

*HYPOCRISY AND HERESY: LANGUAGE AND CONCEPTS IN
EARLY MODERN ENGLAND.*

by

PATRICIA WEIGHTMAN STEWART

M.A., Cambridge University, 1980

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Department of History

The University of British Columbia
Vancouver, Canada

Date Oct 8th 1992

ABSTRACT

The two concepts of hypocrisy and heresy are completely disparate in modern use, and yet they were related in two ways during the early modern period. Firstly, both terms were prominent charges in the polemical exchanges of the English Reformation. Consequently, in this thesis they provide useful tools for studying the effects of controversy on language. The meaning of hypocrisy and of heresy was of considerable concern to many controversialists, and yet the resulting attempts at defining these terms contributed to their destabilization and incoherence.

These terms were also related in a second respect throughout the early modern period. Given the universal conviction at that time that there was only one "true" church, and given the consequent pressures imposed by churches (both Catholic and Protestant) to enforce conformity to their own religions, it was inevitable that judgements had to be made concerning the convictions and internal beliefs of others. Such judgements were central in charges of heresy and hypocrisy; hence in this thesis the concepts of hypocrisy and heresy provide useful tools for studying early modern understandings of intentionality and judgement. The writings of Sir John Cheke, William Perkins, Bishop Joseph Hall and Sir Francis Bacon are shown to display concern combined with confusion and incoherence over these topics. However, Sir Thomas More's *Dialogue Concerning Heresies* is shown to contain

an intricate and coherent analysis of intentionality and judgement *vis à vis* heresy. But, More's foundation for judgement and knowledge was the *consensus fidelium*, a foundation which simply was not available to the later Protestant writers.

Lastly, Thomas Hobbes's treatments of hypocrisy and heresy are examined. In effect, Hobbes negated the judgement of intentions where both concepts were concerned. He acknowledged and accepted the separation of internal belief from external profession. Likewise he accepted the impenetrable nature of the human mind and heart in a way his forebears had not. By examining Hobbes's treatment of these concepts in light of the polemical confusion and conceptual incoherence of the preceeding century, a better understanding of Hobbes's philosophy is obtained and the relevance of early modern theology for intellectual history is demonstrated.

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INTRODUCTION

Two central problems have prompted the content and the form of this thesis. In the first place, when reading sixteenth-century theological tracts I became aware that not only theology and ecclesiology were in a state of flux, but also several key words and concepts were far from stable. Time after time writers defined and redefined an important series of words and concepts such as "atheism", "superstition", "apostasy", "heresy", and "hypocrisy", attempting to establish the meanings of these words, often in opposition to the definitions of other writers. The resulting instability is significant since it had serious repercussions both at the time and later. Obviously, as I shall demonstrate, such instability meant that controversialists often found themselves in difficulties when using these words and concepts in polemical exchanges and in structured arguments. Less obviously, but equally importantly, the instability has also had repercussions in the work of historians analysing this period.

A classical example of the difficulties encountered by historians is the protracted debate over the problem of "atheism" in early-modern England, and indeed, Europe. Ever since the 1942 publication of Lucien Febvre's *Le problème de l'incroyance au XVI siècle*, there has been disagreement about the existence of "atheists" in the sixteenth and early

seventeenth centuries.¹ Febvre's argument has usually been summarized as a denial of the possibility of "atheism" in such an overwhelmingly religious age, while his opponents have insisted that "atheists" did, in fact, exist.² However, as David Wootton has recently insisted in his review article, "Lucien Febvre and the Problem of Unbelief in the Early Modern Period", historians have inaccurately oversimplified Febvre's position by focusing exclusively on this one work. Elsewhere, Febvre did not deny the existence of unbelief in the sixteenth century: rather he claimed that unbelief was "handicapped" by a philosophy and science which "made it impossible to separate successfully the natural from the supernatural".³ Such a separation only came in the seventeenth century with Gassendi and Descartes, and hence sixteenth century unbelief was deprived of a vital ingredient. It lacked the separation which was "a necessary preliminary to denying persuasively the existence of the supernatural".⁴ While it is apparent from this argument that Febvre did not always deny the existence of atheists in the sixteenth century, it is equally apparent, as

¹ I have used the English translation of Febvre's work. See Lucien Febvre, *The Problem of Unbelief in the Sixteenth Century: The Religion of Rabelais*, trans. B. Gottlieb (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982).

² For a helpful synopsis of this debate see David Wootton, "Lucien Febvre and the Problem of Unbelief in the Early Modern Period", *Journal of Modern History*, 60, December 1988, pp.695-730, especially pp. 695-703.

³ Ibid., p. 702, and nn. 27 & 28 where Wootton cites Febvre's works "accepting" sixteenth century atheism.

⁴ Ibid., pp. 702-3.

Wootton points out, that he did consider sixteenth century atheism as intellectually "inferior" to later manifestations. He failed to acknowledge both the sophistication of sixteenth century thought concerning atheism and the important role that this earlier atheism played in later developments.⁵

One important aspect of the widespread debate over atheism has been what Wootton has called "the linguistic problem", namely, the confusion over what the word actually meant in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.⁶ Historians have recognized the importance of the discrepancy between our modern understanding of atheism as the denial of God's existence, and the early modern understanding which they have defined in various ways and with varying degrees of flexibility. Two of the most recent works on atheism in England, as distinct from Europe, have devoted attention to the diverse, and often confusing, ways in which the word was used. In *A History of Atheism in Britain: From Hobbes to Russell*, David Berman identifies and discusses the seventeenth century confusion surrounding "practical" atheism, "speculative" atheism, "absolute" atheism and "mixt" atheism to name but a few.⁷ Likewise, Michael Hunter has explored the

⁵ Ibid., p.727.

⁶ Ibid., pp. 703-7.

⁷ David Berman, *A History of Atheism in Britain: From Hobbes to Russell*, (London: Croom Helm, 1988), pp. 6-16.

diverse meanings given to the term in his article "The Problem of 'Atheism' in Early Modern England".⁸ As Hunter explains,

contemporaries themselves recognised that this was a word 'of a very large extent', being employed to describe more things than one. This is shown by a series of more or less convoluted attempts to classify different types of 'atheist', and to distinguish 'atheists' proper from such other classes of person as hypocrites, temporisers, Epicures and 'Common Profane persons'. . . .⁹

However, despite giving attention to discrepancies in the meaning of "atheism", scholars (including Hunter) have still concentrated on determining whether or not there were "atheists" in England. Perhaps because this question has captured scholarly attention, other equally fundamental questions have not been explored in any detail: in particular, why was it that early modern writers themselves frequently disagreed over the meaning of "atheism", and how did disagreement about atheism relate to the escalating polemical exchanges of the sixteenth century?

Given historians' failure to probe these questions, it is hardly surprising that the difficulties surrounding other equally interesting words like "superstition", "apostasy", "heresy" and "hypocrisy" have not been explored. The latter two words, "heresy" and "hypocrisy", are of particular

⁸ Michael Hunter, "The Problem of 'Atheism' in Early Modern England", *Royal Historical Society Transactions*, 5th series, vol. 35, 1985, pp. 135-157, especially pp. 138-44.

⁹ Ibid., p. 142. The contemporaries here cited by Hunter are first, Thomas Fuller, *The Holy State and the Profane State* (Cambridge, 1642), p. 378, and second, Thomas Adams, *Workes*, (1630), p. 16.

interest because in polemical exchanges early in the century they were employed as opposing terms of abuse by Catholics and Protestants. While Catholics charged Protestants with "heresy", Protestants retaliated by charging Catholics with "hypocrisy". Thus, while the modern reader perceives them as two disparate concepts, in early Reformation polemics "heresy" and "hypocrisy" were connected, operating as terms of abuse. However, as the century progressed and the divisions and disagreements of the Reformation escalated, so too did the uses and definitions of these two terms. Both words were increasingly used by Protestants against other Protestants. This precipitated profound changes in the very concepts themselves, changes which suggested that closer analysis of these words is necessary in order to understand the effects of polemical exchange on this language in the early modern period. Consequently, a concern with words and concepts was the first problem which prompted the form and content of this thesis. The two words "heresy" and "hypocrisy" particularly lent themselves to closer systematic analysis because of their polemical relationship to one another. Hence these words provide the central focus for the content of the thesis. Regarding the form of the thesis, the most effective method for examining the difficulties surrounding these terms was the close textual analysis of works in which the terms were discussed. Hence, the form is dominated by the detailed analysis of relevant texts.

However, as I have already suggested, there was another related problem which came to my attention as I studied sixteenth century understandings of "heresy" and "hypocrisy". It became apparent that another parallel existed between these two words because, in order to make a charge of either heresy or hypocrisy, judgement of another's intentions was necessary. For example, in the case of hypocrisy the accuser indirectly claimed to know that there was a discrepancy between the words and/or actions of the accused on the one hand, and his intentions on the other. In a typical scenario, the "hypocrite" would be charged with either uttering words or performing actions which he did not mean in order to achieve some hidden, ulterior purpose. Alternately, the "hypocrite" would be charged with saying one thing and doing another, the implication being that one or the other, words or actions, were an ill-intentioned ruse designed to hide the hypocrite's true intentions. A parallel can be seen in the charge of heresy. While superficially the charge was simply that the accused maintained proscribed beliefs or opinions, in reality judgement frequently involved an assessment of the accused's intentions. For example, accusers had to assess how "obstinately" a belief was maintained. A distinction had to be made between simple "error" and "heresy", since one error did not necessarily make a heretic. Similarly, under threat of burning at the stake, a "heretic" might claim not to believe errors of which his accusers thought him still guilty. Thus, heresy charges frequently involved an assessment of the

"inner beliefs", the secretly held opinions, and therefore the intentions of the "heretic". While not all controversialists explored these problems in detail, some being content to employ the concepts of heresy and hypocrisy merely for polemical impact, others were acutely aware of the difficulties inherent within them. It was apparent in the works of, for example, Sir Thomas More, Sir John Cheke, William Perkins, Bishop Joseph Hall and Sir Francis Bacon that heresy and hypocrisy could also provide useful vehicles for examining early modern approaches to the problems of judgement and intentionality.

The problem of judgement of the intentions, of judgement of the "internal" world of another human being was compounded for these men by two further factors. Firstly, they all accepted one fundamental axiom which seemed to negate any attempt to know another's intentions. They all accepted that God alone could see and know the hearts of men. Mere mortals were simply incapable of penetrating one another's facades and of *knowing* what lay in the hearts and thoughts of their fellow men. As Thomas More so succinctly expressed the problem in his *Dialogue Concerning Heresies*, "no man can loke into anothers breste . . .".¹⁰ However, despite this acknowledged limitation, it was equally accepted that in reality men must

¹⁰ *The Complete Works of St. Thomas More*, (henceforth cited as CW), 15 vols. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1963-), vol. 6:1 (1981), *A Dialogue Concerning Heresies*, Thomas M. C. Lawler, Germain Marc'hadour and Richard Marius, eds., p. 22/1-2.

pass judgements on the intentions and the "inner condition" of others. Given the universal conviction that there was only one "true" church, and given the consequent pressures imposed by churches (both Catholic and Protestant) to enforce conformity to their religions, it was inevitable that judgements had to be made concerning the convictions of others and their internal beliefs. As Perez Zagorin has recently demonstrated in *Ways of Lying: Dissimulation, Persecution, and Conformity in Early Modern Europe*, the Reformation precipitated a particularly acute awareness of the problem of "lying". That language could be employed just as effectively to conceal and deceive as it could to reveal and inform posed a serious problem in an era that saw the splintering of religious beliefs and yet continued to espouse the ideal of conformity to one universal church. In England, as Zagorin points out, "Protestants were frequently confronted with moral conflicts as a result of the enforcement of conformity by the royal state and established church".¹¹

Zagorin's work is of immense importance in drawing attention to the neglected subject of "lying" and in providing such a far reaching analysis of its causes, forms and effects in early modern Europe. Zagorin's work also acts as an exemplar of what I hope may be achieved in my own analysis. In examining dissimulation, Zagorin does not confine himself

¹¹ Perez Zagorin, *Ways of Lying: Dissimulation, Persecution, and Conformity in Early Modern Europe*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990), p. 222.

to the world of "religion" or to the world of "philosophy", but demonstrates clearly that "the legitimation and practice of dissimulation were major factors in the lives of religious bodies, intellectuals, philosophers, and men of letters".¹² Zagorin shows that many of the problems confronting theologians and religious institutions were also those prompting the writings of "intellectuals" and "philosophers". Obvious and inevitable as this interrelationship of philosophy and theology may seem, it is an interrelationship often overlooked by English historians. There has been a detrimental tendency towards compartmentalization of this period with the result that the falsely imposed boundaries between "religion" and "philosophy" have rarely been crossed by historians. Intellectual historians have not explored the ramifications or relevance of the theological debates of sixteenth and early seventeenth century England. And yet, as Zagorin's treatment of dissimulation clearly demonstrates, and as the problems inherent in the concepts of heresy and hypocrisy also suggest, these topics have considerable relevance for intellectual history despite the often "theological" or "denominational" context in which they were initially discussed.

Thus, my aim in writing this thesis has been to cross the boundary between philosophy and theology by exploring two different problems relating to the words and concepts of

¹² Ibid., p. vii.

"heresy" and "hypocrisy": firstly, the problem of instability of meaning, and secondly the problem of intentionality and judgement. In addition, I have sought throughout to draw out the relevance of these problems, and indeed of sixteenth century religious controversies in general, for intellectual history. To this end, in Chapter One I have demonstrated two things: that the widely accepted distinction between matters "religious" and matters "philosophical" has been inimical to the historical analysis of this period, and secondly that a wide range of early modern theological material has considerable significance for intellectual history. Chapter Two provides a survey of controversial writings to demonstrate not only the prevalence of the terms "heresy" and "hypocrisy" and their frequent juxtaposition, but also that these concepts became "unhinged" and highly unstable in meaning as a result of polemical exchanges. In Chapter Three I have examined the arguments of several writers who attempted to provide more detailed and carefully structured definitions of heresy and hypocrisy, and who also explored the link between these concepts and the problems of judgement and intentionality. The immense difficulty these writers encountered in presenting coherent arguments on judgement and intentionality is readily apparent. The lack of coherence was so marked that it led me to enquire whether any controversialist at this time had been able to confront the complexities at the heart of either concept, heresy or hypocrisy, and still succeed in building a coherent argument concerning the judgement of these offences.

Thus, Chapter Four consists of an analysis of Sir Thomas More's interpretation of heresy as it is expressed in his polemical work, the *Dialogue Concerning Heresies*.

In the final Chapter, Thomas Hobbes's treatment of heresy and hypocrisy is examined. Not only did Hobbes examine these concepts in remarkable detail, but he also put them both to significant and unusual uses. As we shall see, the most marked feature of his treatment of both heresy and hypocrisy is that he effectively removed the judgement of intentions from both concepts. Hobbes acknowledged and accepted the separation of internal belief from external profession. Likewise, he accepted the impenetrable nature of the human mind and heart in a way that his forebears had not. Previously, it has usually been argued that Hobbes accepted this separation as a necessary addendum to his political philosophy. In general his political philosophy has been studied as an "abstract, timeless scheme of equal applicability to every time and place",¹³ the result being that the relevance of the political and religious climate of his own, and indeed preceeding eras, has been minimized. And certainly, my purpose is not to deny the overwhelming "political" impulse behind Hobbes's writings, in particular *Leviathan*. However, what I will try to demonstrate is how much more we can understand about Hobbes's approach to

¹³ David Johnston, *The Rhetoric of Leviathan: Thomas Hobbes and the Politics of Cultural Transformation*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), p. xvii.

political and theological problems when they are examined in the light of developments in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. As David Johnston has observed in his recent study *The Rhetoric of Leviathan: Thomas Hobbes and the Politics of Cultural Transformation*:

in both method and content Hobbes's *Leviathan* owes at least as much to modes of thought that were dominant in the sixteenth century as it does to the scientific outlook of the seventeenth century and beyond with which we usually associate his name.¹⁴

Thus, by illustrating the instability surrounding heresy and hypocrisy in early modern England, and by exploring the problems concerning judgement and intentionality which both issues raised, Hobbes's treatment of these two terms can be seen in an appropriate "early modern" context.

¹⁴ Ibid., p.ix.

CHAPTER ONE

SIXTEENTH CENTURY THEOLOGY AND THE HISTORY OF THOUGHT.

The polemical tracts of the English Reformation have a mixed reputation amongst scholars. Credit has been given where credit is indeed due, to the dominant figure of Richard Hooker for example, but such exceptions are rare.¹ Much of the material has been neglected or dismissed. In 1968 Rainer Pineas surveyed the output of his scholarly forebears and contemporaries and wrote the following condemnation:

Although a large proportion of the works published during the Tudor period concern themselves with religious controversy, this huge body of literature has been more often deplored than studied. What scant treatment the subject has received has often been from a theological point of view which usually displays religious bias in favor of one side or the other, while such literary treatments as do exist have not gone into the matter in detail.²

Pineas therefore set out to provide a "literary" study of the polemics of More and his antagonists. His work has since been accompanied by a few others, but the field still remains sadly neglected or worse, reviled. A decade after Pineas, Peter Milward compiled his comprehensive work, *Religious Controversies of the Elizabethan Age, A Survey of Printed*

¹ See, for example, C. S. Lewis, *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century Excluding Drama*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954), p. 174, where Hooker is praised *vis à vis* the "deficiencies" of More's controversial style.

² Rainer Pineas, *Thomas More and Tudor Polemics*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1968), p. ix and relevant notes.

Sources, and pointed once again to the continued neglect. He was "astonished" and indeed "scandalised -- to find that it was largely virgin territory", the few exceptions being controversies which had indeed been studied, but from a "confessional" viewpoint.³

Even more alarming is the tendency of some historians who, while not overtly grinding confessional axes, instead dismiss theological writings as not only laborious but in some fundamental sense dead. Having examined a controversy concerning the seven sacraments, Gordon Rupp cries out for modern critical analyses of certain volumes of controversy but dismisses others. The controversy itself he denounces as "labyrinthine", involving "repetition", "hackneyed quotations" and a wearisome "absence of Christian manners". Rupp objects to the "sanctimonious humbug" he found.⁴ All of this leaves a firm impression that because the debate fails to live up to some mythical standard of etiquette, it deserves to be ignored. Likewise, Patrick Collinson, who has devoted his career to the history of the Elizabethan and Jacobean Churches, can dismiss the writings of several bishops by inquiring

³ Peter Milward, *Religious Controversies of the Elizabethan Age: A Survey of Printed Sources*, (London: Scholar Press, 1977), p. x.

⁴ Gordon Rupp, "The Battle of the Books: The Ferment of Ideas and the beginning of the Reformation" in Peter Newman Brooks, ed., *Reformation Principle and Practice*, (London: Scholar Press, 1980), pp. 17-18.

who is prepared to engage seriously with this mountain of extinct* divinity And who is able to discuss such works in a comparative context, setting them alongside the scholarly productions of other reformed churches?⁵

Such dismissals are alarming. The centrality of theology to any understanding of the sixteenth century is beyond dispute. These controversies demand attention, especially before any judgements can be made concerning the theology of the Church in this period.⁶ Recently, several historians have isolated specific debates and provided comprehensive case studies of their chosen controversy. For example, the predestinarian controversy has received detailed analysis in Dewey D. Wallace's *Puritans and Predestination: Grace in English Protestant Theology, 1525 - 1695*; the Admonition Controversy provided very fertile ground for Peter Lake's study *Anglicans and Puritans? Presbyterianism and English Conformist Thought from Whitgift to Hooker*; and debate about the worship of images received well deserved attention in Margaret Aston's *England's Iconoclasts*, volume 1.

Studies like these are invaluable in helping to chart this neglected territory. And yet, two substantial problems

⁵ Patrick Collinson, *The Religion of the Protestants: The Church in English Society, 1559 - 1625*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 44. See also G. R. Elton's criticism that Collinson pays too little attention to theology, in G.R. Elton, review of *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement*, by Patrick Collinson, *Historical Journal*, 11, 1968, pp. 586-88. Here, and throughout the text, * signifies my italics.

⁶ See, for example, Collinson, *Religion of Protestants*, pp. 81-82, where he comments upon the "common and ameliorating bond" of Calvinism in the Jacobean Church.

remain. Firstly, because these works focus on *individual* debates they tend (of necessity) to neglect problems of wider concern, problems evident throughout an entire range of sixteenth-century literature and especially visible in theological controversies. Attention to individual debates has obscured the wider implications, the parallels, the similarities and contrasts that are made possible by a wider perspective. Secondly, and very importantly, historians approaching these controversies have usually remained within the traditional perimeters of relevance binding religious subject matter, failing to develop the relevance of their material for intellectual history. For example, Wallace keeps his analysis exclusively within the realms of theology and religious history. Only in a brief conclusion does he attempt to examine the "social function in another age of a perception of reality alien to our own",⁷ and even here he is more concerned with the social ramifications of religious experience than with the intellectual relevance of this controversy. Likewise, Peter Lake's analysis of the Admonition controversy is particularly interesting because he makes a specific and structured attempt to draw out the controversy's relevance not only for religion, but also for politics. Thus, Lake works systematically through texts drawing out their implications in these two spheres. While

⁷ Dewey D. Wallace, Jr., *Puritans and Predestination, Grace in English Protestant Theology, 1525 - 1695*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982), pp. 191-96.

this approach is very effective in demonstrating the *religious and political* ramifications of the controversy, the coherence of another aspect of Lake's argument is sacrificed in the process and a topic which might well be of interest for intellectual history is sadly neglected. It is worth examining in detail how Lake's traditional religious/political presentation of his material creates these difficulties.

Lake accepts and employs the commonplace that "Calvinists" had a "dour" "wintry" and "austere" view of human nature. He also claims that the Elizabethan Church embodied a "Calvinist consensus" about predestination so that while there were differences over certain issues between his three factions ("conformists", "puritans" and "presbyterians") all three embraced the Calvinist theology of predestination.⁸ It was this Calvinist Predestinarian theology that was at the heart of the "dour" Calvinist understanding of human nature. Thus we would expect all three "Calvinist" groups to exhibit this austere view. At first all seems well in that Lake demonstrates how the "un-Calvinist" Hooker held a "rather more benign" view of human nature and of sin than his "dourly Calvinist contemporaries". The conformists too he describes as dour. However, the "Puritans" who are unequivocally

⁸ Peter Lake, *Anglicans and Puritans? Presbyterianism and English Conformist Thought from Whitgift to Hooker*, (London: Unwin Hyman, 1988). On Whitgift's dour "Calvinism" see, for example, pp. 61, 62, and 66. On the acceptance of Calvinist predestination by all parties see p. 142. For some subtleties within the "Conformist", John Bridges' position, see pp. 121-26.

described as "Calvinist" and therefore (we may anticipate) dour, are found arguing in unexpectedly positive terms. According to Lake, they were insisting that "what God commanded must needs be in the compass of man's abilities" and that the perfectability of man was possible in this life.⁹ These views are inconsistent with "dour" Calvinism which emphasized the inherent corruption of human nature since the fall. Thus, while Lake's argument is illuminating in other respects, it illustrates the need for a closer study of the controversialists' understandings of human nature. There is a contradiction within Lake's analysis between his description of "Calvinism" and the views of some of his "Calvinists". By studying the Admonition controversy exclusively for its political and religious significance, Lake has ignored a problem which was important for the controversialists, namely, the nature of man, his limitations and his capabilities *vis à vis* the nature of God.

The "Conclusion" of Lake's work highlights both his own perspective and the resulting failure of insight. He claims that the cause of "anti-puritanism" was severely hampered in the 1590's by the collapse of the presbyterian threat.

⁹ Lake, *Anglicans and Puritans?* For Hooker's more benign view of human nature see pp. 150 and 166. On the Puritan argument that "what God commanded must needs be in the compass of men's abilities", see p. 104. For the Calvinist/anti-Calvinist distinction see p. 189 where Lake writes "Calvinists tended to emphasize divine omnipotence and human impotence, the miracle of grace and the entirely undeserving nature of its recipients. Anti-Calvinists tended to emphasize divine justice and mercy, human effort and the divine response to it".

Hooker, he argues, had launched a "full-scale attack on Calvinist piety" while passing it off as acceptable anti-presbyterianism.¹⁰ The likes of Bancroft and Whitgift had needed a "Presbyterian threat" in order to attack the more serious and threatening "puritan mental set" which jeopardized their political and ecclesiastical world views. Thus, when the Presbyterian threat diminished, Lake tells us that there followed in the 1590's "a series of attempts to find an alternative focus [than anti-presbyterianism] for anti-puritan polemic". Thus, Lake considers the theological debates of the 1590's only in relation to his own "religious" and "political" categorizations. He writes off debates about sabbatarianism, exorcism and Christ's descent into hell as failures because "none of these issues quite fitted the bill . . ."; they did not provide viable vehicles for continuing the anti-puritan invective.

However, if we take the debate about Christ's descent into hell as an example, it becomes apparent that the debate could not have been a mere "focus for anti-puritan polemic". In reality, this debate arose over issues crucial to the formulation of Protestant theology and its origins went back to theological changes precipitated by the break with Rome. The intensity and urgency of the debate, as well as the multiplicity of suggested resolutions, illustrate the widespread and pressing concern with resolving the problems at

¹⁰ For the relevant passages in his conclusion see Lake, *Anglicans and Puritans*, pp. 239-40.

the heart of the controversy. Debate revolved around the interpretation of the creedal formula that Christ "descended into hell" after his death on the cross, and this debate was precipitated by the Protestant denial that there were distinct "levels" within hell.¹¹ Catholics had believed that Christ only descended to the highest level of hell known as Limbus Patrum, or Abraham's Bosom. From here, Christ had been able to fulfill the various purposes of his visit to hell, but had done so without suffering because pain was only inflicted upon those in the lowest "levels" of hell, namely Gehenna and purgatory. This Catholic interpretation was untenable for Protestants. Their initial schism from Rome had arisen over the sale of indulgences for the remission of punishment in purgatory. In rejecting the efficacy of indulgences, the Protestants also rejected the whole notion of purgatory and of levels within hell, leaving them with substantial problems in determining both why Christ descended to hell after his death, and also how he did so without suffering if hell was exclusively a place of torment. Thus, debate about this creedal article began on the Continent in the earliest years of the Reformation, and was evident in England as early as 1552.

¹¹ See P. W. Stewart, unpublished M.A. thesis, *The Descent into Hell: An Elizabethan Controversy*, (University of British Columbia, 1984), especially pp. 24-37 where the Continental background to the English debate is discussed. See also, Dewey D. Wallace, "Puritan and Anglican, The Interpretation of Christ's Descent into Hell in Elizabethan Theology", *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte*, 69, 1978, pp. 248-278.

In light of this background, Lake's claim that controversy over "the descent into hell was not connected with any doctrinal difference which would open the way for a more general assault on puritan piety . . ." is inadequate on several counts. Firstly, it implies that the controversy emerged in the 1590's simply because the "Conformists" were looking for a replacement vehicle for their anti-puritan invective, whereas in reality disagreement had begun in England in 1552, had persisted through the Elizabethan period and continued into the seventeenth century. The debate was not simply the product of a search for focuses for anti-puritan invective. Secondly, the assessment implies two viewpoints within the debate, "Conformist" and "Puritan", while close analysis of the debate reveals a kaleidoscope of opinions about the meaning of the creedal article. The range of opinions escalated as debate continued and the escalation itself was of grave concern to some controversialists. Bishop Thomas Bilson outlined a long list of current opinions and warned:

. . .it were to be wished, that in matters of so great weight and danger, we would rather try where we are, then hasten to go onward. But as water breaking her bankes still runneth and neuer stayeth; so some lighting on other mens inuentions neuer leaue adding till they marre all.¹²

¹² Thomas Bilson, *The effect of certaine Sermons Touching the Full Redemption of mankind by the death and blood of Christ Iesvs*, (London: P. Short for W. Burre, 1599) pp. 8-9.

His attempted solution to this chaos was not so much to insist on one authoritative formula but to "set downe certaine limits beyond which [Christians] may not go, as also to reiect such extremities as by no meanes may be closed in the crosse of Christ, without apparant impietie."¹³

Bilson's attempts did not succeed and the debate continued into the first decade of the seventeenth century. Indeed, it may be argued that the demise of the debate had more to do with this escalating chaos of opinions than it did with any failure to provide a focus for "anti-puritan" invective. In 1607 a new and revised *Exposition of the Thirty-Nine Articles* by Thomas Rogers was published. The work had first been published in 1585 and at that time a specific interpretation of Christ's descent was offered as authoritative. By 1607, when Rogers was Chaplain to Archbishop Bancroft and was therefore propounding the "Catholic Doctrine of the Church of England", the interpretation of the article had disintegrated. A complete change was made from the fixed 1585 interpretation. Instead, the 1607 edition mentions the range of "different views that had been entertained of the doctrine" but "does not strongly advocate any".¹⁴ Rogers admits that the meaning of the article is not clearly known, but that until it becomes clear,

¹³ Ibid., p. 9.

¹⁴ Thomas Rogers, *The Catholic Doctrine of The Church of England, An Exposition of the Thirty-Nine Articles*, Parker Society, ed., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1854), pp. xii and xiii.

certain extremes of belief must be opposed.¹⁵ That such uncertainty and insecurity should be admitted in an authoritative doctrinal work of the Church of England is poignant evidence of the effects of a controversy which went beyond the pitting of "Conformists" against "Puritans".

Lastly, we must object that because of his focus on the "religious" and "political" implications of the debate, Lake's assessment misses an important parallel between the Descent into Hell and the Admonition controversy. Just as there was evidence of conflicting opinions concerning human nature, human capabilities and limitations *vis à vis* divine nature in the Admonition controversy, so too such concerns are evident in the debate about Christ's descent into hell. For example, one aspect of the debate revolved around the nature of Christ's atonement for the sins of mankind. In Catholic belief atonement had been accomplished simply by the physical shedding of Christ's blood and his death upon the cross. The bodily death of Christ had been sufficient to save mankind, *body and soul*. But several Protestant controversialists argued that Christ's descent into hell meant nothing other than Christ's *soul* suffering while he was dying on the cross and that such soul suffering was a vital part of the atonement process.¹⁶ They suggested that if the redemption of the

¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 59-61.

¹⁶ Calvin had advocated this interpretation. See John Calvin, *The Institution of the Christian Religion*, trans., T. N., (London: R. Harrison, 1562), fol. 164^r. For English expressions of this formula (often with variations) see, for

bodies of men had required the bodily death of Christ, then the redemption of the souls of men must have required at least some degree of soul suffering on Christ's behalf, if not even the death of Christ's soul: a God of justice would have demanded this. In refuting this argument other Protestants insisted that as Christ was without sin, as he was an *innocent* sacrifice, there could be no soul suffering involved in his sacrifice for mankind: a God of love would not have inflicted such needless torment on his only son.¹⁷ Thus, the requirements of "justice" were being pitted against the nature of "love". And, in advancing their arguments about what was necessary to save mankind, the controversialists disclosed divergent views about the nature of mankind itself. Lake's analysis does not broach these larger issues about human nature or detect the parallel concerns running behind these debates because of his exclusive interest in the "religious" and "political" implications of the Admonition controversy.

example, Alexander Hume, *A Reioynder to Doctor Hil concerning the Descense of Christ into Hell*, (Edinburgh: R. Waldegrave, 1593), p. 138; William Perkins, *An Exposition of the Symbole or Creed of the Apostles, in The Complete Works of William Perkins*, (henceforth cited as "CW"), 3 vols., (London: John Leggat, 1616-18), vol. 1, p.233, col. 1, C-D; Henry Jacob, *A Treatise of the Svfferings and victory of Christ*, (Middleburg: R. Schilders, 1598), pp. 31-32; and Andrew Willet, *Loidoromastix*, (Cambridge: C. Legge, 1607), sig. ¶¶ ii^r.

¹⁷ See, for example, John Northbrooke, *Spiritvs Est . . . A breefe and pithie summe of the Christian faith*, (London: J. Charlewood, 1582), fols. 12^r-14^r; Adam Hill, *The Defence of the Article: Christ descended into Hell*, (London: W. Ponsonbie, 1592), fols. 8^v-9^r; John Higgins, *An Answer to Master William Perkins, Concerning Christs Descension into Hell*, (Oxford: J. Barnes, 1602), p. 9; and Thomas Bilson, *The effect of certaine Sermons*, pp. 8-9.

Margaret Aston's work on *Iconoclasm* follows a less rigid approach and consequently draws attention to some of these broader issues. Aston examines images and image breaking from a wide range of perspectives and, in the process, illustrates that controversy about image worship entailed controversy about human nature, about divine nature, and about the correct way of perceiving the two. Of particular interest is Aston's demonstration of a shift in focus that reformed belief entailed, a "turning inwards from works to the fruits of introspective self-doubt. . .".¹⁸ The iconoclastic process ended where it had begun, "in the heart".¹⁹ Not only must the external world be changed through images being torn down, but the human mind, the human heart must be reformed; mental "images" or "idols" must be banished before true worship of an "unseen" God could commence. Aston stresses both the importance of the shift from external to internal and also some of its consequences. It affected language: "The 'idols' of the Reformation, like the word 'image' itself, moved from a predominantly physical to a largely mental connotation". It affected belief since it brought with it an ever expanding tendency to allegorize the external; "Antichrist and the devil were . . .being interiorized Laurence Chaderton went to some lengths to prove the existence of Satan in order to

¹⁸ Margaret Aston, *England's Iconoclasts*, vol. 1, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), p.452. For discussion of the internal/external relationship, see the section entitled "Idols of the Mind", pp. 452-466.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 460.

refute the many who wrongly supposed the devil to be a 'foul cogitation of the mind' . . .". And it affected the view of self; "Antichrist - the great beast who was the author of idolatry - came increasingly to be thought of as the evil to be combatted in every Christian breast": "The spiritual enemies of the seventeenth century seemed to lurk more and more in unlit corners of the mind".²⁰ Aston does not draw conclusions about these changes; she leaves that for her anticipated second volume on iconoclasm. But, in exploring iconoclasm from such varied perspectives, rather than exclusively for its relevance to "religious" history, she has already opened the door to fresh insights.

Clearly, then, many interesting problems are broached in these recent works of Wallace, Lake, and Aston. And yet, equally clearly, a "controversy by controversy" approach fails to broaden the horizons sufficiently for some of the most intriguing problems and parallels concerning, for example, human nature, to receive the attention they deserve. In addition, while Aston's work points the way, historians have not probed the relevance of this material for intellectual history sufficiently. There are perhaps two reasons for this. First of all, the language of these debates is alien to the discourse of modern intellectual history. Take, for example, the subject of Wallace's work, *Predestination*. When

²⁰ Ibid., p.465. Exactly the same tendency towards, and concern about, allegorization can be detected in the debate about Christ's descent into hell. See Stewart, *The Descent into Hell*, pp. 56-66.

discussion of Predestination remains confined (as it does in Wallace's work) within the theological language of "election", "grace", "freewill", "Pelagianism", "semi-Pelagianism", and "Socinianism", the debate inevitably seems restricted in relevance to those for whom such terms had immediate meaning and impact. None of these terms are part of our contemporary vocabulary for discussing human nature. But, if these issues are extracted from this archaic language, we discover that this sixteenth century debate focused upon the strengths and weaknesses of human nature, the degree to which men can control their own behaviour, the degree to which men are victims of their own weaknesses or the degree to which intellect can control emotion. When translated into these terms, the relevance of this material for intellectual history is immediately apparent.

The seeming lack of relevance of the theological language has led intellectual historians, and even religious historians, to dismiss sixteenth century debate as marginal in the history of thought.²¹ Without exception, the intellectual history of England is considered to "begin" in the seventeenth century with Sir Francis Bacon and, more importantly, Thomas Hobbes. These great political and philosophical thinkers have

²¹ See above, pp. 14-15, the remarks of Rupp and Collinson. See also David Johnston, *The Rhetoric of Leviathan: Thomas Hobbes and the Politics of Cultural Transformation*, (Princeton: New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1986), p. 214, where he sums up the widely accepted view that "Hobbes is generally credited with offering a new version of man and society that breaks sharply with an older, traditional view".

been considered distinct from writers of the previous century largely because they have broken out of the constraints of a traditional theocentric world view. Hobbes's work is singled out because of the starkness, the brutal coldness and hence, in some respects, the modernity of his world view. Hobbes himself insisted upon an "absolute divorce between philosophy and theology", a distinction which has inevitably contributed to the relegation of theology when matters "philosophical" are being examined.²² Much work has been done recently to moderate the view that Hobbes successfully divorced "philosophy" from "theology". Scholars have explored, for example, his preoccupation with Christianity in the last two books of *Leviathan* and elucidated the "Christian morality" evident in his work. However, the balance has not been redressed for sixteenth century theologians. In other words, while intellectual historians have recently explored the degree to which "theology" permeates the thought of "philosopher" Hobbes, they have not questioned the degree to which "philosophy" might permeate the writing of sixteenth century theologians.

²² For Hobbes's insistence on the divorce of philosophy from theology, see Arrigo Pacchi, "Hobbes and the Problem of God", in G. A. J. Rogers and Alan Ryan, eds., *Perspectives on Thomas Hobbes*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), pp. 172-3, where Pacchi paraphrases Hobbes's famous passage on this subject from *De Corpore*: "[Hobbes] emphasizes that philosophy cannot study the nature and attributes of God, because this everlasting, ingenerable, and incomprehensible being is not knowable by means of the usual scientific methods of resolution and composition, and cannot be investigated with respect to his possible generation".

This brings us to the second reason why the relevance of this theological material for intellectual history has been overlooked. There has been a kind of unspoken prohibition underlying the approach of most intellectual historians to sixteenth century theology. The silent claim is that a personal belief in a Christian God is a prerequisite for this material having any relevance at all. Therefore, non-believers have not approached the material, tacitly intimating that thought begins where traditional Christianity ends, in the mind of Thomas Hobbes. Believers have tended to study this material for its relevance to the history of Christianity and denominationalism. Its relevance for the history of thought itself has been largely, and mistakenly, ignored.

However, just a brief examination of some sixteenth century theological writings will demonstrate that the intractable issues lying behind much of the debate are of considerable importance in the history of intellectual thought. The "Reformation" was not only a breeding ground for divergent, and often discordant, theologies, but played an integral part in the enunciation of divergent and discordant views of man. We have seen from secondary sources that the Admonition controversy, the Predestinarian controversy and Iconoclasm all entailed some debate about human nature. The same is true of debate over Christ's descent into hell, as we saw briefly from primary sources. One further example will serve to demonstrate the relevance of this theological material for intellectual history. The example in question is

the considerable debate which revolved around the person of Christ in the sixteenth century. Again we will find that disagreement about Christ's nature entailed fundamental disagreements about all human nature since Christ was not only "God" but was also "man". These sixteenth century disagreements about Christ can be very illuminating on several different levels and in order to demonstrate why, the theology of Christ's nature must be examined in a little more detail.

Christ was believed to have two distinct natures or wills, one divine and the other fully human with the one exception that Christ could not sin. Consequently, if controversialists disagreed about Christ's *divine* nature, they divulged in the process a great deal about their own understanding of "perfection", of a perfection which lay *beyond* the scope of human capability. If they disagreed about Christ's *human* nature they revealed their own views about the essence of human perfection. How would an ideal, a perfect human being behave and why? What would motivate him to behave in one way rather than another? What moral values would take precedence in a perfect human being, and why? All these topics were open for discussion when Christ's human nature was debated. And lastly, when theologians discussed the differences between Christ's human nature and their own they were obliged to discuss the conflicts within human nature, and the factors which inhibit human beings from achieving ideal moral behaviour. Why are human beings capable of conceiving idealized modes of behaviour and yet remain incapable of

maintaining those standards? What factors might contribute towards an increased ability to maintain standards? Can human beings change and "improve" their own behaviour; if not, why not, and if so, how?

We find all these complex and insoluble problems haunting debates about Christ in the sixteenth century. The two eminent theologians John Colet and Erasmus expressed strikingly different views on such issues early in the century. On his first visit to England in 1499 Erasmus became involved in a heated debate with Colet about the nature of Christ's agony in the Garden of Gethsemane. Later the two theologians exchanged letters on the subject and in 1503 Erasmus published a more detailed and considerably expanded analysis of Christ's agony entitled *Disputatiuncula de Tedio, Pavore, Tristitia Jesu*.²³ The events in the Garden of Gethsemane lent themselves to analysis of Christ's nature and motivation because during his "agony" Christ displayed the seemingly human failings and human emotions of weakness and fear. If Christ had indeed been "afraid" to die, this needed explanation. Could human perfection include "fear", and if it could, what was the purpose behind it?

²³ Erasmus, *Disputatiuncula de Tedio, Pavore, Tristitia Jesu, Opera Omnia*, 10 tomes, (London: The Gregg Press, 1962) tome 5, fols. 1265-1294. For the exchange of letters between Erasmus and Colet see Erasmus, *Collected Works of Erasmus*, trans. R. A. B. Mynors and D. F. S. Thompson, (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1974), vol. 1, *Letters 1 - 141*, nos. 108 - 111, pp. 202-19.

That Christ had been "afraid" was beyond dispute. After all, the biblical accounts portrayed Christ praying not just once, but three times that "this cup might pass". His soul was "exceeding sorrowful even unto death" and his agony was so acute that "his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground".²⁴ This fear on Christ's behalf presented two problems. Firstly, since Christ had a divine nature as well as a human one, it was assumed that in his divine nature he knew of his destiny to die for the sake of mankind. It therefore seemed incongruous that his human nature expressed reluctance to meet this divine destiny. Secondly, the reluctance to die expressed by Christ's human nature brought his perfection into question because a perfect human nature should have been happy to die for God's sake. Unless some explanation was offered for this "fear", Christ would seem less "perfect" than many of the later Christian martyrs who had met their deaths bravely and willingly for his sake.²⁵

²⁴ Matt. 27:39-44; Mark 14:33-42; Luke 23:41-44.

