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## Michael Peter Alderson

A literary and rhetorical examination of the depiction of Luther's monastic period in

Peter Manns's *Martin Luther*

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Much historical writing before the nineteenth century was produced with little historiographical consciousness and sought to 'tell the story'. The nineteenth century, however, saw a shift in historical writing mainly as a result of the work of Ranke; his legacy has been far reaching and many historians continue to write in the post-Rankean tradition, aiming essentially to depict the past *wie es eigentlich gewesen*.

As suggested by several theorists, notably Hayden White, post-structuralism questions whether this is possible or indeed desirable and argues that there is a correlation between the historian's view and narrative emplotment. In light of this, post-structuralist critics argue that historical writing may be subjected to the same analysis as figurative writing. Nevertheless, while theories have been produced regarding the emplotment of historical writing and its correlation to the author's ideological view, few, if any, studies have combined historiography with detailed narratological analysis.

Luther's monastic years are problematical as the subject of historical writing, as while they seemingly played a significant role in Luther's development, documentary evidence on the period is scant. The historian must compensate for this lack of documentary fact and create a narrative which tallies with this deterministic emplotment. As such, Luther's monastic period represents an ideal candidate for such rhetorical analysis.

Regarded as an influential and groundbreaking biography, Manns's *Martin Luther* represents an important step in historical writing on Luther's life, showing a significant development in the Catholic understanding of the reformer. By analysing the treatment of key episodes in exemplar texts, narrative traditions can be identified and through comparison with Manns, an ecumenical shift emerges on a conceptual and a rhetorical level in how a polemical figure from the past can be understood and represented.

A Literary and Rhetorical Examination

of the Depiction of Luther's

Monastic Period

in Peter Manns's *Martin Luther*.

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M.A. Thesis

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September 2004



04 NOV 2005

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## Chapter I

### Rationale

Post-structuralist and deconstructionist literary theory questions whether *getting the facts straight* is possible or even desirable and argues that the very way in which historians write shapes their representation of the past, thereby revealing a correlation between the historian's view and the narrative emplotment, or the means through which a historical narrative gains an explanatory effect by creating a story out of a chronicle of historical events. In light of this, critics argue that historical narratives may be subjected to the same analysis as figurative writing. While such theories have been tried on a macro-level, there have been to date very few, if any, studies that combine historiography with detailed narratological work on the relationship between the emplotment and the historian's view.

There are, however, inherent difficulties in testing the theory owing to the wealth of written material on any subject, but particularly in the case of Luther, one of the most written-about Germans. Moreover, in certain aspects of the Luther story, the remoteness of the subject and the lack of 'objective data' pose further complications to the act of narrative representation. Historical writing on Luther is further complicated as much of it takes the form of biography. Biography, as a genre, is somewhat difficult to define, as Judith Anderson argues;<sup>1</sup> it provides the history of a particular individual and has been described as the 'reconstruction of a human life'.<sup>2</sup> As Garraty's use of the term 'reconstruction' suggests, the biographer's duty is to discover the historical facts of his subject's life in order to present a link between the individual's personality and his life's work. Yet in presenting rhetorically a chronicle and 'authorised' version of its subject's life, biography becomes historical writing. Within the genre of biography exists the sub-genre of hagiography which seeks to provide an account of a saint's life; as historical writing, however, hagiography has been much criticised since the Enlightenment from Gibbon, to Burckhardt and Delahaye in the twentieth century for its supposedly primitive nature and the lack of reliability in its representation of the truth.<sup>3</sup> For historians, hagiography has become a term signifying little more than 'pious fiction or

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<sup>1</sup> Judith H. Anderson, *Biographical Truth* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> John A. Garraty, *The Nature of Biography* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1957), p. 28.

<sup>3</sup> Heffernan, *Sacred Biography* (Oxford: OUP, 1988), pp. 56-57; to which all notes in body of the text will refer henceforth.

an exercise in panegyric' (p. 16), and as such Heffernan's 'sacred biography' (p. 7) is perhaps more informative as a generic title. Sacred biography refers to a narrative written by a member of a community of belief that 'provides a documentary witness to the process of sanctification for the community and in so doing becomes itself a part of the sacred tradition it serves to document' (p. 16). Sacred biography extends the notion that the subject is holy and worthy of veneration and is designed to promote social cohesion within the intended readership and, therefore, generate norms of behaviour.

Sacred biography was one of the most successful literary genres to emerge from the medieval period and given the wealth of extant material, 'it is fair to assume that everyone [...] was exposed to the lives of the saints' (p. 14). Sacred biography, therefore, represents a familiar genre that the audience would have easily recognised and regarded as a legitimisation of an individual's sanctity and the community to which he belonged.<sup>4</sup> Due to the volume of surviving *vitae*, it is possible to identify the hallmarks and characteristics of the genre, which in turn can be identified in early representations of Luther's life.

The purpose of a sacred biography is to provide a model of exemplary Christian behaviour for a community of believers. Such narratives are obviously crucial in the early stages of a community, where clear examples are needed as well as the reassurance that the subject belongs to the *templum dei*. The subject often inhabits simultaneously two different worlds, the heavenly and the earthly – the former serving to guide the latter as the subject is presented as someone for whom natural laws are suspended because of divine favour. The subject's action is not, however, always divine but often demonstrates the ideal of human behaviour and the hero often appears as a balance between the 'not quite demigod...and a moral everyman' (p. 30).

Despite the Augustinian precept, *ut doceat, ut delectet, ut flectat*,<sup>5</sup> the emphasis in sacred biography is placed on a primacy of the truth or matter of a subject, diminishing the rôle of ornamented language; as such dramatic action dominates over complex argument, partly due to the example given by Christ in the New Testament and partly by the level of literacy of the audiences for whom the sacred biography was intended. The narrative needs to communicate its message unambiguously and clear

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. Eamon Duffy, 'The Impact of Literacy: Didactic and Devotional Collections', in *The Stripping of the Altars* (New York: Yale University Press, 1992), pp. 68-77.

<sup>5</sup> Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana*, Bk. IV. XII. XXVII (Turnhout: Brepols, 1982).

expression is, therefore, paramount. While a synthesis should be achieved between *sapientia et eloquentia*, language must serve truth in encouraging emulation.<sup>6</sup>

As many *vitae* originate from oral testimony, the rôle of the original audience was crucial and the author's duty becomes twofold in presenting an account of a life that will illustrate the exemplary behaviour of his subject while conforming to the expectations of his audience. As a result of this relationship, the audience functions simultaneously as 'resource, censor, critic and arbiter' (p. 20) and shares in a collective authorship of the account. The author's rôle is primarily to record and interpret episodes appropriately. In this understanding, sacred biography can be seen to illustrate something of the 'collective mentality' (p. 59) and the common understanding of the subject's life.

Within the genre, there are, however, certain inherent problems. As with biography, the author must relate the 'facts' of the subject's life as accurately as possible, while meeting the various expectations of the audience, which probably knows the essential story from the oral tradition. If the narrative originates from an early stage in the transmission of the cultus, then the audience's knowledge of the subject plays an important rôle, perhaps as great as the author's. The text must, therefore, satisfy the audience's traditional understanding of the subject, be it accurate or not. Entrenched legends, however true, must be accommodated within the narrative and the sanctity of the subject is achieved through the narration of stories of the subject's actions in different contexts, ideally provided by different witnesses. This would, therefore, require the author to include certain episodes in his text which might not necessarily 'belong', and which in turn might result in a certain narrative tension. Hagiography not only shares the positivist and sympathetic traits of biography, but also seeks to teach and provide a model of saintliness and perfect humanity that will lead the faithful to emulation.

In applying the term hagiography or sacred biography to early Protestant narratives of Martin Luther,<sup>7</sup> there is an inherent ironic contradiction, for as a result of Luther's own theology, there had been a deliberate shift away from hagiography and iconographic representations.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, the late-medieval community of faith, accustomed to saintly models, required such narratives to feed their faith and provide

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<sup>6</sup> Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana*, Bk. IV. V. VII. (Turnhout: Brepols, 1982).

<sup>7</sup> For a full definition of the term 'sacred biography' see Heffernan, *Sacred Biography: Saints and Their Biographers in the Middle Ages*.

<sup>8</sup> James Atkinson, 'Luther Studies', in *JEH*, 23 (1972), 69-77 (pp. 69-70)

models in *imitatio Christi*. This was especially important in the early stages of the Lutheran Church, when a clear image of its leader was needed. Furthermore, such hagiographical representations implicitly approve of Luther, suggesting divine sanction for his actions and life.<sup>9</sup> Melancthon, Mathesius and other authors of early Protestant biographies, therefore, created narratives that adopted the conventions of the sacred biographical genre without explicitly presenting Luther as a saint. Equally, early Catholic narratives sought to present the opposite, depicting Luther as the arch-heretic.

More traditional narratives have tended to portray Luther in a certain way and subsequent representations within the tradition have developed and mirrored earlier emplotments. Furthermore, until recently these two confessional sides were divided by theological differences and there was little active dialogue between them. This enabled the development of two distinct narrative traditions that, employing the same historical data, treated or emplotted the same subject in very different ways. With the development of the ecumenical movement, inter-faith dialogue has grown, not necessarily with the intention of reconciliation but simply to promote better relations between Churches. This movement developed greatly in the nineteenth century reaching significant stages in 1910 at the Edinburgh Missionary Conference for Protestants, and importantly at Vatican II for Roman Catholics. The latter formed a landmark in inter-faith relations, and as this ecumenism has developed, confessional tensions have lessened and rhetorical style has followed the trend towards understanding and reassessing former differences.

Biographies of Martin Luther are the ideal subject of a literary and rhetorical analysis of historical writing as, in the first instance, there is a wealth of written material on Luther, so much so that some historians have been led to describe him as the most written about figure since Christ.<sup>10</sup> Secondly, as a historical figure he lies at the heart of a polemic between two confessions which have placed him at opposite ends of a polarised controversy. This has had the effect of creating two radically different interpretations of Luther's actions and his life, which in turn have created two distinct representations which have developed into narrative traditions over the course of time.

Within the depictions of Luther's life, his monastic period poses a particular problem to biographers and historians. As with his childhood, the monastic period

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<sup>9</sup> Eike Wolgast, 'Biographie als Autoritätsstiftung: die ersten evangelischen Lutherbiographien', in *Biographie zwischen Renaissance und Barock: Zwölf Studien*, ed. Walther Berschin (Heidelberg: Mattes, 1993), 41-71 (p. 41).

<sup>10</sup> James Atkinson, 'Luther Studies', *JEH*, 23 (1972), 69-77 (pp.69-70).

represents nearly twenty years of Luther's life for which very little objective historical data exist but which, nevertheless, call to be represented if a full 'picture' of the subject's life is to be given. Despite this lack of evidence, historians and biographers from both sides of the confessional divide have emplotted and interpreted various episodes within the period as having deterministic but yet opposingly valenced significance for Luther's later development. Moreover, until recently Protestant representations of Luther's monastic period were characterised by ignorance of, if not apathy or even hostility towards, monasticism. These episodes have their origin either in the *Tischreden* (1566),<sup>11</sup> in reported anecdotes, and contemporary Luther-legend. With little historical data available, these episodes have entered into the historical consciousness and influenced subsequent narratives of the period. The resulting narratives demonstrate, therefore, a disproportionate amount of embellishment to compensate of the lack of documented historical fact.

Once these episodes have assumed a historical status, historians are forced to develop narrative strategies to deal with the episodes and explain their significance in reference to their own particular ideological background. As such, the identification of these episodes and an analysis of the strategies employed to deal with them is crucial to an objective understanding of the narrative treatments of the monastic period in Luther's life and the author-historian's relationship to it. It is the very way in which the episodes are narrated that reveal the confessional consciousness at work and the author's relationship to his ideological tradition and in turn his sub-textual relationship to the episode. Consequently, it is only a narratological approach that can examine the ways in which historians have emplotted and narrated the episodes rather than simply interpreted the significance of the historical data, which to a large extent is common to most biographies of Luther, be they Roman Catholic or Protestant.

Manns's *Martin Luther*<sup>12</sup> reveals several interesting insights regarding its treatment of certain key episodes or 'kernels'<sup>13</sup> in the representation of Luther's monastic period. These kernel episodes are common to most biographies of Luther and have received almost canonical status in their representation, yet they are based on scant documented historical fact and the historian is thus able to narrate them in a more creative way, but one which is also more open to ideological bias. Nevertheless, as will

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<sup>11</sup> Martin Luther, *Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe (Weimarer Ausgabe)*, Abt. 2, *Tischreden*, 6 vols (Weimar: Böhlau, 1912).

<sup>12</sup> Peter Manns, *Martin Luther* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1982).

<sup>13</sup> Steve Cohan and Linda M. Shires, *Telling Stories: a Theoretical Analysis of Narrative Fiction*, (London: Routledge, 1988), p. 54.

be demonstrated, the narrative representations of these episodes have largely followed standard confessional treatments without deviating significantly from them. The first such key episode is the vow Luther made near the village of Stotternheim, when he was supposedly nearly struck by lightning and fell to the ground in fear making his vow to become a monk. This episode poses difficulties for both Protestant and Roman Catholic historians; Protestant accounts must come to terms with votive practice and its validity in the case of Luther in relation to his later writings and criticism of monasticism and vows. In order to do this, the episode has been traditionally accorded certain 'Damascus Road' significance by Protestant historians who have cast Luther's resulting years in the monastery as a Passion narrative; Luther is led into a negative environment and a negative series of experiences by a divine agent, from which he is resurrected as the Reformer Luther. The use of such a metaphor is obviously potent and as a result, Luther's negative experiences in the monastery appear as an almost essential aspect in his theological development and emergence as a reformer. Although Catholic historians have had little difficulty in treating the episode in terms of its votive act, they have had to deal with the overt biblical imagery of the Protestant narrative tradition. Moreover, they have had difficulty in emplotting the vow as a divinely inspired act owing to Luther's negative experiences in the cloister as well as his later actions and criticism. The resultant polemical Catholic narrative tradition has tended towards representing Luther as suffering from a certain mental instability which expresses itself more forcefully in moments of great stress.

As with the vow at Stotternheim, Luther's entry to the Augustinian cloister at Erfurt has been represented in two opposing ways. Building on the depiction of the vow, Protestants have again traditionally employed a Gospel-related narrative to begin the notion of Luther's Passion in the cloister, casting Luther's departure from his friends as a 'Last Supper', furthered through the monastic metaphor of Luther having subsequently 'died' on entering the cloister. Thus, in the Protestant narrative tradition, representations of the start of Luther's monastic period have centred on two connected but separate events: the narrative of the 'Last Supper'; and the actual entry into the cloister. This standard Protestant emplotment has the effect of course of drawing a parallel in which the monastery and death become synonymous and, through the ordeals encountered there, Luther is 'resurrected' as the Reformer Luther. Such a treatment employs a whole raft of meanings and resonances that are undesirable to a Catholic account and the episode must, of course, be approached in a different way, if at all, by Catholic historians without drawing on such overtly positive and approving metaphors.

Although it is not a single event in itself, Luther's novitiate has been narrated as a single episode in order to show the difficulties Luther supposedly encountered are proof of his own or monastic system's failings. There is again an obvious tension between the scarcity of documented historical fact regarding a then unknown novice and the retrospective claim that Luther's initial years in the monastery were an influential period in his life. Given his status as a novice, Luther's novitiate constituted a relatively large period of time for which almost no objective historical record exists. Historians must resort, therefore, to the few known accepted facts as well as a general understanding of monastic practice in order to compensate for the lack of real Luther-specific fact, and thus rely on iterative narrative. In the Protestant tradition, Luther's novitiate has been employed to singulate Luther and his struggles against the unjust and corrupt system. On the other hand, Catholic authors have relied on iterative knowledge of monastic practice to question Luther's singulative recollections and criticisms to cast Luther as having suffered problems encountered by others but equally having failed to accept the remedies available.

The fourth episode that will be examined centres again on two episodes that have been connected narratively to show either Luther's unsuitability for the monastic profession or the corrupting nature of the monastic system *per se*; namely, the fit in the choir that Luther allegedly suffered as a young monk during the Gospel reading of the man possessed; and his alleged attempt to flee the altar during his first mass. Obviously, Roman Catholic biographers have used these episodes negatively as proof of Luther's diabolic possession, in the earliest narratives, through to grave mental instability in more recent accounts. Unsurprisingly, Protestant authors have tended to avoid representing the episodes at all given the obvious metaphors employed by Catholic historians, and when they have done so have employed the episodes to criticise the monastic system.

Historians have repeatedly used Luther's journey to Rome in 1510 as a turning point in Luther's life in which his eyes were opened to the corruption of the Roman Catholic Church and its practices. As with the other episodes, documented historical data are lacking, and the historian must deal with Luther's own recollections and more general knowledge of the period to create his narrative. Stemming from a period later in his life, Luther's recollections originate from a time when he used such anecdotes relating to the journey as proof of the Church's abuses and are, therefore, open to question. While Protestant representations have tended to accept these anachronistic 'facts' and have created a Luther that is commensurate with them, the narrative

treatment of the journey to Rome has been somewhat problematical for Catholic historians. As such, they have ignored it, underplayed its significance or more recently dismissed its emplotment as a deterministic event with reference to Luther's actions and writings in the subsequent period.

The final episode that emerges in Manns's biography that suggests a confessionally different emplotment is not in fact a single episode at all, but rather a series of events that Luther is alleged to have suffered not only in his monastic period but throughout his entire life. The episode is, of course, the *Anfechtungen* or the series of spiritual crises that Luther claimed to have throughout his adulthood. The term *Anfechtungen* is generally accepted to refer to the terror suffered by Luther brought about by fears of God's judgement, his [Luther's] own justification and salvation. As such, they are essentially a theological problem and narrative representations of them have, of course, been influenced by confessional differences in theology relating to the questions. Once again, the narrative traditions have generally represented the *Anfechtungen* in two polarised ways, either to suggest Luther's unsuitability for the monastic vocation or to highlight the corrupting nature of the monastic system. Moreover, for Protestants the solution to the *Anfechtungen* lies in Luther's theological revolution, and consequently they are cast as a necessary stage in the Passion narrative of the monastic period and inherently linked to the pre-Reformation Luther.

The clichéd depictions and narrative hallmarks will be established, by analysing the narrative treatment of the key episodes in texts that exemplify the rhetorical traditions of both sides of the confessional divide. Having demonstrated the narratological conventions, the analysis of Manns's text will then show how he has approached the treatment of the key episodes in light of the overt ecumenical aim stated in the foreword to the biography. Finally, the extent to which Manns's own narrative, and thereby a modern Roman Catholic approach, is influencing subsequent biographies will be established by examining the relatively recent biography of Luther's life by a Protestant Church historian, Genthe. The Luther story is, therefore, an obvious candidate for a rhetorical analysis, polarised as it is by the tradition of two distinct confessional sides.

The historian must employ a certain amount of narrative creativity to compensate for the lack of historical data on Luther's life and surrounding his monastic period in particular, and the degree of manipulation is revealed by this compensation. The monastic years provide a rich focus of analysis as they are a period of great ignorance in the Luther story. Historical writing on them lacks any real documentary

evidence that would testify or validate any historian's account, and yet the period seemingly played a significant rôle in Luther's development by both his own account and that of his biographers from either side of the confessional divide. Thus, historians writing in the post-Rankean tradition, which stresses the importance of historical method and the primacy of verified and verifiable historical data, are forced to fill the void with something which tells of this period and explains its alleged significance. Moreover, until recently many Protestant representations of Luther's monastic period were characterized by ignorance if not apathy or even hostility towards monasticism itself. The resulting narratives, therefore, demonstrate a disproportionate amount of embellishment to compensate for the lack of documented historical fact. This embellishment often takes the form of iteration, in the Genettian sense, which thereby creates a certain narrative tension between the singulative details of the *histoire*. By focusing on the use of singulation and iteration, it is possible to demonstrate how a text differs historically from other emplotments and what effect the use of singulation and iteration has on the textual diegesis.<sup>14</sup>

Therefore, an examination of narratives dealing with this period in Luther's life in light of modern historiographical theory, would seek to discover initially whether there is a correlation between the historian's view, stemming from his confessional and ideological tradition, and the narrative emplotment. Secondly, it would then seek to show whether emplotments can be distinguished confessionally and whether there are particular hallmarks of the 'classic' Catholic and 'classic' Protestant emplotments of the monastic period in the Luther story. Finally, the thesis hopes to demonstrate if any differences between traditional emplotments have shifted in light of the ecumenical movement and the increasing dialogue between the two confessions.

The history of narrative representations of Luther is traditionally divided, both conceptually and rhetorically, between the two distinct confessional groups. On a conceptual level, differences are overtly visible in the interpretation attached by the historian to the various episodes in Luther's life. These distinct confessional differences can also be seen, however, on a rhetorical level in the way in which a historian emplots or depicts certain episodes within his biography, which in turn affects the valency given to Luther's life. As the ecumenical movement has grown, new directions in the interpretation of events in the Reformation have been explored and there has naturally been a lessening of confessional differences on the conceptual level in an attempt to

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<sup>14</sup> For a definition of *singulation* and *iteration*, see p. 30.

bring about a rapprochement between the two parties on a controversial subject. Yet while more recent Catholic histories have begun to recognise, for example, that some of the complaints made about the medieval Church were legitimate, and Protestant accounts acknowledge that the Church was not entirely amoral, much writing has remained true to traditional confessional styles and emplotments. While Manns's *Martin Luther* does not represent a significant step in its conceptual interpretation of Luther's life and positivist approach, it is groundbreaking in its attempt to challenge the rhetorical valency traditionally attached to certain key episodes and confessional emplotments.

In analysing historical writing on Martin Luther, there is a wealth of material available from which to choose exemplar texts, given that he is arguably the most written about figure in history after Jesus Christ.<sup>15</sup> As the focus of a rhetorical-literary study, it would be justifiable to a certain extent to select texts arbitrarily and subject them to analysis given that all historical writing contains fictive elements that would indicate ideological and confessional bias, as Hayden White argues. Nevertheless, the selection of landmark biographies in the corpus of texts dealing with Luther will reveal how confessional traits have shaped and influenced subsequent works and demonstrate the extent to which more recent biographers and historians are working both from within and from outside their own narrative traditions.

Peter Manns's biography of Luther, *Martin Luther*, stands at the heart of this analysis. While it has been argued that the quincentennial Luther celebrations in 1983 represent a year in which 'little new ground was broken' in biographies of Luther,<sup>16</sup> it was also an occasion for many high quality popular biographies by major Reformation scholars. *Martin Luther* is, of course, the product of one of the foremost Luther scholars of the twentieth century and, to some extent, the summary of his life's work, and, therefore, remains an influential and important account of Luther's life. The text's lack of scholarly apparatus and illustrations suggest that it was not intended for academic purposes, and its target readership was most likely a Protestant audience given its subject. Nevertheless, while the outward appearance of the text has led some critics to suggest it was intended for 'Protestant coffee tables',<sup>17</sup> it has equally been recognised as 'not just another picture book'.<sup>18</sup> It offers a sympathetic approach to understanding

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<sup>15</sup> James Atkinson, 'Luther Studies', *JEH*, 23 (1972), 69-77 (pp.69-70).

<sup>16</sup> Mark U. Edwards, 'The Luther Quincentennial', *JEH*, 35 (1984), 597-613 (p. 597).

<sup>17</sup> Robert McAfee Brown, *The New York Times*, 26 December 1982, "Book Review", p. 14.

<sup>18</sup> Mark U. Edwards, 'The Luther Quincentennial', *JEH*, 35 (1984), 597-694 (p. 600).

Luther and urges the reader to recognise the 'Catholic' in Luther. On a conceptual level, Manns attempts to show that what Luther sought for himself and the church was achievable from within the church; and that significantly, through an examination of Luther, as agent of the schism, a closure of the Reformation wounds might be achieved. It is the product of an author who was both a Catholic priest and respected Catholic historian and stems from within the institution of the Roman Catholic Church. While Manns's text does not represent a significant step in its conceptual interpretation of Luther's life and its positivist approach, it is groundbreaking in its attempt to challenge the rhetorical valency attached to certain key episodes and confessional emplotments.

It is a text that deals with Luther's life in its entirety and which seeks to set and explain his life firmly in the context of the late-fifteenth and early-sixteenth centuries, and thus seeks to provide a history in the Rankean model of 'wie es eigentlich gewesen', in which there is a clear attempt to represent the past without condescension and understood it as those who lived through its events. The text itself attempts to create a definitive account of Luther's life and represents a clear advance on the Catholic polarised representations of the past that did little other than demonise Luther and his actions. Interestingly, it goes beyond on the Lortzian narrative tradition that attempted to interpret Luther more positively but, nevertheless, failed to move beyond a gentle condemnation of its subject.

It demonstrates an ecumenical shift in how the past can be understood and, to paraphrase Manns, a desire to see the Catholic in Luther and the Luther in Catholicism. The biography offers an attempt to show how an ecumenical interpretation of the German reformer's life may be achieved. On a simplistic level, the narrative shows a break from the extreme Catholic 'demonising' representations of the past and interestingly Manns's emplotment would seem to be working its way into modern Protestant accounts, as is shown in Genthe's narrative.

Manns establishes in the general historical background an accelerative summary of ecclesiastical and political history, thereby setting the scene against which Luther was born, lived and died. In sketching this broad overview of the period, Manns creates an iterative account of reform which will become crucial to Manns's understanding of Luther's singular life and 'singulative' acts of reform. This iterative narrative desingularates Luther as the arch-reformer so much so that he emerges as an exemplar of a larger historical chain of Catholic reformers, thus negating the singulative quality accorded him in classic Protestant representations and rehabilitating Luther within the Catholic Church. In so doing, Manns explains and justifies why Luther did

what he did and where he belongs both in a historical and a theological narrative. The biography becomes an education or re-education in a Catholic view of a Roman Catholic history, offering an overview of the period and its main socio-political and religious events, punctuated by a singulative narrative of Luther and his life.

In order to develop the narrative traditions from which Manns worked, biographies have been selected that are generally regarded as having a seminal importance in the history of writing on Luther. In addition to this, an even number of Roman Catholic and Protestant texts have been chosen to show how particular episodes in the narrative tradition of representations of Luther have been depicted and developed through time. The earliest selected text is Johannes Cochlaeus's *Commentaria*, written in 1534.<sup>19</sup> It is a mixture of eyewitness account, commentary on Luther's writings and hearsay. As well as being one of Luther's first biographers, Cochlaeus was one of Luther's most vociferous opponents, participating in all-important religious discussions after the Diet of Worms. He produced numerous Latin tracts and pamphlets against Luther and the other reformers, although it is for his writings against Luther that he is most well known. Inverting the recognised genre of the *vita*, Cochlaeus creates in his *Commentaria* an arch-heresiograph in which he depicts a subject who is individually able to 'wreak havoc in the social and ecclesiastical realms'.<sup>20</sup> As will be shown, Cochlaeus's narrative establishes the tone of subsequent Catholic narratives for the following four hundred years and thus enjoys the status of a master-narrative in the classic Catholic tradition. By 1559 Cochlaeus's *Commentaria* had been recognised as the main source of information regarding Luther's life for the Catholic Church when it was listed on the Index of Pope Paul IV.<sup>21</sup> Interestingly, the views of Luther contained in the *Commentaria* continue to enjoy a certain authorised status within Roman Catholicism, which while questioning the tone of Cochlaeus's writing does not repudiate its content:

Almost all of these publications, however, were written in haste and bad temper, without the necessary revision and theological thoroughness, consequently they produced no effect on the masses.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Johannes Cochlaeus, *Commentaria Ioannis Cochlaei, de Actis et Scriptis Martini Lutheri Saxonis* (Mainz: F. Behem, 1549).

<sup>20</sup> Ralph Keen, 'Johannes Cochlaeus: An Introduction to his Life and Work', in *Luther's Lives* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 40-52 (p. 49).

<sup>21</sup> A. Herte, *Die Lutherkommentare des Johannes Cochläus*, (Münster, 1935), p. 339, cited in Wolgast, p. 62.

<sup>22</sup> Joseph Sauer, 'Johannes Cochlaeus', *Catholic Encyclopaedia*, <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04079a.htm> [accessed 20th July 2005].

While the Catholic Encyclopaedia claims that Cochlaeus had ‘no effect on the masses’, he did in fact have a great effect on subsequent Catholic writing on Luther and certain narrative structures as well as his interpretation of data can be found in later biographies through to the twentieth century.

Through the centuries, generation after generation of Catholic priests were brought up on church histories, encyclopaedias, world-chronicles, and histories of heresy all of which, deliberately or unknowingly, accepted Cochlaeus's verdict on Luther. Only in the Age of Enlightenment did the *Commentaria* temporarily lose some of its hold on Germany, though not on France; and even then, the revival of confessionalism in the nineteenth century renewed the old influences and continued to do so right into modern times.<sup>23</sup>

As the Catholic representation of Luther is relatively stable and heavily influenced by Cochlaeus for the next four hundred years, the second Catholic work is that of Hartmann Grisar's *Luther* published in 1911.<sup>24</sup> As an important nineteenth-century scholar of the Reformation, Grisar's work has had a lasting influence on the depiction of Luther and became once again an authorized popular representation, so much so that copies of his work were donated to libraries across America by the Knights of Columba.<sup>25</sup> Grisar's *Luther* is a detailed work with many valuable contributions but it is also one that maintains a decidedly negative depiction of its subject. While the Jesuit Grisar attempted to move positively beyond the Dominican Denifle's vilification of Luther, it has been argued that his depiction is the same in all but tone:

Compared with Denifle's work, that of Grisar seems an improvement, if only by its tone; for is it not written with a chilliness preferable to the rabies of its predecessor?

Through the application of a Freudian evaluation, Grisar arrives at the conclusion that Luther was physically, mentally and spiritually ill. Yet, where Denifle's attack was made through straightforward statement, Grisar relies on a more subtle technique of insinuation to allow the reader to reach his own conclusion. Nevertheless, the account

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<sup>23</sup> Gotthelf Wiedermann, ‘Cochlaeus as Polemicist’, in Peter Newman Brooks (ed.), *Seven-Headed Luther* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), p. 204.

<sup>24</sup> Hartmann Grisar, *Luther* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1911).

<sup>25</sup> Lewis Spitz, ‘Images of Luther’, *Concordia Journal*, 11 (March 1985), p. 46.

stresses throughout Luther's negative qualities and repeats the 'old slanders' common to the classic Catholic *Lutherbild*.<sup>26</sup>

The third Catholic text is by the French philosopher and convert to Catholicism Jacques Maritain.<sup>27</sup> As with Grisar, Maritain views Luther as a demonic character who knows no restraint, and who becomes the 'egocentric par excellence'.<sup>28</sup> *Trois Réformateurs* (1925) connects Luther with Descartes and Rousseau as the three 'false prophets who have promised freedom to the modern man'.<sup>29</sup> For Maritain, Luther provided man with religious freedom, simultaneously giving him religious irresponsibility. Owing to its extreme depiction and academic nature, Maritain's audience was no doubt an educated Catholic readership. Maritain's Luther emerges as a dim-witted figure that was able to fool people at a time when they wished to escape the power of the Church, and in so doing Maritain takes from Luther his intelligence. Thus, the classic Catholic *Lutherbild* is represented through the biographies of Cochlaeus, Grisar and Maritain, in which Luther is cast as a mentally unstable and stupid heretic.

Joseph Lortz is regarded as one of the most important scholars of the Reformation in the twentieth century whose school of research dominated the post-Vatican II era and laid the foundations of ecumenical dialogue in Church history. As the father of the *familia Lortziana*, Lortz stimulated the Catholic reappraisal of Luther and arguably produced within *Die Reformation in Deutschland* (1941) the first Catholic biography of Luther that did not seek to vilify him, paving the way for his disciples Manns and Pesch.<sup>30</sup> While the text is a serious scholarly account of the Reformation intended primarily academic use, Lortz's style is accessible and no doubt contributed to its popular success. As some critics have argued, Lortz's appraisal of Luther marks the shift from 'destructive criticism to a respectful encounter' and is the first narrative that breaks significantly with the demonising accounts begun by Cochlaeus.<sup>31</sup> Lortz's Luther emerges as a *homo religiosus*, a faithful priest, professor and confessor whose complex character has led him to be simplified for the sake of vilification. Although Lortz

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<sup>26</sup> Jaroslav Pelikan (editor), 'Adolph von Harnack', in *Interpreters of Luther*. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1968), pp. 261-262.

<sup>27</sup> Jacques Maritain, *Trois Réformateurs: Luther – Descartes – Rousseau* (Paris: Plon, 1925).

<sup>28</sup> Fred W. Meuser and Stanley D. Schneider (eds.), *Interpreting Luther's Legacy*, (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1969), p. 43.

<sup>29</sup> Peter Brunner and Bernard J. Holm, *Luther in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, (Iowa: Luther College Press, 1961), pp. 88-89.

<sup>30</sup> Joseph Lortz, *Die Reformation in Deutschland* (Vol. I) (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1941).

<sup>31</sup> Richard Stauffer, *Luther As Seen By Catholics*, (Virginia: John Knox Press, 1967), p. 7.

maintained that Luther could not be ‘melted down’ into the Catholic tradition,<sup>32</sup> he saw Luther as a figure of tragic necessity for a Church decaying due to severe abuses and Luther’s heresy becomes a necessary act to bring the Church back to true catholicity. In *Die Reformation in Deutschland*, Lortz suggests that the Reformation was historically necessary and needed to correct wide-ranging ecclesiastical abuses of the early modern period. Breaking with earlier accounts that vilified Luther’s character as a means to discredit the entire Reformation, Lortz approaches Luther as a sincere religious man and theologian. As such, his interpretation of the Reformation and Luther’s rôle in it was seen as being offensive to the official Catholic view in the 1930s and 1940s. While Lortz continued to view Luther as a heretic, he moved beyond the traditional Catholic views of Luther as a plague on Germany, as suggested by Cochlaeus, or the mentally disturbed figure of Grisar’s account. Simultaneously, however, Lortz radically revised the Roman Catholic interpretation of Luther and called for Catholic scholars to include Luther in ecumenical dialogue. The consequences of his work were far-reaching and his conclusions stimulated debate among scholars to move beyond the question of how good a Catholic Luther was.

Melanchthon’s *Historia* (1548) was written as an introduction to a post-humous collection of Luther’s works and was one of the first Protestant accounts of Luther’s life; despite the closeness of the relationship between Luther and Melanchthon, the latter never produced a full biography of the former.<sup>33</sup> Melanchthon’s *Historia* was in fact the preface to a collection of Luther’s works, with which Melanchthon intended to correct false accounts of Luther to a later audience. As with Cochlaeus’s *Commentaria*, Melanchthon’s history was originally published in Latin and indicates that it was intended for an educated Protestant audience. While Melanchthon is able to offer a primary account of some events in Luther’s later life, the events of the earlier years appear secondary and are based on hearsay. Melanchthon’s account is, of course, far from objective; he was one of Luther’s closest friends and a senior figure in the fledgling Lutheran Church. As such, it is not surprising that he creates a protagonist ‘who rises heroically from the dregs of late medieval Catholicism, and with prophetic zeal restores the piety of the ancient church’; Melanchthon thus attempts to establish Luther’s position within church history, and ranks him beside a list of prophets, apostles and the Church Fathers, and Luther thereby becomes a continuation of their work.

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<sup>32</sup> Eric W. Gritsch, ‘Joseph Lortz’s Luther: An Appreciation and Critique’, *ARG*, 81 (1990), 32-49 (p. 37).

<sup>33</sup> Philip Melanchthon, *Historia de uita et actis reuenerendiss. viri D. Mart. Lutheri, uerae Theologiae Doctoris* (Erfurt: Geruasius Sthurmerus, 1548).

Melanchthon's *Historia* sets the tone for subsequent Protestant biographies in its use of hagiographical and rhetorical conventions common to the medieval *vitæ*; his representation seeks simultaneously to provide a model of Christian life, instruction in the facts of Luther's life as well as a repudiation of Catholic slander. In this way, Melanchthon's account serves as an antidote to the opposing Catholic representations, typified by Cochlaeus. Yet the description of Luther's monastic period lacks the hallmarks of the later Protestant tradition. Its emplotment shows, however, a hagiography common to traditional Protestant representations and as a master-narrative, it later went on to influence and define future Protestant depictions of the reformer's life, as well as provide basic historical data for Catholic biographers, including Cochlaeus.

Equally important in creating the early Protestant *Lutherbild* was Mathesius's biography of 1566.<sup>34</sup> Mathesius's account of Luther belongs to the first biographies that dealt with Luther's entire life. Johannes Mathesius belonged to the last generation that could report from personal experience of Luther; Mathesius himself had studied in Wittenberg and had lived in Luther's house. Although his account was not produced until twenty years after the Reformer's death, Mathesius's depiction of the Reformer was originally part of a series of sermons to be preached between 1562 and 1565 by which time the image of the reformer in the popular Protestant consciousness was relatively certain.<sup>35</sup> In his account, Mathesius follows the life of Luther chronologically but, as Wolgast indicates (p. 63), it is in his attempts to bring his subject to life that he is original. Unsurprisingly, Mathesius's aim in creating his biography serves a three-fold aim in thanking God for the rediscovery of the Gospel through Luther, the remembrance of the great reformer, and as an example of a Christian life for future generations. The Luther that emerges in Mathesius's account is, however, relatively static, and Mathesius projects the older Reformer on to the young monk. Mathesius categorises Luther's childhood, university life and monastic period as a formative experience that will lead him to the crucial events that took place after 1517. Mathesius, therefore, seeks to show the relevance of Luther's early life, piety and the significance of various events to his later development. While Mathesius's Luther is not regarded uncritically, Luther does

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<sup>34</sup> Johann Mathesius, *Historien von des Ehrwürdigen in Gott Seligen thewren Manns Gottes Doctoris Martini Luthers anfang, lehr, leben vnd sterben* (Nürnberg, 1566), in *Johannes Mathesius: Ausgewählte Werke*, III, ed. G. Loesche (Prag: Calwe, 1906).

<sup>35</sup> Eike Wolgast, 'Biographie als Autoritätsstiftung: Die ersten evangelischen Lutherbiographien', in *Biographie zwischen Renaissance und Barock: Zwölf Studien*, ed. Walter Berschin (Heidelberg: Mattes, 1993), pp. 41-71 (p. 62).

emerge as a prophet to the German people and is even compared to Moses. Mathesius's depiction was hugely successful, reaching ten editions by 1600 and continuing to be printed into the twentieth century. As such, its influence on the popular understanding and image of Luther cannot be underestimated:

[Die Lutherbiographie von Mathesius]...war so lebendig geschrieben und verlässlich in ihren Angaben, daß viele Generationen von Populärschriftstellern und Geistlichen ihr Bild von «unserem Dr. Martin Luther» aus diesem Werk gewannen. Insofern begründete Mathesius mit seinen Historien das populäre Lutherbild der evangelischen Kirche.<sup>36</sup>

In attempting to trace the development of the classic Protestant *Lutherbild*, Mathesius's narrative cannot be ignored given its important status in the 'canonisation' of Luther in the Protestant consciousness.

