New Perspectives on Tudor Cultures

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Edited by

Mike Pincombe and Zsolt Almási

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INTRODUCTION: PERSPECTIVES AND CULTURES

ZSOLT ALMÁSI

An introduction makes its case at the crossroad of two value systems: humble withdrawal and loud marketing. An introduction is always a confession, an exploration of limitations caught up in the dynamics of revealing what lies within the forthcoming chapters and also what is absent. An introduction then generically lies in the use and abuse of the dynamic interrelatedness of what is there and what is not there—but soon will be. In this sense an introduction is just a sign in the chain of signification, a sign that points towards other signs that are either definitely absent or absent only for the time being. To put it otherwise, an introduction identifies the forthcoming book as a commodity to be marketed, and to be sold as well. Thus, an introduction plays its part in the silent space of religious humility, in the mode of confession, and, in the loud space of the marketplace, in the mode of advertisement.

The double mode of humble confession and loud marketing seems to signify cultural phenomena. If one checks the usage of the word "introduction" in the novel Google NgramViewer, one will find an interesting cultural phenomenology—provided one believes the power of statistics. Suspending overall scepticism for a while, one may observe that the query concerning the word "introduction" as it appeared in printed material between 1500 and 2008 seems to reveal two "introduction" vogues. The first one took place between 1550 and 1650 and the second after 1750 rising constantly until most recent times. One may well wonder why there are these "introduction" vogues, or to put it differently, why paratextual elements in general become fashionable—and *un*fashionable—in certain cultural periods.[1] Now, of course, this question cannot be answered, but, using a case-study, I would like to point towards a possible way of handling this question. This case-study in turn will also function as

[1] For an informative and thoughtful discussion of the first vogue, see Helen Smith and Louise Wilson, eds., *Renaissance Paratexts* (Cambridge UK—New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

an introduction to this very volume in so far as this will partly explain the plural, "cultures" and "perspectives" in the title of the volume.

The case-study focuses on one particular problem, one which cannot be solved, but only explored. The problem at hand can be phrased like this: Why is it impossible nowadays to publish Thomas More's *Utopia*? This problem may look at first glance like a paradox, in so much as there are dozens of editions entitled *Utopia* and authored by Thomas More, many editions that one may buy and read. Naturally, in this case the problem is to be narrowed down so as to preserve its problematic nature, or, in other words, the problem is to be phrased from a particular perspective.

The theoretical impossibility of producing an edition of Thomas More's *Utopia* will be presented through the lens of the paratextual elements of its first four early editions. Nowadays, it is almost a commonplace that reading and interpreting a text is heavily influenced by aspects other than its own syntactic and semantic code. If there is truth in this claim, then it follows that the interpretation of the two books of Thomas More's *Utopia* is affected by, on the one hand, the materiality of the book, and, on the other hand, by other textual and visual aspects than the two books of *Utopia* themselves. The material aspect would include the size of the pages, the type of paper used, binding, letter size and type, width of margins, weight and smell. Although these aspects are important in so far as they create and determine the reading and interpretative attitude, yet I will disregard them, as for a contemporary editor and publisher, these historical aspects are not considered when publishing a book. What, however, could and should matter are the textual and visual elements surrounding the two books of *Utopia*,[2] so I shall focus on these in this meditation.[3] Furthermore, I shall limit the focus to the prefatory material attached to the work in its first four editions in the production of which, in all likelihood, Thomas More had a hand.

For the sake of showing the intricate nature of the textual and visual elements surrounding the two books of *Utopia*, I will rely on Gérard

[2] As Wooden puts it "indeed the entire prefatory apparatus, are a potentially vital guide to More's meaning in his most controversial work." See Warren W. Wooden, "A Reconsideration of the Parerga of Thomas More's »Utopia«", *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* Vol. 10, Quincentennial Essays on St. Thomas More (1978): 151, and also 160.

[3] For a comprehensive study of the paratextual elements in *Utopia* in its early Latin and vernacular editions, consult Terence Cave, ed., *Thomas More's* Utopia *in Early Modern Europe: Paratexts and Contexts* (Manchester—New York: Manchester University Press, 2008). I am going to discuss these elements from a different angle from what one finds there.

Genette's analysis of what he terms as "paratext."[4] Genette in his groundbreaking book, *Paratext*, defines paratextual elements as follows:

> Indeed, this fringe, always the conveyor of a commentary that is authorial or more or less legitimated by the author, constitutes a zone between text and off-text, a zone not only of transition but also of *transaction:* a privileged place of a pragmatics and a strategy, of an influence on the public, an influence that—whether well or poorly understood and achieved—is at the service of a better reception for the text and a more pertinent reading of it (more pertinent, of course, in the eyes of the author and his allies).[5]

To put this very simply, the paratext is everything that lies around the text of a literary work, from the title of the work to the final colophon—and even beyond. The paratext, then, is a demarcation zone between two worlds: that of the text and that of the rest. This demarcation zone belongs organically to the text, but at the same time intends to shape its reception in the extratextual world. This demarcation line thus denotes the liminal territory linking a text to the extratextual terrain, and so may well include a large number of elements. Out of this wide range of textual and visual set of elements, I shall focus on sixteen items in Thomas More's *Utopia*, including epistles written by various people, maps and poems—and an alphabet.[6] These are the items that have been referred to with the label "parerga" by More scholars since 1931.[7]

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[4] Since the publication of Genette's book there have been criticisms of his ideas from a variety of angles. Although there is much truth in this criticism, for the present purpose, which is primarily pragmatic and not theoretical discussing a particular book, his ideas will suffice. For a criticism of Genette's ideas see Smith and Wilson, *Renaissance Paratexts*. especially pages 4-7. For an abstraction of his ideas to other disciplines read Mukherji: "This book, then, thinks of threshold not only as a space or metaphor but also as a constitutive term, a category of experience that organizes thinking and feeling in lived reality and art." See Subha Mukherji, "Introduction," in *Thinking on Thresholds: The Poetics of Transitive Spaces*, ed. Subha Mukherji (London: Anthem, 2011), xxvi.