²⁵ See James Tracy, "Humanists Among the Scholastics: Erasmus, More and Lefèvre d'Étaples on the Humanity of Christ", *Erasmus of Rotterdam Society Yearbook*, vol. 5, 1985, pp. 31-2. On this dispute between Erasmus and Colet see also, Giovanni Santinello, "Thomas More's *Expositio Passionis*", *Studi sull'Umanesimo Europeo; Cusano E Petrarca, Lefèvre, Erasmo, Colet, Moro*, (Padova: Editrice Antenore, 1969), pp. 76-116. A shortened version of this article is repeated in R. S. Sylvester and G. P. Marc'hadour, eds., *Essential Articles for the study of Thomas More*, (Hamden, Connecticut, Archon Books, 1977), pp. 455-61. Also, G. J. Fokke, s.j. "An Aspect of the Christology of Erasmus of Rotterdam", *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses*, vol. 54, 1978, pp. 161-87. Thomas More also wrote extensively on the topic of Christ's sadness

Erasmus and Colet presented strikingly different solutions to these problems, and in the process, showed just how different their "philosophies" of human nature, human perfection and perfection itself were. Regarding human nature, Erasmus's view was both more sympathetic and more optimistic than Colet's. He argued that human emotions were not positive or negative emotions *per se*, but were instead completely neutral and could therefore be ascribed to Christ without any impiety. Instead of being the harbingers of sin (as Colet understood them to be), Erasmus simply saw emotions as natural conditions of the soul, comparing them with the equally natural functions of the body such as hunger and thirst which clearly were not sinful in themselves as Christ frequently displayed these normal manifestations of humanity. As Erasmus wrote in the *De Tedio*:

It is part of the soul to sorrow, to rejoice, to hate, to dread, to be angry. It is characteristic of the body to hunger, to thirst, to be tired, to be weak, to be afflicted, to die. What do I take away from the most perfect virtue of Christ if I should say he hated, since in him there was no hatred, except avoidance of true evil. Why do I not assert he is angry, if nothing is anything in his anger, except hatred of evil²⁶

Erasmus was quite prepared to accept that emotions did in reality often lead men to evil, but this was not because they were evil in themselves. Rather it was because of a certain "corrupting of nature in us" that our emotions "search for

in the Garden of Gethsemane in the *De Tristitia Christi*, CW, vol. 14 parts I & II.

²⁶ Erasmus, *De Tedio*, fol. 1277. Unpublished translation by Natalie Johnson, p. 29.

shameful deeds", and "flee those things which are desired".²⁷ Thus, Erasmus argued that Christ did indeed display both weakness and fear in the Garden of Gethsemane but the display of these emotions in no way detracted from Christ's supreme commitment to die for man's sake. Fear of death did not mean, as Colet had suggested, that Christ was more concerned about himself than he was about mankind. Instead, fear of death showed just how much Christ loved mankind in that he was prepared to take on this manifestation of humanity for our sakes. Once again Erasmus fell back on the analogy between bodily function and emotion of the soul to make his point:

. . .nobody reasons in this way, that he loved less, because he was hungry. On the contrary he especially loved, because he wished to feel hunger for our sake.²⁸

Time and again throughout the debate Erasmus employed these kinds of parallels, not only between body and soul but also between the experiences of Christ and the experiences of men. The resulting stress on, and explication of Christ's humanity, provided insight into the human condition itself and also held out hope for the improvement of this condition via the method of loving, and thereby learning from Christ. In stark contrast, Colet so carefully preserved the superhuman perfection of Christ that his Christ displayed the absolute minimum of humanity. There were no parallels between Colet's perfect Christ and sinful man and consequently there was

²⁷ Ibid., fols. 1276-7, trans. p. 28.

²⁸ Ibid., fol. 1282, trans. p. 41.

nothing man could "learn" from Christ's behaviour at this moment of crisis.²⁹

If we turn from humanity and concentrate on views expressed about human perfection and perfection itself during the course of this debate, we find that equally interesting insights are available. For Colet, human perfection contained no weakness or inconstancy, no vacillation or divisions of will. Colet equated unity of purpose with perfection of purpose, unity of motivation with perfection of motivation. Hence, we find that the perfect Christ could not possibly have experienced any division of will when facing death. Likewise, for Colet there could be no multiplicity of explanation - "truth" was simple and singular and it was only because of the "sterility" of human minds that multiple explanations arose. Here Colet turned the usual image of the fertility of nature on its head by arguing that "nothing is more imperfect than offspring born in numbers". The "lower creatures of nature, like flies and ants" multiply in vast numbers because of their sterility, while "the holy Spirit, who is the progenitor of Holy Letters, [and] is fertility itself . . . begets in itself for the sake of its power one . . . simple truth".³⁰ Thus, just as Christ could have had no division or multiplicity of

²⁹ For a detailed analysis of the intellectual world of Colet see John B. Gleason, *John Colet*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), especially pp. 95-125 where the disagreement between Colet and Erasmus over Christ's suffering in the Garden of Gethsemane is discussed.

³⁰ Erasmus, *De Tedio*, fol. 1291-2, trans. p. 63.

will, so the Holy Word must have just one true meaning, and even the "Spirit of God" or perfection itself was unitary, one might even say isolated "retaining itself in itself, and keeping itself in itself, by hiding its face from itself, as if unworthy, not out of envy, but out of the unworthiness of men".³¹

As might be expected, Erasmus's opinion on these matters was very different. While Colet denounced multiplicity, Erasmus gladly embraced it, but attempted to contain it. Even within the human perfection of Christ, what was dreaded according to one will was sought after according to another. From within his human nature Christ could both desire to die and experience revulsion at the prospect of his own death.³² Such a seeming division was compatible with human perfection for Erasmus because of the distinct but equally good motivations which could be attributed to each part of the division. Death was desired for the saving of mankind, but fear of death was experienced and expressed so that men might love and learn from Christ. Christ spoke "as a man, for men, to men and in the words of men, expressing man's fears", when he prayed to avoid death. He displayed fear, instead of fearlessness, because

³¹ Ibid.

³² Erasmus, *Letters 1 - 141*, p. 208.

it was better suited to our feelings for he [Christ] had determined to win our love, rather than admiration and whereas we admire fortitude, we love and affectionately embrace that which is gentle and weak.³³

This is a dramatically different understanding of human perfection than Colet's and the same may be said of Erasmus's understanding of divinity, or perfection itself. There was no stress on the isolated singularity of truth, nor was there the same huge gulf of unworthiness separating God and man, divine and human. Instead there was an all inclusive approach; contraries were contained and contradictions explained by their application to man.

From this one example we can see just how revealing and how problematic discussion of the person of Christ could be. The essence of the problem for Erasmus and Colet was defining the divine/human relationship and they were not alone in having difficulties with this relationship. Scholars have recently drawn attention to substantial difficulties inherent in Calvin's treatment of the divinity and humanity of Christ,³⁴ and hence we should not be surprised that

³³ Ibid., pp. 208 and 210.

³⁴ See David Foxgrover, "The Humanity of Christ: Within Proper Limits", *Calviniana: Ideas and Influence of Jean Calvin*, Robert V. Schnucker, ed., *Sixteenth Century Essays and Studies*, vol. X, 1988, pp. 93-105. Foxgrover summarizes previous debate about Calvin's interpretation of Christ and provides references to key contributors, most notably Francois Wendel, "Christ and His Work of Redemption", in *Calvin, The Origins and Development of His Religious Thought*, trans. Philip Mairet, (New York: Harper, 1963); and Paul van Buren, *Christ in Our Place: The Substitutionary Character of Calvin's Doctrine of Reconciliation*, (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1957). Foxgrover then demonstrates how Calvin jeopardized the divinity of Christ by asserting Christ's

difficulties are manifest in the writings of other Protestant theologians throughout the century.³⁵ To offer just one more detailed illustration of a theologian attempting to explicate the divine/human relationship, but in fact simply showing us the dire problems which the issue was capable of generating, it is worth turning to the work of William Perkins, a prolific and prominent theologian at the end of the sixteenth century.³⁶

"authentically human character" to the point of risking "denying the sinlessness of Christ", p. 94. The most comprehensive recent study of Calvin is William J. Bouwsma, *John Calvin, A Sixteenth Century Portrait*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988). While Bouwsma does not examine Calvin's interpretation of Christ in detail, he does explore Calvin's understanding of God and of man, and the tensions between the two. See especially Part IV "The Abyss".

³⁵ See Elizabeth K. Hudson, "English Protestants and the *imitatio Christi*, 1580 - 1620", *Sixteenth Century Journal*, vol. XIX, No. 4, 1988, pp. 541-58. Hudson examines the works of five English Protestants on the imitation of Christ finding both "ambiguity" and "inconsistency" in their positions.

³⁶ See Richard A. Muller, "Perkins' A Golden Chaine: Predestinarian System or Schematized *Ordo Salutis*?", *Sixteenth Century Journal*, vol. IX, no. 1, 1978, pp. 69-81. Muller claims that Perkins "was arguably the most prominent Reformed theologian on the scene in the late sixteenth century", p.69. See also Perez Zagorin, *Ways of Lying*, p.235, where he refers to Perkins as "one of the most influential Calvinist theologians of his time". Also, Wallace, *Puritans and Predestination*, p.56, where Perkins is described as "one of the most important of the spiritual writers as well as an English theologian of European reputation, who may well have been the most important figure in the emergence of Reformed scholasticism in England". For one so prominent, a modern comprehensive biography of Perkins is sadly lacking, although aspects of his life and theology have been studied in depth. For Perkins' theology see R. T. Kendall, *Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981). For the impact of Ramism on his work see Donald K. McKim, "The Functions of Ramism in William Perkins' Theology", *Sixteenth Century Journal*, vol. XVI, no. 4, 1985, pp. 503-17. For Perkins' casuistry see Zagorin, *Ways of Lying*, pp. 235-40 and works cited therein.

Because of his involvement in many of the theological controversies which dominated the closing decades of the century, Perkins was obliged to broach the divine/human relationship on numerous occasions and from numerous angles. The result is confusion both in the views expressed about Christ himself, and in the conflicting accounts Perkins offered of human nature. For instance, Perkins' interpretation of Christ's behaviour in the Garden of Gethsemane acknowledged Christ's human weakness and fear (just as Erasmus had done) but at the same time managed to remove the possibility of a didactic purpose in this suffering. While Erasmus had suggested a battle *within* Christ's human will, thereby making it a battle from which ordinary humans could learn, Perkins insisted that Christ experienced a simple dissention from death in his entire human nature, while the desire to die came exclusively from Christ's divine will. He wrote:

The humane will of Christ did with an holy dissention in some sort wil deliuerance from the agony of death, which notwithstanding the diuine willed not.³⁷

Thus, on this occasion, Perkins did not suggest that Christ experienced any divisions of will with which human beings could identify or from which they could learn. As the division was exclusively between the divine will on one hand

³⁷ William Perkins, *A Christian and Plaine Treatise of the Manner and Order of Predestination, and of the Largenes of Gods Grace*, CW, vol. II, p. 609, col. 1, B.

and the human will on the other, no didactic message could be obtained since there was no conflict *within* the human will.

Elsewhere, however, Perkins did attempt to analyse Christ's sufferings whilst giving them a strong didactic message, and the result is a breakdown in the coherence of his analysis. In a work on *The Combate Betweene Christ and the Deuill* . . . (which examined Christ's temptations in the wilderness) Perkins maintained that Christ was tempted by the devil and that man could learn from these temptations, but that while Christ was tempted without sin, man was always tainted with sin when tempted, even if the temptation was resisted. To demonstrate how incongruous this position was, it must be examined in more detail. Perkins began by arguing that there were three steps involved in the devil's temptation. First, the devil "conueyes into [man's] mind, either by inward suggestion, or by outward object, the motion or cogitation of that sinne which he would haue him to commit".³⁸ Next, by conveying these cogitations of sin, the devil caused godly men to be "full of trouble, sorrow, and vexation . . . the whole man is disquieted, his thoughts and affections are troubled, and his heart is vexed".³⁹ Christ, we are told, was subjected to both these stages of temptation. However, the third and final part of the process was reserved

³⁸ Perkins, *The Combate Betweene Christ and the Deuill displayed: or A Commentarie vpon the Temptations of Christ*, CW, vol. 3, p. 376, col. 1, B.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 376, col. 1, C.

for man alone. Although "a man doe not approoue, neither entertaine with delight, the deuils temptations, yet shall he hardly keepe himselfe from the staine and taint of sinne, because the imaginations of his owne heart, are naturally euill".⁴⁰ Thus, being naturally evil, man was always sinful when tempted whereas Christ, having a perfect human nature, could be tempted without sin. Christ was excluded from the last part of the process of temptation because he differed from all other men by being perfectly holy in his human nature, and therefore "he did not in the least measure receiue any corruption into his minde . . .".⁴¹

Thus, up to this point in the argument, the distinction between the sinless human Christ and naturally sinful man was maintained, but a problem arose when Perkins ascribed a didactic purpose to Christ's temptations. Amongst the various uses which Perkins ascribed to the temptations, he claimed that they served as "a good direction for their comfort that are troubled with blasphemous thoughts".⁴² The comfort came from knowing that these blasphemous thoughts remained "the Deuils sinnes wholly, and become not ours, til we receiue them by some degree of delight or assent. . .".⁴³ Here, man seemed capable of rejecting temptation, and provided he did not

⁴⁰ Ibid., vol. 3, p. 376, col. 1, D.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid., p. 376, col. 2, A.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 376, col. 2, B.

"delight or assent" to it, he did not sin: the sin remained wholly the devil's. This contradicted Perkins' previous analysis in which man always sinned when tempted (even if the temptation itself was resisted) because of man's naturally evil heart. Thus, in the process of expounding how man could learn from Christ's temptation, Perkins had collapsed the distinction between divine and human. In order to show that man was as capable of rejecting temptation as Christ had been, Perkins had removed the naturally evil imaginations from man's heart, thereby creating a substantial confusion in his "philosophy" of human nature.

From these brief examples of Erasmus, Colet and Perkins we can see that theological material can be highly revealing in areas other than pure "theology". We can see these men addressing problems concerning human capabilities and human limitations. The issue at the heart of their dispute was the ability, or inability, of man to learn, to change, to contribute to his own improvement. If man was not capable of this, then Christ's life on earth had fulfilled no didactic purpose. If man was capable of self-improvement, God's omnipotence as the redeemer of mankind could appear to be threatened. Thus, debate about these issues often focused on the person of Christ because, theoretically, he combined these didactic and redemptive roles. Finding and maintaining an acceptable balance between these two roles was the intractable problem which bedevilled many theologians throughout the sixteenth century. Thus, in writing about Christ, theologians

struggled to balance two contradictory and conflicting understandings not only of Christ, but also of man. Either man was at the mercy of his own nature, unable to control it, let alone improve it, without external help from a power greater than his own (i.e. God); or, through watching, studying and loving an example, man could emulate that example and consequently improve himself. While all writers agreed that Christ embodied both roles, the natural tension between these two contradictory alternatives was the cause of disagreement and confusion for many.

Clearly, then, the confusion in sixteenth century understandings of Christ also demonstrates confusion in sixteenth century views of man. The theology of this period provides revealing insights into early modern thought about the very nature of man. However, the link between this theology and emerging English "philosophy" can be demonstrated even more directly. We find that the problems surrounding the issues of Christ's natures and his roles on earth persisted into the seventeenth century and that Thomas Hobbes himself was obliged to deal with them in his masterpiece, *Leviathan*. Hobbes began his analysis of the problem by asserting that there were, in fact, three roles ascribed to Christ in Scripture:

The first of a *Redeemer*, or *Saviour*: The second of a *Pastor*, *Counsellor*, or *Teacher*, that is, of a Prophet sent from God, to convert such as God hath elected to Salvation: The third of a *King*, an *eternall King*, but under his Father, as Moses and the High Priests were in their severall times.⁴⁴

Clearly, Hobbes was dealing directly with the two "roles" of Christ which have just been identified as problematic for sixteenth century theologians: Christ the Redeemer, and Christ the Teacher. If, then, we pose the obvious question of how Hobbes balanced the redemptive and didactic roles of Christ, and how he related Christ's humanity with his divinity (given that sixteenth century theologians had found this relationship so thorny) the rather surprising answer emerges that he simply avoided the need for a "relationship" altogether. He managed to sidestep the problem completely by arguing that Christ fulfilled these "roles" at different times. Hobbes's argument must be examined closely to see how he managed to employ the traditional Christian language of "Christ the Redeemer" and "Christ the teacher" whilst completely avoiding the sixteenth century problems surrounding this language.

Firstly, concerning Christ the Redeemer, Hobbes argued that the redemption of mankind took place only at the precise moment when Christ died on the cross because this was the only sacrifice which God was pleased to accept. As a result, Hobbes claimed, Christ could not correctly be termed "Redeemer" during his life. The argument ran as follows:

⁴⁴ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, C. B. MacPherson, ed., (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1968), p.512.

For as much therefore, as he that *redeemeth*, hath no title to the *thing redeemed*, before the *Redemption*, and Ransome paid; and this Ransome was the Death of the Redeemer; it is manifest, that our Saviour (as man) was not King of those that he Redeemed, before hee suffered death; that is, during that time hee conversed bodily on the Earth.⁴⁵

It will be noticed that Hobbes was careful to stipulate that only in his *manhood* was Christ not the "redeemer" during his lifetime. Therefore, Hobbes's argument so far leaves open the possibility that Christ was redeemer while living, but in his divinity. However, Hobbes proceeded to negate this possibility by the following argument. Although Christians had renewed their pact with God (and therefore with the "divine nature" of Christ) by baptism, and were consequently obliged to obey God (and therefore Christ) as a King, they had to do this only when the King chose to reign in his Kingdom. Hobbes then relied on Christ's own statements that his kingdom was "not of this world" to show that, while here on earth, Christ renounced his kingship in this respect until his second coming. Consequently, neither in his manhood, nor in his divinity did Christ claim to be king during his own lifetime. Very neatly, Hobbes had completely removed one half of the dilemma which had perplexed sixteenth century theologians.

Secondly, if we ask how Hobbes dealt with the issue of Christ the Teacher we find that, once again, the traditional language of the sixteenth century was retained, but the impact of the argument was not traditional. According to Hobbes, Christ had to achieve two things during his life on earth:

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 514.

One to Proclaim himself the Christ; and another by Teaching, and by working of Miracles, to perswade, and prepare men to live so, as to be worthy of the Immortality Beleevers were to enjoy, at such time as he should come in majesty, to take possession of his Fathers Kingdome.⁴⁶

Thus, Christ did indeed have a "teaching" role while here on earth. And yet, this teaching role bore little resemblance to the didactic purpose that, for example, Erasmus or Perkins had claimed for Christ's life. The whole emphasis was not on teaching men how to live "Christian" lives here and now but on "persuading and preparing" them to be believers in Christ as Messiah so that they might be worthy of immortality at Christ's *second coming*. The detailed moral content of Christ's teaching and its implications for Christian life on earth had evaporated.

What, then, may we conclude about Hobbes's treatment of the redemptive and didactic roles of Christ when seen against the background of sixteenth century debate about these issues? The most striking feature is that while Hobbes retained the traditional theological language surrounding Christ (Christ the Redeemer, Christ the Teacher, Christ the King) he emptied these terms of their traditional content and used them instead as tools in his own argument for the complete obedience of Christians to temporal authority. Hence, a language was retained but a whole series of questions and problems was removed. By arguing that Christ's redemptive and didactic roles were not concurrent but rather consecutive Hobbes had

⁴⁶ Ibid., pp. 515-6.

removed the difficulty of trying to relate the divine and the human.

Such observations have a twofold significance. Firstly, that Hobbes was using this language at all is interesting. It confirms the important interrelationship which I have been suggesting between the "theology" of the sixteenth century and the "philosophy" of the seventeenth. Consequently, it confirms the need for closer scrutiny of these theological writings by intellectual historians. Secondly, Hobbes used this theological language in a radical way. He detached the terms from their problematic meanings and redefined them to suit the purposes of his own argument. Hobbes warned his readers in the "Epistle Dedicatory" to *Leviathan* that he would give unusual meanings to "certain Texts of Holy Scripture", considering this the aspect of his work "which perhaps may most offend . . .".⁴⁷ Hobbes's methodology of redefining words and reshaping language in general has been widely acknowledged by historians of his political philosophy.⁴⁸ Hence, his redefining of theological language could be seen simply as a necessary additional application of the same methodology. In other words, Hobbes's theology, and

⁴⁷ Ibid., "Epistle Dedicatory to Mr. Francis Godolphin", p. 76.

⁴⁸ See, for example, Mark Hartman, "Hobbes's Concept of Political Revolution", *J. H. I.*, 47, 1986, p. 495, where he writes "One of Hobbes's main intellectual tactics was to appropriate the terminology of others and use it for different purposes". For Hobbes's use of Biblical language, see Arrigo Pacchi, "Hobbes and Biblical Philology in the Service of the State", *Topoi*, 7, 1988, pp. 231-39.

especially his use of theological words and axioms, could be seen *exclusively* as the outcome of his political philosophy. And certainly, the driving force of Hobbes's political philosophy cannot be disputed. However if, as we have seen, debate over Christ's natures and his roles on earth had led to contradictions and confusions concerning certain theological words and axioms, this very confusion provides an illuminating context in which to comprehend Hobbes's reinterpretation of the words and axioms in question. Hence, while the driving force of Hobbes's political philosophy is acknowledged, a potent factor in his reshaping of theological language can be discerned in the confusion and contradictions surrounding this language in earlier polemical use.

This hypothesis would indicate that the controversies of the preceeding century could affect the very meaning and coherence of the language in which the controversies themselves were conducted. Or, put another way, it suggests that polemics had the effect of "unhinging" or "destabilizing" words and concepts from their accepted framework of meaning, to the point that it became possible to use that same language for radically different purposes. In the above example, we have seen Hobbes doing this with theological axioms, but the same process could and did apply to other words and concepts caught in these controversies. The main body of this thesis will be devoted to exploring the parallel destabilization of two other words and concepts. In the chapters that follow we will examine the effects of polemical exchange on the

concepts, "heresy" and "hypocrisy". As I will demonstrate, these words were prominent within Reformation polemics and, because of the resulting pressures exerted upon them, became highly unstable as the century progressed. Once again, we will find that writers repeatedly encountered difficulties in expounding these concepts coherently, and we will also find Hobbes eventually employing these "unhinged" or "destabilized" concepts for his own radically different purposes.

CHAPTER TWO

THE INSTABILITY OF LANGUAGE: HYPOCRISY AND HERESY IN EARLY MODERN POLEMICS.

A relationship existed between the terms "heresy" and "hypocrisy" in Reformation polemics, a relationship which we would not anticipate given their modern dissociated uses. In the earliest polemical exchanges of the Reformation, Catholics charged Protestants with heresy, while Protestants retaliated by charging Catholics with hypocrisy. Subsequently, these opposing charges were employed repeatedly for specific reasons. But, as the century progressed, although the terms continued to be used frequently, they were no longer confined to these specific contexts. Protestants began to use both terms in their polemics against other Protestants as well as against Catholics and, as a result, confusion arose over both the application and the meaning of these terms. An analysis of the roles these words played in Reformation polemics forms the subject matter of this chapter.

However, before we study specific examples of the contexts in which these terms were employed, and the difficulties specific writers had in dealing with them, a brief illustration of the prevalence of these terms in sixteenth century polemics is called for. Both "hypocrisy" and "heresy" (and their personalized forms "hypocrite" and "heretic") played roles in the very first rounds of

Catholic/Protestant polemic and continued to appear in the works of controversialists throughout the century. In some of England's earliest vernacular defences against Protestantism we find Sir Thomas More constantly denouncing the "heresy" of his opponents, while on the other side of the polemical divide William Tyndale railed against the "hypocrisy" of his Roman Catholic adversaries.¹ That Protestants were "heretics" and Catholics were "hypocrites" became standard allegations throughout the decades that followed.

One easily accessible means for seeing the prevalence of these terms is to study the volumes of the Parker Society. Instituted in 1840, the Parker Society's mandate was "the Publication of the Works of the Fathers and Early Writers of the Reformed Church".² Since many of these works were controversial in nature, and since many followed the format of citing opponents' arguments before refuting them, the Parker Society volumes offer a useful and convenient window into the polemical rhetoric of both Catholics and Protestants. There are fifty-five volumes in the Parker Society, the last of which is a "General Index". This index reveals sixty-five citations under "heresy", sixty-seven under "heretics", and

¹ See, for example, Thomas More, *CW*, vol. 6:II, A *Dialogue Concerning Heresies*, p. 855, the index citations to "heresy" and "heretics". See also William Tyndale, *An Answer to Sir Thomas More's Dialogue*, Parker Society ed., vol. 44, pp. 10, 140 & 194.

² See the title page of *Select Works of John Bale, D.D.*, Parker Society, ed., (Cambridge: The University Press, 1849), vol. 1, or the title page of any other volume.

thirty-eight under "hypocrisy". There are also indexes to the writings of individual authors, usually, but not always, in the last volume of their own works.³ However, all these indexes are far from accurate and are incomplete.

Inaccuracies are evident even when the individual author indexes are compared with the General Index. For example, the individual index of Hugh Latimer's works cites six references to hypocrisy (one of which is inaccurate), while the General Index cites only four. Of these four, only three match listings in the individual author index. Hence, in total there are seven listings for "hypocrisy", three of which are present in both indexes, one of which is present only in the General Index, and three of which are present only in the index of Latimer's works. More important still, all these indexes are very far from complete. For every one use of "heresy" and "hypocrisy" that is cited, the pages teem with examples that have not found their way into the indexes. Therefore, while these indexes are useful because they demonstrate that both terms "heresy" and "hypocrisy" were integral to polemical exchanges at this time, their inaccuracies and most significantly their incompleteness make it important that the texts themselves be examined to obtain a representative picture. For instance, in his *Obedience of a Christian Man*, William Tyndale rebuked Catholic hypocrisy nine

³ Exceptions to this rule are to be found in the editions of Thomas Becon, for example, where there is an index appended to each individual volume. See, *The Works of Thomas Becon*, Parker Society, ed., vols. 2, 3, & 4.

times in a matter of twenty pages, with no record to be found in any of the indexes.⁴ Thomas Becon also poured out un-cited vitriol against the Catholics:

Antichrist, to enlarge his kingdom, taketh unto him innumerable swarms of *hypocrites*,* as cardinals, patriarchs, archbishops, bishops, priests, deacons, subdeacons, monks, friars, canons, hermits⁵

And so his list continues, including no less than forty-one categories of Roman Catholics with each and every one of them considered "hypocritical" by Becon. In like manner, we find Thomas Harding making un-cited accusations of heresy against English Protestants in his dispute with John Jewel, Bishop of Salisbury:

. . . these defenders [of the English Church] take upon them the name of the church of England, setting forth thereby a face of authority And verily herein they follow the wont of all heretics. For never was there any sect of heretics hitherto, which hath not claimed to be accounted and called the church.⁶

The number of citations in the Parker Society's indexes and the ease with which uncited uses of both "heresy" and "hypocrisy" can be found help to demonstrate the prevalence of

⁴ William Tyndale, *Doctrinal Treatises and Introductions to Different Portions of The Holy Scriptures*, Parker Society, ed., vol. 42, pp. 322-42. Another example of Tyndale's frequent but uncited use of "hypocrisy" is in *Expositions of Scripture and Practice of Prelates*, Parker Society, ed., vol. 43, pp. 4-14 where there are eleven uncited uses of the term in ten pages.

⁵ Becon, *Works*, vol. 4, p. 506. For other examples of Becon's uncited charges see vol. 4, pp. 261, 269, 514, & 528-9.

⁶ *The Works of John Jewel*, Parker Society, ed., vol. 25, p. 150.

these terms in polemical tracts. Equally persuasive is the fact that these labels found their way into official and political documents. These religious epithets had become such commonplaces that they occurred in a variety of non-theological literature. For example, in 1536, after the uprisings in Lincolnshire and the Yorkshire "Pilgrimage of Grace", one of Cromwell's protégés, Sir Richard Morrison, published tracts denouncing the rebellions. In assessing the possible causes of unrest, Morrison made the, by then, standard link between Rome and hypocrisy:

I cannot think that the putting down of abbeys, that is to say, the putting away of maintained lechery, buggery, and hypocrisy, should be the cause of this rebellious insurrection.⁷

Henry VIII, Morrison claimed, had set a shining example to all foreign princes concerning the duties of kingship, "to redress things of religion, to put down hypocrisy, and to restore honesty to her place again".⁸ Later in his reign Henry himself provided a classical example of the polemical use of both terms "heresy" and "hypocrisy". In his last speech to parliament in 1545 Henry made a plea for harmony and concord in matters of religion. He denounced name-calling *per se*, requesting that such crimes be amended to establish peace,

⁷ David Sandler Berkowitz, ed., *Humanist Scholarship and Public Order: Two Tracts against the Pilgrimage of Grace by Sir Richard Morison*, (Washington: The Folger Shakespeare Library, 1984), p. 95.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 97-8.

but in the process he offered examples of the very name-calling he denounced:

One thing, which surely is amiss, and far out of order, to the which I most heartily require you, which is, that charity and concord is not amongst you Behold then what love and charity is amongst you, when the one calleth the other Heretic and Anabaptists, and he calleth him again Papist, Hypocrite and Pharisee . . . few or none preach truly and sincerely the word of God Amend these crimes . . . or else I whom God hath appointed his Vicar, and high minister here, will see these divisions extinct and these enormities corrected, according to my very duty.⁹

One final yardstick by which we can measure the widespread use of these two labels, particularly in the latter half of the century, is to scan the titles of theological tracts written during this period. Peter Milward's *Religious Controversies of the Elizabethan Age* is a useful starting point yeilding such anti-Catholic titles as Lewis Evan's work *The Hatefull Hypocrisie, and rebellion of the Romishe prelatie* (1570), and John Nichols' *Iohn Niccols Pilgrimage, wherein is displaied the lives of the proude Popes, ambitious Cardinals, lecherous Bishops, fat bellied Monkes, and hypocriticall Iesuites* (1581). The Catholic attacks on Protestants are equally revealingly titled. For example, there is Richard Shacklock's translation of Stanislaus Hosius's work attacking Protestantism which became known as *The hatchet of heresies*

⁹ A. G. Dickens and John Tonkin, *The Reformation in Historical Thought*, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), p. 62.

(1565), and Richard Bristow's *Demaundes to bee proponed of Catholickes to the Heretickes* (1576).¹⁰

However, Milward's compilation of these titles also reveals some of the "unhinging" which was besetting these polemical labels. His chapters include many more titles of works containing the charge of heresy, but instead of being written by Catholics against Protestants, we find they were written by Protestants against other Protestants. There is John Rogers' *The Displaying of an horrible secte of grosse and wicked Heretiques, naming themselves the Familie of Love . . .* (1579), and John Knewstub's *A Confutation of monstrous and horrible heresies, taught by H. N. and embraced of a number, who call themselves the Familie of Love* (1579). What is more, we also find Protestants turning the charge of heresy back onto Catholics. William Fulke's response to three Catholic theologians offers a prime example of this being entitled *D. Heskins, D. Sanders and M. Rastel, accounted (among their faction) three pillers and Archpatriarches of the Popish Synagogue . . . overthrowne, and detected of their severall blasphemous heresies* (1579).¹¹ In like manner, charges of "hypocrisy" were being laid not only by Protestants against Catholics, but also by Protestants against other Protestants. John Yates took over the assault on Arminius

¹⁰ Peter Milward, *Religious Controversies of the Elizabethan Age: A Survey of Printed Sources*, (London: Scolar Press, 1977), p. 20 no. 83; p. 53 no. 188; pp. 19-20 no. 78; and p. 40 no. 147.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 34 no. 130; p. 35 no. 133; p. 7 no. 23.

when William Perkins died in 1602 by writing *Gods Arraignment of Hypocrites: with an Inlargement concerning Gods decree in ordering sinne. As likewise a Defence of Mr. Calvine against Bellarmine; and of Mr. Perkins against Arminius* (1615).¹²

The use of "heresy" and "hypocrisy" in such diverse ways indicates that through polemical exchanges the words had come unhinged from their original "Catholic versus Protestant" context. We should notice, however, that we are not necessarily observing here a "progressive" unhinging through time in which conventional uses were increasingly overtaken through the course of the century. Certainly there is an element of "development" involved since different applications of these words could only emerge as circumstances changed and possibilities for new applications arose. However, these two labels were sometimes inverted even in the earliest controversies of the century. For example, having been charged with heresy by Thomas More, William Tyndale refuted those charges by arguing that More was in fact a heretic, not himself.¹³ Likewise, More returned Tyndale's charge of

¹² Ibid., p. 163 no. 592. Another interesting example of the "unhinging" of these polemical labels is provided by Elliot Rose, *Cases of Conscience: Alternatives open to Recusants and Puritans under Elizabeth I and James I*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p. 177 where Rose describes how "Cartwright called the bishops Pharisees for their legalism in ritual matters, and Whitgift . . . returned the epithet on the puritan party".

¹³ See, for example, Tyndale, *Works*, Parker Society, ed., vol. 44, p. 162, where Tyndale wrote "And when M. More calleth it 'heresy, to think that the married [priests] were as pleasant to God as the unmarried,' he is surely an heretic that thinketh the contrary".

hypocrisy back from whence it came by calling Protestants "hypocrites".¹⁴ Such inversions were, and indeed still are, a standard occurrence in polemical exchange. Thus, what we are witnessing here should not be seen as a linear progression, but rather as a state of flux induced by the complex and disruptive nature of controversy.

Such observations bring us back to the initial question which must be examined, namely how and why these words became part of the polemical exchanges in the first place and how and why they came unhinged. It is to these problems that we will now turn our attention, examining first the problem of heresy.

The presence of the charge of heresy in Catholic polemics against Protestants comes as no surprise. Throughout the history of the Catholic Church, adherence to a religious opinion contrary to Church dogma had always been branded "heresy" by the Church. Hence, Protestant insistence on "justification by faith", denial of transubstantiation, and denunciation of purgatory made it inevitable that charges of "heresy" would form the core of Catholic responses to these unorthodoxies.

In order to understand how and why the concept of heresy came unhinged by polemical use we must recognize that Protestants could not use the word as it had been defined by the Catholic Church without accepting that they were indeed

¹⁴ See, for example, More, *Dialogue Concerning Heresies*, CW, vol. 6:1, pp. 422-24, where he charges Protestants with both heresy and hypocrisy, and p. 426 where he charges them with hypocrisy.

heretics. The Catholic definition of heresy made the Church, and therefore ultimately the Pope, the supreme authority in determining the true faith. Although there was less clarity in the pre-Reformation understanding of heresy than emerged later with the onset of the Counter-Reformation, certain key features of heresy were universally accepted. Heresy charges could only be laid against those who had previously confessed the Christian faith. Heresy entailed the rejection or corruption of accepted dogma or, as St. Thomas Aquinas had written, heresy was "a species of infidelity in men who, having professed the faith of Christ, corrupt its dogmas".¹⁵ While there may have been some lack of clarity amongst scholastic theologians concerning the exact content of the heterodox teaching which constituted heresy, there was no doubt at all concerning the source of authority which determined such issues. That authority was the Church and therefore ultimately the Pope. Heresy was a willful rejection of Church discipline and a breaking away from the communion of the faithful.¹⁶

¹⁵ *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, 15 vols. (New York: Robert Appleton Co., 1910), s.v. "Heresy". For a useful background on heresy in the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries see Gordon Leff, *Heresy in the Later Middle Ages: The Relation of Heterodoxy to Dissent c.1250-1450*, 2 vols., (Manchester, England: Manchester University Press, 1967); and Edward Peters, ed., *Heresy and Authority in Medieval Europe: Documents in Translation*, (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 1980).

¹⁶ *The New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 17 vols., (Washington, D. C.: Catholic University of America, 1967), s.v. "Heresy".

Such a definition of heresy could not be accepted by the Protestants without serious modifications and consequently we find the concept of heresy was often at the centre of disagreement in Catholic/Protestant polemics where it was easily warped and manipulated by polemical exchanges. When William Tyndale rebuffed the Catholic argument that lay access to the Bible precipitated heresy, he not only called the Papists "heretics" and "hypocrites" but he also redefined heresy itself. It was

a dark cloud that springeth out of the blind hearts of hypocrites, and covereth the face of the scripture, and blindeth their eyes, that they cannot behold the bright beams of the scripture.¹⁷

Elsewhere, denouncing scholastic disputations over the interpretation of scriptural passages, Tyndale charged that "man's foolish wisdom" was heresy:

there is no other division or heresy in the world save man's wisdom, and when man's foolish wisdom interpreteth the scripture.¹⁸

John Bale's *Examination of Anne Askewe* contained another brief definition of heresy, his purpose having been to denounce the Roman Catholic definition and promote a Protestant one. His definition was based upon the authority of the Word of God:

¹⁷ Tyndale, *Works*, vol. 43, p.141.

¹⁸ Tyndale, *Works*, vol. 42, p.160.

Heresy is not to dissent from the church of Rome in the doctrine of faith, as Lanfrancus . . . and Thomas Walden . . . defineth it; but heresy is a voluntary dissenting from the scriptures of God, and also a blasphemous depraving of them for the wretched belly's sake, and to maintain the pomps of this world. . . . Consider, then, whether he be the theif that sitteth upon the bench, or he that standeth at the bar; the popish clergy that condemneth, or the innocent [Anne Askewe] that is condemned.¹⁹

Thus, not only did Bale redefine heresy making it dependant on Biblical rather than Papal authority, he also employed the polemical device of turning the charge of heresy back from whence it came, onto the Roman Catholics. In another example, Thomas Becon did not formally define heresy, but he made exactly the same point as Bale when he argued that the "detestable heresies" of the early Church were due to the neglect of the holy Scriptures and an over-reliance on men's "own judgements and fantasies".²⁰

In all these examples, Protestants were attempting to substitute the authority of the Scriptures for the authority of the Pope in their definitions. However, this was not the only way in which the concept of heresy was coming unhinged through polemical exchanges. When definitions of heresy were offered in confrontational situations each party pounced upon the faults and weaknesses evident in the definitions of their opponents. Such was the case in the disputations of James Pilkington, Bishop of Durham, whose arguments we will study in more detail.

¹⁹ Bale, *Works*, vol. 1, pp. 217-18.

²⁰ Becon, *Works*, vol. 2, p. 278.

Pilkington had preached a sermon at St. Paul's Cross on June 8th 1561 concerning the reasons why that Cathedral had been struck by lightening. In essence, he considered the disaster was a warning of God's wrath at the laxity of living prevalent in London at the time. However, this sermon precipitated a response by an unknown Catholic theologian who, of course, blamed the disaster on the fact that Protestantism rather than Catholicism was being preached in England. Within this response, the charge that Protestants were "heretics" was made. The people were so "blinded in heresy, . . . that their hearts do not understand, their eyes do not see [and] their ears be stopped for hearing the truth".²¹ The Catholic author also appended "Certaine Questions" and answers to his work to assist the reader and it is here that certain "definitions" are offered. One of his questions was "Who is an heretic"? Predictably, the opponent gave a recognizably Catholic definition of a heretic, including the fact that heresy was determined by the Catholic Church itself:

He that teaches, defends, or maintains any erroneous opinion against the decrees, judgment, or determination of Christ's catholic church, is an heretic.²²

In Pilkington's response he argued that such a definition of heresy was faulty. He pounced on his opponent's obvious omission: the opponent had failed to make a distinction

²¹ *The Works of James Pilkington*, Parker Society, ed., vol. 35, p. 486.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 619.

between simple "error" and "heresy" which was the *obstinate* maintenance of error. Proving "obstinacy" or "pertinacity" was an essential part of any heresy charge and it was central to the problem of judging heresy. Without obstinacy there was no evil intentionality and no malice, but only simple error. Here, then, polemical exchange had produced yet another inadequate definition of heresy because of the omission of this vital element. It is worth remarking that Protestants were equally guilty of omitting this vital ingredient from their own definitions of heresy. In the next example we shall look at, the Protestant Bishop John Jewel made this error and was brought up sharply by his Catholic opponent, Thomas Harding.

However, before we turn to Jewel and Harding, there is one last aspect of Pilkington's work which deserves attention. Within the definitions of heresy we have just reviewed, we can see that the issue of authority over faith (and therefore over heresy) was absent. But this was not because Pilkington and his opponent had avoided the topic. "Authority" was discussed, but under a different heading. The opponent's first question had been "Which is the Catholic church?" and his answer was that the apostolical see of Rome was the true Church. He supported this definition with extracts from certain Church Fathers and then added:

Nor let heretics take any comfort to themselves, if they can frame out of the chapters of the scripture for their purpose that which they say, seeing the devil has alleged some things of scripture: for the scriptures consist not in reading, but true understanding.²³

Here, then, was the Catholic defence that "Scripture" could not be an adequate substitute for Papal authority in determining matters of faith, and therefore matters of heresy, since Scripture could even be manipulated to support the devil's cause! The Bible could not be an effective authority in this world without some authoritative method for interpreting it. Pilkington attempted to refute this argument, denouncing the authority of Rome and adding "the Holy Spirit" to "the Word" as sources of Protestant authority:

the church is gathered by Christ and the apostles first, and continues, not in the papistical but in the apostolical faith, under Christ our head, who rules his church still by his Holy Spirit and word, and has not put it into the hands of any one only general vicar in the earth²⁴

Pilkington went on to use the historical factionalism and schism within the Roman Church as proof that it was not the one true church. Clearly, this debate also focused on this issue of the authority of Rome which was central to the Protestant problem regarding heresy. Without an adequate "this worldly" authority to take the place of the Papacy in the Catholic definition, all attempts to rebuff the charge, let alone to use it effectively against others were doomed to failure.

²³ Ibid., p. 618.

²⁴ Ibid.

Both the thorny problem of authority and the problem of "obstinacy" are present in the next case we will examine, namely the polemical exchanges between Bishop John Jewel and Thomas Harding. Here once again Harding took the usual Catholic position by arguing that if Protestants rejected the faith handed down by Popes through the centuries, then they must indeed be heretics. He wrote:

If ye have forsaken the faith ye were baptized in; if ye be gone from the faith which St. Eleutherius, pope and martyr, . . . preached in this land by Damianus and Fugatius; . . . if ye refuse the faith which Gregory the great, that holy pope, caused to be preached to our ancestors the English nation . . . and have thereby dissolved the unity of the catholic church, and leave not to maintain the doctrine whereby the same unity is dissolved; all this presupposed, we see not but that this cry made upon you is true; for then are ye heretics indeed.²⁵

In response to this charge, Jewel attempted to build a historical refutation, claiming that Harding had mistaken the authority from which the English Church had been founded. It had not received its authority from Rome and the Papacy but rather,

the church and faith of Christ had been planted here a long while before . . . either by Joseph of Arimathaea, or . . . by St. Paul the apostle, . . . or . . . by Simon Zelotes, or by the Greeks, or by some others.²⁶

²⁵ Jewel, *Works*, vol. 25, p. 163. See also vol. 25, p. 116 where Jewel paraphrases Hardings argument as follows: "that in his only holiness [the Pope] standeth the unity and safety of the church; that whosoever is divided from him must be judged an heretic; and that without the obedience of him there is no hope of salvation".

²⁶ Jewel, *Works*, vol. 25, pp. 163-4.

Clearly, the historical foundations upon which the English Church hoped to bypass its allegiance to Rome were far from authoritative, although this argument concerning the historical independence of the English Church as the "true" Church was developed and refined in the following decades to rebuff charges of "heresy" from Rome.

