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Sir Thomas More, Humanist and Hero: a Man for All Ages.

Noel Joseph Toups
Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College

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SIR THOMAS MORE, HUMANIST
AND HERO: A MAN FOR ALL AGES

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
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in

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by

Noel Joseph Toups
B.A., Nicholls State University, 1960
M.A., Louisiana State University, 1962
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ABSTRACT

Sir Thomas More has appeared as a literary character in many diverse works from the time of his death to the twentieth century; these works have generally treated him as a model of intellectual integrity and adamantine conscience whose love of truth has made him the perfect touchstone against which a panoply of other individuals may be judged.

More's own century viewed him in conflicting ways. The Tudor apologists, like the Skeltonic author of "The Image of Hypocrisy," Hall, Holinshed, and Foxe were critical of More's wit and treatment of heretics and deemed prideful his insistence upon conscience regarding the "King's Great Matter." However, the recusants pictured More the loyal servant of London, devoted father, respected humanist, and man of unswerving conscience. These include, among others, the biographers Roper and Harpsfield; sixteenth century treatments culminate in two by Ro. Ba. and Anthony Munday. Munday's Book of Sir Thomas More, an essentially Protestant play for an essentially Protestant audience, lionizes More, thus consummating the flattering treatments subtly begun by Holinshed.

By the seventeenth century, received tradition, reinforced by oral legends, had crystalized; thus the

In the eighteenth century, Thomas Ward's popular *Hudibrastic*, *England's Reformation*, praises More as avatar of goodness against whom King Henry and others falter. Addison and Prior also celebrate More's wit and praise him for avoiding expediency. Thereafter Swift celebrates More's greatness in two memorable presentations in *Gulliver's Travels* and in the essay "Concerning that Universal Hatred, Which Prevails Against the Clergy"; essentially, Swift makes him an ethical and rational standard for emulation. Whereas other epochs begot several dramatic profiles of More, the eighteenth century fostered but one: *Hurdis's Tragedy of Sir Thomas More*, a dull play derivative from long-standing traditions, one exception being that it placed greater emphasis on the protagonist's familial devotion than had previous dramas.

Charles Lamb next briefly tarnished the image, possibly because he could not comprehend More's treatment
of heretics; however, in his *Ecclesiastical Sonnets*, Wordsworth celebrated More's ethics and "unbending" will. Southey then used More as one of two discussants in his *Colloquies* who present a liberal political program designed by the poet, but that character is indistinguishable from the other, who transparently represents Southey. Charles Dickens later returned to common usage--More the touchstone--in his *Child's History* and measured that "royal pig" Henry against More's wit, wisdom, and goodness. The last nineteenth century author to expend considerable energy upon More is Froude, who in his *History of England* and other works expressed strong Henrician partisanship and opposition to More's treatment of heretics, but often treats More in an affirmative, even warm fashion, especially when dealing with his courage under duress.

Twentieth century popular novelists as exemplified by Eleanor Hibbert, Francis Hackett, and Evelyn Anthony and popular drama as represented by Anne of the Thousand Days have continued the dominant traditions of previous epochs with few aberrations. Bolt's *A Man for All Seasons* and Percy's *Love in the Ruins* become the modern age's important contributions to this tradition, however. Bolt studies More's earthy humanity and sense of selfhood, but always against the backdrop of family and court. Tempering More's responses to pressures from both is his conscience,
and More's conscience is contrasted with absence of that guiding standard among Richard Rich, Cromwell, and Wolsey. This play is a graph objectifying the ascent of an opportunist and the decline of a man of conscience, but the audience is not permitted to overlook the warmth pervading the More family relationships, for it is Bolt's stated purpose to portray More thus.

The idea of an individual for whom his own time is not ready is a thematic assumption underlying Walker Percy's *Love in the Ruins*. This novel depicts a modern ancestor of Sir Thomas who bears his name and shares his Renaissance insistence upon a balance between religious sensibility and the demands of secular life. Dr. Tom More, a bad Catholic, is convinced that he can restore that balance with his invention, but he fails; and eventually only prayer to his sainted ancestor saves him and his world from evil.

In Percy's novel ends the nexus of affirmative literary treatments of Sir Thomas More. For over four centuries he has captured near universal admiration because of his simple humanity, affection for life, generosity, and virtue. More's appeal is also directly resultant from his humanistic studies. They had convinced him that it was man's privilege to engage in an intensive quest for happiness as a human being,
not as angel or beast. Happiness also obtains from
industria, public involvement for the morally wise man,
and More opted for that life of involvement, not for
that of the cloister or of the scholarly recluse; he
lived a full life with a loved and loving family. His
steadfast conscience finally exercised the most lasting
appeal to writers, for it helped to formulate a thematic
construct in literature portraying More for centuries
since his death. But that conscience emerged from his
humanistic studies and a resultant love of truth; there­
fore, his humanism has been a prime mover in his appeal
to authors for several centuries.
INTRODUCTION

The specter of Sir Thomas More has haunted the imaginations of British and--to a lesser extent--American authors for more than four centuries since his execution, so much so that More appears either as a literary character or is mentioned (usually as an exemplar of intellectual honesty) in literary works spanning nearly all of the genres and certainly all of the cultural epochs since his execution for high treason in 1535. Incidentally, More's appeal has not been limited to any predictable class of authors, either political controversialists, Utopians, Roman Catholic hagiographers, or Protestant apologists. Having instead appealed to a diverse group of many political, religious, and philosophical persuasions, More is truly a man for all seasons. In fact, a fascination with his life, his attitudes, and his martyrdom has continued even in the popular historical romances of the twentieth century, and More has been treated by literary men and women of varying fame and talent as dissimilar as Victoria Holt, Roper, Swift, Lamb, Prior, Robert Bolt, Wordsworth, Southey, Dickens, and Walker Percy. No group, no literary period has monopolized the memory of the great Lord Chancellor of England either in imaginative literature or in the literary essay or biography.
Precisely why More has caused this exceptional phenomenon is difficult to ascertain, at least with any certainty. Although he was a man of great stature and accomplishment, there have been others--of his own and other eras--who have equaled or surpassed his political or literary attainments.

Not of humble origins, More was born in Cheapside on February 6, 1478, of a middle-class, professional family. His father, John, was a barrister and later Judge of the King's Bench; his maternal grandfather, Thomas Granger, was a prosperous citizen and Sheriff of London; and his great-grandfather, John More the elder, was Steward and Reader at Lincoln's Inn in the latter quarter of the fifteenth century.¹

As a young child, Thomas was sent to St. Anthony's School on Threadneedle Street, the same school at which John Colet and William Latimer had previously studied and perhaps the leading London school of the times. From St. Anthony's School More's father moved him to a position as page to Cardinal Morton, Archbishop of Canterbury and Lord Chancellor where

though he was young of years /probably 13/, yet would he at Christmas tide suddenly sometimes step in among the players, and never studying for the matter, make a part of his own....In whose wit and towardness the Cardinal much delighting, would often say of him unto the nobles that divers times
dined with him: 'This child here waiting at the table, whoever shall live to see it, will prove a marvellous man.'

In about 1492 Morton appears to have procured a place at Canterbury Hall (later Christ Church), Oxford, for More, where the young scholar remained for approximately two years. With a barely sufficient allowance from his father, More had little choice but to apply himself to study. He did, however, develop lasting acquaintances while there with William Grocyn and Thomas Linacre, and it is apparently Grocyn who first taught him Greek. More's father had apparently always considered law the only career for his son, and he recalled him to London in 1494 to enter New Inn. From New Inn, More moved to Lincoln's Inn in 1496 and was called to the outer bar in an unprecedentedly short period of time. Afterwards, he was appointed a reader or lecturer in law at Furnival's Inn, where his lectures were so successful that he repeated them for three consecutive years.

While studying law, More devoted considerable free time to literary pursuits, writing competent verses in both Latin and English. Also, he assiduously developed the friendships of his Oxford tutors Grocyn and Linacre, who were now in London, and also of the scholars Colet and William Lily. But it was in 1497 that he met
Erasmus, and thus developed a friendship which was to join the kindred spirits in such a fashion that, upon reflecting upon More's execution years later, the older man wrote to a friend: "In More's death I seem to have died myself; we had but one soul between us."^3

Two years later (1499), More must have undergone a period of religious questioning, for he moved near the Charterhouse of London in order to participate in the spiritual exercises of the Carthusians—the order which he had considered joining. But after four years of religious exercises, More suddenly abandoned thoughts of joining a monastery (he had also considered the Franciscans) to enter temporal affairs again with renewed vigor. In 1504 he was elected a burgess of the new Parliament and in that office angered the parsimonious Henry VII by leading opposition to the King's three-fifteenths subsidy for the marriage of Margaret to the king of Scotland.

In 1505 More married Jane Colt and settled at Bucklesbury, where they entertained some of the leading intellects of Europe including Erasmus, who while visiting them wrote his *Moriae Encomium*. Also, by 1510 More had begun his long association with London civil affairs; in this year he was made Under-sheriff of London. But sadness followed quickly upon success: Jane died in 1511 after having borne him four children.
Within a month of her death, however, More had remarried—this time to a widow whom he deemed capable of caring for his family, Alice Middleton. By this juncture too, More's fame as an attorney had been established; he was sought by numerous clients, especially of the trading and poorer classes of London, and he advised them fairly, often, according to Erasmus, giving them "true and friendly counsel with an eye to their advantage rather than his own, generally advising them, that the cheapest thing they would do was to come to terms with their opponents."^4

Henry VIII had by this time occupied the throne and noticed the talented young attorney as the quick-witted, intelligent sort with whom he liked to surround himself. In 1515 he employed More as an ambassador to Flanders, and it is while waiting for new developments in the negotiations that More wrote his Utopia. The following year, when the ambassador returned to England, Henry offered him a yearly pension, but More refused it. Again in 1517 he was at the axis of public events. The "Evil May Day" riots had broken out in London, chiefly as a result of public displeasure with foreign merchants, and More attempted to disperse the rioters by employing his gift of speech against the rowdy crowds of Londoners. The year following that, More was again appointed ambassador, this time to Calais to settle disputes.
with the French. And in 1518 Henry named him Master of Requests, a position which required him to review all petitions presented to Henry as he traveled through the provinces of England. Further, in that same year More was appointed a member of the Privy Council, and with the acceptance of these court positions, his intimacy with Henry began to develop. Henry could often be found at More's household in Chelsea walking about the gardens with him. So too, the King would often send for More to join him and the Queen in their private chambers to engage in witty conversation or to discourse on weighty matters of divinity, astronomy, and science.

Many of More's actions while a man of influence endeared him to the English public; for instance, as Master of Requests, he took many opportunities to lessen the burden on poor petitioners, and in 1521, the Privy Council, supposedly in response to his encouragement, promulgated statutes suppressing unauthorized enclosures.

Again in that same year More advanced farther in the temporal hierarchy. He was knighted and named Sub-treasurer to the King. Then in rapid succession More was elected Speaker of the House of Commons (1523) and named Steward of Cambridge University and Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (both in 1525); then in 1529, when Wolsey was dismissed from his post as Lord
Chancellor, Henry named More to replace him, the first recorded case of a layman occupying that position. As Chancellor, More continued to earn the devotion of the British people; his efficiency and dispatch were unpreceendented and cases under his jurisdiction did not linger in the courts; furthermore, he was readily available to even the poorest suitors and showed no favors even to relatives.

But the conflict of two strong wills was already beginning to develop. In 1527 the King had discussed with More his reservations concerning the legitimacy of his marriage, but More had offered no opinion on that occasion. In 1532, however, Parliament was pressured to revoke all constitutions made by the clergy in convocations without royal license, and this act has been interpreted by some as the first which contributed to the disestablishment of the power of the papacy in the British church. Quickly thereafter emerged both a bill to end payment of first-fruits to the papacy and the King's suggestion that the laws against heresy be relaxed. When More opposed the latter in the Council, Henry was angered, and More, apparently feeling that his position was no longer tenable, resigned the Chancellorship and spent the next eighteen months in virtual retirement except for writing tracts on religious controversy. But the end was near, for in
1534 came the Act of Succession with the oath appended by the commissioners which required the individual to abjure "any foreign potentate" and a special provision for the clergy requiring them unalterably to repudiate the Pope. More refused to take the oath on the simple legal principle that the act of Parliament had not required the oath as the commissioners had written it; however, he did maintain that he was prepared to swear fidelity to the succession. But, although Cranmer advised the King to accept More's modified oath, More's enemies were not so easily placated, and he was committed to the Tower. Again Parliament met eight months later and declared that the commission's oath recognizing the succession, denying the Pope's authority, and assuming the validity of the divorce was the one intended by the Act of Succession; furthermore, it styled Henry Supreme Head of the Church. On July 1 More was indicted for high treason and found guilty, and on July 6 he died on Tower Hill, his last words being "The King's good servant, but God's first." Europe was shocked, and Charles V declared that he would have preferred losing his best city to losing such an advisor.

Certainly there is material in More's life for literary articulation, but why has More so interested British and American writers? Over four decades ago R. W. Chambers called for a study of More's fame.
through English history; it seems that a similar effort tracing his fame through literature would be just as relevant. Apparently, no study of this phenomenon has appeared in print; therefore, it will be the purpose of this study to begin to fill that void. In order to achieve this end, selected English language works from the literary periods since More's execution will be examined. These works will include chronicles, poetry, drama, essays, novels, and biographies. From these materials, this study will analyze presentations of Thomas More as a literary character both in serious and in popular literature. English language works will receive primary consideration, merely as a convenient method of limitation; however, some few foreign language works will be treated briefly when they have some bearing upon the materials being examined. And, most important, this study will present a close examination of the manner in which Sir Thomas More has been treated as a literary character in order to determine what consistencies, if any, appear in these treatments. Once this has been accomplished, some explanation, no matter how tentative, will be advanced for the nature of these literary presentations of More and for the continuing fascination with his life.
NOTES TO INTRODUCTION


2 William Roper, The Life of Sir Thomas More, Knight, ed. Elsie Vaughan Hitchcock, EETS, OS NO. 197, (London: Oxford University Press, 1935), p. 5; cited as Roper; in quoting from Roper and other prose works of the period, spelling has been modernized, but contemporary spelling will be retained for poetic compositions.

3 As quoted in Chambers, More, p. 73.


5 Chambers, More, p. 352.
CHAPTER I
THE BEGINNINGS

The era of the rise and fall of Thomas More was the sixteenth century, and it produced numerous materials concerning the life and character of the great Lord Chancellor; however, as might be expected of an age of such strident political and religious controversy, this large body of Moreana contains works sometimes subtly and sometimes obviously opposed to More, especially regarding his position concerning the Act of Supremacy. To take a position which strongly favored More was still rather dangerous. Witness the matter of the probable censorship of passages of Anthony Munday's The Book of Sir Thomas More, a play which will be examined in the next chapter. Some of the Renaissance materials on More must therefore have been tempered by prudent desire for self-preservation; furthermore, some of the authors whose works will be studied in this chapter, authors like Edward Hall and John Foxe, were genuinely committed to Tudor policies, and their attacks on More must be seen as driven by intellectual commitment instead of blind chauvinism.

Perhaps the first literary document presenting attitudes concerning Thomas More is a piece written in Skeltonic verse entitled "The Image of Hypocrisy." For
some time ascribed to John Skelton, Henry VIII's tutor, poet laureate, and controversialist, the poem bears the stamp of Skelton's personal satires; but modern scholarship no longer makes that ascription, for the poem makes an oblique reference to Thomas More's Debellation, which we now know was written in 1533, four years after Skelton's death.

Although authorship and exact date of composition of "The Image of Hypocrisy" are uncertain, the poem is certainly written in the Skeltonic mode both poetically and thematically. Skelton had said of himself that he sang the material of laughter in a harsh voice; certainly his tirades against Wolsey and others of the King's men in compositions like "Speke, Parrot," "The Bowge of Court," or "Why Come Ye Not to Court?" support this self-assessment; the reader can note that the coarse personal invective of the "Image" on one hand and the tumbling prosody on the other follow these Skeltonic traditions. Furthermore, it is especially what Maurice Pollet described as Skelton's satirical impatience with worldly vanities generally, and courtly vanities particularly, which emanates as the dominant quality of this poem.

"The Image of Hypocrisy" is divided into five sections and an epilogue. The first segment attacks "the cruell clergy,/ And the proude prelacy" for
"Comytting apostacie,/ Against that verytye/ That thei can not denye" and for so confusing the laity that they can no longer distinguish truth from falsehood (Skelton, pp. 413-414). Interestingly, this is similar to the charge made by Skelton in "Colin Clout." The second section focuses on the bishops of the church and their venality:

They be so full of spyte
They care not whom they byte,
Both frend and foo they smyte
With prison, deth, and flighte
So dayly they do fyght
To overturne the ryght....

(Skelton, p. 422)

Allegedly, these same bishops repudiate the rules of prelacy established by the Apostle Paul and "hide underneth the whynge/ Of the Sire of Synne" (Skelton, p. 424)--the Pope. Ultimately, too, the bishops have only corporal matters at interest and exploit their ecclesiastical offices to further their sycophancy, for they

wallowe beasteally,
As hogges do in a styte,
Serving ther god, ther belly
With chuettes and with gelly,
With venyson and with tartes,
With confytes and with fartes
To ease ther holy hartes

... Calling convocations,
Sellinge dispensations,
Givinge condonasions,
Makinge permutations.

(Skelton, p. 429)
Having lashed out at the prelacy in this fashion, the anonymous author moves on to an admission of purpose typical of Skelton's verses: "My mynde is not to lye,/ But to write playnlye/ Ageynst ipocresye/ In bisshopp or in other" (Skelton, p. 431). Perhaps this fragment is preparatory for the third division of the poem, for it is there that the representative of the "others," Thomas More, is dealt his most cutting criticism. When one reads this poem, it becomes obvious that the cause for this attack cannot be established absolutely; however, either More's Conufutation (1533), Apology (1533), or Deballation (1533) alone may have fostered this abuse. In fact, the Debellation of Salem and Bizance and The Apology of Sir Thomas More, Knight (especially Chapter 46) are probably the better candidates, for they are alluded to in these verses (Skelton, pp. 435-436). The charge, later repeated by Foxe, Froude, and others, is that More the great humanist abandoned his life-long search for peace, truth, and justice to attack Protestant dissenters in order to accrue royal or papal favor. Like the master whom he imitates, the follower of Skelton here rails against inequities caused by the King's former servant, but does not attack the King:

But nowe we have a knighte
That is a man of mighte
All armed for to fighte
To put the trouthe to flighte
By Bowbell polley

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With his poetry
And his sophisticated,
To mock and make a ly
With quod he and quod I
And his apologue
Made for the prelacy,
Ther huggy pompe and pride
To colour and to hide
He maketh no nobbes /Does not hesitate/
But with his dialogues
To prove our prelates goddes
And lay men very lobbes /country bumpkins/
Betinge them with bobbes.../taunts/

(Skelton, p. 435)

First, critical tradition established by Reverend Alexander Dyce (Skelton, p. 435, n. 3) and not since disputed, assumes that the knight "armed for to fighte" is Sir Thomas More. What strikes one as an interesting image, however, is that of the non-violent author of Book I of Utopia setting out armed to combat truth in the manner of the knights errant pursuing evil. More will be said of this image and the Abbé Germain Marc'hadeur's speculations about it in this study's treatment of Fuller in Chapter III. Such a portrayal could not have escaped the interest of British humanistic circles if this poem was known to them; nevertheless, the stroke is worthy of Skelton, and it is understandable that this poem was ascribed to him for so many years.

As has been established previously, the section under consideration here early establishes that More's supposed attacks on truth form the hypocrisy for which he is being criticized. Also, the "Bowbell pollecy" is probably a snide reference to More's middle-class London
origins and his popularity among the very people from whom he rose, for Saint Mary le Boye was located in Cheapside, the neighborhood of Thomas More's birth, which was practically in the center of London, and the expression "within the sound of Bowbells" meant near St. Mary's and typical of London trading class attitudes. With this gibe the poet suggests that More designed policy to appeal to the London masses or that his political and religious positions emerged from his mundane origins and hence were opposed to the Reformation cause. In either case, the policy is assailed as offensive.

But it is with the ninth line of the passage quoted above that the author begins to attack More with more specific charges; in this line, the "quod he and quod I" reference is a clear allusion to More's frequent use of dialogue in controversial writing. Many European humanists including More and Erasmus experimented with this literary mode, and the German reformers may have had some influence upon More's choice of a form for the Dialogue Concerning Heresies and Matters of Religion (1528) referred to indirectly in this line.\(^3\) This massive work, commissioned by Bishop Tunstall to counteract the burgeoning influence of Lutheranism,\(^4\) purports to be More's record of four conversations with friends in his study and garden at Chelsea. As the title suggests, the conversations centered around
religious topics and focused on the matter of the Lutheran heresy, which More saw as dangerous to the peace and unity of Christendom. But, more significantly, the speeches of the Dialogue were regularly identified by tags such as "quoth he," "quoth your friend," or "quoth I."

The next line, of course, alludes to More's Apology, written in defense of the clergy and apparently causing considerably stronger response than Sir Thomas had expected. But the accusation of this section of the poem is that More wrote this work to color and disguise the pomp and pride of the ecclesiastical authorities. Though provocative, this charge ignores More's own frequently stated desire for reform of abuses within the church (expressed for instance, in Chapters 10, 48, and 49 of the Apology).

The next major issue raised by this poem is More's Debellation, a major portion of which was devoted to an apologia for the existence of antiheretical laws in the civil realm. The lines which raise this issue read--

In his Debellation,
With a popishe fasshion
To subvert oure nation:
But this daucok doctoure
And purgatory proctoure
Waketh nowe for wages,
Disputith per ambages,
To helpe these parasites
And naughty ipocrites,
With legendes of lyes.  
(Skelton, p. 436)

This issue of heresy More had raised frequently, especially in his Apology. It shall not be the purpose of this study to review in great detail More's position in this controversy, for that has already been done by competent authorities, especially R. W. Chambers in The Place of St. Thomas More in English Literature and History, first published in 1937. Briefly, Chambers finds that More's position was a careful distinction between the functions of the clergy and the laity in dealing with matters of heresy. Simply stated, More believed that it was the function of the clergy to define heresy and then the responsibility of the temporality to punish it, even by corporal punishment, if necessary to the peace and tranquility of the state. This extreme measure might be necessary, for a person preaching doctrine contrary to the state religion was potentially guilty of sedition, which was incompatible with a well-ordered state. In fact, More bluntly dismissed the chief opposition argument against punishment for heretics, for the opponents argued on the premise that, as a result of such civil sanctions, "an innocent may sometime take wrong." The weakness of their argument, More asserted, was that "if this reason should stand, then against malefactors there could no law stand" (English Works, p. 1031).
Furthermore, as has often been the case since the publication of this poem, More is accused in the passage from "Hypocrisy" quoted above of writing controversial tracts for pay. This charge is, of course, linked to the well-documented offer which the bishops of England had made to More of a subsidy of four or five thousand pounds for his defense of the church, but More had refused the grant. What is more difficult to deal with in the same passage is the further charge that More--the man who emerges from English and American literature as an intellectual hero--could have supported a cause, no matter what cause, with untruth. Perhaps we may be somewhat justified in suggesting that the author of the poem allowed his emotions to gain sway at this point.

Lastly, the anonymous author accuses More of having been a cruel persecutor of heretics while Chancellor (Skelton, pp. 436-437). This issue too has been carefully examined previously, but More's critics distort historical truth in connection with this issue. Quite correctly, they frequently maintain that the incidents of prosecution increased when More succeeded Wolsey as Chancellor, but in blaming More for this, they ignore or are ignorant of the points of law in such cases. Actually, More could not prosecute alleged heretics; the bishops and ecclesiastical courts tried such religious cases. Only in those rare cases when the ecclesiastical
courts inflicted the death penalty was the temporality responsible for carrying out the sentence. Consequently, More was not responsible for condemnation or acquittal. However, he provided his own best defense against this charge when he demanded that Christopher Saint-German, one of his frequent accusants, cite one specific case of unjust punishment. And Saint-German did not; in fact, he completely ignored More's challenge in his Salem and Bizance, a tract released after More's plea for specifics. Yet the tradition that More was a cruel persecutor survived and was passed on by Hall, Foxe, Froude, and others. The attitude toward this supposedly cruel facet of his character which is expressed in the following passage from "The Image of Hypocrisy," then, is not an exceptional one and will bear further examination later in this study:

Men say ye will spare none
Of hye nor lowe degree,
That will be eneme
To your ipocresse
...
Ye be so sterne and harde
Ye rather drawe backwarde,
Your brother so to blinde
To grope and sertche his mynde
As thoughe youe were his frinde
Some worde to pike and finde
Wherby ye may hyme blinde;
With your popishe lawe
To kepe us under awe.

(Skelton, p. 437)

The anonymous "Image of Hypocrisy," therefore, belongs to that body of literature which is generally...
critical of the late Lord Chancellor. As we have seen, the criticism within this poem converges on several alleged facets of More's character. The poem accuses him of denying truth and justice for the sake of the approbation of higher authorities, of attempting to hide the maleficence of ecclesiastical authorities, and of seeking to mitigate their "hugy pompe and pride" through his devious sophistry--writings allegedly executed for pay. Finally, the poem attacks his treatment of heretics as unjust and cruel and maligns his methods as designed solely to uphold the "popishe lawe."

As has been noted previously, some of these charges have been accepted by other authors and passed on through the ages, and this study will present more on that matter later.

One final point should be made about "The Image of Hypocrisy" at this juncture, and that is the obvious one that the piece lacks even the kind of partial balance and attempt at objectivity which the sketches of later detractors displayed. Not even the Tudor partisan Edward Hall, whom R. W. Chambers rather unkindly termed "a king-worshipper," was so arbitrary in presenting More. Perhaps what Chambers wrote of Hall and his contemporaries might be considered here relative to this poet:

The majority of King Henry's political supporters naturally did not feel
towards More exactly as did that single-minded reformer, William Tyndale. But these rising men thoroughly approved of a king who was, so far as England was concerned, King, Pope, and Emperor in one. Many of them were London lawyers or merchants, and the confiscation of the monasteries gave them the opportunity they had long desired of acquiring land, and founding families. They loved the brilliant pageantry of the Court, and the foundation of their fortunes rested on Henry's assumption of power as Supreme Head of the Church and on what they called his 'Triumphant Reign.' Their spokesman is the chronicler Edward Hall, whose book has been so often quoted....Hall voices the feelings of a body of politiques which, although small, was destined to have enormous weight in the moulding of future opinion. Like his fellows, Hall has no patience with More's conscientious scruples.12

The second significant character study of Thomas More in English literature appears in Edward Hall's The Union of the Two Noble and Illustrious Families of Lancaster and York (1542), which is better known by the 1550 edition's title: Hall's Chronicle.

Edward Hall was Eton educated and, like More, an Oxford man, a barrister, a member of Parliament, and a political servant to Henry VIII. He apparently intended his work to adulate the Tudors, but he also exhibited a strong and individual style and considerable insight into Henrician politics while transposing to the vernacular chronicle some of the literary qualities of Polydore
Vergil's Latin chronicle *Anglica Historia*. Unlike many of his contemporaries, Hall wrote in a highly dramatic style, abandoning the simple chronicle form followed by Wriothesley and others, and producing a lively narrative; it is especially his narrative technique which he inherited from Vergil. While important to English literary history because of its innovative narrative technique, *Hall's Chronicle* is worthy of consideration for other reasons: it served as the primary source for Munday's history play, *The Book of Sir Thomas More*, for many historical dramas and chronicles written in Tudor times, notably some of Shakespeare's plays, and for Holinshed's *Chronicles*.

Since Hall so frequently served as a source for other literary efforts, some of which will be examined in this study, it is especially important to note that he sometimes exhibits a strong Tudor bias--a quality to which later writers who were glancing at his Chronicle as they wrote responded in various ways. Among other things, Hall's devotion to Henry and the Tudors--already noted and criticized perhaps too stridently by R. W. Chambers and some of his followers--colors his assessments of Tudor policies and his response to More. For instance, a representative example of this bias appears in his characterization of the Act of Supremacy as among the "many...good, wholesome, and Godly statutes" which
helped to abolish from the realm "the Pope with all his 
College of Cardinals with all their Pardons and 
Indulgences." Furthermore, Hall, like many Renaissance 
chroniclers, records history for the moral, political, 
or religious principles which can be gleaned from the 
rise and fall of princes and of nations. Associated with 
this is the corollary theme of union prefigured in the 
original title and also alluded to in the opening pages 
of this work:

By discord great things decay 
and fall to ruin, so the same by 
concord be revived and erected. In 
likewise also all regions which by 
division and dissension be vexed, 
molested and troubled, be by union 
and agreement relieved, pacified 
and enriched. 

(Hall, p. 2)

This theme of union, so often championed in the history 
plays of the Renaissance, so often emphasized in the 
homilies appointed to be read in the churches at the 
very time when Hall is writing, is of particular signif-
icance to this study, for it must temper Hall's responses 
to Thomas More and the recusants, men and women whom he 
and other Tudor polemicists see as contributing to 
discord, division, and ruin in the kingdom. 

Whatever his motivation or his feelings about More, 
Hall treats the late Chancellor rather kindly in the ear-
lier passages of the Chronicle; in fact, some of these 
passages are even mildly complimentary. One such example
can be found in the narrative of "the king's panegyrist" of the visit (in 1522) of the Emperor Charles and his retinue to London. While detailing the masques, tournaments, and pageantry associated with this historical visit, Hall sketches More as a man "well learned" who delivered an "eloquent Oration, in the praise of the two princes" (Hall, p. 637), but whatever the chronicler's respect for More's learning and eloquence, this respect is usually tempered by his complete adulation of King Henry.16

The matter of More's participation in the quelling of the so-called "Ill May Day" or "Evil May Day" riot is an excellent example of this bias. This act of lawlessness in 1517 consisted of mob attacks on foreigners headquartered in London. These foreigners were primarily merchants enjoying privileges and protection granted by the crown and freely plying their trade throughout the kingdom; but there had apparently been tension for some time, between them and the London populace, who believed that the aliens were enriching themselves at the expense of English craftsmen; and in 1517 conditions had become unbearable--at least in the eyes of many of the city's apprentices--for the foreigners had become too over-bearing and insolent. Meanwhile a popular preacher, a Dr. Beale, had railed against the foreigners in a sermon in Easter week of that year, and this had gener-
ated a plan to attack all foreigners. In the closing
days of April, foreigners were mobbed in the streets
and pushed into the filthy ditches of the city. Understandably, there were officials who were concerned, and
More and Richard Brook, both city officials, were
dispatched to plead with Wolsey for advice and instruc-
tions. Quickly realizing the gravity of the situation,
the Cardinal commanded that a curfew be imposed that
night, but that policy only angered the city's apprentices,
for the revels of May Morning had long been their per-
quise; furthermore, the curfew had been announced only
a half hour before it was to take effect. Consequently
the dreaded cry of "Prentices and Clubs!" rang out, and
mobs began to collect: some six or seven hundred in
Cheapside and some three hundred more in St. Paul's
Churchyard. 17

Apparently, More's gift of speech had nearly calmed
the anarchists at some time before midnight on April 30
(evidence perhaps of the respect with which Londoners
held their member of Parliament, under-sheriff and royal
ambassador); however, he was not completely successful--
there was some stone-throwing; a man standing near More
was hit; and the mobs did not disperse until three the
next morning. What had happened, however, was that the
court had been alarmed, for troops under Norfolk's
command were dispatched to the city. Many citizens were
jailed, some of them mere children, and thirteen were executed at once for what was considered an act of treason: violating the King's peace with foreign nations.\textsuperscript{18}

The factors which most angered the London citizenry were twofold: the quartering of troops in the city and the execution of children. More's part in the affair did not end with the embassy to Wolsey, however, for he continued to pursue concord and participated in an attempt to placate Henry. To accomplish this, he and other London officials dressed in black and approached the King at Greenwich to "beseech his Grace to be good and gracious lord unto them, and to accept them now being most sorrowful and heavy."\textsuperscript{19} Henry did not meet their expectations; he referred them to Wolsey, to whom More and the others again pleaded, but finally a great drama of repentance before Henry was arranged for Westminster Hall wherein all of the prisoners pleaded in unison, "Mercy, gracious lord, mercy." Finally, Henry issued a general pardon. Later, More served on a commission charged with investigating the causes of the uprising; but, as Chambers correctly observes, the London tradition has survived that More, by virtue of his wit and eloquence, had suppressed the rioting and secured the pardon.\textsuperscript{20} Generally, the above is the version of Evil May Day events preserved in Munday's \textit{The Book of Sir Thomas More};
for, although this play does employ Hall's *Chronicle* as a source, it also depends heavily on the London traditions which contend that More settled the May Day problems himself and was knighted and made a member of the King's council as rewards for his performance.

Whether or not Hall had access to all sources for details of More's involvement in the Evil May Day matter cannot now be ascertained. We can observe, however, that Hall's version, when compared with those of others like Roper and Holinshed, clouds Thomas More's role as peacemaker and tends to focus on his errors or flaws.

True, Hall does credit More with some role in the affair, (Hall, p. 588), but practically as a "tagger-along" rather than a man of prominence in the community who would have, almost as a matter of course, been included in such peace-making. Furthermore, the London tradition that More's unaided eloquence had quelled the rioting is certainly not supported by Hall's report:

There met with them Sir Thomas More and others, desiring them to go to their lodging: And as they were entreating, and had almost brought them to a stay: The people of St. Martin's threw out stones and bats, and hurt diverse honest persons, that were persuading the riotous people to cease.

(Hall, p. 589)

Additionally, it seems representative of Hall's treatment of these materials that he does not mention
More's being a member of the delegation of aldermen and city officials who, dressed in black robes, approached the King at Greenwich to present the city's apology for the anarchy of Evil May Day (Hall, p. 590), although More's presence is clearly established by city records; nor is Thomas More mentioned as attending the great scene of contrition staged at Westminster (Hall, p. 591). The ultimate effect of these omissions (whether intentional or not) is to diminish Thomas More's role as a respected spokesman for the people of London, the picture of him presented by Anthony Munday and other writers.

On the other hand, Hall devotes considerable space to the account of More's 1523 election as Speaker of the House of Commons; here the account is somewhat reportorial but not lacking in characterization. The entire matter is presented with narrative skill; perhaps a sample of this section will best illustrate this and Hall's characterization of More as the prudent, talented statesman:

According to.../Its/\ instruction the commons...chose for their speaker Sir Thomas More knight & presented him...where he according to the old usage disabled himself both in wit, learning, and discretion, to speak before the king, & brought in for his purpose how one Phormio desired Hannibal to come to his reading, which thereto assented, and when Hannibal was come he began to read,
de re militari, that is of Chivalry, when Hannibal perceived him, he called him arrogant fool, because he would presume to teach him which was master of chivalry, in the feats of war. So the speaker said, if he should speak before the king of learning and ordering of a commonwealth and such other like the king being so well learned & of such prudence & experience might say to him as Hannibal said to Phormio. Wherefore he desired his grace that the commons might chose another speaker: The Cardinal answered, that the king knew his wit, learning & discretion by long experience in his service: wherefore he thought that the commons had chosen him as the most meetest of all, and so he did admit him. Then Sir Thomas More gave to the king his most humble thanks, and desired of him two petitions: the one, if he should be sent from the commons to the king on message & mistake their intent, that he might with the king's pleasure resort again to the commons for the knowledge of their true meaning: The other was, if in communication & reasoning any man in the common house should speak more largely than of duty he ought to do, that all such offenses should be pardoned, & that to be entered of record, which two petitions were granted, and so thus began the Parliament.

(Hall, pp. 652-653)

One might wonder why Hall's Chronicle deals with More's election in so much more detail than it does his participation in the events surrounding the Evil May Day affair—the matter for which More is so venerated in London traditions. There are several plausible answers, but preeminent among them is this: More's presence at many
events associated with Evil May Day was not the central matter in each of the events; the riots themselves and the ensuing imprisonments and executions were, whereas More's election was more significant to the first meeting of the Parliament of 1523. And finally, there was not only his selection as speaker, but also his petition for freedom of speech for the Commons, which was the first such request ever recorded. Perhaps not having realized what the effect of this literary treatment might ultimately be, Hall seems to have contributed to the beginnings of the tradition of Thomas More the statesman.

On the other hand, in his presentation of More's trial and execution, Hall appears to be quite conscious of what he is about, and that is the portrayal of a man driven to deny his king and seek martyrdom. Additionally, Hall focuses on More's finely-honed wit and sneers at it as some aberration; he describes him in these terms: "a man well learned in the tongues, and also in the Common Law, whose wit was fine, and full of imaginations, by reasons whereof he was too much given to mocking, which was to his gravity a great blemish" (Hall, p. 761).

It is especially regarding the Act of Succession and the imprisonment and execution of More that Hall's Tudor loyalty becomes manifest. Concerning the Act of Succession, he reports:

Parliament was prorogued, and there every lord and burgess and all others,
were sworn to the act of succession...at which few repined, except Doctor John Fisher, and Sir Thomas More knight late lord Chancellor...wherefore these...after long exhortation sent to the Tower where they remained and were often times motioned to be sworn: but the Bishop and Sir Thomas More said that they...might not....But... stood against all the realm in their opinion.

(Hall, pp. 814-815)

But, to More, the matter was not so simple. The problem, as he saw it, was not only the oath to affirm that Henry's marriage to Catherine was invalid. On the contrary, as stated earlier in this study, he felt that he could affirm the succession (which would recognize Elizabeth as heir) and stated so in a letter to Meg Roper, his favorite daughter, dated in April of 1534. What he could not do was to take the oath in the form prescribed by the act, for it included a repudiation of papal supremacy, which he certainly believed in. And, to quote More, to forswear would doom his soul "to perpetual damnation." Instead, he had to follow his conscience in such matters; in fact, in the same letter to Margaret, he used the word conscience at least fifteen times (a motif, incidentally, established by More but carried on by William Roper in his brief literary masterpiece, the Life of More). Indeed, instead of obstinately standing "against all the realm," More offered a compromise which Archbishop Cranmer supported,
to affirm the succession if the oath were framed in such a fashion that it "might stand with.../His conscience" (Letters, p. 222). But More's enemies in the government saw that this compromise was finally rejected by Henry.

It is, let us recall, on the matter of his standing against "all the realm" in his refusal that Hall attacks Sir Thomas; but to More the humanist, the man of conscience, this matter of ethics was no mere whim. In his preface to A Man for All Seasons, Robert Bolt, a twentieth century non-Christian apologist for More, aptly delineates the problem More faced: "Unfortunately his approval of the marriage was asked for in a form that required him to state that he believed what he didn't believe, and required him to state it on oath." Thus conscience was preeminent, not the demands of the state, nor had More failed to maintain that fact before the judges who had accused him of the error of pride of which Hall had also charged him. More's answer to his judges is preserved by R. W. Chambers in The Place of St. Thomas More in English Literature and History:

You must understand that, in things touching conscience, every true and good subject is more bound to have respect to his said conscience and to his soul than to any other thing in all the world beside."

More also recalled the occasion of his trial in the previously cited letter to Meg Roper and told her that
he had maintained before his judges that, although Parliament, the King's council, and perhaps the entire kingdom may have subscribed to the oath, his position coincided with that of "the general council of Christendom"; therefore he had no scruples about his refusal (Letters, pp. 221-222).

Hall's characterization of More has been adopted by some authors; however, these are in the minority, and the dominant literary tradition which has survived well into the twentieth century is the presentation of More's act as dictated by conscience. Interesting examples of this modern tradition can be found in a number of contemporary historical romances, among them Jean Plaidy's St. Thomas's Eve (1954), and in drama like Bolt's A Man for All Seasons (1960). Whatever the patterns in twentieth-century works, Hall did not relent, for his next major section on More is the one in which he reports the execution.

Having done so, he wonders,

I cannot tell whether I should call him a foolish wiseman, or a wise foolishman, for undoubtedly he beside his learning, had a great wit, but it was so mingled with taunting and mocking, that it seemed to them that best knew him, that he thought nothing to be well spoken except he had ministered some mock in the communication.

(Hall, p. 817)
And it is with five examples of this "taunting and mocking" that Hall closes Thomas More's life. The examples which he cites have all become favorite anecdotes about More, cherished particularly by his admirers, and deserve full quotation here:

At his coming to the Tower, one of the officers demanded his upper garment for his fee, meaning his gown, and he answered, he should have it, and took him his cap, saying it was the uppermost garment that he had.

Likewise, even going to his death at the Tower gate, a poor woman called unto him and besought him to declare that he had certain evidences of her in the time that he was in office (which after he was apprehended she could not come by) and that he would entreat she might have them again, or else she was undone. He answered, good woman have patience a little while, for the king is so good unto me that even within this half hour he will discharge me of all businesses, and help thee himself.

Also when he went up the stair on the Scaffold, he desired one of the Sheriff's officers to give him his hand to help him up, and said, when I come down again, let me shift for myself as well as I can.

Also the hangman kneeled down to him asking him forgiveness of his death (as the manner is) to whom he said I forgive thee, but I promise thee that thou shalt never have honesty of the striking of my head, my neck is so short.

Also even when he should lay down his head on the block, he having a great gray beard, striked out his beard and
said to the hangman, I pray you let me lay my beard over the block least you should cut it.

(Hall, pp. 817-818)

So, having cited several examples of this seeming aberration, Hall ended with condemnation of what he considered More's flippancy, but this point of derogation has not become a dominant character trait in modern literary treatments. In fact, More's gift of wit and his heroic insistence on following his conscience are the two traits which occur in most evenhanded portraits of him.

As far as the first of these is concerned--his jesting--a marked taste for jesting and comic stories was apparently a common quality in English humanistic circles, and in More's coterie particularly. After all, it is John Rastell who published The Merry Jests of Widow Edith (1525) and A Hundred Merry Tales (1526); the former of which featured jests by Thomas More and the solemn Bishop John Fisher and was at least according to one source (E. E. Reynolds) edited by More; the latter of which featured jests by John Skelton, who also contributed significantly to the English humanistic movement. Also, in 1589, writing a preface to Robert Green's Menaphon which was entitled "To the Gentlemen Students" and directed to the scholars of both universities, Thomas Nashe praises More's intellect and humor.

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while criticizing those scholars who have begun to "vaunt their smattering of Latin in English Impressions," apparently finding learning unencumbered by humor distasteful. Finally, it is this same wit which is praised by writers as diverse as Erasmus, Francis Bacon, Addison, John Heywood, and Lamb; whereas, it is More's insistence on following the dictates of his conscience—the other trait which Hall derided—which has appealed to others, so much that in 1937 R. W. Chambers extended a parallel which had first been established by A. F. Pollard forty-four years ago:

Antigone will remain, for all time, the great example in literature of the claims of conscience against the law of the State. And More is likely, in increasing measure, to be regarded as the great example of the same thing...partly because of his eminence, partly because the extreme moderation of his claim, and the lack of moderation on the part of his opponents, put his more clearly in the right than ever Antigone was. 28

Other than personal dislike for More—which is not suggested by the content of the Chronicle—what could have motivated Hall to treat the memory of More as he did? A passing comment in "The Continuity of English Prose" may offer an answer. In a section of that influential tract dealing with the intention of Harpsfield's biography of More, Chambers writes that
the whole drift of Harpsfield's biography is to prove that the little band of martyrs for Christian unity included, in More, a man of such genius that it would be absurd to suggest that they had mistaken the gravity of the issue.... This belief in More's genius was... one of the great fighting assets possessed by his party. It was necessary therefore... for the other side to belittle not only More's character but also More's intellect: to prove that he was nothing more than either 'a foolish wise man or a wise foolish man.'

In a sense then, one may suggest that what Harpsfield was to later become for the Roman cause, Hall was to the Protestant cause.

Besides Hall's Chronicle there are two similar works which deserve at least passing mention here. The first is Robert Fabyan's New Chronicles of England and France, printed three times between 1516 and 1560. Only the 1560 printing, however, mentions Thomas More. The second is Charles Wriothesley's A Chronicle of England During the Reigns of the Tudors from A.D. 1485 to 1559, which was first published in the eighteenth century. Fabyan's chronicle mentions only More's execution, and that in a brief, journal-like entry, and although the second selection provides more detail concerning More's life with accounts of his appointment as chancellor, his imprisonment and his execution, no entry attempts to develop More's character or express sentiments of...
the author. The omission in the second chronicle is the more unfortunate of the two, for Wriothesley was a minor court official under Henry VIII (Windsor Herald, Rouge-croix Pursuivant) and in an excellent position to observe unobtrusively and report attitudes of the Henrician court and the city. Furthermore, it is significant that, although Wriothesley was apparently a Tudor partisan, his few relevant entries are not disparaging of More. Perhaps the fact that he did not write for publication but for personal entertainment may explain why he did not feel compelled to support Tudor propaganda by attacking More. In fact, this even-handed treatment may more legitimately represent common public attitudes than what was propounded by Hall.

Besides these vernacular chronicles, additional attention might be directed here to an Italian work written by one of More's linear descendants--Ellis Heywood, son of the playwright and grandnephew of More. Heywood's *Il Moro* (1556) may have been written for the benefit of Cardinal Reginald Pole's continental retinue with which Heywood was connected. Since the work has only recently been translated, by Professor Roger Lee Deakins of New York University, it cannot have contributed significantly to the written survival of More traditions in British literature, for there survives no evidence of English versions reaching Britain. True,
an entry in the Stationers' Register suggests plans to publish an English translation in 1601, but no copy remains. It is, therefore, sensible to conclude that the recent translation is the first since the original Italian printing of 1556. Although possibly known in manuscript, then, Il Moro probably did not inspire middle and late sixteenth-century More traditions, but perhaps reflected received traditions concerning More among the English and European humanists who knew him personally or by reputation. What does Heywood show us in this vignette of More?

First, Il Moro is a colloquy in which Heywood pretends to have recorded the words of More and six friends who are gathered at Chelsea to discuss true happiness as the ultimate goal of humanity. Roughly following the traditional scholastic mode of disputation, each of these disputants presents an alternative answer to the question. Near the end of the debate, Thomas More attempts to reconcile the antagonistic views and asserts that true happiness is discoverable in the control of appetite by the divine faculty of reason:

If we intend to reach happiness, we will in my opinion, have to find out how to draw a distinction between reason and appetite that will satisfy our judgments.

(Heywood, pp. 66-67)

As Professor Deakins has observed, the More who speaks in this colloquy (though a rather plastic character)
is still a man who speaks as a Christian humanist, the rationalist author of *Utopia*, the "exponent of a tolerant, humanistic culture...." He is pictured as a man devoid of ambition or avarice (note the similarity to the London legends) who has resigned the Chancellorship when he has found it impossible to work for the welfare of his people in the institutional framework, and like the author of *Utopia*, he views human endeavor based on reason as the only viable one in this irrational world. Further, the More of Heywood's dialogues is a figure who, like the real man whom he represents, can turn easily from complex punning to discussions of ethical and philosophical matters. Finally, Deakins has noted, "In Heywood's dialogue, seriousness and lightness are held in perfect suspension and this juxtaposition of opposed qualities creates the balance that emerges as More's most salient characteristic." But the greatest compliment paid to More by the obviously partisan portrait in *Il Moro* is at the end of the piece (Heywood, p. 70) when the disputants reluctantly leave him, but with admiration, for they realize that they have been with that rarest of humans--a man whose life corresponds exactly with the ethical principles of his writings, a virtue which even his greatest enemies denied with difficulty.

Had it circulated in England in great numbers, the
Heywood panegyric would, of course, be more important to this study; on the other hand, its significance cannot be ignored, for it presents a quality of More's which continues to appear in Moreana from the Renaissance to the present. That telling feature is the attitude of the statesman-philosopher who values reason above appetite or fear for personal safety, a perhaps inordinate trust in reason (a danger which More discussed in his *Apology*). But it is a quality intriguingly mixed in More's real personality with a devastatingly practical sense of reality. It is, after all, this same man who supposedly quipped when his son-in-law Roper complimented him on the good grace which he seemed to enjoy in Henry's eyes,

I thank our Lord, son...I find his grace my very good lord indeed, and I believe he doth as singularly favor me as any subject within /this/ realm. Howbeit, son of Roper, I may tell thee I have no cause to be proud thereof, for if my head /could/ win him a castle in France...it should not fail to go.

(Roper, p. 21)

No blindness to the vicissitudes of unreasonable men in that comment. But this duality in More's character--this charming reasonableness mixed with practicality--Heywood only begins to take the measure of in his *Il Moro*, perhaps because the colloquy is not ideally suited to full presentation of personality, and it was left to William Roper to dwell more fully on More's character
in his *Life of Sir Thomas More, Knight*.

William Roper, More's son-in-law, was perhaps better qualified than any of More's contemporaries to be his biographer. Not only did he have an enquiring mind and a Boswellian sensitivity to the greatness of the man whose intimacies he shared, but he also spent some sixteen years in close association with More (Roper, p. 3), probably three of these before he married Margaret More. As More's constant companion, a lawyer, a man quite conversant with the great religious and political controversies troubling England at the time, Roper was appraised of most of the details of More's life about which he wrote. In cases when he had no direct information, Roper appears to have used More's personal papers or questioned others who possessed the knowledge which he lacked. An example is the account of the trial which Roper includes in his biography. He was not present at the proceedings, and More's close family (excepting Margaret Roper) by that time had been prevented from continued close contact with him, but another Heywood, Richard, brother of John the dramatist, was a relative and constantly in attendance at the trial as part of his governmental responsibilities.35 And the evidence is that Roper's information concerning those proceedings came from More's papers and Richard's direct information (Roper, pp. 96-97).
Another circumstance which ideally prepared Roper to be his father-in-law's biographer is that he was More's constant companion before imprisonment; he also appears to have been a trusted confidant or at least a sounding board for the great statesman's most private thoughts. These facts Roper alludes to indirectly in the brief prologue to the *Life*:

Knowing--at this day--no one man living that of him and of his doings understood so much as myself.../I/ thought it therefore my part to set forth such matters touching his life as I could at this present call to remembrance.

(Roper, p. 3)

True, some critics have claimed that Roper was too obtuse to perceive that he was constantly playing the fool to More's sarcasm, but few modern students of More's life seriously question the nature of their companionship or the accuracy of Roper's accounts of events except with respect to some confusion about dates and chronological relationship of events. These matters Hitchcock and other editors have already examined thoroughly. But the authenticity of Roper's accounts has consistently withstood comparison with others. 36

But more concerning the merits of Roper's *Life* later. It would be convenient to know the time of its composition, but this is impossible. We do know that, after Mary had ascended the throne in 1553, Roper appar-
ently began to record the impressions of the More whom he had known. Nicholas Harpsfield, whose biography is probably the first formal one of More's life, used Roper's material; therefore, his work followed Roper's, which was completed not long before 1557—the date of publication of More's English Works.37

Other than his Life of More, Roper appears to have produced nothing literary, and despite the efforts of many eminent literary specialists, that fact seems to have contributed to the lingering tradition that Roper's Life was not a conscious literary effort, but merely a series of notes being prepared for the use of the official family biographer, Nicholas Harpsfield. This tradition lingers despite the fact that Hitchcock ends her introduction to the EETS publication of the Life with the comment that "for all the More Lives, Roper's ranks as the biographia princeps, and has always been recognized as one of the masterpieces of English literature."38 A careful reading of Hitchcock shows that she was trying to distinguish between biography and memoir and argue that Roper was the writer of a fine memoir, but that "the literary value of it is, as it were, accidental, unpremeditated," whereas she asserted that Harpsfield had written the truly creative biography, organizing dates and events with labor and skill which "gleaned good grapes and leased good corn."39

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An important distinction, perhaps, but one which seems to have caused continuing confusion in Roper criticism, and though in a minor key, the note lingers that Roper was not engaged in writing what deserves to be classified in the hallowed category of literature. Such a view is represented, for instance, in the writing of an otherwise astute student of British Renaissance culture like Fussner. Despite occasional lapses like Fussner's, the dominant assessment among modern critics seems to be that Roper accomplished in sixty duodecimo pages what R. W. Chambers called "probably the most perfect little biography in the English language." Praise perhaps a bit too effusive, but anticipated years previously by Legouis, who in 1926 had already written that

> to More belongs the honour of having provoked one of the best prose works of his time, his biography by his son-in-law, William Roper, which was written about 1535 but did not appear until 1626, in Paris. This is an admirable book from every point of view. Nothing could be simpler, clearer or more pathetic than its story of More's last moments, and it makes an impressive advance in clarity and construction on More's own writings.

