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## ABSTRACT

How does Antony comfort Vincent in Thomas More's *Dialogue of Comfort Against Tribulation*? While other critics focus on specific aspects of Antony's comfort and their reforming effect on a specific power of Vincent's soul, I attempt to show in this paper the effect of the whole of Antony's comfort on the whole of Vincent's soul. First, I define the three appeals of persuasion, since comfort is a reforming kind of rhetoric through appeals. Then, I analyze how Antony discovers, organizes and stylizes those appeals: he discovers the appeals in Vincent's responses, organizes them according to what Vincent is ready for, and stylizes them so that Vincent will enduringly remember his counsel. Lastly, I look at the reforming effect of Antony's appeals on Vincent's soul: Antony helps to instruct Vincent's intellect through logical appeals that draw from reason and faith, refashion his memory and imagination through passionate appeals that are humorous and serious, and redirect his heart (his will and affections) through ethical appeals that move him to trust in Christ alone. The work as a whole is More's vision of a comprehensive attempt to reform the soul so as to pursue freedom and trust in the grace of God. By explicating Antony's rhetorical appeals and Vincent's soul-responses, this paper relates the powers of rhetoric with the powers of the soul. Although grace reforms the soul in the supernatural order, rhetoric helps to reform the soul to a great degree in the order of nature.

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# THE SOUL-REFORMING RHETORIC OF THOMAS MORE'S *DIALOGUE OF COMFORT*: ANTONY'S APPEALS AND VINCENT'S RESPONSE

by

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# INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of Thomas More's *Dialogue of Comfort*, Vincent fears the Turkish invasion to the point of contemplating suicide. When he first approaches Antony, Vincent confides in him that "fearful heaps of peril lie so heavy at [his] heart" (1113.14-15)[1] that he prefers immediate death to the Turkish persecution. By the end of the dialogue, however, Vincent finds comfort amidst his tribulation. When he leaves Antony after their third and final conversation, Vincent not only gives him thanks for comfort, but he promises "to put [Antony's] good counsel in remembrance, not in our language only, but in the Almain tongue too" (1248.58-60). In addition, Vincent ensures that Antony's good counsel reaches the farthest edges of Western Civilization, as the playful subtitle suggests: "made by a Hungarian in Latin, and translated out of Latin into French, and out of French into English" (1111.3-4). Granted, Antony does not completely comfort Vincent (who could after only three conversations?), for Vincent still must carry out Antony's counsels. Nevertheless, Antony puts Vincent's soul on track to freedom. This psychological change raises a significant question for all who want to comfort the sorrowful: how does Antony comfort Vincent? In other words, how does Antony persuade Vincent to pursue true freedom of soul?[2]

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[1] The page and line numbers refer to *The Essential Works of Thomas More* unless otherwise noted.

[2] Of course, comfort and persuasion do not have identical meanings. Comfort is the kind of persuasion whose exhortation to expedient or noble action strengthenes the heart. Regarding comfort, Louis L. Martz and Frank Manley comment in the Yale edition of *A Dialogue of Comfort* that

> "It is essential to recall the derivation of this word from the Latin *confortare*, "to strengthen," for the basic meaning which More assigns to "comfort," whether as a noun or verb or in other forms, relates to this derivation, in the primary and now obsolete senses, defined by the *OED*: "comfort," *v*. 1 "To strengthen (morally or spiritually); to encourage, hearten, inspirit, incite." The second meaning of "relief or affliction; consolation, solace, soothing" (comfort," *sb.* 4, 5) are also present, but usually as related to the root. (331)

Although Morean scholars agree that Antony comforts Vincent, they focus on Antony's comfort for the different powers of Vincent's soul. On the one hand, Louis Karlin and David Oakley claim that Antony uses merry tales "to correct error; to reinforce communal bonds; and to manifest hope" (159-160) in Vincent's imagination. From their perspective, Antony's humor humbles the pride that warps Vincent's imagination. Also focusing on Antony's images, Dale B. Billingsley insists that the Passion of Christ provides Vincent's imagination the surest source of comfort. According to his view, More solves the problem of Vincent's undisciplined imagination "not by renouncing the images of the world, …but by replacing them with a single image from the world: the suffering and crucified Christ" (57). On the other hand, John Boyle believes that "[a]s author, More guides his reader (as Antony guides Vincent) in the ways of the wise man who orders his life in its particulars according to the highest cause. In this, the *Dialogue* is not an exposition of some points of doctrine; rather, it is a work with theological vision of man that gives the theological scaffolding to the practical advice" (18). The essence of Boyle's argument is that Antony's theological wisdom reforms and comforts Vincent's intellect. The nature of Antony's comfort and the effects on Vincent's imagination and intellect certainly are complex.

Yet Antony's comfort is so complex that to focus on one aspect of Antony's comfort would be to leave out other important aspects. Boyle's insight into Antony's theological arguments accounts for the intellectual aspect of Antony's comfort, but it does not account for the whole of it. Indeed, Antony's theological claims do not fully comfort Vincent by the end of

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More writes *A Dialogue of Comfort*, not *A Dialogue of Persuasion*, to emphasize the strength required to fight the worst kinds of tribulation. Besides, comfort also refers to the Holy Spirit as "Comforter," who is a chief source of comfort against tribulation. Speaking of God, Antony says, "And he is a sure comfort that, as he said to his disciples, never leaveth his servants in case of comfortless orphans, not even when he departed from his disciples by death, but … (as he promised) sent them a comforter, the Holy Spirit of his Father and himself" (1112.9-14). Despite the differences between comfort and persuasion, we can validly examine Antony's persuasion as not only an important part of comforting, but *the best* way of comforting in the order of nature.

book one, so he changes tactics beginning in book two with the merry tales. The humor of those tales, as Karlin and Oakley argue, help reform Vincent's imagination, but Antony also uses tales and images that are not at all humorous, such as Christ's Passion in book three. Christ's Passion culminates the dialogue and contributes to the comfort of Vincent's imagination, as Billingsley shows, but it is not the only image or source of comfort in the dialogue.

While critics analyze various parts of Antony's comfort, no major critic synthesizes all of the aspects of his comfort. Such a synthesis is difficult, for Antony makes many appeals to persuade many powers of Vincent's soul. Furthermore, the progressive discovery of these appeals, their subtle design, and the style of his counsel all complicate any attempt at a synthesis of Antony's ways of persuading. Nevertheless, synthesizing the dynamics of Antony's appeals and their effects on Vincent's soul will show More's vision of a comprehensive attempt to persuade a soul to pursue true freedom.

My own view is that Antony persuades Vincent to leave behind his fear and pursue true freedom of soul by instructing Vincent's intellect through logical appeals, refashioning his memory and imagination through passionate appeals, and redirecting his heart (his will and affections)[3] through ethical appeals.[4] Antony does not completely reform Vincent's soul by the end of the dialogue, of course, but he does inspire and direct Vincent enough for him to pursue

[3] Although Antony never systematically defines the heart as he does tribulation, he does speak of it as a faculty of the soul that desires. For instance, in book three, Antony says, "And surely, Cousin, I doubt it little in my mind but that if a man had in his heart so deep a desire and love-longing to be with God in heaven to have the fruition of his glorious face…he would no more stick at the pain that he must pass between than at that time those holy martyrs did" (1200.49-55). Now desire is of two kinds: sensory and intellectual. But sensory desires arise from the sensory appetite (the affections) and intellectual desires arise from the intellectual appetite (the will). Thus, the heart is both the intellectual and sensory appetites.

[4] Antony's persuasion involves the recognition of and dependence on God's grace, for his logical and ethical appeals depend on the authority of Sacred Scripture. Vincent comes to recognize Scripture's authority over the course of the *Dialogue*.

genuine reform. After all, Vincent comes to Antony fearful and leaves him resolved to write down and translate his good counsel and comfort.

To demonstrate that Antony's logical, passionate, and ethical appeals persuade and comfort Vincent's soul, I must define the three kinds of appeals. With these terms clarified, we can proceed to analyze how Antony's appeals reform Vincent's soul.

## PART I: THE ART OF PERSUASION

The three means of persuasion are the three kinds of appeals in any given situation.[5] The logical appeal persuades the intellect through deduction and induction: deduction takes the form of rhetorical syllogisms (enthymemes), while induction takes the form of factual or fictional examples. To put it another way, the speaker either accurately deduces particular conclusions from universal principles—including revealed truths that are not discovered through deduction or induction—or induces universal principles from particular instances. The ethical appeal persuades the will through the goodwill, good character, and good sense of the speaker. In other

[5] This overview of the three means of persuasion is based on Aristotle and Augustine's accounts of rhetoric. For an overview of the three appeals, see Aristotle's *Rhetoric* (cf. 1356a1-35), where he says, "Of the modes of persuasion furnished by the spoken word there are three kinds. The first kind depends on the personal character of the speaker; the second on putting the audience into a certain frame of mind; the third on the proof, or apparent proof, provided by the words of the speech itself." For an overview of the aims of rhetoric, see Augustine's *On Christian Teaching* (IV.87), where he says, "It has been said by a man of eloquence, and quite rightly, that the eloquent should speak in such a way as to instruct, delight, and move his listeners" (IV.74). The man of eloquence referred to is Cicero. Again, Augustine identifies these three aims of rhetoric: "The aim of our orator, then, when speaking of things that are just and holy and good—and he should not speak of anything else—the aim, as I say, that he pursues to the best of his ability when he speaks of these things is to be listened to with understanding, with pleasure, and with obedience" (IV.87). Again, Augustine encourages the orator to pray for this triad: "So the speaker who is endeavoring to give conviction to something that is good should despise none of these three aims—of instructing, delighting, and moving his hearers—and should make it his prayerful aim to be listened to with understanding, with pleasure, and with obedience" (IV.96). I seek to relate the three means of persuasion identified by Aristotle with the three aims of rhetoric identified by Cicero and Augustine.

words, the speaker's virtue makes the audience willing to act. Lastly, the passionate appeal persuades—or, to use a more fitting word in this case, *frames*—the imagination so as to arouse and allay the audience's emotions.