However, Jewel did not leave the matter as a simple dispute over historical sources. Instead he insisted upon the "innocency" of the English Church of the charge of heresy. The English Church would "defend soberly and truly [its] own cause and innocency". Harding responded that so long as the English Church maintained the doctrines of Luther, Zwingli and Calvin, it could not have "the truth". Truth was, as Jewel acknowledged, central to the issue. But how could "truth" be determined? Just as Pilkington had included the "Holy Spirit" in his account, so Jewel made a direct appeal for divine guidance and hence divine authority in ascertaining truth:

This is the very issue of the case; whether the doctrine that we profess be the truth or not which thing through God's grace by this our conference in part may appear. I beseech God, the Author of all truth and the Father of light, so to open our hearts that the thing that is the truth indeed may appear to us to be the truth.²⁷

Yet such an appeal to God for truth did nothing to solve the problem of authority over doctrine in *this world*. Harding simply denied that the Reformers had "truth" while Jewel insisted that thousands of his Reformed bretheren had "borne

²⁷ Ibid., p. 184.

witness unto the truth in the midst of most painful torments that could be devised . . .".²⁸ The argument over "truth" had reached a stalemate. As a result, Harding fell back once again to his original position that the faith of the Roman Church was the "very catholic faith", all else being heresy, while Jewel claimed once again that men should not be branded heretics for following the "truth" rather than the Papacy ²⁹.

Next, Jewel objected that heresy charges should not be laid lightly because of the seriousness of the offence, and here he offered a Protestant "definition" of heresy, omitting all reference to authority in this world and demonstrating the seriousness of the offence. Heresy was "a forsaking of salvation, a renouncing of God's grace, a departing from the body and Spirit of Christ". Harding immediately rejected this definition, showing it to be incorrect because it made every deadly sin a heresy. In other words, Jewel's definition had omitted the requirement of obstinacy or pertinacity (just as Pilkington's opponent had done). Harding countered that heresy was rather "a false doctrine against the right belief, by him that professeth the faith *stubbornly** either avouched or called in doubt." In response to this challenge concerning the correctness of his definition, Jewel attempted a side-step, claiming that he had never intended to define heresy in the first place. Yet, he went on to offer another definition

²⁸ Ibid., p. 187.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 195.

of heresy, thereby seriously undermining the credibility of his denial that he had been making a definition in the first place. If the content of this answer of Jewel's is analysed closely, the confusion in his position becomes readily apparent. First of all he was indignant, denouncing the need for a definition, and again claiming "truth" to be on his side:

Verily, M. Harding, this is but a simple quarrel. It was not my mind in this place to utter any definition of heresy, either right or wrong. You know right well that such curiosity in this kind of writing is not needful. It is sufficient our words be true, although they include no definition.

But in the very next sentence, Jewel offered a revised definition of heresy, this time inserting "God's word" as the authority by which heresy could be judged in this world:

For just proof of heresy three things necessarily are required. First, that it be an error: secondly, that it be an error against the truth of God's word; for otherwise every error maketh not an heresy: thirdly, that it be stoutly and wilfully maintained³⁰

However, having just offered this definition which made the Bible the source of authority, Jewel then reverted to his previous point; no definition of heresy had been intended not only because definition was not necessary as he had argued before, but now because definition was too hard:

³⁰ Ibid., p. 210.

It was not so necessary in this matter so precisely to seek us definitions. I thought it sufficient only to declare the horror of heresy. For, as touching the definition, St. Augustine saith: . . . "To express by orderly definition what thing maketh an heretic, as I judge, it is either impossible, or very hard".³¹

Jewel added to this point by challenging that Catholics had been guilty of using the heresy charge too widely and without due caution, given how difficult it was to define. But, rather than leaving the argument there, Jewel proceeded to cite various Catholic authors in an attempt to reinforce his point. Instead of reinforcement, however, he ended up undermining his point that heresy charges should be laid less often and with extreme caution because he concluded by intimating that all Catholics were heretics! Quoting Alphonsus de Castro, Jewel wrote:

"Therefore it happeneth that they that so rashly pronounce and call every thing heresy, not considering whereof they speak, be often stricken with their own dart, and fall into the same pit that themselves have digged for others. For this would I rather call heresy, to account men's writings among the scriptures of God".³²

This step by step examination of Jewel's argument shows just how incoherent his position had become and the complications that were besetting the concept of heresy during the course of Catholic/Protestant polemics.³³ Nor was this

³¹ Ibid., p. 211.

³² Ibid., pp. 211-12.

³³ This "incoherence" in Jewel's argument stands in marked contrast with the praise he has previously received for the logical, clear and careful nature of his work, and his exhaustive use of authorities. See, for example, W. M.

limited extract we have studied the end of the debate since Harding and Jewel continued to toss the subject backwards and forwards in protracted disagreement. They examined biblical examples of the use of the word "heresy", they argued over whether Christ himself had been a "heretic" because he was called a "Samaritan", and so it continued. However, the point to be made here is that in attempting to fend off Catholic charges of heresy, Protestants were obliged to define heresy differently than their opponents, since they needed a different source of "this worldly" authority. The ensuing polemical exchanges inevitably had the effect of "unhinging" the concept of heresy itself.

Another example of Protestant difficulties in defining, and especially in implementing, the heresy charge can be seen in the *Catechism* of Thomas Becon.³⁴ Here Becon laid out the proper approach of the civil magistrate when dealing with "heretics" in his realm. In effect, this task entailed a "Protestant" definition of both the crime of, and the punishment for heresy. Ideally it also entailed a definition which did not make it equally legitimate for Protestant "heretics" to be treated harshly in Catholic countries as it was for Catholic heretics to be condemned in Protestant countries, an ideal of which Becon was fully aware. The *Catechism* took the form of a dialogue between father and son,

Southgate, *John Jewel and the Problem of Doctrinal Authority*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1962), p. 87.

³⁴ Becon, *Works*, vol. 3, pp. 1-410.

and in the sixth chapter, the "office and Duty of the Temporal Magistrate", the problem of heresy was raised. It was agreed that if heretics were obstinate and continued to profess their heresies publicly despite careful instruction and admonition, then they could be put to death with legitimacy. However, considerable emphasis was given to the need for kindly and loving conference to correct errors. Because heresy was a "spiritual thing", the instrument of correction should not be force, but rather

the sincere and pure word of God, with the faithful testimonies of the old godly writers, and with the perfect consent of the apostolic and primitive church.³⁵

Becon was falling back (just as Jewel had done) on a combination of the Scriptures and the early Church as the authoritative sources for correct belief. And yet these two "authorities" were necessarily made subservient to the authority of the civil magistrate since, if heretics failed to respond to the persuasiveness of these authorities, "then may the head ruler with a good conscience punish those heretics . . . whether it be by imprisonment, loss of goods, banishment, sword, or otherwise".³⁶ Becon offered scriptural justification for these actions but there was no doubt that authority lay with the magistrate. If this was the case, there was a problem which Becon certainly recognized; his definition of the charge and punishment of heresy made it

³⁵ Ibid., p. 313.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 314.

equally legitimate to punish Protestant "heretics" with the sword in Catholic countries. His attempt to find a way around this situation illustrates once again the intractable problem that heresy itself presented for Protestants. Becon's solution to the problem was to attempt to insert a wedge in between the civil magistrate and the Papacy even in Catholic countries. He argued that civil magistrates were called "gods" and "God's ministers" in the Bible and that consequently they must heed God and not Rome. Since it was the Church that conducted heresy trials and passed sentences, only handing over confirmed heretics to the civil magistrate for the implementation of those sentences, Becon argued that the civil magistrate should reject the "tyranny of the bishop of Rome", refusing to be his "hangman and bond-slave". Rather, the magistrate should use his own discretion concerning the necessity of meting out a harsh sentence.

While this argument was designed to undermine the allegiance of Catholic Princes to the Pope, thereby permitting leniency in dealing with those heretics whose only crime had been to reject "the pope's decrees and ceremonies", in effect the argument reinforced the authority of the civil magistrate. Despite his previous emphasis on the "word of God", Becon had not maintained an argument which made Scripture the ultimate authority in matters of faith. A "this worldly" authority was imperative. This was an uneasy situation for Becon since a civil magistrate was just as likely to be obedient to Rome as he was to Protestantism. It is interesting, therefore, that

Becon concluded his remarks on this topic with a plea that all civil magistrates should be directed by the "Holy Spirit". In other words, Becon made a plea to that other source of "authority" which Jewel had employed, the Holy Spirit, in the hope that "this worldly" authority (the civil magistrate) would be governed by "other worldly" authority (the Holy Spirit), in favour of Protestantism, of course!

God give all magistrates his holy Spirit, which may direct them in all their ways, and so govern them in all their affairs, that they attempt nothing contrary to the glory of God and the benefit of the commonweal!³⁷

Not surprisingly, this plea did not solve Protestant difficulties since the "Holy Spirit" was an even less immediate or tenable source of authority in this world than the Bible was.

These problems over authority haunted all Protestant/Catholic polemics concerning heresy, but equally they also haunted Protestant use of the charge *vis à vis* other Protestants. As we saw from the titles of certain polemical tracts cited by Milward, Protestants used the charge of heresy against other Protestants, namely those sects whose beliefs they considered too extreme. This was problematic because the authorities by which erroneous beliefs were denounced were often the very same authorities by which extremists supported their own "heretical" beliefs.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 317.

One of the sects which precipitated vehement denunciation and charges of "heresy" from Protestants was the "Family of Love". In polemical attacks on the Family we can see both the sources of authority that Protestant writers were using to denounce this "heresy", and we can also see the problems inherent in these authorities when used against other Protestants. In John Roger's work, *The Displaying of an horrible secte of grosse and wicked Heretiques, naming themselves the Familie of Love*, several difficulties are apparent.³⁸ First of all, like other Protestants, the Family of Love claimed authority for their beliefs from the early Church, except they used a very extreme form of this argument. The Church of England had adopted a formula which accepted the teachings of the early Church until the sixth century when Roman papal supremacy had been established. By this formula the Papacy was made responsible for all the "errors" of the Roman Church, but the notion of the unity, authority and catholicity of one universal Church could be preserved. This argument emphasized the importance of the visible Church as the external "body of Christ", with membership of that Church being necessary for salvation. The English Church was at pains to preserve these features in order to demonstrate that it was the one true Church. Thus, in polemics against Roman Catholicism the English Church did not reject the external

³⁸ John Rogers, *The Displaying of an horrible secte of grosse and wicked Heretiques, naming themselves the Familie of Loue, with the liues of their Authors, and what doctrine they teach in corners*, (London: George Bishop, 1578).

manifestation of a "catholic" Church, but rather blamed all the errors of the Church on its subjection to Rome.

However, members of the Family of Love claimed their authority from the early Church as well, only they went back one step further to the time of the Apostles. They argued that these men were closest to Christ and consequently were the "purest" in their doctrine. Therefore the "true Church" must be founded on their principles. Thus, both sides were using the "Protestant" authority of the purity of the early Church as a foundation for their beliefs, and were contrasting this purity with the later decay and corruption of the Church, and yet they were using these arguments in different ways to support different, opposing institutions.

Rogers found ways to attack the Family's use of the "early Church" argument. He claimed that the true Church had to have been visible throughout time and consequently have been manifest throughout the intervening centuries. The Family, on the other hand, had freely acknowledged that their Church had been hidden since the time of the Apostles. Therefore, according to Rogers, it could not be the true Church:

And because H. N. and his family haue protested,
that the trueth hath no where beene taught in the
world since the Apostles time, but now by the
familie: how vaine this their assertion is, in
itself appeareth. For if trueth hath bene hidd and
buried this 1500. yeares, where is become Christes
promise, that he would be euerwith his to the end of
y^e world?³⁹

³⁹ Ibid., sig. Av^r.

Despite such refutations of the Family's position, dispute over the authority of the "early Church" and disagreements over how it should be understood could only serve to cast doubt upon the validity of the "early Church" as a source of authority. Disagreement thereby undermined this "authority" which the Church of England had used to denounce others for heresy.

In the second place, there was a problem concerning the authority of the Bible. Both the Family of Love and the Church of England used the Bible as a source of authority but they drew radically different interpretations and theologies from its pages. Early in his work, Rogers challenged the Family and its leader H. N. (Henry Niclaus) to "prove" their doctrine from the Scriptures:

if the doctrine of H. N. be a trueth . . . why dare none of the *Illuminate Elders* (which cannot erre nor sinne) come before the simple ones in Christes schole, and proue their authors doctrine good by the holy Scripture?⁴⁰

Yet, despite issuing this challenge, Rogers tacitly acknowledged elsewhere that the Family of Love *did* support its doctrine from Scripture, the only problem being that they interpreted Scripture according to their own devices:

They cannot abide any exposition of Scriptures, but their own, conferring one place of Scripture with another, and so to say their mindes of it without any other bodies exposition.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid., sig. Kii^r.

The contradiction in Rogers' statements is readily apparent since if the Scriptures needed the exposition of others in order to be interpreted correctly, then the "Holy Scriptures" *per se* could not be an adequate authority by which to disprove the truth of the Family's doctrines.

Interpretation of the Scriptures was also a focus of disagreement in John Knewstub's work, *A Confutation of Monstrous and horrible heresies, taught by H. N.*⁴² Knewstub, like Rogers, had used Scripture to denounce some of the Family's doctrines. For example, he refuted one point by claiming it was "A doctrine, which the whole course of the Scripture doth utterly ouerthrow".⁴³ And yet, elsewhere, Knewstub attacked the Family's use of the Bible because of their "allegorical" interpretations:

To uphold the heresies of H.N. this is one especiall and principall practice, that the History and native sence of the woorde of God, is altogether neglected of him, and in steede thereof is intertained, an Allegorical and bastardly construction, which thing utterly defaceth the certentie of the sacred scripture, & maketh no other thing of it, then a nose of waxe, which wil receiue as many sundry figures, and impressions, as shal please a man to presse upon it: . . . Now if the woorde be made so uncertayne, our faith which is grounded thereupon, cannot be sure.⁴⁴

⁴² John Knewstub, *A Confutation of monstrous and horrible heresies, taught by H. N. and embraced by a number, who call themselves the Familie of Love*, (London: T. Dawson, 1579).

⁴³ Ibid., sig. K7^v.

⁴⁴ Ibid., sig. L5^r.

However, despite this firm denunciation of allegorical interpretations in favour of the "literal" and "grammatical" sense, Knewstub had to allow that in parts of the Bible allegorical interpretations were necessary. This was because at times the literal sense would "establishe some thing repugnant, eyther to faith, or Charitie".⁴⁵ Knewstub attempted to lay restrictions on how allegorical interpretations should be made: they must "haue their meaning made manifest, and beaten out, by the circumstances of the places, from whence they are taken ...". But such attempted solutions could only fuel the debate and disagreement over how the Bible should be interpreted, and thereby undermine the Bible's validity as a source of authority in itself. Once again, the concept of heresy was seriously weakened and unhinged by the polemical debate surrounding the validity of Protestant authority, in this case the Bible.

The "early Church" had been problematic as a source of authority: so too had the Bible. And likewise, one last source of authority, the "holy Spirit", was equally problematic as we can see by reverting to Roger's text for a moment. As we have seen, Protestants defending the Church of England had made appeals for divine guidance and for the assistance of the Holy Spirit, but the Family of Love confronted authorities with an extreme, and therefore unacceptable, formulation of this argument. The Family made a

⁴⁵ Ibid., sig. L9^r.

direct claim to revelation from God himself. Rogers described the situation in Munster where the Family of Love predominated:

Nothing they taught nor published, but that which they affirmed to receive from God by revelation. . . . [H.N. claimed] that he hath received [his doctrine] not by mans ministrie, but at y mouth of God, whose sound and voyce he saith he hath heard.⁴⁶

Rogers' response to such claims to direct divine inspiration highlight the acute difficulty Protestants were having in establishing authority to denounce heresy. First he called upon Scripture: "The Scriptures do teach vs to flee from such men as boast of such vanities, that they are taught by revelation". But then, having offered one or two scriptural examples to support this claim, Rogers went on to argue that "Almightie God to teach his children vseth alwayes the office and ministrie of man". Therefore, instead of direct scriptural authority, the claim now was that God taught men to obey the ministry, or the Church. Thus, the Church had become the authority, but when Rogers tried to produce scriptural arguments to support this claim, he ran into difficulties. He was obliged to explain the anomaly of the Prophets who had claimed direct personal revelation from God. Consequently, Rogers was obliged to argue that the Prophets had

⁴⁶ Rogers, *The Displaying*, sigs. Avi^{r-v}.

their testimonie of their calling ioyned with their office, as a seale, & badge, which was, a bold publication of their message without feare, because it was a truth, and there was ioyned commonly therewith the working of myracles: which seales your author [H. N.] wanteth.⁴⁷

Rogers was arguing that the Prophets had not only their office, but also their "truth" and their "myracles" to confirm that their revelation was directly from God, all of which proofs H. N. lacked. Of course such claims could, and did, lead to bitter dispute over the nature of miracles and the "proof" of miracles, all in an effort to claim the desired but elusive authority for denouncing heretical beliefs.

In conclusion, we can see that the range of theological issues which became enmeshed in these disputes over authority was extensive. Issue after issue was subjected to destructive polemical exchanges. Inevitably, the more virulent the disputes, the more the concept of heresy itself was jeopardized. The Church of England continued to advance an official argument that it was the one true catholic Church, visible through history first of all in the early Church up to the sixth century, and after in a variety of examples of insubordination to Rome. But, as we have just seen, its attempt to defend its position and "prove" its authority often created as many problems as it solved. While the above examples illustrate how and why the concept of heresy was unhinged by polemical exchanges in the course of the sixteenth century, it is important to be aware that we are not

⁴⁷ Ibid., sig. Avi^v.

describing here a developmental progression of arguments in which one writer "developed" on the basis of another's arguments. To take an example, debate about miracles was not simply the outcome of disagreement over divine inspiration between the Church of England and the Family of Love. All of the implications and ramifications of appealing to miracles as proof of divine approval had been fully examined earlier in the century by Thomas More.⁴⁸ Rather than a "progression", the examples above are simply intended to demonstrate the weight and the thrust of arguments produced throughout the century, all of which helped to weaken (and unhinge) the concept of heresy.

An analogous "unhinging" may be demonstrated in the case of hypocrisy to which we will now turn our attention. First of all we must enquire how this term entered into Protestant/Catholic polemics to begin with. Why should the Protestants have selected this word as a key term in their denunciation of Catholics? To answer this question we must look at the authority upon which Protestants attempted to found their break with Rome, namely the Bible. As we have just seen, one of the cornerstones of Protestantism was the authority of "the Word", the authority of Scripture rather than the Catholic reliance on the authority of the Church itself. Protestants charged that Catholics had deviated from

⁴⁸ More, *Dialogue Concerning Heresies*, CW, vol. 6:1, especially pp. 55-110. See also the analysis of this section of the *Dialogue* below, chap. 4, pp. 188-205.

the truth of Christ's teaching. The true spirit of Christ's message had been lost because Catholics had allowed the authority of the "word" to be subsumed by the pedantic and legalistic accretions of men in general, and scholastic theologians in particular. Protestant theologians needed, and indeed found, Scriptural authority for rejecting such pedantic accretions. Had not Christ denounced the pedantry and legalism of the Pharisees who had stuck rigidly to the rules of the Law, but had failed to understand or incorporate its spirit? Thus, Protestants made the link between "Catholics" and "Pharisees" on a Biblical basis. The assimilation of this link into popular parlance can be demonstrated by the example of Richard Taverner. Taverner was another of Thomas Cromwell's *protégés* and polemicists, and in attempting to define the position of the Royal Supremacy English Church as a *via media* between Rome on the one hand and Lutheranism on the other, Taverner wrote:

Some we call Pharisees, we beknave, we defye as naughty papists Again, other some we beheretick, we call Lutherans⁴⁹

Here, then, as in Henry's 1545 speech to Parliament we find that Roman Catholics were labelled "Pharisees", while Protestants were "heretics".⁵⁰

However, if we turn to the Biblical passages from which Reformers were drawing this condemnation of Catholics, we can

⁴⁹ Dickens and Tonkin, *Reformation in Historical Thought*, pp. 61-2.

⁵⁰ See above p. 55 above.

see why the label "hypocrite" joined that of "Pharisee" in the polemical literature. Christ's great denunciation of the Pharisees in the Gospels (Luke 11-12, but more forcefully in Matt. 23) was punctuated with the recurring refrain, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites". The phrase is repeated in Matt. 23 no less than seven times in a matter of seventeen verses, making the link between Pharisees and hypocrites unavoidable for the reader. The link is so insistent as to make it inevitable that the latter joined the former as an anti-Roman slogan.

Given, then, that "hypocrisy" entered the Catholic/Protestant polemics for specific reasons and within a specific context, we must now enquire how and why the word came "unhinged". There were immediate complications inherent in the Protestant charge of "hypocrisy" against the Catholics and these stemmed from the very Biblical passage which had first prompted the use of the term. The problem arose concerning the basis upon which a charge of hypocrisy could be made. Within Matt. 23 there were two different strands running through Christ's attack on the Pharisees. One involved "foolishness and blindness"; the other involved hypocrisy based on evil intentions. The chapter is interspersed with both types of charge. For example, on the first premise, Christ had warned:

Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor! Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold? Matt. 23:16-17.

Here Christ was objecting to the Pharisees' interpretation of the law, suggesting that they had not seen or had mistaken the true essence of the law. By calling the Pharisees "blind" and "foolish" for their interpretation of the law, Christ removed the possibility of evil intentions.

However, in other verses the Pharisees were charged with evil intentions and hypocrisy. For example:

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive greater damnation. Matt. 23:14.

This, and other similar charges (see Matt. 23:27-28) involve deliberate deception on the Pharisees' behalf and therefore Christ calls them "hypocrites". But, a problem arises since in some passages the charges of "blindness" and of "hypocrisy" appear to fuse intimating that blindness itself is an adequate basis for charges of hypocrisy. The problem can be seen clearly in the following verses which must be quoted at length in order to demonstrate how one charge seems to slide into another:

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgement, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of exhortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter that the outside of them may be clean also. Matt. 23:23-26.

Twice in these verses the initial charge of hypocrisy is laid, with overtones of malicious intent, and yet both times the conclusion drawn is that the Pharisees are blind, suggesting ignorance rather than malice. Thus, an unusual situation emerges in which blindness, foolishness or even ignorance can appear adequate grounds for charges of hypocrisy to be made.

Given this confusion in the Biblical passages, it is not surprising that exactly the same confusion is evident in the charges of some Protestants. Most often hypocrisy involves evil intentions, but at times Catholics are accused of hypocrisy simply for their belief in "justification by works" and in the mass, regardless of the intentions of those performing the works. Some Reformers argued that those who believed such a theology were hypocrites simply because the theology was wrong. Thus, William Tyndale could write:

the faith of hypocrites is, that God forgiveth, and works deserve it: and that same false faith, in their own works, receiveth the mercy promised to the merits of their own works; and so Christ is utterly excluded.⁵¹

⁵¹ Tyndale, *Works*, vol. 43, p. 11.

In this passage, the only basis Tyndale offers for calling the Catholics "hypocrites" is that they believe they can be justified by their own works. Likewise, Thomas Becon omitted intentionality from some of his charges of hypocrisy, writing ". . . none can forgive us our sins but God alone. Hath your [the Catholics'] broken bread been without beginning? Hath it made all things? Yea, it is a creature itself, vile and devilish, as ye use, or rather abuse it. Be ashamed, O ye shameless hypocrites, thus to deface the glory of God. . .".⁵²

Thus, even from the very outset, the meaning of "hypocrisy" was unstable simply because of the source from which it had been taken for polemical use. What is more, this use of "hypocrisy" omitting any attack on intentionality had one very prominent and influential proponent, John Calvin. Calvin's frequent and varied uses of "hypocrite" and "hypocrisy" have been noted by a recent biographer, William J. Bouwsma. Bouwsma shows how Calvin attacked hypocrisy with great vehemence and how Calvin's understanding of the term shifted considerably depending upon context. Calvin certainly used "hypocrisy" to attack intentionality, but when he used the term to attack Catholic theology *per se* (especially justification by works) he often used it in a way that circumvented intentionality altogether. As Bouwsma remarks, "The most flagrant vehicle of hypocrisy, for Calvin, was . . .

⁵² Becon, *Works*, vol. 4, p. 279.

justification by works".⁵³ On this basis both pilgrims and pilgrimages also became hypocritical regardless of the intentionality of the pilgrim. Calvin wrote:

if they sweat, [pilgrims] think that every step ought to be reckoned to their account by God, and that God would be unjust unless he approved of what is offered him at such trouble.⁵⁴

Hence, Bouwsma concludes that "In attacking as hypocrisy what the milder Erasmus had called superstition, Calvin seems to have departed from normal usage, in which hypocrisy involves deliberate deception".⁵⁵ While Bouwsma has correctly pointed out that Calvin's use of "hypocrisy" seems unusual to a modern reader, he has failed to detect its New Testament origin and, because his comparisons are with the Catholic Erasmus rather than with other Protestants, he has failed to see that amongst Protestants this use omitting deliberate deception was not entirely abnormal.

Elsewhere, however, both Calvin and other Reformers used the charge of "hypocrisy" in the other form found in Matt. 23 to launch a full scale attack on the intentionality of the Papists. Insinuations that evil purposes lurked behind the Roman insistence on "works" are rampant in the works of William Tyndale:

⁵³ William J. Bouwsma, *John Calvin: A Sixteenth-Century Portrait*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 62.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

Impure-hearted are all hypocrites, that do their work for a false purpose, either for praise, profit, or to be justified thereby; which painted sepulchres (as Christ calleth them) can never see God⁵⁶

Or again quoting Luther, Tyndale writes:

our holy hypocrites . . . feign many good works, of their own imagination, to be justified withal, in which is not one crumb of true faith, of spiritual love, or of inward joy, peace, and quietness of conscience . . . they are even the rotten fruits of a rotten tree.⁵⁷

Likewise, Calvin launched direct attacks upon the intentions of Papists: hypocrites "pretend to worship God by many ceremonies" while they indulge in "every cruelty, robbery and fraud". At the same time they are fasting and hearing mass "to atone for frauds and villanies", they are busy plotting further crimes.⁵⁸

Therefore, in both examples of Tyndale and Calvin we can see two distinct ways in which Papists were charged with hypocrisy: first, there was an attack on the theology of justification by works *per se*. Good works could not obtain God's favour and anyone who was blind enough or foolish enough to think they could, must be a hypocrite. Secondly, there was an attack on the intentionality of the Papists since those who advocated a theology of "works" were ill-intentioned in doing

⁵⁶ Tyndale, *Works*, vol. 43, p. 26.

⁵⁷ Tyndale, *Works*, vol. 42, pp. 499-500. For other examples, see vol. 42, p. 191, vol. 43, pp. 112-3 & p. 130. Hugh Latimer also condemns the evil intentions of Papists, in *The Works of Hugh Latimer*, Parker Society, ed., vol. 27, p. 287.

⁵⁸ Bouwsma, *Calvin*, p. 62.

so. What is more, both forms of attack could claim some Biblical foundation as we saw in Matt. 23.

There were several additional reasons why "hypocrisy" remained prominent in sixteenth century polemics, and all of these factors contributed to its continued instability. First of all, Protestants in England were confronted with a particular problem. Of those who had accepted Protestantism during the reign of Edward VI, some were quite prepared to revert to Catholicism on Mary's accession to the throne. The only possible conclusion to draw from this was that there had been "hypocrites" amongst the Protestants of Edward's reign. In the preface of his *Comfortable Epistle to the Afflicted People of God*, Thomas Becon argued that the return of Catholicism to England in Mary's reign had been God's punishment for inadequate "reform" and also God's test of the purity of faith and conscience of the "reformed". Those who had failed God's test must be branded as "hypocrites":

The patient and thankful bearing of the cross, when it cometh, declareth evidently who is a true member of the Church of Christ, and who is a rotten member and a hypocrite. . . . the hypocrite and false Christian in the time of prosperity seemeth to rejoyce in the truth of Christ's gospel, and greatly to favour the doctrine of the same: notwithstanding, when adversity cometh . . . then fleeth he back, then forsaketh he his Lord and Master, then runneth he out of the field like a coward.⁵⁹

For Becon, lapsed Protestants must be denounced by the same label as had applied to all Catholics. Hugh Latimer made exactly the same point but with a slightly different emphasis

⁵⁹ Becon, *Works*, vol. 4, p. 203.

in the 1562 dedication of his *Certain Sermons*. Those who had made several "conversions" from Catholicism to Protestantism and back again must have been nothing more than hypocritical Catholics all along. Addressing this group of "converts", Latimer admonished:

. . .the Spirit of the Lord is departed from you.
And this is more evident in your manifold and
manifest perjuries, committed by you in king Henry's
time, in king Edward's time, in queen Mary's time.
And what may be said of you at this time [1562], but
that you be false perjured hypocrites; bearing two
faces under one hood; being ready, like
weathercocks, to turn at all seasons as the wind
doth carry you?⁶⁰

Protestants in England, like Becon and Latimer, were obliged to acknowledge that there were "hypocrites" amongst their own simply because not all converts had remained faithful in times of oppression.

On the Continent, Protestants had reached the same conclusion that there were indeed "hypocritical" Protestants as well as hypocritical Catholics, but they had reached this conclusion for different reasons. They discovered that some members of their churches claimed "reformed" faith, but were not "reformed" in their lives. And again, the obvious label for these incomplete converts was "hypocrites". Calvin in particular was tormented by having such "hypocrites" in his congregation,⁶¹ but the most detailed comments on the problem came from Henry Bullinger. Before we examine Bullinger's

⁶⁰ Hugh Latimer, *Works*, vol. 27, pp. 315-6.

⁶¹ Bouwsma, *Calvin*, p. 63.

views on this subject, we must point out that while he was writing in a Continental context, his views were of considerable influence in the English Church. In the latter part of the sixteenth century there were three separate editions of the English translation of Bullinger's *Decades*, in 1577, 1584 and finally in 1587. In his fifth *Decade*, Bullinger set out to define "the Holy Catholic Church; what it is, how far it extendeth, by what marks it is known, from whence it springeth, how it is maintained and preserved [and] whether it may err".⁶² Bullinger drew various distinctions when defining the Church, one of which was between the church triumphant, "that great company of holy spirits in heaven, triumphing . . ." and the church militant here on earth.⁶³ But the church militant needed further definition than this because, Bullinger claimed, it could be considered two ways: either it was to be taken "strictly" as just "the faithful and elect of God" acting as an "inward and invisible church of God"; or it could be "more largely considered" to include not only the elect but also those "who although they believe not truly or unfeignedly, neither be clean nor holy in the conversation of their life, yet do they acknowledge and profess true religion with the true believers . . .". In other words, Bullinger concludes, if the Church militant is understood in this wider sense "not so much as the wicked and

⁶² Henry Bullinger, *The Decades of Henry Bullinger*, Parker Society, ed., vol. 10, p. 3.

⁶³ Ibid., p. 5.

*hypocrites** . . . are excluded and put from the church . . .".⁶⁴ By this definition there were indeed hypocrites within the militant Church of Christ.

Bullinger's definitions were far from complete and he continued by describing the opposite of the true Church of Christ, namely the Church of the devil and antichrist. Bullinger itemized the groups which made up this "wicked church", groups such as "the heathen, Turks, Jews, heretics, schismatics . . ." and he concluded that "to these we may add hypocrites" since Christ had vehemently condemned hypocrisy in the Bible.⁶⁵ However, Bullinger recognized that this created a problem since he had now included hypocrites in both the "wicked church" and the outward communion of the militant Church of Christ. Unlike the English situation where the same "hypocrites" were both Catholics and lapsed Protestants, Bullinger argued that the same hypocrites could not possibly be part of both churches since the Bible confirmed that "good" and "evil" should not mix. He quoted both Christ's and St. Paul's remarks that there must be no "fellowship betwixt . . . truth and lying".⁶⁶ Thus, Bullinger acknowledged that a more detailed examination of the problem was necessary.

Bullinger's solution to his difficulties was to argue that there were, in fact, two different kinds of hypocrites.

⁶⁴ Ibid., pp. 7-8.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 11.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 12.

In essence, Bullinger suggested that hypocrites in the devil's church (in other words, Papists) were equivalent to the "blind" and "foolish" hypocrites of Matt. 23. From a "reformed" standpoint, these men were evil simply because they were wrong, not because they harboured any evil intentions beneath a conforming facade. Hence, Bullinger described them as follows:

there are certain hypocrites that put their confidence in their human justice and equity, doing all their works openly that they may be seen of men, firmly trusting and stiffly standing to men's traditions.⁶⁷

All the adjectives describing these hypocrites appear misplaced to the modern reader: they were "open", they trusted "firmly" and stood "stiffly". There was no pretence on their behalf. But, for Bullinger, their error was sufficient to label them hypocritical, just as Calvin had previously branded some Catholics as hypocrites on the basis of error rather than evil intention.

However, when we come to Bullinger's description of those hypocrites who were part of the militant Church of Christ, evil intentions leap to the fore. These hypocrites were "dissemblers": "outwardly they agree" with Christ's Church, "but inwardly and in mind they neither believe unfeignedly and sincerely, neither do they live holily". Some of these dissembling hypocrites would show themselves during this life by lapsing into heresy and schism; others would remain part of

⁶⁷ Ibid.

the Church for their entire lifetime, outwardly conforming "but inwardly giving themselves up to their own errors, faults, and wickedness".⁶⁸ Consequently, we can see that Bullinger had effectively used the distinction of Matt. 23 to explain the necessary distinction between "Catholic" hypocrites and "Protestant" ones. Where other Protestant writers had simply used both kinds of charge in their polemics against Catholics, Bullinger separated them and applied them to different groups to satisfy the requirements of his ecclesiology.

Bullinger's definition of hypocrisy provides a good example of the effects of polemical exchange on words. His need for a "two tiered" understanding of hypocrisy had, in effect, reduced the force of the charge when directed against Catholics. It was still a useful term in that it carried the implied understanding of something "evil", but Bullinger had (of necessity) removed malicious intention from its meaning in this context. That Bullinger had been obliged to redefine hypocrisy to suit his argument is symptomatic of the unhinging effects of polemics on this language.

This process of "defining" and "redefining" in Bullinger's works draws our attention to a useful indicator we may study to illustrate the "unhinging" or "destabilizing" process, namely the frequent attempts made to define the terms in question. As we have already seen in the cases of both

⁶⁸ Ibid.

heresy and hypocrisy, definitions were often at the centre of disagreement. However, as we have also seen in this chapter, the frequent attempts made to clarify the meaning of these terms demonstrates far more effectively the instability of words caught at the heart of controversy. Thus, we have already found numerous contradictory and incompatible definitions and redefinitions of both heresy and hypocrisy throughout this period. The objection could be raised that the definitions we have examined so far have usually been offered as small component parts of a larger polemical argument. Perhaps, then, the meaning of these words was not of crucial importance to the polemicists and the coherence of the words themselves simply fell victim to the authors' larger polemical pursuits? As we shall see in the following chapter, such an argument can hold little water in the light of the detailed and complex definitions of "heresy" and "hypocrisy" which some other early modern writers offered.

CHAPTER THREE

*THE INCOHERENCE OF CONCEPTS: HYPOCRISY AND HERESY IN EARLY
MODERN THOUGHT*

In the works we will examine in this chapter, definitions formed a substantial part of the structure of the argument or, in some cases, whole pieces were written exclusively on the subjects of "hypocrisy" or "heresy". Consequently, meticulous attention was given by the authors to the words themselves, to their meanings, and to the relationships between the terms in question. An examination of such kinds of writing can, and will, serve a threefold purpose. Firstly, it can illustrate even more extensive concern and confusion than we have already outlined over many terms surrounding religious concepts and categories at this time, including, of course, hypocrisy and heresy. It will become apparent that "heresy" and "hypocrisy" were two of several terms caught in a condition of instability and incoherence during the course of Reformation polemics. Secondly, we will see that concern with these terms, and indeed instability over their meanings, endured well into the seventeenth century when the context in which they were discussed was no longer simply "reformation polemics". For example, they were discussed in detail by the "statesman" and "philosopher" Francis Bacon. Hence, we can witness the unsettling effects of reformation polemics on language both later than we might expect and in circles that were not

exclusively clerical or theologically preoccupied. And lastly, when these lengthier definitions are examined, the authors' concern with, and confusion over the problem of human intentionality is evident. When our attention is focused on the concerns of these authors it will be possible to demonstrate the window which this language can provide into the difficulties surrounding the judgement of human intentions. Hence, the direct relevance of this material for the intellectual historian will be apparent. And so, with these three aims in mind, let us turn our attention to some works in which heresy and/or hypocrisy were the exclusive focus, or works in which definitions themselves were crucial to the authors' enterprises.

Sir John Cheke, the humanist scholar at Henry VIII's court, wrote a *Treatise of Superstition* which provides a good example of a work whose structure and argument relied upon the definition of key terms, including both hypocrisy and heresy.¹ It is also a work in which the issue of intentionality is a visible problem and hence it is worthy of more detailed examination. Cheke's purpose in this work was to define and delineate "superstition" in order to root it out, thereby advancing the cause of "true religion". Right reason, which

¹ Sir John Cheke, *A Treatise of Superstition*, in John Strype, *The Life of the Learned Sir John Cheke, Knight*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1821), pp. 183-218. For Cheke's involvement in "humanist" court life during the reigns of both Henry and Edward, see Maria Dowling, *Humanism in the Age of Henry VIII*, (London: Croom Helm, 1986), especially chaps. 3, 4, & 6.

God had prescribed, had to be distinguished from "what human reason invents, what superstition dictates, [and] what the heat of man's temper hurries him on to pursue".² For Cheke, making this distinction was imperative, but it was no easy task given the immense difficulty of discerning truth from falsehood. The instability, confusion and deception that reigned when superstition was not distinguished from "right reason" was vividly described:

Craftiness imitates prudence; severity is often taken for justice; . . . stupidity is not easily distinguished from temperance; . . . and not only the pretence of holiness, but what is even almost a mere old wives superstition, puts itself off for religion, and for the true worship of God.³

From this, we can see that a central problem for Cheke was the urgent need to distinguish between truth and falsehood, to have a means of penetrating deception. Such an enterprise obviously involved distinguishing between "true" religion, and the mere appearance of religion, and a part of this "distinguishing" process inevitably had to be the judgement of people's intentions. Hence, Cheke needed to establish some foundations for making such judgements and for finding his way through the confusion and deception. He employed the method of "definitions" and we will examine Cheke's attempts at structuring concepts via definitions shortly. But first, it is worth drawing attention to the instability of this language, an instability which Cheke

² Ibid., p. 190.

³ Ibid., p. 189.

acknowledged even while he was attempting to define it. For example, Cheke attempted at one point in his argument to define "atheism", but in his definition he admitted that the word was volatile and that he was coining the label "atheists" to suit his own purposes:

For those who run out with loose inclinations, and are hurried withersoever their passion carries them; they are neither restrained by reason from running headlong, nor are reclaimed by grace from an impure and flagitious life; *who turn the grace of God into lasciviousness*, and live as if God were altogether without care of them; and who neither consider with themselves, nor care whether there be a God or no, or whether he has any administration or foresight of human affairs, or that he will recompense good men with good things, and bad men with what is evil. *The Scriptures mark them out under several titles; but it is most agreeable to our present purpose to call them* Atheists.*⁴

Thus, Cheke acknowledged that the label "atheist" was far from fixed in its meaning throughout this period. And to offer one further example of instability, Cheke was also prepared to admit that even the word "superstition" which lay at the very heart of his treatise was open to debate. Consequently, it needed defining before his argument could proceed. While all men agreed that superstition was wrong, there may, he claimed, be "some dispute as to the name. . .". "The matter under debate [would be] better understood, when the variety of doubtful meanings [was] taken away". Therefore, Cheke would

⁴ Ibid., p. 198-99.

first speak of the name, and then take the thing under examination; that when we are less perplexed about the signification of the word, the thing may offer itself more fully and plainly to be treated of.⁵

By his redefinitions and his direct references to the volatility of his terms, Cheke not only confirmed the unhinging of this language, but he also participated in the process itself.

However, if we return to examine how Cheke tried to employ definitions to structure his argument, we will find still more problems. Cheke began by defining "religion" itself. It was

the pure worship of God, for the retaining his favour, and the averting his wrath; revealed and prescribed to us by God himself, and not the device or invention of human counsel⁶

This religion, he claimed, had two parts. Firstly there was the "searching after knowledge" or "a kind of foundation-principle of human life", and Cheke called this searching "sanctity". Secondly, there was "action" or "piety", which was the correct Christian behaviour required to turn "sanctity" into "practical divinity". Thus, according to Cheke, religion was comprised of a contemplative, theoretical search for knowledge of God, combined with an active piety.

Next, Cheke used this definition as his basis for demonstrating various "errors" in religion. First he defined errors of sanctity which included "ignorance", "depraved

⁵ Ibid., p. 201-2.

⁶ Ibid., p. 194.

knowledge", "pretended knowledge" and "heresy". Cheke defined a heretic as one who "opens not the school of Christ, but sets forth a doctrine of his own, different from all others and repugnant to the truth".⁷ By this definition, Cheke had made heresy *exclusively* an error of knowledge, and not of action. Hence, his definition warped the concept of heresy since heresy usually involved action in the public profession, or acting out, of false belief; if a "heretic" kept his false beliefs entirely to himself, he was no heretic. Next, Cheke turned his attention to errors of "action" only, and it is here that we find his definition of hypocrisy. This definition was also warped since he defined hypocrites as those who may appear pious, but were "internally empty of all good works". Hypocrites "propose to themselves another end of all their actions than God has appointed".⁸ This definition had unusual implications for the intentionality of the hypocrite. Clearly, intentionality played a part in Cheke's definition since hypocrites "proposed to themselves" various ends for their actions. Intentions were, in fact, the part of the hypocrite that was being condemned. And yet, because of Cheke's categorization of hypocrisy as an error of *action only*, intentions themselves were forced into the nonsensical position of being matters of action, and not of knowledge.

⁷ Ibid., p. 196.

⁸ Ibid., p. 199.

If we enquire why Cheke placed this unusual construction on hypocrisy and heresy, the reason becomes apparent when we recall the purpose of his enterprise: to denounce that most abominable of errors, superstition. Consequently, Cheke defined the superstitious as those in whom both knowledge and action, both sanctity and piety were mistaken. The distinction Cheke made between the hypocritical and the superstitious was that while the former deceived others with their feigned piety, the latter were actually self-deceived. The superstitious were the most dangerous of all his categories because they believed their knowledge and their actions comprised the correct worship of God whereas, in reality, both their piety and their sanctity were mistaken.