[5] Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Cambridge—New York NY: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 1.

[6] I am aware that more items could be included here, but as a general principle I have followed the critical edition in the selection: Edward Surtz and J. H. Hexter, eds, *The Yale Edition of the Complete Works of Thomas More*, vol. 4 (New Haven [Conn.]—London: Yale University Press, 1965). I have not included a large numbers of possible items, as woodcuts on the margins, ornamented initials and the almost 200 pages of the 1518 March edition that present More's and Erasmus'

Although I have reduced the scope of meditation as far as Genette is concerned, his method of defining paratextual elements through identifying their features will still come very much in handy. Genette claims that "[t]hese features basically describe a paratextual message's spatial, temporal, substantial, pragmatic, and functional characteristics."[8] I shall identify two of these five characteristics, namely, the temporal and spatial aspects in the rest of this meditation. Following this template of analysis means that the elusive character of the parerga may well be captured with this lucid method of identification. For the sake of convenience the temporal element should be the first one.

So far, what has been suggested is that there is a definite and finite set of items that mark off the text of *Utopia* from the extratextual world. Looking at the items, however, from the perspective of temporal distribution, one might become somewhat perplexed; and this perplexity cannot be resolved by the Genettean classification into "original," "anthumous" and "posthumous," as all of the items I focus on should be labelled as "original." If we take an account of the parerga with respect to the first four authoritative editions ranging from the *edition princeps* of 1516 to that of November 1518, what is conspicuous is the lack of ultimate stability with respect to the items.

The first problem one has to face is that not all sixteen elements were published in every edition among the first four ones.[9] The first edition[10] included the following items: "A woodcut of Utopia," "A Utopian alphabet," "The Tetrastichon," "Hexastichon Anemolii," "Giles letter to Busleyden," "Desmarais' letter and poem," "Geldenhauer's poem," "Schrijver's poem," "Busleyden's letter to More," "Praefatio: More's letter to Giles." The second edition[11] contained the following items: "Hexastichon Anemolii," "Budé's letter," "Giles' letter to Busleyden," "Desmarais' letter and poem," "More's letter to Giles," "More's second letter to Giles," "Busleyden's letter to More," "Geldenhauer's poem," "Schrijver's poem," "Errata." The paratextual elements in the third

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epigrams with Beatus Rhenanus' letter, as for the sake of the argument the sixteen items suffice.

[7] Wooden, "A Reconsideration of the Parerga," 151.

[8] Genette, *Paratexts*, 4.

[9] As far as the list and placement of the parerga are concerned, I rely on the seminal Surtz and Hexter's critical edition of *Utopia*: 4.

[10] Thomas Morus, *De optimo Reipublicae statv deqve noua insula Vtopia libellus uere aureus [...]* (Louvain: Martens, 1516).

[11] Thomas Morus, *De optimo Reipublicae statv deqve noua insula Vtopia libellus uere aureus [...]* (Paris: Gourmont, 1517).

edition[12] range from "Erasmus's letter to Froben," "Budé's letter," "Hexastichon Anemolii," "A woodcut of Utopia (Ambrosius Holbein)," "The Utopian alphabet," "The Tetrastichon," "Giles' letter to Busleyden," "More's letter to Giles," to "A Woodcut of the Interlocutors" "Busleyden's letter to More," "Geldenhauer's poem," "Schrijver's poem." The fourth edition[13] is identical with the third edition as far as the parerga are concerned.

It may well be clear from the list of the elements of the parerga above that the subsequent editions did not only contain a great variety of elements, but also mixed new and reused elements, which further adds to the instability of the parerga. From this perspective the sixteen items of the parerga can be classified in at least five ways. First, according to the early editions in which they appeared, second according to their appearance across these early editions within which category there can be groups according to which items appeared in only one edition, which in two editions or which are the items that appeared in all the editions. First I am going to list the items that are exclusive to one of the editions. There is only one item: the first woodcut of Utopia, by an anonymous artist, that appeared in the 1516 edition only. In the 1517 edition, there are two items that were not republished in the subsequent editions, such as "More's second letter to Giles" and "Errata." The items that are exclusive to the 1518 editions embrace "Erasmus's letter to Froben," a woodcut of Utopia by Ambrosius Holbein, and also a woodcut of the interlocutors. The items that are shared by two editions are the following: "Desmarais' letter and poem" appeared both in the 1516 and 1517 editions; "the Utopian alphabet" and the "Tetrastichon" appeared in the 1516 and 1518 editions, but not in the second, 1517 edition; Budé's letter was published in the 1517 and 1518 editions, but not in the first one. Third, there are a large number of items that surfaced in all the four editions, such as the "Hexastichon," "Anemolii," "Giles letter to Busleyden," "Geldenhauer's poem," "Schrijver's poem," "Busleyden's letter to More" and finally the "Praefatio: More's letter to Giles."

Now there are these sixteen items on the list of an editor, but the categorization above presents a pragmatic problem. The editor has to make a decision about what to include in his or her edition, and to make this decision there seems to be approximately four editorial principles. An editor may chose either one edition as a model, or may include all the

[12] Thomas Morus, *De optimo Reipublicae statv deqve noua insula Vtopia libellus uere aureus [...]* (Basel: Froben, 1518 March).
[13] Thomas Morus, *De optimo Reipublicae statv deqve noua insula Vtopia libellus uere aureus [...]* (Basel: Froben, 1518 November).

paratextual elements, or may follow some statistical principle of selection, or chose the elements that (s)he finds important.

