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Johannes Rothe:

Aspects of his Didactic Writing

by

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Submitted for the degree of

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Abbreviations:

Rothe's Works:

<u>LdK.</u>	:	<u>Lob der Keuschheit</u>
<u>Lib.dev.an.</u>	:	<u>Liber devotae animae</u>
<u>Pass.</u>	:	<u>Passion</u>
<u>Ratsg.</u>	:	<u>Ratsgedichte</u>
<u>Rsp.</u>	:	<u>Ritterspiegel</u>

General:

MHG	:	Middle High German
NHG	:	New High German
OHG	:	Old High German
OF	:	Old French

Journals, Series, Reference Works:

<u>AION</u>	:	<u>Annali Dell' Istituto Universitario</u> <u>Oriente-sezioe Germanica,Napoli</u>
<u>BLVS</u>	:	<u>Bibliothek des Litterarischen Vereins</u> <u>in Stuttgart</u>
<u>DVjs</u>	:	<u>Deutsche Vierteljahresschrift für</u> <u>Literaturwissenschaft und Geistes-</u> <u>geschichte</u>
<u>GRM</u>	:	<u>Germanisch-romanische Monatsschrift</u>
<u>HZ</u>	:	<u>Historische Zeitung</u>
<u>Lexen</u>	:	<u>Mittelhochdeutsches Taschenwörterbuch</u> 33rd ed.rev.Bachofer et al.(Stuttg.1969)
<u>Mod.Phil.</u>	:	<u>Modern Philosophy: Monthly Magazine</u> <u>for Progressive People</u>
<u>N.Mitt.</u>	:	<u>Neuphilologische Mitteilungen</u>
<u>PBB</u>	:	<u>Paul's and Braune's Beiträge zur</u> <u>Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und</u> <u>Literatur</u>
<u>PL</u>	:	<u>Patrologia cursus completus ... series</u> <u>Latina, ed. J.P. Migne (Paris, 1844-64)</u>
<u>Preußische Jbb</u>	:	<u>Preußische Jahrbücher</u>
<u>WW</u>	:	<u>Wirkendes Wort</u>
<u>ZfdA</u>	:	<u>Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum</u> <u>und deutsche Literatur</u>
<u>ZfdPh</u>	:	<u>Zeitung für deutsche Philologie</u>
<u>ZdVfthGuA</u>	:	<u>Zeitung des Vereins für thüringische</u> <u>Geschichte und Altertumskunde</u>

The biblical citations throughout are taken from the
Bibliorum Sacrorum, Iuxta Vulgatam Clementinam, Nova
Editio, ed. Aloisius Gramatica (The Vatican, 1959).

Summary.

The aim of the study is to examine in detail Johannes Rothe's approach to literature as a vehicle for his didactic aims.

Rothe lived as priest, town-clerk and schoolmaster from ca. 1360 to 1434 in Thuringia. His striving to impart his moral code through literature led him to compose several works of a didactic nature. Although he was concerned to present his works in an aesthetically acceptable form, his true purpose in each case was to teach a moral, as he often states in the prologues or introductions to his works. His religious works Lob der Keuschheit, Liber devotae animae as well as the legends, the Passion and the Elisabethlegende, are addressed to members of the religious orders, while his Ratsgedichte aim at improving moral standards in the towns. The Ritterspiegel is composed with the hope of converting the impoverished nobility to a more useful and morally impeccable way of life based on consciousness of a social duty. In the prologues to his chronicles Rothe stresses the didactic function of history-writing and expresses the hope that his readers will learn from the examples of the past.

Rothe's description of his times is shown to be influenced more by his didactic aims than by a wish to be realistic. In the Ritterspiegel the privileges accorded to those of knightly status are seen to be described not for their own sake, but are exploited in each case by the author as an opportunity to introduce his didactic point. The description of social changes and knightly life, although on the surface realistic, is also moulded in such a way that Rothe's moral code comes to the fore. His depiction of social advancement, while basically accurate for his times, is one which suits his didactic purpose, for the good are rewarded with advancement while the wicked are demoted. Rothe compares the knights of his

day to those of a hazy Golden Age of etzwanne and finds them lacking in the qualities he is seeking - namely the heroic values of the perfect Christian knight who is willing to sacrifice his own life for Christianity and for the general weal. The comparison, however, is based on generalisations which serve Rothe's didactic aim rather than historical accuracy.

Rothe's chronicles are typical examples of medieval history-writing. They are based on his belief that history is the manifestation of God's will on earth. At the same time they suit his didactic purpose since the events of history are shown to be manipulated in such a way that the just are rewarded and the wicked punished. Divine influence manifests itself in many forms; paranormal phenomena play a significant role as portents of God's intentions. Rothe shows that even the most powerful individuals are unable to influence the course of events plotted by the just Christian God.

Rothe's works reflect the most striking features in the social and economic developments of his time. He recommends that every member of society should work towards the common weal (gemeyn nutz). At the same time, he emphasises the quality of nutz (usefulness) as a value in itself. Every action - including Rothe's writing itself - is judged by its essential usefulness; in a series of collocations based on the classical qualities of honestum and utile Rothe explains the basic elements of his moral code. From the recommendation to lead a useful life, he proceeds to promote the concept of working for one's living. He shows reward - whether it be of a spiritual or a material nature - to be dependent on personal effort.

While propagating a basically religious ethical code, Rothe is able, with his plea for social consciousness and the right to work for one's living, to take account of the sweeping social changes of his times.

CHAPTER I ROTHE'S LIFE AND WORKS.

Johannes Rothe is one of the better documented figures in a period of literary history which, despite the present increase in interest¹ and a renewed wave of research, has been typified by terms such as "decadence" and "stagnation". Hanns Fischer, for example, points with regret to the "Rolle eines Stiefkinds" played by late medieval literature:

Die Dichtung des späten Mittelalters - seit jeher im Schatten der künstlerisch bedeutenderen Werke der Blütezeit um 1200 stehend und immer wieder mit Abwertungen wie Verfall, Niedergang, Epigonentum, Herbst beiseitegeschoben - spielt trotz mancher verheissungsvoller Ansätze in der Germanistik immer noch die Rolle eines Stiefkinds.²

This statement is no longer as accurate nowadays as when Fischer was writing in 1957, for, as Peter Wapnewski points out in his introduction (1980) to the new edition of Friedrich ~~von der~~ Leyen's Anthology Deutsches Mittelalter:

Im Bereich der Mittelalterforschung verschob sich der Akzent der Interessen fort von der 'klassischen' Periode der sogenannten Blütezeit und verlagerte sich vor allem auf die Epoche des späten Mittelalters.³

Nevertheless, there are still many late medieval works which are worthy of closer research, and Sowinski's plea that more attention be paid to didactic works of the Middle Ages⁴ has been partly fulfilled by the recent interest in Gebrauchsliteratur.⁵

Although the period of Rothe's lifetime has been generalized from the historical and economic point of view as one of "Stagnation und Gärung" or "Stillstand in der Mittelmäßigkeit",⁶ recent research indicates that both economic and socio-historical developments are by no means lacking.⁷ The fourteenth and fifteenth centuries produced literature worthy of detailed study both in its own right and in its capacity as a mirror of contemporary history and as a vehicle for social comment and didactic

exposition. Fischer sees in figures like Oswald von Wolkenstein, Johannes von Saaz, and indeed Rothe himself, "stark profilierte Dichterpersönlichkeiten ... die, - obwohl zum Teil Einzelgänger von schwer zu beurteilender Nachwirkung - die Literatur ihrer Zeit irgendwie beeinflußt haben müssen", and concludes that these authors constitute "eine gewisse Zäsur", a marked improvement in what he considers the otherwise unproductive literary scene around 1400.⁸ This idea of a "caesura" around 1400 is, however, perhaps more the product of oversimplification by generations of literary historians than an accurate estimation of the literary climate of Rothe's times. Recent critical works such as Janota's Forschungsbericht⁹ and Sowinski's general study of the didactic literature of the period¹⁰ make it difficult to subscribe to Fischer's view that the period was generally unproductive, and there will be cause in this study to consider Rothe's work not so much as the caesura Fischer has mentioned, but rather as a significant component of the literary development of his times.

The aim of the present study is, then, to examine the "stark profilierte Dichterpersönlichkeit" Johannes Rothe, his contribution to the literature of his time, and more especially his approach to literature as a vehicle for his didactic aims.