Although these three appeals are the means of persuasion, they must be available in the given situation. A given situation includes the timing, place, and audience of the speech. The timing of a speech is the fitting moment and duration in which the appeals are active; it is the opportune occasion. The place of a speech is the fitting context in which the appeals are present; it is the opportune setting. The audience of the speech is the fitting recipients for whom those appeals will persuade. The time, place, and audience modify how the means of persuasion are available in a given situation. On the one hand, if the timing is bad, then the appeals are not active; if the place is unfitting, then the appeals are not present; and if the audience is not ready, then the appeals are not receivable. On the other hand, if the timing is good, then the appeals are active; if the place is fitting, then the appeals are live; and if the audience is ready, then the appeals are receivable.[6]

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[6]The three conditions of a persuasion (timing, place, and audience) come from Aristotle's and Cicero's account of the three branches of oratory. In *Rhetoric* 1358a36-b7, Aristotle writes, "Rhetoric falls into three divisions, determined by the three classes of listeners to speeches. For of the three elements in speech-making—speaker, subject, and person addressed—it is the last one, the hearer, that determines the speech's end and object. The hearer must be either a judge, with a decision to make about things past or future, or an observer. A member of the assembly decides things about future events, a juryman about past events: while those who merely decide on the orator's skill are observers. From this it follows that there are three divisions of oratory—political, forensic, and the ceremonial oratory of display." In *De Oratore* I.141, Cicero writes, "Again I heard that, of such questions as are distinct from general issues, some have their place in courts of justice, others in deliberations; while there was yet a third kind, which had to do with the extolling or reviling of particular persons." Thus the three kinds of oratory address different auditors in particular places and times through a particular means: judicial (political) rhetoric addresses the justice or injustice of an action in the past in court by means of accusation or defense; deliberative (forensic) rhetoric addresses the expedience and nobility of a policy in the future in an assembly by means of exhortation or dehortation; and ceremonial (epideictic) rhetoric addresses the virtue or vice of a person in the present ceremony by means of praise or

The speaker must discover, organize, stylize, memorize, and deliver the available means of persuasion.[7] The speaker discovers the ethical appeal in his character, the logical appeal in his words, and the passionate appeal in his audience. Only then the speaker can organize them in such a way that each appeal is persuasive. For instance, unless a speaker's goodwill, good character, or good sense dispose the audience to a certain reason or emotion, the speaker will not be persuasive. When the appeals are organized, the speaker must stylize them. Style enlivens the virtue of the speaker, the logic of the argument, and the passions of the audience. Without style, the appeals are dead, that is, unpersuasive. Once stylized with apt words, the speaker must then memorize[8] and deliver[9] the available appeals. If a speaker discovers, designs, stylizes, memorizes, and delivers the ethical, logical, and passionate appeals well, then the chances are

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blame. To analyze the given situation in *A Dialogue of Comfort* through this helpful, though technical, framework, the time is the future, the place is an assembly, and the means is an exhortation to take comfort in God. Granted, Aristotle and Cicero speak of these three kinds of oratory with regard to speeches, not to dialogues. Unlike uninterrupted speeches, dialogues allow for the audience to voice their objections, as Vincent does throughout *A Dialogue of Comfort*. As a result, Antony adapts his persuasion to Vincent's needs. To understand the setting of a dialogue, the most important factors tend to be the timing, the place, and the character of the interlocutor.

[7] Although a speaker (and an interlocutor in a Socratic dialogue) must discover, organize, stylize, memorize, and deliver the appeals of persuasion for a speech, More gives no description of Antony's effort to remember verses of Sacred Scripture and the sources of comfort or a narrator to describe Antony's gestures. Therefore, we need not (and cannot) analyze Antony's memory and delivery. Suffice it to say that Antony remembers numerous passages of Sacred Scripture, both from the New and Old Testament, of the Church Fathers, and of philosophers, poets, and historians. Looking at the effect to know the cause, we can look at how much Antony has memorized to know how diligently he memorized what became part of his persuasion in this *Dialogue*.

[8] Speaking from memory renders the ethical appeal more authoritative, the logical appeal more thought out, and the passionate appeal more heartfelt.

[9] Of all five canons of oratory, delivery is the least relevant to our discussion, for *A Dialogue of Comfort* is a written work to be read, not a visible or audible work to be seen or heard. There is no narrator to describe Antony's gestures or tone. Nevertheless, I mention this aspect of rhetoric to show the amount of skill it requires to actually persuade someone. Poor delivery can ruin the persuasiveness of the strongest appeals. Delivery conveys the appeals visibly and audibly. The visible gestures of the body and face are the window through which the appeals are seen and the audible volume, pitch, and tone are the sound through which the appeals are heard.

good that the audience will be persuaded.[10] As a result, the passionate appeals arouse the audience to feel some way about something, the logical appeals instructs the audience to think something, and the ethical appeals moves the audience to do something.[11]

[10] The five canons of oratory (discovery, order, style, memory, and delivery) have a long history of development that Aristotle begins and Cicero perfects. At the beginning of the second book of his *Rhetoric*, Aristotle enumerates the first three in the canon: "In making a speech one must study three points: first, the means of producing persuasion [invention]; second, the style, or language, to be used [style]; third, the proper arrangement of the various parts of the speech [order]" (1403b1-3). Cicero adds two more objects of study in his *De Oratore*: "And, since all the activity and ability of an orator falls into five divisions, I learned that he must first hit upon what to say; then manage and marshal his discoveries, not merely in orderly fashion, but with a discriminating eye for the exact weight as it were of each argument; next go on to array them in the adornments of style; after that keep them guarded in his memory; and in the end deliver them with effect and charm" (I.142).

[11] This triple-process of persuasion imitates the soul's cognitive and appetitive powers. The following connection between the rhetorical appeals and the soul's powers arise from my own observation and reflection. I am unaware of a rhetorical theorist who shows that the rhetorical appeals address particular powers of the soul.

The cognitive powers depend upon sensing with our sensory powers and knowing with our intellect. Antony draws attention to this basic epistemological fact, for example, when he recommends how Vincent may know to a faint degree the joys of heaven: "And therefore let us all that cannot now conceive such delight in the consideration of them as we should have often in our eyes by reading, often in our ears by hearing, often in our mouths by rehearsing, often in our hearts by meditation and thinking" (1243.22-27).

First, we sense an object (in the following paragraphs, an object means anything that can be known: a physical object, an opinion, an action, etc.). Sights, sounds, smells, savors, and physical things impress our five senses. These external senses, having completed their work, then pass along their impressions to the internal senses. The common sense gathers together the data from the external senses; the imagination stores that unified impression as a phantasm; and the sensory memory tags the impression as fitting or unfitting for our bodily nature. Second, we know an object in some way from that sensory feeling. The active intellect illuminates the intelligibility of the imagination's phantasm and abstracts it from its sensory matter. The passive intellect receives and possesses the thing's intelligibility as a likeness of the thing itself. The intellectual memory then stores that intelligibility for future recall. After apprehending the object, the judgment compares and contrasts those objects with others. For instance, the judgment composes subjects with fitting predicates or divides subjects from unfitting predicates. As a result, the composed and divided subject-predicate sentences are either true or false, depending on their conformity with reality. If our apprehension provides proper words, and our judgment provides true sentences, then our reason can make valid enthymemes. The "story" of how we come to know is based on Aristotle's account in his *On the Soul* (III.1-.5) and Aquinas's account of epistemology in the treatise on man (*Summa Theologica* I q.78-85) and the treatise on human acts and passions (*ST* I-II, q.22-48).

The logical appeal imitates the process of the soul's cognitive powers. When a speaker persuades by inducing universal principles from particular examples, the particular examples justify the universal principles to our senses or intellect. When a speaker persuades by deducing conclusions from principles, the principles reform our judgment. The logical appeal is not enough to persuade someone comprehensively, however, for the soul also has appetitive powers.

While the logical appeal targets the soul's cognitive powers, the passionate and ethical appeals target primarily the soul's appetitive powers. There are two appetitive powers: the sensory and the intellectual appetites.

The sensory appetite is a capacity of the soul that is moved by things apprehended by the external and internal senses. While an object impresses the external senses, and the impression rests in the internal senses, the impression is either fitting or unfitting for our nature. If the impression is fitting, then our sensory appetite tends toward it. If the impression is unfitting, the sensory appetite tends away from it. When tending toward an object, the sensory appetite initiates an attraction (love and hope), moves towards (desire and daring), and rests in the object (joy and calmness). When tending away from an object, the sensory appetite initiates an aversion (hatred and despair), moves away from (withdrawal and fear), and remains displeased with the object (sadness and anger).

The passionate appeal imitates the sensory appetite's movements via the imagination. A speaker appeals to an audience's passions by characterizing an object as either fitting or unfitting the nature of the audience. If described as fitting, then the object will arouse the passions of attraction for that object. If described as unfitting, then the object will arouse the passions of aversion for that object. The aroused passions frame the impression of an object in the imagination, such that when the intellect illuminates the intelligibility of that object, it may abstract more of its fitting perfections than its unfitting imperfections, or vice versa. In sum, the passionate appeal strongly moves the sensory appetite through the imagination to tend toward the speaker's claim and away from the opponents, nevertheless, the passionate appeal is not enough to persuade someone comprehensively, for the speaker must also appeal to the intellectual appetite.

The intellectual appetite, also known as the will, is the capacity of the soul that tends toward the good and chooses actions. Moral actions are either good or bad since they require free deliberation between possible actions that lead to human happiness. If the action is good, that is, if it is the best path to happiness, then the intellectual appetite tends toward that good action (cf. *Summa Theologica* I q. 80 and 82 on the will as the intellectual appetite.).

