

DIALOGUES OF PERSUASION  
THE REFORMATION DIALOGUES  
PRINTED ON THE CONTINENT  
DURING THE REIGN  
OF HENRY VIII

by

Lisa Viktoria Kranzer

A thesis submitted to  
The University of Birmingham  
for the degree of  
MPHIL (B) MEDIEVAL STUDIES

Department of English  
School of Humanities  
College of Arts and Law  
The University of Birmingham  
September 2010

UNIVERSITY OF  
BIRMINGHAM

**University of Birmingham Research Archive**

**e-theses repository**

This unpublished thesis/dissertation is copyright of the author and/or third parties. The intellectual property rights of the author or third parties in respect of this work are as defined by The Copyright Designs and Patents Act 1988 or as modified by any successor legislation.

Any use made of information contained in this thesis/dissertation must be in accordance with that legislation and must be properly acknowledged. Further distribution or reproduction in any format is prohibited without the permission of the copyright holder.

# Abstract

This thesis examines how English Reformation dialogues printed on the Continent during the reign of Henry VIII used the persuasive techniques of the dialogue-form to act as advocates for Reform. All English Reformation dialogues printed on the continent during the reign of Henry VIII employ the same techniques the form offers them. As is shown in this thesis these are the establishment of a truth, the instruction of the reader in that truth, the monologic exposition of arguments disguised as a conversation, the tailoring of arguments to the expectations of the audience and the utilisation of a containment-strategy, allowing the author to neutralise any counter-claims to his arguments. This renders the English Reformation dialogues from 1527 to 1547 formulaic, but allows for the establishment of clear interpretative framework for them. The five rhetorical devices the dialogue authors consistently employed in order to produce a polemic of Reform can be used as a guide to reading those texts. By analysing how and for what purpose the Reformers utilised these rhetorical devices of the dialogue form this thesis sets up an interpretative framework for the Reformation dialogues of Henry VIII's reign based on criteria inherent to the form and demonstrates its effectiveness as a tool of textual-persuasion.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor, Prof. Wendy Scase, for the advice and support I have received from her throughout the process of researching and writing this thesis. I am very grateful to her for it and this thesis would not have been possible without her support.

Thanks are also due to Dr. David Griffith, who provided invaluable advice on the vast corpus of secondary literature surrounding the Reformation and allowed me to participate in his seminar *English Reformed: Early Renaissance Writing* that enabled me to better understand Reformation texts within the greater context of Renaissance writing.

I am also grateful and indebted to my parents Rita and Maximilian Kranzer as well as my aunt Dr. Iris Kloiber, without whose support I could not even have contemplated returning to the University of Birmingham.

# Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Literature Review	9
Chapter I: Encountering the Dialogue	15
Chapter II: The Dialogue before the Break with Rome (1527 - 1534)	
1.1. Employing the Form	24
1.2. The Politics of the Early Dialogues	35
Chapter III: The Dialogue after The Act of the Six Articles (1539 – 1547)	
2.1. Employing the Form	45
2.2. The Politics of the Late Dialogues	54
Chapter IV: The Evolving Form-	
Comparing the pre-1533 Dialogues to the post-1539 Dialogues	63
Conclusion	71
Bibliography	74



# Introduction

Gentyll and soft wyttes are oft tymes offended, that we are now a dayes so vehement in rebukes. But this wolde I fayne knowe of them, what modestye they wolde vse (as they call it) if they were compelled to fyght with dragos, hyders, and other odyble monsters.

John Bale, *The first examinacyon of Anne Askew* (1546)

The writings of the reformers were criticised for their polemicism and fierceness almost from the day they came off the printing presses. Great Renaissance scholars and opponents of Martin Luther's new teachings like Erasmus, Johannes Eck and Thomas More in England all seized on their lack of “modesty” and derided them for it. The reformers themselves, as it is evident in the passage above, heard this criticism but felt justified in ignoring it, because they believed themselves to be fighting a battle for the “true” biblical teachings of Christ against the “false” and corrupt traditions of the Church; and battles are not fought with reason and modesty but anger and determination.

Much of the scholarship on the Reformation and its texts from the nineteenth throughout the twentieth and early twenty-first century accepted this self-defence of the reformers as sufficient explanation for the aggressiveness of their writings leaving it largely unquestioned, but simultaneously dismissed their writings for this very reason as one-sided, monotonous and vulgar; in short, as not worthy of analysis. In fact very little is known about how the writings of the reformers contributed to the spread of the Reformation, even though they are generally viewed as one of its most essential elements. Investigation of Reformation polemic has mainly been concerned with analysis of the medium – the printed page – not with the texts themselves. The recent work of James Simpson has offered a new framework for analysis. In his *Burning to Read*, Simpson questions the widely held belief, advanced mainly via cultural history, that “evangelical

emphasis on the literal sense is simultaneously commonsensical and liberating” (2007: 107). This idea arose in the first place because it was assumed that the availability of texts due to their mass-production thanks to the invention of the printing-press allowed individual readers to develop their own interpretations of texts, thereby liberating them from the sole interpretative authority of the Church. By actually studying those texts that challenged this interpretative hegemony of the Church, Simpson concludes that this was not so. On the contrary, the reformers were aware that their readers needed guidance as to how to understand the Scriptures and various theological writings if they were not to become an uncontrollable reading-mob of opinionated individuals that would not tolerate being led even by the reformers themselves. Therefore they had to instruct their readers how to read and understand their texts; they had to set-up an interpretative framework. But because it was one of the Reformation's central tenets that texts were always understandable at a literal level, this framework could not be acknowledged for what it was, but had to be disguised as a prior revelation of truth that enabled the reader not to interpret what the literal meaning of the text might be, but to know what it was. Of course this knowledge was always what the text's authors wanted it to be as they defined it. This, argues Simpson, produced through the “virus” of literalism an exclusivist, intolerant, persecutory, distrustful, and inevitably schismatic culture of reading (2007: 260-261). In other words a kind of “textual tyranny” constrained the interpretative choices of the reader to the interpretative definitions of the author.

Simpson's interpretation, which is mainly based on his reading of Tyndale, Frith and the writings of the Earl of Surrey, could also easily be applied to another sort of Reformation propaganda that was making its way into England in the late 1520s and early 1530s (as well as the 1540s after a short lull in printing activity): the Reformation dialogue. Dialogue was a prime medium of Reformation discourse - many of the most polemical texts are

dialogues. As a form, dialogue allowed for the exposition of various viewpoints and could also be utilised to instigate textual conversations, or rather controversies with writers of a different persuasion (for example the war of words between Thomas More and William Tyndale in the 1530s). Its main function lies in its persuasiveness and it is commonly understood that dialogue was employed primarily to influence its readers. It is the aim of this thesis to analyse just how these dialogues attempt to influence their readers and thereby come to an improved understanding of their function as textual advocates of reform.

No sustained literary analysis of English Reformation dialogues currently exists. In the light of Simpson's analysis, I propose to examine how the dialogues contain and are in fact made up of rhetorical devices their authors use to guide their readers towards the “correct” interpretation.

The danger of such an analysis lies of course in being aware of these rhetorical devices, but nonetheless becoming ensnared by them resulting in a discussion of the arguments contained within them, with the result that they become the object of analysis rather than the rhetorical ploys themselves; therefore the dialogues' persuasive qualities will be identified and analysed from the outset to avoid such a confusion of content and form. This will also allow for an investigation into what these persuasive devices actually were and how they were employed in order to achieve an improved understanding of the function of dialogue as a form within Reformation discourse.

The dialogues for discussion in this study were selected on the basis of two criteria. First, they had to have been composed and printed during the reign of Henry VIII. Henry's reign witnessed the first wave of English Protestant pamphleteering in the late 1520s and early 1530s introducing the idea of reform to the English population, soon aided by the

King's own struggles for a separation from Rome. In 1539 the introduction of the Act of the Six Articles, a reaffirmation of Catholic doctrine regarding such matters as transubstantiation and the celibacy of priests, led to a second wave of increased Protestant pamphleteering activity. This also coincided with a consolidation of Protestant teaching through canonisation via catechisms on the Continent that would to some extent be echoed in the English reformist dialogues of the period. This trend towards a more catechetical expression of Protestant polemic continued into Edward VI's reign, but Henry's death in 1547 altered the conditions of publication and distribution of Protestant pamphlets so radically that his rule can be seen as marking a distinct phase in Protestant pamphleteering activity that needs to be seen as different from later periods of reformist literature.

This leads to the second criterion of selection for the dialogues in this study. Henry's erratic religious policy forced the reformers to print their texts on the Continent to avoid prosecution, which distinguishes the pamphleteering culture of his "proto-protestant" reign decisively from that of either the reigns of Edward VI or Elizabeth I. Setting the focus of this study on the dialogues printed on the Continent means focusing it on the most distinctive aspect of Henrician pamphlet literature and also narrows the selection of dialogues or dialogue-like texts down to a manageable six. This number allows for a thorough analysis and comparison even in a relatively short study such as this.

The selected pamphlets can be placed in two groups. The first group consists of the dialogues of the first wave of reform, occurring, as has been pointed out above, in the late 1520s and early 1530s before the 1534 Act of Supremacy that at least nominally made England a Protestant country.

The earliest English Reformation dialogue was Jerome Barlowe's and William Roye's *Rede me and be nott wrothe*, printed in 1528 in Strasbourg (STC 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1462.7). This polemical dialogue is mainly an attack on Cardinal Wolsey, but through its ridicule of the

greatest man of the English Church at that period, it conveys and exploits many themes and arguments of the reformers. Its circulation in England would have been fairly limited since an agent of the Cardinal seems to have been informed about it prior to its publication and managed to obtain most copies whilst they were still in Germany (Cummings: *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography/ODNB*); thus only very few copies reached the English market. It is nonetheless the first Reformation-dialogue written specifically for the English market and therefore merits attention, especially so since the few copies that did reach England appear to have been circulated quite widely, as is evident from the many references to it that can be found in later pamphlets. The next Reformation dialogue ( - or rather dialogue-like text – see Chapter II), to be published was *The Supplicacyon for the Beggars* by Simon Fish (STC 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 10883). The pamphlet, which would go on to acquire a seminal role as a reformist text, was printed in Antwerp and reached England in 1529. This pamphlet is a complaint to the king by Fish on behalf of the hungry and needy beggars who have been deprived of all their sustenance by a greedy clergy. It does not utilise the dialogue as its dominant form, but comes so close to it in its rhetorical strategies and stylistic choices that it is justifiable to include it in a discussion of reformist dialogue. It is also one of the few pamphlets King Henry VIII is known to have been familiar with through either Anne Boleyn or through a merchant reading the pamphlet to him after his footman Edmund Moodis offered to show the king “such a booke, as was marvell to hear of” (Scattergood: 68-69). Whether the king actually read the pamphlet himself is impossible to establish.

The third and final text for discussion of this group is *A proper dyaloge, betwene a Gentillman and a Husbandman* printed in Antwerp in 1530 and distributed in England in the same year (STC 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1462.7). The authors of the text were possibly the same as those of *Rede me and be nott wrothe*, Jerome Barlow and William Roye. The dialogue

itself is a polemical exposition of various arguments for reform, conveyed via the mock argument between a Gentleman and a Husbandman, each of whom complains to the other about the abuses of the clergy of their socio-economic group.

The second group of dialogues for discussion in this study are three publications from the 1540s. As has already been mentioned, after the introduction of a more tolerant climate for reform following the King's break with Rome in 1534 and an ensuing lull in printing activity, another major shift in religious policy occurred in 1539 with the passing of the Act of the Six Articles. The Act reimposed strict orthodoxy and prohibited the publication of reformist tracts. This forced many of the reformers to once again return to the Continent in order to print their texts.

One such text was Robert Legate's little-known collection of catechetical dialogues, usually referred to as *A Breife Catechisme and Dialogue* (STC 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 4797.3). The pamphlet, printed in Antwerp by Mierdmann in 1545, is a translation of two Lutheran dialogues meant to educate lay readers in the fundamentals of the Christian faith. The first dialogue comprises approximately a quarter of the text and is a conversation or rather interrogation of a wife by her husband about the meaning of Creed, Pater Noster and Ten Commandments. A second dialogue makes up the remaining three quarters of the pamphlet. In this dialogue an Unlearned Man and the Truth (symbolising the Scriptures) are the protagonists; this dialogue is sub-divided into seven mini-dialogues, each of which deals with a different principle of reformist doctrine. Nothing is known about either the author or the possible purpose of the pamphlet.

*The first examinacyon of Anne Askewe* (STC 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 848) and *The lattre examinacyon of Anne Askewe* (STC 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 850) are the two final texts to be analysed. Both these texts were printed in Wesel by Dirik van der Straten, the former in November 1546, the latter on January 16<sup>th</sup> 1547 only twelve days before the death of Henry VIII on the 28<sup>th</sup> of January

that year. John Bale compiled both examinations and wrote the comments on Anne Askew's own description of her interrogations. In both pamphlets Bale's comments and prefaces make up at least three quarters of the text. The *first* and *lattice examinacyon* are interesting because on the one hand they fairly straightforwardly narrate dialogue in the form of Askew's description of her interrogations, but on the other Bale's text or commentary is also in dialogue with Askew's narration. This is perhaps less obvious but more intriguing as it is a very interesting development or alteration of the form. Bale compiled the examinations only a few months after Anne Askew's execution on July 16<sup>th</sup> 1546. He himself had fled to the continent after Henry VIII's reversal of religious policy a few years earlier (King: *ODNB*) and was named in the king's proclamation of forbidden authors on July 8<sup>th</sup> 1546 (Beilin, 1996: xlv).

It is apparent from the outline above that the dialogue form was not only a dominant category within Reformation discourse in England, but also went through two distinct phases in the period under discussion. This will be reflected in the structure that this analysis will follow.

The first chapter "Encountering the Dialogue" will start by examining the the two great traditions of the dialogue form, the humanist and the scholastic, that dominated the early sixteenth century. It will then discuss where the reformers would have come across these traditions and whether there were any other influences. The chapter will conclude by establishing which particular functions and possibilities, of the various models of the form the reformers encountered, they utilised in their own dialogues. The second chapter on "The Dialogue before the break with Rome 1527 to 1534" will analyse how those functions and possibilities of the form were employed in the first wave of reformist propaganda to enter the English market and explore the political context in which they

were produced. The third chapter “The Dialogue after the Act of the Six Articles 1539 to 1547” will deal with exactly the same questions as the previous one, but make the later dialogues of the 1540s its focus of analysis. In the fourth and final chapter “The Evolving Form – Comparing the pre-1534 Dialogues to the post-1539 Dialogues” the two periods of dialogue literature during Henry VIII's reign will be compared and an assessment will be offered of how the form evolved and adapted to changing political circumstances as well as of how changes in the utilisation of the form reflect changes in religious convictions. The overall aim of this thesis is to come to an understanding of how dialogue functioned as a persuasive device and thus acted as a literary advocate for reform.