Rothe's lifespan covers the period from ca. 1360 to 1434. His life and work are centred around his native Thuringia and shed light on the intellectual, spiritual and cultural climate of his homeland which had previously been a centre of courtly culture during the rule of Landgraf Hermann (1190-1217) and which, as the home of Martin Luther, was later to become one of the first important strongholds of Protestantism. For the modern reader, Rothe's works gain in interest not only from this geographical background, but also from their chronology. His Lob der Keuschheit¹¹ and legal works such as the Eisenacher Rechtsbuch¹² were being written at a time when Wyclif was

preaching and the first German university proper was being established at Heidelberg; the Ritterspiegel¹³ is contemporary with the Council of Constance (1414-18) and reflects a series of economic crises and social changes in fifteenth century Europe.¹⁴

Rothe held posts as varied as priest, town clerk and school-master, and the prolific nature of his didactic writings - comprising material on religious, legal, administrative, historical and social topics - is itself of interest. With the help of documents and the acrostic in the Thüringische Chronik (L),¹⁵ we can piece together a full enough picture of Rothe's various posts, their sequence and approximate chronology. Born in Kreuzburg on the Werra around 1360, Rothe was a priest at the Marienstift in Eisenach by 1387.¹⁶ By 1394 he had become Vikar of the Frauenkirche in Eisenach,¹⁷ and in 1418 he is recorded in a document as canon,¹⁸ although he had almost certainly acquired this post several years earlier, probably in 1404.¹⁹ Rothe is known to have been school-master of the Marienstift in 1422,²⁰ and his death on 5 May 1434 is recorded in a document mentioning the vacant post of school-master.²¹ The acrostic at the beginning of the Thüringische Chronik (L) substantiates much of the above information. According to the author's own words, he was:

Johannes Rothe von Cruzceborg, ein prister unde
ein cappellan des bischofis, und darnach ein
vicarius, und etzwanne ein stadschriber zcu
Iserache, unde darnach ein tumeherre²² unde
darzcu ouch schvlmeister des stiftis unsir
liebijn frowin kerchin in der vor genantjn
stad.²³

Churchman, civic dignitary, teacher, legal adviser and poet, Rothe did not belong to the ranks of the nobility with whom he was, however, closely associated. His family appears to have enjoyed some prestige in Thuringian society. His nomination to the post of town clerk of Eisenach in ca. 1387, when he was barely 30 years old, makes it probable that he was descended from a local

family which was both influential and respected. Hans Neumann draws attention to a document dated 10th December 1387 which places a Hermann Rothe first in the list of Kreuzburg's councillors; Neumann surmises that this was possibly Johannes Rothe's father, and certainly a relation of some kind. Rothe's sister, Jutte, was a nun in the Cistercian House of St. Catherine in Eisenach for which only ladies of high social standing were eligible. Neumann considers this fact "ein deutlicher Hinweis auf die günstige Vermögenslage der Familie".²⁴

Rothe could count noblemen like the bailiff (Amtmann) of the Wartburg, Bruno von Teutleben,²⁵ among his friends, and it is probable that this friendship influenced Rothe's views in his Ritterspiegel.²⁶ Indeed, Rothe even dedicated his Thüringische Landeschronik (G) to the bailiff,²⁷ and as is his practice, uses the letters of his friend's name in the acrostic. Another of Rothe's chronicles, (L), was dedicated to Landgräfin Anna of Thuringia, whose chaplain he became towards the end of his life. We may perhaps connect such personal links with Rothe's obvious concern for the plight of the contemporary nobility, especially as experienced in the economic and moral decay of the knighthood of his day, a sympathy which resulted in the composing of the Ritterspiegel. The interest in heraldry displayed throughout Rothe's work may also be linked to his relationship with the nobility of his homeland.

Besides his concern for the contemporary nobility, Rothe's writings give evidence of his interests in two other major spheres of medieval life: the town and the Church. On the one hand there is Rothe the townsman who took an active part in town politics and applied himself to the writing of an Eisenacher Rechtsbuch and the composition of the legal works known as the Purgoldtsche Rechtsbücher.²⁸ This interest also finds expression in his three Ratsgedichte²⁹ which discuss the structure of municipal administrative bodies and the qualities desirable

in a civic councillor and leader. On the other hand there is Rothe the Churchman, concerned to foster love of God in his Lob der Keuschheit and Liber devotae animae,³⁰ and to reveal God's works in his chronicles and legends.

Rothe's works were not of a kind to make them popular in any generally accepted sense; they were of interest only to a limited public, and with their didactic aims unsuitable for purely entertainment purposes. This is one possible explanation for the small number of manuscripts³¹ and the lack of contemporary references, both of which make it difficult to arrange the works in sequence, and impossible to give an exact date in most cases. Even Rothe's authorship had to be deduced in some cases from internal criteria such as style, form and content, and indeed, it has been disputed for one of the chronicles.³²

The problem of the chronology of Rothe's works has been discussed by Petersen,³³ Neumann³⁴ and Zander.³⁵ It is not within the scope of the present study to re-open this particular discussion. The order of composition which seems most reasonable will be accepted here, taking the arguments of previous critics into account.

Neumann has several reasons for suggesting that the Lob der Keuschheit is the first work of Rothe as a young priest.³⁶ The Lob der Keuschheit is an allegory, deriving from scriptural and exegetical material. Within the complex allegory, Rothe offers rules of conduct for young ladies as well as advice for the inmates of convents. He treats the virtue of chastity and its relationship with other virtues, as well as the role of sins such as sloth and gluttony. Petersen puts forward what he himself admits to be a weak hypothesis that the work was written between the town clerk period and that of Rothe's nomination as canon.³⁷ Neumann, however, undermines this theory with the help of heraldic references and local history. He points out that the Elsterberg mentioned in line 5188 of the Lob der Keuschheit is last noted in records of the year 1393, and that a date of composition much later than

that year is therefore improbable. This theory is supported by the fact that in the Lob der Keuschheit Rothe mistakenly includes the wolf in the insignia of the Lords of Wolfskehl (Ldk 4977), an error which would have been unlikely after the writing of his legal works, and which certainly precludes for the Lob der Keuschheit a date later than that of the Ritterspiegel in which Rothe shows himself an expert in heraldic matters.³⁸ Another indication for the early date of composition of the Lob der Keuschheit is the large number of similarities it shows with the Fürstenratgeber, Rothe's discourse on the duties of a prince, which, to judge by its vivid treatment of the celebrated political bribery scandal at the Thuringian court in 1387, must have been written not long after that date.³⁹ In that year, as Rothe later reports in his Thüringische Chronik (L) (Ch. 736), Landgraf Balthasar had accepted a sum of money from rich burghers in Eisenach in return for permission to increase the size of the town council.⁴⁰ Both the Lob der Keuschheit and the Fürstenratgeber have an abundance of learned quotations,⁴¹ an aid on which Rothe gradually became less dependent for his arguments in later works. Neumann even points to several direct textual similarities in the two early works.⁴² The other two Ratsgedichte which are probably later than the Fürstenratgeber have much less in common with the Lob der Keuschheit. Moreover, the Lob der Keuschheit has few similarities with Rothe's legal works, even where he treats common themes such as marriage and chastity,⁴³ whereas the latter share several features with the later Ritterspiegel.⁴⁴ It therefore seems reasonable that the Lob der Keuschheit should be placed prior to the legal works, as Neumann suggests, and not after them, as put forward by Petersen. This theory is further substantiated by Neumann's analysis of the metric pattern in the Lob der Keuschheit and the rhymed prologue to the legal works, as well as in Rothe's later rhymed works.⁴⁵ He argues, moreover, that the Lob der Keuschheit would be out of place in the bourgeois, business world of the legal works

and chronicles.⁴⁶ Neumann concludes his argument for an early date of composition for the Lob der Keuschheit:

Die mangelhafte Architektonik des Lob der Keuschheit - ganz anders planvoll ist der Ritterspiegel durchgeführt - die fehlende Übersicht des Verfassers über den Stoff, die zu häufigen Wiederholungen führt, und eine tastende Schwerfälligkeit des Ausdrucks kennzeichnen im Lob der Keuschheit eher den Anfänger als einen Mann, der durch Jahrzehnte hindurch die ungeheuren Stoffmassen theologischer, juristischer und historischer Quellenwerke gemeistert hat.⁴⁷

Herbert Wolf, in the introduction to the Ratsgedichte, disputes Neumann's dating on grounds of the information which Rothe supplies about his works in the Prologue to Chronik G:

Es worden sechße an der czal:
Drye von den guten sethen.
Die andren drye vß prisen sal
Das recht von andern steten. (Strophe 4)⁴⁸

Wolf argues that if this catalogue of Rothe's is to be regarded as complete to date, it leaves no room for the Lob der Keuschheit at the beginning of his literary career.⁴⁹ One wonders, however, if these lines, which have been discussed by Devrient, Zander, Neumann and Wolf are not merely a stylised presentation using the two groups of three for purposes of symmetry. There is no convincing argument for a later date for the Lob der Keuschheit, and in view of the reasonable nature of Neumann's arguments, it seems that the assigning of the Lob der Keuschheit to a date around 1385 may be accepted.