The ethical appeal imitates the intellectual appetite's movements. When a speaker shows a good character (which conforms to the speaker's claim), then the audience's intellectual appetite tends toward the speaker's character and claim. The ethical appeal moves an audience not to think some way or to feel something, but to act. Aristotle believes that of all the appeals the ethical appeal is the strongest. As he says in his *Rhetoric*, "his character [the ethical appeal] may almost be called the most effective means of persuasion he possesses" (1356a.13-14). Since we are rational, the logical appeal should be enough to persuade, but since we are also willful, the ethical appeal is a *sine qua non* for a comprehensive persuasion. Of course, a speaker can still persuade logically even if he has a bad character, but he will not persuade the audience comprehensively.

To summarize rhetoric in a sentence: the speaker's discovered, organized, stylized, memorized, and delivered logical, passionate, and ethical appeals present in the time, place, and audience of the given situation instruct, arouse, and move an audience's soul to think, feel, and act. In other words, a comprehensive persuasion employs all the powers of rhetoric to address the all the powers of the soul related to reasoning. By reviewing the art of rhetoric in relation to the soul, we may better understand how Antony comforts Vincent in his tribulation.

Rereading this summary, I fear the reader may overestimate rhetoric's role in the soul's reformation. Rhetoric aids in the soul's reformation, but it is not the only, nor the most powerful, reforming force. To be sure, grace is powerful enough to perfect the powers of the soul without the aid of rhetoric. Nevertheless, rhetoric helps to perfect the powers of the soul to a great degree in the order of nature and lays a foundation for the order of grace. As Thomas Aquinas argues, "grace does not destroy nature but rather perfects it" (*ST* I q. 1, a. 8, reply to 2), and "grace presupposes nature" (*ST* I q. 2, a. 2, reply to 1).

## PART II: ANTONY'S ART OF PERSUASION

Previous terms will serve to clarify how Antony persuades Vincent. Antony is a master rhetorician himself. To repeat the case in point, Vincent comes to him fearful and leaves hopeful. To analyze how Antony persuades Vincent, we must analyze the *Dialogue*'s given situation, Antony's discovery, organization, and style of the three appeals, and their effect on Vincent's soul.

### *Timing*

The rhetorical timing of the *A Dialogue of Comfort* would have been familiar with most of More's contemporary readers and, as Frank Manley points out, "in Europe at the time, with its

entire civilization threatened for almost a century by the increasing military power of the Turks and their steady, almost inexorable, encroachment on European territory, it would have had great emotional reverberation" (cxxii). More sets *A Dialogue of Comfort* in 1527-28 Vienna, Hungary, shortly after the Turkish victory at the battle of Mohács (1526) in central Hungary and before Suleiman I's invasion of Vienna (1529). Vincent's fear of Turkish persecution not only follows from the recent past, but precludes the near future. He accurately notes that "the world is here waxen such, and so great perils appear here to fall at hand" (1111.18-19). Thus, the dramatic history makes the conversation about comfort more opportune.

More immediate than the historical timing of *A Dialogue of Comfort* is the particular timing of the conversation in the lives of the interlocutors. Antony is old, "lying in disease and sickness" (1111.9-10) and close to death, whereas Vincent is young and "in the best of health" (1111.48-49). Antony, who will probably not live long enough to suffer the Turkish invasion, comforts Vincent, who will live through—and perhaps die from—the coming persecution. Given the impending fate, Antony has a brief opportunity to give lasting comfort to Vincent.

In fact, Antony's time with Vincent is so brief that he must select only the most essential counsels. He reveals to Vincent at the beginning of book two, "[a]nd therefore, Cousin, in our matter here, leaving out many things that I would else treat of, I shall for this time speak but of very few, howbeit hereafter, if God send me more such days, then will we, when you list, further talk of more" (1148.55-60). The rhetorical timing pressures Antony to include only what is most comforting.

While the timing in the lives of the interlocutors intensifies the need for comfort, the timing of the actual conversation dramatically shows the urgency of that need. The three books separate three distinct conversations over two days. The first conversation takes place on one

single day, but the last two conversations take place on a second day. After the first conversation, Vincent ironically comments:

> And at this time will I no longer trouble you. I trow I have this day done you much tribulation, with mine importune objections of very little substance. And you have even showed me an example of sufferance in bearing my folly so long and so patiently. And yet shall I be so bold upon you further as to seek some time to talk forth of the remnant. (1144.34-41)

To be sure, Vincent's objections are not inopportune. On the contrary, Antony, despite his frail health, believes that his objections are so opportune that he readily agrees to another conversation—and to be had soon after: "Let that be hardily very shortly, Cousin, while this is fresh in mind" (1144.44-45). Vincent, eager for comfort and counsel, returns on a second day after Antony has had "meetly good rest, and … stomach somewhat more come" (1145.6-7). Although Vincent apologizes for the length of their first conversation and Antony promises to speak less in their second meeting, their second conversation is almost double the word-count of the first. They finish their second conversation in time for lunch, but Antony offers to continue after his afternoon nap. Having exhausted Antony so early in the day, but eager for counsel and comfort, Vincent agrees to return that very afternoon. Their third conversation is the longest of them all. Antony finishes the third session of counsel "weary" (1248.45). The increasing duration of their conversations and the decreasing intervals between their meetings dramatically show Vincent's urgent need for substantial and enduring comfort.[12] But rhetorical timing is not enough

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[12] The rhetorical timing within *A Dialogue of Comfort* imitates the real timing within the life of Sir Thomas More. Just as the Turkish invasion threatens Vincent, Protestant persecution threatens Catholic Christians, including More. Manley suggests that the connection between Turkish and Protestant persecution is not only metaphorical but also literal:

> More is able to catch up not only the external threat of the Turks, but also the internal threat of those false Christians who both literally and figuratively allied themselves with the Turks: the Turks of Hungary, as Louis II called them—Zapolya and his followers, the noblemen after the battle of Mohács who ravaged their own domains, the 20,000 Lutheran *Landsknechte* who were reported to have

for a speaker to use the available rhetorical appeals; the place of the persuasion must also be taken into account.

*Place*

All three conversations in *A Dialogue of Comfort* take place in Antony's home. Unlike Socrates who conversed everywhere and anywhere,[13] Antony welcomes Vincent into the comfort

> served in the Turkish army, the princes of Europe who sought out Turkish alliances to redress the balance of power, and by implication, the growing Protestant sects who in More's opinion had betrayed the faith, turned to false gods, and were in the process of dismembering the mystical body of Christ through war and persecution. (cxxxi)

Manley is surely right that the Turks are a figure in *A Dialogue of Comfort* for Protestants of Christendom, because More's life confirms it. More writes *A Dialogue of Comfort* in the Tower of London shortly before Protestants make him a martyr. The topic of the *Dialogue* takes on more significance as the author of the *Dialogue* undergoes persecution similar to both Vincent's and Antony's. Like Vincent, he must suffer death for his faith. Like Antony, More must suffer pain in his old age. More confesses to Margaret in one of his last letters from the Tower, "I found myself—I cry God mercy—very sensual and my flesh much more shrinking from pain and from death than methought it the part of a faithful Christian man" (1325.59-62). Both pain and death liken him unto the suffering of Antony and Vincent, which heightens the fittingness of the *Dialogue*'s rhetorical timing.

Just as the *Dialogue*'s fictional timing fits with More's actual timing, so too does the subject of comfort. Both Antony and Vincent approach their nearing death, contemplating comfort amidst suffering, death, hell, and heaven. Similarly, at the end of More's life, he writes about the end of the Christian's life. In the Tower, he writes, among other works, *A Treatise upon the Passion, A Dialogue of Comfort Against Tribulation*, "Imploring Divine Help against Temptation," *The Sadness of Christ*, and "A Devout Prayer [before Dying]." The topics of More's final works, written immediately before his execution, testify to the comfort of contemplating lasting things. Therefore, the timing both within and without *A Dialogue of Comfort* occasions and modifies the available appeals.

[13] The rhetorical setting of dialogues sheds light on the significance of the rhetorical purpose. Like Plato, who draws attention to the location or activity in which Socrates converses, such as the wild outdoors in *Phaedrus*, or Cicero, who contrasted the setting of his dialogues with those of Plato, such as the comfortable indoors in *De Oratore*, or Augustine, who added Christian elements to the dramatic setting of his dialogues, such as the Christian school in the *Cassiciacum Dialogues*, or Boethius, who made the prison setting the motivation for his dialogue, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, More draws attention to the place of *A Dialogue of Comfort*.

and privacy of his home. As the home is a place of rest, Vincent comes seeking comfort for his discomforted soul.

All three conversations take place between Antony and Vincent alone in a shameless manner. Unlike Socrates who often converses with multiple people at the same time and sometimes shames them for their errors,[14] Antony and Vincent's conversation is truly a dialogue between friends. With just two interlocutors wherein each can voice his thoughts freely and shamelessly, Vincent speaks his mind without fear or shame. Antony begins book two with a merry tale that assures Vincent their conversation is welcome, such that Vincent admits, "[b]ut now, since I see you be so well-content that I shall not forbear boldly to show my folly, I will be no more so shamefast, but ask you what me list" (1146.61-64). The freedom to speak also allows Antony to take up all of Vincent's objections with joy. For instance, when Vincent gives his strongest objection to the world as a prison metaphor, confessing, "my mind findeth not itself satisfied in this point" (1224.60-62), Antony says that "there was in good faith no word that you spoke since we talked of these matters that half so well liked me as this that you now speak" (1224.69-71). Antony creates a rhetorical place in which Vincent is open to change his soul.