Köstlin's *Luthers Leben* (1892) is an influential account of the reformer in the Protestant narrative tradition.<sup>37</sup> It is the product of a figure who is regarded as one of the greatest Lutheran Church historians and theologians of the nineteenth century. While also a Lutheran pastor, Julius Köstlin is principally renowned as a major scholar of the Reformation even though he did not devote himself to its study until he reached middle age. Nevertheless, during his lifetime, Köstlin contributed much to the field as editor of *Theologische Studien und Kritiken* and director of the *Verein für Reformationsgeschichte*, not to mention his work with Knaake in the production of the Weimar edition of Luther's works. As a Protestant from the South West of Germany, Köstlin had grown up in an atmosphere of co-habitation with Roman Catholics as opposed to the pietist Lutheran tradition of Northern Germany. While he remained a faithful and convicted Lutheran throughout his life, his writings suggest openness to ecumenism even if this were not fully realised until after his death. As an author, he is best remembered for his biography of Luther which was a success during his own lifetime, going through several editions and to which he added several smaller and more popular versions. He is regarded as being one of the first Protestant Church historians to approach Luther's life critically and to move away from the hagiographical tradition of the classic Protestant tradition.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Wolgast, p. 66.

<sup>37</sup> Julius Köstlin, *Luthers Leben* (Leipzig: Reisland, 1892).

<sup>38</sup> For a more detailed biography of Köstlin and his influence, see 'Julius Köstlin: Eine Autobiographie', in Oskar Wilda (ed.), *Deutsche Denker und ihre Geistesschöpfungen*, 9.-12. Heft, 1891; E. Kautzsch, Zum Gedächtnis K.s, in: ThStKr LXXVI, 1903, 1-34; - W. Friedensburg, J.K., in, Mitteldt. Lb. III, 1928; RE XXIII, 784-788 (G. Kawerau); - RGG<sup>3</sup> III, 1718.

Complementing the work of Köstlin, the nineteenth-century development of the Protestant depiction of Luther can be seen in Boehmer's *Der Junge Luther* (1929).<sup>39</sup> As professor of Church history at Leipzig, Boehmer is principally known through his work on Luther, the Jesuits and his contribution to the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*. While modifying the representation slightly, Boehmer's Luther remains fundamentally unchanged from Köstlin's account. Through its desire to understand Luther in terms of the medieval Catholic context, Boehmer's narrative does suggest an ecumenical desire in its conceptual and interpretational content.

Richard Friedenthal was the author of a variety of literary works, from poetry, to novellas and novels, yet it is for his biographies that he is best known, particularly in English-speaking countries. Friedenthal's *Luther* (1967) provides an example of a relatively recent lay depiction by an important professional biographer.<sup>40</sup> Although the biography does not perhaps offer any new historical data or fresh views, and it has been criticised as being of the 'lower level of popular journalism', it is an account that supports its representation with historical material and a 'wealth of detail'.<sup>41</sup> As such, Friedenthal's narrative offers an insight into the late twentieth-century secular depiction of Luther. Friedenthal's text serves as a precursor to Manns's biography through the way in which it seeks to harmonise previous representations from both sides of the confessional divide.

While Genthe's *Martin Luther: sein Leben und Denken* (1996) has been dismissed by critics as being a 'superior sort of guide book',<sup>42</sup> it does offer a recent Protestant appraisal of the reformer's life.<sup>43</sup> As with Manns's text, Genthe's account again lacks any academic apparatus and was clearly intended for a Protestant lay audience. In his biography, Genthe attempts to mediate the results of recent Luther research while providing a guide to sites connected with Luther's career. His dating of the *Turmerlebnis*, among others, makes the 95 Theses the product of a Catholic mind and there is a sense throughout the biography that Genthe has drawn much from Roman Catholic scholarship but has neglected recent contributions from Protestant scholars. Yet, it is precisely this influence that makes Genthe's text important as it displays clear inheritances from Mann's narrative, both conceptually and importantly rhetorically, and

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<sup>39</sup> Heinrich Boehmer, *Der junge Luther* (Gotha: Flamborg, 1929).

<sup>40</sup> Richard Friedenthal, *Luther: Sein Leben und seine Zeit* (München: Piper, 1967).

<sup>41</sup> James Atkinson, 'Luther Studies', *JEH*, 23 (1972), 74-75 (p. 75).

<sup>42</sup> David Bagchi, review of Genthe's *Martin Luther* in *JEH*, 48 (1997), 764-765 (p. 764).

<sup>43</sup> Hans Jochen Genthe, *Martin Luther: Sein Leben und Denken* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996).

thus serves to demonstrate how the modern Catholic *Lutherbild* is infiltrating and informing the modern Protestant consciousness.

By analysing the treatment of the key episodes in these definitive texts, the nature of the distinct confessional narrative traditions on both a conceptual and a rhetorical level, will be demonstrated. Furthermore, by charting the way in which the Catholic and Protestant narratives have developed, it will be possible to show whether Manns's text achieves an ecumenical shift in how Luther's monastic period can be represented and understood, and finally, through analysis of the Genthe biography, to what extent this ecumenical rapprochement is present in the modern Protestant *Lutherbild*.

## Chapter II

### The Historical Narrative

All texts tell a story and historical narratives are no exception to this. They present us with a series of events, or facts, which together form a whole and convey a message to be interpreted by the reader. The view has traditionally been held among historians that the facts of a historical event provide the story; in effect, that the story is present in the data or facts and the historians only need discover the correct facts for the story to be told, or even 'tell' itself. The task of the historian in this classic understanding of historical writing was purely to discover the facts or historical data and write these up in the most plausible way. This is, of course, a fallacy as the 'facts' can never write themselves and numerous theorists, from Collingwood<sup>44</sup> to Hayden White, have argued that the very act of selection and emplotting the data requires the historian to be creative and construct a narrative, as the facts do not speak for themselves. The historian must play a creative rôle in selecting, sequencing and arranging the 'facts' into a plausible account or story. Through this creative process, the historian endows certain 'facts' with deterministic, causal or consequential status, he connects, highlights, discards or suppresses certain 'facts' in his attempt to fashion a story from them. In turn, this creative aspect lends a fictive element to historical writing, an appreciation of which is crucial to a full understanding of the text. In short, the act of writing history feeds the historical interpretative consciousness, in which narrative and rhetoric create and determine history itself.

In order to understand this fictive element in historical writing, accounts of historical events must be approached from a narrative as well as positivist standpoint, as while a positivist analysis would consider the interpretation of facts, it would not consider the way in which they are connected narratively and the way in which they are combined to produce a story. Although other methods of analyses are valid, it is only a narratological approach that will examine the relationship between the narrative elements of historical writing and how the fictive or creative aspect of historical writing has influenced subsequent readings and interpretations of the past, and what effect these have had on our understanding of the subject of a piece of historical writing.

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<sup>44</sup> R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, (Oxford: OUP, 1946), pp. 239-241.

The deconstructionist and post-structuralist movements have argued that meanings change and are always open to interpretation. However well constructed a text is, it is artificial and a product of the human mind. Texts are cultural products, crafted from varying beliefs, values and ways of speaking, peculiar to a particular society and time. The text opens itself up to multiple and possible contradictory readings and a preference for any one is often based on certain beliefs and values rather than the 'words on the page'.<sup>45</sup> In confronting the multiple meanings of a text, the reader accepts its dominant meaning, if one does indeed exist, while acknowledging the existence of other interpretations. The texts are, in a sense, 'verbal fictions',<sup>46</sup> the contents of which are invented rather than found and which, in the case of the historical narrative, draw on an incomplete historical record.

Much historical writing prior to the nineteenth century was produced with little historiographical consciousness and sought mainly to *tell the story* and present an image of the past, as in Gibbon's history of the Roman Empire.<sup>47</sup> The nineteenth century, however, saw a shift in historical writing mainly as a result of the work of Ranke and began to move away from the Enlightenment understanding of history as 'philosophy from examples'.<sup>48</sup> Leopold von Ranke was the author of over sixty works, including multi-volume histories of the Popes, Germany in the time of the Reformation as well as an unfinished history of the world.<sup>49</sup> In addition to this, Ranke was important in establishing history as a separate academic discipline, and in defining its purpose to represent and understand the past in its own terms. Furthermore, Ranke introduced important critical methods of textual analysis into the study of modern history and stressed the importance of historical data.<sup>50</sup> Breaking from the model of historians such as Gibbon, Ranke proposed a theory of history that did not seek to instruct the present

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<sup>45</sup> Brian Moon, *Literary Terms: A Practical Glossary* (London: The Chalkface Press, 1992), pp. 30-32 & pp. 89-91. For a brief definition of the terms 'deconstructionist' and 'post-structuralist', see Raman Selden, Peter Widdowson and Peter Brooker, *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory* (Hemel Hempstead: Prentice Hall/Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1985), pp. 150-187; Mieke Bal, *Narratology: an Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999).

<sup>46</sup> Hayden White, 'Historical Text as Literary Artefact', in *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), p. 82; to which all textual notes refer henceforth.

<sup>47</sup> Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (London: D. Campbell, 1995).

<sup>48</sup> Dionysius of Halicarnassus: 'Ars Rhetorica', xi. 2, in *Critical Essays*, Vol. 1 (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1974): quoted in Richard J Evans: *In Defence of History* (London: Granta, 1997), p. 16.

<sup>49</sup> Leopold von Ranke, *Deutsche Geschichte im Zeitalter der Reformation*, 6 vols. (Munich: Paul Joachimsen, 1925-26) & *The Theory and Practice of History*, ed. Georg G. Iggers & Konrad von Moltke (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1973).

<sup>50</sup> For a fuller contextualisation of Ranke's legacy, see Richard J. Evans, *In Defence of History* (London: Granta, 1997), pp. 16-20.

from the past and which did not condescend towards the actions and people of the past. The duty of history was, Ranke argued, to represent the past ‘wie es eigentlich gewesen’ and to try to understand the past and the people who had lived in it. For Ranke the key to this lay in the validity and reliability of historical documents, from which historians construct their narratives; the historian had merely to discover the correct data in order to construct a version of the past. Ranke’s legacy has been far-reaching and many historians, educated in this school of historiography, continue to write in the post-Rankean tradition (e.g. G. Elton and E. H. Carr) aiming essentially *to get the facts straight*.

Theorists such as Hayden White argue, however, that history is not only an object we can study nor our study of that object, but also a discipline dealing specifically with our relationship to the past.<sup>51</sup> As we relate to the past through historical writing, which is the product of a specific time and place, historical narratives may be put under the scrutiny of the same analytical techniques as literary texts.

Northrop Frye shows that when a historical text reaches a certain point of comprehensiveness, it becomes mythical in shape or assumes a recognised plot form, and thus ‘so approaches the poetic in structure’,<sup>52</sup> which he explains as being comic, tragic, romantic or ironic. That is to say that when an account of a series of past events is recorded in a written form, it is represented in the traditional forms of poetic literature.<sup>53</sup> Comic, he defines, is the myth of progress through evolution or revolution. Tragic is the myth of ‘decline and fall’, Romantic the processional adventure or quest, and Ironic the myth of recurrence or casual catastrophe. Yet Frye stresses that the historian does not work from any pre-ordained form, but rather toward one which is ultimately shaped by the data. The historian should, therefore, be judged by what he says – the verbal reproduction of the external model suggested by the data.

Frye is, however, according to White, stressing the ideal rather than the practice that has inspired history writing throughout time. This ideal in its very nature presupposes an opposition between myth and history. Fiction, according to Frye, consists of ‘sublimates of archetypal myth structures’ derived from Classical and

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<sup>51</sup> Hayden White, ‘Literary Theory and Historical Writing’, in *Figural Realism: Studies in the Mimesis Effect* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), pp. 1-26 (p. 1).

<sup>52</sup> Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957) & ‘New Directions from Old’, in *Fables of Identity: Studies in Poetic Mythology* (New York: Harcourt, 1963), p. 53.

<sup>53</sup> For a detailed definition of Frye’s four basic *mythoi*, see *Anatomy in Criticism*, pp. 162-239.

Judaean-Christian literature which give the text latent meanings.<sup>54</sup> The fundamental meanings of all fictions consist in pre-generic plot structures. Hence, we understand how and why a story develops as it does, once we identify the pre-generic plot structure or *archetypal myth*. We understand the point once we understand the theme and the story becomes a parable or illustrative fable. All literature has a fictional and thematic aspect, but as a text moves towards an overt articulation of theme from a figurative projection of it, it becomes more of a direct address or straight discursive writing, and ceases to be literature. Frye, therefore, views historical writing not as an example of figurative literature but as discursive writing. If the fictional element, 'the mythic plot structure', is overtly present, history ceases to be history and becomes a 'bastard genre' (p. 83), a union between history and poetry.

White, on the other hand, identifies the benefits that historical writing acquires from its similarities with poetic literature; history gains an explanatory effect through its emplotment by making a story out of a chronicle of events. The recognisable and experienced plot structure helps us to understand the strange and distant series of past events. Emplotment, for White, is the 'encodation of facts, contained in the chronicle as components of specific kinds of plot structures' (p. 83).

For White, a casual set of events is not a story in itself, but forms at most the elements of a story. The events only become a story by the suppression of some elements and the highlighting of others, characterization, motivic representation, variation of tone, point of view, and description: in other words, all the traditional techniques used to emplot a novel or a play. No historical event can be *per se* a tragedy, comedy, satire etc., but rather it can only be conceived as such from a particular viewpoint or within a context, in which it is given a favoured place. This develops R.G. Collingwood's view of the historian as fundamentally a storyteller, who has the capacity to make a plausible story out of otherwise senseless and fragmentary 'facts'.<sup>55</sup> To make sense of the 'facts', however, the historian has to use his 'constructive imagination' (pp. 83-84) to present us with what must have happened.

Historical sequences can be emplotted in a number of different ways, thereby presenting a number of different possible meanings and interpretations. One can have different notions of what pre-generic plot structure best fits a sequence of facts, depending on one's perception. Furthermore, White indicates that with a different

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<sup>54</sup> Cited in White, 'Historical Text as Literary Artifact', in *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism*, p. 83.

<sup>55</sup> R.G. Collingwood, pp. 239-241.

ideological agenda, the historian may seek out a different set of facts from the same sequence, because he has a different story to tell. The relationship between the ideological view and the emplotment thus becomes crucial and poses the question as to whether an ideology dictates a particular emplotment.

The configuration of a historical situation depends on the historian's subtlety in matching up plot structure with the historical events which he wishes to endow with particular meaning. This is the fictive or literary operation at work in historical writing. Yet it does not, White stresses, detract from the historical narrative's status as a knowledge provider. White sees two distinct ways of making sense of data or a series of events. Scientific explanation subsumes events under causal laws, so that events appear as effects of mechanical forces: the apple, for example, falls from the tree to the ground as a result of the laws of gravity. Encodation familiarizes the unfamiliar by masking it in recognized categories, religious beliefs or story forms. We may, for example, gain a better understanding of the working of the court of Elizabeth I through comparison with contemporary events in politics.

Historical data are, by their very nature, strange and distant in time and space to us: historical events belong in a past which we cannot truly know. Historical discourse relates them to us and builds a bridge between our present and the described past. The historian knows what form a sequence of events must take for it to be understandable to his probable audience due his membership of a specific culture. In this way, the same historical events can be emplotted in one way by a historian from a different culture, which is unacceptable to another. The intended audiences differ in their cultural background and knowledge and do not necessarily share the same point of view on historical events. Thus Kennedy's assassination (White, p. 84) could be viewed as either a tragedy or a comedy, depending on one's perspective: a moderate historian from the West would most likely emplot it in terms of a tragedy, as that is how his likely audience would expect to receive it, rather than as a comedy which they would find offensive. Thus certain emplotments become the only acceptable and thereafter authorized emplotments of a particular series of events for certain groups. White cites the example of Art Spiegelman's *Maus* (1987) to reinforce this argument.<sup>56</sup> Spiegelman deals with the issues surrounding the representation of the Nazi genocide of the Jews in the Second World War, by allegorising it as a game of cat and mouse. He casts his story in the medium of a black-and-white comic and in the mode of bitter satire. Such an

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<sup>56</sup> Art Spiegelman, *Maus: A Survivor's Tale*, 2 vols (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987).

emplotment is antithetical to most minds and verges on the 'blasphemous', yet the effect is to dehumanise all the *dramatis personæ* and to present, what White describes as 'one of the most moving narrative accounts of it [the Holocaust]'.<sup>57</sup> Sometimes, White suggests, the very emplotment which we least expect can deal admirably with the series of events without detracting from their accepted nature and meaning.

White goes on to explain that the reader follows a series of events in a narrative and recognizes the form as romance, tragedy, comedy or satire, as Frye stated.<sup>58</sup> The reader then experiences the effect of having the series of events explained to him, while being already in possession of the likely outcome, as the story follows a pre-generic plot structure. He follows the story (*mythos*), grasps the point (*dianoia*) and understands it. Thus the story belongs, as White terms it, to an 'icon of a comprehensible finished process' (p. 86): that is to say the outcome of a series of events is both predictable and expected, as it is cast in a culturally known and expected form, through the very way in which it has been emplotted.

In this way, the historian seeks to refamiliarise us with the forgotten or repressed, through likening the forgotten or repressed with the familiar. Great histories have always dealt with traumatic events whose meanings are problematical or over-determined in the significance that they still have for current life. In examining how events happened, the historian refamiliarises them and 'relives' them, not only by providing more information but also by showing how the developments conformed to the chosen story type.

Unlike a purely artistic representation of an object, one of the difficulties facing the historical narrative is that its representation cannot be checked against the original. If we wish to see how Matthew Arnold's description of Rugby School Chapel, for example, compares with the original, we need only visit the chapel and compare the described with the description. We would, to some extent, be then justified in judging the representation. In history, the events are not 'revisitable' in ways analogous to Rugby School Chapel or the locations of famous paintings; the reader is instead reliant on the verbal representation. Yet the strangeness of the historical representation, present in the sequence of events, inspires the historian to make sense of them and represent them in an understandable way. Thus, for White, the historical narrative is not only a reproduction of the past, but also a complex of symbols which gives directions

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<sup>57</sup> Cited in White, 'Historical Emplotment and The Problem of Truth in Historical Representation', in *Figural Realism: Studies in the Mimesis Effect*, pp. 26-42 (p. 31).

<sup>58</sup> Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism*, p. 162.

for finding an icon of the structure of events in our own literary tradition. The historian must, therefore, analyse the data and find the most suitable manner to represent it; it is precisely this representation that is crucial to a fuller understanding of the text.

White stresses that each historical work written adds to the number of possible texts that must be interpreted if an accurate picture of events is to be drawn. Frustratingly, the more we know the more difficult it is to generalise about the original sequence of events. Historical knowledge increases, while our historical understanding does not. Through the many historical texts published, we do not get a more truthful or accurate representation of what happened, merely a fuller and more diverse picture. Yet the vast number of historical narratives does allow us to generalise about the forms in which historical knowledge is transmitted to us.

On their own, no set of events is a story, just as we do not live stories in life. We retrospectively cast, or emplot, a story on a set of events, thereby giving individual events meaning and significance. Historical accounts cannot, therefore, be assessed on their factual content or the individual sequence of events, as authors do not make use of the same set of events in telling a story. As Lévi-Strauss argued, each individual fact, pursued in isolation, shows itself to be beyond grasp.<sup>59</sup> He went on to argue that we can only construct a comprehensible account of the past by giving up some of the facts: there are simply too many data to paint a comprehensible picture. Thus, an explanation of historical sequences is determined by what we leave out as well as what we leave in. In this way, the historian demonstrates his tact and understanding, or lack of both. Facts are tailored into a history or story form, and in this way, history cannot escape from its myth or literary status.

Historical narrative does not reproduce events, but tells us in what direction to think about events and gives direction with emotional valence through the pre-generic plot structure. Historical narratives call to mind images of the things indicated and in this way become metaphors. The historical narrative is, therefore, not unambiguous: it is a symbolic structure or extended metaphor that likens the described events to a familiar and experienced form from our own literary culture and tradition. A particular constitution of a set of events charges those events with the symbolic significance of a comprehensive plot structure. In this way, the historical narrative is the translation of 'fact' into 'fiction'. Historical writing thus understood, White urges, should therefore

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<sup>59</sup> Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Savage Mind* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1966) and 'Overture to *Le Cru et le cuit*', in *Structuralism*, ed. Jacques Ehrmann (New Haven: Yale French Studies, 1966).

focus on discovering all possible ways of emplotting a series of events and determining which one best fits the data:

[...] Our understanding of the past increases precisely in the degree to which we succeed in determining how far that past conforms to the strategies of sense-making that are contained in their present forms in literary art. (p. 92)

Developing Genette's distinction of *histoire* and *récit*,<sup>60</sup> White shows (p. 92 ff.) that every story is open to many different interpretations and its meaning can be inferred in many different ways, depending upon the stress placed on individual elements within its narrative. A writer might discover a set of events, the *histoire* or diegesis, and want to make sense of them, by arranging them into a particular order, the *récit* or act of narration:

*a, b, c, d, e,....., n,*

He may choose to order them chronologically, but will need to add description and characterization so as to give his narrative meaning. He can, however, emplot his narrative in a variety of different ways, thus giving the overall *story* different meanings, without violating the chronological order. He may endow particular events with a greater significance because they explain the structure of the whole series of events; or because they act as symbols of the plot structure of the series, considered as a story of a specific kind. For example,

*A, b, c, d, e,....., n,*  
*a, B, c, d, e,....., n,*  
*a, b, C, d, e,.....,n,*  
*a, b, c, D, e,.....,n,*  
*a, b, c, d, E,.....,n,*

White indicates that a story that endows any event with the status of a decisive factor is 'deterministic' (p. 93). Similarly, any story that lays full emphasis on the final event in a series is 'eschatological' or 'apocalyptic' (p. 93). All writing which falls between these two extremes can be categorized by a distinct fictional sort, which endows the series with a perceivable form and conceivable meaning (e.g. romance, comedy, tragedy and satire).

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<sup>60</sup> Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980), p. 27 ff..

If a series of events were recorded in the order they originally occurred, assuming that such an ordering of events explained why, when and where things occurred, the result would be a pure form of the chronicle. White argues that this would be a rather naïve attempt at representing the past, however, as the categories of time and space alone would serve as the ‘informing interpretative principles’ (p. 94), when they may in fact not explain why something happened as it did. White also conceives of a sentimental emplotment, in which it is denied ironically that historical sequences have any kind of greater significance or describe any imaginable plot structure. Such an account would serve as an antidote to narratives which emphasised a particular deterministic event in a series as the examples do in White’s model of emplotment. It would represent an ironic return to mere chronicle as constituting the only sense which any history could take and could be characterized, as follows:

“a, b, c, d, e,.....n”

The quotation marks indicate, White explains, the ‘conscious interpretation of events as having nothing other than seriality as their meaning’ (p. 93).

Drawing mainly on fictional or figurative literature Genette explains that an event in a narrative can not only happen but can happen again or even be re-represented. Genette terms the study of the relationships between diegetic events of the *histoire* and their narrative representation in the *récit frequency*. Adopting Saussure’s example of the ‘Genève-Paris 8h du soir’ train,<sup>61</sup> Genette shows that while the identity of a repeated event may appear the same, it is different and that any repetition is of course only a mental construction; as at best, ‘similar’ events can only be considered similar through their resemblance.

In analysing the elements of a narrative, Genette reduces the relationships between the narrated events of a story and the narrative statements of a text to four archetypal forms. He shows that a narrative may narrate once what happened once (*IN/IS*), narrate *n* times what happened *n* times (*nN/nS*), narrate *n* times what happened once (*nN/IS*) or narrate one time or at one time what happened *n* times (*IN/nS*). He terms the first two forms of narrative (*IN/IS* & *nN/nS*) *singulative*, in that the ‘singularity of the narrative statement corresponds to the singularity of the narrated event’:<sup>62</sup> he continues by defining the *singulative* by the equality of the occurrences in both narrative and event. Genette considers this form of narrative, and in particular

<sup>61</sup> Ferdinand de Saussure, *Cours de linguistique générale* (Paris: Payot & Rivages, 1995), p. 151.

<sup>62</sup> Genette, p. 114.

singulative narrative, to be the most common and to hold the most normal status. The latter two archetypes (*nN/IS* & *IN/nS*) he terms *iterative*, a sylleptic narrative that considers events only in terms of their analogy.

Genette argues that, in classical narrative, iterative narrative is almost always subordinate to and at the service of singulative narrative and assumes the rôles of description and background. Yet this would not seem to be the case in much historical writing and certainly not in Manns's *Martin Luther*, where the iterative narrative plays a prominent rôle not only in 'setting the scene' but also in narrating apparently singulative details of Luther's life which remain unknown to the historian and have been essentially lost in time. In particular, Manns employs iteration, for example, to question singulative 'fact' or to desingulate elements of the classic Protestant account. By analysing the relationships between the iterative and singulative narrative and the function played by each form, a closer and fuller evaluation of Manns's biography will be made possible.

While Gerard Genette is largely considered to belong to the deconstructuralist and post-structuralist movements, his theory of frequency in literature is more a description of how discourse can be analysed in a mechanical or empirical sense, rather than an ideological theory in itself. It is, therefore, in one sense a relatively ideologically neutral way of analysing narratives of Luther's life which are themselves characterised by ideological extremes. Historical writing or biography that focuses on a single subject suggests a singulative approach to historical writing in the Genettian sense of narrative frequency.<sup>63</sup> This is particularly so in the case of rebels, heretics, heroes, and other figures who are cast as agents of history, solely responsible for bringing about a major change in the status of the world. The biographer seeks to show what makes the subject individual and different from others, and in that way singular and singulative, which then allows the subject to bring about this change. On a purely abstract level, this would seem to be a questionable narrative device as it would seem to be an over-simplification to depict one individual as solely responsible for massive historical change. It is, however, in precisely these terms that Luther has been represented, both positively and negatively, in the five hundred years since the Reformation.

By comparing the use of singulation and iteration in classic accounts of Luther's life, narrative trends will be identified that will demonstrate the way in which Luther has been depicted by both sides of the confessional divide throughout the history of

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<sup>63</sup> Genette, p. 114.

writing about Luther. Genette's identification of iteration and singulation offers a way to examine the questionable status accorded to one historical figure as either the saviour of the world or its downfall, and the importance of episodes within his life. Narratives that have dealt largely in singulation have concerned themselves with the rôle of the individual in history, while those dealing in more iterative narratives have focused on the rôle of the system and the institution. This model is particularly true in the case of biographies of Luther. Protestant accounts have concentrated on the singular hero against the corrupt system, while Roman Catholics have sought to show the system to be iteratively true and more reliable than Luther's singulative claims. Accounts of Luther's life are, therefore, an ideal candidate for such an analysis, as the ideological differences in confessional representations have been mirrored in the polarised narrative treatment of the subject. In the Manns text, this model has reached such a stage where iteration and iterative knowledge are used to question Luther's own self-knowledge to the extent that singulative knowledge is too personal and subjective against the iterative truth of the system.

In conclusion, for White, the old conception that fiction represents the imaginable remains valid, whereas the notion that history represents the actual, is not true. We can, he says, only know the actual by contrasting or comparing with the imaginable. We only know a concept through understanding and knowledge of its opposite (p. 98). We make sense of the 'real world' by imposing upon it the formal coherence of literary art. Literature does not teach us absent 'reality', as it is the product of this world and a time: however imagined the 'reality' may be, it remains valid as it is the product of a real mind from the real world. Fictionalisation of history explains, just as great fiction illustrates the world. By analysing historical narrative in terms of literary devices, we identify the ideological (the fictive) element in the discourse. Historical writing would be more self-conscious, White argues, if the theory of language and narrative were employed as a basis of more subtle presentation. By recognising the literary element, the historian would be on guard against ideological distortions present in form. To draw from Aristotelian philosophy, a greater attention to not only substance but also accident would be necessary, if the historian wished to paint a truer and more balanced picture of the past. It is, therefore, in precisely these terms that historical discourse must be analysed and assessed, if we wish to view a more accurate representation of historical events.

## Chapter III

### The Stotternheim Vow

In considering the representation of Luther's monastic period, an analysis must be offered of the treatment of the vow made at Stotternheim, which is often viewed as the catalyst for his entry into the cloister and the start of the monastic period. The various representations of the Stotternheim episode reflect, however, a certain ambiguity in the narratives. Both sides of the confessional divide must come to terms with the vow and how it fits with their overall representation of Luther. As 'Damascus-road' resonances are often attributed to the episode, many Catholic writers have had difficulty in emplotting the vow as a divinely inspired act owing to Luther's negative experiences in the cloister as well as his later actions. On the other hand, Protestant writers have cast the vow as the beginning of a Passion narrative, leading Luther into a negative environment and a negative series of experiences from which he is resurrected as the Reformer Luther. In such Protestant narratives, Luther's negative experiences appear as an almost essential aspect in his theological development and emergence as a reformer.

#### **Mathesius (1566: Protestant)**

Mathesius presents Luther in the midst of an illness being visited by a priest, who consoles Luther with the idea that God will make use of him. This proleptic representation suggests a prophecy of Luther's life consistent with the generic conventions of sacred biography. It serves as a singulative example of a greater iterative pattern that shows Luther's preoccupation with religious ideas, albeit through the voice of another character:

Mein Bacculaurie, seid getrost, ir werd diß lagers nicht sterben, unser Gott wird noch einen grossen Mann auß euch machen, der vil leut wieder trösten wird.  
(pp. 18-19)

Following this anecdote, Mathesius turns to the Stotternheim vow, emplotment suggesting a divine influence at work in Luther's vow. While the narrative is relatively bare, the account is highly suggestive and serves as a prolepsis for Luther's later actions and theology; Luther's vow is cast as a decision that, while true to extant theology, was essentially theologically unsound. In the midst of the storm, Luther's thoughts turn to the question of forgiveness and the Last Judgement, two ideas that later play a central

rôle in Luther's theology. Luther vows to become a monk in order to assure his own salvation, the theology of which Luther was again to criticise later:

Am ende diß jars, da im sein gut gesell erstochen und ein grosses wetter und gewlicher donnerschlag in hart erschreckt, und er sich ernstlich vor Gottes zorn und dem Jüngsten gerichte ensetzet, beschleust er bei sich selbs unnd thut ein gelübde, er wölle ins Kloster gehen, Gott allda dienen und in mit Messhalten versönen und die ewige seligkeit mit Klösterlicher heiligkeit erwerben, wie denn solches eigentlich der frömbsten Klosterleut lehr und gedanken war. (p. 20)

The narrative representation of the vow is singulative and stresses the singular nature of the episode, which in turn suggests a uniqueness of the event. The implicit criticism present in the narrative excuses Luther, nevertheless, by placing him among the 'frömmsten Klosterleut'; Mathesius's depiction of Luther and his vow excuses the character Luther from the criticism made by the later Luther through its back-projection of later private reasons.

### **Köstlin (1892: Protestant)**

Mirroring Mathesius, Köstlin explains the vow in terms of Luther's later criticism and casts it against general concerns and actions. In order to do this, Köstlin depicts Luther's anxiety while at university and presents the reader with an iterative series of events, transforming the Stotternheim vow into a logical and acceptable decision. Köstlin begins this process with the anecdote regarding the elderly priest who consoles Luther during an illness:

Wir hören auch aus der Zeit, da er Baccalaurius war, von einer Krankheit, die schon Todesgedanken in ihm erweckte. Der greise Vater eines seiner Freunde (aus welchem spätere Überlieferung einen alten Priester gemacht hat) sprach damals zu ihm: „Laßt Euch nit leid sein, Ihr werdet noch ein großer Mann werden“: ein Wort, das sich ihm dann doch eingepägt hat. (p. 42)

Breaking from Mathesius's treatment of the episode, Köstlin develops the iterative pattern yet further with the anecdote of Luther having injured himself on the dagger of his university robes. This episode helps form a background of anxiety and 'eine Stimmung der Verzweiflung' (p. 42), and introduces the notion of vows made in times of plight:

In der Todesangst rief er da: „Maria hilf!“ Er wäre, sagt er später, damals auf Maria dahingestorben. In der folgenden Nacht erneuerte sich der Schrecken, indem die Wunde aufbrach, und wieder rief er die Mutter Gottes an. (p. 42)

This creates an iterative account of both a preoccupation with the question of salvation as a theological issue important to those who are about to die, as well as an iterative of

votive practice. This is further reinforced by the story regarding the death of a friend, and Köstlin suggests that these ‘Regungen der Schwermuth’ might have led Luther to ‘endlich in der von der Kirche empfohlenen mönchischen Heiligkeit sein Heil [zu] versuchen’ (p. 43). An iterative narrative is used to rationalise Luther’s decision and prevent Luther from appearing as somewhat manic and susceptible to visions.

Köstlin comes to the actual episode of Stotternheim and provides the reader with a Luther who has perhaps returned home ‘möglich, daß er dort Auffrischung und Erheiterung für sich suchte’ (p. 43). He builds on the established iterative of anguish. He continues by offering without question the stroke of lightning and Luther’s vow:

Ein mächtiger Blitzstrahl vom Himmel her zuckte vor ihm. Von Schreck durchbebt fiel er zur Erde nieder und rief: „Hilf, liebe Sankt Anna, ich will ein Mönch werden.“ (p. 43)

Having created a background of votive practice and anxiety, Köstlin makes Luther’s reaction in this incident appear as neither unusual nor extreme but rather the normal act of a young and pious medieval student preoccupied with the question of salvation and death. The vow, therefore, appears as a singular and final consequence of a greater iterative trend in Luther’s life. As with Mathesius’s account, Köstlin reports Luther’s subsequent regret at having made the vow and his commitment to his word. Nonetheless, Köstlin develops Mathesius’s account by explaining how Luther was able to circumvent his father’s objection of his having broken the Fourth Commandment. Köstlin does not, however, question the influence behind Luther’s vow as being anything other than the influence of personal piety and rejects Hans Luder’s claim that it might have been the influence of the devil.

### **Boehmer (1929: Protestant)**

Boehmer emplots Luther’s decision as a single consequence of an iterative chain but reduces the iterative background to one incident: a university friend’s death. He presents Luther as preoccupied by a ‘tentatio tristitiae’ (p. 46) and fears of the Last Judgement. Thereafter, the narrative turns its attention to the episode at Stotternheim; the narrative style alters here from longer to shorter clauses, reflecting the sudden nature of the thunderstorm. While not quite as visual a representation as Köstlin’s account, Boehmer’s narrative depicts the episode as something highly dramatic with lightning striking close to Luther. The language of the passage is forceful and reminiscent of Köstlin’s narrative, employing vocabulary that suggests both power and panic:

Am 2. Juli war er schon so weit an die Stadt herangekommen, daß er nur noch etliche Stunden Wegs zu bewältigen hatte, als plötzlich bei Stotternheim ein schweres Gewitter sich über ihm entlud. Ein Blitz schlug in nächster Nähe vor ihm ein, so daß er von dem Luftdruck zu Boden geschleudert wurde. Von jähem Schreck übermannt, rief er die bewährteste Helferin in solcher Not, die hl. Anna, an, um seinem Gebete aber noch mehr Nachdruck zu verleihen, fügte er das Gelübde hinzu: „ich will ein Mönch werden.“ (p. 46)

While Boehmer offers the reader the accepted representation of the Stotternheim vow, as is seen in Köstlin and others, he questions its status as the cause of Luther's metanoia and its sudden influence in his life. As Manns later, Boehmer argues that the vow was:

[...] ein längst durch die inneren Kämpfe der letzten Monate vorbereiteter, aber bisher durch Zweifel und Bedenken mancher Art zurückgehaltener Entschluß [, der] plötzlich zum Durchbruch kam. (p. 46)

Boehmer thus refuses to view the vow as an impulsive act. Resorting to an iterative metonym, Boehmer validates his argument by seeing Luther in light of his [Boehmer's] own experience of people, which allows him to see the vow as an abrupt decision arrived at in 'einem Momente aufwallender Aktivität' but only made 'nach langem zähem Ringen' (p. 46). While historically inaccurate, Manns's use of such a metaphor will be employed more widely in his narrative both to support and dismiss various legends surrounding Luther's life, and ultimately to accept Luther's status as an ordinary man who behaves like others. This technique of casting Luther as an everyman figure negates any prophetic characteristics and counters traditional Protestant emplotments. Importantly, this highlights Manns's status as a Catholic historian attempting to depict Luther as a Catholic man.

### **Friedenthal (1967: Protestant)**

In Friedenthal's narrative, the Stotternheim vow is accorded significance in leading Luther into the cloister and in representing a coming-of-age since for the first time Luther stood against authority to decide his own future. As with other Protestant authors, Friedenthal deals with Luther's decision against the backdrop of his university career and creates a Luther of 'Fröhlichkeit und die Düsternis (p. 36), establishing an iterative character which allows the vow to appear normal. The Stotternheim vow is, however, subordinated to the decision to become a monk and it is on the latter that Friedenthal concentrates.

Friedenthal offers a summary of the possible causes that could have led to Luther's decision and begins his account with the legend according to Justus Jonas in

which Luther suffers a vision returning to Erfurt, abandons his studies, holds a farewell dinner and elopes into the monastery. In addition, however, Friedenthal offers the accepted legend of the Stotternheim vow and questions its veracity, regarding it as a justification by a later Luther. Friedenthal identifies the significance of the vow not in leading Luther to become a monk, but in allowing Luther to question his father's authority:

Und dies scheint uns ein Hauptpunkt bei dem Ereignis: Luther sagt zum ersten Male in seinem Leben den Gehorsam auf, er tritt als Eigenwilliger der höchsten Autorität gegenüber, die er damals kennt, seinem Vater, und vertraut sich einer höheren Autorität an, der Kirche. (p. 37)

In emphasising Luther's break from his father, Friedenthal casts the Stotternheim vow as an initial development in his character that will lead him to a dominant rôle as a questioner of authority in whatever guise; in this way, Friedenthal begins, proleptically, to create an iterative of revolution and defiance into which his depiction of the later Luther will fit. In addition to this, Friedenthal desingularises the importance of the Stotternheim vow and represents it as a single example of a larger iterative pattern. By iterating the vow, the effect is naturally to remove a divine influence and reduce Luther's decision to purely human terms. Friedenthal's emplotment of the vow reflects the ambiguity of the Stotternheim episode, particularly for Protestant writers who must come to terms with not only Luther's vow but also votive practice itself.