A few years after Legouis' praise came Chambers' influential "The Continuity of English Prose," which called even greater attention to Roper's Life of More and accomplished more than perhaps any other treatment
in lifting the little biography out of a limbo somewhere between history and hagiography. Then on the heels of Chambers followed scholars in the field of biographical studies like Paul Murray Kendall, William H. Davenport, Ben Siegel, and More specialists like E. E. Reynolds, Richard Sylvester, and Davis P. Harding, all adding their accolades. Even C. S. Lewis, who has not been known as a More partisan, has observed in the OHEL that Roper "in a small compass produced a masterpiece." 

A point worthy of consideration here is that the function of biography is to do what history does for us--illuminate the past--but to do more than that, too; it must illuminate an individual's character while being a notable work of art possessing an informing principle. That William Roper accomplished this is no longer seriously questioned; consequently a multitude of studies of the work's artistry have emerged, and it would be presumptuous for this study to attempt to represent in detail even the more valid of them. Perhaps a brief outline of those touching on the most useful points is, however, justified.

The structure of the work has received considerable attention. Sylvester and Harding have examined the similarities between its structure and that of Cavendish's Life of Wolsey and observed correctly that both lives
follow the medieval literary pattern of the rise and fall of princes. R. W. Chambers, both in his biographical study, *Thomas More* and in his "Continuity of English Prose," has thoroughly examined Roper's artful use of dialogue, claiming that the author had acquired his ability to create dialogue in the Chelsea circle where More had continued the practice of extemporizing dramatic roles which he had learned in Morton's household. Even Roper's use of essentially static materials from the More papers has been analyzed in an article by John Maguire in the August 1969 issue of *Moreana.* Maguire's thesis is that Roper often artfully employed More's private papers verbatim, but also altered the language of the originals when this approach better served dramatic effect. And finally Sylvester and Harding have observed that the dominant thematic pattern is established by the continuing use of the word conscience. In fact, the word appears thirteen times in the 101 pages of the EETS edition of the work. So all of these artistic qualities and more have been thoroughly analyzed by recent scholarship. What is even more important to this study, however, is an examination of the kind of man who is presented in this *Life of More,* the only full biography done by an intimate of his. Those traits which Roper ascribes to the Thomas More whom he knew personally deserve notice.
Roper's preface to his *Life of Sir Thomas More, Knight* is so frequently quoted that only a summary is justified here. In it, he humbly states that his purpose is to present his recollections of a man unparalleled for his "singular virtue," "clear, unspotted conscience," and "angelical wit" (Roper, pp. 3-4). These qualities are, of course, clearly sketched by the admiring son-in-law; however, beginning with the reference in the first sentence to More's "clear unspotted conscience," the thematic construct is introduced, and the dominant effort is devoted to developing that theme. Despite this obvious feature, however, as recently as 1969 John Maguire was lamenting the general failure to recognize the *Life's* "clearly indicated controlling theme."51

That theme in fact is what gives focus to the ordering of events, the casting of dialogue, the presentation of the fine little dramatic confrontations in the work. As has been mentioned previously, it is the theme of conscience—or more precisely, of a good man entrapped between the demands of duty and conscience—which is the salient feature of Roper's *Life*. Roper sees this virtue of conscience as that which draws More apart from others of his time and place, and it is interesting that even the sub-title of the 1626 Paris edition of the *Life* read *The Mirror of Virtue in Worldly Greatness*, that virtue, of course, being the indomitable conscience.
which Roper so emphasizes here.

In order to present his interpretation of this man of conscience, Roper writes a brilliantly-ordered work which sometimes ignores pure chronology and presents events as their order best serves this thematic purpose. This method has caused some commentators to engage in discussions of whether the Life is legitimately a biography or a memoir--biography apparently requiring greater adherence to chronological sequence than a memoir. The second phenomenon which Roper's imaginative focus on thematic structure produces is his overlooking of certain matters which, if noted by readers, might have deflected attention from his governing purpose. For instance, one of these omissions includes references to any of More's writings, even his Utopia. But we must remember that it is not Roper's purpose to dwell on such matters. In fact, Sylvester and Harding may have been correct in suggesting that "there is not a single anecdote or episode in the book that does not reflect in some way More's conscience or integrity of character." After having outlined his purpose and introduced his theme in the preface, Roper begins with quickly rendered pieces on More's education and training, pieces which contain no readily observable attempts at characterization. But shortly he arrives at the first event which he plans to use to illustrate More's character--his
courtship and marriage. This account is apparently original with Roper, for it appeared in no earlier works. And significantly, as is so frequently the case in the history of literary treatments of More, it has been frequently reproduced by writers and for precisely the purpose for which Roper employed it. As an example, an author as contemporary as Jean Plaidy in the historical romance *St. Thomas's Eve* (1954) makes much of the affair and, in fact, embellishes it as an early illustration of More's strong sense of conscience.54

As Roper recounts the matter, after having ended his flirtation with the religious life at London Charter­house, More begins another flirtation with the second daughter of a Master Colt of Essex who has often had him as a house guest; but--and here only Roper's own words can properly represent the implausible tale of More's reason for marrying Colt's eldest daughter--

\[
\text{when he considered that it would be both great grief and some shame also to the eldest to see her younger sister in marriage preferred before her, he then of a certain pity framed his fancy towards her and soon after married her.} \\
\text{ (Roper, p. 6)}
\]

Roper follows that account almost immediately with the story of the parliamentary burgess More, the "beardless boy" of the chronicle accounts, preventing Henry VII from receiving the subsidy for his daughter's dowry.

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Again, this issue is woven into the tapestry of events which portray More acting with integrity, even when doing so places him in danger of the King's "great indignation"; further, Roper suggests that it is More's integrity which has caused him to determine to leave England to avoid Henry's anger (Roper, pp. 7-8). In none of these cases is the word conscience employed, but Roper is developing conscience as supporting each of More's acts thereby subtly preparing the reader to accept the explicit statements which follow.

The first occasion on which Roper introduces the key thematic term is while reporting More's maiden speech as Speaker of the House of Commons. In this case, Roper presents More's innovative appeal to Henry VIII for the privilege of freedom of speech as prudently allowing each member of the House to "discharge his conscience" (Roper, p. 16). Significantly, More had moved on that occasion from local (city) politics to national office, a move which placed him in position to garner more of Henry's favor and, eventually, more of his ire. It is therefore important that this verbal motif should begin at this point in the Life; it is almost as if Roper were attempting to construct complex foreshadowing of coming events.

On a multitude of occasions the issue of More's integrity becomes the immediate concern of the biography.
For example, Roper reports that, when More was named Chancellor, he dissembled as was the tradition and then, upon being charged by the King's representatives to administer impartial justice to all, he counter-charged them to constantly scrutinize his administration and disclose his failures directly to the King (Roper, p. 40). And as has been mentioned previously, the preeminent London tradition has long been that More scrupulously adhered to the charge of the King's ministers and was incorruptible and fair in treating all, regardless of social station. Apparently, too, there is some truth in this tradition, for three other sources confirm More's integrity; these sources are the Erasmus letter previously cited and an old ballad, only part of which now survives. The ballad alludes to More's scrupulous attention to his responsibility as Chancellor: "When More some years had Chancellor been/ No more suits did remain/ The same shall never more be seen,/ Till More be there again." A third source is an item in Notes and Queries which establishes that one of the major judicial problems of the times was the manner in which the many suits generated in what was obviously a most litigious age lingered in the courts, especially if the suits had been brought by members of the lower classes. But, so much was More committed to equity under the law that Erasmus had once written of him:
Some he relieves with money, some he protects by his authority, some he promotes by his recommenda-
tion, while those whom he cannot otherwise assist are benefited by his advice,... and you might call him the general patron of all poor people.

(Erasmus, p. 397)

As Chancellor, More quickly caused the judiciary to expedite proceedings and made his appeal to them on the basis of their consciences (Roper, p. 45). Such an appeal was not inappropriate; at the time of his having been promoted to that office, Chancery Court was clogged with so many suits that some had been twenty years standing. By the second year of More's tenure, none were pending. In fact, More was so committed to this principle of fair and expeditious treatment under the law that he once told Roper that, should Satan and his own father stand before him as litigants and should the devil have a good case, he would see to it that "the Devil should have right" (Roper, p. 42).

Although there are implications of and direct references to More's conscience in these and other portions of this Life, the references to this trait occur most frequently near the end where Roper begins to tell of More's dealings with "the king's great matter," as the issue of the marriage to Katherine of Aragon came to be called. Here Roper has the appearances of the word conscience increase significantly, the use dissipate
temporarily later, and then rise in crescendo again near the point where the account of More's trial begins. Such careful design, surely, cannot be accidental.

In connection with the marriage, the assertion which Roper makes is that More could not support Henry's desire to displace Katherine and marry Anne Boleyn. When consulted on the matter by Henry, More in fact is drawn as pleading with him that his conscience will not allow him to "serve his grace's contention," and in a fine little scene of dramatic conflict, we see Henry relenting somewhat sarcastically to the force of his servant's ethics:

To this the king answered, that if he could not therein with his conscience serve him, he was content to accept his service otherwise; and using the advice of other of his learned council, whose consciences could well enough agree therewith, would nevertheless continue his gracious favor towards him, and never with that matter molest his conscience after.

However, the tenuous peace between these two strong-willed men does not survive, for immediately after rendering this scene, Roper reports that More soon realizes that there will be other occasions when his ethics will not allow him to serve the King's wishes. Upon arriving at that realization, he asks Norfolk to petition Henry to relieve him of the chancellorship (Roper, p. 51).

It is perhaps noteworthy that this represents a change from previous presentations of More's resignation, for
herein More resigns primarily for reasons of conscience—a factor not introduced in earlier literature.

The last occasion on which Roper develops a verbal pattern similar to the one mentioned above is in the portion portraying the trial and execution. Here the motif of conscience occurs again. It increases from a single subtle appearance (Roper, p. 81) where Roper presents the scene in which Secretary Cromwell approaches More (by then already detained in the Tower) and tries to convince him to take the oath in order to return to Henry's grace. And it culminates in the presentation of More's trial. That segment of the Life contains one-third of the total number of occurrences of this word in the entire work. As I have mentioned previously, More appears to have based his defense on the primacy of individual conscience and on the assertion that the Act of Supremacy formed an "invasion of the prerogative of conscience that is part of the divine law," and Roper faithfully records this, both directly (Roper, p. 92), and indirectly through the verbal music of the piece. But, as we know, the argument was not accepted; the commission which examined him accused him of the same flaw of character which Hall so stridently dwelt upon—his supposedly standing against all the realm in his refusal to take the oath (Roper, p. 94)—and ultimately adjudged him guilty of treason.
Interestingly, Roper does not present some of the more frequently mentioned highlights of More's career, among these his involvement in the Ill May Day matters. He does, however, dwell on other facets of More's character and temperament, although this matter of conscience is that to which he gives primary emphasis. They are More's humility and lack of worldly ambition, his wit and learning, his charity, his self-sacrifice, and his gift of prophecy.

His humility and lack of worldly ambition emerge in a minor key early in the piece when Roper reports Wolsey's attempt to procure More's services for Henry, who is seeking them. But, according to Roper, More is "loth to change his estate" and manages to refuse without angering Henry (Roper, p. 9). Actually this trait is developed in connection with Roper's account of what Sylvester and Harding term "the only occasion when... could be accused of anything approaching Machiavellian duplicity." More and the King were becoming more and more intimate, and as we have seen, Henry often appeared as an unannounced guest at Chelsea to walk in the gardens with More; furthermore, as their friendship continued to ripen, More was frequently called upon to spend long hours with Henry and Katherine in their private chambers. Many of the clergy and nobility would have grasped at such an
opportunity for personal advancement; More did not. In fact (Roper reports) he purposefully made himself a bore to discourage the invitations. The ruse succeeded (Roper, pp. 11-12), giving him more time for those things to which he was more attached than public acclaim: his books, his garden, his family. Also, Roper presents a touching account of More displaying these qualities with filial devotion whenever he approached his father's courtroom. The vignette presents the already acclaimed public figure purposefully passing through Westminster Hall to his place in the Chancery by the court of the king's bench; if his father, one of the judges there, had sat before he came, he would go into the same court, and there reverently kneeling down in the sight of them all, duly ask his father's blessing. (Roper, p. 43)

Roper adds that, as More's reputation as a scholar waxed, he was often invited to engage in disputations with fellow-scholars from Oxford and Cambridge and that his humility was quite evident on those occasions (Roper, p. 21). This admirable humility and lack of worldly ambition, then, are consistently presented by Roper as typical of More. It is notable how distinctly this representation differs from those of Hall and the author of "The Image of Hypocrisy" and how the emphasis on lack of ambition coincides with the sketch of More appearing in Il Moro.
Other personal qualities emerge from Roper's complimentary treatment of More. First, as Hall had almost grudgingly admitted, More captured notice because of his wit and learning from the time of his serving in Morton's household to his death. To make this point, Roper employs accounts frequently used in other sources, but besides those he mentions several which are special to his *Life*. Those examples not original with Roper are the reference to Morton's comment on the witty and educated boy who will prove to be "a marvelous man" (Roper, p. 5) and the accounts of two of More's jests on the scaffold, both of which had appeared previously in *Hall's Chronicle*. Unlike Hall, however, Roper mentions these jests, not as a sign of some aberration, but apparently as evidence of how little death seemed to bother More. The jests which are not original with Roper are More's quips about seeing himself down from the scaffold and about the shortness of his neck (Roper, pp. 102-103), both of which contain essentially the same comic material found in Hall's summaries of them, but which are rendered here in a much more dramatic fashion, employing dialogue to enliven them as Roper was so adept at doing.

Of the allusions to More's propensity for jesting which appear in Roper, there are at least three which the son-in-law is the first known author to mention.
They are a generalized reference to More's previously mentioned plan to "disuse himself...from his former accustomed mirth" (Roper, p. 12) in order to dissuade Henry from monopolizing his time; his jesting with his wife about the quality of accommodations in his Tower cell, arguing that they were equal to those at Chelsea because the cell was "as nigh heaven as his own" (Roper, p. 83); and a third jest which has become popular with More partisans since first mentioned by Roper. That jest I shall call the pew scene, for want of more appropriate phraseology. Again, Roper speaks best for himself:

> And whereas upon the holidays during his high Chancellorship, one of his gentlemen, when service at the church was done, ordinarily used to come to my lady his wife's pew, and said /unto her/, 'Madame, my lord is gone,' the next holiday after the surrender of his office and departure of his gentlemen, he came unto my lady his wife's pew himself, and making a low curtsy, said unto her, 'Madame, my lord is gone.'

(Roper, p. 55)

Hall, at least, did not approve of such light-heartedness, certainly not for the Lord Chancellor of England, but More appears to have felt strongly that--especially to the layman--humor was an important tool of communication, even of the weightiest thoughts. On that point he wrote:

> They reprove that I bring in among the most earnest matters, fancies
and sports, and merry tales.  
For as Horace saith, a man may
sometimes say full truth in game. 
And one that is but a layman as
I am, it may better happily become
him merrily to tell his mind, than
seriously and solemnly to preach. 
(Apology, p. 194)

This boyish, even puckish cheerfulness, contrasting as it did with his full religious life, generated many tales about More's love of horse-play. Although, as Reynolds asserts, not all of the accounts can be accepted, they are nevertheless, "tributes to a characteristic that impressed his contemporaries and became part of his legend." It was, after all, Erasmus who in 1517 wrote the following concerning his wit:

His countenance answers to his character, having an expression of kind and friendly cheerfulness with a little air of raillery. To speak candidly, it is a face more expressive of pleasantry than of gravity or dignity, though very far removed from folly or buffoonery.  

...  
From boyhood he was always so pleased with a joke, that it might seem that jesting was the main object of his life; but with all that, he did not go so far as buffoonery, nor had ever any inclination of bitterness.  

...  
If a thing was facetiously said, even though it was aimed at himself, he was charmed with it, so much did he enjoy any witticism that had a flavor of subtlety or genius.  

(Erasmus, pp. 389-391)

More's great intellect and worldly wisdom are, of course, qualities admired even by some of his most
adamant detractors like Edward Hall; consequently Roper does devote considerable effort to laudation of those traits. In fact, he does so initially in the preface of the Life where he describes More's intellect as "angelical" and suggests that the world shall never again have a man of such learning as his father-in-law (Roper, p. 3). Again, in the previously-cited passage detailing Cardinal Morton's often-quoted assessment of the boy More (Roper, p. 5), Roper uses the word wit in the archaic manner to celebrate More's learning. In fact, it seems valid to conclude that Roper uses these earlier references to More's wit and learning to suggest that these qualities enabled More to rise so quickly in the civil hierarchy of England. Just to mention a few examples, he ascribes More's initial appointment as Under-sheriff of London to his magnificent knowledge of the law, and he also maintains that, due to his learning, there were hardly any matters "of importance in controversy wherein he was not with the one part of counsel" (Roper, pp. 8-9). As evidence, Roper cites the case of the Pope's great ship, a commercial vessel which had been seized for forfeiture by the King's officers. More was engaged as counsel for the Pope's party and so eloquently and learnedly pleaded his case before the Star Chamber that "for no entreaty would the king from thenceforth be induced any longer to forbear his service" (Roper,
Also, the matter of his wisdom and learning is brought up in the previously-cited passage concerning More's disputation with the scholars of both universities, and is also mentioned as Henry's reason for often charging him to deliver addresses in the name of the kingdom (Roper, pp. 21-22). Once these references to his learning appear, it is not again until the closing passage of the Life that Roper refers to that quality; he does so in the section regarding Emperor Charles's response to the news of More's execution and presents Charles paying tribute to More's wisdom (Roper, p. 103).

There are so many references to More's charity and self-sacrifice that limitations of space do not permit mention of all of them. The fact is that the evidence of his charity to the poor already quoted above from Erasmus' epistolary biography is supported regularly in the Life by examples of his deeds; his self-sacrifice, although alluded to frequently, is perhaps best represented by the beautifully symbolic wicker gate scene. Sylvester and Harding have already written of the importance of that scene, but since it is brief, it is perhaps best to present it in full here. The scene occurs as More is leaving to appear before the commission at Lambeth Palace:

And whereas he evermore used before,
at his departure from his wife and children, whom he tenderly loved, to have them bring him to his boat, and there to kiss them all, and bid them farewell, then would he suffer none of them forth of the gate to follow him, but pulled the wicker after him, and shut them all from him; and with a heavy heart, as by his countenance it appeared, with me and our four servants there took he his boat towards Lambeth. Wherein sitting still sadly a while, at the last he suddenly rounded me in the ear, and said: 'Son Roper, I thank our Lord the field is won.'

(Roper, pp. 72-73)

As the editors of Two Early Lives have explained, the scene is highly suggestive of More's shutting himself off from the world of Chelsea which he dearly loved—the world of his books, his pets, his gardens, his friends, and his family. But more to the issue at hand, by closing the wicker gate, More is divorcing his family (with the notable exception of Meg) from his problems and, in a magnificent act of self-sacrifice, is taking upon himself the burden of his difficulties with Henry.

Instead of being a traditional hero, Roper's More is simply articulated as a most honorable and lovable man with a genius for friendship, and his Chelsea home is given as the intellectual center for family and friends—Colet, Fisher, the Ropers, the Clements, the Heywoods, the Rastells. Roper does not draw More as a tragic hero as Charles Brady did centuries later in Stage of Fools; certainly he is not a larger than life hero as Shakes-
peare's are, but heroic in a different sense. He is not cut from the same pattern as great heroes—he loves life; loves his family, especially his children; loves learning, especially that which was to be gleaned from great literature. Instead of being heroic in the ordinary sense, he is only stubbornly ethical and self-sacrificing in the truest sense. And this wicker gate scene, already mentioned as evidence of Roper's literary adeptness by Sylvester and Harding, because of its domesticity and its pure humanity, poignantly fits into the Life of Sir Thomas More, Knight.

Finally, the matter of More's gift of prophecy must be considered. Hagiography of the sixteenth century frequently dwelt upon this trait, for popular religious belief maintained that it was one of the most irrefutable signs of sainthood. Surely, as Chambers has noted, More's foresight was quite remarkable and adequate to gain him the name of prophet, but perhaps the twentieth century feels more comfortable around what has been called More's "realism"; prophets are a bit more than a technological age can readily accept. Furthermore, a man like Roper's More, who lived so insistently by the dictates of his conscience, is probably infinitely easier to accept if the former quality is tempered by a firm grasp of reality.

Whatever the most suitable terminology, however, More's ability to anticipate the future is a quality
established by Roper's *Life*, for it is suggested on at least four occasions. Three of these occasions show More realistically assessing Henry, and the fourth prophetically anticipating the whole Reformation and its attendant religious upheavals; for the latter, Roper quotes More during a private conversation:

'I pray god that some of us, as high as we seem to sit upon the mountains, treading heretics under our feet like ants, live not the day that we gladly would wish to be at league and composition with them, to let them have their churches quietly to themselves, so that they would be content to let us have ours quietly to ourselves.'

(Roper, p. 35)

But More's statements regarding Henry are perhaps even more prophetic (or realistic), for they suggest that More never did underestimate him. For example, on one occasion shortly after More's being named Lord Chancellor, Roper reports having congratulated him for being in Henry's good favor, but has More respond (in the passage previously quoted in this chapter) that he has "no cause to be proud thereof, for if my head *could* win him a castle in France, ...it should not fail to go" (Roper, p. 21); it did go, not for a castle in France, but for the lack of support of another conquest.

The last two prophetic statements in the *Life* More makes following his resignation from his post as Chancellor of England. The first is directed to Cromwell,
who had come to More at Chelsea with a message from Henry:

    If you will follow my poor advice you shall, in your counsel giving unto his grace, ever tell him what he ought to do, but never what he is able to do. So shall you show yourself a true faithful servant and a right worthy counselor. For if a Lion knew his own strength, hard were it for any man to rule him.

(Roper, pp. 56-57)

This statement and that which More supposedly made to Norfolk shortly before appearing before the examiners at Lambeth Palace (Roper, p. 72) suggest a prophetic vision, it is true, for More is right on both counts: Cromwell and Norfolk both fail to "rule" Henry and suffer his ire. But Roper's emphasis on More's prophetic vision should not be taken as indicative that Roper is writing hagiography. In fact, Hippolyte Delehaye, Bollandist, excludes Roper's Life from hagiography with part of the definition of the term hagiographers which appears in his Legends of the Saints:

Under the term 'hagiographers,' we do not mean to include the whole class of writers who...simply recorded what they saw with their own eyes and touched with their own hands....To be strictly hagiographical the document must be of a religious character and aim at edification. The term then must be confined to writings inspired by religious devotion to the saints and intended to increase that devotion.

Instead of meeting these last qualifications, Roper meets the former and presents More's saintliness as essentially static. As Sylvester and Harding have observed,
it is More's humanity which he emphasizes and develops, for despite some care in mentioning More's self-flagellation and his secretly wearing a hair shirt against his skin, it is the man we see and not the saint.\textsuperscript{73}

In fact, instead of writing a hagiographic document, Roper is apparently very consciously producing a literary work which "clearly though indirectly contrasts the... willfulness and inconsistency of Henry with the honorable and consistent integrity of his Lord Chancellor."\textsuperscript{74} This the eloquent little biography accomplishes primarily through the verbal construct of the previously-mentioned theme of conscience and also through the presentation of his other laudible qualities: his humility and lack of worldly ambition, his wit and learning, his charity and self-sacrifice, and his gift of prophecy.

The influence of Roper's \textit{Life of Sir Thomas More}, Knight cannot be easily ignored. Although it is true that the work was not published until the seventeenth century, its impact since publication has been tremendous, and this point will be developed as this study progresses. As far as the sixteenth century is concerned, Paul Murray Kendall has asserted that there is no doubt that the \textit{Life} was widely known in manuscript,\textsuperscript{75} and this was especially true in recusant circles. Certainly there was no shortage of manuscript versions for Hitchcock to use to collate a text for her EETS edition; she employed
at least thirteen different ones, many of them dating back to the sixteenth century.

After Roper's Life came the first formal biography of Sir Thomas More, Nicholas Harpsfield's The Life and Death of Sir Thomas More, Knight (c. 1557). Although Harpsfield is best known as a biographer of More; nevertheless he was a man of parts in his own time. He was something of a scholar: after completing studies at Winchester school he joined his brother in 1535 at New College, Oxford, the college which was later to gain a reputation as a stronghold of Romish tendencies. Within two years Nicholas was made a perpetual fellow of New College, and nine years later he earned the Bachelor of Canon Law and received Holy Orders. Apparently, the Harpsfields suffered little persecution under Henry, but decided to flee to the Low Countries during the reign of Edward VI and there joined other English recusants, especially the remnants of the More circle--the families of John Clement, William Rastell, and John Harris. With them the Harpsfields kept the More legend alive while continuing to study his writings and cherish his memory.

When Mary ascended the throne in 1553, however, Harpsfield returned to England to continue his studies at Oxford and completed the D.C.L. in 1554; afterwards, Reginald Cardinal Pole, Cardinal Legate of England, depended on him as a member of The Commission for the
Suppression of Heresy, a position in which he served with dedication and impressive fairness, considering contemporary attitudes toward justice. Again, when Elizabeth inherited the throne, Nicholas faced danger, for he had gained some reputation, not only as a scholar, or a suppresser of heresy, but also as one of the "mainstays of the Catholic restoration under Mary." When he and his brother refused to subscribe to the Queen's Injunctions, they were sentenced to the fleet, where they both served twelve years imprisonment to the detriment of their health. Finally, they were both released on bail, but Nicholas never fully recovered from his imprisonment and died on December 18, 1575.  

As A. C. Southern has noted in Elizabethan Recusant Prose, controversy was the theme of early recusant writing, and it is probably as part of this trend, due to a sense of loyalty to the memory of Thomas More, and certainly too because he was asked to by Roper, that Harpsfield wrote his Life. Nevertheless, whatever his reasons, Harpsfield's biography is generally considered the first formal English biography and possibly the most accurate of the Tudor and Elizabethan biographies. This accuracy was possible primarily because Harpsfield used Roper's Life, More's letters and papers, Erasmus' letters, Hall's Chronicle, and other sources while writing under the sponsorship of the Roper family.
Although Harpsfield does make some contributions of his own, he functions as a more traditional biographer, culling the More papers loaned him by Roper and Rastell, employing Erasmus' letters, using contemporary accounts of More's life and trial, and ordering the end product so carefully that Chambers wrote that it "has a finished design and a power of arranging material which is noteworthy." As a consequence of his dependency on these sources, however, Harpsfield's *Life* adds little to the compendium of More traditions. There are some exceptions to this generalization, however, and they will be discussed later. Furthermore, not only is the major portion of his work not original, but approximately two-thirds of his material comes from two primary sources: Roper's *Life* and More's *Works*; he employed other sources such as Hall and Erasmus, but it is especially significant that, of the approximately 340 paragraph-sections of the biography, Roper's *Life* is the source for at least 150. It is not accidental, therefore, that the thematic pattern of conscience appears in Harpsfield also (the key term appears nearly forty times), and in most of its occurrences, the passage in question depends on Roper, the *Works* of More, or on the *Paris Newsletter*, which itself appears to have borrowed heavily from Roper. Like Roper, Harpsfield also makes much of More's other admirable qualities: his honesty, charity, lack of worldly...
ambition, wit and learning, and also his gift of foresight.

Harpsfield differs from Roper in some ways, however. First he corrects many of Roper's errors and preserves few of them; but he also orders his materials chronologically, whereas Roper does not maintain strict chronological sequence. Furthermore, although Roper does emphasize More's lack of worldly ambition, Harpsfield does so to an even greater extent. There are at least ten references in Harpsfield's Life to More's lack of aspiration for worldly advancement, and these appear throughout the many paragraphs of the Life, especially in connection with More's long tenure in public service. For example, Harpsfield claims that More disliked and did not seek his ambassadorships of 1515 and 1517 and when Henry offered him a sizable pension after completing the second mission, More diplomatically refused, to avoid being recalled to ambassadorial service. Also, this Life suggests that More intended to refuse the chancellorship, but eventually accepted only out of patriotism. But the dominant assertion is that More "neither hunted after praise and vainglory nor any vile and filthy gains or worldly commodity" and that, in twenty years of service to Henry, "never craved of...anything for himself" (Harpsfield, pp. 20-21; 22; 50-51; 109).

Other differences between Roper and Harpsfield are Harpsfield's considerable treatment of More's writing,
the members of his family, and his personal appearance, the last of which he borrowed from the previously-cited letter of Erasmus to Ulrich von Hutton. But these treatments do not begin to delve into characterization of More or offer anything new beyond characterizations developed by previous sources; consequently, they contribute comparatively little to the More legend except to color him more the devoted family man than Roper had previously done. On the other hand, there are other differences between Roper and Harpsfield which are more significant because they are so striking or because they represent the foundation for parts of the More legend which survive to the present century.

The first is the suggestion made by Harpsfield but not even implied by Roper that Wolsey feared More. Harpsfield suggests that this distrust dated back to Wolsey's attempt to secure additional dowry for Henry VII's daughter and to this attempt's being thwarted by the "beardless boy" More. Furthermore, he assigns Wolsey's ambition and envy as the causes for this fear, and he seems to beg a comparison between the arrogant, ambitious cardinal--

albeit he were adorned with many goodly graces and qualities, yet was he of so outrageous, aspiring, ambitious nature, and so fed with vainglory and with the hearing of his own praise, and by the excess thereof fallen... into a certain pleasant frenzy, that
the enormous fault overwhelmed, defaced and destroyed the true commendation of all his good properties--

(Harpsfield, p. 34)

and the humble More--

He had no list to grow greatly upward in the world, nor neither would labor for office of authority.

(Harpsfield, p. 95)

A second topic which Roper did not broach, Harpsfield introduces: that is the son-in-law's lapse into heresy. Through his treatment of this matter, Harpsfield dramatically represents More's faith and devotion to prayer. Apparently the issue had surfaced when the young Roper was already wed to Meg and a resident in More's household at Chelsea. According to Harpsfield, Roper had fallen into heresy by reading some of Luther's tracts and the so-called "Lutheran" Bible. He was, however, not happy to practice his faith privately, but so desired to further Lutheranism by zealous preaching that he "longed...to be pulpited...to...satisfy his mad affection." So fully was Roper drawn to the new creed by a scruple of his own conscience that he readily accepted the doctrine of salvation by faith and attacked the validity of the papacy and the sacraments. But what is most interesting is Harpsfield's assertion that at this point in his life, Roper "abhorred" More, despite the fact that Sir Thomas "was a man of...mildness and notable patience" (Harpsfield,
Next, Harpsfield presents a scene pregnant with drama. Occurring in More's gardens of Chelsea, it pictures More impatiently approaching his beloved Meg to complain of Roper's Lutheran intransigence:

'I have reasoned and argued with him in those points of religion, and still given to him my poor fatherly counsel, but I perceive none of all this able to call him home; and therefore, Meg, I will no longer argue nor dispute with him, but will clean give him over, and get me another while to God and pray for him.'

From that youthful vigor, the man whom Edward Hall had described as a great persecutor of heretics retreats to pray for his adversary, and the prayer is eventually efficacious, for Roper perceives "his own ignorance, oversight, malice and folly, and turn/\ldots again to the Catholic faith, wherein...he has hitherto continued" (Harpsfield, p. 88).

Besides the former, Harpsfield adds to the More legacy two comparisons of his subject with past heroes. In the first, he recalls a great English saint--himself faced with the same triple conflict of church, state, and conscience--St. Thomas of Canterbury (on whose eve Thomas More wished to die) and in the second terms More the "noble, new, Christian Socrates" (Harpsfield, pp. 199, 213-216).

What was said years ago about Stapleton's Latin
Life of More can also be said of Harpsfield's Life; the object of the work "was not to write a history, but rather a devotional work for the edification of his readers"; thus Harpsfield makes a particular use of his sources, borrowing from them extensively and often borrowing verbatim, but most frequently extending his didactic observations beyond the original source in order to comment on the significance of that which he is reporting. Although many examples of this approach are available, the often-mentioned parish clerk scene between More and Norfolk will suffice as an example. Note the similarities in the Roper and Harpsfield treatments of the basic narrative:

**ROPER**

This Duke, coming on a time to Chelsea to dine with him, fortuned to find him at the Church, singing in the choir, with a surplice on his back; to whom after service, as they went homeward together, arm in arm, the Duke said:

'God body, God body, my Lord Chancellor, a parish clerk, a parish clerk! You dishonor the king and his office.'

'Nay,' quoth Sir Thomas More, smiling upon the Duke, 'Your grace may not think

**HARPSFIELD**

He used, yea, being Lord Chancellor, to sit and sing in the choir with a surplice on his back. And when the Duke of Norfolk, coming at a time to Chelsea to dine with him, fortuned to find him in his attire and trade, going homeward after service, arm in arm with him, said after this fashion: 'God body, God body, my Lord Chancellor, a parish clerk, a parish clerk! you dishonor the king
that the king, your master and mine, will with me, for serving of God, his master, be offended, or thereby count his office dishonored.'

(Roper, p. 51)

Nay,' quoth Sir Thomas More, smiling upon the duke, 'your grace may not think that the king, your master and mine, will with me, for serving of God his master, be offended, or thereby account his office dishonored.'

(Harpsfield, p. 64)

Roper, the literary artist need add nothing beyond the simple narrative and allows the scene to speak for itself; however Harpsfield, the hagiographer, is compelled to comment:

Wherein Sir Thomas More did very godly and devoutly, and spoke truly and wisely. What would the Duke have said, if he had seen that mighty and noble Emperor, Charles the Great, playing the very same part; or King David, long before, hopping and dancing naked before the arks?

(Harpsfield, pp. 64-65)

Lest there be any question about the hagiographic nature of Harpsfield's efforts, one should note that the conclusion of his *Life* attempts to establish that More died a martyr for his faith, in fact refers to him as the "protomartyr for all the laity" (Harpsfield, p. 213), then compares him to Sts. Thomas of Dover and Thomas of Canterbury, concluding that, whereas St. Thomas of Canterbury died because he refused to consent to limitation of the Pope's authority, Sir Thomas More died
for the Pope's supremacy. There is, Harpsfield asserts, in Sir Thomas More

a deeper cause of martyrdom than in the other two. But yet Sir Thomas More's head had not so high a place upon the pole as had his blessed soul among the celestial holy martyrs in heaven.

(Harpsfield, pp. 215-217)

Critical opinion generally classifies this Life as hagiography. Unlike Roper, who evidence does not suggest intended his Life for publication, Harpsfield did his, and it is as clearly a manifesto as Foxe's Book of Martyrs was to be later. It was a manifesto on More's rigid consistency of principle written by an author who saw no inconsistency when the writer of Utopia died on behalf of Christian unity. More's consistency and fairness, we may remember, had been attacked from many quarters--Hall, the anonymous author of "The Image of Hypocrisy," and others--and his consistency was to continue being slighted and that theme echoed in the twentieth century by authors as influential as Sidney Lee. This despite the fact that in More's mind the chief issue (as this study has already asserted) was the danger to the state caused by heretical variance from the state religion. In the island of Utopia as in England, More had consistently recommended punishment of heretics who inflamed the people to sedition or who employed violence in the advocacy of doctrine. And the
events in Europe like the rise of Luther, the sack of Rome, and the Peasants' War had only intensified opposition to those who might destroy the unity of church and state for the purpose of new doctrine.  

In connection with this, the judicious reader conversant with the Utopia should, upon examining Harpsfield's Life, realize the philosophical danger outlined recently by a participant at the 1970 Thomas More Symposium; that danger, Professor Shoeck noted, was in "extracting little items from Utopia in order to illustrate More's life and beliefs," for Utopia "is a fiction and the details of life in Utopian society should be analyzed in their artistic context," not as documents expository of personal belief. Besides, Abbé Marc'hadour, another participant, explained, "More believed not that conscience was some given, unalienable right...; rather it was the duty of each man to form his own conscience rightly." Such rebels as Roper, Tyndale, and Barnes might believe that they were following their own consciences, but, since their beliefs did not meld with the will of the general realm of Christendom, and since the proponents were rebels, their beliefs were, ipso facto, maliciously held, for they seditiously endangered the tranquility of the state. Corporal punishment for such heretical thought More believed in implicitly; he had a medieval belief in the efficacy of corporal
punishment; for that matter, the Utopians used it on such occasions also. Despite the allegations of More's detractors concerning inconsistency, Harpsfield sees none in his hero's life and asserts that More "lived and died also afterward...most innocently and most honorably" (Harpsfield, p. 63).

The Thomas More presented by Nicholas Harpsfield, consequently, is more a saintly than a human figure, but a man nevertheless possessing qualities consistent with those attributed to him by earlier writers. He is an honest man who possesses great learning and a propensity toward witty observations of himself and his situation. He is charitable, not a grasping, acquisitive creature, and he is self-sacrificing, humble and devout. His preeminent quality, however, is strong conscience, coupled with a humble lack of worldly ambition, and in this respect he is the same person portrayed by Roper. These traits enabled More, Harpsfield concludes, to achieve "such an excellent state of worthiness, fame and glory as never did (especially laymen) in England before, and much doubt is there whether any man shall hereafter" (Harpsfield, p. 11).

Chronologically, the next literary treatment of Thomas More appeared in John Foxe's Book of Martyrs, the Reformation martyrrology which became nearly as popular for Protestant readers as the Bible. First
John Foxe was born in 1517 in Boston, Lincolnshire. Despite the considerable efforts of J. F. Mozley in the recently-published biographical and critical work entitled *John Foxe and His Book*, little is known of Foxe's childhood. We first find him mentioned in documents of Magdalen College, Oxford, dated 1534. There he proceeded in the arts course and earned his bachelor's degree in 1537. Having established something of a reputation as a scholar, he received the expected reward of election as a fellow of Magdalen in 1539. While a fellow, he turned to the study of divinity and Reformation controversy, and probably as a consequence of these studies, he became a Protestant and began to openly espouse Lutheran principles. For this he was eventually condemned and pressured--but not forced--into resigning. His resignation of the fellowship represented protest against the religious statutes and rules of celibacy of the college. Subsequently, Foxe lived in extreme poverty in London, then from 1548 to 1553 he served as a tutor to the powerful Howard family and tried teaching, but he apparently accomplished little in these
times other than writing some minor religious tracts and plays. By 1554, Foxe could anticipate the ensuing Marian persecutions, and it is probably in March of that year that he left England for Europe, where he began writing his Book of Martyrs. In 1559 he returned to England, since Elizabeth had ascended the throne, and again took refuge with his former pupil, who was now the Duke of Norfolk. In 1560 he was ordained a priest and from 1572 to 1573 enjoyed a prebend of Durham.

The Book of Martyrs nearly had its popularity pre-ordained, and in Foxe's own lifetime it was so widely read that four editions appeared. Previously, Protestants had supported their position primarily with the Bible, for they had lacked the centuries of tradition or "the majestic background of history" to strengthen their cause, but with his Book, Protestantism had a historical background and a historical justification. Their movement, he told them, was as old as the church itself, with rolls of saints as impressive as the Catholic Calendar of Saints. Their struggle had always been that of a few enlightened minds against the church's attempt to hide the real teachings of Christ from the people, and the early Christians had been persecuted just as modern Christians were.94

Foxe was not alone; most sixteenth century historians were dominated by a desire to uphold or justify religion,
law, or country, and he obviously intended his book to be a religious history of the English martyrs from the beginnings through the Marian persecutions. In fact, the 1570 edition, which Foxe himself revised and published, bore the title *The Ecclesiastical History*. And previously (in the preface of the 1563 edition) Foxe had already made it clear that he considered himself a historian who would instruct "the unlearned sort, so miserably abused, and all for ignorance of history, not knowing the course of times and true descent of the church." 

It is to be expected, then, that a work which begins with such didactic intentions will not develop as a history in the modern sense of that term. Furthermore, Foxe worked in Germany, far removed from the scene of the persecutions and from any opportunity personally to check his sources for accuracy. Understandably, his narrative suffers inaccuracies, for, of necessity, he depended for specifics on printed books for the Henrician martyrs and on written documents sent from England for the Marian martyrs. Anti-Foxe polemicists have not failed to seize on these errors; they have also accused Foxe of being biased, haphazardly copying documents, employing unnecessarily offensive language, confusing dates, plagiarising, exaggerating the importance of trivial incidents, and including as martyrs individuals condemned
for secular crimes. This criticism is not totally unfair; Foxe was careless and sometimes juggled facts and was slapdash enough to misrepresent the date of the important Six Articles, but considering the conditions under which he wrote, it is surprising that more inaccuracies did not intrude. As for the charge of bias and offensive language, it cannot stand against the knowledge that such niceties of language as are required of controversialists today were then apparently irrelevant to writers of religious controversy, even Sir Thomas More.98 Furthermore, Foxe was himself quite aware of the shortcomings of his work, for he wrote:

I grant and confess my fault; such if my vice, I cannot sit all the day...fining and mincing my letters and combing my head, and smoothing myself all the day at the glass of Cicero.99

Despite strong charges of slander and vicious bigotry which have issued especially from Catholics, such judgments can be disputed, for Foxe's poem Christus Triumphans (1556) was especially noteworthy as a forceful plea for religious tolerance and mercy for heretics and for Catholics, and Foxe himself does not seem to have relished the role of divisive propagandist; however, in the Book of Martyrs he had produced a work of gargantuan religious and political influence which was most effective in fostering fear and hatred of Roman Catholics through the Tudor era.
In recognition of the power of Foxe's words, Elizabeth and the ecclesiastical convocation of Canterbury ordered a copy placed in every cathedral church alongside the Book of Common Prayer and the Bishop's Bible.

Elizabethan Protestants defended Foxe's book against Catholic charges of specious documentation, hearsay, and anti-Catholic propaganda with their naive riposte that the book was gospel truth. More recently, specialists like J. P. Mozley have restored Foxe's reputation as an early historian--however fallible--who had made some efforts to sift fact from hysterical bigotry. In fact, Mozley has established that when Foxe knew that a source was inaccurate, he would invariably reject it.

The material dealing with Sir Thomas More in Foxe's Book of Martyrs falls into two categories--that borrowed practically verbatim from Hall's Chronicle and that which accuses More of being a cruel persecutor of alleged heretics. The latter material has been examined in detail by reputable scholars, most recently by R. W. Chambers, with the result being a patent dismissal of most of Foxe's charges of persecution; however, such charges are not easily forgotten. Froude and some few other writers have at some junctures uncritically parroted Foxe, and there are even languishing reflections of Foxe in the DNB section on More.

The gist of Foxe's charge is that More abused his
office to persecute four unfortunate reformers: Tewkesbury, Frith, Petit, and Bainham. But, as Chambers has shown, although the accusation is that More is supposed to have committed the atrocities as Chancellor, three of the cases did not occur during More's tenure in that office. The fourth case is chronologically tenable but rests on the same kind of unsupported gossip as the other three. In fact, in the case of More's alleged persecution of Frith, for example, Foxe was so inaccurate that he had Chancellor More arrest and torture Frith when the alleged victim was in fact away from England.

One specific illustration of Foxe's treatment of More as persecutor may suffice, then, to represent the tone in which the accusations were couched. Writing of a John Tewkesbury, leatherseller, Foxe claims that he was converted by reading Tyndale's Testament and that in disputing points of divinity with the most learned men of the kingdom, he was so expert in his answers that they "were ashamed that a leatherseller should so dispute with them... and were not able to resist him" (Foxe, IV, p. 689). Then Foxe continues that the disputation dragged on for a week until Tewkesbury was eventually taken from the Lollard's Tower and sent to Chelsea to Thomas More.
to see whether...More could turn Him...There he lay in the porter's lodge, hand, foot, and head in the stocks, six days without release: then was he carried to Jesu's tree, in his privy garden, where he was whipped, and also twisted in his brows with small ropes, so that the blood started out of his eyes; and yet he would accuse no man. Then was he let loose in the house for a day, and his friends thought to have him at liberty on the morrow. After this, he was sent to be racked in the Tower, till he was almost lame, and there promised to recant at Paul's Cross.... He had scarcely been a month at home but he bewailed his fact and his abjuration, and was never quiet in mind and conscience, as is hereafter expressed.

(Foxe, IV, p. 689)

Such a tale exhibits Foxe's talent at a storyteller, and the drama of the unlettered leatherseller facing the learned divines is exemplary of the type which is found throughout the book. The problem, however, is that Foxe, writing years later, simply uncritically accepted a confused and exaggerated account of an actual happening. The individual taken to More's garden and flogged was not Tewkesbury, but a mentally deficient person who had been making disruptive attacks on women during the consecration of the mass,\(^\text{105}\)

and if he spied any woman kneeling at a form, if her head hung anything low in her meditations, then would he steal behind her, and, if he were not stopped, would labor to lift up all her clothes and cast them quite over her head.

(Apology, p. 89)
Tested by today's standard of treatment for mentally deranged people, More's action certainly does have the appearance of brutality, but given the knowledge and attitudes of his times, the punishment was mild; in fact, it was probably infinitely more desirable to imprisonment in any of the London "hospitals" for the insane.

The second group of references to More borrowed verbatim from Hall begins with the account of More's selection as Lord Chancellor (Foxe, IV, pp. 610-611). Therein Foxe, like Hall before him, describes More as "a man well learned in the tongues and also in the common law;...[Who] was a little too much given to mocking, more than became the person of Master More."

Finally, Foxe depends directly on Hall for most of his information regarding More's execution. In part, the material is verbatim from the Chronicle with the resultant sneer at More's playfulness of wit "so mingled... with taunting and mocking that it seemed to them that best knew him, that he thought nothing to be well spoken, except he had ministered some mock in the communication." And directly following that verbal swipe, Foxe concludes the story of More with the same examples of what he and Hall considered to be his untoward humor--the five scaffold jests (Foxe, V, p. 100). The clear distinction between the treatments of More by Hall and Foxe is that Foxe--not unexpectedly for a martyrrologist--
frequently moralizes upon More's supposed transgressions. For instance, when introducing the account of the trial and execution which he borrows directly from Hall, Foxe observes:

They that stain their hands with blood, seldom do bring their bodies dry to the grave; as commonly appeareth by the end of bloody tyrants, and especially such as be persecutors of Christ's poor members; in the number of whom.../was/ Sir Thomas More.

(Foxe, V, p. 99)

After one has examined such examples, it becomes clear that Foxe's treatment of More is partisan, but he wrote in an age of partisans. To them, the Reformation was war, and whatever weapons they might battle with, they used with little scruple--misstatement, gossip, violent expression. Foxe's fierceness is only a product of the \textit{zeitgeist} of the sixteenth century, for the powerful feelings of religious partisans like Foxe issued freely in the strength of the language which they employed. His book too is not perfect, nor did he claim perfection; in fact, a touching humility concerning his effort emerges from beneath the fashionable disclaimers which he appends to numerous printings.

One would find difficulty, I believe, in reading this book and not learning to respect John Foxe's effort. As Mozley has noted, his book not only enlivens for us the controversy of a time from which we are so far
removed, but it also reveals to us this man and his touching devotion to the Protestant martyrs, his championship of the suppressed and the poverty-stricken. Although his standards of exactness are not ours, the book was designed to serve an emotional need in a credulous age, and it filled that need. Unfortunately, his characterizations of More were less than objectively rendered, and the shadow of Foxe's influence has lingered through some few nineteenth century treatments of More and is even reflected in the DNB section on More.

In 1569 another popular chronicle was published, this one written by Richard Grafton, a printer who had arranged for the publication of the Coverdale Bible (1539) under Cromwell's patronage. Most notable, however, is the fact that Grafton had also published Hall's Chronicle in 1548 and 1550; it is not surprising, therefore, that Grafton's Chronicle: or History of England is so derivative of Hall's. And, although Grafton's publication is hardly as strident as Foxe's and is in fact more akin to Hall's in temper, as a man whose sympathies lay with the reformers, his purposes seem to have been similar to Foxe's, for "Thomas N." wrote in his dedication "To the Reader" prefaced to Grafton's book that the lessons to be learned from Grafton's "history" are manifold:

Kings may learn to depend, and
acknowledge his governance in
their protection: the nobility
may read the true honor of their
ancestors: the Ecclesiastical state
may learn to abhor traitorous
practices and indignities done
against kings by the Popish usurping
clergy.

Like so many chroniclers before and after him,
Grafton depends liberally on earlier sources. In fact,
he even lists them as "The authors that are alleged in
this History"; among them some of the more familiar names
are Caxton, Hall, Fabyan, John Rastell, and More. Despite
this impressive roster of sources, Grafton's Chronicle
is most derivative of Hall's Chronicle, particularly
for the More references. Grafton not only employs Hall's
language, but also delivers approximately the same
materials pertaining to More from his oration to the
visiting Emperor Charles to his election as Speaker of
the House, his double petition to Henry on the occasion
of that election, his appointment to the office of
Chancellor of England and subsequent resignation from
that office, his refusal to subscribe to the oath and
his five scaffold jests on the way to his execution
(Grafton, II, pp. 322, 335, 421, 441, 452, 454). For
this reason and also because he so often retains the
language and construction of the original passages,
one cannot claim that Grafton made any original
contributions to the More legends. He merely carried
on traditions concerning More already established by Hall years previously, but that is important, for the More traditions survived through the efforts, no matter how unimaginative, of individuals like Grafton.

After Grafton, another printer played an important role in the continuing trend of sixteenth century representations of Thomas More. He was William Rastell.

Rastell was born in 1508 in Coventry of a distinguished family with intimate ties to the Mores. His mother, Elizabeth, was Thomas More's sister, and his own sister Joan married John Heywood in approximately 1522. When William was yet an infant, the Rastells removed from Coventry to London, and it is at this time that he may have come under the influence of More; for when More moved out to Chelsea in 1524, Rastell's father also left for the suburbs and built a house, a stage for plays, and probably had his children educated in the More household.112

After having attended Oxford for a time beginning in 1525 but leaving the university without a degree, Rastell joined his father in the family printing business for approximately two years; then he established his own enterprise and, by 1529, published his uncle's Supplication. This first printing ushered in a long tenure of professional association between the younger Rastell and Thomas More, and it culminated in Rastell's famed printing of The
English Works of Sir Thomas More in 1557. Besides being renowned as a printer of More's works, Rastell was also utilized by the dramatist Heywood and by the Fabyan family for the printing of Fabyan's Chronicle. But this printing career ended as Thomas More's difficulties with Henry VIII were about to begin, for Rastell left printing, entered law, and was called to the bar in 1539. From then he rose rapidly in legal circles until, as Treasurer of Lincoln's Inn, he fled the country "without leave of the Governors" to settle in the recusant colony at Louvain, where he worked on his loyal project of collecting More's works. But fate was not kind to William Rastell, for although he returned from exile for a brief four years during Queen Mary's reign and during this tenure became Justice of the Queen's Bench, he had to flee again in the second year of Elizabeth's reign and died of a fever in Louvain. After this long and fruitful association with the Mores and their family connections, it is not surprising that William Rastell should feel compelled to write a biography of Thomas More.