*Audience*

Frank Manley, in his introduction to the Yale edition of *A Dialogue of Comfort*, identifies four levels of address (audiences): the sixteenth century European Christians suffering Turkish

[14] For instance, in book one of Plato's *Republic*, after Socrates shows the contradictions within Thrasymachus' claim that it is better to be unjust than just, "Thrasymachus agreed to all this, not easily as I'm telling it, but reluctantly, with toil, trouble, and—since it was summer—a quantity of sweat that was a wonder to behold. And then I saw something I'd never seen before—Thrasymachus blushing" (350c-d). Granted, Thrasymachus rudely forced Socrates to speak, so his shame seems well-deserved. Nevertheless, Socrates put him to shame for his erroneous claim—a method that Antony does not use.

persecution (cxx-cxxx), the Catholic Christians aware of More's situation (cxxx-cxxxv), family members and friends who share in the *Dialogue*'s many anecdotes and jokes (cxxxv-cxlvii), and More himself who needed to use the scriptural comforts prescribed by Antony in the Tower (cxlvii-clxiv). In other words, Manley shows the audiences of *A Dialogue of Comfort* in relation to More's context. Although I agree with Manley that More had these audiences in mind, I cannot accept that these are the only audiences. By focusing on the context of the work, Manley overlooks the central audience in the text: Vincent. Admittedly, Vincent embodies aspects of those audiences that Manley identifies. Nevertheless, Vincent is a character with particular passions in a particular situation. In focusing on Vincent as another member of the audience in his own right, a new light shines on the many complex elements of Antony's persuasion. The struggle of an individual interlocutor for the whole dialogue makes an intense appeal to each reader who identifies with him. Therefore, to understand Antony's rhetorical audience, we must understand the character of Vincent.

Vincent's relationship with Antony is familial. Vincent introduces himself as the nephew of Antony. He opens the *Dialogue*, "Who would have weened, O my good Uncle…" (1111.7-8) and Antony responds, "Mine own good Cousin…" (1111.39). The uncle-cousin addresses permeate the *Dialogue* with a kindred tone. But more intimate than their uncle-cousin relationship is the father-son relationship that Vincent requests they adopt: "But us here shall you leave of your kindred a sort of very comfortless orphans, to all whom your good help and counsel hath long been a great stay, not as an uncle to some, and to some as one farther of kin, but as though unto us all you had been a natural father" (1111.32-38). Vincent likens himself and those who also long benefited from Antony's counsel and comfort to "comfortless orphans" and Antony to their "natural father." Although Antony is not literally Vincent's natural father, his

counsel generates spiritual comfort in him, as a spiritual father guides a spiritual son. From this supernatural perspective, Antony's persuasion serves as an image of spiritual fatherhood.

Yet Vincent is also a civic leader in Vienna—another necessary element of the complexity. Although he never reveals his civic position, he actively concerns himself with the common good. He first comes to Antony on behalf of his family, friends, and countrymen to get comfort for their tribulation, speaking in the first person plural, not the singular. If Vincent is a civic leader, Antony is his advisor, not in political policy, but political education. Moreover, Vincent's concern for his country continues up to the very end of the dialogue. He receives Antony's comfort for the sake of comforting, not only himself, but others too: "For, *to the intent that the more may take profit by you*, I purpose, Uncle, as my poor wit and learning will serve me, to put your counsel in remembrance, not in our language only, but in the Almain tongue too. And thus, praying God to give me *and all others that shall read it* the grace to follow your good counsel therein, I shall commit you to God" (1248.55-62; emphasis added). From this civic perspective, Antony's persuasion serves as a part of civic education.

Vincent is not only a civic leader, but also a wealthy one. Vincent's attachment to his wealth becomes more apparent as the dialogue progresses. Towards the end of each book, Vincent objects to some counsel of Antony on the grounds of losing worldly goods. At the end of book one, Vincent gives his longest objection until that point: "And therefore it seemeth hard, good Uncle, that between prosperity and tribulation the matter should go thus, that tribulation should always be given by God to all those who loveth for a sign of salvation, and prosperity sent for displeasure as a token of eternal damnation" (1131.26-31). At the end of book two, Vincent strongly objects, "I cannot see but that every rich man hath great cause to stand in great fear of damnation, nor I cannot perceive, as I say, how he can be delivered of that fear as long as

he keepeth his riches" (1185.48-52). After the middle of book three, Vincent says that of all the temptations they considered losing his wealth "is most sore and most perilous" (1210.75-76). These attachments and vulnerabilities show who Vincent is and what Antony must do. Thus, wealthy Vincent is another aspect of Antony's audience.

In short, Vincent's complex character—his familial relationship with Antony, his civic role in Vienna, and his attachment to wealth—shows More's true and much broader rhetorical audience. The rhetorical timing, place, and audience are elements any rhetor must weigh in order to find the available means of persuasion. After understanding the given situation, the rhetor can then discover the available appeals. Antony comes to understand the timing, place, and Vincent's character more and more as their conversation progresses. As the urgency of the timing increases and the complexity of Vincent's character unfolds, Antony discovers, organizes, and stylizes the available appeals.

*Discovery*

Because young Vincent comes to old Antony fearful that the Turks will invade Vienna, steal his possessions, and kill him, Antony spends his time persuading Vincent that he should be glad to suffer for Christ. By the end of the dialogue, Antony successfully persuades him to pursue true sources of comfort through his own effort and, more importantly, the grace of God.

In order to analyze how Antony persuades him, we must look at his ethical, emotional, and logical appeals—the three means of persuasion present in the speaker's character, the audience's emotions, and the words of the persuasion themselves.

Antony displays all three elements of the ethical appeal: benevolence, prudence, and moral virtue. Vincent first comes to Antony because he is "learned in the law of God" (1111.25-

6), that is, the divine law, from which come the natural and human law—all of which displays his practical and theoretical wisdom. Furthermore, the Turks captured Antony twice before, so his experience of suffering persecution wins Vincent's trust. Vincent mentions that all his kinsfolk regard Antony as one who has "long lived virtuously" (1111.25). Thus, Antony's moral character establishes his authority. Lastly, Antony's willingness to converse with Vincent for such a long time, despite his frail and declining health, displays a great benevolence not only for Vincent's bodily peril, but also his spiritual tribulation as well. Now, Vincent comes to Antony knowing these elements of his character, and Antony continually shows his good sense, good character, and good will, but Antony reproaches Vincent for trusting in him and not God alone—a surprising rebuke from a rhetor. Vincent consistently trusts in Antony throughout the course of the dialogue, but he does not consistently trust in God. In a sense, Antony spends all three conversations exhorting Vincent to trust in God alone as the ultimate and best source of true comfort amidst the least and worst tribulations. To what extent does Antony succeed? Vincent confirms in book three that he now trusts more in God, for which Antony encourages him. Furthermore, Vincent promises to ponder his exhortations to trust in God alone, a sign that he will seek Him with perseverance. Yes, Antony does succeed in his ethical appeal, though not to his character, but to God's.

Like the ethical appeal, the emotional appeal has three aspects: the emotion itself, the one for whom the audience feels that emotion, and how the speaker arouses the emotion. As has already been said, Vincent comes to Antony fearful. To comfort Vincent, Antony seeks to quell his fear and arouse his hope. Vincent feels fear for the Turks, but Antony seeks to transfer Vincent's fear form the Turks to the devil. Likewise, he seeks to transfer Vincent's hope in the comfort of worldly goods to the comfort of spiritual goods. To transfer Vincent's fear, Antony

describes the Turks as “a shadow” (1247.25) of the devil, who is the real enemy that seeks to devour, like a “roaring lion” (1247.55), those who fall in sin. After transferring Viincent’s fear to the devil, Antony transfers his hope to heaven. He describes the joy of the saints, that is, the unchanging and everlasting joy of living with God in his Kingdom. His descriptions in the final chapter of the book three are full of quotations from Sacred Scripture, especially Revelation and the Psalms. While the Turks in comparison with the devil help transfer Vincent’s fear, the comfort of worldly goods in comparison with the comfort of God transfers his hope. Antony’s use of comparison and vivid description are successful emotional appeals in Antony’s whole persuasion.

Lastly, Antony’s logical appeals take the form of examples and enthymemes. There is not room enough here to catalogue all the examples of true and false comfort that Antony uses to persuade Vincent. Nevertheless, the three books of the dialogue separate three kinds of examples that Antony uses. In book one, he uses examples from Sacred Scripture and history to induce that tribulation is medicinal. The most notable example, perhaps, is the trial of Job. In book two, he uses examples from personal experience and fables. While the examples of book one tend to be more serious and straightforward, the examples of book two tend to be more humorous and wonderful. From the examples of book two, Antony induces the causes of tribulation. In book three, he uses images of hell, heaven, and Christ’s Passion to induce the power of God’s comfort in comparison to the world’s comfort. His examples are just as biblical as his enthymemes. One way of understanding Antony’s logical appeals are his sources of reason. He relies on arguments made by pagans and Christians from reason and faith that worldly goods are inadequate, but spiritual goods satisfy. Another way to summaries Antony’s entire logical persuasion is in the following disjunctive syllogism. Either the world or God provides satisfactory comfort. The

world does not provide satisfactory comfort. Therefore, God provides the only satisfactory comfort. Although this summary of Antony's logical persuasion may be reductive, it is the final argument that Antony makes in book three after seeing in books one and two what essentially is Vincent's hesitation from taking comfort in God alone: his attachment to worldly goods.

Another key to discovering Antony's appeals lies in Vincent. All critics take an interest in Antony's comforts, but no major critic takes a substantial interest in Vincent's reactions. His reactions to Antony's comforts reveal his disordered dispositions and ideas that Antony must understand in order to persuade him: Vincent's reactions show the dynamics of Antony's persuasion.