We can now see clearly why all the previous errors, including both heresy and hypocrisy, were allotted to one category of error or the other despite the detrimental effects that this had on their definitions. It was so that superstition alone could be defined as the worst error, being an error of both categories, knowledge and action. Therefore, for Cheke, the sincere holding of "wrong" beliefs (superstition) was more dangerous than the evil intentions hiding behind a facade of "right" religion (hypocrisy). Clearly, Cheke's attack was an attempt to denounce Catholicism as "superstition" while accepting what many other polemicists had failed to acknowledge; that many Catholics "sincerely" believed their faith to be "true". Hence, it is evident that Cheke subjected these categories to his own structure and

definitions for the purpose of building such an all-encompassing argument against Catholicism. This would suggest that these categories and labels were "unhinged" from fixed meanings and were in a condition of flux. This alone would account for Cheke's freedom and liberty in structuring the categories according to his own devices.

Another author who deserves attention for his repeated attempts to structure these categories and labels is William Perkins. There are two factors which make Perkins particularly interesting for our purposes. First of all, historians repeatedly refer to Perkins as one of the most prominent and influential theologians of the Elizabethan period, a fact which makes his thoughts on heresy and hypocrisy of considerable importance.⁹ Secondly, as any reader of Perkins' voluminous works soon realizes, he was particularly concerned with the ordering and structuring of theology in general, and of theological terms and axioms in particular. While historians are still probing the various influences which contributed to Perkins' systematization, there is one unavoidable point of agreement amongst them: that Perkins displayed a keen awareness of the importance of words and of the need to communicate meaning in an easily accessible and structured manner.¹⁰ Consequently, it is

⁹ See above, p. 38, n. 36.

¹⁰ See in particular, Richard A. Muller, "Perkins' A Golden Chaine: Predestinarian System or Schematized Ordo Salutis?", *Sixteenth Century Journal*, vol. IX, no. 1, 1978, pp. 69-81, for a re-examination of the influence of Theodore

particularly interesting to study the efforts of such a writer to impose a structure on words like heresy and hypocrisy, words which were effectively lacking a coherent structure throughout this period.

Perkins offered several definitions of heresy and hypocrisy in the course of his writings, some definitions being more detailed than others. At times he offered simple one line definitions of both terms. Invariably, these definitions did not touch upon the controversial issues which surrounded the words in question. For example, in *A Golden Chaine or The order of the Causes of Saluation and Damnation* heretics were defined succinctly as "such as erre with pertinacie in the foundation of religion".¹¹ No mention was made of the authority by which heretical beliefs would be condemned. Likewise, hypocrisy was defined briefly in Perkins' *Exposition vpon the 3 Chap. of the Revelations*:

Beza on Perkins. See Donald K. McKim, "The Functions of Ramism in William Perkins' Theology", *Sixteenth Century Journal*, vol. XVI, no. 4, 1985, pp. 503-17, for a forceful statement of Ramus's influence on Perkins. Dewey D. Wallace, *Puritans and Predestination: Grace in English Protestant Theology, 1525 - 1695*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982), p. 56-61, supports the view that Perkins was influenced by Ramism, while trying to establish a wider Continental context of "Reformed Scholasticism" to which Perkins's works contributed. However, these writers are agreed upon the prominence of systematizing in Perkins' works. Wallace makes the point most succinctly when he describes Perkins' work as part of "a development of theological definition, consolidation, and elaboration that had long been under way on the Continent, often in response to polemical needs", p. 56.

¹¹ William Perkins, *A Golden Chaine or The order of the causes of Saluation and Damnation*, CW, vol. 1, p. 31, col. 2, A.

"Hypocrisie is, when a man seemes outwardly to be that which he is not inwardly".¹² No mention was made of the malice versus the foolishness or blindness of the hypocrite.

Even in his more lengthy definitions Perkins appeared to have clearly defined interpretations of both terms. In his *Commentarie vpon the Epistle to the Galatians*, Perkins offered a systematic analysis of heresy, breaking it down into component parts and demonstrating why each component was a necessary part of the definition. He began by drawing on the historical development of the word, claiming that it could mean "any opinion, either good or bad". However it then "more specially" signified "any error in religion". But neither of these definitions was adequate for Perkins because "most properly" heresy should be defined as "an error in the foundation of Christian religion, taught and defended with obstinacie".¹³ Perkins then broke this definition into parts to explain its compilation. For example, heresy was an error in *Christian religion* rather than an error in Philosophy, which was no heresy. It was an error in religion, ie. in doctrine and not in "manners, order, [or] regiment" which was schism rather than heresy. Perkins applied this method of explication to the entire definition, consequently appearing to have a clear, non-controversial understanding of the term.

¹² Perkins, *Exposition vpon the 3 Chap. of Revelations*, CW, vol. 3, p. 321, col. 1, C.

¹³ Perkins, *Commentarie vpon the Epistle to the Galatians*, CW, vol. 2, p. 333, col. 2, B.

However, Perkins had not raised the issue behind all the controversy which was unhinging the concept of heresy. He did not stipulate whether the Bible, or the Church, or the Holy Spirit was the ultimate source of authority for determining matters of faith, and consequently he established no external source of authority for condemning heresy.

But, Perkins did not completely neglect the problem of judgement. He argued instead for an internalized, self-judgemental mechanism whereby the heretic would condemn himself:

Paul saith, Tit 3.11. that *an heretike is peruerterd*, that is, put before the foundation: and *condemned of himselfe* in his sinne, that is to say, he erres obstinately euen against his owne conscience.¹⁴

Thus, in this definition, Perkins completely internalized the problem of judgement. This had a two-fold effect. On the one hand, it had the benefit of avoiding the controversial issue of external authority, the issue which had precipitated the "unhinging" we have outlined. But on the other hand, when studied carefully this internalization of the judgemental

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 333, col. 2, B-C. See also vol. 3, p. 173, col. 1, D, where Perkins describes how "to distinguish heretics from true teachers". Once again, the judgement process is problematic since Perkins accepts that heretics often have great wisdom, "worldly policie", zeal and even authority. Via the use of these faculties, heretics had "pretended and perswaded many that they were called of God". However, according to Perkins, what they lacked was "true sauing faith" and hence they often lived "in such notorious sinnes" and "for impietie they haue been and are arch-deuills". Thus, again, Perkins provided no mechanism for judging the content of heretical beliefs; instead he virtually reduced heresy to a nebulous condemnation of the morality of those concerned.

process had serious implications both for the concept of heresy itself, and for the intentionality of the "heretic". If a "heretic" could and should condemn himself from within his own conscience, then the offence was being removed from the public arena into the private one. Heresy would cease to exist as an offence in which the outside world analysed and assessed the beliefs and the intentions of another according to certain acknowledged standards. What was more, the individual who was undergoing this self-assessment was placed in a bizzare and self-contradictory position. On the one hand, in order to be a "heretic" he had to be "obstinate" in his "error", a condition which implied the repeated and determined assertion of the "error" and the resolute belief that the "error" was "true". On the other hand, he had to know from within his own conscience that his "truth" was, in fact, "error". The individual was therefore divided against himself. Not only could the external world not judge his beliefs and intentions, but he also was divided in himself by the process of self-judgement. Perkins did not explore any of these potential complications in his position, but both the potential collapse of the concept of heresy and the contradiction inherent in internalized self-judgement are neatly encapsulated in his attempted definition of "heresy".

Just as Perkins had provided this lengthier definition of heresy, so he also provided an extended definition of hypocrisy. Once again he imposed a systematic approach to the subject, but did not raise the issues which were causing the

"unhinging" in sixteenth century polemics. In *The order of the Causes of Salvation and Damnation* Perkins condemned hypocrisy as the sin which "giueth to God painted worship, that is, if you regard outward behauour, great sincerity, if the inward and hartie affections, none at all".¹⁵ Perkins then proceeded to itemize the effects of hypocrisy and here he glossed over the problems which had emerged in polemical exchanges. He did not stipulate whether hypocrites were motivated by malice or by ignorance, but rather simply described what they *did*. For example, he described the effects of hypocrisy, two of which were

[1] To seeke the pompe and glorie of the world, and by all meanes to enrich itselfe, notwithstanding it makes a glorious shew of the seruice of God.

[2]. It is sharpe sighted, and hath eagles eyes to obserue other mens behauour, when in the regarding its owne, it is as blind as a beetle.¹⁶

And so Perkins' list of the "effects" of hypocrisy continued, providing examples of the external manifestations of hypocrisy but without probing the motivating force behind it.

However, it would be wrong to conclude from these examples that Perkins completely avoided any difficulties with this language. On the contrary, his works included some complex examples of problems with these categories. The difficulties arose when Perkins attempted to explicate the relationships among various categories of error. He tried to

¹⁵ Perkins, *The order of the causes*, CW, vol. 1, p. 38, col. 2, A.

¹⁶ Ibid.

structure these relationships on two separate occasions: once in a treatise entitled *How to Live, and that well: in all Estates and times*, and again in his *Treatise of Mans Imaginations*.¹⁷ These two analyses provide Perkins' most detailed treatments of heresy and hypocrisy, and hence they need to be examined closely.

One noticable similarity between Perkins' two analyses is that on both occasions he did not structure hypocrisy and heresy as errors of "religion" as Cheke had done. Instead, he considered them both to be manifestations of either "unbelief" or "atheism". This fundamental difference between Cheke and Perkins is particularly significant because in other respects their analyses bear considerable resemblance to each other. In the *Treatise of Mans Imaginations* Perkins adopted exactly the same distinction as Cheke had employed between errors of "knowledge" on one hand, and errors of "practice" or "action" on the other. In addition, both authors defined and categorized many of the same subjects including hypocrisy, heresy, atheism and idolatry. Thus, like Cheke, Perkins described hypocrisy as a fault in *practice*, and not in *knowledge* and hence, the same warping concerning the intentionality of the hypocrite applied in Perkins' definition

¹⁷ Perkins, *How to Live, and that well: in all Estates and times. Specially, when helps and comforts faile*, CW, vol. 1, pp. 475-86 and *A Treatise of Mans Imaginations. Shewing His naturall euill thoughts: His want of good thoughts: The way to reforme them*, CW, vol. 2, pp.454-83.

as had applied in Cheke's.¹⁸ But, where for Cheke hypocrisy had been an error in the practice of *religion*, for Perkins it became a manifestation of *atheism* in practice. The effect of this fundamental change from "religion" to "atheism" or "unbelief" on words like hypocrisy and heresy was substantial. The tables had been turned so that the categories were no longer defects in the maintenance of right belief, but were instead expressions of fundamental "unbelief". Thus, by implication, a heretic (for example) was no longer essentially a Christian, albeit one who pertinaciously maintained an erroneous belief: instead he was a man whose heretical *unbelief* amounted to a denial of God.

This shift between Cheke and Perkins from "religion" to "atheism" presents us with a difficulty. So far, while we have been aware that other categories such as superstition and atheism were affected by the unhinging of polemical language at this time, we have been able to focus our attention exclusively on heresy and hypocrisy. However, here it is obvious that some brief examination of Perkins' understanding of "atheism" and "unbelief" is necessary since he categorized heresy and hypocrisy as manifestations of both of them.

As we have seen already in the introduction to this thesis, atheism is a topic which has received considerable scholarly attention for the period of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Scholars have often argued that the

¹⁸ See above p. 101.

term did not have its modern meaning of "disbelief in the existence of God", and have pointed out the diversity of early modern definitions of the term.¹⁹ Perkins' definitions make a useful and significant contribution to discussion over the meaning of atheism because he specifically and self-consciously used "atheism" in two different ways. First of all, he employed it in a wider sense which amounted to "moral atheism", as scholars have called it: he called atheism "a sinne whereby men sundry waies deny God".²⁰ In other words, men talked and acted in such a way as to flout God's power over them. Secondly, Perkins described what he considered to be "the highest degree of Atheism". Here, his definition was equivalent to our modern understanding of atheism as a conviction that there is no God: as Perkins wrote, "when a man doth auouch, holde, and maintaine, that there is no God at all; this is the highest degree of Atheism".²¹ Obviously, then, Perkins used the word "atheism" in two different ways. Equally obviously, his definitions of atheism and his understanding of unbelief would affect his definitions of hypocrisy and heresy since he defined hypocrisy and heresy in one of these works as forms of "unbelief" and in the other as forms of "atheism". Hence, we must look at these two examples individually.

¹⁹ See above, Intro. pp. 1-3.

²⁰ Perkins, *Treatise of Mans Imaginations*, CW, vol. 2, p. 460, col. 2, B.

²¹ Ibid., p. 461, col. 2, C.

In his *How to Live, and that well*, Perkins argued that a central fault in men's lives was their "vnbeleefe". He described this unbelief in some detail, but he did not call it atheism:

[Men] reiect and put away the rule of direction that serues for the ordering of their liues. And this they doe, when they doe not beleue & trust God in his word. And we may not think, that this our vnbeleefe is a small matter: because it is a mother sinne of all other sinnes: and it is the principall law of the kingdome of darknesse, not to beleue God.²²

However, Perkins did not call this unbelief "atheism" because in this work he reserved the label for more specific use. He itemized the "seuen speciall fruits or sinnes" which proceeded from generalized unbelief:

The first [fruit] is Atheisme, when men deny God & his word. Atheisme hath two parts: Epicurisme & Temporising. Epicurisme is, when men contemning Gods commandements, threatenings, promises, care for nothing but meate, drinke, and pleasures. Temporising is when men imbrace religion so farre foorth as they are forced by lawes & times, & no otherwise.²³

Thus, in this work, atheism was a specific category of unbelief, and its meaning was effectively the "moral atheism" that scholars have described.

However, Perkins' analysis in the other work, *A Treatise of Mans Imaginations*, was quite different. Here he set out to demonstrate that all man's natural thoughts concerning not only his neighbour and himself, but also God were evil. Man's

²² Perkins, *How to Live, CW*, vol. 1, p. 482, col. 1, B.

²³ Ibid., p. 482, col. 1, B-C.

first evil thought concerning God was "that there is no God", a thought which entailed the sin of "atheism":

What a cursed thing this is, to *thinke there is no God*: This thought bringeth forth the most notorious sinnes that can be, euen *Atheisme* it selfe; which is a sinne whereby men sundry waies deny God.²⁴

Thus, rather than all the categories including "atheism" being types of "unbelief", in this work they all became manifestations of "atheism". Perkins divided atheism into either "atheism in practice" which he described as "that sinne wherby men deny God in their deeds, liues & conuersations" and "atheism in judgement" which was "that sin whereby in opinion and persuasion of heart men denie God". He itemized and defined three forms or degrees of atheism in practice, namely "hypocrisie", "epicurisme" and "witchcraft", and three degrees of atheism in judgement, namely wrongfull belief in God, idolatry, and atheism in the sense of "hold[ing] and maintain[ing] that there is no God at all". We can see from this more detailed description of atheism that Perkins used the word to cover all forms of what he had called "unbelief" in *How to Live*, but we can also see that he inserted one new very specific use of atheism as a refusal to believe in the existence of God.

Having outlined Perkins' uses of "atheism" and "unbelief" we must now enquire how the meanings of heresy and hypocrisy were affected by being defined as forms of this "atheism" and

²⁴ Perkins, *Treatise of Mans Imaginations*, CW, vol. 2, p. 460, col. 2, B.

"unbelief", rather than as errors in "religion". If we take first the issue of heresy we will discover that Perkins made several changes in order to accommodate his restructuring of these categories. In *How to Live* heresy was Perkins' second "sin of unbelief" following after atheism, which had been the first:

The second fruit is *Heresie*, and that is, when men distrust God in some article of faith.²⁵

There are two points to notice about this definition. First of all, just as in the other lengthy definition we examined,²⁶ Perkins did not provide any "this worldly", external authority by which heresy could be judged. Thus, once again, Perkins did not broach the polemical problems surrounding this word, offering instead a "distrust" in the relationship between man and God over some article of faith.²⁷ Secondly, it is immediately apparent that Perkins' structuring of heresy as a "sin of unbelief", when it had always previously been a specific form of *belief*, (albeit an erroneous one) had a substantial effect on his definition of the word. Nowhere

²⁵ Perkins, *How to Live*, CW, vol. 1, p. 482, col. 1, C.

²⁶ See above, pp. 105-107.

²⁷ It could be argued that because the "distrust" was over some "article of faith", and since the "articles of faith" were formulas publicly approved by the authority of the Church, Perkins was automatically assuming this "distrust" operated in the public arena. Such an argument is highly plausible. My point is not to suggest that Perkins denied the validity of the public arena, or that he "interiorized" the crime of heresy; but simply that by his failure to stipulate the authority by which public judgements should be made, the end result of his arguments was to diminish the importance of the public arena in favour of the private one.

before have we seen this element of "distrust in God" forming part of a definition of heresy. But since Perkins had categorized heresy as a form of unbelief, his abnormal inversion in which he defined erroneous belief as "distrust" or "disbelief" provided a method of dealing with the contradictions inherent in his analysis of heresy, atheism and unbelief.

Perkins' difficulty with these terms is also apparent in *A Treatise of Man's Imaginations*. This claim needs some explanation because on first examination there appears to be no problem at all since Perkins did not even claim to define "heresy" in this work. Instead, he described what I have previously called "wrongfull belief in God" as one of the manifestations of atheism in judgement.²⁸ However, if we examine this "wrongfull belief" carefully we will discover that when Perkins applied it to Catholics, it was in fact a charge of "heresy". Perkins' first "degree" of atheism in judgement was

when men holde, and accordingly worship the true God, creator of heauen and earth, but yet so, as they conceiue of, and worship him otherwise then he hath reuealed himselfe in his word.²⁹

Perkins proceeded to attack the "three great religions" of the Turk, the Jew and the Papist as examples of this wrongful worship, but he devoted nearly all his attention to the last

²⁸ See above, p. 113.

²⁹ Perkins, *Treatise of Mans Imaginations*, CW, vol. 2, p. 460, col. 2, D.

of these three religions, that of the Papists. He charged them with what amounted to "heresy" and yet he continued to call it a form of atheism. He argued that although in some respects Catholicism seemed to be "close to Scripture", in other respects "wee shall find it to be close to Atheisme". Perkins attacked the Catholic doctrines of justification by "works", of transubstantiation, and their doctrine of Christ, claiming that because Catholics interpreted Christ's offices wrongly they effectively robbed him of his offices all together. In his conclusion Perkins claimed that Catholicism could not be a "true religion, but meere coloured Atheisme in iudgement".³⁰ Why did Perkins charge the Catholics with "atheism" when the charges really amounted to "heresy"? Obviously the format of his work, classifying all errors and sins as forms of atheism, must have been at the heart of this abnormal state of affairs. If he wanted to attack Catholicism at all, he had to make it "atheistical" rather than "heretical". But it is also possible that Perkins wanted to avoid the jarring contradiction in terms of calling a form of "belief"(heresy) an "unbelief"(atheism).

However, to conclude this analysis of Perkins' use of "heresy" *vis à vis* "atheism" and "unbelief", there are two very important points to be made. First of all, his abnormal use of heresy and atheism clearly demonstrates just how "unhinged" these terms were throughout this period. If

³⁰ Ibid., p. 461, col. 2, B.

Catholics could be "atheists" and heresy was "unbelief" there can be no doubt that, despite Perkins' best endeavours to impose structure, these words were chronically lacking in structure, and were indeed "unhinged". Secondly, there is considerable significance in Perkins' central shift whereby he turned all these categories into forms of unbelief instead of errors in religion. To claim they were forms of "unbelief" not only made his denunciations more forceful and more condemnatory, it also made it possible to "denounce" rather than "disprove" the error of others. While, occasionally, Perkins did offer biblical support for his denunciations of Catholicism, he did so only when he saw fit. He was not enmeshed in the kind of "point by point" refutation which a "heresy" charge would have entailed. In general Perkins simply made uncompromising and unsupported denunciations relying on his Protestant audience to "know" that these beliefs were "wrong". Clearly, such a technique not only lent much needed unity to the Protestant position, but also removed the need for a detailed refutation of Catholic theology.

If we now turn our attention to Perkins' definitions of "hypocrisy" as a form of "unbelief" and "atheism" in the two works under examination, we will find some interesting repercussions as well. In *How to Live*, the first point to notice is that Perkins completely avoided the difficulties which had surrounded this word in polemical exchanges. He did this in two ways. First, it will be recalled that one of the difficulties which had "unhinged" the word "hypocrisy" for

English Protestants was labelling lapsed Protestants who had reverted to Catholicism in Mary's reign as "hypocrites". Becon and Latimer had both called this group "hypocrites" thereby "unhinging" the word from its "Catholic versus Protestant" context.³¹ However, Perkins completely avoided this difficulty by calling this lapsed group not "hypocrites" but "apostates". Apostasy was Perkins' third "sin of unbelief":

and that is when men chaunge their faith and religion. And this change is made, when the euil heart of vnbeleefe causeth them to depart from the liuing God. This hath bin the fault of the people of this land in the daies of persecution.³²

However, it would be wrong to presume from this relabelling that Perkins intended to reserve the label "hypocrites" exclusively for Catholics. On the contrary, he failed to mention Catholics in his lengthy definition of hypocrisy which was his fourth "sin of unbelief":

Hypocrisie . . . is to make a shew and pretence of faith, and to want the power of it in honest & godly conuersation: or againe, hypocrisie is nothing else, but the vnbeleefe of the heart, couered ouer with the false appearance of faith. And it is the common sin of these times, in which a formall or ceremoniall faith, and ceremoniall repentance beare a great sway. For men make the highest degree of profession that can bee, when they come to the Lords table; and yet afterward take to themselues libertie to liue and doe as they list.³³

³¹ See above, pp. 89-90.

³² Perkins, *How to Live*, CW, vol. 1, p. 482, col. 1, C.

³³ Ibid., p. 482, col. 1, D.

This lengthy and detailed description of hypocrisy is striking for several reasons. It is clear that Perkins was relating the problem of hypocrisy to his fellow Protestants and not to Roman Catholics, or even to lapsed Protestants. Hence, he had removed "hypocrisy" from the polemical context and there is not even a passing reference made here to the "hypocritical" Papist.³⁴ Instead, Perkins' main concern was the discrepancy between the "profession" and the "living" of Protestants. Their actions did not live up to, and often contradicted, their professions of faith and Perkins considered this contradiction an adequate basis for calling them "hypocrites". However, there was a substantial problem with this method of judging the sincerity of others: it imposed a standard of perfection on mankind, a standard which men invariably failed to meet. According to Protestant theology, this failure was only to be expected because man was naturally sinful since Adam and Eve's fall from grace in the Garden of Eden. Even with the help of God's saving grace, as members of his elect, Protestants did not believe man was capable of perfection. And yet, on the other hand, Protestants needed some way of knowing and judging whether or not individuals possessed true "saving grace". Obviously the

³⁴ It should be noted, however, that Perkins did not refrain totally from making polemical accusations in this work. In his closing remarks, he did attack "Papists" along with "Atheists" and "worldlings": "it is a common offence to Atheists, Papists, worldlings, that such as pretend faith, faile in the righteousnesse of a good conscience". p. 486, col. 2, D. "

more "godly" the life and the more integration there was between thought, word, and deed, the more likely it was that men possessed grace and were members of God's elect.

Thus, there was a perplexing problem. There was an urgent insistence upon the need for a more "godly" life combined with a simultaneous insistence upon the corrupt and sinful nature of fallen man. And "hypocrisy" was caught in the middle of this dichotomy. Either, as Perkins had charged, all men were hypocrites because they inevitably fell short of perfection. Or else some method of judgement was necessary which could distinguish the "hypocritical" (ie. ill-intentioned) from the "sincere" but imperfect Christian.

While Perkins did not explore these larger problems in this text, they were of central concern in the other work we have been examining, *A Treatise of Mans Imaginations*. His actual definition of hypocrisy at first seems unremarkable. It was a form of atheism in practice:

Hypocrisie is a sinne whereby men worship the true God, but yet in a false manner, giuing vnto God the outward action, and holde backe from him the true worship of the heart.³⁵

While at first this definition does not seem to explore the difficulties we have just outlined, it does make a statement concerning the inner world of the heart versus the outer world of action. Perkins suggested that the outer world of action was "false" in itself unless it was accompanied by the "true

³⁵ Perkins, *Treatise of Mans Imaginations*, CW, vol. 2, p. 460, col. 2, B-C.

worship of the heart". The heart, therefore, was the centre of human intentionality, and without a "true" intention to worship, all outward actions were false. In isolation, this definition might seem adequate. However, when it is contrasted with other arguments Perkins made in this work, serious problems arose concerning both intentionality and judgement. Hence, we must examine Perkins' wider argument.

Perkins took a verse from Genesis (Genesis 8:21) as his starting point: "And the Lord said in his heart, I will henceforth curse the earth no more for mans cause: for the Imaginations of mans heart is euill euen from his youth". Perkins used this text as his authority for arguing that all men's natural thoughts were evil. As he put it,

The mind and understanding part of man is naturally so corrupt, that so soone as hee can use reason, he doth nothing but imagine that which is wicked, and against the Law of God.³⁶

Given that men's thoughts were all evil, Perkins' next problem was how these naturally evil thoughts may be known, a question which raised all the difficulties we have just outlined concerning the judgement of others' thoughts and intentions. His answer was that man's thoughts might be known in two different ways, the first of which was "directly, [and] without meanes". In other words there *could be* direct access to another man's thoughts but Perkins was quick to point out that such access was God's exclusive prerogative: "for no creature in heauen or earth can immediately and directly knowe

³⁶ Ibid., p. 458, col. 2, A.

the thoughts of man".³⁷ Thus, God alone could look into the minds and hearts of men directly. However, Perkins claimed that men's thoughts could be known a second way, namely "indirectly, and by meanes", there being three different "indirect" means. First of all, men could know another's thoughts by "instinct" from God, although Perkins insisted that this only happened at certain special times and for certain special causes. Secondly, men could know another's thoughts by "*Reuealation from Scriptures*", and lastly, by "signes" such as speeches and actions.³⁸ Consequently, the only way that the thoughts of man could be known, without divine assistance, was by these "signs" like speech and action. Here, we must notice that a link is being postulated between the thoughts of man and his outward persona, his speech and his actions. Automatically this suggested substantial problems in the judgement of hypocrisy which we have just seen Perkins define as a *disparity* between internal thoughts and external actions.

But, this was not the only complication in Perkins' argument. In a lengthy and complex passage he dealt with the issues of hypocrisy, judgement and intention once again when he considered the need for complete obedience to God's word:

³⁷ Ibid., p. 458, col. 2, D.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 459, col. 1, B. Perkins dismissed two other ways of knowing men's thoughts as invalid: firstly, the Papists argued that Saints in heaven knew men's thoughts as by reflection in the glass of the Trinity; and secondly, Astrologians claimed to know men's thoughts, but Perkins did not expand upon this claim or devote any time to refuting it.

. . . wee may see how hard a thing it is truly & soundly to conuert a sinner vnto God, and how easily a man may deceiue his owne soule, & beguile the world by hypocrisie: for a man by long exercise in the word may haue a great measure of knowledge, & withall good wit, and memorie, and with them vtterance, and by a common gift of the spirit, bee able to teach the word truly, and to conceiue prayer to good purpose, and withall haue a cankred heart towards God, poysoned with this damnable thought, *I will not obey the word of God*: for euery man that hath inwardly in him a purpose to liue, though but in one sinne, his heart is not vpright with God, neither bee Gods graces, as faith, and repentance found in his heart: for true repentance is a purpose, and resolution to leaue all sinne, and to please God in all things.³⁹

There are two related problems in this passage. First of all, there is an unresolved conflict within the passage itself because Perkins claimed that man was both self-deceived, and that he was beguiling the world with hypocrisy. If a man was indeed "beguiling" the world, then he possessed a hidden purpose or intention which conflicted with his outward actions, but of which he himself was fully cognizant. If, on the other hand, a man was deceiving his own soul, then he was not fully cognizant of his own thoughts or intentions.

And this contradiction leads us to the related problem, namely Perkins' confused pronouncements concerning self-knowledge and self-judgement. In the passage above, and elsewhere in this work, Perkins wrote as if man knew his own "purpose", and his own thoughts. The very words "inwardly" held "purpose" in the passage above suggest man's cognizance of his own intentions. And elsewhere Perkins described how "all actions proceede from thoughts, the heart being the

³⁹ Ibid., p. 465, col. 1, B-C.

fountaine of our deedes" which again suggested self-awareness of intentions.⁴⁰ However, Perkins contradicted these statements on several occasions, especially when writing about man's "heart". For example, when he argued that *all* men were guilty of the thought "that there is no God", he claimed that many would try to clear themselves from this charge by insisting that they "neuer felt in themselues any such conceits as this". He continued:

But we may easily deceiue our selues herein, for a man cannot alwaies discerne what be the thoughts of his owne heart. . . . since Adams fall, the conscience is corrupt by originall sinne, as bee all other powers of mans soule; whence it comes to passe, that conscience can not do his duty in giuing true testimony concerning mans imaginations: but a man may thinke euill, and yet his conscience not tell him: and therefore wee may not say, because we feelee not these euill thoughts in vs, therefore wee haue them not⁴¹

Thus, Perkins argued that, in his natural state (i.e. without saving grace) man was self-deceived, and could not even know his own intentions. As Perkins remarked in another passage on this topic, "while men doe sooth vp themselues in their good meaning [i.e. intentions], they deceiue their owne hearts through ignorance of their naturall estate".⁴² Perkins even took this argument one step further, contradicting his original analysis of how the thoughts of man may be known. We will recall that, earlier in the work, he had argued that

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 468, col. 1, C.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 461, col. 2, D - p. 462, col. 1, A.

⁴² Ibid., p. 474, col. 2, C.

these thoughts could be known "indirectly by means" such as speech and actions. However, later, he also boldly asserted that "no man knoweth the thoughts of another; nay hee cannot finde out his owne thoughts: . . . God alone is the searcher, of the hearts, [of men]".⁴³

In conclusion, we have seen several examples of the contradiction and confusion which was rampant in this work concerning intentionality, judgement and the exact nature of "hypocrisy" itself. Without a clearer understanding of human intentionality and a coherent basis for judging it, the concept of hypocrisy was being subjected to incoherent definition and use. It was being "unhinged" by the complexities of Protestant theology rather than simply by polemical exchange. "Hypocrisy" was caught between the demands of two central Protestant doctrines: insistence upon the naturally evil condition of man, but the equally forceful insistence that absolute purity of thought, word, and deed was the only reliable sign of having true "saving grace".

Given these complexities, and given that the term "hypocrisy" was caught in the middle of them, we should not be surprised to find that interest in the concept, and also problems surrounding it, are evident even after the original context of reformation polemics had ceased to dominate writers' approaches to it. Consequently, we find Bishop Joseph Hall, 1574 - 1656, giving hypocrisy pride of place in

⁴³ Ibid., p. 475, col. 1, B.

his *Characters of Virtues and Vices*, first published in 1608. Hypocrisy was the very first vice he considered; it would "lead [the] ring: worthily . . . because both she cometh nearest to virtue, and is the worst of vices".⁴⁴ Likewise, in *Satan's Fiery Darts Quenched*, written as late as 1645-6 and published in 1647, Hall again condemned hypocrisy:

Of all creatures . . . out of hell, there is none so loathsome to God as the hypocrites; and that upon a double provocation, both for doing of evil, and for doing evil under a colour of good.⁴⁵

While both these examples demonstrate Hall's concern with hypocrisy, his most interesting work for our purposes was a sermon entitled "The Hypocrite" delivered at court in February 1629-30. Here we can see Hall's awareness of the previous polemical context in which Roman Catholics were labelled "hypocrites" but, just as Perkins had done, Hall now insisted that everyone was hypocritical. Some, Hall claimed, "would

⁴⁴ Joseph Hall, *Characters of Virtues and Vices*, in *The Works of the Right Reverend Joseph Hall, D. D.*, ed. Philip Wynter, 10 volumes, (New York: AMS Press, 1969), vol. 6, p. 106. For a brief discussion of Hall's "casuistry", see Perez Zagorin, *Ways of Lying: Dissimulation, Persecution and Conformity in Early Modern Europe*, (Cambridge: Mass., Harvard University Press, 1990), pp. 242-44. In general, Hall's works have been studied more by English scholars than historians. See, for example, Frank Livingstone Huntley, *Bishop Joseph Hall, 1574 - 1656: A biographical and critical study*, (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer Ltd., 1979); Frank Livingstone Huntley, *Bishop Joseph Hall and Protestant Meditation in Seventeenth-Century England*, (Binghamton, New York: Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, 1981); Richard A. McCabe, *Joseph Hall: A Study in Satire and Meditation*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982); and Leonard D. Tourney, *Joseph Hall*, (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1979).

⁴⁵ Hall, *Satan's Fiery Darts Quenched: or, Temptations Repelled. In Three Decades, Works*, vol. 7, p. 258.

catch all the world in St. Peter's net" but he would not follow this route:

. . . were we clearly innocent of these crimes, I should be the first that would cast this stone at Rome. But now that we share with them in these sins, there is no reason we should be sejoined in the censure.⁴⁶

Thus, for Hall, everyone was guilty of hypocrisy, having "the form of godliness, but deny[ing] the power thereof". Hall took this text from 2 Timothy, 3:5 and used it to show how hypocrites appeared to be godly, but were in reality hidden devils because they denied God's power.

What is of interest in Hall's sermon is not simply the widespread and vehement nature of his attack on hypocrisy, but also the relationship which he described between hypocrisy and atheism. While Perkins had linked the two by defining hypocrisy as a manifestation of atheism in practice, Hall established a relationship of equals but opposites:

He that hath but a form [of godliness] is an hypocrite; but he that hath not a form is an atheist. I know not whether I should sever these two; both are human devils well met; an hypocrite is a masked devil, an atheist is a devil unmasked. Whether of them shall, without their repentance, be deeper in hell, they shall once feel, I determine not. Only let me assure them, that if the infernal Tophet be not for them, it can challenge no guests.⁴⁷

Once again hypocrisy and atheism were placed in relationship to one another, but the volatility of this

⁴⁶ Hall, *Sermon XXVIII: The Hypocrite*. Set forth in a sermon at the Court, February 28, 1629-30, *Works*, vol. 5, p. 426.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 431-2.

language is clearly demonstrated since Hall established a very different relationship than Perkins had done.

However, Hall did not restrict himself to establishing relationships between hypocrisy and atheism; in a descriptive passage he suggested that many heretics and the superstitious were also hypocrites. Where Perkins had described such men as types of atheist, to Hall they were all hypocrites. Hall's denunciation of these enemies of "true religion" deserves attention, not only for its eloquence and virulence, but also for the sweeping judgements he passed on the intentions of those concerned. Judgement and intentionality were problems that perplexed and confused Hall just as they had Perkins. As we shall see, Hall frequently contradicted himself about how to judge and on what basis to judge others. In this first example, Hall considered all these enemies of religion, whether heretics, heathens, or Catholics, to be hypocrites because of their "pretended" holiness. In other words, Hall allowed for no error and no mistaken belief because he claimed that all "wrong belief" was based on deliberate deception and pretence. The denunciation needs to be quoted at length:

[Let us] ascend unto a higher key of pretended holiness, Do ye see some of the elect Manichees lying upon hard mats, which St. Austin says were therefore called Mattarii? Do ye see the penances of the three super-mortified orders of the Mahometan saints! do ye see an illuminate elder of the anabaptists rapt in divine ecstasies? do ye see a stigmatical friar lashing himself to blood, wallowing in the snow naked, returning the lice into his bosom? do ye see a nice humourist, that will not dress a dish, nor lay a cloth, nor walk abroad on a Sunday; and yet make no conscience of cozening his neighbour on the work-day?

All these, and many others of the same kind, are swans; which, under white feathers, have a black skin. These have a *form of godliness*, and are the worse for it. For as it is the most dangerous and killing flattery that is brought in under a pretence of liberty; so it is the most odious and perilous impiety that is hid under a *form of godliness*.⁴⁸

Thus, Hall passed condemnatory judgement on the intentions of all who maintained "false" beliefs.

However elsewhere, discussing hypocrisy once more, Hall withdrew completely from passing judgement on intentions, claiming that God alone could know the intentions of others. Instead, Hall argued that he would judge by appearances only:

As hypocrisy is a common counterfeit of all virtues, so there is no special virtue which is not, to the very life of it, seemingly resembled by some special vice. . . . So the substance of every virtue is in the heart: which, since it hath not a window made into it by the Creator of it, but is reserved under lock and key for his own view, I will judge only by appearance. I had rather wrong myself by credulity, than others by unjust censures and suspicions.⁴⁹

Hall had gone from passing sweeping judgements condemning the intentions of others to refraining from passing any judgements except those based on appearance. He had completely abandoned

⁴⁸ Ibid., pp. 430-1.

⁴⁹ Hall, *The First Century of Meditations and Vows, Divine and Moral, Works*, vol. 7, p. 457.

the possibility of knowing other men's thoughts: the internal world was utterly divorced from the external, and the external could provide an impenetrable sham.

And yet, the more we examine Hall's position concerning intentionality and judgement, the more confusing the picture becomes. He contradicted both these two positions I have outlined in another sermon entitled *The Deceit of Appearances*. Taking John 7:24 as his text, "*Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgement*", Hall stressed time and again the importance of *not* judging by appearances.⁵⁰ Appearances could not and should not be the foundation of any judgement because "if appearance might be the rule, good should be evil, evil good. There is no virtue that cannot be counterfeited; no vice that cannot be blanced".⁵¹ This sermon is highly revealing because in it Hall insisted upon the need to judge, and yet he displayed chronic confusion when he attempted to establish the basis for righteous judgement. Hall acknowledged that Christ's command had been that we must judge: "our Saviour seals our commission, sets us upon the bench, allows us the act, but takes order for the manner: we may judge, we may not judge according to the appearance".⁵² Hall proceeded to demonstrate why judgement should not be

⁵⁰ Hall, *Sermon VIII: The Deceit of Appearance*. Preached before his Majesty, at His Court of Theobalds, on Sunday September, 15, 1622, *Works*, vol. 5, p. 147.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 156.

⁵² Ibid., p. 150.

based on appearance, showing how deceptive appearances could be in politics, religion and in the simple physical assessment of others. And yet, at the end of the sermon, Hall found himself deliberating about what were acceptable grounds for judgement. And here he ran into difficulties. He was obliged to fall back straight away on those very appearances he had just denounced:

though we may not judge only by the appearance, yet appearance may not be neglected in our judgement. . . . Semblances are not always severed from truth.⁵³

At first Hall tried to argue that actions did not deceive where words and "shows" might. An act that looked evil would always be evil; man had to trust the evidence of his own eyes in order to judge correctly in these situations:

What do we with eyes if we may not believe their intelligence? That world is past, wherein the gloss . . . "the wanton embracements of another man's wife must pass, with a clerk, for a ghostly benediction". Men are now more wise, less charitable. Words and probable shows are appearances, actions are not.⁵⁴

Yet, as soon as Hall had stated that words might deceive more than actions, he was driven to temper this comment:

Yet even our words also shall judge us: if they be filthy, if blasphemous, if but idle, we shall account for them, we shall be judged by them. . . . I may safely say, nobody desires to borrow colours of evil. If you do ill, think not that we will make dainty to think you so⁵⁵

⁵³ Ibid., p. 156-7.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 157.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

Thus, Hall had come full circle. Now both evil words and evil actions were an adequate basis for judging a man to be evil. But what of the "good"? After all, we have already seen Hall describe hypocrisy as the "common counterfeit of all virtues". If virtue could be counterfeited, how should men distinguish the appearance of virtue from virtue itself? Hall did not have any effective method for solving this problem. He side-stepped the issue by suggesting that if man was good, then he would be judged to be good. He assumed that internal goodness would accompany the appearance of external goodness:

if we do well, shall we not be accepted? If we be charitable in our alms, just in our awards, faithful in our performances, sober in our carriages, devout in our religious services conscionable in our actions . . . we shall have peace with ourselves, honour with men, glory with God and his angels.⁵⁶

Therefore, despite considerable concern with the problem, Hall had been unable to provide a method for penetrating the intentions of others. He had very successfully shown the pitfalls involved in judging by appearances and yet had effectively demonstrated that appearances, in the form of words and actions, were all man had to judge by.

In like manner, the issue of intentionality also dominated Hall's approach to our other category of heresy. Problems surrounding the intentionality of the heretic were evident when Hall broached the topic in a work entitled *The Peacemaker*, a tract which laid "forth the right way of Peace in Matters of Religion". Here Hall dealt extensively with the

⁵⁶ Ibid.

problem of heresy, defining it as "an error in faith with obstinacy". However, Hall insisted that even an "error" could, and in the case of heresy did, involve evil intentionality on the heretic's behalf:

for . . . it is not falseness of judgment that makes an heretic, but perverseness of will. . . . They are much mistaken that slight the mistakings of the understanding, as no sins; rather, as that faculty hath more of the man than the other inferior, so the aberrations of that must be more heinous. But if the will did not concur to their further aggravation, in adhering to a falsity once received, they might seem rather to pass, with God and good men, for infirmities; but the least falsehood justified proves odious to both; how much more in so precious a subject as religion.⁵⁷

Thus, an obstinate, perverse and indeed evil intention was at the heart of the offence of heresy for Hall.

However, this line of argument created some difficulties when Hall attempted to outline the appropriate punishment for heretics. Because the focus of *The Peacemaker* was the civil authority's role in maintaining peace and order in matters of religion, Hall needed to distinguish between those heretics who simply but obstinately maintained false beliefs, and those who provoked civil unrest by promoting and spreading their heresies. And yet, having asserted that *all* heresy involved "perversness of will", Hall could not dismiss "peaceful" heresy as benign error, reserving harsh punishment for those whose erroneous beliefs caused civil unrest. Instead, Hall made a distinction between what he called "mere" and "mixed"

⁵⁷ Hall, *The Peacemaker, laying forth the Right Way of Peace, in Matters of Religion, Works*, vol. 6, p. 648.

heresies. He defined mere heresy as "a sole error in matter of faith stiffly resolved on, without any other concurrent malignity", whereas the more culpable "mixed" heresy was "intermingled with other mischievous ingredients, as blasphemy, infectious divulgation, seditious disturbance, malicious plottings, violent pursuit, treacherous machinations, and the like".⁵⁸ Predictably, the former group were only to be subjected to "brotherly admonishings" and, in the most obstinate cases "strong conviction" and "church censures", whereas "mixed" heretics could and should be subjected to "bodily punishments", to "the utmost of all pains, [and even] death itself".

Hall's justification for this differentiation was the damage done by mixed heretics to both Church and Commonwealth. As he put it in stark and uncompromising terms, "Even in spiritual matters, as well as civil, that rule is eternal, *Salus populi, suprema lex* [the people's safety is the highest law]".⁵⁹ Clearly, such a bold statement had major repercussions for the concept of heresy itself. If we examine the implications of Hall's argument, we will find that the offence of heresy had been dramatically diminished. Previously, false belief itself and the "obstinacy" with which it was maintained had been at the heart of the heresy charge. If a false belief was maintained *with obstinacy*, that in

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 649.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 650.

itself was an offence worthy of the most serious punishments. But Hall had placed "the safety of the people" at the heart of his judgement process. If the people were not endangered, then obstinate false belief only merited the mildest admonition. In addition, while Hall had claimed that the "obstinacy" of all heretics had to be proven, obstinacy itself had been removed from the centre of the offence. Civil unrest was now at the heart of the offence, and hence the need to "know" and "judge" the intentions of "heretics" had substantially diminished.