First, an editor can follow the principle that (s)he will publish an edition that is based on one of the authoritative editions, i.e. either the first, 1516 edition, or the 1517, or the 1518 ones. Following the *ultima manus* principle the choice most of the time would fall on the last edition that still harmonizes with Thomas More's "intentions," and thus would include the parerga that are exclusive to this edition. The 1518 editions contain the greatest number of items, with two woodcuts. This may signal that this is the final edition in which the greatest attention was paid to fellow humanist authors and authorities, decoration and a sense of reality for the fiction. Or one may as well claim that the 1518 edition is the fruit of the two preceding ones, insomuch as it retains everything valuable from the preceding editions and adds further material to raise quality. The more artistic woodcut of Utopia and the woodcut of the characters appear only in the 1518 edition which may be so owing to two considerations. First, these woodcuts decorate the volume, please the reader, and imply that the volume is more precious. Also these woodcuts enhance the atmosphere of reality, as there must be a place like Utopia, if there is a map depicting it[14]; and, also, next to the three people who the reader may recognize by their faces and postures, the third character, Raphael Hythlodaeus, must also be as real as the others on the image. Erasmus' letter appearing in the 1518 edition may signal the decision that Erasmus should also contribute and appear on the list of excellent humanists. The disappearance of More's second letter to Giles may imply the reduction of the number of letters written by More. So an editor may well rely on one of the "original" editions, or on the last one, as the best among the rest.

Relying on only one edition, however, inevitably leads to a the problem that some of the items will not be included; thus some of the items will not be there to shape reception, as they shaped the reception in their own time. To avoid this problem a second code of decision-making may be utilized. An editor may well claim that, if paratextual elements are so important in shaping the reader's response to a work, then it is impossible to provide a hard argument for choices; thus every item of the

[14] For a meditation about why this second map is rather an artistic than a realistic map see Brian R. Goodey, "Mapping »Utopia«: A Comment on the Geography of Sir Thomas More," *Geographical Review* Vol. 60, no. 1 (January 1970): 21. As he puts it: "More presents us with a Utopia, a 'Nowhere,' that cannot be mapped." For a comparison between the 1516 and 1518 maps, see Arthur F. Kinney, "Utopia's First Readers," in *Challenging Humanism* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005), 35.

parerga should be included without selection. Or, within this category, another explanation for including all the items may follow from the principle of genetic editing, namely, that it is inconclusive to select a certain set of the items, but, for the sake of showing the evolution of the book, all the items should be included. Naturally, the avoidance of deciding which items should be regarded is a decision, and as a decision it may lead to as many problems as it tried to solve. The outcome of this editorial decision is a volume that has never existed before, a volume that cannot reflect any vaguely defined authorial decisions.

To answer the problematic nature of the avoidance of decision-making, editors may deploy other ways of selecting the items to be incorporated in the volume. An editor, the third one in this list, may assert that if including all the items is not appropriate, then they subscribe to the principle of statistics, that is, they are going to include items that are shared by all the editions, or those items that appeared at least in two or three editions. This principle may be justified by the principle of the common denominator: the items that appeared in all or more editions should be the ones that were taken seriously by the producer of the early volumes, so their statistical significance justifies their reproduction in a new edition.

A fourth editorial practice may claim that the significance of these paratextual elements may have shaped early reception, but due to the difference in historical circumstances, present-day readers may be influenced other ways by them—or not at all. Nowadays readers do not need all or any of the paratextual elements that were meaningful for a particular audience. So an editor may select some of the items or may skip all of them from the volume. Instead of the original paratextual elements an editor may introduce a new paratextual element, such as an introduction that is used to cover the historical distance between the text and the present readers. This editor may select elements of the parerga that (s)he finds significant regardless of which edition the individual item appeared in. Or another, number four, may cut all the paratextual elements.

Naturally, the algorithm of the decision-making process becomes somewhat more complicated if the issue of languages is taken into consideration. As Thomas More wrote *Utopia* in Latin, so were most of the textual items in Latin. Modern editions, however, are translations. If the text of the volume has been translated into English, then it is very likely that the paratextual items will be rendered into English as well. But this is as much an editorial decision as the previous five, and this decision can be challenged, too. The four editorial procedures that include some or all the items of the parerga can be multiplied, if the Latin versions are included in this or that way.

The instability of the parerga on the temporal scale may well be further qualified with reference to the second Genettean characteristic feature: location. The binary opposition between peritext and epitext is no question here, because the focus is on epitext, in other words, a paratext included in the volume. What is, however, problematic is the distinction within epitexts, that is, whether the items of the parerga are preludial (positioned before the text) or postludial (items following the text)[15]. In this respect there is also room for decisions, revisions and indecisions. The 1516 edition is exceptional inasmuch as the parerga is placed exclusively in a preludial position, as in the rest of the editions the paratextual elements are cast in both pre- and postludial positions. This exceptional quality seems to imply that both authorial and editorial decisions that Books 1-2 should be surrounded with texts other than those of the two books were made later. Actually, the first and the last impressions are made by the parerga and not by the two books, as if the parerga were more important than the two books, or there was a need for an alienating effect, or there was a need for all the items, and, for the sake of balance, some of them were located after the main-text of the volume.

This positioning of the parerga should also occasion editorial decisions. The number of choices of the first four editorial principles becomes multiplied according to the placement of the paratextual elements. The editor may make a decision to place all the items in a preludial position, or some in preludial and others in postludial position, or all the items that they intend to include in a postludial position. These decisions will all influence the reader's attitude to the two books of *Utopia*.

To see the problematic nature of the temporal and spatial aspects of the parerga in Thomas More's *Utopia*, it is sufficient to take a look at how modern editors proceeded in these matters. It seems that editors have four fundamental choices and variations within these.

First, they do not include in their volume any of the prefatory material: 2010, Cricket House edition only the two books[16]; the 2008 Accessible Publishing Systems edition[17] also has only the two books. This is the choice that is usually made for the cheapest editions.