# Literature Review

There has been strikingly little literary investigation of early Reformation writing in England. For the period between the early 1520s until well into the 1560s there is no canon of literary scholarship that would elucidate the powerful polemics of the reformers. What seems likely to account for this, is the grounding in real events of these texts. The highly political and religious nature of most English Reformation writing may be the reason why so few literary scholars engage themselves in the study of the pamphlet-texts of the period and not because they are of inferior quality to late Tudor writing in the Elizabethan period as has been suggested as early as the Elizabethan period itself.

Alistair Fox, who in his *Politics and Literature in the Reign of Henry VII and Henry VIII* discusses the reasons why literary scholars have avoided early Reformation writing, argues that the disparaging view late sixteenth century poets and literary theorists took of early sixteenth century writing led to literary critics neglecting these texts for four hundred years (1989: 1). C. S. Lewis even described them as nothing more than “indisciplined armies of adjectives” (1954: 196) in his *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century Excluding Drama*. There are in fact only two sustained literary investigations focused entirely on English polemical texts of the Henrician period, the aforementioned *Burning to Read* by James Simpson, published recently, and *Thomas More and Tudor Polemics* by Rainer Pineas, a much older work dating from 1968 addressing not so much the reformist polemics themselves as Thomas More's response to them. John N. King's *English Reformation Literature* published in 1982, even though it proclaims itself as a study of all Reformation literature, only gives the most cursory treatment to the writings of the actual reformers.

Other than these three, literary comment on Reformation texts in general and dialogues

in particular can only be found in the editions of the texts.

The texts have been poorly served by editors also, and often exist only in a single modern edition or none at all. Even Simon Fish's seminal *Supplicacyon for the Beggars* has been edited only once (- in 1871 by Frederick Furnivall). *Rede me and be nott wrothe* and *A proper dyaloge betwene a Gentillman and a Husbandman* have not fared much better, with one edition each also. Douglas H. Parker, who published them in 1992 and 1996 respectively, at least provides an extensive commentary on the texts that gives ample information about authorship and sources. Anne Askew is somewhat more popular with editors, with two recent editions having been published (1996), one by Elaine V. Beilin (whose comments on the text are more historical than literary) and the other by John N. King (who hardly provides any commentary at all). Another drawback of these editions is that they are editions of Askew's writing only and neither includes John Bale's dialogic interaction with Askew's text. The *Breife Catechisme and Dialogue* has never been edited.

The remainder of literary scholarship on Reformation texts and dialogues is very general. David Daniell's recent but somewhat polemical work on Tyndale and his writings provides useful information about the theological and philological context of various Reformation texts and Andreas Keller's *Frühe Neuzeit: Das rhetorische Zeitalter* is an excellent aid in understanding the rhetorical culture of the Early Modern Period and the centrality of dialogue within that culture. Dialogue as a prominent literary form of the Renaissance and Reformation has actually received some attention, but not as much as one would wish and again it is the English dialogues that are particularly neglected. Virginia Cox's excellent study of *The Renaissance Dialogue* for example investigates the dialogue genre in great detail, but does so with reference to Italian texts only. Studies addressing the English use of dialogue during the sixteenth century do exist, but do not include Reformation-dialogues in their discussion. Wilson's *Incomplete Fictions* describes the

techniques and function of dialogue in great detail, but Wilson applies his analysis of the form only to its most patrician examples – Elyot's, Ascham's and More's dialogues. These are exactly the same dialogues that are discussed in *Dialog und Gesprächskultur in der Renaissance* published in 2004 edited by Bodo Guthmüller and Wolfgang G. Müller, another excellent study of the genre, especially its application in England; however, this work unfortunately neglects the more polemical works of the reformers as much as Wilson does. There seems to be a general neglect of the less refined and less canonical texts. An interesting study of the *Literary Relations of England and Germany* by Charles Herford even goes so far as to say the Reformation-dialogues are too “plebeian for consideration” (1886: xx), which undoubtedly says more about the gentleman's bourgeois Victorian haughtiness than about the genuine literary value of the English Reformation dialogue.

Less judgemental, but also less engaged with English Reformation writing are Adam Fox's *Oral and Literate Culture in England 1500-1700* and more recently Malcolm Hebron's *Key Concepts in Renaissance Literature*. These works do not directly touch upon polemical dialogues of the Henrician period, but are excellent sources for discovering links between these texts and other writing traditions and cultures. A work that stands out in this respect is Wendy Scase's *Literature and Complaint in England 1272-1553*. Scase shows that many of the reformers' texts are based on earlier, medieval complaint traditions. This has important implications for any literary investigation into these texts as it begs the question of whether this appropriation of an older writing tradition was accidental or whether the writers of the Reformation polemics were aware of the literary traditions (and by analogy literary devices and ploys) they utilised.

Even though some literary scholarship does touch upon Reformation texts, in most cases this is either done accidentally or dismissively. It is no surprise therefore that the

investigation into and interpretation of these texts so far has been the preserve of historians. Historical scholarship on the English Reformation abounds and it will only be possible to give a brief overview of the dominant trends in the discipline as regards the study of reformist pamphlets.

Current historical scholarship on the English Reformation rests on two pillars. One came to the fore in the 1960s and 70s through the works of A. G. Dickens - *The English Reformation* (1964) and Geoffrey Elton - *Reform and Reformation: England 1509-1558* (1977). These works question the Protestant discourse on the Reformation in England, by developing a new Reformation narrative of an often aggressive and disruptive Protestantism only laboriously and with the aid of political circumstance making inroads into English society. Yet Dickens and Elton still argue for fairly widespread conversion of the population, who may not have turned towards radical Protestantism, but certainly away from old Catholic orthodoxy and thus retain one of the key elements of the Protestant narrative of the Reformation. reformist pamphlets are seen by these historians as having aided and accelerated this process. Broadly within this tradition of the Protestant narrative of the Reformation are also Robert W. Scribner and Elizabeth Eisenstein, whose works on the impact of reformist pamphleteering on society in Scribner's *For the Sake of Simple Folk* (1981) and *Popular Culture and Popular Movements in Reformation Germany* (1987), and Eisenstein's still groundbreaking study on the impact of print *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change* (1979) introduced print as a major player in the conversion process.

The second and currently more dominant pillar of Reformation history is grounded in the revisionist scholarship of Christopher Haigh - *Reformation and Resistance in Tudor Lancashire* (1975), J.J. Scarisbrick - *The Reformation and the English People* (1984) and Eamon Duffy and his *The Stripping of the Altars* (1992). The revisionists challenge the

idea of voluntary mass conversion of the English people and suggest instead that the population was uniformly conservative, the Reformation being foisted upon them by a “predatory Crown on the prowl” (Scarisbrick 1984: 135). Eamon Duffy even argues that it was only sometime in the 1580s that the balance of Protestants versus Catholics tipped in the Protestants' favour and that in the previous decades enormous social damage was done by enforcing Protestant worship upon a reluctant population. The work of the revisionists is ground-breaking in having established a new narrative of the English Reformation that gives consideration to the conservative elements within early modern English society and challenges latter-day Protestant triumphalism. In their emphasis on the survival of conservative religion though, the revisionists almost removed from history the Protestant reformers and by proxy their writings. This is a major flaw in an otherwise coherent and necessary reconceptualisation of the English Reformation.

More recent works have addressed this imbalance and have succeeded in integrating the reformers in the new Reformation narrative. The more prominent examples of this post-revisionism are Ethan H. Shagan - *Popular Politics and the English Reformation* (2003), Dairmaid MacCulloch - *Reformation: Europe's House Divided* (2003) and *The Beginnings of English Protestantism* (2002) edited by Peter Marshall and Alec Ryrie who also wrote *The Gospel and Henry VIII* (2003), which along with G.W. Bernhard's *The King's Reformation* (2005) provides an excellent study of the relationship between the king and the reformers and how his religious policy impacted upon their conduct and writings. A more general analysis of reformist writings as “agents of change” (to use Eisenstein's term) in relation to other persuasive tools the reformers could make use of can be found in Andrew Pettegree's *Reformation and the Culture of Persuasion* (2005), which also contains an excellent chapter on the possible significance of pamphlets as propaganda tools. The more practical aspects of the book trade are dealt with in *The Reformation and*

*the Book* (1998) edited by Jean-François Gilmont and *Antwerp, Dissident Typographical Centre* (1994) edited by D.Imhof, G. Tournoy and F. de Nave. These provide great insight into the importance of Antwerp as a centre of dissident English Protestant printing and as a bridge between Continental and English pamphleteering. Susan Brigden's book *London and the Reformation* (1989) is very informative, especially in context of the two previously named publications, because her study details where pamphlets and images smuggled into England from the Continent were hidden and distributed and who was mainly involved in this subversive and mostly illegal activity. It is also an excellent examination of the centrality of London to the English Reformation and to the pamphleteering movement, which consisted of a network of merchants, reformers (the authors) and printers who worked together to sidestep English restrictions on the booktrade and bring reformist literature into the country.

Currently, historians provide more insights into Reformation writing than literary scholars, yet one should not be carried away by their findings since historians approach pamphlets from a utilitarian viewpoint, only considering them regarding their supposed impact on society. A study of reformist writings is needed that would explore how they could have sought to influence anyone in the first place, before any larger questions about their impact upon society can be asked. My study of the English Reformation dialogue will hopefully provide the first stepping-stone towards the answer.

# Chapter I

## Encountering the Dialogue

Dialogue was the prime medium of discourse in the two great cultural, political and religious movements sweeping over Europe in the sixteenth century, leading the old Continent into the early modern period – the Renaissance and the Reformation. Of the Renaissance it has been argued that culturally it was an epoch of rhetoric and in particular of rhetorical dialogue (Stierle, 1984: 18). Yet even though dialogue played such a central role in sixteenth-century written expression the origins and common standards of the form are somewhat hazy, particularly so for reformist dialogues. Whereas the more famous and scholarly dialogues of the humanists such as Erasmus' *Colloquia*, Machiavelli's *Dell'arte della guerra* or Thomas More's *Utopia* followed classical models, the dialogues of the reformers borrowed from various dialogue traditions, such as the medieval *quaestiones disputatae* or vernacular dialogues of the medieval period (e.g. *The Plowman's Tale*) and often altered the common conventions of these to suit their own needs. Therefore it can be argued that reformist dialogue represents a new development of the form, specifically suited to the polemic exposition of religious doctrine. Nonetheless they could not help but be influenced by the two great strands of dialogue dominant in the early sixteenth century. These were humanist and scholastic dialogues.

Humanism was the new intellectual movement of the age that would have a profound effect on the European intellectual culture of the sixteenth century. Scholasticism was a medieval philosophical construct and method of learning heavily reliant upon logic. Humanist dialogue, like humanism itself, took its inspiration from ancient sources.

Aristotle and Cicero provided the models for humanist discourse as well as its theoretical and critical foundations. It has been argued that what sets humanist dialogue apart from its scholastic counterpart is that it presents itself like a conversation piece that consistently stresses the connection between its particular subject and its wider meanings, often resulting in allegory (Wilson, 1985: 33-34). Humanists also tended to place their dialogues within little stories or indications of scene, often writing prologues or including poems, songs or the description of settings in their texts. For example Cicero's *De re publica*, the example from classical times many humanists used as a guide for their own texts, starts with a description of the setting of the scene that can also be read as a prologue. A similar introduction to the dialogue via an indication of scene can also be found in Erasmus' *Colloquia* and More's *Utopia*, two very popular humanist texts published in 1518 and 1516 respectively. Three of the reformist dialogues for discussion in this thesis, whose authors as university-educated men would have been familiar with the examples cited above, appear to attempt to create a setting. *A proper dyaloge, betwene a Gentillman and a Husbandman* starts with a poem or song of thirteen stanzas setting the theme for the ensuing dialogue while *Rede me and be nott wrothe* has a whole introductory corpus, containing a description of the polemical image against Cardinal Wolsey on the title page of the pamphlet, a mini-dialogue between the pamphlet and its author about the dangers and need for publication and a lamentation about the death of the mass. The lamentation is interesting because it can be seen either as setting the scene for the long dialogue that is to follow or as the central piece of the pamphlet, which is surrounded by dialogue so as to make its contentions more convincing. John Bale's long introductions to the examinations are intended to prepare to reader for what is to follow and therefore also act as a setting.

Yet, one should not be carried away by the apparent links to humanist dialogues that these pamphlets seem to show. Wilson has argued that it was scholastic dialogues that gave

rise to the religious polemics of the sixteenth century (1985: 55). Scholastic dialogues were less concerned with wider meanings and rhetorical flourishes than with logical questioning and a quest for truth that always ended in the establishment of a truth at the end of the dialogue. The already-mentioned medieval *quaestiones disputatae* are an excellent example of this. One could argue that humanist dialogue was rhetorical and open whereas scholastic dialogue was logical and closed, that is, it had to determine a meaning or truth at its end. Humanism was steeped in the Ciceronian tradition of dialogue, which conceived of the form as a display of knowledge. Scholasticism was concerned with the discovery of truth, associated with Platonic concepts of the dialogue form. Considering these differing conceptions of the function of dialogue it should not be surprising that the reformers would more often utilise the latter form as their primary model. The reformers wanted to proclaim a truth, they wanted to convince and persuade. Therefore they would prefer the scholastic model of dialogue as it not only allowed, but encouraged them to do this. The intention here of course is not to suggest that the reformers actually discussed the merits of various methods of dialogue and then decided upon a model most suited to their needs, but that they grew up and lived in an environment that offered them both models and, consciously or not, they chose mainly to employ the deterministic form as it was better suited to the polemical nature of their dialogues.

The environment that offered the reformers the scholastic and humanistic models of dialogues was the transition period from the late Middle Ages into what can still, at least in literary terms, be called the Renaissance. Scholasticism is usually associated with the former and humanism with the latter. As Erika Rummel points out traditional pre-revisionist scholarship argued that this transition period – approximately 1470/80 to 1530 – caused deep and lasting rifts between scholastics and humanists, whereas the revisionists

contend that it mainly was a period of peaceful co-existence only interrupted by some controversies. In her analysis of the humanist-scholastic debate Rummel concludes that the revisionist view may not be accurate when applied to the sixteenth century as a whole, but certainly has validity for the early Renaissance, “which was characterised by doctrinal and academic latitudinarianism” (1998: 17). Looking at the school and university education the reformers of the 1520s and 1540s would have received (and that would have acquainted them with the dialogue form) in the decades around 1500 this view certainly seems to be borne out, since neither the scholastic nor the humanist model of dialogue appears to have been particularly privileged over the other. Some of the first dialogues English pupils in the late-fifteenth and early-sixteenth centuries would have come across were short treatises on Latin grammar written in the early fifteenth-century by Leland – the *Accedence*, *Comparacio* and *Informacio*. These texts were very simple question and answer dialogues meant as teaching aids and show the strong pedagogic function that the form enjoyed. An example from the *Informacio* reads:

What shalt thou do when thou hast a piece of English to make in Latin?