Thus, Hall's writings on both hypocrisy and heresy displayed concern and difficulty with the problems of intentionality and judgement. And one final example of a writer with similar concerns is the renowned philosopher and statesman, Francis Bacon, 1561 - 1626. Bacon's concern with these categories and issues may seem surprising since he was no religious polemicist and certainly no theologian. And yet, his collection of *Religious Meditations* was appended to the early editions of his *Essays*, and in these "Meditations" Bacon offered "Essay-style" musings on many of the categories we have been examining, including atheism, hypocrisy and heresy.

Bacon's writings on these categories demonstrate two things. Firstly, the "unhinging" of the categories is evident once more since Bacon related atheism to heresy, and heresy to hypocrisy in different configurations than the other writers we have examined. For example, in "Of Heresies" Bacon described a structure in which "true religion" formed a middle

ground between "Superstition with superstitious heresies" on one side and "Atheism with profane heresies" on the other, the latter being "more heinous than the rest".⁶⁰ This structure is different again than those of Cheke, Perkins, or Hall, showing that these relationships were far from fixed at this time. Secondly, Bacon's writing on hypocrisy in particular demonstrates a specific interest in problems of intentionality and judgement. In fact the whole focus of the work was how hypocrisy may be "known" or "distinguished". His answer to this problem was to differentiate between "works of sacrifice" which had greater "pomp" and in which hypocrites consequently excelled, and works of mercy which frequently interfered with

⁶⁰ Francis Bacon, "Religious Meditations", in *The Works of Francis Bacon*, 7 vols., James Spedding, Robert Ellis & Douglas Heath, eds., (London: Longmans & Co., 1870), vol. 7, pp. 252-3. There has been considerable scholarly discussion concerning Bacon's method and purpose in writing the *Essays*, the style of which, as I have noted, is similar to his "Religious Meditations". Disagreement arises over whether the *Essays* should be seen predominantly as literary exercises bearing little or no relation to Bacon's philosophy, or whether they not only incorporate Bacon's "civil" philosophy but, as some have claimed, provide "the ultimate *novum organum* . . . of the doctrine of advancement in life". R. C. Cochrane, "Francis Bacon and the Architect of Fortune", *Studies in the Renaissance*, 5, 1958, p. 188, as cited by Ian Box, "Bacon's *Essays*: From Political Science to Political Prudence", *History of Political Thought*, vol. III, no. 1, Jan. 1982. The most helpful analysis of the *Essays* is Lisa Jardine, *Francis Bacon: Discovery and the Art of Discourse*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), chap. 13 where Jardine establishes a balance between these two extremes arguing that, while Bacon "did not set out to give formal justification for particular social and political beliefs", neither should the *Essays* be "regarded as amusing exercises in rhetorical equivocation", pp. 227-8. On the debate over Bacon's attitude towards Christianity, see Timothy H. Paterson, "On the Role of Christianity in the Political Philosophy of Francis Bacon", *Polity*, vol. 19, 1987, pp. 419-42.

the hypocrite's desires and which they consequently avoided if possible. Hence, Bacon argued

The way to convict a hypocrite . . . is to send him from the works of sacrifice, to the works of mercy The works of . . . mercy are the works whereby to distinguish hypocrites . . . for . . . hypocrites seek by a pretended holiness towards God to cover their injuries towards men.⁶¹

Such an argument is similar to Hall's position that "words" and "shows" might deceive, whereas "actions" would not. "Action" was crucial to Bacon's argument as well and he provided quotations to support his position. For example:

*Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the orphans and widows in their affliction.*⁶²

However, like Perkins, Bacon ran into some contradiction when he began to discuss "hypocrites" who were "deceiving themselves". As we have already seen, he had described hypocrites as having pretended holiness, and therefore as having private false intentions behind the facade of holiness. However, Bacon continued his "meditation" with an attack on the excesses of monastic life, in which he described hypocrites who were "deceiving themselves", implying that they did not even know their own intentions:

There are some however of a deeper and more inflated hypocrisy, who deceiving themselves, and fancying themselves worthy of a closer conversation with God, neglect the duties of charity towards their neighbour, as inferior matters.⁶³

⁶¹ Bacon, *Works*, vol. 7, p. 249.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

Thus, we can see not only Bacon's interest and concern with matters of judgement and intentionality, but also his difficulties in dealing with this problematic topic.

There is one final remark of Bacon's concerning both heresy and hypocrisy with which we may conclude this survey of treatments of these two terms. However, in order to demonstrate the relevance of this remark, we must first summarize briefly the results of our study of heresy and hypocrisy so far. Firstly, we have seen that both words "heresy" and "hypocrisy" were prominent in polemical exchanges throughout the century. Secondly, we have seen that heresy and hypocrisy entered polemical exchanges as denunciations by Catholics against Protestants, and Protestants against Catholics respectively. We also saw that the terms were "unhinged" by polemical exchanges. And thirdly, I have argued that the issue of intentionality was frequently evoked when these words were discussed in any depth. Thus, I have been demonstrating certain associations, albeit highly unstable ones, between these words during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Since these associations no longer exist in modern usage and the concepts of heresy and hypocrisy are now completely dissociated from each other, this previous degree of affinity may surprise the modern reader. However, the final remark of Bacon's to which I alluded provides a compelling example of this early modern "relationship" between heresy and hypocrisy. Bacon concluded his "Meditation" on hypocrisy by placing the terms in direct relation to one

another, claiming they were reverse sides of the same coin.

He wrote:

The works of mercy . . . are the works whereby to distinguish hypocrites. With heretics on the contrary it is otherwise: for as hypocrites seek by a pretended holiness towards God to cover their injuries towards men; so heretics seek by a certain moral carriage towards men to make a passage for their blasphemies against God.⁶⁴

Bacon's neat formula is highly revealing because it demonstrates both the association of these two concepts in early modern minds, and that Bacon's primary concern was the problem of *judging* heresy and hypocrisy. For him the two issues were related because they followed parallel patterns where judgement was concerned. However, despite his focus on the issue of judgement, it is important to recognize that Bacon in fact only made *assumptions* concerning the intentions of hypocrites and heretics rather than providing any foundation for informed judgement. Although Bacon acknowledged that intentions were central to the issue by using such words as "pretended" holiness, and by suggesting that heretics "seek" to use their moral carriage towards men as a foil for their blasphemies against God, he provided no method for *proving* the nature of another's intentions. He simply contrasted two conflicting sets of behaviour and used the disparity between the two to cast aspersions regarding intentions. Or, put another way, Bacon took no account of human nature, making no allowance for "error", for "conflict

⁶⁴ Ibid.

of will", or for human weakness. On both counts, he was prepared to assert that there was deliberate deception and an evil intention simply because of the disparity between two types of behaviour.

It might be argued that this over-simplification on Bacon's behalf was due to the brief "essay-like" nature of his writings on heresy and hypocrisy. And yet, while his writings were brief, they were (as I have demonstrated) *focused* on the issue of judgement. Consequently, the omissions and indeed the incoherence of Bacon's analysis seems less likely to be the result of brevity than the result of a failure on Bacon's behalf to confront the complexities at the heart of these topics. As we have seen, not only with Bacon, but also with Cheke, Perkins and Hall, there was repeated awareness of the issue of intentionality, and awareness of the need to judge, but there was either failure or incoherence when these subjects were examined.

In the light of this repeated incoherence, should we conclude that throughout the early modern period the concepts of heresy and hypocrisy were destabilized in polemical exchanges and that, while writers exhibited awareness of the problems of intentionality and judgement, they were unable to provide coherent solutions to these difficulties? Certainly, such conclusions seem justified in view of the treatments we have examined so far. However, as I will demonstrate in the following chapter, there was at least one notable exception to this rule where the subject of heresy was concerned. In his

Dialogue Concerning Heresies, Thomas More not only confronted the issues of intentionality and judgement but he also provided a coherent basis for passing judgement. He offered a possible reconciliation between the two seemingly contradictory axioms: that man must needs judge his fellow man, but that "no man can loke into anothers breste . . .".⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Thomas More, *A Dialogue Concerning Heresies*, CW, vol. 6:I p. 22, 1-2.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE COHERENCE OF A CONCEPT: HERESY, INTENTIONALITY AND JUDGEMENT IN THOMAS MORE'S "DIALOGUE CONCERNING HERESIES".

Sir Thomas More's personal and direct involvement with heresy and heresy trials in his role of Lord Chancellor of England has been well documented.¹ And, it is not surprising that the effects of this direct and practical involvement are immediately apparent in all of More's polemical works, including the *Dialogue Concerning Heresies*. As Peter Milward has observed, "In all his [polemical] writings it is More's aim to prove that his opponents are both heretics (in faith) and fools (in reason)".² Indeed, More's polemical works attack the problem of heresy and heretics from all angles. For instance, two of his works, *The Apology* and *The Debellation of Salem and Bizance* deal predominantly with the many legal problems besetting heresy laws in England at this time. These works were direct responses to attacks made by the common lawyer Christopher St. Germain. Since More had also received a

¹ See, for example, J. A. Guy, *The Public Career of Sir Thomas More*, (Brighton, Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1980), chap. 8; Alistair Fox, *Thomas More: History and Providence*, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982), chaps. 4 & 5; Richard Marius, *Thomas More: A Biography*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984), chap. 9; Louis A. Schuster, "Thomas More's Polemical Career, 1523 - 1533", *The Complete Works of St. Thomas More*, 15 vols., (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1963-85), vol. 8:III, (1973), pp. 1135 - 1268.

² Peter Milward, "A Judgement Judged: C. S. Lewis on the More - Tyndale Controversy", *Moreana*, 17, 1980, p. 33.

legal training, he was able to meet St. Germain on his own ground, rebutting legal argument with legal argument.³ In contrast, More's *The Answer to a Poisoned Book* dealt specifically with the theology of the Eucharist which had come under attack in England via the works of John Frith and George Joye.⁴

But what of the work on which our attention will focus in this chapter, namely the *Dialogue Concerning Heresies*? As the title suggests, the central concept of this work is the nature of heresy itself; hence its pertinency to our subject matter. However, a word of caution must be added concerning this title because the work has not always been known as the *Dialogue Concerning Heresies*. Both the first and second editions had a lengthy and detailed title which enumerated the issues covered in the text rather than combining them all under the label of "heresies". The work, first printed in 1529 and again in 1531 was entitled

³ More, *The Debellation of Salem and Bizance*, John Guy, Ralph Keen, Clarence Miller and Ruth McGugan, eds., CW, vol. 10, intro., pp. xvii-xciv. See also John Guy, "Thomas More and Christopher St. Germain: The Battle of the Books", in Alistair Fox and John Guy, *Reassessing the Henrician Age: Humanism, Politics and Reform, 1500-1550*, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), pp. 95-120.

⁴ More, *The Answer to a Poisoned Book*, CW, vol. 11.

A dyaloge of syr Thomas / More knyghte: one of the /
 counsayll of oure souerayne lorde the kyng / &
 chauncellour of hys duchy of Lan=/caster. wherin be
 treatyd dyuers / maters / as of the veneration / &
 worshyp of ymagys & / relyques / prayng to / sayntys
 / & goyng / on pylgrymage. / wyth many othere /
 thyngys touchyng the / pestylent sect of Luther and
 / Tyndale / by the tone bygone in / Saxony / and by
 the tother / laboryd to be brought in / to England.⁵

This was obviously More's chosen title for the work, since it was not till after his death when the third edition was printed in 1557 that the title refering to "heresies" was adopted. The 1557 title ran as follows:

A Dialogue concernynge / heresydes & matters of
 religi= / on / made in the yere of oure / Lorde. M.
 D. xxviii. by sir / Thomas More (than knight / and
 one of the priuy counsell / of kyng Henry the eyght
 / & also Chauncelloure of / the duchy of Lancaster)
 / To which work he / made this tytyle / hereafter fo=
 / lowynge.⁶

More's original title then followed. The discrepancy between these two titles is significant since More clearly did not brand the denial of worship of images, prayer to saints, and going on pilgrimages as "heresies" in his own title. And yet the whole driving force and purpose behind his text was to prove that *when maintained with obstinacy and malicious intention* such denials of Catholic Church practice were indeed heretical. As my analysis will demonstrate, More's central argument in the *Dialogue* was that "heresy" could only be distinguished from "reasonable doubt" by judging and determining the malicious intentionality of the "heretic".

⁵ More, *Dialogue Concerning Heresies*, CW, vol. 6:II, p. 549.

⁶ Ibid., p. 555.

More explored the numerous complexities involved in the judgement process; the difficulty of determining another's "intentions", the need to establish how it is that human beings "know" the difference between "truth" or "error", and the need to establish an agreed source of authority to pass "judgement" on the beliefs and intentions of others. Hence, the text itself explores how it is that men can *know* some beliefs to be true, and therefore *judge* other beliefs to be heretical. The *Dialogue* was More's first commissioned work against heresy and the instructions More had received from Bishop Cuthbert Tunstal were to write in such a way that the "common man" could "see through the cunning malice of heretics".⁷ More therefore set out to demonstrate that malice was necessary in order to "prove" heresy. Perhaps, then, More deliberately did not prejudge the "heretical" nature of the issues mentioned in his title, preferring instead to commence from a less judgemental position and then demonstrate through the course of the text how these sectarian denials of Catholic practice could, and must, be condemned as "heresy".

However, before we explore the text itself to see how More accomplished his task, there are two additional points which need to be made. Firstly, while More clearly devoted much attention to the concept of heresy in his polemical works, the same cannot be said of our other category, hypocrisy. This is not surprising because, as we saw in

⁷ Ibid., pp. 439-40.

Chapter Two, in the initial rounds of polemical confrontation, hypocrisy was the charge aimed by Protestants against Catholics. Thus, More used the term infrequently, rarely employing it except when recounting and/or rebutting a Protestant attack which included the charge of "hypocrisy".⁸ In such circumstances More did not analyse or examine the concept closely and hence this chapter will focus exclusively on "heresy".

A second, and lengthier topic which needs examination is the views historians have expressed about the *Dialogue*. While More's polemical works in general have often been ignored and/or denounced, several historians have singled out the *Dialogue* as worthy of particular praise. For example, Richard C. Marius summed up its special status when he described the *Dialogue* as the "best" of More's polemical works in English.⁹ Brendan Bradshaw credited it with a "formidable quality"¹⁰ while Rainer Pineas praised the "careful construction" of the *Dialogue*, calling it a brilliant defence of the Church in which More's dramatic devices made the arguments "persuasive

⁸ Ibid., for example pp. 422-4 and 426. It is worth remarking, however, that More does draw attention to the issue of judgement *vis à vis* hypocrisy, writing "Nowe yf of suche as semyd good men we neuer had founden any for ypochrytes / albe it yt myght be that some were suche / yet wold we not I thynke suppose that there were any so in dede / yf we neuer had knowen it tryed & prouyd so", p.224/27-31.

⁹ Marius, *Thomas More*, p.339.

¹⁰ Brendan Bradshaw, "The Controversial Sir Thomas More", *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, vol. 36, no. 4, Oct. 1985, p. 549.

and immediate".¹¹ For Pineas the *Dialogue* was "easily the single most brilliant among More's many works of religious controversy".¹² And yet, despite the obvious praise and attention which this work has received from scholars, a marked contradiction is evident when their comments about it are examined. On one hand, scholars have frequently remarked upon More's skillful use of the dialogue form, his ability to control and develop the characters and the subject matter in a way that remains readable, convincing and entertaining. However, in contrast to this authorial control and structure within the work, scholars have also commented repeatedly on the digressions, diversions, and the aimless meandering within the text which seems to go backwards and forwards over the subject matter, picking up one topic here, dropping it there, returning to it time and again in a seamless, endless ebb and flow of conversation.

Thus, historians have made strikingly dissonant claims regarding this text and, before we examine the text itself in detail, these disagreements should be explored since they illustrate the need for closer analysis of the *Dialogue*. Several attempts have been made to reconcile the dissonant claims of the ordering control of the author on one hand and the rambling disorder of conversation on the other. Pineas has

¹¹ Rainer Pineas, *Thomas More and Tudor Polemics*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1968), pp. 217-8.

¹² Rainer Pineas, review article of *A Dialogue Concerning Heresies*, Yale Edition, *Renaissance Quarterly*, 1982, no. 35, p. 617.

suggested that the meandering dialogue was More's deliberate attempt to break away from the Latin scholastic treatise which relied upon logic to combat heresy. Not only had such works as Fisher's *Assertionis Lutheranae Confutatio* been unsuccessful in halting the tide of heretical attacks, but in addition the time had come to broach the problem on a popular level in English, and this required a completely different format.¹³ More's dialogue form allowed for a digressive, non-scholastic approach which appealed to the layman and also allowed for the controlled repetition of the vital arguments throughout the book. By using the dialogue form More was not obliged to exhaust a subject once broached, but could "take it up, drop it, and then reinsert it wherever he [thought] it most effective".¹⁴ Thus the seeming disorder and repetition is employed to the author's advantage to emphasize the important arguments while avoiding tediousness. Walter M. Gordon offers a slightly different but compatible explanation in his article on *The Argument of Comedy in Thomas More's Dialogue Concerning Heresies*. Gordon analyses the role of More's "merry tales" within the dialogue and claims that while they are indeed diversions and much needed distractions from the strict line

¹³ Pineas, *Tudor Polemics*, pp. 80-92, especially pp.85-6. Also see Pineas, "Thomas More's Use of the Dialogue Form as a Weapon of Religious Controversy", *Studies in the Renaissance*, 7, 1960, pp. 193-206.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 87. For More's use of controlled repetition and "digression" in his other works, see Louis L. Martz, "More as Author: The Virtues of Digression", *Moreana*, vol. 16, 1979, pp. 105-120.

of argument, transporting the reader to a less fraught and contentious situation, they still manage to pursue the issues at stake. Hence they serve a dual purpose of diffusing potential confrontations between the dialogue's characters, while at the same time bringing the reader round to the author's point of view by a humorous rather than a confrontational route.¹⁵

Brendan Bradshaw has offered one of the most detailed modern accounts of the structure of the *Dialogue*, claiming that it operates on three different levels. Firstly it is a defence of the *Ecclesia Anglicana* against the Reformers' claims of abuses and corruption. Secondly, it is a theological apology, a defence of Catholic tradition in the light of the Lutheran appeal to *sola Scriptura*. And thirdly, More accommodated his defence to the demands of "the reform-minded young men who frequented the English universities".¹⁶ Hence More adopted the "humanist" dialogue form and also incorporated the immediate concerns of this group regarding the execution of the reformer Thomas Bilney and the suppression of William Tyndale's translation of the New Testament into the vernacular. Bradshaw argues that More therefore pursued a necessary format to accomodate these three levels. He intended to defend the actions of the English

¹⁵ Walter M. Gordon, "The Argument of Comedy in Thomas More's *Dialogue Concerning Heresies*", *Renaissance and Reformation*, 16-17, 1980-81, pp. 13-32.

¹⁶ Bradshaw, "The Controversial Sir Thomas More", p. 550.

Church regarding Bilney and Tyndale not as isolated issues but in the light of Catholic tradition. Consequently he first had to divert attention away from those two issues, back to the realm of doctrine. This he did in Book I in which he argued that rather than using the *sola Scriptura* of the Lutherans to judge the Church, the faith of the Church itself had been and always should be the basis for examining and expounding Scripture. Book II was then devoted to the consequent issue: how do we know Christ's true Church, given Luther's denial that the institutional Catholic Church was the true Church? The whole content of Book II is devoted to this issue. Book III could then be an argued defence of the Church's actions in the cases of Bilney and Tyndale on the basis of Catholic tradition, and Book IV could expand from those specific issues to the more general problem of dealing with Lutheran "heresy" via the traditional methods available.¹⁷ On the basis of this structure, Bradshaw claims that the *Dialogue* exhibits "intellectual coherence" and that "it is not necessary to explore the structure of *A Dialogue* beyond this point".¹⁸

Like Bradshaw, Brian Gogan has detected a possible underlying order in the *Dialogue*. In his book *The Common Corps of Christendom: Ecclesiological Themes in the writings of Sir Thomas More*, Gogan is interested exclusively in More's thought concerning the nature and formulation of "the Church", its

¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 550-52.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 552.

relation to Scripture, revelation and faith.¹⁹ Hence, while he outlines "a certain logical order which may have been intentional", he offers little explanation for the dialogue form suggesting only that it is indicative of More's "popular" approach in this particular work.²⁰ Because Gogan devotes little attention to the dialogue form, he fails to make any distinction between Thomas More, the author of the entire work, and the *fictional* representation of More as one of the two characters in the dialogue. As we shall see, to assume that More himself and the fictional character of "Author" are one and the same is to miss much of the subtle interplay between the two *fictional* characters in the work.

Bradshaw and Gogan, in concentrating upon the underlying structure of the work, tend to minimize the intricacies of the dialogue form while others, most notably Thomas Lawler in his introduction to the Yale edition, despite devoting more attention to the dialogue form, have still found only a polemical "maze".²¹ Although Bradshaw acknowledges that Lawler employed this expression "with the best of intentions", he still contrasts his demonstrated coherence with the implied

¹⁹ Brian Gogan, *The Common Corps of Christendom. Ecclesiological Themes in the writings of Sir Thomas More*, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1982).

²⁰ Ibid., pp. 133 & 136.

²¹ For Lawler's use of the "maze" metaphor see *Dialogue Concerning Heresies*, CW, vol. 6:II, pp. 442-3.

incoherence of Lawler's maze metaphor.²² This is, I think, an injustice to Lawler. Bradshaw completely ignores the explanation Lawler offers for his metaphor. Basing his argument on some of More's own definitions of heresy given within the text of the *Dialogue*, that heresy is a "syde way" or a "faccyous way" from the common faith and belief, Lawler develops these definitions to describe heresy as a digression or diversion from the common way. One digression in faith leads to another, one issue leads to another in a "tangled but unbroken thread", and hence for Lawler "the structure of the *Dialogue* is the course of heresy itself, one digression or bypath leading to another, farther and farther from the common way".²³ This explanation of the *Dialogue* is attempting to find a reason for the meandering, discursive, even rambling nature of the text, by claiming that it resembles the course of heresy itself. While we may agree with Bradshaw's underlying structure which explains the sequence of the books themselves, Bradshaw has offered no explanation for the rambling digressions *within* the books other than the obvious, that the work is a *dialogue*, not a work of scholastic logical argument. Lawler, on the other hand, is suggesting there is more to the digressions than this; the course of the dialogue is the course of heresy itself.

²² Bradshaw, "The Controversial Sir Thomas More", p. 550, n. 49.

²³ More, *Dialogue Concerning Heresies*, CW, vol. 6:II, p. 443.

Unfortunately, Lawler does not expand upon this suggestion, leaving us with just More's two definitions of heresy as a "syde way" and a "faccyous way" to support his claim. He does not show us how the heretical mind is represented in the meandering of the text. More importantly, he does not explain why More decided to represent heresy to his readers in this form. Hence we are obliged to some extent to agree with the criticisms of Pineas who, in writing a very favourable review of the Yale edition of the *Dialogue*, voiced just one qualification which concerned Lawler's essay:

The very slight qualification is unfortunately necessary in that Lawler's essay dealing with More's view of heresy in the *Dialogue* is tendentious, while demonstrating insufficient familiarity with the nature and techniques of religious polemics, as well as the tenets of literary criticism.²⁴

What then may we conclude concerning these analyses of the *Dialogue*? Bradshaw offers an underlying structure, but does not probe the issue of the meanderings within the text beyond a superficial dismissal that they are dictated by More's audience, while Lawler offers a rather ill-substantiated explanation for the meanderings, but fails to demonstrate coherence of structure. Consequently one feels in both cases that the analysis is less than complete. And the same may be said of one last study I would like to look at. In his work *Incomplete Fictions, the Formation of English Renaissance Dialogue*, K.J. Wilson offers an interesting overview of the development of English dialogue through the

²⁴ Pineas, "Review Article", p. 618.

Renaissance period and sees More's two major dialogues, the *Dialogue Concerning Heresies* and the *Dialogue of Comfort* as key examples of the evolution of dialogue at this time. Within his analysis Wilson draws attention to a feature of the *Dialogue Concerning Heresies* which has not been commented upon so far. He writes:

Frequent repetition, with minute variation,* of the Messenger's questions together with patient recapitulation of the argument in the Councillor's responses reveals More's effort to accommodate his dialogue to a diverse, troubled, and confused audience.²⁵

Wilson has pointed out, where others have not, that the *Dialogue's* repetitions are not simple restatements. He is offering the same standard explanation for the repetitions, that they are for the benefit of More's lay audience, but he does acknowledge that the content of the repetitions varies a little. If this is the case, then perhaps they are not repetitions in the strict sense of the word at all? Perhaps they should be examined more carefully to see what importance may be attached to the variations. Hence, with the remarks and criticisms of these current analyses in mind, it is time to turn to the text of the *Dialogue*. We will examine what it reveals about More's understanding of the concept of heresy itself, and about his views concerning the judgement of intentions.

²⁵ K. J. Wilson, *Incomplete Fictions: The Formation of English Renaissance Dialogue*, (Washington, D. C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1985), p. 147.

In studying the structure of the *Dialogue Concerning Heresies* there are two "levels" at which the text may be approached. The dialogue of the work comprises an exchange between a character whom we shall call "Author", a character who to all intents and purposes is a *fictional* representation of More himself, and a character whom we shall call "Messenger". Messenger is the servant of a friend of "Author" who has been sent to discuss certain issues with Author and then report back to his Master. The first "level" at which the text may be studied is to examine what "Author" himself tells us about the structure of the *Dialogue* when explaining why he wrote the book, and the second "level" is what we ourselves can ascertain from the structure of the work. More went to some lengths to introduce the reader to the *Dialogue*, and in fact the Preface and chapter 1 are entirely devoted to establishing the fictional cause, circumstances and format of the book. Hence, it is these chapters that I intend to study first of all. It is my contention that while these pages do indeed recount a fictional process or structure according to which the book was written, they also present the reader with some of the complexities and problems that are the book's subject matter. They offer an introductory "musing" upon the nature of, and the relationship between, two problems which beset the Christian mind, doubt and heresy. The reader is taken through a process in order that he may reflect upon what it means to "doubt", upon the relationship between doubt and

heresy, and certain difficulties that are inherent in the concept of heresy itself.

We commence, according to the text, with the exact opposite of doubt, namely certainty. A friend of Author sent his "secrete sure* frende . . . with certayne* credence" to discuss and converse with Author.²⁶ Hence we are "certain" about Messenger. The matters to be discussed are "many suche maters / as beyng in dede very certayne and owt of doute*" (21/9-10). Hence the issues under discussion should have been certain, but, with no explanations offered, we are told that these issues have been "of late by lewde people put in questyon" (21/10-11). Thus, subject matter which should have been certain has been doubted. A certain situation and a certain relationship have been intruded upon by doubt and its repercussions are soon evident. Author and Messenger discuss the matters in question and Messenger goes on his way. But far from resolving the situation, we find that Author, who initially felt satisfied with the discussion, soon succumbs to doubt, not about the topics discussed which was where the doubt originally lay, but about Messenger himself. Author "mystrustyd not his [Messenger's] good wyll / and very well trusted his wytte" but he thought he "had not well done . . . to truste his onely memory" in reporting so complicated a discussion (21/22-27). Author therefore thought he should

²⁶ More, *Dialogue Concerning Heresies*, CW, vol. 6:I, p. 21/8. Since the remainder of this chapter comprises a close textual analysis of parts of the *Dialogue*, citations to it will remain embedded in the text.

commit it all to writing. Author is at great pains to let the reader know that it is not in his nature to doubt, and yet in no time at all we find doubt has spread from concern about Messenger's memory to prudent concern about Messenger's character and intentions:

thoughe I nothyng suspecte the messenger / as in
good fayth I do not / and to saye the treuth / am of
my selfe so lytell mystrustyng / y^t he were lyke
very playnly to shew hymselfe nought / whom I sholde
take for bad: yet syth no man can loke into anothers
breste / as it is therfore well done to deme the
beste / so were it not moche amysse in suche wyse to
prouyde for the worste / as (yf a man happe to be
worse than we take hym for) our good opynyon turne
vs to none harme. [21/30-22/6]

Author continues that he therefore wrote down the exchange between Messenger and himself to send to his friend just in case Messenger had "for any synyster fauour borne towarde y^e wronge syde purposely mangled the mater" (22/9-10). Here we have a transition. Messenger has gone from being "certain" to having only his memory doubted, to having a precautionary question-mark raised about his intentions, to being credited with possible sinister favour towards the Lutherans. This is a dramatic transition in the situation and it draws our attention to one vital characteristic of doubt. Doubt is insidious and it breeds upon itself. It does not remain static, but spreads, reaching from one person to another and from one issue to another.

Author resolves to dispell his doubt by writing down and sending the text of the discussion between himself and Messenger to his friend. He thought he could thereby set his

mind at rest. But doubt cannot be dispelled. The copies of his text could be corrupted by the Lutherans. Hence Author is driven to a third resort. He will publish his own version of the discussion to preempt a corrupted Lutheran version. Here we have the "justification" for the published text as we see it and the reader might presume that doubt would be dispelled by this positive action.

However, it is not! In Chapter I we find the "Letter of Credence" which Messenger had brought when he first visited Author. In the letter Author's friend writes about Messenger's character, recommending him to Author. Messenger is described as so reliable that whatever is said to him, Author must consider it said directly to his friend. In other words, Messenger is described as totally trustworthy, as a faultless conveyer of information "Not onely for his trouthe and secretnesse / but also for his *memory**" (25/25-6). Hence Author's doubts about Messenger's memory expressed in the Preface are thrown into sharp relief against this specific recommendation of Messenger's memory that Author received at the outset. Before reading this letter the reader could think that Author's doubt about Messenger's memory was a wise precaution, but now, given these specific reassurances, the reader is left wondering. Either the reader must conclude that Author doubts his friend's testimony concerning Messenger's memory, or he must question whether Author doubts his friend *per se*, because he questions Messenger's integrity despite his friend's reassurances.

To confound confusion, next in the text is the letter Author wrote to his friend when the manuscript was delivered. We must remember that, according to the fiction created in these first Chapters, this letter was written *after* the text was written down, but *before* Author's version of the book was published: in other words, it was written *before* the Preface. In this letter we find Author writing to his friend explaining why he needed to write down his discussion with Messenger rather than relying on the oral report Messenger had given to his friend. Author begins by reiterating the friend's claims about Messenger's trustworthiness, and he also reiterates the trust that he [Author] consequently places in Messenger, despite the fact that we, the readers, know that he no longer trusts Messenger at all:

(. . . for the confydence y^t ye haue in hym / the wyt & lernynge that I founde in hym / and honesty that I so moche y^e more thynke hym to be of / in that I perceyue you beyng of suche wysedome and vertue / to haue hym in so specyall trust) I neyther do nor can byleue the contrary but that he hath of all our communycacyon made you faythfully / playn and full reporte [26/13-19]

The reader already knows from the Preface that the Author had doubts about Messenger's integrity, and yet here we find him repeating platitudes of confidence and trust in Messenger. Is the reader now to doubt the intentions of Author? The reader now suffers from doubt and has been drawn into a doubting situation just as the characters in the text have been.²⁷ In

²⁷ Regarding the reader's involvement in the controversy, see Eiléan ní Chuilleánáin, "The Debate Between Thomas More and William Tyndale, 1528-33: Ideas on Literature and

addition, the point is being made that written testimony is not necessarily any more "truthful" or "reliable" than verbal. The simple process of writing cannot remove doubt. And our doubts about Author continue as we read his letter. He now tells his friend that it is better to be able to read and re-read such complex matters at one's leisure rather than only hearing them once, suddenly, by word of mouth (26/22-27). He makes no mention of his own doubts about Messenger, or of his suspicions concerning Messenger's memory or his possible sinister favour towards the Lutherans. The reader is left to muse over the incomplete nature of this justification, but the discrepancy between these comments and those in the Preface puts the reader on his guard about two things: first, we must question Author's statements with increased care, and second, we must not take written testimony as proof of truthfulness. Author, it seems, is quite capable of offering platitudes to his friend to cover up his real mistrust of Messenger. If this is the case then there must be a devastating irony in Author's comments a few lines further on:

Religion", *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, vol. 39, no. 3, July 1988, p. 411, where he remarks that in their controversies both More and Tyndale "set out to involve the reader".

And surely syr in this poynt / ye may make your
 selfe sure / that I shall neuer wyllingly deceyue
 your trust. And lest I myght hap to do it of ouer
 syght vnware . . . yet for as moche as I perceyued
 by hym [Messenger] that some folke dowted / lest
 many thynges were layd to the charge / not onely of
 that man [Thomas Bilney]²⁸ ye wrote of / but also of
 Luther hym selfe / otherwyse than coude be proued /
 I dyd so moche therin that I was suffred to se and
 shewe hym as well the bokys of the tone / as the
 very actys of the court concernynge the other / that
 we myght bothe by so moche / the more surely
 warraunt you the trouth. [27/1-11]

The process of doubt has just led the reader to question
 Author's integrity and to question the value of the written
 word in proving truth or falsehood, and here we find Author
 pleading for credence on both these fronts!

After this letter, the text resumes in a state of
 confusion. The reader is told one thing, then he is told the
 contrary: doubt reigns supreme. For example the reader is told
 again that Messenger was sent to Author not because the friend
 had any doubts about the matters in question but because the
 friend saw others "doubting" and wanted to have answers for
 them. Yet in the very next line Messenger reports that "some
 thynges . . . were also there so talked / that [the friend]
 wyst not well . . . whiche part [he] myght byleue" (27/33-
 28/1). The reader is left in a state of complete uncertainty
 regarding whether the friend was "in doubt" or not. Thus, we
 may conclude that this introduction to the text has
 demonstrated the nature and process of doubt, its insidious
 growth and its effect on everyone who comes into contact with
 it.

²⁸ On Thomas Bilney, see below, pp. 169-170.

Next follows a transition in the text since the focus shifts from "doubt" to "heresy". Heresy has been conspicuously absent from the text to this point but is now introduced in a striking manner. As we shall see, the fundamental distinction which is immediately made between doubt and heresy is one of "intentionality". The issue is introduced as follows. When discussing Tyndale's New Testament translation Messenger reports that some say that it was burned partly to keep all knowledge of Christ's gospel and God's law from the people, except such parts as the clergy deign to impart now and then. According to Messenger, some say the clergy threaten "men with fyre as heretyques who so sholde presume to kepe [English translations of the Bible] / as though it were heresye for a crysten man to rede crystys gospell" (29/14-16). Thus, the introduction of the concept of heresy is not a rebuttal of some key Protestant theological formula, but rather it comprises an indignant exclamation. Surely, it cannot be heresy for a Christian man to read Christ's gospel! And yet, in the passages which follow, Messenger demonstrates that this can indeed be heresy if the reader reads with misguided intentionality. Some say, he reports, that if any text is approached with the wrong frame of mind, it may be considered heretical. If the text is misconstrued, misquoted or quoted out of context then even St. Paul may be charged with heresy, and St. John's gospel may be found wanting (30/3-9). The reader is informed that not everything a "heretic" says will be untrue. After all, heretics are by definition "Christians".

They have been baptized into the Church and exposed to the faith of Christ. They are not pagans or infidels:

Thoughe Luther were a deuyl / yet myght a man
percase say as he sayth in some thyng / & say trewe
ynough. For neuer was there heretyque / that sayd
all false. Nor y^e deuyl hym selfe lyed not / when
he called Cryst goddes sonne. [30/17-20]

Thus Messenger's account demonstrates two things: firstly, the acute difficulty involved in distinguishing "Christians" from "heretics" and therefore the difficulty of "judging" heresy; and secondly, Messenger shows that intentionality is the key ingredient in making such judgements. Intentionality lies at the heart of heresy itself. Hence, it might indeed be heresy for a "crysten man to rede crystys gospell" if he were to do so with the wrong intentions. And the text continues to raise questions of intentionality in the lines that follow but from a different angle. Messenger reports that some people question whether it is right that those who have no intention of being heretical (namely poor, simple and unlearned men) should be charged with heresy and punished accordingly, even though they were following the teachings of those they considered to be virtuous learned men?

These questions and queries about the nature of heresy and the intentionality of the heretic culminate in a passage where the complexity of the relationship between doubt and heresy is highlighted. The two concepts are juxtaposed in order to point out the difficulties involved in differentiating between them. We are shown that there is

immense complexity at the heart of the concept of heresy. In a fascinating passage which brings together doubt and certainty, heresy and orthodoxy, Messenger claims that both he and his master are certainly not heretics. All the false doctrines which he is obliged to enunciate for the sake of his discussion with Author are to be taken "as they were in dede / the mynde of other / whome ye wolde fayne answeare / and satysfye with reason . . ." (32/27-29). They are not the mind or opinion of him or his master, "whiche dyd and wolde in all thyng stande and abyde / by the fayth and byleue of Crystes catholyke chyrche". Hence, according to Messenger's definition, because they maintain faith and belief he and his master are not heretics. Messenger is obliged to repeat "heresies" for the sake of the discussion with Author, but because he lacks heretical intention he claims he is not a heretic. However, most uncharacteristically Messenger continues that he speaks for himself, not for others when he expresses doubt about the judgements of *this* world, the judgements of "some spyrytuall persons / in the pursuyng & condempnyng men for heretyques / or theyr workes for heresy". Messenger juxtaposes "reasonable doubt" on one hand with "heresy" on the other, claiming that the former is fully justified while the latter, of course, is not:

he thought he sayd (as of hymselfe) y^t men myght
 without any parell of *heresy** / for theyr owne parte
 / notwithstanding any mannes iudgement gyuen / yet
 well and reasonably *doubte** therin / For though he
 thought it *heresy** / to thynke the oppynyons of any
 man to be good and catholyque / whiche ben *heresy**
 in dede / yet myght a man he thought without any
 parell of *heresy ** / *doubte** whyther he were an
*heretyke** or no / that were by mannes iudgement
 condempned for one. . . .[32/36-33/6]

Thus Messenger attempts to draw a distinction between the mechanism by which a belief is known to be heretical and the mechanism by which a man is declared a heretic. He claims to accept the authority of "the Church" regarding "belief", but to "doubt" the authority of "churchmen" regarding the orthodoxy of "believers". In other words, Messenger accepts required theological formulas but rejects the ability of men to judge others on these matters. In this way judgement itself becomes the central issue. As the arguments of Author will attempt to show, such distinctions between "belief" and "believers", between the "Church" and "Churchmen" cannot be maintained. If Churchmen are doubted, then so too is the Church; the two cannot be separated without destroying the whole. Author makes the same argument concerning "doubt" about Church practices, rituals, theology and so on. If one aspect is doubted, then inevitably so are others. Doubt will spread, just as we witnessed it spreading from one person to another, one topic to another in the Preface and first part of Chapter I. Doubt then is not only destructive, it is a possible forerunner of heresy. He who doubts runs the serious risk of slipping into error, into a "syde way" or a "faccyous way" and consequently into heresy. And yet, while the close

relationship between the two is illustrated, doubt and heresy are by no means synonymous in this passage. Both Messenger and Author accept that they are distinct concepts, but the difficulty is to distinguish one from the other, establishing how a "heretic" may be distinguished from one who only "doubts" or is "in error".

The difficulty inherent in this differentiation is emphasized and pursued in the following passage as well. Immediately after Messenger has expressed this "doubt" on his own behalf, rather than on behalf of others, he offers us a self-description which is a perfect profile of an early Lutheran. In response to an enquiry from Author about the nature of the acquaintance between Messenger and his Master, Messenger replies that he tutors his Master's sons; he studies Latin, denouncing other subjects such as Logic, Music, Arithmetic, Goemetry, Astronomy, and Philosophy since man's reason gives "rather . . . blyndnesse than any lyght" (33/20-33). The only light for man is holy Scripture, and even it should be approached from the text itself, not wasting any time on glosses. God, he claims, will assist the faithful towards interpreting the Bible, and Messenger supports his claim by citing two biblical passages (33/21-34/23). Clearly Messenger rejects human reason, rejects human learning, follows the Lutheran tenet of *sola Scriptura* and relies on biblical texts to prove his point. Messenger has provided a self-description which makes him appear to be a Lutheran and a heretic. And yet Messenger has claimed that he is not a

heretic, preferring instead to consider that he only "doubts reasonably". The obvious question being raised, then, is can one be distinguished from the other, and if so how? To highlight this difficulty in differentiation, Author responds to Messenger's self-description by questioning whether Messenger is indeed a Lutheran. Author has a good opinion of Messenger but is "in doubt whether he [Messenger] were . . . fallen in to luthers secte" (34/28-30). If he appears to be a heretic, but claims that he is not, how can this situation be judged? Author, then, is responding to the danger of Messenger's doubt. Doubt and heresy are not synonymous, but they are related, and yet for the sake of judgement they must be distinguished. These problems are central to the work which follows.

So much then for the introductory chapters in which Author tells us about the structure of the work, and in which More introduces us to the problems surrounding two related concepts, doubt and heresy. We must turn now to the second topic of interest concerning the structure of the *Dialogue*, and that is what we as readers can ascertain from the structure of the work as a whole. The point to which I wish to return is to K.J. Wilson's comment concerning the repetitions within the *Dialogue*. Wilson remarked in passing that the repetitions of Messenger's questions contained "minute variation" and it is my contention that these variations are worthy of closer scrutiny. Perhaps within these variations we may unravel some of the complexities surrounding doubt and

heresy, and the necessary distinction between the two. Hence we may reach a clearer understanding of the structure of the work itself.

Messenger and Author reconvene the following day to discuss the matters which Messenger had laid out the day before. And straight away Author, warning the reader of what is to come, draws attention to the complexity of the issues at stake, and to his strategy in dealing with them:

then I shewed vnto hym / that where he had purposed
 . . . in short wordys / many longe thyngys / wherof
*the rehearsall were losse of tyme** / to hym y^t so
 well knewe them all redy / I wolde (all *superfluous*
recapitulacyon set aparte)* as bryefly as I
 conueniently coude shewe hym my mynde in them *all*.
 [35/24-29]

In this passage there is a two pronged warning about repetitions. First of all, Author insists that where repetition is unnecessary he will not indulge in it; consequently he does not repeat the list of matters to be discussed. Secondly Author claims that he will avoid all "superfluous recapitulacyon". The warning is loud and clear: Author will not be repetitious for repetition's sake! These remarks of Author's stand in marked contrast to the "repetition" which modern scholars have frequently remarked upon. If Author firmly denounces "repetition", and yet modern readers claim that the work is riddled with "repetitions", then these "repetitions" themselves certainly merit closer examination. Is the work indeed repetitious despite Author's claims to the contrary, or have modern readers failed to appreciate some subtleties, some nuances or perhaps some

underlying function within these seeming restatements? One way to unravel this problem is to follow one or two specific issues through the course of the text. If close attention is paid to how a certain issue arises, how it is treated, analysed and resolved then a clearer understanding may be obtained of how and why such "repetitions" arise.