Another set of editors may choose one or some relevant items in line with a principle. Thus "More's letter to Giles" may be regarded as an introduction, so it is included whichever other items or items may or may

[15] Genette, *Paratext*, 161, 172.
[16] Thomas More, *Utopia* (np.: Cricket House Books LLC., 2010).
[17] Thomas More, *Utopia* (np.: Accessible Publishing Systems PTY, ltd., 2008).

not be relocated. For example, the 1989 CUP edition[18] puts "More's letter to Giles" before Book 1, and after Book 2 there is a section "Ancillary Materials from Early Editions", including "More's second letter to Giles," "Erasmus' to Froben," "Bude's to Lupset," Anemolius's six-lined poem, Holbein's map, "The Utopian alphabet," "Quatrain in Utopian with a translation," "Giles' letter to Busleyden," "Busleyden's to More," Geldenhouwer's and Schrijver's poems, "Desmarey's to Giles" and finally Desmarey's poem[19]. The same is true of Clarence H. Miller's edition (Yale UP, 2002), in which "More's letter to Giles" precedes Book 1, while "More's second letter to Giles" is placed after Book 2 before the Notes section, and the rest of the material remained excluded. William P. Weaver's 2010 edition[20] is special to the extent that after the two books, in addition to items ranging from the Utopian poems to letters by More and Erasmus, there is a variety of other paratextual elements in the volume, such as excerpts from Lucian, Plato and so on. These are the editions that are intended for a more serious study than the previous set of editions. What is conspicuous is that there does not seem to be a very strong principle of selection. The reason why this or that paratextual element is included or excluded may or may not remain without justification, most of the time the selection seems arbitrary, or at least there does not appear a detailed theoretically substantiated explanation for inclusions or exclusions. The theoretical common denominator appears to be the assumption that, as these elements are only there as illustration, their presence or absence does not affect the reading of the two books.

The most critically acclaimed editions will either not bother about omitting items, or will not omit any item from a single early edition. The first possibility lies in including each and every piece of the prefatory material from the early authorial editions in the name of scholarly and philological accuracy both in Latin and in English translations. The best and, actually, the only example for this, is the critical edition by Edward Surtz and J. H. Hexter.[21] Although this solution is the most generous, and, since it would not wish to delete items, seems the most comprehensive, it is theoretically, if not editorially, problematic, if the principle that the paratextual elements contribute to the meaning of the text is taken for

[18] Thomas More, *Utopia*, ed. George M. Logan and Robert M. Adams (Cambridge UK—New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989).
[19] Here I have spelt the names of the authors of these items as they are spelt in this edition.—Zs.A.
[20] Thomas More, *Utopia*, ed. William P. Weaver (Peterborough Ont.: Broadview Press, 2010).
[21] Surtz and Hexter, *Yale Edition* 4.

granted. If all these elements are present, as well as their English translations, and they are furthermore placed both preludially and postludially, then this choice—a strong choice indeed—will also lead to some effect that is as far from any early edition as the previously described editorial variations. As a fourth choice, and also both theoretically both defendable but with some disadvantages, an editor may chose a particular early edition of Utopia and then include everything that was there in that edition and exclude the rest.

There can be made a case for each and every editorial decision, and at the same time none of them would be conclusive. Arguments can be put forward for and against any of the editorial decisions described above, and, strictly speaking, there is no good solution, because whichever decision is made the result will be reductive, and the reading experience will be determined in one direction as against many other directions. As long as decisions are made according to considerations such as target audience, economic and other more personal ones, the result will inevitably be reductive from an ideal, abstract or theoretical perspective.

What follows from the instability of the parerga temporally and spatially speaking is transitoriness. There is no a way out from this maze, and seemingly the editors' opinions vary according to other considerations than the *stricto sensu* consideration of the influence these works exercise on the overall evaluation of the work. What remains, then, instead of a practically and theoretically viable resolution to this problem, is the acceptance of transitoriness. All the early editions were published with some editorial and authorial consent, and yet there are substantial changes from one edition to the other. Editorial practices have to do away with this transitoriness of the parerga, as each and every edition cannot but fix a version of the versions. Instead, however, of falling prey to despair owing to the *cul-de-sac* of editorial decisions, let us rather welcome this phenomenon. What remains, then, is the very phenomenon that many well-known humanists participated in the production and advertisement of the work, consequently in the production of meaning,[22] and also that there

[22] For an interesting reconsideration of the parerga, see Wojciehowski's "Triangulating Humanist Friendship," even if her conclusion that the paratext and the letters among Erasmus, Giles and More "suggest that their friendship attachments were not only conventional expression of allegiances between humanists, but perhaps emotionally and/or erotically charged bonds as well" sounds somewhat exaggerated. See Hannah Chapelle Wojciehowski, "Triangulating Humanist Friendship: More, Giles, Erasmus, and the Making of the Utopia", in *Discourses and Representations of Friendship in Early Modern*

was room for visions and revisions, decisions and modifications resulting from several concerns, viewpoints and interests.

Having reviewed the transitoriness of the paratextual elements in the first four, authorial editions of Thomas More's *Utopia*, there seem to be two consequences that may be drawn that are relevant for this meditation. If the transitoriness is not to be fixed, but accepted, then we may explain this phenomenon with reference to the plurality of cultures and the very perspective through which this transitoriness can be seen, or rather from which this transitoriness can be created. What are the cultural and perspectival consequences of this transitoriness?

It seems that the transitory quality of the parerga is due to the book being caught up in the meeting point of a variety of cultural crossroads. Thomas More's *Utopia* through these four editions can be witnessed on the crossroads of print and manuscript cultures, cultures of humanist friendships and faceless audiences, cultures of the rigidity of the printed material and of the flexibility and changeability of the manuscript, cultures of inwardness and publicity, cultures of fiction and of reality. The 1510s is still a time when print culture and manuscript culture had a parallel existence, each modeling each other.[23] The parerga represent the transition between these two technologies, when, instead of introductions, letters of recommendation and decoration functioned to limit the legitimate horizon of interpretation.[24] Also, there is the transition between humanist friendships, where great humanists line up to help their comrade, and faceless readership, where the book could reach a readership that may have not known these humanists or the audience could be rejected by them.[25] Also, the flexibility of the paratextual items plays out the

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Europe, 1500-1700, ed. Daniel T. Lochman et al. (Farnham Surrey—Burlington VT: Ashgate, 2011), 61.

[23] Cf. Michelle O'Callaghan, "Publication: Print and Manuscript," in *A Companion to English Renaissance Literature and Culture*, ed. Michael Hattaway (Oxford UK; Malden Mass.: Blackwell, 2000), 82, 83.

