

AN EXAMINATION OF GERMAN REFORMATION
DIALOGUES, 1520-1525

by

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ABSTRACT

The thesis comprises two parts: the first examines German Reformation dialogues from the period 1520 to 1525 in a general study; the second discusses six texts in detail. The introduction deals with the literary tradition of dialogue, with the place of Reformation dialogues among other contemporary forms of literature, with the rapid growth of printing and the output of polemical pamphlets, and with present-day evaluations of both German Reformation dialogues and the society which produced them.

As most dialogues were published anonymously, the question of authorship is treated. The authors' aims, views and loyalties coincide in some instances and display dissimilarities in others. The broad anticlerical movement encompasses a variety of different shades of opinion. Common characteristics in the way polemical dialogues were written are determined, and variations noted. The 'common man' appears both as a frequent interlocutor in dialogues and as a recurrent topic of debate. It is the conduct and the role of the Roman church, however, which represents the predominant concerns of the dialogue-authors. The possibility that the 'common man' protagonist influenced the way in which commoners saw themselves and were seen by other social groups is examined, as is the possible effect of the literary 'common man' on social unrest among the contemporary lower classes. Part I concludes that there is no evidence to show that German Reformation dialogues played any direct or even indirect role in inciting rebellion. It is, moreover, doubtful whether significant numbers of the actual insurgents were influenced by or even familiar with the German Reformation dialogues. The pamphlets were primarily for the literate classes, the educated and semi-educated.

The dialogues studied in detail in Part II are Karsthans, Pfarrer und Schultheiß, Kunz und Fritz, Chorherr und Schuhmacher, Bauer, Belial, Erasmus und Dr. Faber, and Müntzerischer Schwärmer und evangelischer Bauer. This choice reflects the changing preoccupations of the authors from the

beginning to the end of a singularly formative period in German history. This study aims to ascertain the particular concerns of each author and the manner in which he has sought to present them to the reader.

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ABBREVIATIONS

<u>ARG</u>	<u>Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte.</u>
Berger	Berger, Arnold E., ed. <u>Die Sturmtruppen der Reformation. Flugschriften der Jahre 1520-25.</u> Deutsche Literatur in Entwicklungsreihen, Reihe Reformation, vol. 2. 1931; rpt. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1964.
Böcking	Böcking, Eduard, ed. <u>Ulrichs von Hutten Schriften.</u> 5 vols. Leipzig, 1859/61; rpt. Aalen: Zeller, 1963.
Clemen	Clemen, Otto, ed. <u>Flugschriften aus den ersten Jahren der Reformation.</u> 4 vols. Leipzig, 1907/11; rpt. Nieuwkoop: de Graaf, 1967.
Clemen, Fac.	Clemen, Otto, ed. <u>Flugschriften aus der Reformationszeit in Facsimiledrucken.</u> Leipzig: Harrassowitz, 1921/22.
Coupe	Coupe, W.A., ed. <u>A Sixteenth-Century German Reader.</u> Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972.
<u>DVJS</u>	<u>Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte.</u>
Fischer	Fischer, Ludwig, ed. <u>Die lutherischen Pamphlete gegen Thomas Müntzer.</u> Deutsche Texte, 39. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1976.
GAG	Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik.
Götze	Götze, Alfred. "Martin Butzers Erstlingsschrift". <u>ARG</u> , 4 (1906/07), 1-64.
<u>JPS</u>	<u>Journal of Peasant Studies (G.B.)</u>

ABBREVIATIONS (Contd.)

- Kaczerowsky Kaczerowsky, Klaus, ed.
Flugschriften des Bauernkrieges.
 Deutsche Literatur, vol. 33.
 Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1970.
- Köhler et al. Köhler, Hans-Joachim, Hildegard
 Hebenstreit-Wilfert, and
 Christoph Weismann, eds.
Flugschriften des frühen 16.
Jahrhunderts. Microfiche Serie
 1978ff. Zug: Inter Documentation
 Company, 1978ff.
- Laube et al. Laube, Adolf, Hans Werner Seiffert,
 et al., eds. Die Flugschriften
der Bauernkriegszeit. Akademie der
 Wissenschaften der DDR. Berlin:
 Akademie-Verlag, 1975.
- Lenk Lenk, Werner, ed. Die Reformation
im zeitgenössischen Dialog. 12
Texte aus den Jahren 1520 bis 1525.
 Deutsche Bibliothek, Studienausgaben
 zur neueren deutschen Literatur, 1.
 Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1968.
- Schade Schade, Oskar, ed. Satiren und
Pasquille aus der Reformationszeit.
 2nd ed. 3 vols. Hanover: Rümpler,
 1863.
- Schieß Schieß, Traugott. "Drei Flug-
 schriften aus der Reformationszeit."
ZfSG, 10 (1930), 298-348.
- Schottenloher Schottenloher, Karl, ed.
Flugschriften zur Ritterschafts-
bewegung des Jahres 1523.
 Reformationsgeschichtliche Studien
 und Texte, 53. Münster: Aschendorff,
 1929.
- SdVfRG Schriften des Vereins für
 Reformationgeschichte.

ABBREVIATIONS (Contd.)

Seufert	Seufert, Gerald H., ed. <u>Hans Sachs. Die Wittenbergisch Nachtigall. Spruchgedicht, vier Reformationsdialoge und das Meisterlied Das Walt got.</u> Stuttgart: Reclam, 1974.
Simon	Simon, Karl, ed. <u>Deutsche Flugschriften zur Reformation (1520-1525).</u> Stuttgart: Reclam, 1980.
Spriewald	Spriewald, Ingeborg, ed. <u>Die Prosadialoge von Hans Sachs.</u> Leipzig: VEB Bibliographisches Institut, 1970.
WA	<u>D. Martin Luthers Werke.</u> <u>Kritische Gesamtausgabe.</u> Weimar: Böhlau, 1883ff.
<u>ZfdP</u>	<u>Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie.</u>
<u>ZfKG</u>	<u>Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte.</u>
<u>ZfSG</u>	<u>Zeitschrift für Schweizer Geschichte.</u>

DIALOGUES EXAMINED

- 1 Dialogus oder gesprech büchlin herrn Vlrichs
 von Hutten, die Anschawenden genant.
 (German translation, 1521)
 Böcking, IV, 269-308; Lenk, pp. 44-66
 (Die Anschauenden)

- 2 Karsthans. (1521)
 Böcking, IV, 615-47; Clemen, IV, 75-120;
 Berger, pp. 100-24; Lenk, pp. 67-90; Köhler
 et al. (1978), F.3, No. 9; (1979), F. 251,
 Nos.697-98; (1980), F. 535, No. 1372; (1981),
 F. 626, No. 1624

- 3 Dialogus oder gesprech des Apostolicums Angelica
 vnd anderer Specerey der Appotecken Antreffen
 Doctor M. Lutterers ler vnd sein anhanck etc.
 (1521)
 Schade, III, 36-58; Köhler et al.(1979),
 F. 261, No. 734, F. 262, No. 735
 (Gespräch des Apostolikums)

- 4 Gesprech biechlin neüw Karsthans. (1521)
 Böcking, IV, 649-81; Schade, II, 1-44; Berger,
 pp. 167-204; Lenk, pp. 91-127; Köhler et al.
 (1978), F. 172, No. 475
 (Neu Karsthans)

- 5 Ain schöner dialog/ Vñ gesprech zwischen aim
 Pfarrer vnd aim Schulthayß, betreffend allen
 übel Stand der gaystlichen. Vnd böß handlūg
 der weltlichen. Alles mit geytzigkayt beladen.
 u. (1521)
 Schade, II, 135-54; Götze, ARG, 4 (1906/07),
 6-30, 33-41; Lenk, pp. 128-40; Köhler et al.
 (1978), F. 138, No. 377; (1979), F. 263, Nos.
 738-41, F. 264, Nos. 742, 744; (1981), F. 624,
 No. 1615, F. 622, No. 1609
 (Pfarrer und Schultheiß)

- 6 Ein schöner Dialogus von den vier größten
beschweruß eins jeglichen pfarrers nach sag
eines sunderlichen verß hernach geschriben.
(1521)
Clemen, III, 45-91; Köhler et al. (1980),
F. 535, No. 1374
(Von den vier größten Beschwerden)

- 7 Ain schöner dialogus oder gesprech so ain Prediger
münch Bembus genant vnd ain Burger Silenus
vnd sein Narr mit ainander habent. (1521?)
Schade, III, 213-18; Köhler et al. (1978),
F. 170, No. 464
(Bembus, Silenus und Narr)

- 8 Ain schöner dialogus. (1521)
Schade, II, 119-27; Berger, pp. 161-66;
Köhler et al. (1979), F. 252, Nos. 702-03
(Kunz und Fritz)

- 9 Ain schenes vnd nutzliches büchlin von dem
Christlichen glauben. (1521)
Clemen, Fac. I, No. 1; Köhler et al. (1978),
F. 69, No. 180
(Vom Christlichen Glauben)

- 10 Das biechlin zaiget an wer der lebendig
martrer sey auff erdtrich vñ betrifft den
Christenlichen glauben. (1521)
Clemen, Fac. I, No. 2
(Der lebendige Märtyrer)

- 11 Dialogus von der zwitrachtung des hailigen
christenlichen glaubens neulich entstanden,
darin̄ der mensch vnderricht wirdt wie er sich
in denen vnd andern irrthumb̄n halten sol.
(1522?)
Schade, III, 207-12; Köhler et al. (1978),
F. 13, No. 56, F. 103, No. 268; (1979), F.
261, No. 732; (1980), F. 538, No. 1388;

(1981), F. 613, No. 1577, F. 614, No. 1583
(Von der Zwietracht)

- 12 Hie kompt ein Beüerlein zu einem reichen Burger
 von der gult den wucher betreffen, so kompt
 ein pfaff auch dar zu vnd dar nach ein münch,
 gar kurtzweylich zu lesen. (1522)

Schade, II, 73-79; Lenk, pp. 141-45; Köhler
 et al. (1978), F. 165, No. 448; (1981), F.
 627, No. 1629

(Von der Gült)

- 13 Ein cleglichs gesprech geschehen nit weyt vō
 Trient vff der Rōmer straß, von einem Apt,
 Curtisanen vñ dem Teüfel, wider den frommen
 Pabst Adrianum. 1522

Clemen, III, 9-23

(Abt, Kurtisan und Teufel)

- 14 Hüpsch argument, Red Frag vnnd antwurtt dreyer
 person Nemlich Curtison Edelman Burger. nicht
 allein kurtzweilig sonder vast nutzlich zu
 lesen vnnd zu horen. Alles D.M.L. lere
 betreffend. 1522

Köhler et al. (1979), F. 266, No. 751, F.
 267, Nos. 752-53

(Kurtisan, Edelmann und Bürger)

- 15 Ein Dialogus oder gesprech zwischē einem Prior,
 Leyenbrüder vñ Bettler dz wort gottes
 belanget, Gemacht durch Baltasar Stanberger
 zū Weimar in dem Fürstlichē schloß, dem armen
 leyen zu trost. (1522?)

Clemen, III, 192-96 (excerpts only)

(Prior, Laienbruder und Bettler)

- 16 Der gestryfft Schwitzer Baur. Diß b^eüchlin hat
 gemacht ein Baur auß dem Entlib^ouch Wem es nit
 gefall, der küß im die br^ouch. (1522)

Schieß, pp. 300-09 (excerpts only); Köhler et

al. (1981), F. 623, No. 1612

(Der Schweizer Bauer)

- 17 Dialogus zwischen Petro vnd eynem Bawrn, darinne
 angezeigt wurd̄t wie mā auß Petro einē Juden
 gemacht hat, vnd nie sie ken Roem kommen.
 1523
 Clemen, III, 198-214; Berger, pp. 205-16;
 Lenk, pp. 168-78
 (Petrus und Bauer)

- 18 Ein kurtzer begriff wie der Schultheiß vñ die
 gemein deß dorffs Fridhusen vff dem gnoden
 bārg, gemeinlich erkant vnd erwelt haben ein
 schöffel irs dorffs mit namen Hans Knüchel,
 dz der selbig an stat ires Pfarrers sol
 verkünden vnd predigē die Ewāgelische leer
 vnd dē wāg der sāligkeit, biß zū der zū kunfft
 irers Pfarrers. (1523)
 Clemen, I, 225-46
 (Hans Knüchel)

- 19 Eyn vnderredūg vom glawben, durch herr Micheln
 kromer, Pfarherr zu Cunitz, vnd eynem
 Judischen Rabien, mit namen Jacob vonn Brucks,
 geschehenn ynß Richters hauße do selbst zu
 Cunitz. 1523
 Clemen, I, 425-40
 (Unterredung vom Glauben)

- 20 Eynn Dialogus ader gesprech zwischen einem Vatter
 vnnd Sun dye Lere Martini Luthers vnd sunst
 andere sachen des Cristlichen glaubens
 belangende. (1523)
 Clemen, I, 24-47; Lenk, pp. 151-67; Köhler et
 al. (1979), F. 266, No. 748
 (Vater und Sohn)

- 21 Ain schöner dialogus von zweyen gutten gesellen

genant Hans Tholl. vnnd Claus Lamp. sagen̄t
vom Antechrist vnd seynen jungern. (1523)
Schade, II, 128-34; Lenk, pp. 146-50; Köhler
et al. (1979), F. 264, No. 746
(Tholl und Lamp)

- 22 Dialogus oder gesprechbüchleyn wie Christlich vn̄
Euangelisch zū leben. 1523
Köhler et al. (1978), F. 71-72, No. 189;
(1979), F. 265, No. 747; (1980), F. 451, No.
1218 (dated 1522)
(Wie Christlich zu leben)

- 23 Dyalogus der Rede vnnd gesprech, So Franciscus
von Sickingen vor des him̄els pforten mit sant
Peter vnd dem Ritter sant Jōrgen gehalten.
Zuvor vnd ehe dañ er jnn gelassen ist worden.
(1523)
Schade, II, 45-59; Köhler et al. (1979),
F. 261, No. 731
(Sickingen vor des Himmels Pforten)

- 24 Eyn gesprech Brüder Hainrich von Kettenbach mit
aim from̄en alte mütterlin von Vlm von
etlichen zūfellen vnd anfechtung des alt-
müterlin auf wellyche anttwurt gegeben von
Brū Hainrich. Dasselb altmüterlin hat begert
jr anzūschreiben, des sy gewert ist worden
von obgemeltem brüder, Darnach wytter kōmen in
ander menschen hend zūlesen, vnd yetzund
zūlettst in den druck, als man sagt. 1523
Clemen, II, 52-75; Köhler et al. (1978), F.
86, No. 231
(Kettenbach und Altmütterlein)

- 25 Eyn gesprech zwyschen vyer Personen wye sie eyn
getzengk haben, von der Walfart ym Grimmetal,
was fur vnradt odder büber̄ey, dar aus entstanden
sey. (1523/24)
Clemen, I, 136-64; Lenk, pp. 179-96
(Wallfahrt ins Grimmental)

- 26 Entschuldigung des Adels zu Francken, so bey dem Schweinfurtischen vertrag gewest sindt. (1523)
Schottenloher, pp. 100-12
(Entschuldigung des Adels)
- 27 Ain Christenliches lustigs gesprech, das besser, Gotgefelliger vnd des menschen sel haylsamer seye, auß den Klöstern z^okommen vnd Eelich z^owerden, dan̄ dar innen z^obeleyben vnd z^ouerharren. 1524
Köhler et al. (1979), F. 268, No. 756
(Christliches, lustiges Gespräch)
- 28 Ein gesprech auff das kurtzt zwuschē eynem Christen vn̄ Juden, auch eynem Wyrthe sampt seynem Haußknecht, den Eckstein Christum betreffend̄t, so noch G^etlicher schrifft abk^unterfeyt ist, wie alhie bey gedr^uckt figur auß weyßet. (1524)
Clemen, I, 385-420; Köhler et al. (1981), F. 621, No. 1608
(Christ, Jude und Wirt)
- 29 Ein Gesprech eyneß Fuchs vnd Wolffs, so die andern F^euchs vnd W^eloff auff den Stayger waldt zusammen geschickt, sich zu vnder reden, wo vnd wie die beyde parthey den wintter sich haltē vnd neren w^ollen. 1524
Schade, II, 60-72; Köhler et al. (1978), F. 108, No. 286; (1981), F. 784, No. 1969
(Fuchs und Wolf)
- 30 Gespräch büchlein von eynem Bawern, Belial, Erasmo Roterodam, vnd doctor Johaⁿ Fabri, k^urtzlich die warheyt anzeygend, was Erasm^u vn̄ Fabr^u z^o verleugnung des gots worts beweget hat. (1524)
Clemen, I, 319-34; Lenk, pp. 215-23; Simon, pp. 309-26
(Bauer, Belial, Erasmus und Dr. Faber)

- 31 Ein Frag vnd Antwort von zweyen brüder^en, was für ein seltzames Thier zū Nü^erenberg gewesen im Reychßtag nechst vergangē, geschickt von Rom zū beschawen das Teutsch landt. (1524)
Clemen, I, 174-82; Köhler et al. (1979), F. 266, No. 750
(Ein seltsames Tier)
- 32 Ain gesprech büchlin von ainem Weber vnd ainem Kramer über das Büchlin Doctoris Mathie Kretz von der haimlichen Beycht, so er zū Augspurg in vnnser frawen Thūm geprediget hat. 1524
Köhler et al. (1979), F. 253, No. 707
(Weber und Kramer)
- 33 Disputation zwischen einem Chorherren vnd Schuchmacher darin̄ das wort gottes vnnd ein recht Christlich wesen verfochten würdt. Hanns Sachs. 1524
Berger, pp. 281-99; Lenk, pp. 197-214; Spriewald, pp. 67-100; Coupe, pp. 143-50; Seufert, pp. 43-71; Köhler et al. (1980), F. 450, No. 1212
(Chorherr und Schuhmacher)
- 34 Ein gesprech von dē Scheinwercken der Gaystlichē vnd jren gelübdten, damit sy zūuerlesterung des blūts Christi vermaynen selig zū werdē. Hans Sachs Schuster. (1524)
Spriewald, pp. 101-22; Seufert, pp. 75-92; Köhler et al. (1979), F. 210, No. 595
(Von den Scheinwerken der Geistlichen)
- 35 Ain gesprech eins Ewāgelischen christen mit einem Lutherischen, Darinn der ergerlich wandel etzlicher, die sich Lutherisch nennen angezaigt vnd bruderlich gestrafft wirdt. Hans Sachs 1524
Spriewald, pp. 150-73; Seufert, pp. 121-41; Köhler et al. (1978), F. 13, No. 53; (1981),

F. 667, No. 1763

(Ein Evangelischer und ein Lutherischer
Christ)

- 36 Ein Dialogus des inhalt ein argument der
R^emischen wider das Christlich heüflein, den
Geytz auch ander offentlich laster etc,
betreffend. (1524)
Spriewald, pp. 123-49; Seufert, pp. 95-117;
Laube et al., pp. 190-202; Köhler et al.
(1979), F. 208, No. 592; (1981), F. 666,
No. 1758
(Dialog vom Geiz)
- 37 Klag vnd antwort von Lutherischen vn̄ Bebstischenn
pfaffen vber die Reformaciō so neulich zu
Regenspurg der priester halben außgangē ist
im Jar MDXXIIIj (1524)
Schade, III, 136-58; Köhler et al. (1979),
F. 342, No. 964
(Lutherische und Pāpstliche Pfaffen)
- 38 Eyn gesprech von dem gemeynen Schwabacher Kasten,
als durch brüder Heynrych, Knecht Ruprecht,
Kemerin, Spüler, vnd jrem Maister des
Handtwercks der Wullen Tüchmacher. 1524
Schade, III, 196-206; Köhler et al. (1979),
F. 268, No. 755
(Gemeiner Schwabacher Kasten)
- 39 Ein Wegsprech gen Regenspurg zū, ynß Concilium,
zwischen eynem Byschoff Hüren wirt, vnd
Künzen seinem knecht. 1525
Schade, III, 159-95; Köhler et al. (1979),
F. 269, No. 760
(Weggespräch)
- 40 Ain Schöner Dialogus wie ain bawr mit aim frawē
brüder münch redt, das er die Kutten von jm

würfft vnd dem Münch arbayt zūgeben. 1525
 Schade, II, 155-59; Simon, pp. 359-68;
 Köhler et al. (1979), F. 334, No. 946;
 (1980), F. 463, No. 1252
(Bauer und Mönch)

- 41 Eyn newer Dialogus oder gesprech zwischē einem verprenten, vertribnem Edelman, vnd eynem Münch^e, welchē am vnrechstenn geschech, wann die selben beyde vertriben, vnd dy Münch clöster^e auch verbrant wurden. 1525
 Schade, III, 101-11; Köhler et al. (1978), F. 171, No. 467
(Edelmann, Mönch und Kurtisan)
- 42 Ain Nützliches Gespräch vnd vnderweisung zu notturfft der bekumerttē menschen vrsach der zwispaltigen leer, so wider ain anndern von den hochgeleertten eingebracht wirt, die frummen prediger vnangefochtē u. 1525
 Köhler et al. (1979), F. 268, No. 757
(Hofmann und Bauer)
- 43 Ein nutzlicher Dialogus odder gesprechbuchlein zwischen einem Müntzerischem Schwermer vnd einem Euangelischem frumen Bawern, Die straff der auffrurischen Schwermer zu Franckenhausen geschlagen belangende. 1525
 Kaczerowsky, pp. 201-14; Laube et al., pp. 517-30; Fischer, pp. 80-95; Köhler et al. (1981), F. 672, No. 1767, F. 749, No. 1914
(Müntzerischer Schwärmer und evangelischer Bauer)

INTRODUCTION The Background to Polemical Literature

German Reformation dialogues are pieces of writing in the vernacular which deal with questions relating to the Reformation and/or reforms within the Roman church. They frequently include criticisms of other aspects of society, above all socio-political and economic affairs. In the German Reformation dialogue at least two interlocutors take part in the discourse.

'Gravamina'

The grievance literature of the 15th century in Germany is generally deemed a precursor of the polemical publications of the early 16th century. The 'Gravamina' were devoted to criticising many aspects of the state of the nation. They expressed dissatisfaction with the political functioning of the Empire, in particular with defects resulting from the jumble of territories; with social conditions, such as the over-taxation of the peasantry; with the legal system and uncertainty arising from the transition from Germanic law to Roman law; with economic conditions, for example, the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few; with national estrangement caused by the number of Italian officials occupying leading positions in Germany, and by widespread Roman influence. But, above all else, grievance literature in Germany deplored religious and moral degeneration, which

it considered a result of ignorance, venality and¹ licentiousness in the clergy.

'Gravamina' of the 15th century received a powerful impulse from the Ecumenical Councils at Constance (1414 to 1418) and Basel (1431 to 1449). The most well-known example is the Reformatio Sigismundi, written about 1438 in connection with the Council at Basel. It was first printed in 1476 and appeared in numerous editions up to 1525: "the success of the book shows how many men shared his [the author's] ideas".² Fashioned in the style of a royal decree, "die vorwiegend politisch inspirierte Reformation Kaiser Sigismunds" advocates reforms in the curia and changes in the organisation of the Empire.³ The author, no doubt a member of the bourgeoisie schooled in Humanism, declares that Christians should be free and equal and that taxes and tithes should be abolished. 'Gravamina' were repeatedly presented at ecclesiastical and secular diets: "die Reformforderungen [sind] auf allen Reichstagen und Ständerversammlungen wiederholt und erweitert worden".⁴ Nevertheless, these decades of insistent complaints and criticism, at the end of the 15th century, and at the very beginning of the 16th, remained fruitless. Actual imperial authority continued to dwindle, while the territorial princes consolidated their positions of power. The Roman church introduced no manifest reforms to mollify the critics.

Grievance literature has been taken as a harbinger of the impending upheaval in the 2nd and 3rd decades of the 16th century:

Spätestens seit den Tagen der großen Konzilien von Konstanz und Basel fanden das Krisenbewußtsein und die allgemeine Unzufriedenheit auch in der Literatur ihren Niederschlag und führten schließlich dazu, daß Zeitklage und Zeitkritik als Vorboten des künftigen Sturms um die Jahrhundertwende zu ihrem alles beherrschenden Thema wurden.⁵

Indeed a 'sense of crisis' is also thought to be expressed in Dances of Death ('Totentänze'), prophecies of doom and predictions of imminent change⁶:

Throughout the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries resentment at social and religious injustice had flowed easily into a broad stream of millennarian feeling which saw such abuses as evidence that the old corrupt world was in its death throes.

Also prophetic writing was "immensely popular", and at the same time forecasts of a great flood and a peasant rebellion for 1524 "provoked widespread fear and apprehension".

Wer im 1523sten Jahr nicht stirbt,
im 1524. nicht im Wasser verdirbt
und im 1525. nicht wird erschlagen,
der mag wohl von Wundern sagen.

Several historians view the 'crisis' as resulting from economic developments⁹; the discontent the changes created expressed itself in violence:

[Uprisings] were expressions of a deep social crisis at the threshold of the transition from feudalism to capitalism, in which all classes and social groups experienced a process of dislocation and differentiation of unprecedented extent, and which also caused grave difficulties for the ruling classes.¹⁰

However, the 'sense of crisis' as represented in 'Gravamina', prophecies of doom and social unrest was one with long antecedents.

Intense 'Zeitkritik' is to be found in medieval traditions of mysticism and millenarianism, in 13th century codes such as the Sachsenspiegel and Schwabenspiegel, in the ideas of Wyclif and Hus, in the actions of heretical sects, and in numerous peasant revolts. The Sachsenspiegel, for example, rejects the validity of peasant oppression as neither divine, natural nor inherited. Along with other such moral and legal codes, it is known to belong to the most widespread documents of the day.¹¹ During the 14th and 15th centuries insurrectionary violence flared in England, Flanders, France and Bohemia; it was fuelled by similar doctrines of a "primal egalitarian State of Nature."¹² Participants also considered that a moral and religious overhaul was essential before peace and justice could prevail:

... die bei allem Wechsel gleichbleibenden Gravamina und Widerstandsformen der rustici [sind] als gesamt-europäische Phänomene zu begreifen.¹³

Caution is, therefore, necessary when referring to a specific sense of crisis in the late 15th century in Germany, for the conditions deplored and the manner of deploring them had a long tradition. The Roman church had nevertheless maintained its hold on power and influence in the nation.¹⁴

Unruhe und Krisenstimmung [im 15. Jht.] freilich, wie auch schon im 14. Jahrhundert, wie im 14. Jahrhundert vielleicht sogar mehr. Und wenn man weiter zurückgeht, wird man des Zeitalters der Ruhe ja auch nicht ansichtig. Die Bestimmung von gesamtgesellschaftlichen Krisen führt leicht zu Krisen von jahrhundertelanger Dauer,¹⁵ d.h. zur Aufhebung des Krisenbegriffs.

At the beginning of the 16th century 'Gravamina' were still being written. Welschgattung (1513) is directed against the clergy and ascribes all ills of the Empire to Rome and its influence. Around 1510 an educated jurist, dubbed in the 19th century the "Oberrheinische Revolutionär", exhorted the people to establish their own empire. This writer's revolutionary sentiments were scarcely of great significance; for his tract is extant in only one manuscript, while his advanced age (ca. 60 years) and his profession surely disqualify him from being a popular travelling agitator.¹⁶

Die 15 Bundsgenossen (1521) written by Johann Eberlin von Günzburg continues the tradition of grievance literature and demands reforms. In the 15th century and early decades of the 16th century, then, pamphlets appeared in which 'Zeitkritik' was expressed. They generally stipulated reform of the clergy as a pre-condition of improving socio-political conditions and effecting a tighter organisation of the Empire. Such literature continued an existing tradition and cannot, except with hindsight, be interpreted as an intimation of future events.

Humanists

Around 1500 and up to the second decade of the 16th century Humanists revealed in their works little desire for specific political, social or religious reforms. Their writing consisted above all of Latin poetry¹⁷:

Gerade die Jahrzehnte zwischen ca.1490 und 1510, in welchen in der volkssprachigen Literatur Untergangsprognosen und Zeitklagen zu einem breiten Strom anschwellen, können als die Blütezeit der neulateinischen Dichtung in Deutschland gelten,...¹⁸

It was the Reuchlin affair in the second decade of the century that united Humanists and prompted them to declare open enmity to conservative, scholastic upholders of Church dogma and practices. The Epistolae Obscurorum Virorum, fictitious letters published in 1515 and 1517,

ridiculed the opposition with the aim of discrediting it. The authors, thought to be principally Crotus Rubeanus and Ulrich von Hutten, turned their Humanist techniques of satire and caricature to use against contemporary targets and showed, too, a spirit of nationalism. When Luther published his 95 Theses against the sale of indulgences in 1517, the mood already generated in Humanists and manifested in the 'Dunkel-männerbriefe' was such that Humanists were willing to lend him their support as they had Reuchlin. They perceived Luther's ideas against the papacy as a continuation of their own and rallied to his cause. The writers of polemical Reformation pamphlets between 1520 and 1525 were largely people with Humanist schooling.

The State of the Nation in the years 1520 to 1525

It has been said:

Das ganze 15. Jahrhundert ist ein großes Drängen nach der Reformation, die das 16. Jahrhundert als notwendige Frucht einer langen Entwicklung pflücken dürfte.¹⁹

Similarly, another historian has written: "Um die Wende vom 15. zum 16. Jahrhundert machte sich in Europa der Anbruch der neuen Zeit deutlich bemerkbar."²⁰ The Reformation and in 1525 the German Peasants' War are seen as the culmination of a particular development, but views vary widely on which factor in particular, or which amalgam of factors, brought them about. The

decadence of the Roman church, the state of the nation, political and economic innovations, the state of mind of the populace, social pressures, new lines of thought in matters religious, new concerns of the intelligentsia, all play some, undefined part:

Doch trotz all dieser Ursachen und Voraussetzungen der Reformation bleibt an ihrer Entstehung wie an der raschen Ausbreitung vieles rätselhaft.²¹

Conversely, the Reformation has also been judged not as the outcome of such factors but as the instigator:

Es würde deshalb eine arge Verzeichnung der Wirklichkeit und ein Verkennen der sie bewegenden Glaubenskräfte sein, wenn man die politischen, sozialen und geistigen Bewegungen des 16. Jahrhunderts für die Reformation verantwortlich machen wollte. Es verhält sich gerade umgekehrt.²²

Since the relevance of economic developments, political structures, social conditions, religious feelings, nationalism or changing expectations is assessed in a variety of ways, no definitive picture of German society around 1520-25 has as yet emerged. Historians dispute the relative importance of particular factors, and thus interpretations of the forces determining society and leading in 1525 to the German Peasants' War - a term in itself the subject of debate²³ - are many and varied.²⁴

Some historians favour a political explanation: the uprisings in the years 1524 to 1526 were caused above all by antagonism between village community and territorial prince, as the territorial princes were in the process of developing and consolidating their power at the expense of traditional village autonomy. The lords sought to inhibit the peasants' self-government and replace it with state administration. The German Peasants' War, then, was an attempt to effect a political realignment.²⁵

Ziel dieser Aufständischen war es,
alle Gewalten zwischen den Bauern und
dem Kaiser zu beseitigen, d.h. die
Reichsunmittelbarkeit zu erringen:
keinen anderen Herrn mehr anzuerkennen
als allein den Kaiser, - wie die Formel
immer wieder lautet.²⁶

Such an interpretation argues that the participants in revolts acted not so much from economic motives but rather from an injured sense of justice at the imposition of restrictions on their political autonomy.

The view that economic conditions were the dominant motive force behind the revolts is held by Marxist historians and many others, too. They argue that territorial princes were increasing their exploitation of the peasant and strengthening his personal dependence. Serfdom was at this time re-introduced in some parts; freedom of movement was

not permitted; common pasture land was being sequestered; marriage between the subjects of different lords was prohibited.²⁷ The growth of the population had an adverse effect on the agrarian economy, since resources had to be divided among a greater number of people. The result was inevitably economic tensions and increasing social differentiation within the village community, and indeed within families.²⁸ Thus, social antagonism was not confined simply to ruler and subject.²⁹

In the early fifteenth century the Gemeinde movement implied a conflict between lord and villager. In 1525 it was more of a three way tangle between lord, tenant farmer and labourer or cottager.³⁰

Coupled with increased feudal exploitation, the consequences of an expanding population brought "middle- and small-holding peasants face to face with the menace of rapid pauperization."³¹ The violence of 1524 to 1526 was, therefore, the reaction to a deteriorating economic situation.

In terms of historical processes, it is also argued that the contradiction between developing capitalist production and the existing feudal structure led to both the Reformation and the peasant uprisings. This conjoint phenomenon is termed the "Frühbürgerliche Revolution." This term, which has its origin

in Marx's and above all Engels' historical interpretations, explains the upheavals of the early 16th century as the struggle of emerging capitalism to ^Ssupercede disintegrating feudalism. The Reformation is viewed as an ideological revolution which attacked one main prop of feudalism, the Roman church. The peasants' revolts are viewed as a socio-economic revolution with antifeudal intent. The revolution is described as 'bourgeois', because it is principally characterised by the economic conditions brought about by early capitalism.³² money economy
+ trade

Other historians, however, dispute that the peasantry suffered any fall in living standards but rather enjoyed rising prosperity. The improvement in the peasants' economic situation created dissatisfaction, since their political status was out of line with their material position. In fact, it is argued that those who were active in uprisings were recruited from the more prosperous German peasantry:

Es bleibt dabei: der Bauernkrieg von 1525 ist kein Verzweiflungsausbruch eines hungernden ländlichen Proletariats ..., sondern eine von ernsthaften Bauern und Bauerngemeinden getragene Auseinandersetzung im Rahmen₃₃ der deutschen Gesamtentwicklung.

Several historians take psychological factors into account. Not the objective state of affairs but subjective attitudes towards it are vital:

Whether the obligations with which they[land-owners] burdened the land and the air remained the same, were increased or were lightened, they still provoked complaint.³⁴

For example, the mentality of the commoner was perhaps conditioned by provocative luxury - he felt envy and hate towards the economically and socially privileged.³⁵ Various services he had to perform were "vielfach mehr lästig und psychisch bedrückend, als wirklich belastend"³⁶; and it was a collective feeling of injustice that led to mass storming of monasteries and castles.³⁷ It is also considered possible that the uprisings were at least in part due to new feelings of self-awareness and self-esteem among the peasantry, brought about by the Reformation's especial relation to the 'common man'.³⁸ Or again, perhaps it was the frustration and smouldering anger of the underdog that flared up into violence:

The successes of the authorities, as well as the recurrent experience of defeat of the most courageous radical elements, must have played a role in increasing the bitterness that finally led to the great Peasant War of 1524-26.³⁹

Clearly one can only attempt to reconstruct the contemporary state of mind of the general populace. Given the lack of self-portrayal by peasants, such interpretations cannot be verified.⁴⁰

An additional inquiry into the question of how correctly this subjective consciousness reflected objective conditions, would be a first step towards an analysis of the causal factors⁴¹ of the revolution of 1525,...

Some historians reject sweeping generalisations that impose uniformity on social groups and even on Germany itself where none existed. They advocate intensive regional studies as a basis for genuinely tenable conclusions. The socio-economic structures and conditions were multifarious and findings drawn from a localised basis can remain concrete, but lack general application.⁴² Regional studies have confirmed the socio-economic preoccupation of insurgents and demonstrated that not only differences between groups in the social hierarchy created discontent but also differences within these groups.

Yet other historians are concerned that the role of religion be properly evaluated as a factor in the upheavals of the early 16th century. They consider that religious feeling played a major role in shaping events:

Unsere heutige wirtschaftlich und sozialgeschichtlich zugespitzte Fragestellung darf biblisches Gedankengut, christlich-apokalyptisches Ferment und religiösen Erwartungshorizont der Aufständischen nicht zurückdrängen oder gar verdecken, wodurch Entstehung und Verbreitung des Bauernkrieges allein zu verstehen sind.⁴³

Economic, political and social interpretations should not preclude consideration of the religious aspect: " [The Reformation] was a religious phenomenon, and ... I am inclined to see this religious element not as an ideological ornamentation of prior socio-political developments."⁴⁴ It is generally agreed that national feeling played next to no role in peasant revolts.⁴⁵

The controversial and ideological debate on the causes of the Reformation and the German Peasants' War continues. Conflicting appraisals abound. The influence of polemical literature on events is also a matter of speculation rather than of conclusive evidence.

Printing

The invention of the printing press around the middle of the 15th century immeasurably increased the opportunities for disseminating ideas. The first printed books were predominantly conventionally religious:

... an abundance of religious literature of all kinds was now made generally accessible - from prayer-books and words of consolation to preaching manuals and missals, from scholastic Summa to the Dance of Death ... there is no mistaking the fact that in the first decades of the age of printing such literature formed by far the greatest part of the enormous book production.⁴⁶

Grievance literature, the most closely related predecessor of Reformation polemical pamphlets, as far as subject-matter is concerned, formed an untypical fraction of the first printed books. The upsurge in pamphlet production between the years 1517 and 1525 consisted above all of texts on themes relating to reforms and the Reformation. It seems that demand for non-polemical works, such as booklets of curative remedies and popular almanacs containing predictions and prophecies, slumped as the output of polemical literature rose. Consequently the uncontroversial type of pamphlet largely disappeared from the market.⁴⁷

The number of pamphlets printed increased markedly in 1517, and between 1520 and 1525 the number soared again. The huge rise in production has been estimated at 400% from 1520 to 1525.⁴⁸ The business of printing was expanding: "die geographische Streuung von Druckerwerkstätten [verdichtete] sich; und wenig später gewann die Partei Luthers die Mehrheit der Drucker, die sich - wohl aus kommerziellen Gründen - mehrheitlich der Reformation zuwandten."⁴⁹ After 1525 the output of printed pamphlets dwindled again. One estimate of publications between 1517 and 1525 puts the figure between 2,000 and 3,000⁵⁰; another (1518 - 25) puts it at over 3,000.⁵¹ On average 1,000 to 1,500 copies were printed per edition.⁵² The first edition of Luther's An den christlichen Adel deutscher

Nation von des christlichen Standes Besserung (1520), however, ran to 4,000 copies, which sold out within days.⁵³ The ratio of German publications to Latin ones also changed markedly during these years: "Betrug das Verhältniß der lateinischen zu den deutschen Drucken im Jahre 1500 20 zu 1, so 1524 3 zu 1."⁵⁴

There are many factors which hinder an assessment of the quantities of pamphlets and broadsheets published in the first decades of the 16th century.⁵⁵ The amount of copies per edition, the number of editions and reprints and the spread of pamphlets can generally only be conjectured. The lack of information further complicates an assessment of the effect pamphlets had on the nation. Being "fugitive leaves", they were by their very nature not carefully stored in libraries. Since they were in general short forms of writing, which were cheap, easily understood and dealt with topical matters, they constituted "Vorläufer unserer heutigen periodischen Zeitungen und Zeitschriften."⁵⁶ If, as is assumed, they passed from hand to hand, then many must have simply fallen to pieces through public circulation.⁵⁷ Pamphlets disintegrated, were lost or casually destroyed, as well as confiscated and purposely destroyed. Collectors at the time, Willibald Pirckheimer for example, preserved pamphlets of a more artistic and literary nature, while pamphlets lacking scholarly qualities would have had less chance of preser-

vation. Into the latter category may well have fallen those pamphlets and broadsheets more closely associated with or directed at the lower social orders, since they may well have tended towards a more aggressive tone and less polished style.⁵⁸

Measures were taken to stem the dissemination of anti-clerical writing from 1520 onwards.⁵⁹ Since some pamphlets constituted illegal literature, they were duly sought out and confiscated: "Sie wurden durch zeitgenössische Verfolgungen dezimiert."⁶⁰ Just as some pamphlets had less chance of survival because they were less appealing and of less 'literary value' to collectors, so some anti-clerical pamphlets had less chance of escaping confiscation on account of their inflammatory contents:

Das Schicksal der ... Müntzer-schriften - die Auflage der Schutzrede wurde beschlagnahmt, während von den 500 Exemplaren der Entplöbung wenigstens 100 der Konfiskation entgehen konnten - macht deutlich, daß das bäuerlich-plebejische Lager keine Chance besaß, zu einer auch nur annähernd so umfangreichen literarischen Publizistik zu gelangen wie die Lutheraner.⁶¹

For several reasons, then, the pamphlets least likely to survive were those aimed at lower social strata. Broadsheets, due partly to their format, partly to their content, are especially depleted: "Es ist notwendig, die uns überkommenen Bestände kräftig zu multiplizieren."⁶²

Since various editions of the same pamphlet were published in different centres, they are now scattered around libraries, museums, archives and collections in East and West Germany and neighbouring countries.⁶³ As pamphlets frequently offer no information about the author, printer, place or date of publication, they present problems when cataloguing.⁶⁴ Consequently researchers have difficulty in unearthing them. The title remains the main point of differentiation, but various editions may use the same title and the differences among them are only apparent in the text itself.⁶⁵ Perhaps because of the incompleteness of information it is possible to reach conflicting conclusions. While one historian can claim, "Die meisten Flugschriften erlebten nur wenige oder keine Nachdrucke," another can claim, "multiple editions [were] common."⁶⁶

Authors of printed pamphlets in the early 16th century employed a multiplicity of styles and genres to communicate their ideas. Literary forms include sermons, tracts, letters addressed to individuals, letters addressed to the public, prose and verse dialogues, single-page illustrated broadsheets, verse compositions, manifestos, edicts, songs, allegories, prose and verse farces ('Schwänke'), chronicles and Shrovetide plays. These printed works range in length from the one page of a broadsheet to such extended texts as the dialogue

Neu Karsthans which covers 54 sides. The broadsheet is often little more than a picture, while the content of treatises is often learned theological exposition. Pamphlets printed in the early 16th century constituted "ein literarisches Feuerwerk", the favourite styles being satire, caricature and parody.⁶⁷ Pamphlets also vary immensely in tone: from humour and light-hearted entertainment to pious utterances and savage invective.

By the 2nd and 3rd decades of the 16th century the potential of the printed word as a tool with social, religious and political application has been recognised:

Den druck uns Deutschen got zugeschickt hat
Zu lernen die schrift und erkennen der Romer art.⁶⁸

It is a weapon that exposes Romanist ways:

man reit inen iez in das spil
und truckt man auch der bücher⁶⁹vil
die sagent nicht in iren sack.

Pamphlets frequently praise themselves for informing the people of the Roman church's failings and profess themselves indispensable to the soul's salvation, the path to which Romanists blocked and printing has now opened. The opposition is credited with attempting to prohibit reading. In Der Schweizer Bauer the reader is told:

das do ettliche eigengesüchig, hoffertig,
nydig, endchristist predigermünch oder
pfaffen predigen, ein ley soll nit läsen
tütsche bücher, als ewangelia und andere
meer derglichen bewerte bücher, dann sy
mögens nit verston. ⁷⁰

Then the dialogue explains that the real reason they
refuse the layman the right to read for himself is that
he will discover their incompetence. Anti-clerical
pamphlets also encourage the reader to procure and read
a Bible and recommend works by leading publicists:

Son: Es ist auch meyn radt, du kauffest
auch ein Bibel, wen sie nū Martinus
gedeutzschet
Kauff dir das vatter vnser, das Martinus
hat gemacht mit seynner deuttung. ⁷¹

nempt für euch die hayligen Bybel...
jr mügn̄ auch wol zū merer vnderweysung
Lutherum, Carolstadian so dan̄ von den
münchischen gelübden schreybenn lesen ... ⁷²

The Background to German Reformation Dialogues

Traditional forms of dialogue and their influence on Reformation dialogues

The dialogues of Lucian, written in the 2nd century, were rediscovered and readopted first by Italian Humanists, who translated them from Greek into Latin. Lucian incorporated in his dialogues instruction, criticism of contemporary conditions and discussion of topical subjects, all heavily larded with satire. The genre became established in Germany both via Italy and from the Greek. In the 15th century Niklas von Wyle and Rudolf Agricola made translations of Lucian's works.⁷³ Other Humanists to translate Lucian's works were Willibald Pirckheimer, Reuchlin and Erasmus.⁷⁴ Erasmus and Ulrich von Hutten composed their own satirical colloquies on Lucianic and other Ancient models. They were written in Latin.

The dialogue genre was, however, not entirely new to Germany. In medieval monastery schools and universities dialogues were employed as a form of disputation to instruct pupils in the skills of rhetoric.⁷⁵ The Latin dialogues were not on topically controversial themes, but rather dealt with subjects that had been sufficiently resolved, for example, a disputation between a Jew and a Christian, or a Heathen and a Christian. This type of dialogue is in the didactic and theoretical mould of the Socratic dialogue. A feature of this mode of discourse is the posing and answering of

questions, whereby the keen inquirer has very little function but to elicit information in a natural way and so aid the progression of thoughts and ideas. Of these dialogues it has been said that they were by nature most apt for showing "the philosopher in the dramatic instant of seeking and finding, and to make the doubt and conflict visible."⁷⁶ While this technique is quite common in the German dialogues of 1520 to 1525 as a method of maintaining forward momentum within the discourse, the inquirer is not as inactive as characters in Socratic dialogues. Although the didactic dialogue has been considered "weniger verwandt ... dem Reformationsdialog", elements of the Socratic tradition of discourse are obvious in Reformation dialogues.⁷⁷ The Socratic dialogue presents for the edification of the reader the passage of knowledge between interlocutors, always from the character of superior reasoning and sounder knowledge to characters less equipped to refute the other point of view. Most if not all Reformation dialogues are so constructed. The persuasive Christian, who, thanks to his earnestness and eloquence, effects the conversion of a disputant, is common to numerous Reformation dialogues and derives from the Socratic and medieval didactic tradition. Directly in the didactic mould but with Reformation content are Christ, Jude und Wirt and Unterredung vom Glauben.

Although Lucian states that his satiric dialogues were intended neither to reform nor to scold but above all to amuse, they served as the prototype for Ulrich von Hutten's caustic criticisms of the Roman church and political life in the Empire.⁷⁸ Hutten's dialogues were designed as political, propagandistic weapons of opposition. His first, entitled Phalarismus after Lucian's Phalaris, was written in 1517. He wrote his dialogues first in Latin and then translated some of them into German around 1520, as did other writers of Latin dialogues. The Humanists adopted Lucian's mode of expression, which combined satire, criticism and personal mockery, as an appropriate medium for challenging the deplorable state of spiritual and political life in the nation:

Auch inhaltlich hat die Renaissance ein engeres Verhältniss zu Lucian gewonnen. Hier war es sein Geist der Verneinung, die scharfe, aber immer geistvolle Kritik, an der⁷⁹ das Jahrhundert besonderen Gefallen fand.

In the first decades of the 16th century the dialogue was not the only form to emerge as a popular vehicle of expression. It was a period in which lampoon and caricature were favoured styles.⁸⁰ "Enthüllungsliteratur" generally was popular: it exposed the 'truth', mocked character foibles, publicised the deficiencies of certain classes.⁸¹ The Pope and his cardinals were a favourite target.⁸² Increasingly pasquils were written in prose and as dial-

ogues: Pasquillus. Ein wahrhaftiges Büchlein (1520) features the eponymous character.⁸³

Ulrich von Hutten is thought to be the first to have used the term 'Gesprächbüchlein' as a translation of the Latin 'Dialogus.'⁸⁴ Subsequent colloquies are often described as "Dialogus oder Gespräch" or "Dialogus und Gespräch", which suggests the word 'Dialogus' required explanation. From edition L of Pfarrer und Schultheiß one can gather that the Latin term for the genre was indeed unclear: "Dialogus das ist ein gesprech oder rede, zwischen zweien." 'Dialogus' appears on its own occasionally, but 'Gespräch' appears frequently. Other titles for colloquies are "Rede, Frage und Antwort," "Klage und Antwort", "Gespräch und Unterweisung", "Unterredung" and "Disputation", as well as "Gesprächbüchlein" and simply "Büchlein". Most dialogues mention who the interlocutors are, and as dialogues became better known, the interlocutors must have served as signals about the content and sympathies. In the title or preface the authors (or possibly printers) of dialogues commend their work to the reader as "Ein schöner dialogus", "gar kurtzweylich zu lesen " or "lustbarlich und lieblich zu lesen"; they call themselves "nützlich" or "l^oüstig". Other types of pamphlet, for example, songs, also commend themselves as "schön" and "neu".⁸⁵

Ulrich von Hutten is commonly seen as the herald of the 'popular' German Reformation dialogue.⁸⁶ German Reformation dialogues, however, are written in a variety of styles and are indebted in varying degrees to various literary traditions : "Den Reformatiönsdialog als 'literarische Gattung' hat es nie gegeben!"⁸⁷ There are colloquies which are influenced by Lucian's dialogues and the tradition of didactic, instructional dialogues. They adhere more closely to Latin models and are coloured by Latin language. Biblical, Ancient or allegorical figures sometimes play a role: Mercury in Karsthans, St. George and St. Peter in Sickingen vor des Himmels Pforten, the animals of the title in Fuchs und Wolf. Latin passages with commentary or translations are sometimes interpolated, as in Gespräch des Apostolikums. The first Humanist dialogues were written in Latin and only subsequently were German ones written. Some German dialogues are still based on the Latin literary model and contain as a result fewer oral speech characteristics. Some are undoubtedly more indebted to Latin and Humanist tradition than to popular forms of literature, partly because Humanist publicists became involved in the new movement and the new mode of writing.⁸⁸

Other German Reformation dialogues, sometimes considered to be the 'true' Reformation dialogue, have as chief distinction the impression they convey of

colloquial, everyday speech.⁸⁹ They often include a 'common man' spokesman among the interlocutors. The origins of this type of dialogue have been identified as lying in the tradition of popular drama and, in particular, Shrovetide plays.⁹⁰ One obvious parallel between Reformation dialogues and Shrovetide plays is the use of characters from lower social strata. But it has also been argued that folk drama was an almost exclusively unpolitical form of entertainment, its stereotype figures and verse form quite unrelated to German dialogues.⁹¹ The difference between this strain of 'folkish' dialogue and the Latinised dialogue is evaluated in various ways by literary historians. The former, 'colloquial' type is sometimes praised:

In den besten Dialogen wird jedoch eine große Eigenständigkeit gegenüber der⁹² lateinsprachigen Tradition erreicht.

On the other hand, when it is measured against the skilful writing of accomplished publicists such as Hutten, Karlstadt and Agricola, it is judged to represent a negative "Qualitätsunterschied."⁹³ This comment presumes that differences are not so much intentional as reflections of individual ability. This may be true, but authors may well have addressed different groups and intended their works to fulfil different functions, whereby 'folkish' traits should not simply be equated with 'lower class' tastes.⁹⁴

From a study of approximately 50 of the 60 to 70 extant German Reformation dialogues written between 1520 and 1525, it is obvious that no strict line can be drawn between dialogues written predominantly in a Humanist style and those in a 'colloquial', 'Reformation' style. Many authors express their support for Luther and reform through Humanist mannerisms:

Angelica. 'propter hoc amplius accipietis
judicium: ve vobis, ve vobis!'
etc. darumb, liebs Apostolicum,
lis das evangelium recht und
verstant das (wie obstat) mit
Christo, Petro, Paulo, Augustino,
Cipriano, Erasmo Roterdamo,
Martino Lutero und aller 95
erberkeit ...

Other authors write in a style familiar and 'popular', yet identify themselves specifically with humanist rather than Reformation aims. In Kunz und Fritz the discussion between two peasants concerns the high quality of Cicero's and Virgil's Latin. This example must modify the widespread assumption that authors turned to colloquial conversation and 'common man' characters in order to popularise their material among broad sections of the population. The author of Kunz und Fritz was surely not intending to extend his readership into villages and workshops. His target audience was presumably other members of humanist educated circles. He may have employed two 'peasants' as spokesmen for his Humanist views

because he considered it amusing for the reader, or a novelty (this dialogue seems to be the first between two peasants), or he sought to turn the popularity of Karsthans to his advantage. Any of these explanations seems in this particular instance more plausible than the assumption that every author who chose to use 'common man' characters in his dialogue strove for "Breitenwirkung und Resonanz gerade bei den ausgebeuteten Volksmassen."⁹⁶

The years 1520 to 1525 mark the period of greatest popularity for the writing and publishing of dialogues, and, therefore, for the buying and reading of dialogues. The claim that the dialogue was "die weitaus beliebteste Stilform" is not justified, given that the 60 to 70 extant examples form a fraction of the estimated total output of publications⁹⁷; but it was certainly one popular genre among other polemical genres. The rise in its popularity has been attributed to its fulfilling a particular role in "der diskussionsbereiten und erregten öffentlichen Atmosphäre": for the dialogue "antwortete gezielt dem Bedürfnis nach Klärung und Urteilsfindung."⁹⁸ One early dialogue sets out the advantage of its own genre over straightforward tracts. The opponent concedes:

Fur war du hast mich schon uberredt,
 daß mich doctor Lutter oder alle seine lere
 nit bereden kunden. mag villeicht des schult
 sein, daß die red und widerred als disputationes
 baßeingend dan bloßreden oder schriften, do
 man nit fragen, sie auch nit antworten können,...⁹⁹

If many of the authors shared this view that dialogue made arguments readily intelligible and easily digested, it would explain the increase in the writing of dialogues.

Psychologically German Reformation dialogues present a kind of wish-fulfilment. Members of the opposition camp are roundly vilified and openly humiliated, and there can be no fear of repercussions:

Die Leser aber, die von der Geistlichkeit
 Unterdrückten, identifizieren sich mit dem
 Sprecher und erleben seine Argumentation
 als das, was gesagt werden muß.
 Volkstümlich ist
 ... der aggressive, der parteiliche Inhalt
 der Metapher, der die eigenen, die geheimen
 und unausgesprochenen Gedanken des breiten
 Publikums realisiert.¹⁰⁰

It is, of course, not only the reader who enjoys the spectacle of a character confounding a cleric. In their anonymous writings, authors could freely abuse Romanists and the Roman church. No doubt dialogues represent not actual situations but desirable ones in their authors' eyes - a satisfying, safe substitute for real, open confrontation.

Evaluating Reformation Dialogues

In the quest for a greater understanding of early 16th century German literature and its effect on its society, new disciplines have been explored for any insight they might offer in explaining the workings of polemical pamphlets. Marketing, mass communications theory, sociology, social psychology and media studies have all been recruited for the task; for example, B. Balzer applies information on marketing and propaganda practices to the formation of pro- and anti-Lutheran parties in Nuremberg around 1524, and J. Stalnacker uses theory derived from recent revolutions to account for insurgent behaviour in the 16th century.¹⁰¹ The application of modern theories to a historical situation may indeed throw up parallels.¹⁰² It is not necessarily the case, however, that the historical period is comparable to the modern data on which a theory is based.¹⁰³ A further difficulty in applying modern standards to a historical constellation of events is that present-day perception of the 16th century literature is by no means uniform. Differences in initial assumptions and opinions lead literary historians inevitably to divergent conclusions.