The first issue which I intend to examine in this manner is the worship of images. I have singled out this issue because the discussion of images does at times seem repetitious. In addition, as I hope to show, the discussion is not only a confrontation between the orthodox and the heretical positions regarding images; it is also a carefully structured confrontation designed to illustrate one key ingredient of heresy which distinguishes it from doubt, namely the destructive and malicious intentionality of the heretic. How does this topic first arise within the *Dialogue*? Immediately following his denunciation of repetitions, Author announces the order in which he plans to deal with the issues Messenger has raised. Author will "begyn where he [Messenger] bygan at the abiuracyon of the man he spake of" (35/29-30). The man in question was Thomas Bilney who had been forced to recant his heresy and carry a faggot (the usual punishment for a first offence of heresy) at Paul's Cross on December 8th 1527. However, Bilney relapsed into heresy: in 1531 he was tried again and on August 19th 1531 he was burned at the

stake.²⁹ Author rehearses the list of heresies with which Bilney had been charged:

that we sholde do no worshyp to any ymages / nor
pray to any sayntes / or go on pylgrymagys / whiche
thyngys I suppose [Author adds] euery good crysten
man wyll agre for heresyas. [37/17-20]

However, this assertion is immediately challenged by Messenger. Some, he says, would not agree that these beliefs are heretical. Therefore some explanation of why such beliefs are heretical should be forthcoming. At first Author declines to become involved in such an explanation:

who so euer wyll say that these be no heresyas / he
shall not haue me to dyspute it / whiche haue no
connyng in suche matters / but as it best becometh
a lay man to do in all thyngys / lene and cleue to
the comen fayth / and byleue of crystys chyrche.
[37/30-34]

Thus, Author establishes immediately both the Church's supreme authority over such issues and his own consequent lack of authority as a mere layman. On the basis of the *beliefs* of Christ's Church, Author continues he is able to "*know** it for an heresy / yf [he continues] an heresy be a secte and a syde way (taken by any parte of suche as ben baptysed / and bere the name of crysten men) from the comen fayth and byleue of the hole chyrche besyde" (37/35-38/2). Here, then, is the definition of heresy used by Lawler and it is important to notice that this definition is the only qualification placed upon Author's *knowledge* or certainty that the charges brought against Bilney were heretical. The point being made here is

²⁹ See *Dialogue Concerning Heresies*, CW, vol. 6:II, p. 603: 27/6.

that given this definition of heresy and given the common faith of Christendom since the time of the early Church, then *ipso facto* Bilney's beliefs must be heresies. Consequently there is no subject for discussion and Author cannot and will not debate this issue. However, Author is prepared to refute the defences which are put forward in support of these heretical beliefs, and it is to these defences that he now turns his attention. The exchanges which follow display all the so called "meanderings" and "repetitions" on which modern scholars have commented. Consequently the numerous threads must be followed carefully and systematically in the hope of revealing the structure and purposes behind them.

The first issue which Author raises is the heretics' use of biblical texts. Certain texts had been employed time and again to argue that the Bible forbade the worship of images. Author refutes the heretical interpretations of these texts by relying upon the Church Fathers' interpretations of them. Thus, for example, although the heretics cited the Old Testament commandment forbidding "graven images", Author responds that firstly, this commandment did not forbid the use of all images since the priests of the temple still had images of cherubim in the temple's "secret place", and secondly "the wordes spoken in the olde lawe to the iewys people prone to ydolatry . . . sholde haue no place to forbyd ymages amonge his [Christ's] crysten flocke / where his pleasure wolde be to haue y^e ymage of his blessyd body hangyng on his holy crosse . . ." (38/30-35). Next, Author supports these claims

by citing examples (mostly from the lives of Saints) where God or Christ condoned the use of images. Lastly, Author uses an argument concerning the nature of language itself to emphasize not only the validity of images, but also the impossibility of worship without them. If, he argues, heretics allow that the name of Jesus should be venerated, then they must allow that his *image* should be too:

fayne wolde I wytte of these heretyques / yf they
gyue honour to y^e name of our lorde / whiche name is
but an ymage representynge his person to mannes
mynde and ymagynacyon / why and with what reason can
they dyspyse a fygure of hym carued or paynted /
whiche representeth hym and his actes / farre more
playne and more expressely. [39/35-40/5]

Thus, Author has offered a three-pronged refutation of the heretics, using the authority of the Church Fathers, examples from the lives of Saints, and an argument concerning the nature of language.

However, Messenger's response does not answer these points systematically. Instead, he focuses only on the last issue concerning words and images. Messenger cites a book, *The Image of Love*, which he claims answers this argument of Author's. This was a work by one John Ryckes, first published anonymously in October 1525. The book was banned almost immediately upon publication because of its heretical nature.³⁰ The first point to notice about Messenger's use of this text is that despite its heretical content, Messenger attributes its author with certain admirable traits. The

³⁰ See *Dialogue Concerning Heresies*, CW, vol. 6:II, Appendix A, pp. 729-59, especially pp. 734-35.

author (whom we will call "Ryckes" from now on, even though the text does not do so since confusion must be avoided with the textual character of "Author") is described by Messenger as a "very vertuous man contemplatyue & well lerned" (40/10). Thus Messenger introduces the issue of character, motivation and intentionality to the discussion. This will be picked up later by Author. Next Messenger recites Ryckes's argument that the use of images cannot be justified by their analogy with words. Ryckes, Messenger claims

sheweth full well that yimages be but lay mennes
bokes / and therefore that relygyous men and folke of
more parfyte lyfe / and more instructe in spyrytuall
wysdome / sholde let all such dede yimages passe / &
labour onely for the lyuely quycke ymage of loue and
charyte. [40/15-20]

Thus, the truly religious should move towards the more spiritual worship and should reject all base, carnal imagery. Lastly, Messenger cites another argument from *The Image of Love* which, to the unsuspecting reader, (or listener in Author's case) seems to relate to this same issue. He claims that Ryckes speaks out boldly against the wealth wasted on costly ornamentation in the Church. Such lavish decoration and ornamentation would never have been condoned in the early Church: "in theyr tyme they had trene chalyces and golden prestes / and now we haue golden chalyces and trene prestes" (40/25-27). Both the reader and Author find nothing amiss with this argument because of the obvious association between images and ornamentation. We assume that this is another argument against images because wealth must be spent on

creating images as much as on ornamentation. In fact, however, Messenger has introduced a "red herring" into the discussion and it is only later that we are made to realize our error.

For the time being, however, Author responds to Messenger, and once again he does not respond to all the points Messenger has made in systematic order. Instead, he drops the original issue of the analogy between words and images and picks up on the two new issues introduced by Messenger of "intentionality" and "ornamentation". It is interesting that even though Messenger had only made passing reference to the "virtue" of Ryckes, Author provides a detailed comment about intentionality in response:

And verely of his [Ryckes's] entente and purpose I
 wyll not moche medle. For a ryght good man maye
 happe at a tyme in a feruent vndyscrete / to saye
 some thyng and wryte it to / whiche when he
 consydereth after more aduysedly / he wolde be very
 fayne to chaunge / but this dare I be bolde to say /
 that his wordes go somewhat further then he is able
 to defende. [40/33-39]

Here then, as in the Preface and Chapter I, attention is being drawn to the issue of intentionality. Author is adamant that we may not deduce intention either from outward appearances such as "virtue of living" or from just one spoken comment or written argument. He allows for error and will not condemn on the basis of one misguided statement. Author then turns his attention to the ornamentation of the Church, treating it as if it were indeed related to the issue of images. In his response we see one fundamental tactic which is employed time and again: he pounces on the pithy, catchy saying about

"trene" priests and golden chalices with which Messenger had concluded his comments and he takes the saying apart item by item arguing that its contents are demonstrably untrue. It is perhaps here, in More's treatment of these catch phrases, with their obvious popular appeal and yet their devastating implications for the well-being of the Church, that we see most clearly his awareness of his broad lay audience. Time and again he takes these sayings and works through them, showing their weaknesses, and concludes by turning them back on Messenger.³¹ Here Author's attack is threefold: firstly, ornaments in the early Church probably were lavish, not wooden as Messenger has claimed; secondly, God has indicated his pleasure at being served with the best that man has, witness his approval of the lavish Ark of the Covenant and Solomon's Temple; and thirdly, Messenger's contemporaries would not approve of wooden chalices. They would consider them dirty and improper for the consecration of Christ's blood. Author then turns the saying back on Messenger showing that the comparisons are inadequate and that Messenger had used a false statement simply for effect:

³¹ See *Dialogue Concerning Heresies*, CW, vol. 6:II, Appendix A, pp. 758-9 concerning the source of this particular catchphrase in Gratian's *Decretum*.

But y^t worde I wene he set in for y^e pleasure that
 he had in that proper comparyson bytwene trene
 chalyses and golden prestes of olde / and nowe
 golden chalyses and trene prestes. But of trouth I
 thynke he sayth not trouth / that the chalyses were
 made of trene when the prestes were made of golde /
 and shall fynde that then were of olde tyme many mo
 chalyses made of golde / then he fyndeth nowe
 prestes made of tre. [41/23-29]

Once again, it should not surprise us to find that
 Messenger does not respond to all these arguments of Author.
 He sidesteps the issue of intentionality, ignores the attack
 on his analogy, and instead picks up on two passing examples
 that Author had given, those of the Ark of the Covenant and of
 Solomon's Temple which showed God's approval of lavish
 ornamentation. Using arguments from *The Image of Love*
 Messenger explains away these two examples of lavishness as
 exceptions to the rule. When the Ark and Solomon's Temple were
 built there were no needy people who were being deprived by
 such lavishness. Author then demonstrates the logical
 absurdity of such a defence. Even though there were no poor
 amongst the Israelites at the time the Ark was built, there
 must have been many later while the Ark still existed. Surely,
 then, God would have "commaunded . . . to breke it agayne &
 gyue it them / rather then kepe it in the arche" (42/23-24).
 Likewise, Solomon may have been rich, but this is no proof
 that his people were: "For so may it happe that the prynce may
 be most ryche when his people be most pore / and y^e ryches of
 the one causynge the pouerty of the other . . ." (43/8-11).

Messenger's response to these arguments is fascinating.
 In two different respects it may be classified as a

"repetition" of an earlier argument, and therefore the subject matter of his remarks seems familiar to the reader. And yet, in no sense is it a simple repetition. Messenger claims that *The Image of Love* has one final answer that resolves the whole issue which must be quoted at length:

all those thynges y^t were vsed in the olde lawe /
 were but groce & carnall / and were all as a shadowe
 of the lawe of Cryst / and thefore the worshypppyng of
 god with golde and syluer & suche other corporall
 thynges ought not to be vsed amonge crysten people /
 but leuyng all that shadowe / we sholde drawe vs to
 the spyrytuall thynges / and serue our lorde onely
 in spyryte and spyrytuall thynges. For so he sayth
 hym selfe that god as hym selfe is spyrytuall / so
 seketh he suche worshyppers as shall worshyppe hym
 in spyryte / & in trouthe / y^t is in fayth / hope / &
 charyte of harte / not in y^e ypocrysy & ostentacyon
 of outward obseruaunce / bodyly seruyce / gay and
 costely ornamentes / fayre ymages / goodly songe /
 flesshly fastyng / & all y^e rable of suche
 vnsauoury ceremonyes / all whiche are now gone as a
 shadow. And our sauoure hym selfe whose fayth is
 our iustifyfycacyon / calleth vpon our soule / and our
 good faythfull mynde / and setteth all those carnall
 thynges at nought. [43/17-33]

The first argument with which the reader is familiar is the "old law" versus the "new law". We have already seen Author claiming that this argument from the Church Fathers should be used to refute heretical claims that the worship of images was forbidden by the Old Testament commandment "thou shalte carue the none ymage" (38/14-15).³² According to Author, the Church Fathers had argued that the old law spoken to the Jews (a people prone to idolatry) should not be understood to forbid images amongst Christ's flock, where the

³² This biblical text comes from Exodus 20:4. The marginal note in the 1557 edition of the *Dialogue Concerning Heresies* is inaccurate.

new law had superceded the old. Hence, in this instance the heretical argument was that the old law prohibited images and therefore *the old law should be obeyed*. However, in the passage just quoted the position has been reversed. Here the heretical argument is that the new law should supercede the old. The new law, according to the heretics, prohibits "ornamentation" and "*fayre ymages*"* and therefore the new law should be obeyed rather than the old. Upon close examination of the heretical argument we can see that this turnabout in position occurred because of the aforementioned "slip" in Messenger's account from discussion of "images" to discussion of "ornamentation".³³ By introducing "ornamentation" as if it was the same thing as "images" the two issues became fused, thus detracting attention from the inconsistency of the heretical argument. Thus, what seems at first like a repetition, on closer examination becomes a series of carefully masked inconsistencies in the heretical position. It is important to notice that within the text of the *Dialogue* attention has not been drawn so far to the slip between "images" and "ornamentation". The fact that we have moved from images, to ornamentation, to a fusion of both issues has been masked so that, to all intents and purposes, the discussion is still proceeding under the unifying rubric of "images". This supposed unifying rubric masks inconsistency concerning whether obedience is, or is not, due to the old law. It is

³³ See above, pp. 173-74.

only after this inconsistency has passed us by that Messenger finally draws attention to the images/ornamentation slip as we shall soon see.

However, first, we must look at the other argument in the passage above which seems familiar to the reader, namely the advocacy of the spiritual over the carnal. Messenger has previously recounted this argument from Ryckes when he denounced images as being "lay mennes bokes". The argument was that religious men should let dead carnal images pass and should move instead towards the lively quick image of love and charity.³⁴ The essence of the argument is identical to the passage now being examined and hence the reader may well think it a "repetition". And yet there is an important respect in which the second statement introduces an issue that was absent from the first formulation. The initial statement passed no *value judgement* on those who worship images. The spiritual path is obviously preferred, but no aspersions are cast concerning the character of those laymen who worshipped images. However, in the second formulation those who abide by the carnal law, condoning costly ornamentation and "fayre ymages" are accused of hypocrisy and ostentation. The corruption implied in hypocritical outward observances is then contrasted with the purity, the "good faythfull mynde" of those living the "new law" of truth and spiritual worship.

³⁴ See above, p. 173.

Thus the nagging question of intention is brought to the fore again and it is immediately picked up by Author.

In the last comment Author made concerning intention he reserved judgement on Ryckes, refusing to condemn his motives on the basis of one written or spoken error.³⁵ However here, in response to the attack on those who worship "carnally", Author now issues a serious warning about the intentions of those who advocate exclusively "spiritual" worship. They are doing so in defiance of accepted practices of worship and devotion since worship began. Consequently, Author introduces the possibility that rather than being the epitome of truth, their spiritual worship could be inspired by "some euyl spyryte". Author shows how God has always accepted bodily worship and how therefore its rejection is more likely a "deuyllyshe deuyce" than it is the high point of spiritual perfection. Thus the intentions and motivations of the heretics are brought into question by Author in response to the aspersions cast by Messenger on the intentions of those who worship "carnally". And rather than simple repetition of the argument concerning the spiritual and the carnal we find a significant development in the discussion about intention.

Having issued this warning about intentions, Author attempts to return to the subject of images, assuming (as the reader has all along) that Messenger maintained no distinction between images and ornaments. Consequently, Author begins

³⁵ See above, p. 174.

"Nowe as for y^e ymages which ye call one of y^e shadowes" (44/19-20). But straight away Messenger interrupts. Now that his purpose behind fusing the two issues has been accomplished (ie. the seeming coherence in the heretical argument has been established where in reality there is none) Messenger pulls Author up short, pointing out the distinction between the two issues, a distinction which previously he was only too happy to blur. Now Messenger claims that *The Image of Love* distinguishes between ornaments and images. Ornaments, outward observances and bodily ceremonies were classified as shadows of the old law. Images, on the other hand were treated separately in the book. *The Image of Love* recommended that images should either be abandoned completely or "yf we wyll nedes haue any / care not how symple it be made" (44/25-6). Thus images are now extracted as a separate issue from all those with which it had previously been joined together. Messenger now quotes back to Author the argument that the old law forbids images and therefore the old law should be obeyed, the argument first enunciated by Author when he recited the heretics' objections against images. Here, then, is yet another seeming "repetition" concerning the old and the new law - the reader has seen exactly this statement before and he has seen the same biblical citations used to support it. But, once again, this cannot be called a simple repetition since not only has the voice changed from that of Author citing heretics to that of Messenger citing Author, but also the heretical position has shifted again concerning obedience to

the old law. Where ornaments had been concerned, the old law was discarded in favour of the new. Now, however, the old law must be obeyed once again because the old law prohibits the worship of images!

Consequently, what at first appear to be "restatements" turn out to be a series of shifts and changes in the heretical argument. This last volte-face by Messenger, now rejecting the fusing of issues which previously he had joined together, is the final twist which brings forth a long and detailed response from Author. At first glance Author's response may seem repetitious in that it covers some topics for a second time, but at each stage we can detect significant changes and vital new ingredients in the formulations of his responses. The first issue he deals with is the Old Testament passage which Messenger has cited. Author begins his response with an exact restatement of an earlier response - the prohibition of images in the old law was not a complete prohibition for "they had in the temple the ymages of cherubyn" (see 38/32-3 & 45/1-4). However since this response clearly had not prevented the repeated use of this argument as a valid denunciation of images (witness Messenger's own restatement of it) Author now adds an additional explanation of why this biblical quotation does not support the heretics' position. It is an incomplete quotation and, Author argues, according to the full quotation only pagan images and idols were prohibited, not "Christian" images. Author's second line of argument is that while the Old Testament commandment did not completely prohibit images per

se, it was intended to ensure that "no man shall worshyp any ymage as god". There is an appropriate degree of reverence due to an image which is not the same as the full worship due to God alone:

But I suppose neyther scrypture nor naturall reason
doth forbede that a man may do some reuerence to an
ymage / not fyxynge his fynall intente in the ymage
/ but referryng it further to the honour of the
person that the ymage representeth[45/32-37]

Author's third line of argument is particularly interesting. It involves yet another restatement but it also involves a new tactic, one which is frequently repeated by Author through the course of the *Dialogue*. We may recall at the outset of the discussion Messenger's very first defence of the heretical position was to claim that images were "but lay mennes bokes" and that as such they should be set aside as dead images, with the lively quick images of love and charity being preferred. Now Author goes right back to this initial premise, extracted by Messenger from *The Image of Love*, and Author argues that even if this premise was granted, it *still* would not mean that images should be denounced *per se*:

For where they say y^e ymages be but lay mennes bokes
/ they can not yet say nay but that they be
necessary yf they were but so. [46/10-12]

How then may we best summarize Author's strategy in this discussion to date? The tactic employed by Author is, first of all, to refute an initial statement by Messenger and to proceed with a discussion and refutation of several of the issues raised by that initial statement. Author allows Messenger to circle around a subject, dropping some issues,

bringing in some new threads, often making several shifting "restatements" of the heretical arguments. But then Author steps in and changes tactics, suggesting that even if Messenger's initial premise was granted rather than refuted, the heretical position could *still* be shown to be in error. Author then proceeds to build on this new premise, claiming in this case that images are not only "lay mennes bookes"; rather "they be good bokes bothe for lay men and for the lerned to" (46/12-13). He defends images as being better than books, reiterating and expanding upon his previous analogy between words and images.³⁶ Now Author demonstrates in detail the degree to which the visual image is a more direct, more immediate and therefore a more effective communicator of an idea than the written or spoken word. He concludes:

And yet all these names spoken / and all these
wordes wrytten / be no naturall sygnes or ymages but
onely made by consent and agrement of men / to
betoken and sygnyfye suche thynges / where as ymages
paynted / grauen / or carued / may be so well
wrought and so nere to the quycke and to y^e trouth /
that they shall naturally / and moche more
effectually represent the thynges then shall the name
eyther spoken or wrytten. [46/26-32]

The better and more detailed the image, the more effectively it will convey its message, just as a description well written will be more effective than one poorly written. Once again, we are covering a topic with which the reader is already familiar and yet here Author makes substantial additions to his previous statements on this topic.

³⁶ See above, p. 172.

What, then, is the purpose behind this structure? The answer is related to the issue of intentionality. As we have seen through the course of our analysis, there has been a clear development in Author's remarks on intention as the discussion has unfolded. He has progressed from refusing to pass judgement on the intentions of Ryckes since, he argued, judgement of intentions could not be made on the basis of one written or spoken error. But, later he warned that those heretics who continued to advocate exclusively spiritual worship despite centuries of tradition condoning bodily worship as well, must take care lest they be inspired by evil, not good. In other words, the heretics' flagrant disregard for approved doctrine or practices brought their motivation into question. And yet Author was still cautious at this point in the discussion and did not charge the heretics outright with being ill-intentioned. However, now, after Messenger's volte-face and manipulation of the argument by deliberately fusing and then later differentiating between "images" and "ornaments", Author is prepared to make a bold pronouncement concerning the behaviour and intentionality of heretics. They know full well that visual images surpass the spoken or written word as a means of communication, he argues.

Consequently,

they speke not agaynst ymages for any futheraunce of deuocyon/ but playnly for a malycyous mynde / to mynysshe & quenche mennes deuocyons. For they se well ynoughe that there is no man but yf he loue another / but he delyteth in his ymage or any thyng of his.[47/19-24]

It is significant that on this note, a vehement condemnation of the intentions of heretics, the first lengthy discussion of images draws to a close. Author now moves on to other topics and the issue is abandoned for the time being. This is not because the topic is fully exhausted. We have noticed on several occasions during our analysis that although multiple possible lines of argument were raised by one disputant, often they were set aside by the other who extracted just one or two lines to follow. Consequently, it is not surprising that there is further discussion of images later on in the text. We will see, for example, that Messenger reintroduces the topic during a protracted debate about miracles. However, first we must draw some conclusions about this initial discussion of images. It has become evident that while the discussion may *appear* to meander or ramble, with the introduction of side issues here, the dropping of other issues there, and the re-treading over familiar seeming ground, this "meandering" is not without a very definite and important purpose. It is following a set pattern to demonstrate the devious nature of heresy itself and ultimately the malicious intentionality of the confirmed heretic. Thus, we may well agree with Lawler that "the structure of the *Dialogue* is the course of heresy itself, one digression or bypath leading to another, farther and farther from the common way". However, we can now place this claim on a firmer foundation than a single extract from the text defining heresy as a "sydeway". We can see that the "meanderings" themselves are illustrating the

distinction between simple doubt on the one hand, and heresy with its ill-intentioned manipulations of these "meanderings" on the other. It becomes clear that malicious intentionality is what distinguishes heresy from reasonable doubt.

Thus, within the first discussion of images we have seen that the "repetitions" in the work serve a definite purpose, and we have also seen that the confrontation between the orthodox and the heretical positions on images is meant to do more than merely convince the reader of the verity of the orthodox position. It is intended to make the reader explore the nature of heresy itself. Consequently we can see that the introductory "fiction" which we studied where the nature of heresy was questioned *vis à vis* doubt is followed up in the body of the text by a demonstration of the distinction between the two. Author's initial caution in passing judgement when no evidence regarding intentionality was available (witness his reluctance to judge Ryckes) gradually changes (when Author witnesses Messenger's manipulations and deceptive trickery) into a willingness to label as heretics those who display this "malycyous mynde" and evil intentionality.

However, as I suggested in the introduction to this chapter, More was not only concerned with intentionality. He also pursued the problems of authority and judgement as we shall see from the next topic I intend to study, the discussion of miracles in Book I of the *Dialogue*. Authority and judgement were central to the concept of heresy for More since the Catholic Church was confronted with "heretics" who

not only denied their own malice, but also denied the authority of the Catholic Church itself to judge their beliefs. By arguing that they themselves were the "true" Church, Protestants denied the authority of the Catholic Church to condemn their beliefs as "heretical". Thus, the whole foundation upon which judgement could be made was in jeopardy. Indeed, if this attack was tracked to its ultimate source, the very foundations of human knowledge were being questioned. If Protestants claimed to "know" that certain beliefs were "true" in open defiance of Catholic authorities which claimed to "know" that those same beliefs were false, then the nature of "knowledge" itself lay at the heart of the disagreement. Consequently, within the course of the *Dialogue* and in particular in the discussion of miracles, More explored the foundations of knowledge itself in order to refute Protestant arguments, and ultimately to justify denouncing them as heretical.

And, from the first introduction of the topic of miracles, the way in which heresy attacks the foundations of knowledge is clearly being demonstrated. If we examine how miracles are introduced into the text this attack becomes clear. Miracles themselves are first mentioned as a *secondary* proof that God condones the use of images and pilgrimages. Author had been attempting to prove that God condoned the use of images and pilgrimages. His *principal* argument to demonstrate God's support was that the "consensus fidelium", the common faith of Christendom approved of images and

pilgrimages and that therefore God must have planted this devotion in men's hearts:

And surely I [Author] byleue this deuocyon so
planted by goddes owne hand in the hertes of the
hole chyrche / that is to wyt / not the clargye
onely / but the hole congregacyon of all crysten
people / that yf the spyrytualtye were of the mynde
to leue it / yet wolde not the temporaltye suffre
it. [54/20-25]

However, as a *secondary* support for pilgrimages, Author adds that since God has performed many miracles in certain places, this is clear confirmation that God wishes to be worshipped more especially in those places. Author therefore enquires whether Messenger will accept that miracles "prove" God's approval of any matter that is under dispute. Messenger agrees that he will and consequently Author proceeds to offer several biblical examples of miracles taking place at places which later became the focus of pilgrimages. However, on the basis of these examples, Messenger claims that miracles themselves have now become "the force and effect of all the profe". And, despite having just agreed that he would accept miracles as proof, Messenger now backtracks and insists that he will only accept miracles if two conditions apply. First, he would need to see the miracles performed himself in order to believe them, and second, he would need assurance that the miracles were performed by God or some Saint and not by an evil trickster, or worse the devil. By this round about route, Messenger's "conditions" become the centre of the debate. In other words, the debate now revolves around what constitutes "reasonable" grounds for believing that something is true or

false. The very foundations of human knowledge and human belief are under attack, as we shall see. And yet, before debate of Messenger's "conditions" ensues, Author draws the reader's attention to one crucial feature of the discussion. The whole discussion of miracles is itself a "syde way" since Author reiterates that his primary proof that God condones images and pilgrimages had been the *consensus fidelium* (62/17-19). The reader is witnessing here the escalation of heresy and its pernicious nature. More makes it abundantly clear that the nature of heresy is not simply to challenge Church doctrine concerning isolated issues such as "images" or "prayer to Saints" or "pilgrimages". Despite the heretics' claims to the contrary, the attack will ultimately focus on, and raise doubts about, Christian belief itself. It will undermine all knowledge if it goes unchecked.³⁷

More employs one additional technique to alert the reader to the scale of the attack on "knowledge". The reader is made aware of the scope of the attack by a protracted discrepancy between the two interlocutors over what they mean by

³⁷ It is not surprising, given the links More has established between the nature of heresy and the intentionality of the heretic, that as soon as the reader's attention is drawn to the fact that this is a detour in the argument and is, in fact, another "heresy", the reader's attention is immediately drawn again to the intentionality of Messenger. Messenger denies that he impugned miracles; he was only repeating what "some other say" (62/25/33). Ah yes, apologizes Author, "here euer my tonge tryppeth" (63/13/14). Thus, with this pertinent reminder of the close relationship between the nature of doubt, the nature of heresy and the intentionality of the heretic, the lengthy discussion of miracles begins.

"miracles". The discrepancy is glaring to the reader and yet Author and Messenger fail to broach it for over twenty pages of text. Throughout these pages whenever Author cites miracles he refers to authoritative sources using *biblical* examples and *biblical* authority, or relying on such revered authorities as St. Augustine. Messenger, on the other hand questions the proof of miracles on a completely different basis, relying on his own contemporary experience to question the validity of the miracles/trickery and chicanery occurring at local shrines.³⁸ Effectively, by having his interlocutors ignore this discrepancy for so long, More obliges the reader to question the validity of the distinction between these two types of miracle. Messenger's initially tacit, and finally voiced, insistence upon the validity of distinguishing between his own times and biblical times is consequently challenged and questioned not only by Author, but also by the reader.³⁹ By the failure of the two fictional characters to clarify the discrepancy in their subject matter, More obliges the reader to become aware of the possible scale of an attack which not only rejects contemporary "miracles", but also rejects the miracles in the Bible and the early Church. Thus, More has

³⁸ The discrepancy lasts from the beginning of the discussion of miracles on p. 55 till p. 77 where Messenger tries to establish a distinction between biblical and contemporary miracles.

³⁹ More's tactic of bringing the reader into the dialogue can be seen by, for example, Messenger's remark that neither he "nor [he supposes] no good man ellys*" would doubt God's performance of miracles. See *Dialogue Concerning Heresies*, CW, vol. 6:1, 77/8-9.

drawn the reader's attention to the absolute centrality for Christians of the issues being raised. Messenger and Author are not simply discussing whether or not the miracles/chicanery at the local shrine ought to be believed. Rather they are discussing belief itself; how and why, and on what foundation can man "believe" or "know" anything.

How, then, does More pursue the heretical attack on knowledge inherent in Messenger's two conditions? Messenger had refused to believe "miracles" unless he actually saw them occur himself, and unless he could be sure they were the work of God and not the devil. He had rejected the word of others, and had rejected all authority relying only on *his own* assessment of *his own* experiences concerning whether or not a "miracle" occurred. Therefore, by demanding that his two "conditions" be met before he will believe miracles, Messenger had questioned established criteria for belief.

Author's response to this attack is to argue that the "conditions" themselves are untenable and unreasonable. Such criteria for belief would make believing many matters virtually impossible. For example, he enquires how a judge could pass judgement if he rejected the witness of others? To emphasize how vital the acceptance of the word of others is, More uses an example which digs at the heart of man's knowledge and understanding of himself. A man would even be unsure who his own parents were if he rejected all but his own eye witness (63/28-64/6). Such criteria are therefore "unreasonable".

But Messenger's response develops this very issue of the relationship between reason and belief. In fact, the discussion rapidly becomes more complex as the topics of "reason and nature" and their relationship not only to belief but also to truth are introduced. Messenger objects that Author's examples of the judge believing witnesses and individuals believing their parents are not at all similar to the problem at hand of whether or not to believe in miracles. For in the former case "it is *reason** that [Messenger] sholde byleue honeste men in all suche thynges as may be *trew**", whereas in the latter case it "were . . . *agaynst all reason** to byleue men / be they neuer so many / seme they neuer so credyble / where as *reason and nature** (of whiche twayne euery one ys alone more credyble then they all) sheweth [him] playnly y^t theyr tale is *vntrew**. . . ." (64/14-21). In this passage Messenger is using "reason and nature" as the touchstones by which he believes or disbelieves, accepts or rejects information as true or false. But, if we examine the formulation of this "reason and nature" we can see that they are simply the sum of Messenger's own cognitive world. They are exclusively the outcome of his own experience, and no more. Hence, "reason and nature" are based on Messenger's own empirical knowledge and this is the basis upon which he determines truth or falsehood. However, Author is quick to point out the limitations of personal experience in determining truth. He uses the example of a black man whose own experience (ie. his "reason and nature") tell him that all

men are black. Others tell him that some men are white. What should he believe, his own mistaken "reason and nature", or the truth, accepted on the word/authority of others? (65/3-11)

This challenge necessitates a re-examination of what constitutes "reason and nature". Messenger shifts his ground and suggests that "reason and nature" are not simply personal experience, but must incorporate "learning": the black man "should have known" that heat makes skin black and consequently he should accept the corollary that cold makes skin white. As Author points out, such a redefinition of "reason and nature" contradicts Messenger's own "conditions". The black man had only witnessed other black men with his own two eyes. To suggest that he should accept the existence of white men on the basis of "learning" he does not have undermines Messenger's previous position. It would be analogous to suggesting that, with additional learning, the "heretics" whose arguments Messenger is propounding should accept miracles. In essence, Messenger and Author are debating whether "reason" is an individual or a communal faculty. Individual "reason" inevitably is the sum of an individual's own experience and consequently it is limited by the very scope of that experience. Hence it might not equate with the "truth", as demonstrated by the example of the black man. If, however, "reason" is accepted to be a communal faculty, reliant for its formulation on the experiences and learning of others, then the communal verdict must be accepted over individual conclusions. Messenger cannot have it both ways.

The issue is left unresolved at this point in the argument, but the reader's attention has been alerted to the problems inherent in the terms "reason and nature" as Messenger was using them. Without a clarification of how these two terms are to be understood, the reader becomes aware of the chaos into which any discussion of these topics will inevitably fall. In other words, because no definition is forthcoming, the reader is left without any foundation upon which to build an argument concerning "reason and nature".

Next ensues a protracted series of examples through which Author attempts to test Messenger's adherence to the "condition" that he will believe only his own two eyes. Author attempts to demonstrate and maintain the premise that failing to believe the testimony of others (when those concerned are credible and have no motive for deception) may be just as likely to lead to error as being too gullible in believing all that one is told. He uses the example of a piece of gilded silver, drawn out by the smith's fire so that it is "I can not tell how many yardys" long, with the gilt continuing to coat it all (67/16). Messenger remains adamant that he will not believe this is possible even on the witness of ten thousand men. He will not believe anything that he himself "knoweth by nature and reason [to be] vnpossyble" (68/20-22). Author then upsets Messenger's defence by informing him that he personally has seen this feat performed and could take Messenger to witness such a thing with his own two eyes.

Messenger's response to this undermines his own position once again since he fails to adhere to his own "condition". He expresses an inclination to trust Author, despite all his previous statements to the contrary and his insistence that he would only believe his own eyes. When his response is examined closely we see that not only does Messenger move his position, but also the reader's attention is drawn directly to the problems inherent in believing spoken human witness. We are made increasingly unsure of the shifty Messenger's adherence to his own position, and Messenger reduces even "trustworthy" Author to an imponderable unknown. Messenger remarks:

it were harde to fynde [men]/ whom I coulde better
trust then your selfe / whom what so euer I haue
merely sayd / I could not in good fayth but byleue /
in that you sholde tell me earnestly vpon your owne
knowlege. But ye vse (my mayster sayth) to loke so
sadly whan ye mene merely / y^t many tymes men doubt
whyther ye speke in sporte / whan ye mene good
ernest. [68/32-69/2]

Just as Messenger tried to shift the definition of "reason and nature" to suit his purposes, he now casts the whole of the previous discussion into doubt by suggesting that perhaps he had been speaking "merely" rather than seriously, and perhaps Author had been doing likewise. Once again the reader is left without foundations, with no method for distinguishing the jests from the serious discussion. The impossibility of penetrating the consciousness and the intentions of another is brought home to both the protagonists and the reader. Messenger has cut off the foundations of the discussion once again, leaving a state of confusion which neither he, nor

Author nor the reader can penetrate. This condition, of course, implies serious problems for the judgement of another's intentions, and hence for the judgement of heresy.

However, Messenger still tries to find a way out of his difficulties without surrendering his "conditions". Having tried to shift ground concerning "reason and nature" and having tried to shift ground concerning his commitment to his own speech, Messenger now attempts to shift ground concerning "miracles" themselves. He will still only believe his own two eyes where miracles are concerned but now argues that the goldsmith's art is no "miracle". It is incredible, strange and marvellous, but it remains a "thyng that may be done", whereas a miracle is "a thyng y^e can not be done" (70/2-3). Messenger attempts to define a "miracle" as an event which "reason and nature" teach can not be done. He anticipates that Author will find this definition acceptable, but on the contrary, Author rejects it outright. A dramatic and fundamental difference of opinion between the two protagonists emerges as Author sets out to "prove" Messenger's new definition faulty.

Author's proof rests upon precisely the same foundations as Messenger used for his definition of a miracle, namely "reason and nature". If, for Messenger, a miracle is an event which "reason and nature" teach cannot be done, then Author will prove by "reason and nature" that this definition is wrong. Messenger has established those terms of reference and Author happily sets about "proving" him wrong within his own terms. Yet, as we have already seen, these terms of reference

have no coherent meaning because there is no agreement between the two characters about how "reason and nature" are formulated. Consequently, it is not surprising that there is more confusion and disagreement concerning the use of these terms in the passages that follow. Author questions whether "reason and nature" show there is a God or not. Messenger's reply expresses uncertainty:

Fayth sheweth me that surely . . . / but whyther
nature and reason shewe yt me or no that I doute /
syth great reasoned men and phylosophers haue dowed
therof. [72/20-22]

Messenger is now using "reason and nature" in a different sense again. No longer are they the outcome of *his own* experience and *his own* empirical knowledge, but they become synonymous with the *authority* of a few individual "reasoning" men or philosophers. In fact, Messenger is shifting terms of reference altogether, relying on the *authority* of a few individual philosophers and upon "faith" to rebut Author's argument from "reason and nature".

However, Author continues trying to prove God's existence by "reason and nature", employing exactly the same argument he used previously. "Reason and nature" must be formulated by the communal verdict, not the individual. Hence he argues that only one or two isolated philosophers have doubted or disbelieved the existence of God and consequently that "as one swallow maketh not somer / so y^e foloy of so few maketh no chaunge of the matter / against all the hole nomber of the olde phylosophers" (72/33-73/2).

Author also answers Messenger's other arguments. The idolatry of pagans does not argue against the existence of God; rather it "proueth that there was and is in all mennys heddis / a secrete consent of nature / that god there is / or ellys they wold haue worssypped none at all" (72/29-31). Thus, belief in a god is innate in human nature according to Author. And last but not least, Author backs up his position from the Bible. It is important to notice that Author does not use the Bible as an authority *per se*, but simply offers the example from it of St. Paul, who "founde out by nature and reason / that there was a god . . ." (73/3-4). Out of these arguments that Author offers, it is only the testimony of St. Paul that brings Messenger into agreement. Unlike Author, Messenger uses St. Paul as an authority in itself, and he concurs with Author's argument only on the grounds that "saynt Poule sayth so" (73/19). In fact, then, he does not submit to Author's argument at all, since Author's argument had been that "reason and nature" could prove the existence of God, while Messenger accepts that the existence of God may be discovered by "reason and nature" exclusively because of his "faith" in St. Paul.

Once again, More employs the tactic of allowing the interlocutors to proceed as *if* agreement had been reached, even though we have seen that it had not. Author begins to build the next step in his argument, building as he is on unstable foundations. "Reason and nature", he argues, do not teach Messenger that miracles cannot be performed. They simply teach him that miracles cannot be performed *by nature*.

According to reason, God who is almighty can "of reason" perform miracles which are beyond nature. Thus Messenger ought to accept the original premise and believe those honest men who report such events. However, Messenger retaliates that if God's creation, i.e. "nature" was perfect, then "reason" dictates that God would never do anything against the course of such a perfect nature (74/17-18). Author's response discusses the theology of the Godhead, but it remains essentially an argument from reason that "god in workynge of myracles doth nothyng agaynst nature / but some specyall benefyte aboue nature" (75/15-16). Author then brings the argument back again to its original premise; that Messenger should, in accordance with "reason and nature", believe good honest men who say they saw God perform a miracle.

As we have just seen, after each new objection put forward by Messenger, Author tries to bring the discussion back to its original premise. Inevitably, Messenger is finally driven to attack the premise itself. He has, he claims, never yet spoken "with any man that coulde tell [him] that euer he sawe any [miracle]" (75/31-2). Therefore, he is *still* not bound to believe miracles despite Author's repeated arguments to the contrary. Author's answer to this corners Messenger once again. Perhaps, Author suggests, in his whole life Messenger may never meet anyone who was present at his Christening. Would Messenger conclude from this that he was never Christened? Of course not, replies Messenger, for every man "presumeth and byleueth that I am crystened / as a thyng

so commonly done / that we reken our selfe sure that no man leueth it vndone" (76/6-8). Messenger has completely abandoned his requirement of personal eye witness and will accept instead a "common presumption". Consequently, as Author points out, Messenger should accept the common presumption, the universal belief of all peoples both Christian and pagan since the beginnings of the world that there have been miracles outside the course of nature.

If we pause to review the situation for a moment, we can see that in one important respect the positions of the two protagonists have turned tables. Initially, Author argued that the common *faith* of Christendom was sufficient to prove God's approval of pilgrimages, images and worship of saints. Author had used examples from the Bible and from St. Augustine as authorities and had put communal *faith* (not reason and nature) at the heart of his argument. His argument was above all one of consensus in belief. Messenger, on the other hand, using his own personal experience or his "reason and nature" as his foundation had launched an attack on Author's position. Now, however, the roles have changed because Author, attempting to satisfy Messenger on the basis of "reason and nature", has not only shown the need for a redefinition of those terms to include "communal" rather than "individual" reason, but has argued from this newly defined basis only to find Messenger retreating to arguments of faith, authority and universal belief or consensus. However, there is one respect in which Author's argument has remained constant. Whether he was

arguing from "faith" or from "reason and nature" he always insisted upon the need for "consensus". Messenger, on the other hand, switched from "individual" to "communal", and from "reason and nature" to "faith" at will. Obviously, we are seeing once again the pernicious nature of heretical arguments which slide from one topic to another and from one foundation to another as the need arises. But, an even more fundamental point is being made. More is demonstrating that it is essential to both the nature and the process of human discourse, and it is essential to human "knowledge" that the terms of reference, the foundations of that discourse be clear and agreed upon if the discourse is to make constructive progress. "Knowledge" cannot be built upon shifting foundations. Author can (and indeed does) follow and answer every "shift" of ground that Messenger makes. The motion is often circular as we have just witnessed. The effect can appear to be that the dialogue "meanders", but this is far from the aimless, drifting meandering suggested by some modern commentators. There is a clear and repeated purpose behind these circles. They show the reader both the instability of heretical arguments and the impossibility of making any ground against those arguments if the foundations of the discourse are not maintained by both parties concerned. Ultimately, the circles point to the inescapable need for an "authority" to establish the character and perimeters of those foundations, for without such an authority no discourse can proceed. And, as we have seen, More's answer to this inescapable need for an

"authority" was "consensus". Consensus is a vital ingredient in the formulation of "reason and nature" and hence of "knowledge". Consensus is also a vital ingredient in the formulation of "faith" and hence of "beliefs".