The fact that Judge William Rastell had written a Life of More was seemingly common knowledge in Queen Elizabeth's time. Unfortunately, however, little of it survives except a few excerpts known as the Rastell Fragments, which are preserved in Manuscript Arundel 152, published for the first time as an appendix to the EETS.
edition of Harpsfield's Life of More. Compilation of sections from Rastell's Life of More was accomplished as part of a project centered in recusant circles in Belgium; the purpose was to produce a Life of Fisher, and to achieve this, Rastell and others carried on correspondence between the Low Countries and England, seeking information concerning Bishop Fisher, More's contemporary and fellow martyr. The exact date when Rastell completed his Life of More is uncertain; however, it can be set approximately in the early 1570's and probably prior to 1576.

As Hitchcock observes in her preface, "Rastell's Life of More," the loss of Judge Rastell's biography is regrettable, for even with the slim fragments remaining, it is apparent that the Life was scrupulously documented with names and dates and that the judge could tell a tale and construct dialogue as effectively as Roper. Furthermore, in complexity and size, this life must have been massive, for what was probably one of the end sections--that dealing with the imprisonment and execution of both More and Fisher--appears in Chapter 55 of Book 3.

The portions which survive in the Rastell Fragments, of course, deal primarily with the life and death of Bishop Fisher, but they do contain some references to More and some material which is new--not a great deal particularly germane to this study, unfortunately. Perhaps
the most dramatic piece of material is something which appears late in the compilation. In this piece, Rastell has just outlined Fisher's refusal to take the Oath of Supremacy, and then he presents a charge never previously mentioned in chronicles or biographies still extant:

Anne Boleyn made the king a great banquet at Haneworth, twelve miles from London, and allured there the king with her dalliance and pastime to grant unto her this request, to put the bishop and Sir Thomas More to death.\textsuperscript{117}

But since the accusation appears to be supported by few early sources, we must be cautious about giving credence to the charge, especially since the recusants had apparently chosen Anne as the special target of their hatred. In other words, Rastell may have been directing against Anne the same tactic that Foxe so often employed against the recusants.

The other more significant references to More together reinforce the characterizations of him presented by Roper and Harpsfield, but by sometimes presenting new materials in support of already long standing traditions.

The first significant reference claims that More had refused the office of Chancellor when Henry had first offered it to him; what is new in the twist provided by \textit{The Rastell Fragments} is that More's refusal makes Henry irate so that by exercising the sheer power of
his office, he forces More to accept, supposedly because he plans to get More to support him in the divorce. Rastell claims, however, that when More could not be convinced to patronize Henry's position in the "King's Great Matter," Henry "hated him for it" (Rastell, p. 222).

The second citation is perhaps even more meaningful when considered in connection with More's imprisonment and execution, for it shows More early in his chancellorship insisting on the sacredness of an oath, again at the peril of alienating the King. This account deserves to be quoted in full:

The Pope revoked the matter of the marriage to the Rota at Rome; and the king sent thither Doctor Bonner and Doctor Kerne, seeming as though they came not of the king's sending, and they to speak...as of their own authority, and so they certified the Pope that all the Bishops, clergy and noblemen in England were agreed to...this divorce. The Pope required a certificate hereof. The king labored for this certificate, and Sir Thomas More, Bishop Fisher and the Queen's council and other learned divines refused to set their names and seals unto it.

(Rastell, p. 223)

The cumulative effect of these few references to More in the Fragments is a portrayal of a man devoid of worldly ambition and insistent on purity of conscience even to the peril of his own safety--nothing new in the continuing tradition of literary treatments of Sir Thomas More. These fragments, however, do continue More traditions already
established by Roper and Harpsfield. The new legends inaugurated by Rastell, though intriguing, are not particularly relevant to this study of character portrayals of More but, like the supposed villainousness of Anne Boleyn in the deaths of More and Fisher, do make for dramatic stories.

Regret that Rastell's full Life of More did not survive is not unique to Elsie Vaughan Hitchcock or to this study. Others, among them A. W. Reed and R. W. Chambers, have expressed similar views, particularly since Reed's careful research into the documents of the Public Record Office has established so pointedly that Rastell was such a dependable and trustworthy biographer. Furthermore, Rastell was in London at the time of the executions of Fisher and More, and the detailed material which he gives regarding the trial and commissioners is borne out to the letter by state papers; hence this only challenges the More student to imagine what materials might be available had this Life survived. Chambers, in fact, feels that "its combination of elaborate research and intimate personal knowledge...would seem to have reached a standard to which neither Roper nor Harpsfield.../attained/."\(^{119}\)

Roughly contemporary with and closely dependent upon the Rastell Fragments was the Life of Fisher (c. 1576), now extant in numerous manuscripts and sometimes ascribed to Richard Hall.\(^{120}\) But in the "Hall" Life of Fisher we
have a mixture of first-hand information from the Rastell Fragments, second-hand information of a Cambridge correspondent whose letters are still preserved in MS. Arundel 152, and other materials which can only accurately be described as folklore.¹²¹

Not unexpectedly for a biography of another great humanist, controversialist, and martyr for his faith, this work does not contain extensive More materials. In fact, there are only three items in the Life of Fisher which deserve our attention. Of these, only one appears to be original, and it does not delve into characterization, but only introduces a tale that, when More and Fisher were imprisoned contemporaneously, both were tricked into believing that their fellow recusant had relented and signed the oath subscribing to the Act of Succession ("Hall," pp. 106-107). Other than that reference, the two additional ones ("Hall," pp. 102 and 128-129) continue the longstanding tradition of More's great wisdom and learning. He is here described as a "worthy man, as he was for his singular wit far surpassing any that ever yet hath been heard or read of in this Realm, and rarely elsewhere, so for learning it was very hard to find a layman of that time his like" ("Hall," p. 102). What is important about the Life of Fisher, however, is that in small measure, it contributed to the survival of some of the More traditions.
In 1577, the year following that in which the Rastell Fragments were last being compiled for the projected Life of Fisher, the first volume of Raphael Holinshed's Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland was printed;\textsuperscript{122} the enlarged second edition of 1587—the edition which Shakespeare and other writers of history plays appear to have used—became the first relatively complete history of England of an authoritative nature.\textsuperscript{123} But this edition was not published until approximately seven years after Holinshed's death, and though it utilized most of the work which the chronicler had completed up to his death, a syndicate consisting of John Hooker, Francis Thynne, Abraham Fleming, and John Stow expanded the treatment of matters covered insufficiently in the earlier edition; in fact, they did so with such liberality that the Privy Council ordered extensive excision of passages offensive to the government.\textsuperscript{124}

Little is known of the Raphael Holinshed who became one of the premier chroniclers of the sixteenth century. His parentage, his education, his associations—these are all difficult to establish with certainty. Sir Sidney Lee claims that he was probably the same Holinshed who matriculated Christ's College in 1544 and cites Wood as the source for information that Holinshed was a clergyman. It is more certain that he moved to London in Elizabeth's reign and began his writing career as a translator for

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Reginald Wolfe, the court printer.

Wolfe had originally envisioned a "universal cosmography of the whole world" beginning with the flood and ending with the reign of Elizabeth, but when he died in 1573, the printers who continued his project settled for a more reasonable goal: a history of England, Scotland, and Ireland. In their service Holinshed continued laboring on the projects, borrowing freely from Hall's Chronicle, Leland's notes, and a manuscript history by Edmund Campion.

No doubt Holinshed was an originator in a field which few authors had dared enter, but Fussner quite correctly observes that in style and manner he lacked originality. Fussner's further charge that he "copies Hall's prejudices" without comprehending Hall's great theme of union is a point well-taken, but it is too sweeping a generalization regarding rehearsal of Hall's bias. There is no question but that Holinshed did parrot some of Hall's prejudices, and this is easily understood when one realizes how closely he followed the Hall accounts. But one must not ignore the danger still implicit then in representing any pro-More or Catholic sentiment, even as late as the reign of Queen Elizabeth. Although one might cite many examples of Holinshed's tendency to duplicate the Hall Chronicle's Protestant bias, the segment reporting More's execution is representative both of that bias and of
Holinhed's practice of following Hall so closely.Both versions deserve examination in order to consider the above points:

**HALL**

Also the vi
day of July was
Sir Thomas More
beheaded for the
like treason before
rehearsed, which as
you have heard was
for the denying of
the king's majesty's
supremacy. This man
was also computed
learned, and as you
have heard before he
was Lord Chancellor
of England, and in
that time a great
persecutor of such as
detested the supremacy
of the bishop of Rome,
which he himself so
highly favored that he
stood to it till he
was brought to the
scaffold on Tower
Hill where on a
block his head was
stricken from his
shoulders and had no
more harm. I cannot
tell whether I should
call him a foolish
wiseman, or a wise
foolish-man, for un-
doubtedly he beside
his learning, had a
great wit, but it was
so mingled with
taunting and mocking,
that it seemed to them
that best knew him, that
he thought nothing to
be well spoken except
he had ministered some

**HOLINSHED**

On the sixth of
July was Sir Thomas
More beheaded for...
denying the king to
be supreme head.
This man was both
learned and wise,
and given much to
a certain pleasure
in merry taunts and
jesting in most of
his communication,
which manner he
forgot not at the
very hour of his
death.

I cannot tell
(saith Master Hall)
whether I should
call him a foolish-
wiseman or a wise
foolish man, for un-
doubtedly he beside
his learning, had
a great wit, but
it was so mingled
with taunting and
mocking that it
seemed to them
that best knew
him that he
thought nothing
to be well spoken
except he had
ministered some mock
in the communication.

(Holinshed, III,
p. 793)
In the main, Holinshed's version does not differ significantly from Hall's, certainly not as far as the reporting of events and expression of anti-More bias is concerned. There is, however, one noteworthy omission in Holinshed: the deletion of the reference to More as "a great persecutor of such as detested and supremacy of the bishop of Rome." Unfortunately this apparent trend toward more sympathetic treatment of More does not continue unabated, for after Holinshed, like Hall before him, reports the five scaffold jests (Holinshed, III, pp. 793-794), he, like so many sixteenth century chroniclers who were not legitimately historians, employs moral judgement as a convenient substitute for a proper analysis of causation. 129 This he does in the portion of his chronicle closing the narrative of Sir Thomas More, and he carries the criticism of More much farther than had Hall:

\[
\text{God had in most bountiful sort poured his blessings upon this man, enduring him with eloquence, wisdom and knowledge: but the grace of God withdrawn from him, He had the right use of none. (Holinshed, III, p. 794)}
\]

Following that thrust is a somewhat deferential bow to More presented admittedly for didactic purposes, yet presented after all. Here Holinshed maintains that, just as in the lives of pagans there can be something to teach
Christians lessons of piety, so too in the life of this Papist is there a lesson which he will note to the rebuke of protestants, and that is that it is commendable for noblemen and gentlemen, and a great furtherance to the love of religion, to be devout and that Sir Thomas More is to be honored "for his zeal... but for his religion to be abhorred" (Holinshed, III, pp. 794-795). Then Holinshed exemplifies that zeal once in a brief account (previously reported by Roper and Harpsfield but not by Hall) of the occasion when the Duke of Norfolk traveled to More's household at Chelsea to consult him on government business and found the surpliced More singing in the church choir. The proud aristocrat Norfolk chided the Lord Chancellor of England for demeaning his position— to which More replied that he was not concerned, for when King Henry heard of the care with which he served God, he would commend him as a faithful servant (Holinshed, III, p. 795). After that passage, Holinshed— or is it the members of the syndicate working on the second edition?— closes the account of the life of More. There are two significant points to be observed concerning changes in this presentation from earlier works on More, but before examining those we should take note of the fact that Holinshed is like Foxe before him: they both depend heavily on Hall's Chronicle. Like Hall, Holinshed
diminished More's part in the Ill May Day upheaval. His account of those riots and More's place in the peaceful settlement follows Hall almost verbatim. The same is true of the report of More's election as Speaker of the House and the account of More's petition for freedom of speech for the Commons. Furthermore, his representation of Henry's choice of More for his Lord Chancellor, as well as the account of More's execution, when compared with Hall's, prove to be borrowed from this source with only minor alterations, particularly alterations for brevity (Holinshed, III, pp. 620-625, 682, 683, 793-795).

But the real significance of Holinshed's Chronicle is not its similarity to Hall's Chronicle, but its two significant points of difference from Hall's. First, the label which the anonymous author of "Image of Hypocrisy," Hall, and Foxe had previously assigned More, "the cruel persecutor of Protestants," has not been accepted by Holinshed, and, secondly, this presentation of More ends on a much more positive note than had any previous one written by Tudor partisans. Is this to be taken as a sign that the strong Protestant bias against More had begun to soften by this time? After all, More's Apology had by Holinshed's time been published for over one half century; furthermore, these writers, though certainly Tudor partisans, were also removed from those harsh times by roughly fifty years.
Thus with the capstone of Holinshed's Chronicles, end the sixteenth century chronicle treatments of Thomas More by Tudor partisans. That treatment has not been particularly kind to More; it has focused upon his activities which are (especially from a modern point of view) most difficult to defend: hatred and punishment of heretics. It has also dwelled on the point that More had gone against all the realm in his obstinate insistence on refusing the oath; and finally, it has claimed again and again that More produced many of his controversial writings in return for pay. Yet, emerging from behind this Protestant bias, is a rather consistent portrait of an intelligent witty statesman unmoved by the prospect of imminent death and a man totally dedicated to his principles, no matter how misdirected they might be.

The Catholic writers dwell on More's intelligence and wit too, but their presentations also go beyond those simple parameters to include detailed measurements of several features of More's character: his honesty, his lack of worldly ambition, his humility, and his great driving force of conscience. After all, it is for freedom of conscience as opposed to the state's demand for fealty that More died, and it is primarily this feature of his character and dedication which the Catholic partisans seek to memorialize. There is no question that, in terms of sheer numbers, the Catholic or recusant trend was the
stronger of the two, perhaps because their cause was more desperate than that of the supporters of Henrician policy. Regardless of the reason, they in fact maintained and venerated memories of Thomas More in their colonies abroad. And secondly, it is a well-established fact that, among the recusants, a great deal of emphasis was placed on writing and printing books as a viable method of fighting their holy war for the return of the Catholic faith to English soil.\footnote{131}

The trends represented by these movements can be seen as culminating in a two-fold manner. First, there is the near total demise for years to come of unsympathetic treatments of More. It appears that the softening of the typical Protestant bias may have been signaled by the accounts of Holinshed's Chronicles. And secondly, the pro-More stance of London legend and of Catholic partisans like Roper, Harpsfield, and Rastell culminates in the More biography by Ro. Ba. and the Elizabethan history play by Munday, The Book of Sir Thomas More. These two works, coming as they do at the end of the century of More's life, herald the kind of treatment More will receive from that point on, and for that reason they deserve examination in the next chapter.
NOTES TO CHAPTER I


5 Chambers, More, p. 266.


8 Roper, pp. 45-48; also, Chambers, More, p. 352.

9 See, especially Chambers More, pp. 274 ff.

10 Ibid., p. 275.

11 Ibid., p. 244.

12 Ibid., pp. 352-353.

14 Chambers, More, p. 211; Fussner, p. 261.


16 Chambers, More, p. 244.


18 Chambers, More, p. 148.

19 Repertory of the Court of Aldermen, III, fol. 143, as quoted in Ibid., p. 149.

20 Chambers, More, p. 150; see also Reynolds, More, pp. 128-129.

21 Repertory, as above.


25 Chambers, Place, p. 117.

26 Pollet, p. 150; Reynolds, Field, p. 184.


28 Place, p. 117.


33 Deakins, "Introduction," Il Moro, pp. ix, xii-xv.

34 Deakins, pp. ix, xii-xiii.


37 Hitchcock, pp. xxxvi-xxxvii, xlv, n. 4; Sylvester and Harding, pp. xiv-xv.

38 Hitchcock, pp. xlv-xlv, xlvii.


42 "Continuity"; see especially pp. clxi-clxiii.


46 Sylvester and Harding, pp. xvi-xvii.


50 Sylvester and Harding, p. xvi.
51 Maguire, p. 59.
52 See, for instance, Hitchcock's discussion of this issue, p. xlv.
53 Sylvester and Harding, p. xvi.
55 Notes and Queries, First Series, 169, 6 (January 22, 1853), 85.
56 Notes and Queries, First Series, 263, 10 (November 11, 1854), 393.
57 The dramatic quality of Roper's Life has previously been noted by Sylvester and Harding, pp. xv, xviii and Chambers, More, pp. 25 ff.
58 Roper, pp. 49-50; the italics are mine and are inserted for emphasis.
59 Reynolds, Field, p. 364.
60 Sylvester and Harding, p. xvii.
61 See Roper, p. 25 for another representative example.
63 Here Roper uses the term wit in the older sense of sagacity, intelligence, or reasoning as it is related to the OE witan; the reference to his wit as "angelical" possibly reflects the common Renaissance belief that angels were pure intellect.
64 See Roper, pp. 23, 56, 77 for representative examples.
65 See Ibid., pp. 25, 48, 99 for representative examples.
66 Sylvester and Harding, pp. xix-xx.  67 Ibid.
69 Sylvester and Harding, pp. xix-xx.
101

70 Chambers, More, p. 42.

71 See Sylvester and Harding, p. xviii, for a similar opinion.


73 Sylvester and Harding, pp. xii, xix.

74 Maguire, p. 60. 75 Kendall, p. 92.


78 Nugent, pp. 550-551; Chambers, More, p. 31.

79 Southern, p. 49; Nugent, pp. 550-551; Chambers, "Continuity," p. xlv; Harpsfield admits his indebtedness to Roper in his "Epistle Dedicatory," The Life and Death of Sir Thomas More, Knight, p. 6, cited as Harpsfield, and Elsie Vaughan Hitchcock has done an invaluable piece of work in indicating through editorial notes the paralleled sources for Harpsfield's Life.

80 More, pp. 31-32.

81 This information is gleaned from the careful editorial work of Hitchcock.

82 These have previously been studied by, among others, Chambers, in the "Life and Works of Nicholas Harpsfield" preface to Harpsfield, pp. ccii-cciiii.


84 Chambers, More, p. 31.


86 Great Englishmen of the Sixteenth Century (New York: Scribner's, 1904), p. 34; the text, however, was written before the EETS publication of Harpsfield's Life.
87 Reynolds, Field, p. 270.


90 As quoted in Ibid., pp. 8-9; A. F. Pollard, Henry VIII (London: Longman's, 1905), p. 266.

91 Lee, p. 46; though published some twenty-eight years before the publication of Harpsfield's Life, some of Lee's observations are still valid.


93 Ibid.; unless otherwise indicated, the brief biographical sketch which follows is taken primarily from Mozley, Chapters II and III.


95 Fussner, p. 6.

96 "To the True and Faithful Congregation of Christ's Universal Church," The Acts and Monuments, ed. Stephen Reed Cattley (London: Seeley and Burnside, 1838), I, xvii; hereafter, the primary work will be cited as Foxe.

97 Mozley, pp. 120-124.

98 Ibid., pp. 120-124; Massingham, pp. 384-385.

99 As quoted by Massingham, p. 385.


101 Mozley, pp. 159-164.

102 Chambers, More, pp. 278-282.
103 Ibid., p. 278.  
104 Ibid., p. 280.  
105 Ibid., pp. 275-276.  
106 Mozley, pp. 158-159, 238-239.  
107 Ibid., pp. 239, 168.  
108 Reynolds, Field, p. 80.  
109 Fussner, pp. 244, 255.  
110 Reynolds, Field, p. 80.  
111 *Grafton's Chronicle or History of England* (London: J. Johnson et al., 1809), I, xiii; hereafter, the primary work will be cited as Grafton.  
112 Unless otherwise stipulated, this brief biographical sketch depends on A. W. Reed, *Early Tudor Drama* (1926; rpt. New York: Octagon Books, 1969), Chapter III.  
113 Elsie Vaughan Hitchcock, "Rastell's Life of More," in *Harpsfield*, pp. ccxv-ccxvi; Chambers, More, p. 35.  
114 Hitchcock, "Rastell's Life of More," p. ccxv; Professor Hitchcock points out that the previously mentioned correspondence preserved in MS. Arundel 152 enables us to establish that 1576 is approximately the last date on which we can trace the Life of Fisher compilation as still continuing, and, since Rastell's *Life of More* was drawn on for the project, it had to predate the former work.  
115 Hitchcock, "Rastell's Life of More," ccxix.  
117 The Rastell Fragments, p. 235, printed as "Appendix I" to *Harpsfield*; cited as Rastell.  
118 Reed, p. 72; Chambers, "Continuity," p. xlvii.  
120 The EETS has published one of the more authoritative manuscripts, Harleian 6382, and it is this edition of the "Hall" *Life of Fisher* which is hereafter cited as "Hall"; see The *Life of Fisher*, ed. Ronald


122 Unless otherwise stipulated, this introductory material is taken from Sidney Lee, "Holinshed or Hollingshead, Raphael," DNB (1921).

123 Fussner, p. 261.

124 More specific information concerning the printings and suppression of these passages is available in the Holinshed section of the DNB.


126 Fussner, p. 261.

127 The latter point has been carefully examined in many studies; see especially J. W. Allen, A History of Political Thought in the Sixteenth Century (1928; rpt. New York: Barnes and Nobel, 1960), pp. 199-201.

128 This study employs the authoritative 1808 reprinting of the second edition as the primary text; this printing restores previously expurgated passages: Holinshed's Chronicles (London: J. Johnson et al., 1808); cited as Holinshed.


130 See Chambers, More, p. 400 for a similar opinion.

131 Southern, pp. 17, 81, 30-31.
CHAPTER II

CULMINATION OF SIXTEENTH CENTURY TRADITIONS

Ro. Ba.'s *Life of Sir Thomas More*¹ and Anthony Munday's *The Book of Sir Thomas More*² are two selections representing the termini of continuous sixteenth century trends discussed in the previous chapter. The Ro. Ba. *Life* is the final extant sixteenth century recusant biographical and hagiographic presentation of Thomas More; the Munday play is the last extant dramatic treatment of More in the same century. It should, therefore, prove useful to examine these two works as culminations of their respective traditions.

Ro. Ba.'s *Life* has been published only in 1839 and again by the Early English Text Society as recently as 1950,³ and Elsie Vaughan Hitchcock once more is responsible for the availability of this *Life* in the scholarly EETS edition prepared from MS. 179 of the Lambeth Palace Library and collated from seven other manuscript versions. Like Harpsfield's *Life of More*, Ro. Ba.'s was probably not published in the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries because of the grave dangers concomitant with publication of books sympathetic to the recusant cause. Also, the fact that copies of both appear in the library of the Archbishop of Canterbury suggests that they may have reached there as a result of searches of recusant households—
a common practice in which the See of Canterbury often took an active part. Whatever the reasons for its not being published in the sixteenth century or the history of its acquisition by the Archbishop of Canterbury's personal library, the dispersal of copies of this biography throughout England suggests wide availability in manuscript during the Renaissance.

Appended to the Lambeth manuscript Life (1599) and to several other versions, and now generally accepted as authentic, are the "Epistle Dedicatory" and the epistle "To the Courteous Reader." The latter is signed by the mysterious Ro. Ba., and although nothing is known of this author which would facilitate identification, some proposals by A. W. Reed can at least be accepted tentatively. First, it seems apparent that the author was a young, ardent Catholic. Less certain, but plausible is Reed's inference that the writer may have studied at a European Catholic university. This he infers from Ro. Ba.'s thorough familiarity with ecclesiastical customs and his exhaustive knowledge of the Latin Vulgate and the martyrology. Furthermore, from a comment made near the end of the Life (Ro. Ba., p. 271), Reed infers that the author was writing in England instead of from abroad. The comment in question appears in a passage in which the author prays for England's return.
to the unity of his holy Church, for the defence whereof Sir Thomas More... suffered a precious death. Therefore, o most blessed god,...grant this poor land thy holy grace, to acknowledge their present misery, and to return again unto the bosom of thy holy spouse, the holy Catholic Church.

(Ro. Ba., p. 271)

As Reed has observed, the phrase "this poor land" implies that the author was somewhere in England as he wrote.

But whatever the identity of the author or his location when writing, Ro. Ba. produced what R. W. Chambers has legitimately termed the best, in some ways, of the lives of More. As Chambers notes, Ro. Ba. is more than a mere copyist. Although he based his composite life on the earlier works of Roper and Harpsfield, on More's own writing, and on the refugee legends about More preserved in the Latin Life of More by Stapleton, he adds his own information and often refines the sources which he is employing at that juncture in his writing. For example, he often turns Stapleton's "rather jejune Latin into masterly Elizabethan English"; also, when working with accounts known to have originated with other authors, he sometimes adds his own materials, most frequently in order to exemplify More's holiness. Whether his additions are factual, we cannot tell; the possibility is that some are not, for they frequently cannot be supported by other sources. Reed, however, describes him as a consummate storyteller, for he sometimes
shortens verbose sources and sometimes adds intimate details of character concerning members of More's family.

As might be anticipated from an examination of earlier biographies of More, Ro. Ba.'s *Life* also retains much from previous lives. In fact, Ro. Ba. admitted in the epistle "To the Courteous Reader" that "the most part of this book is none of my own; I only challenge the ordering and translating. The most of the rest is Stapleton's and Harpsfield's" (Ro. Ba., p. 14). To establish the precise limits of this indebtedness, Hitchcock and Reed have already done extensive research; since it would be presumptuous to attempt to reproduce all of their findings, a summary will suffice.

An examination of Hitchcock's marginal notes indicates that more than half of the 387 paragraphs of the EETS edition of Ro. Ba. derive from several different combinations of the materials of Roper, Harpsfield, and Stapleton; furthermore, once we add More's *Works*, the figure increases to seventy-six percent. Combining the above sources with those which Ro. Ba. uses only rarely, like *The Paris Newsletter*, Erasmus, and *Hall's Chronicle*, causes the percentage of borrowings to increase radically to where only eleven percent of the work, or forty-three of 387 paragraphs seems to contain materials original with Ro. Ba. Therefore, the dependence of Ro. Ba.'s *Life* on earlier Moreana is
perhaps greater than his modest disclaimer suggests. However, Chambers' previously-cited caution begs repetition: Ro. Ba. is no mere copyist. In many cases, in fact, he improves upon the source material. What little is assuredly original with him has already been outlined for the reader in Reed's "Introduction" to the EETS edition. The new materials amount to a few anecdotes and jests not previously printed, some details regarding More's holiness, and information about members of More's family which only an individual intimate with them could have provided.

But what is most important is another type of originality--that which is linked to what Ro. Ba. himself called the "ordering" of materials (Ro. Ba., p. 14). The imaginative process of selecting and ordering raw materials is the talent which is the keystone of biographical art. As Kendall has written, this shaping intelligence creates a tension between the "intransigence of facts and the imperious demand of art," and from it comes a "simulation, in words, of a life." Consequently, the character Thomas More who emerges from Ro. Ba.'s Life differs significantly from the man portrayed by Roper, Harpsfield, Heywood, and Rastell and differs radically from the person drawn by Hall, Foxe, and Holinshed.

Before the differences are examined, perhaps
similarities to earlier treatments deserve consideration. Like authors of earlier portrayals of More, Ro. Ba. seems convinced that his subject's great erudition demands attention, possibly for the purpose previously cited from "The Continuity of English Prose": in order to establish that the great leader of the recusant cause did not function ignorant of the complex issues involved. Just as in Roper and Harpsfield, here again More's academic training from boyhood studies at St. Anthony's to his years at Oxford and the Inns of Court is detailed and then highlighted with the now very familiar observation of Cardinal Morton that the boy More would "prove a notable and rare man" (Ro. Ba., p. 21). Hall, Foxe, and Holinshed had previously made passing references to More's learning and erudition, but most frequently to criticize his propensity for jesting; in fact, Hall's quip that he did not know whether to call More "a foolish wiseman or a wise foolishman" (Hall, p. 817) is repeated by all members of this latter group of authors, but not by Ro. Ba.

Ro. Ba., in fact, devotes an entire chapter of Book II of his Life to More's learning in Greek, common and civil laws, divinity, and government. He finds this learning evidenced in More's writing and in the mutually appreciative friendships which he had developed with Europe's great humanists--Erasmus, Giles, Colet,
Vives, and others. Among these, Colet was wont to say (as Harpsfield had mentioned previously) that "England had but one wit" and that was Sir Thomas More (Ro. Ba., p. 99). To exemplify this point, Ro. Ba. then sketches a portrait of the late Chancellor of England which even by then had become traditional. This he commences early in the biography (Ro. Ba., p. 23) as he portrays the young scholar More delivering his London lectures on Augustine's *De Civitate Dei*; the same story of his youthful erudition had been reported previously by Roper and Harpsfield. Again, as Harpsfield and Roper had previously, he depicts scholars from both universities resorting to More's quarters to dispute with him on matters of divinity, laws, or philosophy (Ro. Ba., p. 56) and also claims that Wolsey's choice of More as his successor came as a result of his fitness "for his wit, learning, and other qualities" (Ro. Ba., p. 67).

Other than More's learning, Ro. Ba. devotes considerable energy to portraying him as a man of unblemished virtue. This is, of course, not unexpected in hagiographic writing; however, Thomas More seems to have given adequate emphasis of guileless decency in his daily affairs to provide even the most skeptical Bollandist a myriad of materials. Like Plato before him, More had insisted that natural intellectual ability and thorough education were indispensable for those who ruled
or advised rulers, and he drew on Plato's paragon of philosopher-king to substitute his belief that the wise man should go into politics. This he appears to have believed despite Raphael Hytholodaye's opinion that the philosopher could achieve little working in government. And while an agent of local or national government, More employed the moral dictate espoused by his Utopians: nature guided by reason produces unsullied virtue. Also, just as his Utopia did not admit any distinction between public and private morality, in his personal life he applied that demanding standard.

To exemplify More's virtuous qualities, Ro. Ba. uses several of the familiar anecdotes about the Lord Chancellor which by then had become part of the received tradition. First there is the class of references to his humility and lack of worldly ambition. Into this category fall three familiar anecdotes. The first recounts More's ruse to avoid Henry's too frequent social invitations (Ro. Ba., pp. 44-46). Unlike Roper and Harpsfield, who had used the anecdote previously, Ro. Ba. sees in this uncharacteristic act of duplicity evidence of More's prophetic insight into life's uncertainties:

Wherefore even at this time, when flattering fortune seemed most to smile upon him, and all things seemed as fair as fair might be,...he well considered the brittle estate of men that be in the highest favor of Princes.

(Ro. Ba., p. 46)
Akin to that reference are Ro. Ba.'s piece describing Norfolk finding the surpliced More singing in the choir of the church at Chelsea and another anecdote depicting More's common practice of humbly paying devotion to Judge More when he presided in court (Ro. Ba., pp. 51-52 and 59-60); both had been mentioned previously by Harpsfield and Roper as evidencing More's humility and his indifference to personal advancement. And finally, like Harpsfield before him, Ro. Ba. asserts that More did not seek the chancellorship or any other influential position, but served in all of them "without spot, nor coveting after gold" (Ro. Ba., pp. 65-66).

In fact, the honesty attributed to More in the above passage merely complements a multitude of such claims, all of them hearkening back to the previous claim by Roper that More was a man so scrupulous

\[
\text{that in all his great offices and doings for the king and the realm...} \\
\text{he had from all corruption of wrong doing or bribes taking kept himself so clear that no man was able therewith to blemish him.} \\
\text{(Roper, p. 61)}
\]

Similarly, in 1517 Erasmus had noted in his letter to Ulrich von Hutten that More's character was "entirely free from any touch of avarice" (Erasmus, p. 395). More's legendary honesty was, therefore, a long-standing tradition, and Ro. Ba. encapsulates this heritage in an allusion which appears quite early in the piece. Having
just recounted More's ambassadorial ventures for the city of London and for Henry and reported Henry's offer of a lifetime pension for these services, Ro. Ba., like Harpsfield, attributes More's refusal of the pension to a desire to avoid the charge of favoring royal prerogatives in cases wherein he represented the city against Henry (Ro. Ba., pp. 32-33). In fact, More's position is borne out by one of his letters to Erasmus written from London in 1516:

\[
\text{Its acceptance would mean that I either would have to leave my present post in London, which I do prefer even to the higher one, or what is not at all to my liking, I would have to retain it and thereby occasion resentment among the townsfolk. If any dispute over privileges arises between them and the King, as sometimes happens, they would be skeptical about my sincerity and loyalty to them and consider me under obligation to the King as his pensioner. (Letters, p. 70)}
\]

Actually, More did receive a royal pension in 1518, but, on the occasion of accepting it, resigned the position of Under-sheriff of London (Letters, p. 70, n. 14).

Equally attractive is the coloration given More's charity. It follows a trend early established by the previously-cited epistolary biography by Erasmus and by Harpsfield's Life. In fact, the Ro. Ba. Life employs phraseology strikingly similar to Erasmus' suggestion that "you might call him the general patron of all poor
people" (Erasmus, p. 397) and describes him as "the public patron of the poor" (Ro. Ba., p. 53).

Another similarity between Ro. Ba.'s Life and previous ones is that this biography exhibits obvious hagiographic qualities. First, as was traditional with Tudor saints' lives, this composition attempts to attribute the gift of prophecy to More, and in order to accomplish that end, borrows liberally from Roper, Harpsfield, and Stapleton to provide cases of More's prophetic foresight. All of these illustrations have been proffered before by either Roper, Harpsfield, Rastell or Stapleton, and they are presented in Ro. Ba.'s Life in much the same form as originally. The number of instances mentioned of his foresight alone suggests the importance which the author attributed to this singularity. But besides the sheer number of examples provided, there are the summary statements made at the beginning of the fifth chapter of Book I--

Sir Thomas had a deep foresight and judgment of the time that followed; but rather he spake by the way of prophecy of that which since, we have full heavily felt, and he then seemed certainly to know--

(Ro. Ba., p. 85)

and also a passage within that chapter telling of his resignation from the office of Lord Chancellor:

"Indeed he had a great foresight of evil hanging over
the Realm, and that made him the more desirous to live a private life" (Ro. Ba., p. 81). In fact, while introducing one of the anecdotes, Ro. Ba. bluntly admits his purpose; he writes, "To confirm that he had some insight in matters to come, mark this which now doth follow" (Ro. Ba., p. 91).

But even if these expository statements did not exist, the references to his prophetic vision are numerous enough to capture attention, and they follow the traditions previously established by Roper and Harpsfield. Although these are too numerous to quote in full, they extend from the stunning practicality of More's assessment of Henry, first mentioned by Roper--"If my head would win him a castle in France, it should not fail to fly from my shoulders as fast now as it seemeth to stick" (Ro. Ba., p. 47)--to his poignantly sympathetic prophecy of Anne Boleyn's fall--"Alas! Meg, ...it pittieth me to think into what misery, poor soul, she shall come, and that very shortly" (Ro. Ba., p. 92).

There are other hagiographie elements as well. For example, the entire epistle "To the Courteous Reader" is a tract on hagiography generically as well as More's saintly qualities specifically, and it ends with this statement:

I intend by god's grace to write the history of a Confessor, Doctor, and Martyr, so famous, so learned, so glorious, that what in the vast Ocean
of Ancient records may be found to
pleasure or profit, here in this
one life shall be comprehended.
(Ro. Ba., p. 11)

Also, as Harpsfield had done earlier, Ro. Ba. compares
More with Socrates--"O noble and worthy voice of our
christian Socrates!"--and with Sts. Thomas of Dover and
Thomas of Canterbury (Ro. Ba., pp. 250, 267-271); he
alludes to him as "the proto-Martyr of England that
suffered for the defence of the union of the Catholic
Church" (Ro. Ba., p. 26) and again expends considerable
energy recounting Roper's flirtation with Lutheranism
(Ro. Ba., pp. 144-148) but doing so in much the same
form as had Harpsfield, even to the point of repeating
two of Harpsfield's suggestions: first, that when Roper
married Meg, he "abhorred" Sir Thomas More, and second,
that More saved Roper from heresy by resorting to
"devout prayer" (Ro. Ba., pp. 147-148).

Essentially, the hagiographic qualities of the
Ro. Ba. Life obtain from its adherence to the stipulation
already quoted from Hippolyte Delehaye that the document
"be of a religious character,...aim at edification...,\nand be inspired by religious devotion to the saints and
intended to increase that devotion."¹⁸ His fidelity to
his purpose Ro. Ba. suggests in the epistle "To the
Courteous Reader" (Ro. Ba., p. 7) when he writes of the
ancient custom of recording for posterity the lives of
saintly persons "to eternize the memories of holy Martyrs." That this is his intention and that it is allied to Harpsfield's emerges through frequent statements throughout the Life, especially the prayer-like reference drawn from Stapleton which appears at the end of Chapter 18 of Book III:

Wherefore we may be bold to pray that God will, through the merits and intercessions of his glorious martyr, cast his pitiful eye of grace upon us, and reduce us to the unity of his holy Church, for the defence whereof Sir Thomas More, in his holy sight, suffered a precious death.

(Ro. Ba., p. 271)

But the hagiographic quality has not come unexpectedly, for in the epistle "To the Courteous Reader" again, Ro. Ba. had written,

Here we shall learn what love and fear we owe unto god, what Charity and Justice we owe to our neighbor, what moderation and temperance to our selves. For this Saint's life is a mart where every spiritual merchant may compendiously fraught his bark with variety of virtues: young men may find modesty, old men wisdom, learned cunning, ignorant instruction...and every man in his calling his duty and devoire.

(Ro. Ba., p. 11)

But when writing a martyrology one cannot ascribe his subject's death to a compulsion for self-destruction. Thus it appears to be particularly important to Ro. Ba. that he assign Thomas More's unfortunate execution to
the conflict of the Lord Chancellor's conscience with
the sinister forces surrounding him in Henry's court.
More of Sir Thomas's conscience later, but the focus which
Ro. Ba. gives to the efforts of More's enemies deserves
at least brief consideration here. Preeminent among
those individuals are, of course, King Henry, Cardinal
Wolsey, and Anne Boleyn.

The claim that Cardinal Wolsey envied and hated
More is not new with Ro. Ba., since it had appeared in
Harpsfield. Unfortunately there is no evidence to support
that claim in The Life and Death of Cardinal Wolsey,20
written by the Cardinal's gentleman usher, George
Cavendish, a man certainly in the position to know of
such matters. But what deserves consideration here is
that, to the pro-Catholic writers, Roper, Harpsfield,
and Ro. Ba., Wolsey was the originator of the concept
of Henry's divorce, thus an apt target for whatever
vituperation they could direct at him, whether factual
or not. Like Harpsfield before, Ro. Ba. asserts that
"the Cardinal never loved him; yea rather feared him,
least in time the fame of his wit, learning, and virtue
should blemish and dim the glory of his own praises"
(Ro. Ba., pp. 43-44). At this juncture, Ro. Ba. wonders
that More was able to advance so far in the civil
hierarchy with enemies like Wolsey and ascribes his rise
to "the providence of almighty god" who "so appointed

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that so great a light should not be put under a bushel, but reared on the hills of worldly felicity" (Ro. Ba., p. 44).

Like earlier pro-Catholic biographers, Ro. Ba. also expresses disapprobation of Queen Anne Boleyn. Of course, Anne had also become a special target for recusant apologists, as More had for their Tudor opposites. But Anne is blamed for More's being charged to take the Oath of Supremacy, contrary to Henry's "former resolution" (Ro. Ba., p. 200). Also, as Rastell had done before, Ro. Ba. has Henry blame Anne for More's death in a little scene charged with drama:

Immediately after the execution of Sir Thomas More, word was brought thereof to the king, who being then at dice when it was told him, at the hearing thereof seemed to be wonderfully amazed. 'And is it true,' quoth the king, 'is Sir Thomas More, my Chancellor, dead?' The messenger answered, 'Yea, if it may please your Majesty.' He turned him to Queen Anne, who then stood by, wistly looking upon her, said, 'Thou, thou are the cause of this man's death.' So presently [he] went to his Chamber, and there wept full bitterly. (Ro. Ba., pp. 263-264)

If one is to accept Ro. Ba.'s report as accurate and Henry's charge as justified, Anne becomes the prime mover behind More's death—a tradition which has had some currency in More documents over the centuries and which has been reflected in many modern works, even historical
romances like Evelyn Anthony's *Anne Boleyn.*\(^{21}\) Precisely what is the source of this tradition we cannot now determine, despite the fact that without offering adequate proof to substantiate his affirmation, E. E. Reynolds\(^ {22}\) claims that the More family is. But what Reynolds continues to state in another publication is perhaps more plausible; he suggests that it is impossible to determine the truth of the charge, for it is futile today to attempt to read the character of this woman who is "obscured by a fog of legend and scurrility."\(^ {23}\) The irony of this situation is obvious. More's reputation has survived the scurrilous attacks of his detractors. The reputations of Anne, Henry, and Wolsey have not.

Of course, one cannot ignore King Henry when the matter of More's execution is considered. In writing of Henry particularly, Ro. Ba. depends heavily on tradition, for he mirrors both Roper and Harpsfield in maintaining that Henry chose More to be Lord Chancellor in order to secure his approval of the divorce (Ro. Ba., pp. 166-167). And finally, regarding the matter of the trial and sentencing, Ro. Ba. has More himself charge his commissioners with persecuting him for the same reason--the marriage. More contends that the commissioners "seek my blood, as because I would not condescend to the second marriage of the King, his first wife yet living" (Ro. Ba., p. 245). This
charge, we may remember, was first mentioned in the Rastell Fragments; however, no evidence presently exists which would suggest that the Fragments were available to Ro. Ba. Possibly both Rastell and Ro. Ba. instead had access to a third source—the legends and traditions preserved by the recusant exiles.

Besides these instances of similarity to earlier lives and biographical sketches of More, there are numerous other similarities in Ro. Ba. to previous treatments; however, space limitations preclude mention of all. Although Ro. Ba.'s Life of Sir Thomas More, Sometimes Lord Chancellor of England clearly represents a culmination of continuing sixteenth century recusant traditions, it also strikes out on its own in significant ways.

Stylistically, Ro. Ba.'s Life adheres to a convention prevalent in the writing of several recusant apologists like Rastell, Allen, Harpsfield, Stapleton, and Campion. This convention has previously been examined by A. C. Southern in Elizabethan Recusant Prose, and Southern in fact maintains that it is at the very source of the distinction between recusant prose and the mainstream of Elizabethan prose. It consists simply of a logical turn which is not so common in the more contentious writing of other British prose stylists of the period, and it is this character-
istic which both R. W. Chambers (and J. S. Phillimore before him) asserted was the basic quality of English prose revived and civilized almost a century later by Dryden. That same logical or syllogistic turn is the dominant characteristic of Ro. Ba.'s style throughout the narrative passages of the Life. Quite simply, this style typically depends upon the following sequence: a generalized statement, followed by blocks of anecdotal evidence presented in catalogue form, and this evidence again followed by a summary statement. This pattern the author follows in chapter after chapter of his biography. An example may serve better than any further attempts to describe it:

If...virtue paced not equally with these studies and rare knowledge, it might happen all those good parts to be drowned....But his age and virtue equally increased.

In his youth or tender years he used to wear a cilice or hair-shirt, and lay many nights on the ground, often on a board, or else he used a block under his head.

His sleep was very short, seldom or never above four or five hours.

He had great delight to hear god's word preached, and for that exceedingly loved Doctor Colet, dean of Paul's, who was a very spiritual and devout man in his speech and sermons.

(Ro. Ba., pp. 24-25)

Then following the above are additional segments exemplifying More's virtue; finally, after these comes the summary statement:
And, as god appointed that worthy man John Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, to be the Champion of the Clergy, so he reserved Thomas More in the degree of the laity, to be the proto-Martyr of England that suffered for the defence of the union of the Catholic Church.

(Ro. Ba., p. 26)

These, however, are not the only notable characteristics of Ro. Ba.'s style.

Frequently Ro. Ba. will alter a borrowed passage to eliminate archaic language or even words which were just then beginning to become obsolete, but he is somewhat inconsistent in that practice. For example, eftsoons and gear he sometimes replaces with modern equivalents, but sometimes not. Furthermore, frequent use of colorful idioms and proverbial expressions is another facet of his style. A few examples are: "knowledge without virtue is a ring in a swine's nose," "delay is no payment," "fools set to keep geese," and "as a good dish of meat of a slut's cooking." Ultimately, Ro. Ba. is an effective stylist with an excellent command of language and a particular flair for telling a tale. Only occasionally in an apparent attempt to clarify meaning will he stumble and do injustice to More's pithy wit.

A perfect example of this appears in his rendering of the pew jest. Having related the anecdote much as Harpsfield had, he closed it with
his floundering addition:

She, knowing him to be her husband, said, 'I am glad, Sir Thomas, you are so merrily disposed.' 'Truly, madam,' quoth he, 'my Lord is gone, and is not here.' She not knowing what he meant, he told her of the surrender of his office.

(Ro. Ba., p. 85)

There are, of course, many other differences between Ro. Ba.'s effort and previous biographical studies of More; for example, in this Life, More's family, particularly his children, receives considerably more attention than in previous works. One section presents More's children and their families through several generations, combining information which Ro. Ba. had gleaned from Roper, Harpsfield, Erasmus, and Stapleton. Furthermore, to Stapleton's list of Sir Thomas's grandchildren, Ro. Ba. adds Francis (Ro. Ba., p. 131), the sixth son of John. As Reed has indicated, such information ( unavailable in other sources) tends to support Ro. Ba.'s claim of intimacy with survivors of the More clan.

Another interesting inclusion in this cumulative life is Henry Patenson (or Pattison), More's domestic fool. Fourth from the right in the famous Holbein pen sketch of the More family, the figure of Patenson, with his hard face, suggests something of the nature of his humor. He was apparently a fixture in the More household who was expected to perform regularly, especially after the scripture readings which accompanied each meal.
Once the scriptures were intoned in monastic style, Master Patenson directed the conversation to a meaner level, one apparently not alien to Thomas More's tastes. It seems that More was quite attached to his fool and took Patenson with him on his diplomatic missions whenever possible. However, during the mission to the imperial court at Bruges, apparently Patenson's crudity momentarily weakened international relations. Unfortunately, Patenson receives only brief treatment in this biography (Ro. Ba., pp. 172-208), but significantly the Ro. Ba. Life is the first English language biography in which he appears. Most of what tradition tells us of Patenson we must derive from the few passages in Stapleton; besides these, More has himself preserved a few anecdotes concerning his fool in his English Works and especially in the Confutation. It is particularly unfortunate that contemporary documents give us so little of this colorful character, for Patenson does appear in twentieth century works, notably Brady's Stage of Fools and Plaidy's St. St. Thomas's Eve.

Although this domestic element is prevalent in Ro. Ba.'s Life, the work also exhibits much stronger hagiographic properties than had Harpsfield's biography. Part of this phenomenon has already been discussed in this chapter, including Ro. Ba.'s admissions of hagiographic intent, and, as Reed has observed, the few
passages of this *Life* which appear original with Ro. Ba. consist primarily of additional exemplifications of More's sanctity. There are, of course, other additions which have been borrowed from Stapleton and had not appeared in previous and now extant English language works.

Especially interesting are the two brief episodes mentioned in the first paragraphs of the *Life*, episodes which Ro. Ba. suggests prefigured More's "future holiness." Both appear to have been taken from Stapleton's *Life*. The first mentions More's mother, who

> the first night after her marriage, saw in her sleep the number of Children she should have...and the forms, shapes and countenances of them all. One...she.../saw/ full bright and beautiful, and fàirer then all the rest; whereby no doubt was this lamp of England prefigured. (Ro. Ba., pp. 19-20)

The second incident involves More's nurse. As she rode over water carrying the infant More, her horse stumbled and, to better save herself and the child, she cast him over a hedge. Afterwards, approaching the hedge with trepidation, she "found the Child without bruise or hurt, smiling and laughing on her." This episode Ro. Ba. is convinced "was no obscure presage of his future holiness" (Ro. Ba., p. 20).

As had been the case with Harpsfield, Ro. Ba. trusted that prefigurations like the above and other events in More's youth anticipated his saintliness.
Other supposed evidence of this trait he is the first
to mention: for example, the tradition that, as a youth,
More wore a cilice and slept on the bare ground, on a
board, or with a block under his head (Ro. Ba., p. 25).
But perhaps most touching is his account of More's last
few hours in his Tower cell. Ro. Ba. reports that, when
the time of his execution approached, "he wrapped himself
in a linen sheet, like a body to be laid in a grave...
and severely punished his body with a whip" most of that
night (Ro. Ba., pp. 257-258). The next morning he went
to the block having fasted through the night (Ro. Ba.,
p. 258).

The veracity of these accounts cannot now be
established, of course, but they do serve Ro. Ba.'s
hagiographic purpose: to establish that this man, whom
he, Harpsfield, and Stapleton considered worthy of
canonization, had not only lived but also faced death
in a humble and saintly fashion.

This study has previously mentioned the theme of
conscience as it was developed and enlarged by Erasmus,
Roper, Harpsfield, and More himself. Similarly, the
sneering comments of Tudor apologists like the anonymous
author of "The Image of Hypocrisy," Edward Hall, John
Foxe, and Raphael Holinshed have been examined in the
context of the political and religious realities of
the times. Ro. Ba. also deals with the subject and
consistently imputes to More an unyielding conscience throughout this Life. Furthermore, before this most recent biography closes, the crucial term conscience occurs sixty-one times, more frequently, in fact, than in either Roper or Harpsfield. Of these occurrences, two thirds appear not unexpectedly in connection with matters of the divorce, the Act of Supremacy, and More's trial.

Few of Ro. Ba.'s claims regarding More's conscience appear original; most had been presented in earlier chronicles or biographical sources. For instance, the young Speaker of the House of Commons appeals for freedom of speech (just as he had in Roper and other sources) so that each member might unfold his conscience (Ro. Ba., p. 40). Also, here again More makes the familiar comment regarding justice: he "will never go against equity and conscience" even "if.../his/ father stood on the one side, and the devil on the other" (Ro. Ba., p. 68). Further, on the occasion of Henry's broaching the subject of the divorce with More for the fourth time, Sir Thomas again pleads on his knees that he wishes that

he might with safety of conscience serve his Grace's contention. 'For well I bear in mind...those most godly words that your Highness spoke to me, at my first enter ing into your noble service: that first I should attend and look to god and his honor and then to your self.'

(Ro. Ba., p. 168)
And finally, Ro. Ba. quotes extensively More's previously cited letter to Meg discussing his opinions concerning the Act of Supremacy. In it, More clearly imputes to demands of conscience his refusal to take the oath: "As for myself, my conscience so moved me in the matter that, though I would not deny to swear to the succession, yet to the other oath I could not swear without the jeopardizing of my soul to perpetual damnation" (Ro. Ba., p. 191). In connection with this claim, however, Ro. Ba. has More mention a point of defense not previously represented except in More's own writing, a doctrine of Canon Law which states simply that a doubtful law does not bind (les dubia non obligat). And in such cases, Canon 15 admits to individual conscience being the standard from which such difficult judgments must be made. Almost as if he had that canon in mind, More says to Meg,

First for the law of the land, though every man being born and inhabiting therein, is bound to keep it in every case upon some temporal pain, and in many cases also upon pain of god's displeasure, yet there is no man bound to swear that every law is well made, nor bound in conscience to perform what he thinks is unjustly enacted.  

Regarding this crucial matter, there are two striking differences between Ro. Ba.'s treatment and previous ones. First, at an important juncture in the Life—in fact, directly before Ro. Ba. reports King
Henry's first consultation with More concerning the divorce—the author contrasts Henry's conscience with More's. Not unexpectedly in a biography of Thomas More, Henry's conscience falls short of the mark, and Ro. Ba. describes the King as being of "never...so tender a conscience" as More (Ro. Ba., p. 158).

What is particularly different about Ro. Ba.'s portrayal of More is the second point of departure from previous biographical studies. Ro. Ba.'s Life devises a link between More's conscience and his comedic talent. This the author accomplishes through a much stronger emphasis on his humor than in any previous lives and by specifically affirming that his characteristic wittiness was clear evidence of an unsullied conscience.