The following examples of contradictory impressions illustrate this problem. The question of what relationship the authors of Reformation dialogues had to the common people is an important one. On the one hand,

a literary historian declares that the dialogues exude first-hand knowledge of commoners:

Eine solche ästhetische Gestaltung setzte eine genaue Kenntnis des wirklichen Menschen voraus, speziell der Mentalität der Bauern und Handwerker und ihrer Probleme und Sorgen, und erst von dieser Kenntnis des historisch-konkreten Menschen her konnte seine Abbildung und der Entwurf seines Werdens, des Bewußtseinsprozesses, ..., gegeben werden.¹⁰⁴

On the other hand, the 'common man' hero in dialogues is considered to lack realistic traits:

In den Dialogen werden gern Einzelheiten aus dem täglichen Leben der Geistlichkeit, des Adels, seltener der Bauernschaft dargestellt.¹⁰⁵

As dialogues were written in so many guises, both statements could easily be illustrated by examples. On the subject of style, one historian asserts:

Ein persönlicher 'Stil' ist kaum festzustellen. Scheinbare Gleichförmigkeit der Argumentation ...; die Repetition, ..., ist ein überwältigender Eindruck, weil eine fast magische Eindringlichkeit aus der Monotonie entsteht.¹⁰⁶

Others refer specifically to "die stilistische Uneinheitlichkeit verschiedener Flugschriften ein- und derselben Gattung" or to "die Breite der literarischen Aussageweisen, die Mannigfaltigkeit und zugleich Differenziertheit, die relative Allseitigkeit im Ansprechen des Volkes."¹⁰⁷ Although information on the

numbers of copies and editions of various pamphlets is incomplete, there is enough evidence to suggest that some pamphlets enjoyed a great measure of popularity and that others appeared in a single edition only.¹⁰⁸ From this it can be inferred that contemporary recipients differentiated between the styles and content of texts, rather than judging them equally repetitious.

Yet another example of how specialists can draw virtually opposite conclusions refers to the general tone of pamphlets:

Die Sprache der anonymen Dialoge ist
rücksichtslos und vulgär.¹⁰⁹

Aber man vermeidet im allgemeinen
Schimpfworte und unfeine Ausdrücke,...¹¹⁰

It is true that some pamphlets use coarse language, while others show decorum. In some dialogues it is the 'common man' hero who uses vulgar oaths: "Ade, ein k^o bescheis dich!"¹¹¹ In this way the peasant demonstrates his own honesty, for he neither respects nor fears the Romanists.

In Weggespräch Hurenwirt tells Kunz: "du wilt, ich sol z^uchtig vor im [the bishop] reden: ich schetz in nit beßer denn ein h^urenwirt. darumb gebürt mir vor im, als vor meinem landsh^urenwirt, nit z^uchtiger z^u reden."¹¹² In other dialogues it is the clerics who use immoderate language, so demonstrating their moral degeneration. The canon in Chorherr und Schuhmacher is characterised by violent, coarse expressions, in contrast to the

cobbler's polite manner. In Karsthans Karsthans points out that Murner's speech is unrestrained:

Wie sind ir ein seltzam geistlich man,
thûn nit dan flûchen, schelten, toben
vnd den lûten böses wünschen.¹¹³

Individual quotations illustrate characteristics but cannot be wholly representative, given the great diversity among dialogues. Conclusions vary, as criteria vary, and there are few indisputable answers.

Research has shown that of pamphlets printed in the 2nd and 3rd decades of the 16th century the dialogue has by far the greatest frequency of 'oral' speech characteristics. The speech forms especially recurrent are questions, exclamations and ellipsis.¹¹⁴ J. Schildt advances the view that 'oral' speech characteristics became increasingly common up to the crucial years of 1524 and 1525; thereafter they decrease.¹¹⁵ His explanation for this "zunehmende[r] Heftigkeit der Auseinandersetzung" is that authors sought to influence wide sections of the populace. An intensification in emotive colouring and forcefulness of expression thus appears related to an intensification in conflict during these particular years. However, in a study which explores the changing alignments of Lutheran supporters in Nuremberg in 1524, B. Balzer makes seemingly different findings. He demonstrates how

Lutheran pamphleteers were at pains to tone down their writing and dissociate themselves from social ferment rather than risk disaffecting bourgeois support: "Die Aufgabe prolutherischer Propaganda war die Stilisierung des eigenen Images zu dem eines Garanten für Sicherheit und Ordnung."¹¹⁶ So, Sachs's Ein Evangelischer und ein Lutherischer Christ advocates moderation: Lutheran followers should avoid conflict and conform to the aims of the bourgeoisie.¹¹⁷ The apparent discrepancy between the above two analyses serves to underline the problems of forming generalisations about the literature of these years, given its diversity. Pamphleteers reflect disparate aims and interests and, nonetheless, have a great deal in common.

NOTES

1. Will-Erich Peuckert, Die Große Wende. Das apokalyptische Saeculum und Luther (Hamburg: Claassen & Goverts, 1948), p. 196ff.
2. G.G. Coulton, The Medieval Village, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought (Cambridge: University Press, 1925), p. 350.
3. Hans Rupprich, Die deutsche Literatur vom späten Mittelalter bis zum Barock. Das Zeitalter der Reformation 1520-1570, Vol. IV/2 of Geschichte der deutschen Literatur, ed. Helmut de Boor and Richard Newald (Munich: C.H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1973), p.15.
4. Helmut Brackert, Bauernkrieg und Literatur, edition suhrkamp 782 (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1975), p.16.
5. Barbara Könneker, Die deutsche Literatur der Reformationszeit (Munich: Winkler Verlag, 1975), p.10.
6. Erhard Jöst, Bauernfeindlichkeit. Die Historien des Ritters Neithart Fuchs, GAG, 192 (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1976), p. 270f.; Hermann Heimpel, "Characteristics of the Late Middle Ages in Germany," in Pre-Reformation Germany, ed. Gerald Strauß (London: Macmillan, 1972), p.67; Fritz Martini, Das Bauerntum im deutschen Schriftum von den Anfängen bis zum 16. Jahrhundert, DVJS Buchreihe 27 (Halle a. Saale: Niemeyer, 1944), p. 237 and p. 255.
7. R. W. Scribner, "Images of the Peasant, 1514 - 1525," JPS, 3, 1 (1975), 29 - 48, quote p.31.
8. Werner Wunderlich, Die Spur des Bundschuhs. Der Deutsche Bauernkrieg in der Literatur 1476 - 1976. (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1978), p.18: cited from Johann Friedrich, Astrologie und Reformation (Munich: Rieger, 1864), p.161.
9. Léopold Genicot, "Crisis: From the Middle Ages to Modern Times," in The Agrarian Life of the Middle Ages, ed. M. M. Postan, Vol. I of The Cambridge Economic History of Europe (Cambridge: University Press, 1966), p. 660.

10. Adolf Laube, "Precursors of the Peasant War: 'Bundschuh' and 'Armer Konrad' - Popular Movements at the Eve of the Reformation," JPS, 3, 1 (1975), 49-53, quote p.52.
11. Hans Rupprich, Die deutsche Literatur vom späten Mittelalter bis zum Barock. Das ausgehende Mittelalter, Humanismus und Renaissance 1370-1520, Vol.IV/1 of Geschichte der deutschen Literatur, ed. Helmut de Boor and Richard Newald (Munich:C.H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1970), p.292 and p. 370.
12. Norman Cohn, The Pursuit of the Millennium. Revolutionary millenarians and mystical anarchists of the Middle Ages (1957; rpt. London: Paladin, 1970), p. 198 ff.
13. Heiko A. Obermann, "Tumultus rusticorum: Vom 'Klosterkrieg' zum Fürstensieg," in ZfKG, 85, 2 (1974), 157.
14. Seufert, p. 158.
15. Hartmut Boockmann, "Zu den geistigen und religiösen Voraussetzungen des Bauernkrieges," in Bauernkriegs-Studien, ed. Bernd Moeller, SdVfRG, 189 (Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1975), p.25.
16. Boockmann, p.13.
17. Bernd Moeller, "Religious Life in Germany on the Eve of the Reformation," in Pre-Reformation Germany, p. 26f.
18. Könniker, p. 16 and p. 12.
19. Karl Kaulfuß-Diesch, Das Buch der Reformation (Leipzig, 1917), p. 12.
20. Robert Stupperich, Geschichte der Reformation, dtv 413 (Munich: DTV, 1967), p. 7.
21. Rupprich, Geschichte der deutsche Literatur, IV/2,23.
22. Peter Meinhold, Reformation im Bild (Berlin & Hamburg; Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1967), Introd., n.pag.
23. Obermann, "Tumultus rusticorum," pp. 157-60, rejects 'German' because insurrection was pan-European; he rejects 'War' because of the long tradition of armed conflicts; he rejects 'Peasant' because of the urban involvement. Otthein Rammstedt, "Stadtunruhen 1525," in Der Deutsche Bauernkrieg 1524-1526, ed.

Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Geschichte und Gesellschaft, Zeitschrift für historische Sozialwissenschaft, Sonderheft I* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975), p. 239, rejects the term 'Peasant', since it was coined by Luther and urban bourgeoisie to save the Reformation from discredit after the bloody uprising. Not solely the urban poor participated in uprisings, but also artisans organised in guilds (p. 252). Heinz Schilling, "Aufstandsbewegungen in der Stadtbürgerlichen Gesellschaft des Alten Reiches. Die Vorgeschichte des Münsteraner Täuferreichs, 1525 bis 1534," in Der Deutsche Bauernkrieg 1524-1526, p. 238, accepts 'Peasant' for, "Das 'Neue' spielte sich auf dem Lande ab, so daß die Bezeichnung 'Bauernkrieg' oder besser 'Bauernrevolte' u.ä. vielleicht doch nicht ganz ungeeignet ist, das Charakteristische der Vorgänge von 1525 zu erfassen." Peter Blickle uses the term "Die Revolution von 1525".

24. Surveys are given by Peter Blickle, Die Revolution von 1525 (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1977), pp. 9-19; Thomas Nipperdey, Reformation, Revolution, Utopie, Studien zum 16. Jahrhundert (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975), p. 88ff.; and most recently Rainer Wohlfeil, Einführung in die Geschichte der deutschen Reformation, Beck'sche Elementarbücher (Munich : Beck, 1982), p. 169 ff.
25. Günther Franz, Der deutsche Bauernkrieg, 11th ed. (1933; Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1977).
26. Horst Buszello, Der deutsche Bauernkrieg von 1525 als politische Bewegung mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der anonymen Flugschrift an die Versammlung gemayner Pawerschafft, Studien zur Europäischen Geschichte, 8 (Berlin: Colloquium, 1969), p. 144; "Gemeinde, Territorium und Reich in den politischen Programmen des Deutschen Bauernkrieges 1524/25," in Der Deutsche Bauernkrieg 1524-1526, ed. H.-U. Wehler, pp. 105-28.
27. Peter Blickle, ed., "Thesen zum Thema - Der 'Bauernkrieg' als Revolution des 'Gemeinen Mannes'", Revolte und Revolution in Europa, Historische Zeitschrift Beiheft, NS4 (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1975), p. 129; "The Economic, Social and Political Background of the 12 Articles of the Swabian Peasants of 1525," JPS, 3,1 (1975), 63-75.

28. David W. Sabeau, "German Agrarian Institutions at the beginning of the Sixteenth Century : Upper Swabia as an Example", JPS, 3, 1 (1975), 76-88; the same article in German, "Probleme der deutschen Agrarverfassung zu Beginn des 16. Jahrhunderts. Oberschwaben als Beispiel," in Revolte und Revolution, ed. P. Blickle, pp. 132-50.
29. František Graus, "From Resistance to Revolt: The late medieval Peasant Wars in the context of Social Crisis," JPS, 3, 1 (1975), 8.
30. Sabeau, "German Agrarian Institutions," p.83.
31. Laube, "Precursors of the Peasant War," p.50.
32. The background, development and current variations in the usage of the term 'Early Bourgeois Revolution' are to be found in Wohlfeil, Einführung, p. 174ff.
Ernst Engelberg, joint contributor to "'The Peasant War in Germany' by Friedrich Engels - 125 years after", JPS, 3, 1 (1975), 103-07: "Whatever Luther's and Calvin's subjective intentions may have been, it was the bourgeoisie that primarily read and heard their words and was mobilized by them in Germany, in England, and in France. It is, therefore, ridiculous to repeat the polemical suggestion that Marxist historians postulate "bourgeois revolutions without a bourgeoisie."
33. Adolf Waas, Die Bauern im Kampf um Gerechtigkeit 1300 - 1525, 2nd ed. (Munich: Callwey, 1976), p.25.
34. Genicot, p. 735.
35. Rudolf Endres, "Zur sozialökonomischen Lage und sozialpsychischen Einstellung des 'Gemeinen Mannes'. Der Kloster- und Burgensturm in Franken 1525," in Der Deutsche Bauernkrieg 1524 - 1526, ed. H.-U. Wehler, pp. 61-78.
36. Endres, p. 73.
37. Endres, p. 75.
38. Jöst, p. 170ff.; Scribner, "Images of the Peasant," p. 30.
39. Laube, "Precursors of the Peasant War," p.52.

40. Heide Wunder, "Zur Mentalität aufständischer Bauern. Möglichkeiten der Zusammenarbeit von Geschichtswissenschaft und Anthropologie, dargestellt am Beispiel des Samländischen Bauernaufstandes von 1525," in Der Deutsche Bauernkrieg 1524-1526, ed. H.-U. Wehler, p.16.
41. Blickle, "Background of the Twelve Articles," p.64.
42. For example, the studies of Heide Wunder (Samland), Rudolf Endres (Franconia), David Sabeau (Upper Swabia), and Rainer Postel, "Zur Sozialgeschichte Niedersachsens in der Zeit des Bauernkrieges," in Der Deutsche Bauernkrieg 1524 - 1526, pp. 79-104.
43. Obermann, "Tumultus rusticorum," p. 171f.
44. Hans J. Hillerbrand, The World of the Reformation (New York: Scribner, 1973), Preface, p.ix.
45. John C. Stalnaker, "Auf dem Weg zu einer sozialgeschichtlichen Interpretation des Deutschen Bauernkrieges 1525-1526," (trans. H.J. Ginsburg), in Der Deutsche Bauernkrieg 1524 - 1526, p.41.
46. Moeller, p. 21f.
47. Kurt Uhrig, "Der Bauer in der Publizistik der Reformation bis zum Ausgang des Bauernkrieges," ARG, 33 (1936), 108f.
48. Könniker, p. 22; Wohlfeil, Einführung, p. 126: "Der Höhepunkt war 1523/24 mit etwa tausendfacher Steigerung der Drucke gegenüber 1517."
49. Josef Schmidt, Lestern, lesen und lesen hören, Europäische Hochschulschriften, Reihe 1, Deutsche Literatur und Germanistik (Bern: Peter Lang, 1977), p. 46; Könniker, p. 23, puts the figure at 90%; Günter Vogler, "Der revolutionäre Gehalt und die räumliche Verbreitung der oberschwäbischen Zwölf Artikel," in Revolte und Revolution in Europa, p. 223: Printers of the 12 Articles also printed Luther's counter-pamphlet, Vermahnung zum Frieden auf die 12 Artikel.
50. Hannelore Winkler, Der Wortbestand von Flugschriften aus den Jahren der Reformation und des Bauernkrieges, Bausteine zur Sprachgeschichte des Neuhochdeutschen, 55 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1975), p. 23, and "Zum soziologischen Aspekt von Flugschriften aus der Zeit der Reformation und des Bauernkrieges," Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur, 94 (1974), 40f.

51. Rolf Engelsing, Analphabetentum und Lektüre. Zur Sozialgeschichte des Lesens in Deutschland zwischen feudaler und industrieller Gesellschaft (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1973), p. 26. Wohlfeil, Einführung, p.127: 11,000 different editions between 1501 and 1530, the vast majority of which were published between 1520 and 1530.
52. Gerhard Kettmann, Zur Literatursprache im Zeitalter der frühbürgerlichen Revolution, ed. G. Kettmann and Joachim Schildt, Bausteine zur Sprachgeschichte des Neuhochdeutschen, 58 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1978), Introd., p.11; John W. Van Cleve, "Converting the Common Man. German Dialogues of the Early Reformation," Colloquia Germanica, 13, 2 (1980), 97. Rudolf Hirsch, Printing, Selling and Reading 1450-1550 (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1967), p. 125f., disputes that an average number of copies can be gauged, "XVith-century books (published in editions as small as 45, but gradually mounting to more than 7,500)."
53. Simon, p. 15 f.
54. Engelsing, p. 26.
55. Hermann Meuche and Ingeborg Neumeister, eds., Flugblätter der Reformation und des Bauernkrieges. Aus der Sammlung der Schloßmuseums Gotha (Leipzig: Insel-Verlag 1976), p. 7: "Das Flugblatt gehört zu den Einblattdrucken und unterscheidet sich darin von der Flugschrift, die aus mehreren zu einer Broschüre zusammengesetzten Blättern besteht. Es ist ein einseitig bedrucktes Einzelblatt, das in wenigen Fällen aus zwei oder gar mehreren Blättern zu einem größeren Ganzen zusammengeklebt ist."
56. Winkler, Der Wortbestand, p. 23.
57. Winkler, Der Wortbestand, p. 29; Rupprich, Geschichte der deutschen Literatur, IV/2, 104; Schmidt, p. 49.
58. Meuche and Neumeister, p. 67.
59. Schmidt, p. 47; Suzanne Ritter, "Die kirchenkritische Tendenz in den deutschsprachigen Flugschriften der frühen Reformationszeit," Diss. Tübingen 1970, p.71; Johannes Voigt, "Über Pasquille, Spottlieder und Schmähschriften aus der ersten Hälfte des sechzehnten Jahrhunderts", Historische Taschenbücher von Fr. v. Raumer, 9 (Leipzig: 1838), p. 351 f.

60. Winkler, Der Wortbestand, p. 29.
61. Heinz Entner and Werner Lenk, "Literatur und Revolution im 16. Jahrhundert," Weimarer Beiträge, 16, 5 (1970), 155.
62. Meuche and Neumeister, p. 66.
63. H.-J. Köhler, H. Hebenstreit-Wilfert and C. Weismann are collecting and publishing on micro-cards all pamphlets written in German and Latin between 1501 and 1530 within the Holy Roman Empire (Flugschriften des frühen 16. Jahrhunderts).
64. This problem is being tackled by Michael A. Pegg, "Short Title Catalogues. Notes on Identity of Texts," in Flugschriften als Massenmedium der Reformationszeit, ed. H.-J. Köhler, Beiträge zum Tübinger Symposium 1980 (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1981), pp. 29 - 37.
65. Winkler, Der Wortbestand, p. 29f.
66. Heinz Scheible, "Reform, Reformation, Revolution. Grundsätze zur Beurteilung der Flugschriften," ARG 65 (1974), 120; Van Cleve, p. 11.
67. Entner and Lenk, p. 150 f.
68. Eyn clag vnd bitt der deutschē Nation an den almechtigen gott vmb erloszūg ausz dem gefencknis des Antichrist (ca. 1518?), Schade, I, 3.
69. Ich kan nit vil newes erdenckē /Ich muß der katzen tschellen anhencken (ca. 1518-20), Schade, I, 18.
70. Schieß, p. 303.
71. Lenk, p. 157 and p. 160 (Vater und Sohn).
72. Köhler et al. (1979), F. 268, No. 756, Ciiij (Christliches, lustiges Gespräch).
73. Rupprich, Geschichte der deutschen Literatur, IV/1, 493 f., 572.
74. Rupprich, Geschichte der deutschen Literatur, IV/1, 545, 536 f., 560.
75. Olga Gewerstock, Lucian und Hutten. Zur Geschichte des Dialogs im 16. Jahrhundert, Germanische Studien, 31 (1924; rpt. Nendeln: Kraus Reprint Ltd., 1967), p.12.

76. "Dialogue," Oxford Classical Dictionary: citing from Werner William Jaeger, Aristoteles: fundamentals of the history of his development, trans. Richard Robinson (Oxford, 1934).
77. Winkler, Der Wortbestand, p. 27.
78. A.M. Harmon, trans., Lucian, 3rd ed. (London: Heinemann, 1927) I, Introd., p. viii; Hajo Holborn, Ulrich von Hutten (1929; rpt. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1968), p. 76 and p. 108.
79. Gewerstock, p. 29.
80. Voigt, p. 337.
81. Entner and Lenk, p. 150.
82. Ein vnderred des bapsts vnd seiner cardinelen wie im zu thun sey/ vnd das wort Gottes vnder zu trucken, eyn yeglicher sich darauff zu bedencken (1524), Schade, III, 74-100.
83. Pascuillus Ain warhafftiges büchlein Erklerend was list die Römer brauchen, mit Creiren viler Cardinäl, auff das sy alle Bistumb Deijscher land vnder sich bringen (1520), Böcking, IV, pp. 465 - 84; Köhler et al. (1978), F. 172, No. 473. The foreword of the dialogue explains that lampoons were affixed to a column in Rome, and the woodcut depicts it. J. Voigt gives this account of the genesis of pasquils (pp. 343 - 45), as well as an account of the Roman cobbler Pasquino, who was famed for his biting satire. After his death a broken column found and erected near his dwelling was used for sticking amusing or sarcastic notes to - often put in Pasquino's mouth. Marforio was a statue opposite and often questions and answers between the two were concocted (pp. 340 - 42).
84. M. M. Guchmann, Die Sprache der deutschen politischen Literatur in der Zeit der Reformation und des Bauernkrieges, Bausteine zur Sprachgeschichte des Neuhochdeutschen, 54 (Berlin : Akademie-Verlag, 1974), p.47.
85. Hermann Strobach, "Die Bauern sind aufrührig worden. Lieder aus dem Bauernkrieg," in Der arm man 1525. Volkskundliche Studien, ed. H. Strobach, Akademie der Wissenschaften der DDR, Zentralinstitut für Geschichte, 59 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1975), pp. 237 - 73.
86. Lenk, p. 17f. and p. 22; Winkler, Der Wortbestand, p. 27; Seufert, p. 174 f.

87. Bernd Balzer, Bürgerliche Reformationspropaganda. Die Flugschriften des Hans Sachs in den Jahren 1523-1525 (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1973), p. 100.
88. Simon, p. 18.
89. Joachim Schildt, "Sprechsprachliche Gestaltungsmittel," in Zur Literatursprache im Zeitalter der frühbürgerlichen Revolution, ed. G. Kettmann and J. Schildt (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1978), p. 83, explains the contrast between the two strains of dialogue as being a result of their separate lines of descent.
90. Guchmann, p. 46.
91. Lenk, pp. 40-43.
92. Winkler, Der Wortbestand, p. 27.
93. Wolfgang Pfeifer, "Volkstümliche Metaphorik," in Zur Literatursprache im Zeitalter der frühbürgerlichen Revolution, p. 206.
94. Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, The printing press as an agent of change. Communications and cultural transformations in early-modern Europe (Cambridge: University Press, 1979), I, 63.
95. Schade, III, 53 (Gespräch des Apostolikums).
96. Hildegard Schnabel, "Zur Funktion und Wirkung der volkssprachlichen Literatur" in Grundpositionen der deutschen Literatur im 16. Jahrhundert, ed. Ingeborg Spriewald et al., Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin, Zentralinstitut für Literaturgeschichte (Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 1972), p. 105.
97. Berger, p. 41. Also Simon, p. 25: "Binnen kurzem wird der satirisch-dramatische Prosadialog zum beliebtesten Genre der 'Sturmjahre'."
98. Spriewald, p. 10.
99. Schade, III, 54 (Gespräch des Apostolikums).
100. Pfeifer, p. 197.
101. Stalnaker, pp. 38-60.
102. Schmidt, p. 30: "Wenn man nun versucht, diese moderne soziologische Analyse als Hypothese historisch anzuwenden, ergeben sich erstaunliche Parallelen."
103. Wohlfeil, Einführung, p. 170.

104. Werner Lenk, "Grundzüge des Menschenbildes," in Grundpositionen der deutschen Literatur im 16. Jahrhundert, ed. I. Spriewald et al., p. 225.
105. Guchmann, p. 147.
106. Schmidt, p. 28.
107. Guchmann, p. 155; Entner and Lenk, p. 160.
108. Karsthans 10 editions known; Neu Karthans only two known editions.
109. Pfeifer, p. 198.
110. Gottfried Blochwitz, "Die antirömischen deutschen Flugschriften der frühen Reformationszeit (bis 1522) in ihrer religiös-sittlichen Eigenart," ARG, 27 (1930), 230.
111. Lenk, p. 223 (Bauer, Belial, Erasmus und Dr. Faber).
112. Schade, III, 189.
113. Lenk, p. 72.
114. Guchmann, p. 143f.; Schildt, p. 76f.
115. Schildt, p. 81f.
116. Balzer, p. 138ff.
117. Spriewald, p. 28.

PART I AN ANALYSIS OF GERMAN REFORMATION DIALOGUES

CHAPTER 1 Questions of authorship

By far the greater number of dialogues published between 1520 and 1525 is anonymous. Many pamphlets do, however, allow information about their authors to be deduced. Scholarly references to the Ancients, quotations from Church Fathers, Biblical references given according to the Vulgate, and the use of Latin, are common characteristics in many dialogues and indicate that they were certainly written by educated men. From style and content one can assume that authors came from the ranks of clerics, former clerics or humanistically educated laymen. It is true, then, "daß auch Humanisten und andere lehrmäßige Nichtlutheraner Anhänger der Reformation waren." ¹ These conclusions are borne out by those authors who do name themselves.² Alongside clergymen and Humanists are also artisan-poets like Hans Sachs, who belonged to the craftsman bourgeoisie of Nuremberg. Bourgeois authors are thus also included in the process of creating propaganda. The generalisation is valid that the pamphlets largely represent "die Anschauungen der humanistischen Bevölkerungsschichten" and that their authors are to be found among "die humanistischen Theologen, die humanistischen Gelehrten und das aufgeklärte Bürgertum."³ The inclusion of artisan writers represents an innovation:

Eine der beachtenswerten Erscheinungen der Literatur dieser Jahre ist die Tatsache, daß von unten her, nämlich aus dem Kreis der städtischen Handwerkerdichter, geistig und in der dichterischen Technik, der Anschluß an diesen Kreis gelehrter Dialogschöpfer gefunden wird.⁴

While the above generalisation about authors' social background is well-founded, the pamphleteers do not form a homogeneous group, but display many differences in opinions, style, ability and education. Perhaps experience, too, plays some role, since Humanists who were already publicists would have become involved in the new movement and its particular modes of writing.⁵ Considerable disparity is evident, for example, in the use writers make of learned allusions. That some authors draw constantly on their wide knowledge and others make few or no scholarly references may well be attributable to the varying levels of education that publicists enjoyed. A lack of learned allusion, however, could possibly have been a premeditated policy by some writers to play down the role of education.

In contrast to Humanist circles that held education in the highest esteem, many who wrote in support of Luther and reform stressed the importance of the common man's 'simplicity' and turned it into his weapon. Nonetheless considerable differences can be seen in writers' ability to express themselves - presumably not the result of a

conscious ploy. Judging from their writings not all pamphleteers were accomplished scholars: the author of the verse dialogue Strafrede und Unterricht (1521) was not the peasant he calls himself, but neither does he seem to be a scholarly author.⁶ His "oft recht zerfahrene[n] Gedanken-gänge [n]" indicate the unpractised author⁷; "Dieses der Form nach sehr rohe und auch im Aufbau und der Faßung der Gedanken nicht sehr durchsichtige Gedicht" points to a fairly untrained poet.⁸ The author of Hans Schwalb (1521) has a knowledge of Latin, which might point to clerical training, while his clumsy composition, on the other hand, would seem to indicate, "daß der Verfasser doch aus den weniger gebildeten Laienkreisen stammt."⁹ His creation Hans seems to value education little:

was dürffen wir armen hantwercksleüt oder
bauleüt söllicher vnutzer leüt als schüller,
schreyber, Baccalarien, magistri, Doctores,
wann sy nyemant nutz sölle sein, dann
das man ain mit feür solt bekeren züm glauben.¹⁰

Even though pamphleteers were to some degree educated men, many make it clear that they set no store by formal schooling. The peasant in the dialogue Hans Knüchel voices scepticism about humanist principles of education, despite the fact that those very principles were responsible for the existence of the vernacular Bible he extols:

Man findt jetzundt vyl, die do Kriechisch
vnd Hebreisch wellen reden vnd leren, welche
do mit grosser marter kümmerlich können zû
teütsch das wort gottes an tag bringen

Ich wolt gern wissen, was wir doch me zungen
bedörfften zû der liebe gottes und deß nächsten,
dann vnser zungen.¹¹

The author is undoubtedly a schooled theologian, who uses the Bible, canon law and Church fathers to give foundation to his arguments. Nevertheless he espouses 'simplicity' through his mouthpiece Hans, "der do nie vff kein schül ist kummen, noch by gelerten lüten nie gewont, weder kriechisch noch hebreisch kan."¹² His dictum is: "ein schlechter einfeltiger mensch durch sein einfaltigkeit die warheit fruchtbarlicher an tag bringt, dann siben hochgelerter naßweisen."¹³

Caution is essential when deducing from the sentiments expressed in a pamphlet information about its author. What pamphlets express may offer clues to their writers' background, but they are fiction and propaganda and not biographical. So the views that are voiced need not strictly accord with those held by the writer. For example, when the peasant in Petrus und Bauer says, "Der bawer mus noch die
? Sachen richten, muß auch noch ein mal herr im haus werden, dem pfaffen den flegel auch geben,..", that of course does not mean that the author approves of beating clerics nor that the author believes peasants will beat clerics.¹⁴

Pamphleteers were by no means too primitive to indulge in conscious audience manipulation. In Die Anschauenden Hutten

depicts drunkenness among German nobles in such a light as to make the reader feel shame. In this case it was Hutten's conviction that it was only drunkenness which marred an otherwise exemplary nobility. The technique of selective focus and the use of easily absorbed arguments mark the works of propagandists writing to impress certain views on the readership. One cannot expect, therefore, that they expound in full their own opinions. A pamphlet is not a complete statement of its author's religious convictions, although it will reflect them in broad terms.

Dass die Argumentation sich eher im emotionalen als im logischen Bereich bewegt, darf als erwiesen gelten.¹⁵

Studies that measure the theological content of pamphlets against Luther's doctrines run the risk of judging too narrowly the religious beliefs of the authors. G. Blochwitz's study differentiates between authors who adhere closely to Luther's teaching ("echte[r] Lutheraner") and those who, while supporting Luther, have either not understood or not adopted his teaching ("unevangelische Evangelischen").¹⁶ His results demonstrate that in pamphlets up to 1522 authors are still very much conditioned by standard Catholic tradition, although they vociferously reject Church practices. Reform within the Church is sought, not a new faith. In Neu Karsthans, for example, Karsthans comments, "Wie gern wölten wir sie eren vnd neren, wann sie irem ampt nachgiengen."¹⁷ In Von den vier größten Beschwer-

nissen the preacher in the dialogue is pro-Luther, but is at the same time conventional in his beliefs, for example, in worshipping saints and Mary. Salvation is frequently considered attainable through good works (Von der Zwietracht, Hans Knüchel); the New Testament is commonly taken to be the ethical 'Lex Christi' in the Erasmian way. The findings of Blochwitz's study prove that the majority of Luther's publicist supporters did not reproduce exclusively Luther's doctrines in their writing:

Aber so eifrig und so gern man Luther auch gelesen haben mag - oft genug hat man ihn mißverstanden, und seinen evangelischen Standpunkt haben sich nur wenige zu eigen gemacht. Es muß sogar heißen, die wenigsten haben das getan.¹⁸

S. Ritter comes to the conclusion that the majority of anonymous pamphlets were written by authors who fall into the category of "der Reformation fernerstehenden Publizisten."¹⁹ For this apparent anomaly H. Scheible offers the following explanation: "Wenn die Propagandisten der Reformation dieser Reformation fernestehen, so dürfte der Widerspruch in der Terminologie zu suchen sein."²⁰ If authors choose to mention some areas of Luther's teaching and ignore others, it does not prove that they were not in fact strict adherents of Luther. If authors lend their support to some aspects of Luther's

doctrines and endorse, too, others contrary to Luther, then there are several possible reasons. Either they were not acquainted with Luther's teaching in its entirety, or they did not comprehend what it involved, or they did not feel moved to conform to it completely, preferring to follow established tenets of Roman Catholicism in some matters. It seems reasonable to assume that many publicists supporting reform saw Luther as their figurehead but did not recognise him as the sole authority. Rather they offered in their pamphlets their own particular mixture of grounds for reform and desirable kinds of reform.

Within the broad category of anti-clerical and pro-Luther pamphlets written between 1520 and 1525 many individual strains are contained. Some claim Ulrich von Hutten as leader, when his interests coincide with their own. In Der lebendige Märtyrer the speaker blames the impoverishment of nobles on monasteries:

darumb bit ich alle die die von dem
Adel geborn seind/das sy güt lutherisch
seyen vñ folgen nach der warhait Christi/
so wöllen wir reich werden/fröuwe dich
edler von Hutten der schreyner hoblet
den₂spieß darmit ich dir zühilff kommen
wil.

In Kurtisan, Edelmann und Bürger the courtier declares that the nobility and clergy are closely united. He does not object to "ein gut reformation" if it is brought about "in ainigūg der obrigkeit vnd nit mit dem gemeinen bofel."

However, he repudiates the violent measures supported in the preceding dialogue:

aber Luthers vnd Hutten anschlag gefellt mir
nit/das sie raten man sol mit hellenparten
vnd spiessen das zuwegen bringen.²²

Other dialogues show signs of being influenced by the teachings of Andreas Bodenstein, known as Karlstadt. For example, in Neu Karsthans pictures, organs and bells in church are disapproved of: "Fürwar, do ich ein jünglich was, wann man inn kirchen vff den orgelen pfiff, gelustet mich z^u dantzen. Vnd wann ich hort singen, ward ich im fleisch, aber nit im geist bewegt. Hett auch oft böse gedanken in anschauung der fr^öwlichen bildungen auff den altaren."²³ Similarly in Hans Schwalb church-organs and bells are denounced.

Although most dialogues were published anonymously, several were published under pseudonyms. Some pseudonyms are obviously such, for example, Roman Pasquillus (Römische Pfaffen and Lutherische Bauern)²⁴ and Judas Nazarei.²⁵ Others are not so obvious: Simon Hessus²⁶, Hans Bechler in Fuchs und Wolf (accepted as genuine by O. Schade, doubted by B. Könneker²⁷), Ulrich Bossler in Gespräch des Apostolikums (accepted by O. Schade, doubted by P. Kalkoff²⁸). Thought to be fictitious is the name Hans Heinrich Freiermüt, author of the verse composition Triumphus Veritatis (1524/25)²⁹. The author of Edelmann, Mönch und Kurtisan substitutes an enigmatic slogan for his name: "Es ist assunn. J.M."³⁰

Unterrede des Papsts und seiner Kardinäle (1524) also begins and ends with, "Mein reim heit Es ist assunn."³¹ Presumably the author, claiming to be "ein schlichter doctor", is the same, but it is not necessarily the case. It may well be that the slogan "Es ist assunn" and the initials J. M. indicate the identity of the printer, not the writer, of the pamphlet. It is now clear that all pamphlets ending in the letters P.G. were not in fact written by Pamphilus Gengenbach but only printed by him, as, for example, Hans Knchel.³² Ulrich von Hutten had the personal slogan "Ich habs gewagt." A similar slogan concludes the anonymous Bembus, Silenus und Narr : "Ich het schier gelachet."³³

Not only authors concealed their identity. Most dialogues omit the place of publication and name of printer. Some even give fictitious publication details. Lutherische und ppstliche Pfaffen claims to be : "Getruckt z Lumbitsch auf dem federmark." The pamphlet was in fact printed in Nuremberg.³⁴ Weggesprch gives publication information as "Gedruckt z Arnaw an der Elb in Bhem," instead of Zurich, and "Hans Ho von Brawn" instead of Christoph Froschauer the Elder.³⁵ By 1524 most dialogues give the year of publication. When authors write under assumed names or omit any name, when publication details may be designed to confuse or are omitted altogether, then one wonders to what extent the information that is given in the text is genuine.

One possible explanation for such obfuscation is the fear of reprisals:

Die städtischen Obrigkeiten, in deren Ordnungsbereich die Druckereien solcher Schriften meist lagen, versuchten, soweit sie nicht bereits auf der reformatorischen Seite standen, solche Produktionen einzudämmen, wenn nicht gar zu unterdrücken. Aber gegen wen sollten sie vorgehen?³⁶

Lack of publication details served to protect printers. Speakers in numerous dialogues assert that they dare not divulge their identity for fear of punishment. This may in part be a secrecy topos. Still, clerics who sympathised with Church reform and Luther's teaching would be unlikely to profess this openly if their superiors were strongly loyal to Rome. The canon in Vom Christlichen Glaubens says he cannot speak out in Luther's support for fear of forfeiting his livings; the priests in this dialogue echo his sentiments.³⁷ The author of Strafrede und Unterricht, calling himself a peasant, also claims he cannot forego anonymity:

Darf mich auch nit offenbaren
Vor forcht der großen juden scharen.³⁸

The author of Spruch vom bösen Mißbrauch (1524/5), calling himself "ein ordenmann", says he must conform to monastic ways:

Ich darf es warlich nit laut sagen:
Wie die ros ziehent, also gat der wagen.³⁹

While one cannot gauge to what extent such statements

might possibly reflect reality or the mood of the time, they certainly act as condemnation of the Roman church.

The mood evoked is one of insecurity and fearful expectation. At the end of Vom Christlichen Glauben, for example, the Lutheran canon and priests ask to whom they should dedicate "das büchlin". The answer is : "wir wöllen kainen namen darein setzen wer waißt wie es gat wañ got vermag alle ding. Amen."⁴⁰ The peasants in Kunz und Fritz advocate a wait-and-see policy: "Laß uns ain weil sparmunde machen und laß die schwarzen wolken in dem rausch ietz mal über gon "⁴¹ Some publicists may have had to take into account the preferences of their patrons. It is said that Erasmus chose his topics carefully to appeal to public taste.⁴² Patronage and writers' desire for self-advancement may have been a factor in dictating topics and treatment, whereas anonymous or pseudonymous works would permit greater candour.

Some of the references to the need for secrecy made in dialogues and other pamphlets suggest a topos. The comments of "ein ordenmann" are such an instance:

Das wil ich heimlich sagen mir
In still und in geheim alein:
Es hörts iez niemant, als ich mein.⁴³

Interlocutors often hope that no-one will overhear their words. B. Könneker considers that a "Neigung zur Mystifikation, d.h. zum 'Spiel mit der Maske'" is at least as

important a factor in anonymous or pseudonymous writing as censorship and fear of reprisals.⁴⁴ K. Simon makes the point that authors submerged their identity to prove their concern not with personalities but with the topic.⁴⁵ He uses Thomas Murner as an illustration. Murner published anonymously even though, as a loyal supporter of the papacy, he had nothing to fear from the authorities. A base construction is put on this very deed in Karsthans, where Murner is accused of publishing anonymously only until he is assured of a successful reception. A further possible explanation given is that authors chose anonymity, the better to blend with the crowd, so becoming public mouthpieces.⁴⁶

Among those authors who do name themselves are Humanist members of the lower nobility: Ulrich von Hutten, Johann Eberlin von Günzburg and Heinrich von Kettenbach, these last two former members of monasteries. Clerics who published their names in dialogues are Kaspar Güttel and Michael Kramer. Members of the bourgeois artisan-class are Hans Sachs and Utz Richner.⁴⁷ One can assume that those who chose to abandon the customary shield of anonymity were in one way or another protected, perhaps through their own independence or by a powerful patron. Michael Kramer's Unterredung vom Glauben represents a debate between a Christian and a Jew and is, therefore, not offensive to the Church. Balthasar Stanberger,

author of Petrus und Bauer and Prior, Laienbruder und Bettler, was employed at the court of Frederick the Wise, Luther's influential patron.⁴⁸ Ulrich Bossler, if indeed the author's real name, claims to be employed "bei einem furnemen herfarnen man, der nit allein großmechtig fursten vnd herren beherberigt,..."⁴⁹

In the past, research has concerned itself a great deal with establishing the identity of pamphleteers. On the basis of such criteria as dialect forms, authors of anonymous works were 'identified' from among the ranks of known publicists of the time. Thus to Martin Bucer, for example, have been attributed Neu Karsthans and Pfarrer und Schultheiß, to Urbanus Rhegius Kunz und Fritz, to Joachim von Watt Karsthans. The results of this process are by no means beyond dispute and in numerous cases scholars have contradicted one another. The argument in favour of this approach is that by finding out an author's identity, understanding of his writing will be deepened. This does not take into account that for certain particular reasons the author chose to publish anonymously. There is little point in trying to ascertain an author's standpoint through establishing his identity, when his view will anyway undergo changes and development with the course of events and with passing time. Johann Eberlin von Günzburg is one writer known to have changed his position during his career as publicist. He presented in Die 15 Bundsgenossen

(1521) a programme of reform in the tradition of 'Gravamina'. When he went to Wittenberg, he became a supporter of Luther and his doctrines. Later he distanced himself from Lutheran views and adopted the ideals of Erasmus.⁵⁰

Several pamphleteers purport to belong to the common people, either the peasantry or artisans. The author of Der Schweizer Bauer claims on the title-page:

Diß büchlin hat gemacht ein Baur auß dem
Entlibüch,
Wem es nit gefall, der küß im die brüch.⁵¹

The rhyming dialogue Strafrede und Unterricht claims to be the work of a peasant⁵²; Die Göttliche Mühle (1521), an allegory thought to be the work of Hans Füssli and Huldrych Zwingli, states on the title-page: "Das hond zwen schweytzer bauren gemacht."⁵³ Ein kurzes Gedicht (1521) referring specifically to the preceding pamphlet tells the reader in the title that a peasant from Thurgau composed it.⁵⁴ Yet the peasant quotes from Terence and Hesiod. This example illustrates that the fiction of a peasant-author took this writer's fancy and he adopted it himself. Presumably in this way the notion of a common man as author became a vogue. In Hans Knüchel the peasant says he is the author of Der evangelische Bürger (1524).⁵⁵ The layman Hans Schwalb asks: "wie darff ain baur büecher schreyben oder machen oder leeren ain anndern, so er kain priester ist vnnd hat des nicht gewalt?"⁵⁶ He answers that peasants must become

active when the clergy refuse. In Wallfahrt ins Grimmerthal the "ich" - speaker who introduces the scene becomes the "Hantwerckssman" who dominates the dialogue. The "ich"-persona thus claims to be a participant in and reporter of a real episode, not an author.⁵⁷ The dialogue itself is presented as a transcription of an 'actual conversation.' Since the 'common man' character in dialogues puts forward the author's point of view, it becomes understandable that the author sometimes calls himself a 'common man'. As far as the authorship of polemical pamphlets between 1520 and 1525 is concerned, there is no evidence to support the following view: "In the German Peasant War the preparatory stage was not as in Bohemia, the work of clerics and preachers, but of peasant and urban propagandists."⁵⁸ Between 1520 and 1525 clerics, preachers, nobles and artisans alike were all involved in producing propaganda. There is no proof of real peasants being involved in propaganda writing, unless they are the educated or theologically trained sons of peasants.⁵⁹

For what reasons then did well-educated and not so educated Humanists, or men influenced by humanist views, pretend to be 'common men' of little education. They did not so sustain the fiction as to exclude learned remarks and passages of Latin from their writing. On the contrary, scholarly knowledge is used intensively to prove their superiority over the opposition. It is possible that some people did believe the fiction despite the learned

references. The preacher known as the "Peasant of Wöhrd" was, after all, held to be a genuine peasant. He claimed he could neither read nor write and yet could speak Latin, Greek and Hebrew, knew Scripture and the Church Fathers. He was taken seriously for a wonder, even by scholars until his true identity, that of a fugitive monk, was revealed.⁶⁰ His claims did not appear to his contemporaries as a flagrant impossibility.

Martin Luther spoke of himself as the son of a peasant and specifically included the common man in his programme for a new faith. In his writing he enrolled from the start the common people as active participants in his cause. Pamphlets in general, dialogues in particular, reflect this notion, that the common man is deeply involved in Church reform and a reformation. In claiming to belong to the common people themselves, authors enter further into the democratic spirit: "Der Fiktion in der Verfasserschaft entspricht eine Versetzung der Dialoge etc. in die mittleren und unteren Volksschichten."⁶¹ It is, however, questionable whether authors called themselves peasants simply to make their works more popular within the real peasantry.⁶² In many types of pamphlets two chief associations are connected with the 'peasant' or 'common man.' First he has now become informed of Church degeneration and will not tolerate it for much longer; secondly the peasant is often a Karsthans figure, wielding a flail, who will punish the clergy for their sins. By calling himself a peasant, the author is

casting himself in the role of anti-clerical scourge, which is precisely what he is. For example, the allegorical print on the title-page of Die Göttliche Mühle shows Karsthans swinging his flail at Romanists and defending Erasmus and Luther. The pamphlet claims to be the work of two peasants and writes in praise of Erasmus and Luther; the author is allegorically Karsthans, informed and punishing. At the same time the author is playing on the "terror which was inspired in the popular mind by the thought of a peasant revolution."⁶³ Publicists emphasise the point that should any peasant violence erupt, it would be directed solely at spokesmen and officials of the Roman church. Johann Eberlin von Günzburg intimates in Sieben fromme aber trostlose Pfaffen (1521) that anti-clerical pamphleteers and the peasants are in league:

... wie ein Doctnarr z^u Freiburg (als
man sagt) wider sye [Die 15 Bundgenossen]
schreibt, ligt nit daran, sye sollen jm
wol antworten, wann auch Karsthans z^u
jn gefallen ist, feder vnd flegel fügen
wol zesammen.⁶⁴

Pen and flail are complementary means of furthering the same cause, he writes, which implicitly suggests that publicists can use to their advantage the threat of the flail.

It is inconceivable for writers from earlier eras to have pretended they were common people: changes in attitude towards the peasantry and lowest social classes made it

possible. Changes in attitude would have resulted from a plurality of factors. Perhaps one factor is that Humanists, being recruited from various social strata and united in education, tended, therefore, towards a levelling of social differences.⁶⁵ Several influential figures among them were in fact sons of peasants: for instance, Conrad Celtis, Jakob Wimpheling and Crotus Rubeanus. F. Martini has suggested that Humanists' sympathies with the real populace of their country may have been partly due to their own parentage and partly based on their own encounters with that class: "Eine lebendige, aus eigener Erfahrung gewachsene Neigung zum Bauerntum als vertrautem Volksboden läßt sich bei vielen Humanisten beobachten."⁶⁶ Scepticism about this assessment seems justified⁶⁷; although it is true that Humanists "entstammten mehrheitlich keineswegs städtischen Ober-, sondern sozial minder- oder gar unterpriviligierten Schichten, so daß sich mit dem Humanismus gesellschaftlicher Aufstieg verbinden konnte."⁶⁸ Lack of evidence about the personal identity of the authors, however, does not materially prevent an understanding of the arguments and information contained in the texts.

NOTES

1. Ritter, p.26.
2. Simon, p.18.
3. Blochwitz, p. 245.
4. Lenk, p.31.
5. Simon, p.18.
6. Ain straffred vnd ain vnderricht/Wie es des bapsts junger auff geytz hond zů gericht/Darwider ist auff erstanden ain baur vnd ain reitter/ Leeßt fürbas so wert ir hören weyter, Schade, II, 175 - 89.
7. Blochwitz, p. 192.
8. Schade, II, 349.
9. Beclagung aines leyens genant Hanns Schwalb über vil mißbreüch Christliches lebens, vnd darin begriffen kürtzlich von Johannes Hußsen, Clemen, I, 344 - 57, ed. W. Lucke. Cited p. 343.
10. Clemen, I, 351.
11. Clemen, I, 231.
12. Clemen, I, 230.
13. Clemen, I, 235.
14. Lenk, p. 177.
15. Schmidt, p. 29.
16. Blochwitz, pp. 145 - 254.
17. Lenk, p. 102.
18. Blochwitz, p. 239f.
19. Ritter, pp. 80-95.
20. Scheible, p. 114.
21. Clemen, Fac., Vol. I, No. 2, b^a.
22. Köhler et al.(1979), Fiche 267, No. 752.

23. Lenk, p. 112.
24. Ein lüstigs Gespräch der Römischen Pfaffen vnd Lutherischen Baurn, cited by Guchmann, p. 49.
25. Das Wolffgesang (1520/1), Schade, III, 1-35 and Köhler et al. (1980), Fiche 381, No. 1055. Vom alten und neuen Gott, Glauben und Lehre (1521), ed. Eduard Kück, in Flugschriften aus der Reformationszeit, XII, 142-43 (Halle a. Saale: Niemeyer, 1896), 1 - 68.
26. Simon Hesus appears as a character in 2 Latin dialogues from 1521 (and their German translations) between Hesus and Luther. Bibliographical details: Schade, II, 333f.; printed (the German versions) in Böcking, IV, 601-14. Hesus is mentioned in Pfarrer und Schultheiß as "des bapsts diener," Lenk, p. 131. Alfred Götze, "Urban Rhegius als Satiriker," ZfdP, 37 (1905), 66-113, here p.102; "Otto Clemen hat im Centralblatt für bibliothekswesen 17, 566 fgg. nachgewiesen, dass unter dem pseudonym Simon Hesus kein anderer als Rhegius verborgen ist; entscheidend dafür ist, dass er sich nach einem briefe Hetzers an Zwingli selbst zu den schriften bekannt hat, die unter dem namen Simon Hesus ausgegangen ist."
27. Schade, II, 295; Köneker, p.203.
28. Schade, III, 243; P. Kalkoff, Die Reformation in Nürnberg, p. 3ff., p. 15ff. - cited in Blochwitz, p. 191, n.8. Kalkoff suspects Lazarus Sprengler behind the pseudonym.
29. Schade, II, 196-251.
30. Schade, III, 111. According to Götze, "Urban Rhegius," p.74, n.1, "Es ist assun" is Hebrew and means it is completed.
31. Ein vnderred des bapsts vnd seiner cardinelen wie im zu thun sey/ vnd das wort Gottes vnder zu trucken, eyn yeglicher sich darauff zu bedencken (1524), Schade, III, 74-100.
32. Schieß, p. 343; Alfre Götze, Introd., Hans Knüchel, Clemen, I, p. 213ff. (Arthur Richel, Introd., Abt, Kurtisan und Teufel, Clemen, III, 1ff., claims Gengenbach is the author of Hans Knüchel.)
33. Schade, III, 218.
34. Köhler et al. (1979), Register, p. 20.
35. Köhler et al. (1979), Register, p. 39.

36. Brackert, p. 67.
37. Clemen, Fac., Vol. 1, No. 1, Aiiij^a, A4^a.
38. Schade, II, 188f. ("Mit den Juden sind die Feinde des Evangeliums gemeint." p. 349)
39. Ain schener spruch von dem bösen mißprauch in der hayligen Christenhait entstanden, Schade, I, 27-37; cited here p. 30.
40. Clemen, Fac., Vol. 1, No. 1, B^b.
41. Schade, II, 126.
42. Leopold von Ranke, History of the Reformation in Germany, trans. Sarah Austin, Bk. I (London: Routledge, 1905), p. 288.
43. Schade, I, 31.
44. Könneker, p. 26.
45. Simon, p. 17f.
46. G. Bebermeyer, "Flugschrift," Reallexikon der deutschen Literaturgeschichte, I, 2nd ed. (1958), p. 467 - cited by Simon, p. 18.
47. The historical existence of Ulrich Richsner was established by Friedrich Roth, Augsburger Reformationsgeschichte (1881), p. 148 - cited by Paul Böckmann, "Der gemeine Mann in den Flugschriften der Reformation," DVJS, 22 (1944), 191, n.1. See Weber und Kramer and Köhler et al. (1978), Fiche 9, No. 36 (Pfaffe und Weber).
48. Clemen, III, 191f.
49. Schade, III, 36.
50. Könneker, p. 28; Blochwitz, p. 159f.; Rupprich, IV/2, 121 f.
51. Schieß, p. 300.
52. Schade, II, 189.
53. Das hond zwen schweytzer bauren gemacht. Fürwar sy hond es wol betracht (1521), Schade, I, 19-26. Authorship in Clemen, I, 316 and Rupprich, IV/2, 119.
54. Ain kurtz gedicht so neüwlich ain thurgöwischer Paur/ Doctor Martini Luther vnd seiner ler/zñ lob vnd seinē widerwertigē / zñ spot gemacht hat (1521), Schade, II, 160 - 64.

55. Clemen, I, 243. Der evangelische Bürger, Köhler et al. (1980), Fiche 463, No. 1251.
56. Clemen, I, 351.
57. Lenk, p. 179.
58. Graus, "From Resistance to Revolt," p.7.
59. Rupprich, IV/2, 105, asserts that peasants were involved as "Verfasser der Kontrovers- und Tendenz-literatur."
60. Scribner, "Images of the Peasant," p.31.
61. Rupprich, IV/2, 111.
62. Winkler, Der Wortbestand, p.28.
63. D. R. L. Heald, "The Peasant in mediaeval German literature - Realism and literary traditionalism c. 1150 - 1400," Diss. London 1970, p. 177.
64. Syben frum̄ aber trostlos pfaffen klagen ire not (1521), in Johann Eberlin von Günzburg. Sämtliche Schriften, Vol. 2, ed. Ludwig Enders, Neudrucke des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts, 170-72 (Halle a. Saale: Niemeyer, 1900), p. 74.
65. Lewis W. Spitz, "The Course of German Humanism," in Itinerarium Italicum, ed. H.A. Obermann (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1975), p. 378f.
66. Martini, pp. 250-52.
67. Heald, p. 275 f.
68. Wohlfeil, Einführung, p. 115.