I shall rehearse my English once, twice, or thrice, and look out my principal verb and ask the question “who?” or “what?” And the word that answereth the question shall be the nominative case to the verb, as in this example.

“The master teacheth scholars.” “Teacheth” is the verb.

Who teacheth?

The master teacheth. This word “master” answereth to the question here, and therefore it shall be the nominative case.

(*Informacio* as quoted in Orme 2006: 108)

Once the pupils had mastered their basic Latin, the next dialogues they would have encountered were, according to Orme, *Lucian's Dialogues* (in a Latin translation, not their original Greek) that consist of comparatively short conversations between usually two speakers about various topics related to Greek mythology always meant to inform or instruct the reader in the particular subject of the dialogue, e.g. the duties of Hermes and the importance of obedience in the dialogue between Hermes and Maia. More advanced pupils were sometimes even given modern dialogues such as Mantuan's *Eclogues* and Erasmus' *Colloquies* to read. The reformers of the 1520s and 1540s probably did not encounter these texts in their schooling as they were comparatively late additions to the curriculum, especially the latter though they may have come across in their university training. Other dialogues the reformers would have read in school include Virgil's *Eclogues* and various texts by Cicero (2006: 124). Reading of the latter in particular prepared them for their university training. As has already been pointed out above, Cicero's *De re publica* was a standard text of any university curriculum. It is also at university where the division between scholastic and humanist dialogues would have been presented in sharper relief through, as Wilson argues, the competing traditions of Platonic (scholastic) vis-à-vis Ciceronian (humanist) dialogue (1985: 23-24). At university the reformers would also have encountered the *quaestiones disputatae* that, being prime examples of the scholastic tradition, thought to prove a premise of an assumed truth, via the logical questioning of this truth and its alternatives (e.g. the *quaestiones disputatae* of Thomas Aquinas); of course this questioning always lead to the conclusion already postulated at the start of the inquiry ( - or rather question-and-answer dialogue it constituted). Logical dialogue or disputation in the scholastic tradition was also used for both instruction and examination at the university. It therefore seems certain that almost any graduate would have been familiar with both the scholastic and humanist form of

dialogue when they left university.

There was yet another tradition of dialogue that could have influenced the reformers. These were the vernacular dialogues of the medieval period, such as the already mentioned *Plowman's Tale*, that are themselves hybrids of various dialogue forms, but can broadly be grouped within the scholastic tradition because of their “deterministic” form, postulating a truth that is expounded rather than questioned by the protagonists of the dialogue. The *Plowman's Tale*, which is a Lollard text written around the year 1400 and reprinted by Thomas Godfrey in 1536 to support reform and the Henrician agenda (Parker 1996: 75), is a prime example of this. The 1380-line poem has a pilgrim as its narrator, but consists mainly of a dialogue between a “Pellican” speaking in support of Lollard positions and a “Griffon” arguing for the Church. The conversation is completely monopolised by the Pellican though who, as Parker argues, fulminates for 1121 lines against the Church, while the Griffon gets no more than 98 lines to defend it (1996: 74). This apparent monologic exposition of arguments against the Church by the Pellican is interesting because the reformers seem to have, as will be shown in the sub-sequent chapters, used a similar technique to convey their arguments. Unlike for the classical dialogues that the reformers encountered in their schooling and university-education it is not known how familiar they would have been with medieval vernacular dialogues such as *The Plowman's Tale*. There must have been some awareness of these anti-fraternal texts in the population at large, though, as otherwise it seems unlikely that the *Tale* would ever have been found and re-printed; and as has been mentioned already its similarity to some of the reformist dialogues is striking. Wendy Scase suggests that the early Reformation-dialogues of the 1520s and 1530s – *Rede me*, the *Supplicacyon* and *A proper Dyaloge* – can be read as part of a long “complaint tradition” (of which *The Plowman's Tale* is an example) stretching from the judicial complaints of the thirteenth century to the libels of

the early seventeenth century.

With such a wealth of dialogues at their disposal how did the reformers choose which model to follow and adapt for their purposes? The answer, which has already been hinted at throughout the chapter, is that they followed mainly the scholastic model for its basic premise that a dialogue has to establish a truth and that the dialogue is primarily an exposition of that truth. But they also borrowed techniques from other models in order to create a dialogue form ideally suited to influencing their readers. The most striking characteristic of Reformation dialogue is its strong pedagogical value. As has been shown in this chapter dialogue as a form, regardless whether scholastic or humanist, is very instructive and seeks to educate its reader. This is why it was the preferred form of instruction in late medieval and early modern schools and universities. Because of this instructive quality it was very suitable as a polemical tool. After all, the reformers had to rely on persuasion in order to spread and popularise their ideas. Dialogue was very helpful, because it allows the author to present difficult content in a simple form that allows for explanation as well. As will be shown in the following chapters, in most Reformation dialogues we find an instructor-learner model similar to the ones in the basic dialogues on Latin grammar the reformers would have encountered in their schooling. It also mirrors the late medieval dialogues of John of Trevisa. One speaker is usually well versed in the new faith and all arguments for it and explains those to a kind of “simpleton” character, who is mainly there to ask a lot of rhetorical questions which will allow the “instructor” to delve ever deeper into his own arguments. This way of argumentation often goes hand-in-hand with a characteristic pointed out by Eva-Maria Orth in her analysis of “Gesprächsstile in der Erzählliteratur der englischen Renaissance“ (Conversation-styles in the Narrative-literature of the English Renaissance): dialogues do not represent

conversations as much as, monologues produced by two speakers competing for the approval of the audience for their respective argument. This is a characteristic of the Reformation dialogue that finds its echoes or rather precursors not so much in the classical dialogues of the school and university curriculum, but in vernacular medieval dialogues such as *The Plowman's Tale*.

From the artful humanist dialogues such as Erasmus' *Colloquia* or More's *Utopia* the reformers adopt the idea of rhetoric over substance; that is, the protagonists of the dialogue are not characters as such, but are made to fit their situation and audience. They change what they say according to what they deem to be most convincing for their audience. They are, in the words of Malcolm Hebron, rhetorical renaissance men making themselves up as they go along (2008: 229). It was the main principle of rhetoric to convince, not to be consistent or what since the Victorian age would be called "true to character". If one reads a Reformation dialogue, one must understand that it is constructed solely to convince its reader of its argument.

A typical characteristic of late medieval scholastic dialogue the reformers utilise is what Oliver Schoell in his essay on *Der Prosa-Dialog der englischen Renaissance* (The Prose-Dialogue of the English Renaissance 2004: 250) has identified as "Immunisierungs-Strategie" - "Immunization-Strategy". The dialogue allows the author to include arguments in his text that he actually deems contrary to his own and to neutralise them through having them mentioned but immediately disproven by his own counter-arguments. This is actually a very effective strategy for containing the force of an opponent's resistance via anticipating or answering that resistance with an immediate disputation of the opponent's arguments. This allows the author to show himself or rather his own convictions as superior to those of his adversary because he can bring up the arguments contrary to his own and even discuss them. The dialogue allows the author to suggest that

his own counter-arguments are so persuasive that he can easily disprove his opponent right away if he only wants to. A very effective polemical weapon.

How these techniques of persuasion were actually employed in the reformist-dialogues of the Henrician age is the topic of the following chapters.

# Chapter II

## The Dialogue before the break with Rome (1527-1533)

### 1.1. Employing the Form

In the previous chapter the main functions of dialogue in the reformist context were pointed out. In this chapter I shall analyse the functions of the dialogue form in their actual application in the pamphlets of the period between 1527 and 1534. The reformist dialogue's persistent claim of veracity or revelation will be discussed first, followed by an analysis of the pedagogical purposes of the texts. The rhetoric of argument will then be examined by looking at the monologic exposition of arguments disguised as a conversation and the reformer's habit of tailoring the arguments to the expectations of their audience. An analysis of the utilisation of the “Immunisation-Strategy”(Schoell 2004: 250) or “Containment-Strategy” will complete the discussion of the persuasive techniques of the dialogue form. The overall argument of this chapter is that the reformers of the late 1520s and early 1530s consistently employed the persuasive techniques of the dialogue form in order to spread their reformist message and thus turned a literary device into a tool of persuasion.

The dialogue as a revelation of truth is evident in all three pamphlets for discussion in

this chapter – *Rede me and be nott wrothe*, the *Supplicacyon for the Beggars* and *A proper dyaloge, betwene a Gentillman and a Husbandman*. *Rede me*, in particular, is not shy about proclaiming its apparent veracity and begins by advising its readers to “Rede me and be nott wrothe/ For I saye no thyng but trothe” (line 1). Douglas Parker refers to this opening line of the pamphlet as intellectual arrogance and states that it and various other *apologiae* about the tract's truthfulness clearly protest too much (1992: 14). This is a misinterpretation because Parker neglects the central role an alleged truth (usually concerning the veracity of the texts arguments) played in all reformist propaganda of the period. It was one of the strongest polemical weapons the reformers had. As has been explained in the first chapter, it even influenced their choice of dialogue-form. By claiming to say “no thyng but trothe”, the authors are not so much displaying intellectual arrogance, as verbalising that which is implicit in the scholastic form of dialogue they employ anyway. The dialogue is not written to present different viewpoints, but to proclaim one as the truth and use the protagonists to explain this truth via mock argumentation and thereby persuade the reader of it. A protestation of truth like the one quoted above in reformist propaganda is also always strongly related to what Simpson refers to as “lection presupposing election” (2007: 135). As has been pointed out in the introduction, evangelical writers had to give their readers the impression that they had a free choice as to how to interpret the texts, while in fact determining themselves how their readers would eventually interpret them. This they achieved by suggesting that the biblical or any other text for that matter was open and understandable at the literal level, but this would only be obvious to those already “elected” to understand this. That is, biblical reading did not automatically lead to the discovery of true faith or the truth in general, but that the reader somehow had to know or recognise this truth even before he started reading. The text, so to speak, would only be a revelation to the reader if he was prepared

to read it as such. The opening line of *Rede me* can be read as a very short and blunt reminder of this principle since those in favour of reform would agree unequivocally with the statement, whereas those not “elected” to understand the truth, that is, those disagreeing with the reformers simply cannot comprehend it anyway, thus rendering their disagreement meaningless or, better put, “false” leaving the text's claim to veracity (at least in the opinion of the reformers) unchallenged. In *A proper dyaloge, betwene a Gentillman and a Husbandman* the opening lament even tells the readers that:

As long as we perceyue not wronge fro~ right  
Nether holynes from false hypocrise  
The truth can not be knowen manifestly. (lines 33-35)

These lines make it very clear that the reader needs to be able to *perceyue* correctly. He must know *wronge fro~ right* before he can understand the truth, not know the truth in order to *perceyue wronge fro~ right*. Election is presupposed by election (Simpson 2007: 135). Yet the authors of the dialogue do not presuppose the election as well and help their readers along in becoming “elected” by making it very clear through the dialogue what is right and wrong. In the case of *A proper dyaloge* what it advocates as right is that, contrary to the “wrong” claims by the conservatives, the new learning is in fact not new and that there has always been abuse by the Church which kings have tried to stop, just as the reformers aim to do now. This “truth” the authors reveal through a re-printed medieval treatise from the reign of King Richard II against simony and various other ecclesiastical culpabilities that is meant to prove the argument of the dialogue surrounding it. *A proper dyaloge* certainly makes a great effort in explaining and proving what is wrong and right to its readers in order for them to understand the maybe not so literal truth.

*The Supplicacyon for the Beggars* by Simon Fish is unlike the two other dialogues in

this respect because it never explicitly mentions the truth as such. This is because in making a supplication Fish is already implying a truth through the many facts, or what he claims to be facts, he cites. Yet though not mentioned as such, the truth is implicit throughout the text, especially when Fish educates his readers about the “real” state of affairs in the kingdom. *The Supplicacyon* certainly makes strong use of the dialogue's ability to instruct its readers. This takes two forms. Fish either asks a flurry of rhetorical questions that he then answers himself with what appear to the reader genuine facts:

There are withyn youre realme of Englund. liij. thousand parisshe churches.  
And this stonding that there be but tenne houshouldes yn  
euery parisshe yet are there hue hundreth thousand and  
twenty thousand houshouldes. (ed. Furnivall, 1871: 2)

Or he tailors historical events to his needs and presents them as if instructing the reader with accurate examples:

The danes nether the saxons yn the time of the auncient  
Britons shulde neuer haue ben abill to haue brought theire  
armies from so farre hither ynto your lond to haue conquered it  
if they had had at that time suche a sort of idell glotons to finde  
at home. (ed. Furnivall, 1871: 3)

Most of his readers would not have been in a position to know whether these assertions were true or not and in the case of the latter quotation, as history is not so much fact as narrative, they may even have espoused this new version of events (it seems likely that readers of reformist texts were already partial to reform before they picked up those texts, see Chapter II-1.2). Therefore Fish can use his “facts”, which seem to fit his argument more than any actual conditions in England at the time, such as his calculations about the

number of friars and priests and the economic impact their refusal to undertake productive work is having on the financial well-being of the country, as learning aids. This allows him to instruct his readers in the real state of affairs as opposed to the false version hitherto presented by the clergy, who with the exception of a few school masters and university-educated scholars held a practical monopoly on education.

The dialogue is an ideal medium for such instruction because it allows the author to first pose the question through one of the speakers, or in the case of Fish through rhetorical questions, and then have the second speaker explain it at length through the instructor-learner model described in the previous chapter. In *Rede me* this model is particularly pronounced. Watkyn, the simpleton character, has hardly ever more than a single line of text, and it is always asking a question which is then answered by Ieffrey the instructor in many times the line-space of Watkyn. *Rede me* is the earliest example of reformist dialogue though and very soon reformist authors became aware that the form was such an excellent instruction device that they could apply the instructor-learner model less rigidly and use a more conventional style.

This is evident in *A proper dyalogue* which was written three years after *Rede me*, but presumably by the same authors (Parker 1996: 24). In this dialogue the roles are actually swapped throughout. First it is the Gentleman who takes the role of the instructor and explains the arguments of the reformers to the Husbandman who sometimes poses rhetorical questions and sometimes contradicts them in order for the Gentleman to explain away all doubts anyone may have about his arguments and then the same rhetorical strategies are employed vice versa. The dialogue reads more like an actual conversation than a schoolroom lesson:

¶ **The husbandman.**

Syr / god geue you good morowe  
I perceiue the cause of youre sorowe  
And most lamentable calamyte.  
Is for the oppression intollerable  
Of thes monstres so vncharitable  
Whom men cast the spiritualte.  
Trouthe it is / ye poore gentillmen are  
By their craftynes made nedy and bare  
Your landes with holdinge by violence  
How be it we husbandmen euery where  
Are nowe in worsse condicion ferre  
As it may be marked by experience.