This emphasis on More's comedic talent Ro. Ba. accomplishes by introducing original anecdotes and combining the efforts of previous biographers, particularly Hall, Roper, Harpsfield, and Stapleton.

Original with Ro. Ba. are five anecdotes involving More (Ro. Ba., pp. 109-112, 113, 129) which had not appeared in former treatments. Since the majority of these incorporate jests, a sampling may be instructive here. The first recounts an occasion when More was on embassy and dining with numerous diplomats. Eventually, the table talk moved to the diversity of their languages, the difficulty of English, and the inferiority of English
in antiquity as well as in many other respects. To this More responded that the English tongue was in no way inferior for antiquity; in fact, the English were descendants of Brutus. And, as regarded difficulty, he repeated the platitude, "Every thing the harder it is, the fairer it seems." Having made difficulty a virtue, More told them that he could reproduce their languages as easily as they spoke them, and he did, rendering even their dialects just as the native speakers had. But then he challenged them merely to reproduce three words from the English language--"thwaits thwackt him with a thwitle"--but no man there could do so (Ro. Ba., p. 110).

Another jest first reported by Ro. Ba. and one in which Thomas More appears especially attractive is that concerning the maker of a foolish book. It is brief and deserves quotation in full:

There was another fellow had made a very foolish book in prose, and presented Sir Thomas More with it, gaping for a reward for his labor. Sir Thomas read it, and greatly disliked the book. At the next meeting of the fellow, he asked him if he could turn it into meter. 'Yea,' said the fellow, and he did it quickly.

When he brought it again, 'What,' said Sir Thomas, 'is it the same book?' 'Yea,' said the fellow, 'word for word, but that it is now in verse, before in prose.' 'Then it is a fair piece,' said he; 'before it had been
neither rime nor reason; now it hath at the least some rime, no reason.'

(Ro. Ba., pp. 111-112)

Of course, perhaps the most revealing aspect of More's display of wit is the manner in which he often makes himself bear the brunt of his humor. This self-deprecating quality is prevalent in More's jests and, besides contributing to our appreciation of his humility, also makes him a more appealing character and complements the many direct affirmations of his self-demeaning humility already cited. Although there are several anecdotes in Ro. Ba. which might be employed to exemplify this trait, one of the most charming is borrowed from Stapleton; it deals with a conflict between More and Wolsey which occurred when they were both members of the King's Privy Council. According to Ro. Ba.'s account, Wolsey had then recommended to the Council the instituting of the office of Lord Constable of the Realm (an office which he desired). After the Cardinal had proposed the new office, only More among all the members of the "honorable assembly of great Prelates, Dukes, and chief Earls of the Realm" dared oppose the plan as an "unmeet proposition. And...he made such probable reasons for his so saying that the whole Council began to forethink them of their forwardness, and desired a new sitting before they would give their resolutions"
Wolsey took this as a personal affront and there accused More of being a "very proud man, and a more foolish Councilor." But Thomas More,

not abashed with this public check, answered him according to his disposition, in this merry yet witty sort, 'Our Lord be blessed. that our Sovereign liege hath but one fool in so ample a senate.' And not a word more. The Cardinal's drift was all dashed.

Another tale which Ro. Ba. borrows from Stapleton displays a facet of More's wit which must have endeared him to the London populace with which he was so popular. This same story, in fact, became the basis for a rollicking scene in Munday's The Book of Sir Thomas More. This bit of humor has come to be known as the cutpurse jest, and it directs its humor, like the foolish book anecdote, against the pompous and presumptuous. The setting is a trial for picking pockets at which More and a grave old justice are presiding. After steps are taken to compensate the victims for their losses, the older justice lectures the victims for not taking greater precautions with their possessions and accuses them of making thieves "by giving them so fair occasions that they could hardly but do as they did." More, disapproving of the importunity of the old judge, causes the hearing to be delayed, calls the thief into his chambers, and
after chiding the cutpurse for his thievery, arranges that he should pick the justice's purse. Then when the trial has resumed, More asks for alms for a prisoner whose release was pending payment of the keeper's fees. More gives first. Then when it came time for the judge to give,

he put his hand to his pouch, and found it to be taken away: as angry as ashamed, affirming very seriously that he had his purse when he came to the hall, and he marveled what was become of it. 'It is well,' said Sir Thomas, 'you will now leave to chide my neighbors, who had as little care but not so good hap as you, for you shall have your purse again'; so told [Him] who had it.

(Ro. Ba., pp. 107-109)

As seen earlier, the thematic term conscience appears in connection with the question of divorce, the trial, and the imprisonment. Significant is the fact that--also in connection with More's imprisonment in the Tower--Ro. Ba. presents a series of seven jests, all but three of which are either original with him or taken directly from Stapleton. We may remember that earlier biographers and chroniclers continued the pattern established much earlier by Hall of producing all or part of the original five scaffold tales which that author had been the first to report. Grafton, Foxe, and Holinshed had reproduced all five, whereas Roper and Harpsfield had each recounted...
three of the five. Although Ro. Ba. reproduces only three of the original—the "upper garment" jest, More's quip that he would descend the scaffold on his own, and his comment that there would be no integrity in chopping off his short neck (Ro. Ba., pp. 119, 123-124)—he employs numerous other anecdotes which collectively picture a man of wit calmly facing death with a clear conscience. One of these clearly exhibits that facet of More's character about which Erasmus had written: his ability to "extract some pleasure" from even the most serious matters and his attendant capacity to "alleviate the annoyance of the most trying circumstances" through his wit (Erasmus, pp. 391-392). The first account places More in his Tower cell receiving the message from Sir Thomas Pope that he will die that day. When Pope sees that More is not dismayed by his communication, he tries to convince him of the veracity of the report. At that, More calls for a urinal, urinates, and

looking on his water,.../says/: 'Master Pope, for anything that I can perceive, this patient is not so sick but that he may do well, if it be not the King's pleasure he should die. If it were not for that, there is great possibility of his good health. Therefore let it suffice that it is the King's pleasure that I must die.'

(Ro. Ba., pp. 119-120)

The next anecdote, one which originated with
Stapleton, is also set in More's cell and concerns another presumptuous creature, a young courtier who, despite the previous efforts of Cranmer and Cromwell, presumes to approach More with the earnest request that he "change his mind"; More, either weary of such efforts or disposed at the moment to a devilish jest, tells him that indeed he has determined it "expedient" for him to do so; therefore he intends to, "Wherefore I mean--." But instead of allowing More the opportunity to complete his sentence, the naive courtier scurries to inform Henry of his magnificent accomplishment. Upon returning from the King, who is somewhat skeptical, he tells More of Henry's pleasure with the change from his former recalcitrance, and only then does he learn that More has altered his thinking, but not concerning the oath: "I have changed my opinion concerning the cutting of my beard. For you see it now all grown out of fashion since my coming into prison" (Ro. Ba., p. 123).

Ro. Ba. immediately follows this anecdote with an observation suggesting the perfect fusion of wit and conscience to be found in More's personality (Ro. Ba., p. 123). Also, in that same section of the Life, in fact at the very point where he begins to enumerate More's jests in the Tower, Ro. Ba. had already written his most telling statement concerning the conjunction of wit and conscience in More's temperament: "Sir Thomas kept
his accustomed mirth as a testimony of a clear conscience in his greatest afflictions" (Ro. Ba., p. 118). It is this statement which best delineates what has become the distinguishing characteristic of this Life, a presentation of that fusion of wit and conscience.

It is by no means surprising that Ro. Ba. should dwell so on More's comedic talent, for that gift of wit is what so impressed his contemporaries and his biographers. It was both a personality trait and a binding force which knitted together the many strands of his personality: his charity, sense of justice, humility, lack of worldly ambition, devotion, and intelligence and learning. As Richard Lawrence Smith wrote in his hagiographic biography, John Fisher and Thomas More: Two English Saints, this gift of laughter bound all his traits "together in a humility and balance...that could see its own merits and demerits," and this was the great strength which made its impression on most of his contemporaries, especially his friend Erasmus, and certainly on most of his biographers, especially Ro. Ba.

Conflicts of conscience More certainly did experience with the two Henrys who ruled England in his lifetime, but with his compatriots in the city of London, he apparently seldom experienced anything but mutual affection, so much so that in 1521 the city fathers spoke of him as "a special lover and friend in the businesses
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and causes of this city.35 Many plausible explanations exist for the reverence with which this largely Protestant city held the great promoter of the recusant cause, but among those which seem to emerge most frequently are two: first, his sense of justice or concern for the public weal, and, secondly, his great charity. The latter, Erasmus mentioned (Erasmus, pp. 395-396) in his brief biographical sketch as that part of his conduct through which he "made himself extremely popular in the City." The former, Ro. Ba. identifies (pp. 35, 69) as the basis for the great affection which London had for him. For London was always jealous of its privileges, and sensitivity to this popular attitude first made More refuse Henry's pension. But to the people of London, Thomas More was hero, the honest judge who stood for equity and justice36 no matter what the consequence, and this interpretation of his character emerges from the London drama which will be examined next in this chapter, The Book of Sir Thomas More.

Ro. Ba.'s Life of More, then, is a document which, though not published until the nineteenth century, formed a capstone on the sixteenth century tradition of sympathetic treatments of Thomas More. Unquestionably, its artistic merits did not match those of the Roper Life, for Ro. Ba.'s sense of the dramatic, his ability to cast telling little scenes which reveal motive and
character and to choose and order details into an artistic whole are not as finely honed as were Roper's. Furthermore, unlike Roper but like Harpsfield, his purpose was argumentative and hagiographic. Roper's was primarily biographic and attempted to be true to a life while imposing on the life-materials an informing theme.

A measure of Ro. Ba.'s strength is that he combined the efforts of previous chroniclers and biographers and imposed upon them a stamp of his own; this quality consists of his use of colorful diction, his abbreviation and improvement of sometimes verbose sources, and his own thematic interpretation of More's dominant character trait--the coalescence of wit and conscience so evidently a facet of his temperament.

Unlike Ro. Ba.'s Life, Anthony Munday's historical drama represents the culmination of a trend which was in a state of flux by the end of the sixteenth century--the tradition of Protestant treatments of More. By Munday's time, these portrayals had altered their formerly vitriolic tone to the approbation found in Munday's The Book of Sir Thomas More.

Anthony Munday (or Mundy), like the subject of his play a native of London, was born in 1560. His father was a respected member of the drapers' guild and apparently a man of means. The prosperous father took his son's education seriously, for, although there is
no evidence of Anthony's attending either university or the Inns of Court, he received a good classical education in the school Hollyband ran for children of prosperous tradesmen. His writing abounds in classical allusions; he claims to have conversed in Latin when in Rome; and he composed complimentary verses to the Earl of Oxford and Sir Francis Drake in competent Latin.

Due to the careful research of Celeste Turner and others, we can suggest the strong possibility that Munday did some acting as a youth, for a tract probably written by Thomas Pound, suggests his having done so, and this accusation Munday fails to contradict in his scathing response (Brief Answer - 1582), whereas numerous other accusations in the same tract, Munday attacked vehemently. Besides the possibility of a stage background, we do know that Munday, like so many other writers and publishers of Moreana, was bound into a printing apprenticeship. Munday's master was the experienced and widely respected stationer, John Allde, whose shop was near "the proper little church" of St. Mildred in Poultry. This was the same Allde who, Wright has noted, was a Catholic sympathizer. While working with the veteran printer, Munday met several enterprising young apprentices who were composing verse; in fact, he wrote a complimentary alliterative poem to append to Thomas Proctor's A Gorgeous Gallery of Gallant Inventions, a spurious
collection of pillaged and revised pieces by Heywood, Churchyard, and others. Also during that early period of apprenticeship, Munday must have begun writing the street ballads for which Jonson, Chettle, and Marston satirized him and for which he earned the nickname "Balladino." But such hackwork hardly provided a comfortable living, and, although patronage was less available than it had been previously, there were still possibilities for the most aggressive. Munday, now possibly a Catholic convert, sensed an opportunity in Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, a patron of the arts. In fact, another Catholic printer, Charlewood, probably helped Munday to acquire de Vere's patronage. The young de Vere, however, responded condescendingly to Munday's *Galien of France* (1578) and prescribed European study.

Apparently, Munday took de Vere's suggestion seriously, for he was shortly in Rome. There have, however, been large questions posed concerning Munday's European trip—particularly concerning the ease with which Allde accepted the breaking of the articles of apprenticeship and also regarding Munday's source of funds. Some specialists postulate that Munday must have contacted one of the Catholic agents whose responsibility it was to recruit young seminarians for the English colleges at Louvain, Rheims, or Rome; if that is the case,
his travel expenses would have been met by the agent, as was the common practice.\textsuperscript{39} Celeste Turner Wright, however, speculates that Munday, who was now eighteen, was actually intending to enter the priesthood. Nevertheless, whatever the source of his funds, Munday left for Rome in the company of Thomas Nowell after having apprenticed himself for only one year of what was often an eight year obligation; they reached Amiens near destitute as a result of having been robbed on the way by a mob of marauding soldiers. But the accuracy of Turner's speculations concerning the source of Munday's funds becomes less questionable when we learn that, after this initial ill fortune, Munday and Nowell unerringly discovered and frequented the haunts of the recusant colonies in Amiens, Paris, Milan, and Rome and that they were financed and housed almost exclusively by the recusants until they reached Rome.

At the English seminary in Rome Munday observed and relished the delicate food, the comfortable lodgings, and the frequent strife between the English and Welsh students. His experiences he later described in \textit{The English-Roman Life}, published four years after his homecoming. Also, while taking full advantage of the intellectual discipline provided by the Jesuit faculty, Munday carefully noted names of London households where recusants could attend mass and also recorded anti-
government statements which he would later report with a plethora of blushing patriotism. Two fellow students, Ralph Sherwin and Luke Kirbie, who had shown him particular kindness (the latter of the two even lending him money for return passage), Munday later repaid by aiding the government in bringing them to their executions at Tyburn.

Upon first returning to England in 1579, Munday immediately sought the Earl of Oxford again and managed to place himself in the young Earl's service, styling himself "Servant to the Right Honorable, the Earl of Oxford" in his fawning dedication of the Mirror of Mutability (1579). The Mirror presents a collection of doleful samples of the fickleness of fortune. Munday's Mirror, however, went a step further than previous ones, including fresh material from Biblical sources and, instead of being written exclusively in the old reliable rime royal, had a different stanzaic form for each "tragedy."

It seems that Munday was ever willing to resort to hack writing for pay or to vent his rage at some target. Shortly after his return to England, he briefly reappeared on the stage, but was apparently treated unkindly by the audiences, and either religious zeal, compulsion for revenge, or need for finances caused him to accept a fee from the Corporation of London for writing The Third Blast of Retreat from Plays and
Theatres (1580). This piece, like Gosson's "first blast," his School of Abuse (1579), treats the theatre most critically, abusing its "brawlers, roisters, lovers, loiterers, ruffians...as variable in heart as in their parts." He terms the theatres "chapels of Satan" and gasps that even Bible stories are horribly polluted when acted there. At this time Munday also expended considerable effort producing potboiler translations of European romances then in vogue, poetic miscellanies, and other books like the compendium of suicides, monstrous births, and horrible murders (all supposedly portents of the wrath of God to come), which he entitled A View of Sundry Examples (1580).

By late 1580, Munday had apparently cut himself off from acting opportunities; therefore the prodigal returned to the embraces of the drapers' guild and dedicated himself anew to patriotic duties, this time penning The True Report of the Prosperous Success Which God Gave unto Our English Soldiers Against the Foreign Bands of Our Roman Enemies (1580). Munday produced his next spurt of writing in the winter of 1580-1581, when a series of arrests of Catholic agents and Jesuit priests began. Wright suggests that, since at this time, Munday's patron, Lord Oxford, had confessed his Catholicism, Munday's swing away from Rome may have been for self-protection. His fellow seminarians were appearing
throughout England as "massing priests" apparently operating under the leadership of the eloquent Edmund Campion. First his friends Sherwin and Kirby were captured, and Munday occupied a considerable role in their capture and in informing Walsingham and Burleigh of "ensuing harms" from such agents.

After Edmund Campion's arrest, Munday published *A Brief Discourse of the Taking of Edmund Campion* (1581); later in that year he produced another *True Report* concerning the execution of Everit Haunce, one of the massing priests, and in his *Brief Answer* (1582) he pictured Campion's trial and execution. Incidentally, he was able to provide firsthand information about that trial, for he was there to testify against Campion as he had done against his seminary friends. Then the final installments in Munday's anti-Catholic propaganda came in *English-Roman Life* (1582) in which he detailed his observations at the English College in Rome and *A Watch-Word to England to Beware of Traitors* (1584), which displays commendable zeal for Queen Elizabeth's safety from Catholic plots. This zeal and his effectiveness as a propagandist were initially rewarded by a minor court position; then, by 1582, Munday was working for Topcliffe, the chief pursuivant officer charged with uncovering priests and recusants. Finally, in 1584 he assumed the office of Messenger of the
Queen's Chamber, a position of some importance.

By the mid 1580's, Munday began to turn from recusant hunting to writing plays. Henslowe's Diary shows that, between 1584 and 1602, he collaborated on at least eighteen plays, only four of which are still extant. Of these, the play of Sir Thomas More represents the genre in which Munday apparently worked comfortably: what has been called the biographical chronicle play. The More play is important for a number of reasons, paramount among them the supposed collaboration of Shakespeare in writing the Hand D additions.

The question of Shakespearean affiliations with the collaborators who contributed to this play has been thoroughly debated for over six decades; however, in 1949, R. C. Bald surveyed the debate and concluded that the preponderance of evidence points to Shakespearean authorship of the Evil May Day scene. As Bald mentions, little significant or new regarding authorship has been proposed since 1939 or since the publication of R. W. Chambers' incomparable Man's Unconquerable Mind, a study of "sequences of thought" between the Evil May Day scene and other passages in the Shakespearean canon; however, there are some recent studies, like Michael L. Hays's 1975 article in Shakespeare Quarterly, which cannot be ignored, for Hays dismisses the possibility of Shakespearean authorship from a study of watermarks in
the manuscript. If I understand the Hays article correctly, however, there is a significant flaw in his investigatory procedure: Hays studied only photographs of the manuscript and does not appear to have examined the original in the British Museum. But, as Bald has alleged, the important work had been done by the end of 1939. Sir Edward Maude Thompson's palaeographical study asserting Shakespearean authorship, and the collaborating imagistic, bibliographic, philosophical and thematic analyses of Spurgeon, J. D. Wilson, R. W. Chambers, Greg, and others had all been published by that year.46

Modern scholarship, consequently, assumes that a variety of evidence overwhelmingly points to Shakespeare's authorship of the crucial Evil May Day scene of The Book of Sir Thomas More. Of course, before we pursue all of the possibilities attendant with this assumption, we must remember the base from which the paleographic studies began: six Shakespearean signatures and the two words, by me.

Again associated with collaborators, Munday helped write Sir John Oldcastle (1599-1600), another play with well-known Shakespearean affiliation. Furthermore, he collaborated with Chettle on the two parts of another biographical chronicle play, Robert Earl of Huntingdon (1598)47; previously (in 1584) he had translated the
drama *Fedele and Fortunio* and had written *John a Kent and John a Cumber* sometime before 1590. Perhaps one of the most intriguing of Munday's plays for our purposes would be the lost *Rising of Cardinal Wolsey* (1601), which he wrote in collaboration with Chettle, Drayton, and Smith. It would be interesting to compare the treatment of Wolsey with the sympathetic portrait of More in *The Book of Sir Thomas More*, if only better to appreciate the talents of this playwright whom Meres listed among "the best for comedy" and also termed "our best plotter." Nevertheless, today Munday's name is most frequently associated with the *More* play, and this leaves several obvious questions unanswered. Perhaps the most obvious is how did the same individual who was a violent anti-Catholic propagandist also become the primary author of this play? Strangely, until recently, few commentators on the play had even broached this subject. But R. W. Chambers did in *Man's Unconquerable Mind*, and he suggested that it is doubtful that so violent a propagandist as Munday would compose a play making a Catholic martyr of Chancellor More. Furthermore, he asserted that the fact that the bulk of the manuscript was in Munday's hand did not prove that he was the author. From that point, Chambers moved haltingly to admit that Munday was probably one of the collaborators
and that he made the fair copy of the play from rough drafts of the other writers. 50

More recently, Celeste Turner Wright has suggested an alternative. We know that Anthony Munday was an opportunist and not opposed to moving with the tides; we also suspect that the attitudes of Tudor partisans concerning Sir Thomas More had apparently begun to mellow by the time Holinshed wrote his Chronicle. Is it not possible that, though he had publicly opposed the recusants in recent months, Munday was simply presenting a Thomas More who would meld with the traditions in which the London populace and the English people generally revered him--the equitable judge, courageous Englishman, man of conscience, and man of wit? Also, Wright's findings allow us to conjecture that Munday, though publicly a violent anti-Catholic propagandist, privately was a More partisan. 51

These issues will probably never be settled to the satisfaction of all parties and even during its composition, this play which portrayed More so favorably created controversy. Parallels between the Evil May Day scene and similar upheavals in the 1590's had already occurred to Elizabeth's government, as Fleetwood's letter to Burleigh suggests; 52 under these conditions, Sir Edmund Tyllney, Master of the Revels, could not license this play because of the dangers it presented to public order.
He struck through all mention of Frenchmen or strangers and inserted the word Lombards. There were few Lombards in the city then; besides, they were allies of Spain. Then he returned to the first leaf of the manuscript and scrawled his ultimatum:

Leave out the insurrection wholly and the cause thereof and begin with Sir Thomas More at the mayor's sessions with a report afterwards of his good service done being Shrive of London upon a mutiny Against the Lombards. Only by a short report and not otherwise at your own perils.

E. Tyllney.

Discouraging words, no doubt. The numbers of collaborators were increased and their revisions—notable among them the supposed Shakespearean Hand D revision—valiantly attempted to nullify the effects of the questionable Evil May Day scenes by presenting More rebuking the mob through appeals to traditional Tudor political theory—the doctrine of obedience expressed so frequently in the Books of Homilies, especially the 1547 homily entitled "An Exhortation, Concerning Good Order and Obedience to the Rulers and Magistrates."

But even that revision seems to have been inadequate to the challenge, for the evidence is that the play was never performed.

The badly mutilated manuscript of Sir Thomas More housed in the British Museum (Harleian 7368) is the only extant manuscript of the play, and, although a photo-
copy is now available in microfiche,\textsuperscript{56} the 1844 Alexander Dyce edition now serves a valuable function, for there has been further deterioration since Dyce's careful transcript, and we must now consult it for readings of presently illegible passages.\textsuperscript{57} Like Dyce, in 1902 Hopkinson also produced a limited edition, but it was not until C. F. Tucker Brooke's publication of the play in \textit{Shakespeare Apocrypha} that the text became widely available. Following Brooke, J. S. Farmer produced a facsimile in the Tudor Facsimile Series, and, in the same year (1911), W. W. Greg edited the play for the Malone Society. Today, Greg's edition is considered definitive.

The manuscript from which these editions have been printed consists of twenty leaves, thirteen of which are in the autograph of the original scribe, who since 1912 has been identified as Anthony Munday; the other leaves are in the hands of five other writers.\textsuperscript{58} Of the various hands in the document, A is possibly Chettle; B, probably Heywood; C, a theatrical scribe; D, Shakespeare; E, Dekker; and S, Munday. Munday seems to have been both the original author and the maker of a fair copy, but he did not take part in the later process of revision to attempt to placate the censor; Shakespeare, on the other hand, appears to have been involved solely as a reviser.\textsuperscript{59}
Authorship has not been the only problem associated with this play, for attempts to date the manuscript have also created difficulties, especially since More and John of Kent had been bound together for some time. Palaeographical evidence that Kent had been written three years previous to More did not settle the problem of dating, either. Consequently, over the years the date of composition has been estimated at from 1587 to 1608. The preponderance of modern opinion, however, places the composition in the 1590's and possibly in the latter half of the decade.

This same modern scholarship often correctly asserts that, for their sources, the consortium of authors consulted Hall's Chronicle, Roper's Life of More and Foxe's Book of Martyrs, but that significantly, they depended considerably on contemporary London legends about More and ignored the two generations of vigorous attack on More's character. What has not been noted in these studies is that the authors depended not only on London traditions, but also apparently on Ro. Ba. or Stapleton's Latin Life of More for some jest materials. However, what becomes clear is that their intention must have been to present a character who has been termed the "English ideal," a kind, humorous, bluff, blunt, courageous, and honest statesman, not the cynical mocker so emphasized by Hall, Foxe, and Holinshed.
Besides sensing that the dry wit and kindliness of the Lord Chancellor would interest the London audience instead of his historical significance, the collaborators also apparently felt an opportunity to fashion an even timelier play. In 1593, London tradesmen and apprentices had been demonstrating great agitation against aliens, threatening them on placards with "many a sore stripe" and other physical harm. Possibly hoping to popularize their play by appealing to sensationalism, they based More's rise from Under-sheriff of London to Chancellor quite unhistorically on his quelling of the Evil May Day disturbances of 1517. But the fact that they ignored the partisan presentations of Hall, Foxe and Holinshed and attributed the dissipation of the rioters to More's eloquence is even more significant than their historical inaccuracies, for it suggests that the writers were more intent on portraying More as London remembered him, "strongly based on...obstinate tradition" which contradicted Tudor propaganda.

In its present state of deterioration, the play of More consists of seventeen scenes covering the rise and fall of Sir Thomas More. When examined in their unrevised form, the scenes fall into the following scheme:

| sc. i  | Discontent in the City |
| sc. ii | Cutpurse Jest          |
| sc. iii| Court Discusses Discontent |
An even closer examination of the seventeen scenes produces a clearer notion of how obstinately did the playwrights steer away from the propaganda of Tudor documents on More in order to color him instead as the man of learning, integrity, and wit whose memory London so revered. In fact, Scott McMillin's theatrical analysis of the text shows that the collaborators consistently altered scenes for dramatic purposes and to give an important visual representation to More's "personal consistency in the face of outward change." Two passages generally summarize the treatment of Sir Thomas More which emerges from the mutilated leaves of this manuscript. Not surprisingly, they occur at crucial junctures in the text: shortly after More is credited with nearly singlehandedly calming the citizenry and quelling the May Day riots and also at the point where...
More is shown being taken to the Tower. Significantly, the first statement comes from the Lord Mayor of London, then a guest at More's banquet at Chelsea. He praises More's efforts thus:

My Lord, you set a gloss on London's fame,  
And make it happy ever by your name.  
Needs must we say, when we remember More,  
Twa he that drove rebellion from our door.  
With grave discretions mild and gentle breath,  
Shielding many subjects lives from death.  
Oh how our City is by you renowned,  
And with your virtues our endeavors crowned.67

But the Lord Mayor does not voice alone the city's praise of More: the second passage appears as officers of the Tower of London come to escort More to his imprisonment. First, they express concern that they may not reach a barge on the Thames with their prisoner, for the people with their boats have so crowded the river waiting for their Lord Chancellor. Then, the First and Second Warders seem to speak for the citizenry as they intone,

**First Warder**  
Well, be it spoken without offence to any,  
A wiser, or more virtuous Gentleman  
Was never bred in England.

**Second Warder**  
I think the poor will bury him in tears.  
I never heard a man since I was born,  
So generally bewailed of every one.  
(Munday, sc. xiv, 11. 1613-1617)

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In terms of the political controversy, there is no question but that the play does skirt the major issue of More's conflict with Henry--his anti-supremacy position. So far did the authors go to avoid that emotion-laden matter that the play does not delineate why More was executed. Instead, it refers vaguely to More and Bishop Fisher refusing to sign "articles" being presented to the Privy Council (Munday, sc. x, 11. 1233-1256). This appears to be quite unhistorical, for most other sources maintain that More and Fisher appeared before the Lambeth Commission individually, not with the remainder of the Privy Council. Nevertheless, from this avoidance of the complex political and theological problems attendant to the Act comes the necessary product: emphasis on More's death as opposed to emphasis upon the issue for which he died. Chambers, in fact, maintained that it was in thus skirting the issue that the authors hoped to escape the censor. Hence, instead of being a political play, The Book of Sir Thomas More is a character study which attempts "a rounded presentation of an historical figure who was also a great man." While doing so, this play also most intriguingly follows the recusant traditions of interpretation of More's character, although the people who were supposedly to see the play were primarily Protestant, and, as far as it can be determined, the collaborators who wrote the
play were also—especially the newly loyal anti-recusant propagandist, Anthony Munday. 70

The scheme of this character study is interesting, for, as I. A. Shapiro has previously noted, 71 its primary structural principle is comparison; it compares More with other members of the Council and with the British people generally regarding their responses to the difficult situation at hand. More easily survives the comparison, for, although he "seals error with his blood" (Munday, sc. xvii, 1. 1984), he does not capitulate as did Norfolk, Shrewsbury, and, members of More's family, and the playwrights were anything but subtle in communicating that point to their audience.

As I have suggested above, this drama employs comparison throughout as the preeminent structural device, and it does so especially in close alliance with treatments of More's integrity, which are sympathetic. Consequently, other members of the Privy Council serve only as foils to More's great virtue so that finally (Munday, sc. x, 11. 1269-1270), the other lords of the Council limply agree to subscribe to the Act of Supremacy, while More leaves them recalling the preeminence of conscience over law (Munday, sc. x, 11. 1238-1240)—lex dubia non obligat. As he leaves for the Tower, More characterizes his approaching death as relief from the tension between conscience and duty:
"And let us/ To a great prison, to discharge the strife/
Commenc'd twixt conscience and my frailer life"
(Munday, sc. xiii, 11. 1588-1590). Lest the contrast
between More and the lords be lost, the writers focus
a second time on exhibiting More's superiority to his
compatriots of the Council. Most of the great noblemen
are unable to comprehend More's actions; Surrey wonders
aloud, "Tis strange that my lord Chancellor should refuse
the duty that the law of God bequeaths unto the King"
(Munday, sc. x, 11. 1276-1278). On the other hand,
More with his subtle intellect is fully cognizant of
what he is about, and this further enables him quickly
to objectify a moral lesson from his worldly fate. In
fact, Ribner has observed\textsuperscript{72} that the play adopts a
distinctly medieval cast at some junctures, especially
in the passage in which More announces his perception
of the significance of this chain of events. Actually,
we hear him parroting the medieval teaching that divine
ordination prescribes destruction for those who aspire
to high estate, \textit{sans} any congruity with the vice or
virtue of the protagonist. In keeping with this
teaching, \textit{The Book of Sir Thomas More} and its hero
convey the assumption that the individual must accept
his destiny as inevitable without rebellion or resent-
ment (Munday, sc. xiii, 11. 1471-1501).\textsuperscript{73} Again,
only one of the remaining members of the Council appears
to grasp More's meaning at the same time that he pays deference to the former Lord Chancellor's fame and learning. Once more, it is the bluff old Earl of Surrey who, although seldom cited for his sophistication or wisdom in the Tudor chronicles, while bidding farewell to the doomed More, seems to anticipate all of their destinies as he laments, "A very learned worthy Gentleman/ Seals error with his blood. Come, we'll to Court./ Let's sadly hence to perfect unknown fates,/ Whilst he tends prograce to the state of states" (Munday, sc. xvii, 11. 1983-1986).

Besides this portrait of conscience being served in lieu of capitulation to Henry's demands for supremacy, the collaborators frequently note More's integrity, particularly in connection with the Evil May Day disturbances. For information concerning these riots, the playwrights appear to have depended heavily on Hall's Chronicle; however, unlike Hall, Foxe, or even Roper, they credit More with calming the citizenry primarily through his eloquence and personal integrity, so much so that Shrewsbury terms him "th'appeaser of this mutiny" (Munday, sc. vi, 1. 563).

Testimony to More's crucial role is frequent throughout the play; therefore, all occurrences cannot be mentioned here; however, they might best be represented by the words of two characters who represent opposite
poles of the social spectrum of contemporary London--the Earl of Surrey and the rebel, Doll Williamson. Each testifies to the power of More's words. Surrey, hoping that the Privy Council can secure More's services to put down the rebellion, predicts that More "may by his gentle and persuasive speech, perhaps prevail more then we can with power" while shortly after the rioters have been dissipated, Doll credits More in this fashion: "Sheriff More, thou has done more with thy good words, then all they could with their weapons" (Munday, sc. iii, 11. 404-405; sc. vi, 11. 498-499).

But although More's eloquence may have achieved much good, strong personal integrity had to support his assurances. The tradesmen and apprentices who presumed to break the King's peace because (as they put it) foreigners "enjoy more privilege then we in our own country" (Munday, sc. iv, 11. 422-423) were not likely to surrender while their lives were in jeopardy, not unless they had the assurances of a trustworthy person. Only integrity like Thomas More's could make credible the pledges that their grievances would be presented to the King and that they would be secured a general pardon. And the statements of the rebels in scenes vi and vii suggest that they expected no less of their "Mr. More."

This play credits More with having quelled the riot
and having acquired Henry's pardon for the offenders (Munday, sc. vii. 11. 702-705); this is quite contrary to the received traditions surrounding the great drama at Westminster which were preserved by numerous authors including Hall, Harpsfield, Rastell, Grafton, Holinshed, and Ro. Ba. None of these chroniclers and biographers so credit More. Much to the contrary, all of them closely adhere to Hall, and he ascribes the pardon to the pleas of the entire Privy Council, not to Thomas alone:

And when all were come before the king's presence, the Cardinal sore laid to the Mayor and commonality their negligence, and to the prisoners he declared that they had deserved death for their offence: Then all the prisoners together cried mercy gracious lord, mercy. Then the lords altogether besought his grace of mercy, at whose request the King pardoned them all.

(Hall, p. 591)

Actually, the surviving evidence is impressive that no individual secured the royal pardon, and particularly not More. If any single person deserves credit, it is probably Queen Catherine; this legacy is preserved in part by a contemporary ballad which enjoyed some currency even one-half century after More's death. The rather uneven poem was written by one Churchyard, a habitue of Catherine's court, and it details the Queen's plea for the rebels in this fashion:
And so, disrob'd from rich attires,
With hairs hang'd down, she sadly hies,
And of her gracious lord requires
A boon, which hardly he denies.
'The lives,' quoth she, 'of all the blooms
Yet budding green, these youths, I crave....'
Whereat his gentle queen he cheers,
And says, 'Stand up, sweet lady, rise:
The lives of them I freely give....'
No sooner was this pardon given,
But peals of joy rung through the hall,
As though it thunder'd down from heaven
The queen's renown amongst them all.\(^{75}\)

Modern historical romances and biographies have preserved that tradition and added Wolsey's name to Catherine's; however this author cannot discern specific sources for this addendum. Nevertheless, Jean Plaidy's *St. Thomas's Eve* (1954), Mary Luke's *Catherine the Queen* (1967), and Garrett Mattingly's *Catherine of Aragon* (1941)\(^{76}\) have preserved that usage and pictured Catherine and Wolsey prostrating themselves before Henry to secure a reprieve for the anarchists. But the collaborators' version--despite the accounts of Hall, Foxe, Holinshed, and others, despite the stronger London tradition of Catherine's heroism--was that Sir Thomas More secured the pardon from the King.

Perhaps the intent of the playwrights' particular treatment of the More legend and materials deserves some consideration here. It cannot be argued that Munday and his cohorts were completely oblivious to the other versions of More's part in the May Day affair, for, as has been stated previously, their familiarity
with the Hall accounts is quite evident. Furthermore, John Meagher has shown in an article in *Stratford Studies* that Munday knew and used other chronicle sources unsympathetic to More in fashioning his Huntingdon plays: the chronicles of Grafton and Holinshed along with John Bale's *Acts of the English Votaries*. And, just as he had done with the Robin Hood materials while penning *The Downfall* and *The Death of Robert Earl of Huntingdon*, when employing the More materials from Hall, he sometimes borrowed heavily from his source, but at other times deviated independently from it when "the hackwriter's prudent sense of economy" demanded. Unlike some of the theatrical luminaries who were his contemporaries, Munday organized his plays along sometimes ruthless standards of dramatic efficiency which, John Meagher writes, "required the minimising of unnecessary sophistication in plot, in character, in language."  

The brute principle of dramaturgy employed in constructing *More* was apparently the same that Munday had employed for the Huntingdon plays: maximize the dramatic use of materials by compressing, distorting, selecting or inventing new materials upon the suggestions of the old; furthermore, these devices are employed to whatever extent necessary to insure dramatic efficiency. No matter, then, that the sources do not generally credit More with quelling the riots; London oral traditions may
have, and the audience had to be satisfied. Besides, More was already on stage; therefore, it was eminently efficient to have him quell the riot. Moreover, it is not important that More was not named knight, member of the Privy Council, and Lord Chancellor in the course of a few hours. Ignore Hall, Holinshed, Grafton, and even Roper and compress all of the occasions on which he was honored into a few lines of one quick-moving scene. Also, dramatic efficiency prefers the picture of More resigning the Chancellorship when presented the Act of Supremacy. No matter that, in reality, Henry consulted More at least three times (as Roper, Harpsfield, and Ro. Ba. attest) beginning as early as 1527, nor that More, in fact, resigned as Lord Chancellor before being confronted with the oath.

Now, to return to More's integrity--it is significant that this play accurately portrays More devoted first to God and, after God, to the King. As Chambers argues, the play adeptly grasps the two basic elements of More's character: "his passionate devotion to the king in all lawful matters, and his unbending refusal to obey the king in what he believes to be unlawful."\(^8\) In keeping with this interpretation of his character, More appears early in the play (in the Shakespearean revision of the insurrection scene) addressing the rioters by appealing to conservative Tudor political philosophy--
To the king god hath his office lent
Of dread of Justice, power and Command,
Hath bid him rule, and willed you to obey
And to add ampler majesty to this
He hath not only lent the king his figure,
His throne, his sword, but given him his own name
Calls him a god on earth. What do you then
Rising gainst him that god himself installs
But rise gainst god?  

(Munday, sc. vi /Fol. 9a7, 11. 221-229)

All evidence now extant suggests, too, that More accepted this doctrine, but that he also believed that kings did make unjust laws which the subject was not bound to obey. There was, however, a greater good to be considered, and it was the peace of the kingdom. Typically, Sir Thomas More would have put aside such nice considerations of conscience for the preservation of order in the land. But note that the integrity represented here is framed upon balanced fealty to God and king.

In the same Shakespearean addition, More appeals to the Londoners' concerns for their own future and safety, a concern which could not have been alien to them in such dangerous times. Without risking his popularity, he appeals to their sense of self-preservation and fair-play and in doing so exhibits either concern for the masses or a well-honed mob psychology. He argues,

You'll put down strangers, kill them,
Cut their throats, possess their homes....

...
What country by the nature of your error
Should give you harbor... Why you must
Needs be strangers. Would you be pleased
To find a nation of such barbarous temper
That breaking out in hideous violence
Would not afford you, an abode on earth
Whet their detested knives against your
Throats, spurn you like dogs...? What
Would you think to be thus used, this
Is the strangers' case and this your
Mountainish inhumanity. Faith I says
True, let us do as we may be done by.

(Munday, sc. vi /Tol. 9a7, 11. 242-264)

The evidence of this play as well as that of other sources suggests that sensitivity to the well-being of his countrymen motivates More here, for this is a concern frequently cited as the basis for More's popularity with the masses. In fact, once the uprising has been stopped, in response to the Lord Mayor's praise, More interjects, "My Lord, and brethren, what I here have spoke my country's love, and next, the City's care: enjoined me to" (Munday, sc. vi, 11. 511-513). Note also that in his address to the crowds above, More is also wisely appealing to his countrymen's legendary sense of fair play.

A similar sense of equity in dealing with the commons emerges from a segment of the play which we may call the cutpurse scenes, for it is based on the cutpurse jest previously recounted by Ro. Ba. (pp. 107 ff.). Despite More's modest disclaimer that "All that I aim at, is a merry jest" (Munday, sc. ii, 1. 183), the basis for the humor in this scene is the pompous old justice's
strange admonishment of the plaintiff for his carelessness in carrying such large sums of money:

I promise ye, a man that goes abroad, ...meeting such a booty
May be provoked to that he never meant.
What makes so many pilferers and felons,
But such fond baits that foolish people lay:
To tempt the needy miserable wretch.
Ten pounds, odd money, this is a pretty sum,
To bear about, which were more safe at home,
Fore God 'twere well to fine ye as much more
To the relief of the poor prisoners81....
(Munday, sc. ii, 11. 136-145)

But once Lifter has picked old Justice Suresbie's purse, and the Justice has discovered his loss, the ruse is complete, and More admonishes him, "Believe me Mr. Suresbie, this is strange, you being a man so settled in assurance, will fall in that which you condemned in others/57" (Munday, sc. ii, 11. 307-309).

One can thus observe the principle of equity to all as it underlies the irony of this jest. This sense of justice was, we may remember, one of More's qualities which had so impressed Erasmus, and of it Erasmus has written:

No judge ever disposed of more suits, or conducted himself with more perfect integrity....Whatever authority he derives from his rank, and whatever influence he enjoys by the favor of a powerful sovereign, are employed in the service of the public, or in that of his friends..., and this
disposition in more conspicuous than ever, now that his power of doing good is greater. (Erasmus, pp. 396-397)

Also, this cutpurse jest appears as part of a larger pattern emphasizing More's comedic talent, a pattern which courses through the entire play and owes its heritage to portrayals dating back to Hall. Significantly, More's first appearance in the play occurs in this cutpurse scene, and his jests, witticisms, puns, and practical jokes increase dramatically as he approaches the time of his execution. Like Ro. Ba., Munday and his collaborators appear interested in establishing a direct link between More's wit and his unbending conscience, although this is not to imply that conscience is as evident an issue in this play. In fact, besides the reference to it already cited above, there are only two more significant ones, both occurring in scenes within the Tower.

The first of these allusions appears as the members of the Privy Council leave More in the hands of the Lieutenant of the Tower. More bids Surrey farewell, next (we can imagine) surveys the forbidding walls of his prison, then begins this brief soliloquy:

    Fair prison, welcome, yet methinks,  
    For thy fair building, tis too foul a name.  
    Many a guilty soul, and many an innocent,  
    Have breathed their farewell to thy hollow rooms.
I oft have entered into thee this way,
Yet I thank God, never with a clearer conscience
Then at this hour.       (Munday, sc. xiv,
11. 1662-1668)

Only minutes later, More tells the Lieutenant of the Tower, who is trying to comfort him, "I have peace of conscience" (Munday, sc. svi, I. 1741). By no means do these few brief references to conscience begin to reproduce those patterns found in Roper, Harpsfield, and Ro. Ba., but coming as they do at two very crucial points in the play--while the Privy Council faces the issue of supremacy, and as More approaches execution for denying Henry's supremacy--they serve to magnify the importance which conscience has had in the destiny of this British hero.

The collaborators do suggest another conjunction; it is that which More himself states at scene ix (one of the scenes presenting the dramatic performance during the banquet at Chelsea); here More quips to the player who has just told him that The Marriage of Wit and Wisdom forms part of their repertory. More's pregnant observation reads,

The marriage of wit and wisdom? that my Lads,
I'll none but that, the theme is very good,
And may maintain a liberal argument.
To marry wit to wisdom, asks some cunning,
Many have wit, that may come short of wisdom.       (Munday, sc. ix,
11. 923-927)
Expression of the partnership of these two qualities in More's personality seems to have concerned the collaborators as they toyed with and juggled the scenes of the play. Seldom, for instance, do they voluntarily tamper with scenes exhibiting this "marriage," and the play as we have it contains so many jests and witticisms (all depending on More as prime mover) that it would be difficult to represent them fairly here. However, the Lieutenant of the Tower's observation—"in life and death, still merry, Sir Thomas More" (Munday, sc. xvi, l. 1750)—best exemplifies the attitude with which the play treats More's wit; and the passage's juxtaposition of wit and death is crucial, for the majority of the citations of More's humor occur in the latter half of the play where More approaches his death. These last eight scenes, which include the Privy Council's capitulation to Henry and continue to More's beheading, present sixteen examples of More's wit, including jests and puns, some of which exhibit two and three-partite structures. Conversely, the numbers of comic passages in the first nine scenes are minimal.

In fact, a not unexpected pattern develops wherein the closer is More's death, the more intense is the comedy. This entire mode of treatment, in fact, is reminiscent of the treatment of More by Ro. Ba. and

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also of the passage from that author previously quoted: "Sir Thomas kept his accustomed mirth as a testimony of a clear conscience in his greatest afflictions" (Ro. Ba., p. 118). The difference between the treatments implicit in the two sources depends on a subtle shift in The Book of Sir Thomas More to greater emphasis on More's humor while making the theme of conscience secondary.

But this arrangement evolves only gradually. At first it emerges in a minor key from scattered comic passages which materialize as soon as More begins to introduce the *lex dubia* motif in scene x and then abruptly resigns his office shortly thereafter. Having done so, he invites the other Privy Councillors to visit him at Chelsea, where they will "go a fishing, and with a cunning net, not like weak film...catch none by the great" (Munday, xc. x, 11. 1238-1240, 1253-1256, 1263-1265). This quillet, of course, obliquely glances back to Henry's "net": the "articles" with which he had ensnared the Council. In the next scene, and much in the tradition of the pew anecdote which had appeared in earlier sources, More cannot avoid the opportunity to joke about his altered status now that he is no longer Lord Chancellor. He speaks to his family of having been "trimmed of late," of having
"had a smooth Court shaving," and of now being leaner than before; for "the fat is gone: my title's only More" (Munday, sc. xi, 11. 1341-1342, 1358-1360). In a bizarre twist on the traditional pew jest, which in its present form smacks of dark comedy, More tells his wife, "Honor and Jests are both together fled,/ The merriest Counselor of England's dead," and when she wonders which counselor, More responds, "the Lord Chancellor, wife" (Munday, sc. xi, 11. 1353-1356).

From that note, the jests continue to another whimsical twist on More's resolution in denying the Act of Supremacy. We may recall that Ro. Ba. recounted the incident of the young courtier whom More had gulled into thinking he had succeeded at convincing him to subscribe to the oath. Munday revises the jest and has More giving his family the same impression, but correcting it with, "I will subscribe to go unto the Tower, with all submissive willingness, and thereto add my bones to strengthen the foundation of Julius Caesar's palace" (Munday, sc. xiii, 11. 1580-1583).

Shortly after that scene, the warders of the Tower come for Sir Thomas, and, concurrently, the comedy intensifies to a veritable barrage of puns, jests, and witticisms which counterpoints the shadow of death which hovers over More. This crescendo is introduced by More's somewhat solemn pun upon his situation:
"Grave More thus lightly walks to a quick grave" (Munday, sc. xiii, l. 1599) and immediately quickens to a lighter tone. Many of the popular More jests are employed in the last few scenes which cover the imprisonment and execution. For instance, in the course of only four scenes, the familiar upper garment, urinal, scaffold, short neck, and beard jests are reproduced in essentially the same form in which earlier writers had employed them, but added to these are a number of others which had not appeared in extant biographical treatments, chronicles, or other literary forms. Representative of these are the new jokes which More makes while approaching execution once he is imprisoned in the Tower. In the last scene of the play, for instance, he jokes of his impending doom frequently. Some examples bear repetition here:

And sure my memory is grown so ill,
I fear I shall forget my head behind me,

and,

In sooth, I am come about a headless errand,

and,

I confess his majesty has been good to me...; I'll send him (for my tresspass) a reverend head, somewhat bald, for it is not requisite any head should stand covered to so high majesty,

and finally,
I come hither only to be let blood, my doctor here tells me it is good for the headache.

(Munday, sc. xvii, 11. 1888-1889, 1913, 1934-1936, 1941)

This multitude of comic materials and allusions to More's great integrity and learning all contribute to a picture of London's hero which the playwrights were presenting for reasons of audience appeal, not for political or religious propaganda, as had been the case with many of the treatments. Legends of More's conduct in prison and while on the scaffold immediately before his decapitation were current for most of the later sixteenth century; his jests had become legendary, too; and, although the anti-More propaganda of contemporary Tudor or Protestant apologists was strong, the More legends were apparently stronger. In fact, is it not reasonable to suggest that it is to this popular memory of him which the writers of The Book of Sir Thomas More were appealing? This bluff sheriff, lighthearted but just magistrate, and protector of the poor and weak, is just the recollection of More which London cherished. In fact, this essentially Protestant play adheres so closely to that tradition that it employs language evocative of Erasmus's phraseology, and the similarity cannot be coincidental. For as More is led to the Tower, a character merely identified as "a Poor
Woman" cries out, "Farewell the best friend that the poor ever had" (Munday, sc. xiv, 1. 1648).

Despite Scott McMillin's brilliant analysis of the play as a theatrical document, McMillin and others still note its roughness as a literary work. For instance, Meagher commented that the work was "not artistically distinguished" and represented neither "new departures in the theatre nor unusually late survivals of old departures," while, in a doctoral dissertation presented in 1970 to the faculty of the University of Padua, Gilberto Storari suggested that, although the best of More can be elicited from some domestic scenes in the play, and although More's character emerges "cogent and convincing," but "treated rather superficially," ultimately the playwrights' insistence on the hero's humorous acceptance of death detracts and contributes a lack of dignity to that death.

Storari's comments may have some validity if we were to judge this drama solely by modern aesthetic standards, but there are two very significant points which he appears to have overlooked. First, the witticism and humor which he disparages seem to have been totally in character, unless we are to disbelieve partisans and critics alike, among them Erasmus, Hall,
Roper, Harpsfield, Foxe, Holinshed, Ro. Ba., and others. But more significantly, the character More is treated in this play as acting out a typically medieval role which fortune had ordained for him. Indeed, on the scaffold he refers to himself as a "stage player" who "though... old, and [In]...bad voice" is there to "act this last scene of...[His] tragedy" (Munday, xvii, 11. 1933-1934). Thus he implies that he views his rise and fall in terms of _de casibus_ tragedy. In fact, he had earlier referred to his situation in terms which suggested that interpretation:

But we being subject to the rack of hate,
Falling from happy life to bondage state
Having seen better days, now know the lack
Of glory, that once reared each high fed back.

(Munday, sc. xiii, 11. 1496-1499)

This phraseology suggests a medieval attitude toward destiny, one upon which Ribner has previously commented. In fact, Ribner has observed correctly that More's fall is presented as inevitable, though not deserved, for his is the fate of all mere mortals who rise to the top of Fortuna's wheel. Furthermore, Ribner has observed that More's resignation to death is particularly medieval, but both he and Storari fail to comment on another most crucial point: the medieval property of the play's
admixture of the grave and comic, particularly as associated with treatments of death.

Although it is probably true that the supposed involvement of Shakespeare in *Sir Thomas More*’s composition has focused more scholarly attention on the play than it might have otherwise attracted, this drama does possess some merit and is at least an interesting type for the genre known as the biographical historical play. Furthermore, by portraying More in the fashion which I have described above, Munday and his cohorts have contributed to another slight tilt in the traditions of Moreana, a shift away from the hagiographic tendency of focusing primarily on More's battle of conscience with Henry to one concentrating more fully on the popularity which he enjoyed with the London community because of his charity, sense of justice, integrity, and light-hearted humor in the face of death. So much is the conflict with Henry relegated to a secondary position in order to accentuate these other qualities that the audience does not learn from the play precisely what Henry's "articles" contained, nor does it learn exactly why More could not accept the King's demands other than that his conscience would not allow him to do so.