CHAPTER 2 Aims of dialogue authors

Winning support

The aims of Reformation pamphlets were several, but the primary, original aim was no doubt a propagandist one of engendering support for the cause: "Die Flugschriften der Reformationszeit sind nicht in erster Linie Dichtungen, sehr selten theologische Traktate und wohl nie 'objektive' Tatsachenberichte."¹ The wealth of issues discussed and the way they were treated in pamphlets led to a wide spectrum of supporters being recruited.² Later, as the diverse movements advocating change defined their goals more precisely, the extent of the dissimilarities became apparent. A dominant group among those who supported Luther and reforms emerged and was at pains to dissociate itself from other sections of supporters. This group attempted to consolidate and standardise its following. By 1524, for example, the target of condemnation in Hans Sachs's Ein Evangelischer und ein Lutherischer Christ was not the staunch defenders of Roman Catholicism, but those supporters of the Reformation who made provocative, public declarations against Romanist practices and the clergy.³ After the defeat of the insurgents in 1525, Luther and his adherents dissociated the Reformation from the social, economic and political aims of the common people: "... it was no longer an advantage to identify the Reformation with the 'common man' "⁴

In the years 1520 to 1522 publicists belonged to small, comparatively newly-formed groupings in society which were attacking various aspects of the established order of things, but above all the running of the Roman church. At this time their influence and efficiency, if not indeed the very survival of their cause, must have depended on their gaining adherents and so growing in strength against a highly influential opponent. To achieve this, they had first to instruct the readership in the chief points and arguments involved and then sway readers to a favourable appreciation of the new ideas.⁵

The aim of the Reformation pamphlets was to win a following for the ideas they publicised:

... [die Literatur] [verstand] sich als direktes Sprachrohr der Parteien im Kampf um die Verwirklichung ihrer Programme. Es lag hier also ein Funktionswandel vor, durch welchen die Literatur erstmals eine zentrale Stellung im öffentlichen Leben erhielt und als bewußtseinsbildender Faktor in vollem Umfang ernst genommen wurde.⁶

But it has been argued that pamphlets served to engage support only from those predisposed to the new ideas.⁷ The evidence of social psychology indicates that propaganda works upon the indifferent and undecided, but not favourably upon existing opponents. Rather it has the effect of polarising into opposing camps.⁸ B. Balzer postulates that publicists knew instinctively that their opponents could not be won over and accordingly addressed

themselves instead to the correct group of potential converts. He cites Luther:

wenn du das Evangelium wilt Christlich handeln, szo mustu acht auff die person habenn, mitt denn du redist. Die sind tzweyerley: tzum erstenn sind ettlich verstockt, die nit horenn wollen, datzu andere mit yhrem lugen maull vorfuren unnd vorgyfften,..., mit denn selbigen soltu nichts handeln,... Zum andern sind ettliche, die solchs tzuvor nit mehr gehort habenn, unnd woll lernen mochten,...⁹

In Ein Evangelischer und ein Lutherischer Christ Sachs, too, differentiates between two categories of people and demonstrates his awareness and concern about prevalent moods. The enemy is quite intransigent and shut to reason:

Peter: Die keren sich dannocht nicht daran, man sing inen suß oder pitter; die seind verstockt wie die Pharaseer.

Hans: Ey, so laß sie geen wie die Hayden, Matthei xviiij. Wann ir sie lang schendet, inen fluchet, ist es niemant nutz,...¹⁰

Instead one should aim to loosen the ties of the Church on the people, so that they can come to embrace the new faith: "auff das sie ire gewissen loß machten von den gemelten verfurern." This may be achieved through "predigen vnd schreyben." One's words, deeds and own conduct will win over any who are not "verstockt": "Ey, du must inen iren irthumb freundtlich anzaygen,..."¹¹ Yet, on the other hand, some dialogues portray a sequence of discussion or events through which from a seemingly "verstockt" opponent can emerge an avid proselyte, as, for example, in Pfarrer

und Schultheiß and Bauer und Mönch.

The aim of the pamphleteers was not solely to whip up the layman's support for their arguments against the moral decay of the clergy, the role of monasteries, and Church exploitation of the common people. Judging from the concerns treated in some dialogues, their authors' aim was also to win over members of the clergy. Monks are encouraged to desert (Von den Scheinwerken der Geistlichen); or they are encouraged to lead a proper Christian existence within or without their holy order (Wie Christlich zu leben); or questions that concern inhabitants of a monastery are discussed (Der ausgelaufene Mönch). This last dialogue also refers to "ein büchlin Doctoris Martini Luther von den Closter gelübde."¹² Whether directly, through arguments persuading them to change, or indirectly, through portrayals of either clerics indeed changing or clerics in the act of misbehaving, members of the clergy are worked upon by pamphleteers.

The pamphleteers' aim was also to reinforce existing support by supplying cogent arguments and Biblical verification for their points of view. Followers were in this way supplied with appropriate tools with which to uphold particular points of view and disarm opposing ones: "Andere Dialoge verwenden die Dialogform zur Entwicklung von Thesen, mit denen die gegnerische Konzeption widerlegt werden soll,..."¹³ In the course of a dialogue the reader is not only told the arguments to use but 'shown' how to use them effectively and convert the opponent into an ally. Dialogues

sometimes encourage adherents to go out properly armed with arguments and continue the propaganda process, by instructing and recruiting others. Wallfahrt ins Grimmental depicts the process of spreading beliefs from one character to another to a group outside the scope of the pamphlet:

Bawer: Do hab ich von euch [Hantwerckssman] gehört vnd gelert, das ich alle meynn tag nye gehört hab, vnd ych sag euch tzü: ich wyls meynn lebtage gedencken, vnnd wo ich tzü meynen Bawren tzwm weyn küm, so wyll ich yn alle dyng sagen, dye ich von euch gehört hab, vnd wyll sie auch vnterrichten.¹⁴

The propaganda technique of reiteration is used widely. Pamphlets which reproduce essentially the same argumentation as others have the function of reinforcing opinions:

Jede Flugschrift, die bereits Gedrucktes neu weiter vermittelte, zielte grösstenteils eine Verstärkung herrschender Meinungen an; deswegen die verhältnismässige Armut der Argumentation in den volkssprachlichen Schriften.¹⁵

For example, Die Göttliche Mühle was succeeded by Ein Thurgäuischer Bauer, which treats the same themes, same points and same heroes and ends with complimentary remarks about its precursor. Apparently its purpose is to lend weight to the anticlerical movement. This example also serves to demonstrate that pamphlets were absorbed in part by those already in agreement with them. Continual repetition of appropriate Bible passages and telling

arguments occurs not only among dialogues. Even within a dialogue there can be incessant repetition of a particular point. In Petrus und Bauer, for example, it is the pre-eminence of true faith for the soul's salvation that is 'proved' over and over again. The technique of constantly reiterating principles serves to channel the various causes and expressions of dissatisfaction into something more homogeneous. It serves to strengthen opinion by imposing on individual strains a kind of uniformity and framework. It serves also to delimit a focus for discontent.¹⁶ Such steering of discontent towards certain targets by reaffirming the source and nature of the problem lends strength to the one party, while steadily undermining the opposition:

"... imageverstärkende Propaganda hat einen integrierenden Effekt auf die Anhängergruppe."¹⁷

If confirmatory information is made available to and circulated among members and potential members of a party, it not only substantiates and bolsters the individual but leads to the creation of an in-group mentality. By focussing on particular subjects and patterns of discussion, Reformation polemical literature makes the reader familiar with the chief points of dispute and gives him confidence in mastering them. In broad terms, the individual supporter then knows what he stands for. Thus the group consolidates itself. The existence of in-group mentality is most evident in Kunz und Fritz, which betrays the sense of superiority

generally associated with Humanists. Two "g^out luthrisch bauren" vehemently deride university scholars for being unacquainted with "dem zierlichen latein Ciceronis und Virgili" and for resisting a spread of "das g^out latein" on account of their own inability to understand it:

C^onz. wa hast du ie gesehen daß ainer den Paulum so hüpsch herfür bringt als iez Erasmus gethon hat? aber die alten r^utzig^{en} geul verstond nit so vil latein.¹⁸

In this dialogue the Humanist 'peasants' are self-gratulating, considering themselves as part of a circle with superior education and heightened appreciation of Latin. They gibe at those outside their circle. Their comments and jests can only be fully enjoyed by members of their own delimited group (not, of course, peasants) who share their view. So the group can define its own identity and consequently grow in cohesion.

Authors of polemical literature assailed the position of an adversary which wielded far superior power and influence. Disaffection from the beliefs of the Roman church amounted to heresy, for which harsh penalties could be imposed. Pamphleteers, therefore, had to sustain their followers' interest in and adherence to reform ideals, despite the threat of personal disadvantage. In some dialogues the 'common man' hero flouts papal authority, fearlessly declaring his support for new doctrines

(Karsthans, Bauer, Belial, Erasmus und Dr. Faber, Vonder Gült). Yet many dialogues mention the vulnerability of reform sympathisers. The fate of Hus is frequently referred to as having contemporary significance. Tholl und Lamp and Lutherische und päpstliche Pfaffen refer to events in Antwerp when the first Lutheran martyrs were burned as heretics.¹⁹ In Bauer, Belial, Erasmus und Dr. Faber Belial lists the reasons why Erasmus dissociated himself from Luther:

Zum dritten: das die frei offen bekantnuß der reynen warheyte (die dan von aller heuchlerei vnd liebkosung vnbefleckt sein will) nichts dan grossen vnlust, verfolgung, durchechtung, wagnüs vnd alle geferlicheit vrsachet, auch nichts in die küchen triege, dan alleyn, das er durch zorn des Babsts vnnd anderer grosser gewalttiger Tyrannen etwan hochgestrafft werden möcht. Zum vierden: das er solcher grosser gverlickeyt bei dem L^uther vnd andern grausame exempel ansehe, ²⁰des ime dan nit eyn cleyne forcht beweget.

It is asserted that he lacked the courage to oppose the Roman church. Hans Knüchel is unwilling to be elected village preacher in place of the absent priest:

Zu dem ersten, das imm grosse gefärl^elichkeit dar vff stünd^e seines lybs vnd l^ebens. Dann solichs wider die s^eatzung der R^emschen kirchen wär, inn welcher beschlossen wär niemandts zu predigen,... Als wir das haben. de here. c. excomunicamus, auch haben wir das .de here. c. sicut in vno.²¹

Perhaps the fear of personal danger was something of a topos in dialogues or designed principally to discredit the Church. Nevertheless, the reader is often shown that an outspoken proponent of reform can incur harrassment or worse from angered papists and needs courage. / Apart from consolidating support, another aim of pamphleteers was no doubt to pressurise and intimidate the opposition. They exert pressure on the Romanist camp by constant carping criticism, constant publication of its faults (whether real or not), and constant concrete proposals of what it must do to reform itself. They intimidate the opposition by stating that the advocates of reform have the mass support of every thinking Christian. They state that the whole populace is now aware of the Romanists' failure to tend the needs of the people and that all have become passionately convinced a Reformation is necessary. Through continual repetition of these ideas, the economically, politically, socially powerful network of the Roman church is made to appear a vulnerable minority in Germany - an unwanted minority which has incurred the wrath of every right-minded citizen. Implicitly the authors are holding up the spectre of insurrection, directed against the Roman church and blamed on the Roman church.

In their pamphlets publicists make the Church the focus of the commoners' frustration and aggression. Their aim is to arouse unease and play upon fears in the clergy, for

real social unrest was already in existence. Rural and urban revolts were a recurrent phenomenon in the 14th, 15th and early 16th centuries in Germany. Major uprisings of 'Bundschuh' conspirators occurred repeatedly on the Upper Rhine. Revolts in 1493, 1502, 1513 and 1517 involved both peasantry and urban poor. The 'Armer Konrad' uprising of 1514 also involved urban and rural groups and was directed against Duke Ulrich of Württemberg. Its immediate cause is considered to be the imposition of a new tax.²² The factors which precipitated similar revolts, however, are subject to various interpretations. General opinion is that some specific "sharp increase of pressure could trigger a reaction of despair."²³ Not a general condition, but rather sudden local instances of deteriorating economic circumstances would provoke rebellion:

Denn[es] ... kann behauptet werden, daß es nicht ausreicht, auf allgemeine gesellschaftliche Umwälzungen zu verweisen, um einen Bauernaufstand zu erklären ...²⁴

Particular examples of exploitation were much more likely sources of revolt:

The immediate causes of the uprisings were often local abuses in the legal and judicial system, new kinds of taxes and tolls, hardship caused by rampant usury or moral indignation over the irreligious and dissolute life of the clergy.²⁵

[Most people] knew little, if anything, of what was going on in high places, and a blatant instance of clerical immorality in the local setting weighed more heavily than the total of the financial and political involvement of the papacy.²⁶

R. Endres stresses the importance of psychological factors as causes of actual revolt: moral degeneration and luxurious living were flaunted at the common man, provoking his envy and hatred of the financially and socially privileged.²⁷ This is an argument that can be found in Reformation dialogues themselves, where sometimes a peasant shows a natural jealousy of the leisurely life but is taught that it is wrong (Wallfahrt ins Grimmerthal). Thus, at the time Reformation dialogues were being written, clerics had already been the object of violent emotions and actions. Pamphlets not only tell clerics that they are universally despised but also underline their vulnerability, since they are out of step with the general populace.

In his examination of late medieval peasant revolts, F. Graus establishes that revolts increased in number and frequency from the 14th to the 16th century and that they became more extensive and radical.²⁸ There existed, therefore, a long tradition of peasant and town radicalism, which under given circumstances would translate dissatisfaction into concerted action. The expressed aims of 'Bundschuh' insurgents were to end oppression by their lords, abolish serfdom, dissolve abbeys and monasteries, redistribute ecclesiastical property, put an end to tithes and taxes, and base authority on 'divine justice'.²⁹ While the focus of disapprobation is not identical throughout German Reformation dialogues, these same 'Buntschuh'^d demands are reproduced in many of them. The basis for a

transformation in spiritual and national life is in general the same. One crucial factor, however, is omitted in polemical pamphlets. 'Bundschuh' conspirators organised themselves for action; pamphlets do not urge revolt or active measures.

Judging from sentiments expressed in numerous dialogues, pamphleteers did not woo supporters prepared to fight for the implementation of the changes they sought. In fact, they encourage supporters not to fight. The following comments are typical:

Petrus: Lieber brüder, du wilt hefftig dran, aber solchs soltu got befelen, wie du sagst, es wurdt jnen wol gestillet.³⁰

Hürenwirt: des leiblichen ufrürs und buntschüchs oder tods darf der bapst mit der pfaffheit nit fürchten und gewarten von den waren christen und von denen das heilig³¹ evangelium treuwlich geprediget wirt;

True Christians could never fight false Christians, but, the author adds, should God wish to punish false clerics and tyrants, "so wirt er ein ufrür und buntschüch durch den Türken oder durch falsch christen über si erwecken oder anrichten." The aims of pamphleteers were both to create support and to feed fear, but they specifically decry any use of force or armed resistance to achieve their goals. Thus they clear themselves of any charge of inciting revolution. Yet they do not deny that insurrection is a possibility.

They call for patience, since change is inevitable, or for prayers that change will come soon, or for 'proper' preachers, or for verbal attacks on the clergy:

Son: Mit schlagen brengt man keynen zum glauben vnd zum wort gottis ..., Es müs auß freyem lust zu got geschehen. Sye werden sich noch wol wenden, wils got.³²

They discuss the 'common man's' right to revolt in the face of continued Roman intransigence - despite the fact that the common man instigated and participated in recurrent conflicts in their society. That they discuss violence and revolt by no means indicates any intention on their part to stir up the common people's passions so that they would erupt in violent action. By mentioning revolt they do not necessarily intend to provoke it. While the Reformatio Sigismundi (ca. 1438) and the writing of the "Oberrheinischer Revolutionär" (ca. 1510) have both been interpreted as inciting rebellion, it has also been said of them:

Der Aufruhr dient ihnen vielmehr zur Drohung. Sie prophezeien den Aufruhr, um die Obrigkeiten zur Umkehr zu bewegen, zur Reform, bevor es zu spät ist.³³

From an examination of Reformation dialogues there is much to suggest that authors shared the above aim: they desired to arouse fear of potential disorder, but not to rouse the common people into taking up arms. Writers calling for reforms demonstrate in what way and to what

extent the common man has been grievously provoked; they show that he has been given every reason to vent his feelings in militant action; they offer justification for his resort to self-help. The common man and the fear of him are used as a tool to incite those in positions of authority to take action or the culprits to mend their ways, rather than risk mass insurrection.

The pamphlets set particular targets for discontent and ignore other sources of discontent. So, for example, while 'Bundschuh' followers wanted to be released from oppressive secular rulers, dialogues almost always call for the common people to be released from oppressive clerical authority:

But there is no doubt that the mass of moral polemic directed against the priesthood was out of proportion, both according to its quantity and its virulence, to the moral state of the clergy. There was no such virulent polemic against the manners in the secular courts; ...³⁴

Dialogues insist that the common man will be provoked into overthrowing papal institutions, unless papal reforms are introduced. Of rural revolts Graus writes, "The country gentry, the freeholder or the 'Ritter' was likely to be perceived as the primary adversary."³⁵ This picture does not accord with that presented in dialogues. In dialogues economic hardship caused among the common people by clerics is perhaps more a statement about the greedy, unethical clergy than a reflection of concern for the

commoner. Economic exploitation is more proof of a degenerate Church, not justification of rebellion.

A further aim of some pamphleteers, which is, however, inseparable from the functional, propagandist elements of educating and converting, was doubtless to entertain their readership. This is apparent partly in the choice of the dialogue as a means of presenting content. Dialogue is a literary form which allows the inclusion of personal feelings and comments, of social chat, of amusing, sometimes inconsequential detail, all of which would have been perforce excluded, had authors presented their opinions in, say, a list of doctrinal statements or programmatic points. About one quarter of Tholl und Lamp is quite unconnected with conveying information. It is devoted to introducing the characters Hans und Klaus, with awakening the reader's curiosity, and with providing details about them ordering and paying for wine. In Karsthans it is apparent that the author is mindful of being entertaining. The German puns on Latin words perpetrated by Karsthans are designed more to amuse than to lend especial weight to the points made, although they do contribute to the polemical point that German is the proper language of worship, while Latin conceals and confuses.

No doubt authors of dialogues were concerned to write in an entertaining style to alleviate the earnestness of their subject-matter and so popularise their pamphlets among wider circles. Humour and satiric comment are

frequent ingredients in Reformation dialogues, but not the only means employed to engage the attention and promote readability:

Ihre gesellschaftliche Funktion erforderte eine besondere Wahl der sprachlichen Mittel ... sie war vielmehr bestimmt durch das Streben nach maximaler Ausdruckskraft, leichter Verständlichkeit, Wirksamkeit, Überzeugungskraft.³⁶

Other approaches include spirited, brisk exchanges between interlocutors, as in Chorherr und Schuhmacher; astringent, vivid language, as in Bauer und Mönch, where the freshly converted monk roundly abuses monastic life and ends with a stream of vituperative curses; and ill-natured coarseness, as in the following exchange from Ein seltsames Tier:

Vlrich: Lieber, solß nit gut sein, meß kauffen?
Claus: Ja, es ist dem güt, dem du den batzen gibst. der [Papst] kan sich darnach wol mit außmesten, du du sein arßwisch bist, vnd er dein herr.³⁷

In Bauer, Belial, Erasmus und Dr. Faber the reader is regaled with the enjoyable spectacle of seeing the adversary discomfitted: Erasmus and Faber are dismayed when Belial agrees to explain to the peasant why they have defected from the Reformation. A large variety of techniques were put into service to catch the reader's attention and convince him that the anti-clerical arguments and assertions are true.

NOTES

1. Balzer, p. 7.
2. Hillerbrand, p. 45.
3. Spriewald, p. 154 ff. and p. 163 ff.
4. Scribner, "Images of the Peasant," p.32.
5. Balzer, p. 9, puts polemical pamphlets into three categories: "Programmschriften", which instigated new modes of thought and conduct; "Propagandaschriften", which thereafter reproduced and developed those innovative ideas according to the inclinations, interests and skill of individual authors; and "Streitschriften," in which personal attacks on individuals determine the content and aim. In this classification Reformation dialogues fall under the heading 'propaganda', but clearly they include elements of all three types.
6. K nneker, p. 8.
7. Balzer, pp. 23-28.
8. J.A.C. Brown, Techniques of Persuasion. From Propaganda to Brainwashing (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963), p. 66 f.
9. Balzer, p. 26 f. Quotations from Eyn trew Vormanung Martini Luther tzu allen Christen, sich tzu vorhuten fur Auff hr und Emporung (1522), WA, 8, 685.
10. Spriewald, p. 164.
11. Spriewald, p. 165.
12. K hler et al. (1978), Fiche 132, No. 354, Aiiij.
13. Guchmann, p. 49.
14. Lenk, p. 194. Similarly in Neu Karsthans, Lenk, p. 125.
15. Schmidt, p. 71.
16. Brown, Techniques of Persuasion, p. 27f.
17. Balzer, p. 24.
18. Schade, II, 121.

19. The former states that 3 died, the latter 2.
20. Lenk, p. 219.
21. Clemen, I, 229.
22. Laube, "Precursors of the Peasant War, " p.52.
23. Graus, p. 3.
24. Wunder, p. 30.
25. Laube, "Precursors of the Peasant War, " p. 50;
Stupperich, Geschichte der Reformation, p. 106.
26. Hillerbrand, p. 5.
27. Endres, p. 73f.
28. Graus, p. 5.
29. Graus, p. 5.
30. Lenk, p. 177 (Petrus und Bauer).
31. Schade, III, 187 (Weggespräch).
32. Lenk, p. 161 (Vater und Sohn).
33. Boockmann, p. 14.
34. Roy Pascal, The Social Basis of the German Reformation. Martin Luther and his Times (London:Watts, 1933), p.7.
35. Graus, p. 5.
36. Guchmann, p. 39.
37. Clemen, I, 181.

CHAPTER 3 The attributes of the dialogue and their application

Dialogue was a literary form adopted by many polemicists in the years 1520 to 1525 with which to champion the cause of reform and Reformation. It became popular as a medium partly, no doubt, because it lent itself to setting out differing points of view.¹ Through the medium of dialogue general, abstract theories can be turned into personal convictions and individual arguments.

Dialogue was used in two main ways. It is suited to presenting interlocutors who have contrasting points of view and to making obvious the differences between them. Examples of this variety include Chorherr und Schuhmacher, Kettenbach und Altmütterlein and Bauer, Belial, Erasmus und Dr. Faber. In Von der Gült, too, one party condemns all money-lending as usury, while the other attempts to justify it.

Dialogue is equally suited to conveying information from one interlocutor to another. Through conversation one speaker elucidates points for the sake of another or provides him with arguments backing one view and detracting from the opposing view. By this technique information is transmitted to the reader or audience. Examples of this variety include Neu Karsthans, Tholl und Lamp, Kunz und Fritz and Ein seltsames Tier. In Neu Karsthans Franz von Sickingen is cast in the role of educator, informing Karsthans on various subjects. The pamphlet ends in Karsthans expressing gratitude that his partner in

conversation has taken so much trouble to explain to him matters of which he knew nothing. Sickingen just as politely replies: "Lieber Karsthans, allzeyt wil ich dir gern so vil ich von andern gehö^ert mitteylen vnd gar nichts verhalten."² Similarly structured is Tholl und Lamp. Hans has been attending a Bible-reading meeting, at which he and some others heard readings from Scripture. Since he is now conversant with Gospel, even to the extent of having long passages by heart, including alternative translations, he has momentous news to convey to Klaus. First he rouses Klaus's curiosity, and the reader's, about something mysterious and very important. Then he specifies that it concerns the identity of the Antichrist. Finally he speaks some verses of Paul's Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, which prompts Klaus to exclaim in great amazement that it must be the Pope:

Claus Lamp: Nun mü^est dich all teüff^el hollen!
Es ist kein anders thyer dann der Babst vnd
sein reych. Das het ich mein lebttag nymmer
erfaren, wer das nit gewesen.³

In this style of dialogue traces of the Socratic tradition are apparent, where an exchange takes place not between two matched, equally informed disputants, but instead consists of a one-sided conversation. In Petrus und Bauer the conversation takes the form of questions and expatiative answers between an earnest, respectful seeker of truth and an eloquent figure of authority. It is an effective method of conveying knowledge from the author to

his readers. In Socratic dialogue the maieutic art is practised, whereby the thinker stimulates his pupil into making an illuminating discovery himself. The above quotation from Tholl und Lamp is reminiscent of this technique. Similarly at the conclusion of Pfarrer und Schultheiß the newly converted priest concedes that he had always entertained a dark suspicion that his doings were wrong. Faced in debate with the indisputable truth of the Bible, his error has been revealed. He has now been provoked into clear consciousness of his actions:

Darumb laßt mich für baß ewer Pfarrer sein,
so will ich euch thon, was euch lieb ist.
Dann ich hab mir lang gedacht, als wir
pfaffen vns halten thond, Got, der würd
es etwann endern,⁴ das es an tag kem Vnnd wir
gestrafft wurden.

Unlike other types of pamphlet the dialogue can 'show' the reader how a supporter of reform acts, how he argues his case, how he arrives at decisions. In it the author may also with great effect juxtapose a picture of the opponent, what he stands for and what his thoughts and motives are. Thus the reader not only is supplied with arguments why one is right and the other wrong, but also can 'see for himself' and draw his own conclusions. The majority of Reformation dialogues includes a representative of the progressive party, portrayed positively, alongside a Romanist, portrayed negatively. It is an inherent characteristic of dialogue that it can depict inward thought processes, giving personal substance to abstract

theories. While polemicists writing other kinds of pamphlet could only mention the meritorious qualities of their own party and give a great catalogue of their adversary's defects, the author of dialogues could demonstrate both sides in action. The extent to which opinion was influenced by depictions of a character behaving in exemplary fashion or damning himself through his own conduct cannot be gauged. Presumably some dialogues were more successful in their aim than others.

Negative portrayal of the papal party

In almost all Reformation dialogues the reader is told that papal officers are unworthy holders of privilege and power. (Very occasionally the reader is cautioned not to judge all alike.) In many he is presented with such a character in the act of being unworthy. Authors employ various means of portraying the opponent so as to undermine and annul the elevated position of authority he enjoys. The opponent's point of view can be put in such a way that it appears quite unfounded, uninformed or indefensible. Sometimes the opinions of Romanists are over-simplified to facilitate overwhelming defeat, or they demonstrate an inability to respond adequately to criticism or questions raised. The reader is invited to deride their unskilled attempts to parry the thrusts of eloquent, knowledgeable proponents of the new faith. The point is often made in dialogues that no-one could refute Luther in disputation. This is stated as proof of his being right and his

adversaries wrong. Similarly within the fictional dialogue the mere fact that Romanists cannot refute their critics is evidence that the Romanists are wrong. In general opposing views make up a minor part of the whole pamphlet, the author's concern not being to present an unbiased exchange of views in balanced discussion, but rather within a limited space to negate the validity of opposing arguments. Therefore, the conflicting views must be so portrayed as to elicit an immediately hostile reaction.

Authors of many dialogues make a show of presenting genuine arguments of the adversary. They feign the putting forward of serious argument and counter-argument by both sides, but in fact present a very weak picture of antagonistic views. Thus by contrast they boost their own spokesman and make their own views appear all the more compelling and powerful. Characters chosen to represent the papal party include the pope himself, Murner, Eck, a bishop, a court toady ('Kurtisan'), Erasmus, priests and monks. In general they ostensibly advance arguments in favour of the papacy, yet give such a poor account of it that they instead disqualify what they 'intend' to propound. Such a character is the canon in Chorherr und Schuhmacher, a man of position within the church, who is quite confounded by the Biblical knowledge and piety of a 'simple' cobbler. In this pamphlet the canon is permitted to undertake a far more serious defence of the established tenets of the Roman church than in other dialogues. Never-

theless his points are repeatedly capped by those of the cobbler or invalidated since they are not based on the Bible but on 'man-made' decretals. In order to remain undefeated in argument, the canon has to resort to denying the cobbler the right to challenge a representative of papal authority. He makes the bald assertion, without any justification, that it is not fitting for laymen to concern themselves with the affairs of the Church and the Holy Book. This stance is very likely designed by Sachs to anger his readers. It is made quite clear to the reader that when the canon reiterates his objection to laymen interfering in holy matters, it stems purely from the shoddiness of his powers of logic and knowledge of the Bible. Not only are the arguments at his command unsatisfactory and unconvincing, but he unashamedly discloses ignorance of the Bible:

Schuster: Sucht Actuum apostolorum XV.
 Chorherr: Sucht selb, ich bin nit vil
 darinn vmbgangen, ich weyß wol nützers
 zulesen.⁵

The canon's assertion that only papal officers may pronounce on holy matters is made all the more patently unfounded when his own ignorance of gospel is thus brought to light.

The technique of having supporters of papal authority condemn themselves through their own mouth is common to many dialogues. In Kantians the student 'unwittingly'

invalidates his own statements or concedes the truth of denunciations:

Karthans: Wie, ist er [Murner] ein gefryter ordens man, das er den orden nit helt oder wie?

Studens: Nein, er ist also gefryt, das gen^og ist, wann er die kutten an hat, so mans sicht.⁶

Studens: Wie wol du gen^og anzeigen th^ost, das doctor Murnar vast wenig in den evangelien vnd epistelen der zwölffboten, villeicht gar nicht in Paulo gestudiert hat, ye doch so ist er ein verr^ump^et gelert man, den du nit so leichtlich nennen solt als r^elling.⁷

Papal spokesmen invite condemnation by making admissions detrimental to their own views. For example, in Edelmann, Mönch und Kurtisan the monk has discovered that peasants are so well informed about Scripture that he can no longer preach as before. He explains who has taught the peasants such things: "alle gelerte priester, die ein rechten gewißen oder verstant haben, laufen alle auß den clöstern, die lernen und einbilden den bauren das wort gottes."⁸ In Wallfahrt ins Grimmental the priest admits: "Wir wollen nit, das vnser volck sollich ding erf^eur, ist mir auch verbotten, das ich den bawern nit sol die warheit sagen."⁹ Similarly he makes the 'naive' admission that priests do in fact keep whores, since they are forbidden to have wives.

In addition to verbal verification of Romanists' incorrigible baseness, publicists incorporate dramatic actions in the text to corroborate that image. So, in

Chorherr und Schuhmacher the canon orders his Bible to be fetched to test the cobbler's quotations. First his servant brings a book of decretals, then a Bible covered in dust. At the conclusion of the dialogue the canon orders its removal and dice, cards and the gaming-board to be fetched instead. Similarly in Von der Gült the opening scene depicts a rich townsman engaged in counting his piles of money, the proceeds of his money-lending. The implications, which are made obvious, are left to the reader without explicit comment.

The above examples are evidence of their authors' desire to arouse emotional responses in the reader, such as contempt, indignation or enmity. The reader must be convinced that church officers are steeped in impropriety. Not only do Romanists admit ethical deficiencies, they are even shown to defend them and openly condone them. By this technique, to which the dialogue is most suited, the illusion can be created that the reader is receiving from the mouths of those who are reliably informed first-hand evidence of moral turpitude and ignorance among the clergy. Since the reader is made a 'witness' of what is said, it encourages an impression of objectivity. Reformation dialogues insist on the moral laxity of the papal party and on its willingness to abuse its privileged position. Thus its credibility in matters of doctrine can be undermined. Any arguments it is allowed to advance in its defence are rendered dubious by the tainted nature of its spokesmen.

But the illusion is created that they have been given a fair opportunity to put their case and have failed. In Wallfahrt ins Grimmental the papal point of view is exposed as so untenable and the papal official as so unfit for his post that he finally resorts to curses and threats in frustration;

Pfaff: Du bist eyn rechter pfaffen schender,
man solt dir die tzungē auß reyssenn.
Hantwerckssman: Ey, herr, wie seyt yhr so
hefftig, ¹⁰ich mein, ich hab euch auch
troffen.

The priest is clearly unable to stem the flow of accusations by factual, doctrinal or rational means. Similarly in Chorherr und Schuhmacher the canon puts a discreditable end to the dispute with his servant by dismissing him:

Chorherr: O du lausiger bachant, wiltu
mich auch Rechtfertigen vnd leeren, Bist
auch der Lutherischem bößwichtter einer?
Troll dich nur pald auß dem hauß vnd
komm nit wider, du unverschamptes thyer! ¹¹

Unable to refute his opponent by argument, the canon circumvents the problem by exercising his superior power.

The chief means of discrediting the opposition are, then, general descriptions of individual malpractices, sometimes actual, presumably most often plausible fiction. These are designed to epitomise the character and behaviour of all groups of Romanists. Dialogue is particularly suited to this aim, since authors can present their opponents' opinions and motives in such a way as to arouse

the reader's disapprobation. Also authors have simply to manufacture offensive statements, set them in the mouth of a Romanist, and thus elicit the reader's indignation. The papal supporter is often depicted admitting immoral conduct or conceding the truth of his adversaries' views, yet still offering stubborn resistance to change. He insists on keeping privileges and authority, despite the fact that he does not deserve them and cannot justify enjoying them. Through portrayals of Romanists' base thoughts, words and actions within the dialogue, the reader is instructed to hold them in low esteem. His enmity to them is actively sought. The authors are without doubt, "men with an ax to grind."¹² They depict an image of the clergy which could equally have been applied to the nobility, because of that group's similar practices. But it was not. Instead they almost completely restrict their accusations of ignorance, immorality and oppression to papal supporters. The occasional pamphlet does refer to the nobility in derogatory terms: in Edelmann, Mönch und Kurtisan the nobleman is an unethical, anarchic bandit. But the chief butt of criticism is stereotyped clergy: "The conclusion is that the criticism of contemporaries grossly exaggerated the actual facts".¹³

Positive portrayal of the reforming party

Alongside the presentation of Romanists' moral, social and religious defects is set the display of positive, laudable qualities inherent in the reforming party. The

positive image is all the more enhanced through acting as an obvious contrast to the flawed image of the adversary. Upright, pious and eloquent spokesmen of the Reformation, usually laymen, provide the dramatic counterpart to corrupt, ill-educated priests and monks. In the German Reformation dialogues of 1520 to 1525 the satiric passivity commonly associated with the moral critic has disappeared. Sebastian Brant and Thomas Murner, particularly in their satirical literature on the figure of the Fool, had striven for general moral improvement among all classes of the populace:

"Die satirische Epik des spätscholastischen Humanismus bei Brant und Murner ist noch weitgehend mittelalterliche Moral-satire und verfolgt Besserungsabsichten."¹⁴ Their works depicted shortcomings in the Church, but concentrated on a general moral view that all men are compounded of human faults and foibles.¹⁵ An irremediable human condition left no scope for concrete improvements. Murner's Narren-beschwörung (1512), for example, is such a satire; "sie schlägt nach allen Seiten zugleich und findet überall die Unvollkommenheit des menschlichen Treibens. Sie straft nicht nur die Kirche, sondern jeden Stand und also auch Bauer, Bürger, Adel."¹⁶ In not only illustrating injustices and deficiencies in society, but also allocating blame, the Humanists and writers of polemical pamphlets differed from moral critics. They identified one specific source for all shortcomings and held the Roman church accountable. They made out a case for urgent change and even supplied a seemingly practicable alternative to the status quo.

The greater part of Reformation dialogues is concerned with propounding new doctrines with which to replace existing precepts and new modes of conduct to displace the old. Authors convey the excellence of the new teaching to the reader by presenting it in the mouth of an excellent Christian. The authors' spokesmen embody those evangelical characteristics that are, as is repeatedly impressed upon the reader, so lacking in the opposition. These characteristics are partly of a personal nature and partly based on mastery of Biblical material. Fine personal qualities are wisdom founded on native wit and common sense (as exemplified in Karsthans), simple piety and steadfast faith (as in Vater und Sohn), concern for one's fellow man (Wallfahrt ins Grimmental), fearless and outspoken defence of the Holy Word (Hans Knüchel), and 'instinctive' understanding of the Bible (Von der Zwietracht).

The commendable spokesmen for the reforming party impart their convictions in generally cogent and well-formulated arguments, as compared to those of the opponent. The reader is thus shown the discrepancy between the sides and is shown, too, how the logic and vitality of the new arguments easily defeat in fair debate the views propounded by the Romanists. The exemplary Christian spokesman delivers his opinions with utter conviction and confidence. He is always armed with the apposite riposte, providing appropriate quotations from the indisputable truth of the Bible and frequently backed, too, with logical explanation or

allusions to everyday life. The content and style of delivery appeal to common sense and feelings of fairness and morality, again in marked contrast to the crude self-interest ascribed to and evident in the opposing side. The reformers lay claim to being the sole champions of piety and decency. In dialogues model Christian behaviour and total disaffection from the Roman church are identified as going hand in hand. The underlying suggestion is that the precondition of achieving similar perfection of the self is to embrace the new doctrines.

The exemplary spokesman for the Reformation, most often taken from the peasantry or artisan class, was not a creation of Martin Luther, but rather of pamphleteers. The 'common man' who represented reform in dialogues incorporated, too, aspects of an earlier tradition, in which the simple peasant was idealised as most pleasing to God.¹⁷ Through the model behaviour embodied in his spokesman the dialogue author could demonstrate in several ways the validity of his point of view. First the obviously fine character of his mouthpiece reflects favourably on the argument expounded, which must consequently be equally fine. The praiseworthy nature of the individual is associated with and transferred to the whole party of reform. It serves also to highlight the sordidness of the foe. Secondly the fine character of the spokesman must have impressed the reader as being worthy of emulation, which would in consequence involve adopting the new doctrines. The dialogues

depict, "ein Haltungsideal, das den Einzelzielen erst Bedeutung gibt und die Menschen zum Handeln ruft."¹⁸ Thirdly the compelling arguments advanced by the spokesman for reform refute the opposition, because he displays mastery of the Bible and the art of exposition - at least within the context of the pamphlet. The character advocating reform takes the active part, initiating and shaping discussion within the text, with the declared aim of achieving reforms within society. The creation and perpetuation of such a figure in dialogues written between 1520 and 1525 indicates that it was considered a suitable, possibly successful, image for the party (or parties) to adopt:

In diesem Sinne erfolgte die Profilierung des Streiters für die Sache der Reformation, die Gestaltung eines bewußt auf die Veränderung der Gesellschaft hinwirkenden Menschen in der Gestalt des "gemeinen Mannes", des Bauern und des Handwerkers.¹⁹

In many cases the spokesman is himself a fresh proselyte and displays impressive individuality in championing the cause in the face of opposition. If already converted to the new faith at the start of the dialogue, then he continues to exude laudatory, Christian qualities throughout, as, for example, the peasant in Bauer, Belial, Erasmus und Dr. Faber. Not only by compelling arguments but by dint of example the spokesman often awakens the same spiritual response to the Word in his partner in conversation. His clarity of understanding can inspire others within the dialogue to adopt his viewpoints, a

process which might well have had a psychological effect upon the reader. The reader is left in no doubt about which side deserves sympathetic reception. Dialogues also make clear that to embrace the new ideas leads to desirable changes in the convert's life. He is improved, has gained new insight into life and appears reassured and confident.

The primary distinguishing features of fresh converts, such as the monk in Bauer und Mönch and the peasant and monk in Wallfahrt ins Grimmental, are single-mindedness and unclouded understanding of Christian teaching. The dynamism of the new doctrines is made perceptible to the reader in the powerful conviction and stirring speeches of the converted.

Another technique authors employ to emphasise the 'true' nature of views they expound is to introduce a character whose very presence lends authority to such views. The dialogue genre makes this possible. In Petrus und Bauer it is St. Peter. He has been sent by God to instruct the humble peasant on salvation. He greatly admires the simple yet deep understanding the peasant has of spiritual matters, speaks in praise of peasant toil, explains that Luther is indeed an angel of God, answers the peasant's questions about salvation. Above all, St. Peter has been called in as ultimate authority on whether he was ever in Rome or not. Luther stated that Peter never visited Rome, and the saint confirms this: "durch götliche eingebung vnnd ordnung gotes ist erstanden Martinus Luther, mein brüder vnd mit

apostel Jesu Christi, der dem Babst vnd seinem anhang die warheit sagt,..."²⁰ Peter was never in Rome, was never pope there nor in charge;"Man thut mir vnrecht, gott erbarme, das man aus mir also einen mörder, dieb, schinder vnd blut sauger der armen leut gemacht hat ...". This assertion denies the very foundations of papal authority and the Roman church. It is put into the mouth of an apostle, a figure who commands the greatest respect, in order to substantiate Luther's point.

Similarly the point is made in the opening exchanges between St. Peter and Sickingen in Sickingen vor des Himmels Pforten. Again it is the apostle himself, the one person to know definitively whether the pope is his descendant or not, who swears he is not:

Peter: Sagstu, sie haben gewalt vor mir?
 Frantz: Ja. der maß berümen sie sich,
 sie hanthaben dir das dein.
 Peter: Sie hanthaben dem teufel das sein.
 nūn hab ich doch nichts hinder mir ge-
 laßen dann mein fischernetz und
 schifflein.²¹

What evidence is more conclusive than that issuing from the mouth of an apostle of Christ? In the dialogue Sickingen is depicted gaining admittance to Heaven. Peter points out, however, that the nobleman is admitted solely on grounds of his faith in God, not because of any works he performed. This doctrine is expounded in numerous other dialogues, but here it is incorporated into the dramatic action. The author thus gives credence to the doctrine by depicting it in practice in life after death and, by bestowing

the sanction of a saint on it. Even Belial, who in Bauer, Belial, Erasmus und Dr. Faber has bribed Erasmus and Faber to desert Luther, makes the same show of authoritative impartiality. He bears witness to the truth of the new faith: he encouraged Faber to write and speak "wider vnser anfechter vnd verkünder des waren gottes wort..."²² The dialogue form allows the inclusion of much more than simply arguments for and against.

NOTES

1. Rudolf Hirzel, Der Dialog. Ein literarhistorischer Versuch, Part 2 (Leipzig, 1895), p. 443 f.:
"Massenhaft ist der Dialog wohl nur drei Mal erschienen, alle drei Mal in revolutionären Perioden der Weltgeschichte als ein Zeichen und Mittel ihrer geistigen Kämpfe," namely during the age of sophism in Ancient Greece, at the emergence of the Renaissance and Reformation, and at the time of Frederick the Great.
2. Lenk, p. 125.
3. Lenk, p. 148.
4. Lenk, p. 140.
5. Lenk, p. 206.
6. Lenk, p. 70.
7. Lenk, p. 80.
8. Schade, III, 102.
9. Lenk, p. 196.
10. Lenk, p. 196.
11. Lenk, p. 213.
12. Hillerbrand, p. 6.
13. Hillerbrand, p. 6.
14. Rupprich, IV/1, 708.
15. Martini, p. 253f.
16. Böckmann, p. 191.
17. Uhrig, p. 95.
18. Böckmann, p. 193.
19. Lenk, Grundpositionen, p. 219.
20. Lenk, p. 169.
21. Schade, II, 46.
22. Clemen, I, 326.

CHAPTER 4 Three common characteristics of Reformation dialogues

Use of the Bible

Although dialogues reflect their authors' divergent points of view, representing differing intentions and differing solutions, almost all have certain characteristics in common. As far as content is concerned, they display in varying degrees traits of anticlericalism. Their tenor is uniformly one of dissatisfaction with the status quo in religious life. They are permeated by the spirit of reform. In particular a fresh attitude to religion provides the especial new drive to improve the state of the nation. The Bible is consistently presented as the yardstick against which all aspects of Christian life should be measured: "In der Methodologie der antirömischen Flugschriften der frühen Reformationszeit stand nach Häufigkeit und Bedeutung das Schriftprinzip an erster Stelle."¹

Not only dialogues but polemical pamphlets generally are laced with Biblical references, which perform an essential role in the text.² In Tholl und Lamp, for instance, a large part of the dialogue consists simply of Bible passages. In Pfarrer und Schultheiß the author is so anxious to establish that the Bible be decreed the measure of all things that he provides streams of quotations. In his zeal to convince the reader that Church practices are unjustifiable if they lack Biblical foundation, the author appears to include all the corroboration he can muster, regardless of

natural speech. Thus the village mayor is made to say:

[ich] hör auch von meim schüler sagen, das da stand Matthei am fünfften Capittel, wie vor gemellt ist: 'Nit ain spitzlin von ain buchstaben sol von dem gesatz gots nit ab oder zū gon.' Deßgleichen sagt er, das in Deutronomi am xxviij. Capitel stand: 'Ir sōlt eūch nit von dem gesatz gots wenden, weder zū der gerechten oder zū der glincken.' Meer das auch stand Paulus ad Gallattes im ersten Capittel: '...' Meer weitter Ezechielis am xviij. Cap.: '...' etc. Des dings ist vil, das sōlichs (als ich von meim schüler hōre) angezaigt wirdt. Vnnd auch so hör ich sagen, das do stand Esaie am xxix. Capitel, ..., deß geleich auch Jheremie am xviij., ...³

The same passages from Scripture recur in various dialogues, pressed into service in various contexts. The passage from Matt. XXII, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's," is deployed in both Von den Scheinwerken der Geistlichen and Müntzerischer Schwärmer und evangelischer Bauer to prove different points. In the first case it is used as an argument against a monk, since monasteries are freed from paying proper taxes. In the second case it is used as an argument against a peasant supporter of Müntzer, since the peasant wrongly rose up against his overlords.⁴ It is the opponent who misconstrues the Bible:

Peter: Lieber, es sein vil alter grawer menner, die rumen sich auch, sie wissen das Ewangeli, aber sie legens nach irem kopff auß.⁵

The Bible was used as the chief weapon of the reforming party in the campaign to prove points and drive home arguments.⁶ The Bible was declared the highest possible authority on religious truth. If regarded as such, as dialogues insist it should be, then it amounts to an invincible weapon. Against it, within the context of a dialogue, the opponents of reform cannot prevail, unless by resorting to other methods, such as coercion or threats. In Chorherr und Schuhmacher and Bauer, Belial, Erasmus und Dr. Faber the opponents have to fall back on abusing their power to gain victory. It is made clear to the reader that they lack the Biblical expertise of the reforming party and, therefore, cannot win in disputation:

Pap: Wān du also wilt so bistu ein Lutherischer
ketzer, in des Bapsts bann, vnnd Keyzers acht.
Euange: Also thūt yhr heuchler, wann yhr nit
mit schrift vnd vernunft wisset zū fechten.
So wütet, tobet, vnd drawet yhr mit bann vnd
weltlichem schwert:schrift, schrift,
schrift, Pater Sancta, schrift wil ich haben,...⁷

The implication is that if they indeed had that knowledge of the Bible they could not possibly belong to the papal party. Dialogues portray Romanists unable to counter the indisputable truth of the Bible or use it for their own cause: "Die Verwendung des Schriftprinzips wurde zum Kennzeichen der antirömischen Publizisten."⁸ The layman in Von der Zwietracht believes solely in the Bible and wants no explanations or additions from "münchdoctores".⁹ Despite their insistence on sola scriptura, however, some dialogues still

approve of or use Church Fathers and canon law to lend weight to their arguments.¹⁰

Within dialogues Romanists are commonly accused of neglecting the Bible and disregarding their duty to give religious instruction from it:

Vatt. Wie sein dan die pastores also verstockt gewest, das sie vns, das wort gottes nit gepredigt habenn?¹¹

Hürenwirt. ich wolt aber auch gern wissen, ob doch das geistlich recht ... zülaßt, daß si weder dürfen predigen noch ander sorg und arbeit tragen und nur gnedige herren sein.¹²

Or they are accused of rendering it incomprehensible:

Der lai. ir [priests] möchten schlecht verstendig leut als irr machen, daß si nit wisten, wen si hören sölten.¹³

Der Schweizer Bauer claims that priests resist the spread of the German language and so keep the populace in ignorance:

Deßglichen auch so vil hundert menschen an einer predig sitzen und kum das drit wort behalten.¹⁴

The conclusion tells the reader, "das der genant ley sich nit laß abtriben ab der helgen geschryfft."¹⁵ Those advocating reform attribute prime importance to the Bible as the emblem of their cause and as proof of their rightness. They are, therefore, careful to exclude the opponent from any association with it.

The convention of an educated layman pouring forth strings of Biblical quotations was upheld throughout the "Blütezeit" of Reformation dialogues (1520 to 1525)¹⁶:

"Der natürliche Verstand des gemeinen Mannes und die Schrift werden als die eigentlichen Grundlagen des neuen Lebensverständnisses genommen."¹⁷ In Neu Karsthans the author maintains the convention, interspersing the speeches of Franz von Sickingen with references from the Bible. At the same time the author is at pains to present an impression of natural conversation. He explains the apparently untypical utterances of Sickingen by Hutten's presence at the Ebernburg, where they have studied Luther's books together. When Karsthans with some justification inquires how Sickingen can retain such information in its entirety, the author again shows concern to sustain realism:

Frantz: Sollich ler, wann sie ein mensch begirlich annympt, geet vil tieffer yn, dann ichtes anders, bleybt auch länger in gedächtnuß.... Der halben sichst du yetzund manchen vngelernten leyen, der allein hat Luterische geschrift lesen hören, mer von dem Ewangelio vnd grund vnsers glaubens wissen zu sagen, dann manchen pfaffen, der X oder XV jar gepredigt vnd vil bücher durchlesen hat. Das schafft, das dise ler, wie ich gesagt, tieff yngat, lang bleybt vnd frucht bringt. ¹⁸

In explaining and justifying his use of large numbers of Biblical references and passages of Biblical extracts, the author is defending not only his own composition but also a current convention among fellow pamphleteers. It is the illiterate or uneducated person, or in this case the equally

unlikely figure of Franz von Sickingen, who is cast in the role of being fully conversant with Scripture.

The author of Neu Karsthans attempts to dismiss any scepticism about the stock treatment of Biblical material in dialogues by offering his readers an easily comprehensible, if somewhat mysterious, explanation. Although one cannot assess to what extent the literary custom of presenting theological argument was under attack from detractors and to what extent his explanation would be acceptable to the reader, the fact that he feels obliged to offer any reasons at all suggests that at least he was aware of some inadequacy in the standard mode of imparting Bible extracts to the reader. That a 'common man' spokesman should have at his fingertips a great quantity of verbatim Biblical quotations was indeed, according to M. M. Guchmann, under attack: "Die Diskrepanz zwischen der Sprache dieser Personen und ihrer sozialen Stellung gab nicht selten Anlaß zu Spott seitens der Gegner."¹⁹

On the one hand, the figure modelled as the exemplary representative of the Reformation is imbued with dignity and piety through his familiarity with the Bible and his avowed adherence to its teaching. On the other hand, he is often portrayed pouring derision and abuse on the opponent. In the dialogue context the use of intemperate, sometimes gross, language does not seem to detract in any way from the positive aura of that representative. He is nonetheless a dedicated Christian, eager for spiritual

uplift. The stock trait of offensive, scornful language used by many dialogue heroes against clerics was perhaps inspired by the tone of Karsthans. For example, Karsthans, punning on Murner's Latin, comments: "Ja warlich stincken yr vom secret, wil glauben, das ir vil schiþhüser durlouffen sind, do ier noch ein katz waren."²⁰ Coarse language appears rather to indicate their ardent, fearless support of progressive ideas and redounds to their credit.²¹ The use of harsh, aggressive language makes the reader respond emotionally and he is more likely to take a firm stand for or against.²² Fierce language might well have played a supportive role in generating the reader's hostility to the Romanists. Above all, the use of Biblical quotations, uttered by pious advocates of change, lends authority to their views and encourages the reader to approve other statements made by reformers.

Dramatic content

A certain affinity of Reformation dialogue with drama no doubt encouraged its use during the period 1520 to 1525 as a medium suited to promoting the propagandist aims of authors. The dialogue is dramatic in its representation of incident from characters' lives. It embodies dynamic qualities: very often it portrays a progression of feelings and opinions, a complete process from start to finish, in many cases that of initiating a character into new ideas and converting him to them. The dialogue is sustained by a current of thought, the motion of minds towards some conclusion

or resolution. In Tholl und Lamp, for example, it concentrates on establishing the identity of the pope as Antichrist; in Petrus und Bauer it focusses on devaluing the papal claim to authority and propounding faith as pre-eminent in attaining salvation.

The dramatic nature of these psychological processes, involving exposition and persuasion, is mirrored in the formal structure of the dialogues. On the intellectual level there is a meeting of minds, a grasping of the problem and discourse on it, rounded off by arrival at some resolution, be it discord or agreement. The structure of the dialogue demonstrates this complete encounter of interlocutors, like a scene in a play marked off by the opening and closing of a curtain. The scene usually opens with the entrance of the figures and closes with their leave-taking. Their entrance and exit form the framework, which has the function of enclosing a self-contained episode. Some dialogues are preceded by a brief mise-en-scène: "Der Bawer wandert vber felt z^u dres~~den~~^{en}; indem er gehet, fellet jm ein die groß zwancknus der welt ..."²³ Some are preceded by a foreword explaining the ensuing theoretical content, such as in Die Anschauenden. Frequently there is a combination of both kinds of scene setting. The introductory section 'Argument' in Christ, Jude und Wirt is of this type: "Dises gesprech soll ein yder vernemen also:..."²⁴

Other dialogues launch straight into conversational

exchanges: "Ach was lyge ich allhie/ vnnd stirb hungers/
Ich will auff steen ..."²⁵ Occasionally the first-person
pronoun intrudes in the introduction before the dialogue
proper begins. Wallfahrt ins Grimmental begins:

Menigklich weyst, das nach mitfasten Mesß
tzū Franckfurt ist. Do dye Mesß eyn ende
het, zoch ich wider heymwertz vnd kam yn eyn
Dorff. Do gyeng ich yn eyn Wirtzhauß vnd
tranck eyn kendeleyne weyns ... Als ich sass
vnd rwet,...

'Ich' then becomes the third-person 'Hantwerckßman'.

In Weber und Kramer the weaver announces the dialogue to
the reader as a transcript of what passed between him
and a shopkeeper, before the weaver becomes a character in
the text:

Es hatt sich begeben das ich in kurtz
verschiner zeyt bin kommen auff den
Perlach oder marckt. da ist zū mir
komen ain güt gesell ain Kramer mit
wölchem ich diß nachfolgent gesprech
... gehalten hab wie hernach folget.²⁷

At the beginning of the dialogue when the interlocutors
meet there usually follows an exchange of greetings, and
the one stimulates discourse by such means as asking for
news of what is happening in the world:

Eyh bocks lauß, woher, Clauß, lieber
gesell meyne? jch hab dich lang nit
gesehen wo bistu so lang gewesen? ...
Lieber, was sagstu news?²⁸

The characters either come together from different parts,
their paths coincidentally crossing en route, as in Neu

Karsthans, Kettenbach und Altmütterlein, Bauer und Mönch
 or Abt, Kurtisan und Teufel:

Nach dem vnd man zalt nach der geburt Christi
 .M.CCCCC. vnd .xxij jor, vff den .xx. tag deß
 Winmonats, sind zúsamē kumen nit weit von
 Trient vff der stroß gegen Rom ein apt vß dem
 bystumb Trier vnd ein Curtisan.²⁹

Or they arrive at some meeting-point and enter the company
 of others, as in Vater und Sohn or Pfarrer und Schultheiß :
 "Schulthayss:Herr Pfarrer, bona dies, synd wilkum ins
 wirtzhauß."³⁰ Then they are questioned for news. After
 the brief preliminaries of arrival, such as getting drinks
 at the inn or exchanging greetings, they launch into the
 topic or topics to be discussed in the tract, and when all
 the points have been sufficiently expounded and conclusions
 reached, then the dramatic episode is sealed by the physical
 parting of the speakers. They say farewell and leave the
 location, either off home, or off to the inn, or off to
 bed, or off to start a new life, or simply to continue on
 their way.