Next, More applies this fundamental need for consensus to Messenger himself. The *Dialogue* continues to follow several more meanders concerning Messenger's "conditions" until Messenger finally embarks upon the largest "circle" or "meander" to date. He re-employs the very first argument used at the outset of the *Dialogue* against images, but he now uses it against miracles. He reuses the biblical texts (Exodus 20 and Psalm 113) denouncing image worship to argue that miracles performed at places of pilgrimage must be "false miracles" performed by the devil since God, via these biblical texts, had prohibited image worship. Effectively, Messenger has either ignored, dismissed, or ridden roughshod over all of Author's previous point by point refutations of this biblical argument against images. Consequently, Messenger now indulges in an increasingly vitriolic crescendo of arguments against images and miracles. Clearly, Messenger had been able to slide and "meander" from argument to argument in this way simply because, as we have seen, there never was any fundamental "consensus" between himself and Author about the basis upon which they were proceeding. The fact that the two protagonists had failed to dispute on common foundations, had failed to build agreement on the points discussed (despite appearances to the contrary) was the reason for this major collapse in the

progress of the dialogue. In a crucial passage Author explains that this is precisely why he must now change tactics:

fyrst wold I fayne mete with your obieccyons and
 answeare them forthwyth whyle they be freshe /
 sauynge that me semyth better for the whyle to
 dyffer them / for as moch as some thyngys there be/
 wherupon it wyll be requysyte / that we fyrst be
 bothe agreed: without whyche we were lyke to walke
 wyde in wordys & ronne all at ryot so lose / that
 our matter could neyther haue grounde / order / nor
 ende. [102/9-15]

Author therefore sees the need, and indeed attempts to establish foundations for a consensus upon which the discussion can proceed. However, despite seeming to agree to a new central formula that "fayth is & alway shalbe in his [Christ's] chyrche" (111/1-6), Messenger continues to slip and slide and to shift the foundations of his argument. The "circles" and "meanderings" of the argument continue and Messenger attempts to re-employ arguments about both images and miracles to support the Protestant position.⁴⁰ However, having already followed both topics through several seeming "repetitions" we have seen that they were anything but simple "repetitions". They were deliberate constructions within the text designed to demonstrate the central features of heresy.

What, then, can we conclude concerning More's understanding of heresy in the *Dialogue*? From the initial discussion of images we saw that through the seeming

⁴⁰ There is further discussion of images on, for example, pp. 185, 209, 231 & 357. There is also further discussion of miracles on pp. 241-46. Hence my discussion of these topics is not exhaustive but simply meant to illustrate the purposes behind the *Dialogue*'s repetitions.

"repetitions" More was demonstrating both the devious nature of heresy and the malicious intentionality of the confirmed heretic. And within the discussion of miracles More explored the foundations necessary to judge heresy and the authority by which heretics could and must be condemned. More was not only fully aware that intentionality lay at the heart of the heresy charge, he was equally aware of the immense difficulty involved in judging the intentions of others. However, in contrast to Perkins, Hall and Bacon whose works displayed incoherence concerning the ability to judge another's intentions, More not only explored the difficulties inherent in the judgement process but also offered a coherent solution to this problem. The malicious intentions of heretics could be seen and proved by their failure to abide by the "consensus" in matters of knowledge and faith. And, most importantly, this "consensus" was not simply an agreement on matters of faith or knowledge from which "heretics" were excluded because they held completely opposing views. It was a "consensus" which included them, and in which they had fully participated. In other words, by their failure to abide by points to which they themselves had previously agreed, the intentionality of heretics could be proven both destructive and malicious.

CHAPTER FIVE

*SEVENTEENTH CENTURY PHILOSOPHY: HYPOCRISY AND HERESY IN THE
WORKS OF THOMAS HOBBS.*

As I indicated in the introduction, the main argument of this thesis is that the theological polemics of the sixteenth century affected issues (intentionality and judgement) and concepts (hypocrisy and heresy) which have relevance for intellectual history. In the intervening chapters we have seen how the two words "heresy" and "hypocrisy" came unhinged and how the concepts were destabilized by polemical exchanges. We have also seen the immense difficulties of some writers (Cheke, Perkins, Hall and Bacon) in dealing coherently with the related issues of intentionality and judgement *vis à vis* heresy and hypocrisy. In marked contrast, Thomas More explored the complex problems lying at the heart of the concept of heresy and provided a coherent justification for judging the intentions of heretics. Consequently we have seen not only the effects of polemical exchange on these terms, but also just how revealing a detailed examination of their use can be.

Given, then, that these words were "unhinged" and unstable in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, there are two further issues requiring attention. Firstly, it will be recalled that in Chapter One we saw Thomas Hobbes providing a radical interpretation of Christ's roles on earth. We demonstrated how this interpretation used the

language of the sixteenth century controversy about Christ's roles on earth, but put that language to new uses. In the same way, we now need to examine Hobbes's use of the terms "hypocrisy" and "heresy" in light of their earlier "unhinging". Secondly, we must study how Hobbes dealt with the problems of intentionality and judgement, problems that had precipitated such incoherence in late sixteenth and early seventeenth century writers. By examining Hobbes's use of these two terms in light of the previous complications surrounding them, a different perspective on Hobbes's approach to these concepts may be obtained. In addition, the significance of this material for intellectual history will be demonstrated.

Hobbes, in particular, lends himself to this kind of analysis because although he is central to the emergence of "political philosophy" in seventeenth century England, scholars have increasingly remarked that he was also obliged to align his political ideology with a reality still dominated by Christian theology. Recent scholarly focus on Hobbes's "Christianity" has counteracted the previous imbalance in which Hobbes's political philosophy was studied in isolation, and he personally was branded an "atheist".¹ However, as

¹ For a brief synopsis of these positions see Arrigo Pacchi, "Hobbes and the Problem of God", in G. A. J. Rogers and Alan Ryan, eds., *Perspectives on Thomas Hobbes*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), pp.171-187. Pacchi cites R. Polin, *Dieu et les Hommes*, (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1981) as the chief modern proponent of the view that Hobbes's "philosophy" was "materialistic" and hence "atheistic".

frequently happens with historical revisionism, the rebound has been extreme at times, with several historians following the lead of F. C. Hood in arguing that the whole of Hobbes's political philosophy was reliant upon the commands of a Christian God revealed through Scripture.² A dispute has subsequently ensued about the "sincerity" or "insincerity" of Hobbes's Christianity, the central question being the "sincerity" of Hobbes's theism versus his "insincerity" and atheism. Fortunately several historians have recognized the problems inherent in a question formulated in these terms, and have also insisted that by focusing on this ill-posed issue other more rewarding lines of enquiry have been overlooked. In particular, Arrigo Pacchi has argued that while the issue of Hobbes's "sincerity" regarding theology is insoluble, Hobbes's treatment of "theology" itself deserves more attention. Pacchi has demonstrated the "multifarious" ways in which Hobbes aligned his political philosophy with Christianity and has concluded that:

[Hobbes] was not only a philosopher, in the sense in which we now academically term this branch of learning; he was a philosopher, a mathematician, an optician, and a little bit of a theologian too, because theology exists in his thought next to philosophy, albeit fundamentally distinct from it.³

Thus, the attention which Hobbes devoted to "theology" *per se* is worthy of study. In like manner, Leopold Damrosch

² See F. C. Hood, *The Divine Politics of Thomas Hobbes*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964).

³ Pacchi, "Hobbes and the Problem of God", p. 187.

Jr. has analysed the debate between Hobbes and Bishop Bramhall making clear the focus of his attention:

I am not concerned here . . . with either of the two main topics in existing discussions of Hobbes on God, the nature of his belief (or possible "insincerity") and the place of God (or divinely-appointed moral law) in his philosophical system. I am interested in Hobbes's theology in the form in which it offended and bewildered Bishop Bramhall: its insistence on implications of Reformation doctrine which Hobbes well knew that most Anglicans and many Puritans were unwilling to recognize.⁴

Richard Sherlock has taken the argument one step further, suggesting that Hobbes himself was more interested in "theology" than in "theism", and hence historians should follow his lead. In his article "The Theology of Leviathan: Hobbes on Religion", Sherlock claims that "theology, not theism, is what interested Hobbes and it is where any proper interpretation of his analysis of religious questions should begin".⁵ And, finally, Mark Whitaker has added another twist to the argument. In his recent article "Hobbes's View of the Reformation", Whitaker has insisted upon both the importance of Hobbes's theology and the significance of that theology for Hobbes's political thought. Whitaker argues that because Hobbes had previously written two complete formulations of his political philosophy in *The Elements of Law* and *De Cive*, an additional explanation of the later *Leviathan* is necessary; an

⁴ Leopold Damrosch Jr., "Hobbes as Reformation Theologian: Implications of the Free-Will Controversy", *J. H. I.*, 40, 1979, p. 340.

⁵ Richard Sherlock, "The Theology of Leviathan: Hobbes on Religion", *Interpretation, Journal of Political Philosophy*, 10-11, 1982-83, p. 44.

explanation which goes beyond the bounds of Hobbes's "political philosophy". Hence, Whitaker views *Leviathan* as Hobbes's attempt at commenting upon, and influencing the developments of English revolutionary politics. Therefore, the focus of Whitaker's analysis is the "new" material in *Leviathan*, namely those aspects of the work which were absent from Hobbes's previous two works, and most specifically the content of Books Three and Four in which Hobbes examined "A Christian Commonwealth" and "The Kingdome of Darknesse". In these two books (Whitaker claims) Hobbes was arguing that "without a very different Christianity . . . there is no hope of a very different polity".⁶ Consequently, the central focus of *Leviathan* was to demonstrate the "incompleteness of the Reformation". What these analyses of Hobbes have in common is an insistence upon the importance Hobbes gave to theology, both as a partial cause of, and as a possible solution to political unrest. As Whitaker has remarked, for Hobbes

Political subversion . . . had been caused . . . more than anything else by puritan ministers "joining the words of Holy Scripture together otherwise than is agreeable to reason": and much of *Leviathan's* second half is devoted to clarifying which words of Scripture are agreeable to reason, and which are not.⁷

Thus, the central importance of Hobbes's theological interpretations has recently been recognized.

⁶ Mark Whitaker, "Hobbes's View of the Reformation", *History of Political Thought*, Vol. IX, No. 1, Spring 1988, p. 49.

⁷ Ibid., pp. 56-7.

However, while historians have paid increased attention to Hobbes's theology, they have not analysed his treatment of heresy as carefully.⁸ They have tended to focus upon the personal threat of heresy charges under which Hobbes spent his later years. This personal threat took the form of a Bill, first introduced into the House of Commons in October 1666, to re-establish heresy as a criminal offence in England.⁹ The Bill failed in the Lords, and an attempt to reintroduce it in 1667 also failed. However, since the Commons committee examining the Bill had been authorized to gather information specifically about *Leviathan*, and since further attempts at passing a heresy Bill persisted throughout the following decade (1674, 1675 and 1680) Hobbes was likely to consider the threat of heresy charges still imminent.¹⁰ This personal threat has rightly been seen as the factor precipitating Hobbes's six English and two Latin works covering heresy

⁸ See, for example, Alan Ryan, "Hobbes, Toleration, and the Inner Life", in David Miller and Larry Siedentop, eds., *The Nature of Political Theory*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), p.204 where Ryan describes Hobbes's *Historical Narration concerning Heresy* as "undistinguished". The focus on Hobbes's "atheism" in such influential works as Samuel I. Mintz, *The Hunting of Leviathan: Seventeenth Century Reactions to the Materialism and Moral Philosophy of Thomas Hobbes*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970) has also contributed to the comparative neglect of his views on heresy.

⁹ See Richard Tuck, *Hobbes*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 33.

¹⁰ Tuck provides a succinct account of the personal threat of heresy charges against Hobbes. See Tuck, *Hobbes*, pp. 27-39, especially pp. 33-4.

written between the Restoration and his death in 1679.¹¹ And yet, the emphasis on the personal threat to Hobbes has tended to overshadow an equally important aspect of his approach to heresy. In order to present a coherent political philosophy Hobbes had been obliged to resolve the possible conflict between Church and State. Thus he also considered the problem of heresy in his earlier masterpiece, *Leviathan*, first published in 1651. Although Hobbes devoted considerably less attention to heresy in this text than he did in his later works, there can be no doubt that he had analysed the problem fully when he wrote *Leviathan* and that he had resolved it in such a way that heresy posed no threat to his political philosophy. What is more, this treatment of heresy in *Leviathan* laid the firm foundation for Hobbes's approach to the subject in all his later works. As we shall see, all the arguments of the later works concerning heresy are present in embryonic form in *Leviathan*. Thus, while Hobbes's later preoccupation with heresy may well have been due to the perils of his own position, he had fully explored and resolved the implications of the charge for his political philosophy when

¹¹ These English works were *A Dialogue between a Philosopher and a Student of the Common Laws of England*, *An Historical Narration concerning Heresy, and the punishment thereof*, a new reply to Bishop Bramhall, a comment by Hobbes on the Scargill affair (no longer extant), *Behemoth; or The Long Parliament*, and a short manuscript on heresy found at Chatsworth. The Latin works were an appendix to the Latin edition of *Leviathan* which argued that under English law there could be no punishment for heresy, and a verse, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, which also dealt with heresy. See Tuck, *Hobbes*, p. 34 for details about these works.

he wrote *Leviathan*.¹² Hence, it is to *Leviathan* that we will turn first of all, after which we will study Hobbes's treatments of heresy in his later works.

How and why, then, did Hobbes consider the topic of heresy in *Leviathan*? The subject arose first not in parts III and IV where a "Christian Commonwealth" and the "Kingdom of Darkness" were discussed, and hence where we might expect to encounter it. Instead, it was first discussed in Part 1, "Of Man", where Hobbes was discussing the impact of "Ignorance of the signification of words". He argued that because men are ignorant, they are obliged to accept information on trust, the result being that they often accept not only truth, "but also the errors; and which is more, the non-sense of them they trust: For neither Error, nor non-sense, can without a perfect understanding of words, be detected". Hence, out of *ignorance* men sometimes accept error and

¹² Several historians have acknowledged the consistency of Hobbes's writings on heresy. See, for example, Samuel I. Mintz, "Hobbes on the Law of Heresy: A New Manuscript", *J. H. I.*, 29, 1968, p. 410, where he acknowledges Hobbes's fear of heresy charges but insists that "it would be wrong to assume that [Hobbes's] researches into the law of heresy were prompted by self-interest alone". However, while acknowledging Hobbes's "philosophical" need to redefine heresy, historians have not explored the background against which this "redefinition" took place.

From [ignorance] it proceedeth, that men give different names, to one and the same thing, from the difference of their own passions: As they that approve a private opinion, call it Opinion; but they that mislike it, Haeresie: and yet haeresie signifies no more than private opinion; but has onely a greater tincture of choler.¹³

From this very first definition of heresy we can see that Hobbes had a dramatically different understanding of the word than any of the other writers we have examined. For example, in More's case heresy had entailed the obstinate and, as we saw, *malicious* rejection of a Christian truth in defiance of Church authority. Likewise, even Bishop Hall who in some respects diminished the offence of heresy, still insisted that "preverseness of will" was at the heart of the offence. For Hobbes, on the other hand, heresy was the result of "error" in "opinion", no mention being made of "truth" , of "malice" or of "evil intentionality". Thus, we can already detect a substantial discrepancy between Hobbes's understanding of heresy and those of other writers we have examined. In addition, Hobbes insisted in this definition that heresy was strictly "private" opinion and, although he did not expand upon the meaning of this at this point in the text, it is an issue he developed later in *Leviathan*.

Hobbes's next reference to heresy occurred in Part III, in the very lengthy Chapter 42 where he discussed "Power Ecclesiastical". Within this chapter Hobbes refuted the

¹³ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan, or The Matter, Forme, and Power of a Common-Wealth Ecclesiastical and Civill*, C. B. Macpherson, ed., (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1968), p. 165.

arguments of Cardinal Bellarmine, the great defender of the temporal power of the papacy. Bellarmine had argued that Christians could not lawfully tolerate an infidel or "heretic" King because he might attempt to lead his people into heresy. Consequently, according to Bellarmine, the Pope had the right to depose such a King. Hobbes's refutation of this argument was that there could be no judge of heresy amongst a people except their own civil sovereign:

*For Haeresie is nothing else, but a private opinion, obstinately maintained, contrary to the opinion which the Publique Person (that is to say, the Representant of the Common-wealth) hath commanded to bee taught. By which it is manifest, that an opinion publicquely appointed to bee taught, cannot be Haeresie; nor the Soveraign Princes that authorize them, Haeretiques. For Haeretiques are none but private men, that stubbornly defend some Doctrine, prohibited by their lawfull Soveraigns.*¹⁴

Thus, heresy was a privately held opinion which was contrary to the publicly appointed opinion of the sovereign and the distinction between "public" religion and "private" heresy had come to rest solely on the issue of authority. The most striking feature of this definition is that, by insisting that heresy was merely "private opinion", Hobbes again avoided any reference to "truth" or "falsehood", to "right" or "wrong" belief. A "heresy" was no longer a "false belief" but was rather a belief held simply in defiance of public authority.¹⁵

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 605.

¹⁵ Alan Ryan has noted another similar redefinition by Hobbes concerning "justice" and "injustice". He demonstrates how Hobbes reduces these terms to mean "legal" and "illegal", thereby avoiding the issues of the "goodness" or the "evil

And yet, Hobbes did retain the possibility of "error" in belief although he insisted that this was something distinct from heresy. Christians, he argued, must submit to their lawful sovereign even if he held "false beliefs" because the Bible taught that it was always unjust to depose a lawful sovereign:

It is not therefore for want of strength, but for conscience sake, that Christians are to tolerate their Heathen Princes, or Princes (for I cannot call any one whose Doctrine is the Publique Doctrine, an Haeretique) that authorize the teaching of an Errour.¹⁶

In this passage Hobbes preserved the concept of "heresy" and he preserved the concept of "error in belief" but he claimed that the two bore no relation to one another. Hobbes had completely redefined heresy in such a way that it was no longer related to the truth or falsehood of Christian doctrine; it was simply a privately held belief which was not legitimated in the public doctrine authorized by the sovereign. Hence, for Hobbes, a sovereign *could not be* a heretic. But, Hobbes also preserved the possibility of "error" leaving the substantial problem of how such "error" could be judged or known to be "error". Hobbes did not fully answer this problem but was at pains to dismiss one crucial possibility. Subjects could not judge the error or rectitude of their sovereign's beliefs themselves. Error (in this context) was simply left as a concept lacking the required nature" of any act. See, Ryan, "Hobbes, Toleration, and the Inner Life", p. 211.

¹⁶ *Leviathan*, p. 606.

authority to give it content or substance. However, Hobbes had achieved one central goal: the redefinition of heresy in such a way that it offered no threat or challenge to the supremacy of the sovereign.

However, while he did not fully explore the issue of judgement in *Leviathan*, Hobbes did consider one last important topic, namely how heretics should be punished. What action was appropriate when heresy arose? Hobbes made two separate remarks on this issue, both of which tended towards a lessening of the punishment to be inflicted. In the first instance, Hobbes discussed excommunication and its uses as a punishment. The Catholic Church (on the basis of St. Paul's letter to Titus 3:10) had excommunicated heretics but Hobbes argued that this punishment was unwarranted. He quoted the biblical passage in question, "*A man that is an Haeretique, after the first and second admonition, reject*". Hobbes then argued that in this context "to reject" did not mean "excommunicate" but rather "*to give over admonishing him, to let him alone, to set by disputing with him, as one that is to be convinced onely by himselfe*".¹⁷ In the second instance, Hobbes refuted the arguments of Bellarmine concerning the powers of the Papacy. Here the biblical passage Matt. 7:15 had been taken by the Roman Church to justify the execution of heretics. Again, Hobbes cited the passage: "*Beware of false Prophets which come to you in Sheeps clothing, but inwardly*

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 538.

are ravening Wolves". The "wolves" had been interpreted by Rome to be heretics and, on this basis, heretics were executed just as a shepherd would kill a wolf that endangered his flock. However, Hobbes objected that the Apostles were not commanded to kill the wolves/heretics, but "to beware of, fly, and avoid them . . .".¹⁸ Thus, in both cases where punishments for heresy were mentioned in *Leviathan*, Hobbes tried to ameliorate the penalty, to argue that heresy did not deserve the harsh penalties of excommunication and execution, but that it should rather be ignored and heretics avoided.

What, then, may we conclude concerning Hobbes's brief treatment of heresy in *Leviathan*? There are, I think, three important points to observe. Firstly, the sum of Hobbes's approach to heresy in *Leviathan* amounts to a diminution of the concept. By reducing heresy to "private opinion", by arguing against harsh punishments and by removing the issues of "truth" and "falsehood" from the concept, Hobbes effectively lessened the importance and severity of the charge. Secondly, the impetus behind these changes went beyond Hobbes's personal concern for his own safety. Clearly heresy was a crucial issue for his political philosophy since Hobbes needed to provide a solution to the possible threat that Christian belief could pose for a civil sovereign. He provided this solution by insisting that individual Christians must always "tolerate" the "error" of their sovereigns, thereby removing

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 607

the need for confrontation. And thirdly, we should notice that because of the changes Hobbes made to heresy one other important ingredient was removed from the concept. Not only was it no longer necessary to ascertain the "truth" or "falsehood" of beliefs, it was also no longer necessary to determine the malicious intentions of the heretic. In fact, as we shall see, in one of his later works Hobbes was even more specific that "heretics" could not have an evil or malicious intention, but even from his brief comments in *Leviathan* we can see that the need to judge intentions had been removed.

How, then, did Hobbes develop his analysis of heresy in his later works? He touched upon the issue to varying degrees in *Behemoth*, in his *Answer to Bishop Bramhall*, in a manuscript found at Chatsworth (henceforth called the Chatsworth manuscript), in *A Dialogue between a Philosopher and a Student of the Common Laws of England*, in a comment upon the Scargill affair, and in *An Historical Narration concerning Heresy and the Punishment Thereof*. While these works differ from one another in theme and approach, many of the fundamental arguments concerning heresy are common to all of them. Consequently, we will follow the argument of the most detailed work, *An Historical Narration concerning Heresy*, and will simply allude to parallel arguments in other works. The other works will only be examined in depth when they cover different ground than the *Historical Narration*.

The *Historical Narration* was written by Hobbes as an addendum to his *Answer to Bishop Bramhall*, and therefore Hobbes concluded this *Answer* by explaining the need for his *Historical Narration*:

Whereas his Lordship has talked in his discourse here and there ignorantly of heresy, and some others have not doubted to say publicly, that there be many heresies in my *Leviathan*; I will add hereunto, for a general answer, an historical relation concerning the word Heresy, from the first use of it amongst the Grecians till this present time.¹⁹

Even within this brief explanation of the causes behind the writing of the *Historical Narration*, Hobbes informed the reader of his intended approach to his topic. He would commence with the word "heresy" rather than with the concept of heresy. Thus, as we saw in *Leviathan*, Hobbes initially focused his attention on the word itself and in doing so he successfully removed it from its usual context and connotations. The *Historical Narration* did not begin with an analysis of heresy in the post-reformation English Church, or even in the pre-reformation Roman Church. Instead, Hobbes removed the word from these familiar frameworks and dissipated its impact by discussing it first of all in the relatively neutral context of Ancient Greece. Hobbes therefore commenced the *Historical Narration* by telling the reader that

¹⁹ An *Answer to a Book Published by Dr. Bramhall called 'The Catching of Leviathan' together with An Historical Narration Concerning Heresy, and the Punishment thereof*, in *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury*, (hence forth cited as *EW*), 11 vols., Sir William Molesworth, ed., (London: John Bohn, 1839-1845), vol. iv, p.384.

The word *heresy* is Greek, and signifies a taking of any thing, and particularly the taking of an opinion. After the study of philosophy began in Greece, and the philosophers, disagreeing amongst themselves, had started many questions, not only about things natural, but also moral and civil; because every man took what opinion he pleased, each several opinion was called a *heresy*; which signified no more than a private opinion, without reference to truth or falsehood.²⁰

Hobbes had detached the word from its usual theological framework and from its usual Christian definition of "false belief". As a result, he could use the word in totally alien contexts writing, for example, about the "heresy of Aristotle", by which he meant no more than the "opinions" of Aristotle.²¹ Hobbes then proceeded to argue that after the birth of Christianity the philosophers, being better skilled in disputation and oratory than the common man, were the best qualified to defend and propagate the Gospel. Because these philosophers naturally interpreted the Scriptures each according to his own philosophical "heresy", diversity and conflict arose within the Church itself and these disagreements became known as "heresies". Instead of simply

²⁰ Ibid., p. 387.

²¹ For parallel arguments concerning the word "heresy" see *Behemoth, or The Long Parliament*, Ferdinand Tönnies, ed., second edition by M. M. Goldsmith, (London: Frank Cass and Co., 1969), pp. 8-9, and *A Dialogue between a Philosopher and a Student of the Common Laws of England*, Joseph Cropsey, ed., (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1971), pp. 123-4. The "Chatsworth Manuscript" deals exclusively with the English Statutes concerning heresy and therefore does not include this argument about the word itself. See Mintz, "Hobbes on Heresy", pp. 412-14 where the entire manuscript is printed.

meaning opinion, the term became one of reproach.²² Hobbes described how eventually authority was established within the Church to settle these disputes. However, since the Church itself lacked the power to inflict punishment (this being the exclusive right of the civil power), the only recourse available to the Church was to ostracize the offending member. Such a member was branded with "the name of *heretic*, in opposition to the whole church, that condemned his doctrine. So that *catholic* and *heretic* were terms relative; and here it was that *heretic* came to be a name, and a name of disgrace, both together".²³

In recounting some of the heresies of the early Church, Hobbes demonstrated just how volatile early beliefs were. He also demonstrated the undesirable effect on religion when it was intermingled with too much philosophy. But, it was when discussing the role of the Emperor Constantine that Hobbes made the full thrust of his argument apparent. Having converted to Christianity, Constantine was the first Emperor to combine leadership of Church and State. Therefore, Hobbes carefully stressed certain salient features of Constantine's management of the Arian Schism, the major heresy that threatened the unity of the Church in the fourth century A.D. Firstly, Hobbes insisted that Constantine only became involved because the controversy was causing unacceptable bloodshed and

²² *EW*, vol. iv, pp. 388-9. See also *Behemoth*, p.9 and *A Dialogue of the Common Laws*, p.125.

²³ *EW*, vol.iv, p.390.

civil strife. Secondly, Constantine's advice to the divines he assembled at Nicea was that "what so ever they should decree therein, he would cause to be observed". As Hobbes commented:

This may perhaps seem a greater indifferency, than would in these days be approved of. But so it is in the history; and the articles of faith necessary to salvation, were not thought then to be so many as afterwards they were defined to be by the Church of Rome.²⁴

The central thrust of these comments was that the civil sovereign's involvement in religion should be guided by the requirement of *civil* peace. A sovereign should intervene if peace was threatened and should enforce the minimum number of articles of faith necessary to ensure that peace was restored. Hobbes demonstrated how many of the articles agreed upon at Nicea were aimed at settling the contentious issues lying behind the schism, the usual implication being that the formulas had more to do with the need for peace than they did with the "truth" of the doctrine. Hobbes reasserted the same point when he explained why Constantine accepted the non-biblical word *homoousios* to define the relationship between God the Father and God the Son:

And in this again appeared the indifferency of the Emperor, and that he had for his end, in the calling of the Synod, not so much the truth, as the uniformity of the doctrine, and peace of his people that dependeth on it.²⁵

²⁴ Ibid., p. 392.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 393.

Although Hobbes paid careful attention to the content of the formulas agreed upon, often demonstrating how confusion over the exact meaning or translation of one word had resulted in "mistaken" doctrine, he returned time and again to the need for peace. The bishops subscribed to the final formula because it offered a way of governing the Church *peacefully*.²⁶ Thus, while Hobbes was at pains to show the defects of some of the theology, and he therefore charged Constantine several times with "indifferency", he condoned Constantine's overwhelming emphasis on peace.

Hobbes noted that the formula was only sent to bishops to sign and not to laymen, thereby making it a formula for peaceful government and not for universal belief. However, Hobbes made two further points regarding this formula; firstly, no layman who expressed beliefs contrary to it could be punished because laymen never had been made aware of the formula in the first place;²⁷ and secondly, even a bishop could only be a heretic if he went so far as to contradict the formula "in plain and direct words" since "no man could be made an heretic by consequence".²⁸ In other words, only if a

²⁶ Ibid., p. 397.

²⁷ Hobbes made a parallel argument, but concerning the case of Bartholomew Legat in James I's reign, in *A Dialogue of the Common Laws*, pp. 129-30. The Philosopher remarked that a "Declaration of what Articles [were] made heresy" was a prerequisite of the charge. Without public awareness and easy public access to the approved and forbidden formulas, no man could be charged legitimately with heresy.

²⁸ *EW*, vol. iv, p. 397.

bishop dissented openly could he be charged with heresy; a case could not be made that the implications of his words tended towards heretical beliefs and consequently he was a heretic.

What, then, had Hobbes achieved so far in his history of the word "heresy"? Firstly, by removing the word from its familiar context and then writing a "history" of its development, Hobbes had effectively redefined the term. As had been the case in *Leviathan*, heresy no longer meant *false* belief or *false* doctrine in comparison with the *truth* of orthodoxy. Instead it meant publicly *disallowed* formulas and truth and error had vanished from the equation. Secondly, Hobbes had demonstrated that public peace was the most important consideration in the formulation of doctrine to be allowed or disallowed. And thirdly, Hobbes had already introduced some restrictions on the scope of the charge of heresy. There was no "heresy by consequence", and no heresy unless the doctrinal formulas were readily available to clergy and laymen alike.

As the *Narration* progressed, Hobbes increasingly focused his attention on the punishment of heretics and again, as in *Leviathan*, he argued against severe punishment. Under Constantine, he claimed, there were no punishments other than deprivation of living for the clergy and, if heresy persisted, banishment. He continued to repeat his former points concerning the derivation of the word and the predominance of

the need for peace, but now he added the evolution of the methods for punishing heretics:

thus did heresy, which at first was the name of private opinion, and no crime, by virtue of a law of the Emperor, made only for the peace of the church, become a crime in a pastor, and punishable with deprivation first, and next with banishment.²⁹

However, it is important to notice an allusion to a new issue here, an issue which Hobbes explored in more detail in one of his other works, *A Dialogue of the Common Laws*. In the above passage Hobbes insisted that heresy was "no crime" and that it only became a crime when specific edicts were passed by the Emperor. Hence, heresy was *not* a crime according to reason and it was *not* a crime under common law. In fact it was only a crime if and when specific statutes were passed to define and enforce it.³⁰ Later in the *Historical Narration*, as we shall see, Hobbes provided a detailed account of the heresy statutes in England showing that all the relevant statutes had been repealed and hence there remained no legitimate method for bringing a charge of heresy.

However, before he embarked upon this account, he discussed the heresies which arose after the Council of Nicea. Many of these heresies were resolved at the Councils of Chalcedon and of Carthage, and Hobbes's analysis of these councils demonstrated again how the creedal formulas agreed upon were specifically intended to deny certain heresies.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 399.

³⁰ See *A Dialogue of the Common Laws*, pp. 130-31.

According to Hobbes, the predominant factor determining the acceptance or rejection of different doctrines/heresies was the Roman Church's lust for power. Emperors, he claimed, were weak and negligent, allowing the Papacy to do as it pleased:

*There was no doctrine which tended to the power ecclesiastical, or to the reverence of the clergy, the contradiction whereof was not by one Council or another made heresy, and punished arbitrarily by the Emperors with banishment or death.*³¹

Hobbes did not discuss the centuries of papal supremacy in any detail, claiming that it was such a well known story that he "need not insist upon it any longer". However, when Hobbes did refer to Rome he was at his most scathing, attacking the motivations and intentions of the Papacy. During the papal ascendancy

*there was nothing so dangerous [to an ingenuous and serious Christian] as to enquire concerning his own salvation, of the Holy Scripture; the careless cold Christian was safe, and the skilful hypocrite a saint.*³²

Hobbes concluded his *Historical Narration* with an account of the evolution of the charge and punishment of heresy in England. He traced the history of punishments against the Lollards from mere imprisonment under Richard II, to the burning of obstinate heretics under Henry IV. Under Henry V the confiscation and forfeiture of lands and goods was added and under Henry VIII, after the split with Rome, it was

³¹ *EW*, vol. iv, p. 402.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 403. Although the word "hypocrite" is used here, it is an isolated occurrence, whereas, as we shall see later, in *Behemoth* Hobbes used the word repeatedly.

enacted that heretics should be burnt publicly if they either refused to recant or if, having recanted, they relapsed into heresy. Hobbes then followed the laws through the tangled web of the remaining years of the sixteenth century showing how Edward VI repealed Henry's laws, leaving "no law at all for the punishment of heretics". Mary, however, restored Henry's statute, only to have Elizabeth repeal all Mary's ecclesiastical laws. In addition, Elizabeth repealed *all* former laws concerning the punishment of heretics. She did not enact any new laws in their place but rather appointed a commission (the High Commission) to execute "power ecclesiastical". The commission was "forbidden to adjudge anything to be heresy, which was not declared to be heresy by some of the first four general Councils".³³ But, Hobbes was quick to point out that there was nothing in that commission concerning how heretics were to be punished. Thus, not only was there no statute law in England authorizing the punishment of heretics, but also no man could justly be charged with heresy since the doctrines prohibited by the first four councils had not been readily accessible to laymen. Hence, "no man could know how to beware of offending against them".³⁴ Finally, under Charles, even the High Commission itself was abolished and as a result, Hobbes argued, during the Commonwealth period when he wrote *Leviathan*, there were no

³³ EW, vol. iv, p. 405.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 406.

"human laws left in force to restrain any man from preaching or writing any doctrine concerning religion that he pleased".³⁵

Thus, with this historical annihilation of the heresy charge Hobbes ended his piece. Clearly, as had been the case in *Leviathan*, the whole thrust of the *Historical Narration* had been to diminish the concept of heresy. Heresy no longer related to the truth or falsehood of beliefs, but merely to their legality. If no statute laws existed to define specific "heresies" and if the people were not adequately informed about which beliefs were legal and which were not, then there could be no heresy. Hobbes added one final paragraph, exclusively in self-defence, concerning the content of *Leviathan*. He objected that not only was there no legal definition of heretical beliefs when he wrote *Leviathan*, but also the abolition of the High Commission had made the enforcement of heresy charges impossible. As a parting gesture, he reminded the reader that the Bible itself recommended meekness in "instructing those that oppose themselves" and not the "fierceness" of disputation with which Hobbes had found himself surrounded. While these closing passages were obviously written in self-defence, they should not be allowed to obscure the degree to which the arguments of the *Historical Narration* (and indeed Hobbes's other later

³⁵ Ibid., p. 407. For a parallel analysis of English Statute law, with a particular emphasis on punishments, see the "Chatsworth Manuscript", Mintz, "Hobbes on Heresy", pp. 412-14.

works on heresy) were totally consistent with those of *Leviathan*. The demands of Hobbes's political philosophy, and not mere self-defence, had necessitated a redefinition of heresy and consequently Hobbes took this already unstable concept and redefined it to suit his own purposes.

However, there is one aspect of Hobbes's analysis of heresy which we have not yet studied, namely the intentionality of the heretic. As we have seen, the issue was alluded to in *Leviathan* where it seemed that the need to determine the malicious intentionality of the "heretic" had been removed. But Hobbes dealt with this issue in considerably more detail in one of his later works, *A Dialogue between a Philosopher and a Student of the Common Laws of England*, which we will now examine. While the work repeats many of the arguments of the *Historical Narration* concerning heresy, its legalistic nature precipitated some specific statements concerning the relationship between intentionality and heresy which Hobbes did not make elsewhere. But, in order to understand these statements fully we must first examine the nature of the text itself. As the title suggests, the work took the form of a discussion between a Philosopher and a student of the Common Law (in the text simply called "Lawyer"). This dialogue form has presented some problems for scholars because the characterizations are inconclusive at times, and the progress and purpose of the interchanges is not

always apparent to the modern reader.³⁶ The Lawyer usually acts as a mouthpiece for the legal opinions of the famous commonlawyer, Sir Edward Coke and, as Joseph Cropsey (the editor of the most recent edition) has pointed out, the "*Dialogue* is to some extent a polemic against Coke".³⁷

However, the Lawyer also voices some "famous Hobbesian conceptions" and therefore it would seem misleading to view him simply as "Coke". Similarly, although the Philosopher voices many Hobbesian views, he cannot always be seen as the direct or exclusive mouthpiece of "Hobbes the author".

The argument of the *Dialogue* remains consistent with the political philosophy of Hobbes's earlier works whilst demonstrating the legal implications of his ideas. Cropsey suggests that Hobbes developed the practical politics of Bacon and maintained "the king's prerogative, the need for the assent of Parliament, and the indispensability of subordinating the common law (thus the legal profession) to Statute and Chancery, or equity".³⁸ The work is divided into seven sections, two of which are of particular interest for our purposes; namely, "Of Crimes Capital" and "Of Heresy". Both these sections demand attention not only for their content (which we will examine in due course) but also for their sequence since this is informative about Hobbes's

³⁶ A *Dialogue of the Common Laws*, pp. 4-15.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 11.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 14.

approach to the charge of heresy. Hence, we will examine the sequence of these two sections first of all.

The section "Of Crimes Capital" commenced with the Lawyer offering the statute definition of "High Treason". However, the Philosopher was unsatisfied with this definition and argued that treason was a crime of itself; it was "*Malum in se*" and therefore a crime by reason and by common law just as much as by statute law. The section then moved from the discussion of treason to the derivation and definition of "felonies" which, the Philosopher argued, were also "Crimes in their own nature without the help of Statute".³⁹ Thus, the interlocutors discussed particular felonies, for instance murder, and they debated which other crimes fell into the category of "felonies". Only when this discussion was completed did the interlocutors move on to discuss heresy, a crime which the Philosopher insisted was not "*Malum in se*" and which consequently was a crime only under statute law. The Lawyer tried to defend heresy's common law status but the Philosopher was adamant that it was no crime according to reason or common law.⁴⁰ In following this sequence of discussion, placing heresy after all felonies including murder, the interlocutors were diverging from the order in which Coke had originally ranked "Crimes Capital". He had considered treason to be the primary capital crime but had

³⁹ Ibid., pp. 111-12.

⁴⁰ Ibid., pp. 130-31.

ranked heresy as the next most serious, followed only later by murder and other felonies.

Thus, by two different methods, the Philosopher had effectively demoted the crime of heresy; he excluded it from the most serious category of crimes which were offences under common law, reason and statute law, and he placed heresy after all other capital crimes in the order of discussion. As Cropsey has demonstrated, this demotion in the significance of the crime was further emphasized by the actual method of transition from one section of the *Dialogue* to the next. The Philosopher concluded the discussion of "Crimes Capital" by suggesting that they now proceeded "to Crimes not Capital".

The Lawyer responded by reminding him about heresy:

Shall we pass over the Crime of Heresie, which Sir Edw. Coke ranketh before Murder, but the consideration of it will be somewhat long.⁴¹

The Philosopher did not respond directly but merely suggested that they deferred till the afternoon and, with no further comment, the subsequent section simply opened with a discussion of heresy. Thus, not only had the two interlocutors demoted heresy from the more prominent position which Coke had given it, but the Philosopher had tacitly questioned whether heresy should be considered a capital offence at all. As Cropsey has concluded, the Philosopher clearly considered heresy to be "either a crime but not capital, or conceivably not a crime at all". Certainly "it

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 122.

[was] not one of those offences harmful of their own nature to law and mankind".⁴² When we consider these views of the Philosopher in the light of Hobbes's approach to heresy in his other works (where he undermined the importance of the charge and even denied its very existence since the repeal of the relevant statutes) we may safely conclude that, in this section of the *Dialogue* at least, the Philosopher's views were indeed those of Hobbes himself.

So much then for the sequence of the sections "of Crimes Capital" and "Of Heresy" and what this sequence can tell us of Hobbes's views about heresy. If we turn our attention to the content of these two sections we will find that it is equally informative. Again, the issues raised concerning treason and murder need to be studied first as they were important influences on the discussion of heresy. The section opened with the Lawyer quoting the statute of 25 Edw. 3 which declared what crimes constituted "High Treason". It was treason "when a Man doth Compass, or Imagine the Death of our Lord the King . . . " and it was the two words "compassing" and "imagining" that formed the centre of the ensuing debate about the intentionality of the criminal.⁴³ The Philosopher enquired what these two words meant and how intentions could be judged, to which the Lawyer responded that, according to Coke, an open deed was the best proof of intention. Hence,

⁴² Ibid., p. 35.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 101.

proof of intention to commit treason could best be provided by some open deed such as the "providing of Weapons, Powder, Poyson, Assaying of Armour, sending of Letters, & c.". ⁴⁴ However, this argument was rejected by the Philosopher who suggested that to "compass" or "imagine" a crime was effectively to "Design and Purpose" that crime. Design, he claimed, "lyeth hidden in the Breast of him that is Accused; [and] what other Proof can there be had of it than words Spoken or Written". ⁴⁵ Thus, the Philosopher was arguing that intentions were best known by words rather than deeds. He then rebutted a further argument used by the Lawyer to defend Coke's emphasis on deeds rather than words:

As for that Common saying, that bare words may make a Heretick, but not a Traytor, which Sir *Edw. Coke* on this occasion maketh use of, they are to little purpose; seeing that this Statute maketh not the words High Treason, but the Intention, whereof the words are but a Testimony: . . . ⁴⁶

These statements reconfirm the Philosopher's position: words (either written or spoken) were the most direct expression of intention, more so than deeds. This position is particularly interesting in view of Hobbes's repeated insistence concerning hypocrisy that words were external and did not necessarily bear any relationship to the thoughts and intentions of an individual. In *Behemoth* (as we shall see later) Hobbes stressed the impossibility of judging the intentions of

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 107.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid., pp. 107-8.

another from their words or deeds, and hence the impossibility of "accusing" hypocrisy. Here, on the other hand, the Philosopher was not only claiming that words were the most direct testimony of intentions, but also that intentions themselves lay at the heart of accusations of treason and hence intentions themselves must be accused.⁴⁷

It was this central issue of intentionality which resurfaced later in the section when the interlocutors discussed the distinction between murder and manslaughter and also when they debated the felonious nature of suicide. In the case of murder *vis à vis* manslaughter the Philosopher questioned whether actions performed on the spur of the moment, as in the heat of an argument, involved "malice forethought". If one man drew his sword during an argument, his action clearly denoted malicious intention, "but the wickedness of the Intention was nothing near so great" as if he had planned a murder.⁴⁸ Concerning suicide, the Lawyer

⁴⁷ Hobbes made the link between words and intentions elsewhere in his works, although he also drew attention to the problems inherent in using words as signs of another's intentions. For example, in *The Elements of Law, Natural and Politic*, he wrote "Though words be the signs we have of one another's opinions and intentions; yet, because the equivocation of them is so frequent according to the diversity of contexture, and the company where with they go (which the presence of him that speaketh, our sight of his actions, and conjecture of his intentions must help to discharge us of): it must be extreme hard to find out opinions and meanings of those men that are gone from us long ago, and have left no other signification thereof but their books; which cannot possibly be understood without history enough to discover those aforementioned circumstances, and also without great prudence to observe them". Cited by Tuck, *Hobbes*, p. v.