Thus end the literary treatments of Sir Thomas More in his own century. Traditions of presentation
developed in the sixteenth century, however, can be traced through the ensuing centuries and well into the present age. It will be the purpose of the following chapter to survey the continuance of these traditions through representative literature of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries.
NOTES TO CHAPTER II

1 Despite earlier attempts to ascribe this biography to Robert Barnstable, Robert Barnsfield, or others, modern critical opinion admits the impossibility of determining authorship; see A. W. Reed's "Introduction" to Ro. Ba.'s The Life of Sir Thomas More, Sometimes Lord Chancellor of England, Elsie Vaughan Hitchcock and P. E. Hallett, eds. with notes, appendices and introduction by A. W. Reed, EETS, OS No. 222 (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1950), pp. xxiv-xxv.


3 Cited in n. 1 above; hereafter the primary work is cited as Ro. Ba.

4 See Reed, "Introduction," to Ro. Ba., p. xix for a similar conclusion.
5 The date March 25, 1599, appears in the "Epistle Dedicatory" and has been generally accepted as accurate.

6 "Introduction," Ro. Ba., p. xxiv; the youthful characteristic Ro. Ba. assigns to himself (Ro. Ba., p. 15).

7 Ibid., p. xix. 8 More, p. 40.

9 Thomas Stapleton's Latin Life of More (1588) was printed in Douai, Paris, Cologne, Frankfort, and Leipzig, but not translated into English until 1928.

10 Chambers, More, p. 40.


12 See Reed, "Introductory Note" and "Introduction" and especially Professor Hitchcock's very helpful marginal notations to Ro. Ba.

13 These findings are, of course, based on Hitchcock's marginal notations.

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Kendall, p. 17.


Legends, p. 3.


Field, p. 282.

See especially Chapter III of that work, which thoroughly examines recusant styles.

Pillimore's opinions were known to R. W. Chambers and contributed to his "On the Continuity..."; those ideas can be found in "Blessed Thomas More and the Arrest of Humanism in England," The Dublin Review, 153 (July 1913), 8.

Southern, p. 5.


Ibid., pp. xxiii-xxiv.

Ibid., p. xxiii.

Works, p. 768; Chambers, More, p. 179; Reynolds, Field, p. 182.


Italics added for emphasis; *Ro. Ba.*, p. 206.


As quoted in Chambers, *More*, p. 46.

Ibid., p. 47.

Unless otherwise stipulated, this biographical section depends on "Munday, Anthony" in the *DNB* (1921); Celeste Turner Wright, *Anthony Munday: An Elizabethan of Letters*, Univ. of California Publications in English, IT, No. 1 (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1928); Celeste Turner Wright, "Young Anthony Mundy Again," *SP*, 56 (1959), 150-168; and Ann Haaker, especially pp. 122-124.


Munday describes the usual method of recruiting in his *A Discovery of Edmund Campion* (1582), quoted by Turner, p. 13.


In the article previously cited in n. 2, this chapter; see especially p. 45.


See n. 2, this chapter.

The already cited Tannenbaum and Haaker bibliographies will list most references pertinent to this question. Others have been previously cited in this chapter.
47 Nicoll, p. 78. 48 Ibid., pp. 91-92.


51 See Celeste Turner Wright, "Munday Again," as previously cited.

52 Strype's Annals, pp. 37-38, as cited by Turner, Elizabethan Man, p. 110.

53 Greg, Introduction, p. x; Bald suggests two submissions to Tyllney; Bald, p. 51.


55 Sermon X in Certain Sermons, or Homilies Appointed by the King's Majesty to Be Declared and Read (1547), Sig. Rir-Rir, as it appears in James L. Sanderson, ed. Henry IV, Part I (New York: Norton Critical Editions, 1969).

56 For Example, the Images Enterprises edition of John S. Farmer's facsimile: Harleian MS 7368 (Los Angeles: Images Enterprises).

57 Bald, p. 44. 58 Acheson, p. 103.

59 Ibid., p. 104; Bald, pp. 44 ff.


61 Turner, Elizabethan Man, p. 108.

63 Chambers, More, p. 46.
65 Chambers, More, p. 46.
66 Scene divisions are partially as presented by Greg, pp. xxvi-xxvii. Obviously, any analysis of this play's content must be cautious because of the uncertainty of text. See also Scott McMillin's analysis of scenic design in "The Book of Sir Thomas More: A Theatrical View," MP, 68 (August, 1970), 21-22 especially.
67 Anthony Munday, The Book of Sir Thomas More, sc. ix. 11. 965-972 in Greg's edition previously cited; all future quotations of the play will be from this edition and will be cited as Munday. Also, modern conventions of capitalizing first words will be followed here to prevent confusion.
68 Mind, p. 212.
70 Chambers, Mind, p. 212.
73 Ibid., p. 223.
The MS is damaged at l. 145, and all that is legible of the last two words is "po..............soners," but Dyce supplies -ore and pri-.


McMillin as previously cited, n. 62.


Ribner, p. 212. Ibid., pp. 212-213.

Ibid., pp. 211-212.
CHAPTER III

THE CONTINUING TRADITION

Perhaps it is not surprising that Moreana of the sixteenth century should be so numerous and consistently complimentary of Sir Thomas More; however, literary treatments of More did not wane with that century. They have persisted well into the modern period, although no ensuing epoch has produced as much material on More as the sixteenth century. It shall be the purpose of this chapter, therefore, to examine representative materials written in those intervening centuries--the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth--as preparation for an analysis of selected contemporary works.

Writing disparagingly of the paucity of seventeenth century works on More, R. W. Chambers unwittingly commented on what these few selections may mean for us today. Although his opening assertion concerning lack of authority was well-taken ("the scattered anecdotes...have passed through too many mouths to carry authority"), it is Chambers' further observation which is significant to this study: "at best they can show us what people in the seventeenth century believed More to have been like." Taking Chambers' remark as a proposition for this chapter, we may extend it to assert that treatments of More in the eighteenth
and nineteenth centuries also deserve consideration, for they may suggest what those epochs "believed More to have been like."

The earliest extant seventeenth century description of Thomas More's life is to be found in The True Chronicle History of the Whole Life and Death of Thomas, Lord Cromwell (1602), a play which has quite evidently received more scholarly notice than its quality warrants. One of the factors attracting attention to this play is its association with the Lord Chamberlain's Men via a title page claim that it was "sundry times publically acted" by that company. Furthermore, it presents a most complimentary portrait of Cromwell, but this feature is not unexpected, for the Chamberlain's Men are known to have been friendly to Essex and his party, and, since Cromwell was himself Earl of Essex, the company may have hoped to glorify Elizabeth's Essex through Cromwell, turning to the old propagandist Foxe for Cromwellian materials propitious to those objectives.

Second, resulting from another title page inscription--"written by W. S."--has been the frequent association of this play with Shakespeare. Such a connection is not totally implausible; after all, a mere eight years prior to the printing of the play, Shakespeare had already been connected with the Chamberlain's Men. Palace records establish that he performed with them.
at Greenwich for the Christmas revels. In fact, the assumption that the play is Shakespearean has been so long prevalent that *Cromwell* was even included in the Third and Fourth Folios, reprinted by Rose, and revived as "A Tragedy by Shakespeare" by Walker in 1734. The distant past has also been kinder than has the modern age, for, though even the often sensitive reader, August Schlegel, had confidently labeled the play Shakespearean and judged it worthy of inclusion with his best works, later critical assessment has shifted radically. For instance, F. S. Boas scoffs that "perhaps no piece in the apocrypha can have less claim to such an honor."

In fact, contemporary scholarship is generally in agreement with Boas and assumes that the inscription represents the printer's attempt to enhance sales by implying authorship by the popular Stratfordian. Perhaps the most compelling argument against such authorship, however, is lack of esthetic quality, particularly of the kind of character delineation which is Shakespeare's forte. In fact, except for occasional attempts to suggest otherwise, modern appraisals of *Cromwell* have generally agreed with Swinburne's, although they have not employed terms as strong as his:

- a piece of such utterly shapeless, spiritless, bodiless, soulless, senseless, helpless, worthless rubbish that there is no known writer of Shakespeare's age to whom it could be ascribed without
the infliction of an unwarrantable insult on that writer's memory. 10

The play consists of vignettes which follow Thomas Cromwell from his schoolboy days to his death, a common feature of these historical dramas. 11 And, although the character treatment is hardly dramatically convincing, the portrayal of the young Cromwell does exhibit an appealing naive charm; for example, scene i presents him as poor and unnoticed, but already aspiring through learning to overreach his father's mean blacksmith shop:

Good morrow morn, I do salute thy brightness
The night seems tedious to my troubled soul:
Whose black obscurity binds in my mind,

And now Aurora with a lively dye,
Adds comfort to my spirit that mounts on high
Too high indeed, my state being so mean,
My study like a mineral of gold:
Makes my heart proud wherein my hopes enrolled,
My books is all the wealth I do possess,
And unto them I have in gaged my heart,
Oh learning, how divine thou seems to me.

(W. S., sigs. A27, A2Y)

However, despite innumerable transparent efforts to unify the play through the intervention of a chorus, scenes shift discordantly from London to Antwerp, Mantua, and back to England with little dramatic logic; in fact, the episodes on which the play depends have small relation to one another except for the inadequate commonality of concern with Cromwell. 12 And F. S. Boas has validly

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complained that the ultimate source of its weakness is its failure to dramatically heighten bare historical fact. For instance, when the guards appear to take Cromwell to his execution, he responds banally, "No matter...Cromwell is prepared/ For Gardiner has my state and life ensnared,/ Bid them come in, or you shall do them wrong,/ For here stands he, who some thinks lives too long" (W. S., sig. G1^).

Conversely, as in the earlier Book of Sir Thomas More, the feature of this play handled with most artistry is the de casibus theme and its attendant notion: aspiring men are doomed to destruction. In fact, this biographical chronicle studies what one critic has characterized as "the path of unbridled ambition climbing to reach the dazzling heights of power, and its tremendous fall from thence to the nethermost depths," a presentiment of which can be derived from young Cromwell's soliloquy at the close of Act I, scene ii:

Why should my birth keep down my mounting spirit?
Are not all creatures subject unto time...
And from the dunghill minions do advance
To state and mark in this admiring world....
Then, Cromwell, cheer thee up, and tell thy soul,
That thou may'st live to flourish and control.

(W. S., sigs. A3^, A3^)
Indeed, it is upon this very feature of the play which Ribner has commented at some length, finding it the most striking facet of this otherwise flawed composition. As it focuses its concern on Thomas Cromwell, the play appears to consider his demise as an arbitrary act of fate. For instance, at one point (W. S., sig. G3r), this accidental quality is particularly dramatized by the author's having King Henry's pardon for Cromwell arrive only moments after the protagonist's beheading. And, although this drama's attempt at complete justification of Cromwell and implicit defense of Essex may become apparent at first reading, thematically, it is strongly committed to the assumptions of de casibus tragedy much as The Book of Sir Thomas More has been previously. Indeed, Cromwell himself addresses the underlying assumptions of such plays when in Act V, now cognizant of betrayal and approaching death, he intones,

Now, Cromwell, has thou time to meditate,  
And think upon thy state, and of the time.  
Thy honour came unsought....  
But now I see, what after ages shall:  
The greater men, more sudden is their fall.  

(W. S., sigs. F4v, G1r)

Although Cromwell is obviously the focal point of this play, his fellow Chancellor, Sir Thomas More, also attracts consideration as another victim of the vicis-
situdes of Fortuna. Lamentably, the brief glimpses of More in *Cromwell* leave much to be desired in terms of characterization; however, this Cromwellian play's paying at least lip-service to well-established portraits of More as wit and statesman is significant: it testifies again to London drama's most favorable response to the great recusant leader.

From his first appearance in the play, More assumes a role which had become a commonplace in Moreana: that of the sententious jester. For example, when offering a solemn health in the company of Cromwell, he quips,

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I love health well, but where healths do bring
Pain to the head, and body's suffering:
Then cease I healths...
For though the drops be small,
Yet have they force to force men to the wall.
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(W. S., sigs. D2\textsuperscript{v}, D3\textsuperscript{r})

Such passages are by now habitual, surely, but Thomas More assumes a new choral role in this selection; indeed, he boldly observes regarding Wolsey's fall—"Who sees the Cob-web intangle the poor fly,/ May boldly say the wretch's death is nigh" (W. S., sig. D4\textsuperscript{r}). And he continues that role as he advises Cromwell now that the rival has begun to rise in Henry's esteem. In fact, as More had spoken for the assumptions of de casibus drama when addressing Wolsey's fall, so, when addressing the man who would eventually succeed both of them,
his swipe smacks of practical politics laced with the de casibus assumption: "O, content thee man, who would not choose it,/ Yet thou art wise in seeming to refuse it" (W. S., sig. D4v). Although More's role in this drama is admittedly small, it is interesting that, against the background of this play which Ribner characterized as "strongly Protestant in its religious sentiments," the recusant apologist is assigned a choral role which allows him to speak for the playwright himself regarding the subject of mutability and the attendant fall of those who only momentarily bask in Fortuna's smile. This especially poignant use of More, then, responds to what has already become received tradition--an approbative treatment of More by both Catholic and Protestant partisans of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Significantly, this occurs in the same play in which Cromwell credits himself with "the abolishing of Antichrist,/ and of this Popish order from our Realme," for the latter had but served to "feede a sort/ of lazie Abbotes and of full fed Fryers" who "neither plow, nor sowe, and yet they reape/ The fat of all the Land, and sucke the poore" (W. S., sig. E2r). And it is the same play in which King Henry affects events only from offstage. Again, this omission must have been a response to fear of official interposition, for it was still dangerous to portray recent English monarchs the-
atrially; therefore, sensitivity to this danger possibly caused the playwright to avoid bringing Henry on stage.\textsuperscript{18} But it is still striking that Henry, who played so dominant a role in Cromwell's rise and fall, should not appear once in the play, whereas Thomas More should be treated with such approbation. Creiznach, however, has already observed that, with few exceptions (notable among them Webster's \textit{Sir Thomas Wyatt} and some other conspicuous attempts to appeal to groundling taste by marching in friars to vilify), "anti-Catholic polemic grew...rare while traces of the catholicising tendency which distinguished the Court and Cavaliers of the Stuart period became correspondingly frequent."\textsuperscript{19}

Although the abilities and intentions of "W. S." did not parallel and no character of the play consequently exhibits a spark of dramatic realization,\textsuperscript{20} this disjointed biographical play does apparently mirror one of the age's notions of More--wit, politician, and man of honor. To such a characterization of More, the London audience of students, apprentices, tradesmen, and minor nobility which frequented the theatrical company's Blackfriars theatre might have agreed. Additionally, because of the theatre's proximity to the Inns of Court where rhetoric and drama were of keen interest to the students, this audience was more sophisticated, more literate than is often supposed\textsuperscript{21};
therefore, these patrons were trained to be atuned to subtleties of language, and, London favoritism of More aside, were probably more sympathetic to a former student of the Inns who had earned international acclaim for his wit and learning. Further, this same Londoner's use of drollery and quillets had been blazoned abroad by a very strong received tradition. And, to the apprentices and tradesmen in that same audience, More's heroism was both legendary and real; consequently, they too must have been positively disposed to receipt of a sympathetic if brief theatrical portrait.

Following the references to More in the Cromwell play comes the brief but telling one made by Samuel Daniel in his Defense of Rhyme (1603), written in response to Thomas Campion's attack on rhyming in Observations in the Art of English Poesy (1602). Neither extended, nor witty, nor delving into characterization, this More reference need only be seen as a continuation of the tradition of affirmative treatments of Thomas More. Again, the source of the remark is of some note here too, for, although no influential courtier or even a literary artist with the influence of a Marlowe or Shakespeare, Daniel had court connections. He had been tutor to William Herbert, the earl of Pembroke, and by 1604 was licenser of the Children of the Queen's Revels.
As such, one of his duties was to provide masques for the entertainment of Queen Anne and her ladies. Daniel's contributions to the era's experiments with sonnet sequences through the publication of his *Delia* in 1592 are too well-known to repeat here.

This same firmly established Jacobean artist, then, alluded to Sir Thomas More in the *Defense of Rhyme* at that juncture at which he noted the rebirth of scholarship in England. Wrote Daniel,

> Hereupon came that mighty confluence of learning in these parts...spread itself indeed in a more universal sorte... and wakened up other nations likewise with their desire for glory, long before it brought forth...more worthy men I confess, and the last More a great ornament to this land.  

This very approbative statement coming from the author of a tract which was reprinted at least four times in 1602, and again in 1607 and also issuing from an established poet and playwright, continues the tradition of sympathetic treatments initiated by Holinshed. But, a little more than a decade later Shakespeare's *History of the Life of Henry VIII* was to supplement that tradition.

This drama was written in the same traditions as *Cromwell* and *The Book of Sir Thomas More*, and it was a biographical chronicle play performed at a time (1613) when the popularity of that genre was on the wane.
But more important than that are some of the issues which arise from a study of the play; for instance, any diligent examination of this text cannot disregard the likelihood that this work may not be entirely Shakespearean. In fact, problems of authorship have been a continuing concern of students of the play ever since Richard Roderick broached the issue in 1758, and this question may in fact have attracted more attention to the composition that its dramatic quality would have attracted. However, despite efforts to clarify the puzzle of this still interesting drama, Herschel Baker provides with eloquent simplicity the only completely defensible conclusion: that this question of authorship, like the poor, will always be with us. Considering the scholarship which has gone into this still unresolved debate, it would be presumptuous for this study to intrude. For the debate, the major positions can be found summarized in the Introduction to the New Arden Edition. Simply stated, the temptation to infer only Shakespearean authorship from the play’s inclusion in the First Folio, is prevalent even today. One cannot overlook the fact that Heminge and Condell ascribed the play to Shakespeare while Fletcher still lived. Hence, despite much evidence developed by the opposition, modern opinion generally agrees tentatively with Heminge and Condell
and holds for Shakespearean authorship of most of the play.

A second difficulty presented by his play is that it presents not the historical Henry but a typological study of regal virtue, benevolence, wisdom, and prudence whose presence on the stage reminds us of another regal myth--King Hal, the "mirror of all Christian kings." As Peter Saccio noted while examining this dichotomy, barely a decade had passed since the end of the Tudor dynasty. Furthermore, Englishmen seemed to have genuinely admired Henry; hence, no playwright so conscious of commercial exigencies as was Shakespeare would have risked the dangers of too incisive a portrait. To proffer More's ethical conflicts counter to this model of princes might have invited more virulent governmental censure than that evoked by Monday's Book of Sir Thomas More. Further, the author may have concluded that the tolerance of the recusant viewpoint was still too tenuously framed to support a truly sympathetic tendering of Sir Thomas More on the London stage. Then, of course, there is the simple possibility that Shakespeare may never have considered treating More any more incisively than he did.

It is, in fact, for the elaborate festivities of Princess Elizabeth's marriage to the Elector of
Palatine that the play was probably written. A setting like that magnificent state affair was hardly appropriate for a play critical of another Elizabeth's royal father or for one partisan to Sir Thomas More. Instead, Shakespeare prepared a manuscript which skirts the great religious and political issues of Henry's reign and is a series of ceremonious pageants and processions leading to the prophetic paean glorifying the infant Elizabeth, itself amplified by prophecy of the happy Jacobean reign.

In the play which he wrote for that event, Shakespeare is less concerned with conscious individual efforts and accomplishments, or miscarriages from them; instead, he too adopts a medieval view, focusing on the de casibus motif as had the author of Cromwell before him. Note the statement of the prologue of Henry VIII:

Think you see them great,  
And followed with the general throng  
And sweat  
Of thousand friends; then, in a  
moment, see  
How soon this mightiness meets misery.

As one can see, such an approach would only with difficulty allow for the particularity of characterization demanded by dramatic interest in More's learning, wit, courage, charity, and the other traits which have interested earlier writers. Instead, characters are realized as symbols of virtues or vices. Wolsey signifies papal power as he had in Skelton's "Why Come
Ye Not to Court?"; he also represents inordinate ambition. Henry becomes the symbol of ideal kingship. Allegoric development does not encourage intensive character study.

What concerns us here is Shakespeare's attitude toward Sir Thomas More, and, unfortunately, the reader cannot apply common tests for meaning when approaching this play, for it presents, instead of one fall from high estate, an anthology of them: those of Katherine, Buckingham, Wolsey, and Cranmer. Like a new *Mirror for Magistrates*, or an anthology of *de casibus exempla*, it cursorily depicts a number of demises--with the exception of Wolsey's, which becomes the focus of the play--and it avoids amplified treatment of one of the more important characters involved in the reign with which it deals: Sir Thomas More.

In fact, More is not mentioned directly until Act III, when Wolsey is informed of his own fall and told that the Londoner will succeed him. To this, the prelate responds somewhat cryptically, "That's somewhat sudden;/ But he's a learned man. May he continue/ Long in his Highness favor, and do justice" (Shakespeare, III, ii, 394-396). This by now commonplace recognition of More's learning sets the tone for what soon follows, and that is Wolsey's own moralizing to Cromwell--"Mark but my fall, and that that ruin'd me:/ Cromwell, I
charge thee, fling away ambition" (Shakespeare, III, ii, 439-440). Such a meaningful if brief portrayal may be excused as resultant from Shakespeare's desire to focus at the moment on the fall and ensuing death of both Wolsey and Catherine. Nevertheless, latter portions of the drama beg no such reasons, for Thomas More assumed the Chancellorship on 26 October 1529, nearly a full year before Wolsey's death, and was thereafter a central figure, although most often by way of opposition, to Henry's movements regarding his so-called religious scruples. Yet there were many occasions where More served as the fulcrum of Henry's policy; for example during the Parliamentary proceedings against Wolsey, More served his constitutional role as spokesman for the monarch and attacked Wolsey on the grounds of praemunire. On that occasion, More mercilessly criticized the fallen Wolsey as Henry sat next to More. But Sir Thomas More does not play so large a role in the affairs of state with which this play deals; instead, its confusing treatment of events and personalities admits to no certainties except an obvious disapproval of Wolsey and his policies. In fact, in Act V, a character is simply identified as "Lord Chancellor," and it is uncertain whether he is intended as Thomas More. Appearing as he does
between the birth and baptism of Elizabeth (September of 1533), this personage could not be the historical More, but opinions differ concerning the playwright's intent. One school, represented by Cumberland Clark,\textsuperscript{36} alleges that the character presiding at Cranmer's trial was intended as More; the other, represented by G. Blakemore Evans,\textsuperscript{37} assumes that no particular Lord Chancellor is intended.

Besides leaving open some questions of identity, \textbf{Henry VIII} confuses More's actual role in Henry's affairs by distorting chronology. Whereas More's appointment as Chancellor occurred a year before Wolsey's death, Cranmer's consecration after More's execution, and Anne's coronation after More's loss of favor, in \textbf{Henry VIII} More's replacement of Wolsey and Anne's coronation are announced in the same brief scene (III, ii). Shortly thereafter—preceded by no announcements of changes in the Chancellorship—comes Archbishop Cranmer's Privy Council trial presided over by an unidentified Chancellor (V, ii).

Although the play muddles Thomas More's role in Henry's political and domestic intrigues, historical information for this Shakespeare had available, for he had gone to Hall, Holinshed, and, possibly to Foxe, relying on the latter primarily for the Cranmer material of Act V. And, as he was accustomed to doing,
the dramatist assiduously adhered to his sources. Other information, however, which would have corrected errors of omission, though available in these same sources, was not pursued. As Peter Sacco has observed, however, "Henry VIII is not a chronicle of foreign or civil conflict dramatizing the issues of legitimacy and power, exploring the sources of weakness and strength in monarchs, dealing at length with the realities of politics." Instead, it is a pageant which deals cryptically with the events unfolding eventually in the birth of Elizabeth after it portrays Catherine's trial, Wolsey's fall, More's appointment, Cromwell's rise in favor, and Henry's marriage to Anne Boleyn. The play seeks no further raison d'etre than the masque-like portrayal of the rise and fall of several notable figures in recent British memory. In fact, this extended pageant moves gracefully toward that moment which it sees as sacred in English history: the birth of Gloriana. True, intrigues develop, the great are humbled, but, again, as Sacco would have it, "All events are bathed in a lofty compassion and a lively sense of active providence that are characteristic of Shakespeare's other late plays," for "the play is less a dramatic chronicle about a monarch than a dramatic myth about monarchy."38

Significantly, we again find Sir Thomas More (in
the context of a play displaying "ostentatious Protestantism"\(^{39}\) treated with careful kindness through Wolsey's approbative remarks. Furthermore, in some measure Sir Thomas More appears as a symbolic counterpoint to Wolsey. In the received traditions of the city of his birth, More remained as a bastion against the evil he found so prevalent around him--that desire for earthly glory which for so many who had ascended the ladder like More, had become the "sire of malaise and death."\(^{40}\) It was, in fact, an evil of which he had long been conscious; he had referred to it in a letter to William Gonell written in May of 1518 in this fashion,

So to lay oneself out for renown is the sign of a man who is not only arrogant, but ridiculous and miserable.

\textit{(Letters, p. 104)}

Specifically, Wolsey and (at least temporarily) Cranmer suffer the outrages of fortune. Cromwell also has his warning come poignantly from Wolsey. Catherine and Buckingham also lend their demises to the surfeit of ill fortune. And over it all preside a mythic Henry and a shadowy More figure. Considering the political, religious, and social contexts of this play, the company in which the dramatic reference to More emerges, the manner of his function for the play as a standard against which Wolsey is measured--these are in themselves complimentary to Thomas More, and this is the signifi-
cance of his treatment in Shakespeare's *Henry VIII*.

Brief notice at least should be taken of Francis Godwin's *Annals of England* (1616), another of the many collections of brief lives which appeared in the seventeenth century. These *Annals* Godwin published in 1616 in Latin as part of his *Catalogue of the Bishops of England*. Again, the work was published in 1625, 1630, 1653, 1675, in the English translation of 1676, and in 1743. Copies are easily to be had even today; there are several, for instance, in the Bodleian.

Although the More materials in this work are not extensive, they cannot be ignored, for Godwin, unlike so many of his contemporaries and predecessors, treats More unsympathetically. But Godwin was familiar with disputation. Wood attacked his 1601 printing of the *Catalogue of the Bishops of England* for endeavoring out of "puritanical pique" to scandalize the Catholic bishops and bring approbation to prelates like himself who had chosen to marry after the Reformation. Regardless of his intentions, the Bishop of Hereford is certainly critical of Thomas More, although the section in question does contain one brief positive note: "In this dignity the six and twentieth day of October, Sir Thomas More succeeded, whose admirable general learning is so well known to the world that I shall not need to speak anything of it" (Godwin, p. 37). Although the
More section contains references to the Chancellor's disrelish of his high office and an account of his reporting the judgment of the European universities regarding the legality of Henry's marriage, it is in the material regarding the oath that Godwin is most critical, first, in accusing More of being one of only two men "throughout the realm" who refused the oath, men who though learned were "most obstinate stickers in behalf of the Church of Rome" (Godwin, p. 37). Note how this criticism so tellingly echoes the Skeltonic "Image of Hypocrisy" in its emphasis upon More and Fisher's loneliness; furthermore, as Harpsfield had reported, this was one of the major themes proffered by More's prosecution. Apparently, the weight of the early pro-Tudor critics of More is still to be felt somewhat a century later. Otherwise, Godwin dwells on a second criticism also previously developed, possibly first by Hall's Chronicle, and that is More's "most censorious fault" which was "his too much jesting (I will not say scoffing) wit to which he gave more liberty than did lessen the gravity of his person" (Godwin, p. 37).

Though significant as representative of a lingering sentiment, Godwin's Annals serves more importantly to remind us of how rare criticism of More has become by this time; in that respect, its importance overshadows its otherwise sparse treatment of More.
After Godwin's *Annals* came the publications of a man who followed Sir Thomas More into the position of Lord Chancellor of England: Francis Bacon. Disgraced, ill, exiled from Parliament and Court, in 1624 Bacon utilized his vacant hours to complete his *Apophthegms New and Old*, described by Catherine Bowen as "the most uncompromising joke-book in existence; grim, witty, conducive rather to mental shock than to laughter, and some of it unforgettable." The original collection Bacon published the following year; subsequently, it was enlarged and reprinted frequently by admirers. The original collection contained 280 apophthegms, some Bacon's own, some from Raleigh, Queen Elizabeth, More and numerous near-contemporaries; others (the "old" of the title) derived from Lycurgus, Diogenes, and Plato.

Apophthegms are brief, witty sayings primarily designed for comedic effect; apparently, Bacon did not choose or design his to independently illustrate serious or significant concepts, as was the common usage, but only to embellish a point presented in the course of a serious discussion. In other words, designed to assume a confirmatory role in discourse by effectively attacking the heart of the matter in a spontaneous and witty fashion. Bacon apparently composed and edited his collection for diversion during his lengthy illness, and, besides providing him with the divertissemente which
he required in those times, the stated purpose of
the work was to provide materials useful for statement
in "continued speech," for recitation "upon occasion
of themselves"; or for adaptation by the orator to
"take out the kernel of them, and make them.../His/ own." Given the stated purpose and the temper of
the collection, the fact that all More references are
comic both in tone and content is not unexpected. Of
the three More allusions appearing in the twentieth
century Spedding edition, two previously cited ones
are quite common in the received traditions of More
legend; hence they do not need repetition here. These
are the scaffold scene and the joke on the maker of
the foolish book. The third, a jest which has appeared
infrequently in Moreana, is the following, which casts
More as a wit, but also as a man of integrity:

Sir Thomas More had sent him by a
suitor in the chancery two silver
flagons. When they were presented
by the gentleman's servant, he said
to one of his men; Have him to the
cellar, and let him have of my best
wine. And turning to the servant,
said, Tell thy master, friend, if he
like it, let him not spare it.

(Bacon--Spedding--
p. 334)

Therein Bacon presents the picture of the honest judge
so cherished by London traditions. Reynolds, in fact,
has credited More with strengthening public confidence
in the law under his administration as Chancellor.
As we have seen that was one of the qualities for which London oral tradition so honored More.

Also attributed to Lord Bacon's collection of Apophthegms are three more selections, all of which were jests which had also been attributed to More by earlier biographers and chroniclers (among them Roper, Harpsfield, Foxe, Ro. Ba. and others). Although the careful research of Spedding, Ellis, and Heath has questioned the attribution of some of these to Bacon, the fact is that they were not considered spurious in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries; therefore, whether legitimately Baconian or not, they form a significant contribution to the continuing tradition of Moreana. These possibly spurious apophthegms can be examined in the 1825 edition of Bacon's works edited by Basil Montagu. Jests preserved in the Montagu edition which were previously rendered by a number of collectors of Moreana are the scaffold quip about his innocent beard and the famous pew jest (Bacon--Montagu, pp. 109, 113). Also, Montagu included the material quoted in full above. Another, which has not appeared in sources previously examined in this study, is an apophthegm picturing More joking only hours before his execution. In that account, a barber has been sent to him since the authorities seem to have sensed that his disheveled appearance might "make him more commiserated with the
people." On appearing before More, the barber asks if he "would be pleased to be trimmed," and More responds, "In good faith, honest fellow, the king and I have a suit for my head, and till the title be cleared, I will do no cost upon it" (Bacon--Montagu, p. 108).

The final jest in the Montagu edition both contributes to the continuum of a tradition of quips which More allegedly made to his wife and must also have contributed to the tradition that More's son, John, was somewhat dimwitted. This apophthegm mentions that Sir Thomas had had only daughters and that his wife constantly prayed for a boy. Finally, a son is born, but, in the words of the collection, "at man's years, proved simple." Concerning this, More is again assigned his traditional gift of prophecy, for here he is said to have previously commented to his wife, "Thou prayest so long for a boy, that he will be a boy as long as he lives" (Bacon--Montagu, p. 108).

It is significant that Lord Bacon's references to More contain no traces of the old Protestant zeal for attacking the philosophical leader of the recusant cause, zeal which we have already noted had begun to dissipate by Holinshed's time. One might argue that many factors in Bacon's own life may have predisposed him to this cosmopolitanism concerning religious dissent--the Puritan leanings of his own parents, for instance,
may have instructed him in the need for tolerance.⁴⁹ His own religio-political empiricism, which often caused him to reject dogmatic positions, his sympathy for another great Lord Chancellor who had been persecuted—any of these factors may have predisposed Bacon to approach Thomas More sympathetically. Perhaps more important than any of the former, however, would have been his tendency to dismiss idols of the tribe, some official attitudes toward More characteristic of an era of religious controversy. Bacon does not seem to have been intolerant of recusants: in fact, in a letter written to Elizabeth in 1584, he recommended dealing moderately with Catholic recusants; otherwise harsher measures might lead to desperation and encourage them to seek martyrdom.⁵⁰

Furthermore, there survived considerable admiration for More in Elizabeth's kingdom which would have made difficult any vitriolic treatments like that of the Skeltonic author of More's own time. More's works were widely read, especially his Richard III, which was reprinted five times in twenty years of Elizabeth's reign and continued to be the model of historical writing in English until the publication of a worthy rival--Bacon's Henry VIII.⁵¹

Bacon's Apophthegms are significant, however, for they serve to continue the long tradition of presentation
of Thomas More as a man of finely-honed wit and integrity, a man whose appreciation of the lighter comedic side of mundane affairs could not be dissipated by impending death. Additionally, the many editions of this collection attest to its own popularity in the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries. For example, in the seventeenth century alone, five editions of either the Apopthegms alone or in context of the complete works appeared. Besides the 1625 edition, there were those of 1658, 1661, 1671, and 1679. Bacon's treatment of Thomas More, therefore, exerted a continuous influence throughout the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries.

Also of significant influence among seventeenth century readers and indicative of the pervasiveness of the popular notion of More even among Protestant apologists is Sir Richard Baker's Chronicle of the Kings of England (1643). Written by Baker while he resided in the Fleet as a consequence of destitute financial conditions, and often eyed suspiciously by historians, this pseudo-historical piece assumes a rather balanced stance regarding More, for it first credits his industry with the calming of the May Day riots as had some previous treatments and then details More's selection as Speaker with the usual references to the dual petition (Baker, pp. 17-24). These early references to More are
balanced against continued treatment of him throughout the section of the Chronicle describing Henry VIII's reign. In fact, it would not be imprudent to assert that More plays a major role in that section of the Chronicle. Predictably, we find Baker reproducing earlier responses to More nearly verbatim; in fact, the spectre of Edward Hall hovers over Baker's Chronicle, although the latter was printed some one hundred years after Hall's, but an allusion to Sir Thomas's propensity for jesting is familiar and echoes Hall's entry. Baker writes that

Sir Thomas More was both learned and very wise, but so given to a vein of jesting and merry scoffing that he could not refrain it at the very time of his death.

(Baker, p. 43)

Following that most familiar note are citations of three of the legendary scaffold jokes. But Baker must grudgingly allow More his mark on posterity, for he concludes the report of the Lord Chancellor's death with a somewhat restrained accolade to More—a manifesto to his "great integrity and the small reckoning he made of riches" and an account of his filial piety which was exemplified by his frequent appearances at the Court of the King's Bench to ask his father's blessing before himself sitting in judgment at Chancery Court (Baker, p. 44).
In the main, Baker's *Chronicle* survived (with numerous enlargements) to serve generations of English squires like Addison's Sir Roger de Coverley and Fielding's Sir Thomas Booby, and the genuine squirearchy as well, as their chief source for British historical biography. Evidence of its great popularity are the Chronicle's many editions: a second in 1653, a third in 1660 (edited by Milton's nephew Phillips), and a fourth through tenth in 1665, 1670, 1674, 1679, 1684, 1696, and 1730 respectively. This product of its author's eight years in debtor's prison has, therefore, contributed to the maintenance of Thomas More traditions throughout the middle and late seventeenth century and even well into the eighteenth.

Another of the seventeenth century's chronicler-biographers who treated Thomas More most sympathetically was William Winstanley of Essex, whose *England's Worthies* (1660) is one of several biographical compilations by this barber-turned-poet and chronicler. Although the author was staunchly royalist, particularly after the Restoration, his notices are not especially partisan. He was capable, for instance, of writing evenhanded pieces on Oliver Cromwell, Thomas More, and Thomas Cromwell and of treating Thomas Cromwell and More with equal impartiality. *England's Worthies* was an extremely popular work which went through at least three editions,
in the seventeenth century and one (1766) in the
eighteenth; however, its presentation of Thomas More
of London, instead of being imaginative or original,
was merely a piecing together of earlier biographies
from Roper through the chronicles and hagiographies.
Winstanley's "Life of Sir Thomas More" begins with the
effusive judgment that the Lord Chancellor was "one
of the greatest ornaments of his time,...a man of
those high employments and of so great parts to go
through them...that he is deservedly placed amongst our
English worthies."57 Secondly, Winstanley also makes
the expected approbative statements concerning More's
learning, wisdom, and knowledge, besides devoting
considerable space to More's jesting, retelling many of
the standard tales "to render his history the more
pleasant" (Winstanley, pp. 193-194)--the cutpurse jest,
the pew jest, the author of the unwise book jest, the
scaffold jest, the beard jest, and ten others belonging
to More traditions. Only one in particular not fre­
quently reported, a brief Latin jest which whether
apocryphal or not, is of the temper of humor arche­
typally associated with More. It bears quotation in
full here: "Sir Thomas More demanding his money of one
that was in his debt, spake this sentence in Latin to
Sir Thomas More, Memento morieris; to which Sir Thomas
presently replied, What say you, Sir, Memento Mori aeris,
remember More's money?" (Winstanley, p. 196).

Like many of his precursors, Winstanley further devotes considerable effort to exemplifying More's personal integrity in matters of court, state, and bench. To do so, he presents the frequently cited case of a litigant's attempt to bribe More. This is the same incident mentioned by Roper which caused More to be called before the Privy Council to defend himself. The incident involved a Parnell and one Vaughan; the litigant Parnell had complained to the King of More's accepting a gilt cup from Vaughan's wife as a bribe. As Roper reported, so too does Winstanley, (Winstanley, p. 194), that More "did receive the cup...but immediately he caused his butler to fill it with wine, and therein drank to the gentlewoman that presented it, and when that she had pledged him, he as freely gave it her again for a New-year's gift for her husband."

The theme of conscience also appears in Winstanley; again, this may represent the influence of Roper's Life or, less likely, of More's own letter of 1534 to Meg. It is because of Henry's so-called "matrimony-scruple" that Winstanley, like others before him, alleges the King appointed More Chancellor. This Henry did in order to "draw him to his side." But therein, as Fuller was later to note, resided a "supernatural principle" which More would not violate; Winstanley,
in fact, pictures More kneeling as he pleads with Henry to "employ him in any affair, in which with integrity of his conscience he might truly serve God and him" (Winstanley, p. 199). Frequencies of the appearance of the key term conscience do not match that pattern in Roper's Life, but the usage is observable in this work as well, particularly in the sections dealing with the divorce and trial (Winstanley, pp. 199, 202). As several had done before him, Winstanley contrasts More's integrity with Wolsey's lack of it, alleging that petitioners were not admitted to Wolsey's presence "unless his fingers were tipped with Gold," whereas with More, "the poorer and meaner the suppliant was, the more affable he was to him and the more attentively he would hearken to his cause" (Winstanley, p. 200).

Further, the subject of More's humility is treated at length, but with standard fare--the accounts of his honoring his father daily at the Court of the King's Bench and the story of the "parish clerk" episode with Norfolk. Finally, Winstanley closes with a paean to the memory of the great Lord Chancellor, one which, judging from the popularity of this work, must have been read over and over again in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries:
Thus died Sir Thomas More, a man admirable in all kind of learning, Latin, Greek, profane, divine: his Utopia is admired over the world; his Richard the Third, till of late years, of so much credit with historians that they have placed it in their works without the alteration of a word. He was of such excellency of wit and wisdom, that he was able to make his fortune good in what place soever he lived; who wanted no skill either for the managing of private or public businesses, being experienced both in country and city affairs: in giving solid and sound counsel in doubtful cases, none more prudent; to tell the truth without fear, none more free; as from all flatteries he was open and pleasant, full of grace in delivering his judgement. And to conclude, one whose integrity made him a miracle of nature whilst he was living, and whose books have made him an everlasting monument now he is dead. (Winstanley, p. 205)

A brief biographical sketch of More also appears in Thomas Fuller's The History of the Worthies of England (1662),\(^58\) written in the inherited medieval tradition of short lives and further related to the tradition of "prefatory" lives. The latter brief selections introduced readers to authors' lives and works and tended to be collected in biographical dictionary format. To this genre, the Fuller piece on More belongs. Sometimes described by modern historians as useful and celebrated by F. Smith Fussner as "splended,"\(^59\) this treasury of historical and biographical data was written by the chaplain extraordinary to
Charles II and is arranged according to the shires of birth of each subject. The prose style is firm and lucid and not lacking, as Coleridge observed, in beauty and variety. In fact, it is probably the interest and patronage of Coleridge and Lamb which caused the Worthies to go through more printings in the nineteenth century than in Fuller's own era; the huge collection was reissued in 1811, 1835, and 1840 and must be admitted into the ranks of the literary subculture. To this the approbation of Coleridge and Lamb must have contributed some; however Fuller was one of the most popular writers of his time.

During the troubled times of the Interregnum and early Restoration period, Thomas Fuller distinguished himself by his mildness and endearing humanity as a preacher and public figure, and he publicly and privately disapproved of extremism in both Cavalier and Roundhead camps. Representative of this characteristic urbanity is the event of December 28, 1642, a day set aside by Charles I to commemorate the Irish Massacre; on that fast-day Fuller preached a homily recommending peace to both sides and proposing redress by way of petitions to the King and Parliament. Yet this same man was an ardent royalist and enjoyed preferment on the occasion of the restoration of the monarchy.
fact, he joined a select group of loyalists sent to Holland to arrange the return of Charles II; later, the King chose him to fill a bishopric. However, Fuller died before that honor could accrue to him, and his *Worthies* was left to be published by his son, who dedicated it to Charles. 63

The virtue of which Fuller was fondest, moderation, he described as "the silken chain running through the pearl-string of all the virtues"; 64 this trait must be seen as contributing somewhat to his evenhanded treatment of all of his subjects, Thomas More among them. In fact, Tucker Brooke compared Fuller for his tolerance and engaging humanity with Dryden. 65 Furthermore, one should note that although Stowe and Camden are frequently cited as Fuller's primary sources, for the Thomas More material, the writer claims to have used Rastell's *Life of More* (Fuller, p. 361, note). If indeed Fuller did have access to Rastell's *Life*--of which only fragments now remain--it is even more noteworthy that his More piece should be so even handed; for we do know that the Rastell Fragments which now survive are vehemently anti-Tudor, as Fuller is not. The tone and manner of More's presentation follows rather naturally, therefore, from Fuller's urbanity and wit. Much of it is the standard Moreana--accounts of his parentage, education, training in Morton's household, first conflict with
Henry VII, rapid promotion under Henry VIII, fairness and efficiency as a legal official, and such materials. But this prefatory life always leans toward Thomas More in sympathy; for instance, when Fuller mentions More's birthplace--Milkstreet--he quips, "Sir Thomas More was, anno Domini 1480 /sic/ born in Milkstreet, London (the brightest star that ever shined in the via lactea)." Also, at that point where More's honesty as a lawyer is noted, Fuller provides the common notion that More never accepted fees from the poor, widowed, or orphaned and only chose cases which appeared just (Fuller, p. 361). For Henry's motive in naming him Lord Chancellor, Fuller claims that the King was "desirous to ingratiate himself by preferring popular and deserving persons," and "finding him faithful in lesser matters (according to the method of the Gospel), he made him in effect ruler of all...lord chancellor of England; a place wherein he demeaned himself with great integrity" (Fuller, p. 362).

The confrontation with Henry over the Act of Supremacy Fuller characterizes as founded upon "supernatural principle" and the entire matter of More's imprisonment and execution he treats very sympathetically; he portrays More as "bearing his afflictions with remarkable patience" (Fuller, p. 362). It is particularly his patience and the aforementioned
integrity which emerge preeminent in the *Worthies*,
although Fuller dwells some on More's wit, closing the
section on his life with the following account from the
imprisonment, an account infrequently published:

> In his time...Tower prisoners were not
dieted on their own, but on the king's
charges; the lieutenant of the Tower
providing their fare for them. And
when the lieutenant said 'that he was
sorry that commons were no better,'
'I like' said Sir Thomas, 'your diet
very well; and if I dislike it, I pray
turn me out of doors.'

(Fuller, p. 362)

Of course, the careful reader must avoid blindly
accepting all such jests as authentic, as appealing as
that might be; for, as Chambers has noted, "we shall
meet with instances when an authentic jest is elaborated
in...later version...till it becomes buffoonery.
And other jests were fathered on More without any
foundation at all."66

Nevertheless, the smiling, humane moderation of
Fuller's treatment of More remains the preeminent
impression of his *Worthies*; in fact, Fuller sometimes
errs on the side of compassion for the Lord Chancellor.
For example, his response to the rankling issue of
More's treatments of heretics glosses over More's
admission to Erasmus that he found "that breed of men
absolutely loathsome" (*Letters*, p. 180). It is true
that during his chancellorship More did not seek the
execution of heretics, but making them suffer at his pen was another matter; and it is this order of attack upon heresy which More seems to be alluding to in his letter to Erasmus. Yet Fuller writes that "it is observed to his credit...that, whilst he was Lord Chancellor, no Protestant was put to death; and it appears by some passages in his Utopia that it was against his mind that any should lose their lives for their consciences" (Fuller, p. 362).

Fuller is not entirely correct in the latter observation, for, as has frequently been asserted by modern scholarship, one must not err in either taking the Utopia as a jeu d'esprit or as totally serious philosophical comment. A classic case for Utopia as jeu d'esprit was presented by C. S. Lewis's proposal that it was "a holiday work, a spontaneous overflow of intellectual high spirits, a revel of debate, paradox, comedy and (above all) of invention." The other extreme is represented by those readers who would make of even the most playful turns of the narrative significant philosophical matter. The truth rests somewhere midway between the extremes. The reader must also continuously remind himself that More described an ideal society; surely, in such a context he might express a principle that men should not die for their consciences. But More surely realized that England was not the ideal:
instead, it was the contemporary European society of Book I. His intention for the full work was to provide a philosophical criticism of his times while positing a state that might be possible if mankind would be guided by sweet reason.⁶⁹ (No wonder that Dean Swift takes Thomas More as one of the great men of all times.)

At the same time, though this great European humanist may not have been immediately prepared to annihilate all heretics, he might ultimately have agreed to harsh physical measures, for he saw sects like Lutheranism "would speed the end of all those hopes" for "a reformed church through humanistic education using the restored texts of Scripture,"⁷⁰ and though the sword might be taken up in such a holy war, More was philosophically more attuned to using his pen as the weapon of the modern Christian knight. That defiant spirit of the new humanistic knighthood, the Abbe' Germain Marc'hadour eloquently characterized in his address at the International Thomas More Symposium in June of 1978. As the Abbe' expressed it, More and his fellow Christian humanists envisioned themselves adhering to the code of the medieval knight, wielding their pens in controversy to ward off the forces of Satan--in this case, heretics against their faith.⁷¹

Fuller, therefore, either did not understand More's position on heresy or simply glossed it over. Neverthe-
less, such overkind treatment combined with the apparent popularity of Fuller's work in the nineteenth century, following the accolades of Lamb and Coleridge, certainly qualify *The History of the Worthies of England* as contributory to the continuing sympathetic presentation of the famous Londoner.

Following Fuller, a curious production of the period between 1669 and 1696 covered some More materials, and that is Aubrey's *Brief Lives*. Not published contemporaneously, Aubrey's labor was available to some in manuscript, as it was housed by the author at the Ashmolean Museum in 1693 and known and used by Anthony a Wood and others. Although not regularly printed until 1813, this collection was very popular from the time of its first incomplete publication. In 1792, Malone made a transcript of 174 of the lives; in 1797 Caulfield issued more in a volume which he entitled *The Oxford Cabinet*, then in 1813 appeared the inaccurate and faulty edition which was not improved upon until the famous enlarged Clark edition of 1898. Since then, this collection has continued in its great popularity, but more significantly for this study, it can be viewed as at least mirroring contemporary attitudes. Described by the historian Ashley as "that delightfully lucky dip for seventeenth century biographers," this work also takes an affirmative position *vis-a-vis* the
historical Thomas More—an unexpected stance for Aubrey, who was constantly beleagured by legal problems and especially suspected of popish leanings.

In fact, Aubrey never seems to have taken religious matters very seriously, yet in the decade in which the earlier Titus Oates matter had left a scar on religious matters in Britain, Aubrey's closing remark regarding More comes somewhat unexpectedly: "Methinks 'tis strange that all this time he is not Canonised, for he merited highly of the Church" (Aubrey, p. 214). Few non-Catholic apologists for More take note of his sanctity or of his life of faith except to touch the surface of this commitment as driving his self-sacrifice to his faith; Aubrey, however, is an exception.

In the same "Sir Thomas More" entry, Aubrey accepts commonplace lore about Meg's rescue of her father's head from London Bridge after his execution, a tale since accepted by Reynolds and others. As Sherburn has mentioned, it is this habit of collecting delightful gossip as an amused observer of life and proffering it in his "unbuttoned" style which makes a reading of Aubrey such entertainment. These glimpses of the great Lord Chancellor appealed to his age's taste for such fare; whether they are apocryphal or not, therefore, does not appear to have bothered Aubrey. He simply included them, some of them less traditional in collections of
Moreana.

First, he includes the Tom of Bedlam tale, not often incorporated in More biographies. Like much More material, it ingeniously commixes the plausible and implausible; in fact, that is the origin of its humor. According to this account, More was resting at the gatehouse of his Chelsea mansion when Tom of Bedlam approached; intent on casting More down from the height, Tom commanded More, "Leap, Tom, leap," but More, by then an elderly gentleman, suggested his accoster throw his little dog from the height to determine how he would fare. He did so; then More tricked Tom of Bedlam into descending to examine the unfortunate dog; at that juncture, More fastened his door and kept Tom out. As he was prone to do, Aubrey then uses that tale as an opportunity to comment on the scarcity of Toms of Bedlam "since the wars" (Aubrey, pp. 213-214), simply an excuse for another of his many attacks on the Parliamentarians.

Concerning the notice which Aubrey takes of More's treatment of daughters, however, other observations must be made, for here Aubrey exhibits a true appreciation for Sir Thomas More's wit, even though the incident itself is not mentioned in any other sources and is at least partially apocryphal.

The vignette is supposedly presented to show how
Sir Thomas's life was so true to his writing. Aubrey refers to the Utopian allowance that young people see each other nude before marrying and continues with an account upon that which deserves partial reproduction here:

Sir William Roper...came one morning... with a proposal to marry one of his daughters. My Lord's daughters were then both together abed...asleep. He carries Sir William into the chamber and takes the sheet by the corner and suddenly whips it off. They lay on their backs, and their smocks up as high as their armpits. This awakened them, and immediately they turned on their bellies. Quoth Roper, I have seen both sides, and so gave a pat on the buttock, he made choice of, saying, Thou art mine. Here was all the trouble of the wooing.

(Aubrey, p. 214)

Contemporary accounts of Sir Thomas More's fatherly concern for all his children, most particularly his daughters, make difficult belief in the tale. But whether the story is apocryphal or not becomes practically irrelevant, for it mirrors the notion of More's wittiness preserved by oral and written traditions. His wit was just as Aubrey presents it here--open, laughing, and loving. It was a wit which always inclined him more toward merriment than gravity, and, as this study has already shown, More believed that, when wit or gravity were both available to deal with a matter, wit was the better choice. In that respect, Aubrey contri-
butes to a continuation of More traditions and to the preservation of a picture of him, not as a plaster saint, but (as Donnelly has expressed it) a man who "went to death with a still-chipped edge, parts of him...never totally healed and transformed."\(^7\)\(^8\) Perhaps that is part of the secret of Thomas More's appeal through the centuries and cause for so many literary artists to preserve their pictures of him for ages to come.