In some dialogues the dramatic nature of the encap-
 sulated encounter is underlined through the inclusion of
 what almost amounts to stage-directions.³¹ At the conclusion
 of Gespräch des Apostolikums Herbe suggests singing "'te
 deum laudamus'", so that the amicable outcome of the debate
 "nit uns sunder got zu gemeßen werd." The colloquy concludes:

Apostolicm. Hebt an! Ich sing frei mit.

Te deum laudamus.³²

Similarly in Von den vier größten Beschwernissen certain phrases sound like instructions to actors: "Pfarrer. Ir herren, singend langsam vnd weydlich, so kan das volck andacht han. Deus in adiutorium meum intende."³³ Some dialogues incorporate dramatic action in a direct fashion:

Son: Hol sie [Ablaßbriefe], wir wöllen sie verbrennen.
 Vater: Da recht! Fraw, breng fewr her, vnd blaß du eynn weil auff!
 Son: Das gilt woll.
 Vater: Ich brenng sie.
 Son: würff sie hienein!
 Vater: Da liegen sie jns Ecken vnd Emser, Murnars namen, Te deum laudamus!³⁴

On the other hand, some authors lack any leanings to drama and tend instead towards a narrative style. Action in Hans Knüchel is quite without immediacy:

Nach disen Worten ward Hans knüchel mit der gantzen gemein inn die kilchen geführt vnd volgt imm nach iung vnd alt. Vnd als sy yn inn die kilchen brachten, fieng an³⁵ der Schultheiß das volck zu ermanen ...

The author's style is in comparison to the previous extract literary and formal. In some dialogues it appears as though their authors lacked the ability to sustain dialogue. Der Schweizer Bauer lapses into monologue: "In seinem Eifer ... läßt der Verfasser jetzt die Fiktion eines Wechselgespräches fallen; der Mönch verstummt, und es redet nur noch er selbst durch den Mund des Bauers, ..." ³⁶ The author of Vom Christlichen Glauben and Der lebendige Märtyrer also allows his dialogues to become monologues. In the former, colloquy

turns into a first-person prayer to God; in the latter, colloquy breaks down after only half a page. "Der Verfasser versucht sich offenbar zum ersten Male als Schriftsteller. Er vermag die auf ihn eindringenden Gedanken nicht zu meistern und zu ordnen."³⁷

Although a framework delimits the episode, the effects of it are frequently portrayed as being far more enduring and significant than of a brief, chance encounter. The stimuli to which characters have been exposed during their conversation accumulate to create an enlightening experience, sometimes with the force of revelation. Klaus in Tholl und Lamp vows that as long as he lives he will never forget what he has learnt in his talk with Hans.³⁸ In many cases they reach a point where a decision is made to alter the status quo and is either put into immediate effect or is planned for the future.³⁹

In Bauer und Mönch the monk after twenty years of monastic life renounces the cowl and is portrayed as actually throwing it off "freund, iezund stee ich auf und wirf mein kutten, darin ich müßig^e gangen, von mir, ... also, freund, ich gee hin zü^o arbaiten."⁴⁰ In Wallfahrt ins Grimmental the monk renounces his profession, dramatically exchanging his habit for a workman's smock. He will set out to become a miner: "Ich wil eyn weil in das Jochayms tal gehn vnnd arbeyten, byß ichs besser mag haben."⁴¹ Neu Karsthans ends with thirty articles about how one may in

future thwart papal officers and their unacceptable practices. The articles, once thought to be Hutten's work, were later taken to be the printer's own addition to the pamphlet.⁴² That they were in fact composed and included in the printed work is indicative of the generally pervasive desire to actively take measures towards a better future.

Conversion

During the period from 1520 to 1525 dialogue authors repeatedly depict in their polemic a convinced representative of reform in the very act of convincing another character, be he friend, foe or neutral. The predilection for portraying conversions is no doubt partly due to the pamphleteers' own aims of winning converts: "Die Autoren der Dialoge gestalteten ... den Weg, den Bewußtseins- und Überzeugungsprozesse in diesen Jahren nahmen oder vorbildhaft nehmen konnten."⁴³ Karsthans was first printed in January 1521 and was probably the forerunner of Reformation dialogues. It is the first known dialogue to depict the conversion of a papist into a supporter of reform. At first Karsthans accepts the view of the Roman church and believes Luther to be a heretic. In the first section of the pamphlet the central focus is the satirically presented figure of Thomas Murner, whom Karsthans reviles on the basis of his common sense and his impressions of the man. Later Karsthans is depicted as a staunch adherent of Luther,

arguing the merits of tracts from his own knowledge of them. He has become the embodiment of a pious layman.

On account of its lack of unity Karsthans has been interpreted by W. Lenk as a hybrid of Humanist and Reformation traits, since a difference of focus is clear between writers with mainly Humanist sympathies and those with mainly Reformation sympathies.⁴⁴ The former concentrate almost entirely on satirising the negative aspects of their opponents, while the latter concentrate on presenting a favourable image of their own party through the excellence of their fictional spokesmen. To another critic the two manifestations of Karsthans's personality seem too irreconcilable to be the work of a single author. H. Scheible explains "die sachliche Unstimmigkeit" as possibly due to the dialogue being a compilation by two authors.⁴⁵

Later dialogues, however, show similar inconsistencies in their fictional characters, similar instant conversions that are scarcely more convincing to the modern mind, and comparable division into 2 disparate sections. Like Karsthans, Christ, Jude und Wirt is an admixture of dialogue forms. The first section consists of a debate between a Christian and a Jew on the value of Christianity. In the second section the Christian is now termed a 'guest' and the previously minor character of the inn-keeper becomes his partner in conversation. Initially the inn-keeper knows nothing of Luther, but later is acquainted with evangelical doctrines. The latter section is fairly typical of Refor-

mation dialogues where a strong Lutheran instructs an eager, but sometimes ignorant, enquirer. At the beginning of Von der Zwietracht the layman is "nit gelert" and by the end has "klerlich Math. 23 und 1 Johan. 2 gelesen."⁴⁶ In Weggespräch the pimp originally knows no Latin and, just like Karsthans, humorously distorts Latin into German - 'fiscal' into 'frißgar', 'decret' into 'secret', 'suffraganeus' into 'sufsgaruß'. Later he speaks a Latin phrase and Kunz at once takes it up:

Kunz. Das gefiel mir, wann du so latein
kündest reden.
Hurenwirt. Ich mein, ich werd hindenach
etwas von dir begreifen.⁴⁷

It would seem here that, since the author is aware of changing the pimp's character and even remarks on it, such changes must be an acceptable practice. It also suggests that one should not perceive the narrated time of pamphlets as being the same as the narrative time. Instead the latter encompasses a longer period. So, instant conversions were perhaps not intended to be perceived as a sudden volte face but as being arrived at over a period of germination.

One can only speculate whether the numerous conversions depicted in Reformation dialogues originated in that of the hero in Karsthans. The pamphlet may well have introduced what became a common motif. Similarly, the convention of characters' undergoing rapid changes may stem originally from Karsthans. If Karsthans indeed constitutes "eine

interessante Zwischenstellung im Übergang vom humanistischen zum volkstümlichen Reformationsdialog", then the hero's switch from papal to Lutheran sympathies was not so much designed to demonstrate the force of Luther's teaching as became the case in successive dialogues.⁴⁸ Rather Karsthans's change of personality results from the author's desire to do two things at once: discredit Murner, and project a positive image of reform.

Several dialogues show the conversion of an unaligned character who is a strong supporter of neither the Roman church nor reform, such as Klaus in Tholl und Lamp, the layman in Von der Zwietracht, and St. George and Peter in Sickingen vor des Himmels Pforten. The author's aim is apparently to demonstrate how a character's 'impartiality' changes to partisanship as soon as he is told the facts. Thus authors give the reader 'evidence' of the persuasiveness of the arguments: persuasive is presented as analogous with right and true.

More typically, dialogues make apparent the process of conversion undergone by both clerical and lay opponents of the new ideas and reform, as the following examples illustrate. In Pfarrer und Schultheiß the priest discards his former beliefs and embraces the new doctrines; in Bauer und Mönch and Wallfahrt ins Grimmerthal the monk abandons his profession; in Prior, Laienbruder und Bettler the prior leaves the monastery; in Christliches, lustiges

Gespräch "nach langem streyt so sy hart miteinander habē so wirt gemelter Prediger münch auß der gnad des herren von dem Augustiner bekert -.."; in Gemeiner Schwabacher Kasten the wool-carder is won over to the idea of a common fund for the town, saying, "Ja ich wil mein leben lang nimmer mer darwider reden."; in Gespräch des Apostolikums Apostolicum says, "nun teufel ab! hell ab! du hast mich ganz umb gewendt"; in Wallfahrt ins Grimmental the peasant radically alters his views and renounces his papal loyalties. The papal supporter is in these examples overwhelmed by the superior arguments and wisdom of the spokesman for change. The papist finds his standard viewpoints systematically disproved and defeated, leaving him in no doubt which side is right and which has proved deficient.

In some dialogues the opponent has developed an openness to the new teaching and undertakes to follow up the conversation with further study of the matter:

Kramer. Ir hond mich warlich wol halb auff ewren weeg gebracht, vnnd ich will^e mich baßer fleyssen in der Bibel zu lesen ...⁴⁹

Maister Vlrich: Wolan, ir habt mich gleich lustig gemacht, ich wil auch mit euch an ewer^e predig, ob ich ein gutter Christ mocht werden.⁵⁰

Münch: Ich wil den dingen weiter^e nach süchen. Wir geen dahin. Got sey mit euch!⁵¹

In contrast to the earnestness of the above episodes, the papal priests in Lutherische und päpstliche Pfaffen make

the satirical comment that they will all convert to Lutheranism if they are no longer permitted to keep whores and yet are not allowed wives.

By 1524 pamphlets were being written in which the conversion being sought is not that of papal supporters but that of too radical reformers. The pious layman spokesman retains the same personal characteristics and the same role, but his partner in discourse becomes an "all too fervent" advocate of change. In Gemeiner Schwabacher Kasten the wool-fuller is so impatient that he suggests killing all priests and monks. This dialogue preaches moderation, and just as the Romanist wool-carder reforms, so, too, the hot-headed fuller is pacified. The outcome is reconciliation and mutual forgiveness:

Knecht. Dank hab, mein lieber bruder
Heinrich, daß du uns also einig hast
gemacht.
Meister. Gottes wort hat also gewurkt.
got sei lob, ere und dank! amen.⁵³

Ein Evangelischer und einLutherischer Christ propounds a similar ethic of moderation and tolerance and attacks 'false Lutherans'. The hero Hans is concerned with one's social behaviour and preaches adherence to "Statut vnd burgerlich sitten."⁵⁴ The epilogue calls for a spirit of brotherliness to prevail despite one's differences. While 'falsely Lutheran' Peter is not converted, Meister Ulrich the Romanist is favourably impressed by Hans's sensible demeanour. Ulrich's reaction is to be understood as proof

of the efficacy of Hans's ideas. Hans Sachs's aim in this dialogue, however, was not necessarily only to convert papal sympathisers but also to dissuade reformers from alienating potential converts.⁵⁵ In Müntzerischer Schwärmer und evangelischer Bauer Müntzer's fanatical supporter is seemingly brought to an acceptance of Luther's doctrine that earthly freedom is not important and says, "ich hoff ich wil mich mit Gottes hulff bekeren, wo mir Gott mein gesundtheit widder gibt."⁵⁶

The authors of dialogues depict concentrated, dramatic enactments of a conversion. The fictional conversion forms a parallel to their propagandist intentions to win over the public, and they supply their audience with a model in the hope of stimulating the same response from them as illustrated. The readers' attention is focussed on a forward progression of ideas, which seems to develop with inevitability through various psychological stages. Initial disagreement or uncertainty is followed by a dispersal of doubts, abandonment of eroded loyalties (whether to the Roman church, violent reforms, or Müntzer) and an embracing of new ideas.

Not all dialogues, however, culminate in resolved conflict or simple conversion. The "Prozeß kollektiver Wahrheitssuche und Meinungsbildung" is sometimes shown breaking down.⁵⁷ In such dialogues there is no eventual reconciliation between the parties. Rather the discussion results in entrenched positions of hostility. Examples

include Hutten's Die Anschauenden, Von der Gült, Chorherr und Schuhmacher, Bauer, Belial, Erasmus und Dr. Faber and the priest in Wallfahrt ins Grimmental. Although the advocates of reform cannot effect a conversion, the reader is made aware that in the exchange of views one side has proved itself the upholder of Gospel and embodiment of laudable values. The other has been revealed as worthy only of rejection, all the more so by its recalcitrance in admitting its own spiritual and moral baseness. Sometimes the opponent even concedes or 'unwittingly' admits his own failings, but is still indignant at the suggestion that he should change. Such refractory characters serve not only to incline the reader to the representatives of reform but also to engender anger and animosity.⁵⁸

Not all dialogues are structured to culminate in a conversion scene, although they can be very similar in format. In some the passage of information from a well-informed character to an open recipient forms the content. Examples are Neu Karsthans, Vater und Sohn, and Peter und Bauer. In contrast to the very similar Tholl und Lamp, they do not portray conversion but present an edifying conversation in which information is exchanged and a secondary character satisfactorily instructed.

A general tendency among dialogues is discernible where the "stage" is occupied by only two interlocutors. Then the content seems typically to be educational and involves no conflict between the participants, as in the

above examples, and also in Fuchs und Wolf, Kunz und Fritz, Ein seltsames Tier and Hofmann und Bauer. Alternatively any conflict between participants is finally resolved and conciliation follows, as in Pfarrer und Schultheiß, Müntzerischer Schwärmer und evangelischer Bauer and Weber und Kramer. This is no more than a general tendency in the arrangement of dramatis personae within Reformation dialogues. Where there are a greater number of interlocutors the group invariably includes spokesmen of both parties, and the outcome is often increased antagonism, as in Von der Gült, Chorherr und Schuhmacher and Bauer, Belial, Erasmus und Dr. Faber.

Other dialogues depict neither conversions nor edifying conversation but cast the reader in the role of invisible spectator who 'overhears' conspiratorial arrangements or private conversations. In Bembus, Silenus und Narr the reader witnesses 'at first hand' how Bembus has been sent by his prior and subprior to ask Silenus to conceal their amassed wealth. Neither the monks nor the town council nor the commoners are to learn of the treasure for fear that they might appropriate it for themselves. As an 'eye-witness', the reader receives an insight into the shocking dealings of monasteries. Fuchs und Wolf, Kunz und Fritz, Ein seltsames Tier, Edelmann, Mönch und Kurtisan and Abt, Kurtisan und Teufel all impart to the reader secret information and allow him to observe private scenes. This style of dialogue is entertaining as well as having a serious

aim of revealing private affairs and innermost motives of characters who are unaware of the reader's 'presence'.

The above examples have in common a more obviously satirical Humanist background as far as attitudes are concerned.

Although Reformation dialogues portray a wide range of dramatic episodes, the conversion is a favoured effect.

NOTES

1. Ritter, p. 53.
2. Exceptions are Von der Gült and most of Hutten's works. In M. M. Guchmann's view, "So war Hutten beispielsweise nicht gewillt, die Autorität der Religion zur Bekräftigung seiner politischen Ansichten heranzuziehen." (p.42)
3. Lenk, p. 136.
4. Spriewald, p. 113; Kaczerowsky, p. 206.
5. Spriewald, p. 167 (Ein Evangelischer und ein Luterischer Christ).
6. Guchmann, p. 41 f.
7. Köhler et al. (1978), Fiche 132, No. 354, Bij (Der ausgelaufene Mönch).
8. Ritter, p. 59.
9. Schade, III, 212.
10. Ritter, pp. 63-65.
11. Lenk, p. 155.
12. Schade, III, 180.
13. Schade, III, 211.
14. Schieß, p. 304.
15. Schieß, p. 308.
16. Lenk, Grundpositionen, p. 219.
17. Böckmann, p. 196.
18. Lenk, p. 100.
19. Guchmann, p. 49.
20. Lenk, p. 71.
21. "Die sich förmlich überbietende Sackgrobheit und Unfläterei im Ausdruck schlägt uns heut auf die Nerven. Wir hören die Sprache einer untergegangenen Kulturwelt, der Mammutzeit des deutschen Prosastils." Eduard Engel, Geschichte der deutschen Literatur von den Anfängen bis in die Gegenwart, 8th ed. (Wien: Tempsky; Leipzig: Freytag, 1910), I, 173.

22. Heinz Entner and Werner Lenk, "Literatur und Revolution im 16. Jahrhundert," Weimarer Beiträge, 16, 5 (1970), 157.
23. Lenk, p. 168 (Petrus und Bauer).
24. Clemen, I, 389.
25. Simon, p. 363 (Bauer und Mönch).
26. Lenk, p. 179.
27. Köhler et al. (1979), Fiche 253, No. 707, Aij.
28. Clemen, I, 175 (Ein seltsames Tier).
29. Clemen, III, 16. .
30. Lenk, p. 128.
31. Guchmann, p. 49: "Viele Dialoge stellen eine echte, für das Theater bearbeitete Handlung dar, ..." Guchmann mentions Römische Pfaffen und Lutherische Bauern, Von den vier größten Beschwernissen, Karsthans and Chorherr und Schuhmacher.
32. Schade, III, 58.
33. Clemen, III, 71.
34. Lenk, p. 157.
35. Clemen, I, 241 f.
36. Schieß, p. 307.
37. Clemen, Fac., Vol. 1, p. 3, notes.
38. Lenk, p. 150.
39. Lenk, Grundpositionen, p. 226 : "das Mimische".
40. Schade, II, 159.
41. Lenk, p. 195.
42. A. Stern, "Einige Bemerkungen über die Autorschaft des Dialogs 'Neukarsthans'", ARG, 8 (1911), 217 f.; P. Kalkoff, "Die Prädikanten Rot-Locher, Eberlin und Kettenbach," ARG, 25 (1928), 147.
43. Lenk, Grundpositionen, p. 225.

44. Lenk, p. 33f.
45. Scheible, p. 125.
46. Schade, III, 207 and 211.
47. Schade, III, 178.
48. Lenk, p. 34.
49. Weber und Kramer.
50. Spriewald, p. 173 (Ein Evangelischer und ein Lutherischer Christ).
51. Spriewald, p. 122 (Von den Scheinwerken der Geistlichen).
52. Schade, III, 157.
53. Schade, III, 206.
54. Spriewald, p. 155.
55. cf. Balzer, p. 159. Also critical of Lutherans' behaviour are Hans Knüchel, Kurtisan, Edelmann und Bürger and Abt, Kurtisan und Teufel. They are also critical of Luther, while at the same time loosely supporting him.
56. Kaczerowsky, p. 214.
57. Entner and Lenk, p. 156.
58. Dialogues between a Christian and a Jew perform a different function (Christ, Jude und Wirt, Unterredung vom Glauben). The discussion serves above all as a means for the Christian to expound his beliefs, rather than attempt to convert the Jew to Christianity.

CHAPTER 5 The 'common man'

Although the authors of pamphlets were in the main Humanists from educated circles and formed an intellectual élite in Germany, they chose as representative and champion of reform and the Reformation the embodiment of the lowest social orders, the 'common man'. Men with a belief in the supremacy of humanist education found a symbol for their endeavours in the least educated groups of society, the peasantry, urban artisans and junior clergy.

The 'common man' character in Reformation dialogues has been termed "eine der bedeutendsten literarisch-ästhetischen Leistungen der Epoche".¹ Luther was at pains to integrate the 'common man' into his new order of things. Every Christian layman is a member of the priesthood, and in An den christlichen Adel (1520) he refers specifically to commoners: "Ein schuster, ein schmid, ein bawr, ein yglicher seyns handtwercks ampt unnd werck hat,..."² In his "theologia pauperum" Luther had brought the 'common man' into the forefront of discussion and accorded him elevated status; but the 'common man' character who is not just talked about but talks for himself was a creation of the dialogues.³ In polemical pamphlets the views of the commoner are taken seriously and he is depicted as being on an equal footing with members of other estates. The elevated position he occupies within dialogues reflects the social consequences of Luther's teaching.⁴

There were certainly a number of influences which conditioned the positive image of the 'common man' in Reformation polemic. These factors may partially explain why the 'common man' was cast in the role of representative spokesman for the Reformation. The humanistically educated authors who presented an idealised commoner most likely picked out one feature of a long tradition of literary peasant portrayal, namely the positive assessment of his worth. Authors' education would have included the Classical concept of spiritual nobility based on virtue and regardless of social distinctions. The philosophical notion of nobilitas virtutum meant that anyone could achieve inner nobility through his own virtuous conduct, which was at variance with the established theory that the lowly status of the peasant was merely the expression and necessary concomitant of his low moral worth. His material poverty only reflected his spiritual poverty and could be justified as a result of Noah's curse on his son Cham (Gen. IX, 22). 'Tugendadel', however, implies that theoretically there are no social distinctions, since if a man is not noble by birth but by virtue, then nobility ceases to be a privileged social status and becomes a quality to which even the peasant can aspire. He, therefore, cannot be prejudged inherently sinful and ignoble, and the whole notion of God-ordained inequality is called into question.

The principle of nobilitas animi descended from

antiquity, was incorporated in Christian thought and became a commonplace in medieval literature.⁵ It was thus not an indication of a new spirit of egalitarianism or social unrest: it ran parallel to the other equally traditional literary representation of the peasantry, based on scorn and vilification. While nobilitas animi constituted the rejection of inequality on ethical grounds, it did not necessarily do so on social grounds: "Noch fand dieser Gedanke nicht die in ihm beschlossene revolutionäre Auswirkung; jenseitig und nach innen gerichtet, mündete er in die Lehre der für alle gültigen Gehorsamspflicht des Gerechten zurück."⁶ The theme of spiritual nobility and moral equality may be construed as a literary topos with little or no actual social application.⁷

Medieval moral teaching scolded, warned and appealed to the conscience of the individual to improve himself. By dissociating social status from nobility, the preaching of the doctrine of nobilitas animi must have to some extent weakened traditional medieval thinking on social order. It must have created tension between the ideal of social stations and social reality, between, on the one hand, inner equality of the soul before God and, on the other, social and ideological differences between the estates based on a divine plan of salvation:

Eine enorme geistige Vorarbeit in diesem Bewußtseinsprozeß, besonders hinsichtlich einer neuen Wertschätzung des Bauern, leistete die sogenannte Lehrdichtung des späten Mittelalters...⁸

"By the end of the fifteenth century the topos of class equality is firmly established."⁹

Humanist study would have encompassed the works of writers who claimed to hold simple rusticity in the highest esteem, for example, the rustic idylls of Greek pastorals and the Roman glorification of agricultural labour. Virgil's Georgics heaped praise on the simplicity and peacefulness of pastoral life; Augustine idealised it as an idyllic existence, where peasants toiled in a carefree state, at one with nature; Thomasin von Zerclaere considered the peasant fortunate to be unburdened with the worries and responsibilities that beset the mighty. The Bible itself, of course, attaches great importance to those of humble station, and the Gospels in particular accord the lowly pride of place in God's eyes for being pure in spirit. Classical and Christian traditions of Arcadianism must again have coloured the image of the 'common man' in Reformation dialogues.

Alongside the traditional idealisation of peasants' life in medieval literature ran complaints about the appalling conditions under which they lived. It is thought there was growing awareness of the importance of economic factors in the Middle Ages, which led to greater appreciation of the social function of the peasantry as 'Nährstand'. Since the peasant served the whole community by providing its food, society was entirely dependent on his labour; yet it placed him at the very bottom of the social hierarchy.

Recognition of material dependence on agricultural labour led to an ennoblement of manual work and a glorification of the toiling peasant at the plough. In the literature of the 'estates' peasants are in theoretical terms put on a par with their superiors, the clergy and knights, since all are nourished by the class at the foot of the ladder. Sermons and didactic literature urged charitable feelings towards the peasantry, based on the Augustinian doctrine of caritas and humility towards the poor, although no doubt double standards prevailed: "poets protest that the 'arme liute' are oppressed and exploited by bailiffs and lords, yet are otherwise entirely conventional in their attitudes towards the peasantry as a class."¹⁰

The idealisation of the peasant or complaints about the conditions he lives in, however, can be intended more to exemplify the deficiencies of other classes than to improve the esteem peasants were held in. In his social theory Thomasin von Zerclaere discussed peasants and their rightful place in society. Yet his admonitions to accord them their due concentrated primarily on instructing the knights in their duties and role as protectors. 'Ministeriales' and lesser knights formed the real object of his concern. The hostility felt by burghers in the late Middle Ages towards the nobility encouraged the townsmen to hold up an idealised image of the countryman in order to accentuate failings of the nobles.¹¹ Rather than promote the lot of the

commoner, they strove to draw a comparison unfavourable to knighthood. The Thuringian cleric, Johannes Rothe (ca. 1360 - 1434), serves as an example of this aim. In his Ritterspiegel (1415/16) he depicts knights as a corrupt, degenerate band and peasants as stout-hearted and industrious: Rothe aims at shaming 15th century knighthood into a return to courtly values.¹²

Similarly, the writers of Reformation dialogues demonstrate how the 'common man' possesses wisdom, piety and Biblical knowledge, while the clergy is morally base, ignorant and mercenary. Some authors were most probably more intent on expressing their disapproval of the Roman church than on raising the public esteem commoners were held in - far less raising the self-esteem of commoners. It has been suggested that authors' "ureigenstes Interesse" was "in kürzester Frist den 'gemeinen Mann' geistig aufzuwecken und als Gewalt gegen die römische Kirche zu organisieren."¹³ Given a long-standing literary tradition of contrasting other estates unfavourably with the peasant to highlight their own defects, and given a tradition of peasant glorification, one can assume that these elements were indeed woven into the 'common man' character in Reformation dialogues.

It has been observed that social groups very often feel most threatened by and exhibit most hostility towards the social group closest to them. The expression of contempt

and animosity which burgher poets displayed in the 15th and early 16th centuries may well have stemmed from fear of the peasantry's social proximity. Having at one time exchanged a rural existence for townlife, these townsmen perhaps felt particularly endangered by the group from which they themselves had sprung and had subsequently distanced themselves.¹⁴ The factor of 'Landflucht', the emigration from rural into urban areas, no doubt fuelled the fear: "The burgher has cause to fear him [the peasant] in a fluid society and vents his fears in angry and malicious satire."¹⁵ At the same time and in blatant contradiction, the burghers sided with the peasants when their aim was to illuminate the shortcomings of the other rival group of nobles.

The choice of the 'common man' to symbolise the drive for reform may be at least partially explained, therefore, in the light of the theory that enmity and rivalry is strongest between groups more or less adjacent in the social hierarchy. The choice of the 'common man' was made by writers who held in low regard those not as well-educated as themselves.

Although several factors must be taken into account, one important factor determining their choice would be the writers' loathing of the other educated class distinct from themselves. They had termed them "Dunkelmänner" for showing no inclination to embrace humanist studies nor any

willingness to contemplate reforms, whether in religious, educational or socio-political spheres. Supporters of papal authority and the Roman church in its existing form, and opponents of reform in universities and society generally, constituted the social group which was closest and posed the greatest threat to Humanists of Erasmus's school and followers of Lutheran ideas, e.g. in the field of gaining employment or patronage. The 'common man', on the other hand, was without the power to obtrude himself into the mundane affairs of the 'progressive' educated classes, and consequently did not rank as a primary source of danger.

The 'common man' is portrayed as possessing the clear, unclouded vision of the uneducated, a pleasing contrast to the "Obscure Men", befogged by an outworn, narrow scholastic education. The commoner exercises native wit and penetrates to essential truths, while dusty scholars labour to blinker themselves with invalid theories.¹⁶ When the issue of what constitutes proper and improper education was a controversial one, the 'common man' **without education could not damage the** self-esteem of the 'progressive' group, but could serve to downgrade the group of papal servants and their supporters. It may have been a particularly effective form of snubbing the group nearest to the writers' own interests by favouring and elevating the lowest social strata, from which writers themselves had little to fear, and giving them the ability to topple their rivals in argument, e.g. Dr. Eck, Murner, prelates, priests and monk, as portrayed in numerous

Reformation dialogues. One can detect similarities between the relationship of 'common man' to clergyman and that of Humanists to "Dunkelmänner". The one side propounds clear, unadulterated truth, the reader is told, and has taken up the fight against those who obscure truth. As the symbol of reform and the Reformation the 'common man' is fired with an impetus that impels him to seek to understand the essence of Christian teaching and agitate for change. Portrayed as the voice of innovation, he seems almost a kind of self-image of his creators, the pamphleteers.

The tradition of representing the peasant in literature was, however, twofold. The tradition of positive assessment, as described above, existed alongside a negative one. It comprised a deeply negative evaluation of peasant worth, agricultural labour and peasant character. For example, the songs and farces ('Schwänke') that feature the exploits of Knight Neithart Fuchs depict peasants typically as stupid, lazy, ugly, gluttonous, podgy, argumentative, prosperous and cunning.¹⁷ The Neithart farces were published at the end of the 14th century and their function may well have been to consolidate courtly values as well as defame the peasantry. The reader or audience is shown how peasants try to dress and behave like their social superiors, but succeed only in aping them in a grotesque parody. Peasants are ignorant upstarts who must be kept in their place. In Heinrich Wittenweiller's Der Ring (ca. 1400-08) peasants are depicted as corrupt protagonists, but the book's intention is not a

See
p. 326f.

satire on peasants but a didactic message for an urban middle-class audience.¹⁸ The peasant is the means of putting this message across. It was a topos of bourgeois writing to portray human folly through a representation of peasant life.¹⁹ Thus the tradition of presenting peasants as contemptible beings was consistently maintained over the centuries and so became deep-rooted in society.²⁰ The peasant had always been and still was by the beginning of the 16th century roundly vilified from all quarters. The 'common man' hero of Reformation polemic is portrayed as self-confident and aware of his own importance and rights. From a position of moral superiority he judges those who are economically and socially above him and outspokenly condemns them when necessary for injustice and sin. The 'common man' who features as representative of reform and the Reformation is able to speak on his own behalf and able to decide for himself what is right and what is wrong. Although a literary tradition already existed which portrayed commoners as embodying such positive qualities as simplicity, righteousness and innocence, the view presented in polemical Reformation literature includes additional innovative features: the 'common man' is the spokesman of his own estate; he has achieved inner perfection; he has been entrusted with the task of championing social improvements and of saving the faith. His thoughts and feelings, usually treated with gravity, provide the main matter of the literature.

Murner's gibe from 1520, made in reply to Luther's

An den christlichen Adel, that "hanß karsten vnd die vnuerstendig gemein" could be influenced equally "z^u bösem alß g^utem" has been superseded.²¹ Murner accused the lowest orders of inability to differentiate right from wrong and of lack of common sense. Murner stands refuted by the 'common man' who cannot be swayed in any way from his perception of truth. Dialogues and poems assert and demonstrate that commoners now know what is what. Karsthans depicts the contrary of Murner's assertion that the 'common man' is by nature volatile: Karsthans relies on his own faculties of native wit, honesty and sense of justice to reject Murner and align himself with Luther.

In Die Göttliche Mühle (1521) the author(s) refer to Karsthans, the peasant who demonstrates both an awareness of Church abuses and an unwillingness to be duped further:

Karthans seinen flegel noch hat:
 der die heilig gschrift iez auch verstat.
 Welt man in betriegen wie vor,
 so ist er so ein grober tor,
 Er schläg^e mit dem flegel drein.²²

Similarly in Vom bösen Mißbrauch (1524/25) the poet indicates that a change in the 'common man's' perception has taken place:

Daß weißt iez maniger biderman
 Der anders wenig lesen kan.²³

Der Kurtisan und Pfründenfresser (n.d.) also comments that

the commoner is now informed of the facts about the ways of the Romanists and is itself conveyor of such information:

Hie würrdt mein B^eberey bekant,
Dem Bauren vnd gemainem man.²⁴

Now that the 'common man' has become aware, as is asserted, changes will have to be made:

Der bauer wil sich nimer laßen affen.
Das merkt, ir fürsten herren und regenten.²⁵

The suggestion contained in many pamphlets is that they have brought about widespread enlightenment and that they see their role as providing easy access to information which was previously unobtainable:

dis hab ich geschriben . . . , do mit der
gemein man im lesen durch das latein
nit zerstreuet werd, sunder von stund
an den verstant in sich faß.²⁶

Reformation literature announces that the 'common man' does indeed possess the power to judge and differentiate right from wrong, because now he has the information on which to base his decision. This is not the same 'peasant' as features in Latin sermons and literature of estates, but a self-assertive, critical character, fully equipped with innate abilities to make and implement decisions. In fact, this 'common man' who has become enlightened about the Roman church seems very much a kind of parallel to his creator, the writer with humanist leanings. The characteristics presented as laudable in the 'common man' seem to resemble

those of a publicist: he argues his case regardless of whom he offends; he attempts to convince the opponent of his own point of view; he refuses any longer to tolerate established abuses.

While the commoner in the literature of earlier eras had been more or less exclusively a peasant, the 'common man' modelled by intellectuals as the exemplary protagonist of the Reformation was variously cast, in keeping with a more complex social structure. In Bauer und Mönch and Bauer, Belial, Erasmus und Dr. Faber, for example, he features as a simple peasant. In Weber und Kramer and Wallfahrt ins Grimmental, however, he is an urban artisan. In Vater und Sohn he appears as a university student, the son of a peasant with "Knechte". In Karsthans he is the unschooled peasant father of a university student but holds the position of village mayor. In Gemeiner Schwabacher Kasten he is a runaway monk. In Von der Zwietracht he is simply termed "a layman". Whatever his supposed role in society, the 'common man' is an exemplary Christian character. His personality could arouse readers' approval and appear worthy of emulation.

But when one examines the social conditions of some of these model characters, they scarcely embody actual ideals to which the reader would readily aspire. In Chorherr und Schuhmacher the servant Calefactor is unceremoniously dismissed from his job for outspoken Lutheran comments. In Prior, Laienbruder und Bettler (1522?) the beggar is the mouthpiece

for reform opinions ²⁷; in Wegggespräch it is a brothel-keeper. These examples do not depict actual social categories of persons to be admired (not even by actual commoners), but rather Christian characteristics that are worthy of admiration. Thus one could conclude that the figure of the 'common man' is certainly in some Reformation dialogues more a literary affectation, a plebeian topos, than a realistic representation of an acceptable "man of the people".

The cause of reform and the Reformation is identified with the 'common man' who epitomises a reformed human being deeply concerned with spiritual values. He takes on an assortment of roles within dialogues. For example, he can be presented propounding the new faith to fellow commoners, as does Hans to Klaus in Tholl und Lamp, who are social equals, and the artisan to the peasant in Wallfahrt ins Grimmental; again, both are commoners. He also appears propounding the new faith face to face with the opposition, in Von der Gült or Chorherr und Schuhmacher, and does so with courage, determination and unflagging vigour. He also appears in the role of winning over officials of the Church or members of monastic orders, by dazzling them with his ready skill in Biblical allusion and reference, as in Pfarrer und Schultheiß, or by shaming them with examples of colleagues' depravity, as in Wallfahrt ins Grimmental. The 'common man' hero also appears in the process of being himself instructed and converted, as in Petrus und Bauer and Karthans. As the symbol of the

Reformation the 'common man', whether urban or rural, is presented as the protagonist character, the focus of attention, in the forefront of the dialogue. He usually initiates discussion and often leads it to a conclusion. (NeuKarsthans is one notable exception, where the knight is hero and main speaker.)

In general the lay characters, whether they are the heroes of dialogues or simply minor characters, are drawn predominantly from lower social strata, with figures such as Sickingen, a count (Vom Christlichen Glauben) or a steward (Von den vier größten Beschwerenissen, Dialog vom Geiz) being the exception. H. Winkler has pointed out that in dialogues the hero's counterpart or opponent is typically a potential ally and thus is also drawn from social orders, "die auf Grund ihrer objektiven Klassenstellung für die bürgerliche Bewegung gewonnen werden konnten"²⁸ The opponent is not usually drawn from "Vertreter der kirchlichen Feudalhierarchie", who because of their position are precluded from changing sides. From the fourteen dialogues in her study she cites three exceptions, namely the bishop in Weggespräch, the prior (who is in fact converted) in Prior, Laienbruder und Bettler, and Murner in Karsthans. Other characters who belong to elevated levels in the Church hierarchy are the canon in Chorherr und Schuhmacher, Erasmus and Dr. Johann Faber in Bauer, Belial, Erasmus und Dr. Faber, the treasurer in Bembus, Silenus und Narr, the abbot in Abt, Kurtisan und Teufel

and the canon in Vom Christlichen Glauben. Only the last mentioned figure sympathises with reform.

In comparison with the numbers of characters who are lowly priests and monks, those of higher clerical rank are indeed few. The general tendency in dialogues is certainly to set the scene in a lowly social milieu. Figures such as an "Edelmann" or "Bischof" do play a role in dialogues as representatives and 'living proof' of those deficiencies that are held up to censure.

At the same time as the 'common man' is presented as the model layman, authors commonly voice the hope that the common people will not be obliged to act on the information they now possess; for theirs is not the estate that should be entrusted with carrying out national reform:

Lants nit an gemeinen haufen wassen!
 Auf daß von inen nit werd vergoßen
 Etwan unschuldig christen blüt.²⁹

While it is the 'common man' who has become aware of the faults in the Roman church and who now longs or even presses for change, he is often told to restrain himself or to await patiently changes carried out by those in positions of authority. Authors commonly purport to be writing for the 'common man's' benefit; yet in the next breath call on members of the ruling classes to rectify matters:

dis hab ich geschriben ..., do mit der
 gemein man ... den verstant in sich
 faß. wil domit all regierer des weltlichen

stands bi dem heil irer selen ermant
 haben,..., daß si unverzagts gemüts^e
 alle curtisanen und ir boten vertriben
 und ußjagen, keiner römischen bullen,
 keins bans, [etc.] mer achten.³⁰

The 'common man' is not usually proposed as the engine of change. He embodies the impetus and power necessary to effect ^aon upheaval in the life of the nation. But it is to the emperor, princes, nobles, or even to the clergy itself, that encouragement to steer and implement reforms is given.

In Reformation pamphlets the 'common man' is often the focus of attention. Authors claim to be writing for him; pamphlets are supposedly written by him. Now that he is in possession of "knowledge" about the injustices he suffers at the hands of other estates, greater concern about his feelings and well-being is deemed necessary. The 'common man' appears in pamphlets as the yardstick against which other estates are measured: in most dialogues it is primarily the clergy's piety and attitude to work that is measured against those same qualities in the commoner and is found wanting.

The 'common man' also appears in pamphlets as a worthy object of Christian charity in thoughts and actions: the behaviour of other estates towards him is then compared and discussed. In Edelmann, Mönch und Kurtisan a noble and a monk argue about which of them perpetrates the most severe injustice on the 'common man'. The nobleman accuses the monk of swindling the commoner and robbing him of his "ecker und wisen" and adds, "des gleichen habt ir die alten

mütterlein umbs gelt bracht." The monk parries, "... ,
 aber daß ir euer pauren so hart nötigt zu steuren, reisen,
 frönnen etc. wider all billigkeit und recht, ..." The
 accusations continue, the nobleman condemning monkish ways,
 "welches zu erbarmen und nit zu wunden, ob schon der arm
 man kein gelt hat", and the monk condemning noble practices,
 "welchs dann den gemeinen man und alle andere hendel seer
 beschwert hat."³¹

Similarly in Weggespräch the welfare of the common
 people is the paramount consideration and the conduct of
 other estates towards them the subject of criticism. Again
 the behaviour of clergy and nobility is compared:

Hürenwirt. und ob schon die weltlichen
 bißher zu zeiten dem gemein man mer
 abgenommen haben, denn in von recht
 gebürt, so ists aber verträglicher³²
 denn von den falscher geistlichen.

In Ein Evangelischer und ein Lutherischer Christ Sachs is at
 pains to convey the message to Lutheran supporters that
 they must not annoy the 'common man' by all too overtly
 Lutheran behaviour: again the commoner is the central
 concern, whose opinions and well-being are of prime importance.³³
 When the conduct of other social groups is measured against
 that of the lowest social group, the excellence of the
 commoner serves to illustrate and highlight deficiencies in
 others.

While dialogues characteristically contain proposals
 about the future, these cannot really be termed revolutionary.
 They deplore oppression of the common people, yet the power

the 'common man' possesses is to be directed specifically against the Roman church and not against temporal authority. Even then, the general hope expressed is that the Church will reform itself first. If it will not do so, then princes should instigate Church reform and so alleviate the commoners' condition. If all else fails, then the 'common man' may step in and right matters himself. This prediction is variously made as a warning, a goad and a threat. It is not viewed as desirable. The 'common man' character in dialogues seldom advocates violence, but when he does, another character urges him to restrain himself. In Kantians Luther tells the hot-headed peasant to repudiate violence; in Petrus und Bauer St. Peter calms the angry peasant; in Gemeiner Schwabacher Kasten the Lutheran spokesman restrains an impatient worker; in Vater und Sohn the Lutheran student son convinces his enraged peasant father to reject violence and forgive his enemies. Such displays of angry impatience among commoners may serve to intimidate those cast as the putative victims of commoners' violence. Characteristically, however, the 'common man' character in Reformation dialogues opposes rebellion.

The 'common man' may have become spokesman for the party of reform partly because of a prevalent fear of him as a potential insurgent. In Reformation dialogues he is portrayed as an exemplary Christian, but the idea that he may rise in rebellion is never far. The characteristic

implement of the peasantry was traditionally the flail and in Reformation dialogues it is frequently going to be used on Romanists:³⁴

Karsthans: Wo ist myn pflegel?³⁵

Lutherisch pfaffen. der pauren trischel wartet auf euch [Papistisch pfaffen], kumpt oder bleibt auß.³⁶

Mayster ..., oder die Pauern werden sy mit kolben lauben.³⁷

Münch. ich besorg, sol ich lenger petteln under den pauren, so wurd ich erschlagen.³⁸

It has been suggested that a tradition of peasant glorification arose from recognition of the peasantry's potential power:

The idealization of the peasant may stem in part from the fear of peasant unrest - signs of which go back as early as the Stedinger uprising of 1229-1234 - and the promptings of the Christian conscience.³⁹

Publicists may well have played upon this fear of insurrection to promote their own goals. Dialogues show that the 'common man' now knows how shamefully the clerics have deceived him. His anger and impatience for improvements are used to lend urgency to the calls for reform; at the same time he is shown to condemn violence.

By showing their 'common man' spokesman renounce violent measures, authors of dialogues are improving the image of their reforming party. The reader is told that it consists of law-abiding Christians. Authors of dialogues

are, at the same time, destroying one of their opponents' main arguments against them: "... man [war] allenthalben bemüht, den Vorwurf, daß das Evangelium nur zum Aufruhr diene, zu widerlegen."⁴⁰ The 'common man' protagonist often expresses the conviction that change is imminent. But one should not speed the process by active measures; it might be induced by peaceful means or allowed to develop of its own accord. In Tholl und Lamp, for example, the peasants decide that their best course is to pray for good preachers and appeal to God for true faith. In Kunz und Fritz the peasants will await the inevitable developments:

Cunz. man muß oft, umb args und übels
zu fürkumen, ain weil ain aug zu thun
und darbei schweigen biß zu der rechten
stund.⁴¹

Change is couched in impersonal, vague terms. Kunz envisages "daß der engel gots das schwert emplößt und inen den tod treuet." He names Murner, Eck and Emser, who will not escape "dem zorn des gerechten gots."

Nevertheless, the idea remains, in the wings as it were, that resistance is justifiable if provoked by the blatant abuse of power. The opponents of reforms hold up the spectre of revolution and bloodshed as the consequence of the new teachings. Thus they hope to prevent defection to the reformers. Publicists for the 'progressive' party, on the other hand, intimate that the Romanists, and to a limited extent temporal rulers, have been allotted time to reform themselves. If they do so, violence can be averted

and the commoners' just wrath assuaged. If they do not reform, they will cause rebellion:

Faber: Nun, ich hör wol, bauer, warzu dein gmiet geneuygt ist, du woltest gern vffrur oder embörung sehen.

Bauer: Das ist nit war,... Seiet ir dan nit Christen vnnd auch nitt Jüden, so müst ir gewißlich rechte Ketzzer, Türcken oder der hellisch teuffell selbst sein vnd derhalb zurettung Christlichen glaubens nach euwerer menschlichenn selbs lere gewälttigklich anzutasten vnd außzureüten.⁴²

In addition, Romanists should fear revolt from 'false Christians': when God decides to punish them, "so wirt er ein ufrur und buntschuch durch den Türken oder durch falsch Christen über si erwecken oder anrichten."⁴³ In Gemeiner Schwabacher Kasten the anti-Lutheran wool-carder states, "Ach, die neu lere wirt noch große zwitracht und aufrur machen." The Lutheran master replies, "Ja den menschen, die gottes wort nit annemen und gar wenig oder gar nichts an die predige geen."⁴⁴ The common man who is a true supporter of the new faith will have no part in rebellion, the reader is shown and told:

Daß es der reformatorischen Literatur mithin nicht um Volksaufhetzung ging, beweist diese Bauernfigur, die frei ist von allen revolutionären Elementen.⁴⁵

The following appraisal of Reformation dialogues would thus seem unsubstantiated:

Die Gestaltung des mit seiner ganzen Persönlichkeit engagierten Menschen ist die Gestaltung des an die Sache der Revolution engagierten Menschen, der Prozeß der Wahrheitsfindung ist der Prozeß der Aneignung eines

revolutionären Bewußtseins in
kollektivem Erfahrungsaustausch,
gestützt auf ein revolutionäres
Programm, und beides schließlich
gipfelt in der höchsten Form revolutionärer
Persönlichkeitsäußerung,
im revolutionären Handeln.⁴⁶

Of course, Neu Karsthans does present a revolutionary programme of a kind: an armed uprising of nobles and peasants is suggested, directed against Church oppression and with the peasantry under the leadership of noblemen. Franz von Sickingen pays lip-service to the notion that it would be best if the Church reformed itself:

Wiev^eol besser wär, wir möcht^en sie mit
gütten vermanungen dahin bringen, das
sie vnns den Christenglauben, wie vns
den Christus vnd die Apostel gegeben
haben vnd sie vns mitler zeyt genommen,
widerumb gäben.⁴⁷

But he at once adds:

Die weyl sie das aber nit wöll^en, förcht
ich, man müß sie mitt irer zerbrechung
dartzu zwingen,...

He proposes, "sol die geistlicheit reformiert werden, so
müß man ... den meisten teyl der kirchen abbrechen,...

Ich kan auch sein [Ziska's] hoch verstantn^euß nit gnüg breysen,
das er alle münich vßgetriben vnd vertilget hat,..."⁴⁸

The peasant is viewed in a traditional way: he is unable to differentiate between innocent and guilty, but acts simply as a hot-head. As Sickingen says, "du vnd dein hauff schlahent mit vnvernunft daryn." Karsthans, the respectful subordinate, agrees.

The Imperial knights possessed the potential to act independently to implement changes and in fact took concerted action in 1523 under the leadership of Franz von Sickingen. According to the character Sickingen in Sickingen vor des Himmels Pforten, the common people joined his forces, so that he would help them against the unjust oppression of their princes and overlords.⁴⁹ His aim was to help the poor and aid the spread of Gospel. Other pamphlets do not judge his actions in the same light. Rather they refer to the raids and rampages of unruly highwaymen. Dialogues written outside the knights' circle do not want to entrust change to commoners, nor even include them in the process.

NOTES

1. Entner and Lenk, p. 157.
2. WA, 6, 409.
3. Heald, p. 254: "Rarely, except in *Der Renner* (ll. 1309 ff.) where their arguments are summarily dismissed, are peasants allowed to speak up for themselves in mediaeval German literature."
4. Böckmann, p. 200.
5. Heald, p. 226 f.
6. Martini, p. 118.
7. Heald, p. 228 f.
8. Lenk, Grundpositionen, p. 212.
9. Heald, p. 242.
10. Heald, p. 70.
11. Heald, p. 280.
12. Rupprich, IV/1, 298.
13. Lenk, Grundpositionen, p. 224.
14. Hellmut Rosenfeld, "Die Literatur des ausgehenden Mittelalters in soziologischer Sicht, " Wirkendes Wort, 5 (1954/55), 330-41, here p.335.
15. Heald, p. 44.
16. Heald, p. 254: "that quality of simplicitas which was dear to the Christian moralist, a state of innocence unperverted by that excessive learning ..."
17. Jöst, p. 150 ff.
18. Rupprich, IV/1, 108 ff.
19. Martini, p. 180.
20. Martini, p. 54.
21. Wolfgang Pfeiffer-Belli, ed., Thomas Murners deutsche Schriften mit den Holzschnitten der Erstdrucke, VII (Berlin and Leipzig : de Gruyter, 1928), 63.

22. Schade, I, 25, l. 209 ff.
23. Schade, I, 29, l. 77 f.
24. Der Curtisan vnnd pfrundenfresser..., Schade, I, 181 (notes) and 7.
25. Schade, I, 11, l. 142 f.
26. Von dem pfründtmarckt der Curtisanen vnd Tempelknechten, Schade, III, 71.
27. Résumé and excerpts in Clemen, III, 192-97.
28. Hannelore Winkler, "Zum soziologischen Aspekt von Flugschriften aus der Zeit der Reformation und des Bauernkrieges," Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur, 94 (1974), 37 - 51.
29. Schade, I, 12, l. 191 ff.; similarly in Neu Karsthans, Lenk, p. 92f.
30. Schade, III, 71 f.
31. Schade, III, 105.
32. Schade, III, 186.
33. Spriewald, p. 156 f., p. 162.
34. Heald, p. 284.
35. Lenk, p. 68 ff. (Karsthans).
36. Schade, III, 150 (Lutherische und päpstliche Pfaffen).
37. Köhler et al. (1979), Fiche 265, No. 747 (Wie Christlich zu leben).
38. Schade, III, 103 (Edelmann, Mönch und Kurtisan).
39. Heald, p. 277.
40. Uhrig, p. 173.
41. Schade, II, 126.
42. Lenk, p. 223 (Bauer, Belial, Erasmus und Dr. Faber).
43. Schade, III, 187 (Weggespräch).
44. Schade, III, 204.
45. Uhrig, p. 173.

46. Entner and Lenk, p. 157.
47. Lenk, p. 124.
48. Lenk, p. 121 f.
49. Schade, II, 51.

CHAPTER 6 The targets of criticism

The information an author selects to convey in his pamphlet is not necessarily a real or complete compendium of his beliefs and grievances.¹ He communicates the information he considers worth communicating. A particular author may have chosen to concentrate on certain points and ignore others, or he may have modified or distorted certain areas, in order to achieve his specific goal. The main target of almost all dialogues written between 1520 and 1525 is the malpractices of the Roman church and its officials. Criteria for an author's selection of material would have varied from individual to individual and his criteria may have been an amalgam of factors. The author's objections to the church and clergy may have been based on their inadequacy on a religious level or moral level or for social, personal, intellectual, financial or nationalistic reasons. But, above all, the wish to succeed in convincing others of his view must motivate the polemicist and determine his choice and treatment of topics.

Some authors appear to be concerned that certain facts be broadcast among as many people as possible, either to enhance the reform party's standing or to undermine the Church's authority. Many dialogues make use of Luther's success at Worms as proof of the correctness of his views, as the following example illustrates:

Pfarrer: Wans also ist, als ir sagt,
 das der Luther zů Worms erschynen ist
 Vnnd sein ding also verantwort ...
 vnd jm es nyemandt wider fechten kan,
 so wil ich auch für nyemandt mer
 fechten..., dann ich kan mit disem
 wol mercken, das der Luther vil gelertter
 ist dann der bapst, Cardinal, Bischoff,
 Prelaten, Doctores, Pfarrer vnd pfaffen,
 So sunst verhanden seind.²

The inclusion of actual contemporary occurrences in the dialogue would lend the other events portrayed in the text the impression of realism. Dialogues intend equally to circulate information injurious to the opposing party. In Wallfahrt ins Grimmental the artisan hero relates how the pilgrimage to see the miracle of a weeping Virgin Mary has been exposed by the local count as a deception perpetrated by the priests to increase their income. The same artisan goes on to shock his audience further by retelling the sensational story of a Dominican scandal, which involves falsified visions, fake holy wounds and attempted murder and ends with the culprits being burnt and the victim immured. It is this account of such disgraceful activities which prompts the monk to discard his habit out of shame. The author hoped to elicit a similar response of shocked anger from his readers:

Hantwerckssman: Ich hab die sach alle
 gelesen, ist ein lange rede, wol XX
 bogen, wolt Got, das yederman wüst,
 da wurd man wol erfahren, wie man
 heyligen macht vnd walfart auffricht.³

While the scandal is recounted as in a newspaper, the story was by the time the dialogue was composed, in 1523, already 14 years old. Murner had exposed it in 1509. Although no longer topical, the events are publicised again at a most propitious time to reflect discredibly on the monastic orders. The author's aim was either to spread the information to those ignorant of it or to rekindle indignation.⁴

The method of conveying actual topical or past news items to engage the attention of the reader and arouse admiration or animosity passes imperceptibly into tales and anecdotes where the degree of reality and fiction cannot be immediately gauged. In Neu Karsthans Karsthans tells Franz von Sickingen that he was fined by a local Church official for stroking his horse, on the grounds that it was "ein ketzer stuck". When Karsthans could not pay the fine in full, he was put under ban. The anecdote is presented as his actual experience but is certainly a fabrication to illustrate Church abuse of power and to point to Sickingen's admirable character. He reacts with anger and indignation:

Frantz: Warlich, das ist vnrecht vnd
verdreisset mich vonn hertzen auff den
abentheurer Ich wolt dich wol vor
im verthedingen, dann er hat kein fûg noch
vrsach gehabt, dich zu bannen. Ich wil es
auch dem Bischoff schreyben.⁵

Tales are presented as credible, often purporting to depict

personal experiences, which are then treated as typifying, usually, the clergy in general.

The publicist who was motivated primarily by a desire to convince others of his objections to the Roman church may well have avoided problematic discussion and preferred satirical or easily assimilable motifs. Fierce, emotional invective can damage the opponent more effectively than reasoned argument.⁶ The following example from Weggespräch sets out to destroy the credibility of churchmen as religious leaders by depicting their morals as despicable:

Künz. ich hab aufs bischofs hof freßen,
 saufen, spielen, raßlen, schweren, flüchen,
 hürerei und alle leichtfertigkeit erfahren
 und gelert; dann da hört man (...) selten
 oder nimmer von got reden, auch über tisch,
 sonder nur von kriegem und hüren;⁷

The violent views expressed in pamphlets may not necessarily reflect the true views of their authors. Writers probably did not truly believe that clerics were scoundrels to a man, as is often portrayed.⁸ One cannot presume that the many pamphleteers who wrote about the clergy being in league with the Devil were genuinely of that opinion.