¶ **Gentillman.**

In worse caas? nay / that can not be so  
For loke ouer the hoole worlde to and fro  
Namely here in oure owne region.  
And thou shalt fynde that in their handes  
Remayneth the chefe lordeshippes and landes  
Of poore gentillmens possession.  
They haue oure aunceters lyuelood and rentes  
Their principall fearmes and tencamentes  
With temporall fredomes and libertees.  
They haue gotten vnto their kingdomes  
Many noble baronries and erldemes  
With esquyres landes and knightes fees.(lines 194 - 218)

Because the authors use the debate form for the argument between the Gentleman and Husbandman the dialogue seems closer to an actual conversation than is the case in *Rede me*. For this reason it may also appear as more convincing to the reader because argument and counter-argument seem to be more evenly balanced and any resulting conclusion

would therefore be more convincing. The form itself and each speaker addressing the other gives the appearance of them having a conversation, but in reality this is just a ploy and both are holding forth a little lament about their own dire circumstances due to the greed of the clergy, which could just as well stand on its own and needs no contribution from the second speaker. A *proper dyalogue* is a more sophisticated dialogue only in so far that it apportions the instructor-learner roles more evenly, giving each speaker an opportunity to both learn and instruct. But this is merely a variation from the basic model, not a departure from it, since it consistently retains the principle of the speakers receiving their instruction without any resistance. They only show doubt of their opponent's argument in order for whoever may hold the role of the instructor at that moment to delve ever deeper into his explanations and thus make those arguments more, not less, convincing. The prime rule of scholastic dialogue that the truth is known from the beginning and only expounded through the dialogue is adhered to throughout. A *proper dyalogue* does not stray from the form, but uses it more convincingly because it uses it more sophisticatedly than in its blunt application in *Rede me*. In the latter it almost seems as if the authors had only placed a name in front of their rhetorical questions in order to clarify that they were indeed using the dialogue form. This becomes obvious when the “monologic dialogue” of *Rede me* is compared to “dialogic monologue” of Fish's *Supplicacyon*.

Fish does not use speakers to convey his message, but as has already been pointed out in the previous chapter uses every other technique of the dialogue form, including perhaps most prominently a wealth of rhetorical questions. These questions always precede more lengthy points of argument and prepare the reader for the points Fish is going to make, which is exactly what Watkyn is doing for Ieffrey in *Rede me*. The only change one would have to make in order for these two texts to seem very much alike would be to either assign two names to the passages of text in Fish's pamphlet that either consist of rhetorical

questions and their explanations respectively or alternatively remove the names from *Rede me*. With some alterations the same can be argued for the *Proper dyaloge* because all the speakers in the dialogue serve merely to convey arguments, and none can be described as being an actual character. This is of course to be expected as the Renaissance and Reformation period knew no characters as such as has been mentioned in the first chapter.

However, the authors were very conscious of the social group in which they placed their speakers. All three pamphlets include members of the lower orders in the dialogues. *Rede me* is a dialogue between servants, *A proper dyaloge* has a husbandman arguing with a gentleman and Fish's text is a *Supplicacyon* on behalf of the beggars. The purpose of this inclusion of the lower orders though is not to give them an actual voice, but to create the impression that all social classes would benefit from reform. The speakers are not actual representations of husbandmen or servants, but are intended to convincingly convey the argument of a clergy opposed to the whole of society. This emphasis on argumentation rather than characterisation is obvious in both *Rede me* and *A proper dyaloge* that articulate their arguments via what on first glance may appear as “characters”, but are only really mouthpieces for the message intended to be conveyed through the dialogue. The dialogue form the reformers employ is not dependent and does not know the idea of character and character development that only came to the fore through the popularisation of the novel two centuries ago, but relies instead on the carefully applied principles of rhetoric in its construction of itself.

The rhetoric of argument in the reformist-dialogues is probably best explained following Andreas Keller's proposition that the complex principles of argumentation in Renaissance rhetoric can be reduced to three core concepts. The Reformation dialogue has its speakers start by making an ASSERTION; it then uses its speakers to support this

assertion through OBSERVATION, thus confirming it, and finally it has them proceed unto transforming these observations into conclusive EVIDENCE and thus ultimate PROOF (2008: 51). Both *Rede me* and *A proper dyaloge* follow this rhetorical strategy to the letter. They respectively start with the assertions – and they are assertions rather than propositions due to the polemical purposes of the Reformation dialogue - that the mass is dead and the clergy has deprived the people of their wealth. Having done this the speakers proceed to tell their audience about the observations they have made confirming this, i.e. the laments and weakening of the clergy in the former, the poverty of gentlemen and husbandmen in the latter. The “conversation” then moves on to have the “learner-characters” Watkyn and the husbandman suddenly discover that all these signs confirming the assertion made at the beginning of the dialogue by the “instructor-character” must in fact be proof of it. This seemingly sudden recognition of, in the case of the reformist dialogues, the corruption of the clergy and need for reform by the “learner-character” is then amply emphasised and confirmed by the “instructor-character” and the objective of the dialogue to reveal a truth not via debate, but through explanation is achieved. That the speakers merely serve to make these rhetorical points is again clear when one applies the above criteria to Fish's *Supplicacyon* as well which does indeed follow exactly the same line of argument. First Fish claims the beggars are so poor because of the clergy's greed:

And this  
 most pestilent mischief is comen vppon youre saide poore  
 beedmen by the reason that there is yn the tymes of youre  
 noble predecessours passed craftily crept ynto this your realme  
 an other sort (not of impotent but) of strong puissaunt and  
 counterfeit holy, and ydell beggers and vacabundes whiche  
 syns the tyme of theyre first entre by all the craft and  
 wilnesse of Satan are nowe encreased vnder your sight not

onely into a great nombre, but also ynto a kingdome.

(ed. Furnivall, 1871: 1)

Then he backs this up with various examples, which he then uses as proof or justification for his call for reform with which he ends his text. Once again as in the analysis of the monologic aspects of the dialogue form, Fish's text only differs from *Rede me* and *A proper dyaloge* in that it does not employ actual speakers. But like them it utilises the rhetorical techniques of the dialogue form as described above in order to convey its message.

Perhaps the dialogue form's most potent and to the reformers most useful technique was the "containmentstrategy" or "Immunisation-Strategie" as Schoell describes it (2004: 250). The dialogue form's ability to let the author bring up the arguments of his opponents and immediately neutralise them is employed frequently in all three pamphlet texts. In *Rede me and be nott wrothe* for example such a containment strategy can be found in an exchange between Watkyn and Ieffrey, in which Watkyn poses a popular argument against the proselytising of the reformist message, that if the whole truth and salvation can indeed be found in scripture, why would there be any reason to publish anything but the Bible in favour of the reform?

**Wat.**

¶Holde thy peace and be content /  
The gospell by a co~maundment /  
To do it will strayghtly theym compell.

**Ief.**

¶They sett nott by the gospell a flye /  
Diddest thou not heare whatt villany /

Thy did vnto the gospel?

**Wat.**

¶Why / did they agaynst hym conspyre?

**Ief.**

¶By my trothe they sett hym a fyre /

Openly in London cite. (lines 704 – 712)

Ieffrey contains Watkyn's counter-argument by presenting it as mistaken and utilises it by suggesting the clergy care so little for the scriptures they burn them. An outrageous act at the time. In *A proper dyaloge* the containment strategy is mainly utilised by the authors to raise, but at the same time, neutralise concerns about the different socio-economic groups and therefore possibly divergent interests of the speakers. The *Supplicacyon* can only bring up counter-arguments through the ploy of rhetorical questions, achieving ultimately the same effect as *Rede me* and *A proper dyaloge*, but in a much more blunt and less realistic manner. Notwithstanding questions of style though, the frequent use of the containment strategy in all three dialogues testifies to its and in general the dialogue form's functionality as a persuasive medium for Reformation discourse.

## 1.2. The Politics of the Early Dialogues

In this chapter I shall discuss potential readers or reformist polemics and how the dialogues of the reformers were to a considerable extent the product of the political circumstances of their time, yet also utilised these political circumstances to their advantage.

Commonly it is argued that Reformation dialogues were too aggressively polemical to act as advocates for conversion and this certainly seems to be the case for the later texts of the 1540s but when considering the dialogues of first period of reform before Henry VIII broke with Rome, one needs to be more careful with this assessment. All three Reformation dialogues from this period under consideration in this study avoid doctrinal argument and focus instead on primarily two themes. One is the covetousness and hypocrisy of the clergy, the second, related to the acquisitiveness of the clergy, is the issue of royal power. But before the significance of such an emphasis on non-theological themes in what are still thought of as primarily religious polemics can be discussed it needs to be clarified who was likely to read these texts in the first place since a text's direct influence is always confined to its readers. There appear to be two distinct groups of readers. The first consisted of the reformers themselves and their conservative opponents, most prominent among whom was Sir Thomas More who wrote several refutations of reformist polemics, e.g. *The Supplicacyon of Soulys* in 1529. The second group is far less clearly defined as it has to encompass all potential readers and will be discussed in more detail below, but first the “reading-group” of reformers and Counter-reformers needs to be considered.

Reformist dialogues were not just the dialogues on the printed page, but were also in a dialogue beyond the text with their conservative opponents. Soon after the first reformist

polemics started entering the English market in 1526 and 1527 Conservatives recognised that prohibition of these texts would not be enough and started writing against the reformist pamphlets. This of course required them to read the reformist texts. Thomas More and Bishop John Fisher were the most active opponents of the reformers. Bishop Fisher though appears to have mainly written against more general themes such as the denial of transubstantiation and the divorce of Henry VIII from Catherine of Aragon and not any specific texts by the reformers. This was almost exclusively the preserve of Thomas More, who conducted a series of textual exchanges with Tyndale (often using the dialogue form for his responses), but also paid attention to texts by less well known authors such as Fish's *Supplicacyon*. His response to Fish's text was the already mentioned *Supplicacyon of Soulys*, in which More directly attacked Fish's assertion that beggars were being robbed by the clergy, by having the souls in purgatory lament their plight if the people and clergy cease to pray for them. More thus asserts that there is in fact such a thing as purgatory since much of Fish's argument rests on the denial of the latter and he argues that the clergy are not greedily robbing the poor because they use the money for a necessary cause – prayer for the souls in purgatory. Fish died too soon to defend his text, but other reformers took up his cause and responded to More, including Barlowe and Roye who defend Fish's *Supplicacyon* in *A proper dyaloge*:

¶ **Gentillman.**

So shuld we be sure of soche answeres  
 As were made vnto the poore beggers  
 For their pituous supplicacyon.

Against who~ y<sup>e</sup> clergyes resons nought worthe  
 The soules of purgatory they brought forth  
 The beggers complaynte to discomfyte.  
 Wherefore against oure petition I the tell

They wold bringe out all the deuells in hell  
For to do vs some shamefull despyte.

¶ **Husbondman.**

And was ther none other waye at all  
But the sonles of purgatory to call  
In ayde and assistance of the clergie.

¶ **Gentillman.**

It was the suerest waye by seynt Ihone  
For had they to playne scripture gone  
I wousse they hadde be taken tardye.  
The beggers complaynte was so grounded  
That the clargye hadde be confounded  
Had they not to purgatory hasted.

¶ **Husbondman.**

Where sayd they purgatorye shuld be?

¶ **Gentillman.**

By scripture they shewed no certente  
Albeit with stowte wordes they it faced.  
Euen like vnto the man / which ment  
A certeyne straunge ylonde to inuent  
But whan he sawe could it not fynd  
Least his wit & travaile shuld seme in vayne  
Reporte of other men he beganne to fayne  
The symplicite of rude people to blynde. (lines 485 – 515)

It is clear from this passage that the authors of the dialogue do not just confine their dialogue to one on the printed page, but are also in a dialogue with other texts, mainly those of conservative opponents or other reformers (Fish and More's *Supplicacyons* in this

case) and thought it important to defend their texts and doctrine from any attack even if the attack was directed against other reformers. This why this first group of readers, although comparatively small is nonetheless important because it not only influenced what the reformers wrote in their dialogues, but also how those dialogues functioned as textual participants in a greater dialogue beyond the printed page often involving them in the great religious and political disputes of the age.

Regarding the second group of readers who constituted the majority and could be any member of the reading public, it is impossible to find out who exactly read these dialogues, but it is possible to establish who was likely to. In the late 1520s and early 1530s the restrictions on the book trade made it difficult to even acquire a Reformation pamphlet. A prime example of this is Barlowe and Roye's *Rede me and be nott wrothe* of which most copies were seized while still in Germany and only very few ever made unto the English market (Cummings: *ODNB*). As mentioned in the introduction *A proper dyaloge* and the *Supplicacyon* were distributed in greater quantity, but selling and owning them was a dangerous business. The *Supplicacyon* was put on the list of banned books soon after it arrived in England in 1529, anyone who owned it faced imprisonment and considerable fines. Therefore it required a certain amount of determination in order to to get hold of and thus be able to read those texts in the first place as has most recently been suggested by Alexandra DaCosta in her study "Religious Babel: the Impact of Restrictions of the Book Trade 1529-32". This is significant as it implies that a large section of those that read these dialogues must have known about their strongly reformist content prior to their acquisition and this is what actually made them find these texts even under considerable threat from the authorities. It then seems likely that the further circulation of the dialogues would have been to people the buyers of the dialogues knew to be sympathetic to reform also, as

otherwise the risk would have been too great. In short a significant amount of those that read the reformist dialogues must have known about their reformist content prior to reading them and read them specifically for this reformist content, implying that they in fact may have wanted to be influenced or rather confirmed in their opinions by these texts. Amongst the readers of reformist dialogues there was not a uniformity of class or profession, but a certain general conformity to reformist ideas. Uniformity as has been shown in the first section of this chapter was to be found in how the dialogue authors used the tools of their medium to make their case for reform. It has also been pointed out in both Chapter I and II that it was one of the core principles of renaissance rhetoric to tailor one's arguments to the expectations of one's audience. Therefore it could be argued that the similarity of the early reformist-dialogues might be due to a fairly homogeneous audience. Yet there is more to it.

In England anti-fraternal writings were a staple of medieval literary output and as Scase has shown were utilised by the reformers (2007: 149-157). One of the two main themes of Reformation dialogues, the greediness of the clergy, was a common feature of English writing even before the Reformation and would have found a wide audience even among those not necessarily sympathetic to reform because they would not have immediately identified it as being a new much more dangerous attack upon not just the clergy, but the Church as a whole. This is why one needs to be careful with suggestions that the early Reformation-dialogues were too radically polemical to appeal to anyone other than zealous Protestants because one of the main achievements of these dialogues was to cloak their Lutheran message under a mantle of anti-clerical content. The extent of anti-clericalism in England prior and during the Reformation has been hotly debated, but regardless of whether it may have been a contributing factor to the rise of Protestantism or not, Ethan Shagan has demonstrated that it certainly produced a commonplace belief that the king and

the priesthood were enemies, and many subjects were eager to prove that, when push came to shove, they would always back the Crown (2003: 144). This the reformers exploited in the second main theme of their dialogues, the issue of royal power.