Besides treating religious themes in his Lob der Keuschheit, Rothe was also producing legal works during the same decade. This radical change of subject was dictated partly by Rothe's career - the lawbooks were almost certainly written while he was town clerk of Eisenach. The content of the legal works was gathered together by Rothe from a host of different sources; they are by no means original in their thought, but take account of most major legal works known in Europe at the time. The sources of Rothe's legal works, for example,

include the Meißner Rechtsbuch, the Sachsenspiegel, the Schwabenspiegel, Landgraf Albrecht's municipal law of 1283 and the Eisenacher Gerichtsläufe.⁵⁰ Since the legal works almost certainly belong to Rothe's town clerk period, we may place them with some certainty in the years between the late 1380's and the 1390's, and since they were probably preceded by the Lob der Keuschheit, a date after 1385 must be considered most likely. The legal works consist of the Eisenacher Rechtsbuch and the collection known as the Purgoldtsche Rechtsbücher, which are now generally ascribed to Rothe. Rondi has pointed to the many similarities between these works. He places them in the years 1384-87, basing this assumption on several pieces of evidence within the works themselves. Rothe, for example, mentions as a recent innovation the introduction of functionaries known as furmunden in Thuringia.⁵¹ The first evidence of the existence of these four officials - chosen by the community to protect their interests in the face of corruption among the councillors - dates from 1384. Since Rothe also speaks of two councils,⁵² each with 12 councillors,⁵³ one can safely conclude that the legal works were written before Landgraf Balthasar increased the number of councillors in 1387 by accepting a sum of money from twelve rich townsmen in return for their installation in a third council.⁵⁴

Rothe's Ratsgedichte, although containing more original thinking than his legal works, derive much of their content from the works of the Church Fathers. There are three Ratsgedichte: Dye Vorrede or Von der stete ampten; Von des Rathes Zucht and Von der Fursten Ratgeben. The first is a catalogue of the various functions of the different elements of the body politic within a town. Rothe likens the role in each case to that of a particular part of the body, a metaphor which had often been used in Latin works of a similar kind,⁵⁵ and which is also found in the Old Testament.⁵⁶ Rothe, however, carries the parallels further than previous authors. The

soldiers, for example, are the arms of the body, while the messengers are the legs and the merchants the lungs. The second of the three Ratsgedichte takes the form of advice on how a town should ideally be ruled, laying special emphasis on the importance of the moral impeccability of its councillors. The third work takes the form of a compendium of advice for a prince on how to rule his people, and to judge by the personal note struck and the outspoken condemnation of bribery, the advice is levelled at Landgraf Balthasar who was responsible for the bribery scandal of 1387.⁵⁷ The allusions to this occurrence in the Fürstenratgeber are scarcely veiled. Rothe quotes Solomon

(Proverbs XXIX, 12):

Salomon der wise konig spricht:
'Welch fürste sich darnach richt,
Daz her gerne horit lügenmere,
Der swechet sinen hoff sere,
Wanne darvone alle sin hofe gesinde
Lernit snodekeyt vnd bosheit finde.'

(Fürstenratgeber, F 1258-63)

Rothe, basing his advice on biblical and patristic writings, composes a treatise against such abuses as the buying of positions, bribery, flattery and blind greed for power. He tries to impress upon rulers the importance of choosing councillors who will act according to the dictates of the general good and not for their own purposes.

The dating of the Ratsgedichte is more problematic than that of the legal works. Wolf summarises the suggestions put forward by other critics: Zander argues for the years between 1398 and 1403, with the Fürstenratgeber later; Neumann suggests that the first two works were written between 1390 and 1400, while the Fürstenratgeber was probably composed soon after 1387; Peterson places Von des Rathes Zucht around 1398 with Von der stete ampten possibly earlier, but makes no attempt to date the Fürstenratgeber; Rondi merely suggests as a terminus post quem 1387. Wolf adds to the information given by previous critics by pointing out that the first work speaks of 12 councillors. During the years 1387-96, Eisenach did not in fact have twelve, therefore Wolf concludes that Von der stete ampten was written after

1396. Besides, as he points out, Rothe constantly warns in the work against zwietracht, a warning which would be understandable in the Eisenach of the years leading up to the turn of the century. The trustees. (furmunden) already mentioned by Rondi in his evidence for the dating of the legal works, can again be used to prove that the second work, Von des Rathes Zucht, was not written before the year 1384 in which they were introduced. For the first of the poems, Wolf concludes, the most reasonable solution is to place it between 1396 and 1400, with the Fürstenratgeber coming earlier, around 1390, since the events of 1387 are treated with some force. Wolf also discusses the possibility that the first two Ratsgedichte may have been written as the Prologues to Books IX and X of the Purgoldtsche Rechtsbücher with which they have striking textual similarities.⁵⁸

The Ritterspiegel, a work in which Rothe discusses the distress of the nobility of his day and indicates several solutions to their problems, can be dated fairly accurately between 1414 and 1416. Petersen argues convincingly for a date after 1412,⁵⁹ and Helmbold specifically for 1416.⁶⁰ Neumann, in the introduction to his edition of the Ritterspiegel, agrees with these suggestions, rather than with Zander's argument for the beginning of the second decade of the fifteenth century.⁶¹ He bases his preference on the mention by Rothe of the account of the knighting of Landgraf Ludwig der Heilige in der croniken (Rsp. 891). As the Thüringische Chronik (L) gives a different version of the knighting and a different date for the event, Neumann concludes that Rothe is referring to his two earlier chronicles (Kr and G) in which the accounts of the investiture coincide with that given in the Ritterspiegel. These two chronicles were written between 1414 and 1419. As Rothe, moreover, apologises in the prologue to his Thüringische Chronik (L) in 1421 that he is no longer physically and optically fit to write rhyming verse as "vor jaren hatte ich es wol getan",

Neumann points out that the skilful verse of the Ritterspiegel cannot be too close to that date. He also subscribes to Petersen's view that in the light of the vivid references in the Ritterspiegel⁶² to uprisings, murders and robbery committed by robber knights, such as in fact took place in 1412-13, a date shortly after the first chronicle in 1414 is the most probable.⁶³

In the years between 1414 and 1421, Rothe's main preoccupation seems to have been with history. During these years he wrote three chronicles. The first of these, known as Chronik Kr.⁶⁴ after its editor, Kreysig, can be placed around 1414. It confines itself more completely to matters relating specifically to Eisenach than the two later chronicles, a fact which leads Rondi to suggest the title of Eisenacher Chronik for the sake of differentiation.⁶⁵

Chronik G.⁶⁶ which is housed in the library at Gotha, was written between 1417 and 1419. It centres around Thuringian history, and Rondi suggests the title of Thüringische Chronik for this work. From the acrostic we learn that Rothe dedicated his second chronicle to his noble friend 'deme gestrenge Brunen von Teitleben, amchtmanne uff Wartberg'.⁶⁷

The third and best known of Rothe's chronicles is his Thüringische Weltchronik or Chronik L. This work contains the famous acrostic which gives information about Rothe's life. Bech has shown that the acrostic continues beyond the facts about Rothe's life, and, by changing only a few details, he has established a dedication to Landgräfin Anna, and an exact date, namely 1421:

der (Rothe) sammente unde schreib desse cronikin
von den keisern bebistin und von deme lande unde
der herschaft zcu Doringen, zcu dinste und
behegelichkeit der dirluchtin forstinnen frowin
Annen landgravinnen daselbis und marggraffinnen
des landis zcu Missin ouch etiwanne des ediln
grafin Gunthers von Swarczburg tochtir seligis
gedechtenissis dit ist also vollinbracht noch unsirs
herrin Jhesu Kristi gebort tusint feir hundirt ein
unde zwenzcig jarr noch deme heiligin ostirlichin

tage der in deme selbin jare an deme ein unde
zwenzcigistin tage des brachmandis der ist an
der zcehin tusint ridter abunt unde der ouch
ist an sente Albans tag.

From the continuation of the acrostic it can be established that Rothe handed over his work to the Landgräfin in 1421.⁶⁸ The chapters of Chronik L which relate the events of the years after 1421 may be accounted the work of another author, although Rothe may have added notes until his death in 1434. The Thüringische Weltchronik (L) is wider in scope than Chronik Kr and Chronik G. It starts with the Creation and works its way through Old Testament history, classical history, legend and various aspects of the medieval world down to Rothe's own day. Papal history, political events, reported miracles and the occurrence of natural phenomena such as comets all have their place in the Thüringische Weltchronik (L).

In his old age, Rothe again turned to religious writing. His Liber devotae animae is a religious work on the same lines as the early Lob der Keuschheit, but it displays a more mature style and a more independent expression of the author's opinions. The Liber devotae animae centres around the allegory of an elaborate harness which is, however, by no means consistent. Rothe makes indiscriminate use of the animals and birds, plants and precious stones on the harness to enlarge upon various virtues such as chastity (Lib.dev.an. 813-974), poverty (Lib.dev.an. 1499-1578) obedience (Lib.dev.an. 1143-1226) and love of God (Lib.dev.an. 5310-37). Ahmling, on grounds of several similarities between the Liber devotae animae and the Ritterspiegel⁶⁹ concludes that the Liber devotae animae was most probably composed between the Ritterspiegel and the Thüringische Weltchronik (L), possibly even after the latter.⁷⁰ Neumann, however, feels that on account of significant differences between the Liber devotae animae and the Ritterspiegel especially in stylistic and metrical features⁷¹ the Liber devotae animae was probably written in the late 1420's.⁷² He also suggests that the fact that

the work has remained a fragment indicates a date of composition late in Rothe's life.⁷³ This suggestion is confirmed in Rothe's confident use of a wide selection of quotations, his exhaustive exploitation of the allegory and a new tendency to use Latin terms and quotations.⁷⁴ Above all, the ability to include quotations as support for his own views, rather than using them to carry the argument as in his early works leads Neumann to term the Liber devotae animae 'eine entwickeltere und reicher dotierte Stufe Rothe'scher Didaxe'.⁷⁵ The second half of the 1420s seems to be the most likely date of composition.