[24] As O'Callaghan put this: "Print distanced these poems from the relatively cohesive scribal community that gave them meaning by making these poems available to a wider and more diverse print public. Because these poems tended to be context-oriented, when they were recontextualized within a print culture it became necessary to give them titles or preface them with explanatory material that would enable the reader to make sense of the fictional world of the poem." Ibid., 85–86.

[25] Cf. Alan Stewart, "The Trouble with English Humanism: Tyndale, More and Darling Erasmus," in *Reassessing Tudor Humanism* (Houndmills Basingstoke Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 91. Stewart presents the negative English approach to the humanist circle when exploring Tyndale's fury

seemingly embarrassing opposition between inwardness, with friends helping, trusting, doubting each other, and publicity, as the letters are published to an audience that may not even know the authors of these letters.[26] Yet again, with manuscripts there was always room for revisions and modification which goes against the formal and mechanical completeness of a printed book, which is precisely the case with the first four early editions of *Utopia*. Also, the parerga participated in creating the work "as an edition *de luxe* of a Latin classic,"[27] which played its part, too, in the book as a container of ideas and as a commodity to be sold: the culture of ideas and that of the marketplace resulting in the blurring the difference between "truth" and "fiction."[28] These cultures form a dynamic and incongruous harmony for this work.

This distancing unity, this being caught up at the threshold of cultures, however, can only be seen from the present perspective. This layer of Utopia, and this aspect of the paratextual elements remains invisible from other perspectives, say from the perspectives of political philosophy, political propaganda, Cultural Materialism or Deconstruction. The perspective that enables the eye to see the problematic nature of the parerga is reception and book history, cultural studies, paratextual studies and the theory of editing. So the word "Perspectives" in the title stands for this prismatic effect both as an optical and interpretative tool.

The double nature of "perspective" as a notion related to optics and to interpretation is already there in the etymology of the word, and this was already their in the sixteenth century. "Perspective" as a word is related to the Latin verb "*perspicio*," meaning: 1. to look or see through, to look into, look at"; and 2. "to perceive, note, observe, explore, prove, ascertain."[29] What is clear in the two meanings of the verb is the interrelatedness of the visual and the mental. Seeing, exploring and proving—all denote the activity of the mind via the metaphors of

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towards the Erasmians: the "community has retrenched itself as an élitist, corrupt and back-scratching *familia*, a self-serving household whose doors are now firmly shut." For a similar, but less radical account of this humanist community, see Harold Andrew Mason, *Humanism and Poetry in the Early Tudor Period. An Essay*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge and K. Paul, 1966), 28.

[26] Cf. Meredith Anne Skura, *Tudor Autobiography: Listening for Inwardness* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 225, 226.

[27] Wooden, "A Reconsideration of the Parerga," 151.

[28] For the difference and interrelatedness and lack of difference between truth and fiction see Skura, *Tudor Autobiography*, 3.

[29] *Perseus 4.0 Latin Word Study Tool* http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=perspectus&la=la#lexicon Last accessed 25/10/2011.

perception, of seeing. This double signification is not only present in modern dictionaries, but was there in the sixteenth century as well. In Thomas Elyot's *Dictionary* what is there in the entry for "perspiceo, –spexi, –spicere," corroborates the hypothesis that optics is related in this case to epistemology. Elyot defines the Latin verb as "to se or vnderstand playnely,"[30] so that seeing and understanding both appear in the field of signification in the case of perspectives.

Perspective as both a visual and epistemological concept has been related to cultural studies since the publication of E. H. Gombrich's *Art and Illusion*. Gombrich argues that perspective "creates its most compelling illusion where it can rely on certain ingrained expectations and assumptions on the part of the beholder."[31] Perspective thus relies on expectations and assumptions conditioned by the cultural environment. When interpreting Gombrich's claim as far as the visual is concerned, O'Gorman argues that "[n]ot only is perspective a visual illusion according to Gombrich, but it is a culturally determined effect that relies upon the fact that the brain, indeed, is not separate from the world it contemplates."[32] As vision is not only the product of the eye but that of the brain as well, so is perspective not only a point of view that is a physical given factor, but rather a culturally determined aspect. In this respect "perspective" does not only follow from where the beholder is located but also is an effect of being caught up in a given cultural environment. Perspective in this sense—epistemologically speaking—does not only determine how something is seen but is something that determines what and how can be seen, appreciated.

It is this notion of perspective that lies in the dichotomy of cause and effect, so it seems rather natural that the present volume will present new perspectives on Tudor cultures. These new perspectives are secured via the international group of researchers from Great Britain, Northern Ireland to France, from the Netherlands to Greece, from the U.S.A. to Hungary. The internationality of the contributors cannot help but cause and result in fresh approaches to cultural phenomena. Also, the scholarly disciplines that are present in the volume create a sense of novelty: from literary history, history of rhetoric, to history of tilting, from the history of philosophy to the interaction of literary production to the history of

[30] Thomas Elyot, *The Dictionary of Syr Thomas Eliot Knyght* (London: Thomas Berthelet, 1538), R3v.
[31] Ernst H. Gombrich, *Art and Illusion: a Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 261.
[32] Marcel O'Gorman, *E-crit: Digital Media, Critical Theory and the Humanities* (Toronto—Buffalo—London: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 29.

religion, and within the history of society we will meet the poor and the queen. Furthermore, the objects discussed cater for a variety of approaches: from jousting to texts, from religious controversy to French drama, from iconic historical figures to figures of rhetoric, from celebration to criticism, from the poor to the elite, from pagan to Protestant. This colourful palette is made all the more interesting by the individuality of the authors of the meditations. Each and every aspect, the crossroad for a variety of factors all substantiate the novel perspectives that are going to provide fresh viewpoints on the material treated in the forthcoming chapters of the book.

My chapter analyses a short excerpt referring to the Pyrrhonian sceptic school of philosophy in Thomas Elyot's *The Defence of Good VVomen*. I argue that this reference to Pyrrhonian scepticism is important on two accounts. First, it contributes to the complexity of character-drawing, in so much as it creates a dynamic ambiguity around the otherwise negative Caninius—for a moment he seems to be superior to his opponent in the dialogue. Second, as far as I know, this is the first reference to Pyrrhonian scepticism in England and in English, which is understandably but unduly neglected by historians of Pyrrhonian scepticism. So a short excerpt of a hardly canonical work can contribute to its re-evaluation in literary studies and histories of philosophy.