In *Rede me* Barlowe and Roye attack Wolsey for assuming more power than either king or nobles, being only comparable to an Emperor:

Och / there is nether duke ne barone /  
Be they never of so grett power.  
But they are constrayned to croutche /  
Before this butcherly sloutche /  
As it were vnto an Emproure. (lines 1211 - 1216)

The complaint in *Rede me* that Cardinal Wolsey, representative of the clergy as a whole, has accrued more power than the king is echoed in Fish's *Supplicacyon*:

And whate do al these gredy sort of sturdy idell holy  
theues with these yerely exactions that they take of the  
people? Truely nothing but exempt them silues from the obe-  
dience of your grace. Nothing but translate all rule  
power lordshippe auctorite obedience and dignite from your  
grace vnto them. Nothing but that all your subiectes  
shulde fall ynto disobedience and rebellion ageinst your  
grace and be vnder them. (ed. Furnivall, 1871: 4)

Fish goes farther than Barlowe and Roye by arguing that the clergy's acquisition of power means not only that the king is deprived of this power, but that it will lead to further losses as it leads the king's subjects to rebellion. Fish's attack on the clergy is very strong because it implies that what they are doing is treason. reformist sympathisers would of

course have supported such an accusation, but even conservatives could not have attacked Fish outright as it might have tainted them with the suspicion of betrayal of their king. That the crown was not backing the clergy as it used to in 1529 when Fish's pamphlet was published is evident from the legislation passed in what was to be the first year of the Reformation Parliament. An Act was passed removing the clergy's right to separate canonical courts and commoners accused of heresy were granted the right to be examined by the king's courts rather than the ecclesiastical ones. The latter had been accused of turning any accusation of heresy into a conviction. In the following year parliament reinstated the charge of Praemunire, thereby removing the clergy's ability to appeal to Rome. This was a clear sign that Henry wanted to have his court perceived as the sole locus of power. This is a sentiment that can also be found in *A proper dyloge*. This text was published during the first sessions of the Reformation parliament in 1529/30 and like *Rede me* and the *Supplicacyon* laments the wretched state of the kingdom caused by the rule of the clergy:

Howe we husbandemen full pituously  
vnto miserable wrechednes are brought.  
Fyrst whan englonde was in his floures  
Ordred by the temporall gouernoures  
knowenge no spirituall iurisdiccion.  
Than was ther in eche state and degre  
Haboundance and plentuous prosperite  
Peaceable welthe without affliccion.  
Nobleness of blood/ was had in price  
Vertuousness avaunced/ hated was vyce  
Princes obeyd/ with due reuerence. (lines 269 - 278)

Again it is implicit in the husbandman's lament that the king needs to deprive the clergy

of their undue power and exercise it himself. It would be a mistake to assume from this that the dialogues played any significant role in causing these political changes. What they did do was capture the mood of the time and use it to their advantage. The English Reformation dialogues primarily attempted to persuade their readers of the need for reform through conflating it with their reader's loyalty towards the Crown.

The dialogue form was the ideal medium for such a confusion of conviction and obligation through its tools of persuasion discussed in the previous chapter. First it allowed its authors to suggest to their readers they were revealing a truth. The truth they revealed was the need for reform because of the enmity of the clergy towards king and people. Those readers sympathetic to reform in the first place would not have contested such a claim, for more conservative readers it may have been provocative. It also made it more difficult for conservatives to answer such a text as a truth, even if it is just an alleged truth, is harder to contest than a simple suggestion. This was made harder still by the way in which the dialogue form allowed its authors to educate their readers in this truth via the instructor-learner model. First the instructor-character launches a tirade against the abuses of the clergy. These alleged abuses would not have been unfamiliar to readers because of the above mentioned medieval anti-fraternal traditions. Once this is done the learner-character in *Rede me* and *A proper dyaloge* (Fish employs rhetorical questions for this purpose) pretends not to understand either how this relates to a need for reform or, more cleverly, how such a reform could ever be brought about for surely the clergy is too powerful? This is the cue for the instructor-characters Jeffrey and the husbandman (or in Fish's case the answers to his own rhetorical questions) to recite monologues on how this seems impossible because the clergy has taken so much power from the king that they appear more powerful than the actual originator of that power, yet not so powerful that the king could not reclaim this power. This is then “proven” with various examples from the

past. In *A proper dyaloge* an actual tract against simony from the reign of Richard II is included to give credibility to these claims. The first connection between royal power and the need for reform is thus made. The learner-character does not appear to be satisfied though and keeps probing the instructor with questions that appear critical, but act as containment strategy that allows the instructor to disperse doubts and make ever more convincing arguments. And not just any arguments for reform, but reform through greater royal power, thus making the two separate issues of reform and royal power virtually indistinguishable. The influence thus achieved on readers in favour of the new learning would be considerable as it confirmed them in their already held beliefs, but also tied these to their loyalty as subjects and made reform seem like the inevitable choice for patriotic Englishman and not the subversive movement it actually was. Among conservative readers the influence would not have occurred in terms of personal conviction, but in depriving them of the certainty of defending established authority. By transforming the religious struggle of Protestantism into a political one of loyalty to king and country, the authors of the reformist-dialogues succeeded to a considerable extent in presenting themselves as the defenders of justified or “true” royal authority against the “false” and subversive power of the clergy.

The dialogue form was such a useful literary device for the reformers in the years before Henry's break with Rome because it allowed them to invert the actual political and religious situation in their writings and thereby present themselves as whatever they wanted to be seen as. In the case of *Rede me*, the *Supplicacyon* and *A proper dyaloge* this was as advocates for royal power since this suited the drift of royal policy perfectly and the influence of the Reformation dialogue on its readers was augmented and strengthened by the influence of actual political events on them. The strongest element of influence the Reformation dialogue enjoyed was not just its tools of persuasion, but that its authors knew

how to exploit the political circumstances of their time through these tools.

# Chapter III

## The Dialogue after the Act of the Six Articles (1539-1547)

### 2.1. Employing the Form

Truth is, as in the pre-1534 reformist-dialogues, still a prominent feature of the form. It can even be argued that it is more pronounced in these later dialogues from the 1540s. Both *The first examinacyon of Anne Askewe* and *The lattre examinacyon of Anne Askewe* have Psalm 116 printed on the title page- *the veryte of the lorde endureth for euer*. And *A Breife Catechisme and Dialogue* advertises on its title page:

dyuerse other Dialogues betwene the Truthe and the Unlearned man:  
wherein the Truthe (which is Goddes worde) teacheth all symple and  
ignoraunte people what is necessary for them to knowe unto their saluacyon  
folio I, *A Breife Catechisme*

and at the very bottom of the page adopts the motto *Truthe overcommeth*. It is immediately obvious that all three of these protestations of truth are very much religious expressions of truth. Two, psalm 116 from the *Examinacyons of Anne Askewe* and the motto of *A Breife Catechisme*, are taken directly from the Bible, while the content description of the latter not only announces the *Truthe* as a speaker of the dialogue, but states this *Truthe*, or as can be assumed is intended to be conveyed, the *Truthe* in general is *Goddes worde*.

Bale and Legate, the authors of these late Henrician dialogues, use the form's technique of establishing a truth at the beginning of the argument as much as Fish, Roye and Barlowe, but it has a different quality. In the early dialogues it was employed practically; its use was meant to convey to the reader that the reformer's texts were “true” as opposed to the “false” writings of their opponents. In the later dialogues the *Truthe* is not just an assessment of the dialogue's veracity, but a proclamation of conviction – religious conviction. Therefore it is not the dialogue that will reveal this truth as was the case in the earlier pamphlets because the truth is and has already been revealed by God through the Scriptures. Rather the dialogue will be a medium between this known truth and those that may see it, but not comprehend it. Its function is pedagogical as is obvious from the description of its own contents on the title page of *A Breife Catechisme*. Of all the dialogues for discussion in this study *A Breife Catechisme* is the most obviously “educational” text. It advertises itself as such and follows its self-description on the title page:

A Breife Catechisme and Dialogue betwene the Husbande and his Wyfe:  
contaynyng a pyththy declaracyon of the Pater noster, Crede, and tene  
Commaundementes, very necessary for all men to knowe  
folio I, *A Breife Catechisme*

and the above cited description of the second dialogue between the Truth and the Unlearned Man to the letter.

The *Breife Catechisme and Dialogue betwene the Husbande and his Wyfe* is much more the former than the latter. Prompted by the rhetorical questions of her husband, the wife defines the meaning of each commandment or passage from the Creed or Pater Noster ever more precisely and definitively. The reader is not left with any interpretative choice. The

already deterministic form of the scholastic dialogue is taken one level further in this text. As has been discussed in the previous chapter, the early dialogues use the form to explain a truth proclaimed at the beginning of the dialogue. The *Breife Catechisme* does not simply explain one over-arching truth, but each sentence of the Creed, Pater Noster and the Ten Commandments is separately proclaimed as true and then expounded upon. The reader is taught not just what to believe, but how to understand each individual tenet of that belief.

The second dialogue of Legate's pamphlet, between the Truth and the Unlearned Man not only instructs its readers in how to interpret what to read, but prompted by the rhetorical questions of the Unlearned Man the Truth instructs him (and the reader) in how to believe according to what he reads. The dialogue is a tutorial of how a "true" believer should conduct his life. This is already evident from the seven sections the dialogue is divided into:

I Of the loue toward God & our neyghboure. Item a declaracyon of the Lawe, and how a man shall ordre hym selfe therin.

II Of faythe, and how a man shall vse hym selfe therin.

III Of Goddes mercy: & how that we ought alwayes to prayse & blesse his holy name.

IV How to avoyde false doctryne, and to eschewe all maner of uproure and sedycyon: And how that no man ought to slaundre a nother, nor yet lyghtely one to iudge a nother.

V Of our dutyes toward kynges and Prynces: and how that we ought to honoure and obeye them.

VI Of persecucyon: and how euery man ought to suffre, and to beare his

crosse.

## VII Of the judgement of God: and the lyfe euerlastynge.

The first six sections all deal with how a believer ought to behave if he wants to achieve everlasting life promised to him in the final section of the dialogue. The reader is not only taught through the dialogue how to live such an exemplary life, but the very structure of the dialogue provides a model for it starting with the fairly practical concern of how to obey the law and avoid confrontations with others and then moves on to issues of correct faith and the avoiding of false doctrines, before it instructs its reader about more dangerous issues arising from adhering to the “true” faith – the obedience towards princes and the suffering of persecution. It is almost like an ascending model of the challenges of faith, which then culminates and is resolved through the promise of God's judgement rewarding the righteous with eternal life. The dialogues in *A Breife Catechisme* instruct their readers in how to read and how to live according to that reading, motivating them through promising them the reward of everlasting life after the final judgement.

Bale's *Examinacyons of Anne Askew* also need to be read as an instruction to the reader as to how to understand Anne Askew's testimony of her own examinations. It needs to be added here that Bale's comments on Askew's text can only be understood as constituting a dialogue with them if they are read as the kind of textual participant in a greater dialogue beyond the printed page, as referred to in Chapter II – 1.2. The Politics of the Early Dialogues. Bale's text is a defence of Askew's Protestantism and can be read as being in dialogue with both the persecutors and adherents of Askew. That Bale is following the scholastic principle of dialogue mandating a pre-determined truth is immediately obvious from how he himself describes his comments of Askew's examinations in both pamphlets – *the censure or iudgeme~t of Iohan Bale therupon, after the sacred Scriptures and*

*Chronycles* (folio XIII, *First examinacyon*; folio X, *Lattre examinacyon*). A censure or judgement always implies the establishment of truth. Bale lets his readers know that he intends to “elucydate” to them what happened to Anne Askew. This elucidation in both *The first* and *The lattre examinacyon* takes the form of a very long introduction and conclusion to what is a comparatively short text from Askew herself, which Bale constantly interrupts with his own comments.

This again as with all the other pamphlets gives Bale's text the appearance of being in a dialogue with Askew's, but it is yet another “dialogue of the deaf” with Askew never even having been aware that her testimony would be used in such a way and Bale drowning out Askew's voice through the sheer length of his explanations. For example on folios XX to XXII of *The first examinacyon* ten lines of text from Anne Askew are expounded by three pages or seventy-eight lines of commentary by Bale. The annotations are almost eight times as long as the base text. This is a more extreme example, but throughout the text of both examinations Bale's expositions are consistently longer than Askew's own writing. Yet this is to be expected from a text that is not so much in dialogue with Askew, but with those that either despise Askew for her Protestantism or those that admire her for it. The arguments of the former Bale wants to counter, the beliefs of the latter he tries to strengthen. Bale does not elucidate but obscure and distort Askew's testimony through his commentary. He utilises Askew's writing as a prop for his own agenda. This is similar to the use of rhetorical questions in the other dialogues as props for certain arguments. The *examinacyons* are similar to the other dialogues because one of the “conversation-partners” serves merely as a prompter for the monologues of the other. This is particularly interesting in Bale's “dialogue of monologues” because he cannot simply introduce a learner-character, who asks the questions, but has to use and partition Askew's text in such a way that it will allow him to insert his expositions of her writings. He achieves this by first

either confirming what Askew says in his commentary and then expanding upon it or lamenting on the cruelty of the interrogators thereby instructing his readers in what is and is not “true” Christian conduct. Because Bale essentially appears to simply expand upon Askew's text, it is not immediately evident to the reader that he actually distorts it in order to advance his own arguments. Yet in each individual commentary or rather monologue in which Bale appears to “elucydate” Askew, he is actually diverting attention away from her very factual account of the proceedings against her to his polemics about the villainy of the religious conservatives. Askew's voice is completely drowned out by the extent of Bale's commentary in relation to her relatively short testimony and she only surfaces to introduce yet another of Bale's monologues. In *A Breife Catechisme* that employs conventional speakers in both its dialogues more like *Rede me* and *A proper dyaloge* than the *Supplicacyon* or the *Examincacyons*, one of the speakers, as in all the other dialogues, also only serves to prompt the other with rhetorical questions. But because the *Breife Catechisme* is indeed a catechism this is done very crudely:

**The Husbände**

What is faythe or beleue?

**The Wyfe**

To beleue in God: is to put all his confidence and trust with herte, wytte (and all that he may) in God, depe~dyngē stedfastly vpo~ his worde, without all maner of doubtyngē, settngē all his trost a~d confydence in God. Thus is fayth or beleue nothyngē elles but an hope and truste in Goddes promyses.

**The Husbände**

Wherevpon standeth our fayth, and whervpon is it grounded?