The last two works of Rothe's career took the form of religious legends. The Passion,⁷⁶ which has come down to us only in fragments, is probably slightly earlier than the Heilige Elisabeth.⁷⁷ The fragments of the Passion which have survived to the present day have in fact little to do with the passion of Christ as such. The legend of Judas's life (Pass. 1-292) is followed by the tale of the first coin after the Flood (Pass. 293-449) and how it became the silver pieces for which Joseph was sold into Egyptian slavery (Pass. 381). Rothe then records how, after many transactions, the coins passed through the hands of the Three Wise Men (Pass. 428-31), Mary (Pass. 433) and the Temple Priests (Pass. 441) to land eventually in Judas's possession as his fee for betraying Christ (Pass. 442). The third fragment of the Passion consists of the legend of Pontius Pilate's life (Pass. 450-1714) and the fourth tells of the besieging of Jerusalem by Titus and Vespasian (Pass. 1715-2051). The question of Rothe's sources remains open despite attempts by Heinrich to establish similarities with other versions such as the legenda aurea. The most probable date of composition is the early 1430s.

The Heilige Elisabeth, which was written probably shortly before Rothe's death in 1434, is the legend of St. Elisabeth of Thuringia and her saintly life which was devoted to the services of the poor. Already in the

Thüringische Weltchronik (L) it is apparent that Rothe admired the piety of Elisabeth and of her husband, Landgraf Ludwig.⁷⁸ The lack of metrical skill in the Heilige Elisabeth leads Zander,⁷⁹ for example, to consider it as a work of the poet's old age, past his literary prime.

Rothe was still teaching in the Marienstift when he died, aged over 70, in May 1434. For fifty years, he had been composing works with the aim of teaching and improving mankind; the result had been at least the ten major works which have been preserved to the present day. Neumann summarises Rothe's literary activity as follows:

Von fast rein geistlicher Sittenlehre im Lob der Keuschheit geht er aus und zieht nach und nach jeden Lebenskreis, dem er im Laufe seiner weitgreifenden Berufstätigkeit nahetritt, in den Bereich seines rastlosen Strebens, die Menschen zu bessern und zu bekehren.⁸⁰

Most histories of literature dismiss the life and works of Johannes Rothe in a few sentences. Nevertheless, these short passages give the impression that the critics are not unaware of his ability and of his importance for social and cultural history. M.O'C. Walshe, for example, calls him "one of the most level-headed social critics of his day".⁸¹ Of the Ritterspiegel, H. Rupprich writes:

Rothes Ritterspiegel hat kaum viel literarischen Erfolg gehabt, ist aber durch den Versuch, dem bürgerlichen Arbeitsethos Anerkennung und Gültigkeit zu verschaffen, ein kulturgeschichtlich interessantes Stück spätmittelalterlicher Ritterdidaxe.⁸²

The Ritterspiegel on the whole has attracted more attention than Rothe's other works. Wentzlaff - Eggebert mention it as an example of an increased emphasis on general knowledge and education which became apparent in the late Middle Ages:

In seinem Ritterspiegel vertritt Johannes Rothe die Auffassung, daß Bildung und Gelehrsamkeit den Menschen adeln können, auch wenn er nicht dem Geburtsadel angehört.⁸³

Boesch finds it significant that a bourgeois author ('ein bürgerlicher Mensch, der Thüringer Kaplan Johannes Rothe')

should be the one to supply the nobility with an answer to their problems in his Ritterspiegel.⁸⁴ A less flattering opinion of Rothe's work is given by H. Schneider, whose view of the Ritterspiegel, however, is based on a misinterpretation of Rothe's presentation of both the nobility and the peasantry:

Laudator temporis acti, sieht er doch klar genug, um zu erkennen, daß dem Rittertum, dem er innerlich noch anhängt, keine Zukunft mehr blüht. Der Bauer scheint ihm in der jahrhundertelangen Auseinandersetzung, die mit Neidhart begann, den Sieg davongetragen zu haben. Wird hier das ständische Thema in überkonservativem Sinn und altfränkischen Formen behandelt, ...⁸⁵

Rothe's treatment of these same problems is interpreted in a very different way by F. Ranke:

In seinem Ritterspiegel ... trägt er den tiefgehenden Veränderungen Rechnung, die in der geschichtlichen und sozialen Wirklichkeit eingetreten sind. ... Auch in der Verwischung der Standesgrenzen durch den Aufstieg bürgerlicher und bäuerlicher Elemente in den Ritterstand findet er an sich kein Unglück, solange dieser Aufstieg nur gesetzliche Formen innehält und an die sittliche Leistung geknüpft bleibt. Das ideale Ritterbild, das Rothes 'Spiegel' zeigt, hat freilich viele Sonderzüge des spezifisch Ritterlichen verloren, es ist im Grunde das allgemeine Ideal christlicher Humanität, bei dem auch für den Ritter nicht mehr wesentlich andere Forderungen gelten als für den Bürger und Bauern.⁸⁶

G. Ehrismann makes no mention of the conflict-situation between the different social ranks, but restricts his comments on the Ritterspiegel to Rothe's moral teaching as to fitting behaviour, rank, privileges and insignia. He suggests that Rothe's 'fruchtbare und vielseitige Tätigkeit' is a direct result of his profession: 'Aus seinem umfassenden Berufsleben gehen seine Arbeiten hervor',⁸⁸ although he speaks of an 'angeborene Lehrhaftigkeit'.⁸⁹

Yet another aspect of Rothe's teaching is emphasised by H.O. Burger, who maintains:

Am Fuß der Wartburg werden die Ritter jetzt in der Schule zu bürgerlichem Arbeitsethos erzogen.⁹⁰

Frenzel also speaks of 'Rothes im Grunde ganz bürgerliche Haltung',⁹¹ while F. Neumann points to the lack of popularity of the 'traumlos-nüchterner Ritterspiegel'.⁹²

Rothe's works have constantly attracted research and comment. In the eighteenth century there appeared Menckenius' edition of the Heilige Elisabeth (1728),⁹³ and Schoettgen and Kreysig's edition of Chronik Kr.⁹⁴ The first work, however, to be recognised as Rothe's composition was the Lob der Keuschheit, which F.A. Kinderling introduced in Adelung's Magazin für die deutsche Sprache in 1784.⁹⁵ In this paper Kinderling described the content of the work, printed 170 lines and gave a detailed account of a since lost manuscript.⁹⁶

The nineteenth century saw several further editions of Rothe's works, and above all the first attempts to give a detailed description of his life and clarify the extent of his compositions. In 1835 A.F.C. Vilmar edited the Ratsgedichte under the title of 'Von der stete ampten und von der fursten ratgeben, ein deutsches Lehr- und Spruchgedicht aus dem Anfange des 15. Jahrhunderts'.⁹⁷ This was followed a year later by Ortloff's edition of the Eisenacher Rechtsbuch.⁹⁸ Rothe's short work on the Seven Liberal Arts, which is contained in the same manuscript as the Ritterspiegel and the Eisenacher Rechtsbuch, was edited by W. Crecelius in Mone's Anzeiger für Kunde der deutschen Vorzeit in 1856.⁹⁹ The Düringische Chronik des Johann Rothe (Chronik L) was edited in 1859 by R. von Liliencron, and in the same year A.L.J. Michelsen published a list of documents which helped to shed light on Rothe's life: "Urkundenverzeichnis Johann Rothe betreffend".¹⁰⁰ The author's birthplace, Kreuzburg on the Werra, was established in an article by K. Aue in 1859,¹⁰¹ and a year later, K. Bartsch edited the Ritterspiegel as the Mittel-deutsche Gedichte of an unknown poet.¹⁰²

The earliest scholarly and influential account of Rothe's life, attempting to catalogue and analyse his

works, was undertaken by Fedor Bech in the early 1860s. His work on Johannes Rothe appeared in 1861 and 1862 in Germania.¹⁰³ In these papers, Bech disclosed the acrostic in the Ritterspiegel which, apart from proving the authorship of the work, was to provide several important facts about the poet and his life. Bech also argued competently for Rothe's authorship of the Eisenacher Rechtsbuch as well as the essay on the Seven Liberal Arts and the so-called Rechtsbuch Johannes Purgoldts by pointing to similarities between these works and the Thüringische Chronik (L) and the Ritterspiegel respectively.