As with other later narratives, Friedenthal identifies the vow as a singulative example of an iterative chain of events and concerns that led Luther to become a monk. He informs the reader of the death of one of Luther's friends, the presence of plague and the incident in which Luther cut an artery on his university dagger and prayed to the Virgin Mary for help. The parallels with the Stotternheim vow are obvious and using iteration he presents the Stotternheim vow as an action typical for the young Luther.

Friedenthal employs metaphor and iteration more generally to examine Luther's decision to enter the monastery by comparing him to all men of strong character and creative genius who are subject to frequent attacks of severe depression: 'Schwere Depressionen hat Luther häufig gehabt, wie alle starken Naturen und schöpferischen Geister' (p. 38). While such a comparison is invalid in forming the basis of singulative historical truth, it allows Friedenthal to justify his analysis with reference to his own experience of others. In this way, Luther becomes little more than an example of group that behaves in accordance with the conventions of the archetype. In addition to this, the comparison also serves to establish an iterative pattern of Luther's depression which not

only justifies Friedenthal's later depiction but, when coupled with Luther's awareness of sin, also presents the vow as the logical outcome of a lengthier period of consideration. The singulative significance of the Stotternheim vow is, therefore, removed and it is cast as the final stage in a longer process that led Luther to become a monk.

### **Cochlaeus (1549: Catholic)**

In the more extreme Catholic treatments of the Stotternheim vow, attempts have been made to present it as a very human act, not divinely influenced, but brought about through fear. In Cochlaeus's narrative, the reader is presented with a double emplotment, in which Luther's vow can be viewed as either a purely singulative act, or as a decision taken at the end of a period of anxiety started by the death of a friend, thus reducing the decision to an iterative act. Having described Luther's parentage and early upbringing, Cochlaeus turns his attention to Luther's university life and recognises Luther as a gifted student. The Stotternheim narrative appears suddenly in Cochlaeus's *Commentaria* and offers as origin for the vow:

Iuris deinde studium aggressus, cum esset in campo, fulminis ictu territus & prostratus, ut uulgo dicitur, aut interitu sodalis sui contristatus, huius mundi contemptu ingressus est repente, multis admirantibus, Monasterium fratrum S. Augustini, qui uulgo Heremitæ dicuntur,... (p. 1)

Although Cochlaeus offers the traditional motivation for Luther's decision to enter the cloister, his alternative justification questions the former and removes any notion of divine influence on Luther's decision, thereby 'de-sacralizing' the thunderstorm. In fact, Cochlaeus's aside-like emplotment, 'ut uulgo dicitur', suggests a lack of belief in the Stotternheim legend. The vow, thus seen, becomes a human act resulting from fear and amidst a preoccupation with death. Furthermore, his emplotment of the vow enables Cochlaeus to remove any question of divine influence from Luther's decision, which in turn allows him to question Luther's later actions without questioning the rôle of God.

### **Grisar (1911: Catholic)**

Demonstrating a desire to understand Luther's vow positively and ecumenically, Grisar develops the traditional Catholic emplotment while showing his confessional inheritance. He opens his treatment of the Stotternheim vow with the 'Last Supper' and Luther's entry into the cloister. Grisar depicts Luther in his cell attempting 'der

Aufregung Herr [zu] werden' (p. 1), which in itself places the narrative into iteration rather than singulation, and then Grisar focalises his narrative into Luther's thoughts. Grisar presents the vow as being the ultimate event that led Luther to take the decision to enter the monastery, but as the earlier depictions also show, he places this in an iterative of anxiety, and thus presents the decision as the culmination of a long preoccupation with the desire to become a monk:

Denn unter seltsamen, seine Seele tief aufregenden Umständen war er zu dem Entschlusse, Mönch zu werden, gekommen. Er befand sich nach einem Besuche des Elternhauses auf der Rückkehr nach Erfurt, als er bei Stotternheim durch ein Gewitter überfallen wurde und, von dem Blitzschlag in seiner Nähe wie von „einer himmlischen Erscheinung“ bedroht, das plötzliche Gelübde machte: „Hilf die liebe Sankt Anna, so will ich ein Mönch werden.“ Er scheint überdies gerade damals durch den jähen Tod eines lieben Studienkameraden, der im Streite oder Duell erstochen worden, in Trauer und Angst versetzt gewesen zu sein. (p. 1)

The use of the 'either...or' explanation and 'he also appears' serve to desingularise the importance of the Stotternheim vow and reduce it to at best an act belonging to a series. This, in turn, reduces the divine force at play and enables Grisar to deal with Luther's actions in very human terms as the product of man rather than God. Grisar has also built on the image of Luther being preoccupied with fear at the time and thus reveals a distinct Catholic inheritance from older treatments.

Grisar develops the iterative nature of the vow further by regarding it as the outcome of Luther's 'serious temperament' (p. 4) and again reduces the singulative quality of the decision:

So kamen mit betäubender Schnelligkeit die Gedanken damals zur Reife, die vielleicht sein ernst gestimmtes Inneres schon längst zum Kloster gezogen hatten...weil er an sich selbst „ver zweifelte“, sagt er einmal, sei er ins Kloster gegangen. (pp. 1-2)

The use of the 'ripening' metaphor serves to reinforce the notion of Luther's vow as being an iterative act that reached its conclusion following a much slower and longer period of reflection.

### **Maritain (1925: Catholic)**

Maritain views the Stotternheim vow as belonging to an iterative pattern of 'terreur' (p. 6) brought about by both the death of his friend as well as the storm, thus robbing the Stotternheim episode of any singulative importance. Maritain further iterates these two episodes against a much larger pattern of anxiety, from which Luther suffered throughout his religious life:

Entré en religion, si on l'en croit lui-même, à la suite d'une impression de terreur causée d'abord par la mort d'un ami tué en duel, ensuite par un violent orage où il faillit périr, et « non point tant attiré qu'emporté », *non tam tractus quam raptus*, il semble avoir été, dans les débuts de sa vie religieuse, régulier et peut-être fervent, mais toujours inquiet et troublé. (p. 6)

Maritain's narrative, therefore, accepts and reinforces the treatment present in the much earlier Cochlaeus text, without placing the storm as the major influence in question. The Stotternheim vow is emplotted to reflect Luther's character as being 'inquiet et troublé' (p. 6) and creates singulative examples of Maritain's iterative truth of Luther as a psychologically unbalanced character, demonstrated at Stotternheim and later in the choir.

### **Lortz (1941: Catholic)**

Manns's treatment of the Stotternheim vow seeks, however, to harmonise the two traditions and to create an emplotment acceptable to both sides of the confessional divide. Therefore, Manns couples his analysis of the Stotternheim episode with an examination of Luther's university career at Erfurt, seen as preparation for his later vow. This treatment is to a large extent found and probably inherited from Lortz's earlier account, in which an attempt to contextualise the vow made at Stotternheim in medieval society is established, in votive practice as well as Luther's own circumstances. This represents a desire to understand the vow's context and seeks to remove, in an informed way, the singulative significance of the vow, and 'Damascus road' effect of the episode through the examination of votive practice. This removal of the divine influence is a consequence of the ambiguous signals of the 'experience' at Stotternheim and later in the monastery and Lortz wishes to remove the singulative, and thereby the hagial, significance of the act.

Lortz begins his treatment of the Stotternheim vow at the end of his examination of Luther's university life. His narrative takes an abrupt turn however, in narrating Luther's departure mid-term and the events that then took place:

Wie dem auch sei, etwas scheint 1505 nicht zu stimmen mit ihm. Er nimmt Urlaub mitten im Semester. Auf dem Rückmarsch von der Heimat (damals Mansfeld) zur Universität überrascht ihn bei Stotternheim ein Gewitter. Als der Blitz neben ihm einschlägt, schreit er auf: ‚Hilf, St. Anna, ich will ein Mönch werden!‘. (p. 155)

In this way, Lortz acknowledges the 'canonical' status of the Stotternheim episode within the accepted Luther story, placing Luther in an iterative narrative of anxiety, true

to the traditional Catholic emplotment. Lortz continues his examination by examining the Stotternheim vow itself: firstly, he acknowledges the normality of Luther, the miner's son, beseeching St Anne, the patron saint of miners; secondly, Lortz accepts the relatively normal status of vows as being 'dem mittelalterlichen Menschen etwas Naheliegendes', although this comment is qualified as being 'ebenso richtig wie nichtssagend' (p. 155). Lortz concludes that the vow represents 'den Kurzschluß in einem lange vorbereiteten Kreislauf' (p. 156) and casts the Stotternheim vow as a single example of a much longer process of consideration. While this is the final decision reached by Lortz, he accepts that the vow might have been an 'Ausbruch' and that this would be supported by Luther's behaviour as a monk and 'Primiziant' (p. 156), supporting the singulative act through reference to the iterative pattern that he will later present.

### **Manns (1982: Catholic)**

Manns establishes in the general historical background not only an accelerative summary of political and ecclesiastical history, but also the diachronic limits of the biography, thereby setting the scene against which Luther was born, lived and died. In sketching this broad overview, Manns creates an iterative account of a process of reform (*IN/nS*), against which Luther's single life and singulative actions of reform will be set. This iterative summary desingularates Luther as the arch-reformer, and he emerges as an exemplar of a larger historical chain of Catholic reformers, thus negating the singulative quality accorded him in classic Protestant representations. In so doing, Manns explains and justifies why Luther did what he did and where he belongs both in a historical and theological narrative. The biography becomes essentially an education or re-education in a Catholic view of a Roman Catholic history, offering an overview of the period and its main socio-political and religious events, punctuated by a singulative narrative of Luther and his life.

Having described in some detail the general historical situation, Manns focuses on Luther's studies in Erfurt and his progression from *baccalaureus* to *magister*. Documentary evidence relating to this period in Luther's life is scarce, and by way of compensation Manns takes a pastiche of university education in the late medieval period and projects it upon Luther's life, and so particularizes the general. Manns adopts Genette's model of a *IN/nS* narrative, applies this to the life of Luther and makes it true of him. In so doing, Manns compensates for the lack of factual information in the Luther narrative with information of the most general nature, and allows himself the

opportunity to explain the contemporary situation and in this way 'educate' his reader in both the Catholic past and present. This technique demonstrates Manns's concern to present Roman Catholicism as a going-concern, rather than as a purely historical institution; this technique is of course unreliable as a way of explaining the past.

Making use of the scant documented data, Manns employs individual facts, generally dates, and presents them as singulative narration (*IN/IS*) amid the largely iterative narrative as a means of establishing a diachronic frame to his narrative; this also has the effect of providing the narrative with a singulative semblance. Thus, he opens the chapter with the date of Luther's matriculation and quickly turns to a discussion of the University of Erfurt's standing in the contemporary 'league table' of German universities. This he follows with an explanation of a student's life, yet this essentially iterative narrative, represented again by Genette's formula *IN/nS*, is cast in a very singulative form in the person of Martin Luther, for whom the most general history becomes a personal experience: Luther was admittedly a then unknown and unimportant figure and therefore unworthy of chronicle:

Dies [die strenge Erziehung und Lehre der Universität] mußte der als „Martinus ludher ex Mansfeld“ eingetragene Student erfahren... (p. 19)

The use of the modal verb in the preterite reinforces the speculative and presumptive nature of the statements regarding university education. In this way, Manns's narrative relies on a commonplace iterative narrative to compensate for documented fact. Manns is openly honest that little is known 'mit letzter Sicherheit' (p. 19) of Luther's university career, even as to the choice of his college, and he does in fact offer both traditionally suggested choices of the *Himmelspforte* and the *Georgsburse*, thus on one level offering other plausible data and emplotments. Manns offers a general discussion of student life in the fifteenth century, again without drawing on source material and again compensating for the scarce source material as well as informing. This is a consequence of the absence of the Luther-specific data from this period which forces Manns to rely on generic information. Furthermore, Manns deliberately attempts to present the life of the medieval student as being synonymous with that of a monk, particularising the specific case of the student within the much larger pattern of the monastic lifestyle. This is cast in a narrative which narrates once what happened *n* times (*IN/nS*). This tacit comparison with the monastery normalises Luther's later decision to enter the cloister, and contextualises Luther's experience in a much greater tradition of Roman Catholic clerical education. This parallel between monk and student was further mirrored by the

wearing of a *Tracht* - analogous with a habit, the compulsory use of Latin and participation in the Divine Offices. This, Manns claims, was a routine, which ‘...ihr klösterliches Vorbild nicht verleugnen kann’ (p. 19). The effect of this simile is to lessen the difference between university and monastic life and the Luther who emerges here negates a representation of Luther as a seeker of sanctity such as might be found in traditional Protestant narratives such as Mathesius’s account.

Manns employs an essentially iterative narrative to impart sylleptically his representation of the medieval system in one cohesive ‘portrait’. In educating his readership and serving his ecumenical aim, Manns seeks to draw a comparison between the medieval university and his own time in a seminary. While historiographically questionable, such a comparison serves not only to form a bridge between past and present and author and subject, but also enables us to understand better the distant past through Manns’s understanding of the near present; importantly, this comparison educates the reader in the Roman Catholic present as well as the past. Such a comparison also seems to suggest that Luther’s later decision to enter the monastery was a normal act by contextualising his school and university education into a greater and iterative tradition of Roman Catholic education, thereby desingularating the event and removing some of the mystical effects of Luther’s vow as portrayed in older Protestant accounts.

Authority is added to the narrative by Manns drawing on his primary experience to reinforce his depiction. Such a representation does, of course, presume an iterative and constant concept of the convent that is historiographically questionable. In Manns’s representation, the character of Luther was so accustomed to a monastic lifestyle that his decision to become a monk was both normal and acceptable in light of his experiences. This has the effect of negating the often great significance attached to the Stotternheim vow as the ‘Damascus road’ episode and its traditional prominence in the Luther narrative, and presents it as only the end of a much lengthier process.

This brief examination of the student’s lifestyle is followed by a discussion of the medieval university curriculum, interspersed with the few known facts from Luther’s own academic career. Manns again employs his standard iterative narrative of *IN/nS* to infer from this *model* the unknown details of Luther’s life; again Manns relies on an iterative non-Luther specific narrative. Manns briefly explains the basic texts studied by the Arts student and how they were studied and presents the iterative and the singulative ‘fact’ as equal in status to the date on which Luther gained his bachelor’s degree:

Schon Ende September 1502 wurde Luther zur Bakkalaureatsprüfung zugelassen. Er bestand das Examen eher elegant als glänzend, d.h. mit dem mittleren Notendurchschnitt. (p. 20)

As a consequence of the fact that German does not distinguish between an iterative and singulative tense, as say French does, the narrative is aided by a simple preterite to merge both an iterative and singulative narrative, ignoring the disparity between the status of the two statements, 'Schon Ende...' and 'Er bestand...'. The iterative history of the curriculum is 'personified' in Luther and given an equal standing to the known fact of the date of his graduation, which is cast in a singulative *IN/IS* narrative. This representation is repeated in the description of Luther's progression to the 'Magistergrad', in which the singulative and particular fact of his graduation nestles between items of 'general knowledge' in an iterative narrative, the former validating the latter. The reader is informed of Luther having passed his 'Magisterprüfung...mit glänzendem Erfolg...als zweitbester' (p. 20) in January 1505. Once more the reader is led through the graduation ceremony and told:

Luther, der solche Feste liebte...Und der stolze Vater, der fortan den eigenen Sohn nicht mehr duzte, hat brav bezahlt. (p. 20)

Manns presents this as fact rather than as supposition or quotation: the knowledge of Luther's personal opinion other than that gleaned from letters and contemporary documents is unobtainable. The ironic description of Hans Luder arguably reflects a traditional Catholic emplotment in depicting him as a proud but pretentious father and connects proleptically with his behaviour at the First Mass.

The analysis of Luther's time as a student is closed with an examination of the relevance of his philosophical studies for his later development, which leads Manns to employ explicit prolepses in referring to Luther's later writings. In evaluating the extent and importance of the influence of Luther's teachers, Manns resorts once more to iteration, singulatively punctuated by details of his teachers, Jodokus Trutfetter and Bartholomäus Arnoldi, and, importantly for the educative aim, their teachings. Manns begins with two earlier members of the order and members of the faculty who influenced its philosophical tradition. Trutfetter and Arnoldi represent a symbiosis of philosophy and theology which: '...ein durchaus ehrliches kirchliches Engagement der Gelehrten keineswegs ausschloß' (p. 21). The statement answers an unmentioned criticism that the philosophy and theology are in fact incompatible and suggests that

Trutfetter and Arnoldi served as models for Luther. This iterates an archetype of the academic monk, reducing Luther's vow to a normal decision.

Having presented briefly the little known facts of the 'unknown' or 'unremarkable' student, Manns continues to place Luther into a greater iterative tradition of 'großen Männer' (p. 20) and their retrospectives: a metaphorical device that depicts Luther as an iterative type rather than as a singulative individual. This iterative technique places Luther in the context of successful great men, whose reminiscences the reader has presumably learnt to mistrust:

Dabei geht es nicht nur um die psychologische Gesetzmäßigkeit, derzufolge die meisten großen Männer im Rückblick durchweg nur mit Verachtung von ihrer Studienzeit sprechen. (p. 20)

Manns's technique here seeks to substitute historical data with generalisation in a suspect way, and the use of iteration and the obvious comparison again serve to depict Luther negatively and hint at Manns's confessional inheritance. Thus, the reader's knowledge of the present has influenced and informed the understanding of the past. This is another example of Manns drawing comparisons with the contemporary situation, paralleling the historical situation with 'culturally provided categories' as well as the use of iteration so as to throw doubt on Luther's own later statements.<sup>64</sup> This device is again employed when Manns refers to his own reading of *Il Decamerone* and compares it with Luther's encounters with Humanism and his reading of Plautus and Virgil:

Seine Begegnung mit dem Humanismus war kaum intensiver als meine Begegnung mit der schönen Literatur im Bonner Albertinum... (p. 21)

Such iterative contextualisation is seen in Manns's comparison of Luther with his teachers, which results in an image of Luther as a 'gemachter Mann' (p. 21) following a recognised path.

The passages dealing with Luther's time as a student show Manns's attempt to educate more fully his reader in a Catholic interpretation of the past, shown through the details regarding the curriculum and philosophy, and to set Luther fully in the context of a late-medieval student. In describing this period, Manns is leading his narrative towards an explanation of why Luther chose the Faculty of Law and shapes his narrative to that end. In order to compensate for the lack of detailed information available to him, Manns employs a *IN/nS* narrative and is thus able to educate the

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<sup>64</sup> White, *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism*, p. 86.

reader in the generally unknown life of Luther as a student, which would perhaps properly merit a singulative *IN/IS* narrative, clothed in an iterative narrative.

In his approach to analysing Luther's progression from his study of Law to the Stotternheim vow, Manns returns to the medieval university. Again, contrasting Luther's period with Manns's contemporary time, he draws an ironic comparison to state that medicine was not an option, not because of a 'numerus clausus' (p. 22), but because the faculty was not yet functioning correctly. This statement has an aside-like quality and awakens the author's present in the narrative. It is repeated later in the narrative, when Manns claims that the 'Bedingungen akademischen Lebens' (p. 57) have changed little since Luther's time and that it is still as important to say to which order a monk-theologian belongs, as it was five hundred years ago.

In examining the Stotternheim vow, Manns adopts to an iterative *IN/nS* narrative to express the almost clichéd view of Luther's relationship with his father and through a focalised narrative immediately projects himself into the persona of Luther to examine his choice of study. Manns continues by giving the date of Luther's first lectures as a *magister artium* in a *IN/IS* narrative and in the same sentence returns to a *IN/nS* narrative to describe Luther at university:

[...] Wo er vom 24. April ab seine Vorlesungen als Magister artium zu halten hatte und wo er, scheinbar selbstverständlich, am 19. Mai nach der feierlichen Fakultätsmesse zu Ehren St. Ivo von Chartres, des Patrons der Erfurter Juristen, mit seinem neuen Studium begann. (p. 22)

Once more, Manns is aware of his own speculation shown through the 'scheinbar selbstverständlich'. By exploiting the opportunity to correct previous representations of this episode, Manns asserts his authority as a Catholic author writing on Catholic history, but also reinforces the relationship between the university and the Church.

Similarly, Manns draws on his own experience as an educator to set Luther's behaviour into an iterative pattern of 'junger Gelehrter' (p. 22) who quickly abandon a subject that they once found interesting. By thus employing metaphor and metonymy in such a way, Manns compensate through the use of a sylleptical hypothesis for the lack of detailed information regarding Luther's later decisions. He appeals to his reader's experience to share the assumption being made, without questioning such a 'gap-filling' technique. Through this narrative technique, Manns conceals the lack of Luther-specific fact and validates his generalised account. Moreover, such a comparison relies on a universal archetype known to the reader and true to both time frames. Again, Manns finds the answer to this question in his own experiences:

Wer die Menschen kennt und einigermaßen vertraut ist mit den Reaktionen begabter junger Gelehrter wird sich zunächst fragen, ob es nicht Gründe gibt, die im Verhältnis Luthers zur Jurisprudenz, selbst liegen. Auch Studenten von Luthers Kaliber halten zunächst manches für interessant und lassen es dann doch nach der ersten Begegnung liegen, weil sie instinktiv erkennen, daß sie mit der neuen Wissenschaft niemals glücklich werden könnten... (p. 22)

This is another example of Manns attempting to compare and find similarities between Luther and the modern student, and to draw on the 'culturally provided categories' of knowledge to facilitate understanding. By employing iterative knowledge to comprehend the singulative life of Luther, Manns suggests that Luther can be understood by his modern readership in terms of their own contemporary society. It is for this reason that he draws the many comparisons. Yet Manns accepts that the true reasons for Luther's change of heart will remain a secret. He informs us that 'andere Quellen' report 'eine merkwürdige Traurigkeit Luthers' (p. 22) during this time as well as the story of the death of two university friends from the plague. This final fact, Manns asserts, caused thoughts of death which coupled with '...Angst um das eigene Seelenheil, damals viele junge Menschen ins Kloster geführt [hat]!' (p. 22). This iteration of eschatological concerns once again negates the 'Damascus road' representation often attributed to the episode. In this way, Manns desingularates the classic Protestant account by employing an iterative narrative to present Luther's act as relatively normal and devoid of any supersignificance; this demonstrates, of course, the Catholic heritage of the Manns narrative.

Manns recreates the many possible influences that could have led Luther to become a monk. The use of 'damals' along with the 'viele jungen Menschen' suggests that the decision to enter the cloister was a normal act for men of the early sixteenth century. In contrast to his common technique of using iterative narrative to 'pad' his *récit*, Manns desingularates Luther's decision by showing his singular act belonging to an iterative pattern, and thereby follows an established Catholic technique. Manns does this through a desire to present a range of contributing factors for Luther's entry into the cloister rather than any one cause, but importantly it removes any question of divine influence. This desingularation is reinforced by the anecdotal story of two jurisprudence professors, who on their deathbeds exclaimed: 'O wäre ich doch ein Mönch gewesen' (p. 22). The similarities between such a statement and Luther's own supposed exclamation at Stotternheim are obvious and show him to be acting as part of a tradition of academic-monks already established by Manns in his depiction of Usingen and

Trutfetter, thereby iterating Luther's act once again and removing any singulative emplotment.

With these similarities in mind, Manns then begins the Stotternheim narrative. Its very emplotment at the end of an analysis of possible reasons reinforces an understanding which at least sees Stotternheim as the final episode in a series of stages that led Luther into the monastery; but equally the emplotment does not cast the vow as the only reason, thereby desingularating a deterministic emplotment. The reader is informed that on the 20<sup>th</sup> June Luther interrupted the semester and returned home to Mansfeld. The reader is presented with the possible reasons for this journey in a similar way to the possible areas of study following Luther's master's degree, but Manns tells the reader that a discussion of a possible entry into the cloister was not an option. Breaking the chronology of his narrative somewhat, Manns takes the opportunity to tell the story of Luther's accident with the dagger of his university *Tracht* which occurred on the same journey the previous Easter. This event, similar to the death of two friends from the plague, is depicted as another contributing factor in Luther's decision and chronologically does not belong at this stage in the narrative; Manns's positioning of it prior to the Stotternheim vow, however, shows it to be another key event which might have helped form Luther's decision. Almost as if he were gifted with a deeply personal knowledge of Luther, Manns tells the reader:

Den Tod vor Augen, hatte er damals ohne Gelübde die Gottesmutter um ihre Hilfe angefleht. Obgleich die Heilung daheim nicht ohne Komplikationen verlief, hat er die Lebensgefahr bald vergessen und auf dem Krankenbett ohne Lehrer das Lautenspiel erlernt. (p. 22)

Whether this anecdote is told to heighten the perceived danger or to question Luther's reaction in what is to follow is not clear. By casting this accident in an iterative narrative, Manns desingularates the Stotternheim episode and questions the traditional Protestant valency attached to it, thus revealing the Catholic inheritance of his narrative.

### **Genthe**

**(1996: Protestant)**

While distanced from the Stotternheim episode, Genthe focuses on Luther's time as a student at Erfurt and employs his narrative to provide essentially iterative information on university life, punctuated with the singulative details of Luther's time as a student. Almost as an aside, however, Genthe offers in the third chapter the narrative of the accident in 1503/4 in which Luther is alleged to have fallen, cutting an artery in his leg on the dagger of his university robes. He presents this in the form of a direct quotation

from one of Luther's later students, Veit Dietrich. As with other representations of this accident, Genthe's narrative suggests similarities with the chronologically later Stotternheim vow. The reader is told that he 'damals mit nur einem Begleiter im Felde [war]' (p. 37), an analeptical reference which presupposes the reader's knowledge of the later incident at Stotternheim and which leads the reader to compare the two accidents. While in 'Todesgefahr', Luther cries out 'O Maria, hilf!' (p. 37) and then later the same evening, when the wound opens up again, Luther again cries out to Mary for help. While different in its direction, there are obvious similarities with his cry at Stotternheim (p. 46) and to compare the reactions is a natural response. Genthe is, therefore, creating an iterative pattern of Luther's anxieties that desingularises Stotternheim as their primary cause and as the sole influence for his decision to become a monk. This emplotment follows the Catholic tradition rather than the Protestant 'Damascus road' accounts.

While the description of this accident might fit chronologically into a discussion of Luther's time as a student, the singulative narrative is dropped into the iterative description of the curriculum almost unobtrusively. Genthe may have done this to maintain the chronology of events as closely as he could, but in so doing, he breaks the more traditional and analeptical representation of this incident, which couples it with Luther's later reaction and vow at Stotternheim. Along with Manns, the more recent biographies of Oberman and Marius combine these events anachronistically in their emplotments.<sup>65</sup> In linking the two anecdotes narratively, the similarity between them and the progression from one to the next are highlighted more clearly. By not linking the two accidents, Genthe presumably seeks either to connect the incidents in the reader's mind more subtly or to contextualise such exhortations and cries as being commonplace at the beginning of the sixteenth century, as suggested by Puchta:

Das Gemeinsame an beiden Ereignissen [Stotternheim und dem Degenunfall] ist, daß der junge Luther in der Not einen Heiligen anruft, sich dem Schutz eines Patrons anvertraut. Luther steht damit in einer Tradition, die auch dem spätmittelalterlichen Votivwesen zugrundeliegt.<sup>66</sup>

Genthe is thus 'setting the scene' for what is to follow, as well as casting Luther's reactions as singular examples of a larger iterative pattern. Genthe's emplotment shows

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<sup>65</sup> Heiko A. Obermann, *Luther: Man between God and the Devil* (New York: Image Books, 1992), p. 125 & Richard Marius, *Martin Luther: Christian between God and the Death* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2000), pp. 44-45.

<sup>66</sup> Hans Puchta, 'Luthers Stotternheimer Gelübde: Versuch einer Deutung', *ARG*, 84 (1993), 311-318 (p. 312).

Luther's later cry and act belonging to a larger and more 'normal' chain of events, both in terms of the singulative life of Luther and in the larger society to which he belonged. Genthe's emplotment of the earlier vows reflects the inheritance of the Manns narrative, while the singulative and isolated treatment of the Stotternheim vow retains the traditional Protestant emplotment.

Genthe closes this initial phase of the chapter dealing with the Stotternheim vow and its consequences with a rhetorical question which 'kick starts' his narrative into a discussion of the origins of the vow, which like Manns he sees as arising out of 'inneren Kämpfen' (p. 46). Genthe questions whether Luther had come to see his life as useless and himself as unacceptable to God and thus chose a course that would justify him to God, even if it meant becoming a monk. This proleptical comment again helps to prepare the way for Genthe's discussion of Luther's doctrine of justification and how it arose. While Genthe acknowledges that Luther never expressed any view on the origins of the vow, it had, Genthe reports without offering any evidence, occupied Luther during his time in the monastery and he came indeed to regret it. He closes his analysis of the Stotternheim vow: 'Doch einmal abgelegt, mußte es erfüllt werden' (p. 46). Importantly, this comment short-circuits the question as to whether the vow was indeed valid and whether it needed to be fulfilled according to Canon Law.

Overall, the vow at Stotternheim is given relatively little space in Genthe's treatment and this itself reflects the Protestant tradition. In opening the chapter dealing with Luther's progression to becoming a priest with this oft-cited 'pivotal' event, Genthe accepts its position and rôle in the traditional Protestant Luther narrative. Yet it is possible to argue that by underplaying its significance and through a process of subtle iteration, he is asserting its relatively minor importance in Luther's decision to enter a monastery and depicting it as being at the end of a larger cumulative series of decisions, thereby reflecting his inheritance of Manns's valorisation of the vow. Unlike Manns, however, Genthe offers almost no other direct reason for Luther's decision and thus accepts the Protestant emplotment of the Stotternheim vow as a pivotal episode in the Luther story. He casts it as a 'Damascus road' experience leading Luther into the monastery; thus, despite his attempts to contextualise diegetically and iterate the decision, Genthe ultimately accepts its singulative status. Luther's vow stands alone as a singulative act rather than as part of a larger tradition and retains its importance as found in the traditional Protestant emplotment. There is, however, a certain narrative tension between an inherited Protestant representation and the relatively 'normal'

depiction given to the vow and its context would suggest, as Manns does, that it was not a momentous or unusual decision which led Luther into the monastery.

Manns narrates immediately afterwards in few words the events describing the vow made at Stotternheim, deliberately depicting a rather dramatic scene in which finally Luther cries out: 'Hilf Du, S. Anna, ich will ein monch [sic] werden' (p. 22). Manns is not, however, interested so much in Luther's reaction and how it differed from a remarkably similar situation a year earlier, but rather in the vow itself.

Genthe, on the other hand, cannot escape his confessional tradition and emplots the vow at the beginning of a chapter dealing with Luther's progression to the priesthood. In so doing, Genthe acknowledges Luther's vow as the beginning of the monastic period and as an 'Einschnitt' in the narrative. While Genthe has already offered Luther's earlier exhortations on cutting his artery and the death of a friend, he deals with the vow in isolation, thereby stressing its importance. Genthe then provides the precise date of the 2<sup>nd</sup> July, on which Luther is caught in a storm to the north of Erfurt near a village named Stotternheim:

Am 2. Juli geriet Martin Luther nördlich von erfurt bei dem Dorf Stotternheim in ein Gewitter. Blitze schlugen dicht bei ihm ein, warfen ihn sogar vielleicht zu Boden, so daß er in Todesgefahr gelobte: 'Hilf, heilige Anna, ich will ein Mönch werden!' (p. 46).

Differing from previous accounts of the Stotternheim vow which accord it an almost mythical status, the description given by Genthe is brief, concise and understated; importantly, however, it retains its singulative status, and thereby its Protestant valency. It is, indeed, almost restricted to the few known details of the events surrounding the vow. Genthe presents briefly the accepted detail of the lightning strike at Stotternheim and Luther's reaction and then follows the vow's outcome with Luther entering the monastery, casting it as little more than the first step on Luther's journey to become a monk.

### **Manns (1982: Catholic)**

The question of the vow and its validity leads Manns to examine the notion of vows and their theological and canonical significance, which as before reflects Manns's desire to educate the reader in a lost or forgotten tradition. Manns admits that the almost clichéd vow received a mixed reaction among Luther's friends and family and that it later became something of a religious 'football' in the discussion about monasticism and the validity of vows. Importantly, Manns claims, however, that:

Bis heute es von Biographen, Historikern und Theologen immer wieder zitiert und nicht selten auch mißverstanden [wird]. (pp. 22-23)

This quotation shows Manns taking other plausible emplotments into question and dismissing them because of their lack of knowledge regarding Catholic practices. It does of course lead him again neatly into a discussion of what the vow 'actually' signifies in theological terms, which itself presupposes a constant. Borrowing authority from Boehmer, he asserts that Luther was 'innerlich schon auf dem Weg ins Kloster' (p. 23), when the storm struck at Stotternheim, a fact certainly suggested and reinforced by Manns in the directly preceding narrative. Luther's vow is thus cast not as a sudden and divinely inspired decision.

Again, Manns places Luther firmly in the context of others who took a vow in the face of danger and considers his reaction to fit the pattern. There were friends who supported, and others who attempted to dissuade Luther from his decision. This use of an iterative narrative serves to reduce the vow to a common act, again desingularating the vow and hinting at Manns's confessional tradition. Manns recognises the 'schwere Last' (p. 23) that Luther felt in taking the vow and the 'anmutende[n] Ernst, den Menschen nun einmal empfinden, wenn sie ernstlich letzte Entscheidungen treffen.' (p. 23).

Manns completes his evaluation of Luther's vow in a mixture of singulative and iterative narrative. He instances the known reactions of individuals in a singulative narrative (*IN/IS*), while returning to an iterative narrative to project himself into the minds of those who make such a decision. This representation relies on a standard understanding of such decisions and an assumed historical constant. Manns represents Luther's decision and behaviour as a normal and essentially iterative act; as a consequence of his emplotment, he follows the vow with some understanding and empathy. He describes it as being 'ebenso christlich wie menschlich', as a 'schwere Last' and 'normal, besonnen und zielstrebig' (p. 23). He depicts Luther as having carefully thought through his vow and approaching it seriously and with reflection, rather than as a rash decision made in terror. This contradicts older Catholic representations, where Luther is shown to make the vow in the heat of the moment out of fear, as well as older Protestant representations that depict Luther making the vow in a divinely inspired moment.

In this way, Manns sets Luther's decision against a background of standard reactions of people in such cases, an essentially iterative strategy which desingularates Luther's act. Manns acknowledges the lack of source material and refuses to entertain

romantic representations of Luther's decision, because if the vow is a singulative act particular to Luther, it is possible that it is divinely motivated; if it is cast as an iterative act, Manns may suggest that the vow is human, making it possible to come to terms with Luther's later difficulties in the monastery and his emergence as a reformer, without indicating some form of divine intent. Instead, Manns reminds the reader of Hans Luder's reaction of supposing his son's decision to be the work of the Devil and witches and Nathin's comparison with St. Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus. Indeed, Manns is keen to highlight Luther's dismissal of such comparisons, thus using Luther himself to question any notion of the Stotternheim as a 'Damascus road' experience.

The various treatments of the Stotternheim episode demonstrate that there is a move away from highly singulative emplotments of the Protestant tradition, which cast the vow as a 'Damascus road' experience, as is shown by the accounts of Manns and Genthe. While Manns follows the Catholic tradition of iterating the vow, this is done not with reference to Luther's fears but to sixteenth-century practice. Manns specifies the vow to an iterative group of people of Luther's intellectual calibre and casts it as the final act in series of events that led Luther to make the decision. While Manns's interpretation is followed in Genthe's account to the extent that Genthe desingularates and removes the divine aspect of the vow, he cannot escape the importance of the episode in the Protestant tradition. Nevertheless, this iterative recasting of the episode does represent a shift that suggests ecumenism on a rhetorical level.

## Chapter IV

### The Last Supper

Luther's entry into the Augustinian monastery in Erfurt forms another episode that emerges as important in the depiction of his monastic period. As with the Stotternheim vow, the representation of the entry into the cloister differs greatly between the two confessional traditions. The Protestant tradition has employed a Gospel-related story to begin the notion of Luther's Passion in the cloister, depicting Luther's departure from his friends as a 'Last Supper' or *Abschiedsmahl*, furthered through the metaphor of Luther having subsequently 'died' on entering into the cloister. The depiction of Luther's entry into the monastery, therefore, represents two distinct but closely related episodes: the narrative of the *Abschiedsmahl*; and his entry into the cloister. For reasons of clarity, these two episodes will be treated separately. Such a representation draws a parallel in which the monastery and death become synonymous and, through the ordeals encountered there, Luther is 'resurrected' as the Reformer Luther. At the same time, however, Protestant accounts have suffered from an ignorance of monasticism and have often relied on iterative generic understandings of monastic practice. Yet such treatments employ a whole raft of meanings and resonances that are undesirable to a Catholic account, such as Cochlaeus's. Instead, Catholic representations must emplot the episode in a way that does not draw on such overtly positive and approving metaphors, but which nevertheless relate the accepted facts of the event.

#### Cochlaeus

(1549: Catholic)

Establishing a feature common to the Catholic narrative, Luther's entry to the cloister is ignored in the Cochlaeus narrative, which would suggest that there was nothing noteworthy about it or owing to its explicit Biblical metaphors, it was better to abandon it altogether. In fact, for Cochlaeus, Luther's inability to adapt to the monastic system was extraordinary rather than vice versa. Cochlaeus's ignoring of the episode suggests a lack of need to fashion a 'legend' out of a common event as well as supporting its status as an understood practice among his intended readership, which would accept monasticism as a familiar practice:

[...] aut interitu sodalis sui contristatus, huius mundi contemptu ingressus est repente, multis admirantibus, Monasterium fratru S. Augustini, qui uulgo Heremitæ dicuntur ... (p. 1)

This ellipsis of the episode is found in the much later texts of Grisar and Lortz who, in the same way as Cochlaeus, ignore the *Abschiedsmahl*, demonstrating the difficulty of representing it within the Catholic tradition.