Pauline Blanc approaches Nicholas Udall's *Ralph Roister Doister* from the perspective of social decorum, understood as assimilating political and ethical virtues, on the one hand, and social conduct, on the other. The play illustrates, in her view, the subversion of social decorum through the protagonist's behaviour. Such an approach not only reintegrates *Roister Doister* into the Tudor canon, but also establishes links between Udall's play and Shakespeare's *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.

Kate Roddy's paper explores the ways in which Mary Tudor's supporters constructed the queen's identity through their polemical works. It considers the difficulties these writers faced owing to the lack of a pre-existing iconography for a queen regnant they could rely on, the need to counter hostility towards a female ruler, and the unpopularity of her foreign husband. Works by John Heywood, Nicholas Udall and Miles Hogarde are deployed to demonstrate the ways in which their use of maternal imagery serves to link Mary to the Church and her people, thereby legitimizing the queen's sovereignty and synthesizing a vision of a uniquely feminized state.

Gavin E. Schwartz-Leeper illuminates how the images of Cardinal Wolsey in the poetry of John Skelton compare with those supplied by William Shakespeare and John Fletcher in *Henry VIII*. He considers the

mechanisms by which two authors (or authorial entities) constructed satirical, dramatic, and poetic imagery of an enormously significant historical figure who left his mark on virtually every major element of Tudor society.

Efterpi Mitsi looks at Thomas Sackville's contributions to the *Mirror for Magistrates*. She argues that Sackville's vision of Troy has a political claim, since the emotion provoked by the *ekphrasis* of War's shield convinces the reader to learn from Troy's destiny. Sackville's history on the one hand, thus, provides a moral lesson from a Christian perspective, when relating *ekphrasis* to the Renaissance *topos* of mutability. As part of the 1563 edition of the *Mirror*, the shield of War in the "Induction" on the other hand also suggests a shift from an emphasis on direct political intention and towards a conscious literary interest.

Chris Butler puts scholarly attention in a new perspective when he reflects on the Elizabethan reception of Sir Edward Dyer's poem's "Hee that his mirth hath loste." He claims that instead of a secular love poem, the poem was valued for its artfully indirect religious-political rhetoric and the wide interpretative horizon it provided for its readers of diverse religious and political loyalties to identify with the Speaker. The analysis, thus, presents the poem's textual variants in order to register its possible religious and political meanings.

Jon D. Orten provides a brief, fresh overview of the poetic output of Henry Howard, the Earl of Surrey with the objective to present a new assessment of Surrey's position as an accomplished mid-Tudor poet. He begins with what is generally acknowledged: Henry Howard established the English ('Shakespearean') sonnet form and that he was the first English poet to publish in blank verse. His special focus is on the different poetic resources that Surrey made use of, with due attention given to metrical concerns.

Sue Simpson's chapter looks at the Court entertainment for a specific weekend—Saturday and Sunday, 16-17 November 1577. She utilizes for this enterprise evidence from the College of Arms in London, unpublished material from the Ditchley MSS at the British Library and Sidney's poems in the Adam Otley MSS, together with biographical details of Philip Sidney and Sir Henry Lee. Relying on this evidence, she suggests how a tournament entertainment could have been put together as a collaborative effort in 1577.

Kinga Földváry's essay explores the descriptions of food and eating habits in William Harrison's *Description of England*, with the intention of trying to look behind the colourful façade they present, to have a glimpse at social reality partly hidden by the author's national pride and his bias in

favour of the upper classes. She claims that, although Harrison is aware of English poverty, he does not waste many words on describing the eating habits of the poor, and this silence on the subject speaks volumes to her.

Erzsébet Stróbl's meditation casts light on Thomas Bentley's *The Monument of Matrons*, with an emphasis on problems of female authorship, authority as well as on the religious aspect of the cult around Elizabeth I. In 1576, the day of the Queen's accession to the throne of England became an official feast day in the Church Calendar. This move in turn created the need for special prayers and sermons, yet the first set of prayers designed for Accession Day was published only six years later by Bentley. The book's prestigious layout and immense bulk was designed to showcase the correct form of worship of the queen and to balance the secular figures of praise. *The Monument of Matrons* contains also prayers by the queen, and texts which were about her rule.

Gabriella Reuss casts light on the images of the enemy created in the last third of the sixteenth century in literary works, especially in the Locrine-legend. Since Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae* the story of a Briton hero halting the great invasion from the East, named as the Huns, was often used in forging national identity in a number of mid-Tudor works. In the centre of her analysis is *The Lamentable Tragedie of Locrine* and the description of the foreign invaders in this play. Reuss argues that the play's staging the legendary pseudo-history that shaped the national self-esteem was demanded by the audience and equally by high political circles, as seen for instance, in a 1588 pamphlet by Cardinal William Allen.

Richard Hillman identifies the shaping influence of the French political and religious discourses on early Elizabethan tragedy. He claims that in ways that echo French practice, the Italian-derived Senecanism of both popular and erudite English tragedy from the beginnings of its evolution is inflected by a preoccupation with atheistic or orientalist tyranny, villainous scheming, vengeance, martyrdom, providentialism, divine scourging, contested succession, and civil war. Contesting prevailing scholarly opinion, Hillman argues that they reflect the contemporary cultural climate of England's neighbour, who, as usual, exerted on the English a powerful and ambivalent fascination.

The presentations of these extra-, multidisciplinary perspectives on the variety of cultures, however, do not aim at feigning that a comprehensive picture would have been delineated of the complexity of cultures in Tudor England. That this apology would be all too egocentric can be shown with reference to the volumes produced in the last decade that have more ambitious objectives than the present book. These more ambitious

objectives are reflected in size, number of chapters and contributors in these volumes. As examples, or rather as a context for the present volume let me mention three of them.