In book one, Antony eventually discovers the available logical appeals after perceiving Vincent's inability to understand the comfort in his early counsels. When Antony gives the "great comfort in tribulation: that every tribulation which anytime falleth unto us is either sent to be medicinable if men will so take it, or may become medicinable if men will so make it, or is better than medicinable but if we will forsake it" (1120.55-59), Vincent responds, "Surely this is very comfortable *if we may well perceive it*" (1120.60-61; emphasis added). In other words, Vincent conditions the comfort of Antony's counsel on his ability to "perceive it." In order to help him perceive it, Antony connects these three ways of taking comfort in tribulation to the following three considerations: that we receive tribulation for our present sins, for our past sins, and for our own merit (1120.62-77). Despite this explanation, Vincent still cannot see, and, therefore, cannot take comfort in his counsel: "This seemeth me very good, good Uncle, saving that it seemeth somewhat brief and short, and thereby methinketh somewhat obscure and dark" (1121.5-8). From Vincent's similarly qualified reaction, Antony discovers how he must persuade Vincent in book one: "We shall therefore, to give it light withal, touch every member somewhat

more at large" (1121.9-11). The metaphors of "light" and "seeing" display both Vincent's need and Antony's aim. Vincent needs to see the causes of comfort intellectually, so Antony aims to shed the light of reason and faith on those causes.

Antony sheds intellectual light with his logical appeals. He deduces conclusions from principles defended by both pagans and Christians and revealed by reason and faith, and he induces principles from examples in history and Sacred Scripture. Here Boyle's criterion—that More writes a consolation not of philosophy, but of theology—is applicable. Both reason and faith illuminate the comfort in Antony's counsels and help Vincent to "perceive" it. After Antony explains the first cause of comfort, quoting the Old Testament and referring to the New, Vincent understands: "Verily, mine Uncle, the first kind of tribulation have you *to my mind opened sufficiently*, and therefore I pray you resort now to the second" (1122.23-26; emphasis added). After he explains the second cause of comfort—deducing particular advice from the letters of St. Paul and St. John and inducing a principle from the story of the "young lovely lady" who left her "old-acquainted knight" for a "new-acquainted knave" (1123.10-27) —Vincent understands, since he repeats the advice in his explanation as to why "yet can [he] not see" (1123.68) the third cause for comfort. After Antony explains the third cause of comfort by inducing from the example of Job and deducing from Christ's beatitudes, Vincent affirms the truth of Antony's logical appeals: "Of truth, good Uncle, albeit that every of these kinds of tribulation have cause of comfort in them (as ye have well declared), if men will so consider them, yet hath this third kind above all a special prerogative therein" (1125.63-67). Antony's deduction and induction establish the truth of the comforting power of his counsel and Vincent confirms that he is intellectually persuaded because he "considered" them—until Antony

mentions purgatory and prosperity. Vincent objects to the reality of purgatory[15] and the harm of prosperity, revealing Vincent's attachment to worldly goods. Antony again responds by deducing and inducing from Sacred Scripture and pagan philosophers. Thus, Antony discovers the logical appeals to reason and faith once he has perceived Vincent's inability to understand and believe in the causes of comfort.

Although Antony indeed helps to comfort Vincent intellectually in book one, Vincent is not completely comforted yet—even intellectually. Antony knows that Vincent is still incompletely persuaded by his logical appeals, as he requests that Vincent return "while this [desire to discuss the remnant] is fresh in mind" (1144.44-45). Vincent commits "to put this [the causes of comfort] in remembrance that it shall never be forgotten with me" (1144.46-47). Antony's logical appeals in book one incompletely persuade Vincent, which is why Antony uses passionate appeals in book two to reframe his imagination and memory.

In book two, Antony turns to the available passionate appeals because Vincent marvels at false comfort. After a warm and welcoming preface with a "merry tale" (1146.25-26), Vincent questions whether Antony would allow "for comfort either in worldly things" (1146.74). Building upon the merriment of the preface, Vincent argues, "For a merry tale with a friend refresheth a man much, and without any harm lighteneth his mind and amendeth his courage and his stomach…. And Saint Thomas saith that proper pleasant talking… is a good virtue, serving to refresh the mind and make it quick and lusty to labor and study again" (1146.75-1147.3). Although Antony admits that he is "of nature even half a giglet and more" (1147.17), he cautions, "Howbeit, let us, by mine advice, at the leastwise make these kinds of recreation as short and seldom as we can; let them serve us but for sauce, and make them not our meat"

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[15] This objection may reveal Luther's influence on Vincent's beliefs.

(1148.3-5). In other words, just as the merry tales are accidents to the substance of Antony's counsels, the passionate appeals are accidents to his logical appeals. Nevertheless, Vincent's passions, such as his fear of losing worldly goods, cloud his reason, as when he objects to Antony with the story of a heretical priest early in book two:

> And forsooth, I heard a religious man there myself, one that had been reputed and taken for very good, and which as far as the folk perceived, was of his own living somewhat austere and sharp. But his preaching was *wonderful*; methinketh I hear him yet: his voice was so loud and shrill, his learning less than mean . . . . "Leave therefore—leave, I beseech you—these inventions of men, your foolish Lenten fasts and your peevish penance! Diminish never Christ's thanks, nor look to save yourselves! It is Christ's death, I tell you, that must save us all! Christ's death, I tell you yet again, and not our own deeds! Leave your own fasting therefore and lean to Christ alone, good Christian people, for Christ's dear bitter Passion!" Now so loud and so shrill he cried "Christ" in their ears, and so thick he came forth with "Christ's bitter Passion," and that so bitterly spoken, with the sweat dropping down his cheeks, that I *marveled* not though I saw the poor women weep. (1151.70-1152.16; emphasis added)

The priest frames his heresy in a passionate exhortation that arouses Vincent's wonder. The priest figures his speech with anaphora and alliteration, which increases the intensity of his plea. As a result of the priest's passionate appeals, Vincent wonders at the heresy and objects to Antony on those same grounds. Here Antony discovers the passionate appeals in Vincent's misdirected marveling and begins telling the merry tales of book two. As Karlin and Oakley point out, the humor, especially in book two, has an important role in reforming Vincent's imagination. More than just humorous tales, for there are also tragedies, Antony's wondrous tales and images redirect Vincent's wonder away from false comforts and towards true comforts. Antony pulls his wondrous tales and images from his own invention, history, Aesop fables, personal anecdotes, the Church Fathers, and, most importantly, from Sacred Scripture. In fact, the organizing structure of book two is the four images of temptation in Psalm 90. For instance, Antony explains the first kind of temptation—the "night's fear"—with the tale about the suicidal

wife in Buda, and Vincent responds, "Undoubtedly this kind of tribulation is marvelous and strange" (1164.58-59), and again, "Yet is it marvel unto me that it should be as you say it is" (1165.33-35), and yet again, "This was a strange temptation indeed" (1165.48), and still again, "Forsooth, this was a wonderful work" (1166.10). Although the wife in the tale tragically arranges her death, Antony helps Vincent to wonder, not at false apparitions, but at the reality of the devil's temptations.

Although Antony's passionate appeals in book two's tales serve to persuade Vincent's imagination not to marvel so much at false persuasion, but at true persuasions, Vincent is not fully persuaded—neither yet intellectually nor emotionally—to take comfort in God alone amidst persecution, as Antony is fully persuaded amidst his bodily tribulation. Vincent returns to Antony at the beginning of book three in fear that "the great Turk prepareth a marvelous mighty army" (1193.11-12). Granted, Vincent has only had the morning to accept Antony's passionate appeals. The *Dialogue* would be unrealistic indeed if Vincent gains complete presence of mind in such short a time. Therefore, Antony uses their third and final conversation to persuade Vincent comprehensively, that is, definitively set him on the path to freedom of soul.

In book three, Antony makes an ethical appeal not to his own character, but Christ's.[16] Antony uses their third conversation to elicit Vincent's trusting love of God, who provides true comfort. At the beginning of this final conversation, Vincent says, "But yet evermore I trust in Christ, good Uncle, that he shall not suffer that abominable sect of his mortal enemies in such wise to prevail against his Christian country" (1195.35-38). Antony confirms him, "That is very well said, Cousin. Let us have our sure hope in him" (1195.39-40).

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[16] Normally rhetoricians, when appealing to ethos, praise their own good will, good character, and good sense in the eyes of the audience. Here, Antony praises Christ's benevolence, virtue, and prudence.

Transferring Vincent's trust onto Christ has been Antony's intent from the beginning to the end of the *Dialogue*. Vincent comes to Antony in their first conversation trusting in Antony's ability to comfort, since he has "long lived virtuously and are so learned in the law of God, as very few be better in this country here, and have had, of such things as we now do fear, good experience and assay in yourself, as he that hath been taken prisoner in Turkey two times in your days, and now likely to depart hence ere long" (1111.25-31). Although Antony's character appeals to Vincent's desire for good counsel, Antony reprimands Vincent for trusting in him, not God. He warns, "But whensoever God take me hence to reckon yourself then comfortless, as though your chief comfort stood in me, therein make ye, methinketh, a reckoning very much like as though ye would cast away a strong staff and lean upon a rotten reed; for God is and must be your comfort, and not I" (1112.3-9). As leaning on a strong staff is better than leaning on a rotten reed, so taking comfort in God is better to taking comfort in Antony. Since Vincent trusts in Antony enough to urgently return to him for comfort, and Antony discovers over the course of books one and two the extent of Vincent's attachment to worldly goods, Antony spends a large portion of their third conversation analyzing the value and loss of worldly goods: outward goods (chapter 5), lands and possessions (6-7), riches (8), fame and reputation (9-10), and authority (11). When they pause to analyze the harms and advantages of losing these worldly goods (chapters 12-16), Antony has Vincent play the role of a rich young man whom the Turks persecute. The role-playing is so effective in detaching Vincent from these worldly goods that by the end of it, Vincent declares, "I pray God give me the grace . . . that I never, for any goods or substance of this wretched world, forsake my faith toward God, neither in heart nor tongue, as I trust in his great goodness I never shall" (1214.53-57). Antony continues to analyze bodily pain and enslavement (chapter 17-18), imprisonment (19-20), and a shameful death (21-23) only to

discover that Vincent is still attached to worldly goods: Vincent admits that "all the pinch is in the pain" (1236.64). Rather than concede the apparent permanence of Vincent's attachments, Antony attempts to uproot them by comparing a painful death to the pains of hell (chapter 25), the joys of heaven (26), and Christ's Passion (27). Antony exhorts Vincent to take comfort in true sources of comfort, repeating the hortatory phrase "let us . . . " sixteen times in the last chapter of book three. These comparisons of goods and exhortations help Vincent to take comfort neither in Antony nor the goods of the world, but in the godly fear of punishment in hell, the hope of joy in heaven, and the love of the suffering Christ. As will be discussed later, Antony's rhetoric reforms Vincent's soul enough to pursue God alone as the true source of comfort.