### **Melanchthon (1548: Protestant)**

From the beginning of the *Historia*, Melanchthon establishes the shape that his narrative will take, namely to demonstrate the worthiness of Luther's life and how it may serve as an example of a Christian life. He makes clear in the preface that a promised autobiography of Luther would have offered examples for strengthening piety in good minds, 'quæ ad confirmandam pietatem in bonis mentibus profutura essent' (p. 16) and corrected those who 'priuata ipsum cupiditate inflammatum, seruitutis monasticæ uincula rupisse fingunt' (p. 16). Yet such an autobiography was never written and Melanchthon states that:

[...] sed quia editionem talis historiæ fatalis ipsius dies anteuertit, nos iisdem de rebus ea, quæ partim ex ipso audiuiimus, partim ipsi uidimus, bona fide recitaturi sumus (p. 16)

Thus Melanchthon sees himself as maintaining Luther's desire for a true version of his life, and establishes himself as a source of primary, or first-hand, and accurate secondary evidence. He will offer a partisan representation of the Luther story very much in the hagiographical model in which the hero's life will serve to exemplify and instruct the reader in the virtues of Christianity and ultimately lead 'to a more burning desire for the Kingdom of Heaven'.<sup>67</sup> The narrative testifies to the virtues of Christianity and the importance of God's power and existence. From the outset, therefore, Melanchthon's narrative is faced with the problem of depicting Luther in 'good faith' within the confines of the genre; historical validity will be subordinated to his overt didactic aim.

Overall, the monastic period in Melanchthon's *Historia* is given little attention, suggestive of Melanchthon's attitude towards this part of Luther's life, namely that the period was unremarkable and posed no narrative problems for a Protestant author. Having offered a positive image of Luther's heritage and education, in which the reader is constantly presented with the image of an intelligent, good man of integrity from humble but decent stock (p. 16), Melanchthon brings the reader to Luther's time as a

<sup>67</sup> Bede, 'Life of Cuthbert' in *Lives of the Saints* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965), p. 72. As Anderson shows (pp. 20-26), Bede's 'Life of St. Cuthbert' typifies the hagiographical tradition in its description of the saint's life and his miraculous actions.

Law student. Melanchthon emplots Luther's decision to study Law as being influenced by his relatives and shows Luther following the will of others. Conversely, at the age of 21, Melanchthon tells his reader, Luther seeks admission to the cloister against the opinion of his parents and relatives, 'subito præter parentis et propinquorum opinionem' (pp. 17-18). The narrative is devoid of value judgement except that the decision was Luther's own, showing him breaking the Fourth Commandment. This decision represents a shift from the earlier influence of his parents and family to autonomy. The reference to the decision being made at the age of 21 suggests that Luther waited until he reached adulthood before attempting to go against parental, or paternal, will. Melanchthon offers no reason for Luther's desire to enter the cloister and presents it as a mere fact in Luther's biography, suggesting that Melanchthon saw the decision as normal. This reflects the common and shared history of Catholic and Protestant writers at this time; this emplotment views the vow as an example of an iterative act, depicted as it is without significance.

### **Mathesius**

**(1566: Protestant)**

Mathesius rejects the notion that Luther entered the monastery out of laziness or poverty, and no doubt rebuts thereby the criticism made of Luther by others and in particular Catholics. He stresses that Luther fulfilled the vow against his own will and that of his parents, and thus excuses Luther's action in light of later statements. He also introduces a representation of Hans Luder that would later become an integral part of Protestant representations, in which he questions the origin of the vow and stresses the importance of the Fourth Commandment:

Derhalben wird er, nicht fauligkeit, ungeschicklichkeit oder armut halber, ein Augustiner Mönch zu Erfurt, doch one willen und wissen seines lieben Vatters, der ein herzliches mißfallen drob getragen unnd zwei wort zu seinem Sone gesagt: Sehet zu, das ewer schrecken nicht ein Teuffelisch betrug gewesen. Man solle dennoch den eltern umb Gottes worts willen gehorsam sein und nichts hinter irem wissen und rath anfahen. Welches dem Doktor hernach ist stetiges leid gewesen, biß er seine Kappen wider außgezogen, Wie man inn seiner vorrede an seinen Vatter vor dem Buch von dem Kloster gelübnius fein sehen kan. (p. 20)

Mathesius's narrative thus seeks to present Luther as a pious and godly individual throughout his early life from birth until his decision to become a monk. Through the use of metaphor, Luther emerges as a singulative example of an iterative group of godly individuals, including Samuel and Savanarola. Moreover, Mathesius depicts the 'novice Luther' in such a way as to exculpate him from the judgement of the later 'Reformer

Luther' and his criticism of monasticism and monastic vows. The narrative identifies proleptically Luther's theology in the actions of the younger Luther, presenting these as a constant and Luther as an individual continually working toward this. Mathesius's narrative is true to the sacred biographical genre and establishes a consistent and religious image of Luther.

**Manns (1982: Catholic)**

Importantly, Manns examines the *Abschiedsmahl* legend but questions through iterative knowledge of the period and medieval university life the highly singulative Protestant emplotment that depicts the *Abschiedsmahl* as mirroring the Last Supper. Manns employs the traditional and common singulative *IN/IS* narrative to represent the documented facts of Luther's life in his biography in an expected way. His use of the iterative *IN/nS* narrative is worthier of note, as he employs it not only to complete the 'background picture', but also to complete the Luther biography. The historical validity of such narrative is questionable, based as it is on general rather than particular understanding and knowledge. Moreover, Manns uses iteration to question traditional Protestant accounts that singulate the episodes of this period, crediting them with significance for Luther's development or even Gospel resonances. In this way, Manns's narrative emplotment reveals a subliminal confessional bias that contrasts with the overt ecumenical aim.

Returning to the facts, Manns informs the reader of Luther's 'last supper'. He begins to paint a very vivid, human and moving tableau of this 'Abschiedsmahl': Luther sitting among his friends in the 'Gasthof' (p. 24), listening to the conversation yet feeling the 'Kälte der Morgenstunde' (p. 24). This depiction is found in the Köstlin and Boehmer narratives, both clearly inheriting much from Mathesius, where the anecdote of the 'Last Supper' is offered. The reader witnesses Luther's departure from the secular world into the monastic enclosure in a highly visual depiction, as he literally and figuratively departs one world for another:

Am 16. Juli lud er noch einmal seine besten Freunde zu sich, um von ihnen Abschied zu nehmen. Noch versuchten sie ihn zurückzuhalten; er erwiderte ihnen: „heute seht Ihr mich und nimmermehr.“ Am andern Tag, dem Tage des heiligen Alexius, gaben sie ihm noch mit Tränen das Geleite an die Pforten des in der Stadt gelegenen Augustinerklosters, das ihn, wie er meinte, für immer aufnehmen sollte. (Köstlin, pp. 43-44)

The Gospel resonance of the episode is obvious and forms part of a traditional Protestant emplotment. Boehmer later mirrors Köstlin's treatment of the *Abschiedsmahl*

without significant alteration. Manns will later treat Luther's departure in a similarly visual style that is reminiscent of the Gospel, John 13, 33-36. Köstlin's emplotment creates through its Gospel resonances the beginnings of a Passion narrative that metaphorically seeks to invest Luther with divine and Christ-like qualities: Luther, as Christ did, bids farewell to his friends on the eve of the beginning of his sufferings. This Passion metaphor thus establishes a character that will later be resurrected to glory as Luther the Reformer.

This picture is, however, according to Manns lacking in reality and fact, and not supported by the sources. Through this representation, Manns questions the traditional Protestant depiction and refuses to share in the beginnings of a Passion. Instead, he presents Luther's own later singulative reminiscences of his 'Abschiedsmahl' (p. 23) with scepticism, but follows it with a seemingly more 'accurate' iterative account of what happened. Again, this is followed by a *IN/IS* singulative narrative, drawn from the *Tischreden*, describing Luther's actual entry into the cloister.

The *Abschiedsmahl*, Manns informs the reader, most probably took place in college and Luther went to the cloister in the early morning of the 16<sup>th</sup> July 1502. Retaining his Catholic inheritance but acknowledging an alternative Protestant emplotment, Manns does, nevertheless, present as fact that Luther's friends wept for him before the monastery gates; however, Luther '„hielt durch“ und vollzog in der Entschlossenheit des Glaubens eine Entscheidung, die er als Akt der totalen Hingabe an Gott trotz der späteren bitteren Kritik am Mönchtum niemals widerrufen hat' (p. 24). Manns views Luther's decision as being voluntary and as an act of devotion and duty to God; in so doing, he reinforces the piety of Luther's act. Regardless of Luther's later recollections on the vow made at Stotternheim, the event was one that remained under the grace of God. Manns closes the chapter, stating:

Darum fehlt in dieser schweren Stunde keineswegs das Licht, das ihn auch und gerade im ‚schwarzen Kloster‘ nicht verlassen wird. (p. 24)

In this dramatic scene, Manns resorts to an extended metaphor that suggests that Luther was guided by God, 'das Licht' accompanying him through the dark times in the cloister. Overall, the image that Manns portrays of Luther's *Abschiedsmahl* is one of understanding, empathy and experience. Manns demonstrates that Luther's decision is to be understood predominantly in its medieval terms, and in terms familiar to Manns as a priest. The comparison is never explicit but the understanding demonstrates it. Importantly, despite the explicit ecumenical aim of the text, and as with Manns's

narrative of the Stotternheim vow and the preceding events, the depiction of Luther's entry into the cloister demonstrates that the rhetoric of the representation remains in the Catholic tradition. As before, Manns desingulars the episode and dismisses the notion of a 'Damascus road' experience. Moreover, Manns removes any Gospel resonances from his representation and thus plays down any affinities with a Passion narrative.

**Genthe** (1966: Protestant)

The statement, 'einmal abgelegt, mußte es erfüllt werden' (p. 46) leads Genthe into a description of Luther's last acts before entering the cloister; the sale and giving away of his possessions. The Gospel resonances of this act are obvious and hint at traditional Protestant emplotments that establish a Passion narrative in the early episodes of the monastic period. Relying on later sources, Genthe narrates briefly Luther's last dinner, yet it is without the overt biblical imagery and Gospel resonance present in the Manns narrative (p. 24). There is, however, a biblical resonance in the quotation of Luther's parting words to his friends, which as a consequence acquires something of the effect created in the Manns text of likening Luther to Christ: 'Heute seht ihr mich und nimmermehr' (p. 48). This recalls John 13, 33-36. Genthe resigns himself to a narration of the 'bare facts'. The focalised narrative states that Luther's friends had 'keine Ahnung' (p. 46) as to the reasons behind the invitation and this is followed by the iterative description of the most likely route taken after the meal to the cloister. This scene adopts something of a biblical resonance, ultimately equating Luther with Christ. Genthe's narrative, therefore, shows an ecumenical shift through its abandonment of more traditional Protestant narratives and adoption of some of Manns's emplotment.

**Grisar** (1911: Catholic)

The traditional ignoring of Luther's entry to the cloister is again found in Grisar's account of the event, which once more suggests that the episode is without any significance as far as the traditional Catholic emplotment is concerned:

Die Brüder des „Eremitenordens des Hl. Augustin von der deutschen Kongregation“ – das war die volle Bezeichnung der Ordensgemeinschaft - aber waren glücklich über den Gewinn eines hochbegabten und vielversprechenden Jünglings, der an der Universität von Erfurt bereits den Grad eines Magisters der Philosophie erlangt hatte. (p. 2)

**Lortz (1941: Catholic)**

Luther's entry to the cloister is given a greater importance than in the earlier Catholic treatments, although the episode is regarded without any particular significance.

Iteration predominates and is used primarily to offer some description of the order.

Lortz employs an iterative metaphor to cast Luther into a group of former monks who rose to prominence in disputes with the Church by connecting Luther's entry with Hutten's departure:

Luther trat am 17. Juli 1505 ins Kloster. Es war das gleiche Jahr, in dem Hutten dem Kloster entwich. (p. 157)

This proleptic metaphor hints at Luther's course of action in leaving the cloister, as well as the cause of his future fame.

As with Cochlaeus and Grisar, Lortz offers a sylleptic introduction to the Erfurt Augustinians, stressing the conditions within the monastery. Luther's admission is quickly dealt with and the sparse depiction suggests that the episode is regarded as having no particular significance. The sparsity of the narrative, taken further by later Catholic writers (e.g. Maritain) who abandon the episode altogether, reflects a desire to avoid the Gospel representation common to traditional Protestant emplotments, which entail a myriad of metaphorical connotations undesirable to a Catholic account.

**Köstlin and Boehmer (1892 & 1929: Protestant)**

Köstlin and Boehmer, the latter inheriting much from the former, offer an accelerated summary of the Erfurt Augustinians. Their depictions provide an introduction to monasticism, but Boehmer's account differs in stressing the Augustinians' status as an ascetic élite. Such a comment functions proleptically to suggest Luther's piety and ascetism. Both Protestant authors demonstrate a clear desire, however, to educate their reader in an unknown practice so that they might better understand the context of Luther's actions and later criticisms. Yet a tension exists between this desire and the authors' lack of personal experience, and their reliance on 'academic' knowledge. Nevertheless, Köstlin offers an iterative narrative which provides little more than the usual custom of those seeking admission to a monastic order with some Luther-specific historical fact (Köstlin, pp. 45-47). The reader, therefore, gains an insight into the established practice, which while likely to be true, remains in Luther's case conjecture. In Boehmer's account, the process of Luther's entry to the cloister and the admission procedure are entirely iterative and follow Köstlin's narrative, albeit with greater detail, and offer short statements of singulative documentary fact.

**Friedenthal (1967: Protestant)**

In depicting Luther's entry to the cloister, Friedenthal provides an introduction to the order and its practices, while focusing his narrative on the Erfurt house (pp. 41-53). In his accelerated introduction, Friedenthal stresses the Erfurt Augustinians' preaching and teaching rôle, proleptically creating an appropriate background from which the Reformer Luther will emerge. The narrative of Luther's admission is iterative and follows the set pattern of the process. As with the other treatments, singulative narrative occurs and this again appears in reporting Luther's continued disagreement with his father. The introduction that Friedenthal provides stresses a monasticism that is strict and harsh and the description serves to establish an image of an institution that will correspond to Luther's later criticisms of it as well as explain his exit from it.

**Manns (1982: Catholic)**

Manns begins the second chapter with a relatively dramatic opening: the cloister gates and Luther physically entering the cloister, through which he is metaphorically born into a new life. Developing his educative technique, Manns employs a *IN/nS* iterative narrative to project the customary process of admission into a monastic order, while specifying his general narrative to the Erfurt cloister, thus endowing it with a singulative appearance:

Es gehört zur Erfahrung aller Mönchsorden, daß die Entscheidung zu diesem Leben eingehender Überprüfung bedarf, und zwar ebenso auf der Seite des Bewerbers wie von seiten der Ordensgemeinschaft und der Oberen. Luther begann also sein Klosterleben mit dem sogenannten Postulat, das etwa zwei Monate dauerte. (p. 25)

The effect of this statement is to confuse the iterative and singulative narratives; the iterative is confused on two levels, mixing the generic iterative monastic process with the iterative process within the Erfurt house; and the singulative in dubiously specifying this historical 'truth' to Luther. In mentioning Luther's parents' reaction to his decision, Manns introduces a singulative narrative (*IN/IS*) to offer some factual detail.

He speckles his hypothetical narrative with concrete facts regarding the cloister: for example the name of the prior, details of the buildings within the cloister, a letter sent by Luther to his parents and his father's anger at his decision. For Manns, juxtaposed fact and assumption rest comfortably together, the fact lending the assumptions authority. Knowledge of an iterative experience dominates and informs the

narrative and Manns continues by inferring what Luther experienced during his postulancy. This is presented as a straightforward fact in the simple past tense:

Für ihn ging es dabei um die Vertiefung einer Entscheidung, die er durch die Wahl des ‚schwarzen Klosters‘ gleichsam vorentschieden hatte. (p. 25)

Once more, Manns alters the direction of his narrative by asking why Luther chose the convent of the Augustinian Eremites. This leads him into an accelerated summary of the origins and nature of the order and allows him once more to ‘educate’ his reader in a predominantly Roman Catholic tradition and history. Manns dismisses the argument that Luther chose the Augustinians for their discipline and observance of the Rule, as stricter orders existed. This argument dismisses the view of him being in possession of a strict reformatory zeal from the start, and with it a hallmark of the traditional Protestant emplotment. The representation of this choice is characterized by a juxtaposition of fact and hypothesis, which leads us to share the opinion of the author. As a novice, Luther abandoned the right to decide his own future – this would lie instead with his superiors – yet he was attracted by the possibility of further study with the Augustinians within the *studium generale*. As proof of this argument and the close relationship between the university and the Erfurt Augustinians, Manns offers the example of Johannes Lang, another graduate of the Arts Faculty and the later monk of the Augustinian cloister. Luther is placed in an iterative pattern which desingularates his actions and achievements. According to Manns, this explains why he did not choose the Franciscans or the Dominicans, the latter of which ‘er zwar für sehr gelehrt [hielt]. Aber er hielt sie auch für überheblich und eingebildet’ (p. 25). Furthermore, the narrative has the effect of desingularating Luther as a reformer, as traditional Protestant accounts would characterise him.

Continuing his introduction to Catholic practices, Manns explains the geographical and physical layout of the monastery as well as defining what monastic vows meant for Augustinians. In this summary, Manns is keen to indicate that the Augustinians had a long tradition of reform and that:

es eigentlich nicht ohne Eindruck auf Luther geblieben sein [kann], daß in Sachen der Reform die Initiative keineswegs unbedingt von Rom ausging. (p. 26)

Statements such as this temper Luther’s later action and cast him iteratively into a longer Catholic tradition of reform, reinforcing Luther’s Catholic orthodoxy, acquainting Manns’s non-Roman Catholic readers with a ‘decent’ tradition of reform

within the Catholic Church, as well as indicating to Catholic readers that the 'Protestant' Luther was acting within a very Catholic tradition. Importantly, the effect of this desingularizes Luther as the arch-reformer and questions the traditional Protestant emplotment.

In his history of the order, Manns shows that there were reformatory movements within the Church and that Luther was not the first to seek to reform the Church. The history suggests that the tradition of the order showed that the Church could be questioned from outside the Vatican, dispelling the 'myth' that it was impossible to criticize the Church or that Luther was the first to do it. The effect of this is to desingularize Luther and iteratively cast him into a general trend of reform within orthodox Catholicism, thus recognising the Catholic in Luther; this, of course, agrees with the ecumenical aim established in the foreword but also shows Manns moving away from a traditional Catholic emplotment. Manns develops his history of the Augustinians by introducing the reader to a simple biography of Staupitz, indicating at the start that he was to become close to Luther (p. 26) and at the end to Frederick the Wise. He concludes his history of the order, focusing on the academic standing of the monastery and the development of its buildings. In this way, Manns introduces the supposedly 'ignorant' reader to a fuller understanding of cloister life and what Luther could have met when he entered the cloister in 1505; but he acknowledges that this initial experience was later criticized by Luther, even though his order sought to avoid many of the 'sins'.

Having introduced the reader to Luther's admission, Manns states that he may begin focusing on events from Luther's own point of view (p. 27), yet this representation will not rely solely on Luther's own recollections but will also take other plausible emplotments into consideration:

Hier führt vielmehr nur ein Verfahren weiter, das Luthers Rückblicke zwar beachtet, gleichzeitig aber auf der Basis sicherer Quellen die Verzeichnungen der Wirklichkeit korrigiert, die dem auf sein Leben Zurückschauenden aus den verschiedensten Gründen unterlaufen. (p. 27)

Manns does not, however, offer these sources and employs details of Luther's subsequent successful monastic career to counter such criticism. In order to provide a brief overview of Luther's time as a postulant and novice, Manns uses iterative knowledge to provide a hypothetical outline, and in this way iterative knowledge is used to compensate for the lack of singulative knowledge; as before, he 'fleshes' this out with the small amount of known detail and undisputed 'fact'. From the known dates of

Luther's progress from novice in 1505 to priest in 1507, Manns concludes that Luther's superiors had marked the 'hochbegabten und durch Himmel selbst berufenen fr. Martinus' (p. 27) out for an 'akademische Laufbahn' within the Church.

**Genthe (1996: Protestant)**

Genthe's representation of Luther's entry to the cloister mirrors Manns's account. It is highly iterative in nature, punctuated by singulative anecdotes and references where possible. Genthe provides a variety of possible reasons for Luther's choice of the Erfurt Augustinians, which leads him into a brief sylleptical summary of the order's history. Not only does this passage 'pad' the narrative in order to compensate for the lack of documented Luther-focused fact surrounding this episode, but it serves, rather like the Manns text, to 'educate' the reader in a lost Catholic past and monastic tradition. This is developed in Genthe's use and explanation of Latin ecclesiastical terminology. The history provides not only a Luther-focused subjective hypothesis rather than 'historical' fact, but also serves to suggest reasons for Luther's choice, in that it stresses learning, strictness, adherence to the rule of the Order, all of which present Luther as a pious and faithful novice, and proleptically fit Genthe's depiction of Luther. Such a depiction of Luther's choice as well as the implied view of the Augustinian Eremites are positive and shows an increasingly positive understanding of monasticism *per se* by Protestant authors. This view of monasticism and the Augustinians in particular is inherited from Manns's representation (Manns, p. 26), or at least emulates it owing to Genthe's lack of primary experience of monastic education.

In his description of the monastery buildings, Genthe goes to some length to refer to the present and to build a bridge between the described past and the 'visitable' present. This invitation to visit the sites invites the reader to verify the validity of Genthe's narrative by comparing physical evidence to his description, suggesting that the past is 'revisitable' through an experience of the physical sites. The iterative narrative continues to explain the 'everyday' existence of the cloister, and is based on general truths rather than on the singulative fact of the Erfurt house. Contrary to Manns's attempt to understand medieval monasticism through reference to modern monasticism, Genthe examines the life of the cloister almost as a historical artefact; he approaches and understands it in its medieval and historical context alone, thus reflecting his confessional allegiance and inherited view of monasticism as a 'dead duck'. The work of the satellite houses leads him to the wealth of the Erfurt monastery,

and this in turn to a discussion of the reform movement within the Augustinian Eremites. This question of reform acts as a prolepsis for Luther's journey to Rome.

By treating the 'Last Supper' and Luther's entry to the cloister in his narrative, Manns reflects a significant step towards ecumenism on a conceptual and rhetorical level, in contrast to the Catholic tradition of ignoring the episodes. Simultaneously, however, Manns questions the singulative Protestant approach, using iteration to challenge the Protestant emplotment and to remove the 'divine' valency accorded the episode. While Genthe's account remains rooted in a Protestant singulative narrative tradition, the lessening of the Gospel resonances attached to the episode demonstrate the infiltration of Manns's treatment. Both narratives, therefore, challenge the beginnings of the traditional Protestant Passion narrative and suggest a confessional rapprochement.

## Chapter V

### Novitiate

The representation of Luther's novitiate creates a certain narrative tension between the knowledge that his first years in the monastery were an influential period in his life, either positively or negatively, and the scarcity of documented historical fact.

Depictions are further complicated by the fact that much information relating to this period is a mixture of recollection by Luther and others, and in particular symposial recollections from the *Tischreden* (1566). Luther's novitiate constitutes a large period of time and it is one of which very little is known due to Luther's relatively unnoteworthy stature at that time. Protestant and Catholic historians alike must, therefore, resort to the known facts of the period as well as an iterative knowledge of monasticism as an institution to compensate for the lack of documented historical fact.

In the Protestant tradition, Luther's novitiate has tended to characterise him as a singulative occurrence of significance, rightly and divinely inspired. Thus, Luther's life becomes a series of singulative struggles against an iteratively narrated corrupt system: Luther's difficulties testifying to his virtue and the inherent monastic corruption. Initially these difficulties were viewed by Catholics as reflecting Luther's lack of suitability for the life of a monk, if not as evidence of diabolical possession. More recently, however, Luther has been narrated as an iterative character that suffers normal problems, in part known and in part answered by the system.

#### **Grisar (1911: Catholic)**

In early Catholic accounts, Luther's novitiate is treated as having little significance other than in isolated episodes such as the alleged incident in the choir. In more recent narratives, however, there has been a distinct attempt to question Luther's later criticism of monasticism. Grisar, having created a character suffering from depression and anxieties throughout his early life, provides a good example of this. He opens his account by questioning the Stotternheim vow and brings to his analysis a Catholic understanding of the nature of vows perhaps missing from contemporary Protestant accounts. This is informed by Grisar's own knowledge of votive practice and using a technique of iterative comparison, later developed by Manns, he questions Luther's suitability for his calling:

Nicht eines jeden Charakter ist der Befolgung der evangelischen Ratschläge Christi gewachsen, und sich eindringen in eine subjektiv unangemessene, wenn auch fromme und strenge Lebensbahn, ist sicher nicht nach dem Willen der weisen und milden Vorsehung. (p. 5)

Grisar stresses that Luther was at liberty to leave the cloister throughout his novitiate and implies that, contrary to all that was later said, Luther suffered nothing so great as to make him totally question his vocation at that time. Thereafter, Grisar focuses on the beginning of the novitiate and employing iteration takes the reader through Luther's clothing and admission. This accelerated summary of Luther's novitiate mixes iterative knowledge of monastic practice and singulative documentary fact.

As Manns later will, Grisar employs his own knowledge of monasticism to question some of Luther's later criticisms and is able to contextualise these in the light of his own experience. As before, this iterative comparison suggests a constant of monasticism with questionable historical validity:

Mochten auch in der Gemeinde von manchen die frommen Gepflogenheiten des Ordensstandes zu äußerlich aufgefaßt und mechanisch verrichtet werden, mochten wohl auch Mitbrüder wie es in großen Gemeinschaften zu geschehen pflegt, sich durch liebloses Wesen Luther oder andern lästig machen (er erwähnt einiges davon in seinen Tischreden), so war doch im großen und ganzen der Klostergeist zu Erfurt wie in den andern Häusern der Kongregation im Grunde nicht tadelnswert. (p. 6)

Such comments correct a more negative depiction of monasticism as evinced in the more confessionally biased Protestant accounts.

As in Köstlin's and Boehmer's accounts, Grisar examines the anxieties experienced by Luther in the monastery, drawing on references made by Luther in the *Tischreden*. Once more drawing on his own experiences, Grisar views Luther as an example of a familiar group:

Wer die Wege des geistlichen Lebens kennt, der ist damit vertraut, daß mancher Tugendbeflissene dem läuternden Feuer ähnlicher Prüfungen ausgesetzt ist. (p. 6)

Unlike the Protestant accounts, however, the question of Luther's *Anfechtungen* is used to demonstrate that the monastic institution answered Luther's sufferings. Thus, Grisar places the blame for such problems not on monasticism or Catholic theology but rather on Luther's understanding of them: 'Luther stützte sich indes gegenüber solchen Belehrungen allzuoft auf den eignen Sinn' (p. 7). Monasticism, therefore, does not emerge as a corrupt system, but rather as an institution that sought to counsel Luther

who was led away 'von seinem verstörten und aufgeregten Naturell' (p. 7) and who remained deaf to its advice. Grisar completes his examination of Luther's novitiate by indicating that however much Luther later criticised monasticism and complained of his early sufferings, his order was satisfied with him and allowed him to make his profession. Grisar then presents a generic iterative *mise-en-abîme* of Luther's profession in a pseudo-singulative narrative, as Manns will later do for the postulancy, novitiate and profession.

Grisar's representation of Luther's novitiate, therefore, has certain affinities with the Protestant emplotment. Both sides of the confessional divide are reliant on the same sources and singulative documentary fact is scarce. Whereas some Protestants identify the cause of Luther's problems as the monastic system, Grisar suggests Luther's character was at fault and employing the technique of iterative comparison evaluates and dismisses the validity of Luther's later, and often prejudicial, recollections.

#### **Lortz (1941: Catholic)**

Lortz opens his examination of Luther's novitiate by providing a short description of the Erfurt monastery and in doing so accepts Luther's remark that it was poorly provided for. Lortz follows Luther from postulant to novice and it is the iterative that informs the narrative, as for example when Lortz depicts admission by providing the prior's prayer (p. 158) As in Grisar, Lortz employs the technique of iterative comparison to challenge the notion that Luther could have deviated as far from the Rule as he later claimed. This technique suggests an unchanging constant to monasticism and monastic practice that might not be historically true. This technique is later adopted by Manns who uses his own experience of monasticism and Roman Catholic practice to challenge Luther's reported experience, thereby assuming an unchanging constant within the Roman Catholic Church which cannot be historically valid. This technique presupposes that Manns knows Luther better than himself, and again demonstrates the primacy of iterative over singulative knowledge. Thereafter, Lortz takes the reader directly to Luther's profession and employing pseudo-singulation narrates the ceremony, using a mixture of third person narrative and direct speech.

Lortz concludes his summary by challenging the extreme Catholic representations of Luther's early monastic career and reminds the reader that whatever Luther himself said, his superiors were satisfied with his progress and identified him for higher offices:

Luthers Klosterleben war ernst. Es war auch so, daß seinen ersten Oberen der Gedanke gar nicht kam, er passe nicht in ihre Reihen. [...] Außerdem hätte man ein so wenig zuverlässiges Mitglied des Konvents nicht noch eigens für die Studien und eine Professur bestimmt. Luthers Verhalten blieb denn auch bis 1517 [...] korrekt. (p. 159)

This use of iteration to question singulative behaviour and assertions is another technique that Manns employs to rebut Catholic 'legend' regarding Luther's time in the convent. Lortz employs techniques present in the Grisar narrative, and which Manns develops, to challenge such myths, and these enable him to provide a positive depiction which criticises neither Luther nor monasticism.

### **Melanchthon (1548: Protestant)**

Melanchthon states that, once in the cloister, Luther approached the monastic life as he had approached the academic life: 'hæc studia quanquam parerga tractabat, et facile arripiebat illas scholasticas methodos' (p. 19). The iterative narrative suggests a constant of Luther's life throughout the monastic period which Melanchthon even sees continuing beyond Luther's time in the cloister:

*Erat autem natura, quod sæpe miratus sum, in corpore nec paruo nec imbecilli, ualde modici cibi et potus, uidi continuis quatuor diebus, cum quidem recte ualeret, prorsus nihil edentem aut bibentem, uidi sæpe alias multis diebus quotidie exiguo pane et halece contentum esse. (p. 18)*

This iterative portrayal of Luther shares certain affinities with hagiographical representations of saints who eat little, if anything, and whose survival without food reinforces their beatific status. This representation of Luther's food highlights the generic conventions within which Melanchthon is working: he produces his own 'life of a saint', and through the food type hints at his piety. While the use of iteration is historically questionable, the combination of a singulative and iterative narrative provides a coherent picture of the young monk, the former lending authority to the latter, to produce a constant image acceptable to Melanchthon's employment.

### **Mathesius (1566: Protestant)**

Although a relatively short account of Luther, Mathesius examines briefly Luther's early monastic period. While the entry to the cloister and the details of his postulancy are ignored, Mathesius focuses his attention on Luther's attitude during his early monastic period in a way that will correspond to the image that he provides of the later

Luther. Luther emerges as such as a serious student of the Bible who adheres to the Rule:

Ehe er im Kloster Profeß thut, gibt ihm das Conuent auff sein bit ein Lateinische Biblia, die durchliset er mit höchstem ernst und gebete unnd lernet vil dauon aussen. (p. 20)

It is noteworthy that it is Luther himself who requests a copy of the Bible, thus becoming the initiator of his own biblical study; the monastic system, on the other hand, appears ignorant, corrupt and concerned with worldly interests, as the bible was only provided at his request. In order to achieve this criticism, Mathesius takes an arguably iterative fact, as all monks supposedly received a Bible on entering the monastic life, and recasts singulatively to stress Luther's piety. This technique is then repeated in reporting that it is Luther's fellow monks and superiors who later take it from him. Thus, Luther is presented as a self-proleptor, initiating his own biblical study and conducting it in spite of the monastic system that tried to prevent him from doing so:

Da er aber nun Profeß thete und die Kappen anzoch unnd folgend im 1507. jare Priester ward, wie sein brieff außweiset, darinn er auff sein erste messe gebeten, haben im seine Brüder die Biblia wider genommen und im ir Sophisterei unnd Schullerer unter die hende geben, die er *ex obedientia* fleissig durchlesen, doch wo im zeit und raum ward, hat er sich in des Klosters liberei versteckt und zu seiner lieben Biblia stets und trewlich gehalten ... (p. 21)

The above passage, particularly the description of the 'snatching' of the Bible, suggests a singulative act; yet is more likely to refer to the more iterative notion that at this stage in a priest's theological instruction the focus was predominantly philosopho-theological, based on Biel's *Canon Missæ* and Peter Lombard's *Sententiæ*. Having completed his novitiate and vocational training as a priest, Luther embarked on theological studies in preparation for the degree of *baccalaureus sententiaris*.<sup>68</sup> As a consequence, the singulative emplotment given the episode by Mathesius suggests a far more sinister and obstructive act, which we are led to believe was typical of the medieval Church.

In addition to this, Mathesius's account serves his ideological function in depicting the monastic system as a corrupt and ignorant body concerned with worldlier interests than might be expected:

Es halten in aber die Klosterleut sehr lege und seilen im vil auff, das er Custos und Kirchner sein muste unnd die unfletigsten Gemach aussseubern, Wie sie im

<sup>68</sup> For a more detailed account of medieval theological education, see Jacques Verger, 'L'Exegèse, parente pauvre de la théologie scolastique?', in *Manuels, Programmes de Cours et Techniques d'Enseignement dans les universités médiévales*, ed. by Jacqueline Harnesse (Louvain-la-Neuve: Université Catholique de Louvain, 1993), pp. 31-56 (pp. 36-38).

auch ein Bettelmönch zugaben und sprachen unuerhohlen: *Cum sacco per ciuitatem*, mit betlen unnd nicht mit studiren dienet und reichert man die Klöster. (p. 20)

In this way, Mathesius's narrative has a dual purpose in both presenting Luther's life and serving its obvious propaganda aim of attacking a 'corrupt' system, thus reflecting Luther's own later criticisms. Luther's novitiate is left unexplained and without comment, because at the time of writing it was still a familiar concept, and because the narrative's purpose lies proleptically in justifying Luther and his later criticism. The young monk Luther in Mathesius's account, therefore, emerges as a pious exegete against a corrupt background. This depiction is achieved by a singulative narrative that seems to ignore, or misrepresent, certain iterative truths that would emerge from a more iterative perspective.

### **Köstlin (1892: Protestant)**

In depicting the novitiate, Köstlin presents the generally accepted process of the novitiate and profession. While the narrative is generic, it is initially cast in a pseudo-singulative form that, while focalised on Luther, is based on essentially iterative 'knowledge':

Mit feierlichen Gesängen, Gebeten und andern Gebräuchen wurde der Neuling unter die Novizen aufgenommen. (p. 47 ff.)

Köstlin adopts Mathesius's treatment and stresses Luther's biblical study, preparing the reader for the Luther of the later narrative who appears as biblical exegete and scholar:

Das wichtigste endlich war für ihn, daß ihm jetzt eine Bibel, nämlich die allgemein von der Kirche gebrauchte lateinische Bibelübersetzung, in die Hand gegeben wurde...Mit wahren Hunger aber las er sich in seine Bibel hinein und ließ nicht mehr von ihr. (p. 49)

Therefore, while providing a pastiche of a novice's life, presented as being Luther's, Köstlin's narrative allows him to show an image of Luther that will be consistent with his image of the later Luther. In this way, Köstlin is able to transform Luther's novitiate into something wholly positive and beneficial to his later development without over-Catholicising Luther.

### **Boehmer (1929: Protestant)**

Having described Luther's entry to the cloister, Boehmer adopts the model of a Luther-specific iterative narrative as found in Köstlin; this iterative narrative is cast in a

pseudo-singulative form that suggests a greater degree of historical veracity and attempts to cloak the putative nature of the representation in 'fact', although Boehmer does provide clear indicators that he is providing little more than a generic portrayal:

Zuvörderst ward er, wie alle Novizen, von dem Novizenmeister in den vorgeschriebenen Ehrenerweisungen und all den anderen äußeren Observanzen unterweisen, die zu dem eigentümlichen Lebensstil des Klosters gehörten. (p. 50)

While the historical validity of such a portrayal is questionable, it compensates for the lack of documentary fact on this period in Luther's life, while suggesting a static understanding of monasticism that acknowledges an unchanging monastic practice.

In Boehmer's novitiate narrative, the education received by Luther and in particular the practices and 'kleine Charakterproben' (p. 50), coupled with the importance given to confession and the study of the Bible, are stressed to create a picture of monasticism that is both strict and penitential. In this way, Boehmer is able to accuse the monastic system of having caused Luther's anxieties. Friedenthal treats Luther's early monastic years similarly: the overriding tone of the narrative is one of discipline with emphasis on the penitential aspects of monasticism, namely the Chapter of Faults and the practice of confession. Boehmer's representation of Luther's novitiate is largely true to some of the criticisms made by the later Luther and presumably his intention was to emplot the novitiate in such a way as to prepare proleptically the reader for those criticisms and to present Luther as being consistent in his behaviour.

Where possible, Boehmer offers singulative narrative; this follows the established trend of narrating the anecdote of Luther's conversation with his novice master, and such singulation serves to punctuate an otherwise iterative narrative. Through the use of iteration, both the generic and the Luther-specific, Boehmer reaches the conclusion, also reached by Manns, that Luther 'die Überzeugung gewann, im Kloster den rechten Ort für seine arme Seele gefunden zu haben' (p. 52).

Overall, Boehmer's account mirrors Köstlin's emplotment in presenting the generic introduction to monasticism and Luther's novitiate. Boehmer's representation develops the earlier narratives, however, in highlighting the institution of monasticism as the cause of Luther's anxieties, and propagates the Protestant legend that Luther's difficulties grew out of the system. As Friedenthal does, Boehmer creates an iterative background of preoccupation with sin that will allow him to present the incident in the choir and Luther's First Mass as logical outcomes of the latter's experiences in the monastery.

**Manns (1982: Catholic)**

Manns is aware that his readership is largely ignorant of the monastic life and therefore leads it through monasticism slowly, as it was a generally unknown practice in the twentieth century, particularly for Protestants. In attempting to make the 'alien' in terms of a historical and a cultural difference familiar to his reader, Manns generates an iterative narrative of monasticism which is not specific to Luther's experience or the Augustinians of the sixteenth century.

Manns seeks to establish that the monastic lifestyle and the problems facing the postulant and novice have changed little in the five hundred years since the Reformation. Developing the traditional Catholic treatment, Manns states that the problems confronted by Luther in the monastery are not specific to his time but rather are universals specific to the situation, which Manns himself has experienced: the criticisms and alleged problems need to be understood in terms of monasticism itself. This Manns does through the many comparisons with his own experience and through the examination of the monastic lifestyle which follows.