In Hans Sachs's dialogue Ein Evangelischer und ein Lutherischer Christ the theme of effective propaganda is itself discussed. The hero Hans explains how to live evangelically and at the same time succeed in winning over new support, rather than causing offence and reaping

animosity. While both he and his counterpart Peter, a fiery opponent of Roman Catholicism, are agreed that to eat meat on Fridays is acceptable, they differ in their approach. Peter wants to act openly in accordance with his beliefs; Hans is for concealing potential points of friction for the good of their cause:

Hans: Lieber bruder, wiltu ir [the unconverted] nit verschonen, so schon doch des Ewangeli vnd wort Gottes, welches durch ewer fleysch essen verlestert vnd ketzerey gescholten wirdt; wann das fleysch essen ist dem gemeinen man schir der aller grost anstoß vnd ergernuß an der Ewangelistischen leer. ... so thu so wol vnd meyd fleisch essen, oder thu es ye gar haimlich, das niemant geergert werdt.

"Der Weg der Anpassung" is advocated by Hans in order that those who are not yet supporters of reforms might not be alienated and thus lost for the cause. Similar manipulation of the public is undoubtedly a modus operandi adopted by pamphleteers. They were, no doubt, similarly aware that certain arguments would provoke certain responses, that certain topics would be more effective in eliciting a sympathetic reception than others, and so chose their material accordingly.

Reasons that appear in dialogues to justify a rejection of the clergy seem to lie in all spheres of life. Reasons put forward can be personal, ethical, intellectual, social, political, religious or nationalistic: all these elements are to be found in dialogues, although in each

dialogue the constellations and emphases vary. A combination of social, moral and religious criticism predominates as basis and justification for enmity towards the Church and its officials. Matters of a social and moral nature go hand in hand with religious grievances.¹¹ Such intermingling occurs since social misbehaviour and moral impropriety among clerics is taken as a demonstration of their lack of piety and spirituality, which can be taken as proof that their form of faith is built on unsound foundations. Social, ethical criticism very often serves the purpose of invalidating the position of the Church in questions of faith. In some cases it will have been a conscious policy of polemicists, to gain ground for a new faith against the Roman church's doctrines. In other cases polemicists will have been concerned solely with malpractices in the Church and questions of Church doctrine will have played "eine untergeordnete oder gar keine Rolle."¹² Nevertheless, they, too, were preparing the ground for their own and others' development from seeking reforms to seeking a Reformation.

Both as individuals and as an estate, the clergy is accused of inadequacy on a moral level. Priests and monks are commonly condemned as useless members of society who are naturally lazy and work-shy. Numerous dialogues attest that Church officials enter religious life only to escape hard work elsewhere:

Baur. Ich hab mein leben lang gehört,
die m^unch haben g^ut tag. wie klagt ir
dann den hunger?

M^unch. Ja etwan ist das gewesen, das
mich auch geursacht in die kutten z^u
k^omen.¹³

Karsthans: Vnd darumb h^er ich etwan
von den eltern, wann sie ire kinder
geistlich z^u werden überreden:
lieber sun, du solt ein pfaff werden,
so w^urst du ein grosser herr vnnd
magst ein g^ut leben haben, kanst allen
deinen fre^unden n^ut^z sein.¹⁴

Karsthans's partner in conversation, Franz von Sickingen, agrees with him, adding "leider am meisten bey vns vom adel." Peasants, too, are depicted as anxious to send a son to join the Church, so that the son may either enjoy an easy life or provide for the rest of the family. In Karsthans the peasant's son studies at Cologne; in Vater und Sohn the peasant's son studies at Wittenberg. As one peasant character puts it:

Nun hab ich eyn jungen son bey xij jaren,
der ist yetztt bey meynem pfarrer. Denn
vermeynt ich yetzt auff dye hohen schul
tz^u schicken vnnd hab also CC gutter
Lorentzer g^ulden auff jn gespart. Do mit
vermeynt, er sol studiren vnd eyn pfaff
werden, das er auch g^ut tag hab vnnd nitt
also hardt durfft arbeytten als ich.¹⁵

Another frequent criticism levelled at clerics concerns their habitual libidinousness. Monks, priests, prelates and bishops, all men of religion, the reader is told, are fornicators without scruple. Several dialogues complain specifically that since clerics must remain

celibate they fill the monasteries with whores and their children:

Bawer: ... ich armer man mus da, wie du siehest, mit meinem flegel meinn narung zu winnenn im lanndt vmb lauffenn, mir gantz sere sawer lassenn werdenn, wie der gute Adam thett, vnd die pfaffen vberkommen vil guts hinder dem tisch mit jren kochin vnd huren kindern.¹⁶

Schulthayss: Wo her ist man etlich sollichs alles schuldig, das man etlich sol so vil brot vnd wein, schmaltz, mel vnd ayer vnd gelt opffern, Das ir mit ewern holster mumen verfressent?¹⁷

Weggespräch, in which Kunz, a pimp and a bishop converse, is wholly concerned with the whoring of clerics. They may not take wives and so are encouraged to fornicate, while the fines they must pay for absolution keep the bishop's coffers full. Religious men misuse their authority to gain access to other men's wives and daughters and seduce them:

Kunz. darnach schreiben ir die schreiber einen absoluz (umb gelt) brief, und so das arm freulin nit gelt hat, muß es alles mit dem underhemd bezalen.¹⁸

A frequent solution advocated is as follows:

Hurenwirt. der bischof solt aber nach der lers Paulus einer frauen eeman sein und solt züchtige kinder ziehen und solt in sinem bistumb den pfarhern die ee frei laßen.¹⁹

The stock motif of the smooth-talking, well-fed monk who visits peasants' homes when the menfolk are out working and the women are alone occurs in dialogues of the Reformation period as it did in medieval literature and Shrovetide plays:

Schulthayss: darzū wer waißt, was sy
in vnser heüser sūchend, wenn wir
pauren nitt dahaim seind?²⁰

Beüerlein: Ir sehent woll, wie der
mūnch also gladt ist vmb die backen,
das in ewer fraw nit lieber gewen dan
euch.²¹

Priests, monks, high-ranking ecclesiastics, all are drawn to high living and material comforts. Those in the higher ranks indulge themselves in ostentatious luxury, thus emulating powerful princes. Those of lesser rank spend their time drinking, feasting, gambling or at the inn:

Chorherr: Trag die Bibel auß der stuben
hynauß vnnd sich, ob die stein vnd würffel
all im bretspil sein, vnd das wir ein
frische karten oder zwū haben.²²

Do sass eyn Prediger Mūnch vnd eyn
Pfaff, spilten mit eyn ander ynn dem
Bredt (das ist der Pfaffen vnd Mūnichen
studium vnd yr Bibel lesen).²³

Church officials further offend against social, moral and religious codes by their boundless greed, whereby it is clearly the monastic orders that arouse the greatest displeasure. A feature common to numerous

dialogues is listing what is offered up to the clergy by the common people. Long lists emphasise the large quantities the clergy gather :

Bawer: Vnnd da mus man yn itzundt geben
fleisch, hunner, eyer, flachs, arbeisen,
tzins, vnd das vnd gens, nach kan sie
der teuffel nit erfüllen.²⁴

Hantwerckssman: Do hat mann ymmer zu^o
getragen, do Gelt, do Hunner, do Flachss,
do Wachßliechter, Eyer, Keeß, Kornn,
Habernn vnnd des gleychenn etc.²⁵

That the clergy collect much more than is necessary to satisfy ordinary needs is a widespread complaint. Clerics are generally portrayed as utterly insatiable, regardless of the poverty and hardship they in consequence cause among the populace:

Karsthans: ..., also nemen, ziehen, reyssen,
rauben, ropffen vnd stelen die pfaffen
täglich, noch werden sie nitt erfüllt oder
ersetiget, sunder fordern yemer noch mer.²⁶

The excess gathered may be simply hoarded as described in Bembus, Silenus und Narr in which the Fool is astonished to discover how much money a monastery can possess and yet still beg for more:

Narr..., sollen si so vil rent und^o
gült haben und so vil guldin darzu^o
und dennoch nimmer ab den armen leuten^{en}
komen mit betlen, pfei der schand!²⁷

Or the excess is gathered to be exported to Rome, where their money can purchase them favours. A rumour that

Franciscan monks collected 80,000 ducats so that one of their order could be made a cardinal, is recounted in Wallfahrt ins Grimmental and Von den vier größten Beschwernissen.²⁸

Numerous dialogues reiterate that what the Church ought to do instead is dispense alms to the needy. The subject of Gemeiner Schwabacher Kasten is the establishing of a common municipal fund, run by tradesmen, out of which the poor, sick and homeless may be given money. The chief proponent of the scheme is a runaway monk who wishes to implement Luther's views:

Brüder. Ich bit euch, lieber meister,
lest das büchlein von der ordnung des
gemeinen kasten vom Luther außgangen.²⁹

The desire expressed to by-pass the Church and replace it with an institution set up by lay townspeople is indicative of a trend in urban areas towards self-administration and own organisations.

In the performance of their religious duties Church servants again display their inadequacy. According to most dialogues, commercialism is all-pervasive. The Church sells its services at a price and performs none free of charge:

Narr ... [sie] blaperen denn da ob dem
grab umb ain pfund haller und nemen nit
ains hallers minder.³⁰

In fact, the officials are only prepared to go through

the motions of a service if a high yield is assured:

Schulthayss: Leüt man dann zû vigilg,
trägt es nit vil, so bleibt er [the
priest] sytzen, trägt es aber etwas
güts, So laufft er fluchs in die
kirchen wie ain wolff in schaff stal.³¹

The financial dealings of the Church are determined by lust for gain, the reader is told. Thus officials cheat and swindle the people with usurious practices. In 1519 Luther expressed his opposition to usury in Sermon von dem Wucher.³² Some years later Von der Gült was written, condemning both Church and burghers for lending money in order to exact high interest. The peasant character is violent in his condemnation of Church practices:

Beüerlein: Botz lung! Ey botz bauch!
Botz haudt! Wer hat euch [Pfaffen] die
macht gegeben? Ich hör wul, ir hapt ein
andern got dan wir armen. Wir armen
haben vnsern herren Jesum Christum, der
hat solchs gelt leihen verbotten vmb
genuß. Es ist aber dar zu komen:
woe ein gutt ist, eß seindt ecker oder
wissen, gertten oder heüser, es würdt
durch die leüt beschwerdt alß wucher,
pfaffen oder münchen, stifften oder
clöstern mit dem wucher, güldt genant,³³
also das bey nichtz nit mer frey ist.

The above excerpt illustrates well how the portrayal of immorality in papists, be it in their financial, social or ethical dealings, serves to highlight their unsuitability and inadequacy to superintend the salvation of souls. Constant reports about moral degeneration

invalidate the Church's claim to be religious mediator between God and the laity. Since social criticism implies either directly or indirectly also religious criticism, it is hard to distinguish whether an author favours merely an improvement in Church administration or wants to change religious dogma.

In almost all dialogues from 1520 - 1525 one or more characters, who are usually laymen, voice complaints about the inability of the clergy to provide proper pastoral care for the congregation. Clerical incompetence is given various causes, but the result is that the guidance and spiritual welfare of the common people is sadly neglected. A constantly recurring metaphor is of sheep which have not been taken to graze by the shepherd. Instead the flock is unfed and the shepherds are wolves or mere day labourers who care only for their wage. In continuation of this metaphor several characters in the dialogues exclaim that they are hungry for the word of God:

Karsthans: Aber vnns armen weiden sie
gar nit, dann wir geen in grossem hunger
des götlichen wortes.³⁴

Vater: Sag mir, jch bynn des hungerich!
Son: Das sey Gott gelobeth, das jch eynenn
menschenn höre, der des Evangeliumbs
hungerich ist! Nu reych mir meyne³⁵
Bybliam her auff der banck ...

In Petrus und Bauer the peasant laments that the whole nation is in a state of confusion and no longer knows

which teachings are true and which false.³⁶ The consequences of such neglect of the laity's spiritual needs are painted as grave, since the soul's salvation is thus put at risk. Authors make the presumption that the common people are keenly aware of their lack of instruction in religious matters and, having so postulated a gap, proceed to fill it.³⁷ One common cause of the laity's condition is, the reader is told, that clerics hold no sermons to instruct it:

Karsthans: Sie wöllent aber yetzunt
nieren hin zu predigen, sunder bleyben
sie da heimet, pflegen güter rü vnd alles
lustes, heissen vns in gelt vnd güt zu
huß bringen,...³⁸

Meister. Ach, unser pfarrer hat uns bei
vil jaren kein predig gethan.
Brüder. Also haben die unfleißigen
hirten uns geweidet:...³⁹

An even more widespread complaint is that the sermons held are based on false notions, which again is portrayed as jeopardising the layman's salvation:

Hantwerckssman: Solch fabel werck,
heyligen lugend, erschrecklich exempel,
do mit habt yhr das arm volck erschreckt,
das wyr⁴⁰ Christum mer furcht dan geliebt
haben.

The reason clerics' preaching is condemned is because it is not drawn from the Bible but from other sources. Only sermons from the Gospel are truly divine; anything else is "vnergründte ler."⁴¹ Christliches, lustiges Gespräch

features all the arguments for renouncing "aufgesetzten menschlichen orden" and for preaching from no other material than Scripture.⁴² An Augustinian monk stands for this teaching, debating with and finally converting a Franciscan monk. This example indicates that not only laymen characters were the mouthpiece for these views. In Tholl und Lamp false teaching "der lügen prediger" stems from the clerics' malicious nature, for, "die Pfaffen habens vor vns verborgen." Their teaching is mere fabrication, endangering man's salvation:

Hanns Tholl: Ja es ist not, das wir
got ernstlich bitten vmb recht prediger,
die vnns das Ewangelij lautter predigetten⁴³
Vnnd da haym belyben mit den merlin.

In other cases the preacher's neglect of his religious charge derives more from his own pursuit of physical pleasure, to the detriment of his flock's well-being:

Vater: Vnßer pfarrer hatt mitt seiner
Biblien, der köchin, sovil zu schickenn,
das er wenig achtung darauff gybt. Wen
er das predigenn soll, so wescht er do
hin das gnadenreych Evangelij⁴⁴, das ynn
nymannnds verstehenn khann.

A fairly common complaint about the clergy's neglect of its flock concerns the custom of farming out cures. In Neu Karsthans the background is explained. A priest purchases himself a cure: "Vnd ist ye ein erbärmlich ding z^o sehen, das so vngelerte, vntügliche, auch oft jung personen z^o den ^eämptern kommen;..." But instead of carrying out his spiritual charge himself, he takes the livings and

hires another to perform the duties. The hireling receives a mere pittance and so carries out the duties in a cursory fashion.⁴⁵ The village vicar may also be untrained or uneducated and so accepts meagre pay. A remedy for this state of affairs, which is represented as a common occurrence, is to adopt universal priesthood and choose a layman to instruct his fellow laymen:

Son: Wöllen die p^effaffen des nitt thun,
so müssen wir selbst predigenn etc....
Kann doch got gleich so wol in einem
armenn pflughalter sein Evangelium
außbreitten als in m^enchen vnd p^effaffen.⁴⁶

The whole content of Hans Knüchel is an illustration of this remedy being implemented:

Sy haben einen Pfarrer gehabt, der ist by
inen nit wonhafft gewäsen, sunder inen all
halb jor ein n^ewen versäher geben vnd dem
gedinckt vmb ein bestimpten lon, inn der
moß, das sy nit wol hand ir narung mögen
haben ... Dann sy hatten jetzt ein m^ench,
dann ein wäلتlichen priester, vnd was
diser hat gelert, hat der ander verkert.⁴⁷

The parish elect Hans, "welcher sich fast übt inn der geschryfft," to give them proper sermons every Sunday.

Authors of pamphlets are intent on arousing not only resentment at the shoddy preaching of clergymen, but also fear of possible eternal implications. Various dialogues claim that false preachers are the result of one's sins. They are a punishment. The proof of sinfulness is that those preachers have been tolerated so long:

Hanns Tholl: Es ist ain wunder, das ins got so lang verhengt hat, das nit offenbar worden ist, das wir so blind seyen gewesen. Das macht als, ⁴⁸das wir gewychen seynd von der warhayt,....

Vater: Wie sein dan die pastores also verstockt gewest, das sie vns das wort gottes nit gepredigt habenn?

Son: Hör⁴⁹ das haben wir mit vnsern sunden verdint.

Now, to atone for one's sins and return to the true path, one should no longer tolerate improper teaching. Alternatively, it is claimed that one's sins are the result of false preachers. Again, only by freeing oneself from their falsehoods can one return to the true path:

Lutherisch pfaffen. was hat uns von der warhait gefürt dann das mengen, daß man immerdar menschen leer und das wort gottes gemengt und neben eingefürt hat, die uns von der warhait gefürt haben.⁵⁰

In the dialogues written between 1520 and 1525 less emphasis is placed on discussing particular tenets of Roman faith than on depicting the venality, moral turpitude and spiritual emptiness of exponents of the Roman faith. In some pamphlets it is clear that the nature of the particular topic under discussion confines the pamphlet to social or socio-political spheres. Von der Gült, for example, concentrates solely on the theme of usury. In many other pamphlets, however, a wide selection of topics is treated, yet the focus is primarily on social or socio-political reasons for enmity to the

Roman church. Questions of dogma are then ignored:

Sie [eine ganze Anzahl Flugschriftenschreiber] polemisieren gegen äußere Mißstände in der Kirche. An ihrer Lehre haben sie nichts, oder doch so gut wie nichts auszusetzen; jedenfalls nicht, daß sie die Gläubigen über ihr Verhältnis zu Gott grundsätzlich falsch belehrt.⁵¹

It would seem that some pamphleteers extracted from Luther's views those which suited their own interests and paid no heed to the rest. Often Luther's name is adduced to lend authority to what an author writes. In Neu Karsthans Sickingen states that he has his opinions from reading "die Lutherischen bücher" and discussing Scripture.⁵² As a result he knows it is time that "die falschen geistlichen" were punished and is eager to commence:

Frantz: Darinn schaff gott seinen götlichen willen. Wiewol ich mich selbs beduncken laß, es sey schon die zeyt, das sie sollen gestrafft werden.⁵³

Some authors may well have sought no greater changes than moral rejuvenation within the Church or aimed at the abolition of monastic orders. Perhaps some authors drew only on easily comprehensible reasons for rejecting the Roman church, because supporters could more easily be gained for Luther through alienating them first from the Church and then providing an alternative to adopt. Simple, concrete reasons would be more immediately compelling than, say, abstract, doctrinal comparisons. Obviously one cannot

assume that all pamphleteers who do not refer to doctrinal differences had nevertheless adopted Luther's position completely or at all. They might not have agreed with him, or saw his views as being only one set among other possible sets and preferred their own combination of ideas. Possibly they had not developed an understanding of the differences between Lutheran and papal dogma, or possibly they were unacquainted with Lutheran doctrine in much depth:

Daß., als Luthers reformatorische Hauptschriften längst erschienen und z. T. in außerordentlich hohen Auflagen abgesetzt worden waren, Glaubensfragen weithin nur als etwas Untergeordnetes behandelt werden, ja ganz übergangen werden, das ist merkwürdig und erstaunlich.⁵⁴

It remains a matter of speculation for what reasons authors placed less emphasis on questions of faith than on the debased and mercenary clergy.

Dialogues are more or less unanimous in inveighing against the clergy and often display great similarities. In questions of faith dialogues show greater individualism. Church ceremonial receives a fair degree of criticism, as being unbiblical mummary, without any spiritual purpose or justification. Ostentatious ceremonial is designed merely to impress and enthrall the simple populace. In numerous pamphlets the Pope is heralded as the Antichrist: in Tholl und Lamp this forms the main content. To the Pope are often imputed exaggeratedly evil designs:

Priester. Der bapst hat gewalt alle
 gesatz Christi zerbrechen und machen
 wie er wil.⁵⁵

Various precepts of the Roman church and various articles of faith are discarded in different dialogues. In Neu Karsthans stress is put on the indiscriminate use of excommunication. Weber und Kramer is concerned with proving that there is no Biblical basis for oral confession. The shopkeeper has a new book on the subject by a Dr. Kretz, in which the Scriptural basis of confession is asserted. As the weaver is unconvinced, he is invited to the other's house to read it for himself. At the conclusion the weaver's arguments have prevailed: oral confession is without Scriptural foundation.

Jr hond mich warlich wol halb auff
 ewren weg gebracht, vnnd ich will mich
 baßer fleyssen in der Bibel zū lesen
 wañ ich nye gethon hab, wañ ich hör
 das der recht grndt, darynn stat.⁵⁶

The artisan hero of Wallfahrt ins Grimmental also denies that oral confession has its basis in Scripture, but approves of it, if practised properly.⁵⁷ This dialogue rejects Church doctrine in several areas: the sale of indulgences, pilgrimages, fasting on Fridays. There are only 3 holy sacraments not 7. When it comes to discussing whether Church tithes are justified, the artisan hero is not quite so confident, but goes on to reject them:

"Hantwerckssman: Von diser sach ist mir ein wenig tzū schwer tzūreden...:jhr seyt yhn kein tzehend schuldig

tzugeben."⁵⁸ Commonly dialogues which touch on the differences between Lutheran and papal dogma propound the universal priesthood and the supreme importance of faith, as against deeds, in attaining salvation:

Petrus: Wer do glaubt, der ist selig,
 er lauff allein zu got, der wurd't im
 helfen, der gibt die handt dem armen,
 da darff man keiner bullen, ablas, mörlin
 vnd grosse kuheuten brieff, die vmb tragen
 vnd verkundungen, es mus der schatz der
 glaub sein, da lauff nit ins Grimmethal,⁵⁹
 es grimbt einem das gelt auß dem beutel.

The author of Von der Zwietracht does not seem to agree. He has St. Paul tell the Layman: "Der glaub on die werk ist niendert für."⁶⁰ Polemical dialogues are one in their opposition to commercialism and impropriety in the Church, but there is no such uniformity in the individual interpretations about what is proper in Roman Catholicism and what must be changed.

Objections to the Church on the grounds that it is not German but a foreign institution play a relatively minor role in dialogues. Above all, Ulrich von Hutten made use of nationalistic themes in his invective against Romanist influence. In Die Anschauenden it is stated that the real purpose behind the papal legate's journey to Germany is to swindle Germans out of their money, and not, as Cajetan purports, to raise finance for a Turkish campaign:

Sol: Dann in rechter warheit tracht er
nach der Teütschen gelt; hatt jm
fürgenommen, die zu plünderen vnd,
was sye noch von gelt haben, abzudringen.

Phaeton: Lieber, so sag mir, wie lang würt
er solichs spiles pflegen?

Sol: Bitz die Teütschen weiß werden, die
yetzo durch der Römer betrug gantz zu
narren gemacht vnd voller mißglauben
überredt seindt.⁶¹

Such comments are designed to arouse consciousness of national identity and nationalistic animosity to the Roman church. Further appeals are made to national prejudice by stereotype descriptions of the foreigner. The German reader is informed that Italians are so arrogant that they view the people of all other nations as barbarians, whereas in fact the opposite pertains:

Sol: Wil man der gute sitten vnd achtung
freundlicher beywonung, auch fleyß der
tugent, beständigkeit der gemüt vnd
redlicheit ansehen, so ist dieses ein wol
gesitte nation, vnd dargegen die Römer mit
der aller ausserlichsten barbarey ver-
stallt. Dann erstlich seind sye von weych-
mütigkeit vnd weybischem leben verdorben
leüt. Darnoch ist bey jnen grosse wanckel-
mütigkeit vnd mer dann weybische vnbeständig-
keit, wenig glaubens, betrug, vnd bößheit,
damit sye allen fürtreffen.⁶²

In the following pamphlet the author claims to be reconstructing the course of Luther's disputation at Worms (1521). Luther voices nationalistic feelings:

antwort Lutherus 'wann so die teutsch
nacion meine wort wirt hören und be-
halten, wirt sie erlöst auß dem rachen
der Römer und curtisanischen hürnkinder.'⁶³

In Ein seltsames Tier two commoners watch a procession of
the papal legate Campeggi and his entourage into Nuremberg
and are incensed at the iniquity of Roman influence:

Vrlich: helt er [Campeggi] dann die
Teutschen also für narren?
Claus: Was sag jch? er henckt vns grosse
titel an vnd vil frommkeit, vnd darneben
wischt er den ars an unser beger brieff
vnd dergleichen. Heyßt das nit mit den
Teutschen der blinden meuß gespielt, so
weyß jch nichts.⁶⁴

Perhaps one reason that the nationalistic argument against
the Roman church was not widely adopted lies in the fact
that such polarity was not generally perceived or did not
exist. The offending monasteries were inhabited, after all,
by German monks and churches were staffed mainly by German
officials. Corruption in the clergy could not simply be
blamed on Italian blood. The 'court toady' in Edelmann,
Mönch und Kurtisan is a German from Regensburg, but is
counted to the foreigners because of his Roman connection:

Curtisan: unser handwerk ligt uns ganz
darnider. ... Das sind die Teutschen der
römischen büberei innen worden ...: es
ist kein ding auf erden, das den Teutschen
mer bescheißt dann ir klosterhengst.⁶⁵

Among those pamphlets which side with knighthood
the antagonism to things foreign is most apparent. The

enemies of the lower nobility were not only Romanists but also princes and merchants. The merchants are condemned partly because their foreign imports are corrupting and destroying traditional German ways:

Franz: und ob wir nit so vil pomeranzen,
granaten, citheronii, capre, oliven,
unzgolt, seiden, samat oder schamlotten
in Deutschlant brechten und
dargegen uns an gelt und güt emblösten,
wir würden dannoch leben und uns unserer
specerei, als zwibel, knobloch und was in
deutschen landen gefelt, wol mögen be-
helfen.⁶⁶

The deceased Sickingen at Heaven's door laments the erosion of self-sufficiency among German gentry and the nobles' general impoverishment. Foreign influence is a focus for blame. He had wished to expel it: "ich wolt inen noch wol recht laxativa geben haben."

Another criticism occasionally levelled against the clergy is that its members are ignorant. Such pamphlets are often, but not always, characterised by humanist sympathies. Both simple clerics and the famous spokesmen of the papal party, such as Eck, Emser, Lemp and Murner, are classed as uneducated. Although the latter grouping certainly did not lack education in reality, they are also denounced as deficient on an intellectual level. In Karsthans Murner is no match for a simple peasant. Kunz und Fritz portrays supporters of the papacy as dusty, old schoolmen, who lack intellectual ability and understanding and who are for this

very reason inimical to new humanist learning. Pfarrer und Schultheiß complains that many clerics are untrained, putting this criticism into the mouth of a cleric: "Pfarrer: ..., So seind ain tayl so vngelert, Das sy nit ains Dominus vobiscum künden verston,..."⁶⁷ His conversion to the views of the reforming party ensues, since so many learned men are on Luther's side:

Pfarrer: Dann jch vernym, dise hochgelertten menner haben den rechten kern der gütten bücher in yebung, kriechisch, hebraisch, lateinisch vnd vylleycht kaldeysch;...⁶⁸

Other dialogues, however, are advocates of 'natural simplicity' as inherent in a peasant or a layman, rather than supporters of intellectual prowess:

Der schultheiß: ... ein schlechter einfeltiger mensch [bringt] durch sein einfaltigkeit die warheit fruchtbarlicher, an tag, dann siben hochgelerter naßweisen.⁶⁹

This dialogue, Hans Knüchel, displays some anti-Humanist feeling, but cannot strictly be called Lutheran either. It criticises evangelists, regrets the split into two parties, and approves of reading about saints. In Bauer und Mönch the monk suddenly exclaims, with the force of revelation, "O freund, es ist darzü^o komen daß die ainfeltigen und geringen mer wißenvon götlichen dingen zü^o sagen wann die großen diser welt."⁷⁰

Most but not all dialogues are utterly set against everything relating to the Church. In Neu Karsthans Franz

von Sickingen differentiates between two kinds of clergy and attempts to avert blanket hostility to clerics:

Frantz: Dann es seind doch ye noch redlich
leüt vnder den geistlichen, vnd solt man
sie mit einem gewalt überfallen, sol^ewar zu
besorgen, das der vnschuldig mit dem schul-
digen gieng...⁷¹

The sympathies of this dialogue lie with the nobility, and the above differentiation into two categories no doubt reflects the fact that, as Franz himself says, large numbers of nobles' sons enter the Church. In Kunz und Fritz the reader is told not to assume that all clerics are necessarily true to the papacy and opposed to Luther:

Cunz. nun wän ich doch, die münch seien
all wider den Luther.
Fritz... man findt noch vil die haimlich
junger seind, si dürfen sich aber nit
merken laßen von forcht wegen der juden,
irer prelaten.⁷²

Kunz und Fritz expresses a sympathy with Humanist ideals and, again, the above statement no doubt reflects awareness that supporters of Humanism and reform are to be found in the ranks of the clergy.⁷³ In Gemeiner Schwabacher Kasten the call is for all people to improve themselves and feel brotherly love, for, "Es ligt nit alles an den papisten."⁷⁴

In Weggespräch and Von den vier größten Beschwerissen sympathy is evident with the lot of lowly village priests, who are abused by their ecclesiastical superiors. In the latter dialogue a prelate's official is portrayed unfairly

demanding fines for alleged offences:

Vicarius. Gang hin Fiscal, Citier mir
den pfaffen, das er k^ome oder wir w^ellen
jn in ban thun vnnd suspendiern a diuinis,
das er kein me^ß mer le^{ße}.. [etc.] bi^ß das
er sich mit vns vertrag vnnd gelt gebe.⁷⁵

Here the behaviour of churchmen towards other churchmen
requires condemnation.

By 1523 in Hans Knüchel and by 1524 in Ein Evangelischer
und ein Lutherischer Christ and Gemeiner Schwabacher Kasten
it is the behaviour of Lutheran representatives which
warrants criticism of a similar kind to that made against
Romanists. They stand accused of unwillingness to improve
their own mode of conduct, which is marked by violent speech:

Maister Vlrich:: Wenn ir Lutherischen
solchen zuchtigen vnd vnergerlichen wandel furet,
so het ewer leer ein bessers ansehen vor allen men-
schen;..Aber mit dem fleysch essen, rumorn,
pfaffen schenden, hadern, verspotten, verachten
vnd allem vnzuchtigen wandel habt ir Lutherischen
der Ewangelischen leer selber ein grosse ver-
achtung gemacht.⁷⁶

Such improper Lutherans who are eager "mit der that zu
schwirmen vnnd gleich denn vnbesinten zu rasen" are too
violently anti-clerical and ought to moderate their attacks
on Roman Catholicism.⁷⁷ In Gemeiner Schwabacher Kasten such
a character is depicted. "Sp^öüler. Ach, man solt pfaffen
vnd munchen alle zu tod schlahen."⁷⁸ He has to be converted
to brotherly love and evangelical ways, just as in many
other dialogues the papist is converted to reforms or
Reformation.

Other aspects of national life receive criticism also, but in relation to the body of complaints directed at the clergy they are insignificant. Legal injustice is mentioned infrequently: the legal process favours the rich and powerful, not the innocent.

Pfar...., Auch jr mit den reichen ordenung
machen, wans die armen brechen, des man sie
strafft, aber wans die reichen brechen, die
es haben helffen machen vnd straffbar sind,
so wil man die selben ordenung wider ab gen⁷⁹
lassen, da mit der reich vngestraft blib.

Entschuldigung des Adels is a political dialogue concerning the affairs of nobles. It discusses the rights and wrongs of the Treaty of Schweinfurt (1523), making clear that both nobility and lower orders suffer at the hands of princes and cities. Anyone who wishes to oppose the influential princes or cities in law withdraws in fear of being reduced to penury. They can burden knights and commoners with injustices because they, princes and cities, are so powerful. Indeed they are no longer obedient to the Emperor. Kunz and Haps, two messengers, discuss the plight of their lords and extol the values of knighthood: "wo kein bestendige gehorsam, da sey auch kein recht oder pilligkeit."⁸⁰ Fuchs und Wolf, too, is politically topical in content and is also concerned with affairs of the nobility. The events surrounding Sickingen's military campaign of 1523 and its aftermath are described. Remnants of his force survive under great hardship, being exiled and hunted, yet might well be

rehabilitated as soon as the Emperor requires their services.

Quite a number of dialogues condemns temporal lords for their oppression of the common people. Usually such accusations occur alongside condemnation of the Church and it is made clear that the Church, however, is worse, or started it first, or has least right to do it:

Edelman. ich bin ein großer pöswicht.
der curtisan noch ein größerer vnd du,
münch, der aller gröst.⁸¹

Hürenwirt. und ob schon die weltlichen
biß her zu zeiten dem gemein man mer
abgenommen haben, denn in von recht
gebürt, so ists aber verträglicher
denn von den falschen geistlichen
noch dennoch ist der fürsten bschwerd
gar vil gringer vor got denn des bapsts,..⁸²

If the state of the nation is deplored, as in Pfarrer und Schultheiß where the priest objects to the nobles' anarchic behaviour, their officials' heartlessness, the citizens' dishonesty and the peasantry's low cunning, the riposte follows that above all the Church must be castigated, since its role is to set a good example to secular circles. Since instead its officers set a bad example, then consequently all social spheres are immersed in baseness.

Schulthayss: Ir habt vil gemeldt da mit die
welt beschwert ist; Ye doch ist die geytzig-
keit von erst bey euch auff gestanden...⁸³

Von den vier größten Beschwerissen is written from the point of view of a village priest. He naturally does not accuse the Church as a whole of misconduct. He sees that the harshest exploitation of the commoners is practised by monks and estate stewards. In this pamphlet the overlord's steward admits to abusing his master's peasants by dealing unfairly with their legal disputes and by exacting the greatest amount of work, money and gifts possible, for example:

Juncker. auch wann sie mir fronen
mit grosser arbeyt, so gib ich jnen
etwann nit z^u essen, das ich thon solt,
vnnd brings dannocht die summ meinem
herren in die rechnung vnd mach vil
ne^uwer⁸⁴ auffsetz, da mein her nit von
weiß.

One category of dialogues, however, is largely at variance with others. Pamphlets which espouse the values of the lower nobility frequently conflict in interest with most other pamphlets, which mainly confine themselves to seeking social and religious improvements in the Roman church. While the main group present a view of the Church as the main source of evil in society, the smaller group sympathetic to the nobles' cause view territorial princes and cities as equally detrimental to society. Yet both types of pamphlets are in favour of a new faith. Princes are put on a par with iniquitous prelates; merchants and financiers are scoundrels: "die aller größten tagrauber und wuchrer Teutscher Nacion ... die großen geselschaffter oder

kaufleut." ⁸⁵ They are especially to blame for the increasing impoverishment of the nobility. ⁸⁶ In Von der Gült , on the other hand, the peasant approves of merchants who make a profit by trading, for they incur the risks. ⁸⁷ Urban values are embraced in Gemeiner Schwabacher Kasten, which argues for the setting up of a municipal fund and the forming of mutual support groups. Sickingen in Sickingen von des Himmels Pforten decries urban associations, which do away with a commoner's freedom. Since the Church, territorial princes and cities all wielded more power than the knight, his only possible remaining allies were the peasantry or urban poor. In Neu Karsthans it is to these groups that Sickingen turns, advocating a coalition between knight and peasant, owing allegiance only to the Emperor.

An examination of the targets of criticism in Reformation dialogues demonstrates that complaints were levelled at quite a variety of social groups and institutions. The main object of censure is the Roman church; but, to a lesser degree, fault is found with merchants, Lutherans, princes, cities, temporal lords and the legal system as well.

NOTES

1. Schmidt, p. 15.
2. Lenk, p. 139 f. (Pfarrer und Schultheiß).
3. Lenk, p. 181.
4. The 'Jetzer' scandal is also mentioned in Der lebendige Märtyrer and Weggespräch.
5. Lenk, p. 92.
6. Balzer, p. 31.
7. Schade, III, 162.
8. Peuckert, p. 604.
9. Spriewald, p. 156 f. The same sentiment is expressed in Wie Christlich zu leben.
10. Spriewald, p. 28.
11. Böckmann, p. 203.
12. Blochwitz, p. 196 f.
13. Schade, II, 155 f. (Bauer und Mönch).
14. Lenk, p. 98 (Neu Karsthans).
15. Lenk, p. 184 (Wallfahrt ins Grimmental).
16. Lenk, p. 170 (Petrus und Bauer).
17. Lenk, p. 132 (Pfarrer und Schultheiß).
18. Schade, III, 177.
19. Schade, III, 190.
20. Lenk, p. 136 (Pfarrer und Schultheiß).
21. Lenk, p. 144 (Von der Gült).
22. Lenk, p. 214 (Chorherr und Schuhmacher).
23. Lenk, p. 179 (Wallfahrt ins Grimmental).
24. Lenk, p. 170 (Petrus und Bauer).

25. Lenk, p. 187 (Wallfahrt ins Grimmental).
26. Lenk, p. 110 (Neu Karsthans).
27. Schade, III, 218.
28. Lenk, p. 190; Clemen, III, 57 f.
29. Schade, III, 199.
30. Schade, III, 218 (Bembus, Silenus und Narr).
31. Lenk, p. 131 (Pfarrer und Schultheiß).
32. Lenk, p. 276 (notes).
33. Lenk, p. 143.
34. Lenk, p. 108 (Neu Karsthans).
35. Lenk, p. 153 (Vater und Sohn).
36. Lenk, p. 172; similarly in Von der Zwietracht, Schade, III, 207.
37. Ritter, p. 74.
38. Lenk, p. 95 (Neu Karsthans).
39. Schade, III, 197 f. (Gemeiner Schwabacher Kasten).
40. Lenk, p. 191 (Wallfahrt ins Grimmental).
41. Lenk, p. 139 (Pfarrer und Schultheiß).
42. Köhler et al., Fiche 268, No. 756.
43. Lenk, p. 149.
44. Lenk, p. 153 (Vater und Sohn).
45. Lenk, p. 107.
46. Lenk, p. 159 (Vater und Sohn).
47. Clemen, I, 227.
48. Lenk, p. 149 (Tholl und Lamp).
49. Lenk, p. 155 (Vater und Sohn).
50. Schade, III, 137 (Lutherische und päpstliche Pfaffen).

51. Blochwitz, p. 196 f.
52. Lenk, p. 100.
53. Lenk, p. 101.
54. Blochwitz, p. 200.
55. Schade, III, 211 (Von der Zwietracht).
56. Köhler et al., Fiche 253, No. 707.
57. Lenk, p. 186 f.
58. Lenk, p. 189.
59. Lenk, p. 175 f. (Petrus und Bauer).
60. Schade, III, 207; "ist niendert für ist nirgend vorwärts, hat nie den Vorzug," 295 (notes); Blochwitz, p. 203 f.
61. Lenk, p. 49 and p. 51.
62. Lenk, p. 51.
63. Ain schöner newer Passion (1521), Schade, II, 111.
64. Clemen, I, 181.
65. Schade, III, 103.
66. Schade, II, 56 (Sickingen vor des Himmels Pforten).
67. Lenk, p. 135.
68. Lenk, p. 140; the same idea is expressed in Bauer, Belial, Erasmus und Dr. Faber.
69. Clemen, I, 235.
70. Schade, II, 159.
71. Lenk, p. 92.
72. Schade, II, 123. Similarly in Vater und Sohn: "Es seind aber auch noch junger Martini in denn klöster^en, die sich nit regen dürffen vor jrenn prioribus," Lenk, p. 160.
73. Könneker, p. 16: Humanists valued the cultured qualities of members of the clergy from the higher ranks.

74. Schade, III, 202.
75. Clemen, III, 86.
76. Spriewald, p. 172.
77. Spriewald, p. 165.
78. Schade, III, 202.
79. Clemen, III, 65 (Von den vier größten Beschwernissen).
80. Schottenloher, p. 103.
81. Schade, III, 108 (Edelmann, Mönch und Kurtisan).
82. Schade, III, 186 (Weggespräch).
83. Lenk, p. 133 (Pfarrer und Schultheiß).
84. Clemen, III, 83. In Vom Christlichen Glauben the count confesses he spent more time on his dogs than his subjects.
85. Schottenloher, p. 105 (Entschuldigung des Adels).
86. Schade, II, 49 f. (Sickingen vor des Himmels Pforten).
87. Lenk, p. 145.

CHAPTER 7 Reception of Reformation dialogues between 1520 and 1525

Postulated audience

As has already been illustrated above, different Reformation dialogues represent differing interests. They advance a variety of points of view and judge various factors to be the cause of the nation's woes. In addition they propose varying solutions to the problem and appeal to certain groups to implement their solutions. Some may claim to have been written for the benefit of the common man, but usually address other quarters to set matters right. The introduction of Kurtisan und Pfründenfresser states that it informs "Dem Bauren vnd gemainem man" but continues "Ich rieß vnd schrey On abelan /Z^um Adel vnd aller Oberkayt."¹ The poem concludes with a string of imperatives telling rulers how to act and also why they should do so:

Erbarmen euch der armen leut!
Fürwar es ist ietzt an der zeit.
Secht an euere underthanen!
Die seint von verfluchten curtisanen
Von mark biß auf das bein genagt.²

The subtitle of Wallfahrt ins Grimmental reads: "Eyn trew Christlich vermanung an alle Hantwercks leute vor müßigang sich tz^u h^uten."³ The text depicts how a peasant and a monk renounce forms of idleness and set off to work. That the peasant interrupts his pilgrimage to return home is applicable to "alle Hantwercks leute"; that the monk deserts his monastery has little direct relevance to artisans, since

they scarcely need be persuaded to abandon the monastic life. However, one might argue that the monk's conversion has the general aim of showing that the monastic orders are in a crisis. It is doubtful, though, that the dialogue was aimed solely at tradesmen as it states, given that it makes an appeal to secular lords and imperial cities to take matters in hand:

Hantwerckssman: O yhr frommen deutschen
Fursten vnd yhr frommen Reychstet, secht
in die sach, treybt sie auß vnd bawet andere
heuser do hyn, das ander leut wonung do
haben. Die seyn euch verwar nutzer, dye
selben geben stewr vnd gelt etc.,....

As a sly financial incentive is included, the author may indeed have intended to influence princes and cities.

Many other dialogues, without directly invoking princes or princes and cities, do argue that they are the proper section of society to implement change. Weggespräch, for example, argues above all for an end to celibacy. If the temporal authorities should reduce the number of clerics, it would be to the common good:

Hürenwirt. Es müst die weltlich oberkeit
den bischoffen gebieten, daß si kein ölgötzen
mer machten und daß man nit mer priester züließ
dann nur einem ietlichem flecken ein bischof
oder pfarrer und diaconus,..., und müst man
das ander geschwürme der unnützen müßigen
pfaffen und münchen alle absterben laßen 5
und ire pfründ in gemeinen nutz wenden,...

In Pfarrer und Schultheiß princes are again called upon to reduce the number of benefices. The princes are again

depicted as fair arbitrators who will act in the common interest. Those unsuited to priesthood will be deprived of their benefice and be either chased out or made to work:

Schulthayss: Vnd sunst, welicher mer dann ain pfryend hat, dem nem sy ain landt fürst oder herr vnd tayl sy vnder arm gelert pfaffen vnd laß fürbaß kain auff ain pfryend zu Rom belechnen. Vnd verleychents die Fürsten füro hin selbs, So werdent die armen leüt freyer vnnd vnbeschätzt.⁶

Such trust in the helpfulness and selflessness of princes, however, is not universally shared. The peasant in Bauer, Belial, Erasmus und Dr. Faber is not so confident. He says that "ein frumme weltliche oberkeyt" will not force people from God's Word, but immediately continues, "Wo sie aber das aus vnverstand oder mutwilliger bűberei fürneme vnd vnderstűnde,..."⁷ The peasant's appeals to the princes' piety are tinged with doubt:

Bawer: Sein die herren des Regiments frumm (als sie seinn sollen),⁸ so werden sie mich vol vnbeschwert lassen.

The epistolary Der Schlüssel David (1523) openly declares that both temporal and spiritual authorities suppress the new religion. The writer warns them they will go to hell for opposing God:

Ja, ir müssen erseuffzen über ir grosses elend, das kein elender, geferlicher, erschröcklicher stand auff erden ist denn die oberkeit; wann aller zorn gottes wirt uff inen ligen fürderlich.⁹

In the above two pamphlets the animosity towards secular rulers stems from the rulers' persecution of the new ideas: in pamphlets characterised by partisanship for knights the animosity towards the rulers stems from political and financial sources.

Very occasionally dialogues appeal to Romanists to adopt their points of view. In Christliches, lustiges Gespräch, for example, the hero is an Augustinian monk, who appeals to other followers of the monastic life: "O all jr ordensleüt wachen vnnd eüwere augen ... dye thündt wider auff."¹⁰ The reader or listener is advised in the preface to imitate his exemplary ways: "Wölliche obgemelte ordensleüt söl't jr mit fleyß mercken, hören, vnd denselben in jren Euangelischen leeren nachfolgen." The desirable goal advocated is to leave one's monastery, "Es wirdet dir not seyn ain handtwerck zūlernen," before marrying and having children. Wie Christlich zu leben, written by "Caspar Gūthel jm Augustiner Kloster", also addresses itself to the inhabitants of convents and monasteries: "mügē sy gedencken, das verfürlichē trendelmarcktes abzūsteen, oder die Pauern werden sy mit kolben lauben."¹¹ But here the message is that it is not necessary to leave the monastery at all to be "gūt Ewangelisch." Not the surroundings but faith and brotherly love are the important factors: "Mayster. Haw hin lieber drescher, drisch im Kloster od̄ in der schewn allain biß gūt Ewangelisch, enthalt dich der verfürlichen kremerey, Auff das du werdest selig. Schüler. Amen." The above 2 dialogues are addressed

specifically to monks. They are similar in theme and both propound the new faith, but have quite different interpretations of what it entails.

It is a recurrent motif that monks should leave their monasteries and nuns their convents: "Die Nennen vnnd himelh^eütterein müssen auch herauß, die mist gabel in die handt nemen, sich mit yren henden ernerren vnd kinder tziehen vnd sich meren,..."¹² Authors put forward varying solutions to the problems they see and turn to certain sections of society to carry them out. However, the audience an author assumes in his dialogue is not necessarily the real one.¹³

Actual audience

It is very hard to determine what sections of society were the actual recipients of German Reformation dialogues. Recipients were, no doubt, of two kinds: those who read pamphlets themselves and those who were otherwise exposed to them. F. Martini considered that pamphlets were intended for all levels of society, including the peasantry: "Die Flugschriften, die ihn [the peasant] sprechen lassen, sind weder von Bauern noch etwa allein für Bauern geschrieben, sondern für das ganze Volk."¹⁴ It is commonly thought that the polemical pamphlets of 1520 to 1525 not only were intended for as wide a spectrum of the public as possible, but also in particular sought a positive response from the lowest social orders. From authors' writings has been deduced ihre bewußte Orientierung auf Breitenwirkung und Resonanz

gerade bei den ausgebeuteten Volksmassen."¹⁵ The view is widely held that "[d]er einfache Mann wurde so häufig zur Dialogfigur gemacht, wie er der Adressat der Flugschrift war."¹⁶ In so far as 'common man' is synonymous with layman, then Reformation dialogues were indeed intended for his edification. They were composed not in Latin but in German and were no longer intended for the eyes of scholars and theologians but for all German readers.¹⁷ That Ulrich von Hutten translated his Latin works into German is proof of a new concern to reach as large a public as possible. In addition the style of writing in German Reformation dialogues was no doubt an attempt to give the writing a broader appeal, which does not mean to say that it was directed above all at the lower orders.

However, one must be wary of assuming that just because Reformation dialogues feature the 'common man' and take his part against oppressors they strive to engage the support of the peasantry and urban proletariat: "All too often it is taken for granted that 'low-brow' or 'vulgar' works reflect 'lower class' tastes, despite contrary evidence offered by authorship and library catalogues."¹⁸ W. Lenk advances the opinion that the pamphleteers' aim is "in kürzester Frist den 'gemeinen Mann' geistig aufzuwecken und als Gewalt gegen die römische Kirche zu organisieren," but does not specify in what way this might have been achieved.¹⁹ One must either presuppose literacy among the common people or attribute such

potential 'awakening' to oral transmission of pamphlets' contents. Of the two reasons which W. Lenk advances for the depiction of peasant characters in the pamphlets, "sei es, um den Bauern für die lutherische Sache zu gewinnen, sei es, um die Gegner mit der Kraft, die er verkörperte, zu schrecken," the former explanation postulates that peasants were both the intended and actual audience; the latter argues that the views put in the mouths of peasant characters were directed at the clergy and their supporters.²⁰ Questions of actual readership, its size and composition, have not yet been resolved.²¹

Information about printing and literacy in the early 16th century in Germany is essential in determining facts about the reading public. Pamphlets are thought to have been printed in editions of up to 1,500.²² They were often reprinted and their price was low. As far as circulation and cost are concerned, then, pamphlets seem to have been available to, and presumably procured by, large numbers of the population. From a sample of 14 Reformation dialogues, H. Winkler estimates that they alone amounted to 50,000 copies.²³ Since the total number of pamphlets printed between 1518 and 1525 is put at over 3,000, pamphlets were indeed "massenhaft verbreitet."²⁴ The high number of copies and editions obviously points to an extensive reading public:

The development of printing and the spread of literacy represent a major social and cultural phenomenon, and the waves of written polemic and propaganda which flooded Germany as the great debate on religion unwound during 1520-25 created the first genuine mass literature and mass audience of the modern period.²⁵

Caution, however, is necessary when assessing the extent of an increase in literacy.²⁶

The literate public was certainly expanding in the 16th century in Germany. It is a development which is closely related to the emergence of an urban society.²⁷ Moreover, there is evidence that the interest in and enthusiasm for education was growing.²⁸ Yet in the 16th century, despite an undoubted increase in the level of literacy, the reading public has been estimated at 400,000 to 800,000, representing over 5% of the population.²⁹ There is a lack of information on the composition of the population; in the Middle Ages most of the population were peasants: "However great at any particular time was the degree of urbanization in medieval Europe, the vast majority of the population - 80 - 90 per cent - was engaged in arable or pastoral farming,..."³⁰ Some 10% of the population in the 16th century are thought to have had familiarity with Luther's works.³¹ It is, therefore, only with reserve that one can speak of a "mass audience," for in the sense of a direct readership it is not in evidence.

We have no factual information on the exact extent of literacy during this period [15th and 16th centuries], or on its distribution among the various levels of the population, and in different parts of Europe. The people as a whole did not, of course, know how to read or write.³²

Also there is a difference between the public with basic

literacy and the readers of books: "Learning to read is different, moreover, from learning by reading."³³

By 1524 the ratio of printed German texts to Latin ones had risen to one in three.³⁴ Polemical pamphlets concerning the Reformation had largely displaced popular forms of literature, e.g. "the many legends, prayer books, almanacs, calendars, prognostications, and various types of broadsides,..."³⁵ No doubt the literate 'common man' would indeed be a reader of pamphlets, learning "in Sachen Reformation der Gesellschaft, der Kirche, der Moral usw. mitzusprechen und seine Auffassungen zu formulieren."³⁶ But unfortunately one can scarcely know to what extent a literate commoner was a reality in the 1520s.³⁷ Because of the 'folkish' nature of German Reformation dialogues, it is widely thought they were intended to be read not only by nobles, the urban patriciate and **scholarly**, clerical or professional circles, but also potentially by members of the middle and lower classes.³⁸ However, B. Balzer demonstrates in his study of Sachs's dialogues that the desired recipient in Nuremberg in 1524 belonged to the middle or upper strata of the bourgeoisie. Peasants and the urban poor were undesired supporters.³⁹ These findings are very likely applicable to other urban centres, too.

Although pamphlets were cheap and available, they were no more accessible to those who could not read them. Pamphlets were designed primarily for the literate, in contrast to pictorial or semi-pictorial broadsheets:

... das Flugblatt [fand] besonders enge Berührung mit den unteren sozialen Schichten, engere und unmittelbarere als die Flugschrift, wo eindeutig der Text dominierte und Vermittlung über Lesekundige immer erforderlich war.⁴⁰

Some dialogues, however, specifically address themselves to both the reader and listener, although that might be little more than continuing a literary topos from earlier eras.⁴¹

In 1521 Luther wrote in his defence against the papal bull:

"Allen fromen Christen, die disz buchlin leszen odder horen,..."⁴² In 1522 Kurtisan, Edelmann und Bürger commended

itself as "nicht allein kurtzweilig sonder vast nutzlich zu lesen vnnd zu horen Alles D.M.L. lere betreffend."⁴³

Christliches, lustiges Gespräch addresses "ainē yeden fromen Christenlichen leser vnd zühörer."⁴⁴ It is a recurrent

theme in Reformation dialogues that the illiterate common man is read to and educated by a literate fellow-commoner or by a student, sometimes hired for the purpose, as in

Karsthans, Pfarrer und Schultheiß or Tholl und Lamp. The

passing of information from one person to another and the

educating of one person by another is central to many of

the dialogues. Education and literacy were, of course, very

important to a movement which took its code of conduct

(primarily) from a written source, the Bible, and wanted to

spread new ideas as widely as possible.