*Organization*

While Antony discovers the logical, passionate, and ethical appeals through Vincent's conversation and reactions, he also organizes the appeals. Because Antony and Vincent cover a wide range of topics, the arrangement of the conversation is difficult to see, but not altogether absent.[17] When analyzing the design of appeals, one cannot only ask *what is the design*, but also

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[17]In recent discussions of *A Dialogue of Comfort*, a controversial issue has been whether this dialogue has a definite design or not. On the one hand, some argue that the dialogue does not have a design. From this perspective, the conversation meanders from topic to topic without a convincing structure. On the other hand, others argue that the dialogue has a definite design. As the editor of *A Dialogue of Comfort* for the *Complete Works of Thomas More*, Louis Martz claims that the work has "a firm and central line, a teleological structure based on a goal never forgotten" (lxi). While recent scholarship agrees that the work has a design, they disagree on what that design is. Frank Manley asserts that the three theological virtues organize the work. From his perspective, Antony first fosters Vincent's faith, then arouses his hope, and exhorts him to charity. Like Manley, J. Stephen Russel argues that a theological principles organizes the work, but that principle is the Bible. According to his view, the "three parts of the *Dialogue* are thus analogous in mode to the Old Testament, the Gospels, and the Apocalypse respectively" (53). In other words, Russel believes in a biblical framework. In proving his reading, however,

*why that particular design.* Antony begins with strong intellectual appeals and, because Vincent's passions impede his reason, Antony tells tales to refashion his imagination, and then, because Vincent still does not trust in Christ, he concludes with an exhortation to trust in the Christ. Antony openly expresses his attention to the arrangement of his counsels toward the beginning of book one: "We shall therefore neither fully receive those philosophers' reasons in this matter, not yet utterly refuse them, but, using them in such order as shall beseem them, the principle and effectual medicines against these diseases of tribulation shall we fetch from the high, great, and excellent Physician" (1115.8-13). In other words, Antony attends not only to the order in general, but the order of appeals that fit most with Vincent's complex soul. The logical, passionate, and ethical structure of appeals are more fitting than other structures because the order of the appeals fits with the present order in Vincent's soul: Antony moves from persuading Vincent's intellect to his imagination to his affections because, as Antony discovers, Vincent's fearful affections dominate his ill-formed imagination which misrepresent reality to his intellect. As a doctor who progressively discovers the root of an illness through symptoms, Antony progressively discovers that Vincent's passions impede his ability to reason. For example, when

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he shows another governing framework. According to Russel, "A rhetorical examination of Book Three should illustrate its unique wedding of the matter of Book One with the manner of Book Two" (48). Russel's point is that in book one Antony gives the right arguments in the wrong tone, and in book two he adopts a merry tone on a different matter, but in book three he unites the right matter with the merry manner. Russel's proof of the dialogue's structure is more convincing than his conclusion because in his proof he attends to how Antony adapts to Vincent's developing needs. Rather than a tripartite structure, Louis Martz suggests that the dialogue has a two-part movement from the abstract to the concrete, from the general to the particular, from the theoretical to the practical. Although I agree with the critics in favor of the work's design, I cannot accept their proposed frameworks as absolute. To reduce its structure into the three theological virtues or the works of the Bible misses the dynamics of a realistic conversation and of an illustration of growth in self-knowledge. By focusing on the external structure of Antony's arguments, these critics overlook the internal structure of Antony's logical, passionate, and ethical appeals. Granted, these appeals overlap in each book. Nevertheless, one particularly stands out in each book as Antony's target.

Antony recognizes that, objectively, the "fear of losing through deadly sin the life of his seely soul . . . is sorest tribulation of all," he says, "[T]hough we touch here and there some pieces thereof before, yet the chief part and principal point will I reserve, to treat apart effectually that matter in the last end" (1119.10-16). By saving what he thinks is the hardest tribulation for Vincent till the end, Antony prepares Vincent's soul—and discovers along the way Vincent's subjectively harder tribulation of losing worldly goods. In their second conversation, Antony designs the appeals after two verses from Psalm 90, but leaves room for necessary tangents: "Now in the two next verses following, the prophet briefly comprehendeth four kinds of temptation, and therein all the tribulation that we shall now speak of, and also some part of that which we have spoken of before. And therefore I shall preadventure, expect any further thing fall in our way, with treating of those two verses finish and end all our matter" (1157.5-12). Antony offers an approach structured enough to make progress in their conversation, but flexible enough to allow for necessary and revealing objections. Louis Martz aptly calls the flexibility of Antony "The Art of Improvisation." Only after preparing Vincent with their first and second conversations and hinting at the topic of their third conversation throughout the first two does Antony speak of open persecution. If Vincent was not ready for this topic at the beginning of book one, he is ready at the beginning of book three, for Antony says,

> For if we now consider, Cousin, these causes of terror and dread that you have recited, which in this persecution for the faith, this midday devil, may be these Turks rear against us to make his incursion with, we shall well perceive, *weighing them well with reason*, that albeit somewhat they be indeed, yet every part of the matter pondered, they shall well appear in conclusion things nothing so much to be dread and fled from as to folk at the first sight they do suddenly seem. (1200.76-85; emphasis added)

Here Antony identifies the reason behind his order: to weigh well with reason the topic that Vincent fears the most. Because fear inhibits Vincent from considering persecution rationally, Antony saves it until the end, after he explains the causes of comfort and calms him with tales.

Admittedly, Antony attempts to reason with Vincent in book one. Nevertheless, Vincent is not comforted. Because his logical appeals were not enough, Antony turns to passionate appeals that sufficiently calm him and refresh him for further study. When they reconsider persecution in book three, Antony exhorts Vincent to take comfort in Christ. As a result, Vincent promises to rehearse, remember, and record Antony's appeals. All three appeals are Antony's comprehensive attempt to put Vincent on track to pursue true freedom of soul.

*Style*

Antony is conscious of the dialogic style of their conversation: "And therefore wished I the last time, after you were gone . . . that we had more often interchanged words, and parted the talk between us with ofter enterparling upon your part, in such manner as learned men use between the persons whom they devise disputing in their feigned dialogues" (1145.57-65). Imitating dialogues like those of Plato, Cicero, Augustine, or Boethius, Antony converses with Vincent in a Socratic manner. By entering the literary tradition of Socratic dialogues, Antony dialogues with other famous dialogues, both in their content and style. Although the content may vary, a dialogue's style allows for objections, interruptions, and questions from a character that readers may identify with, all of which help to overcome what Socrates charges against the written word in Plato's *Phaedrus*: that a speaker "must determine which kind of speech is appropriate to each kind of soul, prepare and arrange your speech accordingly, and offer a complex and elaborate speech to a complex soul and a simple speech to a simple one" (277b-c).

Antony understands this charge and offers a complex set of appeals to a complex soul in a written work of art.

*A Dialogue of Comfort* is not only a book of wise advice on the causes of tribulation and the sources of comfort, but also a great work of art because of its vivid style.[18] As Richard Sylvester, one of the greatest More scholars of the 20th century, said, "*A Dialogue of Comfort* is indeed a dialogue, the best More ever wrote" (101). Some critics defend the *Dialogue*'s artistry, but they neglect to show what the vivid artistry is ordered to reveal: they identify the presence of style without showing the purpose of the style.[19] Therefore, I shall attempt to show, by way of explication, the grand style of More in *A Dialogue of Comfort*.

The last chapter of the last book is, indeed, a culmination of Antony's rhetorical efforts. Dale Billingsley rightly says of the last chapter, "Vivid language and concrete imagery, here reinforced by rhetorical balance and parallelism, give the imagined tribulation a sensory impact that more abstract discussion would lack" (59). In fact, Antony puts so much effort into his final exhortation that he must "make a sudden end of mine whole tale, and bid you farewell. For now

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[18] Of course, the greatest works of art and style alone are still not enough for complete liberation, for, as Antony points out many times throughout *A Dialogue of Comfort*, grace and the sacraments are needed.

[19] Morean scholars debate the value of More's style. On the one hand, some argue that More's style is not outstanding. As C. S. Lewis wrote,

> Great claims have in modern times been made for More's English prose; I can accept them only with serious reservations…. To live and die like a saint is no doubt a better thing than to write like one, but it is not the same thing; and More does not write like a saint. . . . There is nothing at all in him which, if further developed, could possibly lead on to the graces of Elizabethan and Jacobean literature. (180-181)

From this perspective, the *A Dialogue of Comfort* is more of a wise treatise on suffering than a well-wrought work of art. On the other hand, others argue that *A Dialogue of Comfort* is an outstanding work of art. According to Leland Miles, "More exhibits outstanding literary skill in many areas" (33), such as his climactic structure, his adaptation of historical materials, and his autobiographical revelation. In defending More's literary techniques, Miles shows that More employs various figures of speech and thought. In sum, then the issue is whether *A Dialogue of Comfort* is a work of art.

begin I to feel myself somewhat weary" (1248.43-45). What may weary Antony is his most artful style; the great length and craft that frame his thoughtful exhortation exhausts him.