Returning to documented details of Luther's monastic period, Manns acknowledges the unreliability of Luther's later recollections regarding his time as a monk. Manns claims that his description of this period will consider Luther's later recollections but will correct them 'auf der Basis sicherer Quellen' (p. 27). Again, Manns assumes a superior knowledge of Luther's actions and thoughts, showing the importance of iterative knowledge on singulative in his representation of historical facts. Manns describes Luther's initial progress as a monk in a mixture of singulative and iterative narrative. In the singulative narrative, he offers accepted dates as fact and embellishes the dates with essentially iterative 'knowledge' of the system. In order to avoid a totally iterative narrative, however, Manns moves from the little known novitiate to concentrate on Luther's 'geistliche Erziehung zum Mönchtum und Priestertum' (p. 27), which he claims is of greater significance for his reformatory development.

Regarding the importance of Luther's spiritual education to his later development, Manns exploits the opportunity to return to an account of the daily life of a monk: he answers an essentially singulative and Luther-focused (*IN/IS*) question with an iterative (*IN/nS*) answer. Reference is made to Luther to reinforce either Manns's criticism or praise for various facets of the monastic system: Luther's attitude towards the learning of the Psalter and the saying of the Daily Office are good examples of this (p. 29).

Manns again employs his technique of an iterative narrative somewhat metaphorically, in that its syllepsis assumes that Luther's experience was congruous with that of many others in a larger historical pattern, but it is simultaneously metonymic, casting Luther as the representative of a larger experience. Manns leads his reader through a general but nevertheless Luther-specific description of the novitiate. In this overtly educative series of passages, which simultaneously addresses the present, Manns again resorts to a comparison with his own period. The metaphorical allusion calls upon the reader to compare his own essentially secular life with the strictly regulated life of the late medieval monk:

Wer als Laie diesen Zeitplan [den Tageslauf des Chorgebets] auf sich wirken läßt, meint zunächst, daß die Mönche aus der Kirche nicht herausgekommen seien. (p. 28)

This reference steers and directs the narrative, so that Manns can educate his reader in a partially lost Roman Catholic tradition. Thus Manns simultaneously presents an account of Luther's life as well as demystifying the Roman Catholic past and present.

Such use of a tacit metaphor is employed in exactly the same way in describing the strictness required in learning the rubric of the Psalter:

Um von ‚Äußeren‘ oder den ‚Äußerlichkeiten‘ endlich zum ‚Inneren‘ zu kommen, sei nur noch kurz auf die klösterliche ‚Rubrizistik‘ verwiesen, die dem formlosen modernen Menschen teils lächerlich, teils verhaßt, auf jeden Fall aber unerträglich erscheint. (p. 28)

Such references educate the reader in partially unknown practices and involve him in the narrative, calling in this instance for his respect of an individual such as Luther who competently learnt his 'Rubrizistik'.

Similarly, Manns explains the difficulties inherent in the sung daily offices and the amount of time they required; yet he indicates what benefits this had for Luther in allowing him to gain a comprehensive knowledge of Holy Scripture, and he refuses to accept Luther's criticisms of the Divine Office. This mixture of iterative educative narrative, addressing both the contemporary and the Luther period, describes something of the dangers inherent in singing the Divine Office which might result in the focus of prayers being technical rather than conceptual, with the petitioner only partly concentrating on what he is praying. Again, Manns describes a seemingly universal problem, enabling him to address the two distinct time frames simultaneously. His analysis of the problem is informed by his own experience of the Divine Office,

resulting in an essentially metaphorical narrative. The issue of the Divine Office, according to Manns, can only be truly understood by those who have had to 'live' it:

Wer aber die Tagzeiten überhaupt nicht betete, galt als Schismatiker, weil er Gott den geschuldeten Dienst verweigert hatte. Jeder, der die Verpflichtung zum Chor- und Breviergebet einmal buchstäblich ernst genommen hat, weiß, was das bedeutet. (p. 30)

By placing Luther's problems in a general iterative pattern, Manns is able to judge from his own experienced knowledge, 'die jeder Brevierbeter kennt' (p. 30). The narrative implies an unchanging constant of the experience of the Divine Office which to some extent questions Luther's later criticism, as can be found in the *Tischreden* and older Protestant narratives.

Once more, Manns insists that to understand fully Luther's criticisms, namely that the monastic system would not allow him to fall so far behind, one must understand the situation in which he lived. It was not until after 1517 that Luther publicly attacked monasticism and criticised the issues of monasticism and prayer as forms of works, the cult of the rosary and repetitive liturgical chants.<sup>69</sup> While Manns's understanding is cast in an iterative knowledge, it remains exclusive, as these situations still exist and may be experienced in Roman Catholicism. He quickly dismisses the Catholic 'polemische Legenden' (p. 30) that Luther started to 'skip' the Divine Office for weeks as a novice, as such a 'crime' would be 'undenkbar' under the watchful eye of his novice master. Interestingly, Manns views with suspicion various criticisms made of the Luther of this period, including some in the *Tischreden*, disregarding singulative instances of criticism and supporting his own arguments with reference to iterative 'fact'. Basing his opinion of events on his own experience and reading, Manns views sceptically Luther's later claim to not to have been a matter of weeks:

[...] sondern ein Vierteljahr mit den Gebetsverpflichtungen „im Rückstand“ gewesen sein – fragwürdig. Aus einer höheren Sicht ist es das ‚Klischee‘, das diesen Erinnerungen zugrunde liegt, das gegen die Echtheit der fraglichen Rückblicke spricht. (p. 30)

Manns's view of Luther's alleged difficulties with the Daily Office is similar: he refuses to accept that Luther could have been led to a crisis in the act of collective prayer in choir, as it was a recognised and accepted problem, remedies for which were to be found in pastoral handbooks and which were known to confessors. Thus Manns employs iterative knowledge as a 'yard-stick' against which he measures singulative

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<sup>69</sup> Marius, p. 150, p. 193 & p. 312.

statements and recollections. If and when the two do not agree, Manns is able to reject the latter in light of the former.

Employing once more the stylistic device of the rhetorical question, Manns questions the notion of Luther the monk being turned into an over-scrupulous individual liberated by the Gospels. Rather, he suggests, it was the work of the Protestant editors of the *Tischreden*, who depicted Luther in such a way as to present his past to the glory of the Gospels. In his representation, Manns systematically avoids a singulative portrayal of Luther, and prefers to depict him as a single example of an iterative type known to the system. Mann's emplotment of Luther's novitiate seeks to present Luther in a medieval and monastic context, as understood by a Roman Catholic. Manns's dismissal of various legends surrounding the period serves to desingulate Luther's later negative reaction and through a process of iteration normalises this experience, negating the singulative *basanoi* of the Protestant tradition.

In concluding his analysis of Luther's entry into the cloister, Manns provides a closer description of the Divine Office, which he stresses is an *opus Dei*; again this reveals a desire to educate the reader in Catholic practice and theology. Implicitly drawing a comparison with himself, Manns indicates the inherent difficulties in learning the texts. Drawing on his own experiences, Manns recognises some of the problems Luther acknowledged: the correct gauging of scansion and pointing of texts for example, which Manns suggests were more prevalent after the introduction of the German language liturgy. In attempting to understand Luther, Manns cautions the reader, however, to meet Luther's later complaints with some scepticism.

Continuing his examination of the Divine Office, Manns examines the perceived worth of singing the breviary. Manns accepts that Luther will not have suffered many difficulties with the breviary other than the learning of the rubrics, but he will not accept all the criticisms made of it, especially that the Divine Office was a good work by which 'primitive Mönche ... vor allen anderen honoriert werden wollen' (pp. 30-50). Manns disputes this criticism as being the case in Erfurt, as he doubts its origin: he disregards the novice master and the prior immediately as being the cause of this misunderstanding. Manns views Luther's alleged problems with the saying of the breviary as caused by the fundamental nature of the Divine Office itself. Manns's interpretation of these difficulties could be regarded as one of the basic differences between Protestantism and Roman Catholicism: according to Manns, Luther had difficulties with the Divine Office as he preferred a more personal form of prayer, exemplified in the *oratio mentalis*, that was not regulated by an artificial chronological

rule. While accepting that any difficulties with the saying of the breviary may have led to 'Schwierigkeiten' or 'Krisen' (p. 50), Manns refuses to accept what he views as Luther's exaggeration, as the problem was a familiar phenomenon known in the 'Handbücher' and to the confessors. By asserting that the problems were known to the system, Manns iterates Luther's difficulties and desingularates them. Furthermore, Manns finds that a comparison of the 'betenden Mönch' with the 'betenden Reformator' leads one to recognise prayer as a 'Werk des Glaubens' (p. 50). The importance of prayer, Manns shows, was something which shaped Luther's life and writings, as the traces of the 'geschmähten Chorgebets' (p. 50) in Luther's later writings demonstrate. Manns concludes, therefore, that as the Divine Office had such a lasting influence on Luther, it could not have been entirely negative.

Drawing on an alleged common knowledge, Manns approaches elements of the Luther story with scepticism, dismissing those elements that do not fit his own experience; the iterative experience dictates the validity of Luther's claims. Such assumed knowledge focalised on Luther can be no more than hypothesis, assuming authority by calling on a supposed shared experience with the reader:

Wer im übrigen über einige Erfahrung im Gebetsleben verfügt, hat mehrmals in seinem Leben – ähnlich wie Luther – erfahren, daß er bis dahin eigentlich weder den Psalter, den er natürlich auswendig kann, noch das kurze Vaterunser, „von Herzen“ gebetet hat. Vor allem aber weiß er, daß das, was dem betenden Luther angeblich völlig fehlte, nämlich die „Gewißheit des Herzens“ und das „getroste Amen“, niemals als selbstverständlich vorausgesetzt werden dürfen. (p. 50)

By inviting those with experience of monastic life to confirm Luther's statements, Manns employs a dual-temporal metaphor in his narrative to question elements of the 'Luther story', preferring an iterative truth instead. Such statements again hint at Manns's readership. While it is clear that Manns assumes his readers to have experience of religious life, the confessional allegiance of this is not clear.

Manns's explanation of the Chapter of Faults reflects the pattern already established in the description of monastic life. From familiarity with the system, Manns imposes his iterative knowledge in order to question the singulative though anachronistic complaints of his subject. Manns accepts that the process of the Chapter of Faults may have been 'kindlich' or even 'kindisch' (p. 50), and refuses to deny its use or relevance through his use of the rhetorical question that then leads him into a theological discussion of its purpose and benefit. Manns denies that the practice drove Luther into a guilt complex:

Sicher ist nach den Quellen ebenfalls, daß Luther durch das Schuldkapitel in keinerlei Schuldkomplex hineingetrieben wurde, so ernst fr. Martinus seine monastischen Verpflichtungen auch genommen hat. (p. 51)

The sense of a dual temporality continues in drawing a further tacit metaphor in the description of the Chapter of Faults, which Manns views as almost 'unerträglich' (p. 50) for his modern audience. This comparison serves as an impulse to educate the reader in a more accurate understanding of the Chapter of Faults.

The discussion of the *Schuldkapitel* returns Manns to his explanation of medieval Catholicism and a discussion of confession and sin. Manns disputes the veracity of Luther's later recollections, found in the *Tischreden*, and indicates that Luther's very own complaints found in the *Tischreden* are themselves iterative rather than singulative:

Es sind keine Tagebucheintragungen eines gequälten und sich abquälenden Mönches, sondern es sind ‚Tischreden‘ des seiner Sache völlig sicheren Reformators, der von Freunden, Kollegen und Schülern mit erhobenem Zeigefinger auf die Qual einer finsternen, längst gemeisterten Vergangenheit verweist. Dies wird besonders deutlich in den Äußerungen, in denen Luther nicht eigentlich persönliche, sondern gemeinsame Erfahrungen als Anklage gegen die verfehlte monastische Beichtpraxis anführt. (p. 51)

The irony of such an observation is obvious and highlights Manns's own subconscious at work in narrating Luther's monastic period. The narrative functions as an education in the Catholic present as much as the past. Again, Manns is asserting his own knowledge above Luther's; this omniscient stance is present throughout the text and reinforces the primacy of iterative over singulative fact. Employing a standard device, Manns resorts to a general discussion of monastic confessional practice, as Luther's own 'Beichtpraxis' from this period will be totally unknown and to many outside of the Roman Catholic Church the act of confession is an alien concept. Manns explains how confession functioned within a monastery, the choice of confessors, and the notion of sin. The image which emerges from the retrospective writings of Luther suggests to the historian as much as the priest Manns an individual who:

[...] weit über die Vorschrift der Regel hinaus von der Beichte Gebrauch gemacht [hat], wobei aus den Quellen zunächst das Bild krankhafter Gewissenhaftigkeit entsteht. (p. 51)

Manns offers examples of Luther's zealous desire to confess his sins and retells anecdotes relating to Luther's confessional practice. Manns suggests, however, that were Luther's own retrospective true, he would have been a 'pathologischer Fall' (p.

51). He stresses the lack of contemporary documented evidence for such statements and that the anecdotes stem from the *Tischreden* and from the later Luther who is pointing with ‘erhobenem Zeigefinger auf die Qual einer finsternen, längst gemeisterten Vergangenheit’ (p. 51). Manns takes care to indicate the contradictory nature of the retrospective statements, at their most critical when at their most general or iterative, but most positive, and also singulative, about his confessors. Manns exploits the opportunity to introduce Luther’s likely confessors, again ‘filling the gap’ with little known fact. Manns introduces the reader to Prior Winand as an ‘offenbar...kluger und lebenserfahrener Prior’ (p. 51). Manns tells of Luther’s novice master, Johann von Greffenstein, whom Luther considered ‘ein rechter Christ’ (p. 52). From such men, Manns suggests, Luther learnt much for his own rôle as confessor and in light of this Manns refuses to accept that Luther’s difficulties arose out of either the people or the system present. Manns has therefore employed an iterative of Luther’s later practices to explain and question Luther’s apparently singulative recollections and comments on his monastic period. This emplotment demonstrates that Manns is following a traditional Catholic encodation, albeit with a modern interpretation that seeks to represent monasticism positively.

Manns continues to serve his ecumenical aim, answering criticism from both sides of the confessional divide, in seeking to explain fully confessional practice and theology in late-medieval terms. Once more he adopts his customary iterative narrative focalised in the Erfurt convent to explain what Luther ‘would have’ experienced. Manns rejects the singulative emplotment of a Protestant interpretation of Luther’s crisis as stemming ‘aus dem wachsenden Widerspruch zu dem grundsätzlich falschen System katholischer Beichte’ (p. 52), yet he is equally dismissive of accepting the traditional Catholic iterative emplotment and interpretation of Luther as the ‘pathologischer Fall’ (p. 52), as he would not have received such rapid and impressive promotion – which alone stands as indisputable fact.

The biography becomes a Luther-focused iterative narrative, combining hypothesis with generalised projections which answer some of Luther’s later complaints and difficulties experienced as a monk. Manns examines the universal theological questions that troubled Luther, contextualising them in Catholic theological terms. Through iteration, Manns depicts Luther as an orthodox and conservative Roman Catholic who did not act outside Catholic theology. Equally, Manns dismisses the Protestant notion from his own experience in the iterative statement:

Denn jeder ehrliche katholische Seminarist oder Christ, der in seiner Jugend mit dem Ernst und der Gewißenhaftigkeit der Erfurter Mönche dem Beichtvater seine Sünden bekannt hat, kann unter Berufung auf die eigene Erfahrung vor Gott und der Welt versichern, daß er die priesterliche Lossprechung im Normalfall – nicht immer – als befreiende, froh machende Wohltat empfunden hat. (p. 52)

Such a rebuttal is iterative in that it stresses the validity of a common and shared experience to counter a possible Protestant argument. As before, the text is punctuated by an anecdotal and fact-based singulative narrative which reinforces and confirms Manns's argument. By iterating Luther's experiences, Manns questions the validity of a singulative emplotment, stresses Luther's belonging to a chain, and thereby normalises Luther within a Catholic tradition. The placing of the 'katholischer Seminarist' stresses that this is an experience familiar to Roman Catholicism. It is illogical to Manns that Luther refused to feel this 'Wohltat'. Manns explains Luther's difficulty by suggesting that he failed to feel the necessary regret in confession, and thereby casts Luther's experience as a common problem. This essentially theological problem took on a practical aspect for Luther, rather than a disinterested one, for forgiveness.

Manns develops this discussion of shame and regret by describing his own experience; presented as a general discussion, Manns talks of an iterative 'jeder Mensch' and his experience of 'Reue, Scham and Liebe' (p. 53). This question facing Luther developed, argues Manns, into a life-defining problem: namely, the search for justification and forgiveness. Luther's difficulties in the cloister, Manns argues, stemmed from his search for 'Liebesreue' (p. 53) which remained to him 'unerreichbar' but which led him into a vicious circle of insolvable questions. Manns examines Luther's difficulties here with the pastoral understanding of a priest helping his parishioner; once again this suggests an iterative experience in which Luther's problems become normal. Manns examines Luther's supposed sense of impurity and examines possible causes and dismisses them with theological justification. He paints a picture of a scrupulous and almost neurotic individual, who did not want to be helped – drawing perhaps on the image given of Luther by Staupitz:

,Nicht Gott zürnt dir, sondern du zürnst Gott' (p. 53)

Manns concludes his discussion of Luther's problems regarding justification by comparing them to toothache, which as long as one has teeth may reoccur and can cause pain. The simile serves to suggest that Luther's problems were natural, and therefore iterative, and were common, especially in light of Luther's character. Manns has

employed the stylistic device of the shared culturally provided category to facilitate understanding of an inherently difficult and often misunderstood problem.

The representation of Luther's novitiate and profession of monastic vows follows the established pattern of an educative and iterative narrative, focused on Luther and punctuated by singulative documented fact. Manns is seeking to explain the largely unknown system and process to his reader while focusing his narrative on his subject; the iterative narrative thus serves to de-alienate the past. Yet this representation suggests a relatively unchanging constant in monasticism and the priesthood, which allows Manns to draw inferences from his own experiences.

Manns acknowledges that in Catholic and Protestant representations of Luther's monastic period Luther's admittance to his novitiate and the profession (p. 54) play a prominent rôle, in which the prayers, the relevance of grace and obedience are stressed. Rather than repeat them, Manns argues that Luther saw his vow and vocation as a monk as an example of good works, and that Luther never questioned the vow he had made. He claims that Luther took his vows 'in freier Hingabe' and 'blutig ernst' (p. 54), and Manns continues by explaining something of the ritual of the profession, in which Luther would have received blessed robes. Manns states with certainty that Luther made his vows 'im Glauben' (p. 54), did not regret them at all and argues that Luther's later criticisms are borne out of an ideology and do not reflect reality. Manns's subsequent description of monasticism is flattering and praises of the dedication exercised by monks. Manns finds nothing in the monastic lifestyle, as practised by the Erfurt Augustinians, that Luther would not later practise after he had abandoned the cowl, challenging Luther's criticism with iterative fact. Moreover, Manns argues:

Er [Luther] verhält sich denn auch nach seiner Profeß und in den folgenden Jahren so, als ob er das Kloster niemals im Leben verlassen werde. (p.54)

Having depicted quite fully Luther's entry to the cloister, Manns returns to a simple narration of fact, drawing on an indulgence certificate to demonstrate that by 1508 Luther was regarded as one of the 'Dignitäten' (p. 54) of his cloister. Manns takes care to show that at the time of Luther's admittance into the Order there was nothing to suggest that his dedication was not whole-hearted. Rather, Manns seems to suggest that something occurred later to awaken a change in Luther's attitudes to monasticism and the medieval Church. The biography's overall concern with theological matters is reflected in the quickening pace of the narrative when dealing with events of a non-theological nature.

**Genthe** (1996: Protestant)

Having outlined the geographical layout and work of the cloister, Genthe turns to the singulative case of Luther and commences his description of Luther's entry into the cloister. The narrative is almost an iterative play with the singulative characters of Luther *et al* playing the generic rôles, yet narrated in the preterite it suggests a singulative narrative, in which the generic rôles are personified with the names of Luther's superiors, but the narrative remains essentially speculative and iterative despite its pseudo-singulative appearance. The education in daily monastic routine (pp. 54-55) is punctuated with Luther-focused iterative detail, allowing the appearance of the pseudo-singulative narrative to be maintained. Yet this description differs from Manns in the analysis concentrating on monasticism as a thing of the past rather than belonging equally to the present.

In order to embellish his narrative with singulative and character-focused iterative narrative, Genthe provides a singulative sylleptical summary of Staupitz (p. 57). From this he returns to general iteration to describe monastic lifestyle in the *persona* of Luther. Genthe leads the reader through a typical profession ceremony, cast in specific characters drawn from the Luther-story. As a result of this, the narrative takes on the appearance of 'singulative fact', which belies its very general nature. In his description of the monastic hierarchy, Genthe stresses that the Erfurt monks were academic theologians as well as priests, which places Luther in a larger iterative pattern, as does Manns. It functions as prolepsis of what follows in the chronological Luther story. One might argue that Genthe is 'preaching to an ignorant congregation' in his definition of a Roman Catholic priest's rôle, stressing its sacramental and sacerdotal importance.

The narrative retains its pseudo-singulative appearance through its Luther focus in the iterative narrative and through occasional references to 'his' education and thought where possible. The account is essentially iterative but needs to be cast in the *persona* of Luther to retain its validity within the narrative. Genthe continues his examination of medieval theology, or rather those elements that were to become of particular importance to Luther. He offers an analysis of free will (p. 61), justification and predestination (p. 62), the forgiveness of sins (p. 63) as well as a discussion of the Eucharist. Genthe employs iteration to question one of the 'myths' that has arisen around Luther; namely, that the doctrine of justification posed a problem. According to Genthe, Luther approached the question with seriousness and that it was not a

'persönliches Problem' (p. 64), as Manns suggests, but rather a weak point in medieval theology, implying that Luther's reaction was therefore not uncommon. Again, this attempts to understand Luther within the context of medieval theology and monasticism, but the Luther-focused narrative seems to be accepting traditional Protestant and rejecting Roman Catholic representations, viewing Luther not as a 'square peg in a round hole' but rather the hole as being 'misshapen'.

Genthe offers a highly speculative background to Luther's thinking in the monastic period as an explanation of Luther's later thought and theology. Genthe is arguing that one can only 'know' Luther by understanding his thought and to be able to do this, one must first understand the context which gave birth to it. Such an approach naturally presupposes an examination of Luther's Catholic origins, and Genthe resorts to a narrative clearly inherited from Manns.

Overall, the passages dealing with Luther's entry into the cloister are narrated in a mixture of singulation and iteration. As is necessary in any such depiction, the singulative narrative punctuates the text with the known documentary facts of the Luther story, while the iterative is used to detail 'what happened'. Owing to the scarcity of objective historical data, Genthe relies on common and general patterns of life to inform his narrative. The iterative narrative educates the reader in medieval theology and institutions and establishes the context in which Luther lived. Genthe offers the general story and reinforces it with singulative details, even though they are at times anachronistic and anecdotal. To ensure that his narrative is not purely iterative, Genthe focuses it on Luther to maintain its relevance and avoid the charge of generalisation, but this creates, nevertheless, a pseudo-singulative narrative that hides the iterative 'truth' behind it. Genthe's treatment is remarkable, however, for demonstrating an infiltration of certain modern Catholic narrative techniques, while nevertheless retaining several hallmarks of the traditional Protestant emplotment. There are obvious inheritances from the Manns text, suggesting a close relationship between the two accounts.

Manns's treatment of the novitiate is remarkable in allowing him to challenge Protestant narratives by asserting that Luther can be understood in terms of the medieval Catholic institution, and importantly that this understanding may be informed through knowledge of the Catholic present. As the rhetoric of Manns's narrative suggests, Catholicism must be reincorporated into the Luther story to allow a fuller understanding of Luther and his life. Following the emerging pattern, Manns challenges the singulative Protestant emplotment of the diligent monk while highlighting the iterative difficulties of the

monastic life. Yet, Manns breaks from the Catholic tradition of emplotting Luther as an acute depressive by stressing Luther's general success. This treatment is mirrored in Genthe's appraisal: Manns's infiltration is obvious in the iterative depiction of monasticism, but it fails to shake the fundamental Protestant belief that the system was to blame for Luther's difficulties.

## Chapter VI

### First Mass

The First Mass forms the basis of a polemical episode in Catholic and Protestant representations of Luther's monastic period. Legend has it that Luther, overcome by a sense of his own unworthiness and fear of God, attempted to flee the altar during his First Mass and would have done so if not prevented by the assisting priest. Naturally, older Catholic histories have sought to interpret this episode as proof, on a more positive level, of Luther's unsuitability for the priesthood and, on a more negative level, of his demonic influence. The case for the latter is furthered by the narrative of the incident in the choir, when Luther supposedly fell to the ground crying out: 'Non sum, Non sum' (Cochlaeus, p. 2) during the Gospel reading of the man possessed. As might be expected, Protestant authors have tended to avoid representing the episode in a way similar to their Catholic counterparts' dismissal of Luther's entry to the cloister or the journey to Rome.

#### **Cochlaeus** (1549: Catholic)

Cochlaeus identifies demonic qualities throughout Luther's life in his description of Luther's alleged reaction in the choir on hearing the reading of the man possessed. The incident in the choir is cast in a sylleptical narrative, which assembles Luther's experiences over five years and represents them in a singulative narrative. Interestingly, Cochlaeus claims the incident took place several times during Luther's time in the monastery and thus employs a pseudo-singulative narrative to describe once an incident that supposedly happened *n* times. In addition to this, the anecdote is placed in indirect speech and Cochlaeus thus removes himself as author transferring the responsibility for the veracity of the legend to Luther's fellow monks in Erfurt. Having carefully absented himself from his narrative, Cochlaeus structures an argument in which he leaves the reader to conclude that Luther was indeed possessed:

[...] post annum probationis, Ordinis illius professione, strenue in studiis et exercitiis spiritualibus militauit ibi Deo annis Quatuor. Tametsi uisus est fratribus, nonnihil singularitatis habere, siue ex occulto aliquo cum Dæmone commercio, siue ex morbo Comitiali: tum propter alia quædam indicia: tum præcipue, quod semel in Choro, cum in Missa legeretur Euangelium, de eiecto a surdo & muto Dæmonio, repente conciderit, uociferans, Non sum, Non sum. Multorum itaque est opinio, eum occulta usum esse familiaritate Dæmonii cuiuspiam, Quandoquidem & ipsemet talia de se aliquando scripserit, quæ

Lectori suspicionem de huiusmodi commercio nefariaque societate ingerere possint. (pp. 1-2)

Employing the medieval notion that outward appearance, and in particular disease, reflect an individual's character and suggesting that Luther suffered from epilepsy, Cochlaeus implies through the use of metonymy that Luther was possessed by the devil or evil spirits, drawing on a common popular belief of the Middle Ages that connected epilepsy with diabolical possession.<sup>70</sup> This association of epilepsy and madness reaches back to the Gospels,<sup>71</sup> and while it was accepted by some, notably Paracelsus, that epilepsy was neither a form of madness nor demonic possession,<sup>72</sup> the belief persisted that madness was a punishment for sin and that the Devil 'preferred to attack young Christians' (Middlefort, p. 72). By inserting this episode into an iterative passage, Cochlaeus is implicitly explaining the incident in the choir not as a slightly mysterious or one-off incident but something which can be understood as a manifestation of an underlying general problem.

Thus Cochlaeus creates in a few lines what became a feature of the traditional Catholic narrative. Cochlaeus skilfully casts doubt on Luther's character by depicting an anecdote that couples effective rhetoric with accepted imagery. For Cochlaeus, the incident in the choir could be attributed to one of two things: either demonic possession or epilepsy; nevertheless, while providing two origins, Cochlaeus is really offering the same thing. Thus, Cochlaeus's concession concedes nothing and despite its 'either...or' appearance offers a single accusation.

### **Grisar (1911: Catholic)**

Grisar's narrative emplots the episode of the First Mass at the heart of a discussion of Luther's 'temptations' during his early monastic period. Drawing on the *Tischreden*, Grisar presents the basic legend, although he does temper his representation by stating that Luther should not have been so afraid of making a mistake:

Von den Zeremonien wußte er aber doch, wie alle, daß unfreiwillige Verletzungen derselben keine Sünden, am wenigsten Todsünden seien, wiewohl er die gegenteilige Meinung den „Papisten“ nach seinem Abfalle zuschreibt. (p. 11)

<sup>70</sup> For a fuller description of the link between epilepsy, madness and diabolical possession, see Michael Kutzer, *Anatomie des Wahnsinns* (Hurtgenwald: Guido Pressler, 1998), pp. 21-30, &

<sup>71</sup> Muriel Lahare, *La Folie au Moyen Âge* (Paris: Le Léopard d'Or, 1991), p. 34.

<sup>72</sup> H. C. Erik Middlefort, *A History of Madness in Sixteenth-Century Germany* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), p. 296 & p. 116.

This has the effect of suggesting that Luther was affected by his own over-scrupulous nature rather than Catholic practice at that time. Grisar's sympathetic account of Luther's First Mass does not, therefore, demonise Luther in light of his behaviour according to the legend but seeks to understand it as a single example of an iterative series of anxieties experienced by Luther in his monastic period. Hans Luder emerges as the *senex iratus* of the Luther story, questioning and admonishing his son, true to both Protestant and Catholic representations. Nevertheless, in interpreting the legend of the First Mass as proof of Luther's *Anfechtungen* (pp. 10-11), Grisar uses the opportunity to relate the incident in the choir, which he views in direct connection to the legend of Luther wanting to flee the altar during his First Mass and the *Anfechtungen* more generally. Grisar emplots the incident as a single example of a much larger iterative chain of events that demonstrates Luther's struggles in his monastic period. While Grisar's account lacks the more obvious vitriol, he does to a large extent mirror the structure and rhetoric of the earlier narrative:

Eines Tages, da Luther im Chore der Mönche dem feierlichen Meßopfer beiwohnte, bekam er während des Evangeliums, das vom Besessenen handelte, einen Anfall. Er stürzte zu Boden und gebärdete sich unter Krämpfen wie ein Todsüchtiger. Dabei rief er nach Aussage seiner Klosterbrüder aus: „Ich bin es nicht, ich nicht“, nämlich der Besessene. An sich könnte es ein epileptischer Anfall scheinen, aber diese kommen bei Luther sonst nicht vor, nur andern Ohnmachtsfällen begegnet man in seiner Krankheitsgeschichte. (p. 12)

Grisar accepts as historical truth the legend begun by Cochlaeus but differs in depicting it in a pure and explicitly singulative narrative. Narrative veracity is given by both the testimony of Luther's fellow monks ('nach Aussage seiner Klosterbrüder') as well as by Cochlaeus himself, who was 'mit ehemaligen Mitbrüdern Luthers verkehrte' (p. 12). Drawing again on Cochlaeus's narrative, Grisar connects this incident to the possibility that Luther suffered from epilepsy although his account lacks the potent metaphor of diabolical possession present in the Catholic master-narrative. Grisar, however, hints at Luther having epilepsy but cannot find other occurrences, the iterative destroying the singulative, and leaves demonic possession unmentioned. By disassociating the episode from epilepsy, through the use of the iteration, Grisar suggests implicitly that the origin of the attacks lay elsewhere but he does not explicitly identify them; by disassociating the fit from epilepsy, Grisar thus achieves the same effect as Cochlaeus did by associating epilepsy with demonic possession. As the implicit connection between epilepsy and possession no longer existed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Cochlaeus's metaphor is absent. Moreover, writing four hundred years later than

Cochlaeus's, Grisar cannot suggest demonic possession as the origin of the fit, as this would be unacceptable to his audience, but neither can he escape the traditional Catholic emplotment so much as to do away with the question of epilepsy and demonic possession altogether. Grisar's text, therefore, shows clear signs of both its Catholic inheritance and a lack of desire to move away from it. As in Cochlaeus's *Commentaria*, Grisar's narrative of the incident in the choir demonstrates at best Luther's struggles in the monastery and at worst his total lack of suitability for the monastic way of life.

**Lortz** (1941: Catholic)

The First Mass and the incident in the choir are reduced much further by Lortz both in terms of their treatment and the space accorded them within the text. Lortz begins his examination of Luther's monastic period in the belief that 'Luthers Verhalten im Kloster blieb denn auch bis 1517 [...] korrekt' (p. 159), but does, nevertheless, detect problems in Luther's behaviour by the time he is priested and tells the legend of Luther attempting to flee the altar during his First Mass. This is regarded as an example of Luther's scrupulousness, which leads him to extremes of behaviour. His representation is, therefore, inherently positive and provides a gentle Catholic understanding of the episode that neither demonises Luther nor excuses him his faults, but rather examines Luther in terms of his character and criticises where he sees necessary. Through its emplotment, the First Mass becomes a single example of the iterative series of problems experienced by Luther during the early monastic period.

The Luther that emerges in Lortz's depiction of the First Mass is a figure that can be characterized by 'seelische und nervöse Erregung' (p. 160). Iterative knowledge of Luther's actions and, more generally, iteration as metaphor are used to reinforce and correct the legend of the First Mass, and the latter gains particularly from Lortz's knowledge of the priesthood. Lortz accepts Luther's later recollection of the event without questioning its historical validity. He goes on to suggest that the problem resided in the proximity of God to the priest and Luther's desire to focus on a part of the liturgy of the mass that 'seiner augenblicklichen innern [sic] Spannung entspricht'. This was exacerbated by that fact that Luther himself tended 'zum grübelnden, selbstquälerischen Ernst' (p. 161), which iterates Luther's experiences. Luther, according to Lortz, ignores the comfort of the liturgy and concentrates on the 'Majestät Gottes'. Thus Lortz identifies the problem evinced in the First Mass and the episode in the choir as being a consequence of Luther's own character in which God is all-important:

Aber dem großen Mittelpunkt seines Lebens, der nie schwinden wird, sind wir nun ein für allemal begegnet: Gott, Gottes unvergleichliche Größe, neben der der Mensch nichts sein kann, nichts in des Wortes letzter Bedeutung: Gott allein – nichts Menschliches: das ganze Programm Luthers. (p. 161)

For Lortz, therefore, the First Mass exemplifies a problem that acquired greater significance in Luther's theology; the First Mass becomes a single example of a wider iterative concern for Luther. Linked to this, Lortz uses the opportunity to refer to the incident in the choir. While it is in the form of a short footnote, its very presence shows Lortz's inability to escape a traditional Catholic representation. The narrative again becomes a single example of an iterative pattern of Luther's 'auffallende seelische und nervöse Erregung' (p. 160). Lortz reduces the representation to a pure singulative narrative and continues to accept the veracity of the incident first found in Cochlaeus's narrative:

Die Erschütterung paßt zu der andern, die Luther einmal ergriff, als (bei der Konventsmesse?) das Evangelium vom Besessenen verlesen wurde und er auffuhr : ‚Ich bin es nicht!‘ und zusammenfiel. (p. 161)

The brevity and position of Lortz's narrative of the incident in the choir does show, however, a shift in the Catholic understanding of Luther's monastic period. Firstly, Lortz emplots the incident within a generally positive interpretation of Luther's entire monastic period, moving away from the diabolically possessed Luther of the earlier Catholic tradition. Secondly, he acknowledges the incident as a symptom of Luther's 'nervöse Erregung' rather than the sinister origin given in older narratives. Lortz does not question the authority of the incident and its status in the Luther story and its very presence accepts the legend as historical truth. The narrative represents, nevertheless, a significant step towards an ecumenical appraisal of Luther's monastic period and a rapprochement to the Protestant representation, which often ignores the incident altogether.

Lortz identifies the cause of Luther's *Anfechtungen*, therefore, as being at the heart of his theological understanding and in a 'seelische[r] Labilität' (p. 161). Thus in a step not too far removed from older Catholic interpretations, which identified Luther's reaction during the First Mass as a symptom of diabolical possession, he connects Luther's action to mental illness:

Man hat ihn ihretwegen [Anfechtungen] – zusammengenommen mit seiner Skrupulosität – für seelisch krank erklärt. Nun sind sie gewiß kein besonderer Beweis für seelische Robustheit. (p. 161)

This judgement is, nevertheless, again tempered by Luther's industry and productivity during his monastic period, as throughout his life. Lortz is able to explain the apparent contrast through the use of iteration, in which Luther emerges as the victim of acute depression:

Es bedarf nicht eben besonderer Erfahrung auf dem Gebiet des geistlichen Seelenlebens und der geistlichen Seelenführung, um zu wissen und zu verstehen, wie selbst schwere depressive Einbrüche an einem bestimmten Punkt, an einem bestimmten Vorstellungskomplex bei sonst robuster seelischer Gesundheit möglich sind. (p. 162)

As with Grisar's earlier account, Lortz's narrative of the First Mass does not demonise Luther according to more traditional Catholic emplotments. It does, nevertheless, lay the charge of mental illness against him which while tempered, does question both his behaviour and actions.

### **Köstlin**

**(1892: Protestant)**

Köstlin emplots the incident of the First Mass amidst an attempt to trace Luther's concerns with the doctrine of *sola fide*. Thus, Köstlin presents Luther's 'stete Unruhe' (p. 52) as a result of his dissatisfaction with theology and its inability to answer his questions regarding salvation and justification. The monk Luther of Köstlin's biography emerges as an earnest character preoccupied over a number of years with the question of justification. Thus the problems encountered during his First Mass become single examples of an iterative problem until '[d]ie Pforte des Paradieses erschlossen und von hier aus sei ihm auch der ganze übrige Inhalt des göttlichen Heilswortes klar geworden' (p. 62). The *Anfechtungen*, depicted as such, thus become a necessary means to a theological end; through his suffering, Luther and his theology emerge victorious. The singulative nature of the *Anfechtungen*, and their outcome, expressed as explicitly singulative, suggest divine purpose and a Passion narrative in the traditional Protestant model.

Within this iterative picture of inner turmoil, Köstlin identifies Luther's third year in the Erfurt monastery as an 'entscheidende Wendung' in his 'innerem Kämpfen und Arbeiten' (p. 60). Immediately following this statement, Köstlin returns anachronistically to Luther's second year in Erfurt in which he was ordained priest, allowing him to examine the 'legend' of the First Mass, after which he returns again to a discussion of salvation theology.