**The Wyfe**

Upon the very worde of God, without the which fayth can not contynue and abyde in

necessyte and trouble. Thus is Jesus Christe the worde of the father, the onely foundacyon and stonne wherupon our beleue standeth.

folio XI, *A Breife Catechisme*

The purpose of this kind of dialogue is clearly the instruction of the reader in the tenets of the Protestant faith and the author does not attempt to mask this in any way through either a more balanced approach of which one of the speakers asks and answers the questions as in *A proper dyaloge* or through better characterisation of either one of them. The latter though as has already been pointed out or rather the lack of it was common in all Renaissance and Reformation dialogues because the speakers, i.e. their orations, were meant to present an argument in such a way that the audience would find it convincing, not to be the elocutions of genuine characters.

The second dialogue in *A Breife Catechisme* is a particularly good example of this. For in this dialogue the speakers not only voice the argument, but are solely identified by the two aspects of that argument: one is the Unlearned Man in need of instruction desiring to hear the argument and understand it, the other is the Truthe, who as the personification of God's word can of course as Bale would put it “elucydate” the Unlearned Man. The dialogue is direct in its assignment of roles and leaves the reader in no doubt as to what the speakers are meant to convey to their audience. The Unlearned Man represents the audience itself who need guidance in their faith, whereas the Truthe is God's word mediated to them via the dialogue.

*A Breife Catechisme*, as its title would suggest, is like all the other dialogues intended to instruct its readers, but it is different from the other texts in doing this openly. Its intention can be found in its very title, in several references to being an instruction manual for the “ryght fayth” in its introductory passage and in the actual names of the speakers. Whereas the other dialogues attempt to convince their readers of the new

learning through their instruction, this dialogue assumes they are convinced already and tells them how to act accordingly. Yet this confidence in its readers has rendered the form crude and *A Breife Catechisme* is through its bluntness much less refined in its use of the tools of the form than earlier examples. Especially the containment strategy is, even though used extensively, reduced to the kind of interrogation session found in the dialogue between the Husband and Wife, being introduced each time with the same words –

*thus I perceyue very well..., but*  
*now perceyue I very well...,but*  
*I beleue ryght well..., but*

Bale's use of this feature of the dialogue form so popular among the writers of the early dialogues from the 1520s and 30s is less obvious than Legate's and more similar to its utilisation in the earlier texts. For example after an extract from Anne Askew in which she has to defend herself as a woman speaking about the Scriptures, Bale comments:

Plenteouse ynough is her answeare here, vnto thys quarellynge, and (as apereth) vnlernd chancellour. Manye godlye wo men both in the olde lawe and the newe, were lerned in the scriptures, and made vtteraunce of them to the glorye of God. As we reade of Helisabeth. Marye, and An na the wydowe, Lu. 1. & 2. yet were they not rebuked for it. yea, Marye Christes mother retayned all, that was afterwar de written of hym, Luc. 2. yet was it not imputed vnto her an offence. Christ bla med not the woman that cryed whyls he was in preachynge, ...

folio XI, *First examinacyon*

Bale employs the strategy so often found in the earlier dialogues of assenting to what the second speakers says, but nonetheless elaborating on it, so he can simultaneously

defend Askew's position and transform the reader's sympathy for her into assent for his own argument.

Overall the main functions of the dialogue form are still employed to the same extent in the 1540s as in the late 1520s and early 1530s, but as a literary form they seem to have developed in a negative direction becoming cruder and more direct, almost to the point of bluntness. Yet this does not mean that a literary regression has taken place, on the contrary the genre has been fully developed: the texts of the earlier period advocating reform through dialogue have become Reformation dialogues preaching the gospel.

## 2.2. The Politics of the Late Dialogues

The reformist dialogues of the 1540s exhibit what has been described by Alec Ryrie as the tension between the reformers two loyalties to their king and to their faith (2003: 3). These are also the two directions in which the authors of the dialogues attempt to lead their readers with their arguments transmitted via the persuasive tools of the form. The dialogue form the reformers employed, steeped in the scholastic model of a single truth proclaimed and expounded, was suddenly utilised to persuade its readers of two different loyalties simultaneously. Of course the earlier dialogues already conflated the need for reform with the reader's loyalty to the king, but this is exactly where the difference lies. The earlier dialogues managed to conflate these two very different obligations, one's obedience to God and one's obedience to the king; whereas the later texts keep them strictly separate, one's obedience to God versus one's obedience to the king, yet they nonetheless attempt to make the two appear as two sides of the same coin. As Alec Ryrie argues, in this still early period of the Reformation, evangelicals hoped that the tension could be resolved(2003: 3). The course of events would soon show that radical faith and absolute loyalty to the Crown did not coincide very often. Even in the 1540s a decade after the English Church had become independent from Rome, reformers like Bale and Legate were still forced to print their pamphlets on the continent. This fact alone is revealing already about the difficulty of combining zealous faith with the practical demands of being an obedient subject. The main tension arose from the compromises the new religious establishment in England necessitated since as Shagan has argued Tudor political theory held that religious consensus was the basis of political stability (2003: 221) and the ill-timed radicalisation of faith evident in the writings of the reformers. The reformers were probably very familiar with the biblical warning that no one can serve two masters, but they did not yet either

realise or admit in their texts that the king and their faith were two separate masters. The future tension this would cause is already apparent in the dialogues from this period that attempt to influence their readers towards both loyalties, yet unwittingly cancel one out in the process. To analyse how this happens and therefore how these later dialogues influence their readers is the aim of this chapter.

Before the analysis gets under way though it is important to point out that, much more so than with the reformist dialogues from the late 1520s and early 1530s, the authors of these texts were primarily concerned with, again quoting Alec Ryrie, “shoring up the faith of the converted rather than with persuading their opponents” (2003: 4). Knowing that the post-1539 dialogues are almost exclusively intended to confirm and strengthen the faith of the already converted is vital in understanding how they aimed to simultaneously persuade their readers of absolute faith in God and absolute loyalty towards the king and fail in doing both, to the detriment of the latter.

Robert Legate's *A Breife Catechisme* is particularly interesting regarding the tension between the two conflicting loyalties of believer and subject because it is a translation from one or several German originals and therefore is not tailored at all towards the particular circumstances of the Henrician Reformation. It is also strikingly different from the earlier texts on account of the many Bible quotations it contains, probably making up half the text. In the dialogues of the 1520s and 1530s the mention of purgatory was the sole genuinely religious content in texts supposed to propagate a new faith. Therefore before *A Breife Catechisme* can be placed within its English context, it will be necessary to discuss its German origins in order to understand the intended purpose of the dialogue.

Even though the actual text or texts Legate translated are not known, the catechism dialogues of Reformation Germany during the 1540s are so uniform that one can

nevertheless reach conclusions about their intended purpose by analysing them not as individual texts, but as a sub-genre of the dialogue form. With the secure establishment of Lutheran principalities in the German speaking lands in the two decades following the former monk's challenge to the Papacy, the reformed religion had achieved a permanent basis and had to, if it wanted to exert control over its believers as Simpson has pointed out, create an interpretative framework for reading the Bible (2007: 106-141). This framework could only be based on faith as tradition and authority, the pillars of Catholic readings of the Bible, were not acceptable to the reformers. Therefore the reformers had to define what faith was and how this faith led one to interpret scripture, the commandments and any other religious writings. To do this they wrote catechisms. Many of which, it should be pointed out, including *A Breife Catechisme*, legitimated the instruction of their readers in how to believe and how to interpret scripture through extensive Bible quotations, thus creating a perfect circular argument. Unfortunately this cannot be dealt with here as it is such a large topic that it would require a separate study. What matters for this study is that catechisms were clearly written for an already reformed readership that was to be instructed in how to understand and live their reformed faith.

This continental context of a “codification” of faith would also have been familiar to English reformers of the same period, yet they had another phenomenon to deal with which was according to Ryrie, the Henrician doctrine of the royal supremacy that was neither Protestant nor Catholic (2003: 58). As was shown in the analysis of the early Reformation dialogues, the authors not only paid tribute to this fact, but used it to their advantage. Commonly even in the more radically Protestant texts of the 1540s, the king was still placed on a pedestal and the idea of the early pamphleteers that there should be a link between royal power and the reform movement to the disadvantage to the clergy was retained. This is also evident in Bale's *Examinacyons* where he is eager to point out that:

Alwayes haue the worldelye gouernours shewed more gentylnesse and fauer  
to the worde of God, than the consecrate prestes and prelates.

folio XVIII, *Lattre Examinacyon*

Because *A Breife Catechisme* is a translation it lacks these direct appeals to royal favour. The 1545 dialogue is not entirely negligent on matters concerning the status of princes and contains an entire section entitled: *Of our dutyes towarde kynges and Prynces: and how that we ought to honoure and obeye them* (folio XLVII). But this is not so much an appeal for royal favour or an attempt to connect the idea of royal supremacy with that of reform, but a guide for the “humble” believer of how to conduct himself should his prince be unjust, or worse obstructive of the new faith. The answer the catechism of Legate gives is simple and clear:

Ye shall not speake euell by the Prynce of your people.

Ye seruantes obeye your Lordes wyth all feare: not onely if they be good & curteouse, but also thoughe they be frowarde.

folio XLVII, *A Breife Catechisme*

This does not so much reflect the respect for princes the German reformers had, but rather their willingness like their English counterparts to engage in realpolitik. Yet their efforts to survive depended mainly, as is also evident from *A Breife Catechisme*, on containing the revolutionary ideas of their flock, already displayed during the peasant wars of the 1520s, and less on assuring the supremacy of “the prince”, as the English reformers usually did.

Whereas the English dialogues of the late 1520s and early 1530s had made it seem as if the reformers were acting for the king, Legate's dialogue makes it plain they are acting in

their own self-interest. Royal power is to be obeyed because disobedience is too dangerous – *specyally now in these dayes* (folio XLVII) as the Unlearned Man remarks. Another very important departure from the earlier pamphlets is that the issue of royal authority does not suffuse the entire text anymore, but is relegated to a sub-category. Therefore, even though *A Breife Catechisme*, technically supports the idea of royal power it does so amongst many other things, it does not assign primacy to it. The impression on the reader would be clear: royal power needs to be obeyed, but because faith demands it. And this faith is not synonymous with royal supremacy as it was made out to be in the earlier texts, but is inferior to it. The dialogue attempts to support it, but by being centred on faith and the scriptures throughout and only discussing obedience to princely authority as one aspect of a believer's expression of faith, it denigrates it and assigns the highest authority to the “Word of God” from which all other authority derives. Whether this was done intentionally by the authors is difficult to determine, but what is certain is that it marks a definite departure from the earlier tradition of conflating the idea of the royal supremacy and the reform movement. Now the royal supremacy is just one aspect of the reform movement.

Of course it could be argued now that this is all due to Legate's dialogue being a translation of a German original not representative of the English reformer's writings. Yet if one studies Bale's *Examinacyons* carefully, very similar protestations of obedience to the king can be found that are nonetheless drowned out by the constant emphasis on points of Protestant doctrine as for example the denial of transubstantiation. This attack on the real presence in the Eucharist was in fact a direct attack on the first article of the Act of the Six Articles and could thus be, and was, construed by the conservatives as an attack on the king's authority in general. As were of course both the *First* and *Lattre Examinacyon* in their entirety because Bale was defending a condemned heretic through them. Bale defends himself and his text by suggesting that the king cannot have known about the fate of Anne

Askew; otherwise, so is the implication, he surely would not have allowed such prosecution. About Askew's letter to the king he writes:

Thys godlye womau, hyr innocencye to clere, laboureth not here to an  
inferiour membre of the realme, but to the head therof, the kynges owne  
persone. Whome she beleueth to be the hygh mynyster of God, the father of  
the lande, and vpholder of the people, Sapi. 6. that he myght faythfullye and  
ryghtlye iudge her cause. But who can thynke that euer it came before hym?  
Not I, for my part.

folio XXXVIII, *Lattre Examinacyon*

As a defence of Bale himself this serves well enough, but as a defence of the king it is quite feeble. Bale does exalt the king and thereby echoes the earlier Reformation-dialogues, yet he does not do so in his own voice but uses Askew's instead - *Whome she beleueth to be the hygh mynyster of God, the father of the lande, and vpholder of the people*. All he has got to say about why this king, whom Askew believes to be the *hygh mynyster* did not save her is that he presumably did not see her letter. This certainly reflects Bale's desire not to offend the king, but it is and so are all the other similar protestations of loyalty to the king that can be found in the *Examinacyons*, no more than that. Bale knew that for the moment the reform movement in England could only survive with royal support therefore he could not write in opposition to the king. Yet that he also saw the royal supremacy as but one aspect of the greater issue of "true faith" is clear from a different passage in the *Lattre Examincacyon*:

O tormentours and tyrauntes abhomynable. Ye feare least your temporall and mortall  
kyng shuld knowe your madde frenesy. But of the eternall kyng, whych wyll  
  
ryghtlye ponnysh yow for it, with the deuyll & hys angels (vnlesse ye sore repent it)

ye haue no feare at all.

folios LI – LII

This passage is interesting for two reasons. First Bale laments that the *tormentours* of Askew fear the king but not God. This is a strong departure from any earlier Reformation polemics because this short passage does not describe the king as God's instrument, but almost goes as far as to present him as a false authority. There is a clear opposition between the royal authority that the *tormentours* **do** fear and the divine wrath they **should** fear. This is indicative of later developments, where the radical reformers would very openly preach faith in God as more important than obedience to temporal authority (e.g. John Knox). Bale does not go that far in this passage, but he does very clearly step away from conflating the royal with the divine. The passage is also interesting because again it brings up the king's possible role in Askew's execution or rather his ignorance of it - *Ye feare least your temporall and mortall kynge shuld knowe your madde frenesy*es – yet it serves not so much to absolve the king of responsibility for Askew's torment and execution, as to present a hierarchy of final power to the reader. The king may have great power on earth, but he is only *temporall* and *mortall* whereas God is the *eternall kynge*. The temporal ruler is cited in a build-up function to the crescendo of the eternal king. It is also significant that Bale writes that the mortal king might find out about the crimes against Askew by his officials, but the one who will punish these is not the king himself, but God. This very strongly suggests to the reader that the king's power is only on loan from God and it is the latter whom they really need to serve as he holds the final judgement. This is a dialogue still upholding the authority of the king, but like *A Breife Catechisme* it does so only as a function of faith thereby demoting loyalty to the king to a sub-category of faith.