Further Thomas More references are to be found in an interesting minor history of questionable authorship entitled *A New History of England*,\(^7\)\(^9\) which was first printed in 1693 from a manuscript in Archbishop Sancroft's possession. Although Sancroft was convinced that the manuscript contained transcriptions compiled by Sir Walter Raleigh, that assumption is no longer widely accepted.\(^8\)\(^0\) Furthermore, edited as it was from a manuscript nearly seventy-five years after Raleigh's execution, and assumed to be Raleigh's notes for a British section of the never published second part of his *History of the World*, this work and its attendant prose tract ("A Breviary of the History of England") emerged with questionable pedigree. The *New History* did, however, gain acceptance, particularly in the eighteen century, when it went through at least three printings (1751, 1753, 1756), each time expanded with contemporary historical materials.
Predictably, this publication--like most Tudor chronicles--perceives history as a "manifestation of the divine purpose in a linear movement extending from the creation to the Last Judgement." Less predictably, the work is openly critical of Henry VIII. Although the author of the Henrician segment does lionize Henry as a scholar, musician, and linguist, he further admits antithetically that "he was cruel, and withal very presumptuous, a circumstance which caused him often to be overreached by those monarchs who had any contest with him" (Raleigh, p. 187). Though this language falls short of The History of the World's vitriol ("If all the pictures and patterns of a merciless Prince were lost in the world, they might all again be painted to the life, out of the story of this king"), candor is there which might have bordered on the foolhardy had the selection not been followed with a paean for James I.

But it is the New History's portrayal of Thomas More which most concerns this study, and that treatment is nearly even-handed, though tipping more toward the old ideas of Foxe and others that More had actually persecuted religious nonconformity. Treating the deaths of Bishop Fisher and More together, the author writes, "The execution of these two great men, chiefly upon a point of conscience, may justly be reckoned among the blemishes of that reign" (Raleigh, p. 199).
Another extremely popular eighteenth century work was Thomas Ward's *England's Reformation* (1710). The controversialist Ward was born in Yorkshire on April 13, 1652, in the early years of the Interregnum. Despite his having been reared a Calvinist, Ward's theological studies fostered an interest in Rome which later caused a conversion to Roman Catholicism; afterwards, he traveled through France and Italy and finally took a commission in the Pope's Swiss Guards to which he committed himself for five or six years. In the late 1680's he returned to England and began taking part in religious controversy, calling himself a "Roman Catholic Soldier" in some of his publications. Later, he left for exile in France and died there in 1708.

Ward's Hudibrastic poem was first published in full at Hamburg in 1710 and went through four more editions (1715, 1716, 1719, 1747) before retreating into obscurity in the nineteenth century. The contemporary editions attest to its great popularity. Like Butler's *Hudibras*, which it imitated, *England's Reformation* was topical, and, in the words of Walter Jackson Bate, it "reads further from public notice...every decade; for despite its wit..., the folly and hypocrisy it exposed were based upon manners and illustrated by allusions which had significance for...the time in which is was written."

Consisting of four lengthy cantos which narrate the
story of the Reformation "from the time of King Henry VIII to the end of Oates's plot," the poem rehearses the church policies and public affairs in the reigns of Henry to Charles II, and it often pushes to the limits of satire with its sometimes satirical, sometimes bathetic depiction of religious matters. For example, describing the talents of Ridley, Bishop of London, Ward writes,

This Ridley was, as most agree,  
The picture of a Pharisee,  
In Calvinism most deeply learn'd,  
His living by his Preaching earn'd;  
Could hold forth, when the Spirit press'd him,  
From Morn to Night, and never rest him;  
A Fawning Flattering Hypocrite.  
That canted Gospel out of Spite,  
Had at Command his tears and could  
His Face into strange Figures Mould,  
And in his Eyes could make appear  
Love, Hatred, Joy, Grief, Zeal, and Fear.  
(Ward, i, p. 106)

Nor does the monarchy escape the vituperation, for, after picturing time as essentially bald except for his most "instructive" forelock, he irreverently enthrones James thus:

This Workman lopping off the Queen,  
Made Room for James the First to Reign;  
Who catching Forelock mounts the Throne  
'Ere any other got thereon.  
The Ceremonies being done  
About his Coronation,  
He very briskly falls to work,  
As all Kings do, in Clouting Kirk.  
For since our Princes were Supreme  
In Church Affairs, not one of them,
At coming to the Crown, but hath
Reform'd his Predecessor's Faith;
As if Religion were intended
For nothing else but to be mended.

(Ward, iv, p. 74)

The technique combines the daring, wit, and vituperation which readers had come to look for in the satire of the epoch, and the octosyllabic jog-trot meter of Hudibrastic mockery is perfectly suited to Ward’s scurrilous treatment of king and kirk. Little doubt remains concerning Ward’s conviction regarding the English monarchy or church once the reader has delved into the work for some time. But it is Henry who comes in for some of Ward’s strongest sentiments. Introductory lines of canto i colorfully define Henry’s character thus:

A man to every Vice inclin’d
Revengeful, Cruel, Bloody, Proud,
Unjust, Unmerciful and Lewd;
For in his wrath he spared no-Man,
Nor in his Lust spar’d any Woman.
Was never rul’d by any Law,
Nor Gospel valu’d he a straw.

(Ward, i, pp. 2-3)

So pejorative a rendition of Henry’s character would be unlikely to appear in a poem critical of Sir Thomas More, and, quite expectedly, all the allusions to More in the piece are most sympathetic, whereas Henry continuously serves as Ward’s target. For example, regarding Henry’s multiple marriages and divorces this author assumes the popular recusant position that
Henry's sins were punished through his issue:

In fine, this lewd Adul'trous Prince
Had thrice, Two wedded Wives at once
Curst in his Issue; little Ned
At six Years Reign was Poison'd.
Mary the Queen, his Lawful Daughter,
Expir'd of Grief but five Years after:
Queen Bess, sprung from incestuous Blood,
Dy'd Mad--Thus ended Harry's Brood.

(Ward, i, pp. 60-61)

Therein Ward alludes to the salacious scandal--apparently widely accepted by the exiled recusants--which makes Anne Boleyn Henry's daughter. While there seems no doubt that another Boleyn daughter, Mary, had been Henry's mistress, as Chambers notes, the allegation concerning Anne's parentage is chronologically impossible. What is even more interesting concerning this charge, however, is that it was popularized by Rastell in his Life of More, and this opens a possibility that Ward may have had access to that now lost document. Contrasting with these scurrilous representations of Henry are the very commendatory verses mentioning Thomas More.

First Ward writes of the many executions ordered by Henry, that Parliament, "Pack'd of a Crew of servile Commons" enacted statutes legalizing all which the King had previously done, "As sending Rochester and More,/ Pris'ners (unjustly) to the Tower" (Ward, i, pp. 42-43). Though not an original charge, for Ro. Ba. had already complained that More was imprisoned and sentenced on
perjured testimony, the charge is still an uncommon one for the times, for it has not been until recent years that authorities in English common law have begun to agree with the More apologists that he was condemned on unacceptable evidence. Exemplary of this contemporary trend are works of drama and historical fiction which shall be studied in the next chapter, but also public statements and arguments in scholarly publications by people as varied as Maitland, Holdsworth, Lord Birkenhead, Lord Justice Slesser, Ernest Baker, James Brown Scott, Sir James Mackintosh, and Lord Chancellor Campbell.

Also, in the context of a lament on the dissolution of the monastic houses and the destruction of much of the architectural beauty of old England--"Oh! Lofty Towers, and Sacred Piles,/ That once adorn'd our happy Isles,/ Who can Record your Overturning/ But in deep Sighs and bitter Mourning" (Ward, i, p. 53)--Ward alleges that a deluge of martyrs' blood "flow'd o'er all the Land,/ Swept all away that durst withstand/ His late Usurped Supreme Pow'r" and carried away Rochester and More, "Two Martyrs Pious, Wise and Learn'd/ As any Age has since discern'd" (Ward, i, pp. 53-54).

True, the commendatory treatment of More was penned by a clearly partisan author. Besides, this allusion is brief and lacks the detailed character
development which would make it extremely significant to this study. However this work cannot be overlooked, for it is of a type: those depictions of Thomas More which do not present intensive character studies of More himself, but which adulate More through contrast with Henry, Wolsey, or others. In this respect, *England's Reformation* presents a positive image of More similar to that of Shakespeare's *Henry VIII*; furthermore, it was, as has been previously established, an extremely popular work, and certainly contributed to the continuum of approbative Thomas More traditions.

Perhaps more significant because they issue from more important writers who were not apologists for the recusant cause are the next three treatments of More by Addison, Prior, and Swift.

The Addison reference comes appropriately in the *Spectator* papers, Number 349 of April 10, 1712. This entire number, done by Addison, easily lives up to the stated purpose of the publication, for in Number 10, Addison had announced his purpose as being

> to /Bring...philosophy out of closets and libraries, schools and colleges, to dwell in clubs and assemblies, at tea-tables and in coffee-houses. I would therefore in a very particular manner recommend these my speculations to all well-regulated families.  

*(Addison, I, 41)*

Furthermore, it is important to note that, unlike its
predecessor, The Tatler. The Spectator had renounced politics and party: "My paper has not in it a single word of news, a reflection in politics, nor a stroke of party." And again in the same number, Addison wrote: "I have rejected everything that favours of party." (Addison, IV, 42; Spectator Number 262).

With the elasticity which was so much his, Addison had moved each day to a new subject for the edification of the "well-regulated families" for which he hypothetically wrote, those readers who "live in the world without having anything to do in it, and either by the affluence of their fortunes or laziness of their dispositions, have no other business with the rest of mankind but to look upon them" (Addison, I, 42; Spectator Number 10).

As Alexandre Beljame has noted, "Addison succeeded by reason of neither insulting nor despising anyone whether Right or Left. He excluded not only party politics...but also partisan and sectarian morality.... In short, he introduces moderation, calm, and impartiality." And it is with this good will that Addison writes of Sir Thomas More and his death. As so often occurred in The Spectator papers, this number is supposedly motivated by recollections of a general subject upon which the author then particularized, using not only the philosophy to which he referred in Number 10,
but narratives to exemplify the assertions which he made. Herein he ruminates on the subject of death and man's conduct in the shadow of death to assert that "death...closes a man's reputation, and determines it as good or bad"; therefore, "we are naturally averse to...launching out into a man's praise till his head is laid in the dust," for "whilst he is capable of changing, we may be forced to retract our opinion" (Addison, V, 128-129; Spectator Number 349). Further, he asserts that "the end of a man's life is often compared to the winding up of a well-written play, where the principal persons still act in character, whatever the fate is which they undergo" (Addison, V, 129; Spectator Number 349). Attendant upon this theme, Mr. Spectator portrays the final hours of Sir Thomas More and Don Sebastian, King of Portugal. Of More, he notes that no finer example can be found of gaiety and humor concomitant upon a good life and the prospect of a happy eternity. In his friendly good will, Addison is singularly uncritical of More, even rejecting the Hall-Foxe tradition of criticising More's jesting as sometimes inappropriate. Instead, Mr. Spectator praises More's wit and learning, echoing Erasmus, Roper, and earlier More biographers, and notes that he died a martyr upon a point of religion. But even in death his wit did not abandon him:
That innocent mirth, which had been so conspicuous in his life, did not forsake him to the last. He maintained the same cheerfulness of heart upon the scaffold which he used to show at his table,

(Addison, V, 130; Spectator Number 349)

and "his death was of a piece with his life."

Typically, Addison here is averse to all exaggeration as he so regularly is in Spectator pieces, and though in other pieces he occasionally repeats excessively, in his piece on More, he does not. Actually, he grasps the situation which has puzzled and even offended so many--More's jesting even at the point of death, but note the assiduous avoidance of high-sounding phrase and dramatic gesture. Here he is at his best:

He did not look upon the severing his head from his body as a circumstance that sought to produce any change in the disposition of his mind; and as he died under a fixed and settled hope of immortality, he thought any unusual degree of sorrow and concern improper on such an occasion.

(Addison, V, 130; Spectator Number 349)

Writing of Addison's treatment of religious matters, C. S. Lewis notes his rational piety avoided embroiling itself in matters of doctrine but saw religiosity in the abstract. To Addison, matters of doctrine were unimportant. What was important was proving oneself to be religious or irreligious, and the former proof he saw Sir Thomas More as clearly offering in the manner
of his death.

Much the same attitude can be attributed to the author of "A Dialogue Between the Vicar of Bray and Sir Thomas More," Matthew Prior. Although the exact date of composition for this piece cannot be certified, the year of Prior's death (1721) is usually assigned to the piece as a convenience; however the dialogue does not appear to have been published until 1765, and then at the direction of Lord Lyttelton, who was working from Prior's literary papers.\(^9\) Previously this dialogue had only been known to those few admirers and friends of Prior who had been engaged in preparing the Longleat Collection of over thirty volumes of his papers for publication. Among these was his contemporary, Alexander Pope. Consequently, this study once again deals with a work not published until years after composition; it is, however, a work of some consequence for its contribution to a continuing tradition harkening back to Roper's *Life of More*.

This fourth piece in the *Dialogues* consists of an imaginary conversation between the legendary Vicar of Bray and More which is supposed to have taken place in some unspecified place shortly after the Vicar's death. As a foil to More, Prior employs this character who had already become a legend by the time of publication of Fuller's *Worthies*. Therein Fuller alleged that the Vicar
had filled his vicarate in the Berkshire village through the tenures of Henry VIII, Edward, Mary, and Elizabeth, having been twice a Catholic and twice a Protestant in the interim. A ballad which the O.E.D. dates at 1720 also touches upon the Vicar's tenacity in his berth, but only Fuller appears to have approached Prior's sarcasm. Both writers, however, appear to have sensed that the Vicar was his own worst critic. In Fuller, when it is mentioned that some party criticized him for being a changeling and a turncoat, the Vicar delivers the riposte, "Not so, for I always kept my principle, which is this, to live and die the vicar of Bray" (Fuller, III, 113).

Beginning amiably, the Vicar and Thomas More rehearse many of the issues which each believes important to a successful life. In the end, they have discoursed (never heatedly but sometimes testily) about the conflicts among virtue, duty, and conscience; the primacy of truth; and the value of compromise. On every score the Vicar proves via his responses to More's positions that he is a man devoid of principle, while--perhaps unfairly for so toadying a creature--he is antithesized against a hero of conscience who, in the words of Chambers, died "rather than agree that Divine and Human law were united in the state of which Henry was Head." And it follows that in times when the state accomplished its ends through
perjury and false evidence, Sir Thomas More died rather than swear what he considered a false oath, whereas the Vicar expediently altered principles each time he faced a new religio-political determination; otherwise he "might have been Deprived of...living by Old Harry, and perhaps not restored by his Son Edward...again have chanced to be Burned by Queen Mary, and if...had escaped that Storm...had been sure of Starving in the Reign of her Sister Elizabeth" (Prior, I, p. 644).

Each time the Vicar confronted such threats, service to his parish suffered at the expense of clerical security and ambition. In fact, his spinelessness is what emerges as the characterization of the Vicar through the dialogue with More. From the opening lines of this selection, it is apparent that the author's sentiments are with More and against the Vicar, for perhaps more effectively than otherwise, Prior thus orders the design so that the Vicar condemns himself. As he bids farewell to the parsonage at Bray, he recalls,

I held it bravely out however, Let me see, from the twentieth of Henry the Eight, and I Died in the twenty-ninth of Elizabeth, just Seven and Fifty Years; Attached by Missals and Common Prayer, Act of Parliament opposed to Decrees of Church,...Praemunires in Westminster-Hall...Oaths of Obedience to the See of Rome and of Supremacy to the King of England, Transubstantiation, real Presence, Bulls and Praemunires and that intricate question of Divorces.

(Prior, I, p. 640)
Even in death, in fact, the Vicar is incapable of comprehending his old friend's death, for, although he is still grateful for More's patronage, he echoes most of the old Protestant criticism of More's actions, some of which dates back to Hall and "The Image of Hypocrisy." More's lighthearted wit even at the time of execution, his supposed meddling into royal affairs, and particularly his tampering with theological matters which he could not understand are some (Prior, I. 643-645). In connection with the latter, Prior allows his Vicar to offer a rare verbal swipe, for, when More criticizes him for too busy a consideration of worldly matters, the Vicar retorts,

Why really, Sir Thomas, You preach very well; I begin to think there was some mistake in Our Affairs while we were in the troublesome World of which you are talking. We should e'en have changed stations; if you had been Vicar of Bray the Parish might have had Excellent Sermons, and if I had been Chancellor of England, I'll give You my word for it, I would have kept my Head.

(Prior, I, p. 649)

As Spears has noted briefly in "Matthew Prior's Religion," the theme of this dialogue is expediency: whether it is preferable to be martyred for one's belief as was More or to be a prosperous time-server as was the Vicar. Typically for him, Prior examines both alternatives with sympathy but unquestionably relegates the stronger position to Thomas More; conse-
quently, although this work pretends to be a dialogue between equal participants, the parties are unmatched and the emergent view of More is that of a man who has both lived and died by principle. Obviously, this depiction of More is similar to what--much more briefly--Addison had prepared for The Spectator. Although Prior cynically recognizes a reason for conformity in the pleas of the Vicar's whining "where would you have had me been? in Foxes Book of Martyrs?" (Prior, I, p. 644), the Vicar's dissembling appears utter corruption compared to More's strict ethics. A representative example might serve to illustrate this.

Following an exchange in which More has just accused the Vicar of trifling his fourscore years away without either doing or intending any good (Prior, I, p. 646), the cleric responds with three admissions which condemn him: first, that his only constant vexation was that he might lose his vicarage; secondly, that his guiding principle was that he "thought that it was very well that.../he/ did not do much harm"; and third, that, whenever some new ecclesiastical crisis presented itself, he was always prepared to seek some clergyman or casuist for advice and "constantly carried with.../him/ an Inclination to be convinced" (Prior, I, pp. 646-647). To these admissions, More soon comments acidly,

'Tis True Vicar we Seldom are in Life what we seem to be, I jested upon the
Bench, yet guarded my Actions with the greatest Severity, and You looked gravely and talked Morally in the Pulpit without any Resolution of living up to that You taught others, But Vicar what you all this while call Living is only Breathing.

(Prior, I, p. 649)

More's character Prior exemplifies both through his own statements and those of his adversary, and the author exhibits an obvious concern for showing that More's life was a piece with his beliefs, that he had not compromised to expediency and the exigencies of politics as had the Vicar, but that his life had been one guided by that principle upon which More himself lectures the Vicar:

Vicar, the beginning, Progress, and Ultimate end of Thought can only inform You that Truth is to Direct all your Actions, and that Courage is only a Virtue as Assistant to Truth....Your Caution is but Cowardice, and Your Discretion is double dealing: You scarce can pardon Your own fears to your Self, your conscience therefore must direct Your prudence, and Your Virtue must be entire that your honor may be unspotted.

(Prior, I, 651)

Utterly opposed to such strictures is the Vicar's principle of expediency: "In difficult cases there must be some Allowances made; if we cannot bring the thing to our Conscience, we must e'en Strive as much as we can to bring Our Conscience to the thing" (Prior, I, p. 654), a principle which, as Spears has asserted, was repulsive to Prior in both political and doctrinal concerns.
Following eighteenth century patterns, two particularly complimentary treatments of Sir Thomas More appear in the writings of Jonathan Swift. The first occurs in the Glubbdubdrib segment of *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), another in the essay "Concerning that Universal Hatred, Which Prevails Against the Clergy." In Glubbdubdrib, Captain Gulliver materializes the spectres of historical figures to discern the substantive nature of the past. Again, the satirical fancy herein waxes upon the pattern of the battle between the ancients and the moderns, with the ancients emerging triumphant, although not utterly triumphant. Swift teases blind venerateds of the past via his handling of many historical personages. The reader learns that Alexander died of a fever generated by excessive drink; Hannibal complained of having not a drop of vinegar in his camp. But Gulliver converses at length with Brutus, whom he presents as heroic in stature and is told by Brutus "that his ancestors Junius, Socrates, Epaminondas, Cato the younger, Sir Thomas More, and himself were perpetually together: a sextumvirate to which all the ages of the world cannot add a seventh" (Swift--*Gulliver*, p. 205). In this sextumvirate are all men reputed to have maintained honor and truth over duties, and the passage further presents an opprobrium of simpering servility in national service but an approbation of the Roman virtues.
of courage, fortitude, and honor. More died for truth and in doing so imitated Socrates. Brutus and Cato committed suicide for honor's sake. So it seems that More, like Gulliver, suffered due to his integrity and vision; curiously, Swift's Tory idealism disparages the whole history of the Christian era except for the relief provided by the stellar exception of Sir Thomas More. This is quite a compliment from Dean Swift although he was not a man given to easy compliment.

So too was More treated kindly by Swift in his essay "Concerning that Universal Hatred, Which Prevails Against the Clergy" (1736). It is in this second selection by Swift that the often-quoted passage about More appears: "a person of the greatest virtue this kingdom ever produced" (Swift--"Clergy," p. 301). Apparently, the image of More had remained with Swift for some years, or, if not that, then it at least reoccurred intermittently. But, as in Gulliver's Travels, More again in this essay seems to represent for Swift an avatar of honor and heroism. He is not developed in either piece as a living human being as he has been in so many other selections; instead, he functions as an ethical standard against whom Swift can compare King Henry VIII, whom the author alternately describes as "that detestable tyrant," "so infernal a beast," and "a monster and tyrant" (Swift--"Clergy," p. 302). Swift's Henry is
anything but the lovable, bluff Prince Hal of English lore or even the symbol of kingship as presented by Shakespeare, but a truly despicable creature who "although he abolished the Pope's power in England...yet what he did in that article, however just it were in itself, was the mere effect of his irregular appetite...for a younger and more beautiful woman, whom he afterwards beheaded" (Swift--"Clergy," p. 302). Chambers has suggested reasons for Swift's admiration of More. As he suggested, that epoch was finally able to think again of Europe as a geo-political entity; it was possible, now that the bitterness of religious wars had dissipated somewhat, to think of a great league of peace among princes just as Erasmus and More had envisioned it. And Jonathan Swift, more particularly, shared More's hatred for the futile wars of Christian nations, wars which reason should dictate were ludicrous, while they both felt that the gross tragedy of the human condition was that reason did not lead men. The same rationality which underpins More's humanistic search for peace is what makes him especially appealing to the eighteenth century and to Addison, Prior, and Swift.

The human ideal, not the reality of the Houyhnhnms, underscores the great admiration which Swift expressed for Thomas More. These rational creatures represent (just as More in a different context did) the model
which is beyond human capacity; they are rational, handsome, graceful. Further, their reason is not contravened by impulses of a corrupting nature. Yahoos are, above all, ugly because they are irrational. To Swift, Henry is the imperial Yahoo; "there was never so infernal a beast as Henry VIII in every vice of the most odious kind, without any one appearance of virtue: but cruelty, lust, rapine, and atheism, were his peculiar talents" (Swift--"Clergy," p. 302). Henry may have rid England of the power of the papacy, but he did so for totally repugnant reasons: "against law, reason, and justice" (Swift--"Clergy," p. 301). Swift asserted that Henry effected no true reformation in England, but only took abbey lands and other church wealth for "profane uses," and, rather than reform the excesses of the old faith, "with great dexterity, discovered an invention to gratify his insatiable thirst for blood, on both religions" (Swift--"Clergy," pp. 301-303-304).

In Swift's construct, Yahoos are driven by unreasoning barbarity; so is Henry. Having read the praise of Thomas More and the diatribe against Henry in "Concerning that Universal Hatred," one might speculate that the Dean, had he his choice, might relegate King Henry to the same position as Gulliver's Yahoo wife. Quintana has correctly argued in The Mind and Art of
Jonathan Swift that Swift felt that irrational behavior warranted either contempt or horror, in this case both. Henry's actions Swift deemed particularly despicable, for they violated the seventeenth century ethical view which Swift had adopted—"that reason must subdue the lower faculties." This Henry abrogated to act out of desire instead of religious principle while severing the Church of England's ties with Rome. Conversely, Thomas More, a man of unassailable virtue, moved from a reasoned belief in freedom of religious principle as long as that belief did not endanger the security of the nation. As Ward has already observed, Thomas More is so admired by Swift because of his willingness to battle tyranny to the death. Since tyranny is essentially unreasonable, More's battle was against the forces of unreason. And perhaps in lionizing Sir Thomas More, Swift was trying to overcome that shortcoming of recorded history which his Captain Gulliver discovered on his voyage to Glubbdubdrib:

I found how the world had been misled by prostitute writers to ascribe the greatest exploits in war to cowards, the wisest counsel to fools, sincerity to flatterers, Roman virtue to betrayers of their country, piety to atheists, chastity to sodomites, truth to informers. (Swift—Gulliver, pp. 208-209)

Approximately two decades after Swift's references to More, in an age increasingly attracted to periodical
literature, another piece in part commending Sir Thomas More appeared, this one in a number of The World, a publication financed by Robert Dodsley and edited by the dramatist Edward Moore. The publication ran in 209 numbers between 1753 and 1756 and apparently drew upon considerable merit and snob appeal for its popularity.\footnote*{107}

This same Edward Moore had been reared in the traditions of a dissenting family and was descendent from persons who intriguingly bore Christian names very familiar to students of Sir Thomas More's life. Edward's father was Thomas, a dissenting minister of Abington, and his grandsire was Rev. John Moore, curate of Holnest, Dorset. Further pursuing the nominal parallels, one finds that upon the death of his father, Edward was raised by an uncle who also bore the name John Moore. This Edward Moore is the playwright-poet who authored several popular moralizing dramas, most of which are now damned with faint praise. Among them--The Foundling (1747), Gil Blas (1751), The Gamester (1753)--only the last has survived in infrequent contemporary performances. Under the patronage of Lord Lyttelton, Moore, however, was named editor of The World, which began publication in 1753, ran an average circulation of two to three thousand copies, and was a potent journal in its time, since many of its contributors were men of fashion and influence, including Lords
Lyttleton, Bath, and Chesterfield, as well as Horace Walpole.  

Number 73 of *The World* (May 23, 1754) contains a discourse on "The Different Behavior of Men at Death" and was written by the editor. The piece mentions Thomas More briefly but in a fashion deserving comment because of the influence and popularity of the periodical in which it appeared. At the juncture at which the More reference appears, the editor is asserting that (contrary to popular sentiment) judging the goodness of a man's life based on his behavior at death will sometimes lead to false conclusions, for contempt of death may not so much reflect the certitude resulting from a good life as it may reflect insensitivity, brutal courage, or a naked dislike of life (Moore, pp. 52-53). In the context of that admonishment, the essayist specifically asserts that Sir Thomas More's beard jest on the scaffold was "no more proof of the goodness of his life, if there had been no other voucher, than that of the murderer... who entreated the hangman not to touch his neck... because he was ticklish" (Moore, p. 53). The cardinal phraseology here is the subjunctive "if there had been no other" which suggests that there had, and that the reader would be familiar with it--another sympathetic presentation of Sir Thomas More.

Particularly noteworthy is the phenomenon of
Addison's and Moore's utterly opposing positions vis-a-vis Sir Thomas's jesting, whereas both writers eventually arrive at most approbative findings regarding his character and integrity. The next work under consideration renders Sir Thomas More somewhat differently in that respect and in other extremely significant ones, however.

Whereas the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries begot numerous dramatic profiles of More, the eighteenth century appears to have fostered but one: James Hurdis's little known Tragedy of Sir Thomas More (1791). This James Hurdis was the popular divine and widely read author of "The Village Curate" and was himself curate of Burwash when that lengthy poem was published. It received numerous favorable reviews and went through four editions. Subsequently, Hurdis gained an entree into literary circles and became acquainted with many of the dominant writers of that epoch, but he was especially acquainted with Cowper. Following upon this new public acclaim, Hurdis next wrote "Adriana; Or the First of June" and (in 1790) a volume of poems. After serving as tutor to the Earl of Chichester's son, he was named to the living of Bishopstone in 1791 and that year wrote Sir Thomas More. Although it is impossible to discover evidence of its having been performed in any theatre, it apparently enjoyed some reader acceptance, for it was
printed in at least two editions--in 1792 and 1793. Furthermore, though the work displays nugatory artistic qualities, the depiction of More which had appeared in the chronicles and early prose and dramatic lives it adheres to most slavishly; nevertheless as part of a continuing sympathetic usage, this play deserves some consideration in this survey of literary portraits of More.

Written as it was by a curate of the established church and during dangerous times when strong reaction against revolutionary France had already manifested itself, the reason for this drama's apparent nonperformance may have been its subject, for British opposition to revolutionary France specifically took the form of objection to whatever might be labeled as a French political ideal. Furthermore, it more generally expressed itself in distrust of any manifestations of domestic discontent. In a sense, Burke speaks for the times when, in his Reflections on the Revolution in France (1790), he warns that the French upheaval is not opposition to abuses but irruption against the fundamental basis of society. At such a time a drama lionizing the most popular champion of the recusant cause might be deemed to run counter to the public good, for it might foster domestic discontent by celebrating a man who placed himself in opposition to most of his
own countrymen, their tendency having been to support Henry and his Reformation Parliament. Possibly for these reasons, therefore, the play appears never to have been produced, but it was at least twice printed; hence it became part of the continuum of More portraits through the decades since his execution.

Although esthetically flawed, woefully derivative of earlier treatments, hence offering no new material or insight into More's character, The Tragedy of Sir Thomas More does, like Harpsfield's Life before it, color More as paterfamilias. On the other hand, no effort is expended to present More's gentle, light heart and wit or his great enjoyment of life, those qualities so appreciated by admirers of More through the ages. Recently, for instance, delivering an address at More's own parish church, Chelsea Old Church, on June 30, 1974, John Mc Manners of Oxford University dwelt upon these very qualities and confirmed that it is those traits which still attract admirers to Thomas More today.

What, then, is the image of Sir Thomas More presented by this late eighteenth century play? Since the play is not readily available, a summary of its major events might make dealing with that question a bit less difficult. Sir Thomas More begins with an extended scene between More's long-time friend Anton
Bonvisi and Giles Heron, who was later to marry More's daughter Cecilia. Therein and with inadequate dramatic justification, they review More's life from his leaving Morton's household to the present time of the play---some juncture between More's mission to Cambrai (June 1529) and shortly before his being appointed Chancellor (October 1529). This tedious scene also has superimposed upon it the beginning of an ill-formed subplot which weaves through the play and evolves around the loves and marriages of two of More's daughters. In this expository scene, however, Bonvisi encourages Heron's interest in Cecilia; in fact, he immediately begins his function as an arbiter of the More family's happiness. Nevertheless, a fourteen page review of More's career in the form of a monologue does not make for good theatre; furthermore, most of the material is derived from other sources or from long-standing oral traditions. Interlaced with this dramatic vita are a number of references which go beyond a mere chronicling of events to touch upon More's character. Through these, he is depicted by Bonvisi as a man of sublime talents but Spartan desires, loving no wine, food, or fashion "so intent/ Was his whole mind upon the books he read" (Hurdis, I, i, p. 8). Additionally, as so many sources had done before this play, Bonvisi praises More's legal acumen and his charitable refusal to collect
fees from the poor for legal services. Allied with this claim is his further assertion that, out of respect for this charity and these abilities, More's fellow Londoners chose him for the sheriff's court and later for Parliament. Also, Bonvisi and Heron note More's humility, recalling that he had refused to join Henry's court while begging lack of ability and that, when he was appointed to the Privy Council, that appointment had come without forewarning and against his will (Hurdis, I, i, pp. 9-10).

There follow scenes of tranquil domestic affairs as More's daughters talk of Elizabeth's love for Dauncy; afterwards, Cecilia is shown lovingly tending Sir John More while he discourses on beauty and permanence to warn that goodness is the solitary virtue which can serve as an anchor to the proper earthly voyage:

So woman's beauty flies,
Brush'd by the hand of sorrow or mischance.

...It falls a victim to the thefts of time;
And there is nothing permanent on earth
But goodness.

(Hurdis, i, iii, pp. 20-21)

Upon Sir Thomas's return to Chelsea moments afterwards, the international peacemaker is portrayed as the doting father most interested in news of his family. When pressed by Bonvisi on the marriage of one of his daughters, More dismisses the notion of marriage
settlements even before it can be broached and insists:

I do not wish to fix my daughter's price
At more than maintenance. All else I ask
Is the good heart and cultivated mind.
Young men who these possess, shall have approach,
And all success their virtues can obtain them.

... Therefore seal thy lips,
And never let this secret thence escape,
That I approve of Hero.

(Hurdis, I, v, p. 30)

In Act II More quickly grants permission for the marriages of Elizabeth and Cecilia, for the girls have proven to him that their suitors are commendable young men. In reality, those marriages occurred on September 29, 1525, four years before More's appointment as Chancellor, yet in the play, all events are telescoped into a few scenes for dramatic expediency. Act II otherwise merely serves to first introduce the subject of the "King's Great Matter," the divorce.

Act III continues with that troublesome subject with Henry unexpectedly calling on More at Chelsea to seek his opinion a second time concerning the divorce. This time the King uses an appeal to civil concord as justification for desiring a new royal wife (Hurdis, III, i, pp. 60-61); More immediately perceives Henry's ruse but only unburdens himself in a soliloquy delivered after the King's departure:

Ay, so it is. Lust will have no denial.
What specious argument, what neat excuse,
Cannot the hungry libertine invent
To shew the folly of wise abstinence,
The wisdom of indulgence? Ah! poor Queen!
I see it is thy fortune to come down

Yet shalt thou find a friend whose hand
and heart
Shall dare sustain thee, tho' he lose his head.

(Hurdis, III, i, pp. 62-63)

And so does Sir Thomas defend the legality of Catherine's claims very dispassionately—"Sir, I would gladly serve you—if I could,/ I would as freely give you my advice to do the thing you wish.../ Could it be done with honour," but he asserts, "Cath'rine is your wife,/ As Lawfully as wife was ever wedded" (Hurdis, III, ii, pp. 66-67).

Following that evidence of More's integrity even in the face of Henry's wrath, Hurdis presents that facet of More's character so often sketched by writers before and lovingly preserved by London tradition: his charity to the poor. To accomplish this, the burning of More's barns, library, and part of his home is utilized. Lady More is the bearer of these tidings and, though Henry reacts sympathetically, More is only concerned that the poor neighbor who had started the fire would not be bankrupt, and he replaces both their losses at his expense (Hurdis, III, ii, pp. 71 ff.).

The third act also portrays Anne Boleyn as villainess, a treatment cherished by recusant legends and maintained.
by some contemporary works like Anderson's Anne of the Thousand Days. As in that modern work and in the Rastell Fragments, so too here, Anne suggests that Henry execute More if he will not support the divorce (Hurdis, III, iii, pp. 73-74); and, when Henry does not immediately acquiesce, explaining,

He has a name
In ev'ry corner of the globe, at home
Lov'd for his virtues, and esteem'd abroad,

(Hurdis, III, iii, pp. 74-75)

she alternates with a recommendation that Henry buy More's support with an appointment to high position (Hurdis, III, iii, p. 76); this Henry does attempt by naming More Chancellor after Wolsey's fall, and shortly thereafter he questions him on the matter of the divorce again.

Act IV begins to move rapidly with More warning Meg that Henry appointed him Chancellor to win his approval of the divorce. With the end of this same segment of the play, More has determined that he will resign the chancellorship.

As the play ends, Hurdis follows the many accounts of More's imprisonment which picture his resignation about dying at that trying point in his life. Furthermore, the play accurately shows Meg petitioning More to take the oath, but Hurdis does portray momentarily a new facet of More's character previously not suggested.
by Moreana: a simpering, self-pitying soul who does not—as the historical More did—completely rise above the suffering. That perception he does not long maintain, however. Sections from a soliloquy in the Tower cell may better illustrate this new semblance of More:

Such is my home—a gloomy tenement,
Not a Soul
Deigns me a visit. All my company
Are toiling spiders, who consume the day
In spreading nets to catch the harmless fly.
An emblem of myself. For what am I
But a poor, helpless, weather-beaten insect,
That sought for shelter in the lowly shed
And found within the spider tyranny.

...Philosophy and Faith have each their sword
And murder, one for wisdom, one for truth.
The paths of glory are the paths of blood.
And what are heroes and aspiring kings
But butchers?

...What am I
But a poor lamb selected from the flock,
To be the next that bleeds.

(Hurdis, V, ii, p. 114)

More's execution does not occur onstage; neither does his ascent of the scaffold. But the final lines do provide one last occasion for Hurdis to paint Anne the villain of the piece. When Roper reports that Parliament has passed a bill making his father-in-law guilty of treason, he blames More's destruction on "the vex'd king,
Provoked by Anne" (Hurdis, V, iii, p. 124). And again in the last scene of the play immediately before the arrival of news that More has died, Bonvisi reads More's last letter; once more Anne is blamed:

This adult'rous king
Is greedy for his blood. I never heard
Of haste so unbecoming. 'Tis the spite
Of Bullen urges him, and go he must;

consequently, Roper adds,

That monster Bullen has obtain'd her wish.

(Hurdis, V, v, pp. 128-129)

Most notably, this play wanders considerably from the dominant trends of received tradition and depicts Thomas More in a somewhat new light, focusing attention primarily on the hero's familial concerns, whereas that trait which has sometimes appealed to other writers, often repulsed them, but seldom been absent from their consideration, is hardly even insinuated--his comedic disposition. Possibly the emphasis which dramatists of Hurdis's time had placed on the unities may have caused him to exclude material affined with More's comedic inclination. Nevertheless, the author's failure to incorporate these materials does picture a much more somber, particularly less human More and presents us instead with a legendary figure who is simply never dramatically realized as a man.

Then standard literary renditions of More are mostly overlooked, as is the quality of his wit mentioned above.
For instance, More's great learning is mentioned only once, then by King Henry, and only in the context of a catalogue of reasons for refusing Anne's early advice to execute More (Hurdis, III, iii, p. 75); however, Bonvisi does pay deference to More's oratorical eloquence in Act I (Hurdis, I, i, p. 11), and in the earlier treatments of More the two were often handled concomitantly. But More's international reputation for learning is hardly treated as significant; in fact, reading this play without knowledge of More's importance to the humanistic movement of the sixteenth century, one would discover little to suggest More's international fame as a man of learning. His saintly courage and patience are also dealt short shrift here; in fact, if anything, the Thomas More of Hurdis's play displays some peevishness and more of the self-pity previously exemplified in the Tower soliloquy. This is especially evident in the manner of his response to Meg's plea that he take the oath of supremacy:

    Thou subtle Eve, I charge thee, say no more.
    Thou'lt make me angry, as I never was,
    ... Child, be gone.
    Thou are much altered. Leave me to myself.
    I never wish'd thee absent till to-day.
    ... Swear I will not, nor will I tell thee why.

(Hurdis, V, ii, pp. 118-119)
On the other hand, More's homely qualities of humility, charity, and integrity are preserved by this selection. Superimposed on scenes presenting these facets of his character is the tragedy of the eventual isolation and destruction of this good, humble, and fatherly figure. This, the careful reader will realize, is the identical approach taken by Roper's Life in so far as the element of isolation is concerned; however, Roper did not choose to so strongly emphasize those fatherly qualities. But Hurdis's More never flourishes into an adequate fulfillment, for his stature has not been framed in tragic proportions--he is a good man, but he is not larger than life. Perhaps the play's dependence on the previously mentioned dialogue between Heron and Bonvisi (Act I, scene i) instead of using less artificial devices for character delineation may be the cause of this shortcoming.

There is certainly noble material in the life of Thomas More. Whereas he embodies in character, mind, and personality the noble features we have correctly termed typically English and have also come to associate with Christian humanism, More is at the same time a universal symbol of the complete man, "to whom by reason of his manhood nothing divine is foreign." The real Thomas More belongs to the Renaissance and only concurrently belongs to the Reformation to the
extent of showing concretely how little the English Reformation was solicitous of intellectual freedom. The personal and universal grief of Thomas More, therefore, is that one of the first fruits of the English Reformation had to be the death of this learned, witty, charitable, and humble man. But further, the true tragic magnitude of Thomas More's life (and the material which was available to Hurdis and which might have enabled him to elevate this play to a genuine tragedy) was the magnificence of More's resistance to compromise of his principles. Hurdis's Sir Thomas More: A Tragedy overreaches itself; it does not grasp and mold that material to make of its More a creature of tragic proportions. Perhaps, too, that material was too difficult to mold into tragedy.

Also due brief consideration is one of Charles Lamb's essays entitled "Sir Thomas More," (1820) which was first published in The Indicator but not anthologized until E. V. Lucas's 1903 edition of Lamb's Works. In that composition the author purports to be interested primarily in presenting readers of The Indicator samples of More's writing because "of the writings of this distinguished character, little is remembered at present beyond his Utopia and some epigrams" (Lamb, p. 260). Actually, the essay is more concerned with the former Lord Chancellor's treatment of heretics than with anything else.
One can certainly understand if not excuse some of Lamb's responses to Thomas More. Despite admiration of More expressed in the essay, Lamb, like other writers before him, cannot abide More's supposed harsh treatment of heretics, nor can the large hearted Romantic appreciate the fine lawyer's distinction which More made (and which civil and canon law made) between the charters of the civil and ecclesiastical authorities in matters of heresy. Consequently, Lamb's closing comment about More reads, "After witnessing his treatment of Sir John Hytton, and his brethren, we shall be inclined to mitigate some of our remorse, that More should have suffered death himself for conscience sake" (Lamb, p. 265). The precise cause of Lamb's disapproval cannot be ascertained. Certainly one must be cautious not to ascribe it to hatred or even distrust of religious dissent, for Elia's well-known "A Quaker's Meeting" (1821) easily disproves such assumptions--"my spirit hath gravely felt the wisdom of your custom," (Lamb, p. 529) Elia wrote. Nor is the More essay revealing, for Lamb's method here as was so often the case, was to state the conclusion without outlining the causes. What is known of Charles Lamb's religious convictions suggests that, despite his frequent protestations against religious orthodoxy and his liberality with criticism of religious matters, Lamb was not totally
repulsed by the sentiment of religious belief of any kind, nor is it particularly evident that Lamb's sentiments were especially opposed to the Roman Church. We can only speculate that the kind champion of causes that he was might have been repelled by the heated polemics of More's attacks and that his natural sympathy for the supposed heretics, who in More's time were the minority, combined to predispose him to their position. Concerning the polemics, More, like his opponent Tyndale, was engaged in a mighty struggle of chivalric protection of the old faith, and, as Frederick D. Cogggan, past Archbishop of Canterbury recently noted, More and all his opponents were merely employing in their fierce polemics artillery which their age deemed appropriate to controversial writing.

Ultimately, Charles Lamb's depiction of Thomas More emerges neither full nor fair; though he compliments More's wit and prose style, the offshoot of the essay is an unstated impression that More is nought but a bundle of hatred for heretics, and, as Sullivan has observed in Moreana, since Lamb questioned the very reality of Satan, he may have found it difficult to accept that anyone should hate so innocuous a thing as heresy. What Lamb has not done is understood More's belief that Lutheranism threatened the end of civilization as he knew it; had he done so, he might have
responded differently to Thomas More, but he did leave us with a slightly tarnished image of More, an image left for Wordsworth and Dickens to polish.

Published only one year after Lamb's piece, Wordsworth's "Apology," Sonnet 26 of *The Ecclesiastical Sonnets* (1821), is one of the uncommon treatments of More in lyrical poetry. In this piece, Wordsworth provides another affirmative glimpse at Thomas More the recusant champion. Supposedly, a walk on Coleorton Moor with Sir George Beaumont in 1820 fostered the production which came to be entitled *The Ecclesiastical Sonnets*. More specifically, Wordsworth writes in his notes to these poems, "The Catholic Question, which was agitated in Parliament about that time, kept my thoughts in the same course, and it struck me that certain points in the Ecclesiastical History of our Country might advantageously be presented to view in verse." But the specific aspects of that history which concerned him he outlined in the same notes: "My purpose in writing this Series was, as much as possible, to confine my view to the introduction, progress, and operation of the Church in England, both previous and subsequent to the Reformation." As both William Wordsworth and one of the assiduous students of the sonnet have noted, the *Ecclesiastical Sonnets* command a new capability from the sonnet: Wordsworth composed a long poem...
fashioned from a series of sonnet stanzas. Part II of
that series touches upon some of the abuses which caused
the Reformation and traces the Reformation itself, and
it is therein that More becomes a subject.

For an individual who strongly opposed Catholic
emancipation as a threat to the Established Church and
also objected to the admission of dissenters to the
newly founded University of London, it might seem
that it would be difficult to portray the Bishop of
Rochester and Sir Thomas More sympathetically; however,
one must recall that this sonnet forms only one stanza
of a longer poem and that the approbative picture of
More occurs among other sonnets lamenting the "Revival
of Popery" (Sonnet 33) in Mary's reign, chastising the
old religion for "rites that trample upon soul and
sense" (Sonnet 11), but also mourning the destruction
of the old abbeys (Sonnet 35). Furthermore, high church-
man that he was, Wordsworth would not have been far
afield of More in some of his beliefs concerning religious
reform. In fact, he was associated with the Tractarian
Movement in the 1840's, not as a participant, but as
an intellectual supporter. It is improbable that he had
studied more than one of the Tractarian documents, and
he did not agree completely with the Puseyites, but, as
Frederika Beatty has suggested in William Wordsworth of
Rydal Mount, he had anticipated many of the ideological positions of that movement a decade earlier in these sonnets. He also sympathized publicly with what they were doing. In fact, individuals in the movement took Wordsworth to be their poet and welcomed the support of the religious temperament so akin to the spirit motivating their movement.128

In the spirit of that high church Tractarianism Wordsworth wrote his Sonnet 26 in Part II of the Ecclesiastical Sonnets.129 The poem celebrates the unifying force of papal supremacy as an "arch of Christendom" which was "not utterly unworthy to endure" (Wordsworth, 11. 3, 1). The very existence of this unifying factor and their acceptance of the papacy's teachings enabled many believers to pass into the afterlife "like saintly Fisher, and unbending More." The "unbending" reference is, of course, one of the most frequently quoted phrases about More, but one which may be misconstrued, for in the last eight lines of this poem the image takes on a duality not often noted. That duality is encouraged by the dominant image of the poised executioner's axe, and it is nurtured from line 7's allusion to the scaffold, to the last three lines of the poem, which commend how More's "gay genius played/ With the inoffensive sword of native wit./ Than
the bare axe more luminous and keen" (11. 12-14). It is not only to Henry's supremacy that More is unbending, but also to that symbol of it so frequently mentioned in the accounts of his execution: the razor-edged axe.

Furthermore, the dialogue which occurs in lines 9 and 10—"'Lightly for both the bosom's lord did sit/
Upon his throne'" appears to consist of instructions to the executioner, regarding proper dispatch of Fisher and More, yet whatever the significance of that brief passage, Wordsworth clearly specifies that the intervention of the executioner's axe into the scene does not dissuade these martyrs to the old faith. Instead, "unsoftened, undismayed/ By aught that mingled with the tragic scene" (11. 10-11) they are, and the clean cut of More's inoffensive wit seems to pierce deeper "than the bare axe more luminous and keen" (11. 13-14).

Thus Thomas More stands in the lines of Wordsworth's poetic history of the British church as a man martyred to a concept of supremacy which served as a supporting arch to the edifice of Christianity. He died tragically but "unsoftened, undismayed" by fear or hesitation. In fact, his sharp wit played about that final scene "more luminous and keen/ ...than the bare axe" (1. 14) which killed him.

A somewhat tenuous link exists between Wordsworth
and the next selection to be considered in this study. In 1829 Wordsworth claimed in a letter to George Huntly Gordon that this next work was read to him by its author when it existed only in manuscript. One cannot establish, however, that he knew that work already when embarking upon his Ecclesiastical Sonnets. This selection, which may best be described as early political science, comes next from Robert Southey; his Sir Thomas More: Or Colloquies on the Progress and Prospects of Society (1829) was issued with scant praise. It continues receiving little for its literary merit, but it receives at least begrudging notice for its influence on English political thought. Like his earlier Letters from England (1807), the Colloquies is a critique of industrial society, a monument to the flourishing nineteenth-century disenchantment with "the devouring principle of trade." The work has been issued in three editions (1829, 1831, 1887), and although it cannot be alleged that it enjoyed great popularity, it did attract the notice of luminaries like Hazlitt, Macaulay, John Stuart Mill, and Bulwer-Lytton and, like many other works examined previously in this study, forms part of the continuum of sympathetic treatments of More since his lifetime.

The organizational concept of the Colloquies is
several lengthy discursive meetings between the ghost of Sir Thomas More and Southey (who appears herein in the guise of one Montesinos). In the second edition this series of colloquies occupies 723 pages in two volumes—a tedious dialogue consisting of some fifteen colloquies moving toward consideration of the ideal state through an examination of its "progress" and including speculation about the "prospects" of the English nation. Certainly, Sir Thomas More had easily proven himself qualified to engage in this ilk of speculation, but the character More who is herein depicted bears little resemblance to the historical Thomas More, and this deficiency was often noted by the reviewers of Southey's era. As we know, journals of these times often employed vilification and scurrilous attacks on an author's politics, religion, or personal habits. Southey, as Poet Laureate, was a prime target for such strategy; the Colloquies also seems to have been especially suited to invite more vitriol from the opposition press than any of Southey's other works. Much of that criticism is unworthy of careful consideration because of its methods; however, one notable exception is the general agreement among those contemporary reviewers which expressed respect for the memory of Sir Thomas More but puzzlement concerning Southey's use of him as a character in the Colloquies. William Hazlitt
himself employed the colloquy format in "Conversations as Good as Real" to comment on Southey's *Sir Thomas More*, and the two discussants express this aforementioned confusion. On that point, Hazlitt's piece best represents itself:

J. Why does he connect his book with the name of Sir Thomas More?

T. Because he aspires to be in good company. He thinks Robert Southey alone, with a cortege of classical and imposing vouchers about him, is like a picture without a frame.

... There is nothing in the book... but what might have passed between him and Mrs. Croker or Lord Eldon, without invoking the shade of the venerable martyr to the popish faith.

Also, in January of 1830, an anonymous notice of *Colloquies* appeared in *The Edinburgh Review*; it has since been attributed to Thomas Babington Macaulay, but the telling point is that this review is more entertaining than the item which it reviewed. The opening sentences of that piece set the tone for the remainder of Macaulay's comments and, therefore, bear quotation here:

It would be scarcely possible for a man of Mr. Southey's talents and acquirements to write two volumes so large as those before us which should be wholly destitute of information and amusement. Yet we do not remember to have read with so little satisfaction any equal quantity of matter, written by any man of real abilities. We have for some time past observed with great regret the strange infatuation which leads the poet-laureate to abandon those
departments of literature in which he might excel, and to lecture the public on sciences of which he has still the very alphabet to learn. He has now, we think, done his worst. The subject which he has undertaken to treat is one which demands all the highest intellectual and moral qualities of a philosophical statesman, an understanding at once comprehensive and acute, a heart at once upright and charitable. Mr. Southey brings to the task two faculties which were never, we believe, vouchsafed in measure so copious to any human being—the faculty of believing without a reason, and the faculty of hating without a provocation. 137

As if this were not condemnation enough, Macaulay's characterization of the colloquies themselves is even more damning:

We now come to conversations which pass between Mr. Southey and Sir Thomas More, or rather between two Southeys, equally eloquent, equally angry, equally unreasonable, and equally given to talking about what they do not understand. 138

No doubt Macaulay was facilely using Southey's work as a stepping stone to condemnation of so-called "liberal" opinions and to proffer the gospel of laissez-faire. His political opinions, after all, are known as a "monument of nineteenth-century optimism," 139 but although the modern reader may question Macaulay's politics, the criticism of Southey's work is sound.