Michael Hattaway, in the "Introduction" to *A Companion to English Renaissance Literature and Culture* apologizes for not providing a complete and ultimate view of the period and its authors, even though just by numbers the volume is large and comprehensive enough. The volume is cast into 788 folio-sized pages with sixty chapters by specialists of the field and of the topics of the chapters. Despite the size and quality, Hattaway admits that

> A single volume can offer neither one definitive overview either of the period nor any single account of how it was seen by contemporaries. Describing the course of history by means of narratives with beginnings, middles, and ends or enclosing parts of extensive cultural fields is problematic. Inspection of the map of this book will reveal lacunae, and its organization will complicate parts of what it seeks to clarify.[33]

So even a volume of this extant can do nothing else, but apologize for what is missing and for the arrangement of the material. What characterizes then this companion, even though as a bulky volume it is a work of learning and methods, of information and insight, is hiatus and lack of an all encompassing methodology.

A mighty counterpart of Hattaway's *Companion* is Pincombe and Shrank's *The Oxford Handbook of Tudor Literature*, and in its "Prologue" the editors also apologize for what is missing from the book. *The Oxford handbook* is also a large treasure-house of insight and information about the long Tudor period with its forty-four chapters and Prologue, Epilogue and 832 pages. Nevertheless the editors also have to write about the lack of comprehensiveness:

> Despite this, the volume is in no way comprehensive: Thomas Sackville, William Forrest, and Lewis's maligned Peend are regrettably absent, for instance; even Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, has only a ghostly presence […]. The ambition behind the volume—and the idea behind each of the chapters—has been to give a taste of how fascinating some of these

[33] Michael Hattaway, "Introduction," in *A Companion to English Renaissance Literature and Culture* ed. Michael Hattaway (Oxford, UK—Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Pub., 2000), 6.

> forgotten authors and their texts are, and to stimulate interest and research in this rich and fertile field.[34]

Seemingly even this rich and copious store-house must name great authors of the period who are missing from the volume—some of these names have a massive presence in our volume. They also have to admit that the volume can do no more than function as an appetizer for scholarly interest towards authors and towards the period which is still on the margins of studies of the period.

A year after *The Oxford Handbook of Tudor Literature* another Companion, this time *A Companion to Tudor Literature*—equal in size and quality—also admits that it is impossible to capture the multiplicity and complexity of this period from a single point of view. As far as the size is concerned the volume includes thirty-one chapters on 536 folio pages. In contrast with the apologetic nature of the previous volumes, Cartwright frames a possible apologetic claim as a self-assertive position in so far as the dynamism of a cultural period is not to be anchored in an all-encompassing, definitive rhetoric. He argues, thus, in his "Introduction" to the volume:

> They [the chapters of the volume—Zs.A.] suggest not a master narrative of culture and history so much as a multiplicity of narratives that intertwine, run parallel, or diverge in dynamic relationship. Such a dynamic view seems appropriate, because the Tudor age (1485 – 1603) – or, as we might term it, the Renaissance or the Early Modern era or simply the sixteenth century – marks perhaps the most significant and dramatic period of cultural change in European history during the millennium that preceded the rise of Modernism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[35]

What a "master narrative" thus cannot capture and consequently anchor in a single viewpoint is presented and represented in this large volume of chapters and subchapters, is the very dynamism of interrelatedness as intertextuality and interactivity.

A volume of smaller size and ambition than these three giants of Tudor studies still has a place among them. The arrangement of the chapters is in harmony with the ambition of the book: the method of arranging the

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[34] Mike Pincombe and Cathy Shrank, "Prologue: The Travails of Tudor Literature," in *The Oxford Handbook of Tudor Literature, 1485–1603* ed. Cathy Shrank and Mike Pincombe (Oxford—New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 16.

[35] Kent Cartwright, "Introduction," in *A Companion to Tudor Literature* ed. Kent Cartwright (Oxford, UK—Malden, Mass.: Wiley and Blackwell, 2010), 1.

material in this volume follows a simple chronological ordering of the chapters. Other methods could have been used for casting the chapters into larger units, such as generic, disciplinary, periodical, similar to the volumes mentioned above. The generic would have entailed that links between works could be based on genres, the disciplinary would mean that historical, political, social and literary works are to be treated separately, while the periodical would assume that within periods authorial concerns were somewhat similar but different from those of other periods. It is no question that all these approaches and divisions are legitimate, yet this volume will not follow any of these hard methods of classification. On the one hand, the aim of the volume is to present the multiplicity of layers and aspects of cultural phenomena which do not know generic, historical, political, social and periodical boundaries. On the other hand, this volume is all too humble in its size to classify the contributions according to well-defined principles. So the principle of positioning the individual chapters is a chronological ordering in a flexible manner.

Needless to say that in this case, the apology for what is missing from the volume is unnecessary. There are more authors, more texts that are not given their due attention than the ones that are discussed in this volume. Counter-balancing this shortcoming, the editors may argue that it is impossible to achieve completeness. Instead of this, we rather proudly claim that the virtue of this volume is that what enters the focus of attention of the individual chapters is discussed in merit. Furthermore, a second virtue of this volume is that both the Tudor texts and their authors have not received due scholarly attention, so the volume would also like to be a humble but substantial contribution to Tudor studies.

If an introduction knows its function, it should comply with it. Introductions are born at the moment of the dynamic interrelatedness of contradictory value systems: at the moment of humble confession and of aggressive marketing. The moment of its birth, the contradiction of the value systems, this self-contradictory state is also a self-consuming quality. Semiotically speaking, this self-contradiction of a sign—and as a sign this cannot be otherwise anyway—can only be anchored in self-withdrawal. Its very presence is nothing more, and nothing less than the preparation of the way for the real thing, for “the thing itself” to come in the rest of the volume. Let it come.