That faith is the be-all and end-all purpose of the *Examinacyons* is nowhere more

obvious that in how the text ends. In the previous chapter it was mentioned that the early dialogues all end with a call for reform so greater royal power and thus a better governance for the realm can be achieved, the later post-1539 dialogues end with a pledge of faith, in this case Anne Askew's ballade which starts:

Lyke as the armed knyght  
Appoynted to the field  
With thys world wyll I fyght  
And fayth shall be my shielde.  
Faythe is that weapon strong[...]  
Whych wyll not fayle at nede  
My foes therefor amonge  
Therwith wyll I procede.  
As it is had in strenghte  
And force of Christes waye  
It wyll preuayle at lenghte  
Though all the deuyls saye naye. folio LXIII, *Lattre examinacyon*

Of course Bale feels obliged to add yet more commentary to this in the form of a conclusion that also calls on the readers to always keep faith and ends not with an appeal to the king as the earlier dialogues, but:

to the prayse of God, whose name be gloryfied worlde without ende,  
Amen. folio LXXI, *Lattre examinacyon*

It is clear that in order to influence their readers the authors of the later dialogues still employ the same techniques the form offers them as their predecessors from the 1520s, but because they have ceased to conflate the issue of royal supremacy with the reformed faith

the great polemical arsenal of the form only gets employed for the latter. The reader is left with the impression that the king's authority may be legitimated through faith or scripture, but ultimately all authority comes from scripture and this is where he needs to place his loyalty. It would not be long before the more radical reformers understood that ultimately whoever controlled the interpretation of scripture controlled the ultimate authority and that therefore they could do away with all others and the dialogue-form's powers of persuasion would be utilised to spread this new conceptualisation of *sola scriptura*.

# Chapter IV

## The Evolving Form -

### Comparing the pre-1533 Dialogues

### to the post-1539 Dialogues

In the previous two chapters I have suggested that the English Reformation dialogue went through two distinct phases during the reign of Henry VIII. The first occurred in the late 1520s and early 1530s before the king's break with Rome and the establishment of royal supremacy in 1534. The dialogues of this period, as has been discussed in chapter two, advocate reform by conflating the need for reform with the idea of greater royal supremacy. They achieve this by using the form's formidable arsenal of persuasive techniques that comprise the establishment of a truth, the instruction of the reader in that truth, the monologic exposition of arguments disguised as a conversation, the tailoring of arguments to the expectations of the audience and the containment strategy allowing the author to voice counter-arguments, but immediately neutralise them. The persuasive techniques themselves that are particular to the dialogue form have their origin in the medieval scholastic tradition of disputation rather than in the renaissance or humanist development of the form that transforms it into an open disputation with an unknown outcome. Yet the Renaissance dialogue did have an impact upon the Reformation dialogue, but only in so far as the popularity of the form among educated circles must have familiarised the reformers with it. Certainly in the first phase of the English reform

movement an attempt to mask the scholastic or deterministic principles behind a humanist façade of open disputation of the form is noticeable. One cannot call them models of dissimulation because at least educated people of the period would have been too attuned to dialogue not to notice such attempts at using rhetoric for persuasion as it was a staple of sixteenth-century education, nevertheless the authors of the early dialogues certainly made a considerable effort to obscure their pre-determined message through mock argument and fake conversation. They must at least have hoped for some success of such a technique, possibly with less well educated readers or those already reform-minded and therefore willing to be coaxed into believing the reformers arguments.

The second phase of the utilisation of the dialogue form by the English reformers occurred in the 1540s after the religious climate in England had become more conservative again with the passage of the Act of the Six Articles in 1539. The Act reaffirmed Catholic doctrine in six vital points, including matters so important to the reformers as transubstantiation, priestly marriage and confession. The reformers were again writing their polemics in a very uncertain religious climate that required their dialogues to be printed on the Continent to avoid prosecution. Yet unlike the first wave of reformist-dialogue polemic this latter wave, as has been demonstrated in Chapter III, still retained the idea of a fusion between the royal and the reformist interest, but began to separate faith in the scriptures from faith in royal authority and thus weakened the latter. Faith was clearly differentiated from temporary royal authority, making the latter seem as nothing more than a sub-category of all that is encompassed by the all-determining belief in the “Truthe”, which rests solely on the Scriptures and of course those - the reformers - that interpret the scriptures. This change in argumentation was reflected in the application of the dialogue form.

The establishment of a truth was always the first tool the dialogue form offered that the reformers employed. In the pre-1533 dialogues this took its most forthright form in *Rede me and be nott wrothe* that proclaimed itself to “saye no thyng but trothe”. This was, as has been shown, not an example of “intellectual arrogance” as Parker referred to it, but an essential element of the propaganda purposes of the text and merely an articulation of the forms’ deterministic principle. The rest of the dialogue explained this truth to the readers. This pattern of proclaiming a truth and then explaining it was repeated in the *Supplicacyon* and *A proper dyaloge*. In short the early dialogues tell or inform their readers about the “truth” (its actual veracity from a modern or non-reformist perspective being of course a matter of opinion). The post-1539 dialogues, in marked contrast, simply are the “Truthe”. In *A Breife Catechisme* the “Truthe” synonymous with Scripture is one of the speakers in the dialogue and instructs its readers in everything there is to know about the right faith. And in Bale’s *Examinacyons* psalm 116 “the veryte of the lorde endureth for euer” not only justifies his “elucidacyon” of Askew’s trial, but anchors it as the ultimate truth. Through defending Askew’s stand for the new faith or “the veryte of the lorde”, Bale simultaneously presents his own text as the mouthpiece of this “veryte”, therefore it “is” the truth not just its explanation.

This change of the function of truth within the dialogue, from a basis for argument to an almost divine state of being of the text as the “Truthe” itself, affected the form in such a way that it in fact made it more rigid and less dialogic. Since the dialogue was the truth and did not discuss the truth, many of the rhetorical flourishes and attempts at mimicking actual conversations evident in the earlier dialogues disappear in the later ones and give way to doctrinal instruction. This was not due to adverse literary developments of the form. Non-reformist humanist dialogue flourished. The reformist-dialogue became so rigid as the Reformation progressed because the reformers needed to consolidate their newly

established flock and this required rules or as James Simpson has argued:

In any society undergoing profound social mobility, written authority will replace the intuitive praxis of smaller ruling elites; the new social forces habitually demand that the rules be clear (or “transparent”) and explicit. They demand, in short, that the rules be written, and written in the clearest possible prose. (2007: 119)

The dialogue form allowed its authors to be clear and explicit as well as to properly instruct their readers in the new rules. In the pre-1533 dialogues the education of the readers had been purpose-orientated, they were to be convinced that obedience to king and country mandated a commitment for reform. In the post-1539 dialogues the readers were instructed in a world-view on whose principles the reader was meant to structure not just his life, but his entire conceptualisation of the same. For the form this meant that the earlier dialogues were more inventive in the application of the form's techniques in order to convince their readers of their single argument. For example mock-debate and artificial characterisation of the speakers were used in order to create the impression of an open forum that eventually produced the most reasonable position on which all readers should agree. This was not necessarily a very sophisticated literary strategy, but nonetheless it was more lively and engaging than the sermon-like dialogues of the later period. The post-1539 demands on the form meant that it became a rigid display of its own argumentation techniques and pedagogical function. The genuinely dialogic element of these dialogues was either in the case of *A Breife Catechisme* reduced to an interrogation session through which the reader was simply told what the correct belief was or to a monologic explanation piece like Bale's *Examinacyons*, where Askew's short and concise text is used, or rather abused, as a prompt for Bale's own lengthy instructions to the reader on how to understand Askew's testimony. The pedagogic function is strikingly obvious in the later dialogues.

They have ceased to argue and preach to their readers instead. The reason for this could be that, as Andreas Keller has argued, Protestants developed the idea that they had received a commandment from God to transmit his will to the people like the prophets of the Old Testament (2008: 80). This transformed their texts from dialogues mimicking conversations into dialogues imitating sermons. This is most noticeable in the reformist-dialogue's use of the veiled monologue.

As has been argued in previous chapters the Reformation dialogues are not so much dialogues proper in the humanist sense of a genuine verbal exchange between two independent speakers, but a string of monologues connected solely by rhetorical questions not even requiring a second speaker in some instances, for example Fish's *Supplicacyon*. Very similarly to the difference between the application of the pedagogic function of the form the earlier dialogues use monologues in order to explain their argument at length. All three of them attempt to convince their readers that the economic woes they are suffering from are due to the abuses of the clergy and that only reform of the Church will put an end to this. The monologues are used to present this argument in so much detail and with so many examples cited as fact that the readers are almost compelled to agree through the exclusion of a counter-voice. Yet even though the early dialogues are in fact more monologic than dialogic they still argue for the truth and at least in principle the idea of a possible counter-position is retained otherwise there would not need to be an argument. In contrast the post-1539 dialogues employ the monologue as a textual sermon. Because they do not argue for the truth, but “are” the truth a counter-voice is not heard anymore. The already weak genuinely dialogic-element of the form is completely replaced by a continuous monologue of instruction and advice to the reader only reluctantly interrupted by either the one-lined rhetorical questions in *A Breife Catechisme* or the in comparison to Bale's commentary extremely brief extracts from Anne Askew. Both of these different

kinds of interruptions serve only as an aid to the monologue of the main speaker. They are not inserted to criticise or question, but to allow a smooth progress of the lessons of the monologue; as such they are not genuine interruptions, but part of the monologue. Again, the more extreme use of one of the dialogue-form's features by the later reformers creates a less sophisticated literary impression, but increases the propaganda value of their texts since now that the preacher in the pulpit had been transformed into a sermon on the page he could be taken home and exert his influence in the most private of settings.

About Calvin and the other great reformers Bruce Gordon has recently argued that they read to extract that which was agreeable and plundered the works of the Church Fathers for thought congenial to their own purposes (2009: 253). As much as the reformers were seeking to find opinions best suited to their own when reading, they were committed to present arguments tailored to the expectations of their audience when writing. In the pre-1533 dialogues it is the second speaker, or in the case of the *Supplicacyon* by Fish his own rhetorical questions, that are meant to represent the possible opinions of the audience. These the first speaker, the one holding the monologues, then either confirms and expands upon in order to increase the effect of his argument; or he slightly twists them, in such a way, that they become congenial to the main argument of the dialogue, e.g. the greediness of the clergy is being appropriated to justify what is technically an attack on Church doctrine rather than practice. The later dialogues differ in that they pre-suppose stronger agreement from their readers to begin with (see section on potential readers in Chapter II) and seek to strengthen and steer the already-held belief of their readers rather than to convince them of it. Whereas the earlier dialogues have to argue for reform, the later ones need to establish guidelines for the already reformed. This means that their attempts to appeal to their readers do not centre so much on argumentation, but explanation. *A Breife Catechisme* explains to its readers how to live (and think) according to their faith, i.e. the

Scriptures and Bale's *Examinacyons* “elucydate” to them why Askew's testimony is such an exemplary story, giving them much instruction about true faith and a Christian life besides.

The final weapon in the persuasive arsenal of the dialogue form is the containment strategy that allowed the neutralisation of counter-arguments as has been discussed in the previous chapters. As with all other literary devices the dialogue-form offered the reformers, the pattern of the early texts using it more inventively and persuasively and the later ones employing it rigidly and patronizingly is repeated. The authors of the pre-1533 dialogues strategically use the imitated-conversation between their speakers. One voices an opinion that at first sounds quite persuasive, but which is then, through argumentation by the other exposed as false, thereby creating an impression of superior reasoning and more importantly veracity. Such an exchange, especially in the case of *A proper dyalogue*, can go back and forth quite a bit and seemingly involve the reader in a lively debate on the merits of two different arguments. The outcome of such a debate is of course always predetermined as has been shown in the preceding chapters. Nonetheless for the reader at least an impression of greater interpretative freedom is created because there appears to be an exchange of ideas in the dialogue even if this is not actually so. Post-1539 dialogues also exhibit examples of the containment strategy, but in a very obvious manner. As has already been mentioned in Chapter III in *A Breife Catechisme* each instance of a possible doubt about to be explained away is introduced with *I perceyue ryght well, but...*; this makes the intention of the author very clear to the reader, but is on the whole a blunt application of the containment strategy that lacks any kind of literary finesse and is not going to create any interest in the ensuing argument. Yet that was not the intention of the later dialogues, they were supposed to instruct the reader in the rules of the new faith not to create an interest in the arguments that led to these rules.

To sum up it could probably be argued that the English Reformation dialogue of the pre-1533 period evolved from a polemic for reform to the post-1539 polemic of doctrine. In literary terms this actually meant a deterioration of the form and the later dialogues are evidently less sophisticated than the earlier ones. But as a propaganda-tool the dialogue-form simply became more direct and forceful, which did not detract from its effectiveness as a polemical device. And as one must not forget, to produce successful polemics was the ultimate aim of the reformers. The authors of the English Reformation-dialogue thought to convince their readers with their texts. It was not their aim to produce great works of literature, but for their readers in Cicero's phrase to conclude at the end of the dialogue that:

I have found it easy to let no argument to the contrary so much as enter my head; I therefore support the view you have given.

(Cicero *Tusculan Disputations* in Wilson 1985: 43)

# Conclusion

All English Reformation dialogues printed on the continent during the reign of Henry VIII employ the same techniques of persuasion the form offers them. As has been shown in this thesis these were the establishment of a claim to truth, the instruction of the reader in that truth, the monologic exposition of arguments disguised as a conversation, the tailoring of arguments to the expectations of the audience and the containment-strategy, allowing the author to neutralise any counter-claims.

Undoubtedly the English Reformation dialogues are very formulaic, but in terms of establishing an interpretative framework for them this is a boon rather than a burden. The five rhetorical devices the dialogue authors consistently employed in order to produce a polemic of reform can be used as a guide to reading those texts. Understanding the dialogues according to the persuasive techniques their authors utilised enables one to grasp their entire content as well as purpose; but simultaneously it makes it possible to avoid being taken in by the attempts at persuasion and therefore, either when critical of the reformist message reject those texts, or if favourable towards the idea of reform, embrace them, as would have happened to the actual sixteenth-century readers. This submission to the persuasive devices of the dialogue authors certainly cannot be the standard approach of twenty-first century readers towards the reformist dialogues.

It is by knowing how the authors through the form they employ achieve this divisive effect that such a misreading can be avoided. And it is through an awareness and understanding of the persuasive techniques of the dialogue form that enables one to read those texts more dispassionately, to in effect stand outside or above the argument of the dialogue and therefore understand the dialogues for what they are rather than what they argue for. In this study, following this interpretative framework has allowed for questions

about how the reformist dialogues may have influenced their readers to be raised.

In Chapter II it was demonstrated that in the first phase of the English Reformation dialogue literature the form was utilised to convince its readers that obedience to the king in effect required support for the reform movement and a conflation of the royal supremacy with the new learning was achieved, at least on the textual level. Chapter III and the investigation into the post-1539 dialogues has shown that the authors still attempted this synchronisation of royal power and the reform movement in the 1540s, but failed because defining faith had become more important than moulding it to suit the political circumstances. The readers were not just confirmed in their faith, but radicalised in it through the constant emphasis on the primacy of scripture to the detriment of everything else, including royal authority. Chapter IV discussed how the form and its persuasive techniques were employed somewhat more directly and less sophisticatedly in the later phase, but how the basic structure of the dialogues remained essentially the same. The purpose of the dialogue always being to make its readers amenable to reform and to do this through avoiding or invalidating all arguments to the contrary, leaving their readers but one option, which was to agree with the dialogue.