Grammatical style consists of correct syntax and clarity, aptness, and liveliness. The syntax of Antony's speech is certainly correct, as an incorrect syntax may render an incorrect image of the sources of true comfort. The diction is clear, but also inventive. In fact, in this last speech Antony invents words never before recorded in English, such as a "fisting" cur (1247.62) and "timbrels" (1246.33).[20] Besides these contributions to the English language, Antony uses compound words to augment the reality he describes. For instance, he insists that the consideration of Christ's kindness will "not fail in such wise to inflame our key-cold hearts" (1245.33-34). Key-cold is an Anglo Saxon kenning, a vivid figure of thought naming something obliquely. The vivid diction occurs most often in his descriptions. Comparing the terror of the Turks to the horrors of hell, Antony says that while fighting the Turks "if there should suddenly then, on the other side, the ground quake and rive a-twain, and the devils rise out of hell, and show themselves in such ugly shape as damned wretches shall see them, and with that hideous howling that those hellhounds should shriek . . . as for the Turk's host, we should scantly remember we saw" (1246.35-46). Antony's inventive, striking, and ekphrastic style helps to uproot Vincent's memory of the Turks and plant new memories of hell. To be sure, his style does not provide the content of the memory, but it does make the content memorable.

Moreover, Antony's high level of diction is appropriate because Vincent is a well-educated man.[21] His diction derives mostly from Latin roots, using words like "dolorous" (1245.55) and "marvelous" (1246.49), but the height of his diction does not lower its vividness;

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[20] See thomasmorestudies.org/contribution-to-english.

[21] For example, Vincent is familiar with St. Thomas Aquinas's *Summa Theologica* and uses the Greek word "εὐτραπελία" (1147.1) for the virtue of good humor.

Antony uses some of the strongest verbs in the English language to describe what it takes to reform one's soul, such as his counsel to "take up our mind, and ravish it … in the thinking deeply of … Christ's death, hell and heaven" (1246.10-17). Besides the Latin roots of his vivid words, Antony's diction is often biblical: consider how he exhorts Vincent "to fasting, to prayer, to alms-deed in time, and give that unto God that may be taken from us" (1247.5-6) and how he quotes Sacred Scripture in almost every paragraph of this last speech. Pulling from biblical and Latin roots, Antony uses a diction that elevates the mind without losing the imagination and moves the will with an impassioned speech.

Finally, Antony's style is lively in both rhythm and figuration. The many complex sentences convey simple ideas in a rhythmic style. For example, the first sentence of the chapter—about the comfort of Christ's Passion—is 396 words long, among the longest sentences in the *Dialogue*. Despite its length, its message is clear: remembering Christ's Passion with all its gruesome aspects will inflame hearts with such love that those who suffer should be content and even glad to die for his sake. To craft a complex sentence of such length with such art about such a topic is a feat of rhetoric. In addition, the sheer variety of sentences is impressive. From rhetorical questions to exhortations to exclamations to conditionals, Antony employs many rhythmic forms to stylize his appeals.

Antony enlivens his style by figuring both his speech and thought to persuade Vincent to pursue true freedom of soul for the rest of his life until his death. He favors figures of address and amplification. Antony repeatedly invokes God as he addresses men on earth: "Would God we would here, to the shame of our cold affection, again toward God for such fervent love and inestimable kindness of God toward us—would God we would, I say, but consider what hot affection many of these fleshly lovers have born … and how many have willingly lost their lives

indeed" (1245.39-47). The anaphoric apostrophe intensifies the petition. Just as noticeable as his amplified addresses is his use of alliteration. When he catalogs the bitterest aspects of Christ's Passion, Antony alliterates in almost every clause: "the scornful crown of sharp thorns beaten down upon his holy head, so strait and so deep that on every part his blessed body issued out and streamed down; his lovely limbs drawn and stretched out upon the cross to the intolerable pain of his fore-beaten and sore-beaten veins and sinews" (1245.8-13). His hard consonants sound out the very act of crucifixion to make this source of comfort more sensible. Just as his figures of speech are sharp, so too are his figures of thought. The many metaphors that permeate his last speech make memorable the sources of comfort that Antony exhorts Vincent to remember. In perhaps the most vivid metaphor of the *Dialogue*, Antony encourages Vincent, "And let us fence us with faith and comfort us with hope, and smite the devil in the face with the firebrand of charity" (1247.70-73). The metaphors of physical combat imitate the spiritual combat in which Antony trains Vincent. Thus, the comfort that Antony provides is not only solace, but strength (*confortare*, meaning "to strengthen"). Furthermore, the allegory of the devil as "a ramping lion" (1247.51) arouses fear for the one who can kill the soul—"And himself in the meanwhile compasseth us, running and roaring like a ramping lion about us, looking who will fall, that he then may devour him" (1247.49-52). The devil portrayed as a lion moves Vincent away from his fear of bodily death to a fear of spiritual death, which Antony calls "the sorest tribulation of all" (1119.12).

To summarize, Antony's correct, clear, appropriate, and lively style enhances his appeals, and, therefore, his persuasion. His style makes the logical appeals more understandable, the passionate appeals more vivid and wonderful, and the ethical appeals more moving.

## PART III: VINCENT'S RHETORICAL REFORMATION

Along with the grace of the Comforter, Antony's appeals help put Vincent on the path to true freedom of soul because they show why and how he needs to reform his cognitive power (intellect, imagination, memory) and appetitive power (intellectual and sensory).[22] Antony's logical appeals help reform Vincent's intellect, his passionate appeals help reform his imagination and memory, and his ethical appeals help reform his heart, which is both his intellectual and sensory appetites.[23]

*Effects on Vincent's cognitive powers*

Vincent's cognitive powers undergo a radical change in the course of the dialogue from not perceiving, wondering at, or desiring the true cause of comfort to beginning to perceive, wonder at, and desire God.

Antony's deduction and induction help render God's comfort intelligible to Vincent. In order to understand Vincent's cognitive development, we must distinguish between sophistical fancy and substantial truths. Antony makes this distinction in book three, after Vincent has already undergone his intellectual conversion. Realizing that Vincent does not think that this world is a prison, Antony says, "in the persuading whereof unto you I had weened I had quit me well, and when I have all done appeareth to your mind but a trifle and a sophistical fancy—myself have so many years taken for so very substantial truth that as yet my mind cannot give me

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[22] See footnote 10 on the powers of the soul. Further, Antony's appeals do not completely reform Vincent, which he acknowledges at the beginning of the *Dialogue*, for the only the grace of the Holy Spirit can do. Nevertheless, his appeals perfect Vincent's soul in order to lay a foundation and start Vincent on the path to complete reformation.

[23] Although the soul is a unity, we can speak of its diverse powers. By speaking of the soul's individual powers, I do not intend to imply that the soul is not a unity. On the contrary, I intend to show that because the soul is a unity, a persuasion must reach the whole of it, not only singular powers.

to think it any other" (1224.79-84).[24] The question is whether the image of the world as a prison is a sophistic fancy or substantial truth. If truth is the conformity of the mind to reality, then sophistry is the conformity of the mind to fancy. Explaining the reality of God's provident creation and man's original sin and mortality, Antony concludes,

> Then need I no more, Cousin, for then is all the matter plain and open evident truth which I said I took for truth—which is yet more a little now than I told you before, when you took my proof yet but for a *sophistical fancy*, and said that for all my reasoning that every man is a prisoner, yet you thought that except these whom the common people call prisoners, there is else no man a very prisoner indeed. And now you grant yourself again for very *substantial open truth*, that every man is here (though he be the greatest king upon earth) set here by the ordinance of God in a place (be it never so large), a place, I say, yet (and you say the same) out of which no man can escape, but therein is every man put under sure and safe keeping to be readily fetched forth when God calleth for him, and that then he shall surely die. (1226.39-55; emphasis added)

In the last sentence of the quotation above, Antony shows how Vincent's intellect has been reformed. At first, he took the image of the world as a prison as a sophistical fancy. After Antony's demonstration through deduction and induction, Vincent takes that image as a very substantial open truth. This intellectual micro-reformation shows an important instance in the macro-reformation throughout the work.

Similarly, Antony, acting as a Socratic midwife, Ciceronian rhetor, and biblical instructor, helps to reform other cognitive powers of Vincent's soul, most importantly his

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[24] Thomas More has taken this image of the world as a prison as substantial truth from the beginning to the end of his writing career. In an epigram entitled "On the Vanity of this Life," an epigram that he invents himself and is not a translation of some other ancient epigram, More writes:

> We are all shut up in the prison of this world under sentence of death. In this prison none escapes death…. One man wanders freely in the prison, another lies shackled in his cave; this man serves, that one rules; this one sings, that one groans. And then, while we are still in love with the prison as if it were no prison, we are escorted out of it, one way or another, by death. (237.1-14)

Although More wrote this poem when he was free and healthy, he returns to the same images and ideas when he is imprisoned and sick.

imagination and memory. In his final exhortation, he encourages Vincent to have a "right imagination and remembrance of Christ's bitter painful Passion" (1245.4-5), which Vincent begins to have in the dialogue.