Köstlin's treatment of the First Mass develops two distinct stories surrounding the occasion. Firstly, Luther's relationship with his father; and secondly Luther's inner difficulties that reach a zenith in the Mass. Mirroring his earlier description of Luther's father, Hans Luder is represented as a stern and plain-speaking peasant who is not afraid to challenge either his son or the Church.<sup>73</sup> Consistent with his 'lineage', Hans Luder appears in the description of the First Mass as one who rides in with a 'stattlichen Geleite von Freunden und Verwandten' (p. 61) and who remains 'fest' in his attitude towards his son's decision. Köstlin paints an image of a man who stands up for what he believes in the presence of all, and thus Hans Luder reminds the gathering of the Fourth Commandment and his hope that Luther's decision to enter the monastery was not the effect of diabolical influence. Köstlin informs the reader that Hans Luder 'zu verstehen [gab]: „Ich muß allhier sein, essen und trinken, wollte aber lieber davon sein“' (p. 61). In this highly iterative and constant description of the Luthers, it is to be assumed that Luther too shared his family's trait of resolution and common sense. Hans Luder's outburst at the First Mass could be viewed as a singulative example of the iterative truth of the Luther character that will emerge once more in Luther's 'battle' with the Catholic Church.

Having examined Hans Luder's reaction, Köstlin returns to look at the legend of Luther's behaviour during the actual Mass. The emplotment of the episode is anachronistic and interrupts the chronological structure of the account. Yet, by narrating the episode here, Köstlin connects the two events more clearly. Indicating something of his readership, Köstlin explains the significance of the priest's rôle:

Vor Gott sollte er [Martin Luther] jetzt als Priester treten, Christi Leib, ja Christum selbst und Gott durch seine Weiheworte in der Messe auf dem Altar gegenwärtig werden lassen, den Leib Christi als Opfer dem lebendigen ewigen Gott darbringen. Dabei waren wieder eine Menge Formen zu beobachten, bei denen schon ein Versehen Sünde war. Als er damals seine erste Messe hielt, überwältigte ihn dies alles so, daß er kaum am Altar zu bleiben vermochte; er wäre, sagt er später, schier davon gestorben. (p. 61)

Luther's reaction appears as a logical consequence of his theological concerns throughout the monastic period. Köstlin so emplots the incident that Luther's reaction appears justifiable in light of his struggles in the cloister and not an instance of

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<sup>73</sup> N.B. The description of the Luther family and its character as 'leicht bereit zur Selbsthülfe und dabei zum Gebrauche der Faust. Fest hat dann dieses Geschlecht im Lauf der Zeiten und unter schweren Heimsuchungen und großen Umwälzungen, die über Möhra besonders im dreißigjährigen Krieg ergingen, sich behauptet. Gegenwärtig bestehen dort noch drei Familien Luther, die sämtlich Landwirtschaft betreiben [...] Nicht minder bedeutsam findet ein gegenwärtiger Kenner der dortigen Bevölkerung die ihr im allgemeinen eigene besondere Tiefe des Gefühls und Festigkeit des Sinnes. (p. 3)

diabolical possession or his unsuitability to monasticism. The anecdote is presented in a mixture of singulative and iterative narrative; the overall effect of the narrative is to desingulate the episode and present it not as an example of diabolical possession, but rather as an example of Luther's personal theological sufferings. The function of the priest to stand before the altar that caused Luther 'Furcht und Bangen' (p. 61) is iterative, in that it narrates once what Köstlin suggests happened *n* times. Luther's attitude thus becomes a repeated reaction to both his office and its theological implications. The singulative is used to suggest that on the occasion of the First Mass, the same 'Furcht und Bangen' which he felt afterwards overpowered him resulting in his desire to flee the altar. The language used in the representation of the First Mass - *Furcht, Bangen, überwältigte* and *gestorben* - suggests that Luther gained a victory in overcoming this initial fear to be able to approach the mass without fleeing the altar. This would certainly be consistent with the description of the Luther character begun with the representation of Hans Luder.

Köstlin's narrative of the First Mass, therefore, presents a Luther that typifies the Protestant *Lutherbild* of the nineteenth century. Luther is a hero from a family 'aus der Mitte des deutschen Landes' (p. 1); his parentage demonstrates the familial character that will later be evinced in the son and his own reaction at the First Mass is emplotted as a single and justifiable reaction to his inner concerns in the monastery. Köstlin is thus able to vindicate Luther's behaviour and shape the legend to his end.

### **Boehmer**

**(1929: Protestant)**

In the Boehmer narrative, the reader is again confronted with a mixture of iterative and singulative narrative. While the singulative offers the known historical data of the event, the iterative functions on several levels. Iteration provides a pastiche in which singulative information does not exist and it functions in the use of metaphor, in which Luther belongs to a much larger pattern of troubled spirits.<sup>74</sup> Boehmer's own experiences thus inform his narrative of Luther's life and compensate for the lack of available documented historical fact. Boehmer's analysis develops Köstlin's narrative further in both its treatment of the relationship between Luther and his father and Luther's reaction during the Mass. The relationship between father and son in the Boehmer narrative is one, however, in which Luther adopts the major rôle and offers the

<sup>74</sup> See p. 51: 'Nichts wirkt so beruhigend auf ein verstörtes Gemüt wie die plötzliche Versetzung in eine andere Umgebung und der Zwang, sich deren Lebensstil äußerlich und innerlich anzupassen. Auch die Übertragung vieler neuer kleiner Pflichten beeinträchtigt diese Wirkung nicht, wofern dadurch nur der Geist von der steten Beschäftigung mit dem eigenen Ich abgelenkt wird.'

moral tone in contrast to the earlier biography in which Hans Luder's voice is prominent.

The depiction of the First Mass comes in the middle of a chapter on Luther's novitiate and is immediately preceded by a discussion of Luther's inner struggles during this period. In contrast to Köstlin's narrative, the emplotment is essentially chronological and the narrative educates the reader in monasticism through a Luther-specific iterative, punctuated where possible by singulative detail. Boehmer comes to a discussion of Luther's 'Angst um sein Seelenheil' (p. 51) and how the Erfurt house sought to answer this problem. In reaching the end of his novitiate, Luther was told to prepare for ordination and Boehmer thus begins the narrative of the First Mass. Breaking from Köstlin's narrative, Boehmer attempts a chronological treatment of events and attempts to approach the incident and the available historical data *wie es eigentlich gewesen*. Through the use of an accelerated summary, Boehmer brings the reader to the 4<sup>th</sup> April 1507, the day of Luther's ordination (p. 53 ff.).

As with Köstlin, Boehmer highlights the sacerdotal rôle played by the priest during mass and something of the practice that surrounded it:

Damit hatte er nicht nur die geheimnisvolle Fähigkeit, sondern auch das Recht erlangt, die Messe zu zelebrieren. Es war aber schon damals üblich, den Tag, an dem der Neupriester zum erstenmal von diesem Recht Gebrauch machte, besonders festlich zu gestalten. (p. 53)

Luther becomes part of a larger iterative pattern in following the custom of celebrating his First Mass and the narrative suggests a certain dual temporality that connects with the present: Luther's reaction forms part of an inherent, and thereby iterative, universal reaction, common to the sacerdotal rôle. Hans Luder is introduced as a strong figure who co-decides the date of the First Mass and who arrives at the cloister as a 'wackerer Hüttenmeister' (p. 53). Boehmer returns to Luther whom he sees as an essentially iterative figure susceptible to the worries of any in celebrating mass, especially for the first time:

Daß Luther mit einigem Bangen die Stufen des Altars hinanstieg, ist wohl möglich. Die Messe ist eine so komplizierte Handlung, daß der Primiziant dabei leicht etwas versehen kann. (p. 53)

The narrative is governed by the iterative that informs Boehmer's evaluation of Luther's actions; through the use of metonym Boehmer is able to assess Luther's behaviour and the veracity of the legend by comparing Luther with many other priests. As in Köstlin's

narrative, Boehmer sees Luther's alleged reaction during the First Mass as the logical consequence of his concerns throughout his early monastic period and writes:

Es kann wohl sein, daß dies Gefühl einen Augenblick ihn so übermannte, daß er am liebsten vom Altar geflohen wäre, aber daß er schon den Rücken zur Flucht gewandt und nur durch ein Wort des Priors oder des Novizenmeisters am Altar zurückgehalten worden sei, ist ausgeschlossen. (p. 53)

Boehmer, therefore, approaches the First Mass with an understanding of the rôle of priests in general and the rôle played specifically by Luther. The use of metaphor allows him to assess the veracity of the legend by comparing Luther's reaction with those of others and his alleged reaction in light of his concerns, however anachronistic their origin might be, during his monastic period. Moreover, through the use of iteration, Boehmer desingularates the representation of the First Mass which seeks to explain Luther's reaction in light of a deeper unsuitability for the priesthood, and thereby questions traditional Catholic emplotments.

In describing the feast that followed the mass, Boehmer recites the exchange between Luther and his father. Hans Luder emerges as a man 'beinahe grob' (p. 54) and unafraid to speak his mind in public, who questions Luther's decision to enter the cloister and reminds Luther of the Fourth Commandment. Whereas the Luther of Köstlin's account does not answer the charges, Boehmer's Luther is the dominant figure:

Da verstummte der Sohn, aber nicht weil er sich getroffen fühlte, sondern weil er nun in seinem geistlichen Hochmut einen Grund mehr zu haben glaubte, den so irdisch gesinnten Vater zu verachten. Es wurmte ihn aber doch, daß ihm das nicht so recht gelang. (p. 54)

In this way, Luther assumes the moral tone and claims the victory in the disagreement with his father.

Boehmer's narrative dealing with the First Mass represents, therefore, progress in the Protestant *Lutherbild*. It seeks to understand the actions of the young priest within the context of the priesthood and the Mass more fully. Indeed, the value attached to the incident is governed by knowledge of Roman Catholic practice and tradition and there is a clear desire to inform the reader of these. That Boehmer acknowledges sixteenth-century practice within a larger historical tradition both before and after Luther's First Mass represents a recognition of such practice as a going concern, which will later be seen in Manns's treatment. Yet Boehmer's account remains within the Protestant tradition in its explicitly positive depiction of Luther.

**Friedenthal (1967: Protestant)**

In Friedenthal's narrative, the incident in the choir is emplotted against an essentially iterative discussion of Luther's monastic period. The twofold iteration offers a generic pastiche of monasticism as well as a Luther-specific iterative offered in the form of pseudo-singulative narrative. As with the First Mass, Friedenthal regards the incident in the choir as evidence of Luther's *Anfechtungen* in the monastery. In this way, the alleged reaction is desingularated and cast as a single example of a pattern of behaviour.

Friedenthal views such anxieties and attacks of a psychopathic nature (p. 58) as normal in an individual of Luther's genius and thus subordinates Luther's singulative experience to the iterative:

Es würde nicht leicht fallen, irgendeinen genialen Menschen, geschweige denn auf religiösem Gebiet, zu zitieren, der nicht solche Züge aufwiese. (p. 59)

Friedenthal accepts the veracity of the story and validates it against the experiences of others. As Cochlaeus does, Friedenthal begins his account with the suggestion that Luther suffered from epilepsy and supports this claim with the narrative of the incident in the choir. As with Grisar and Lortz, Friedenthal reduces the episode to a purely singulative narrative and moves away from the iterative representation by Cochlaeus:

Eine solche Episode ist überliefert: Es wird bei der Konventsmesse das Evangelium vom Besessenen verlesen nach Markus I, 23, der da schreit: »Was haben wir mit dir zu schaffen, Jesus von Nazareth? Du bist gekommen, uns zu verderben. Ich weiß, wer du bist, du Heiliger Gottes!« Da sei Luther niedergestürzt und habe gestöhnt: Ich bin es nicht, ich nicht! Sein späterer Gegner Cochläus berichtet das und knüpft daran die fromme Betrachtung, die Mitbrüder hätten ihn schon damals als von einem Dämon besessen angesehen. In einem höheren Sinne stimmt das sogar. (p. 59)

Friedenthal's narrative here is decidedly evasive; he presents a variety of reasons for Luther's alleged reaction, but simultaneously questions the reliability surrounding the episode's origin through the use of the subjunctive and references to the authorship of the legend, 'sein[em] spätere[n] Gegner Cochlaeus'. By dismissing the older polemical interpretation, Friedenthal rehabilitates the notion of 'possession' in a newer way and even goes as far as to suggest that Luther's reaction might have been divinely inspired, 'In einem höheren Sinne' and thus suggests that God was working through Luther.

In connection with the incident in the choir, Friedenthal sees the First Mass as evidence of Luther's psychological difficulties. He gives the narrative voice to Luther and opens his discussion of the First Mass with a quotation from the *Tischreden*,

following the traditional representation: Luther is stricken by fear and wishes to flee the altar but is prevented from doing so. Friedenthal explains the cause of Luther's anxiety as being the direct communication with God present in the Mass. Breaking from earlier examinations, however, Friedenthal recognises a revolutionary aspect to Luther's problem in a shift away from the ecclesiastical hierarchy:

Das war weit entfernt von der hierarchischen Auffassung der Kirche, die dem Priester eine so hohe und über dem »bloßen Gläubigen« stehende Position vorbehielt. Auch darin trat er schon, noch völlig unbewußt, aus dem Rahmen der traditionellen Anschauungen heraus. (p. 59)

The reader might assume that Friedenthal is proleptically hinting at the later concept of the priesthood of all believers, as well as establishing Luther's revolutionary nature which has hitherto appeared largely obedient in both character and action. The description of the feast after the First Mass follows that of Boehmer: Hans Luder appears as a relatively pompous and stubborn 'wohlhabender Hüttenmeister' (p. 60) who ascribes diabolical influence on Luther's decision to enter the monastery and reminds Luther of the Fourth Commandment. The episode is closed with another quotation from the *Tischreden* detailing Luther's hurt at his father's comment and that father and son were never reconciled until Luther had a son.

Despite its target readership of a non-confessional audience, Friedenthal's biography has clearly inherited much from previous narratives of the Luther story. In his representation of the incident in the choir, Friedenthal has borrowed both the emplotment and the structure of the Cochlaeus text, although this has been repeated numerous times in subsequent Catholic accounts and Friedenthal's source may be a later treatment of the episode. The origin of the attack in the choir is modified and where diabolical possession once stood, Friedenthal re-emplots the episode, in an innovative way that is consistent with the Protestant tradition, to suggest God's power at work. Friedenthal's narrative, therefore, shows a move away from the stark early treatments of the episode while still revealing its reliance on earlier texts.

### **Manns**

**(1982: Catholic)**

In seeking an ecumenical understanding of Luther, Manns contextualises Luther's behaviour within the tradition of the First Mass and uses an iterative narrative to desingulate Luther's reaction both at the First Mass and at the incident in the choir, thereby questioning the more extreme Catholic emplotment. Manns approaches Luther's progress to the office of priest in a way similar to that depicting the novitiate;

he explains first the function of the office and what was necessary in preparing for it, primarily the celebration of the Mass. This returns Manns to a discussion of Luther's ability to celebrate Mass 'correctly' and his 'Umgang und den Empfang des leiblich gegenwärtigen Herrn' (p. 55). Manns employs his *descriptio* to take the reader through Luther's First Mass and highlight where he might have encountered problems in light of his generally acknowledged theological difficulties. Importantly, however, Manns moves away from the singulative Protestant and Catholic representations of the First Mass, which seek to represent the faults of the system or the demonic possession respectively by relying on an iterative knowledge of the context.

Drawing on his experience as a priest, Manns indicates the point in the liturgy at which Luther would have begun to stumble, as he stood 'unmittelbar und ohne Mittler' (p. 55) before God. Manns reminds the reader of Luther's alleged desire to flee the altar, which he would have done had he not been prevented from so doing by the assistant priest. Manns argues that while differing interpretations of the event exist, the historical fact is not disputed: the traditional Roman Catholic interpretation would use the event to show that Luther was caught in a subjective 'Befangenheit' (p. 55), while the traditional Protestant argument would remind that Christ was viewed not only as a 'Mittler, sondern auch als Richter' (p. 55). Manns is happy to accept the story of the First Mass and recognizes that such feelings and behaviour were a common feature of the medieval period, in which 'First Mass jitters' were akin to contemporary wedding-day jitters. Manns views Luther's reaction at his First Mass as a 'quasi-normale Schwierigkeit...damals wie heute' (p. 55), which:

[...] so mancher gewissenhafte Neupriester damals wie heute in seiner Primizmesse erfahren mußte, was in der liturgischen Einrichtung des 'Presbyter assistens' nahezu eine kirchenamtliche Bestätigung findet. (p. 55)

Manns sees Luther's problem as a universal and eternal problem inherent in the vocation of priest, which he seems to suggest has changed little; again serving to question the singulative emplotment of Luther's problems. Manns presents himself directly in the narrative, questioning the retrospectives and informing the narrative through his own experience as a priest and educator. By assuming the rôle of an arbitrator in the 'Luther story', Manns can measure the events from his own knowledge and casts himself as the typical priest; in this way, Manns himself adopts a kind of 'iterative' position. This adopted rôle suggests that most of the 'problem' in understanding Luther lies in the lost cultural and religious knowledge of the twentieth-century reader that can be partly regained through metaphor. Yet in adopting this rôle,

Manns assumes a level of knowledge superior to Luther's whose singulative statements become subordinate to those of Manns and other iterative experiences. This questionable technique does of course indicate Manns's attempt to temper Luther's life in such a way as to exculpate Catholicism. This exemplifies Manns's attempt to set Luther's behaviour and reactions in the context of not only the medieval Church but also the modern Church, in which his behaviour would be treated as no more unusual or usual than it is now. Luther, as Manns depicts him, belongs to a long tradition of sensitive seminarians and priests who responded in a typical way to the questions he faced. This depiction desingularates the episode and normalises it, countering older Catholic and Protestant accounts.

This argument is reinforced when Manns develops his comparison by reciting an anecdote from his own First Mass, in which he felt sentiments similar to those expressed by Luther. Manns sees Luther's fears as examples of a serious moral dilemma rather than indications of an ill-balanced disposition. Manns dismisses with few words the 'katholische Mär' (p. 56), promulgated by Cochlaeus, of Luther's alleged fit in the choir. By connecting the two episodes of the incident in the choir and the First Mass in his narrative, Manns demonstrates an inherited Catholic representation from which he is unable to move away. It is as if Manns robs the once common feature of the older Catholic polemical interpretations of any validity, aware no doubt of his readership as well as the ecumenical aim of his text. Manns values more highly Luther's retrospectives, which show his esteem for the priesthood and his own happiness when he was able to celebrate Mass successfully. Yet this juxtaposition encourages the reader to see both episodes as dubious, enabling Manns simultaneously both to follow a traditional Catholic emplotment and undermine its force.

Manns closes the representation of Luther's novitiate and First Mass by stating that his reactions, for which he has been much criticized, are 'im Rahmen des Normalen' (p. 56). He stresses we must all learn to recognize that the inherent nature of the priesthood may lead to dramatic tensions within the individual. Nevertheless, these conflicts and tensions, coupled with his concerns regarding God's Love, led to a crisis in the over-scrupulous Luther and it is from here that Luther's later development may be explained. Manns sets Luther's early monastic life in its historical and theological context, while allowing the reader to see the parallels to his own life through similitude.

The representation of the First Mass reflects a desire to desingularate Luther's experiences in the monastery. Through the use of iteration, Manns shows that Luther's problems were common to monastic practice, and that the institution of the Church

sought to answer them. Such an emplotment is typical of the Catholic tradition which depicts Luther as fitting into the general practice, and depicts the institution positively. Moreover, the use of iteration places Luther proleptically at the heart of a movement for reform within the Church.

While Manns's narrative accepts other plausible emplotments, he negates older Protestant treatments of Luther's *basanoi* in the monastery, and through a questionable use of iterative knowledge of the system dismisses them. Thus, Manns's text reveals him to be following a modern Catholic tradition. Simultaneously, however, the dismissal of the incident in the choir indicates Manns's inability to shed a 'key episode' from his narrative and the traditional Catholic emplotment. Alongside this, the desingulation of the First Mass dismisses an over-negative or Catholic interpretation of the incident, in which Luther emerges as demonic, or a Protestant interpretation that would seek to highlight problems within Catholic theology and Eucharistic practice. In this way, Manns's treatment of the novitiate and the First Mass represents an attempt at an ecumenical emplotment and ecumenical understanding.

### **Genthe**

**(1996: Protestant)**

Having offered a 'guide' to medieval theology, stressing those aspects of particular importance to Luther, Genthe returns to an iterative first-person narrative in the *persona* of Luther offering singulative fact wherever possible to detail Luther's progression to ordination. This explanation is given with an appreciation of Roman Catholic theology and Canon Law (p. 65). This maintains the depiction of the rather mute 'monastic Luther' in deference to the vocal and all-knowing 'Reformation Luther'. The accepted and oft-reported reaction of Hans Luder functions as the voice of German reason. The First Mass is depicted in 1N/nS iterative with 1N/1S singulative details (p. 65), often anachronistic and dating from a period later in Luther's life:

Diese erste Messe hat Martin Luther tief erschüttert. 33 Jahre später erwähnt er das in seiner Vorlesung über das I. Buch Mose: „So bin auch ich einst, als ich noch Mönch war und zum ersten Male im Meßkanon die Worte las: Dich also, gütiger Vater (bitten wir demütig und flehen zu dir..., die ersten Worte des Kanons) und weiter:...“ (p. 67)

The effect of this once again renders the historical accuracy of the account rather dubious. Breaking with older Protestant and Catholic depictions, Genthe accepts that a negative reaction was common at a priest's First Mass and follows Manns's account, only developing it with an iterative (1N/nS) description of the second priest, who was there 'um gegebenenfalls einzugreifen' (p. 67). Nevertheless, Genthe does not draw the

obvious conclusion from this but leaves it to his reader to interpret the significance of the statement.

Once again, the depiction of the First Mass clearly demonstrates that an ecumenical process is taking place in the rhetorical representation of Luther's monastic period. Manns harmonises the various confessional narratives to produce a universally acceptable account. Manns desingularises Luther's concerns and reactions to contextualise them as an inherent problem of the rôle of priest. He dismisses the alleged singulative incident in the choir and employs iteration more generally to show that Luther's problems were recognised by and, to some extent, arose out of medieval theology. Genthe's narrative reflects an understanding gained from Manns in its awareness of common reactions to the First Mass, while understating the significance of the episode as evidence of corrupt Catholic theology. In this way, the extreme singulative and iterative narrative traditions merge in Manns's and Genthe's accounts, demonstrating the move towards ecumenism.

## Chapter VII

### Journey to Rome

The journey to Rome is the final major single episode in the Luther story that is differently valorised in Catholic and Protestant narratives. It is an episode of which documented fact exists other than approximate dates and the purpose of the journey. Many narratives rely, therefore, on Luther's later recollections when he used anecdotes to attack the Church and the Papacy in particular. In light of this, Protestant narratives have traditionally accepted such retrospective criticism and tailored their emplotment to depict a Luther commensurate with his subsequent observations regarding the immorality and depravity of the inhabitants of Rome, particularly the clergy. Moreover, the journey to Rome is seen as a turning point in Luther's development, in which his eyes are opened to the corruption of the Church and after which he returns to Germany intent on reform. As the legends surrounding the journey to Rome do not portray the Church positively, many Catholic authors have found representing the episode problematic. Early narratives have tended to ignore it or underplay its significance, while recent Catholic biographies have dismissed Luther's later criticism through the use of iteration and by examining his writings and actions in the period following the journey.

#### **Melanchthon (1548: Protestant)**

Luther's journey to Rome is almost neglected in the Melanchthon account, despite it later being regarded as a turning point in the Luther story. The journey lacks significance, is offered without any value judgement and becomes an event in Luther's life remarkable only for its destination and status in the contemporary context; thus Melanchthon does not attach any over-singulative meaning to the episode. As one of the earliest accounts, this naturally raises the question as to the origins of the embellishment of the journey to Rome and the significance accorded it in later narratives.

#### **Mathesius (1566: Protestant)**

Mathesius uses the journey to Rome to strengthen his representation of Luther's character as a pious servant of God. Through the use of metaphor and by contrasting



Luther with a corrupt Roman clergy, Luther emerges as an upright German Christian against a background of foreign corruption; a singular character who breaks the iterative mould. Mathesius places Luther's journey in the middle of his monastic period narrative and informs his audience that Luther was sent on behalf of his convent. There is something ironic in Mathesius's ironic description of Christianity as the Pope's 'güldene Religion' suggests its wealth and corruption, and this is reinforced by the reference to the Pope's courtiers and servants:

Im 1510 jar, wie sein eigen Handschrift bezeuget, sendet ihn sein Conuent ins Klosters geschefften gen Rom; da sihet er den heiligsten Vatter den Papst, und sein güldene Religion unnd ruchlose Curtisanen unnd Hofgesinde, welches in hernachmals wol gesterckt hat, da er so ernstlich wider die Römische gewel und Abgötterei schribe. Wie er sich an seinem Tische offft hat vernehmen lassen, er wollte nit tausent gülden dafür nemen, denn er hette Rom gesehen. (p. 23)

Having created a scene of abomination and false worship, Mathesius attacks the doctrine of Purgatory, reinforcing the progress made in theology by Protestants in abandoning the doctrine of Purgatory. This reference is heightened by the anecdote of the blasphemous priests hurrying Luther to finish Mass:

Denn, als er allda seine freunde auß dem Fegfeuer mit sein Meßopffer erlösen wolte, wie deßmals jedermann glaubete, und sehr andechtig und langsam seine Meß hielte, das neben im auff einem Altar sieben Meß verricht wurden, ehe er ein mal fertig ward, sagten im die Römischen Meßknechte, *passa passa*, fort, fort schicke unser frawen iren Son bald wider heim. Andere liessen sich ubertische hören, was etlicher Romanisten Wort weren, damit sie ir brod und wein consicirten und thirmeten, nemlich, *panis es & panis manebis, vinum es & vinum manebis*. (p. 23)

Mathesius closes his brief treatment of the journey by narrating Luther's return to Wittenberg, where he recommenced his studies. By stating that Luther continued his studies on his return to Wittenberg, the syntax suggests the second clause to be a consequence of the first. The closing lines suggest that the impetus was a result of his journey:

Da ihm Gott nun wider gen Wittenberg in sein Kloster halff, fert er fort mit studieren und disputieren. (p. 23)

In this way, Mathesius establishes, on a very discreet level, the view that Luther's journey functioned as a turning point and it is here that his 'reformation' thoughts began. A treatment of the journey to Rome that emplots it as an 'Einschnitt' is a hallmark of the Protestant Luther narrative, and as is seen in Mathesius's account, reaches back to the earliest representations.

### **Köstlin (1892: Protestant)**

While mirroring the structure and the interpretation of Mathesius's representation, Köstlin develops the journey to Rome into a significant 'Wendepunkt'. The narrative functions simultaneously on two distinct levels: the first reports Luther's actions and impressions; while the second provides the reader with a sylleptical history of Rome and the pope at the time of Luther's visit. Once more, Luther emerges as a German hero who is forced to react against the negative behaviour and attitude that he encounters in Rome.

Köstlin emplots the journey in its own chapter, reinforcing the view of the visit as significant in Luther's development. By following Luther's academic career and his transfer to Wittenberg, he provides some background to the trip and establishes an iterative narrative of Luther as an official of the Augustinian Hermits in which the journey appears as his second commission for them. As Manns later does, Köstlin employs iteration to question a singulative interpretation and identifies the journey to Rome as being proof of Luther's status within the order and of his lack of difficulties:

Zunächst aber wurde ihm noch ein anderer Auftrag von Seiten seines Ordens zu Theil: ein Beweis, welches Vertrauen auch nach anderen Seiten hin seinem Eifer für die Sache des Ordens, seinem praktischen Verstand und seiner Energie geschenkt wurde. (p. 66)

Köstlin follows the actual journey by offering a sylleptical introduction to the origins of the debate and, as many other biographers do, a purely iterative account of the journey. Thereafter, Köstlin focuses on Luther's reactions and experiences to his visit and in so doing accepts the anachronistic observations that form the basis of many modern narratives. As the anecdotes stem from a later period, they are naturally critical towards Rome; significantly, however, such anecdotes present Luther as reacting personally to abuses that he experienced first-hand, legitimising his later criticism.

Köstlin's Luther appears as the generic pilgrim visiting the religious sites of the city. Köstlin relates Mathesius's anecdote of Luther wishing to lessen the sufferings of friends and family in purgatory by celebrating mass and acts of devotion. Developing the legend further, Köstlin traces Luther's understanding of Romans 1, 17 to his time in Rome:

Indem er die Stufen einer heiligen Treppe, die einst vor dem Richthaus des Pilatus gestanden haben sollte, knieend und unter Gebet hinaufklohm, wozu dort noch heutzutag [sic] reiche päpstliche Ablässe einladen, da fiel ihm das

Prophetenwort aus dem Römerbrief (1, 17) ein: Der Gerechte wird seines Glaubens leben. (p. 68)

In this way, Köstlin narrates the journey to Rome as a major turning point in the Luther story, reflecting the traditional Protestant emplotment. Köstlin gives a decidedly negative portrayal of Rome and the immoral behaviour of the clergy, offering among others the anecdote of the blasphemous priests. Köstlin's Luther is, however, appalled by the blasphemy that he finds in Rome and by the attitude of the Romans towards the Germans:

Zugleich mußte er an dem geringschätzenden Tone sich ärgern, womit dort über die dummen Deutschen oder deutschen Bestien geredet wurde, auf die man in Rom keine Rücksicht zu nehmen habe. (p. 69)

This contrasts with contemporary treatments in stressing the active rôle of Italians in offending the Germans and Luther in particular. Rather than the German visitors being offended by 'natural' Roman behaviour, as found in Mathesius, the Italians actively cause offence to the Germans in Köstlin's account.

Köstlin concludes his examination of the journey by giving an anecdote found in Mathesius that Luther would not have missed going to Rome as it later enabled him to report accurately his experiences:

„Ich wollte nicht hunderttausend Gulden dafür nehmen, daß ich nicht auch Rom gesehen hätte; ich müßte sonst sorgen, ich thäte dem Papst Unrecht; aber was wir sehen, das reden wir.“ (pp. 69-70)

By allowing Luther to 'speak', Köstlin reinforces the authority of his narrative; Luther himself declaring the veracity of his experiences. Thus his journey becomes a significant incident in Luther's life, in helping him to reach a theological breakthrough on the *scala sancta* and experiencing Rome and the papacy. Luther's experiences are singulated, despite the iterative nature of the documented fact, to produce the singular effect on him. The iterative abuses are viewed through the persona of Luther and punctuated by later recollection.

### **Boehmer**

**(1929: Protestant)**

Boehmer affords the journey to Rome its own chapter, casting it as an 'Einschnitt' in the Luther story and narratively suggesting a singulative emplotment and significance. The narrative is a mixture of a description of the journey as well as an education in the practices later condemned by Luther. He opens his chapter with a description of the

sixteenth-century Church in need of reform but suffering simultaneously from resistance towards it (p. 66 & ff.). Boehmer demonstrates that this was the case on a macro-level for the Church and on a micro-level within the Augustinian Order. Luther, therefore, appears in the narrative initially attempting to gain permission to appeal directly to the Pope and later as a delegate sent to Rome to resolve the situation. In this way, Luther becomes a character in an iterative drama that is at odds with the singulative status of the journey suggested by the physical structure of the narrative treatment.

Boehmer's treatment of the journey begins, as it ends, with a pseudo-singulative iterative narrative that offers an explanation for the route taken by Luther. The narrative is characterized by adverbs of probability that suggest the putative nature of the text and the lack of documentary fact for Boehmer's depiction. Contradicting the anticipated singulative treatment, Boehmer compensates for the lack of historical data with a generic narrative, punctuated by singulative fact or anachronistic anecdote. In this way, Boehmer presents Luther's criticism of Italian clergy as 'völlig ungelehrten Leuten' as well as following him on a pilgrimage to the seven principal churches of Rome 'in üblicher Weise' (p. 70), St Paul Outside the Walls, St Sebastian, St John Lateran, Holy Cross in Jerusalem, St Lawrence, St Mary Major and St Peter's; at the end of which Boehmer inserts the anecdote of Luther doubting the doctrine of purgatory:

Doch fiel ihm, als er glücklich droben [am Lateran] angelangt war, das wohl eben kurz zuvor gehörte Zweifelswort ein: „Wer weiß, ob es wahr ist?“ (p. 71)

As in Köstlin's account, Boehmer's narrative presents the Germans positively in contrast to the degenerate Italians. This is achieved through Luther's memory of the 'German church in the Spital' which conducted services in the German fashion:

Denn wie den Welschen in Deutschland damals die Andacht des Volkes und die Würde des Gottesdienstes ganz besonders auffiel, so fiel umgekehrt den Deutschen in den welschen Kirchen die Hast und die Würdelosigkeit der Zelebranten und die Irreverenz der „Andächtigen“ auf. (p. 73)

This reference demonstrates Boehmer's desire to continue the positive depictions of the Germans in stark contrast to the negatively represented 'Welschen', and suggests an unchanging constant to the Church where services were conducted 'wie heute noch' (p. 73). To this Boehmer adds the later anecdote of the blasphemous priests as well as an accelerated history of papal corruption and immorality which portrays the Roman Church negatively in contrast to the piety of the German visitors.

Nevertheless, Boehmer's Luther remains a Catholic and his reactions belong to a common experience (p. 76), where the negative impressions only later became significant. Boehmer desingularates Luther's criticism to show that it was a common reaction among visitors to Rome. Boehmer's account shows progress towards an ecumenical representation, while reflecting a distinct confessional inheritance. Boehmer does not attribute great significance to Luther's experiences in Rome as his subsequent behaviour did not alter significantly, and suggests that what Luther gained after 1517 from contemporaneous literature influenced him far more in his condemnation of the city and the Church. He cannot, however, escape his confessional inheritance and the similarities with the Köstlin narrative are obvious. In Boehmer's account, a tension remains between the textual suggestion of according the episode its own chapter and Boehmer's explicit generic treatment of it.

### **Friedenthal (1967: Protestant)**

Friedenthal's representation focuses on a brief examination of the immorality of the early sixteenth-century Church, as well as the characteristic stories of Roman corruption and Luther's reactions, however iterative in nature. While dismissing the notion that the journey represents a breakthrough in Luther's attitude, Friedenthal acknowledges that 'Etwas Richtiges [...] meist auch in Legenden verborgen [liegt]' (p. 94). He offers the established anecdotes relating to the visit. Thus, Friedenthal confirms the veracity of this legend by applying the truth of the iterative of legends to the specific story of Luther.

Friedenthal begins with a short introduction to the reason for Luther's journey and moves on to an iterative description of the journey, into which various singulative later reminiscences are interwoven; in this respect his narrative mirrors Boehmer's. He provides a description of the city that serves as a backdrop for his later narrative. Indicative of writing for a more general readership, Friedenthal plays down criticism for Luther's lack of reaction towards the beauty of Renaissance Rome by casting him as an example of an iterative group that failed to remark upon the city:

Man hat Luther etwas naiv vorgeworfen, daß er von den neuen Kunstschätzen Roms nichts bemerkte, aber das ging auch Erasmus so und vielen anderen, die keine Bettelmönche waren. (p. 99)

Friedenthal returns to iteration to describe Luther's pilgrimage to the seven great churches of Rome and the narrative follows an inherited Protestant tradition. He offers the anecdotes regarding Luther's regret that his own parents were not dead and that he

could not acquire a greater indulgence for them. The iterative is, however, used to challenge later criticisms that Luther could not celebrate Mass:

Luther hätte gerne dort im Lateran eine Messe gelesen, aber das Gedränge war zu groß: »Konnte nicht zukommen und aß einen zubereiteten Hering dafür«, wie er nachmals grob spottend sagte. Er aß damals nichts; der Pilger mußte nüchtern als letzte Station die Peterskirche erreichen, um dort das Abendmahl einnehmen zu können. (p. 101)

Friedenthal accepts the legend of the blasphemous priests who hurried Luther during Mass, again following Boehmer, and sees Luther's offence as stemming in part from a common clash of cultures:

Der römische Gottesdienst hat immer den Nordländern als »äußerlich« mißfallen [...] (p. 102)

Thus, Friedenthal confirms through iteration Luther's later criticisms and reminiscences and stresses the importance of not regarding Luther as a modern tourist but rather as an individual seeking the absolution of the general confession.

This final part of the chapter educates the reader in the various scandals that surrounded the popes, against which Friedenthal will later show Luther to react. He reminds the reader that Luther did not, however, mention any of these abuses until after his 'Kampf' had begun and that for him as many 'Pilger' they remained 'kleine Flecken auf dem strahlenden Schild der Kirche' (p. 112). Interestingly, while Friedenthal concedes that these abuses were not present in Luther's consciousness at the time, he does 'import' them textually into his account. Again, Friedenthal follows the example of more recent representations in recognising Luther's allegiance to the Catholic faith up to and after the journey but follows the more Protestant interpretation of attributing blame to papal corruption. Friedenthal's narrative of the journey represents, therefore, a hybrid of more recent Catholic and Protestant treatments, with a bias towards the latter in particular. Following the traditional Protestant emplotment, Friedenthal acknowledges the dubious quality of many of Luther's later recollections and criticisms. He seeks to place Luther in the context of the early sixteenth century and the abuses of the Church.

### **Cochlaeus (1549: Catholic)**

Cochlaeus's representation of the journey serves as part of a larger iterative depiction of Luther as an intelligent and bold debater. Such a depiction, early in the narrative, conforms to the character that emerges in the conflict following 1517:

Vbi autem post Triennium orta esset inter fratres Ordinis sui discordia, eo quod septem Conuentus a Vicario per Germaniam Generali in quibusdam dissentirent, Ille a Conuentibus illis delectus in litis Procuratorem, Romam profectus est, eo quod esset acer ingenio, & ad contradicendum audax ac uehemens. (p. 2)

Cochlaeus thus acknowledges that the journey to Rome happened but does not interpret its significance.

### **Grisar (1911: Catholic)**

Grisar begins his examination of the journey with an accelerated summary of the history of Luther's order that leads him to Staupitz and the dispute regarding the order's amalgamation, the probable reason for the journey. Grisar does not, however, provide any details of Luther's journey but concentrates on its effect on his development. He begins his examination of the journey's effect by stressing the positive reaction of many on visiting Rome and thus creates an iterative to which Luther will not conform, presenting Luther as the exception to the rule. As Köstlin does, Grisar sees this as a consequence of Luther's origins as well as the abuses present at that time:

An sehr vielem, was er sah und hörte, nahm er harten Anstoß, teils infolge seiner nordländischen Betrachtungsweise der Dinge, teils wegen der wirklichen moralischen Mißstände. (pp. 23-24)

Drawing on generic traits of a more reserved nation, Grisar believes the German Luther was offended by the Romans' 'südländische Freiheit und Beweglichkeit' (p. 23), and as Lortz does, identifies part of Luther's problem as a clash of cultures. In addition to his national characteristic, Grisar argues that Luther focused on the negative in Rome as he was 'kritisch' and, disposed to 'Einbrücken des Sittenverfalles' (p. 24). Luther's criticism is seen as the outcome of his 'Germanness' rather than his religious views.