In 1870 August Witzschel published an article on the Heilige Elisabeth,¹⁰⁴ and two years later one on Chronik G, in which he argued for Rothe's authorship.¹⁰⁵ The same year Karl Bartsch discovered the Berlin manuscript of the Lob der Keuschheit.¹⁰⁶ A translation of the Thüringische Weltchronik (L) with a patriotic introduction was undertaken by E. Fritsche in 1888.¹⁰⁷

Further new editions and some longer studies bear witness to a continued interest in more recent scholarship. Alfred Heinrich edited the Passion in 1906, and added a long introduction in which he described the Dresden Manuscript and gave a detailed study of the sources. He also included a lengthy examination of Rothe's language with a detailed survey of the various forms and spellings.

One of the fullest studies of an aspect of Rothe's work is Julius Petersen's Das Rittertum in der Darstellung des Johannes Rothe (1909). After discussing the image of the knight of the courtly period, Petersen focusses on Rothe, gives an account of his works and their chronology as far as possible before going on to discuss probable sources. He then discusses the term 'knight', the history of knighthood, heraldry, privileges, education and duties of the knight. Tournament, mode of warfare and accolade complete Petersen's survey of knightly life as portrayed by Rothe.

H. Helmbold discussed Rothe's chronicles in 1912,¹⁰⁸ and followed this with a translation into New High German of the Eisenacher Chronik (Kr) in 1914.¹⁰⁹ A. Heinrich edited the second of the Ratsgedichte, Des ratis zucht, in 1913.¹¹⁰

The first attempt to give a complete survey of Rothe's life and works was an unpublished dissertation by Karl Zander (Halle, 1921). The general structure of Zander's work, which treats each composition separately before attempting a generic division into didactic works, legal works and historical works, has since been criticised by Neumann, as have several points of his interpretation.¹¹¹

In 1933, Ludwig Ahmling introduced a newly discovered work of Rothe's: Liber devotae animae. In his Vorstudien zu einer Ausgabe des Gedichts - the edition has, in fact, still to be done - Ahmling gives a chapter by chapter account of the content of this allegorical work. He then discusses content and style, giving a synopsis of Rothe's moral theology as displayed in the Liber devotae animae.

Hans Neumann, with his scholarly editions of the Lob der Keuschheit (1934) and the Ritterspiegel (1936), has made a major contribution to the study of Rothe's works. His detailed study of the former work, Das Lob der Keuschheit - ein Lehrgedicht von Johannes Rothe - Literar-historische und sprachliche Untersuchungen, falls into three main parts. In the first part, Neumann discusses thoroughly the received manuscripts and fragments. In the second he begins with an examination of the sources, and goes on to analyse Rothe's moral theology, especially with regard to the virtue of chastity. The inter-relationship of the various virtues, and Rothe's views on sin, including his treatment of the seven deadly sins, are then discussed. A minute examination of the allegory is followed by an analysis of the style and the metre. The date of composition is assessed with reference to external and inner criteria and the public for whom Rothe is writing is satisfactorily assessed. After examining the place of the Lob der Keuschheit within Rothe's literary

career and its role within late medieval writing as a whole, Neumann concludes his study with a survey of the language and orthography.

Neumann's edition of the Ritterspiegel is preceded by an introduction in which, besides giving a general description of the work and attempting to establish the chronology, the author briefly compares and contrasts the use of terms such as 'minne', 'zuht' and 'aventure' in the courtly epic and in Rothe's works.

In the introduction to his translation of the Eisenacher Rechtsbuch (1950), Peter Rondi discusses in particular Rothe's legal works. He describes the manuscript and discusses the question of Rothe's authorship both in the case of the Eisenacher Rechtsbuch and the Purgoldsche Rechtsbücher. After an examination of the sources and the date of composition, Rondi gives a broad outline of Rothe's life and the works not already dealt with under the legal category.

Ute Schwab, in a general paper on the Last Judgment (1960), includes an examination of Rothe's attitude towards the Last Judgment as shown in his Liber devotae animae.¹¹²

In 1971, Herbert Wolf's new edition of the Ratsgedichte appeared, along with an appendix containing the rhymed prologue to the Thüringische Landeschronik (G). Wolf discusses the two available manuscripts of the Ratsgedichte before going on to give a brief analysis of the form and language of the poem. A discussion of the chronology and the relationship of the three works to one another is followed by an evaluation of the Ratsgedichte from a literary-historical point of view. An examination of the sources and an assessment of the social criticism contained in the works, as well as a brief look at lexical features, complete the introduction.

Until now, study of Rothe's works has been confined for the most part to short articles, introductions to editions, or longer studies of one particular aspect, such

as Petersen's study of knighthood and Neumann's examination of the Lob der Keuschheit. Only Zander in his "Johannes Rothe, sein Leben und seine Werke" has until now attempted a study of a wider nature, but his treatment of each work is brief. The aim of the present dissertation is, therefore, to shed light on some of the major aspects of Rothe's work which have been only cursorily treated by other critics, and in particular to examine the author's approach to didactic literature and his various means of achieving his didactic aims within the scope of a particularly varied literary activity.

1. See, for example, series such as the Texte des späten Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit (Berlin) and recent volumes of the Münchener Texte und Untersuchungen, where a considerable corpus of late medieval literature has appeared in recent years.
2. H. Fischer, "Neuere Forschungen zur deutschen Dichtung des Spätmittelalters", DVjs 31 (1957), 303-345, p.303.
3. Deutsches Mittelalter, ed. Fr. von der Leyen, introd. P. Wapnewski (Frankfurt, 1980). p.V.
4. B. Sowinski, Lehrhafte Dichtung des Mittelalters (Stuttgart, 1971), p.V.
5. See the papers of the "6. Anglo-Deutsche Arbeitstagung" (Würzburg, 1978) which give an indication of the scope of material in question. It may be noted that the term Gebrauchsliteratur cannot easily be rendered into English except by means of paraphrase (as "functional and didactic writing"); the term "technical literature" appears to be equivalent to Fachliteratur.
6. R. Romano and A. Tenenti, Die Grundlegung der modernen Welt - Spätmittelalter, Renaissance, Reformation (Frankfurt, 1967), p.48.
7. See, for example, Literatur im Feudalismus, ed. D. Richter (Stuttgart, 1975).
8. Fischer, "Neuere Forschungen", p.309.
9. J. Janota, "Neue Forschungen zur deutschen Dichtung des Spätmittelalters (1230-1500)", DVjs 45 (1971), Sonderheft 1-242.
10. Sowinski, Lehrhafte Dichtung.
11. Johannes Rothe, Das Lob der Keuschheit nach C.A. Schmid's Kopie einer verschollenen Lüneburger Handschrift, ed. H. Neumann (Berlin, 1934).
12. Johannes Rothe, Eisenacher Rechtsbuch, ed. P. Rondi (Weimar, 1950).
13. Johannes Rothe, Der Ritterspiegel, ed. H. Neumann (Halle, 1936).
14. See, for example, R.-H. Bautier, The Economic Development of Medieval Europe (London, 1971), pp.170f. and 227f.
15. Düringische Chronik des Johann Rothe, ed. R.v. Liliencron (Jena, 1859).
16. A.L.J. Michelsen, "Urkundenverzeichnis Johann Rothe betreffend" ZdVfthGuA, 3(1859) 21ff. See here Urkunde 1.
17. Ibid., Urkunden 2,15,16. For the various possibilities of meaning for Vikar see E. Haberkern and I. Wallach, Hilfswörterbuch für Historiker: Mittelalter und Neuzeit, 3rd. ed. (München, 1972).