The contents of pamphlets may have been circulated by word of mouth. Oral transmission of ideas, through sermons or public readings, which in turn would be recounted to

others and thus conveyed to large sections of the illiterate populace, is often assumed but can hardly be proven. Hawkers of pamphlets ('Buchführer') are said to have declaimed their wares, which were "offenntlich außgeschrien vnnd gesunngen."⁴⁵ it is suggested that those who read out pamphlets to an audience would also have glossed and commented on the content.⁴⁶ Such means of diffusion as the "Prozeß mündlicher Verbreitung" may have allowed broad sections of the illiterate public to gain a knowledge of Reformation concerns and doctrines, but there is a lack of evidence to show that the rural population was in any way exposed to such polemical literature as the dialogues.⁴⁷

However, publicists such as Thomas Murner and Johannes Cochlaeus who wrote in support of Roman Catholicism viewed Luther's tracts and anticlerical pamphlets as dangerously inflammatory, or at least so they said.⁴⁸ They associated Luther with 'Bundschuh' conspiracies; in his An den

Adel (Christmas 1520) Murner called Luther "ein warhafftigen Cathelinam."⁴⁹ They wrote that Luther and the new ideas would create havoc in the nation, saying so either to discredit the opposition, or because they saw it so, or because they took the claims of anticlerical pamphlets at face value. The common man was being incited to bloody revolt.⁵⁰

The woodcuts that appear on the title-page of pamphlets have been described as "for the illiterate or semi-literate."⁵¹

Woodcuts were, of course, "didaktische Hilfe für Leseunkundige" since they offer some indication of contents (not always correctly⁵²):

Man denke an die zahlreichen Holzschnitte in den Reformationsdialogen, die, meist in satirischer Übertreibung, auch eine klare Parteilichkeit zum Ausdruck bringen (z.B. die verschiedenen Tiersymbole für die einzelnen Gegner Luthers: Murner mit einem Katzenkopf, Emser als Bock, Eck als Wildschwein, Cochlaeus als Schnecke usw.).⁵³

But such prints as those described seem very sophisticated for an illiterate common man to understand, without first having the figures explained to him. Animal caricatures of their opponents were a Humanists' ploy, certainly not meant to aid the illiterate. The sophistication of many woodcuts that appear on the front-page of dialogues does not suggest that the illiterate were the intended recipients. For example, the figure holding bellows in the print for Bauer, Belial, Erasmus und Dr. Faber represents Johannes Faber.⁵⁴

Surely the illiterate person would require such a picture to be explained to him, just as he would need the text read to him. Rather the broadsheet, which provides a clear pictorial representation of a point of view, would provide didactic aid to the illiterate:

Beim Analphabetentum der Menge darf es als sicher gelten, daß das Flugblatt besonders enge Berührung mit den unteren sozialen Schichten fand, engere und unmittelbarere als die Flugschrift,... das Flugblattbild war für jene [Leseunkundige] eine unmittelbar benutzbare und - im Unterschied zur Überwiegenden

Zahl der Bilder auf den Titelseiten
der Flugschriften - eine sehr ergiebige
Informationsquelle, die von sich aus das
Gesamtanliegen des Blattes schon weit-
gehend erschloß.⁵⁵

Woodcuts in Reformation dialogues were very likely a device to encourage sales, by indicating content and sympathies.⁵⁶

Reformation concerns and doctrines found their way to the largely illiterate population. There is no evidence to show that Reformation dialogues played a direct role, or indeed any role, in the process. Far more likely is that Reformation ideas were disseminated among the populace by other means - means that did not require so much education or such sustained concentration, means that did not presuppose so much knowledge of current personalities or so much awareness of and interest in matters pertaining to the Roman church. Preaching to the people was one way of propagating ideas; sermons delivered by mendicant friars and such itinerant lay preachers as the "Drummer of Niklashausen," the "Peasant of Wöhrd" and "Karsthans" would have reached the lower classes in society. Songs that are rousing and easily remembered are another means of kindling enthusiasm among the uneducated.⁵⁷ A further means was pictorial broadsheets that illustrated clearly a particular idea. Sermons, songs and pictures were all very much in the same vein as German Reformation dialogues but were probably further-reaching than dialogues could possibly have been.

NOTES

1. Schade, I, 181 (Notes), also 7.
2. Schade, I, 12.
3. Lenk, p. 179.
4. Lenk, p. 190. In Vom Christlichen Glauben the count addresses himself to "ir graffen vnd edelleüt." Strangely he does not exclude members of the clergy when promising to protect the Lutheran priests: "Ich hab noch vil Fürsten vnd heren vnd edelleut gaistlich vnd weltlich, die mir auch helffen werden," Clemen, Fac., Vol. 1, No. 1.
5. Schade, III, 188.
6. Lenk, p. 135.
7. Lenk, p. 221.
8. Lenk, p. 222.
9. Der Schlüssel David (1523), Schieß, p. 320.
10. Köhler et al. (1979), Fiche 268, No. 756.
11. Köhler et al. (1979), Fiche 265, No. 747.
12. Lenk, p. 70.
13. Eisenstein, I, 63 f., makes a similar point with regard to 15th century printed books.
14. Martini, p. 244.
15. Schnabel, p. 105.
16. Friedrich Gaede, Humanismus Barock Aufklärung, Handbuch der deutschen Literaturgeschichte, Part 1, Vol. II (Bern and Munich: Francke, 1971), p. 59.
17. Uhrig, p. 106 ff.
18. Eisenstein, I, 63.
19. Lenk, Grundpositionen, p. 224.
20. Lenk, p. 35.
21. Rudolf Hirsch, Printing, Selling and Reading 1450-1550 (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1967), p. 126 f.; Eisenstein, I, 60 ff.

22. See Introduction, p. 15 f., above.
23. Winkler, "Zum soziologischen Aspekt," p. 40 f.
24. Estimates vary. See Introduction, p.15, above.
25. Scribner, "Images of the Peasant," p. 29.
26. Eisenstein, I, 71: "Most references to wide dissemination are too fleeting to make clear the specific effects of an increased supply of texts directed at different markets. In particular they fail to make clear how patterns of consumption were affected by increased production."
27. Carlo M. Cipolla, Literacy and Development in the West (London: Pelican, 1969), p. 45.
28. Cipolla, p. 49.
29. Rolf Engelsing, Analphabetentum und Lektüre. Zur Sozialgeschichte des Lesens in Deutschland zwischen feudaler und industrieller Gesellschaft (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1973), p.32.
30. R. H. Hilton, "Agrarian Class Structure and Economic Development in Pre-Industrial Europe," Past and Present, 80 (1978), 5.
31. Engelsing, p. 28 f.
32. Hirsch, p. 126.
33. Eisenstein, I, 65.
34. Engelsing, p. 26.
35. Hirsch, p. 127.
36. Entner and Lenk, p. 154.
37. Franklin Kopitzsch, "Bemerkungen zur Sozialgeschichte der Reformation und des Bauernkrieges," in Der Bauernkrieg 1524 - 26. Bauernkrieg und Reformation, ed. Rainer Wohlfeil (Munich: Nymphenburger Verlagshandlung, 1975), p. 191: "Die in der Flugschriftenliteratur begegnenden lesenden und disputierenden Bauern sind wohl nicht nur Idealvorstellungen der Autoren, sondern auch Gestalten der zeitgenössischen Realität, wenn gleich sie eher die Ausnahme als die Regel gewesen sein dürften."
38. Brackert, p. 65 f.

39. Balzer, p. 136.
40. Meuche and Neumeister, p. 67.
41. Hirsch, p. 148, gives several 15th century examples.
42. WA, 7, 309.
43. Köhler et al. (1979), Fiche 267, No. 752.
44. Köhler et al. (1979), Fiche 268, No. 756.
45. Schnabel, p. 103.
46. Schmidt, p. 66.
47. Kopitzsch, p. 191.
48. Uhrig, p. 186 ff.
49. An den Großmechtigsten vnd Durchlüchtigsten adel
tütscher nation; in Thomas Murners deutsche Schriften, VII,
ed. W. Pfeiffer-Belli, p. 63.
50. Brackert, p. 34 f. and p. 67.
51. Scribner, "Images of the Peasant," p. 29.
52. Clemen, I - IV, gives examples where prints appear on the
title-page of pamphlets, although they obviously were
originally designed for other pamphlets and do not
illustrate the contents.
53. Schnabel, p. 102.
54. Lenk, p. 243.
55. Meuche and Neumeister, p. 67.
56. Vogler, p. 225.
57. Strobach, "Lieder aus dem Bauernkrieg," p. 238 ff.

CHAPTER 8 The effects of German Reformation dialogues on the nation

Literary historians generally agree that the authors of Reformation polemical literature more or less inadvertently fuelled the mass insurrection of 1525. The authors are not considered to have sought to incite violent revolution. Only Thomas Müntzer is held to have intentionally stirred up the populace to rebel. Polemical pamphlets and in particular German Reformation dialogues were read primarily by the educated classes and the bourgeoisie; the peasantry and urban poor were largely excluded from reading because of widespread illiteracy. Judged solely on the basis of its restricted readership, then, one can conclude that Reformation polemical literature had as good as no effect on the participants in the numerous uprisings between 1524 and 1526. For the insurgents were, depending in part on the region and nature of the strife, peasants - both impoverished, landless labourers and some of the relatively better-off tenant farmers - and townspeople - mainly the urban proletariat but also guild-members¹. With the exception of the burghers, it is precisely these social groupings that were unable to read.

However, two other points must also be taken into consideration when one attempts to assess the extent to which Reformation pamphlets activated or encouraged social unrest: oral communication to the broad populace of those controversies treated in pamphlets, and the role of Refor-

mation pamphlets in creating the self-awareness and self-esteem that then manifested itself in armed insurrection. It is argued that the spirit and aim of anticlerical writing were misconstrued by contemporaries. While pamphlets deplored existing conditions in society and discussed why revolt might result from the perpetuation of those conditions, their talking about revolt was equated with calling for revolt. K. Uhrig holds the view that writers of Reformation dialogues discussed the lot of the commoners and created a pacifist 'common man' figure because their aim was "die ja vorhandene gärende Stimmung innerhalb der Bauernschaft abzuschwächen und in evangelische Haltung umzubiegen."² But, he maintains, instead of defusing the mood, their writing was "ein wesentliches Moment, das den Ausbruch des Bauernkrieges mitverschuldete."³ Similarly H. Boockmann has said of the Reformatio Sigismundi and the work of the "Oberrheinische Revolutionär", which both refer to violent insurrection: "Auch damals, vor Beginn des Bauernkrieges, können diese Reformschriften gegen die Absichten ihrer Autoren gelesen worden sein, als ein Aufruf zu Gewalt und Aufstand."⁴ Whether those who read or heard about such writing were in fact inflamed by it or not cannot be ascertained; but such writing certainly kept alive the awareness that social stability was under threat, as did contemporary prophetic writing.

Another view is that Reformation pamphlets were never intended for the lowest social classes, but that they nevertheless reached and influenced them, again thanks to oral transmission:

Obwohl die breiteren, vielfach analphabetischen Volksschichten zu dieser an ein lateinlesendes, gebildetes Publikum adressierten Literatur - ... - kaum direkten Zugang hatten, so blieb doch das Wissen um die hier vorgetragene anti-klerikale Kritik in den gesellschaftlich so hochexplosiven Jahren unmittelbar vor Ausbruch der frühbürgerlichen Revolution sicherlich nicht auf die ursprünglich vorgesehenen Leserkreise beschränkt.⁵

The preoccupation of Reformation literature with the 'common man' has been regarded as one important reason for its filtering through to the real common people:

Die Projektion bürgerlicher Zielvorstellung auf den Bauernstand [sollte] ... unter den Bürgern Reformstimmung fördern Daß dann allerdings die Bauern, auf die man keinesfalls gezielt hatte (...), sich angesprochen fühlten und der Fiktion Realität gaben, muß man zu den niemals auszuschließenden unerwünschten Nebeneffekten rechnen,...⁶

The above two interpretations presuppose that the barrier of illiteracy has been circumvented and that analphabets have become acquainted with the matter of Reformation pamphlets by word of mouth, by public readings, or by whatever means. Hawkers of pamphlets ('Buchführer') are known to have extolled their wares and read from them publicly to encourage custom. Largely due to these vendors'

activities, it is assumed that when publicists began to press harshly and insistently for renewed spirituality coupled with other reforms they excited a far greater audience than they intended. However, it is debatable whether those who took part in the widespread revolts of 1524 to 1526 did so on account of Reformation literature.

Certainly the ideas that are present in German Reformation dialogues became common knowledge, even at the lowest levels of society. The ideas raised in dialogues crop up in grievances and demands formulated in the German Peasants' War. The preface to the Zwölf Artikel calls itself 'evangelisch' and Biblical references are used to give authority to the demands - but this can be partially explained by the fact that insurgent bands had to enlist the services of an educated man to write their demands for them, and that he would probably be familiar with literary forms.⁷ The criticism levelled at the clergy in Reformation dialogues is also found in the Zwölf Artikel: for example, priests must teach from the Gospel and taxes imposed on the commoners reduce them to total penury. But the articles contain other ideas that are not passed on directly by Reformation pamphleteers. Complaints against secular lords for their oppression of the commoners are scarcely ever advanced in dialogues, but the articles emphasise exploitation by temporal rulers and Church equally. The peasants are said to have carried copies of these articles, even though they could not read; the demands were read out at large gatherings.⁸ Since the articles that plead

for greater social equality and autonomy have not been gleaned from Reformation pamphlets, the articles that do have coinciding demands need not have been adopted from Reformation pamphlets either. Yet publicists may have played some role in firing commoners' discontent, for the latter group's grievances are only the logical and indeed realistic extension of pamphleteers' one-sided social criticism.

But printed literature was not the sole source of reform doctrines. Preachers had direct contact with the common people and great influence on them. They were also the people most intimately involved in the spread of new religious teaching: "Indeed, the men who first carried the new gospel to success had formerly been Catholic priests and monks. They were the foot soldiers of the Reformation"⁹ There were trained theologians, moreover, who supported both the Reformation and its socio-economic, political implications. They sided with the common people's hopes of reform. Such a preacher was Heinrich Pfeiffer, a runaway monk, who in 1523 delivered "fiery evangelical" sermons in Mühlhausen and won great popular support. Another was Thomas Müntzer, who joined him there and also became an immensely popular figure.¹⁰ Both were expelled after riots in which churches were despoiled. Christoph Schappeler was another preacher to gain the support of townspeople as well as peasants in and around Memmingen. He brought about the establishment of Reformation doctrines in the town.¹¹ Apart from that small group of preachers who held resident positions, there was a large group of itinerant

preachers which was in general ill-educated, poor and looked down upon by the nobility. This group "[wurde] daher näher an die mittleren und unteren städtischen wie ländlichen Schichten herangerückt."¹² Such preachers are thought to have delivered sermons which focussed on social inequality. Not only did they deplore the oppression of the lower classes imposed by a corrupt Roman church but also that imposed by temporal rulers, too.

Of course, the combination of religious and egalitarian social ideas was not entirely new. It had always been espoused by heretical groups, which had also made use of oral sermons to popularise their views, although the influence of such sects as Waldensians, Hussites and Taborites is thought to have "petered out in the latter half of the 15th century."¹³ The commingling of religion and egalitarianism was a traditional ingredient in unrest. Joss Fritz, who in 1502, 1513 and 1517 organised 'Bundschuh' conspiracies, "successfully combined strong religious feeling of his fellow peasants with the needs of anti-feudal action" and sought to base all authority on "divine justice."¹⁴ Peasant articles of 1524 and 1525 reveal the "quickenings of social and economic grievances with evangelical teaching" which is an obvious parallel with the revolt of English peasants in 1381.¹⁵ The actions of the insurgents bear out that secular lords as well as the clergy were the target of their anger and aggression.¹⁶ Castles and convents alike were looted and destroyed:

Zu Beginn der Stadtunruhen, ..., wurde der Arm-Reich-Gegensatz in allen Orten betont, richteten sich die Aktionen ohne Unterschied gegen weltliche und geistliche "Reyche."¹⁷

Another interpretation of the effects of Reformation literature on the nation views it as greatly altering the way in which the 'common man' was regarded by other social classes and as altering the way the common people regarded themselves. Since the pamphlets presented a picture of the 'common man' as an important, even influential figure in national affairs, it is thought that this image not only improved the commoners' status in the eyes of others, but also communicated itself to the common people and raised their self-esteem.¹⁸ The growth in their self-respect led them to wish for self-determination and so caused them to revolt:

Die besondere Leistung der Dialogliteratur für die Fortentwicklung der Revolution von der lutherisch-bürgerlichen Phase zur bäuerlich-plebejischen bestand darin, daß diese Dialoge -...- das revolutionäre Selbstbewußtsein des unterdrückten Volkes gestärkt und gefestigt haben.¹⁹

By encouraging a change in the common people's self-evaluation, Reformation literature raised their expectations of what was their due and created "hopes of fundamental changes of religion, state and society."²⁰ Of course, the lower orders had frequently shown their dissatisfaction with their lot and their determination to act before. The uprisings of 1524 to 1526, however, were supraregional both in their proliferation and in their demands.

Reformation literature has been described as "ein literarisches Feuerwerk, das ein wirkliches Feuer entfachte: die revolutionäre Aktivität der Volksmassen."²¹ Certainly the Zwölf Artikel - which appeared in about 25 editions within half a year, which were widely diffused and formed the insurgents' ideological basis - directly contributed to the rapid spread of insurrection. But it is by no means clear whether the writings of Lutheran or Humanist bourgeois authors contributed. In 1522/23, under the leadership of Franz von Sickingen, the knights rebelled at the economic and political pressures imposed upon them, as their impoverishment grew and as territorial princes consolidated their power. In the case of the knights, Reformation pamphlets are not generally held as contributing greatly to the revolt, although Ulrich von Hutten's writing was certainly influential. Reformation ideas served their purpose by providing them with a justification of their actions: the knights made mention of the Bible and Luther to legitimise their goals. In the case of the peasant and urban participants in the German Peasants' War, too, Gospel teaching served as the basis of their demands, as the final article of the Zwölf Artikel clearly demonstrates.²² It is not clear that insurgents imbibed the doctrines from printed literature. They certainly must have absorbed them from preachers. Of course, what evangelical preachers preached was at least partially culled from anticlerical polemical pamphlets. The effect of German Reformation dialogues on the populace

cannot be gauged. They possibly achieved little more than influence educated and semi-educated opinion in its appreciation of new religious ideas and anticlerical arguments.

The events of 1525 in which many thousands of peasants died mark the end of the 'common man' as representative spokesman of the Reformation and articulate critic of the Roman church in German Reformation dialogues.²³ The 'common man' in the role of hero all but disappears, as the Reformation party dissociates itself from a figure which is no longer an asset but an unwelcome liability.²⁴ The insurrection is now termed a 'peasant' insurrection, Luther and the towns being anxious to lay the blame elsewhere.²⁵ The social evaluation of the commoner has turned full-circle.

In 1520 Thomas Murner made deprecating remarks about the type of commoner that was attracted to Luther, referring to "hanß karsten vnd die vnuerstendig gemein."²⁶ His remarks are thought to have provoked the creation of Karsthans, to give the lie to Murner's taunt. From the original Karsthans descended a host of 'common man' characters who embodied the opposite of Murner's view. The Karsthans in Neu Karsthans is insulted at being disparagingly addressed by the clergy: "Heissen vns grobe rültzen vnd knotasten. Haben vns auch anders nit, dann wä^eren wir vnvernünfftige thier; das thut mir wee,..."²⁷ But a dialogue written by a supporter of Luther in the aftermath of the Battle of Franckenhausen reduced the peasants' status to that accorded them by Murner.²⁸ In the pamphlet

an evangelical peasant who supports the rulers' massacre of insurgents rails at a defeated, wounded supporter of Müntzer. The evangelical peasant first distinguishes between "dem groben pöff^el" who rebelled under Müntzer and "die verstendigen vnd gelerten" who did not. Then in Neidhartian style peasants are termed greedy, lazy, gluttonous, boisterous, vain upstarts, who try to emulate the dress of their superiors. Rulers whether good or bad are ordained by God and must be obeyed. The traditionally negative portrayal of peasants and their place in society has reasserted itself - reintroduced by the Lutheran reform party, which had previously championed the 'common man' and had him as its literary champion. After 1525 the positive portrayal of the common people virtually disappears.

Nevertheless, an instance of the traditionally positive estimation of the peasant can also be found in a dialogue from 1525. Hofmann und Bauer, presumably written before the Battle of Frankenhausen but all the same in a year when rebellion constantly flared up in many regions, still espouses loyally the cause of peasant equality.²⁹ The courtier laments the state of the country. His mood is eschatological:

... nun hab wir ye yetz groß krieg vnd
widerwerttgkait, in aller welt der erden,
zwischn̄ König, Fürsten, Herren, Edel vnd
vnedel, in allen Stetten, Dörffern vnd
flecken alle seynd auffrurig, vnd ye ains
wider das ander, da hilfft kain freündt-
schafft u. Groß parten, groß secktten, groß
versamlungen stond auff, gar wenig stend
im rechttem fryd gegen ain andern.

He feels the Day of Judgement is nigh; he continues that war, bloodshed, pestilence, vanity, greed, unchristian trading, envy, hate, anger, adultery etc. spread over the country. The peasant replies to comfort him. The courtier, a follower of Luther, does not want to place himself above the peasant and tells him to use the informal address 'du' instead of the formal 'ir'. The reason he gives has a long tradition:

Ich bin nit mer z^u achttenn alls du,
wie wol ich bey Fürsten vnd herren
ertzogen bin, vnd du allayn nur im
dorff wonnest, halt mich als deinen
brüder, dan wir sind alle auß ainem
klotzen von Adam her gepflantzt u.

However, the honest, upright, pious 'common man' figure does recur occasionally in literature concerned with the Reformation. K. Uhrig lists some 16th century dialogues to illustrate that "in ganz bescheidenem Maße taucht der reformatorische gelehrte, glaubensfeste und disputierende Bauer in alter Gewandung neu auf, wie es einige Schriften beweisen."³⁰ From an examination of broadsheets H. Meuche and I. Neumeister have established:

Der gemeine Mann, im Kampf geschlagen,
politisch und sozial schärfer unterdrückt
als vor seiner großen Erhebung, prägte
sich in den Flugblattdarstellungen bis
ins fünfte Jahrzehnt des 16. Jahrhunderts
als Bildgegenstand weiter aus. Dabei trat
er zunehmend deutlich als gesellschaftliche
Kraft hervor, war ausgerüstet mit einem
bestimmten sozialen, politischen und
moralischen Anliegen, erschien befreit
von abwertenden Darstellungstendenzen in
würdevoller Größe oder schalkhafter
Weisheit.³¹

NOTES

1. Peter Blickle, Die Revolution von 1525, p. 179, lists the participants: "Der gemeine Mann ist der Bauer, der Bürger der landsässigen Stadt, der von reichsstädtischen Ämtern ausgeschlossene Städter, der Bergknappe." Rammstedt, "Stadtunruhen 1525," p. 239 ff.; Endres, p. 72 f., p. 78.
2. Uhrig, p. 173.
3. Uhrig, p. 191.
4. Boockmann, p. 14.
5. Schnabel, p. 90 f.
6. Balzer, p. 33.
7. Brackert, p. 49 f. and p. 56 f.; Blickle, Die Revolution von 1525, p. 161.
8. Vogler, p. 226.
9. Hillerbrand, p. 40.
10. GordonRupp, Patterns of Reformation, Part III, "Thomas Müntzer. The Reformer as Rebel" (London: Epworth Press, 1969).
11. Blickle, Die Revolution von 1525, p. 158 ff.
12. Brackert, p. 69.
13. Moeller, p. 15.
14. Laube, "Precursors of the Peasant War, " p.51.
15. Coupe, p. 63.
16. Endres, p. 76 f.
17. Rammstedt, p. 253.
18. Jöst, p. 176 ff.
19. Entner and Lenk, p. 158.
20. Scribner, "Images of the Peasant," p. 30.
21. Entner and Lenk, p. 151.

22. Robert Stupperich, Die Reformation in Deutschland,
Monographien zur Weltgeschichte (Munich: DTV, 1972),
p. 186 f.
23. Lenk, p. 43; Böckmann, p. 227; Rupprich, IV/2, 122.
24. Scribner, "Images of the Peasant," p. 32.
25. Rammstedt, p. 239.
26. Pfeiffer-Belli, p. 63.
27. Lenk, p. 107.
28. Müntzerischer Schwärmer und evangelischer Bauer.
29. Köhler et al. (1979), Fiche 268, No. 757.
30. Uhrig, p. 192 f.
31. Meuche and Neumeister, p. 65.

PART II A DETAILED EXAMINATION OF SIX GERMAN REFORMATION DIALOGUES

The following six texts have been chosen to represent the period 1520 - 1525, during which German Reformation dialogues were being published in fairly rapid succession. Karsthans (1521) has been selected on account of its great popularity and considerable influence on subsequent dialogues, as well as on other genres. Pfarrer und Schultheiß (1521) and Chorherr und Schuhmacher (1524) have been picked because they, too, belong to the most widespread of the German Reformation dialogues, judging from the numbers of extant copies. Kunz und Fritz (1521) has been included as it displays an interesting blend of humanist traits and Reformation ideas, and features humanistically educated 'common men', who support both Erasmus and Luther. Bauer, Belial, Erasmus und Dr. Faber (1524) depicts greater differentiation and a hardening of attitudes; Erasmus has meanwhile turned into a foe of the party of reform. Müntzerischer Schwärmer und evangelischer Bauer (1525), which was written after the defeat of the insurgents at the Battle of Frankenhausen, marks the virtual end of the era in which German Reformation dialogues were produced and in which the 'common man' was portrayed as the epitome of a serious Christian. These six examples demonstrate the lack of uniformity within the anticlerical movement. They illustrate the disparity among the points of view of the various publicists and the diversity in the way they chose to present them in dialogue form.

1. Karsthans

The earliest known, and very possibly the first, Reformation dialogue both to feature the common man as protagonist and to be composed in German is Karsthans. Like the majority of its successors, it was published anonymously, was undated and omitted the printer's name and place of publication. In all, ten editions are extant; typographical examination has demonstrated that three were printed in Strasbourg, three in Basel and four in Augsburg. The first edition was printed in Strasbourg. The unusually high number of editions of Karsthans, spread over three centres of publication, gives a clear indication of the pamphlet's popularity and diffusion. Its success must have been virtually instantaneous, for the numerous reprints all appeared in the same year and, indeed, within months of one another. After 1521 no further editions are known, from which it would appear that the popularity of the pamphlet was not sustained.¹

Nevertheless, Karsthans made a lasting impression. The catchword, connoting the fiery-tempered Lutheran peasant wielding an agricultural implement, was confined neither to South Germany nor to dialogue literature.² Some pamphlets exploited the existing interest in Karsthans by using his name in their titles (Neu Karsthans, Karsthans und Kegelhans³) or by depicting him prominently in title-page prints (Die Göttliche Mühle). Others simply mentioned his name within the text (Dialog des Apostolikums, Weggespräch). In 1522

the lay preacher, Hans Murer, preached in Strasbourg under the name of Karsthans. Johann Locher or Rott, an itinerant preacher from Munich who also on occasion went by the name of Karsthans, published several pamphlets in 1523/24 in which the figure of Karsthans played a major role.⁴ The author wrote as though in collusion with that character: "ich wils dem Karsthannsen über sy [papists] klagen", "ich wils dem Karsthansen yetz heymlich sagen."⁵ After 1525 the catchword Karsthans still occurred occasionally, but with a shift away from its positive connotation. It no longer signified the pious commoner, but reverted to meaning the uncouth rustic.⁶

Date of publication

Publication of Karsthans is considered to have occurred in January 1521. It is usually held that a letter written by Thomas Murner on 13 January 1521 and addressed to Sebastian Brant, as chancellor and jurist for Strasbourg town council, refers to Karsthans. In this letter Murner demands the confiscation of heretical writings and in particular of a defamatory pamphlet attacking himself; should no steps be taken, he threatens to address himself to Rome on the matter. The letter would, therefore, date publication of Karsthans as immediately before 13 January 1521. That the calumnious work is in fact Karsthans is accepted by H. Burckhardt, A. E. Berger, W. Lenk, B. Könniker, H. Rupprich and others; but T. Schieß has given evidence to support the conclusion that Murner's letter referred to Defensio Christianorum de Cruce.⁷ She, nonetheless,

places the date of publication in January 1521.

Measures to confiscate Karsthans were either not implemented or unsuccessful, since by 8 May 1521 the third edition to be printed in Strasbourg was already in circulation. On this date Murner did make a printed protest about the aspersions cast on him in this particular edition of Karsthans.⁸ Edition D, according to H. Burckhardt's bibliography, ended with four lines of verse which asserted that Murner was in collaboration with Peter Wyckram and Hieronymus Gebweiler. In his letter of 8 May, Murner denies that they participated in any way in the composition of his tract.

Authorship

The identity of the author of Karsthans still remains a matter of conjecture. Various historical figures have been cast in the role of author, such as Hans Murer, a lay preacher who called himself Karsthans; Ulrich von Hutten; Martin Butzer; and Joachim vom Watt, also known as Vadian - only to be later discarded as new insights are gained. Nowadays Vadian is considered the most probable author, but such a supposition is not universally accepted.⁹

From the colloquy itself, however, information about its author and his background can be gleaned. The author sides with Reuchlin and expresses enmity towards Hochstraten; he refers to the Humanist work Eccius dedolatus (1520)¹⁰; he conveys informed gossip about tactics of the Roman church, for example, to influence the outcome of Reuchlin's trial, or to implement the burning of Luther's books. These

features indicate that the author is a man of education with Humanist leanings. Puns and animal analogies were favoured by Humanist writers, as was direct, biting personal satire; so Murner is given here the features and characteristics of a tom-cat, a pun on his name.

In common with Humanist writers generally, the author of Karsthans enjoys playing on words and switching between Latin and German. Eckius is called "geügeküs", just as Cochläus was commonly referred to as "Kochlöffel". Karsthans 'mishears' Latin words as German, for example, "camal" for "cardinal", to amuse the reader with anticlerical gibes, and to expose Latin as the language of deception: "diese Taktik des lateinischen Verschleierns wird durch die Taktik höchst vulgären deutsch-lateinischen Mißverstehens satirisiert."¹¹ There might appear to be an internal contradiction in the author's attitude to Latin and German, for, on the one hand, Murner is upbraided in the preface for writing in German (to conceal his ignorance), while, on the other, Luther is requested to write in German for the benefit of "einfeltigen leyen." However, the author differentiates between Murner's dog-Latin and the polished Latin of Humanists¹²: "So ganz undifferenziert wird die lateinische Sprache freilich nicht gegen die deutsche ausgespielt: Da gibt es die Kirchenlatinität Murners ... als Sprachrolle der lateinischen Narrheit ... Es gibt jedoch auch die lateinische Sprachrolle als Medium der (humanistischen) Kritik."¹³

The author of Karsthans is well-read in classical literature as well as in contemporary, topical literature. His colloquy is interspersed with learned allusions to, for example, Virgil. The Latin speaking figure of Mercurius has been taken from Lucian's Dialogues of the Dead, or perhaps from Hutten's dialogue Phalarismus (1517). He is versed in canon law. He refers to Murner's satires Gäuchmatt (1519), Narrenbeschwörung (1512) and Schelmenzunft (1512), as well as to Murner's polemical pamphlets Eine brüderliche Ermahnung an Luther (1520), Von dem Papsttum (1520), and An den großmächtigsten und durchläuchtigsten Adel deutscher Nation (1520). The author even parodies and plays on Murner's own words:¹⁴

Die Kommunikationskompetenz des anonymen
Autoren ist derjenigen Murners vergleichbar
und ebenbürtig.¹⁵

Karsthans ist das literarische Vehikel,
Murners Polemik auf gleicher Ebene, im
gleichen Stil und vor dem gleichen Publikum
verächtlich zu machen.¹⁶

He refers to Luther's An den christlichen Adel (1520) and Von dem Papsttum zu Rom (1520). He draws on the New Testament, "in der selbständigen Verdeutschung", to underline his opinions and invalidate those of Murner.¹⁷ The anonymous author of Karsthans is a man of learning, with the knowledge and skill, through satire, to beat Murner at his own game. He clearly presumes a fairly high level of education in his readership.¹⁸

The title and preface

The foreword of Karsthans consists of an attack on a "geistlichen vnd vil gelerten man (nach syner achtung)" who remains unnamed. To the initiate the introductory remarks about a theologian who criticises "jm titel brüderlicher ermanung" and presents "vast vßlendig dorecht leren" obviously refer to Thomas Murner and his tract of 1520. In the preface he is accused of abusing his power, of ignorance, of fettering Christianity to the papacy, and of seeking glory and profit. The writer is particularly aggrieved that Murner published anonymously against Luther; perhaps the anonymous Karsthans was conceived to repay him in kind. The preface states that Murner's motives are base and that, morally and intellectually, he is no match for the "hochgelerten götlichen Martino Luthero." Thus the introduction to the colloquy establishes where the sympathies of its author lie and, obliquely, who the object of his censure is.

In contrast to Karsthans, most subsequent Reformation dialogues are headed by an explanatory title which names the participants, the topics of discussion and often sings the pamphlet's praises. The tendency to be more readily intelligible is evident in Editions H and J, which are entitled : "Karsthans mit vier Personen so vnder inen selbs ain gesprech vnd red halten."¹⁹ The title of Edition K goes even further in that direction: "Djse seind die fünff, so vnder jnen selbst ain gesprech vnd red halten, mit namen.

Murner. Karsthans. Studens. Luther. vnd Mercurius.
 Gar kurtzweylig vnd lustig zu lesen."²⁰ This pamphlet
 provides translations from the Latin in the margin.

The structure of the colloquy

After the preface, the colloquy itself falls into three sections. In the first, Murner appears with Karsthans, the student and Mercurius; in the second, Luther appears with Karsthans, the student and Mercurius; in the third, Karsthans and the student, with Mercurius in the background, discuss the theological controversies that divide Murner and Luther. Karsthans arrives at the conclusion that Luther "tausent mal geschickter ist, in gemeinen natürlichen verstand von der geschriff^t z^u reden dann der Murner."²¹ His conclusion about Murner is : "Ho he he, send so vil vnnütz geschwetz an ein blat, ... Ich hab des Murners kunst gen^ug erfahren, wie dieff er in der heiligen geschriff^t sich ger^eümet hatt."²² Thus Karsthans builds a logical progression, despite what one might consider great changes in tone and approach between the sections.²³

The principal points the author conveys

In the first section of dialogue, dramatic effects and lively satire prevail. There is no exchange of arguments; instead the author strives to nullify Murner's status as a learned theologian by presenting him in the poorest possible light. The noise of a wailing cat leads Karsthans and his son, the student, to discuss the nature of cats. According to "die buren im dorff", a cat is a sly, perfidious creature

which is by nature malevolent and wilfully causes harm. The wailing, spitting cat then turns into Murner, no doubt to the delight of the Humanist reader. Murner, a man of the cloth, betrays himself as unscrupulous in his dealings and more foul-mouthed than any coarse peasant.

Karsthans makes ostensibly naive comments in mock humility. They amount to denunciations:

Karsthans: Lieber herr, yr müssen vnß
dorfflütten verziehen, wir wissen nit,
wie ein solich geistlich man sol gehalten
werden, hab nit gewüßt, das yr vff den
techern vmb lieffen vnnd abweg sūchen,
geistlich lüt sollen by nacht in klösteren
syn vnd betten vnd metten singen.²⁴

Thus Karsthans provokes the enraged Murner to a multitude of oaths: "Das dich der rit schend alß burens!", "das ũch bocks hoden schenden vnd plenden!", "Du buren klotz!" Although Karsthans is told that Thomas Murner is a great man, he relies on the evidence of his own eyes and ears to reach the conclusion: "Wie sind ir ein seltzam geistlich man, thūn nit dan flūchen, schelten, toben vnd den lūten böses wünschen."²⁵ Murner is portrayed as a choleric degenerate, devoted to wordly pursuits. He seeks fame, fortune and pleasures of the flesh; his theological works consist of writing about Fools.

In the course of the first section Karsthans becomes increasingly vituperative, as he discovers Murner's corrupt nature, even slipping for once from the 'ir' form of address:

Murnar: Du bist ein gouch.
 Karsthans: Vnd du ouch.²⁶

Mercurius adds to the general affray with cynical Latin interpolations. Even the student, who is cast as his adherent, 'unwittingly' compounds the vilification:

Studens : [Murner] Mag auch durch alle
 land ziehen ..., mit abgeschnitten zerteilten
 hosen, den degen im katzbalck, mag auch
 verkleydt in die lupanaria gon.
 Mercurius : Quotidiana.
 Murnar: ... Protestor veritatem iam dictam
 in meam personam.²⁷

The savage personal satire places this section of the pamphlet in the tradition of other Humanist satires directed against Murner.²⁸ The contemporary Humanist reader must have taken great pleasure in seeing a formidable opponent treated with consummate disdain by a rumbustious, illiterate peasant.²⁹ The author is at pains to destroy any respect Murner might command. For example, Murner avoids a confrontation with Luther for fear of ignominious defeat:

Murnar: So der [Luther] kompt,
 ist myn zu vil hie, laß mich
 hindenn vß.³⁰

Karsthans : Der Luther kompt.
 Murnar : Adi.³¹

Murner is made to utter unrepentant admissions of guilt and to unashamedly advocate keeping the population in ignorance. Such remarks are, fittingly, in Latin ("Medium, die Gedanken zu verbergen, und Sprachrolle der Unwahrheit"³²):

"Iterum vitium est indignis secreta vulgare," "Coniuro te, ad^eolescens, obmutescas! ", "Occultum vulgo."³³ All in all, the first section of Karsthans is intended to blacken Murner's name. He lacks the spiritual values and demeanour of a serious man of God to a shocking, and nonetheless humorous, degree. As he beats a hasty retreat at Luther's approach, he recommends two of his tracts, of course simultaneously detracting from them.

The second section of the colloquy acts as a counterpart to the first. Luther is listened to and revered, where Murner was found worthy of contempt. Through pious words, a benevolent manner and earnestness, Luther is depicted in a way which is designed to highlight the marked differences between the two men. While Murner's behaviour was unseemly, Luther's is saintly. Luther is selfless, concerned only about the good of "die Tütschen" and "die warheit vnd vernunfft." He insists on truth, pleads for a fair hearing, commends his own works and invites impartial comparison:

Luther: So thuen so woll vmb gottes vnd
der warheit willen, hö^eren vnd lesen mine
bücher ouch in glichem fliß als miner find
bücher, vnd kein teyl angesehen, sunder
luter vnd bloß die warheit vnd vernunfft,
dan so vrteilen zwischen mir vnd allen
mynen finden.³⁴

The student mentions that papists, however, prefer not to permit the foe to debate, in case he wins. The ways of the pope are not the straightforward, honest ones of peasants,

he tells Karsthans, again 'unintentionally' providing from the peasant sphere 'objective' proof of papal venality.

Luther appears only briefly in Karsthans, to tell the peasant that Germans are being duped by the Romans, that Luther is in danger on account of his teaching, and that he rejects any form of armed resistance. At his departure, he again invites comparison of his and his opponents' views, so introducing the third section of theological discussion. Luther is a flat, remote character in comparison to Murner. That the two are to be compared is evident: Murner represents foreignness, selfishness, deception and obfuscation; Luther stands for Germanness, self-sacrifice, truth and clarity (punning on his name). The section closes with Karsthans summing up: "O sun, das ist vil ein bescheidner her dan der Murner."³⁵ Luther, however, occupies very little of the colloquy and is not involved in real exchanges, in the way Murner and Karsthans are.

Although the first section of Karsthans served to discredit Murner, the following pages are not chiefly in praise of Luther. Rather they go on from attacking the individual representative, Murner, to attacking the papacy as an institution and the pernicious practices of Romanists generally. Luther plays a minor role, perhaps because it is simpler, and comes more naturally to a Humanist, to caricature the opponent than to accentuate the rectitude of one's figurehead. Perhaps for a similar reason, the woodcuts of all but one edition portray only four of the

five participants: Luther is omitted.³⁶ He serves to introduce the tone of earnestness that prevails in the final section of Karsthans.

The third part of Karsthans is the longest, comprising more than half of the whole colloquy. It focusses on a theological discussion of Murner's Von dem Papsttum, as both he and Luther have urged. The peasant has in the meantime undergone refinement, possibly to illustrate the effect of contact with the great man Luther, or simply to fulfil the demands of serious debate. The student tells Karsthans the contents of the tract and Karsthans comments on it from a Lutheran point of view. He refutes Murner, using the tools of Biblical quotation and learned references to substantiate his objections. Where the author sought at the beginning to discredit Murner on the grounds of his disreputable personality and base behaviour, he now strives to discredit Murner intellectually and theologically.

Karsthans refuses to accept the pope as the sole head of the Church and propounds universal priesthood: "wir [send] al priester, pfaffen vnnd pfeffin."³⁷ He gives a list of seven quotations from the New Testament to invalidate Murner's assertion that he had never heard anyone so insist he was in the right as Luther did. Karsthans disproves this in a methodical, earnestly theological fashion, before adding a typically Humanist, satirical quip:

Karsthans: Schint wol, das doctor Murner
mer vff der gauchmatten gefogelt hat,
dan in der heiligen geschriff studiert.³⁸

In Karsthans Luther is not presented as an innovator but as the advocate of traditional religion. He stands for a faith unadorned by new-fangled ideas:

Karsthans: Ich wils mit im [Luther] halten,
wil by meim alten bureu glauben bleiben ...
Der from doctor Martin Luther leret noch
recht, lasset den glauben vff Christo
bleiben, do mit vff.³⁹

Murner, on the other hand, exemplifies the new elaborated faith which destroys simplicity:

Murner: ... er [Luther] wil mer durch das
evangelium vnd Paul vnnd des alten ding
bewert haben, daruff ich mich nitt vil
gelegt hab, wann es alt heydnisch werck ist;
wer es aber der neyw thandt ...
Karsthans: So ir so ein hochspitziger man
sind vff die new manier ...⁴⁰

Karsthans states that only the Bible is authoritative, not a pope nor a bishop. Luther is the one who can interpret it "in gemeinem natürlichen verstand" for the benefit of "vnß arm einfeltig leyen," while priests only conceal and obscure it. The author of Karsthans has taken issue with Murner on various theological points, tried to negate Murner's position through logic and frequent quotations, and establish instead Lutheran opinions.

The author also takes issue with Murner on the social question of upsetting the status quo:

Studens: Doctor Murner sagt in seim
büchlin, man sol die ding vngerüttelt
lan, wann es vffur wider die oberkeit
bring.⁴¹

This explains why in the second section of the pamphlet Luther was depicted as explicitly dissociating himself from Karsthans's offer of violent assistance. But despite being instructed by Luther against taking matters into his own hands, Karsthans still threatens to flail Murner and reopens the question of using violence against deserving tyrants. He argues that force should be used not indiscriminately, but to undo wrongs and punish those who perpetrate them:

Karsthans: Es ist mein meinung nit,
das man der oberkeit widerstan noch
die durächten sol. Es mag sich aber
ein oberkeit so grob vnverschampt
seins gewalts mißbrauchen, das solichs
zu schäd, schand vnd wider all vernunfft
sich selbs offentlich anklagt. Meinst nit,
ob sich geburen möge, das sollichem
shedlichem gewalt räd̃t thon mög werden?
Studens: Ia, wo man recht ordnung helt;
ir bauren aber habent nit vernunfft in
sollichem.⁴²

Bloodshed is not to be feared from the commoners, as Murner would have it, but from those in power. Tarquin the Proud is cited as an example; were it not for "ir räd̃t, regenten, perlament, widersprechung der gemeinen," who hold them in check, rulers would have spilt yet more blood. Karsthans advocates democracy rather than autocracy; the question of violent resistance to tyrannical rulers is, however, left hanging in the air as a question:

Karsthans: Hör wol, man sol das haupt
 lassen imer krencker werden vnd wütig,
 die vnschuldigen lassen ermorden, hencken
 durch sein eygen hend, westfälisch
 ritterschaft⁴³ triben, backen vnd nasen
 abschniden?

From a general condemnation of temporal tyrants, Karsthans moves on to the ecclesiastical: in particular, popes are autocratic and tyrannical. The aim of Karsthans is to resist and invalidate Murner's views at every turn. Where Murner contends that Luther will provoke the lower classes into overturning the social order, Karsthans demonstrates that Luther rejects violence and it is instead the evil papacy that might well provoke revolt. The author of Karsthans plays on the very emotions Murner would rouse in his tracts. Murner tries to induce fear and stem change through conjuring up the image of the threat the common man poses to all, should he run amok. The author of Karsthans, however, uses the potentially threatening aspect of the common man to his own ends, by refining and defining it. Violence would be directed against Romanists, for Karsthans is a God-fearing layman who is justifiably offended by patent abuses in the Church. One day he may be moved to rectify them himself. Yet he is not content to suffer tyranny from secular rulers either and approves the action taken to remove the Duke of Wurtemberg.⁴⁴

Origin of the name Karsthans

'Karst' is the name for a two-pronged hoe. The word had currency predominantly in Alemannic, Swabian and

Alsatian linguistic areas and formed a compound with the name Hans to create a contemptuous, derisive title for the peasant who worked the land. The earliest known example of the compound, cited by H. Burckhardt, is found in Strasbourg in 1498. In his sermons on Sebastian Brant's Narrenschiff, Geiler von Kaysersberg employs the word Karsthans as synonymous with "Bawern klotz", rustic oaf:

Deßgleichen sagt der Edelmann: was sol ich mit dem Karsthansen oder Bawern klotz zu schaffen haben? er kann doch weder schimpff noch glimpff, weder zucht noch mores: wenn er reittet, sitzt er gleich auff dem Pferd, als het jn dz wasser darauff gefüret, vnd deren dingen viel mehr.⁴⁵

In Von dem Papsttum, published 13 December 1520, Murner writes:

Was sol hanß karst vnd die vffrürige gemein darzu thun? wa ir ewer klag ie erstrecken würden, solt euch hanß karst wol den blunder gar nemen, dan kenn ich in recht, so kan er kein schimpff verston, mit namen was pfaffen vnd münch antrifft, dan ich vß seinem mund selb gehört, man hab im drei zipffel genumen vnd ficht vmb den fierden, er wöl ein mal mit dem karst daryn schlagen. Ir solten euch wol eins zipffels klagen vnd dz gantz bet verlieren.

In An den Adel, published 24 December 1520, Murner writes again in the same vein:

dißē vffrierigen nit gebüre, hanß karsten vnd die vnverstendig gemein so bald zu bösem alß gutem anzüzünden vnd in schellige flammen zu bewegen.

Murner disparages and mocks the peasantry for its ignorance and unruliness. He is at pains to undermine Luther's democratic concept of integrating the lowest social orders into his new order of things and according them responsibility and elevated status. Murner seeks to dispel any belief in the sound judgment of the common man:

Denn hinter Murners Anwürfen steht die reale Befürchtung, dass Luthers Forderungen die geistliche und weltliche Herrschaft umstürzen werden.⁴⁶

The anonymous author of Karsthans was seemingly prompted by Murner's references to "hanß karst" to create a figure that in part epitomised the opposite, and in part played on Murner's fears: "Karsthans wird zu einem Ehrennamen, sein Träger zu einer positiven Gestalt."⁴⁷

Other compounds of 'Hans' coined around 1521-25 were "fryhans" (in the verse added, perhaps by the printer, at the end of Karsthans); "kegelhans" (Karsthans und Kegelhans); "kyttelhanß" (Ain new Gedicht wie die gaystlichait zu Erffordt in Dhüringen Gesturmbt ist worden, 1521); "flegelhans" (Petrus und Bauer). None of these compounds captured the imagination as "Karsthans" had done; only he was rendered lasting.

The peasant hero

Karsthans is not the ignorant character without the wit to differentiate between right and wrong, as depicted by Murner. Rather he is capable of making considered

judgments, irrespective of any pressure exerted on him by his social superiors. Karsthans, although illiterate, demonstrates that he possesses the 'peasant' faculties of natural common sense and instinctive piety and is thus better equipped to arrive at honest conclusions than oversophisticated corrupt schoolmen, or indeed, his half-schooled son; comparisons and illustrative examples are drawn from peasant life. Karsthans perceives Murner's unscrupulous character behind the hypocritical front, just as he perceives that Luther speaks the truth in religious matters. From automatically accepting the papist view that Luther is a heretic and in consequence reaching for his flail, Karsthans becomes a staunch believer in Lutheran views. He is neither easily deceived nor manipulated, but forms his own opinions, for example:

Aber doctor Martin Luther, meins
beduncken, tausent mal geschickter
ist, in gemeinem natürlichen verstand
von der geschrift zu reden dann der
Murner.⁴⁸

The author presents a peasant of independent and intelligent insights, who applies honest criteria. These qualities are directly associated with his peasant status:

Studens: O vatter, du hast buren regel ...
Studens: Vatter, du hast ein gute einfaltige
meinung...
Karsthans: Warumb hat vnser herr so ein
einfaltigen schlechten glauben vff gesetzt,
daran er sich benügen lat? ich wils mit im
halten, wil by meim alten buren glauben
bleiben.⁴⁹

He is thus representative of the peasant class, although he does hold the position of village magistrate. In the colloquy Murner's opinion of the peasant is unchanged: "Du buren klotz!" But the author of Karsthans has created a conscious antipole to some of Murner's accusations: in the first section of dialogue Karsthans is honest and outspoken, with a commonsense approach to how clerics should and should not act; in the final section he is a thinking, pious Lutheran. Karsthans embodying these laudable attributes was formative for 'common man' characters in succeeding dialogues.

Murner also associates "hanß karst" with an inflammable nature and proneness to revolt. His characterisation of the rustic's typical action, "er wöl ein mal mit dem karst daryn schlagen", is taken up in Karsthans itself and in numerous subsequent pamphlets. In literature peasants were traditionally represented as brandishing a tool of their trade and as insurgent. The author of Karsthans does not in this case portray an antipole to Murner's picture. He creates the memorable and humorous gimmick of a rather pugnacious peasant constantly on the verge of flourishing his flail, yet never actually finding it, far less using it. His catchphrase is: "Wo ist myn pflegel?" There is, no doubt, comic appeal in the spectacle of the fiery Karsthans discomfitting Murner, as the representative of papal authority, but no actual harm is done to him. Clearly traditional elements of

farce and Shrovetide drama are contained in the situational comedy and antics of Karsthans and Murner.⁵⁰

In his tracts Murner contends, in order to dissuade reformers from unsettling society, that peasant violence might flare up at the slightest provocation; in Karsthans the peasant is indeed a hot-head, but he is incensed at moral corruption and papal arrogance. The solution to the problem of using violence remains fairly inconclusive. On the one hand, Karsthans faithfully adheres to Lutheran teaching and receives from Luther clear instructions not to use force; on the other hand, Karsthans still proceeds to discuss his reaction to tyranny. It is suggested that those abusing power should reap suitable punishment.

Literary historians are divided on the conclusions to be drawn. The one discounts political implications in Karsthans:

Doch mit weltlichen Mitteln will K.
den Kampf gegen die römische Macht
nicht führen ... Ebenso weit ist K.
von Aufruhr gegen die weltliche
Obrigkeit entfernt ...⁵¹

Another sees a progression from the original ideas associated with Karsthans in 1521 to the Peasants' War of 1525:

Jene Vorstellungen, die sich um das
Karsthansmotiv gruppieren ... führen doch
unmittelbar an das Bauernkriegsgeschehen
heran, machen also sichtbar, wie eng
damals die religiöse mit der politisch-
sozialen Bewegung zusammenhängt.⁵²

In only one case is the name Karsthans associated with peasant articles. A title-page print from Karsthans appears in 1525 in a pamphlet of peasant articles, with the name above it.⁵³ Presumably the printer deemed it suitable for inclusion; but otherwise Karsthans is in no way directly linked to the uprisings of 1524 - 1526. Perhaps Karsthans played no part because nothing revolutionary attaches to him and thus those really striving for social change were unable to identify with a figure whose role is to advocate religious change but who otherwise adheres to the socio-political status quo.⁵⁴ Yet, while the author of Karsthans does not call for armed conflict, it seems very likely that, "der stereotype Ruf nach dem Flegel und das offene Bekenntnis zum Widerstandsrecht wirkten revolutionär; man darf dem Verfasser so viel Geist zutrauen, daß ihm dies bewußt war."⁵⁵

If one examines the reception of Karsthans in other polemical pamphlets up to 1525, then very clearly Karsthans is associated with a potential eruption of violence. The following allusions are typical:

Herbe: legen hin all ungestüme, dar
mit der her von haus nit mit stangen
(nach Karsthansen beger) schiet, daß
die büxen umb fallen und die species
under die fuß rinnen!⁵⁶

Baw.: der bawer mus noch die sachen richten,
muß auch noch ein mal herr im haus werden,
dem pfaffen den flegel auch geben, damit
er seine kinder auch ernere. karsthans vnnd
flegelhans werden eins mals kommen mit jrem
ablas vnnd den geistlichenn auch jr sunde
vergeben.⁵⁷

Hürenwirt: es wer ie kein wunder,
 daß der Karsthans mit dem pflegel
 drein schlug und die rappennäster
 alle zerstörte.⁵⁸

He is remembered for being on the point of brandishing his flail with punitive intent, rather than for refuting Murner by theological means, which forms the major part of the colloquy. The Catholic camp, too, saw him or claimed to see him as a violent insurgent. In Murner's Von dem großen Lutherischen Narren Luther excretes Karsthans after drinking from a bottle with a 'Bundschuh' on it.⁵⁹

Several popular preachers, such as Hans Murer, Johann Locher and the "Peasant of Wöhrd", are known to have made use of Karsthans, either as a name or pictorially in their pamphlets. Thus many more people must have been exposed to the name and figure of the reforming peasant than could actually read. Since real common men did not avail themselves of the Karsthans character as a slogan, it may possibly have been because he was too moderate a character. However, it raises the question to what extent genuine peasants were acquainted with and interested in the Humanist literary figure.

NOTES

1. One might ask whether the market was possibly saturated.
2. Details of its occurrence are listed in Herbert Burckhardt's introduction to Karsthans (1521), Clemen, IV, 40-52; also Schmidt, pp. 148-49.
3. Karsthans und Kegelhans (1521), a dialogue in Latin hexameters between two peasants, Otto Clemen, Beiträge zur Reformationsgeschichte aus Büchern und Handschriften der Zwickauer Ratsschulbibliothek, 3 (Berlin: C.A. Schwetschke, 1903), 15.
4. Paul Kalkoff, "Die Prädikanten Rot-Locher, Eberlin und Kettenbach", ARG, 25 (1928), 128-150; Böckmann, pp. 207 - 19.
5. Burckhardt, p. 43 f.
6. Burckhardt, p. 50; Berger, p. 51; Schmidt, p. 172.
7. Traugott Schieß, "Hat Vadian deutsche Flugschriften verfaßt?" in Festgabe des Zwingli-Vereins zum 70. Geburtstag von Hermann Escher (Zurich, 1927), pp. 66 - 97, and Beiträge zur Geschichte St. Gallens und der Ostschweiz (St. Gallen, 1932), pp. 181-215, here pp. 197 - 99 - cited by Scheible, p. 119 f., n. 44.
8. Burckhardt, p. 37.
9. Könniker, p. 103, and Lenk, p. 254, both doubt it, given the evidence of T. Schieß, "Hat Vadian deutsche Flugschriften verfaßt?", p. 82 ff. and of Werner Näf, Vadian und seine Stadt St. Gallen, II (St. Gallen, 1957), 121, n . 224.
10. Thomas W. Best, Eccius dedolatus. A Reformation Satire (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1971).
11. Günter Hess, Deutsch-Lateinische Narrenzunft (Munich: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1971), p. 146.
12. Schmidt, p. 136.
13. Hess, p. 146.
14. Berger, p. 336, notes; Lenk, p. 262, note "henselin".
15. Schmidt, p. 135.
16. Schmidt, p. 144.