The origin of these Colloquies has been suggested by Jack Simmons in his critical study of Southey's works. Simmons noted a shift of political interest on
Southey's part--from foreign affairs to home affairs. And apparently these new interests led Southey to write this work to justify new politics; the dedicatory poem suggests so much. But he did produce a series of some fifteen colloquies, and his Montesinos and Sir Thomas More, who are indistinguishable from one another, discourse on a number of political, economic, social, and religious matters so numerous and involved that they do not admit of effective summary here. Let it simply be noted that the Colloquies roams over a number of cooperative social schemes in keeping with the author's well-documented interest in pantisocracy, and what more qualified person than Thomas More could he have found to be his partner in this conversation? Southey had, however, long since learned to distrust zealous plans for Utopian societies, and the work concludes recommending, instead, the gradual implementation of a system which might best be described as an authoritarian welfare state.

What Macaulay had noted, that too had the anonymous author of a Monthly Review piece published in 1829. His complaint is that the apparent form is a colloquy, but the interlocutors "fall almost immediately into the same strain; and rather relieve each other as they happen alternately to be out of breath." However, in the course of their very close duet, Montesinos and More examine the issue of child labor, war, colonization,
unemployment, feudalism, universal education, slavery, industrialization, taxation, heresy, Catholic emancipation, and population control—only to name a few of their topics. But, as the review mentioned above asserted, these opinions are more evidently those of Robert Southey than those of Sir Thomas More; therefore the complaints of Macaulay and the review are well placed. For example, when More and Montesinos discuss the Reformation—a subject upon which the historical Thomas More would hardly have been silent—the exchange is too gentlemanly to be real. A sample may better serve to demonstrate.

Montesinos: Had it been my fortune to have associated with Bilney, or Tindal and Frith, I might have partaken their zeal and their fate. On the other hand, had I been acquainted with you and Cuthbert Tonstal, it is not less likely that I should have received the stamp of your opinions. Even the mere difference of age might have decided whether I should have died at the stake to promote the Reformation, or have exerted myself as you did in opposing it. You yourself, had you been twenty years younger, would have been a reformer.

... The Reformation brought with it so much evil and so much good,...such monstrous corruptions existed on the one part, and such perilous consequences were certainly foreseen on the other,...that I do not wonder at the fiery intolerance which was displayed on both sides.

More: It was vain speculation to inquire whether the benefits might have been attained without the evils of that long and dreadful process. Such an assumption would be absurd, even as the subject of a political romance. For if men were in
a state of morals and knowledge which made them capable of conducting such a revolution unerringly, they would attempt no alteration, because it would be palpable that none was needed. Convulsions of this kind are the consequence and the punishment of our errors and our vices: it is seldom that they prove the remedy for them.

(Southey, I, 246-247)

Numerous critics have been incapable of comprehending Southey's desire to use Sir Thomas More as leader of the speculations in this dialogue. Representative of that objection is the anonymous reviewer of the Monthly Review, who wrote,

It may perhaps be thought that it was scarcely worthwhile to bring back from the dead the spirit of one of the wisest men that England has ever produced, merely to make him a kind of stalking-horse, behind which the author might stand to shoot his arrows as the peculiar game which he delights to pursue. These dialogues, therefore, are not dialogues, but monologues, too, of a very heavy and wearisome nature.143

Writing for The Quarterly Review in 1850, Lockhart and Whitwell described the inclusion of Sir Thomas as leader of the discussion as "not over-felicitous," for, as they quite colorfully observe, More is less the master of his disputant, Montesinos, than he is the pupil of the real Southey. Rather than bring into play his supernatural wisdom, he "fills his pitcher at Southey's cistern."144 That failure to differentiate character and to distinguish Thomas More from the persona
through whom he (Southey) speaks in representative of the flawed design of the entire piece; however those flaws have been studied in detail practically since the original publication of the Colloquies. A notable exception to that weakness, however is the occasionally very effective and moving description. Jack Simmons' too-effusive praise aside, there are occasional flashes of pure descriptive genius in the passages of these dialogues; they are more poetic than prosaic and may, in fact, lend credence to Macaulay's belief that Southey should have restricted himself to literary forms of which he had proven his mastery.

Despite the previously noted flaws, however, twentieth century social historians have been complimentary of Southey's humanitarian viewpoint as it is evidenced in this work. Indeed, the political tables have turned, and modern readers might sympathize more with Southey's politics than with those of his most vociferous critic: Macaulay. In the work, Southey advocates a kind of Tory socialism built upon communal ownership of property but excluding atheism or leveling influences. It is not theory because it does not presume to be so well-defined; in fact, the colloquy format is a felicitous choice, for it admits doctrinal informality by its imposition of a conversational tone upon political
The political notions inherent in the Colloquies can perhaps best be summarized as follows. Southey maintained, unlike many of his contemporaries, that poverty was not an act of God but a social condition about which the state was bound to do something: to provide social services. On the other hand, the democratic principles of his day he dismisses and opts for an authoritarian government very sensitive to social ills. This enlightened government can found a system of national education, diminish unemployment by embarking on public works projects, assist emigration to the colonies, establish a system of national savings banks, organize a more efficient police, and generally improve the condition of the poor so that "the laboring classes will have their comforts enlarged and their well being secured...whereby they may be rendered healthier, happier, better in all respects" (Southey, II, 419). Thus Southey conceived "practical reform." Nevertheless, these political writings, though practically inviting Macaulay's brilliant satire, "have a definite place in the development of progressive ideas in England...for the influence they exercised" and the attention which they attracted.

More germane to this study, despite Sir Thomas More's Catholicism—a creed for which Southey exhibited
little respect in his writings\textsuperscript{150}—Southey respected Sir Thomas. After all, More had designed one of the first British pictures of an ideal society, and Geoffrey Carnall even speculates that Southey, like More, would have resisted the Reformation had he been More's contemporary, so powerful was his revulsion against anarchy,\textsuperscript{151} and hence so strong his spiritual brotherhood with More. Southey also seems to have sensed a brotherhood between himself and More; in fact, he has More say,

\begin{quote}
We have both speculated in the joy and freedom of our youth upon the possible improvement of society; and both in like manner have lived to dread with reason the effects of that restless spirit which, like the Titaness Mutability described by your immortal Master, insults Heaven and disturbs the earth.
\end{quote}

(Southey, II, 247)

Although it is true that the depiction of Sir Thomas More within the hundreds of pages of this work ignores the character of the historical More and although the Thomas More of the \textit{Colloquies} is indistinguishable from Montesinos, this portrait of More, nevertheless, joins the many sympathetic presentations of the recusant champion. Despite the brief deference in the dedicatory verse to the outworn charge of More's bigotry against heretics, the dominant image of Sir Thomas maintained by the two volumes of this work is best described by Southey himself in that same verse:
More the mild, the learned and the good; 
Traced in that better stage of human life 
When vain imaginations, troublous thoughts, 
And hopes and fears have had their course 
and left 
The intellect composed, the heart at rest 
...
Such was the man whom Henry, of desert 
Appreciant alway, chose for highest trust; 
Whom England in that eminence approved; 
Whom Europe honoured, and Erasmus loved. 

(Southey, I, iv)

Although not true to the very complex character of that complex man, the depiction is sympathetic, loving, and the former Lord Chancellor is one of two characters used to present a political program in which Southey apparently believed rather strongly. Finally, once he has accomplished his ends, Southey has More bid him farewell in this fashion, "Rest there in full faith. I leave you to your dreams; draw from them what comfort you can" (Southey, II, 426). The real Thomas More, the designer of the dream of a Utopia, surely could have appreciated that sentiment.

Following Southey, Charles Dickens covered Thomas More in a biographical vein in his Child's History of England, which he wrote between 1851 and 1853 and serialized irregularly in Household Words beginning in January of 1852 and ending in 1853. It has since been reissued in at least six regular English editions from 1852 to 1908 besides numerous Everyman's Library printings from 1906 to 1969.
This production Dickens had originally planned for the education of his own children; it comprises some 150,000 words of adaptation of Keightley's History intertwined with the expression of what Una Pope-Hennessy termed Dickens' "shallow, vituperative judgments" in a "rather deplorable production." Her assessment of his judgments of historical personages is probably fair, but what her criticism does not admit is that the Child's History exhibits a quality of naive charm which still makes for very entertaining reading today.

Further, one must realize that Dickens' work is not history; it is mainly a vehicle for the expression of extremely personal assessments of historical personages. This, of course, has offended some students of history; in fact, it has been suggested that he had "far better... left the teaching of history to tutors" than to disfigure his accounts of the British monarchs with phrases like "His Sowship" (James I) or "a corpulent brute, grunting and growling in his own fat way like a royal pig" (Henry VIII). But dull reading the Child's History is not, for Dickens takes every opportunity to insert colorful opinions regarding his own peculiar view of British history. In fact, G. K. Chesterton best assessed the work when he offered that it would remain a monument of English literature, not for its historical significance, but for its "contri-
Dickens' religious opinions were seldom what could now be characterized as tame, and one might wonder, since he does discourse on Sir Thomas More in the History, how these views might color his depiction of More. Unfamiliar as he was with Catholicism in his childhood, once he reached intellectual maturity, he tended to include it with nonconformity as another style of political and economic reaction, and though it does not occupy the stage in his novels, his letters and Pictures from Italy establish his abhorrence of all its forms and traditions. The Child's History, as general and unpollished as it is, views the old religion as a peculiar and horrible vestige of more barbaric times. The Anglican Church does fare better, but only because Dickens could not take it very seriously; though he briefly became a Unitarian, he in fact assiduously avoided associating creeds and conscience. Dickens' disapproval of Catholicism does not affect his presentation of Thomas More. Conversely, as has been the pattern in several previously mentioned works, Dickens' Sir Thomas functions as a touchstone against whom King Henry is unfavorably compared. Dickens' disapproval of Henry is far from subtle; in fact Chapter XXVII of the Child's History begins with this
revealing passage:

We now come to King Henry the Eighth, whom it has been too much the fashion to call 'Bluff King Hal,'... and other fine names; but whom I shall take the liberty to call, plainly one of the most detestable villains that ever drew breath.

(Dickens, p. 227)

After that, the author engages in tasteless attacks on Henry's physique. First, he addresses the tradition of the athletic young king who cut such a figure that he impressed all European courts:

He was just eighteen years of age when he came to the throne. People said he was handsome then; but I don't believe it. He was a big, burly, noisy, small-eyed, large-faced, double-chinned, swinish-looking fellow in later life... and it is not easy to believe that so bad a character can ever have been veiled under a prepossessing appearance.

(Dickens, p. 227)

Furthermore, as he closes this chapter, Dickens seems incapable of resisting one final scathing remark regarding Henry: "a most intolerable ruffian, a disgrace to human nature, and a blot of blood and grease upon the History of England" (Dickens, p. 246). Thus the presentation of King Henry is such that, in the two brief chapters of twenty pages which recount Henry's reign, the six sympathetic references to Sir Thomas More create an image again of a learned, witty man of integrity much superior to this "royal pig" who had him executed. In fact, in the Henrician section of the
Child's History, More belongs to a cavalcade of Henry's ministers and wives with whom Dickens sympathizes for suffering their royal master's terrors. Unlike Froude who was wrong in a robust and childish fashion, Dickens perceived the main point about Henry's character: that he was often an extremely wicked man. But Dickens errs in trying to make him at once every kind of wicked man and he misses the fine shades.  

On the other hand, the rendering of Sir Thomas More is very commendatory. He is presented as "a wise man, whom [King Henry] repaid by striking off his head" (Dickens, p. 233). That quality of wisdom Dickens makes an obvious effort to reemphasize afterwards, for again he mentions it when he notes that More was appointed to replace Wolsey (Dickens, pp. 236-237). Other than More's wisdom, his wit earns equal concern from Dickens, who repeats the scaffold and beard jests with some appreciation (Dickens, pp. 238-239), but it is his final assessment of More which rings familiar by this time, for it is that "Sir Thomas More was one of the most virtuous men in...[King Henry's] dominions...but to be a friend of that fellow was almost as dangerous as to be his wife" (Dickens, p. 239). That sentiment about More's greatness, incidentally, was apparently one which Dickens held for some time, for in a speech given in 1843
before the Printers' Pension Society, he had characterized More as "the best, and wisest, and the greatest of men; who...died what was almost the natural death of the good, and the wise and the great."¹⁶⁰

Significant nineteenth century treatments of More end with that of James Anthony Froude in his *History of England* (1856-1870), *Times of Erasmus and Luther*, and his essay "Revival of Romanism" (c. 1867-1883). Sound arguments could perhaps be advanced claiming that Froude's *History* does not legitimately belong in a study like this which considers literary treatments of Thomas More; however, today opinion holds Froude not to be taken too seriously as a historian but respects his literary style and defers to the influence which he has exerted on others. Furthermore, Froude's style, his narrative techniques, and his imaginative reconstruction of historical events have long been recognized for the values which are there, and modern opinion generally holds--in the words of the author of *History and Historians of the Nineteenth Century*--that Froude neither belongs to the world of literature or the world of history but to both worlds, that he "closes the age of the amateurs, whose brilliant writings belong as much to literature as to history."¹⁶² And finally, Froude himself saw history, not as a science reciting the bare fact of historical event, but as an art, "a voice for ever sounding across
the centuries the laws of right and wrong," and taking the truth—as Shakespeare did—from life's events, for through history "we learn...to sympathize with what is great and good; we learn to hate what is base."

Froude believed that history appeals less to understanding than to "higher" emotions and that it did only half of its duty if it merely related events. Such a theory of history invites subjective intrusion on the part of the writer, and it is for his partisanship that Froude has been attacked by admirers of More, particularly Reynolds and Chambers.

Obviously, Froude is partisan to Henry VIII; he cannot see in Henry the evil streak which so many modern historians sense. Instead, Froude's Henry is the benevolent prince concerned for the welfare of his subjects and the peace of his kingdom. Regarding the divorce, Froude admits that Henry had interfered "despotically" to gain a favorable judgement from the universities, but claims naively that "he had made no attempt...to check the tongues of the clergy." In fact, if anything, Froude claims, Henry made an "ostentatious display of impartiality" by admitting to his Privy Council men like More and Tunstal who were members of the papal party, and "the presence of Sir Thomas More in the council was a guarantee that no exaggerated measures against the Church would be permitted so long
as he held the seals" (Froude, I, 364, 168). The charge, in fact, of anti-Catholic bias and of his "condoning of atrocities provided they were committed on the Protestant side"\(^{164}\) Richard Altick and Samuel Chew level at Froude in Baugh's *Literary History*.

Again, the charges are excessive. That Froude was critical of the Roman religion is apparent. That he was sometimes critical of Thomas More and often blind to the truth in matters affecting the Lord Chancellor are points correctly noted by More specialists. That he would grasp for justifications of Henry's policies or marital strategies further becomes apparent from a close reading of the *History*. But what the More specialists do not admit is that, for so rabid a Protestant partisan as James Anthony Froude, the depiction of Sir Thomas More in his biographical history is unexpectedly complimentary. In fact, in a series of Oxford lectures on Erasmus, Froude was able to blame the deaths of Fisher and More, not on their adamantly "sticking" to their misguided convictions (as Foxe would have it) but to "the Pope's cunning or the Pope's folly."\(^{165}\) Chambers and Reynolds have simply hyperbolized Froude's opposition to More's policies. In their zealous defense of More against Froude's criticism of his supposed persecution of heretics, they have failed to take cognizance of his frequently warm treatment of Thomas More.
R. W. Chambers has already charged that Froude did not understand More's self-deprecatory position in the matter of the oath. To support this assertion Chambers made an interesting point, one which at least deserves mention here: that is that Froude misquoted More's scaffold speech (an unconscious misquote, Chambers believed), for Froude had More say that he died "a faithful servant of God and the King" (Froude, II, 176), whereas other sources credit him with the clearer differentiation that he had been "the faithful servant of the King, and, in the first place, of God." Such apparently small but significant delineations of loyalties were not unknown to the Renaissance courtier; Froude, however, appears not to have understood or appreciated the distinction which More was making. So too is his appreciation of More's position concerning the prosecution of heresy clouded by his partisanship.

As has previously been noted, Foxe accused More of brutality toward alleged heretics whom he had been charged to examine, and Froude uncritically accepted Foxe's accounts, hence passing on to this century a criticism of More's conduct which has lingered, not so much in belles-lettres literature as in contemporary histories. One example may serve here. S. T. Bindoff, in the popular Princess history Tudor England (1950) writes of the "More who committed Protestants to the
Fires"; leaving the impression which Froude left that More was personally and frequently responsible for such acts. Of course, More in reality commanded no such power. The Bishop's Court tried and adjudged alleged heresy; if a man were adjudged guilty, he would then be handed over to the sheriffs for the penalty prescribed by civil code enacted in 1401 to deal with the Lollards, *De Heretico Comburendo*, and that penalty was burning at the stake. Froude's knowledge of these close distinctions need not be inferred since he clearly stipulates the applicable statutes and adds brief summaries of each. As he admits, More was bound upon taking his oath of office to suppress heretics (Froude, I, 550-552); he is instead critical of More for cruelty once they were under his control. What is troubling is that Froude again accepts Foxe's charges of such cruelties at Chelsea and then hedges with the strange and unexpected phrase, "which at least we may hope were exaggerated" (Froude, I, 551).

The Public Records Office holds two petitions accusing More of illegal imprisonment; Froude errs in treating these charges as truth without having investigated them further (Froude, I, 552 ff.). Actually, King Henry ordered an investigation of at least one of the complaints, and the charges were dismissed as unjustified and frivolous. That is the charge of illegal imprison-
ment made by one Phillips. Too frequently in the matter of More's supposed persecution of heretics, ensuing writers have accepted Foxe's accusations uncritically, and Froude in that sense is merely adhering to long-established tradition. But with the Phillips case, Froude even goes beyond Foxe's errors. Although he acknowledges that More had had Phillips delivered to the ecclesiastical jurisdiction within ten days as the law required, he accuses More of privately examining the accused, which was a clear violation of British law. For these charges he cites Foxe, whereas Foxe had clearly stated that the examination was not private: "He was oftentimes examined before Master More and the Bishop." Furthermore, Froude criticizes More for the alleged persecution of Tewkesbury, Frith, Petit, and Bainham as Foxe had; however, the trials and punishments of the first three occurred before More became Chancellor, and, although the Bainham charges (Froude, I, 561 ff.) are chronologically tenable, since Froude garners most of his information from Foxe, that case is also questionable as is his allegation that "no sooner had the seals changed hands from Wolsey to More than the Smithfield fires recommenced... encouraged by the Chancellor" (Froude, II, 83). In reality what had happened is this. By 1519, More was apparently aiding Henry in his avowed campaign to "study how to extirpate
Luther's heresy"; More then became Chancellor in 1529 and remained in favor at least until 1531. During those twelve difficult years between his first joining forces with Henry and his political impotence, there was not one death sentence pronounced upon a heretic in the Diocese of London. What did happen in 1531 was Parliament's bestowing on Henry the title of "Supreme Head." From then, More's loss of favor and power beings, and Stokesley, Bishop of London, attains more of both. During the three years of More's retirement, disgrace, and imprisonment, fifteen or sixteen dissenters were executed, primarily upon the encouragement of Stokesley and the other bishops who were willingly or unwillingly separating themselves from Rome and who promoted executions to prove their orthodoxy. On the other hand, as Chambers has correctly asserted, Froude could not have known More's Apology, the document which has led to other discoveries of the facts in these cases. 175

Nevertheless, in that section Froude commends More's genius and attainments in a paean which reads, "the philosopher of the Utopia, the friend of Erasmus, whose life was of blameless beauty, whose genius was cultivated to the highest attainable perfection" (Froude, I, 550). Furthermore, it is More whose stellar accomplishments Froude recognizes early in the History and More whom he groups with Sir Thomas Eliot, Wyatt,
Cromwell, and Erasmus as representatives of what the
spirit of the Henrician dynasty had wrought in indivi­
dual accomplishment (Froude, I, 47-48).

Additionally, Froude notes (as several other sources
had previously) that More accepted the chancellorship
reluctantly, yielding finally to Henry's entreaties.
But, so Froude proposes, it would have been preferable
for his memory had More persevered, for he charges that
Sir Thomas struggled against the movement of the times
and "attempted to counterpoise the attack upon the Church
by destroying the unhappy Protestants." But as events
moved forward, More, feeling he could no longer counte­
nance what was happening by occupying a position of trust
near the King, petitioned to be allowed to resign. Note
Froude's very sympathetic choice of phraseology here:
"It was time for him to retire from a world not moving
to his mind; and in the fair tranquility of his family
prepare himself for the evil days which he foresaw"
(Froude, I, 361-362).

Unlike Hall, Foxe, Holinshed, and others who have
disparaged More's propensity for jesting, Froude observes
with a suggestion of admiration that "More's wit was
always ready" (Froude, II, 271) and proceeds with
numerous examples including an account of More's receipt
of the death sentence with the King's commutation of
the usual traitor's treatment with his quillet, "God
forbid that the King should show any more such mercy unto any of my friends; and God bless all my posterity from such pardons" (Froude, II, 271). In fact, Froude notes many other examples of More's humor as he takes the reader closer to the execution. None, however, are new to this work. Other examples used by Froude are the now common scaffold, short neck, and beard anecdotes; his cataloguing of these enables him to move gracefully into an assertion regarding victory over death as evidenced by "that last scene /Being/ lighted with its lambent humour" (Froude, II, 275-277). As he presents this part of the biography of More, he repeatedly cites Cresacre More's own Life of More and appears to depend almost exclusively on this partisan account for the little personal touches while using the State Papers for historical materials.

When not directly stated, Froude's admiration for More's courage under duress often emerges through what remains unstated. However, in his account of the execution itself, Froude's esteem for More is direct and touching. The brief passage, part of which has been quoted before, deserves quotation in full here, for it speaks best to the issue of Froude's rendition of Sir Thomas More:

This was the execution of Sir Thomas More, an act which was sounded out into the far corners of the earth, and was
the world's wonder as well for the circumstances under which it was perpetrated, as for the preternatural composure with which it was borne. Something of his calmness may have been due to his natural temperament, something to an unaffected weariness of a world which in his eyes was plunging into the ruin of latter days. But those fair hues of sunny cheerfulness caught their colour from the simplicity of his faith; and never was there a Christian's victory over death more grandly evidenced than in that last scene lighted with its lambent humour.

(Froude, II, 277)

Despite Froude's apparent Henrician partisanship, his judgments of Sir Thomas More are generally favorable, however couched they may be in qualifying terms designed to pay deference to Henry's broad policies. An example may be useful here. As has been noted previously, Froude's account of More's execution is most sympathetic, in fact couched in poetic terms. Following that account, Froude pauses to consider the entire policy which motivated it and observes that "history will rather dwell upon the incidents of the execution than attempt a sentence upon those who willed that it should be. It was at once most piteous and most inevitable"

(Froude, II, 277).

Although Chambers is at least partially responsible for the negativism current in More studies concerning Froude's treatment of More, Chambers himself intimated that Froude's presentation of More was not utterly
unbalanced, for, with all its partisanship, there is in Froude's depiction of More, sympathy and, in fact, respect for More's heroism. Indeed, Chambers quite correctly observed that

when we come to the end of the story of the martyrdom of the Carthusians and of More as Froude tells it, I am not sure that we are not left with a feeling of admiration and awe, even deeper than that left by a perusal of Father Bridgett's noble delineation of More and Fisher as faultless Catholic martyrs.177

With Froude, the significant treatments of Thomas More belonging to the nineteenth century end. In communion with the generally positive views of this great humanist provided by the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the depictions rendered by Froude and his contemporaries form a continuing tradition reaching back to those even of More's own epoch, and this received tradition also anticipates the even more positive treatments of the twentieth century which span nearly the entire spectrum of printed literature from hagiography through fiction, drama, poetry, and even popular historical romance. Emerging as a predominant motif throughout the uses of More as a literary character in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries has been a pattern wherein More is avatar of conscience and virtue; against him others are tested and most are found lacking—especially Wolsey and King Henry. There-
in we find the chief function which Sir Thomas More has served as a literary character in a tradition stretching from Shakespeare through Winstanley, Ward, Addison, Prior, Swift, Hurdis, Dickens, and others. Finally, the most positive treatments of Sir Thomas More in the twentieth century must be examined as the culmination of this long tradition.
NOTES TO CHAPTER III

1 More, p. 45.

2 "W. S.," Thomas Lord Cromwell, ed. John S. Farmer, Tudor Facsimile Texts, No. 97 (1911; rpt. New York: AMS Press, 1970); all future references to this play will be from this edition, cited as W. S.; however, act and scene divisions are suggestions of William Kozlemko, ed., Disputed Plays of William Shakespeare (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1974). Ribner, p. 205, posits authorship as early as 1600, but on the speculation that the play was a counter-blows to Sir John Oldcastle.

3 Ribner, pp. 204-205. 4 Ibid.


6 Kozlemko, p. 265. Schlegel as quoted by Kozlemko.


9 Cf. Ribner, p. 205.


11 See Creizenach, p. 261, for a similar assessment of the unity of historical drama.

12 See Ribner, pp. 205-206, for a similar appraisal.


15 Ribner, pp. 206 ff. 16 Ibid., p. 208.

17 Ibid. 18 Creizenach, p. 182.

19 Ibid., p. 101.


22 Ruoff, pp. 97-98.


26 Baker, p. 978.


32 Lines 25-30 in The Riverside Edition previously cited. All future references to this play will be from that edition, hereafter cited as Shakespeare.


34 Chambers, More, pp. 240-243.

35 It would appear that this is an issue on which directors seldom, if ever, take a position. The BBC-Time Life production of April 25, 1979, directed by Kevin Billington, retained the More reference but presented an unspecified Chancellor in the Privy Council trial scene.


37 The Riverside Shakespeare, p. 1012, n. 35.

38 Saccio, pp. 210-211. 39 Baker, p. 979.


47 Reynolds, Saint, pp. 235-236.

48 See the Preface in Spedding's previously cited edition of Bacon for a detailed and careful analysis of the spurious and the Baconian apophthegms.

49 Skemp, pp. 9, 16. 50 Ibid., pp. 15-16.

51 Chambers, Place, pp. 28-29.

52 For a more detailed presentation of the history of these materials, see the Preface to Bacon--Spedding, especially pp. 313-324.


56 "Winstanley, William," DNB (1921).


59 Fussner, p. 206.


62 "Fuller, Thomas (1608-1661)," *DNB* (1921).


64 Thomas Fuller, *The Holy State and the Profane State*, as quoted in *DNB* entry supra.

65 Brooke and Shaaber, p. 598.


69 White, p. 149. 70 Donnelly, p. 19.


73 Anthony Powell, *John Aubrey and His Friends* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1948); see particularly, pp. 204, 206, 214, 225, and 282; Edmund Wilson, "Foreword," Aubrey, p. v.

74 Powell, pp. 281-282.


76 Reynolds, *Field*, p. 381.

77 George Sherburn and Donald F. Bond, "The Restoration and Eighteenth Century" in Baugh, previously cited, p. 792.

Sir Walter Raleigh, A New History of England (London: T. Astley, 1751); hereafter, though authorship is uncertain, this work will be cited as Raleigh.


Raleigh, World, p. 56.


"Ward, Thomas," DNB (1921).


Chambers, More, p. 35.  

Chambers, Place, p. 114.

Joseph Addison, The Spectator (London: Payne et al, n. d.), V; hereafter cited as Addison. Although others contributed many numbers to the publication, those used herein are all by Addison.


Ibid.


96 Chambers, Place, p. 104.


98 Ibid., particularly pp. 162-163, 172, 179-180.


102 Chambers, More, pp. 253, 365.


105 Ibid. 106 Ward, p. 162.

107 George Sherburn and Donald Bond, "The Periodicals and Oliver Goldsmith" in Baugh, pp. 1050-1051.


110 The Tragedy of Sir Thomas More (London: J. Johnson, 1793); cited as Hurdis.

111 "Hurdis, James," DNB (1921).

112 This author has found no mention of the play in innumerable annals, revels accounts, and stage histories consulted. A brief reference appears in

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Allardyce Nicoll, A History of English Drama: 1660-1900 (1927; rpt. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1955), III, 86. That notation merely observes that this play was part of a resurgence of history plays and notes that in this play "Anne Bullen plays the part of villainess." Nor apparently has Nicoll discovered any evidence of the play having been produced. See p. 274, particularly.


115 Chambers, More, p. 183.


119 In a sermon delivered at Chelsea, Old Church on February 8, 1978, and published in the previously cited Thomas More Through Many Eyes; see especially pp. 175-176.

120 Moreana, II, 208. 121 Donnelly, p. 19.


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127 Beatty, pp. 210-211, 224, 227.

128 Ibid.

129 To be found in Wordsworth, pp. 373-374; line references are to that publication of the poem.


131 Sir Thomas More: Or Colloquies on the Progress and Prospects of Society (London: John Murray, 1829); cited as Southev.


133 John Stuart Mill in a letter to John Sterling dates October 1831, as published in Madden, pp. 386-387 and Edward Bulwer-Lytton, England and the English (1833), part of which is reprinted in Madden, pp. 387-388.


135 Hazlitt, pp. 260-261.


137 Ibid., p. 391.

138 Ibid., pp. 401-402.

139 Carnall, p. 180.


142 The Monthly Review, NS, 119 (1829), as reprinted in Madden, p. 335.

143 In Madden, pp. 335-336.

144 John Gibson Lockhart and Whitwell Elwin in an
unsigned review of Southey's Life and Correspondence published originally in _The Quarterly Review_ (December 1850), as reprinted in Madden. See p. 434.

145 Simmons, p. 219.

146 See Madden, "Introduction," p. 29 and notes for further information.

147 Simmons, p. 152, points out, in fact, that Southey would have objected to the term _political theory_ as pretentious.

148 I have depended partially on Simmons, pp. 152-155, for this summary.

149 Ibid., p. 155.

150 Especially in his personal correspondence. See, for example, his letter of April 1807 to C. W. W. Wynn in _Letters of Robert Southey_, ed. Maurice H. Fitzgerald (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1913), pp. 120-123.

151 Carnall, p. 30.

152 Charles Dickens, _Charles Dickens' Works_ (New York: G. W. Carleton and Co., 1878), XV.


155 Pope-Hennessy, p. 338.

156 Dickens, pp. 287, 240.


158 Lindsay, pp. 39-40. 159 Chesterton, p. xi.


164 Baugh, p. 1331.


166 Chambers, *Place*, p. 118.

167 As noted in *Place*, p. 118.


170 Hen. V. stat. I; 2 Hen. IV.


174 Ibid., pp. 277, 279-281.

175 Especially in the biographical *Thomas More*, but less so in *The Place of Saint Thomas More in English Literature and History*.

CHAPTER IV

THE TRADITION IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

After having survived for such a lengthy period, More traditions were not likely to disappear suddenly in the twentieth century, nor did they. This century, despite its patterns of alienation and its frequent dismissal of the heroic, has also responded sympathetically to Sir Thomas More; and it has done so through diverse media: films, television programs, magazine articles, radio talk shows, drama, fiction, and poetry. Furthermore, in these miscellaneous forms of the creative arts, no single unsympathetic literary treatment of the great Lord Chancellor of England appears. Apparently, this epoch has produced nearly as much sympathetic literature regarding Thomas More as any previous century, and what it has produced is, furthermore, epitomized in two significant modern works: Robert Bolt's A Man for All Seasons (1960) and Walker Percy's Love in the Ruins (1971). Surrounding these two contemporary works is a wealth of modern tradition probably as representative of popular sentiment as was Munday's Book of Sir Thomas More. This usage encompasses nearly everything from the popular historical romance to the television program. This chapter will examine representatives of the multifarious printed elements in this pattern, but the Bolt
play and the novel by Percy will draw most attention, for they undoubtedly form a culmination of this extending tradition, both in terms of their content and popularity.

As in the century of his death, there has been in this age a forceful tradition of popular treatments of Sir Thomas More, especially in historical romances. Of these, Francis Hackett's *Queen Anne Boleyn* (1939)\(^1\) is apparently one of the earliest and most Romantic portraits of Anne as champion of religious egalitarianism, sympathizer with the downtrodden masses, and secret disciple of Luther. In this novel Thomas More warrants some consideration, but first we must see the novel's portrayal of Anne. By no means an isolated case is the following passage from the novel as it pictures Anne. It comes from that section portraying the execution of one Rowse, Bishop Fisher's cook framed to suffer for Cromwell's botched attempt to poison Fisher. This execution scene presents Anne in the light previously mentioned. As Rowse is about to be boiled alive, Anne muses sympathetically on his situation:

The insignificant being on whom all this attention was centred, a being without a friend or an attachment visible, a being so utterly cast out that the earth shook with these voices roaring against him--this rejected man was half-pushed, half-pulled up the wooden steps of the platform.

... Anne looked away, while wave on wave of dreadful sounds surged from
'But,' said George as they hastened away, 'poisoning is to be discouraged. No person can live in surety otherwise.' Anne moved her grey lips to answer, but no sound came. So she just smiled.

(Hackett, p. 342)

Within this same context, Anne Boleyn views Sir Thomas More and Bishop Fisher as imperialists opposed to the new Protestant movement which is battling to provide the Word for all the masses. This movement she espouses much more fervently than King Henry. Since More and Fisher are opponents of Lutheranism, she perceives them as her enemies:

When they burned the New Testament that Tyndale translated, she believed they were afraid of the Word. Anne's opposition to them increased as she saw their long faces and prudish glances. They called her the Concubine,...the whore. Her heart hardened and her body became taut when their hatred struck into her.

(Hackett, p. 343)

But writing in his own voice in Chapter VII of the novel, Hackett characterizes More quite differently. Shortly after Henry has revealed to Queen Catherine his intention to seek a divorce, Henry and Wolsey discuss their opponents and the Cardinal advises Henry to go to More on the matter. The passage which follows below is representative of Hackett's treatment of Thomas More. It deserves quotation at length, for it illustrates an important contrast which is developed in this popular novel: the crucial difference between Anne's view of
More and the reality of this great man.

More, broad and under-sized, gave a look at the magnificent being who... cajoled him. It was an astonishing look, at once eager and apprehensive, quizzical and respectful, humble and audacious. There was a quick, a lively play both in mouth and nose, and the whole face, its reds splashed with blackness of hair and brow, had the utmost mobile intelligence in it, but beyond that, beyond the wary tightness that at once repressed the mouth, the eyes had a dark splendour and the voice a timber of its own. Rather untidy, or at any rate careless in his attire, and with uneven shoulders that suggested the studious man, More's was a presence in the gallery of Hampton Court that was as enlivening as light in a house or water in a landscape. He did not stand out from the others, he soared out. Against Wolsey himself, against Henry, against Norfolk, or against the underling Cromwell, here was a figure of the first order. And it was on this sincerity of More's that Henry was about to press his conscience.

(Hackett, p. 225)

The passage is so complimentary that it could have been written by Erasmus; and, in fact, some of the phraseology appears to have been lifted directly from Erasmus's previously cited letter of 1517 to Ulrich von Hutten.

But the passage in Hackett continues,

But there was nothing comic for Thomas More in this gesture of conscience. His was a character mordant and sincere. It was also reverent. Henry was God's anointed. He took him with a submission that verged on abasement. All that splendour in his own nature, his mirth as ready as his wit, went with a tragic awareness of forces, moral forces, which can never be played with.

(Hackett, pp. 225-226)
That presentation of More in the framework of a novel very favorable to Anne Boleyn is, by now, not unexpected; in fact, such partiality has become a commonplace in Moreana of the past centuries. But Hackett's Queen Anne Boleyn advanced the More legend further with a tribute to his chivalric conscience which might have easily been written by the twentieth century More specialist, the Abbé Germain Marc'hadour:

"All the flexibility and passion, all the paradox and vivacity, of the ironic nature had its origin in the adventure of immortality on which it believed itself to be engaged. The Round Table had merely preceded him and the Holy Grail was only in new terms for him, but he was a Knight who barely succeeded, by force of reason, in keeping from an escape onto the desert... Thomas More was more alive than ever to this ravening lion... Henry had boarded More's conscience; and from that conscience, as from Catherine's and Bishop Fisher's he knew he had something to contend with."

(Hackett, pp. 225-226)

What is true of Hackett's historical romance is, in fact, typical of popular novels published well into the 1970's, and representative examples will be examined later in this study; however, Maxwell Anderson's Anne of the Thousand Days (1948) appeared in its original form approximately a decade after Hackett's novel, and it also focused some attention on Sir Thomas. Writing in The Nation's January 1, 1949, issue, Joseph Wood Krutch described Anderson's play as surely one of the best
of his works and one of the two plays then on Broadway worth seeing. Krutch's praise was especially founded upon Anderson's grasp of the British Renaissance character and personality, at a time in which "Englishmen and Englishwomen had...an almost Latin tempestuousness of soul which they did not entirely lose until the eighteenth century....They loved and hated, they destroyed others and they destroyed themselves, with a passionate recklessness." And he maintained that the dramatist who would make the people of that time live must capture that passion as Anderson had done in his Anne, showing her "unconquerable and ruthless," not merely a pathetic victim of Henry's whimsy.

Unlike his grasp of Anne's character, Anderson's characterization of Thomas More is flawed; More appears out of character in this play but is not treated unsympathetically. As the Sullivans have observed, however, the portrayal of More is insinuative. While Anne Boleyn is treated sympathetically as a figure whose ambition eventually caused her destruction, More is not colored as her great adversary. In fact, none of the More sources examined by this study (not even those critical of More), none of the modern historical treatments (not even those sympathetic to Henry) support the rendition of Thomas More favored by Anderson—a More who is but one of many courtiers about Anne Boleyn.
engaging in pseudo-intellectual small talk. For example, in their nigh flippant consideration of providence and justice, Anne muses, "There must be a machine up above that computes these things, and filters them automatically--and keeps the score," to which More responds uncharacteristically, "But who built it? And suppose it gets out of order" (Anderson, p. 49). The thought of this particular martyr to a point of religion being so lackadaisical concerning doctrinal matters is strange indeed. It might be proposed that More could have been using the colloquy to protect himself and to allow Anne to arrive independently at her own dangerous conclusions; however, this would have been uncharacteristic of Thomas More, if we may trust the many near-contemporary sources which survive. His commitment in hierological matters was so fixed that he contended with kings and cardinals, and surely Anne Boleyn would not have frightened him. In fact, his beliefs would have been well-known to Anne. Note how Anderson has More continue, however: "But somehow we came here. Somehow we are as we are" (Anderson, p. 49). It appears that Anderson, like Southey, was merely speaking through Sir Thomas More as a persona. Surely the More presented herein is difficult for the student of the real Sir Thomas More to tolerate as a true rendition of Henry's Lord Chancellor. What is even less characteristic is this
character's lack of comedic insight into his condition, or any hint of the real More's prophetic but self-deprecating humor. This character does not speak a single witty line. So too are his love of life, his familial concerns, his great intellect, his charity, and his humility overlooked.

Granted, this play is indeed about Anne Boleyn, and developing Sir Thomas as the complex person he truly was might have detracted from the presentation of Anne; however, it did not have to do so.

The only respect in which this character approaches the historical figure is in the passages wherein Houghton, Fisher, and More tell Henry they cannot take the oath. Here, as the Sullivans have also noted, More is sketched with greater assurance, but the language assigned (as is true throughout the play) is not only inelegant, but also atypical of More's patterns of speech. For instance, when conceding that Henry might be right in assuming that his people will support the break from Rome, More's comment is, "It may be true. I don't know. I've known these things to happen before with you. Not quite like this. Not on this scale" (Anderson, p. 69). This character's speech is not only inelegant, it verges on being inarticulate.

At best, therefore, this Thomas More is a rough cast copy of the original without any of the saving
graces of that original--his wisdom, his humility, his wit, his charity for others, and fatherly concern for family. And for this reason, this Thomas More does not resemble the real man. The portrait is not critical, however, and in that respect it continues to contribute to a long developing pattern of affirmative treatments. Finally, in his previously cited review, Krutch labeled the play a "historical romance rather than strictly speaking a tragedy," and it may be that, in the clouding of the real which obtains from the romance, such an apparent misrepresentation of Sir Thomas may be allowable.

Sir Thomas and his family have generated considerable interest among writers of popular novels. Sometimes the interest has merely been a corollary to interest in the turbulent lives of Henry and his court, as in the case of the widely published Eleanor Hibbert, a writer having had over 2,000,000 copies of her historical romances published. Her novels belong to the realm of popular literature like many of the selections which this study has previously examined; they do not pretend to be serious imaginative art, but they do contribute to a cultural underpinning upon which great literature does depend somewhat for its legitimacy. Most importantly, however, they signify a continuing interest in and consistent treatment of Sir Thomas More. The first of these novels concerns Anne Boleyn and is

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entitled *The King's Pleasure* (1949); the second deals specifically with More and is entitled *St. Thomas's Eve* (1954) and the third is another biographical novel about Anne bearing the title of *The Concubine* (1963).

Under her own name, Hibbert published the fictionalized version of Anne Boleyn's life which is *The King's Pleasure*. Although fictional, the novel is based carefully on Tudor and on contemporary historical accounts. Therein are numerous instances of Sir Thomas More presented in a positive demeanor: the learned and internationally admired author of *Utopia*, the savant, the wit and close friend of King Henry and Queen Catherine. In this novel, Hibbert devotes considerable space to More's retirement from office, his last touching interview with Meg in the Tower, and his trial and execution. The novel then ends with Queen Catherine poignantly mourning the deaths of both Fisher and More and realizing that Henry will kill her just as surely as he has killed them. Five years afterwards, Hibbert published *St. Thomas's Eve*, this time under the pseudonym Jean Plaidy. This piece is a fictionalized rendering of Sir Thomas More's life from the brash, youthful member of Parliament who opposed Henry VII's subsidy to the older, settled More who opposed Henry's son in his "Great Matter." For this novel the author depended extensively upon Roper's *Life*, Cavendish's *Life of
Wolsey, More's own *Dialogue of Comfort*, plus the Chambers biography and A. W. Reed's study of early Tudor drama. The Sullivans have observed that the novel is based primarily on the early lives, but Plaidy took liberties to expand upon the known to invent what is true enough to More's life to be veritable.

Like others of the genre, this novel presents saccharine embellishments of familial relations and sentimentalized treatment of history. Nevertheless, although *St. Thomas's Eve* is popular literature and presumes no claims on serious literature, as Daiches has explained in *Literature and Society*, popular fiction is of some importance because it exists as an underpinning enabling artistic expression to function properly. That proper function is not possible, he argues, unless a community of assumptions exists to support great literature. Therefore, although sentimentalized, this novel incorporates four centuries of More traditions and biographical scholarship from Will Roper's to R. W. Chambers'. Little of importance appears in this novel which had not appeared previously in Roper, Cavendish, Chambers, or any other sources mentioned in this study. The standard More materials appear to have been incorporated from the "beardless boy" matter in which More as a member of Parliament opposes Henry VII's subsidy to the scene near the end.
of this novel wherein Plaidy echoes Ro. Ba. and Stapleton in having Henry VIII blame his Queen for More's death: "'You have done this!' he shouted at his Queen. 'You have demanded of me the death of a good man and, God forgive you, I have granted your request'" (Plaidy, p. 253).

Standard Moreana not cited so consistently herein are the comic references, the notable exceptions being the comic tales revolving around the pew, the scaffold and More's beard (Plaidy, pp. 214, 250); however, the witty conversationalist and jester who was Sir Thomas More is not the primary subject of Plaidy's focus. Furthermore, the traditional conscience theme, though present in much dissipated form, is not a major concern in this novel either; in fact, the word occurs infrequently and sometimes in reference to Henry's matter of "conscience." Plaidy also interprets certain materials differently. For instance, more strongly than any previously cited source, she implies More's authorship of Henry's reply to Luther, the Assertion of the Seven Sacraments (Plaidy, pp. 155-117). Also, she makes an intriguing suggestion concerning More's retention of a household jester: Henry Patenson. That suggestion is that Patenson lacked wit and humor and desperately needed financial support; therefore More charitably maintained him until the darkest times.
But even then, More had arranged that those London burgesses who had agreed to take him in should have difficulty ridding themselves of the acerbic Fool, for he was "a very poor Fool indeed, whose idea of wit seemed to be to laugh at the physical appearances of others" (Plaidy, pp. 175, 218). Another innovative treatment is that of Alice More, the outspoken, uneducated second wife of Sir Thomas. Previous renditions have been silent concerning Alice's personality and how she fit in to the talented and learned household of the Mores, except to show her chiding More about his dress, criticizing him for resigning the chancellorship, and questioning his motives for refusing the Oath. But Plaidy pictures a Mistress Alice who dominates this home where the great collect; in fact, she presents Alice as a most forceful figure who cews the great and the learned, from Erasmus to the tutors of the More children; for example, Master Nicholas Kraster, fellow of Corpus Oxford, she scorns because he is German and cannot speak English: "Here's a pretty state of affairs. And supposed to be a learned man" (Plaidy, pp. 75, 78).

But the love affairs and familial intimacies this little novel relishes. As an example, the Jane Colt affair (wherein More was supposedly in love with the younger Colt daughter but proposed to the elder out
of sympathy) the novel dwells upon luxuriantly for the sentimentality inherent therein. Perhaps some segments of the novel will best represent Plaidy's depiction of that affair:

Being the man he was, he saw only one course open to him. He must turn tenderness into love; he must marry Jane. He must turn her into a woman such as he wished to have for his wife. Why should it not be so? She had been a docile daughter; she would be a docile wife. So he removed the girl he loved from the picture of domestic bliss and set Jane there in her place.... How young she was! How pathetic! How could he leave her to the mercy of her family? Dear Jane! He guessed what her life would be if he rode away now. Her sisters would taunt her; the whole family would let her see that she had failed; she would become Jane-of-no-account, in very truth. Life was unfair to such women. Pity coloured all his thoughts.

(Plaidy, p. 27)

And the sentimentality continues with presentations of Jane adjusting to life in the More household. We read a touching admission from this uneducated woman. On her deathbed, she confesses to her brilliant daughter,

When we married I was afraid I was quite unworthy of him. I was so...unlearned; and at first I was unhappy. I would sit at the table trying so hard to study the Latin he had set me...yet knowing I would never learn it to his satisfaction. And then when you were born all my unhappiness vanished, because I knew that, although I could not make him an ideal wife, I had given him someone whom he could love better than anyone in the world. That was worthwhile, Margaret. I was happy then. And when I saw you grow up and become every-
thing that he had desired, I was
even happier....That is what I have
told myself, and because of it I can
die in peace.

(Plaidy, p. 71)

Of course, in the context of such treatment of More
family affairs, the wicker gate scene (Plaidy, p. 234),
which was first used by Roper, becomes another moving
scene among many.

As this study has previously maintained, however,
the dominant trait of this great intellect was humility,
and Plaidy remembers that part of More's temperament,
particularly in depicting his reluctance to accept
court appointments and advancements (Plaidy, pp. 85-90),
a reluctance first mentioned by Rastell. In fact,
Plaidy has Henry acknowledge More's reluctance: "Enough!
Enough!...Suffice it that it was humble...most humble....
Fortune is favouring you, for the King is giving you his
hand in friendship. Go away now...and think of the
greatness which lies before you" (Plaidy, pp. 85-86).
And, as has been the case in so many sources, More's
humility is further exemplified by the famed choir boy
exchange between Norfolk and More (Plaidy, p. 205).

Also following the patterns set by previous
treatments, this novel develops the assertion that
More's integrity and charity especially endeared him
to the citizenry of London. That unassailable honesty
which protected him from Cromwell's attempt to prove
him guilty of taking bribes also caused him to be the first Lord Chancellor who does not enrich himself with the perquisites of the office (as Norfolk will attest in Bolt's A Man for All Seasons). Nor does his family especially benefit, for, although his son-in-law Dauncey yearns for advancement and complains that he has not been aided; More retorts that he will not favor a relative, not even to give the Devil an unfair hearing, even if his father "stood on one side of... [Him]" and the Devil on the other, and in this instance the Devil's case was the right one, then must... [He] decide in favour of the Devil" (Plaidy, p. 203). The same insistence upon integrity in wielding the powers of high office is later presented in another fashion. Another son-in-law, Giles Heron, had recently entered the practice of law and brought a case to More's adjudication; More had ruled against Giles's client (Plaidy, p. 205).

Besides this integrity, a monastic charitableness precipitated his habit of feeding and housing wayfarers and also enabled him to sympathize with the fallen Wolsey and even with the triumphant Anne Boleyn (Plaidy, pp. 110, 192, 236). It also drives him to seek the King's pardon for the May Day rioters (Plaidy, p. 78). But what most endeared More to the City of London was his integrity and charity as an attorney, judge, and
Lord Chancellor. As a judge, More took no bribes and even relinquished his fees if the litigants could not pay; "this became known throughout the City. It was about this time that the people of London began to love him" (Plaidy, pp. 69, 230).

Fittingly, however, Plaidy has Henry, More's great adversary, make the most noteworthy comment about More in this novel. The passage is cast from Henry's point of view and delivered as the King waits for More to appear at court to be invested with the chancellorship:

This man More had a strange effect on all men, it seemed. Even when his opinions differed from theirs, they respected him to such an extent that they must continue to love him. (Plaidy, pp. 194-195)

In another romantic history entitled The Concubine, Hibbert, writing under the pseudonym Norah Lofts, paints Anne Boleyn as the tragic victim of court intrigue, but especially a victim of Henry's libido. The Anne of this novel is, in many ways, similar to the woman of Anderson's play--beautiful, intelligent, vivacious, and an effective political conniver. But this same woman has become entangled in a web which she has helped to weave, for she became Queen of England by replacing Catherine, but Anne eventually lost favor and Henry to Jane Seymour. Early in this novel, the reader sees Anne as a pitiable creature who dies with a modicum of courage but as a
shadow of the woman she had been. The author frequently
draws parallels between Anne and Catherine and has her
reaching this calm realization as her execution nears:

She thought of Catherine, living out
the empty hopeless days in the
Huntingdonshire marsh while in
London another woman wore the crown
and was called Queen. Bad enough,
but Catherine had had an easy mind;
her name had never been blackened.
(Lofts, p. 310)

Anne enjoyed no such comfort.

While tracing Anne's rise and eventual crowning,
Lofts alludes to Sir Thomas More many times. Most of
these references, however, are harmless, innocuous
notations of a court official and are couched in
phraseology suggesting no attitudes of the author.

The most approbative passages in the entire novel
occur in the section after More's death wherein Henry
searches for a device to rid himself of Anne. Having
considered all apparent alternatives, he consults
Norfolk, who still survives by bending to Henry's
whims. The Duke observes Henry's drunkenness but
is not surprised, for he "had not gone sober to bed
on any night since Sir Thomas More's execution" (Lofts,
p. 229). Shortly thereafter, Henry consults Norfolk
again about the most expeditious manner to rid himself
of Anne. This reference to More occurs in a third
person narrative following Norfolk's thoughts. Therein
the cautious old nobleman concludes that More had had to be beheaded, for he had stood in the way of peaceful accommodation to Henry's policy. But the picture of More created therein is important; he is described as "More, whom Henry had truly loved, the wittiest, most charming man in the world" (Lofts, p. 231).

Also representative of popular literature's gauge of Sir Thomas More is the historical romance by Evelyn Anthony, *Anne Boleyn* (1960), which renders a most interesting picture of Sir Thomas as adversary to Anne. Most of this little romance is narrated from Anne's point of view; therefore, readers must envision More in a shading not previously employed in the extended tradition of literary portraits examined herein.

More appears, however, as but one of Anne's many adversaries, for, as a fitting partner for Henry, she was equal to him in ambition and ruthlessness; she fought them all--Wolsey, Parliament, church, European diplomats--to become Henry's paramour. Just as Henry would brook no interference from human or divine law in his courtship of Anne, so too Anne's adamantine will threw the charge of treason against those who only appeared to oppose. Anthony portrays that strength and resolve much more effectively than even Anderson had formerly and fashions a considerably powerful opponent--to Wolsey, to More, and even to Henry himself.
in the waning months of their relationship. It is in this context that the reader views Sir Thomas More.