18. Michelsen, "Urkundenverzeichnis", Urkunde 18.
19. Rondi, Rechtsbuch, p. XXXII.
20. Michelsen, "Urkundenverzeichnis", Urkunde 19.
21. Ibid., Urkunde 31.
22. Rondi, Rechtsbuch, p. XXXII notes that the use of the term Domherr for Rothe is not quite accurate, since he was not in the cathedral of a bishopric.
23. Rondi, Rechtsbuch, p. XII.
24. H. Neumann, Das Lob der Keuschheit, ein Lehrgedicht von Johannes Rothe: Literaturhistorische und sprachgeschichtliche Untersuchungen (Leipzig, 1934), p.147, Note 34.
25. See K. Wenck, "Geschichte der Landgrafen und der Wartburg als fürstlicher Residenz vom 13. bis 15. Jahrhundert" in: Die Wartburg, ed. Carl Alexander, Großherzog von Sachsen-Weimar-Eisenach et.al. (Berlin, 1907), p.258f.
26. Neumann, Untersuchungen, p.141 and Note 41.
27. See argument about dating and placing of this dedication in Neumann, Untersuchungen, p.141.
28. Das Rechtsbuch Johannes Purgoldts nebst statutarischen Rechten von Gotha und Eisenach, ed. F. Ortloff (Jena, 1860).
29. Johannes Rothes Ratsgedichte, ed. H. Wolf, (Berlin, 1971).
30. L. Ahmling, "Liber devotae animae: Ein neues Werk Johannes Rothes: Vorstudien zu einer Ausgabe des Gedichts" (Diss. Hamburg, 1933). There is as yet no edition of the Liber devotae animae.
31. The number of manuscripts is, of course, not always a reliable indication of popularity. There are only three manuscripts of the Arme Heinrich, for example, while there are numerous ones of the Middle English Prick of Conscience.
32. Neumann, Untersuchungen, p.141 and note 22, doubts Rothe's authorship for Chronik G, as does Petersen (see note 33 below), and also for Chronik Kr. In the introduction to his edition of the Ritterspiegel two years later, however, Neumann has changed his opinion in favour of Rothe's authorship (p. XVI).
33. J. Petersen, Das Rittertum in der Darstellung des Johannes Rothe (Strassburg, 1909), Chapter 3.
34. Neumann, Untersuchungen, pp.129-132 and 134-137.
35. K. Zander, "Johannes Rothe, sein Leben und seine Werke" (Diss. typescript, Halle/S., 1921).
36. See Neumann, Untersuchungen, pp.134-150.

37. Petersen, Rittertum, p.23f.
38. Neumann, Untersuchungen, pp.135-7.
39. The influence of the political bribery scandal on the Fürstenratgeber will be treated below in connection with the chronology of that work.
40. Rothe, in his Thüringische Weltchronik L of 1421, writes in Chapter 736:

Dorumbe sso geschach is yn dem jare also man schreib noch Cristus gebort 1387 jar, das etzliche reiche burger, die yn dem radt zu Isenache nicht gut gnugk waren unde die man umbe yren gebrechen nicht doryn kissen wolden, die ern Balthasarn lantgraven zu Doryngen schanckten 300 schogk grosschen, das her sie yn den radt setzte unde machte ir noch 12 zu den 24 die dorynne waren. sie wolden der stat also vor stehin, das sie uss alle yren schulden komen sulde, die zu der zeit noch gar gerynge waren. Der gutliche herre gehorchte yren worten unde satzte sie yn den rad unde machte sie gewaldigk, der sete unde gelegenheit her nicht enkante. die swuren do heymlichen zu sampne weder den radt. Also wart der rath des rathis unmechtigk unde ouch der gemeyne, wen die nawen keyns helffen wolden zu bussen obirtretunge der gesetze. also vorgyngk dor von der gehorssam eyntrechtigkeit gesetze ynnunge unde allis das sich zu redelichkeit gezuhet. das geschengke unde das vorvolgen hat mer gutes geschat, denn sie selbe stat erplichen zu rechte gegeldin mochte.
41. Petersen, Rittertum, p.39.
42. Neumann, Untersuchungen, p.140.
43. Ibid., p.142.
44. F. Bech, "Über Johannes Rothe", Germania 6 (1861), 45-80, p.68.
45. Neumann, Untersuchungen, p. 131.
46. Ibid., p.147.
47. Ibid., p.144.
48. Wolf, Ratsgedichte, p.101. Wolf includes in his edition of the Ratsgedichte an appendix with the rhymed prologue to Rothe's Thüringische Landeschronik G.
49. Ibid., p.24, note 33
50. Rondi, Eisenacher Rechtsbuch, p.XXI.
51. In the Purgoldtsche Rechtsbücher X, 42.
52. Ibid., IX, 5.
53. Ibid., V, 14 and IX, 7.
54. Rondi, Eisenacher Rechtsbuch, pp.XXIX-XXX and Bech, "Rothe", Germania 6, p.74.

55. See Wolf, Ratsgedichte, p.12, note 9 for examples. Also E.R. Curtius, Europäische Literatur und Lateinisches Mittelalter, 8th ed. (Bern, 1973) pp.146-8.
56. E.g. Isaiah I, 5-6.
57. Cf. Proverbs XXIX,12: Princeps, qui libenter audit verba mendacii, omnes ministros habet impios. It is significant that the fourth verse of the same Chapter of Proverbs reads: Rex iustus erigit terram, vir avarus destruet eam. Although not openly directed at Landgraf Balthasar, Rothe's advice shows more than a coincidental connection with the bribery scandal. He lists among the evils to be avoided by a courtier, for example, the acceptance of gifts:
- Daz drytte laster, dez man phlit
In der fursten hofe, als ez nü lyt,
Daz ist, daz man gabe nymit
Boßlichen, di da nicht enczemit,
Die di wisen machen blint,
Die in der fursten rethe sint,
Vnd die gerechtin also beswerin,
Daz si ire worte vorkerin.
(Fürstenratgeber, F 1080-87).
- The fourth evil listed is also significant:
- Daz vierde laster, daz da wirdit fünden
In der fursten hofe zu manigen stunden,
Daz ist ein vnschemelicher kaüff
Der ampte nach des hofes laüff.
(Fürstenratgeber, F 1166-69).
- Neumann also points out as significant v.823:
- Die nuwe fünde vnd liste finden.
and vv.1244ff:
Wo man nüwe gesece ertracht
Vnd vorkert gewonde macht.
- See also Wolf, Ratsgedichte, p.26.
58. See Wolf, Ratsgedichte, pp.23ff. especially p.23, note 31, where he discusses the theories of the earlier critics.
59. Petersen, Rittertum, pp.32ff.
60. H. Helmbold, "Johannes Rothe und die Eisenacher Chroniken des 15. Jahrhunderts", ZdVfthGuA 29, NF21 (1913) 393-452, p.452.
61. Zander, "Johannes Rothe", p.57.
62. Eg. Rsp., 969ff.
63. Neumann, Ritterspiegel, p.XVII.
64. Chronicon Thuringicum, ed. C. Schoettgen and G.M. Kreysig in: Diplomataria et scriptores historiae Germanicae medii aevi (Altenburg, 1753), I, 85-106.
65. Rondi, Eisenacher Rechtsbuch, p.XXXVIII.

66. Landesbibliothek Gotha, Codex Gothanus (Cod. Chart.) B 180, Blatt 158b-288a.
67. See Helmbold, "Chroniken", p.6; Rondi, Eisenacher Rechtsbuch, p.XXXVII; Wolf, Ratsgedichte, p.41.
68. Bech, "Johannes Rothe", p.47.
69. Ahmling, Vorstudien, p.49.
70. Ibid, p.48.
71. Neumann, Untersuchungen, p.131.
72. - 75. Ibid., pp.143-5.
76. Johannes Rothes Passion mit einer Einleitung und einem Anhang, ed. A. Heinrich (Breslau, 1906).
77. Auctor rhythmicus de vita S. Elisabethae landgravae Thuringiae. E codice bibl. ducalis Saxo-Vilmariensis, ed. J.B. Menckenius, in: Scriptores rerum germanicarum praecipue Saxonicarum (Leipzig, 1728), II, Col. 2033-2102.
78. Chronik L, Chapters 392-466.
79. Zander, "Johannes Rothe", pp.137-9.
80. Neumann, Untersuchungen, p.151.
81. M. O'C. Walshe, Medieval German Literature: A Survey (Cambridge Mass., 1962), p.288.
82. Hans Rupprich, "Die deutsche Literatur vom späten Mittelalter bis zum Barock. I: Das ausgehende Mittelalter, Humanismus und Renaissance 1370-1520" = H. de Boor und R.N. Newald, Geschichte der deutschen Literatur (Munich, 1970), IV, 1, 298f.
83. F.W. and E. Wentzlaff-Eggebert, Deutsche Literatur im späten Mittelalter: 1250-1450 (Hamburg, 1971), p.2.
84. Deutsche Literaturgeschichte in Grundzügen, ed. B. Boesch, 3rd ed. (Bern and Munich, 1967), p.96.
85. H. Schneider, Geschichte der deutschen Dichtung (Bonn, 1949), I. 184.
86. Friedrich Ranke, "Von der ritterlichen zur bürgerlichen Dichtung 1230-1430" = pp.179-253 of Geschichte der deutschen Literatur, ed. H. de Boor, H. Kuhn, F. Ranke and S. Beyschlag, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart, 1962), p.250.
87. G. Ehrismann, Geschichte der deutschen Literatur bis zum Ausgang des Mittelalters (Munich, 1934, repr. 1959) II, 2, 2, 460.
88. and 89. Ibid., p.461.
90. H.O. Burger, Renaissance, Humanismus, Reformation: Deutsche Literatur im europäischen Kontext (Bad Homburg, 1969), p.61.