"BE NOT YE OF THAT SECT OF PHILOSOPHERS CALLED PIRHONICI?": CANINIUS AND PYRRHONIAN SCEPTICISM IN THOMAS ELYOT'S *THE DEFENCE OF GOOD VVOMEN*

ZSOLT ALMÁSI

Thomas Elyot's *The Defence of Good VVomen*[1] came off the press first in 1540 and belongs thematically to writings which are "humanist in character and apologetic in purpose."[2] The book treats the case of women in a conversational form, which provides dramatic tension, gives the impression of a lively discussion, and opposes viewpoints. The objective of the dramatized argumentation is to refute the insinuating thesis that women in general are inferior to men; this form of reasoning deploys arguments for and against the thesis drawn from philosophy, literature or popular clichés. The discussion takes place first between two gentlemen, Caninius representing the low opinion about women, and Candidus refuting Caninius' views. As a final "argument" there appears a good woman, queen Zenobia, whose very life proves the value of good women, and her appearance gives her some independence from the male oriented discourse.

Before the debate takes place between the two gentlemen, Caninius attempts to secure the rationality and utility of the discussion. Until Candidus promises that he does not belong to a particular school of philosophy, Caninius refuses starting the debate.

> Cananius: Nay fyrst I praye you tell me one thynge that I wyl aske of you. Be not ye of that sect of Philosophers called Pirhonici?

[1] Thomas Elyot, *The Defence of Good VVomen* (London: Thomas Berthelet, 1540).
[2] Constance Jordan, "Feminism and the Humanists: The Case of Sir Thomas Elyot's Defence of Good Women," *Renaissance Quarterly*, Vol. 36, no. 2 (Summer, 1983): 181.

> Candidus. What meane ye therby? I know not that secte: yet haue I sene a good part of philosohye.
> Cani. It is the sect which affirmeth, that nothing is in dede as it seemeth to be, sayinge, that snowe is blacke and not whyte, the erthe is not stable bute euer mouinge, & many another frowarde affection, contrary to truth and al common reason. (B2v)

> Can. […] But to our purpose, I asked of you, if ye were of the secte called Pirhonici, for if ye so were, I wolde thynke it vayne to reason thenne with you. (B3r)

The significance of this reference to Pyrrhonian scepticism is twofold. First and foremost, this is one of the first references to Pyrrhonian scepticism in England and in English, one which has been understandably but unduly neglected by historians of Pyrrhonian scepticism. Major histories of Renaissance philosophy, or histories of Pyrrhonian scepticism do not mention Elyot as one of the pioneers in the reception history of this type scepticism. This is understandable, as these works focus mainly on large scale development or changes of sceptic tenets, and their application to current philosophical and theological issues.[3] Although it is understandable that Elyot's work has not found its way into these historiographic works, this does not mean that Elyot should not be mentioned at all, since his reference to Pyrrhonian scepticism signals intellectuals' interest in scepticism in England, furthermore this interest

[3] Witness Jill Kraye, "The Revival of Hellenistic Philosophies," in *The Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Philosophy*, ed. James Hankins (Cambridge–New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 107-110. Donald C. Ainslie does not even mention Hume's actual sources for Pyrrhonian scepticism in his "Hume's Scepticism and Ancient Scepticisms," in *Hellenistic and Early Modern Philosophy*, ed. Jon Miller and Brad Inwood (Cambridge–New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 251-273. Although Richard H. Popkin traces the story of Pyrrhonian scepticism, he does not mention at all anything that is related to England before the 1560's in his seminal *The History of Scepticism: From Savonarola to Bayle*, revised and expanded Edition (Oxford–New York: Oxford University Press, 2003). Understandably, Popkin does not mention English early developments in his "Theories of Knowledge," in *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy*, ed. CB Schmitt, Q. Skinner, E. Kessler, J. Kraye (Cambridge–New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 668-684. Though Emmanuel Naya founds his research on consulting dictionaries, thesauri and encyclopaedias, he does not mention any English work in his "Renaissance Pyrrhonism: A Relative Phenomenon," in *Renaissance Scepticisms*, ed. Gianni Paganini, José R. Maia Neto (Dordrecht: Springer Science-Business Media B.V., 2009), 13-32.

was not limited to a Latin readership, but was open to a wider audience in the English language. As a last point, Elyot scholarship may benefit from this as far as Elyot's scope of learning, intellectual brevity, and openness to schools of thought are concerned.

Second, this reference to Pyrrhonian scepticism contributes to the complexity of character-drawing in this dialogue. The measure of close-endedness of this work[4] is shrewdly counterbalanced for some time via the reference to Pyrrhonian scepticism by creating dynamic ambiguity around the character of Caninius. In the first part of this paper I will show to what extent this claim casts positive light on Caninius' character in his attempt to secure the appropriate circumstances for a beneficial discussion. This attempt may well display what Shrank claims about Elyot "the commitment to a humanist belief in the need, and potential, to dovetail book learning with public life."[5] In the second part of the paper I will list arguments that undermine the positive light cast on Caninius' character once one explores the definition of Pirhonici with reference to Sextus Empiricus' writings and the reception history of his Pyrrhonian scepticism.

I. Caninius on the positive side of the scale

Caninius is surprisingly presented as a positive character on two accounts at the beginning of the main text of *The Defence of Good VVomen*. It is surprising that he acquires positive characteristic features because in the Dedicatory address, preceding the main text, he is identified as a malevolent character opposed to Candidus' purely positive characteristics. Right after the dedication, at the beginning of the dialogue, however, the kaleidoscopic perspective changes First, Caninius becomes temporarily the champion of the discussion through his claim that there is no room for the discussion if Candidus is one of the "Pirrhonici" i.e. he is a sectarian, who holds mad opinions, and challenges scientific truths. Secondly, in comparison to Candidus, Caninius gains intellectual superiority by revealing that Candidus' judgement cannot be trusted for his being half educated and biased.

Caninius' representation through the reference to Pyrrhonian scepticism as a positive character may take the reader by surprise, as in the dedication

[4] Cathy Shrank, "Thomas Elyot and the Bonds of Community," in *The Oxford Handbook of Tudor Literature* ed. Mike Pincombe and Cathy Shrank (Oxford–New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 157.
[5] Cathy Shrank, "Thomas Elyot and the Bonds of Community," 168.