To understand how Vincent comes to have a right imagination and remembrance, we must distinguish it from what Antony calls a wrong imagination. When comforting Vincent on the pain of captivity, Antony presents a hypothetical situation: "if my transmigration into a strange country should be any great grief unto me, the fault should be me much in myself" (1220.2-4). Explaining this startling claim, Antony continues, "I must consider that the cause of my grief is mine own wrong imagination, whereby I beguile myself with an untrue persuasion, weening that this were mine own country, whereas of truth it is not so" (1220.12-14). According to Antony, a wrong imagination would be the cause of his tribulation. He continues, "Now as for all other griefs and pains that are in captivity, thralldom, and bondage, I cannot deny but many there are and great. Howbeit, they seem yet somewhat (what say I somewhat? I may say a great deal) the more *because we take our former liberty for more a great deal than indeed it was*" (1220.36-41; emphasis added). In other words, the false understanding of true liberty forms the wrong imagination that causes grief. To remedy the grief of a wrong imagination, Antony corrects the understanding of liberty and – more broadly – of our human condition: "But yet should we, I suppose, set thereby somewhat the less if we would remember well what liberty that was that we lost, and take it for no larger than it was indeed" (1220.55-58). The false liberty is that "we reckon as though we might before do what we would" (1220.58-59).[25] To show that true

[25] More considered this wrong understanding of liberty throughout his writing career. In his early writing career, he translated Lucian's *The Cynic*, emphasizing the Cynic's proud desire "to do whatever I want, to live with whom I want" (26.41-42). Soon after this translation, More translates *The Life of John Pico*, stressing that "Liberty he above all things he loved to which both his own natural affections and the study of philosophy inclined him, and for that he was

liberty is not simply doing what we would, Antony catalogs the many ways in which man is bound by the laws of God and men (1220.59-79). He concludes, "Let every free man that reckoneth his liberty to stand in doing what he list consider well these points, and I ween he shall then find his liberty much less than he took it for before" (1220.80-83). Thus, a wrong imagination is a power of the soul with an ill-formed image of human nature and the nature of reality that causes grief.

In contrast to the wrong imagination, Antony exhorts Vincent to form a right imagination in the penultimate chapter of the *Dialogue*:

> And therefore let us all that cannot now conceive such delight in the consideration of them as we should have often in our eyes by reading, often in our ears by hearing, often in our mouths by rehearsing, often in our hearts by meditation and thinking, those joyful words of Holy Scripture by which we learn how wonderful huge, and great those spiritual joys are, of which our carnal hearts hath so feeble and so faint a feeling, and our dull worldly wits so little able to conceive so much as a shadow of the *right imagination*. "A shadow," I say, for as for the thing as it is, that cannot only no fleshly carnal fantasy conceive, but over that, no spiritual ghostly person peradventure neither that here is living still in this world. For since the very substance essential of all the celestial joy standeth in blessed beholding of the glorious Godhead face to face, there may no man presume or look to attain it in this life, for God hath so said himself: *Non videbit me homo et vivet* ("There shall no man here living behold me"). And therefore we may well know that for the state of this life, we be not only shut from the fruition of the bliss of heaven, but also that the very best man living here upon earth (the best man, I mean, being no more but a man) cannot, I ween, attain the *right imagination* thereof, but those that are very virtuous are yet in a manner as far therefrom as the born-blind man from the *right imagination* of colors. (1243.22-50; emphasis added)

Antony uses "right imagination" in two senses. In the first sense, right imagination is the power of the blessed in heaven to enjoy the face of God. In the second sense, it is the power of the virtuous to see reality as it truly is. In fact, in the last sentence of Antony's exhortation, he uses

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always wandering and flitting and would never take himself to any certain dwelling" (71.13-17). In other words, Pico, like the Cynic, does what he wants when he wants. Similarly, in *Utopia*, written in the middle of his writing career, Raphael Hythloday declares, "I live as I please" (159.54-55). While these three characters defend this understanding of liberty, Antony attacks it as a root cause of the wrong imagination's grief.

the second sense of right imagination as a metaphor for the first sense: as the blind cannot see color that those with sight can, the living cannot see the joys of heaven as the blessed in heaven can. Although Antony admits that men cannot fully attain a right imagination in the first sense on earth, they can attain at least “a shadow of the right imagination.” By frequently reading, hearing, rehearsing, meditating, and thinking—that is, using the powers of body and soul—upon the heavenly joys that Scripture reveals, men on earth form a right imagination to see reality as it truly is, which mirrors the right imagination of the blessed to see God as he truly is. Moreover, Antony specifies that the right imagination of virtuous men mirrors that of the blessed. Therefore, vicious men cannot form a right imagination in any sense of the word. In short, Antony advises Vincent to form a right imagination on earth to gain a right imagination in heaven.

Antony helps to reform Vincent’s wrong imagination so that he can develop a right imagination. At the end of book one, Antony exhorts Vincent to consider and remember his counsels: “Whoso these things thinketh on, and remember well, shall in his tribulation neither murmur nor grudge, but first by patience take his pain in worth, and then shall he grow in goodness and think himself worthy, then shall he consider that God sendeth it for his weal” (1143.69-74). When Vincent returns for their second conversation, he reveals that he tried to consider and remember—and even relate—the sources of comfort: “Of truth, my good Uncle, it was comfortable to me, and hath been since to some others of your friends, to whom, as my poor wit and remembrance would serve me, I did— and not needless—report and rehearse your most comfortable counsel” (1145.41-46). Again, at the end of the third conversation, Antony promises “to put your good counsel in remembrance, not in our language only, but in the Almain tongue

too" (1248.58-60). In short, Antony helps Vincent reform his soul's cognitive powers with images of true spiritual comfort that Vincent plans to root deeply in his memory.

*Effects on Vincent's appetitive powers*

Just as Antony's appeals help to reform Vincent's mind, they help reform his heart too. Vincent approaches Antony, asking him to "strengthen the walls of our heart against the great surges of the tempestuous sea" (1112.35-36) of tribulation. The heart, as Antony uses it, is the sum of both the intellectual and sensory appetites. To understand how Antony's appeals reform Vincent's heart, we must differentiate between the heart's fleshy affections for worldly goods and its spiritual affections for spiritual goods. Antony first speaks of their difference when he finally sees that "in this point [of losing worldly goods] is the sore pinch" (1232.18) for Vincent. Considering how "the affections of men's minds [are] imprint[ed]" (1232.37), Antony provides advice for cultivating the affections of the heart:

> Now are the affections of men's minds imprinted by diverse means: one way, by the means of the bodily senses, moved by such things, pleasant or displeasure, as are outwardly, through sensible worldly things, offered and objected unto them. And this manner of receiving of impression of affection is common unto men and beasts. Another manner of receiving affections is by the means of reason, which both inordinately tempereth those affections that the bodily five wits imprint, and also disposeth a man many times to some spiritual virtues very contrary to those affections that are fleshly and sensual. And those reasonable dispositions be the affections spiritual, and proper to the nature of man, and above the nature of beast. Now as our ghostly enemy the devil enforceth himself to make us lean unto the sensual affections and beastly, so doth almighty God of his goodness by his Holy Spirit inspire us to motions, with aid and help of his grace, toward the other affections spiritual, and by sundry means instructeth our reason to lean unto them, and not only to receive them as engendered and planted in our soul, but also in such wise water them with the wise advertisement of godly counsel and continual prayer that they may be habitually radicate and surely take deep root therein. And after, as the one kind of affection or the other beareth the strength in our heart, so we be stronger or feebler against the terror of death in this cause. (1232.37-66)

The heart holds either fleshy or spiritual affections. On the one hand, fleshly affections, born from the bodily senses, can move the heart to desire bodily goods. On the other hand, affections spiritual, born from the senses and tempered by reason, can move the heart to desire spiritual goods. While the devil tempts man to fleshy affections with bodily goods, God attracts men to spiritual affections with grace, a spiritual good. Let us now see how Antony's appeals redirect the desires of Vincent's heart away from fleshy affections to spiritual affections.

As revealed throughout the *Dialogue*, Vincent desires bodily goods since he is attached to his wealth. Although Vincent does not know the extent of his attachment as he quickly agrees to Antony's first counsels to only take comfort in God, he comes to know that taking comfort exclusively in God goes against the dispositions of his heart. At the end of the *Dialogue*, however, Vincent resolves to pursue spiritual goods, not bodily goods, as the true sources of comfort. Although the devil tempted Vincent to fear the loss of his worldly goods—for Antony reveals that "the Turk is but a shadow…. The Turks are but his tormentors" (1247.24-27) —Vincent finishes the *Dialogue* praying to "God to give me and all others that shall read it the grace to follow your good counsel therein" (1248.60-61).

In sum, Antony sets out to reform Vincent's soul, beginning the *Dialogue* with the clear intention to take the "comfort of God" and "put that point in [Vincent's] mind" and "to move [Vincent] to pray God to put this desire [for God's comfort] in his mind, which, when he getteth once, he then hath the first comfort, and without doubt, if it be well-considered, a comfort marvelous great" (1118.41-49). He moves Vincent to pray for this spiritual comfort—as Vincent responds to Antony's comforts, "And therefore now shall we pray God for a full and a fast faith" (1116.26-27) —and to well-consider God's comfort with his strengthen heart. No wonder Vincent leaves Antony determined to pursue true freedom of soul.

# CONCLUSION

More wrote *A Dialogue of Comfort* at the end of his life, at a time when he had the most leisure to consider the most important things in this life. As a father, scholar, Lord Chancellor, and churchman, More had much that he considered important, but in *A Dialogue of Comfort*, he limits himself to only that which is most necessary for true freedom of soul in this life and the next. In order to acquire true freedom of soul in this life and to prepare for the soul's freedom in the next, More writes this *Dialogue* to show what it takes to lead a soul to freedom and what it takes to be led. For the one comforting, the logical appeal is not enough to fully comfort a soul in tribulation. The passionate and ethical appeals are necessary. The passionate appeals include humor as much as they induce godly fear. The ethical appeal requires the holiness, virtue, and learning of a speaker, but the speaker's character is not sufficient—as has already been mentioned, Antony rebukes Vincent from trusting in him—whereas Christ's character is sufficient. Rhetor Antony makes a comprehensive attempt to address Vincent's cognitive and appetitive powers of the soul. How does Antony persuade Vincent to pursue true freedom of soul? By employing the most powerful appeals of rhetoric and addressing the depths of Vincent's soul, Antony comprehensively persuades Vincent to pursue freedom of soul from then on and to rely on God's grace more than either his trained powers of soul or the goods of this world. This work is not only a dialogue about comfort, but also a dialogue that gives comfort.

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