17. Berger, p. 49; Schmidt, p. 141.
18. It is doubtful whether "der Kreis derer, die die lateinische Sprache verstanden, umfaßte ja damals fast alle Schichten der Bevölkerung," as claimed by Olga Gewerstock, Lucian und Hutten. Zur Geschichte des Dialogs im 16. Jahrhundert, Germanische Studien, 31 (1924; rpt. Nendeln: Kraus, 1967), p. 21.
19. Burckhardt, p. 56 f.
20. Burckhardt, p. 57 f.
21. Lenk, p. 85.
22. Lenk, p. 87.
23. See p. 116 above.
24. Lenk, p. 69.
25. Lenk, p. 72.
26. Lenk, p. 70.
27. Lenk, p. 70: Merc. Every day. Murn. I testify to the truth now uttered against me.
28. Könniker, p. 34; Lenk, p. 253.
29. With the above exception, however, Karsthans addresses Murner as "ir" and is addressed as "du".
30. Lenk, p. 71.
31. Lenk, p. 72.
32. Hess, p. 134.
33. It is also a sin to divulge secrets to the unworthy; I adjure you, youth, speak no more!; (it has been) concealed from the people.
34. Lenk, p. 74.
35. Lenk, p. 77.
36. Edition K in Burckhardt's bibliography, pp. 52-58, is the exception.
37. Lenk, p. 88.
38. Lenk, p. 80.

39. Lenk, p. 82.
40. Lenk, p. 72.
41. Lenk, p. 82.
42. Lenk, p. 82.
43. Lenk, p. 84.
44. Duke Ulrich (1503-50) was driven out in 1519 by the Swabian League under Bavarian command - from Berger, notes 118, 24 ff., p. 338.
45. Burckhardt, p. 38.
46. Schmidt, p. 143.
47. Lenk, p. 37.
48. Lenk, p. 85.
49. Lenk, p. 75, p. 80, p. 82.
50. Böckmann, p. 195; Schmidt, p. 136; Rupprich, IV/2, 116: "Der 'Karsthans' verbindet humanistische Bildung mit volkstümlicher Haltung."
51. Burckhardt, p. 39.
52. Böckmann, p. 194.
53. Schmidt, p. 154, p. 166.
54. Könneker, p. 105.
55. Scheible, p. 133. Similarly Rupprich, IV/2, 117: "der Name 'Karsthans' [gewann] in den folgenden Jahren auch in Mittel- und Norddeutschland für einige Zeit einen revolutionären Sinn."
56. Schade, III, 42 (Dialog des Apostolikums).
57. Clemen, III, 212 (Petrus und Bauer).
58. Schade, III, 178 (Wegggespräch).
59. Illustration in Schmidt, p. 160.

2. Pfarrer und Schultheiß

Thirteen editions of Pfarrer und Schultheiß are extant.¹ As such a large number is untypical, it must indicate that the pamphlet aroused considerable interest; by way of comparison, fourteen editions of Luther's An den Christlichen Adel are known and eighteen editions of Von der Freiheit eines Christenmenschen.² All thirteen editions were published anonymously and gave neither the printer's name nor place of publication. They were in fact published in a wide variety of centres: Augsburg (first edition), Nuremberg, Strasbourg, Erfurt, Eilenburg, Basel, Coburg and Wittenberg.

Date of publication

All but one of the thirteen editions are undated: edition I, in A. Götze's bibliography, ends "Vollend im jar. M.D. XXI." One can conclude that the original dialogue was composed around May 1521, since the text refers to Luther's appearance at Worms (18 April 1521).³ O. Schade suggests that it may well have been written before the Edict of Worms was issued in May, as no mention of it is made in the text.⁴ It would seem that the editions followed in rapid succession and probably all belong to that year.

The author

It is perhaps a further measure of the interest stimulated by the pamphlet that the material of the original dialogue was added to, evidently by some other writer, to emphasise certain points and increase the references to Luther's teaching. Editions C - M are based on this second

version, edition B. The second version was further remodelled, presumably by a third writer, to make additional points (edition N).

The author of edition A is commonly considered to be Martin Butzer (1491-1551), but, as is usually the case, there is no conclusive evidence for this assumption. A. Götze considers that the author was a theologian, rather than a Humanist, on account of the lack of sordid vocabulary⁵; H. Scheible considers the author had "so wenig theologischen Verstand" that he could not have been Butzer.⁶ From the text it is clear that the author was a learned man with Humanist sympathies. When he quotes from the Bible, he does so in his own translation from the Vulgate. The only clue to the author of edition N is his reference, "bey unns am Rein stram."

Crossfertilisation in pamphlets

It is clear that the writers of pamphlets were the readers of other people's pamphlets. Pfarrer und Schultheiß almost certainly draws on Karsthans for some of its characteristics: the peasant spokesman for reform is also an office-bearer in the village, is also illiterate, and has a student who reads to him. The author of Pfarrer und Schultheiß mentions "den frummen paschguillum von Rom" and Ulrich von Hutten and Simon Heß as being opponents of papal authority, which demonstrates his familiarity with contemporary polemical literature.⁷ Towards the end of the dialogue Luther's allies are mentioned: Erasmus of Rotterdam, Andreas Karlstadt

and Oecolampadius. His opponents are Murner and Eck. The author thus makes known who stands where.

The writer of edition B includes additional references to contemporary literature. His priest lists some of Murner's works, "mit namē, die narrenpschwerung, die schelmenzunfft, der greth millerin jartag", to illustrate Murner's irreligious nature.⁸ The freshly converted priest mentions Karsthans specifically, approving that peasant's treatment of Murner the tom-cat.⁹ The peasant's final speech includes references to that passage of Murner's Von dem Papsttum which originally talked of "hanß karst" and evidently provoked the writer of Karsthans. Here the 'Schultheiß' defends peasants for holding onto the last corner of the blanket after losing three corners already; they need something to keep them warm.

Pfarrer und Schultheiß not only absorbed and treated opinions from other pamphlets, it also stimulated others to write dialogues. Another dialogue from 1521, Von den vier größten Beschwernissen, takes up and discusses the village-mayor's views from the point of view of a diligent priest, who deplores the oppression of the peasantry: "Ich hö^ere wol, wann jr zū vil schencke vnd ne^ewer auffsa^etz brechten dem armen man (wie e^uch der schultheiß anzeigt)"; he urges the noble to ensure just legal proceedings for all, "des schultheisen fre^und oder reich."¹⁰ A dialogue from 1523, Hans Knüchel, has marked similarities with the theme of the third version (N) of Pfarrer und Schultheiß. This time "der Schultheiß

vñ die gemein deß dorffs Fridhusen" have asked their priest to attend to them properly, but he has refused. The village-mayor then persuades the layman Hans, "ein schöffel irs dorffs," to become their village-preacher instead.¹¹

The above examples illustrate an interaction of ideas among publicists. They show that pamphlets were read by, among others, people capable of producing such writing themselves, people who were very likely already in agreement with the points of view expressed.

The structure of the dialogue

The dialogue comprises three unequal sections. The first forms by far the major part of the pamphlet, which reflects the chief concern of the work: the village-mayor condemns the unseemly practices of all clerics of whatever level and argues with the priest about the true role of the clergy. Then the priest attempts to counter-attack by depicting identical vice within all social groups of the laity. The peasant is quick to parry the charges, by again laying blame on Roman officials of the Church. There follows the priest's swift conversion to Lutheran precepts.

The village tavern provides the scene and framework for the encounter. The dialogue opens with the local priest arriving and being greeted by the peasant mayor, "herr Pfarrer, bona dies, synd wilkum ins wirtzhauß." Since the priest has been away from his parish, the mayor asks him for the latest news. When the priest offers no information on

Luther, he is asked directly:

Schulthaiß: was hört ir dann vom Luther,
 So yetz zu Worms gewesen ist?
 Pfarrer: was gat mich der münich an? Er
 ist ain ketzer, er redt und schreybt widern
 glauben.¹²

The priest's unconcerned reply, which runs counter to the interest shown by the mayor, provides the point of departure for the discussion. The dialogue ends on the cordial note:

"Also schyed yeder ab und haym in sein hauß, unnd der Pfarrer auch, der ward also zechfrey gehalten. u. AMEN."

The title

Unlike the brief, unadorned titles of Karsthans or Neu Karsthans, the full title of Pfarrer und Schultheiß describes the contents of the text in the style that became more or less standard for subsequent Reformation dialogues. The title does not in itself suggest the strong partisanship that follows. It merely promises to discuss the faults of both the spiritual and temporal spheres, and rather suggests a conventional estates-satire. However, Karsthans had been recently published and was enjoying widespread popularity. Since it featured as hero the memorable 'Dorfvogt,' the title may not have seemed so neutral to informed contemporaries. One may ask whether the mere mention of a 'Schultheiß' in the title was immediately suggestive of the 'Dorfvogt' Karsthans? It cannot be readily established whether in May 1521 peasant characters in dialogues were already recognised by the general readership as being the mouthpiece of the reform camp.

The main arguments of the original Pfarrer und Schultheiß

Commercialism and intrigue which are rife in Rome form the first object of attack. The peasant has learnt about them from Luther's tracts, he says. Then he inveighs against the clergy in Germany, which he has observed for himself. It is a disgrace that prelates amass wealth and indulge in worldly ostentation, spending the revenues on costly raiment and jewels "wie die weltlichen fürsten und grauffen thund ." The lower clergy arouses his indignation equally, if not more, for he describes in great detail the money-grubbing ploys they engage in to increase their income. For example, they bedizen the churches to lure the simple people and then extract as much money as possible from them; they spend their days in idleness, interspersed with drinking, gambling and seducing peasants' wives. The author lends authority to these accusations by relating them as the peasant's first-hand experience: "So hab ich s^eolichs yetz z^u Worms selbs gesehen. So wayß ich woll, wie es z^u Straßburg und Speyr auff bayden styfften z^ug^eât." The writer of edition B sought to strengthen the criticism and added, "So h^eör ich es sey auff andern stifften überal auch also."¹³

The main objections to clerics which the peasant makes concern their luxurious life and their immorality. These failings are both the cause and result of greed. The peasant mayor denies that there is any Biblical justification for

the Church demanding so many tithes and taxes: "Wo her ist man eüch sollichs alles schuldig, das man eüch sol so vil brot und wein, schmaltz, mel und ayer und gelt opffern, Das jr mit ewern bolstermümen verfressent? ... Wo hats gott eüch also zü geben bevolhen?"¹⁴ Secular rulers, however, are entitled to the revenues they exact. The peasant's grievances against the Church are principally of a social nature. His illustrations of clerical abuses are set in a peasant milieu: the Church collects so many taxes, "das manicher armer kaum zü bezallen sovil hat Und sein haußbradt oder kü jm stal darumb verkauffen und versetzen müß. u."¹⁵

The peasant mayor proposes a social and political remedy, to stop clerics' fleecing the poor:

Die Mißstände werden nur noch bloß-
gestellt, um auf eine Neuordnung zu
dringen.

Sobald einmal derart die soziale und
wirtschaftliche Entartung des kirchlichen
Lebens aufgewiesen ist, müssen sich daraus
weitergreifende umstürzende politische
Folgerungen ergeben.¹⁶

The mayor suggests reforming malpractices in the way benefices are held: a priest should have no more than one living, extra ones should be shared among poor, learned priests, unsuitable priests should be chased away. The nobility should control how church livings are distributed and so break German dependance on Rome. The list of grievances made in this first major section of Pfarrer und Schultheiß is conventional in its condemnation of financial and moral malpractices:

So sieht Butzer in Luther weniger einen Reformator als einen kirchlichen Reformer.

Butzer ist nicht der einzige, dem es Rom gegenüber weniger um die persönliche Heilsfrage als um die Aufdeckung bestimmter Mißstände im kirchlichen Leben geht.¹⁷

In the second stage of the dialogue the priest makes his rejoinder concerning the sinfulness of the secular world. The nobility is denounced for highway robbery, for equal harshness to the peasantry, as, for example, in the practice of heriot law. Deceit abounds among merchants, artisans, inn-keepers and peasants alike. Of the various classes, the peasant defends only the nobles:

Schulthayß: lieber Pfarrer, Das ist ain annder ding: Sy [peasants] sytzent auff der herschafft grundt und boden Und muß man sy pschützen und schyrmten...¹⁸

He underlines the nobility's protective role and fairmindedness towards the peasantry, so making it quite clear that peasants are only dissatisfied with the burden imposed on them by clerics. This stance casts some light on the origins of the author or on the group he wishes to influence through his pamphlet.

The priest presents a picture of universal sinfulness. It is a human characteristic and thus, implicitly, he excuses the misconduct of clerics. The mayor, however, rejects such a traditional explanation and passive acceptance of corruption. He unites the various complaints and gives them one direction: "Ir habt vil gemeldt damit die welt

beschwert ist, Yedoch ist die geytzigkeit von erst bey
 euch auffgestanden ... dann ir sollten die lerer sein
 Und wir die volger." The much briefer discourse on vice
 in temporal spheres culminates in much the same way as
 the first section. The nobles are visualised as arbitrators:
 "Wir wollen die Fürsten und herschafften bitten unnd in
 darzu helffen das man euch die überigen pfryennenden wyder
 nem." The remedy is the same: a reduction in wealth and
 a chaste, ascetic existence for clerics. If they then
 carry out their religious tasks dutifully, peace will be
 assured.

The additional arguments of the second version (editions B-M)

The writer clearly sought to extend the scope of the
 original dialogue, from being a straightforward rejection of
 current conditions in the Church to presenting a doctrinal
 alternative. His additions to the text incorporate
 references to Luther's tracts (for example, on the Lord's
 Prayer and confession) and publicise Luther's teaching
 (for example, of universal priesthood). One major inter-
 polation, based on Luther's opinions, deals with the nature
 of ordination, clerics' use of ban, and papal interdict.
 The peasant regrets the use of interdict, as "vil gütter
 seliger messen vnder lassen gon." In A. Götze's words,
 "das Bedauern über den Untergang vieler guter seliger Messen
 20,13 kann nur ein Gemüt hegen, das noch halb im alten
 Kirchentum befangen ist"; but, of course, one must judge
 the position of the author not so much by the views he still

holds in 1521 but by those he already professes.¹⁹

Apart from theological interpolations the writer of the second version makes other minor additions to increase the intensity of the social and moral criticism. For example, he extends the original list of ways in which members of the clergy practise sinful ostentation to include "auß geschnyttē schüchen vñ lappettē baretten wie die lantz knecht."²⁰ He complains that the clergy enjoys tax-free status in imperial cities. He informs, or more probably reminds, the reader of Eck's ignominious defeat at Leipzig. Although that disputation occurred three years earlier, it is again brought up, being an embarrassment for the papal party. He paints a satirical picture of a preacher trying to no avail to make his congregation desert Luther. The preacher may think his sermon made its point, since no-one contradicted him in church, but he is ridiculed behind his back: "wan̄ er aber īm weinhauß auf dem blatz od' īm bad darbey wār, so hörte er gūt sprollen." The aim of such jibes may well have been to undermine the confidence of traditional preachers and so demoralise them, as well as to discredit them in the eyes of other readers.

The additional arguments of edition N

Edition N suits its title to its mood: "Ain schöner dialogus vnd straffred", which is no longer "zwischen" the two, but "wid' den Pfarrer." Accordingly the diatribe

dispenses with the introductory pleasantries.

In a tone accusing and severe, it launches into invective about the neglected state of the parish. While in editions A and B it was suggested that the priest had only temporarily been absent, here the situation has altered. The proper priest is more or less permanently away and has left an incompetent substitute in his place. The mayor complains that the vicar in charge is uneducated, can barely baptise a child, far less preach the Gospel. Instead, "laufft er stäts auß dem dorff der bűeberey nach Wie ain gayler stier Und ist allzeyt vol weins, das niemand nichts mit jm außrichten kan."²¹ The mayor accuses the clergy of performing no useful function in the community. They merely collect revenue to lead unchristian lives.

In his article "Reform, Reformation, Revolution", H. Scheible indicates that the three versions of Pfarrer und Schultheiß exemplify the step by step development from reform towards Reformation and "die revolutionären Töne." : "Zum vollen Verständnis der reformatorischen Botschaft gelangt erst die Neubearbeitung N."²² The pamphlet states that indulgences are quite unnecessary, for salvation is attainable through faith in God: "bey dem mörck ich wol, das die sālīgkait in got und in unserm glauben und vertrauen zu got städt und nit inn Eürem wachs und leder, dann wann uns unser glaub und vertrauen in got und würckung gütter werck jm glauben der gesatz gotts nit sālīg macht, so kan uns weder Bapst, Bischoff noch

bader mit all Eür macht nit gen himel bringen." The pope and curia are not the Church: "so ist die Christenlich kirch unsichtbar und mitt gott ain gayst."²³

Edition N includes much more about Luther's new faith and new concept of the Church than the previous editions. It also extends the section on secular failings to treat seduction and adultery:

noch so ist der Eebruch so groß
und so gemain bey eüch, das jr
eüch schier auf die Zotomittischen
weyß thünt richten, und besunder
etwann under dem Adel auff den
schlossen.²⁴

The nobility is particularly chastised and at length. Eventually, however, the peasant replies, "wer macht yetz meer armer tröpfinen dann die grossen prelaten? die überschütten es mit vil gelts und setzent vil armer iunckfrawen von jren eeren." The priest touches on the question of serfdom, asking where it comes from, since there is no Biblical justification for it. He suggests that Luther would abolish it; the peasant mayor replies that serfs are happy to obey their masters.

After the priest's conversion and departure, the mayor addresses the assembled peasants to report on the results of his disputation. The democratic idea is evident: the peasants asked him to represent them and express their dissatisfaction. Thanks to Luther's teaching and the Bible, he has led the priest "auff ain güten weg."

He predicts future change in the Church, in particular that ceremonial will disappear: "thūt nun gemach, es wirt noch vil des dings in der kirchen mit weil abgon, das überig und on not ist, und allain auß geyttigkait von jn erdacht u." He concludes by telling peasants to pay no more than tithes on corn and oats, anything else should be given to "armen nottürfftigen leütten vor der kirchen." The way to achieve a better Church is to reduce its income.

The priest's conversion

Throughout the attacks on the Church and clergy the priest knows no adequate answer. He is unable to defend the clergy by logical argument and instead resorts to denying both the layman's competence and his right to comment on or criticise Church matters:

Pfarrer: jr s^elt nit also reden, jr verstond es nit. mann hatt e^uch etwan auß neyd also von jnn gesant, so glaubt jr leychtlich.

Pfarrer: Unnd wann im gleych also w^eär, so hond ir oder kain lay sy umb s^elich^os zū straffen.

Towards the end of the dialogue he changes sides and agrees to follow Luther's teaching and be a true shepherd to his flock. The priest performs a volteface when he learns no-one could refute Luther at Worms. He comes to a similar conclusion to the one the peasant in Karsthans reached. The superior knowledge and education of the reform camp is patent:

ich kan mit disem wol mercken,
 das der Luther vil gelertter ist
 dann der bapst, Cardinal, Bischoff,
 Prelaten, Doctores, Pfarrer und
 pfaffen, So sunst verhanden seind ...
 Dann ich hör, es seyent sunst vil
 gelerter leüt auff seiner seyten.²⁵

There is an obvious contradiction that the papal side is scorned for inferior education, while an illiterate is the champion of the party of men, who "haben den rechten kern der gütten bücher in yebung, krieichisch, hebraisch, lateinisch und vyллеycht kaldeysch."²⁶

The peasant hero

The hero of Pfarrer und Schultheiß is the 'common man'. Like Karsthans he is not a simple peasant but an office-bearer in the peasant community. While he can, at his own admission, neither read nor write, he can refute every remark of the priest. He has been educated in the Bible and Luther's works by a student: "(dann waz ich red, kumpt auß meim schüler, Ich kann weder schreyben noch leßen)."²⁷ Edition N portrays the student as a participant in the debate, who himself speaks the Biblical quotations: the village-mayor talks of "mein schüler Johanneßlin, der dann mer dann ain gantz jar in die lateinischen schul gangen ist."²⁸ The literary fiction that peasants employ students to educate them is perpetuated in later dialogues. Since the peasant's or layman's or common man's argumentation is based on scriptural proofs, it is essential for the sake of

verisimilitude that he in some way have access to Gospel. The very combination of illiteracy and yet perfect comprehension of God's word is the hallmark of this popular character. That it was treated seriously is evident from the "Peasant of Wöhrd," whose real name was Diepold Peringer, "der weder schreyben noch lesen kan."

The dialogue depicts a debate between anonymous representatives of reform and the papal party. In Karsthans the representative of the peasantry converses with two well-known personalities, Murner and Luther, during which his views are moulded; in Neu Karsthans the peasant is instructed by the well-known figure of Franz von Sickingen. In Pfarrer und Schultheiß, however, the peasant has confirmed beliefs from the start and professes them unwaveringly. The anonymous peasant is simultaneously representative of the peasant estate, the laity and of reform. His opponent is a similarly anonymous member of the clergy and adherent of the papacy. This model served for many subsequent Reformation dialogues, for example, Chorherr und Schuhmacher, Bauer und Mönch and Von der Gült.

The 'Schultheiß' associates himself with the peasantry, "wir bauren", and is their potential leader: "Volgent mir aber die bauren ainmal, so wöl wir sy z^um dorff außjagen."²⁹ As in Karsthans, the peasantry

embodies potential punitive vigour, against which a cleric can do little. It is the churchman who is presented as vulnerable. The peasant's temper flares when Luther is called a heretic. First, towards the end of the section "betreffend allen übel Stand der gaystlichen", he had an angry outburst, reminiscent of Karsthans: "Wie hayßt ir inn ain kätzer? Da laßt warlich von oder bey dem har in dem hoff umbzogen."³⁰ He has no respect for a man of the cloth: "Was gat mich ewer weyhe an?" The priest repeats his accusation towards the end of the second section on temporal shortcomings and the mayor utters a parallel threat: "Ich sag euch, Pfarrer, hörent auff von diser ketzerey zū sagen, oder warlich ir wert übel geröfft." The pious peasant is seen to spring to Luther's defence. He confines his complaints about financial exploitation of the poor to that perpetrated by the Church. Lay rulers are defended and legitimated. Any threat of violent action is directly solely against the Church and in fact princes are appealed to to implement Church reform.

NOTES

1. Listed in Alfred Götze, "Martin Butzers Erstlingsschrift", ARG, 4 (1906/07), 3-6.
2. Cited from Götze, p. 3.
3. Götze, p. 28.
4. Schade, II, 339.
5. Götze, p. 47.
6. Scheible, p. 131, offers evidence that Butzer was in fact not the author.
7. Various pamphlets, in both Latin and German, featured Pascuillus; see p. 42, n. 83, and p. 52 above. Frag vnd antwort Symonis Hessi, vnd Martini Lutheri, newlich miteinander zu Worms gehalten, nit vnlieplich zulesen (1521); Argument dises biechleins. Symon Hesus zeigt an Doctori Martino Luther vrsach, warumb die Lutherische biecher vō den Coloniensern vn Louaniensern verbrent worden sein (1521), in Böcking, IV, 601 - 14. Originally written in Latin and translated into German, Schade, II, 332 f., note 140, 15.
8. Götze, p. 29.
9. The woodcut for edition I depicts a peasant with a hoe ('Karst') over his right shoulder.
10. Clemen, III, 65 f.
11. Clemen, I, 225.
12. Götze, p. 7.
13. Götze, p. 13.
14. Götze, p. 14 f.
15. Götze, p. 17.
16. Böckmann, p. 204.
17. Blochwitz, p. 190.
18. Götze, p. 23.

19. Götze, p. 33; see Scheible, p. 129, n.68.
20. Götze, p. 12.
21. Götze, p. 33.
22. Scheible, pp. 128 - 31.
23. Götze, p. 35.
24. Götze, p. 38.
25. Götze, p. 28 f.
26. Götze, p. 25.
27. Götze, p. 15.
28. Götze, p. 40.
29. Götze, p. 22.
30. Götze, p. 20. Edition N expands this, adding
 "und alle die gabeln, und pflegel ob dem grind
 zerschlagen." Die Göttliche Mühle uses a similar
 formulation in connection with Karsthans, Schade,
 I, 25:

Er sch^el^ege mit dem flegel drein,
 solt joch sein studens einer sein,
 Giltet gleich ob im der grint bl^et.

3. Kunz und Fritz

Three editions of the dialogue are mentioned in Karl Goedeke's bibliography, Grundriß zur Geschichte der deutschen Dichtung aus den Quellen.¹ They provide neither the printer's name nor place of publication nor date. They may well have been printed in Augsburg.² A terminus ante quem non for the date of composition is supplied in the pamphlet, for it refers to a tract on confession published by Oecolampadius. O. Schade takes it to be Ein sunderlich lere und bewerung daß die beicht einem christen menschen nit bürdlich oder schwer sei, which is dated 28 August 1521.³ However, Oecolampadius's tract in Latin, Quod non sit onerosa Christianis confessio paradoxon, was printed in Basel in June 1521.⁴ Since a letter written by Michael Hummelberg and dated 1 August 1521 alluded to the dialogue Kunz und Fritz, one can assume that the dialogue was written and printed around July 1521.⁵

Authorship

Although the pamphlet is anonymous, it is widely attributed to Urbanus Rhegius (1489-1541), preacher at Augsburg cathedral at the time.⁶ Some of his contemporaries also held him to be the author: "Vielfach nannte ihn damals das Gerücht als Verfasser eines Gesprächs zwischen Fritz und Kunz."⁷ His friend, Hummelberg, doubted it in a letter he sent to Johann Faber, but then he was at pains to reconcile the two men.⁸ Nevertheless, it demonstrates that Rhegius was held capable by his contemporaries of being the author of the dialogue.⁹

The title

The pamphlet is entitled simply Ain schöner dialogus. An indication of its contents, however, is given in a following strophe of six lines; the same mode of introduction had already been employed in Neu Karsthans. The interlocutors are introduced in the first line of concise verse by their Christian names only, immediately indicating that they belong to the lowly social class of common men. They are further labelled in the final line as peasants whose sympathies in the current controversies lie with Luther: "Vñ sind güt Luthrisch bauren."

The main arguments

The author of Kunz und Fritz is clearly a supporter of both Humanism and Luther's Reformation. While he demonstrates unrestricted allegiance to the former, there are traces of a certain reserve towards the latter. His unreserved admiration for Erasmus emerges from the peasants' comments. Erasmus's learning is unsurpassed: "wa hast du ie gesehen daß ainer den Paulum so hüpsch herfür bringt als iez Erasmus gethon hat?"¹⁰ His judgment is above question: "wen Erasmus von Poterdam lobt, der ist kain nar."¹¹ Enmity towards Erasmus is a result of the envy others feel now that he has revealed their ignorance and inferiority.

Praise of Luther, on the other hand, has a different emphasis. He is not so important in himself but as a preacher and advocate of the Gospel. He is not praised

for his outstanding intellectual qualities but for speaking the truth. Fritz attempts to judge him critically, assessing his importance in relation to other factors, for example:

si seind alain dem Luther feind, daß
er auß den hailigen lere Pauli und
Christi inen ir verdampfen weis,...
anzeigt. er bringt nichts neus herfür.
es thut in aber zorn, daß er inen die
warhait sagt.¹²

Another attempt to put Luther in perspective, suggesting that the author has reservations, comes at the end of the dialogue:

dann wann si schon wisten daß Luther nit
überal recht het, so ist doch das ir
meinung nit, daß sie das anzeigen durch
die eer gots, alain daß ir unermessne
geitigkeit nit zu grund gang.¹³

The author seems concerned to play down the role of Luther and seems to prefer giving prominence to the intellectual abilities of Erasmus and Oecolampadius. Enmity towards Luther is motivated by his doctrines which lead inevitably to a diminution of Romanists' status and wealth: "dann ir mechtiger gewalt, eer und güt und große titel wurd gemindert und villeicht gar undergeen."

In a number of instances Fritz differentiates between the terms 'Christian' und 'Lutheran' : "ains von der beicht, in welchem er ganz christenlich (ich sprich mer dann lutherisch) schreibt." Although the author finds 'Christian' a more fitting epithet for "des Luthers lere, ja Christus ler",

he himself uses 'Lutheran' to describe his "güt luthrisch bauren" and "die fromen lutherischen burger". His own usage suggests that, even though he does not consider it apt, it is a convenient label for all critics of the Church. Its popular currency in the language, despite arousing Luther's disapproval, has been noted:

Seit Frühjahr 1522 protestiert Luther (nach 1. Kor. 1, 12f. und 3,4f.) gegen den Gebrauch von lutherisch als eines Parteinamens, und Anhänger von ihm wie Güttel, Eberlin, Lotzer stimmen in diesen Protest ein. Das Wort war aber schon zu sehr eingedrungen.¹⁴

Possibly the author of Kunz und Fritz was conforming to Luther's wishes, but he can scarcely be described as a proselyte of Luther:

Begreiflicherweise hat sich Luther gegen den gebrauch seines namens zur bezeichnung der partei verwahrt, bei seinen schülern ist er damit auch durchgedrungen.¹⁵

From the dialogue it is apparent that the author is well acquainted with the personalia of leading figures in scholarly and theological circles. His interest lies above all in current gossip about the educated class, particularly if detrimental to the Romanists. He is familiar both with the present circumstances of well-known personalities (Fritz tells Kunz that Eck is currently at Polling monastery and Oecolampadius at Altenmünster monastery) and with their backgrounds (Fritz claims to have known a humbler Lemp twenty four years

previously). The author is himself obviously educated in the Humanist mould. He employs personal satire as a means of defaming the opponents, such as contemptuously twisting their names. Lemp's name is deliberately 'misunderstood' as "Lump", a rag, then as "doctor Fetz", then "der Hader" (also a rag), and "ain stinkender Fußhader." Eck is ridiculed and condemned as another Judas, who has betrayed the Fatherland for money:

Mainst nit, ob er auch Cristum verkaufet,
der sein aigen volk und vaterland also auf
die babilonisch flaischbank geben dar?¹⁶

Rather than inveigh against the Romanist camp in a generalised way - for immorality, greed, or whatever - he criticises particular deeds of known spokesmen.

Kunz und Fritz is not a discussion of theological points. In fact it is unusual among the dialogues which propound reforms in that there is not one Biblical reference. Instead the brief pamphlet refers to secular literature, to the Humanist satire Eccius dedolatus, to Cicero and Virgil, to university textbooks. The author's main consideration is not to publicise Luther's doctrines, but rather to extol the virtues of the broad anticlerical party. The dialogue is more an affirmation of Humanism than of the Reformation. As far as the author's theological standpoint is concerned:

Rhegius [bestimmt] noch 1521 das Evangelium
nicht wie Luther als die frohe Botschaft von

der Gnade Gottes in Jesus Christus,
sondern wie Erasmus als das ethische
Lehrbuch der Lex Christi.¹⁷

The conclusion of the dialogue is written in a different style. Instead of realistic description of actual events, it makes allegorical statements. Fritz wonders what will happen since those in power in part support the status quo; they cannot be appealed to, as in Pfarrer und Schultheiß, to oppose the Roman church since they have in the meantime aligned themselves against Luther and his followers. Attacks on Luther and his adherents are impending. Kunz answers with mild optimism: "Man wirt uns baß bedenken dann wir uns sorgen, dann ich hör, die sach werd noch güt werden." The way to achieve positive change is phrased very vaguely and the main method is passivity. One must just wait, "ain weil ain aug zü thun und darbei schweigen biß zü der rechten stund ... laß die schwarzen wolken in dem rausch iez mal über gon!" These peasants do not embody a potential punitive force that may erupt into violence if pushed too far. Instead it is the Roman church which now appears powerful and menacing, probably because of recent historical developments:

Der Dialog zeigt deutlich die gedrückte
peinliche Stimmung, die das Wormser Edict
mit seinen Verfolgungen in so manchen
Gegenden zumal Süddeutschlands hervorbrachte.¹⁸

These peasants admit to being at the mercy of those in power.

Despite their present vulnerability and impotence, change will in due course occur, because it is inevitable anyway. Violence will play a role in ousting the offenders, but it is not human violence that is depicted, but an impersonal force: "wann ... der frum christlich gewalt das schwert recht ergreift, glaub mir, es wirt anderst gon", "dann ich sich vor meinen augen, daß der engel gots das schwert emp-lößt und inen den tod treuet", "die all werden noch in kürz sehen sich geschent sein und dem zorn des gerechten gots nicht entrinnen mügen." Matters should be left to "got ... und das glück." The dialogue thus ends advocating a policy of passivity - it presents no alternative - and promises retribution and vague changes in future: "nach denen wellen wir unser leben richten und wölln die römischen buben buben laßen sein."

The depiction of the peasants Kunz and Fritz

The author makes no attempt to imbue Kunz and Fritz with peasant attributes. The characteristics they display are those of educated Humanists. Strong language is, of course, associated with the peasantry, as an example from Petrus und Bauer shows, where the peasant apologises to St. Peter for his coarse tongue: "Bit, lieber Petre, wollest mirs vertzihen, das ich also grob bin, die bawern thun jm nit anders ." ¹⁹ But here Fritz's abusive, fierce oaths are less an attempt to reproduce peasant speech than a style adopted by Humanists: "Ei daß dich der teufel schend in fetzenlumper hinein, du alter tanhausischer eselfütterer, mit deinem subtilen narrenkopf!" and "ich wolt daß si der

hagel schlug^e in boden hinein, die kainnützigen eckischen leusköpfe!"²⁰ The aim is simply to insult. Most likely the coarseness of expression and vehemence were also intended to regale other Humanists.

Kunz and Fritz do not touch on any topics associated with the world of real peasants, such as excessive tithes or village affairs. No references are made to economic conditions or social distinctions, except where Kunz tells Fritz of Luther's reception: "welcher fil pfründen hat, der ist dem Luther feind und schelten in ain ketzer: aber die arm rot hat in lieb." The formulaic class distinction made is, however, not borne out in the dialogue itself. Kunz says he thought everyone supported Luther: "ich gedacht, es wer iederman lutherisch hie." He is then informed that the prior of a Carmelite monastery, his preacher and his monks are open supporters of Luther. The pamphlet is concerned to point out that in fact not all monks are antagonistic to Luther: "man findt noch vil die haimlich junger seind." This point of view is not surprising, given that Fritz commends Oecolampadius on giving up his position as preacher at Augsburg cathedral to retreat from the world into a monastery: "so hat er doch die welt mit irem geprenk und neid veracht, ..., ist zu^o Altenmünster ain münch worden."²¹ Unlike many other pamphlets, Kunz und Fritz is not in principle opposed to monasteries. Where other dialogues demand that monks be chased out and made

to work for a living, this dialogue objects to ill-educated conservatism among Romanists.

Not social issues nor theological controversies are of paramount interest to the two peasants. Kunz and Fritz show the greatest interest in the provision of proper university education. In their exchanges they comment on the difference between old-fashioned teachers and humanistically schooled teachers in university; they talk of theologians, proponents of fine Latin, of leading spokesmen for the papacy, of pious Lutheran townspeople, of students. The one social class the two peasants never touch upon is the peasantry.

The dialogue opens with Kunz explaining his absence to Fritz, who is a friend, not an adversary. Kunz was "zu Tübingen under den studenten." K. Uhrig remarks: "Dieser Bauer Cunz ist insofern in der Literatur einmalig, als er erscheint als der Bauer, der die Universität besucht hat."²² Kunz is not only literate but reads Latin, too. He can even evaluate works critically: "als man aber sagt und sein geschriften anzaigen, so ist er ain sunder gelerter man." He has opinions on the merits of different types of Latin; that of Erasmus is "das güt latein", but his opponents, "die alten rützigen geul verstond nit so vil latein." This peasant objects to those with an inadequate knowledge of Latin. He mentions that, although he has read Oecolampadius, he has never seen him; for this brand of peasant, it is not inconceivable to be mixing

with such leading names.

As in other Reformation dialogues the first question to introduce the pamphlet's matter is concerned with Luther. Kunz tells of events at university, while Fritz reacts with rage and indignation. The two opposing camps within education are portrayed in terms of light and darkness: "ich trau got, die zeit sei komen, daß die recht warhait an das liecht kom und die vinsternüs, darin die alten grauen esel gelegen seind, verschwinden werd." The "Dunkelmänner" forbid teaching from Holy Scripture because of their own inadequate education. They resist change and hate the learned because Erasmus and other learned men are incomprehensible to them. The differentiating features underlined by Kunz and Fritz are in quality of education and appreciation of Latin.

The obvious and complete fiction of the interlocutors' identity as peasants does not seem to undermine in any way the validity of their argument. They are peasants only in choice of Christian name and in being so labelled in the foreword. Otherwise there is no indication of their peasant origins in the dialogue. That the anti-clerical spokesmen are required to be, explicitly, common men was seemingly at this time developing into a modish convention. From Kunz und Fritz it certainly appears as though its author conceived of a 'peasant' as a kind of generic name for those in opposition to established Romanist practices.

NOTES

1. Karl Goedeke, Grundriß zur Geschichte der deutschen Dichtung aus den Quellen, 2nd ed. (Dresden, 1886), II, 265.
2. Könneker, p. 67.
3. Schade, II, 323 f.
4. Alfred Götze, "Urban Rhegius als Satiriker", ZfdP, 37 (1905), 107.
5. Götze, "Urban Rhegius", p. 106f.; Berger, p. 55. Kunz und Fritz is dated 1522 in Paul Hohenemser's bibliography, Flugschriftensammlung Gustav Freytag (1925; rpt. Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1966), p. 255, no. 3937.
6. Berger, p.56; Rupprich, IV/2, p. 117.
7. Gerhard Uhlhorn, Urbanus Rhegius. Leben und ausgewählte Schriften, 2nd ed. (Elberfeld, 1861; rpt. Nieuwkoop: B. de Graaf, 1968), p. 29.
8. Götze, "Urban Rhegius," p. 106 f.; apparently Rhegius acknowledged that he was the author of the 2 Simon Hessus dialogues.
9. Uhlhorn, p. 30 and p. 349, n.5.
10. Schade, II, 121.
11. Schade, II, 123.
12. Schade, II, 122.
13. Schade, II, 126.
14. Clemen, Fac., Vol. I, notes p. 4.
15. Götze, "Urban Rhegius", p. 69 f.
16. Schade, II, 125.
17. Blochwitz, p. 170.
18. Schade, II, 324.
19. Lenk, p. 170.
20. Schade, II, 120 and 121.

21. Schade, II, 123.
22. Uhrig, p. 167.

4. Chorherr und Schuhmacher

In 1524 the Nuremberg artisan poet, Hans Sachs, wrote four dialogues concerned with the Reformation, of which Chorherr und Schuhmacher is the first. One may infer from the unusually large number of surviving editions that it was a very popular pamphlet. Ten are known from 1524.¹ Two English editions are recorded, one appearing in a list of banned books in 1546, the other dated 1547, and in 1565 a Dutch version was published.²

Most authors who attacked the Roman church did so behind the shield of anonymity, but Hans Sachs not only dispensed with its protection by including his name on the title-page, but even appears as the outspoken character, Hans the cobbler, in the text. He does the same in another two of his 1524 dialogues, Von den Scheinwerken der Geistlichen and Ein Evangelischer und ein Lutherischer Christ, which feature Hans, the 'common man' hero. When, for example, learned Humanists purport to be commoners and depict "representatives of the underprivileged", it is usually true that "their [representatives] positive role in Reformation dialogues is designed to illustrate a theological point, rather than to express some measure of social sympathy"³; in Hans Sachs's case it is somewhat different since he, a cobbler, portrays a cobbler. He is certainly concerned with "die sittlich-sozialen Auswirkungen des evangelischen Glaubens und seiner charakterbildenden Kraft" and particularly in Dialog vom Geiz (1524) with the social conditions of the poor worker.⁴

Sachs himself was, of course, a prosperous master-artisan.

In the opening lines of Chorherr und Schuhmacher Sachs alludes obliquely to himself as author of the 'Spruchgedicht', Die Wittenbergisch Nachtigall (1523), a polemical poem in praise of Luther:

Chorherr: Ey, der teuffel holl den schuster
mitsamt seiner Nachtigall!....

Schwester: Ey herr, fart schon! Er hat doch
nur ewren gotzdienst, leer, gebot vnnd ein-
kommen dem gemeinenn mann angezeygt⁵

Thus the themes to be discussed in the dialogue are shown to derive from the content of Die Wittenbergisch Nachtigall.

While the dialogue names its author, mentions another of his works and the year of publication, it omits the name of the printer. It has been established that the first two editions were printed not in Nuremberg but by Erlinger in Bamberg, presumably for fear of censorship in that city. In Nuremberg in 1524 printers and vendors of pasquils had reason to fear that the city council would curtail and punish their activities, and in September one vendor was imprisoned.⁶ It seems likely that Hans Sachs's Chorherr und Schuhmacher did not meet with disapproval, for his subsequent dialogues were then first printed in Nuremberg. Hieronimus Höltzel, the printer of Sachs's three other dialogues, may well have arranged the publication of Chorherr und Schuhmacher outside the city.⁷ At the end of 1524 he was arrested for printing works by Karlstadt and Müntzer, and in 1525 was finally expelled from Nuremberg.

Hans Sachs's willingness to dispense with the customary cloak of anonymity has been seen as an indication of his personal courage:

Daß ein Schuster es wagte, öffentlich in den Glaubensstreit einzugreifen, wurde freilich auch damals von vielen als ungewöhnlich, wenn nicht als offene Herausforderung angesehen.⁸

Possibly, however, it is true that Sachs could publicise himself as a public opponent of the Roman church because the views he expressed coincided with the main current of Nuremberg official opinion: "die von ihm betriebene Flugschriftenpropaganda geht mit der Haltung und den Maßnahmen der Stadtregierung völlig synchron."⁹ Interestingly, the one dialogue where he goes beyond Luther's doctrine of 'inner freedom' and rejects social injustice and oppression in temporal spheres ran to no more than four (known) editions, in contrast to the other dialogues' eight, ten and eleven editions from 1524.

The structure of the colloquy

The colloquy is made up of two parts. In the first, main section the conservative canon and the Lutheran cobbler debate, the canon's female cook playing a very minor role. In the final section, the epilogue, canon and cook discuss the previous events, and Heinrich, the canon's Lutheran servant, joins in. In all, there are three 'commoners' portrayed in the colloquy, two of whom (the men) are Lutheran and oppose the cleric's views.

The main arguments

The argument in Chorherr und Schuhmacher consists to a large extent of asserting and justifying the layman's right to criticise the Church as an institution and the behaviour of its officials. The canon simply denies that a layman may chastise them, but concedes that chastising is acceptable if it comes from informed people: "Nun ich gyb das nach, wo es gelert verstendige leüt thäten; aber den leyen zimpt es nicht."¹⁰ On the one hand, the artisan expands his many arguments, founded on Biblical sources, that every Christian has a right "in der schrift zūforschen, lesen, schreiben", that it is one's duty to condemn wrongs publicly, that the Pope and his party should be "diener der Christlichen gemein" and that a layman thus has the right to reprove them if they fail in their duties. On the other hand, the canon repeats only his unfounded denial: "es gehö^ert den leyen nit zū, mit der schrift vmbzугan." Rather than applaud interest in religion, he sees it all as an intrusion into the privileges of the Church.

The canon is not equipped with compelling supporting arguments for his point of view. The two "reasons" he advances are first that a man should concern himself with looking after wife and family, so denying him any right to be concerned with spiritual matters as well. Secondly, the laity are illiterate: "Wo wolts ir Leyen gelernt haben? Kann ewer mancher keinn b^üchstaben." Hans replies that intuitively the layman understands, since he is taught by God and imbued with the Holy Ghost. The canon announces that

he is not imbued with any such thing, so 'unintentionally' admitting his spiritual shallowness. Similarly, this satirical device, where the opponent 'naively' acknowledges his badness, is used when the cobbler describes the difference between proper and improper prayer. The churchman replies with inappropriate levity:

Lieber, was ist das für ein gebeet
oder gotzdinst im geyst vnnd in der
warheitt? Leeret michs, so darf ich
nymmer gen metten vnnd mein horas nymer
beeten.

The cobbler's opponent is furnished with obviously shoddy arguments, which harm rather than help his position. He demonstrates an inability to appreciate Hans's earnestness and purity of spirit; he is stubbornly resistant to learning anything new and lacks spiritual devotion. Unlike Hans, who perceives men in a positive light as anxious to lead Christian lives and attain salvation, the clergyman can only credit them with negative attributes. Human beings are irremediably weak, irreligious and aggressive; they do not act according to their supposed beliefs, for example, they renounce saints but would still pray to them in an emergency. The canon's cynicism about the nature of human beings contrasts markedly with the cobbler's implicit belief in human goodness.

On all topics discussed the cobbler and his foil hold conflicting views. The cobbler views secular rulers as the highest authority in the land, the canon the ecclesiastical

rulers. The cobbler perceives the Bible as the sole guide to a Christian way of life, the canon prefers decretals and councils. Similarly, their views on fasting, meat eating, Luther, confession, prayer and good works all conflict. The contrasts in character are important to convince the reader of the inadequacy of the clergyman on all levels. His blatant inferiority on a moral and mental level is carried over into the theological sphere. His spiritual emptiness is underlined by remarks such as when he says he has just 'reeled off' ("abgedroschen") his prayers.¹¹ The reader is encouraged to believe that the canon's immoderate language, lack of Biblical knowledge and weak arguments are due to his corrupt ethical standards, and vice versa. Thus advocacy of the Roman church and spiritual emptiness are made to go hand in hand.

To highlight this important argument in the pamphlet, a satirical scenario is inserted, giving graphic testimony of the canon's incompetence. He calls for a Bible and his cook brings instead decretals. Then she brings in a dust-covered Bible, with which the canon admits to being ill-acquainted. The episode ironically characterises him. Sachs is anxious to establish the Romanist's ignorance of Holy Scripture and reiterates the point. In the epilogue after the cobbler's departure, the canon converses with his cook about the impudence of laymen and calls for his servant to instruct him in his Bible, for all he knows is "nur schulerische leer, was die menschen haben geschriben vnnd gemacht."¹² At the conclusion of the dialogue, he orders

a banquet to be prepared, adding, "Trag dy Bibel auß der stuben hinauß vnd sich, ob die stein vnd würffel all im bretspil sein, vnnd das wir ein frische karten oder zwü^o haben."

In the epilogue the canon is portrayed as even more choleric and intolerant. He would like to see Luther and followers forced to recant and silenced: "wie mit dem Joannes Huß^o zu Costentz geschehen ist." Huss was burned at the stake in Constance although promised safe passage: the example is probably included to anger the reader. The canon's anger, barely contained against Hans, now erupts in full violence against his servant, who has turned out to be equally full of Lutheran doctrine and equally outspoken in his criticism:

Chorherr: O du lausiger bachant, wiltu mich auch rechtfertigen vnd leeren? Bist auch der Lutherischen bößwichter einer? Troll dich nur pald auß dem hawß vnd komm nit wider, du vnverschamptes thyer!¹³

The epilogue illustrates that the cleric has learned nothing from his discussion with the cobbler. His nature is no less immoderate and he abuses his position of power to impose economic sanctions on the opposition. The cobbler's plea for a peaceable solution is wasted.

The aim of Chorherr und Schuhmacher is to expose the religious incompetence and moral inadequacy of the Roman church dignitary through revealing gradually and satirically his lack of Biblical knowledge and his desire for a comfortable worldly existence.

The audience Hans Sachs intends to address with this propaganda is, according to the preface of Die Wittenbergisch Nachtigall, the "gemainen man", in order to instruct and enlighten him about "die götlich warhait vnd dargegen die menschlichen lügen." In Chorherr und Schuhmacher the canon comments that only the uneducated masses form Luther's supporters; the cobbler does not deny the portrayal. Instead he draws a parallel with Christ and his followers:

Chorherr: Ist er dann so gerecht, wie, das
jm dann so wenig gelerter vnd rechtiger herrn
anhangen? Allein der grob vnverstendig hawf?
Schvster: Christo hing weder Pilatus, Herodes,
[etc.] an...¹⁴

When the canon further states that only a small part of the poor follow Luther, this, too, stands unrefuted:

Chorherr: Ey lieber, der gemein hauf gibt auch des
weniger teyl dem Luther recht.
Schvster: Das machen ewer lumpen prediger,
die schreyen, es sey ketzerei, vnd das on alle
geschrifft.¹⁵

This is the same fiction as created, for example, in Kunz und Fritz, where two 'common men' maintain that only "die arm rott" supports Luther. Those commoners, however, are obviously the mouthpiece of an educated Humanist author who is himself a supporter of Luther. It is a picture which, given the author and his own Luther partisanship, can be discounted as purely fictitious.¹⁶ In Chorherr und Schuhmacher the terms common man and layman are virtually synonymous.

Despite references to the 'common man', Hans Sachs's

dialogues were not directed at the lowest social strata.

His target audience would have been the bourgeoisie:

Die für die Durchsetzung der Reformation
in den Städten relevanten Gruppen waren
anzusprechen, die mittleren und gehobenen
Schichten des Bürgertums, sowie diejenigen
handwerklichen Kleinbürger, die die ständische
Ordnung noch akzeptierten.
Der "linke Flügel" - Bauern, städtische
Plebejer - kam als Zielgruppe nicht infrage.¹⁷

Sachs himself was a man of means, not of the lowest classes, as is sometimes suggested: "Am überzeugendsten hat zweifellos Hans Sachs, da selbst einer von ihnen, den Ton des kleinen Mannes getroffen."¹⁸

The colloquy depicts the rout of the cleric and the victory over him of the tradesman. The canon admits his lack of Biblical expertise with which to prevail over the layman and admits defeat in the disputation. He intends to avoid any dispute in future, for "verbrennts kind fürcht fewr!" He is, however, quite unchanged by the experience, his intention is to continue gaming and feasting with like-minded clerics. Therefore, while the cobbler scores moral points, his attempts to convert the churchman fail. The canon is still, no matter how unworthy, invested with the power to cut off the cobbler's livelihood, which he does by deciding on a replacement cobbler, and to throw his servant out of the house. But the dialogue renounces any attempt to change the existing condition, except by example and discussion. At the same time Hans admits it is entirely without result to chastise, so negating

in a way the point of the propaganda:

Des Autors Absicht, die Friedfertigkeit seiner evangelischen Vorbildspersonen in jedem Falle eindrucklich herauszustreichen, zieht den praktischen Sinn der reformatorischen Propaganda und Verkündigung selbst in Zweifel.¹⁹

But the pamphlet is surely designed as well to discourage people from following the behaviour and holding the same views as the objectionable Romanist and to show them how to attain the superiority of layman Hans.

The common man hero

The 'common man' spokesman dominating the dialogue is not a peasant but an urban artisan, "meyster Hanns", a persona the author appears to adopt:

Die dem Reformationsdialog generell eignende Tendenz, als authentisches Protokoll wirklicher, auf dem Marktplatz oder im bürgerlichen Hause geführter Gespräche über konfessionelle oder soziale Fragen zu erscheinen, wird durch das fiktive Auftreten des stadtbekannten Handwerkermeisters in seinem eigenen Dialog natürlich besonders gefördert.²⁰

The setting is the canon's house, to which the cobbler has brought the canon's mended slippers, an immediate indication of soft-living. After greetings are exchanged, discussion is activated by reference to a nightingale and then to the cobbler who upbraided the Pope. The canon curses "den tollenschüster", the cobbler defends his right to criticise the clergy.

From the start a striking contrast is made between their two styles of speech, characterising the nature of both figures.

The cobbler addresses the cleric with politeness and pleasantness, maintaining this tone throughout, even when verbally abused and threatened with physical punishments. The reader is made aware that his mild manners do not prevent his speaking out frankly; they highlight the unpleasant, cynical expressions of the church dignitary.²¹ Almost the first words of the canon are designed to alert the reader to his lack of spiritual depth: "ich byn hinden im sonnerhauß gewest vnd han abgedroschen ... Ja, ich han mein horas gebeet." And the scene between the cleric and his cook after Hans's departure serves to illustrate that, although the canon was already distasteful in Hans's presence, he discards even that veneer of decency in private. He now curses Hans roundly and determines to replace him with a new cobbler. His conciliatory parting words to Hans, "Wolan, lieber meyster, zyecht hyn im fryd!... Verzeich vnns got vnnser sündt", are immediately revealed as hypocritical, "Ich main, der teüffel sey inn dem Schüster verneet."²² It now transpires that only fear of inciting a riot prevented him from physically assaulting the artisan: "Ich hab nur von der gemein ein auffrur besorgt, sonst wolt ich jm die pantoffel in sein antlitz gesmeyst haben,..."²³ In this context, the spectre of civil disorder has a positive effect on the dialogue's events; the threat of a riot works to the 'common man's' advantage, because the churchman is compelled to moderate his actions. This association that public disorder could work positively could only be made at a particular historical point:

Die Drohung mit Aufruhr und Empörung ("Chorherr") konnte ganz im Sinne der Politik Nürnbergs gegen kirchliche Institutionen -Geistliche und Klöster- eingesetzt werden. In dem Augenblick, in dem die Gefahr der Realisierung dieser Drohungen bestand, verbot sich das Spiel mit dem Feuer.²⁴

The cobbler acts with independence, externalising in the events of the dialogue his 'inner freedom', espousing and acting with brotherly love and charity, but through his adoption of non-violent means is unable to act to achieve change:

Im Dialogmilieu -...- ist der Einzelne frei und autonom; seine faktische Ohnmacht und Handlungsunfähigkeit wird als solche nicht mehr bewußt, bleibt jedoch kritischer Deutung sichtbar.²⁵

The inability to act is portrayed as the choice not to act and as such is imbued with positive worth. It is evident that a gap exists between the proper Christian outlook as exemplified by Hans and social reality. If the cleric will not improve himself voluntarily, then the solution is "so laßt jn geen wie ein heyden!"²⁶ Since Hans admits that his attempts to chastise clerics do not succeed, his polemic against the Church is actually in vain: "Schvster: Ewer hertz ist verheret wie dem künig Pharaoni",... darumb hülfft weder straffen noch vermanen an eüch."²⁷ The solution to the dilemma in the pamphlet is thus imperfect, since there is desire for change but impotence to achieve it. The dialogue, however, presents Hans's conduct and point of view in a positive light.