As has been pointed out at various occasions in this thesis this makes it much more likely that the reformist dialogues, in particular the later ones were read by those already in favour of reform who wanted to be confirmed in rather than convinced of this opinion. Therefore the English Reformation dialogues can be seen as advocates of reform in so far as they encouraged and strengthened the convictions of the already reform-minded. In the case of the earlier dialogues they may even have appealed to the religiously more conservative on account of forgoing genuine theological argument for political polemicism advanced via the familiar and therefore perhaps non-threatening literary tradition of anti-clerical writings. This though is only a hypothesis so far and will require further analysis to

answer. Equally the question of how the English Reformation dialogues in general utilise older medieval writing traditions and how this may have affected or even aided their reception needs further research.

The production and commission of pamphlet-texts, including how much they cost and who paid for them is another area that still needs to be explored. Perhaps one of the most interesting questions arising from the analysis of the English Reformation dialogue during the reign of Henry VIII and the development from a written medium supportive of royal power to one critical of it as shown in this study, is if and how this trend continued and what its implications were both for the form as a literary medium and, by being a tool of persuasion, as an agent of change.

This study has laid the groundwork for further investigations into the English Reformation dialogue by establishing an interpretative framework for it and demonstrating its continuity as a form, but changing purpose throughout the first tumultuous decades of the English Reformation, the reign of Henry VIII.

# Bibliography

## Primary Sources:

Bale, John. (1546) *The first Examinacyon of Anne Askewe*. Wesel: Dirik van der Straten consulted via *EEBO* - *Early English Books Online*  
[http://eebo.chadwyck.com.ezproxyd.bham.ac.uk/search/fulltext?SOURCE=var\\_spell.cfg&ACTION=ByID&ID=D00000998361310000&WARN=N&SIZE=134&FILE=../session/1280842737\\_2093&SEARCHSCREEN=CITATIONS&DISPLAY=AUTHOR&ECCO=default](http://eebo.chadwyck.com.ezproxyd.bham.ac.uk/search/fulltext?SOURCE=var_spell.cfg&ACTION=ByID&ID=D00000998361310000&WARN=N&SIZE=134&FILE=../session/1280842737_2093&SEARCHSCREEN=CITATIONS&DISPLAY=AUTHOR&ECCO=default)  
1<sup>st</sup> October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2009 – August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2010. copy from British Library: STC (2<sup>nd</sup> edn.) / 848

\_\_\_\_\_ (1547) *The lattre Examiniacyon of Anne Askewe*. Wesel: Dirik van der Straten consulted via *EEBO*, copy from British Library: STC (2<sup>nd</sup> edn.) / 850

Barlowe, Jerome & Roye, William. (1528) *Rede me and be nott wrothe*. Strasbourg: Johann Schott consulted via *EEBO*, copy from Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery: STC (2<sup>nd</sup> edn.) / 1462.7

\_\_\_\_\_ (1530) *A proper dyaloge, betwene a gentillman and a husbandma~*. Antwerp: J. Hochstraaten consulted via *EEBO*, copy from British Library: STC (2<sup>nd</sup> edn.) / 1462.7

Beilin, Elaine V. ed. (1996) *The Examinations of Anne Askew*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Daniell, David ed. (2003) *Tyndale Selected Writings*. Manchester: Fyfield Books

Fish, Simon. (1529) *A supplicacyon for the beggers*. Antwerp: J. Grapheus consulted via *EEBO*, copy from British Library: STC (2<sup>nd</sup> edn.) / 10883

Furnivall, Frederick J. ed. (1871) *A Supplication for the Beggars ... by Simon Fish*. Early English Text Society, e.s. 13. London: N. Trübner

Hunter, John C. ed. (2010) *Renaissance Literature. An Anthology of Poetry and Prose*. Oxford: Blackwell

King, John N. Selection and Introduction. (1996) *Volume 1: Anne Askew* in Patrick Cullen & Betty S. Travitsky. (1997) *The Early Modern Englishwoman: A Facsimile Library of Essential Works – Part 1: Printed Writings, 1500-1640*. Aldershot: Scolar Press

Legate, Robert. (1545) *A Breife Catechisme*. Antwerp: S. Mierdmann consulted via *EEBO*, copy from British Library: STC (2<sup>nd</sup> edn.) / 4797.3

Nugent, Elizabeth M., ed. (1956) *The Thought and Culture of the English Renaissance. An Anthology of Tudor Prose 1481-1555*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Parker, Douglas. ed. (1992) *Rede Me and Be Nott Wrothe*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press

\_\_\_\_\_. ed. (1996) *A proper dyaloge betwene a Gentillman and an Husbandman*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press

Pearsall, Derek. ed. (1999) *Chaucer to Spenser: An Anthology*. Oxford: Blackwell

## Secondary Sources:

Arblaster, Paul. Gergely Juhasz. Guido Latre. eds. (2002) *Tyndale's Testament*. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols

Aston, Margaret. (1984) *Lollards and Reformers: Images and Literacy in Late Medieval Religion*. London: Hambledon Press

\_\_\_\_\_. (1993) *Faith and Fire: Popular and Unpopular Religion 1350-1600*. London: The Hambledon Press

Berger, Arnold. ed. (1964) *Die Sturmtruppen der Reformation: Flugschriften der Jahre 1520-1525*. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft

Bernhard, G. W. (2007) *The King's Reformation: Henry VIII and the Remaking of the English Church*. Reprint (1<sup>st</sup> edn. 2005) New Haven: Yale University Press

Bernstein, Eckhard. (1993) *Hans Sachs*. Hamburg: Rowohlt

Black, Robert. ed. (2001) *Renaissance Thought*. London: Routledge

Blickle, Peter. (2000) *Die Reformation im Reich*. Stuttgart: UTB

Brigden, Susan. (1989) *London and the Reformation*. Oxford: Clarendon Press

Clemen, Otto. ed. (1908) *Flugschriften aus den ersten Jahren der Reformation*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. (1<sup>st</sup> edn. 1907) Leipzig: Rudolf Haupt Verlag

Copenhaver, Brian P. & Charles B. Schmitt. (2002) *Renaissance Philosophy*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. (1<sup>st</sup> edn. 1992) Oxford: Oxford University Press

Cox, Virginia. (1992) *The Renaissance Dialogue*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Cummings, Brian. 'Barlowe, Jerome (fl. 1528–1529)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edn, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004  
[<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/68033>, accessed 18 July 2010]

Da Costa, Alexandra. (2009) 'John Fewterer's Myrrour or Glasse of Christes Passion and Ulrich Pinder's Speculum Passionis', *Notes & Queries* 56, 27-29

- Daniell, David. (2003) *The Bible in English: Its History and Influence*. London: Yale University Press
- Desius, Johannes. (1883) *Martin Luthers Schriften in Auswahl*. Gotha: Friedrich Andreas Perthes
- Dickens, A.G. (1964) *The English Reformation*. London: Batsford.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1966) *Reformation and Society in sixteenth-century Europe*. London: Thames and Hudson
- Dowling, Maria. (1986) *Humanism in the Age of Henry VIII*. London: Croom Helm
- Duffy, Eamon. (1992) *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400-1580*. New Haven: Yale University Press
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2001). *The Voices of Morebath: Reformation and Rebellion in an English Village*. London: Yale University Press
- Eisenstein, Elizabeth. (1979) *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early Modern Europe. Vol I. & II*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2005) *The Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. (1<sup>st</sup> edn. 1983, Canto edn. 1993) New York: Cambridge University Press
- Elton, Geoffrey. (1972) *Policy and Police : The Enforcement of the Reformation in the Age of Thomas Cromwell*. London: Cambridge University Press
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1977) *Reform and Reformation: England 1509-1558*. London: Edward Arnold
- Fox, Adam. (2000) *Oral and Literate Culture in England 1500-1700*. Oxford: Clarendon
- Fox, Alistair. (1989) *Politics and Literature in the Reigns of Henry VII and Henry VIII*. Oxford: Blackwell
- Gilmont, Jean-Francois ed. (1998) *The Reformation and the Book*. English ed. & translation Maag, Karin. Brookfield, USA: Ashgate Publishing
- Gordon, Bruce. (2009) *Calvin*. Bodmin, Cornwall: MPG Books for Yale University Press
- Guthmüller, Bodo & Wolfgang G. Müller. eds. (2004) *Dialog und Gesprächskultur in der Renaissance*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag
- Haigh, Christopher. (1975) *Reformation and Resistance in Tudor Lancashire*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1993) *English Reformations: Religion, Politics and Society under the Tudors*. Oxford: Clarendon Press

- Hattaway, Michael, ed. (2003) *A Companion to English Renaissance Literature and Culture*. Oxford: Blackwell
- Hebron, Malcom. (2008) *Key Concepts in Renaissance Literature*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan
- Herford, Charles H. (1886) *The Literary Relations of England and Germany in the Sixteenth Century*. Cambridge: At the University Press
- Imhof, D., G. Tournoy. F. de Nave. eds. (1994) *Antwerp, Dissident Typographical Centre: The Role of Antwerp Printers in the Religious Conflicts in England (16<sup>th</sup> Century)*. Exhibition Catalogue. Antwerp: City of Antwerp & Plantin-Moretus Museum and Stedelijk Prentenkabinet
- Jewell, Helen M. (1998) *Education in Early Modern England*. London: Macmillan
- Kaufmann, Thomas. (2006) *Martin Luther*. München: C.H. Beck
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2009) *Geschichte der Reformation*. Frankfurt am Main: Verlag der Weltreligionen
- Keller, Andreas. (2008) *Frühe Neuzeit: Das rhetorische Zeitalter*. Berlin: Akademie Verlag
- King, John N. 'Bale, John (1495–1563)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Oct 2009  
[<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/1175>, accessed 18 July 2010]
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1982) *English Reformation Literature*. Princeton: Princeton University Press
- \_\_\_\_\_ ed. (2004) *Voices of the Reformation: A Sourcebook*. Pennsylvania: Penn State University Press
- Kinney, Arthur, ed. (1999) *The Cambridge Companion to English Literature, 1500-1600*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Lewis, C.S. (1954) *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century Excluding Drama*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Lowenstein, David & Janel Mueller, eds. (2006) *The Cambridge History of Early Modern English Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- MacCulloch, Diarmaid. (2003) *Reformation: Europe's House Divided 1490-1700*. London: Allen Lane
- Marshall, Peter & Alec Ryrie. eds. (2002) *The Beginnings of English Protestantism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Menz, Cäsar & Hugo Wagner. eds. (1979) *Niklaus Manuel Deutsch. Maler, Dichter,*

*Staatsmann*. Bern: Kunstmuseum Bern

Mörke, Olaf. (2005) *Die Reformation: Voraussetzungen und Durchsetzung*. Oldenbourg: Wissenschaftsverlag

Murphy, James J. (2005) *Latin Rhetoric and Education in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*. Aldershot: Ashgate

Orme, Nicholas. (2006) *Medieval Schools – From Roman Britain to Renaissance England*. New Haven: Yale University Press

Orth, Eva-Maria. (2004) “Gesprächsstile der Erzählliteratur der englischen Renaissance: hoher und niederer Stil bei John Grange und Thomas Deloney in Bodo Guthmüller & Wolfgang G. Müller. eds. (2004) *Dialog und Gesprächskultur in der Renaissance*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 229-242

Pettegree, Andrew. ed. (1992) *The Early Reformation in Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

\_\_\_\_\_ (2002) *Europe in the Sixteenth-Century*. Oxford: Blackwell

\_\_\_\_\_ ed. (2004) *The Reformation*. London: Routledge

\_\_\_\_\_ (2005) *Reformation and the Culture of Persuasion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Pincombe, Mike & Cathy Shrank, eds. (2009) *The Oxford Handbook of Tudor Literature 1485-1603*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Pineas, Rainer. (1968) *Thomas More and Tudor Polemics*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press

Raymond, Joad. (2003) *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britain*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Rosman, Doreen. (1996) *From Catholic to Protestant. Religion and the People in Tudor England*. London: UCL Press

Rummel, Erika. (1998) *The Humanist-Scholastic Debate in the Renaissance and Reformation*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press

\_\_\_\_\_ (2000) *The Confessionalization of Humanism in Reformation Germany*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Ryrie, Alec. (2003) *The Gospel and Henry VIII*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Scarisbrick, J.J. (1984) *The Reformation and the English People*. Oxford: Blackwell

Scase, Wendy. (2007) *Literature and Complaint in England 1272-1553*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Scattergood, J. "Simon Fish's Supplication for the Beggars and Protestant Polemics", in D. Imhof., G. Tournoy., F. de Nave. eds. (1994) *Antwerp, Dissident Typographical Centre: The Role of Antwerp Printers in the Religious Conflicts in England (16<sup>th</sup> Century)*. Exhibition Catalogue. Antwerp: City of Antwerp & Plantin-Moretus Museum and Stedelijk Prentenkabinet, 67-75

Schnabel-Schüle, Helga. (2006) *Die Reformation 1495-1555: Politik mit Theologie und Religion*. Ditzingen: Reclam

Schoell, Oliver. (2004) "Der Prosa-Dialog der englischen Renaissance: Formen und Funktionen" in Bodo Guthmüller & Wolfgang G. Müller. eds. (2004) *Dialog und Gesprächskultur in der Renaissance*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 243-260

Schrank, Cathy. (2007) "John Bale and reconfiguring the "medieval" in Reformation England" in Gordon McMullan & David Matthews. ed. (2007) *Reading the Medieval in Early Modern England*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 179-192

Scribner, R.W. (1987) *Popular Culture and Popular Movements in Reformation Germany*. London: The Hambledon Press

\_\_\_\_\_ (2004) *For the Sake of Simple Folk: Popular Propaganda for the German Reformation*. Reprint (1<sup>st</sup> edn. 1981) Oxford: Clarendon Press

Shagan, Ethan. (2003) *Popular Politics and the English Reformation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Simpson, James. (2007) *Burning to Read: English Fundamentalism and its Reformation Opponents*. Harvard: Belknap

Stierle, Karlheinz. "Gespräch und Diskurs" in Karlheinz Stierle. ed. (1984) *Das Gespräch*. (Poetik und Hermeneutik 11) München: Fink, 152-205

Usher Chrisman, Miriam. (1996) *Conflicting Visions of Reform: German Lay Propaganda Pamphlets, 1519-1530*. Boston: Humanities Press Inc.

Walker, Greg. (2005) *Writing Under Tyranny. English Literature and the Henrician Reformation*. Oxford: Blackwell

Wallace, David. ed. (1999) *The Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Wagh, Patricia. (2006) *Literary Theory and Criticism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Wilson, K.J. (1985) *Incomplete Fictions: The Formation of English Renaissance Dialogue*. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press

Woolfson, Jonathan. ed. (2002) *Reassessing Tudor Humanism*. London: Palgrave