While Grisar's representation of the journey relates the expected anecdotes, he challenges their significance particularly in older Protestant accounts. For example, he dismisses the story that Luther reached a theological breakthrough while climbing the *Scala Sancta* as a 'reine Legende' (p. 25). In this way, he counters the Protestant representation that Luther was affected negatively by his experiences in Rome, as can be found for example in Köstlin's account. Instead, Grisar employs documentary evidence from outside the episode to insist that Luther's conviction of the authority of the Church, among other things, remained 'keineswegs...erschüttert' (p. 25). Employing an iterative metaphor, Grisar challenges the Protestant interpretation and significance of Luther's visit. He dismisses the anecdote regarding the blasphemous

priests, who urged Luther to hurry the celebration of Mass,<sup>75</sup> and contextualises this within a variety of statements from the later Luther.

Overall, Grisar's representation of the journey negates some of the Protestant legends surrounding the episode. This is achieved through the use of iterative comparison which contextualises Luther's experience while portraying much of the criticism as the product of a later controversialist. The effect of this removes any great significance from the journey and presents Luther the monk affirming Catholicism.

### **Lortz (1941: Catholic)**

Lortz's narrative presents a relatively positive but still Catholic image of the journey; concentrating on the journey's effects on Luther rather than attempting to reproduce the route, Lortz sees a preoccupation and a search 'nach dem gnädigen Gott' (p. 168) in Luther's silence regarding the beauties of Renaissance Rome, leading Luther to the pilgrimage sites and their possibilities for absolution. Lortz goes on to report Luther's disappointment at what he discovered in Rome:

Luthers Erwartungen wurden getäuscht. Die mehrmalige Generalbeichte lehrte ihn die Unwissenheit römischer Beichtväter kennen. Aus dem Messelesen römischer Priester trat ihm ein lästerlicher Unernst entgegen. Er meinte später: 'Ich als ein Narr trug auch Zwiebeln gen Rom und brachte Knoblauch wieder.' (p. 169)

Without indicating the exact meaning of Luther's metaphorical condemnation of his experiences in Rome, Lortz resorts to an iterative metaphor and concludes that the problem might have lain in a difference of temperament:

Der Norddeutsche im so ganz anderen, leichteren, beweglichen Italien: es konnte sich leicht eine gewisse Abkühlung im Verhältnis zur Mutter Kirche ergeben. (p. 169)

Developing Grisar's account, Lortz ascribes some of Luther's disappointments to a clash of cultures, intensified by his scrupulous and earnest disposition. In contrast to Köstlin's narrative, Lortz does not regard Luther as the insulted German hero but as a representative of a generic group acknowledged for its reservedness and formality. As Manns later highlights, whatever disappointment Luther suffered in Rome did not lead to any crack in his Catholicism. Thus, Lortz employs iteration to challenge the Protestant representation of Luther's journey as having a significant effect on his Catholicism. Moreover, as Lortz argues, while Luther was moving toward a more

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<sup>75</sup> One account of this episode is given in Mathesius, p. 23; cf. p. 89.

reformed position at this time, it was not driven by 'unedler Nebenansicht'; the critic in Luther 'vertrug sich damals noch vollkommen mit der kirchlichen Praxis' (p. 169). In his representation of the journey to Rome, Lortz demonstrates a desire to understand Luther's development positively and challenges interpretations that attach too great a significance to later criticism. Lortz's narrative reflects an attempt to discover a positive Catholic interpretation of Luther's monastic period that is mirrored by Manns.

### **Manns (1982: Catholic)**

In attempting to create an acceptable ecumenical account, Manns presents a narrative that allows both emplotments. In the final section of the chapter dealing with Luther's monastic period, Manns attempts an appraisal of this time in Luther's life. He opens his analysis by detailing a supposed 'innere[n] Widerspruch' (p. 60), from which Luther allegedly suffered: on the one hand, his total enthusiasm and engagement for the monastic life and, on the other, his growing indictment of it. Manns accepts that this contradictory view of monasticism may be explained in terms of the later Luther, but finds it questionable in terms of how the younger Luther experienced and judged monasticism at the time. The contradictory nature of the retrospectives suggests to Manns that Luther experienced monasticism in a way different from later criticisms show and that for a more objective analysis to be made, Manns must examine sources other than the *Tischreden* and other later writings of Luther. Manns returns instead to 'objektiven Quellen und Tatsachen oder auch an unverdächtigen Selbstzeugnissen' (p.60), which allow Luther to answer the question: in short, Manns believes that the bare facts of Luther's later monastic career give meaning to the chaotic data and speak for themselves. These objective sources take the form of an analysis of Luther's subsequent monastic career.

Manns continues his analysis by stressing Luther's successful monastic career, leading him to be one of the superiors of his monastery by 1508 and the journey to Rome. Since it is removed from its proper chronological position and accorded it a separate emplotment one might expect it to be given significant treatment here. Manns relates the bare facts behind the journey and stresses that what stands out as important from Luther's part in the discussions is that he supported the stricter reforming party of monasteries. He acknowledges that nothing is known of the monk who accompanied Luther and that Luther had reached the age of 27 when he went to Rome, was well acquainted with Nathin and had assisted in a similar mission in Halle.

The description shifts to a singulative narrative and offers all the known details but returns to a *IN/nS* iterative narrative in representing the reason for the journey. This iterative narrative allows Manns to summarise quickly a lengthy chronological process and provide the background information necessary for an understanding of the affair. Having provided this information, the narrative returns to *IN/IS* singulation. Yet, in representing Luther's reaction to what he met in Rome, the narrative becomes iterative, based as it is on speculation and hypothesis rather than historical data. Manns does not labour the significance of the journey and chooses not to speculate about its effect on Luther. He reports the outcome and Luther's rôle in it, and thus avoids a discussion of Luther's later criticism of his experiences.

Relying on Luther's later statements, Manns confidently asserts, however, that Luther experienced and witnessed Rome as a 'frommer Pilger' and that Rome was important for his own 'Seelenheil' (p. 61). After his visit to the *Ordensgeneral*, Luther changed his support from Nathin to Staupitz: Manns claims that Luther did not naturally belong to the Nathin party but rather to Staupitz's, and perhaps reminding the reader of the ecumenical purpose of the biography, states:

Denn ist es nicht besser, gleichzeitig der Reform und der Einheit zu dienen, sofern dies als möglich erweist? (p. 61)

This seemingly innocent rhetorical question reflects the nature of the text as a whole, in wishing to serve an ecumenical aim, but contains a criticism of the later Luther as the architect of the schism. As little more is known of the journey, Manns abandons his analysis and moves on to other details of Luther's life in this period.

Manns returns to an accelerative summary of Luther's progression within his order. He merges several years of Luther's life into an iterative narrative of a matter of lines, compacting information gleaned from correspondence to present a picture of a diligent, committed priest so as to compensate for the lack of documented information. Manns tells in a succinct narrative of Luther's progress to the office of sub-prior of the Wittenberg convent and district. Manns notes that the first office gave him the second most important position in the cloister, while the second office gave him responsibility over ten 'bedeutende Konvente' (p. 61). Drawing on Luther's personal correspondence over this three-year period, Manns depicts a fully occupied and engaged man, carrying out his duties with care. Furthermore, he concludes that Luther appears from his correspondence to be a 'schlechthin vorbildlicher Mönch und Vorgesetzter der ihm unterstellten Konvente und Mitmönche' (p. 61).

This representation dismisses the ‘square peg in a round hole’ narrative of the Luther story, which has been projected on Luther’s monastic period in older Catholic treatments. In addition to this, it corrects a representation of Luther’s faith and belief in the Church having been damaged as his behaviour remained consistently true. Manns continues his summation of this period by praising Luther as a model monk:

[...] in allem aber ist er ohne Vorbehalt und Abstrich ganz Mönch, ganz Christ und doch schon ganz Luther, obgleich er noch die Kutte trägt, als wäre sie ihm an den Leib gewachsen. (p. 61)

The statement that Luther was in this period ‘doch ganz Luther’ and the following clauses suggest that his behaviour and attitudes remained the same as they did when he no longer wore the habit. Manns has employed an iterative narrative to demonstrate Luther’s exemplary conduct and adherence to Catholicism, challenging the image of Luther as a slovenly monk.

This image is reinforced through a singulative narrative recounting Luther’s correspondence with Georg Mascov and Georg Leiffer. Individual examples demonstrate the iterative ‘truth’, which described the later monastic Luther and which Manns once more summarises in a *IN/nS* iterative narrative at the end of the chapter:

Was immer von dem ein wenig sentimental Hinweis zu halten ist, verbürgt und sicher ist die Feststellung, mit der ich diese Überlegung beschließen möchte: daß nämlich auch Luther – trotz seiner späteren negativen Entscheidung – sein Mönchtum ohne Vorbehalt und Einschränkung als Kreuzesnachfolge verstanden hat und verstehen konnte, weshalb sein Weg als Mönch kein Irrweg war, mag er selbst und seine Freunde dies später auch so gesehen und dargestellt haben. (p. 62).

Such statements act as iterative ‘proof’ that contradicts a negative emplotment of the journey, as Luther’s actions remained true to Catholicism following the episode. More importantly, however, since what historical episodes ‘are’ is always a question of how they are ‘gesehen und dargestellt’, Manns seems to be invoking a superior, ‘true’ interpretative standpoint which gives a truer apprehension of the monastic period than Luther’s.

Manns concludes the section of the text dealing with Luther’s monastic period by suggesting that some of the later Reformation theology was starting to grow in this period but that Luther continued to carry out his duties without question. The representation of Luther’s monastic period, even by Luther’s later retrospective comments, does not match up with Manns’s ‘truth’, which shows Luther to have been a model monk.

In accepting Manns's argument and representation, we must assume that Luther's later retrospective comments are simply incorrect and that they originated from a desire to represent monasticism in its most negative light to suit the later ideology, which needed a practical example to serve the cause. This emplotment iterates Luther into the rôle of the reformed zealot who condemns his past life as a form of negative affirmation of his present and future life. This effect demonstrates again the use of iteration to question the traditional Protestant emplotment. Moreover, Manns asserts once again his superior knowledge over Luther's autobiographical statements. This suspect technique stresses his omniscient status as narrator who seeks to 'correct' Luther's own statements where they contradict Catholic practices.

In this section of the biography dealing with Luther's central years as a monk, Manns demonstrates confessional allegiance in the rhetoric of the narrative. This is shown in his lack of treatment of the journey to Rome, which is narrated as a concession to known historical data. Unlike Protestant accounts that suggest the episode to be crucial in Luther's development, it provides no interpretation and is cast as a mere event in Luther's monastic career. The emplotment ultimately ignores Protestant accounts but reflects traditional Catholic treatments. This under-valorisation is Manns's way of dealing with an otherwise problematical episode for the Catholic tradition in the Luther story.

At the same time, however, Manns has employed iteration to question the extreme Catholic view of Luther as ill-suited to the monastic way of life, as well as the Protestant representation of a corrupt and corrupting institution, by highlighting Luther's general success throughout these years. While the underplaying of the journey is not found in the Protestant Genthe's account, this re-evaluation of the monastic career in light of iterative evidence is. It appears, therefore, that Manns's emplotment is working its way into the modern Protestant narrative. Manns mimics Protestant accounts, however, by granting the journey its own chapter, thereby according it significance, yet at the same time, he sets it amid Luther's other experiences as a monk, iterating the trip and reducing it into a general pattern. Through his refusal to speculate on the events of the journey or its significance, Manns avoids an overtly negative depiction of the Church. This follows the traditional Catholic emplotment and shows Manns firmly rooted in his confessional tradition.

**Genthe (1996: Protestant)**

At a superficial level alone, Genthe's treatment of the journey to Rome reflects an inherited Protestant emplotment by granting it its own sub-chapter. Genthe's narrative shows a pivotal point in Luther's life and is followed by an examination of the *Anfechtungen*, hinting at a connection between the two 'episodes'. To some extent mirroring Manns's account, Genthe summarises a history of reform within the Augustinian order, leading to the singulative fact that Luther and Nathin were sent in 1508 to persuade the dean of Halle, Adolf von Anhalt, to petition the archbishop to intervene on behalf of the reforming party. This places Luther's later complaints against the Church in an iterative pattern of active attempts to reform, rather than an irrational and sudden attempt to 'smash' the Church, suggesting the influence of modern Catholic representations. Furthermore, this addition creates a sense of Luther at the heart of his order's politics and as an important diplomatic figure.

Having provided this sylleptical summary of the journey's reason, Genthe returns to a Luther-focused and pseudo-singulative narrative:

Über ihren Verlauf kann man sich nur aus späteren Bemerkungen Martin Luthers, verbunden mit der allgemeinen Kenntnis der im späten Mittelalter üblichen Reisewege, ein Bild machen. (p. 81)

The 'details' of the journey that follow are speculative and the narrative is as a consequence iterative but cast in the *persona* of Luther. Through the commonality of this experience, Genthe hypothesises what Luther must have done; the 'reconstruction' of the journey is punctuated with later statements from Luther, lending authority to Genthe's description of the route and journey.

In depicting Luther's impressions of Rome, Genthe offers a quotation (p. 82) that 'testifies' to the opulence and corruption of Italian society. Genthe casts Luther as a single example of a larger iterative chain of visitors to Rome who 'dies alles höchst befremdet wahrnahm[en]' (p. 84). This reinforces the Reformation Luther's view of Rome, and Genthe is playing to expectation rather than attempting to reflect accurately what Luther thought at that time, hinting at an inherited depiction. Genthe leads the reader on Luther's 'tour' of the 'Ewige Stadt' (p. 82). This touristic description seems to suggest that the past is indeed 'revisitable' and that Genthe's narrative may be verified against that which he describes. The image of Luther, however, that Genthe portrays is one in which Luther went to Rome, behaved as a pious medieval pilgrim and that his piety was not damaged there (p. 84). Projecting Luther's thoughts iteratively, Genthe argues that the Reformation at this time 'lag ihm [Luther] fern' (p. 84), that he

did not wish to damage the Church but rather preserve it properly. Genthe, nevertheless, reinforces Luther's comment with the benefit and judgement of hindsight, removing the Pope from his medieval context and his age. Genthe strengthens Luther's judgement of a very worldly Church, reflecting the confessional origins of the text. The return journey (p. 85) mirrors the outward journey in its hypothetical iterative narrative based almost totally on speculation. The singulative and documented historical fact of the outcome of the journey, being that the superior of the order imposed his will and abandoned any plans to unite the Order, ends this section of iterative speculation (p. 86); while Luther's desire for compromise at Jena functions to establish an image of him as willing to compromise and work for the good of the Church.

While setting the narrative apart and according it a particular place within his narrative, Genthe credits the journey to Rome with a major status in Luther's development theologically and as a turning point in the latter's monastic career, reflecting conventional Protestant representations of this period in Luther's life. Yet there is an obvious tension between Genthe's explicit evaluation of the journey and the implicit logic of the narrative, which accepts the iterative and generic nature of the representation. In a blend of singulative and iterative sylleptical narrative, Genthe presents the documented details of Luther's journey, as gained from later recollections, but fails to link these explicitly with Luther's later actions. Thus for Genthe the journey to Rome becomes another stage in Luther's development as monk, revealing a new and not altogether positive experience but an experience that does not fundamentally damage his attitude towards Catholicism. Unlike Manns's account, the journey remains a turning point in the Luther story and an obstacle overcome. Genthe's construction of the journey to Rome places Luther in a greater iterative pattern of criticism of medieval Catholicism and the curia. He develops this criticism to explain that Luther and the Reformation questioned the influence of the Church, but initially neither its sanctity nor its sacraments. Luther, as constructed in Genthe's account of the journey, wishes to reform the Church from within and is willing to compromise to bring about change for the good of the Church.

Manns's brief treatment of the journey to Rome reflects the episode's problematical nature. By isolating its emplotment, Manns suggests a significant episode, but he goes on to underplay its significance and uses iteration to question traditional Protestant and Catholic representations. Manns demonstrates that Luther's Catholicism remained largely undamaged in the period following the journey and equally that he continued to

flourish within his order, challenging both confessional narratives that credit the journey as a major turning point in Luther's theological development. The singulative appearance of the Genthe narrative belies its highly iterative content that remains tied to the Protestant tradition in emplotting the journey as the cause of the *Anfechtungen* and Luther's spiritual difficulties. Such an emplotment of the journey to Rome is a legacy of the older Protestant tradition and represents the ongoing change and stasis within the *Lutherbild*.

## Chapter VIII

### The *Anfechtungen*

The *Anfechtungen* refer to the ordeals suffered by Luther in his adult life, during which he was terrified by thoughts of God's judgement, his own justification and salvation. The *Anfechtungen* are linked to fundamental questions of theology, and as a result of this, narrative treatments of the *Anfechtungen* are confessionally diverse, naturally polarised by basic theological differences.

With regards to the monastic period, Catholic writers have portrayed the *Anfechtungen* as evidence of Luther's unsuitability for monasticism while later histories have sought to identify their cause as Luther's failure to understand medieval theology. Protestant writers have, on the other hand, emplotted the *Anfechtungen* as ordeals in Luther's monastic period that led him to a theological breakthrough. For Protestants, the cause of the *Anfechtungen* lies primarily in medieval theology, the 'revolutionising' of which by Luther brought an end to his suffering, and they are seen as an almost necessary stage in Luther's development. The *Anfechtungen* are inherently linked to the pre-Reformation Luther and are emplotted as essential *basanoi* in a Protestant Passion narrative of the monastic period.

#### Cochlaeus

(1549: Catholic)

While on the whole, Cochlaeus almost ignores the *Anfechtungen*, he does create a sylleptical but simultaneously singulative depiction of Luther as having a certain amount of peculiarity, 'nonnihl singularitatis habere' (p. 1), both before and during his time in the convent. Such statements are reinforced through references to Luther's relationship to the Devil:

Tametsi uisus est fratribus, nonnihl singularitatis habere, siue ex occulto aliquo cum Dæmone commercio, siue ex morbo Comitali: tum propter alia quædam indicia: tum præcipue, quod semel in Choro, cum in Missa legeretur Euangelium, de eiecto a surdo & muto Dæmonio, repente conciderit, uociferans, Non sum, Non sum. Multorum itaque est opinio, eum occulta usum esse familiaritate Dæmonii cuiuspiam, Quandoquidem & ipsemet talia de se aliquando scripserit, quæ Lectori suspicionem de huiusmodi commercio nefariaque societate ingerere possint. (pp. 1-2)

In this way, the *Anfechtungen* appear in the oldest Catholic period as a singulative and singular episode, peculiar to Luther, indicative of his unsuitability for monastic life and at worst of diabolical influence. This technique is a case of character assassination and depicts an abhorrent character who suffered something so unusual that its origins had to be otherworldly.

### **Grisar (1911: Catholic)**

Grisar traces an iterative pattern of a moody 'gloomy youth' in Luther's life, thereby establishing a character that will behave according to the rôle. Grisar sees no reason to assume that Luther's behaviour changed on entry to the cloister and suggests that Luther's problem was a constant and lay in his natural disposition:

Im Kloster, wo der Leser ihn oben verlassen hat, haben ihn solche Tage ohne Zweifel ebenfalls, namentlich zu Anfang bei dem Blicke auf die Lebensänderung, heimgesucht. Inwiefern die von ihm erwähnte Stimmung der Bezweifelung an sich selbst vor dem Klostereintritte in seiner Seele Herr geworden, ist aus dem Grunde schwer zu sagen, weil er, von dem Gelübde und dem geheimnisvollen „Schrecken vom Himmel“ abgesehen, in älteren Jahren auch die Strenge seiner Eltern, der er habe entgehen wollen, als Ursache seiner Flucht aus der Welt nennt. (p. 5)

Grisar highlights, however, the theological cause of this despair, which the standard confessional practices failed to answer. In this way, Grisar follows a more modern Catholic emplotment, which while not regarding the *Anfechtungen* as singulatively perverse, identifies them as resulting from Luther's own character that failed to respond properly to traditional methods:

Wer die Wege des geistlichen Lebens kennt, der ist damit vertraut, daß mancher Tugendbeflissene dem läuternden Feuer ähnlicher Prüfungen ausgesetzt ist. In der überlieferten katholischen Lehre und in der Erfahrung der klösterlichen Seelenleitung waren die wirksamsten Heilmittel für solche Zustände niedergelegt...Man wußte recht wohl und schärfte es dem Geängstigsten ein, daß uns durch die Verdienste des Erlösers bei ernstestn Vorbereitungen der Seele wahre Verzeihung verliehen wird, und daß wir durch Christi Gnade, und nur durch sie, alles, auch in der bittersten Anfechtung, vermögen. (pp. 6-7)

Luther is an example of a group character failing to respond as others did and having a preference 'allzuoft auf den eigenen Sinn' (p. 7). Grisar creates a pattern of an unhealthy over-scrupulous personality who follows his own mind, thereby mirroring Maritain's depiction of an arrogant individual:

Luther stützte sich indes gegenüber solchen Belehrungen allzuoft auf den eigenen Sinn. Er verharrte in krankhafter Weise bei Selbstquälereien, die in seiner ersten eifrigen Klosterzeit allerdings die Gestalt von frommen Skrupeln

gehabt haben mögen, die aber nachher mehr und mehr unter dem Einfluß körperlicher Affektionen einen andern Charakter annahmen. Er kam nicht zum Frieden wie andere Skrupulanten, weil er, verführt von seinem verstörten und aufgeregten Naturell, gerne, wie er gesteht, den Zweifel nachhing, ob denn wohl auch die Anempfehlungen, die er hörte, nicht Trug und Schein seien. (p. 7)

Grisar acknowledges, nevertheless, that Luther functioned successfully as a monk despite the *Anfechtungen*, as is shown in the key episodes. This creates an iterative narrative of Luther's *Anfechtungen* which questions an overly singulative narrative. Having created this pattern, Grisar challenges the notion of Luther as 'zur Zielscheibe derselben [Luthers Versuchungen] ausersehen' (p. 13), reflecting the overall desire to desingulate the *Anfechtungen* both as phenomena and in Luther's reactions. Grisar discusses an anecdote involving Staupitz informing Luther of other 'großen heiligen Männer' who were improved by *Anfechtungen*. This anecdote iterates Luther's experiences into one common to 'der großen heiligen Männer' with God having 'große Dinge' (p. 14) in mind for Luther. Grisar prefers the reader to believe that Luther's difficulties were a result of his nature and a failure to accept the consolations of theology rather than a case of divine testing.

Grisar's treatment of the *Anfechtungen* shows an inheritance from an extreme Catholic tradition, as demonstrated in Maritain, while attempting to balance the overall analysis. Luther's *Anfechtungen* are desingulated, and thereby reduced in singular significance, to a common experience intensified by his character. As an ecumenical concession, however, Grisar questions extreme Catholic representations that employ the *Anfechtungen* to show Luther's unsuitability for his vocation:

Historisch ist nur, daß er damals ein observanter Mönch war und sich deshalb auch des Vertrauens der Oberen erfreute. (p. 15)

Through iteration, Grisar questions an over-sympathetic Protestant singulative emplotment of the *Anfechtungen* as well as an over-singulative Catholic treatment. Iteration is used to contextualise and balance Luther's singulative behaviour within a larger iterative tradition; there is, however, a certain tension between the ecumenical desire present in the diegesis and the inherited rhetoric of the narrative.

### **Maritain (1925: Catholic)**

Despite the temporal divide, Maritain's depiction develops Cochlaeus's representation of the *Anfechtungen* very little and they become a highly subjective problem. As with Protestant accounts, the *Anfechtungen* are cast as a developmental stage in Luther's

own theology but they equally demonstrate Luther's perversion of Catholic theology. As with more recent histories, Maritain stresses that such problems as Luther's were common and that the system answered such complaints. In this way, Maritain establishes the *Anfechtungen* as known iterative phenomena. Maritain opens his narrative of the *Anfechtungen* by locating their occurrence at night, which he then immediately allegorizes; as is made more explicit by Cochlaeus, the symbolism here suggests something satanic. Maritain's account suggests, however, that while they were common phenomena, Luther's response was incorrect and he chose instead to pursue his own remedy:

Arrive la nuit, cette *nuit du sens* qui est d'autant plus ténébreuse que l'âme a un besoin plus grand d'être vidée de soi. Martin Luther a perdu toute consolation sensible, il est plongé dans un océan d'angoisses, il voit, avec cette clarté impitoyable que Dieu donne en pareil cas, la vanité et la perversité qui habitent son cœur d'homme; tout l'édifice de perfection qu'il a essayé d'élever de ses mains semble chavirer sur lui, se retourner sur lui pour l'accuser. Ce pourrait être la nuit purificatrice, et c'est peut-être le moment de choisir son destin pour l'éternité. Que fait-il? Se quitte-t-il lui-même? Se jette-t-il en Dieu? Dit-il à son cœur troublé le grand mot d'Augustin: *vis fugere a Deo, fuge in Deum*? Il quitte la prière, il se jette et s'enfuit dans l'action. Il s'étourdit dans un labeur insensé... (p. 10)

As a common problem, Maritain questions why Luther did not follow the iterative, and presumably fail-safe, remedies. Luther's failure to do so becomes a singulative and perverse reaction to a common problem, demonstrating that the fault resided in Luther rather than in monasticism. Moreover, this failure is further compounded by his abandoning his struggle and reaching an apparently false conclusion:

Tentation d'esprit, avant toute autre. Luther fait cet acte de résignation perverse, il renonce à lutter, il déclare que la lutte est impossible. Submergé de toutes parts par le péché, ou ce qu'il croit tel, il se laisse emporter par le flot. Et il en vient à cette conclusion pratique: *la concupiscence est invincible*. (pp. 11-12)

In concluding his treatment of the *Anfechtungen*, Maritain summarises his views on the Reformation, which he views as the outcome of a personal struggle made public, in which Luther almost attained the necessary point but failed at the last moment:

[...] et l'on pourrait dire que l'immense désastre que la Réforme protestante fut pour l'humanité n'est que l'effet d'une épreuve intérieure qui a tourné mal chez un religieux sans humilité. C'est dans les hauteurs de l'esprit qu'il est tombé d'abord, qu'il a livré combat et qu'il a été vaincu. C'est *in acie mentis*, à la suprême pointe de l'âme que le drame s'est noué. Luther raconte qu'il a vu et défié une quantité innombrable de démons, qui le menaçaient et argumentaient contre lui. Dans ses origines et dans son principe, le drame de la Réforme a été un drame spirituel, un combat d'esprit. (p. 17)

Maritain's account of the *Anfechtungen* demonstrates a traditional Catholic valorisation while recognising that such trials were a common and almost beneficial process. Maritain views Luther's *Anfechtungen* as an iterative phenomenon, while Luther's reaction was singulative and perverse. It is indeed Luther's failure to follow medieval theology as well as his character that led him to ignore that theology that is at fault. As a form of religious discipline, phenomena such as *Anfechtungen* can have a positive effect; but Luther failed to respond to his iterative 'truth' and followed a singulative and false course. In this way, Maritain employs a singulative narrative to demonstrate Luther's break from an iterative and normal spiritual process, thus highlighting the perverse nature of his actions.

**Lortz** (1941: Catholic)

While retaining hallmarks of the traditional Catholic narrative, Lortz tempers Grisar's treatment of the *Anfechtungen* to create an iterative narrative in which Luther's early cloister life is characterised by fear of the Last Judgement (p. 162). Lortz indicates that Luther's problems were common and that remedies existed; Lortz breaks from older interpretations, however, in suggesting that while such remedies failed, Luther was not the intentional cause of this failure. Therefore, while the *Anfechtungen* remain iterative and Luther's reaction singulative, this singulative reaction is not a wilful desire to pervert practice:

Vielleicht nirgendwo sonst zeigt sich die Unmöglichkeit Luthers, Entscheidendes von außen anzunehmen, so sehr wie in diesem zentralen Anliegen seiner schmerzlich ringenden, wunden Seele. Er ist so sehr, nicht nur in seinen eigenen Vorstellungen, sondern in seiner Vorstellungsart, gefangen, daß er gar nicht verstehen kann, was der andere ihm sagt. So liest er jahrelang über die gesuchte befreiende Deutung von Röm. I, 17 hinweg, um sie dann neu zu entdecken, dann allerdings in einem viel weiter reichenden, häretischen Sinne. (p. 163)

Moreover, Lortz's representation mirrors, although negatively, Protestant accounts in depicting the *Anfechtungen* as a necessary stage in the process leading to Luther's breakthrough. In the Protestant Luther story, this would appear as a *basanos* of a Passion narrative; in Lortz's treatment, however, Luther's reaction rediscovers a Catholic understanding of theology, thus desingularating the singular significance of a breakthrough. Emplotting the *Anfechtungen* as a painful and necessary process in Luther's development, Lortz demonstrates the influence of Protestant accounts, while

retaining a Catholic interpretation to his treatment by viewing the process as an outcome of a singulative Luther character flaw:

Er mußte jedesmal und überall allein und einsam die Last des Suchens, des Ringens, des Durchstoßens tragen. (p. 163)

This inability to accept the consolation of others is compounded as his difficulties were the result of a misunderstanding of the nature of sin and forgiveness; Luther's difficulties are depicted as a perversely singulative reaction and Luther becomes in this interpretation the 'square peg'.

In particular, Lortz identifies the problem behind the *Anfechtungen* as being an over-subjective attitude in which a personal, and therefore singulative, expression of salvation and faith is paramount:

Alles Bewußtsein ist gerichtet auf das eigene Heilserleben. Der Begriff der Kirche als des Organismus, aus dem heraus der einzelne Christ überhaupt erst glaubend lebt, die Auffassung, daß das Urteil und das Handeln der Kirche Voraussetzung sind für die Wahrheit des religiös-theologischen Urteils und die Heiligkeit des Handelns des einzelnen Christen: dieser Kirchenbegriff hatte für Luther in seinem ganzen Leben zu geringe Wirklichkeit. (p. 164)

Luther's misconception is complicated by a questionable reading of Occamist theology, in which Luther's concept of the inhuman God concentrated on the 'Majestät...des zürnenden Richters' (p. 172), putting Luther under even greater strain. Lortz creates an iterative pattern of causes of the *Anfechtungen* resulting from Luther's failure to understand medieval theology. While Luther's *Anfechtungen* are shown to be a singulative response to an iterative problem, they are cast as the result of a 'perverted' understanding of Catholic teaching and demonstrate how dangerous such an understanding can be:

Dieses Unlösbare hat Luther empfunden, entdeckt, in seiner ganzen seelenmordenden Unbarmherzigkeit durchlebt und für sich herausgestellt. (p. 174)

Overall, Lortz's treatment of the *Anfechtungen* demonstrates a modern Catholic representation through its acknowledgement of the *Anfechtungen* as an iterative problem, while retaining an emplotment of Luther's reaction to them as being singulative, perverse and ultimately, although unintentionally, heretical in his understanding of Romans 1, 17.

As has been shown, Catholic representations of the *Anfechtungen* place the blame for Luther's difficulties during the monastic period on Luther: when faced with a

common problem that had an accepted solution, Luther reacted ‘perversely’ and refused to follow the teaching of the Church. While older Catholic treatments view the *Anfechtungen* as evidence of diabolical possession, more recent accounts have shown a desire to ignore Catholic practice and thus charge Luther’s character with the blame. Lortz, however, attempts to level this by asserting that Luther did not actively choose to pervert theology, but was rather almost involuntarily brought to do so.

### **Melanchthon (1548: Protestant)**

The merging of an iterative account of the monastic period with an iterative and proleptic account of a later period in Luther’s life is repeated in Melanchthon’s description of the *terrores*. Melanchthon’s own memories of later events in Luther’s life develop the representation of the *terrores*, which are accorded an important status within the relatively short narrative and are shown to be a formative experience in Luther’s life, thus becoming the *basanoi* of the traditional Protestant emplotment.

Employing what is commonly accepted in later narratives Melanchthon suggests the death of one of Luther’s friends as a catalyst for the terrors and that Luther entered the monastery out of a preoccupation with the question of salvation. In so doing, he hints at what was to become an important issue at the heart of Luther’s theology, ‘quod pietati et studiis doctrinae de Deo existimavit esse conuenientius’.<sup>76</sup> By emplotting the decision to enter the cloister against the backdrop of theological questions raised by events in Luther’s own life, Melanchthon puts the question of salvation at the heart of Luther’s adult life and traces it throughout the *Historia*. Moreover, by emplotting the *Anfechtungen* as arising from Luther’s own life, Melanchthon stresses the importance of personal experience to Luther’s theology, and casts the initial impulse as a singulative act particular to Luther. Melanchthon establishes a representation of Luther that depicts a unique character with a distinct sanctity and theological preoccupation.

This theological preoccupation is maintained, as when afflicted by such ‘terrores’, Luther’s thoughts turned to God, ‘attentius de ira Dei’ and the many examples of punishments ‘aut de mirandis poenarum exemplis’ (p. 19); thus, Melanchthon maintains a theological preoccupation and relevance to Luther’s early life, serving as a prolepsis for his later acts. Using personal reminiscence, Melanchthon provides eyewitness testimony and authority to his account, and maintains a specific singulative narrative:

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<sup>76</sup> cf. Lucien Febvre, *Martin Luther: A Destiny* (London: Dent, 1930), pp. 7-8, or Martin Brecht, *Martin Luther: His Road to Reformation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), pp. 46-47.

Ac uidi ipse, cum in quadam doctrinæ disputatione propter intentionem consternatus, in uicino cubiculo se inlectum collocauit, ubi hanc sententiam crebro repetitam miscuit inuocationi, Conclusit omnes sub peccatum, ut omnium misereatur. Hos terrores seu primum, seu acerrimos sensit eo anno, cum sodalem, nescio quo casu interfectum, amisisset. (p. 19)

Melanchthon continues with an iterative representation of Luther's monastic period, building on the character he has already introduced: Luther, according to Melanchthon, 'alimenta pietatis quærebat', 'Interea fontes doctrinæ cælestis auide legebat ipse' and 'Hoc studium ut magis expeteret, illis suis doloribus et pauoribus mouebatur' (p. 108). This iterative account presents a constant image of Luther in the cloister, piously working towards an aim established earlier. Developing his treatment of the *Anfechtungen*, Melanchthon turns his attention to an aged monk at Erfurt who consoled Luther and who represents monasticism positively, albeit in the persona of an old man from whom one might expect to gain wisdom. Melanchthon places Luther's later theology as developed from St. Paul, the Creed and Bernard of Clairvaux.

Melanchthon again employs this highly singulative anecdote of the aged monk to relate Luther's sufferings to his later theological developments. Through the consolations of the 'senis' (p. 20), Luther is reminded of 'de tota Pauli sententia' (p. 20), leading him to a breakthrough. Importantly, Melanchthon employs a highly sylleptical narrative of the *Anfechtungen* to represent Luther's sufferings as the consequences of medieval theology only cured in light of the latter's own revision of that theology. By singulating the *Anfechtungen*, Melanchthon asserts their unique status and stresses their primary rôle in Luther's theological thought, as a metaphor for his intellectual development. The combination of a singulative with an iterative narrative provides a coherent picture of the young monk, in which the singulative lends authority to the iterative narrative so as to produce a constant image acceptable to Melanchthon's emplotment.

### **Mathesius**

**(1566: Protestant)**

Mathesius provides a compacted sylleptical narrative in which the *Anfechtungen* once again emerge as a singulative difficulty, suggesting a divine test and thereby casting Luther metaphorically as a saintly figure. The *Anfechtungen* occur as a consequence of penitential practices and monastic discipline, resulting in a Luther who was 'stetig betrübt unnd trawrig' (pp. 21-22). The answer to Luther's problems is divine and arrives in the form of a messenger from God:

Weil er aber tag und nacht im Kloster studiret und betet und sich darneben mit fasten und wachen kasteiet unnd abmergelt, war er stetig betrübt unnd trawrig, unnd all sein Meßhalten ihm kein trost geben wolte, schickt ihm Gott ein alten Bruder zu im Kloster zum Beichtuatter, der tröstet ihn hertzlich unnd weiset ihn auff die gnedige vergebung der sünden im *Symbolo apostolorum* unnd leret in auß Sanct Bernhards predigt, er müste für sich selber auch glauben, das im der barmhertzig Gott und Vatter durch das einige opffer unnd blut seines gehorsamen Sones vergebung aller sünden erworben und durch den heiligen Geist inn der Apostolischen Kirchen durchs wort der Absolution verkündigen ließ. (pp. 21-22)

In order to emphasise the divine favour, Mathesius stresses that this messenger was sent by God, thereby reinforcing the singulative emplotment; yet the monk was presumably already in the monastery and it is only Mathesius's formula that makes his 'arrival' seem singular. Mathesius recognises Luther's orthodoxy at the heart of Catholic theology, by stressing the rôle of St. Bernhard, while simultaneously acknowledging the importance of *sola fide* and this obviously connects with the later Luther's theology.

Mathesius's treatment of the *Anfechtungen*, therefore, emplots Luther's sufferings as a singulative episode, particular to Luther, rather than as a known complaint. The similarities between Mathesius's and Melancthon's accounts are obvious and show the former's inheritance from the latter. Mathesius identifies the monastic system as having created the sufferings but sees their remedy as an act of divine intervention which sanctifies the hero and approbates his actions. It is clear to see the effects of a singulative narrative in creating a hero in the early Protestant Luther story.

### **Köstlin**

**(1892: Protestant)**

In Köstlin's account, the singular narrative of the *Anfechtungen* emerges as a necessary step in the development of Luther's theology. The *Anfechtungen* are positioned at the heart of Luther's early monastic career as an ordeal in a Passion-like narrative. Köstlin opens his examination by establishing an iterative depiction of Luther's preoccupation with sin and his constant restlessness:

Es entstand endlich in seinem Gemüth eine stete Unruhe, in der er nach Sünden suchte, auch wo überhaupt keine zu finden waren. Was er schon früher beim Händewaschen äußerte, daß man bei allem Waschen nur immer unreiner werde, mußte er jetzt erst recht bei sich erfahren. Indem er darüber zerknirscht sein sollte, fühlte er wohl Pein und Furcht im Übermaß, aber doch nie in der Weise, daß er sich sagen konnte, das Böse werde hiedurch vor Gott gut gemacht. (pp. 52-53)

This identification of Luther's difficulties as coming from theological concern traces proleptically a preoccupation with the question of justification:

Was auch beim gelehrten theologischen Studium sein wärmstes persönliches Interesse auf sich zog, blieb immer die schwere Frage, wie der Sünder zum ewigen Heil gelangen könnte. (p. 54)

Therefore, while establishing the *Anfechtungen* as a singulative reaction to medieval theology, Köstlin demonstrates the significance of an older Protestant tradition to create an iterative of Luther's later doctrinal developments.