Anthony casts Anne as innocent of More's death but guilty of it in Henry's eyes. But the point of interest here is the coloration of More's biography which Anne Boleyn's perspective has given this novel. The majority of these references reflect that bitterness which Anthony obviously believed Anne must have felt toward More since that intractable champion of the old way had opposed her campaign to establish supremacy alongside her King's. That difference of ideals stands behind Anne's hatred of More, and it is often expressed as a facet of the desperation experienced by Anne, desperation for which she attempts to compensate by removing her enemies. That desperation leads her to suggest to Henry that "no life was too sacred to be taken," not even More's (Anthony, p. 208).

Actually, More's death is accorded more attention in Anne Boleyn than his life; it functions as a catalyst to increasingly alienate Anne from Henry. As part of this emblematic treatment of the Lord Chancellor's execution, Anthony stages the now familiar scene with Henry learning of More's death while gaming at cards with Anne and presents this little scene with as much heightened dramatic tension as had Ro. Ba. earlier. This game becomes, in fact, a dramatic point within
the larger context of the increasing conflict between Henry and Anne. Henry is winning now, for, although "in the old days he used to lose," she now vainly grasps for any devious method of remaining in his grace. She hawkishly watches him. Although

she might delude herself that the old days of their courtship had returned,...only the fact that she dared not risk winning destroyed the illusion....For the moment, he had completely forgotten that one of the men he liked best was due to be executed that day. The cards had driven Thomas More from his mind. Until the last moment he had never believed that his former Chancellor would be fool enough to follow that bigot Fisher and a parcel of mangy monks to the scaffold rather than take the Oath for his friend the King. More was cultured and brilliant; he was also one of the driest wits at Henry's court and the King had spent many pleasant evenings with More and his family. More was loyal to him, and incorruptible, but he was worldly enough not to throw his life away for nothing; not to die for the sake of a Pope in Rome he had never seen.

(Anthony, p. 210)

Awareness of several strains of tension in that room grows. These had first been meshed by the omniscient author's intrusion: "This was the day set aside for his execution, but the King believed that the messenger he was expecting would bring news of More's capitulation" (Anthony, p. 210). That assurance is played out against Henry's assurance in the game of cards, for, as Henry raises Anne's bet to six nobles, the messenger

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arrives. He is delayed by the courtiers; they nervously fear the King's reaction to the message. Anne drops her cards when she sees the messenger. There is an attempt to pick them up, but Henry orders them left alone and freezes the scene with his demand, "'What news do you bring me?'" to which the messenger responds that he brings word from the Tower of More's execution (Anthony, pp. 210-211).

Response from Henry is not immediate, but it is vengeful. Momentarily, everything is suspended as the court awaits Henry's reply. His eyes are closed, but everyone sees that

a deep red flush was spreading over his neck. He was staring at Anne, sitting opposite him, and the rush of pain and guilt in his heart found a scapegoat, and suddenly his indifference and his boredom turned to hatred. More had not taken the Oath. More had died as other men were dying and languishing in prison because he once loved this woman....Henry threw his hand of cards down on the table, and his chair fell back, clattering to the floor behind him; his arm shot out, one shaking finger pointed at her in accusation.

'A good man died this day because of you!'

(Anthony, p. 211)

More's death exercises considerable dominance over the closing sections of the novel. After Anne's miscarriage, when Henry learns that the dead child would have been a Prince, he blames Anne for all his difficulties, especially the deaths of Wolsey and More. Significantly,
More's death is catalogued with Henry's other troubles, an implication that it is at least as important (Anthony, p. 242). In later scenes the spectre of Sir Thomas returns; for instance, at Hampton Court, Henry remembers the people whom he believes Anne has caused him to dishonor: Wolsey, Catherine, and More. Her control over him was witchcraft. Wolsey's demise he regretted; Catherine deserved her fate; More's death, however, he really lamented (Anthony, p. 271).

Thomas More's death does function as a catalyst to force matters to a crisis in this novel as it has in other works which concern themselves with this man's life; moreover, it appears that Anthony consciously idealized More's manner of death as he fashioned the plot of the novel, and, although he avoids articulating it, he has Anne strive to face death as heroically as More. Furthermore, Henry is convinced that, since Anne bewitched him to destroy Fisher, More, Wolsey, and Catherine, that panoply of deaths and dishonor longs for restitution. So Henry tells Cromwell, "She showed no mercy for any man or woman either. Urging me to be merciless, when I wanted to show mercy. Her crimes are worthy of nothing less than what she brought on others" (Anthony, pp. 244-245).

Novels like Anne Boleyn, The Concubine, St. Thomas's Eve, The King's Pleasure, and Queen Anne Boleyn belong
in the category of popular literature, but contribute significantly to a tradition which colors the suppositions from which more serious literature operates. After these lesser works, we move to two selections aptly representing the twentieth century's present perception of Sir Thomas More: Bolt's *A Man for All Seasons* and Percy's *Love in the Ruins*. This study does not presume to attempt a new critical analysis of either of these works, both of which have been analyzed at great length in other studies; it attempts merely to place both of them in the long progression of literary presentations of Sir Thomas More.

Possibly enjoying greater popularity than any other serious British play since the war, *A Man for All Seasons* ran for 320 performances in London, and, upon crossing the Atlantic, was voted the best foreign play of 1962. Then Bolt wrote the screenplay for the 1966 film starring Paul Scofield, and, besides winning six Academy Awards, it enjoyed extended seasons in movie theatres throughout the world. Furthermore, the play has been translated into Czech, Danish, Dutch, Finnish, French, German, Hebrew, Italian, Japanese, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Swedish, and Turkish, which is certainly another indication of its worldwide acceptance. Writing in *Moreana* ten years ago, E. E. Reynolds understandably wondered why a
play concerning a most English Englishman, a Catholic saint, a man who lived four hundred years ago, and a man whose destiny revolved around the matrimonial vicissitudes of Henry VIII would appeal to readers and viewers throughout the world. \(^{15}\) The recent Lord Chancellor of Great Britain, Lord Hailsham of St. Marylebone, offered an answer when he wrote that it is More's earthy humanity which exercised such international appeal. \(^{16}\)

Part of that earthy humanity is the domestic milieu which dominates this play. It is apparent that the audience is meant to see everything through the eyes of the More family. They attempt to alter his opinions, but they only fail, and, as Hayman has also noticed, \(^{17}\) More spends scenes with them explaining decisions already made. To conclude from that a lack of concern for his family would be erroneous; in fact, so important to him were Meg, Alice, and Roper that the real Sir Thomas, like Bolt's character, worried lest any of them should misunderstand his motives. This deference extends especially to Alice, even though, as Bolt put it, she was something of a primitive; in fact, in an interview with Hayman, \(^{18}\) Bolt asserted that Alice was the only character in his play intended to be shown as conquering More in that she frustrated his efforts to die a meaningful death by her inability to understand his
reasons for dying. From the first scene of the play, the foundation is set for the powerful effect of More's family upon his little universe, for in that scene we view their concern over his summons to Wolsey's chambers in the middle of the night. This intrusion of court intrigue is played against the tranquility of the familial atmosphere of Chelsea; More has not yet faced the charge of treason and all his sufferings. Later, having suffered considerably, he is again in their company, but this time against the threatening backdrop of the Tower. Then, his insistence on conscience they see as unreasonable. This More finds disquieting and accuses them of torturing him more than Henry has: "The King's more merciful than you. He doesn't use the rack" (Bolt, II, p. 192). That is a telling comment, for his family is pivotal to the play, and Bolt used the family to provide one of several crucial tests of More's conscience. We find, in fact, that Bolt focuses on the family to the exclusion of other facets of More's very rich life; however, in the interview with Hayman, he admitted that such was his intention, arguing its biographical accuracy. In fact, in that same interview, he faulted Paul Scofield's film performance solely on the score that the actor was too poised and articulate from the very beginning of his performance, thus imposing a speciality upon
the familial scenes which should not have been. Instead, these scenes—at the beginning, at least—should have shown "just a man in his home."^^ That part of More's life is only part of Bolt's grasp of More's totally human character, and this is the triumph of his play, his portrayal of Thomas the man, of his devotion to family, his wit, his humor and urbanity, his love of truth, and his absolute integrity.

In the context of these family scenes, we find Bolt's notion of More's selfhood. In fact, the complaint from which Bolt claims to have approached this play is a recurring one in twentieth century literature: contemporary man's sense of disorientation and alienation. Bolt wrote:

And the individual who tries to plot his position by reference to our society finds no fixed points.

... Both socially and individually it is with us as it is with our cities—an accelerating flight to the periphery, leaving a centre which is empty when the hours of business are over.

(Bolt, "Preface," p. 93)

The admiration which the playwright expresses for Sir Thomas is couched in terms of More's "adamantine sense of his own self" and of his knowing "where he began and left off" (Bolt, "Preface," p. 94). More appears, therefore, as a figure worthy of emulation, a man sensitive to his place in society and the cosmos. In
fact, one easily perceives that Bolt's statement and the entire play focus on the family man more than on Thomas More the internationally renowned scholar, wit, and diplomat. A "hero of selfhood" is the phrase which Bolt used in the "Preface" appended to the printed text of the play (Bolt, "Preface," pp. 95-96); further, the self-avowed atheist Bolt does defer to the religious scruples of his subject, for he fashions More as holding self and soul synonymous. For instance, in a heated exchange with Cromwell during his trial, the following occurs:

More: In matters of conscience, the loyal subject is more bounded to be loyal to his conscience than to any other thing.

Cromwell: And so provide a noble motive for his frivolous self-conceit!

More: It is not so, Master Cromwell--very and pure necessity for respect of my own soul.

Cromwell: Your own self you mean!

More: Yes, a man's soul is his self!

(Bolt, II, pp. 200-201)

By effectively skirting the historical context of the play, Bolt causes the focus to be concentrated on Sir Thomas's "self" as it holds in the context of his family and their demands on him. This is made possible by Bolt's having made all of these sixteenth
century characters moderns, for the historical context of More's story is blurred by the playwright's modus. This is accomplished primarily by the intervention of the Common Man, who is intended to embody "that which is common to us all" and who even reads from histories about Sir Thomas and his times. As Hayman has noted, these and other devices like having the same actor play all the working-class parts produce the "effect of zooming us in and out of the historical picture" of the play. This character serves a further function, however. Not only does More play out his drama of conscience against the backdrop of family, but also against characters like the Common Man. We recall, of course, that this has become a regular pattern in Moreana dating back to the Renaissance.

Bolt himself, in fact, highlighted the Common Man's emblematic function. In the same interview, he noted that several of the character's speeches conclude with the word common as a continuous reminder of our need to associate ourselves with this character. And, when the final confrontation occurs between More and this character, it is most telling. The confrontation develops when More has to dismiss his servants as a consequence of resigning the chancellorship. More tells the Common Man that he will miss him; however, having been told that he was a cheat or a fool would have
pleased him more. But, as he actually finds himself at that moment, he has lost his "self" and--to use Bolt's own phrase--"becomes just a shifting commodity." Under those conditions, the mere presence of an ethical man like Sir Thomas is a rebuke to this character.  

Actually, the thematic substance of this play, like so many prior materials centering on More, focuses on the issue of conscience. Like other depictions of More, this play is rife with numbers of references to that central concept; in fact, there are at least eighteen appearances of the word conscience in the text. 

Frequently also, characters in other treatments of Thomas More have served as foils against which More's strength of character and personal resolve have been matched; certainly that was the case in the previously-examined selections by Prior, Shakespeare, Dickens, and others. In A Man for All Seasons, the character most frequently perceived by critics as serving that function is Richard Rich. A recent Cambridge graduate and friend of the More family, Rich has been gracing the London anterooms for months as he has attempted to secure a position for himself. More, however, apprehends that Rich's ambitiousness makes him assailable. When Rich begs More for employment, More answers, "Richard, you couldn't answer for yourself even so far as tonight" (Bolt, I, p. 146). But Cromwell, also an astute
student of human nature, can appreciate and use Rich's vulnerabilities and enables Rich to rise higher and higher as he extracts more information from him regarding Sir Thomas; in fact, concomitant with each moral lapse is another social elevation, until, by perjuring himself at More's trial, Rich earns the post of Attorney General of Wales.

In his study of Bolt's works, Hayman notes, "Rich is a man who can be pushed indefinitely without ever finding a point where he has to dig his heels in"\(^2^2\), whereas Bolt perceived More as a man "asked to retreat from the final area where he located his self" but found there "something in himself without which life was valueless, and when that was denied him was able to grasp his death" (Bolt, "Preface," p. 94). Bolt had, in fact, had the Common Man foreshadow that adamantine resolve. In Act I, More had just exhibited his great generosity by presenting Rich with the silver cup given him for a bribe. Seeing this, the Common Man wondered aloud,

My master Thomas More would give anything to anyone. Some say that's good and some say that's bad...because some day someone's going to ask him for something that he wants to keep; and he'll be out of practice....There must be something that he wants to keep. That's only Common Sense.

(Bolt, I, pp. 117-118)
Wolsey also serves as a foil to More in this play as he did in *Henry VIII*. More makes one of his primary statements about conscience during an exchange with Wolsey in Act I. More has just refused support of Wolsey's intention to secure the divorce for Henry (a refusal which Wolsey abscribes to More's lack of common sense), then he has an opportunity to address the matter of conscience. Ironically, it appears along with Wolsey's devious appeal to More's humility, an appeal which he obviously believed would cause More to decide to cooperate; however, Wolsey learns that he has underestimated his adversary's trust in his own values. Wolsey asks, "Now explain how you as Chancellor of England can obstruct those measures for the sake of your own, private conscience" and More gives a bitter response, "I believe, when statesmen forsake their own private conscience for the sake of their public duties,... they lead their country by a short route to chaos" (Bolt, I, p. 120). This practice has now become a commonplace; again in this play, Cromwell functions as a gauge against which More's excellence is accentuated, except that, unlike his former appearances, Rich appears here a partner in sin with Cromwell. For example, in a little scene in Act I occurring in a pub where the two have met secretly, Cromwell offers Rich position and power for information damning More.
Cromwell knows that he is losing hold of Henry; therefore, he is desperate, and, in his desperation, he apparently speaks for the playwright:

There are no rules. With rewards and penalties--so much wickedness purchases so much worldly prospering....It's much more a matter of convenience, administrative convenience.

(Bolt, I, p. 151)

Certainly, the matter of conscience is not at issue between these opportunists. Also, this is a significantly positioned scene, for it closes with Rich warning Cromwell that he has underestimated his adversary, that More is an "innocent" who "doesn't know how to be frightened" (Bolt, I, 154). Following that is the beginning of Act II; therein, More illustrates how correct Rich had been, for he clarifies for Will Roper his position on the Act of Supremacy.

Another commonplace utilized by Bolt is More's dedication to an abstract honesty; among other matters, Bolt uses the story which dates back to Roper suggesting that More would even give the Devil benefit of the law, but he applies a new twist to that. In the Roper version, More had stated that he would treat Satan equitably even if his own father should be opposing the Devil in court (Roper, p. 42). In Bolt's version, Roper and Alice have urged More to arrest Rich because he has spied on them. Sir Thomas refuses,
for he quips, there is no law against being evil. Roper chides More impatiently, and More responds, "And go he would if he was the Devil himself until he broke the law!" That enrages Roper, who asks, "So now you'd give the Devil benefit of law" (Bolt, I, p. 147).

Not only regarding the dictates of legal ethics, but also regarding state business, this virtue of absolute honesty even the King appreciated. For instance, at the very moment when Thomas incensed Henry by refusing to agree to the divorce, the King insisted that More must serve him "because you are honest. What's more to the purpose, you're known to be honest" (Bolt, I, p. 140). Immediately, Henry voices his respect for More's integrity. However, it is the gruff old Norfolk's testimony to his friend's incorruptibility which is most significant, for Norfolk did not often play the courtier, and certainly in the scene in question had nothing to gain by so doing, for therein Cromwell was trying to acquire evidence to indict More for treason. To that purpose, he questioned Norfolk in the name of the King, and Norfolk responded in a pique,

What! Goddammit, he was the only judge since Cato who didn't accept bribes! When was there last a Chancellor whose possessions after three years in office totalled one hundred pounds and a gold chain?

(Bolt, II, p. 166)
There is yet another facet of More's insistence on conscience which comes to a focus in this play. Knowing, as we do, of More's reputation as an impromptu contributor to the dramas at Morton's banquets, it is not surprising to read of him in theatrical terms as regards the matter of conscience. In fact, as Sylvester has previously noted, before the word conscious entered the English language, conscience appears also to have meant a sensitivity to the historical drama of one's situation, an outer direction which complemented the inwardness of moral conviction. Thus, conscience becomes a sensitivity to the need to perform one's role properly. In More's case, the humanistic knight-author must combat evil in full consciousness of his function as a contemporary model of Christian chivalry. As More must have been aware, Pico della Mirandola saw a potential for renewal of knightly chivalry in the disputation exercises of the university, and Erasmus, Roper, and others consistently portrayed More as the knightly ideal using his clenched fist of logic and wit to combat Satan and his forces. For example, in Roper's Life, as Sir Thomas was being taken to Lambeth for the confrontation with the commissioners appointed to examine him on the question of Supremacy, he is depicted wearing the "S" chain of royal service, speaking of the golden chain as the fitting
bounty for his captors, for then "they should somewhat fare the better" by him (Roper, p. 74). Further, in his correspondence from the Tower, More consistently signed "Sir Thomas More, Knight, Prisoner" and later walked to his execution carrying the red cross of St. George, the cross of knighthood. When Sir Thomas says at his trial that "in matters of conscience the loyal subject is more bounden to be loyal to his conscience than to any other thing" (Bolt, II, p. 200), he refers both to morality and a notion of one's place in the drama of life.

Sir Thomas More's humility, so persistently lauded in other sources, attracts only incidental concern in Bolt's play, but the notice it does gain is important to the total picture of the man. For instance, More's reluctance to accept high public office is clearly specified early in the play as he alludes to that responsibility having been "inflicted" upon him. This occurs during an argument with Rich wherein More attempts to dissuade the young Cambridge graduate from seeking a court position because of the temptations which accrue to such powerful offices. Henry himself also twice alludes to this same reluctance (Bolt, I, pp. 112-113; 138) and, therefore, supports More's claims, whereas the Tudor apologists of the sixteenth century had attempted to portray Thomas More as
ambitiously grasping for wealth and power. The frequently cited acolyte tale appears in this play also (Bolt, I, p. 134), and Bolt has taken that anecdote directly from Harpsfield. The sovereign incident relating to humility, however, is one which regards a puzzle previously ignored by sources: that is the puzzle of More's utter dependence only on the letter of the law as his defense against the Henrician ministry. Bolt's play postulates a plausible solution to the puzzle. To fully appreciate it, however, one must recall that More had long been sensitive to the danger that pride might tempt one to seek the glory of martyrdom. Because he was so sensitive, he suggested to Roper in the passage below that duty called him to resist death as effectively as he could; he, therefore, depended upon legal doctrines to defend himself since that field he had always considered his forte.

The law, Roper, the law, I know what's legal, not what's right. And I'll stick to what's legal.

... In the thickets of the law, oh there I'm a forester. I doubt if there's a man alive who could follow me there, thank God.

(Bolt, I, p. 147)

And again with Roper and Meg in Act II, he broaches the issue. This section, incidentally, Bolt himself has identified as the key to understanding his entire play
Now listen, Will. And, Meg...God made the angels to show him splendour—as he made animals for innocence and plants for their simplicity. But Man he made to serve him wittily, in the tangle of his mind! If he suffers us to fall to such a case that there is no escaping, then we may stand to our tackle as best we can.

... But it's God's part, not our own, to bring ourselves to that extremity! Our natural business lies in escaping—so let's get home and study this Bill.  
(Bolt, II, p. 182)

One facet of Bolt's presentation of More becomes untenable, however; that is the conduct of More in the confrontation with Norfolk. Therein More forces an argument and alienation to protect the Duke from suspicion engendered by his friendship with More. First, as Reynolds has already noted, Bolt hits the mark off-center when he deals with class distinctions of those times. Distances between classes, the dominant sense of status, the hierarchy which pervaded intercourse between classes—these matters, Bolt clouds. In fact, the punctiliousness which pervaded behavior and speech, More seems to have adhered to always, despite his elevated governmental position. To insult a duke when dukes really were dukes and when there were only two in the kingdom was unheard of. But, secondly, such behavior was out of character for Thomas More.

So many previous treatments have stressed More's
comedic talents that Bolt's does not paint his dominant comic talent as accurately as could have been. Even Sir Sidney Lee, no partisan of More, writing in Great Englishmen of the Sixteenth Century, expressed sensitivity to More's wit and humor. While writing of More's martyrdom (and not in a very sympathetic manner), he emphasized that devotion to principle, religious fervor, courage are most apparent qualities in many martyrs, but, in More's case, combined with these is the rarely seen quality for martyrs for religion--there was "no gloom in his sunny nature. He was a wit, a wag, delighting in amusing repartee, and seeking to engage men in all walks of life in cheery talk." While considering this phenomenon, however, one must realize that Bolt had dramaturgical judgments to make. Had he focused too much attention on More's comedic talents, the play might have shifted away from the serious biographical play which it was. Prose biographies have a greater available range than do plays; consequently, Bolt's decision to underplay More's comedy was probably a wise one despite the fact that directing intellectual high spirits to serious ends was characteristic of More and the humanists (consider Erasmus here, for example). In fact, as Thomas White has earlier noted, More often gave high praise to the manner of the Greek satirists who combined delight
with instruction.

At this point, it may be useful to make a distinction between wit and humor, as Frank E. Manuel did in an article which appeared in *The New Republic* in 1978. Differentiating between the two, he asserted that wit is an element "that can be barbed and cruel, that vents its aggressive energy against a person or thing." It can assume a teasing character also, however. Through his wit, More confused and confounded, as in the exchange with the Spanish Ambassador which will be presented later, or as in the confrontation reported by Ro. Ba., cited in Chapter II before, in which More confounded the foolish courtier by allowing him to believe that he had succeeded in convincing More to take the Oath; whereupon the courtier reported this to Henry. The King then supposedly sent his pardon through the foolish courtier who was doomed to hear from More,

> I perceive you did not understand me, but you were still urging me to change my opinion, and I told you I had; and being about to explicate my meaning, you were over hasty, for you interrupted me, and so in haste you departed.... This then I would have said unto you, 'I have changed my opinion concerning the cutting of my beard.' For you see it now all grown out of fashion since my coming into prison.

*(Ro. Ba., pp. 122-123)*

Humor, on the other hand, is "a triumph, a transcendent exercise that liberates its possessor by separating him
from his interests and anxieties, diminishing them through distance, making them childish, unreal, a fitting subject of merriment." Manual suggests that it was humor rather than aggressive wit that in the last days came to More's aid and helped him face death, jests that placed him outside the reach of his own circumstances and made him invulnerable. With gallows humor he was able to annihilate reality.

Wit pervades Bolt's presentation of his hero, but more low-key than common in the long history of Moreana. An example is the scene in which Roper's new-found Lutheran convictions are the issue. There More quips on his future son-in-law's inconsistency:

Listen, Roper. Two years ago you were a passionate Churchman; now you're a passionate--Lutheran. We must just pray, that when your head's finished turning, your face is to the front again.

(Bolt, I, p. 125)

Another example appears in Act II. The scene occurs between More and Chapuys, the Spanish Ambassador. Chapuys has come to broach the subject of More's accession to the Act of Supremacy and sonorously intones that More and Roper--because of their resistance--are publicly acclaimed for their saintliness. This amuses More; he grins maliciously at Roper and quips, "That's it of course--saints! Roper--turn your head a bit--yes, I think I do detect a faint radiance.... You should have told us, Will" (Bolt, II, p. 157).
But Sir Thomas suspects that Chapuys wants something of him and continues to press the ambassador who responds that he has merely come to visit a brother in Christ. More is unimpressed and counters,

A characteristic we share with the rest of humanity. You live in Cheapside, Signor? To make contact with a brother in Christ you have only to open your window and empty a chamberpot. There was no need to come to Chelsea.

(Bolt, II, p. 157)

Bolt has preserved in delicate miniatures some materials pertaining to More's wit and comedic talent. For instance, the trial scenes especially frame those gifts in the heightened tensions of those moments, and the Scofield film also presents that in attractive relief as the Londoners in attendance at the trial respond with encouraging applause to More's swipes at Cromwell, the judges, and Richard Rich. Of course, as Reynolds has observed, the trial as presented in this play is a travesty of a Tudor trial, for among other matters, the public would not have been admitted. However, in another way, the film was honest to conditions of those painful days, for through its travesty of Tudor judicial procedures, it does manage to emphasize More's great popularity among the people of London. Concerning More's comedic leanings, however, Storari has complained that this play colors
More a "melancholy intellectual aristocrat," but that assessment is too extreme. It is true that all of his qualities—great learning, wit, humility, charity, and love of life—are not fully exemplified in Bolt's work, but few literary selections (Roper's Life being one notable exception) have managed that feat. And the play does render his wit and humorous inclinations fairly, considering the circumstances, even if there is some seriousness in the coloration of his character which is questionable. The scaffold execution scene, for instance, avoids the traditions of numerous scaffold jests to cause the play to end on a very weighty note.

One critic has described this play as "a graph on which Bolt plots two curves: the steady rise of an opportunist and the decline of a man of principle." How fitting that it should be so, for that theme was first amplified by Roper so visually through the wicker gate scene, and it has been a part of received More traditions ever since. More's isolation grew, of course, as a result of an exercise of principle beyond the ken of most of his contemporaries, but these principles have continued into the twentieth century to form a touchstone against which the corrupt ambition of others (Wolsey and King Henry, especially) have been measured. Such comparisons must lead eventually to a sensitivity to the essential tragedy of More's
situation. A man so perfectly suited to life and so enjoying it, but only willing to adapt so far, he becomes the individual hero for whom his own time is not prepared. The words of the playwright might help us to understand what finally motivated him to write of Sir Thomas More:

> He was a perfect gentleman....He knocked off Utopia, cleaned up the law courts, ran this house where he entertained all the celebrities of his day, kept up his friendships with noblemen and people like Colet and Erasmus and behaved like John Bunyan. This is why people like the play. They think 'Thank Christ, somebody can do it. I may not be able to, but life can be that perfect.' And he didn't do anything that you or I couldn't have done. St. Francis talked to the birds, but anyone at his best could do what More did. He had taste, wit, courtesy, consideration.../and he was marvellously witty.

The previously mentioned concept of the individual for whom his own time is not ready is the thematic assumption behind the protagonist of Walker Percy's *Love in the Ruins* (1971), Dr. Tom More, who supposedly is a linear descendant of the famous Lord Chancellor. In the words of the subtitle, he is, however, a "Bad Catholic at a Time Near the End of the World." Part though it is of the long tradition of More treatments which have been noted in this study, this novel depicts a character who, though sometimes parallel with the Lord Chancellor, persistently stands in contrast to his
predecessor. However, Tom More is most cognizant of the dissimilarities between himself and his namesake; in fact, it is a continuous source of disquietude. Early in the novel, he comments,

I was a smart boy and at the age of twenty-six bade fair to add luster to the family name for the first time since Sir Thomas More himself, that great soul, the dearest best noblest merriest of Englishmen. My contribution, I hasten to add, was in the realm of science not sanctity.

(Percy, p. 23)

Responsive as he is to the distinctions of his predecessor, Tom acknowledges that he is unequal to the challenge of similar accomplishments, for

Sir Thomas More was merry in life and death and he loved and was loved by everyone, even his executioner, with whom he cracked jokes.

(Percy, p. 23)

However, he cannot follow More's example—"love [Himself less God and...fellowman more," for he is "possessed by terror and desire" and lives a life of longings, "longings for women, for the Nobel Prize,...Bourbon whiskey, and other great heart-wrenching longings that have no name" (Percy, p. 23). Having castigated himself so, the final maxima culpa must be expressed by this bad Catholic: "Sir Thomas was right, of course, and I am wrong" (Percy, p. 23).

Like his illustrious recusant English ancestor,
Tom More holds the Renaissance view that there must be a balance between religious sensibility and the demands of the secular life. Tom is convinced that his invention, the "lapsometer," may provide a restoration of balance. There is a further significance to this character's name. His vision, in fact, obtains from that name's emblematic import. Percy himself has commented on this:

I wanted to establish a Catholic point of view and to identify the main character as a Catholic of a certain sort—not Irish, but English which is a strange category in itself. It's a small minority. Here again, it's a question of perspective. I figured that the descendant of an English Catholic would be in a particularly advantageous position to see all around him, to see his fellow Catholics, his fellow Protestants, and other people.

As Robert Riehl has observed, this peculiar quality of first sight makes Tom a most effective instrument for much of the satire pervading this undoubtedly most comic of Percy's novels. Through the glass of More's first sight we view a world of absurdity, again, in the words of the subtitle, "At a Time Near the End of the World." Few but Dr. More are sensitized to the radical problems of the times; however, he is totally sensitized and notes in the beginning of the novel,

Our beloved old U.S.A. is in a bad way. Americans have turned against each other; race against race, right against left,
believer against heathen, San Francisco against Los Angeles, Chicago against Cicero. Vines sprout in sections of New York where not even Negroes will live. Wolves have been seen in downtown Cleveland....Some Southern states have established diplomatic ties with Rhodesia. Minnesota and Oregon have their own consulates in Sweden...Gore Vidal is the grand old man of American letters. The center did not hold.

(Percy, pp. 17-18)

However, as Martin Luschei has noted in his seminal study of Percy, *The Sovereign Wayfarer,* this Thomas More is not expostulating a Utopia, but "fighting a rearguard action" to counter the dissimulating impact of Skinnerite social scientists. This modern Tom More operates under a limitation which is ironically balanced against the received traditions about his namesake. As many commentators have observed, Tom More is a diagnostician of social malaise in a world "too far gone even to care about its terminal illness." Like the historical More, who anticipated Anne Boleyn's demise, the Oath of Supremacy, and the English Reformation, Percy's character is undeniably attuned to the reality of a world gone mad. Had not Percy cast this novel in a comic mode, his Tom More could have been as prophetic a character as Roper's Sir Thomas, so conscious is he of the evil surrounding him. The ironic core of association for these two Mores is the relatively old vision of the human condition, the ancient Grecian theme of over-
weaning pride, more specifically, spiritual pride. Tom More envisions himself the New Christ. The old Christ had died for mankind, but "it didn't work, we were not reconciled. The new Christ shall reconcile man with his sins" (Percy, p. 153).

Viewed through the nebulous fog which surrounds Tom, distinctions of time and place disappear. The novel begins on July 4, returns to July 1--the date of the historical More's trial-- and focuses on July 4 again. In the beginning, Dr. More waits for the apocalypse, for the country is disintegrating; everyone has given up, and More himself has even given up "eating Christ in Communion" (Percy, p. 6). But the center has not held for any group of class: "Conservatives have begun to fall victim to unreasonable rages,...high blood pressure, and large bowel complaints" and "liberals are more apt to contract sexual impotence...and a feeling of abstraction of the self from itself." More's particular misfortune and blessing is that he suffers from both (Percy, p. 20). At the hospital, he is a patient and a physician. His home is located in Paradise Estates, an avuncular development which admits liberal and conservative landowners. As Godshalk observed, Tom More is Everyman; he "partakes of all sides,...is tempted, falls..., and finally recovers when he gains knowledge of his true role in the
Christian universe. Before he experiences that revelation, however, this New Christ proposes to save the world from its own destruction with his Lapsometer, which measures brain waves and correlates them "with the manifold woes of the Western world, its terrors and rages and murderous impulses" (Percy, pp. 28-29).

Fatefully, diagnosis is more important than treatment, and at its best, it represents "a witty, horrific extension of a pessimistic view of conditions today." Dr. More's pride is that he presumes to have the cure. In fact, in a very revealing segment taking place fittingly in Leroy Leadbetter's Little Napoleon tavern, Tom experiences an apocalyptic vision. He sees himself in an antique bar mirror, "a miniature cathedral, an altarpiece, an intricate business of shelves for bottles...stained-glass windows," but the image is "a dim hollow-eyed Spanish Christ....It is the new Christ, the spotted Christ, the maculate Christ, the sinful Christ....The new Christ shall reconcile man with his sins" (Percy, pp. 151, 153).

Tom More as the new Christ also has a Satanic force to contend with: Art Immelmann, a serio-comic Lucifer doomed to sweat out his fall in the deep South. Immelmann, who first enters More's office while the doctor is listening to Don Giovanni, produces an
ionizer device capable of curing the disaffections of Western man. To gain use of the device, More signs a Faustian contract with Immelmann. In return, he acquires the ion generator and reports to the medical center's Pit, where he is to compete with Dr. Buddy Brown before an audience of students and doctors. Brown's diagnosis is wrong; Ives is a linguist concentrating on an abstruse problem of proto-Creek, and, although More manages to get Ives to talk and walk again, the irony is inescapable. He could have accomplished that without the lapsometer, for Ives had merely "refuse to respond at all" to those who would control human responses by resorting to the infamous Skinner box.

Parallels between two public trials are apparent. Only, in the case of Tom More, the trial is not his own. Like his predecessor, Tom has refused allegiance to a new order, but this is "neobehaviorist... descended from B. F. Skinner," and his trial consists of a confrontation in the surgical arena with an apostle of Skinner over the future of a patient. There Tom's metaphysics and the assumptions of the Skinnerites are tested. Dr. More begins the trial a decided underdog, glancing about him at the steep rows in the Pit; students pack them; half are anti-euthanasics and apostles of Dr. Spiro T. Agnew, and the other half
qualitarians who adhere to doctrines of Hesse, Skinner, and Justice Douglas. As with Sir Thomas's trial, there are represented in the "jury" the opposing issues which underpin social conflicts of the times. Also, as with Sir Thomas's trial, it is the duty of the accused to prove his innocence against a tacit assumption of guilt. For, the behaviorist assumption dominates that, unless Tom can exonerate Ives, he will "necessarily" be relegated to painless death at the Happy Isles extermination center in Georgia. But there the similarity ends, for Dr. More applies his lapsometer, and Mr. Ives recovers, giving his first speech in months contemptuous of all that the medical facility and the new order represent: "There is only one kind of response to those who would control your responses by throwing you in a Skinner box:...refuse to respond at all" (Percy, p. 234). The reader must suspect that the image of Sir Thomas More maintaining his silence when confronted by the demands of the new order must have been directing the creative process here. Sir Thomas had also maintained silence when he had found the new order intolerable, but, when hope of survival proved futile, he too unburdened and delineated his objections to that new order.

The central point of continuity between Tom and his namesake is this psychiatrist's alienation in his
own time. He "refuses allegiance to the new order" because he operates from a view of mankind which dates back to Sir Thomas More and the sixteenth century. Borrowing from Hallett Smith, Luschei notes that those times viewed *homo viator* as precariously located midway between angel and beast, with his future promising that he could ascend to the angelic or fall to the beastly. Since the Fall, it was more likely that he would decline to the latter condition. Tom More finds himself floundering in a new social order supported by a medical establishment pervaded by Skinner ethics. A Fall has occurred in the decayed anti-Paradise of a suburban society where little works. Automobiles are abandoned on the freeways because there is no one to fix them; weeds are overtaking everything; even the Howard Johnson's is abandoned. Therein, as Luschei has expressed it, man "has become lost to himself, even to his own sins." However, only gross negligence would allow us to overlook another crucial likeness between Tom More and his namesake. To Sir Thomas earthly suffering and death were part of a journey to the fuller life. Seeing this course of life as he did—a pilgrimage to a much more lustrous existence—he accepted pain and lived austerely. In fact, as Hickinbotham has observed, Sir Thomas had the medieval *homo viator* notion constantly in mind and

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apparently saw his function being to remind those about him of their proximity to heaven. When Alice More visited him in the Tower to beg that he capitulate and leave for the comforts of home, he jokingly chided her with the quip that the Tower was as near heaven as their domicile. Furthermore, this part of the More tradition is very strong and has been picked up by many sources like Plaidy's *St. Thomas's Eve* (Plaidy, p. 235) since its introduction in Roper (Roper, p. 83). Percy's Thomas More has a similar religious conviction assuring him; in fact, he is consuming all his energies attempting to complete the fusion between angelism and bestialism by means of his lapsometer. His hope appears to be for an earthly paradise (exemplified by the location of his home in Paradise Estates); he expresses no comforting other-worldly visions like Sir Thomas's, but underlying Percy's predilections with man's condition is an orthodox Christian depiction of mankind and a concern for that about him that mars his humanity. Primarily he sees man as the "pilgrim...searcher in the Judeo-Christian tradition."\(^{50}\)

The culmination of Tom More's search is the epilogue--five years later--barbecuing in his sack-cloth, hoeing collards in his kitchen garden, but still convinced that his lapsometer can save mankind if he can but get the correct adjustment. He can cure mankind
of "More's syndrome,...chronic angelism-bestialism that rives soul from body and sets it orbiting the great world as the spirit of abstraction whence it takes the form of beasts, swans and bulls, werewolves, blood-suckers, Mr. Hydes, or just a poor lonesome ghost locked in its own machinery" (Percy, p. 383).

As his world had crumbled about him, the new Christ had appeared in the Second Coming rendered in a serio-comic vein. Held captive by the revolutionary Bantus, More had escaped from his prison at St. Michael's Church by crawling through an air conditioning duct to emerge to the sound of the church carillon chiming "O Little Town of Bethlehem" (Percy, p. 309). Of course, in keeping with the serio-comic vein of the narrative, all occurs on a hot July 4 day. Incapable of exorcising evil with his own strength, this contemporary More only sunders his dependence upon the new Lucifer by calling upon Sir Thomas. This occurs when Tom finally becomes cognizant of Art Immelman's satanic powers: "What is frightening is his smiling assurance. He doesn't even need the lapsometer!" At that juncture, Satan reveals himself, "arms outstretched like the Christ at Sacre Coeur in New Orleans" (Percy, p. 376). With that dramatic exemplification of the force of evil comes the striking appeal of the imperfect Dr. More. His imperfection manifests itself in and of his pride-
fulness, his belief that he could treat a spiritual aberration with a scientific instrument, no matter how sophisticated. Unlike his predecessor, Tom cannot cope with apparent evil; thus he must invoke the name of his ancestor, for Immelmann has forsaken his design on More and is now trying to take Ellen from him. Tom cries: "Sir Thomas More, kinsman, saint, best dearest merriest of Englishmen, pray for us and drive this son of a bitch hence," and Immelmann turns away, hurt and dazed as if he had been struck in the face by a superior power (Percy, p. 376). Faustian pride's hold on Tom has been dissipated, and all that is left for Percy is to present the epilogue. But, as Godshalk has explained, the point of the rejection of Immelmann is Tom's acknowledgement of weakness and dependence--dependence, significantly upon his ancestor, Sir Thomas, and his holiness. No longer the new Christ, Tom is not carried off to hell in Faustian pride, but escapes the clutches of evil like Everyman. His lapsometer cannot save him; his sainted ancestor can.

In a significant essay which appeared in The Southern Literary Journal, Mark Johnson examined Love in the Ruins and other Percy novels as presenting men searching for a place in this life which is similar to Kierkegaard's authentic environment. In fact, Kierkegaard even used the metaphor of the man who had established
his place as a man occupying a house with his beloved. 55 Tom More occupying the Slave Quarters with his second wife Ellen, his "lusty tart Presbyterian" (Percy, p. 384), his daughter Meg, and his son, Thomas More, Jr., is as near a presentation of a man "at home" with himself as anything in this novel. 56 By no means edifying, this epilogue has brought its protagonist to the point of "repetition," the turning to the past about which Percy has frequently spoken and written. 57 That is to say, if the present time means alienation, one must through "repetition" return to his past. That past is one's self. There one may discover the point of eruption of his alienation. 58 To use Percy's own words, one must return to "stand before the house of one's childhood." 59 One cannot, it seems, overemphasize Percy's concern for this issue of alienation; in fact, three years before the release of the novel he had told Carlton Cremeens, "Alienation is...nothing more or less than a very ancient orthodox Christian doctrine. Man is alienated by the nature of his being here. He is here as a stranger and as a pilgrim, which is the way alienation is conceived in my books." 60

No doubt, Percy's interest in the predicament of homo viator in the contemporary scene has fashioned the verbal construct of this novel. Readers do not find any set answers in Percy; the epilogue "five years
"later" is but tentative, but, as Johnson has at least partially explained, the resolution of the novel returns Dr. More (in a metaphorical sense) to the "house" of his past. He goes to confession, wears ashes and sackcloth, so penitent for his sins is he. On the other hand, not just penitent, but "ashamed rather" (Percy, p. 399). He lives in the Slave Quarters, tending his collards, but that condition is pregnant with significance. He is a servant, for he has returned to an orthodox medical practice treating ordinary complaints using ordinary procedures. He has become what he had wished for very early in the novel after his attempted suicide. Then he had prayed, "Why can I not be merry and loving like my ancestor, a gentle pure hearted knight for our Lady and our blessed Lord and Savior? Pray for me, Sir Thomas More" (Percy, p. 109). This is, however, an earthly paradise; there are imperfections. Tom continues suffering earthly temptations--Mrs. Prouty and his Early Times--but he addresses his problems as problems now. A bad sign is his belief that he can still cure the evils of the times if he can repair his lapsometer, but his ideals are now noble, "What I want is no longer the Nobel, screw prizes, but just to figure out what I've hit on. Some day a man will walk into my office as ghost or ghost-beast and walk out as a man, which is to say
sovereign wayfarer, lordly exile, worker and waiter and
watcher" (Percy, p. 383). In his epilogue, however,
Tom has settled down on the banks of the misty Louisiana
bayou, for "if you want and work and wait, you can have"
(Percy, p. 361). There exuding love for creation and
for mankind he enjoys domestic bliss as did his ancestor,
but yet differently:

In my second wife I am luckier than my
kinsman Thomas More. For once I have
the better of him. His second wife was
dour and old and ugly. Mine is dour
and young and beautiful. Both made good
wives. Sir Thomas's wife was a bad
Catholic like me, who believed in God
but saw no reason why one should disturb
one's life, certainly not lose one's
head. Ellen is a Presbyterian who doesn't
have much use for God but believes in
doing right and does it.

(Percy, p. 384)

Emphatically, this is the ordinary Christian life; the
end of the world of the novel's title can wait.

Thus ends the nexus of positive literary treatments
from More's own century to the present. For over four
centuries he has captured near universal admiration.

E. E. Reynolds considered the reasons for this several
years ago, and his conclusion, although lengthy,
deserves full quotation here:

The answer is not Utopia; the perennial
attraction of that book keeps his name
in men's minds, but the authorship of a
classic does not always mean that the
author himself wins a place in popular
regard. The fact that More dared to
defy a King, and accepted death rather
than betray his conscience, gave him a high place in history, but he was not the first nor the last to sacrifice all for a principle. Without ranging over the centuries, we can note the example of John Fisher who died for the same cause. Yet Fisher's name is all but unknown in popular esteem. Here we come to the heart of the matter. Fisher remains, as a person, a shadowy figure; we know a great deal about his public life; we know that he was a friend of More and Erasmus; but it is difficult to imagine oneself in his company. By contrast Thomas More has always been a real person, a companionable man. Anecdotes about him and his sayings were in circulation during his lifetime and they entered the common memory of folk. Until the publication of Roper's little book in 1626, nearly a century after his death, there was no printed record in English to keep his name alive; it was...a popular, verbal tradition, and the more one thinks about it, the more extraordinary it seems. Roper followed by Cresacre More turned the folk-tales into fact. The emphasis throughout the years was on Thomas More, the man; the laughter-loving father of a close-knit family; the upright judge--that was always part of the portrait--a man of learning and wisdom; a good man. All that has been revealed since by the State Papers, by the renewed study of his works and by the devoted labours of scholars, has continued to add to his stature and renown.

Another suggestion regarding More's appeal to moderns and to all ages appeared in The Times. The issue's leader dwelt on a point which suggests a central reason for More's appeal:

If the English people were to be set a test to justify their history and civilization by the example of the life of one man, then it is Sir Thomas More.
whom they would perhaps choose.

... The irony and sense of humour, the gift of conversation, the practical interest in worldly business, the shrewdness of affection, the love for his family, the love of animals, the pleasure in his home and garden, the warmth and generosity to his friends, language and the use of words--these are all qualities which the English value.64

Whether studying literary portraits of Sir Thomas More or analyzing his own works, one cannot escape the issue of More's humanism. But that term, like the terms Romantic or Renaissance, accrues about itself some controversy. It would appear, however, that the humanistic doctrine both espoused by and exemplified by Sir Thomas More was the same doctrine of humanitas as proposed by Cicero in On Duties. To Cicero and to More, the humanitas represented a quality of both mind and spirit among civilized men, particularly exemplified by kindliness. This kindliness emerged from the humanist's sensitivity to the inherent value of the individual man, a deduction inherently resultant from the Stoic notion of the brotherhood of men: in the law of nature, humanity was of some worth; consequently, men deserved well of one another. As Grierson has noted,65 this sensitivity was to be achieved via the pathway through the Latin and Greek classics, a program of study in which More genuinely believed. In fact,
when the study of Greek was being openly attacked at Oxford University (March 1518), More wrote to the Proctors and Masters of Oxford (Letters, pp. 95-103) defending that study for its humanizing influences and as a course through which man could arrive at the proper contemplation of things supernatural.

But the product of humanistic studies which especially attracted More and many of his friends was the resultant "due respect for human nature in all its fullness (therefore including our natural desires and instincts) as distinguished from the claims of the divine, of the other-worldly."66 This interest in the free play of the human spirit and enthusiasm for a full use of all faculties of mind and spirit comes of the humanist's belief (as Pearl Hogrefe has explained in The Sir Thomas More Circle67) that it is man's privilege to engage in an intensive and sensitive quest for personal happiness and to do so as a human being, not as an angel or beast. Such happiness is an outgrowth of reason, conscience, and good taste, and enables man to acquire "truth,...right, justice, goodness, and... permanent spiritual beauty." Even more specifically, the Christian humanist, which More certainly was, believes that man is aided in this quest by divine revelation, law, and grace. But, as is also commonly known in Renaissance studies, one does not negate a
More "stepped down from the study into the arena and experienced the good and ill fortunes of ordinary folk."\textsuperscript{70} He did not opt for the life of the religious or scholarly recluse; instead, he lived a full life with a loved and loving family. But, as Dorothy H. Donnelly has asserted, More's appeal has always been that his life was firmly grounded in the mundane: He was an expert in the construction and repair of sewers. He was a farmer with holdings in Glastonbury, Oxfordshire, Kent and Middlesex. He was a politician who was twice elected to Parliament where as Speaker he served as the 'common mouth of the Commons'....As a father, this twice-married man with four children, missed them so much when Henry embroiled him in business, that he claimed, 'neither the mud, nor the rain nor the stumbling horse,' could distract him from the thought of them....The same More loved tricks, games, and amateur theatrics, and supported in his own home the fool, Henry Patenson....He loved music, gaiety and song. He kept a private zoo, and had his favorite monkey painted into Holbein's famous More family portrait. This Renaissance man delighted in the humanistic coquetry that produced the \textit{Utopia} as an exercise in ingenuity.\textsuperscript{71} But apparently the greatest appeal exercised by More was connected with his steadfast conscience, since it is this topic which appears again and again in Moreana through the centuries. Heroism of that caliber has always appealed to humanity, and, with More, that heroism is impressed with considerable sacrifice; few
have given up so much upon a principle of conscience. More denied (as had another twentieth century favorite, St. Francis of Assisi) social position and the joys of family life. Unlike St. Francis, More also gave up international renown as a scholar and the companionship of learned and famous friends, among whom Erasmus was only the most luminous. Thus he has become beloved not only of the twentieth century but as a man for all centuries.
NOTES TO CHAPTER IV

1 Queen Anne Boleyn (1939; rpt. New York: Popular Library, 1974); cited as Hackett.

2 Anne of the Thousand Days (New York: Sloane 1948); cited as Anderson. Comments about Anderson's presentation of More must take into account the playwright's apparently having had second thoughts. The scene in which More engages in flippant theological exchanges with Anne was removed from the revised acting edition of the play. See Maxwell Anderson, Anne of the Thousand Days (New York: Dramatists Play Service, 1950).

3 The Nation, 168, 1 January 1949, 24.


5 Ibid. 6 Krutch, p. 24.

7 Hibbert has published under several pseudonyms, including Victoria Holt, Jean Plaidy, Norah Lofts, and several others; however, for purposes of accurate textual identification, the several pseudonyms will be retained in this text.

8 Norah Lofts, The Concubine (1963; rpt. New York: Fawcett, 1972); cited as Lofts. For information concerning The King's Pleasure, this author has relied on a summary provided by the Sullivans in Moreana: Materials, II, 107, for the novel is presently out of print.


10 Ibid.


13 Citations from the crucial preface which Bolt appended to the play will be identified as Bolt, "Preface."

14 Hayman, p. 42.

15 "The Significance of A Man for All Seasons," Moreana, No. 23 (1969), p. 34.


17 Hayman, pp. 44-45.

18 Ibid., Interview, pp. 81-82.

19 Ibid., p. 82.

20 Ibid., p. 48.

21 Ibid., Interview, p. 83.

22 Ibid., p. 43.

23 The OED's earliest citation is Hobbes's Leviathan (1651).


25 As previously noted, I owe this view of More as the Renaissance model of ancient chivalric ideals to the Abbé Germain Marc'hadour's address, "More's
Spirituality" delivered at the International Thomas More Symposium.

26 See especially the letters written to Margaret Roper from the Tower in 1534 and 1535 as reprinted in Letters, pp. 239 ff.; 245 ff., and 253 ff. Furthermore, he considers this issue persistently throughout the Dialogue of Comfort Against Tribulation, especially Books II and III. I have consulted the edition of that work prepared by Monica Stevens, ed., The Dialogue of Comfort Against Tribulation (London: Sheed and Ward, 1950).

27 Hayman, Interview, p. 81.
29 Lee, p. 58.
32 Ibid.
33 Ibid.
35 Storari, p. 27.
36 Professor Dugmore's similar conclusion should be noted; see his contribution to Thomas More Through Many Eyes, p. 54.
37 Hayman, p. 42.
38 Hayman, Interview, p. 81.
40 Riehl, p. 102.
42 Riehl, p. 103.
43 Luschei, p. 174.
44 Among them, Paul L. Gaston, whom I quote here, p. 467.
45  Godshalk, p. 135.  
46  Gaston, p. 465.  
47  Luschei, p. 215.  
48  Ibid., p. 174.  
51  Percy commented on Immelmann as Satan in the interview with Abádi-Nagy, p. 17.  
52  Ibid.  
53  Godshalk, p. 139.  
55  See Johnson, p. 59.  
56  Ibid., p. 75.  
60  Carlton Cremeens, "Walker Percy, the Man and the Novelist: An Interview," *Southern Review*, 4, NS No. 2 (1968), 284.  
61  Johnson, p. 76, especially.  
62  Ibid., p. 75.  
66 Ibid.


68 Ibid.


72 See Reynolds, "Fame," p. 40 for similar conclusions.
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VITA

Noel J. Toups was born in New Orleans, Louisiana, on December 11, 1938, the son of Fernand J. Toups and Vivian Bourgeois Toups. He received his elementary and secondary education at Holy Savior School in Lockport, Louisiana. He graduated from high school in 1956 and received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Nicholls State University in 1960. In 1962 he received his Master of Arts degree from Louisiana State University. After two years as a military intelligence officer in the United States Army, he married Verna Marie Jones; they have two children: Michael and Stephen. Since 1965 they have been living in Thibodaux, Louisiana, where he teaches at Nicholls State University.