91. H.A. Frenzel and E. Frenzel, Daten deutscher Dichtung, 3rd ed. (Munich, 1962), I, 70.
92. F. Neumann, Die altdeutsche Literatur (800-1600) (Berlin, 1966), p.289.
93. See note 77 above for full reference.
94. See note 64 above for full reference.
95. F.A. Kinderling, "Ausführliche Nachricht von einem altdeutschen handschriftlichen Gedichte Johann Rothens oder Rodens von der Keuschheit", in: Adelung, Magazin für die deutsche Sprache 2/4 (1784), 108-37.
96. See Neumann, Untersuchungen, p. 1.
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101. K. Aue, "Bemerkung betreffend Johannes Rothen", ZdVfthGuA 3 (1859), 362.
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106. K. Bartsch, "Johannes Rothes Lob der Keuschheit", in: Heidelberger Jahrbücher der Literatur, 65. Jahrgang, II, 9ff.
107. E. Fritsche, Johannes Rothes Chronik von Thüringen (Eisenach, 1888).
108. H. Helmbold, "Johannes Rothe und die Eisenacher Chroniken des 15. Jahrhunderts", Jahresbericht über das Karl-Friedrich-Gymnasium zu Eisenach von Ostern 1911 bis Ostern 1912 (Eisenach, 1912), pp.3-20. Also in: ZdVfthGuA 29, NF 21. See note 60 above.
109. H. Helmbold, Chronik Eisenachs bis 1409, neuhochdeutsch, mit Einleitung, Anmerkungen und Verzeichnissen versehen. (Eisenach, 1914).

110. Johannes Rothes Lehrgedicht "Des Rathis zcucht",
ed. A. Heinrich, Jahresbericht des Realgymnasiums
Berlin-Tempelhof (Berlin-Tempelhof, 1913), 3-14.
111. See Neumann, Untersuchungen, pp.142 and 146 with Note
32 and p.148, Note 37.
112. U. Schwab, "Zum Thema des Jüngsten Gerichts in der
mittelhochdeutschen Dichtung", AION 2 (1959), 1-49.

CHAPTER 2: Didactic Aims and Methods in Rothe's Writing.

Rothe produced at least ten works during his life, although one might have expected him to be fully occupied by his engagement with Church and school as well as his function of town clerk (stadtschreiber). Despite his continuous and varied literary activity, the style and content of his works contain little to suggest that the author might have been moved to write by pure inspiration. There is no evidence of the joy in writing expressed, for example, by Konrad of Würzburg:

ob nieman lepte mêr, denn ich,
doch seite ich unde sünge,
dur daz mir selben clünge
mîn rede und mîner stimme schal.
ich taete alsam diu nahtegal,
diu mit ir sanges dône
ir selben dicke schône
die langen stunde kürzet.
(Der Trojanische Krieg, 188-195)¹

By contrast, Rothe's works show evidence of diligence and industriousness, and above all, of an untiring will to teach, and through teaching to improve. This is the kind of work on which W. Stammer focuses in his estimation of the art of Rothe's times:

Die damalige Zeit sah mit anderen Augen.
Mittelalterliche Kunst war nicht Selbstzweck,
nicht l'art pour l'art. Ein Kunstwerk als
"objektivierte Schöpfung", für sich allein
geschaffen, gab es nicht. ... Zu jeder
künstlerischen Darstellung gehört ein "Sinn",
d.h. eine hintergründige Bedeutung, die das
Dargestellte über das äußerlich Sichtbare
hinaus vertieft.²

Ecclesiastically influenced literature of the later Middle Ages combined didactics with parenesis, and the two components varied in strength depending on contemporary views as to the purpose and function of literature, and on the literary tradition to which the

individual poet subscribed.³ Hay discusses this didactic style with special reference to Biblical commentary:

Allegory and analogy soon extended enormously the possibility of types, so that an ingenious and fertile commentator might find hidden meaning in any verse of the Old Testament.⁴

The philosophy of the late Medieval world was responsible for the literary swing away from the ideals of the courtly epic to the drier moral of allegorical didactics. The belief was current that the world had entered its last era, one which would then be followed by the advent of Antichrist.⁵ The aim was to prevent his coming and prolong the world's last era by being pleasing in the sight of God. This entailed a return to impeccable moral standards and a shunning of all worldly evil. Literature and sermons provided the obvious vehicle for the teaching of these moral standards, and devices such as metaphor and allegory were used to convey thoughts on admonition and rules of conduct. G. Roethe has called the fourteenth century "das Jahrhundert der Allegorie",⁶ although, of course, this label has been applied with at least as much justification to the twelfth century. A device such as allegory offered the author the possibility of fulfilling didactic aims while presenting his material in an aesthetically acceptable form. This was important for Roethe and his contemporaries, for despite the fundamentally didactic aim of most of the literature of their day, the ideal balance expressed in the formula "Got und der werlt gevallen" was still sought after. Variations in metre and rhyme, acrostics and rhetorical devices provided an aesthetically satisfying form, while learned quotations, exempla and exhortations underlined the didactic side. Where allegory was absent, simile and metaphor fulfilled a similar role. In Roethe's case, the amount of direct, unveiled teaching involved depended on the audience for whom he was writing each particular work. For the Thuringian priest, school-teacher, lawyer and historian, didactic literature, this 'Mittelgeschöpf zwischen Poesie und Rhetorik',⁷ was a many-sided rostrum. His words are

directed at the patricians in the towns on the one hand and the Landgraf of Thuringia and his advisors on the other. His religious works are addressed to young ladies and novices in noble convents, while the Ritterspiegel is aimed at the knightly classes of his day. Chronik (L), dedicated to Landgräfin Anna, and Rothe's other historical works, are for the edification of educated fellow-countrymen, and perhaps for his own pupils in the monastery school. Apart from the specifically named persons in the texts, who may be considered the patrons (Auftraggeber), the intended audience would appear to be - as is the case with other didactic literature - the iuvenes, the younger members of the nobility.⁸

There is no doubt that the form of his works was important to Rothe. He uses various forms of rhyming verse, and where he uses prose, as in Chronik G and Chronik L, he apologises in the rhymed prologues for the feebleness and old age which have hindered him in expressing his thoughts in verse form. In the Prolog to Chronik G, for example, he laments:

Nue muß ich doch voldrucke
Mit dissem andern buche;
Konde ich es sust gesmucke,
Der ryme ich mich entruche.

Getretin byn ich nue also
In des alders orden
Das mir vor jaren was ein lust,
Das ist mir nue ein erbeit worden.

(Prolog G, Strophen 11 and 12)

In the Prolog to Chronik L, Rothe asks Landgräfin Anna to excuse his writing in prose form:

Nicht ssal yre togunt das vorsmehen,
Das is ungereymet ist.
Vor jaren hette ich es wol gethan,
Zu langk worde mir nu die frist.

(Prolog L, Str.30)

While this may be little more than a modesty topos - Bede also bemoans his "bodily and mental infirmities" - it is indeed probable that Rothe's advanced age made him physically and optically less fit to write.

Despite the importance of outer form, however, there is no question that the main importance for Rothe lies in the message which he hopes to impart to his reader by poetic means. He stresses, either in formal prologues or at the beginning of the works, his intention to teach and his hope that the results of his labour will be of use to his fellow men.

In his earliest work, the monastically orientated Lob der Keuschheit, which was written with nuns and the daughters of noble or patrician families in view, Rothe clearly voices his didactic intent in the Dedication, where he prays:

Dich bete ich, Criste lieber herre,
durch diner muter kusche ere:
gip mir nu dine gnade dar zu
daz ich dit buch geschriben nu
dinen reinen kuschin kinden,
das sy trost dar ynne finden
unnd da mit vormanet werden
wy sy leben sollen uff disser erden.
(Ldk. 41-48)

The last two lines make clear Rothe's fundamental aim in the work. Even the allegory which forms the framework is not only a stylistic device, but a functional one. It is an explanatory factor which helps to make the abstract terms of the theological subject matter more easily understood. Johannes Rutinck, the scribe who added a rhymed prologue to the work at a later date, was also in no doubt as to the didactic purpose of the Lob der Keuschheit, which he calls "disse schone lare":

Ich wolde das keine juncfrauwe were
in der werlde nach kein bidder wip
di ir sele, ere, gud unnd lip
gerne wislichen wolden beware,
sy hetten zu sture disse schone lare.
(Ldk, Prolog, 5695-9)

The first critic to voice an opinion on the balance or synthesis of the prodesse and delectare elements in the Lob der Keuschheit is Kinderling, who states:

Es herrscht diejenige finstere Klostermoral nicht darin, welche man von der Zeit, da es geschrieben worden, leicht erwarten würde.⁹

A comparison with other poets of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries helps to substantiate this view; W. Rehm describes the moral climate displayed in the works of these centuries:

Fragt man nun nach der Sittlichkeit der beiden Jahrhunderte und den Unterscheidungsmerkmalen, die sie von der hochmittelalterlichen trennen, so ist zu sagen, daß sie dogmatisch und katechetisch geworden ist, sehr streng, unduldsamer und von der weiteren freieren Höhe des 13. Jahrhunderts herabgestiegen ist. Sie ist überhaupt Moral geworden, ist nicht mehr Ethik, hat einen fast asketischen Zug; ... Die Gesinnung der Didaktik ist nun betont christlich, streng und gesteigert kirchlich ...¹⁰

Rothe, although he indulges in laudatio temporis acti, shows no signs of asceticism or of Weltfeindlichkeit. On the contrary, he is anxious to provide practical advice, and displays none of the pessimism of der Teichner, who, wherever he looks, can see only 'diserwelt irregang', and no hope of improvement.¹¹ The dedication to the Lob der Keuschheit bears witness to Rothe's aim to provide not a dry moral code, but a fresh, hopeful companion with which he hopes to give pleasure to his readers. He spells out the didactic purpose of the allegory within the work:

In der heiligen scrifft han ich funden
das man die kuscheit zu manchen stunden
glichit dissen gemalten stocken
die der kuscheit bilde hy smocken,
da man ir reinen togund ynne
eychentlichen wol mach besynne.
dar umme so stet hie vorgemalet das
das man sy erkenne deste bass.