⁴⁸ *A Dialogue of the Common Laws*, p. 114.

suggested that he that "killeth voluntarily" was a felon by both common and statute law. However, the Philosopher disagreed:

I conceive not how any Man can bear *Animum fellum*, or so much Malice towards himself as to hurt himself voluntarily, much less to kill himself; for naturally, and necessarily the Intention of every Man aimeth at somewhat, which is good to himself, and tendeth to his preservation: And therefore, methinks, if he kill himself, it is to be presumed that he is not *compos mentis*, but by some inward Torment or Apprehension of somewhat worse than Death, Distracted.⁴⁹

The dialogue continued with the two interlocutors debating how to judge a man's "intention" towards himself, especially if the subject was dead.

Thus, we can see clearly that intentionality and malice were central to the whole section on "Crimes Capital" and these same issues continued to be prominent in the following section on heresy. Much of this section covered familiar material in that Hobbes again took the reader back to the Greek origins of the word and traced its etymology and history in a manner similar to the *Historical Narration* and *Behemoth*. He also demonstrated again that heresy was no longer a crime under statute law since the earlier statutes defining the crime and punishment had been repealed. However, within these now familiar accounts there was one new element which deserves attention. In the historical account, the Philosopher explained how the terms "Catholic" and "heretic" had become opposites of each other. But the Lawyer interrupted:

⁴⁹ Ibid., pp. 116-7.

I understand how it [heresy] came to be a Reproach, but not how it follows that every Opinion condemned by a Church that is, or calls it self Catholick, must needs be an Error, or a Sin. The Church of *England* denies that Consequence, and that Doctrine as they hold cannot be proved to be Erroneous, but by the Scripture, which cannot Err; but the Church, being but men, may both Err, and Sin.⁵⁰

In this passage, the Lawyer had raised the two concepts of "error" and "sin" with regard to heresy. Clearly these terms pointed towards the problem of the intentions of the "heretic"; whether he was simply "mistaken" in his belief, or whether his belief was maliciously maintained. The Philosopher pursued these issues in his reply:

In this Case we must consider also that Error, in it's own Nature, is no Sin: For it is Impossible for a Man to Err on purpose, he cannot have an Intention to Err; and nothing is Sin, unless there be a sinful Intention; much less are such Errors Sins, as neither hurt the Common-wealth, nor any private Man, nor are against any Law Positive, or Natural; such Errors as were those for which Men were burnt in the time when the Pope had Government of this Church.⁵¹

Here the Philosopher (and again I think, Hobbes) insisted that there was a fundamental distinction between "error" on the one hand and "sin" on the other. An error *could not* be a sin, and intentionality itself formed the basis of this

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 126. It is worth remarking that, in opposing the Catholic position, the Lawyer has suggested that Scripture was not open to either error or sin, whereas the Church, consisting of mere mortals, was open to both. This formula ignores the glaring problem of the interpretation of Scripture and the authority by which this should be done. Consequently, the Lawyer's formula ignored, rather than solved, the problems of the preceeding century concerning this issue in the Church of England. Although Hobbes explored these issues in *Leviathan*, it is significant that he avoided entering into them here.

⁵¹ Ibid.

distinction. Hobbes argued that a sin was only a sin if there was sinful intention. Sinful intention created sin. However, according to Hobbes, man could not err on purpose, there being no such thing as an "intention to err". Thus, error and sin were differentiated, and even polarized, by the issue of intentionality. The former was defined by its very lack of intentionality, while the latter existed only because of its specific intentionality. Consequently, this argument constituted yet another serious attack on the legitimacy of the crime of heresy itself.

Hobbes's use of these terms "error" and "sin" points to a larger issue in his writing and a larger distinction between himself and the other writers we have studied. Hobbes's use of error assumed that the individual "heretic" did not consider that he was erring. Rather he considered "orthodoxy" to be at fault and his own beliefs to be true. On this level, then, Hobbes was claiming the individual had no *intention* to err. The individual's own view of his actions and his own intentions determined the validity of his beliefs since no external standards were relevant. This position stood in marked contrast with, for example, More's. For More, a heretic had to have the error of his beliefs demonstrated to him according to the external standards of the consensus of Christian belief. Once such errancy had been demonstrated and explained, if the individual persisted in his beliefs, then he had (according to More) an *intention* to err, despite his own denials to the contrary. In other words, the external

consensus formulated a verdict not only concerning the individual's beliefs, but also concerning his intentions in holding those beliefs. For More, the verdict of the consensus took precedence over the individual's interpretation of his own intentions.

In light of this comparison with More, it is evident that Hobbes had removed one key ingredient from the charge of heresy, namely the judgement of intentions. If, as Hobbes claimed, a man could not "intend" error, and yet heresy had been defined as the stubborn or obstinate maintenance of error, then a man's intentions had nothing whatsoever to do with judging whether or not he was a "heretic". Thus, although Hobbes discussed intentionality in relation to heresy, the outcome of his analysis was to remove the judgement of intentions from the charge of heresy. A man's beliefs were judged to be heretical simply because they contradicted the dictates of the civil sovereign and a man's intentions in holding those beliefs were no longer relevant.⁵² Undoubtedly, Hobbes's removal of judgement of intentions from the crime of heresy was in line with his other arguments on heresy, all of which (as we have seen) served to diminish the scope of the offence.

However, before we draw any broader conclusions concerning the relevance of his position, it is necessary to

⁵² In other words, the intentionality of the believer *vis à vis* his beliefs was no longer central to the charge of heresy.

enquire briefly what, if anything, Hobbes made of the other concept we have been studying, "hypocrisy". And in order to assess this we must turn our attention to a different work, Hobbes's analysis of the English Civil War in *Behemoth*, or *The Long Parliament*. Unlike *Leviathan* in which the word "hypocrisy" appears infrequently and the concept is not subjected to close analysis, *Behemoth* is riddled with references to "hypocrites" and "hypocrisy", the issue being placed at the forefront of Hobbes's analysis of the war.⁵³ Consequently, in order to examine Hobbes on hypocrisy, we will now examine this text.

In *Behemoth* Hobbes provided a "history" of the Civil War from 1640 to 1660 in a dialogue between two characters, A and B. However, within the very first lines of the text Hobbes made clear his preoccupation with the character and intentions of the men who precipitated the Civil War. His history of the war was more than a simple descriptive account of events but rather it focused on intentionality.⁵⁴ Before any

⁵³ Although the word "hypocrisy" is used infrequently in *Leviathan*, similar problems arise when it is used to those we shall encounter in *Behemoth*. For example, Hobbes wrote "seeing no man is able to discern the truth of another man's repentance, further than by external marks, taken from his words and actions, which are subject to hypocrisy . . ." *Leviathan*, p. 500. This use of the term hypocrisy entails a disparity between internal thoughts and external words or actions, a disparity which, as we shall see, Hobbes in fact legitimated in *Leviathan*. Hence, to use the pejorative term "hypocrisy" when referring to a legitimated disparity seems problematic.

⁵⁴ Deborah Baumgold has remarked on Hobbes's interest in "hypocrisy" in *Behemoth*. See Baumgold, *Hobbes's Political Theory*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 121

explanations had been offered or any reasons given, character A of the dialogue pronounced negative views of the perpetrators of the war in a dramatic and bold statement:

A: If in time, as in place, there were degrees of high and low, I verily believe that the highest of time would be that which passed between the years of 1640 and 1660. For he that thence, as from the Devil's Mountain, should have looked upon the world and observed the actions of men, especially in England, might have had a prospect of all kinds of injustice, and of all kinds of folly, that the world could afford, and how they were produced by their dams *hypocrisy** and self-conceit, whereof the one is double iniquity, and the other double folly.⁵⁵

Thus, hypocrisy, that "double iniquity", and self-conceit were placed at the heart of the Civil War and consequently were to have prominence in Hobbes's account of it. Character B echoed back this interest in intentionality when he responded that he wished to hear about the actions of that period and of "their causes, pretensions, justice, order, artifice, and event".

And yet, despite this focus on hypocrisy and the evil intentions of the perpetrators of the war, *Behemoth* contains an explicit incongruity in Hobbes's approach to hypocrisy. On the one hand, the text is littered with claims that others (usually the Presbyterians) were hypocrites. But, on the other hand, the text contains seemingly contradictory statements which negate the very use of the term "hypocrite".

where she writes: Hobbes "did not intend [*Behemoth*] to be a descriptive history of the war, but only meant to tell the story of the 'injustice, impudence, and hypocrisy,' the 'knavery, and folly' of that Parliament that precipitated the war".

⁵⁵ Thomas Hobbes, *Behemoth or The Long Parliament*, Ferdinand Tönnies, ed., 2nd edition, (New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1969), p. 1.

"Hypocrisy", Hobbes wrote, "hath indeed this great prerogative above other sins, that it *cannot be accused*".⁵⁶ It could not be accused because man was unable to know the intentions of others: as Hobbes wrote "we cannot safely judge of men's intentions".⁵⁷ Once again, Hobbes expressed the total impossibility of making accusations based on the intentions of others when he enquired "who can prove they [the Presbyterians] do not believe [what they pretend to believe]".⁵⁸ These negations of the charge of hypocrisy and of the possibility of judging intentions stand in stark contrast to a whole series of contradictory remarks: for example, "there were many [Parliamentarians] that had discovered the hypocrisy, and private aims of their fellows";⁵⁹ and again, the Presbyterians "meant to force [Henrietta Maria] to hypocrisy, being hypocrites themselves".⁶⁰

Why would Hobbes include such contradictory statements concerning hypocrisy and intentionality in the text of *Behemoth*? There is no simple answer to this question, but there is one obvious possibility which must be dismissed. The contradictory statements cannot be attributed to *Behemoth's*

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 48.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 72.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 49.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 139.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 61.

presentation in dialogue form. Of the quotations already cited, contradictory comments come from the voices of both characters A and B. Whereas in More's dialogue, as we have seen, the form itself played an important role in the structure of his argument, the same techniques can not be found in Hobbes's work. While it is indeed interesting, as Richard Tuck has pointed out, that Hobbes used this "humanist" style of writing in several of his later works, in general both scholars and Hobbes's contemporaries have found little specific purpose behind this form of presentation. All have tended to agree with John Wallis's now famous pronouncement that the dialogues were conversations "between Thomas and Hobbes".⁶¹ There is none of the subtle play in Hobbes's dialogue that was evident in More's and most particularly there was no literary device whereby the reader was brought into the dialogue process. Where More had used the dialogue form to involve the reader in the judgemental process, to make him an integral part of the basis upon which heretics could be judged with legitimacy, Hobbes simply used both characters to express his own views. Hobbes's process was to inform the reader of a predetermined verdict (that the Presbyterians, amongst others, were hypocrites and were responsible for the Civil War), not to involve the reader in the making and passing of that verdict.

⁶¹ See Tuck, *Hobbes*, p. 35.

Perhaps, then, Hobbes was not attempting to employ the "humanist" dialogue form which was so much a vehicle of exploration rather than indoctrination. Hobbes's dialogue is more strongly reminiscent of a catechism or of the "quaestiones" of scholasticism in which doctrine was expounded by a system of questions and answers. The dialogue of *Behemoth* in particular has more in common with the catechismal form as this was often the method by which the young learnt from their superiors. In *Behemoth* there is precisely such a situation since character B described himself as having been too young to "see so well" during the Civil War years, whereas character A was described as having been "in that part of [his] age, wherein men used to see best into good and evil . . .".⁶² In other words, character A had the age and wisdom of the "teacher" whereas character B was firmly cast in the role of a student.⁶³ The indoctrinating nature of the text as a whole has been pointed out by M. M. Goldsmith in his introduction to the second edition of Ferdinand Tönnies' edition of the work. Goldsmith concluded his introduction by stressing that *Behemoth's* central message was that, in order to avoid further insurrection and rebellion "men should be taught Hobbism", or put even more strongly, "Hobbism should be

⁶² *Behemoth*, p. 1.

⁶³ See Royce MacGillivray, "Thomas Hobbes's History of the English Civil War: a Study of *Behemoth*", *J. H. I.*, 31, 1970, pp. 179-198, especially pp. 179 and 184. MacGillivray remarks that "it is . . . highly possible that . . . the didactic function is part of the reason why Hobbes chose the dialogue form".

established by authority".⁶⁴ Thus, while Goldsmith has offered a possible explanation for the dialogue form of *Behemoth*, this explanation does not resolve the contradictions concerning hypocrisy.

Perhaps, then, a closer examination of the text itself, rather than its structure, might reveal the purpose behind these contradictions. As we have seen, the dialogue opened with a firm statement of purpose and viewpoint. The purpose was to observe the period of the Civil War, and the viewpoint was to demonstrate the hypocrisy and self-conceit of those who perpetrated the war. This viewpoint was common to both characters A and B who proceeded to discuss what kinds of people could have "seduced" the populace into war against the King. Throughout the following descriptions of the Papists, Presbyterians, sectarians and others who perpetrated the war, there were constant reminders of Hobbes's intention to examine only "the story of [the perpetrators'] injustice, impudence and hypocrisy"⁶⁵ and not to provide a full "history" of the war itself. The "pretended" powers and claims of the papacy were examined in detail, particularly the papal punishments of excommunication and of heresy, which were shown to rest upon "false" premises. The legitimacy of the Reformation in England was then demonstrated while the language denigrating

⁶⁴ *Behemoth*, intro. to second edition, p. xiv. See also Mark Hartman, "Hobbes's Concept of Political Revolution" *J. H. I.*, 47, 1986, p. 493, where the didactic function of the text is stressed.

⁶⁵ *Behemoth*, p. 119.

the Papacy, particularly regarding moral integrity and honesty, continued.⁶⁶ For example, character B remarked that "there was never such another cheat in the world" as the Papacy and he praised such works as *The Mystery of Iniquity* and *The Grand Imposture* which chronicled the evil progress of the Pope's power.⁶⁷

Next, attention was turned to the Presbyterians and "by what art and what degrees they became so strong".⁶⁸ It was argued that they joined forces with certain gentlemen who desired popular government in the civil state just as the Presbyterians had desired popular government in the Church. And, yet again, aspersions were cast on their motivations:

And though it be not likely that all of them did it out of malice, but many of them out of error, yet certainly the chief leaders were ambitious ministers and ambitious gentlemen. . . .⁶⁹

Hobbes then argued that the Presbyterians used a whole series of false pretences and false techniques to win the favour of the people. One of the most dramatic charges related to their technique of preaching. Hobbes claimed that their "godliness" was a pretence covering their seditious intentions:

⁶⁶ Ibid., pp. 18-22.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 20-21.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 23.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

no tragedian in the world could have acted the part of a right godly man better than these did; insomuch as a man unacquainted with such art, could never suspect any ambitious plot in them to raise sedition against the state, as they then had designed⁷⁰

Thus, the Presbyterians were "actors" who, behind a pretence of godliness, hid seditious ambitions. In effect, this was a charge that the Presbyterians were hypocrites since their intentions were divergent from their professions. And Hobbes did indeed proceed to charge them with hypocrisy. However, he offered a completely different justification for doing so than the divergence between intentions and profession. Within the same section Hobbes claimed that the Presbyterians were hypocrites because the proceedings which they had initiated ended in war and impious acts. Character B remarked:

Who would think that such horrible designs as these could so easily and so long remain covered with the cloak of godliness? For that they were most impious hypocrites, is manifest enough by the war their proceedings ended in, and by the impious acts in that war committed.⁷¹

Here, then, Hobbes's argument was that because the war itself was an evil, and because "impious" acts were committed during it, the perpetrators of that war must have been evil themselves, despite their outward pretence of godliness. Hence, the outcome of the Presbyterians' actions, and not their own intentions in acting were at stake in this accusation of hypocrisy. Had Hobbes in effect reformulated the charge of hypocrisy in such a way as to avoid the

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 24.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 26.

judgement of intentions altogether? While this may be the case in this one instance, it is not true of Hobbes's use of the charge of hypocrisy in general. Elsewhere, as I have already indicated, Hobbes used "hypocrisy" in such a way that judgement of the intentions was still clearly involved. For example, in a passage discussing the actions and intentions of the Presbyterian ministers, character A remarked that if the preaching of the ministers was considered a basis for judgement, then they would defend themselves by saying they thought their preaching was "agreeable to God's revealed will in the Scriptures. If they thought so", character A continued, "it was not disobedience, but error. And how can any man prove they thought otherwise?" Character B responded with the previously quoted comment that "Hypocrisy hath indeed this great prerogative above other sins, that it cannot be accused".⁷² This defence of the Presbyterians relied on the fact that to judge hypocrisy it was necessary to judge intentions, and this could not be done.

Thus, the incongruity of the text of *Behemoth* concerning "hypocrisy" remains, although there is one final avenue worth exploring. At one point Hobbes seemed to suggest that human nature itself was an adequate basis for assuming the worst when judging the intentions of others. Characters A and B were discussing the nobility of Scotland and the reasons why they were so averse to episcopacy. Character B cast

⁷² Ibid., p. 48.

aspersions on their objection to episcopacy suggesting that it could not be the result of extraordinary tender consciences because

in their lives they [the Scottish nobility] were just as other men are, pursuers of their own interests and preferments, wherein they were not more opposed by the bishops than by their Presbyterian ministers.⁷³

Character A responded that he did not know why the nobility disliked episcopacy because he could not "enter into other men's thoughts, farther than [he was] led by the consideration of human nature in general".⁷⁴ However, on this very basis of "human nature" alone, character A went on to suggest that the nobility were hostile to episcopacy because of their own self-conceit, thirst for power, and unbridled greed. In this case, then, Hobbes seemed to suggest that human nature alone entitled men to think the worst when assessing the intentions of others.

However, once again, such a conclusion would be an oversimplification of Hobbes's position because within a matter of pages he reversed this assessment of human nature in the case of one individual. Character A would not accept the "very uncharitable censure" of those who claimed that the Duke of Hamilton had failed to prevent the war in Scotland because he had private ambitions to become King of Scotland by means of the very war he was supposed to prevent. Whereas previously,

⁷³ Ibid., p. 29.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

human nature had been a sufficient basis for assuming the worst about another's intentions, here character A argued that it was wrong "upon so little ground to judge so hardly of a man, that afterwards lost his life in seeking to procure the liberty of the King his master".⁷⁵ Thus, by redeeming Hamilton from censure, Hobbes had tacitly rejected that human nature alone was a sufficient basis for always assuming the worst about the intentions of others.

What, then, may we conclude concerning accusations of hypocrisy in *Behemoth*? We have seen that Hobbes used the term time and again and that one of the most persistent arguments in this work concerned the evil intentions versus the outward "godliness" of those who perpetrated the war. On the other hand, we have also seen that Hobbes repeatedly drew attention to the impossibility of judging the intentions of others and hence the impossibility of "accusing" hypocrisy. Lastly, we have seen that whenever Hobbes provided a foundation for judging hypocrisy, he undermined it almost immediately. In light of these conclusions, we are bound to enquire why Hobbes, who built an entire political philosophy on clarity in the definition of words and consistency in their use, would have used the word and concept of hypocrisy in such a self-contradictory manner? And the answer must lie, I think, in the contradictory requirements of his "philosophy" versus his use of "rhetoric" or "polemics" in this work. As I will

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 31-2.

demonstrate, Hobbes's "philosophy" as developed in *Leviathan* had denied the possibility of knowing another's intentions, thereby removing the necessary foundation for all charges of hypocrisy. On the other hand, the rhetorical and polemical language he employed in *Behemoth* drew upon the polemical language of that time which, as we have seen, included charges of hypocrisy. Hence, the rhetorical nature of *Behemoth* will be illustrated first of all, after which the implications of Hobbes's "philosophy" for the concept of hypocrisy will be explored.

As several scholars have recently noted, rhetoric, polemics, and the "art of persuasion" played a larger role in the works of Hobbes than has previously been acknowledged.⁷⁶ Within this wider recognition of the role of rhetoric in his works, attention has been drawn to its use in *Behemoth*, especially for didactic purposes. In a recent article, Noam Flinker has presented a different interpretation of *Behemoth*, arguing that its purpose was not solely to teach "Hobbism" as

⁷⁶ A most influential work in this respect has been David Johnston, *The Rhetoric of Leviathan: Thomas Hobbes and the Politics of Cultural Transformation*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986). In addition see, Jeffrey Barnouw, "Persuasion in Hobbes's *Leviathan*", *Hobbes Studies*, vol. 1, 1988, pp. 3-25; William Sacksteder, "Hobbes: Philosophical and Rhetorical Artifice", *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, vol. 17-18, 1984-85, pp. 30-46; and Frederick G. Whelan, "Language and Its Abuses in Hobbes' Political Philosophy", *American Political Science Review*, vol. 75, 1981, pp. 59-75.

a remedy for political unrest.⁷⁷ Flinker has claimed that *Behemoth* displays a progressive breakdown in the ability of character A to teach character B. Character B commenced the dialogue as a receptive and keen student whereas, by the end, he was unable to memorize, let alone assimilate character A's instruction. Flinker explains this breakdown by suggesting that

Hobbes was conceivably interested in confusing his readers by leading them to identify with 'B' in order to convince them of the unreliability of rhetoric and persuasion. In these terms, the dialogue form of *Behemoth* is a technique for repudiating itself in favor of the less rhetorical logic of the *Leviathan*.⁷⁸

Clearly, Flinker is in agreement with other historians that Hobbes employed rhetorical devices in this text. Disagreement only arises over what these rhetorical devices were intended to demonstrate. It would be appealing to explain the discrepancies over "hypocrisy" by agreeing with Flinker that *Behemoth* displays a progressive breakdown of communication in order to convince the reader of the unreliability of rhetoric. However, this solution is untenable. Flinker argues that the dialogue was effective in Book 1 of *Behemoth* and only deteriorated as the text progressed. But the discrepancies we have noted concerning hypocrisy were present from the very beginning of the work and hence cannot be explained in this

⁷⁷ Noam Flinker, "The View From The 'Devil's Mountain': Dramatic Tension in Hobbes's *Behemoth*", *Hobbes Studies*, 2, 1989, pp. 10-22.

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 20.

way. Consequently, while Flinker's argument is suggestive of a more subtle manipulation of the dialogue form by Hobbes than has previously been acknowledged, it cannot explain the discrepancies surrounding "hypocrisy".

However, this complication aside, Flinker is in agreement with other historians about Hobbes's use of rhetorical devices. Since, then, Hobbes was employing and manipulating the current rhetoric surrounding the religious factions at the heart of the Civil War, we should not be surprised (given our analysis of the religious and polemical use of the term throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries) at Hobbes's liberal use of the terms "hypocrisy" and "hypocrite" in this text. In addition, Hobbes's contradictions when providing a foundation upon which hypocrisy could be judged can obviously be explained in the same way given the confusion we found in many writers concerning how intentions should be judged. Hence, Hobbes's repeated use of the label "hypocrite" and his varied statements regarding the basis of the accusation can easily be explained by the "rhetorical" nature of *Behemoth*.

What, however, of Hobbes's equally repeated insistence that hypocrisy "could not be judged", that another's intentions could not be known? These statements have their origin not in Hobbes's manipulation of rhetoric, but in his "philosophy". In order to demonstrate this we must turn to some of the intricate and detailed arguments in *Leviathan* where Hobbes insisted upon the deep and unbridgeable gulf

between the external, public world of words and actions and the internal, private world of thoughts, beliefs and desires. For example, it was an error, Hobbes claimed, "to extend the power of the Law, which is the Rule of Actions onely, to the very Thoughts, and Consciences of men . . . ".⁷⁹ Time and again, he stressed the division between the external and the internal, using precisely these dramatic terms to emphasize the distinction between the two worlds:

For internall Faith is in its own nature invisible, and consequently exempted from all humane jurisdiction; whereas the words, and actions that proceed from it, as breaches of our Civill obedience, are injustice both before God and Man.⁸⁰

The individual Christian, Hobbes maintained, was at liberty to "obey" by making external profession and yet hold internally, "in his heart", a different belief:

A private man has alwaies the liberty, (because thought is free,) to beleeve, or not beleeve in his heart But when it comes to confession of that faith, the Private Reason must submit to the Publique⁸¹

The above quotations make it clear that Hobbes asserted a distinction between the private and the public worlds, between inner and outer, between internal and external. However, these quotations still leave some room for doubt regarding the final relationship between the two worlds. The possibility remains that Hobbes ultimately reunited the two worlds by

⁷⁹ *Leviathan*, p. 700.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 550.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 478.

suggesting that the inner world must submit to the outer. After all, he laid constant stress on the need for individual conformity to the demands of public religion. However, in one crucial passage, Hobbes provided an animated defence of the inner world whilst still insisting on conformity to external, public doctrine. The passage provides us with the best possible insight into the deep split which Hobbes maintained between two separate but equally legitimate worlds, neither one needing to impinge on the other. It is a lengthy passage, but worth quoting in full:

But what (may some object) if a King, or a Senate, or other Sovereign Person forbid us to beleieve in Christ? To this I answer, that such forbidding is of no effect, because Beleeef, and Unbeleef never follow mens Commands. Faith is a gift of God, which Man can neither give, nor take away by promise of rewards, or menaces of torture. And if it be further asked, What if wee bee commanded by our lawfull Prince, to say with our tongue, wee beleieve not; must we obey such command? Profession with the tongue is but an externall thing, and no more then any other gesture whereby we signifie our obedience;
⁸²

Hobbes went on to explain that in such circumstances a Christian had the same liberty as the prophet Elisha allowed to Naaman the Syrian, to believe in God "in his heart" and yet to denounce publicly such a belief by bowing to the idol Rimmon. In adverse conditions, then, Hobbes allowed the two worlds of faith and public worship to be completely separate and distinct.⁸³ When the demands of the two worlds were

⁸² Ibid., p. 527-8.

⁸³ Although Hobbes legitimated the disparity between private belief and public performance, it should be pointed

divergent men could fully and equally satisfy both. Public obedience was all that could be demanded by the State, and internal belief was adequate for the demands of Christianity in these circumstances.⁸⁴

Thus, there can be no doubt that Hobbes fully accepted the distinction and division between public and private, between internal and external. And while the above examples all revolved around maintaining an inner belief versus an outer conformity to public religion, the internal/external division is also evident in another area of *Leviathan* as well. In Hobbes's view of man we find the operations of the human being itself explained in precisely these terms. Men naturally had secret thoughts of all kinds which were completely free to roam, being subject to no restraints and, indeed, no censure. Only when thoughts were expressed externally as words did they need to be constrained because

out that he did not advocate or promote feigning. The divided state in which the internal and the external worlds were completely divorced from each other was acceptable if circumstances required it, but even then, if individuals had sufficient strength, they should die for their beliefs: "For an unlearned man, that is in the power of an Idolatrous King, or State, if commanded on pain of death to worship before an Idoll, hee detesteth the Idoll in his heart, hee doth well; though if he had the fortitude to suffer death, rather than worship it, he should doe better". *Leviathan*, p. 674.

⁸⁴ Hobbes made one exception to his rule legitimating the disparity between internal and external. The disparity could not be allowed in public figures or ministers because the unlearned man who might follow their example could not discern their "feigned" worship from "sincere" worship. The only way in which disparity could be made legitimate in a public figure was if his abhorrence of idol worship was made just as clear to the external world as his "worship" of the idol was. *Leviathan*, p. 674.

they had to conform to patterns that were socially and politically acceptable. For example:

The secret thoughts of a man run over all things, holy, prophane, clean, obscene, grave, and light, without shame, or blame; which verball discourse cannot do, farther than the Judgement shall approve of the Time, Place and Persons.⁸⁵

And again:

For, (I believe) the most sober men, when they walk alone without care and employment of the mind, would be unwilling the vanity and Extravagance of their thoughts at that time should be publicquely seen: which is a confession, that Passions unguided, are for the most part meere Madnesse.⁸⁶

If the make up of man was such that his secret or innermost thoughts were not subject to shame, blame, or even restraint, then it is not surprising that the distinction between inner and outer was employed by Hobbes to legitimate a possible gulf between thoughts and words, between thoughts and actions or between private, internal belief and public, external religion.

These statements concerning both the requirements of Christian behaviour in the Commonwealth and the make up of man relate directly to Hobbes's understanding of man as a "person". In Part I, chapter 16 of *Leviathan*, "Of Persons, Authors, and things Personated", Hobbes's definition of a "person" (once again tracing the etymology of the term) incorporated the concept of a "feigned", "artificial person" or "actor". From the Latin and Greek, Hobbes demonstrated how

⁸⁵ *Leviathan*, p. 137.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

the word had meant a "disguise", an "outward appearance", or a "mask". Hence, in his understanding of man as "person", the ability to represent or "personate" another meant that the external appearance could legitimately be distinct from, and indeed radically different from, the internal reality. As Hobbes wrote:

A person, is he whose words or actions are considered, either as his own, or as representing the words or actions of another man When they are considered as his owne, then is he called a *Naturall Person*: And when they are considered as representing the words and actions of an other, then is he a *Feigned* or *Artificiall person*.
 . . . a Person, is the same that an Actor is, both on the Stage and in common Conversation⁸⁷

Clearly, in his understanding of man as "person", as well as in his analysis of the appropriate political action for Christians, Hobbes had legitimated the very disparity between internal thoughts and intentions on the one hand, and words or actions on the other that was central to the charge of hypocrisy itself. Since he had made the disparity between internal and external complete and legitimate where circumstances demanded it, he had also legitimated the very disunity which lay at the heart of all accusations of hypocrisy. Thus, the inevitable outcome of such a view of man and his relationship to society would be, in Hobbes's own words, that "hypocrisy [could not] be accused". Therefore, what we can see in Hobbes's rejection of the charge of hypocrisy in *Behemoth* is the logical outcome of a philosophy

⁸⁷ Ibid., p.217.

which allowed for disunity between thought and deed. At the same time, however, this rejection of the charge is contrasted sharply with Hobbes's rhetorical use of the charge to persuade his readers of the evil nature of those who helped perpetrate the war.

What then may we conclude from this? The most striking feature of Hobbes's treatment of hypocrisy is that he rejected the possibility of passing judgement on the intentions of others. As we have seen, his philosophy demanded such a rejection while the self-contradictory bases he offered for his rhetorical uses of "hypocrisy" helped reinforce the impossibility of judging intentions coherently. What is more, we may now recall that judgement of the intentions was the key ingredient which Hobbes had also removed from the charge of heresy. Thus, in Hobbes's treatment of these two concepts we can detect a retreat from the possibility of knowing, and therefore judging another's thoughts and intentions. If, then, we now consider the implications of Hobbes's treatment of heresy and hypocrisy, one highly significant point is evident. Hobbes's treatment of these two words stands in marked contrast to More's insistence, over a century before, that intentions could and must be judged, and his detailed provision of a foundation upon which to make such judgements. More's foundation was the "consensus of Christian believers", in which he attempted to include the reader of his *Dialogue Concerning Heresies*. His *Dialogue* provided a mechanism for demonstrating the malice and destructive intentionality of

heretics, and thereby provided a mechanism that included the reader in passing a negative judgement on heretical intentionality. In the intervening century, not only did the "consensus of Christian believers" break down but, via polemical exchange, two central words and concepts which required the judgement of intentionality became "unhinged" and destabilized. At the same time writers repeatedly found the judgement of intentions a problematic issue. The concurrent emergence of such difficulties at the same time as Christian consensus was also breaking down was far from coincidental. Indeed, historians have drawn attention to certain ramifications of this breakdown. For example, Perez Zagorin has shown how the growing diversity of religions combined with the continued demands for religious conformity contributed to an escalating awareness of the problem of "dissimulation".⁸⁸ Dissimulation itself relied upon exactly the same "gulf" between internal belief and external profession as we have been studying here. Indeed, Zagorin concluded that the link between religious breakdown and the growth of concern with dissimulation was such that the periods of "Reformation" and "Counter-Reformation" might well bear the additional name of "The Age of Dissimulation".⁸⁹

However, while Zagorin has demonstrated the growth of concern with a specific problem, indeed the emergence of

⁸⁸ Zagorin, *Ways of Lying*.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p.330.

language and structured doctrines authorizing a gulf between internal and external, it has been my aim to demonstrate the "destabilization" and disruption which Reformation polemics precipitated in the language and concepts caught in the heat of controversy. In studying the destabilization of "heresy" and "hypocrisy" we have seen not only the definitions of the words come adrift, but also the impossibility of discussing the central issues around which the concepts revolved (namely intentionality) when the words themselves were unhinged. Hence, Hobbes's removal of the issue of intentionality from both concepts, his redefinition of heresy and his self-contradictory position concerning hypocrisy bear witness not only to the demands of his own political philosophy but also to the effects of "reformation" polemics on language and concepts.

CONCLUSION

In the preceeding chapters we have surveyed literature spanning one hundred and fifty years from the writings of Thomas More in the 1520's to the later works of Thomas Hobbes in the 1670's. In the process I have tried to demonstrate three distinct features of this literature: firstly, that early modern theological writings have relevance for intellectual history; secondly that the two words "hypocrisy" and "heresy" were "destabilized" by polemical exchanges in this period; and thirdly that problems of intentionality and judgement lay at the heart of the more probing analyses of these concepts. Inevitably, any "conclusions" to a study of this nature are more likely to take the form of "suggestions" rather than conclusions in the strict sense of the word, and consequently we will now consider some suggestions of further avenues to pursue and further possibilities to contemplate.

On the most simple and most obvious level, a comment must be made about the variety and the quantity of works which could be studied to expand this analysis of "hypocrisy" and "heresy". The range of available material is vast. As we have already seen, the Parker Society's volumes teem with controversies in which "heresy" and "hypocrisy" played a part. The substantial works of William Fulke, for example, deal with

the problem of heresy in some detail.¹ Likewise, William Whitaker's *Disputation on Holy Scripture*, being a defence of Protestantism against Rome, deals at length with the issues of heresy and authority.² As we have also seen, Peter Milward's *Religious Controversies of the Elizabethan Age*, and indeed his *Religious Controversies of the Jacobean Age*, demonstrate the wealth of literature available for exploration.³ Robert Browne, the separatist who gave his name to the "Brownist" movement in the early 1580's, wrote two works of interest for our purposes. In the first, *A Treatise upon the 23. of Mattheue, both for an order of studying and handling the Scriptures . . .*, he dealt with the very biblical chapter from which much of the confusion surrounding hypocrisy first arose. In the second, *A Booke which sheweth the life and manners of all true Christians, and how unlike they are unto Turks and Papistes and Heathen folke . . .*, Browne made a specific attempt to classify the "definitions and divisions" of the parts of divinity, making it an interesting work for further

¹ *The Works of William Fulke*, Parker Society, ed., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1848), vol. 18, pp. 5-124, pp. 373-393.

² William Whitaker, *A Disputation on Holy Scripture, against the Papists, especially Bellarmine and Stapleton*, Parker Society, ed., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1849) vol. 45.

³ Peter Milward, *Religious Controversies of the Elizabethan Age*, (London: Scolar Press, 1977), and Milward, *Religious Controversies of the Jacobean Age*, (London: Scolar Press, 1978).

study.⁴ Another useful source which yields yet more relevant texts is the *Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England . . . 1475 - 1640*. In its pages are such hidden gems as John Bate's *The Portraiture of Hypocrisie, liuely and pithilie pictured in her colours: wherein you may view the vgliest and most prodigious monster that England hath bredde*. This work is worthy of detailed study since it comprises a dialogue between a "hypocrite" and a godly Christian. It attempts to expose "the corruptions of [such] double faced protestants . . . whose actions are not answerable to their Christian profession".⁵

However, there are other ways in which my survey suggests further avenues to pursue. In the introduction, it will be recalled, I claimed that a whole series of words were in a state of flux and were frequently defined and redefined by early modern writers. These words included "hypocrisy", "heresy", "atheism", "superstition", and "apostasy" to name but a few. While I have singled out hypocrisy and heresy for examination in this thesis, partly as a practical method for defining my project and partly because of the particular polemical "relationship" between the two concepts, the early modern literature on all of these categories deserves

⁴ Milward, *Elizabethan Controversies*, p. 36, nos. 137 & 138.

⁵ John Bate, *The Portraiture of Hypocrisie, liuely and pithilie pictured in her colours: wherein you may view the vgliest and most prodigious monster that England hath bredde*, (London: Robert Robinson for John Dalderne, 1579), "To the Christian Reader".

attention. Indeed, even the well studied category of atheism might prove revealing where problems surrounding intentionality and judgement are concerned. Drawing upon the existing secondary literature, there are several indicators that it might prove rewarding to study atheism with the issues of intentionality and judgement in mind. Take, for instance, the early modern insistence upon defining atheism that scholars have called attention to. It might be suggested that the urgent attempts to define atheism and the virtual obsession with categorizing and classifying types and varieties of atheists was prompted by the pressing need to ascertain how atheists could be "known". The very language which contemporaries used to try and classify atheists is indicative of this need. The "practical atheist" was one whose atheism could be *detected* from his living and his actions, whereas the "speculative" or "philosophical" atheist was one who might be "*known*" by his words.

Indeed, further evidence of this pressing concern over how atheism might be "known" is hinted at by Michael Hunter in his article on "The Problem of 'Atheism' in Early Modern England" where he alludes to the "fastidiousness" of early modern writers in their definitions of true "atheism". Hunter provides the example of Thomas Fuller whose reluctance to offer an instance of a "speculative Atheist" was partly because "we cannot see mens speculations otherwise then as they cloth themselves visible in their actions, some Atheisticall speeches being not sufficient evidence to convict

the speaker an Atheist".⁶ Clearly, the problem of judging atheists, of "knowing" whether men were indeed atheists, revolved around judgement of the inner man, of "knowing" his intentions. The problem was directly analogous to the problems we have seen where the judgement of heresy and hypocrisy was concerned.

Hunter also suggests that Francis Bacon exhibited a similar reticence to Fuller when it came to citing speculative atheists. And if we study Bacon's two pronouncements on atheism (one in the *Essays* and one in the "Religious Meditations") we find, once again, a concern with the intentionality of the atheist. The "atheist", just like the "hypocrite", was motivated by the "malice of his will";⁷ indeed, "the great atheists . . . are hypocrites, which are ever handling holy things, but without feeling".⁸ In fact, the whole problematic relationship between the internal thoughts and feelings of men on the one hand, and their external words and actions on the other, formed an important part of Bacon's analysis of atheism.⁹

⁶ Thomas Fuller, *The Holy State and the Profane State*, (Cambridge: 1642), p. 383 cited by Michael Hunter, "The Problem of 'Atheism' in Early Modern England", *Royal Historical Society Transactions*, 5th series, vol. 35, 1985, p. 144.

⁷ Francis Bacon, "Religious Meditations", in *The Works of Francis Bacon*, 7 vols., James Spedding, Robert Ellis & Douglas Heath, eds., (London: Longmans & Co., 1870), p. 251.

⁸ Francis Bacon, *The Essays*, John Pitcher, ed., (Harmondsworth: Middlesex, Penguin Books, 1985), p. 109.

⁹ Bacon, "Religious Meditations", p. 251.

Nor were Bacon's attempts to differentiate between the internal state or intentions and the external appearance simply evident in his writings on "atheism" and "hypocrisy". His "Meditation" "Of Impostors" is directed at precisely this same distinction. A truly religious man, he argues, will conduct himself with "mildness and sobriety and appliable demeanour" in his dealings with his fellow men. He will reserve his expressions of ardour for his own, individual, private relationship with God:

His carriage and conversation towards God is full of excess, of zeal, of extasy. Hence groans unspeakable, and exultations, and raptures of spirit, and agonies.

With "impostors" (and, he also argues, hypocrites) these roles will be reversed:

in the Church and towards the people [impostors] set themselves on fire, and are carried as it were out of themselves, and becoming as men inspired with holy furies, they set heaven and earth together. But if a man should look into their times of solitude, and separate meditations, and conversations with God, he would find them not only cold and without life, but *full of malice** and leaven¹⁰

Bacon, it seems, was concerned with knowing and judging what other men "really" were. As was the case in his "Meditation" on hypocrisy which we examined earlier, so here Bacon was also driven to making pronouncements about the internal state and the intentions of others based only upon their external appearances. He provided no mechanism for exploring the complexities of this judgement process and, once again, made

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 250.

assertions concerning intentionality rather than providing any foundation for informed judgement. But, despite this failure on Bacon's part, it is apparent that many of his "Religious Meditations" were dominated by the need to judge who these men "really" were and establish how they might be "known".

We can, I think, make two suggestions based on the body of this thesis and on this brief look at Bacon and at atheism. Firstly, there was considerable concern in the early modern period with how men could ascertain the "true" nature of their fellow men.¹¹ This concern was not only expressed in the polemical language of "heresy" and "hypocrisy" and in the frequent attempts to structure and analyse these concepts. We might now suggest that these concerns were expressed, and therefore could also be studied, in other judgemental polemical language caught in the religious controversies of the early modern period.

Secondly, I think we can suggest one further possibility worth contemplating. As I indicated in the introduction, one of my purposes in this thesis has been to show the relevance of early modern theology for intellectual history. Thus, I have shown the relevance of the polemical unhinging of "hypocrisy" and "heresy" and the relevance of the problems surrounding intentionality and judgement for our understanding of Thomas Hobbes's views on these subjects. However, perhaps we could develop the implications of this study one step

¹¹ Perez Zagorin, *Ways of Lying*, bears witness to this same concern.

further. In this thesis we have examined a breakdown in "knowledge" and a breakdown in "authority". The early modern writers we have studied failed repeatedly to establish a coherent method for "knowing" the intentions of others. Likewise, in the disagreements over the nature and judgement of heresy, we have witnessed the repeated inability of writers to establish a coherent definition of heresy and their repeated inability to establish a coherent authority by which heresy might be condemned. Time and again the attempts of writers to establish "knowledge" *vis à vis* the condition of others and to establish "authority" *vis à vis* false beliefs ended in self-contradiction and incoherence. In both cases, writers lacked a coherent foundation upon which to base their "knowledge" and "authority". The only exception to this incoherence was found in the writings of Thomas More. As we saw, More explored the concept of heresy and the judgement of intentions coherently. However, in order to do so, he not only saw the need to establish an agreed foundation upon which all "knowledge" was based, he also took as his foundation the "consensus" of Christian believers. Clearly, this "foundation" was simply not available for Protestants. Hence, in some sense the confusion and incoherence we have witnessed in studying Protestant treatments of "heresy" and "hypocrisy" was related to the Protestant search for a coherent foundation for "knowledge" and "authority".

In conclusion, then, what I would like to suggest is that the concern with epistemology, which has been remarked upon in

the seventeenth century "philosophical" works of Hobbes and Locke, should not be examined in isolation. Nor should we see this concern with epistemology as emerging exclusively in the seventeenth century or exclusively from the scientific developments and the "rationalism" of that era. I would argue that a further "possibility to contemplate" is the precipitative role that early modern religious controversy (with its resulting chaos in terms of both "authority" and "knowledge") played in the emerging epistemologies of the seventeenth century.

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