Hans appears as representative of the 'common man', embodying the exemplary attitudes and behaviour that Luther propounded. In the course of the dialogue, he explains the main tenets of the new faith, 'proving' each assertion with quotations from the Bible, and acts according to these beliefs: "Wirksamer konnte man Berechtigung und Resultat der protestantischen Forderung damals kaum vorführen, als es Sachs in diesem Dialog verstand."²⁸ He demonstrates brotherly love towards an inimical opponent. He shows courage and confidence to voice his views in the face of an antagonistic social superior, which, it is made clear, stems from his unwavering faith in the truth of the Gospel. He admits openly to the cleric his evangelical allegiance. He displays obvious superiority, as the layman earnestly propounding Lutheran views, over the shallow churchman who can barely defend his position. The artisan's ability to defeat the canon in debate results from his sound knowledge of the Bible and his application of the Bible to life. He leaves his opponent floundering and defensive, while he commands an array of convincing arguments. His deep conviction compares favourably with the canon's spiritual and mental laxity. It emerges that the canon's main motivation is a desire to preserve papal privileges for the few, while the layman is concerned with benefits for all. On all counts, then, the cobbler is depicted as an admirable figure and the churchman as a contemptible one.

Attitudes to violence

One of the important differentiations made between the churchman and the 'common man' is in their attitude to violence. The negative figure of the cynical, hypocritical, lax cleric resorts to angry outbursts and threats, while the positive figure of the frank, upright artisan stays peaceable throughout. Unlike Kunz and Fritz, the cobbler is not intimidated by threats of violence and execution, indeed considers it blessed to die for the Lord.²⁹ The canon argues in favour of taking strong measures against Lutherans as heretics, proposing "darein zü schlagen". The argument in favour of violence is put in the mouth of the Romanist; as it is depicted as a characteristic of the objectionable canon, violence emerges as a negative value. Hans attempts to pacify the irascible canon on various occasions, "Ey herr, zürnet nit! Ich meins gut", and remains pacific when faced with abuse:

Chorherr: ... Darumb packt euch mit dem geist!
 Schvster: Christus spricht Joannis vij: ...
 Chorherr: Wie? Ich main, ir stinckt nach
 Mantuano, dem ketzer, mit dem heyligen geist!
 Schvster: Spricht doch Paulus j. Corinth iij: ...³⁰

In this way Hans personifies in his own peaceable conduct the path of non-violent actions: "Auf die überzeugende Gestaltung dieses Verhaltens gründet sich die Überlegenheit des Lutheranhängers und die polemisch-propagandistische Wirkung des Dialogs."³¹

The cobbler meets the canon's violence with quotations from the Gospels, establishing a parallel with the persecution

of Christ and his disciples. He warns his adversary, "Wer mit dem schwert ficht, wirt am schwert verderben."³² When the cleric states, "Hilfft süß nit, so muß aber sawer helffen", the cobbler replies, "O neyn, .. Ist die leer auß den menschen, wirt sy on alle schwertschleg fallen, ist sy aber von got, so künt irs nit dempffen." The only permissible weapon with which to defeat the opponent is the Word, "Derhalb seyt ir auß got, so verfechten ewre leer vnd wessen mit dem wort gottes,..."³³

The sometimes explicit, sometimes implicit threat embodied in such peasant heroes as Karsthans in Karsthans and Neu Karsthans or the "Schultheiß" in Pfarrer und Schultheiß is quite absent in the cobbler. He is as fearless as they, but opposed to violence. It is the canon who, rather like Karsthans, is impatient for action: in his opinion it is high time that measures be taken to stamp out heretics. Nevertheless, the threat of commoners' violence against Romanists is used by Sachs in his dialogue, for the canon must modify his worst excesses for fear of inciting "von der gemein ein auffrur." Secular rulers are not mentioned in the discussion.

Quite apart from its success as a piece of propaganda in 1524, Chorherr und Schuhmacher receives high praise from literary historians as a literary composition. A. E. Berger considers that Sachs's dialogues from 1524, "gehören inhaltlich wie stilistisch zweifellos zu den besten schriftstellerischen Leistungen ihrer Zeit", and that the first surpasses the others as "künstlerisch der wertvollste".³⁴ I. Spriewald

judges it as the best example of its genre: "mit Recht als ein Glanzstück der deutschen Dialogliteratur der Reformationszeit gerühmt."³⁵ Similarly, B. Könneker agrees with general opinion that it can be "zu den gelungensten Beispielen dieser Gattung ... gerechnet."³⁶ The reasons behind the praise have formed the subject of examination: both B. Balzer and J. Schutte agree that 'traditional' research has an interest in justifying the Protestant movement's rejection of social revolution, while 'Marxist' research is anxious to demonstrate the legitimate roots of a German workers' movement.³⁷

Commentaries on Chorherr und Schuhmacher generally base their praise of the dialogue on its convincing structure and style. They point out that the conversation between cobbler and canon, although a fiction, is portrayed in a most convincing fashion and that expressions and behaviour depicted are thus realistic:

Der Vorrang des Hans Sachs liegt in seiner größeren Glaubwürdigkeit, die sich in einer realistischeren Darstellung und einer tieferen geistigen Durchdringung äußert.³⁸

Dieser "Wirklichkeitsnähe", die es dem Publikum ermöglichte, die Fiktion für bare Münze zu nehmen....³⁹

That the dialogue should appeal to the reader by reason of its convincing characteristics does not mean, of course, that it is any more an objective picture and any less of a fictional illusion.

A reason for praising Sachs's "realistic" dialogues is to be found quite simply in a comparison with other dialogues of the period. Presumably all were composed with the same specific purpose in mind, as "Mittel zum konfessionspolitischen Zweck", but noticeably few Reformation dialogues are consistent in upholding the fiction they create to the extent Chorherr und Schuhmacher does. To the modern reader, breaks in style, incongruous elements such as peasants discussing Virgil, commoners' flights into Humanistic speech, long sermons delivered during a conversation, all dispel any impression of natural speech and a realistic situation. Such features detract from a "convincing" picture. Authors frequently flout the fiction they present, despite apparent attempts in the same pamphlet to create a plausible picture: this nowadays implies lack of talent in the writer. By comparison, Chorherr und Schuhmacher impresses one as more sophisticated in that it presents a coherent fiction sustained consistently throughout. The speech characteristics of both main characters seem appropriate and are maintained; short, lively exchanges and the skilful introduction of dramatic elements (fetching the canon's Bible), to underline a point, seem by modern standards to indicate an uncommon ability in the author. Unfortunately one cannot know if the sixteenth century reader applied similar yardsticks.

NOTES

1. Only a handful of pamphlets from the period survive in such numbers, including three other German Reformation dialogues: Karsthans (1521), Pfarrer und Schultheiß (1521) and Hans Sachs's fourth dialogue of 1524, Ein Evangelischer und ein Lutherischer Christ.
2. Full bibliographical details in Spriewald, pp. 44-56.
3. Coupe, p. 142.
4. Berger, p. 62 f.
5. Spriewald, p. 68. The title of edition 7i (acc. to Goetze's numeration) refers specifically to the connection with Die Wittenbergisch Nachtigall : Von einem Schumacher vnd Chorherren: ein vast kurtzweilig Christliche disputation von der Euangelischen Wittenbergischen Nachtgallen.
6. Balzer, p. 136.
7. Spriewald, p. 14, n.9.
8. Könneker, p. 149.
9. Balzer, p. 135.
10. Spriewald, p. 72.
11. Spriewald, p. 68.
12. Spriewald, p. 98.
13. Spriewald, p. 99.
14. Spriewald, p. 89.
15. Spriewald, p. 89.
16. In Bauer, Belial, Erasmus und Dr. Faber the Romanists have to bribe learned men to abandon Luther's cause.
17. Balzer, p. 136.
18. Könneker, p. 35.
19. Jürgen Schutte, "Was ist vns vnser freyhait nutz/ wenn wir ir nicht brauchen durffen. - Zur Interpretation der Prosodialoge," in Hans Sachs - Studien zur frühbürgerlichen Literatur im 16. Jahrhundert, ed. J. Bumke et al., Beiträge zur Alteren deutschen Literaturgeschichte, 3 (Bern: Peter Lang, 1978), p. 63.

20. Schutte, p. 50.
21. Spriewald, p. 15.
22. Spriewald, p. 95.
23. Spriewald, p. 96.
24. Balzer, p. 135.
25. Schutte, p. 59.
26. Similar conclusions in Kunz und Fritz, Schade, II, 127: "wir .. wollen die römischen bösen bösen laßen sein" ; and in Petrus und Bauer, Lenk, p. 178: "Der halben laß sie dem babst, jren bösen humanischen gesetzen folgen, bleib du bey Cristo."
27. Spriewald, p. 94.
28. Spriewald, p. 17.
29. Spriewald, p. 92.
30. Spriewald, p. 77.
31. Schutte, p. 63.
32. Spriewald, p. 91.
33. Spriewald, p. 93.
34. Berger, p. 63.
35. Spriewald, p. 14.
36. Könneker, p. 152.
37. Balzer, pp. 1-6; Schutte, p. 44 f.
38. Seufert, p. 176.
39. Könneker, p. 152.

5. Bauer, Belial, Erasmus und Dr. Faber

Only two editions of this colloquy are known.¹ They are held to have been published by Jakob Fabri of Speyer, although in neither is his name or the place of publication given. An indication of the approximate date of composition is provided in the text: it makes mention of "des Mandats, so itzt jüngst zu Nürnberg wider außgangen."² The decree was issued by the Imperial Diet at Nuremberg on 18 April 1524. A. Götze has tried to prove that the author of the anonymous colloquy was Erasmus Alberus, a thesis which has not found general acceptance.³

Woodcut and title

Bauer, Belial, Erasmus und Dr. Faber is one of the few dialogues around 1524 both to feature well-known personalities instead of anonymous representatives of particular social groups, and also to include an allegorical character. The four participants are depicted on the title-page, from left to right in the order in which they appear in the title.⁴ The choice of prominent figures and their portrayal in the woodcut is reminiscent of Karsthans. The first figure is an anonymous peasant in traditional garb with hose torn at the knee. He has collared and appears to be admonishing an unhappy devil. Behind the devil stand two men in clerical dress: Erasmus, fully absorbed in stroking a fox's tail on which rests the pope's triple crown, and Dr. Johann Faber with bellows, observing the conversation. The arrangement of the four reflects their positions in the pamphlet. The

peasant stands bravely, although against him are ranged the other three; Belial is unwillingly obliged to converse; Erasmus has turned to flattering the papacy; Faber is a vigilant and fierce opponent of Lutherans. His bellows signify not only his name, but also his role as tale-bearer ('Ohrenbläser').⁵ His final words to the peasant are:

"Ich wil dir den brandt plasen bei dem Statthalter vnd dem Regimentt." The expression may imply both denunciation and burning at the stake as a heretic.⁶

The title indicates the nature of the contents, "was Erasmū vn̄ Fabrū zū verleugnung des gots worts beweget hat," and mentions a concept central to the pamphlet, "die warheyt." Johann Faber had once been an advocate of Church reform and had openly condemned the sale of indulgences, but by 1521 he was a staunch upholder of the papacy. While Humanists initially lent Luther their support in his attack on the Roman church, from the Leipzig Disputation (1519) onwards they began withdrawing it again⁷: "Vor allem war es aber Erasmus von Rotterdam, dessen Mißtrauen Luther gegenüber gewachsen war. Zu einer unmittelbaren Berührung kam es zwischen ihnen nicht."⁸ Not until the beginning of 1524 did Erasmus decide to oppose Luther publicly. In September 1524 Erasmus published De libero arbitrio to refute Luther's assertion that man did not have free will. Although O. Clemen sees in Bauer, Belial, Erasmus und Dr. Faber "keine prolep-tische Anspielung auf den Streit zwischen Erasmus und Luther de libero arbitrio - de servo arbitrio", the peasant repeats

and insists that God's will alone determines the course of events, for example, "Du hast nit gesagt: ob got wöll", "Alle ding siend in dem willen gottes vnd gar nitt in deinem oder deins fabers vermögen", "Faber, glaub warlich, du vermagst nit mehr, dann gottes wil ist."⁹

The structure of the colloquy

The focus of the colloquy is on the peasant. Like the peasant hero in Karsthans, he is the central character who occupies the stage throughout, while the other interlocutors appear, engage in conversation with him, and depart. The matter of the pamphlet is developed in three phases. In the first section there is general discussion among all four about the current state of affairs in relation to the past. Then Erasmus and Faber withdraw, leaving the peasant and Belial to discuss them in their absence. Belial provides reasons for the current state of affairs and then retreats in fear at Faber's approach. The final section comprises an acrimonious dispute between the peasant and Faber, during which certain points of conflict between Lutherans and Romanists are elucidated.

The main arguments

One of the basic themes of the colloquy is condemnation of Erasmus for changing sides and joining the papal camp, as Faber had done before him. From being anticlerical spokesmen for reform, they have become defenders of the papacy and opponents of Luther and the Reformation. The pamphlet's

aim is to 'explain' what motivated them to defect: it 'reveals' their desertion as the work of the devil, who played upon their base desire for security and papal favour. It is important for the author to establish beyond any doubt that only the shabbiest of motives has caused them to disown the Reformation and that there is no inherent fault in the anticlerical point of view.

Thus 'truth' is an important idea in the discussion, one to which the peasant lays claim for himself and Luther. He delivers his judgments in a forthright manner, because he has unwavering confidence in the 'truth' he represents:

Ba. die warheyt ist so kreffftig, starck
vnnd vnuberwindtlich, das nitt alleyn der
weltklug, kleynmütig Erasmus mitt aller
seiner spitz, witz vnd kunst dawider nit
schaffen oder hindern mag, sonder du,
Belial,... werdet ir nit absigen können,
dann sie ist, die ewig vnbestritten
bleibet.¹⁰

'Truth' is associated with incurring persecution, while success and favour are achieved by hypocrisy. Belial has brought Erasmus "zu verleugnung der warheyt" and makes Faber work "wider vnser anfechter des waren gottes wort." Not one of the participants disputes the merit of the Gospel. Erasmus and Faber recognise it as being the 'truth', but suppress it for personal gain. Belial works against it, as a friend of the pope, because Luther's success is causing anxiety. Belial wants to keep Hell well-stocked:

Aber glaub mir: durch mein kunst vnd
embsigen fleiß hab ich es alles zuwegen
bracht vnd dahin gerichtet, das dir vnd
deinem hauffen schwer wirdet mich vnd mein
gesellschaft ferrer also züuernichten.¹¹

The devilish scheme has been to counter the way Luther has effectively promoted the cause of Church reform, by winning over equally prestigious names to the other camp. Thus they hope to prevent further demoralisation among Romanists:

Bau. Was sagten da deine pfarrer vnd bischöff?
Beli. Die vormals betribt waren, empfiengen
widerumb eyn hertz, vnd etlich sagen: was gilts?
wir haben auch gelert leut auff vnser seitten,
die dem Lütther in das maul greiffen dörrffen.¹²

The opening words of the pamphlet are intended to give immediate proof of the peasant's simple piety, and Erasmus's response is intended to display his lack of interest and understanding: "Was lallet dieser bauer?" The first section of the pamphlet is concerned above all with Erasmus. The peasant praises his erstwhile accomplishments, for Erasmus once championed the movement for Church reform through writing tracts "zu erhebung des götlichen worts vnd zu anreytzung vnd erweckung aller gelerten", even initiated the anticlerical movement, "ist er nitt der gewesen, der ewers abgots des antichrists zu Rom pracht vnd sündtlichs leben zum ersten gestraft vnd angetast hat?" Now he has become a turncoat, "ein groser Babst schmeichler vnd vnuerschampter gots lesterer." The peasant outspokenly accuses Erasmus 'to his face' of betrayal. Yet, despite the harshness of his words, it is clear that they are never-

theless tinged with a certain respect for Erasmus's past achievements and regret at his present actions.

Erasmus has no tenable excuses and those he gives only reflect badly on himself. He is made to appear weak, fearful of distress and anxious for praise and personal gain. The author's interpretation of Erasmus's split with Luther completely disregards their differing religious principles, preferring to paint a picture of shabby personal ambition, "in einer Zeit, in der man den Gegner nicht verstehen konnte und wollte."¹³ When Faber escorts Erasmus away with the words, "Ir müsset nit so forchtsam sein", Erasmus's role as an interlocutor in the pamphlet is completed. Of the four Erasmus is the minor character and speaks only four times before taking his leave. Perhaps the author still felt some of the respect his peasant professes for the erstwhile anticlerical critic; on the other hand, Erasmus is mercilessly denigrated after his departure. Belial comments that Erasmus commands a large following which owes greater allegiance to him than to the Gospel. Possibly the author felt it wiser not to have Erasmus appear in person for fear of alienating his many admirers. The writer had obviously no such compunction with Faber.

Erasmus is referred to as the "meyster des zirlichen lateins" and it is pointed out that he is still honoured by many especially for "sein zirlich schreibenn." This suggests that the rift is now fully appreciated that developed between those supporters of Church reform who were primarily Humanists,

and those supporters of reform who stood for Luther and the Reformation. The author of Bauer, Belial, Erasmus und Dr. Faber was concerned to prevent reform sympathisers being drawn away from the Reformation by Erasmus's example.

In the second section of the pamphlet the peasant goes on to command the devil through invoking God to explain how he effected the defections of Erasmus and Faber. The devil, much to Faber's dismay and no doubt to the reader's delight, reveals his methods. Base motives come to light: Faber was won over by promises of honour, wealth and pleasures, which the devil procured for him," bei B^ebst, Cardinalen, Bischoffen, Ertzhertzogen, hertzogen vnd andern der welt hohen heuptern vnd götlichen worts verfolgen."¹⁴ The list includes both ecclesiastical and temporal spheres but consists only of those with high social standing. Similarly "die warheyt" is little respected by "den ö^ebersten Priestern vnd hohen hauptern."¹⁵ Their opponents are depicted as common men : "wir armen baur", "dir vnd deinem hauffen," "alle deine nachpawern." Erasmus fears the loss of his reputation for the reason: "es werd gewar der gemeyn man, bei dem ich bißher großgeachtet gewesen, mit was sachen wir vmbgehn."¹⁶ Thus the author forges a link between being opposed to the papacy and being a commoner and adds the national aspect of being German.

Belial then lists five reasons for Erasmus's change of side: Faber's rise to fortune, Murner's rewards, persecution

incurred from pursuing the cause of truth, fear of danger, and Luther's outdoing Erasmus and robbing him of fame. The author has presented only shabby reasons behind Erasmus's behaviour, to blacken his reputation and deny he had any real justification for what he has done. Faber, however, is depicted as a more dangerous, venomous opponent, because of his power to persecute. The peasant is dismayed that such an immoral man, ironically called "eyn solcher holtseliger, keuscher nonnentröster", should enjoy so much sway. The final section of the pamphlet confirms his fears. Having shed light on Erasmus's and Faber's secret aspirations, Belial has served his purpose and departs.

The final section is a highly acrimonious confrontation between Faber and the peasant, in which both present fiercely irreconcilable views. They clash on such themes as obedience to authority, adherence to religious tradition and the recently issued decree of the Nuremberg Diet. The author's intention lies in making Faber appear as an unscrupulous tyrant, spitting gall. He addresses the peasant as "du Lutherischer ketzer", "Ir bößen buben", "Ir teutzschen schelmen", "ei du schelmhaffter bauer, du L^utherischer bößwicht," and so on. Faber's main objection to Lutherans is their lack of obedience. This complaint he repeats over and over: "wir begeren ... euch L^utherische ketzer zustraffen, außzureuten vnd wider zu gehorsam zubringen."¹⁷ The peasant is accused of stirring up mass disobedience: "vnd verführest ja auch dich also nit alleyn, sonder alle dein nachpawern machstu vngehorsam."¹⁸

Faber insists on adherence to the religious practices of the forefathers, again preaching blind obedience. "Darzu so haben dein eltern souil hundert jar her glaubt, das du vnd der Luterisch hauf nun gantz verachtet vnd den stül zu Rom gar vngehorsam seiet. du soltest ie billicher deinen eltern nachuolgen."¹⁹ He does not justify his views, but demands they be followed on pain of punishment. He makes constant ominous threats against the peasant and his like, e.g. "wir wollenn ewer einen dermaß grawssamlich straffen, das sich tausent vnnd aber tausent daran stossen sollen."²⁰ He has a specific suggestion for disposing of the peasant, so demonstrating his readiness to misuse his powers to perform tyrannical acts: "man muß dich in Thürn werffen vnd heymlich ertrencken, das deine nachbauern nit wissen, wo du hinkommen seiest." Added to his malicious abuse of power, dubious moral character and unreasoned demands for subservience to the Church is his derision of Germans. The author portrays a thoroughly unpleasant character in his pamphlet, with the aim of convincing the reader that it is a true image of the man.

The peasant hero

While the depictions of Erasmus and Faber are designed to generate hostility, that of the peasant is conceived to elicit admiration. He champions 'truth' regardless of risk to his safety and appears as the antithesis to Erasmus in this respect. He embodies personal qualities that reflect favourably upon his religious views. Against the men of

position in worldly affairs the lowly peasant stands undaunted by their opposition and unafraid of their wealth and education. He displays supreme self-confidence despite his social inferiority, deriving his strength of character, it is made clear, from the knowledge that he defends Holy Scripture. Therefore, God is on his side. He is confident that God will mete out justice eventually and punish the bad:

Bau. Aber glaub mir, das gericht gottes
wirdet vber dich vnd alle deine anhenger,
auch der Euangelischen warheyt veruolger
auch schnelliglich kommen vnd dir vnd
ienen ewern gewalt vil Ringern oder gar
ernider stossen.²¹

This admirable figure of bravery and steadfast godliness accepts all events as God's will, whether he comes to harm or not. Judged against him, Erasmus and Faber appear all the more corrupt.

The exemplary peasant is representative of Lutherans and of the peasantry, now fully aware of Roman ways: "wir Bauern fürchten dich oder deinen Antichrist zu Rom doch nichts mer, wir wissen nū auch, von wann Ir seiet." The Lutheran peasant is also representative of Germans in their resistance to Roman domination. Faber's references to the Germans' unwillingness to obey the Romans is designed to incense the German readership:

Fab. Ir teutzschen schelmmen, ir thut keyn gut,
man bring euch dan eyn fremde Nation herrein,
die auch den glauben lerne, auch wie ir den
stul zu Rom gehorsam beweisen sollet.²²

The author is at pains to associate the peasant with

being German as well as Lutheran, and so encourage the German reader to identify with the peasant out of a sense of indignation. Of course, Faber was in fact himself German.

The peasant presents the reasonable, thinking point of view. He argues logically against Faber as, for example, when Faber proposes that religious practices of one's forefathers should still be followed: the peasant creates a simple but effective parallel to refute the proposal. Faber, on the other hand, demands total, unthinking obedience, which he would enforce by violent means.

When Faber accuses the peasant of influencing his "nachpawern", he 'reveals' his anxiety about the spread of Luther's new faith. His words, "ir wollet ietz alle Lutherisch sein, man muß euch castigiren ", are intended to convey that the opposition has strength of numbers. The peasant confirms his anxieties by emphasising the large numbers that exist, all equally committed to his cause:

dan ob ir sie [truth] an einem ort
niderstosset, sie get an dem andern
hundertmal höher vber sich vnd wirst
samt deinen Bischouen hart damit
geschendett.²³

For propaganda purposes it is advantageous to indicate that Lutherans form a large, formidable party, causing concern among papists. Faber is taunted: "hen, wie meinst du nun, Faber, wan ich solchs meinen nachbauern anzeyg? meinstu auch, sie werden ab diesem Vnchristlichem mandat hart erschrecken?"

On the question of temporal authorities, the peasant is

prepared to offer them only conditional obedience: "Baw. Ir sein rein, sprach der her, aber nit alle."²⁴ If rulers are pious, they cannot oppose Luther's doctrines and will be obeyed by their subjects. However, should they suppress the new faith, peasants will be as obedient as possible, but will risk "leib vnnd güt" rather than renounce their faith. The peasant thus appeals to rulers not to use coercion, for their duty as pious rulers lies in supporting Lutherans. There is a hint of a threat in his words.

Faber insists that the members of the Imperial Diet must be pious, because those who sent them did not doubt it:

Fab. Du wilt auch erst in zweiffel setzen,
ob die herren des Regiments frum sein, So
doch Fürsten vnd herren, die sie daher
geordent, daran keinen zweiffel haben.²⁵

Yet shortly after he admits those sent were chosen to quash the Reformation movement: "Darumb auch souil pfaffen vnd ewerer feind durch die Bischoue oder geistlichen Fürsten in das Reichsregiment zusitzen verordent." In this way he undermines the authority of the Diet, although demanding absolute obedience to it, and reduces the validity of its anti-Lutheran decree. In addition, the peasant provides four reasons for denying the validity of the Nuremberg decree, for example, that it is the product of lies and deceit, and that it was issued without the approval of all Imperial estates. His flat rejection of the decree was perhaps designed to influence those who were required to implement it, as well as those whom it was intended to affect.

Faber makes the conventional accusation in reply to criticism: "du woltest gern vffrur oder enbörung^e sehen."

The peasant parries with the conventional denial, hedged with conditions. He argues that opponents to Holy Scripture cannot be Christians and implies that non-verbal conflict might be in the offing:

Bau. so müst ir gewißlich rechte Ketzer,
Türcken oder der hellisch teuffell selbst
sein vnd derhalb zurettung Christlichen
glaubens nach euwerer menschlichenn selbs
lere gewälttigklich anzutasten vnd außereüten.²⁶

The colloquy ends in bitter, hardened conflict between irreconcilable fronts. The peasant finally answers Faber's threats to denounce him by inciting him to do so and hurling a parting oath: "Ade, ein k^o bescheis dich!" On the one hand the papal party has power to coerce through issuing decrees. On the other, Lutherans have the strength of support to resist. Temporal rulers should not take the papal side and enforce the decree. Such is the author's view.

NOTES

1. Lenk, p. 296.
2. Clemen, I, 333.
3. Alfred Cötze, "Erasmus Albers Anfänge", ARG, 5 (1908), 48 - 68.
4. Clemen, I, 321; Lenk, p. 243.
5. Clemen, I, 320.
6. Clemen, I, 336; Lenk, p. 298.
7. Donald J. Ziegler, ed., Great Debates of the Reformation (New York: Random House, 1969), p. 34:
"Luther came to Leipzig as a reformer within the established church. He departed as an accused heretic, as one who would shortly inaugurate one of the most far-reaching mass movements of modern times. For it was there that he perhaps first comprehended, at Eck's prodding, the implications of his stand on papal supremacy."
8. Stupperich, Geschichte der Reformation, p. 112.
9. Clemen, I, 335, n. 4. References to God's will, p. 323, p. 326, p. 328, p. 330 and p. 331.
10. Clemen, I, 324.
11. Clemen, I, 325.
12. Clemen, I, 327.
13. Clemen, I, 318.
14. Clemen, I, 326.
15. Clemen, I, 325.
16. Clemen, I, 326.
17. Clemen, I, 332 f.
18. Clemen, I, 329 f.
19. Clemen, I, 330.
20. Clemen, I, 331.
21. Clemen, I, 331.

22. Clemen, I, 330.
23. Clemen, I, 333.
24. Clemen, I, 332.
25. Clemen, I, 332.
26. Clemen, I, 334.

6. Müntzerischer Schwärmer und evangelischer Bauer

Two editions of the dialogue are known, both dated 1525.¹ The first edition gives the place of publication, Wittenberg, and the printer's name, Hans Luft; the information is presumably correct. The second edition omits this information. The dialogue deals with the events surrounding the Battle of Frankenhausen (15 May 1525) and refers to the execution of Thomas Müntzer (27 May 1525). It was most probably written between mid-June and early July of that year and is among "die ersten und entscheidenden Dokumente der Verfemung Müntzers ..., an denen sich die Entstellung seines Bildes für die ganze Folgezeit ausgerichtet hat."² There is some internal evidence to suggest that the author was acquainted with the anti-Reformation pamphlet, Ein gloubwirdig und warhafftig underricht, which emanated from the Catholic chancellery of Duke George of Saxony.³ The pamphlet is dated 12 June 1525.⁴ It gives an account of Müntzer's confession, in which he recanted and celebrated communion in one kind. The author of Müntzerischer Schwärmer und evangelischer Bauer seems not only concerned to discredit "schwermerei", but at the same time to devalue the Catholic 'success' in converting Müntzer.

The author maintains his anonymity, but is generally thought to be Johannes Agricola, properly Johann Schneider or Schnitter (1492 - 1566). Agricola studied under Luther in Wittenberg and accompanied him at the Leipzig Disputation in 1519.

The main arguments

In the course of Müntzerischer Schwärmer und evangelischer Bauer the author strives to establish several points, mainly through his Lutheran mouthpiece, the 'pious, evangelical peasant', but also for heightened effect through Müntzer's supporter. The pious peasant asserts, reiterates, proves from the Bible and finally convinces the other peasant that his own views are sound. The pamphlet has rightly been described as "Das extremste Beispiel für die Versuche, den Bauern als Sprachrohr der Lutherschen Lehren fungieren zu lassen."⁵

First, the author is at pains to clear the nobles of any imputation of dishonourable conduct at the Battle of Frankenhausen. He exonerates their actions emphatically, pointing out that they were forced into slaying the insurgents because of the peasants' behaviour. The nobles merely meted out an appropriate punishment:

BAW. als aber ewer blintheit vnd hertmutigkeit vermerckt, seit yr als baldt wie billich angegriffen, Denn yr habt es nicht anders, sondern ewrn verdieneten lon, wie denn der euch gegeben, wollen haben.⁶

The pious peasant's foil, described as a "schwermer", Luther's term of abuse, makes the damaging accusation that on the day of battle the rulers had broken faith with the peasants and attacked during a truce. Although the 'zealot' was, according to the fiction of the dialogue, present on the battlefield, the pious peasant sets him to rights, "Aber es helt sich vill

anders denn du sagest." The pious peasant presents a version of events which demonstrates how the nobles were goaded into breaking the truce. That the pious peasant insistently condones the rulers' actions during and after the battle might well indicate they were the subject of condemnation at the time. He maintains that they were fulfilling their Christian duty:

BAWER. Solt das weltliche obirgkeit nicht straffen? ya wen ein herr ynn solchem fall hundert tausent schwert hett, so soltten sie alle getzuckt werden, solche byben, reuber, diebe vnd morder zuwürgen.⁷

Given the amount of distorted and deliberately false information contained in this pamphlet, one can assume with certainty that the account of the battle is an intentional falsification of events, rather than a product of hearsay. Die Histori Thome Muntzers, thought to be the work of Philip Melanchthon, appeared at the end of May or beginning of June 1525. It presents yet another version of the battle, describing how instead of fighting, the peasants were busy singing to God and so put up no resistance:

Da der Landtgraff außgeredt het, ruckt man hinzu an die Baurn und schoß ab. die armen leut aber die stunden da unnd sunge ... gleich als wern sie wansinning, schickten sich weder zur wer noch zur flucht.⁸

Agricola's version, which reluctantly admits that there was a breaking of the truce, did not become the "official" version: "Bis heute wird aber die effektvolle, scheinbar so

plausible Version Melanchthons allenthalben verbreitet."⁹

The second point the dialogue's author is concerned to put across successfully is his picture of Müntzer. The greater part of the dialogue is used to discredit Müntzer in all facets of his being. On a personal and moral level, Müntzer is depicted as drunken, lazy, cowardly and greedy. He is denounced as a seeker of "eigen nutz". These accusations are identical with those levelled against officers of the Roman church in earlier Reformation dialogues; but now the criticism has been transferred to fellow opponents of the Roman church, to Müntzer and his party. To strengthen the credibility of his assertions, Agricola employs several techniques, for example, he purports to have 'eye-witness' evidence:

BAW. Ich stund ym hoff vnd machte einen wagen zu, do hort ich, das der Schosser den Müntzer fragte, als er auß der Cantzlei gieng, von den Fursten vnd rethen, wie es yhm gangen were, aber der Müntzer war vntter seine angesicht so gelb wie ein todter mensch ... er war gar verzaget.¹⁰

BAWer. ich sahe yhm nach do er aus der Cantzelei kam, da folgetten yhm die stal buhen..., wusten mehr von Christo, denn der Müntzer.¹¹

Similarly, the pious peasant begins his observations about Müntzer with "So hab ichs gesehen": "Ey so hab ichs gesehen, das man yhm alle tag zu trug, puttern, keß, eyer, bier, wein, fleisch, semeln, korn, gelt, flachs etc."¹² A further technique is to put damaging remarks in the mouth of Müntzer's

supporter, as in the following anecdote:

SCW. er sprach ein mal zu mir zu Alsteth ...
 Gott hett yhn befolhen, er solt die gantze
 Christenheit reformiren.
 BAW. das muß yhn der Gott von Schluncken-
 hausen geheissen haben.
 SCHW. Das weis icht nicht er, was auff
 selbige mal wol getruncken.¹³

On a theological level, Agricola asserts that Müntzer's exegesis was perverse and his teaching based solely on the Old Testament. Undoubtedly Agricola know this to be untrue. He goes on, however, to take this 'fact' to such extreme lengths that it becomes quite indefensible. He portrays the logical conclusion of Müntzer's Old Testament teaching: Müntzer wanted to make Jews of us, would have had Christians circumcised and thus Christ's coming would have been in vain. He uses the technique repeatedly of making the opposing view untenable by exaggeration and extrapolation. Such is his concern to denounce and defame that contradictions and inconsistencies slip into the picture he creates: "man sagt ... das er auch sein yrthumb, die er getriben hat mit außlegung vnd felschen der schrift widder Gott vnd sein eigen gewissen... offentlich bekant."¹⁴ Yet, further on in the dialogue, however, the peasant informs the zealot that Müntzer deserved death, "weil er nicht hatt wollen vmbkeren, vnd sein yrtumb erkennen."¹⁵

As a preacher, the reader is told, Müntzer held unclear sermons, was a false prophet and deliberately deceived and seduced the people. That Müntzer was unversed in Scripture

is a particularly blatant vilification from a former friend, assuming that Agricola is indeed the author: Agricola "[wußte] doch allein schon aus dem persönlichen Briefverkehr sehr genau, wie belesen und in theologischen Fragen gelehrt Müntzer war. Bei der Diffamierung des toten Widerparts schreckt Agricola also vor kaum einer verleumderischen Erfindung zurück."¹⁶

The author's aims are to strip Müntzer of any positive qualities and apportion to him all blame for the revolts. Of course, in making Müntzer solely responsible, he acquits the Lutheran party of any responsibility. He is also anxious to establish the point that anyone supporting Müntzer is blind and foolish, allowing himself to be hoodwinked into believing such a fanatic: "Seine [Agricolas] Vertrautheit mit Müntzers Lehre will er nutzen zur Gewinnung unsicher gewordener Anhänger des 'Mordpropheten'."¹⁷

A third main point the author stresses is Luther's teaching of 'inner freedom'. One must embrace the doctrine of "Christliche freiheit" and reject completely "ein fleischliche odder eusserliche freiheit". He allows no scope for social improvement, the declared goal of Müntzer and his supporter, the zealot. The pious peasant stands for the status quo:

Ja Sant Petrus wil aber das es nicht ein
fleischliche odder eusserliche freiheit sey,
Sonder ein innerliche der selen vnd der
guten gewissen ... vnd wir durch vnsern
glawben, ynn Christo frei sind.¹⁸

The pious peasant shows no understanding whatsoever for his

fellow-peasant's wish for greater freedom and equality. To the complaints about burdensome tithes and taxes he replies: "Was geht dich das an, ist doch zeitlich dingk, daruber wir allein von Gott als knechte, vnd nicht als herrn gesetzt sein."¹⁹ His renunciation of things worldly is total: "Wir sollen nicht vmb zeitliche narung sorgen, sonder das reich Gottes vnd seine gerechtigkeit erst suchen, so sol sich das zeitlich wol finden." God will provide "wo du yhm von hertzen vertrawest." Thus he dismisses the zealot's worries about poverty and starvation.

The fourth main point the pamphlet endeavours to establish is closely bound up with the preceding one, namely that of the lords' role in society. With great insistence and continual repetition the pious peasant propounds the divine legitimation of bad rulers and tyrants. He repudiates any need for change on the grounds that God created the world as it is. God created tyrants to be His instrument of punishment for man's sins and so they play an important role in His scheme of things: "das Tirannisch obirgkeit vmb der sunde der menschen willen gegeben werden von Gott."²⁰ The author is reasserting the medieval notion of 'ordo', in which inequality is ordained by God and any endeavour to alter that order is a sin against God. To drive home the argument, threats are issued. If one is so lacking in humility as to wish for change, then one may well suffer eternal damnation: "sonst strebst du widder Gottes ordenung, vnd fellest ynn die verdammnis."²¹ Indeed God might devise an

even worse form of punishment than "bose obirgkeit",
should tyrants fall from power:

so ist gewiß Gott ... so gewaltig, vnd macht
vns viel einen scherffern besen auff die haut,
den der vorige yhe gewesen ist, vnd steupt vns
vnd plaget vns viel sehrer domit,..²²

The aim is clearly to instil fear. For his part, the pious peasant admits and accepts tyranny. In fact tyrants are essential, if one is to have martyrs: "Es müssen Tyrannen auff erden sein."

The main arguments advanced in Müntzerischer Schwärmer und evangelischer Bauer set forth a staunch Lutheran point of view and show the author's concern to dissociate the Lutheran party from those hopes and attitudes that culminated in armed rebellion against the rulers:

sie [die Figur] ist nichts anderes als das
mit dem Namen "Bauer" versehene Sprachrohr
der rachsüchtigen, gegen das Volk blindwütig
tobenden, es in seine Unterdrückung zurück-
zwingenden Herren.²³

The two peasant interlocutors

The dialogue is set on the day after the rout at Frankenhausen and takes place between one of Müntzer's followers, who fought for his cause on the battlefield, and a pious, evangelical peasant, who rejects 'zealotry'. The dialogue depicts a confrontation between two characters from the same social class, who both support the Reformation, but who nevertheless hold opposing views. The peasant initially

named "Wolf Schwermer" followed Müntzer because "wir wolte das Euāgelion verfechten, vor den gottlosen vnd Tyrannen." The peasant termed "evangelisch" - so classing his counterpart as unevangelical - reinterprets his portrayal, so that, "der Müntzer, Carlstadt odder irgent ein Rotten geister ein rotten loser buhen zusammen treibt, Lant vnd leut mit wort vnd blutt vergissen verterbt." The latter interpretation is then established in the pamphlet as true. The zealot is rebuked and instructed by the pious peasant, the author's aim being to leave his reader in no doubt that Müntzer's path to a Reformation was the wrong one. The zealot formed his views from listening to Müntzer, and the other 'proves' that these views were erroneous and the teacher influenced by the Devil.

The motif of education is important in the dialogue. The pious peasant, of course, has the superior education and dominates the conversation. Just as in Karsthans or Pfarrer und Schultheiß from 1521, it is the opposing party's greater knowledge that eventually causes the character to be converted. The zealot adopts the pious peasant's interpretation: "du kanst mer vntterricht aus der Biblien denn irgent ein pfaff, ich wil dir folgen."²⁴ The conversion serves the author doubly, as he can deal a blow against both zealotry and the Catholics. The confession exacted from Müntzer before his execution indicated his return to the Roman church. The author of Müntzerischer Schwärmer und evangelischer Bauer makes sure that his figure of the zealot rejects both Müntzer and the Roman church.

Before conversion, however, the zealot defends Müntzer staunchly despite Frankenhausen: "Ich hoff vnser sach sol auch noch gut werden." Of others he reports confidently: "ich weiß sie werden noch fest bei der Müntzerischen sachen stehen vnd schwerlich dauon lassen." The author depicts a gradual erosion of his convictions, as the pious peasant scores points against him. Both peasants command Biblical quotations to support their arguments, the zealot to show how he misconstrues the meaning, his adversary to settle a dispute in his favour. The latter wins points by 'correcting' the other's interpretation of Biblical passages:

SCHwer. Stet doch geschriben ym buch von
der Apostoln leben Act. ij.Cap. das...
BAw. Ja recht aber setz ein prill auff die
nasen liber schwermer vnd sich dasselbige
Capittel recht an.²⁵

The zealot finally declares himself converted by such knowledgeability. The pious peasant lists his education: he can read a little German, has read works by Luther, attends sermons by Dr. Lang in Erfurt and always carries a copy of the New Testament. The dialogue concludes with a Christian gesture of almsgiving, demonstrating the true piety of the pious, evangelical peasant.

Although the conclusion of the dialogue shows the erstwhile zealot willing to follow his counterpart's advice, he only partially accepts the doctrine of 'inner freedom'. He still asks insistently about oppression, despite reassurances of its unimportance: "So sol ich mich gar nichts mit der obirgkeit zancken, soll sie schlechts lassen mit mir

machen was sie wollen?" The pious peasant equally repeatedly counters that oppressive rulers are God's judgement on man's sins. It is clear from the dialogue, as from his Auslegung des XIX. Psalm, that Agricola adheres wholeheartedly to Luther's teaching and had no sympathy with Müntzer's strivings. Yet, his zealot character appears, at least to the modern reader, to be neither persuaded nor placated. The zealot refuses to ignore social questions and his arguments seem insufficiently disqualified. Even his conversion would seem to lack total conviction: "ich hoff ich wil mich mit Gottes hulff bekeren", (although this statement is also a display of due humility). Maybe the impression is intentional and Agricola is showing how deeply recalcitrance is embedded in Müntzer's adherents, so perhaps indirectly justifying future persecution and executions. Agricola also argues that peasants are never satisfied anyway, further supporting his view that all change is futile.

At the opening of the dialogue the limping fanatic explains that he received fourteen wounds on the battlefield and was left for dead by the knights. Thus he eluded death. Now he is on the run and fears betrayal, but he is still a loyal defender of Müntzer. The pious peasant shows neither pity for his fellow peasant's plight nor sympathy with his motives, namely to end exploitation of the lower classes by their rulers. Rather the pious peasant berates the zealot for his radical ideas and actions. He informs the zealot repeatedly that the radicals received

their just deserts in battle. They brought disaster on their own heads by compelling their rulers to take up arms and slay them. His harsh, abusive language contrasts noticeably with the polite reserve of the wounded peasant. In contrast to Sachs's Chorherr und Schuhmacher, it is the author's mouthpiece who speaks roughly and the adversary who remains quiet. In Sachs's dialogue polite, proper speech is a sign of a good, evangelical attitude and its opposite a sign of lax morality. The reverse is the case in Müntzerischer Schwärmer und evangelischer Bauer. Its pattern is similar to several other Reformation dialogues where the opponent is harangued, for example, in Weggespräch.

The pious peasant condemns Müntzer's supporters utterly. That they sought to lighten the burden borne by the lower classes, to which the pious peasant ostensibly belongs, is in no way positively weighted. Agricola differentiates between two groups of peasants, as had Luther. Given the original ideas behind the first German Reformation dialogues, which elevated the status of the commoner and made him appear as the epitome of the thinking Christian, the following comment is justified:

Es ist besonders infam, daß Agricola die Dialogform dazu benutzt, den geknechteten Stand aufzuspalten und damit Solidarität zu hintertreiben: Auf der einen Seite konstruiert er ehrbare Bauern mit "evangelisch frommen" Ansichten - auf der anderen eine radikale Minderheit von "Schwärmern."²⁶

The one peasant tells the wounded, defeated, penniless peasant that what he received in battle was no more than

"ewrn verdieneten lon."

Throughout, the dominant peasant hurls insults and accusations at the zealot, using similar terms of abuse as were used in dialogues against the clergy: "losen lammen fratzzen", "lose blinde leut", "yr elenden narren", "yr blinden tollen narren". Other dialogues, too, argue from a position of 'moderation' against more extreme views of Reformation adherents, but in general earlier dialogues created the fiction that all commoners were like-minded in their hatred of the Church. As the Reformation progressed and various factions developed, the focus in some pamphlets moved from berating the clergy to differentiating between right and wrong supporters of the Reformation. Earlier dialogues also created the spectre that all commoners might one day with justification rise up and seek to change their own fate. This threat in Reformation dialogues was above all directed at the Church and was used as a tool for precipitating change in that sphere. However, when the commoners did rebel, it was in fact to storm castles as well as monasteries and it was to win changes in their economic and social conditions from secular overlords as well as ecclesiastical lords. This dialogue, written after the main battle of the Peasants' War had been fought, denies any justification whatsoever for active revolt. Change cannot be won from the wielders of power; that would be to usurp God's position. The message conveyed by the dialogue is that passivity is essential.

The views of the zealot

The zealot makes three specific accusations in the dialogue. He complains that Müntzer was improperly interrogated by Duke George of Saxony. The pious peasant simply glosses over this point, using the fact that the prisoner recanted in favour of the Roman church as proof of his faithlessness. That the confession was exacted under duress is not refuted but is treated as unimportant. The zealot's second particular grievance concerns the breaking of the truce at the Battle of Frankenhausen. His damaging account of events is dismissed and replaced by a version favourable to the nobles. Thirdly, he contrasts the qualities of Müntzer and Luther. Müntzer is courageous and outspoken, while Luther toadies the rulers to protect his own skin: "Er hatt aber gleichwoll nicht also geheuchelt, als der Luther thut."²⁷ Agricola is concerned to prove that Luther, too, was not scared to rebuke princes and cites examples, but with a supposed difference from Müntzer's way: "Er strafft wo es strefflich ist einen iederman, er sei Herr, Furst odder konig, aber doch alles mit gemach das er es verantwortten kan vor Gott vnd der welt."

The zealot compares how Müntzer lent his support to "dem gemeinen man", not to "den grossen Hansen", and would not accept money. Agricola takes pains to repudiate this view, again using the trick of 'eye-witness' evidence to convince the reader: "BAW. So hab ichs gesehen vnd sonderlich das etliche reiche hansen yhme ein handt voller grosser

groschen gaben ynn sein handt."²⁸ The zealot is permitted at first to demur, "Ach ich wils nicht glewben", but immediately adds some substantiating evidence of his own.

Daß der "Schwärmer" sich hier selbst widerspricht, ist ein erneuter Beleg dafür, wie hier die "Fakten" zur Verleumdung Müntzers zusammengedichtet werden.²⁹

The specific accusations the zealot makes are particularly barbed, and the author employs various tricks to remove their sting. That the accusations should be introduced into the pamphlet at all would seem to suggest they were particular current criticisms, which the author decided to disarm rather than ignore. The accusations no doubt serve a further purpose:

Er legt dem Schwärmer auch sonst freindüttige Fragen in den Mund, ..., desto stärker wirkt es dann, wenn der Schwärmer die schlimmsten Legenden um Müntzer - anscheinend halb wider Willen - nicht nur bestätigt, sondern z.T. selbst verkündet.³⁰

When the above particular grievances have been dealt with, Agricola permits the zealot's complaints to slip into generalisations. He emphasises the timeless and universal grievances, rather than specific current ones.

The main grievance of the zealot concerns oppression and exploitation of the lowly by tyrannical lords. Whereas the charge of "vns schinden vnd schaben" was commonly brought in earlier dialogues against the Church, here it is raised against secular lords. And whereas the charge was previously

used to show disapproval and to achieve changes of practice and attitude in and towards the clergy, here the nobility are in no way encouraged to change. Instead the peasant urging change is told to accept the inevitability of oppression from above: indeed it is God's will that he should suffer from oppression. The Church's exploitative practices were not to be tolerated, but the nobles are to be honoured and obeyed: "BAWER. Das ist nicht die warheit, das man die obirgkeit schendet, vnd vnehret wenn sie gleich böß ist".³¹ The zealot not only refuses to accept his lot but also advocates the use of force: "Ich sehe nichts das wir frei sein, man predig das Euangelion wie man wil... mit der gestalt wurden wir wol nimer mer frei, wenn man nicht mir der fawst dazu thet."³² Here Agricola makes it appear that the two points are bound together.³³ The first, wanting change, leads of necessity to the second, using violence. The aim of turning the Gospel into reality is now the aim of a zealot, whereas once it was the aim of good Lutherans:

BAWER. Lieber was war doch yhr furgeben mit solcher narren weise?

SCHWERMER. Nicht anders denn sie sagten sie wolten das Euangelion ynns werck fürhen, Es must nicht allein bey dem wort bleiben.

BAWER. O yr stock narren,...³⁴

The zealot presents the same ideas as other peasant heroes in Reformation dialogues, only in Müntzerischer Schwärmer und evangelischer Bauer he is not the exemplary hero but the ill-advised fanatic. Deluded by Müntzer and destitute as a result, this 'foolish', 'blind' peasant is

brought to accept the non-violent, passive views of the pious peasant. The zealot does not touch on matters of the Church. He refers to the need for freedom and to the injustice of secular rulers. He concentrates on the common man in a political and economic context. The pious peasant, however, shifts the focus away from social conditions to the plane of inner spirituality. In so doing, the author does not confront and resolve the questions about social conditions, but denies their relevance to religious matters.

Attitudes to secular rulers

Illogicalities and inconsistencies occur in the attitudes Agricola presents as desirable. He does not deny that rulers are greedy and oppressive. Their role is to act as God's punishment on man. No matter how tyrannical, they must be obeyed. Yet, on the other hand, he states that their role in society is to be responsible for justice. They are the arm of the law and punish wrongdoers in society. The picture that rulers are both wicked tyrants and protectors of law and order is illogical, but is presented as a reasonable explanation. Agricola supports the view that since the princes control power, the use they make of it is legitimate. "BAWer. By man wird wol rath finden, die Herren haben schwert, rede vnd galgen gnug ynn der welt." The author's spokesman moves into increasingly dangerous areas when he tells the reader to obey rulers in all secular matters, but should rulers interfere in matters of conscience, then God comes first: "yn denn singen aber die das gewissen vnd den

glawben verhindern, sollen wir Got mehr gehorsam sein denn den menschen."³⁵ Agricola does not expand this weak formulation, as it leads again to acknowledging that in some cases disobedience may well be justified. The author has propounded the very opposite throughout the dialogue.

Return to the divine 'ordo'

The pious peasant paints a picture of what Müntzer's style of freedom entails:

Ja das ist ewr vorgeben...., das yr schwermer
gern woltet frei sein, niemand nichts geben
kein gehorsam yn euch wer, allein zufallen
vnd den leuthen das yhr mit gewalt nemen,
auff das yr nicht dorffte arbeiten, sonder
wie die wilden vntzamen thier ewer buberei
mit fressen, sauffen, spielen vnd hurerei treiben.³⁶

du mochtest so viel verschlemmen vnd verprassen,
toppeln vnd spielen.³⁷

The uncouth, undisciplined rustic revelling in debauchery, greed, sloth and so on, is a recreation of the traditionally negative literary figure of the peasant. The medieval portrayal consisted of just such "hyperbolic extremes of indecency".³⁸ Agricola makes the peasant once again the target of contempt and moral disapproval. The peasant is no longer the embodiment of simple, German piety, the worthy "gemeiner man". The term the pious peasant uses is "der gemein pöff^el". The positive image of the common man has again been replaced by the negative one. Towards the end of the dialogue the pious peasant explains to the other peasant that not only are Müntzer's supporters undisciplined, but indeed all peasants are upstarts:

ist der hoffart nu mehr vntter den
gemeinen bawern denn vntter den Herren
vnd Fursten, do gehort denn auch viel gelts
zu, Es solt billich weltliche obirgkeit mit
ernst darein sehen vnd verbieten, das nicht
ein iglicher scheffel drescher odder bawer
dem Adel vn Herren odder Fursten sich mit
der kleidung vergleicht, es muß ya ein
vntterschid sein, darnach der standt ist,...³⁹

see p. 136

His argument is that if peasants attempt to emulate nobles in dress, they cannot be poverty-stricken. So the social and economic position of the peasantry is not wretched; indeed stricter measures against the peasantry are required. The literary figure of the evangelical peasant steps out of his own class, as it were, to repudiate all peasants as rebellious wastrels.

The peasants are condemned to servitude. Earlier dialogues written by adherents of the Reformation permitted the common man a say in his affairs and gave him the task of reforming the Church. In Agricola's dialogue his role has changed radically. He is no longer qualified in either sphere, far less suited as a champion of the cause; hence the indignant comment:

Die Flugschrift ist ein eindrucksvolles
Beispiel dafür, in welcher Weise Literatur
in den Dienst der Unterdrückung der ausge-
beuteten und gesellschaftlich unterprivile-
gierten Massen eingespannt werden kann. Es
ist besonders infam, daß Agricola die
Dialogform dazu benutzt,...⁴⁰

At the beginning of 1521 Karsthans was published to counter Murner's concept of "hanß karst", the unruly boor.

In Neu Karsthans Karsthans is pained at the Church's attitude to the lowly: "Heissen vns grobe rültzen vnd knotasten. Haben vns auch anders nit, dann wä^eren wir vnvernünfftige thier; das th^ut mir wee."⁴¹ From then on, German dialogues that propounded reforms and a Reformation depicted pious commoners earnestly seeking the true path to proper Christianity. With Müntzerischer Schwärmer und evangelischer Bauer the development has come full circle. Its Lutheran author puts forward a view of the commoner in 1525 which corresponds to that of the Catholic Murner in 1520. Agricola's pious peasant uses the very same expressions against the peasantry which in earlier dialogues had been put in the mouths of Catholics and then condemned as objectionable.

NOTES

1. Details in Fischer, p. 181.
2. Fischer, p. VII.
3. Laube et al., p. 636, n.5; Fischer, p. 182 f., n. 80, 18 ff.
4. Fischer, p. 105, p. 200.
5. Könneker, p. 106.
6. Kaczerowsky, p. 202.
7. Kaczerowsky, p. 207.
8. Fischer, p. 39, l. 17 ff.
9. Fischer, p. XLI.
10. Kaczerowsky, p. 207 f.
11. Kaczerowsky, p. 208.
12. Kaczerowsky, p. 211.
13. Kaczerowsky, p. 210 f.
14. Kaczerowsky, p. 202.
15. Kaczerowsky, p. 207.
16. Fischer, p. 191, n. 88, 19 f.
17. Laube et al., p. 487.
18. Kaczerowsky, p. 204.
19. Kaczerowsky, p. 206.
20. Kaczerowsky, p. 205.
21. Kaczerowsky, p. 212.
22. Kaczerowsky, p. 205 f.
23. Lenk, Grundpositionen, p. 230.
24. Kaczerowsky, p. 212.
25. Kaczerowsky, p. 203.

26. Kaczerowsky, p. 262.
27. Kaczerowsky, p. 205.
28. Kaczerowsky, p. 211.
29. Fischer, p. 195, n. 92,10.
30. Laube et al., p. 487.
31. Kaczerowsky, p. 209.
32. Kaczerowsky, p. 204.
33. Fischer, p. 185, n.82, 31 ff.:"[Agricola sucht]
der münzzerischen Argumentation dadurch zu begegnen,
daß er ihr einen falschen Inhalt als durch Fakten
bewiesen unterstellt."
34. Kaczerowsky, p. 210.
35. Kaczerowsky, p. 213.
36. Kaczerowsky, p. 203.
37. Kaczerowsky, p. 213.
38. Heald, p. 287.
39. Kaczerowsky, p. 213.
40. Kaczerowsky, p. 262.
41. Lenk, p. 107.

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