As with earlier Protestant narratives, Köstlin acknowledges that standard practices did not help Luther:

So spricht er [Luther] von Schülern des Gesetzes, die es mit ihren Werken versuchen wollen, immer arbeiten, härene Hemden tragen, sich kasteien, fasten und peitschen, Alles, um endlich dem Gesetz Gottes zu genügen. (p. 55)

If the monastic system were in possession of 'remedies', such statements iterate Luther's sufferings into a recognized pattern. Nevertheless, the singulative case of Luther recognised that such solutions were insufficient. Köstlin shows that while such complaints as the *Anfechtungen* were to an extent common, and therefore iterative, Luther's reaction was particularly singulative:

So haben die Erfahrungen, die er dort machte, ihn zu der Grunderkenntnis hingeführt, von der nachher seine reformatorische Predigt ausgehen sollte. (p. 56)

Thus the *Anfechtungen* emerge as a necessary stage in Luther's development. However painful, Luther needed to feel such pain which 'keine Zunge es aussagen und keine Feder es beschreiben könne' (p. 56) for him to reach his breakthrough. Köstlin's representation of them clearly demonstrates the Protestant tradition and emplots the *Anfechtungen* as *basanoi* of a Passion narrative.

### **Boehmer (1929: Protestant)**

While the *Anfechtungen* are shown to be iterative phenomena in Boehmer's account, Luther's reaction is emplotted singulatively. The narrative shows a clear confessional inheritance, particularly from Köstlin, in stressing Luther's qualities and showing how such difficulties led to Luther's unique theological developments. Employing a device later adopted by Manns, Boehmer opens his examination of the *Anfechtungen* by iterating Luther into a pattern of 'ein verstörtes Gemüt' (p. 51), thus emplotting Luther's difficulties into a common problem. Moreover, this device assumes a greater

relationship between the past and the present than is historically valid. Boehmer accepts that experiences such as the *Anfechtungen* were common within monasticism, even to the extent to which they led Luther into anxiety over the salvation of his soul:

Kein Wunder daher, daß der junge Luther sehr bald wieder in Angst um sein Seelenheil geriet, und unter dieser Angst jetzt noch mehr litt als zuvor. Aber das war eine Erscheinung, die schon den alten mönchischen Seelenführern wohlbekannt war. (p. 51)

As a problem familiar to monasticism, the Church had remedies for the *Anfechtungen* but these were to fail Luther. The effect of this is to singulate the iterative problem of the *Anfechtungen*, emplotting Luther as an acute case or the subject of a divine test:

So wirkte auf ihn alles, was Hunderten in ähnlicher Lage anscheinend gut geholfen hatte, wie Gift. Oberflächliche Beobachter haben hieraus sofort den Schluß gezogen, daß es mit ihm nicht ganz richtig gewesen sein könne, und die Beweiskraft dieses Schlusses durch die Behauptung verstärken zu können geglaubt, daß er auch in seinem späteren Leben immer wieder unter „Anfechtungen“ zu leiden gehabt habe und daß *diese* Anfechtungen ihm nach seinem eigenen Zeugnis noch mehr zu schaffen gemacht hätten als die Angstanfälle der Klosterzeit. In der Tat, er hat auch später immer wieder Anfechtungen gehabt, Anfechtungen, die ihn zum Teil schwerer drückten als einst die aufreibenden Kämpfe um die Gewißheit des Heils. (p. 95)

Boehmer disregards an over-singulative interpretation that Luther's difficulties arose out of his character, if not mental illness. Boehmer is challenging the extreme Catholic tradition started by Cochlaeus. While Boehmer does concede, however, that the failure of monastic practices to help Luther did have something to do with 'der besonderen Konstitution seiner Psyche' (pp. 96-97), the tone is far from negative and explains an inner struggle within Luther regarding justification and salvation:

Der innere Kampf ging in seiner Seele mit kaum verminderter Heftigkeit weiter. Erst im April oder Mai 1513 trat hierin fast plötzlich eine Wendung ein. (p. 108)

Boehmer shows here that through the *Anfechtungen*, emplotting as a 'Kampf', Luther struggled to a new understanding. Moreover, Boehmer understands Luther's breakthrough as a direct consequence of experience, which therefore becomes necessary to his development:

So ähnlich sein Selbstbewußtsein zuzeiten dem Selbstbewußtsein der alten Propheten erscheint, so war es also doch innerlich immer ganz anders geartet und begründet. Vor allem beruhte es nicht auf irgendwelchen Erlebnissen ekstatischer Art, sondern auf einer ganz ohne solche abnorme seelische Begleiterscheinungen zustande gekommenen *Erkenntnis*. (p. 112)

The *Anfechtungen* are emplotted as a necessary stage in Luther's development that leads him to his Reformation breakthroughs; reinforcing the notion of a Passion narrative in which the *Anfechtungen* become *basanoi*.

**Friedenthal (1967: Protestant)**

Breaking with earlier Protestant accounts, Friedenthal emplots Luther's *Anfechtungen* as normal and as a consequence of Luther's highly scrupulous nature, rather than as signs of his unsuitability for monasticism. More importantly, however, Friedenthal does not regard the *Anfechtungen* as visible signs of his spiritual sufferings or a theological breakthrough. Friedenthal opens his examination of the *Anfechtungen* by following the established convention of Luther's preoccupation with sin and confession. Employing anecdotal evidence, Friedenthal concludes that Luther's nature led him to unhealthy confessional practice. He cites Staupitz's advice and pastoral care, but again recognises, as an iterative truth, that Luther understood theology in its most extreme interpretations. In this way, Friedenthal concludes that Luther is a singulative representative of an iterative group, according to whose conventions he behaves:

Man pflegt solche Beängstigungen krankhaft, hysterisch, auf alle Fälle sinnlos übertrieben zu nennen. Luther hat zweifellos, und nicht nur im Kloster, an schweren Anfällen psychopathischer Natur gelitten. Es würde nicht leicht, irgendeinen genialen Menschen, geschweige denn auf religiösem Gebiet, zu zitieren, der nicht solche Züge aufwies. Selbst Männer der Macht wie Bismarck litten an Weinkrämpfen; wir brauchen die Beispiele nicht auszuführen. Seine Gegner haben Luther sogar als Epileptiker bezeichnet; es ist durchaus glaubhaft, daß er niedergefallen ist oder sich vielmehr niedergeworfen hat. pp. 58-59)

Friedenthal views the *Anfechtungen* as belonging to a pattern of behaviour which was seen in other key episodes. Naturally this desingularises the *Anfechtungen* and reduces their significance, questioning the traditional Protestant emplotment.

In addition to this, Friedenthal challenges the traditional singulative Catholic emplotment as may be found in Maritain, by stressing that Luther functioned successfully in his order:

Der Ekstatiker war eine bekannte, ja erwünschte Erscheinung, der »Psychopath«, der von Dämonen geplagte Büsser, durch viele Heiligengeschichten bekannt und legitimiert. Luthers Vorgesetzte, ausgezeichnete Männer und strenge Ordensleute, hatten nicht die geringsten Bedenken, diesen Bruder so rasch wie möglich zu befördern und ihm immer neue und verantwortungsvollere Ämter aufzutragen. Er hat in der Tat überraschend schnell »Karriere« gemacht... (p. 59)

Friedenthal uses an iterative narrative to question biased singulative confessional representations in an attempt to create a more ecumenical account, later adopted by Manns.

**Manns (1982: Catholic)**

In the final section of his biography, Manns focuses on the *Anfechtungen*, and their relevance to Luther's later actions. They are emplotted as an individual episode as if they were a separate event in Luther's life rather than a continuing problem in the monastery. By so emplotting them, Manns emphasises their importance and singles them out for particular consideration. He opens his narrative with the common stylistic technique of a rhetorical question, and asking what influence the *Anfechtungen* have on Luther's later 'reformatorische Entwicklung' (p. 82), thereby crediting the *Anfechtungen* as a significance event in Luther's life.

The description is characterized by an iterative educative narrative which describes the nature of such sufferings in a general non-Luther-specific way. Manns reduces Luther's suffering to a single act, while acknowledging its longevity. He rejects the notion of the *Anfechtungen* as a continuous problem that led Luther to a schism, and thus dismisses an over-deterministic emplotment. Manns counters the argument that Luther was ill-suited to monasticism, returning to the fact that Luther functioned as a normal, and indeed successful, member of his order, thus challenging the singulation with iteration.

Luther's *Anfechtungen*, as viewed by Manns, were natural phenomena intensified by his extreme 'Leistungsprinzip' (p. 82) into crises. They were not the produce of the monastic lifestyle, even though they were a commonplace in medieval monasticism which did provide remedies for them. In particular, Manns stresses his belief that Luther's *Anfechtungen* were made worse by confessional practice, but in order to spare monasticism any further criticism, Manns dismisses the idea that Luther's brother monks had any problems with the issue. For Manns, Luther was simply unable to summon up the necessary sense of disinterested love and penitence necessary for forgiveness. Manns, seemingly in his rôle as a pastor, sees this inability as a misinterpretation of what Luther needed to feel and then tortured himself in trying to create a sufficient sense of penance, leading to problems at confession and at Mass. In this way, Manns argues, Luther becomes a 'Sonderfall' (p. 82) suffering from a problem unknown to the Erfurt monastery and 'das sich im Rahmen der Frömmigkeit,

Spiritualität und Theologie des damaligen Mönchtums weder stellte noch ohne weiteres lösen ließ' (p. 82). Manns continues by stating that the concept of 'reine Liebe', to which penance is closely related, was familiar to Luther, especially as it is closely anchored in Scripture and widely known in theology.

In answering his second question about the relevance of Luther's *Anfechtungen* to his development as a reformer, Manns is positive that Luther did not fail as a monk:

Das katholische Mönchtum [darf] folglich nicht als der dunkle Hintergrund gesehen werden [...], von dem Luther sich in einem schmerzhaften Prozeß absetzte und befreite, in dem er sich unter diesem negativen Einfluß zum ‚Reformatorischen‘ hin entwickelt. (pp. 82-83)

Manns's interpretation questions more polarised Protestant accounts that seek to represent the monastic period as Luther's 'Passion', from which he emerges and is resurrected as the Reformer Luther. Hence Manns's allegiance to an inherited Catholic tradition is demonstrated. Furthermore, Manns discounts the almost clichéd view that it was against his monastic background that Luther rebelled and suggests that the monastic lifestyle exacerbated certain characteristics within Luther, influencing his later development. Nevertheless, Manns argues, this development did not need to take Luther out of the monastery, an idea that he believes will counter many long-held Protestant and Catholic assumptions. Manns places his examination of the *Anfechtungen* apart from the earlier narrative, so that he can deal with them as a decisive element in the Luther story rather than as a constant background event. Furthermore, Manns employs iteration to question singulative critique and asks, if monasticism were so bad, why Luther continued to wear his habit until 1524 and remained in the Wittenberg convent.

Manns takes advantage of the *Anfechtungen* to discuss their effect on Luther's later development. This opportunity enables Manns to focus on particular questions of theology, compensating for the lack of historical data regarding Luther's sufferings. Manns follows the possibilities through with a sympathetic attitude, providing answers to the questions relating to an interested and a disinterested love and the question of works with a partisan understanding. He shows that Luther's later theology of sin and divine love was born out of his monastic experiences. He focuses on Luther's later writings and shows their relevance to his earlier sufferings, and how to some extent his later theology answered them. Employing iteration to challenge Protestant representations, Manns concludes that Luther's understanding of divine love is acceptable to both confessions and he reinforces the argument that in his criticisms, thought and belief, Luther never truly left his Catholic heritage behind:

Von daher ist es das Aufregende an Luther, daß er – auch sich selbst zeitlebens immer wieder voraus – die Grenzen der alten Kirche sprengt, ohne sie deswegen zu verlassen, und daß er in keine ‚neue Kirche‘ eingeht, deren ‚reformatorische‘ Grenzziehung grundsätzlich durch die Ablehnung des ‚Katholischen‘ bestimmt wäre. (p. 87)

This naturally questions the fundamental difference between Catholicism and Lutheranism, stressing the notion that Luther remained Catholic. Yet at the same time, such comments are questioned by the Catholic rhetoric that underlies the representation. The textual tension suggests that further dialogue is needed before a full ecumenical synthesis is demonstrated in both the mimesis and diegesis.

Manns dismisses the ‘Protestant’ argument that Luther ‘floored’ ‘das ‚Katholische‘’ in monasticism and replaced it with the ‘Reformatorische’ (p. 87). Balancing the summation, Manns dismisses a traditional Catholic view that Luther attacked a Catholicism which was not actually Catholic or that he rediscovered ‘katholisches Glaubensgut’ (p. 87) and found it to be heretical: both views, Manns asserts, are preliminary stages of an examination of Luther and his life. Manns instead urges the reader to realise that Luther’s belief could be part of the reader’s own belief. Such a realisation has concrete implications for a representation and understanding of Luther:

Denn wenn die geheime Voraussetzung von der grundsätzlichen Unvereinbarkeit der beiden Bekenntnisansätze der Entwicklung Luthers und seinen theologischen Grundanliegen nicht entspricht, dann entfällt damit auch die Frage, worin denn inhaltlich das ‚Reformatorische‘ besteht und zu welchem Zeitpunkt Luther es in der Weise eines befreienden Durchbruchs erkannt und erfahren hat. (pp. 87-88)

Through recognition of the common ground, Manns believes that the reader will realise that he has much in common with Luther’s theology. He takes the reader through the theological implications behind sufferings such as Luther’s, educating the reader as much in contemporary Catholicism as in the Catholicism of Luther’s ‘history’, recognising the *Anfechtungen* as common. The focus in the biography is predominantly theological: what Luther gained from his time in the cloister and how that might be traced in his later thought and writings. The narrative is both educative and iterative, examining the development of Lutheran theology and thought. Importantly, however, by so emplotting Luther’s experiences, Manns suggests that they are crucial to his theological development, and thus mirrors a classic Protestant account in which such

ordeals become *basanoi* belonging to a Passion narrative, necessary for Luther's emergence as the Reformer Luther.

In Manns's narrative, questions regarding the 'Reformation' content of Luther's thought become irrelevant. This enables Manns to dismiss questions about the *Turmerlebnis* and the course of the Reformation, while negating the significance of the episode in Protestant accounts. Moreover, Manns urges the reader to see Luther as a pragmatist who based his actions on a theology which must be studied in order to understand him. Yet, Manns argues, it is accepted that if it is not Luther's thought, then it is historical reasons 'die den tragischen Verlauf der Reformation maßgeblich bestimmen' (p. 88). Manns closes the final lines of the chapter in the same fashion as the biography opened: with regret at the outcome of the Reformation and a desire to see the ecumenical movement restore the Churches to unity.

### **Genthe (1996: Protestant)**

Luther's transfer to and experiences in Wittenberg lead Genthe to an examination of the *Anfechtungen* (p. 86) almost in isolation, as if they only affected Luther later in his monastic career rather than throughout, the works of the Mystics, Dionysios Areopagita and Bonaventura among others, as is often depicted in other biographies. Yet their very emplotment here suggests that they are a consequence of either the journey to Rome or the move to Wittenberg. If the former is assumed to be the case, Genthe stresses the negative effect of Rome on Luther, hinting at an inherited Protestant tradition.

Genthe returns to a discussion of aspects of theology which came to play a major rôle in both the Ninety-five Theses and Luther's later theological writings: predestination and justification. Genthe employs an iterative syllepsis to describe Luther's need to confess (p. 88) which is indicative of the latter's inability to feel God's grace, arguably the cause of the *Anfechtungen*. The sylleptical nature of the narrative presents Luther's suffering as almost unchanging and atemporal, and the account is characterized by 'theological' explanations of problems and punctuated by singulative narrative, often anachronistic and often in the form of retrospectives (p. 89). The syllepsis is continued by explaining how Luther tried to console himself with contemporary theology but eventually failed. The proleptical reference to the Ninety-five Theses suggests that the 'crisis' brought about by the *Anfechtungen* was solved by Luther's thinking which led to the Ninety-Five Theses. This emplotment suggests that Luther's monastic period was a necessary obstacle that once overcome led to his

emergence as a reforming figure, and reinforces the notion of the Protestant Passion narrative.

While the *Anfechtungen* chapter is not unusual in dealing with them as a distinct 'episode' in the Luther story, it is noteworthy in emplotting them as a consequence of the journey to Rome. They are depicted in few words as a constant problem in Luther's life and their status in the emplotment would suggest that they were *basanoi* to be overcome in the road to the Reformation. With other key episodes, Genthe develops a series of experiences which change Luther's understanding of the world, the Church and her theology sufficiently for him to take the step of publishing the Ninety-five Theses. Genthe presents these stages as being relatively 'normal' and has them understood in the context of medieval theology. Yet the structure of his narrative shows that, despite the explicit ecumenical aim, older Protestant narratives are clearly at work in Genthe's treatment; their effect is to question the influence of medieval Catholicism on Luther. Ultimately, Genthe's emplotment questions the diegetical and ecumenical desire stated in the text.

As with the journey to Rome, Manns's isolated narrative of the *Anfechtungen* suggests a Luther-specific treatment. Manns uses the episode to challenge the Catholic iterative tradition of viewing the *Anfechtungen* as evidence of Luther's unsuitability for monasticism, while equally questioning the Protestant singulative narrative of the *Anfechtungen* as proof of divine selection and testing. Instead, Manns attempts to show the *Anfechtungen* to be an iterative recognised problem, which did not prevent Luther's success in his order. Genthe develops Manns's suggestion that the *Anfechtungen* arose out of Luther's confessional practices, but retains a traditional Protestant approach in seeing their solution in Luther's theological breakthrough, thereby forming a final stage in the Protestant Passion narrative. As with the journey to Rome, the rhetorical treatment of the *Anfechtungen* in both the Manns and the Genthe narratives demonstrate that the ecumenical process, while underway, is not yet complete.

## Chapter IX

### Conclusion

As White and other post-structuralist theorists argue, historical narrative is drawn from an incomplete historical record from which the historian must create his 'story'. The facts do not speak for themselves and they must be crafted into an interpretation. The historian in conducting this task must produce an acceptable portrait from the data and explain them in a way acceptable to his audience, especially when they are already in part familiar with a version of the story he is telling. This task is complicated when, as in the case of Luther, two distinct rhetorical traditions exist and the modern historian must often emplot his story in a more neutral and less confessionally biased way.

In examining Manns's text, it becomes obvious that it is a highly *Lutherfreundlicher* approach, significantly so from a Catholic author. In the desire to present a fairer appraisal of Luther's early career, Manns demonstrates ecumenism at work on a conceptual level. Moreover, this desire is reinforced at a narrative level in an ecumenical rhetorical treatment of the key episodes of Luther's monastic period. Manns breaks from the two significant rhetorical traditions of representing Luther; the Protestant singulative interpretation, and the Catholic iterative approach, which developed from the early singulative and demonic appraisal. Imitating older Protestant accounts that demonstrate a claim to greater knowledge of Luther than that of the 'excluded' Catholics, Manns uses iteration to emplot Luther's actions as belonging instead to Catholic and monastic tradition. Manns adopts this technique to challenge Protestant understandings of the institution that shaped Luther and to promote the accuracy of his own account. Manns's rhetoric demonstrates this overt ecumenical desire in its attempt to produce a narrative depiction that tempers the distinct differences between the two confessional traditions.

Biographies of Luther as the agent of the schism that split Western Christianity have tended towards either hagiography or heresiography in their extreme incarnations, such as that in the *Catholic Encyclopaedia* or Pallavacini.<sup>77</sup> As dialogue between the two sides of the confessional divide has grown, however, such differences have

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<sup>77</sup> H.G. Ganss, 'Martin Luther', *Catholic Encyclopaedia*, <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09438b.htm> [accessed 20th July 2005] ; (Cardinal) Pietro Sforza Pallavacini, *Succincta relatio historica de gestis in sacrosancto generali Concilio Tridentio* (Dillingen: J C Bernard, 1695), Durham University Library (Palace Green), Routh MSS, Pallavicini 43.B.5.

lessened and representations have grown together on a diegetical and mimetic level. Luther has become the focus of discussion between the two confessions and, therefore, serves as an apt subject for the analysis as to whether ecumenism has penetrated confessional rhetorical styles. As has been shown, Luther's monastic period is particularly problematical for the historian, given the absence of documented data, though it seemingly played a significant developmental rôle in both Luther's own recollections as well as in the accounts by subsequent historians. In offering a reappraisal of this period in Luther's life, Manns's text does, nevertheless, represent a significant shift towards an ecumenical representation of Luther's monastic period on both a rhetorical and a conceptual basis. It attempts to harmonise the traditional emplotment of Protestant and Catholic histories, particularly more recent treatments, and thereby create a history that is acceptable to both parties. Manns is largely successful in re-examining the familiar data in the Luther *histoire* and emplotting them into his own *récit* of Luther's life, in order to produce a specifically ecumenical biography of the reformer.

The explicitly ecumenical tone, established in the foreword, characterizes the narrative, in which Manns is careful to avoid accepting confessional clichés which have determined earlier interpretations, but also questions the very way established episodes of Luther's monastic period have been emplotted. Instead, Manns looks to examine the greater picture and analyse events as much in their historical as in their individual context, thus following the Rankean concept of *wie es eigentlich gewesen ist*. Manns's interpretation of the 'wie' stresses the Catholic in Luther's life and society, and it is this approach which characterises the biography. This suggests that Manns's ultimate aim is partly to integrate Catholicism into an account of Luther's life.

In reading Manns's biography of Luther, the reader does not gain a 'greater' or 'truer' knowledge of events in the monastic period, but rather a fuller and more diverse picture of this period. Importantly, Manns provides a greater picture of Catholicism as a 'going concern' through history as well as in the twentieth century. This contrasts with older Protestant narratives in which there is an implicit sense that Catholicism was 'finished' with the advent of Luther. This conceptual understanding is represented on a narrative level in that the 'story' would move on to concentrate on Luther and Lutheranism. Manns's narrative attempts, however, to reincorporate Catholicism into the Luther-story and show that it continued after Luther. He suggests that an alternative Catholic emplotment of events is possible and that the events may be given alternative meanings. Manns's history is shaped by its ecumenical aim and its desire to see Luther

as a 'Vater im Glauben' (Manns, p. 7), showing Luther's progress through his life to be formed but damaged by his experiences in the cloister. Manns's interpretation is a fundamentally Christian interpretation of the past and of a decisive moment in Church history, which attempts to produce an ecumenical interpretation of Luther's monastic period.

The ecumenical desire in the diegetical content of the narrative is, however, at times undermined by the Catholic tone of the mimesis. As has been demonstrated, Manns's text largely follows the traditional Catholic emplotment of the key episodes of Luther's monastic period while simultaneously tempering this confessional tradition to a modern moderate appraisal. In this respect, Manns does not break significantly from an inherited confessional emplotment of the monastic period, thus revealing that the process of ecumenism has only begun, as it is only visible on a diegetic level. Moreover, the narrative suggests that further dialogue is needed between the two confessions, so that a diegetic and mimetic synthesis may take place. Simultaneously, however, Manns's treatment of Luther's monastic period does show a shift in the Catholic emplotment and treatment, through the use of singulation and iteration to question the Protestant and the Catholic understanding of various aspects of the key episodes. It is indicative that many aspects of Manns's style and emplotment are working their way into the Protestant *Lutherbild*, as were shown in the Genthe narrative. It would seem, therefore, as though a synthesis is slowly taking place between the conceptual and literary-rhetorical style of writing on the history of Luther, and that the confessional divide is beginning to some extent to close.

In order to create a more ecumenical representation on a rhetorical level, Manns provides an 'answer' to the history of accounts of Luther's monastic period. This is begun in the depiction of the Stotternheim episode, which has been cast as a singulative event in the Protestant tradition to suggest a 'road to Damascus' experience. The explicitly biblical metaphor naturally opens the Protestant Passion narratological tradition, establishing a hagiographical representation. The Catholic tradition, however, has sought to desingulate the significance of the Stotternheim vow to create an iterative depiction of at best a normal act and at worst as a singulative symptom of Luther's general anxiety.

Manns follows the Catholic tradition of emplotting the Stotternheim vow in an iterative narrative and establishes a pattern of eschatological preoccupation. By creating a comparison of university and monastic life, Manns stresses the normality of the vow and further contextualises Luther's decision in the midst of 'junger Gelehrter' (Manns,

p. 22) who followed a similar course of action. By creating a chain of events, Manns casts Stotternheim as a final but non-deterministic stage in Luther's process of becoming a monk and, as shown, entirely normal for the sixteenth century. This representation naturally questions the highly singulative Protestant narrative tradition that casts the vow as divinely inspired, with its obvious Damascus road affinities. The ecumenical significance of Manns's text is highlighted by the way in which it appears to be infiltrating the modern Protestant narrative. Through a mixture of diegetical and mimetic techniques, this infiltration is particularly visible in Genthe's account. While the vow is accorded a singulative status, Genthe's treatment reflects an ecumenical shift in creating an iterative chain of events while simultaneously casting Stotternheim as an isolated but deterministic episode, thereby maintaining the Protestant tradition. Genthe's representation is tempered, however, under the influence of the Manns text through the overall tone of the passage and the relatively minor rôle accorded the actual vow.

The Protestant tradition of a singulative narrative is repeated in the depiction of the 'Last Supper' or Luther's departure from his friends before entering the cloister. As with the Stotternheim episode, singulation is used to create a unique occurrence rich in Gospel resonances, helping to establish a hagiographical depiction of Luther and thereby asserting his sanctity to the community of faithful. The logical consequence of this metaphor is that the following experiences in the cloister form a Passion from whose ordeals Luther emerges as a Reformer. The Protestant narrative contrasts starkly with the Catholic tradition, where the episode has been largely ignored owing to its positive, overtly biblical imagery. Catholic writers, such as Cochlaeus, Grisar and Maritain, have avoided representing the episode given its latent metaphorical significance and the consequences these would have had on their narratives.

While his narrative of the 'Last Supper' does reflect an ecumenical shift in representing Luther's monastic period, Manns challenges the singulative narrative Protestant tradition that endows the episode with its Gospel resonances, employing an iterative narrative to 'correct' the representation. In so doing, Manns removes the Gospel attributes of the 'Last Supper' narrative and challenges the beginnings of the Protestant Passion narrative. Without deviating from his confessional tradition, Genthe's treatment remains essentially singulative, tempered by Manns's influence reflecting an infiltration of Manns's narrative into the modern Protestant Luther story. The seeming unwillingness to deviate radically from traditional confessional emplotments reflects the sanctity of episodes in the 'authorized' Protestant Luther story,

and shows that while Protestant representations of Luther are open to ecumenism, they are not so at the cost of accepted and expected narrative episodes.

In the traditional Catholic representation, Luther's entry into the Augustinian cloister in Erfurt is consistently either ignored or emplotted in a highly iterative non-Luther specific narrative; both styles suggest an episode in Luther's life that is without significance. The Protestant narrative is characterised by an iterative narrative, reflecting confessional ignorance of an alien practice, but the episode has also been used to demonstrate the singulatively strict and ascetic nature of the Erfurt Augustinians. This singulative status accorded to the cloister serves of course as a proleptor for Luther's reformatory acts.

Manns's treatment of Luther's entry to the cloister again suggests an attempt to understand and emplot the episode ecumenically by attempting to harmonise the two distinct confessional traditions. Manns employs iteration to challenge the Protestant singulative narrative that accords the episode significance and highlights the Augustinians' status. Iteration is used not only to provide a backdrop to the historical context, but also to emplot Luther as a single example of an iterative tradition of Roman Catholic reformers. This ecumenical trend is again visible in Genthe's narrative of Luther's entry to the cloister, but not even he can escape the traditional Protestant emplotment of singulatively casting the Augustinians as a strict and pious body in order to establish Luther's reformatory tendencies.

Owing to the nature of Luther's recollections regarding his novitiate, it is hardly surprising that Catholic accounts have tended to emplot the episode, if at all, in an iterative narrative in which his 'ordeals' appear as the iterative behaviour of a character type, known to the monastic institution and for which remedies were at hand. In more recent Catholic accounts, an ecumenical balance has been sought through references to Luther's success within his order as iterative proof of his 'true' lack of difficulty in this period. As expected, Protestant accounts have emplotted Luther's experiences singulatively against an iterative background of a failing system and theology. This singulative narrative of the diligent monk naturally serves as a proleptor for the Protestant depiction of the later Luther as biblical exegete and Reformer. Moreover, the iterative representation of the monastic system identifies the causes of Luther's difficulties within the institution and begins a narrative tradition in which the First Mass and the incident in the choir appear as the logical reaction of a singulative individual fighting an inherently perverse iterative system.

In order to challenge the singulative Protestant representation of the *basanoi* of the monastic period, Manns employs an iterative narrative and iterative knowledge to desingulate Luther's experiences and to question the Passion narrative tradition and assert Luther's problems to be common and human. As in the more recent Catholic tradition, iteration is used to stress Luther's success and to show that the system recognised and indeed provided solutions to the problems he encountered. In this way, Manns exculpates monasticism, as the system alone cannot be held responsible for Luther's later actions. Mirroring emplotments such as Lortz's, this argument is corroborated through iterative knowledge of Luther's success as well as the fact that he never seemingly questioned his vows. Consequently, Manns's narrative becomes a defence of monasticism and a call to recognise its positive benefits on Luther. The influence of the representation is again seen in Genthe's account, where once more iteration dominates and a clear desire to understand the monastic context is shown. While Genthe reveals a reliance on Manns, in offering iterative contextualisation of monasticism, his analysis is historical in focus and while he accepts Luther's problems to be common, he finds the origin for such problems within monasticism rather than Luther, thereby demonstrating hallmarks of the singulative Protestant tradition. His tempered account reveals, nevertheless, an ecumenical rapprochement in terms of its overall emplotment.

Building on representations of the novitiate, older Catholic accounts of the First Mass and the incident in the choir have portrayed both episodes as singular examples of the iterative pattern of Luther's unsuitability for monastic life, or even diabolical possession. In more recent accounts, this anxiety has been translated into an over-scrupulous character that revealed itself in such episodes and demonstrated clear psychological instability. All such treatments do of course question Luther's behaviour and challenge his criticism of monasticism through character assassination. Similarly, Protestant biographers have used the episodes as singular outcomes of Luther's iterative theological concerns and inner sufferings. Yet, where Catholic writers have identified the agent of these sufferings to be Luther himself, Protestant historians have demonstrated Luther's reaction to medieval theology to be normal for someone of his intelligence and theological sensitivity.

In his representation of the First Mass and the related incident in the choir, Manns challenges both forms of iterative narrative. In order to challenge iterative representations, Manns contextualises the episode in sixteenth-century practice and suggests that the problems experienced by Luther, were normal, expected and answered

by the Church. Manns desingularizes Luther's experiences at the First Mass to depict them as normal and an inherent part of the sacerdotal rôle. His anti-representation of the incident in the choir shows, however, by its very lack of treatment, that he cannot escape an episode expected among his readership and he at least mentions it, if only to dismiss it. Manns's emplotment is again found to infiltrate the Genthe text in the acceptance of the First Mass 'jitters' and the rôle of the assistant priest, and in the way in which he underplays the episode.

In moving away from the extreme Catholic interpretations of the journey to Rome in the Cochlaeus model, where it is acknowledged but not interpreted, the episode is treated in two distinct ways. Firstly, an earlier treatment, as found in Grisar, is emplotted in a singulative narrative to cast Luther as uniquely different in his failure to respond positively to Rome, while simultaneously characterizing this as a response typical of northerners. The effect of this is to dismiss any later criticism and ascribe it to Luther's actual origins. As the Catholic narrative tradition has developed, this singulative emplotment has given way to an iterative narrative that devolves the theological significance of the journey to Luther through iterative reference to his writings and behaviour in the period thereafter. This later narrative, as found in Lortz, retains the notion of a cultural clash as the cause of the negative reaction and, importantly, thereby circumvents a discussion of the theological implications of Luther's criticism.

The Protestant Luther story has equally developed from an insignificant episode, as found in Melancthon, to a singulative narrative of Luther as the pious pilgrim reacting against corrupt theology and practices which in turn had a significant effect on him. In the nineteenth century, this depiction has metamorphosed into a singulative representation of a national hero fighting against foreign corruption and a victory attained through a unique theological breakthrough. In such accounts, the singulative heroic depiction is cast against an iterative portrayal of the medieval Church's abuses and its general immorality.

On the whole, Manns's narrative of the journey to Rome circumvents the problematic nature of representing the episode. While setting it apart from its chronological place, suggesting an important status, Manns totally underplays the significance of the journey. Through the use of iteration, Manns dismisses singulative Catholic interpretations of Luther as peculiar, as well as iterative narratives that show him as an example of a critical Northern race reacting against Southern freedom. Equally, Manns challenges singulative Protestant accounts to show that there was no

major breakthrough in Luther's thoughts following the journey and that he continued to progress successfully in his order; Luther returned and continued to function as a pious Roman Catholic in the years after the journey to Rome, whatever his experiences, thereby negating a singulative and over-significant interpretations of the episode.

Following the singulative depiction of the *Anfechtungen* as symbolic of diabolical possession, the Catholic emplotment of the *Anfechtungen* has maintained an iterative narrative of Luther's peculiarity in his monastic period that manifested itself in such behaviour. While the *Anfechtungen* are seen as a known problem, the emplotment of Luther's reaction ranges from being singulatively diabolical, to perverse, and finally as a necessary stage in a theological breakthrough which itself is seen as fundamentally flawed by Catholics. As might be expected, the *Anfechtungen*, as *basanoi* of the older Protestant Passion narrative, appear singulatively as a direct consequence of Luther's preoccupation with justification and as a consequence of medieval theology. In such representations, the *Anfechtungen* become a form of divine trial leading Luther to greater theological understanding. In the twentieth century this representation is transformed into an iterative narrative which, mirroring the Catholic interpretation, emplots the problem iteratively while showing the outcome in Luther to be singulative. The *Anfechtungen* remain a necessary stage in Luther's development and become examples of his iterative preoccupation with theological questions.

By setting his treatment of the *Anfechtungen* aside, Manns's representation suggests a singulative narrative but it is far from this. Instead he seeks to challenge traditional confessional emplotments. Manns questions the singulative Catholic representation of the *Anfechtungen* as symbols of Luther's possession through iterative proof of Luther's success as a monk. Manns follows the Catholic tradition by stressing that the *Anfechtungen* were a known phenomenon, answered by monastic practice, and following his confessional tradition suggests that it was Luther's singulative failure to 'understand' theology that led to the problem. This argument enables Manns effectively to exculpate medieval Catholicism and to lay the blame with Luther, reflecting his confessional allegiance and the positive representation of Catholicism throughout the text. In addition to this, Manns employs iteration to challenge the singulative Protestant representation that shows the *Anfechtungen* to have led to schism or to a breakthrough, by citing Luther's success and continued loyalty to monasticism until at least 1521. By contextualising and iterating the *Anfechtungen*, Manns questions their representation as a divine test, as is seen in older Protestant accounts. As before, Genthe's text demonstrates a clear inheritance from Manns in attributing the origin of the

*Anfechtungen* to Luther's confessional practice and recognising them as an iterative phenomenon. Yet Genthe remains firmly rooted in the Protestant tradition by emplotting the *Anfechtungen* as a consequence of Luther's experiences in Rome, so much so that they lead to a crisis of faith, and in showing them to lead to Luther's theological breakthrough, maintaining their status as *basanoi* of the Protestant Passion narrative.

There are many parallels between Genthe's and Manns's depictions of the Luther story. On a very simple level, the biographies are structured in a similar way; Genthe's structural approach and chaptering mirroring those of Manns's. In terms of emplotment, Genthe's narrative seems to be a hybrid of both Comedy and Romance and has much in common with Manns's romantic depiction. Genthe displays a constant desire to 'educate' his reader in the medieval and Catholic context, just as Manns does, and attempts to present this in a neutral if not positive way. Genthe goes to great lengths to facilitate an understanding of the monastic way of life on a day-to-day as well as a theological level, although monasticism perhaps remains for him an object of historical study rather than a 'going concern'. The two authors are of course different in their educational backgrounds; while Manns's narrative is complicated by his quasi-first-hand experience of Roman Catholic monasticism through his seminary training, which is *per se* questionable, Genthe as a Protestant has only ever witnessed it and experienced it as an alien practice. This educative aim along with the regular desire to link his narrative to his present, through references to the 'sites' of the Reformation, addresses the present in a way reminiscent of, but also fundamentally different to, Manns. It would seem that for Genthe the only way of 'revisiting' the Reformation is via the physical sites of events, whereas for Manns, the historical past of the Luther story may be revisited in part through an experience of the Catholic present. Yet, in comparison to the Manns text, Genthe is far less 'personally' involved in his depiction and studies his subject purely as an object, unlike Manns who appears to engage with and relate to his subject far more.

The use of a broad iterative narrative, characterised by the specific characters of the Luther story and reinforced by singulative fact, is typical of the two biographies. Used without question by both writers, iteration provides the backdrop to their stories and embellishes them, where otherwise nothing would be known. Singulative fact in both biographies is often in the form of retrospectives, but unlike Manns, Genthe fails to question the obvious bias in them. The historical validity of Genthe's and Manns's narratives of the monastic period are, therefore, open to question, as they are essentially

based on a general rather than a particular knowledge. Overall, despite his attempts to move beyond a confessional representation, Genthe's narrative of the monastic period in Luther's life seems less sceptical and questioning of the 'Reformation Luther's' retrospectives. While attempting to move towards a more objective and ecumenical representation, it re-presents some of the inherited Protestant depictions of the Luther story and is unable to free itself from its own tradition.

A rhetorical study of the treatment of the monastic period in Luther's life reveals that there are distinct confessional narrative traditions. With the advent of ecumenical dialogue, the differences between these traditions have lessened and a rapprochement in the conceptual and rhetorical representation of Luther has taken place. As Manns's text shows, the Catholic tradition, once clearly identified by its iterative employment, has adapted to allow a more positive and *Lutherfreundliche* depiction to take place. Equally, the singulative Protestant narrative, with its Passion connotations, is in the process of accommodating a more generous and open attitude towards Catholicism as a means of understanding the Catholic Luther.

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