(Ldk., 49-56)

The last line of the above passage stresses the explanatory, didactic function of the allegory, while the question of entertainment is raised at the beginning of the last strophe of the dedication:

Nu nym dit zu dir, liebe magit,
wille dir das buch behagit,
und habe din kurtze wile dar mede,
ich kan nicht bass da van gereden.
(Ldk., 89-92)

The terms behagit und kurtze wile (pleasure, pastime) express Rothe's hope that his work will not be merely a vehicle for his didactic aims, but will provide enjoyment. In his first work, then, the pattern for a balance between teaching and entertainment has already been set, albeit in a work which treats religious subject-matter.

The Eisenacher Rechtsbuch and Rothe's other legal works, obviously, serve no such dual purpose. The author aims at providing a clear and comprehensive legal reference work for his native Thuringia, and we may take for granted a purpose similar to that of Eike von Repgow, from whose Sachsenspiegel he frequently borrows:

Des heiligen geistes minne sterke mine sinne,
daz ich recht unde unrecht den Sachsen
bescheide nach gotis hulden unde nach der
werlde vromen.
(Prologus, Sachsenspiegel)¹²

In the Ratsgedichte, Rothe moves on to a wider, socio-historical plane of didactics which deals with the many-sided problems of town administration. The choice of verse form rather than prose may possibly betoken aesthetic intent, although, of course, verse is almost the norm in the literature of Rothe's day. The main emphasis, however, is once more on the didactic content of the subject matter. In the first of the three poems, Von der stete ampten, the author's main interest is to describe within the topical metaphor of the body and its limbs and organs the various tasks to be accomplished by the individual functionaries and other inhabitants of a town. One by one, the inhabitants are invested with a function within town administration, just as the members and organs of the human body fulfil certain tasks. The common-place metaphor of the body politic and its parts in the Ratsgedichte fulfils a function similar to that of the allegory in the

Lob der Keuschheit. *Primarily* it has an explanatory function, and at a more superficial level it has the purpose of entertaining the reader. Rothe himself states that he intends to point out the meaning of the parallels:

Eyn icliche gewonlich stad
Sich als eynes menschen licham hat
Myt irn gewonlichen amptluten.
Dyt glichniße wil ich vch düten.
(Ratsg., F53-56)

Within the description of the functions, Rothe finds the opportunity to teach the reader what he regards as the ideal way to fulfil the parallel function within town administration. In the case of the eyes, for example, Rothe is not content only to describe their function:

Dye schriber, daz sind dy augen,
Dy sullen gesunt sin vnd wol taugen
Der stat gescheffte wol besehen
Vnd in steteclichem gemerke stehen.
Vnd alz man mit den augen sihet,
Waz man tûd vnd war man iehet,
Als sullen die schriber merken:
Daz tûn, daz laßen, daz beste werken,
Nücz vnd den gebrechen
Schriben, merken vnd sprechen.
(Ratsg., F 93-102)¹³

He goes on to analyse the matter further; he keeps the parallel with the eyes, but now has to be more explicit in his explanation by introducing the likeness with Das ist, since the qualities he hopes to attain in the clerks are far removed from the realm of the physiology of the eye:

Dise augen sullen bliben clar,
Daz keine gestüppe daryn var;
Daz ist: si sollen frome sin,
Nuchtern, meßlich trincken win,
Warhafftig, getruwe vnd vorswigen,
An schalkheyd vnd wol gedigen.
(Ratsg., F 103-8)

He then returns once more to the eye and quotes St. Matthew:

'Ist din auge eyn schalk, eyn geck,
So brich ez vß vnd wirff ez enweg.'
Bessir ist <dir> eyn auge <in> das hymelrich,
Danne mit czweien augen der helle tich.
(Ratsg., F 111-4)¹⁴

From the above example it is apparent that Rothe exploits the metaphor¹⁵ far beyond the bounds of the usual topos; indeed he transcends its boundaries in order to include a moral lesson relevant to town life in his own day.

In the second of the three Ratsgedichte, Von des Rathes Zucht, the didactic element is yet more obvious. The poem begins with a sequence of nine anaphoristic imperative verbs within four sentences:

Ratzmann bis stete,
Du gerne des frumen bete!
Fure recht gerichte,
Sprich wiben vbel mit nichte!
Erbüet got ere,
Bis sitig, czorne nicht sere!
Geistliche lute
Bewirdige, nicht finger düte!
(Ratsgedichte, F 283-290)

The imperative form of the verb is to predominate throughout the first part of the poem, entitled 'Von den ratesmannen'. In the following sections, 'Von den ratesmeister', 'Von den kemerern', 'Von dem Schultheißen', 'Von den schepphin', the author uses the auxiliary mag or sal followed by lists of infinitives, so that again an imperative meaning is conveyed. Within the imperatives, Rothe's whole moral code is expressed, and the didactic element comes to the fore.

The third of the poems, the Fürstenratgeber, makes use of examples and learned quotations to illustrate the points the author is trying to make. The question of citation in Rothe's works is, of course, problematic: he refers throughout to specific sources (in standard fashion as 'der meister Aristoteles' etc.). It is not, however, to be assumed that these are used at first hand, but rather that they were common knowledge due to the popularity of florilegia, or that they were contained in the standard school works. A teacher such as Albertus Magnus would have been an obvious choice of text, and the classical or earlier Fathers, such as Boethius, were probably also consulted. Neumann mentions the Manipulus florum of Thomas Hibernicus¹⁶ as a likely source for

Rothe's quotations, and puts forward a good case for Michael of Prague's De custodia virginitatis as an influential source for the Lob der Keuschheit.¹⁷ Biblical figures, such as David, Hosea, Solomon and Isaiah are quoted in the Fürstenratgeber as examples of wise leadership.¹⁸ The use of these biblical figures is, especially in the case of David, almost a topos in medieval didactic works,¹⁹ and the concept of kingship as such is a major theme in Latin writings.²⁰ In the Fürstenratgeber, Rothe uses the general nature of the historical background as an intermediate step to a more specific criticism of events in contemporary Thuringia. This movement from a general plane to the more specific is also reflected in the language of the work. The first part of the Fürstenratgeber follows the didactic method of the second of the Ratsgedichte, using impersonal third person forms such as: "Den fursten sal man raten" (Ratsg., F 678) and "Wer erkennen wolle ... Der merke ..." (Ratsg., F 694 and 696). The information conveyed by those pseudo-imperatives is then implemented by the exemplum of the King of Rome who, with a metaphor in which he likens himself to a shepherd over his sheep,²¹ counters the unwise, flattering suggestions of his counsellors. Rothe then continues in the impersonal style shown above:

Ein furste sal (F 722)
Des sullen die fursten diener han (F 742)
Ein furste sal besehen (F 744).

The text is interrupted once more by an exemplum, this time the well-known example of Solomon whom Rothe also extols in his Lob der Keuschheit.²² The Ratgeber then continues in the impersonal mode, with only one sign of a more personal involvement in the exclamation "Ach got", followed by a more vehement expression of the author's disapproval:

Ach got, wy vbil der furste tûd,
Der ...
(Ratsg., F 807-8)

The personal involvement is, however, once more concealed in third person forms such as:

Bye den dienern prüfit man
Wes sich der furste nymet an.
(Ratsg., F 812-13)

Das liebet eyne fursten tummen,
Wanne man yme saget ...

(Ratsg., F 826-7)

The controlled impersonality which is a feature of Rothe's didactic style in the Ratsgedichte is, however, interrupted for some forty lines in which the author's personal disapproval is displayed with convincing vehemence. With an "ach phi" and a contemptuous second person "du",²³ he addresses a gift, or more accurately a bribe, leaving little doubt with his mention of the fursten rethe that he is referring to the sum of money given to Landgrave Balthasar in 1387 in exchange for permission to enlarge the council:

Ach phi, du lesterliches geschencke,
Waz kanstu nüwer bosheyd erdencke,
Daz du mit diner bete
Vorterbist der fursten rethe,
Dem fursten vnstetikeyt brengest
Vnd der lastere vorhengest;
Du brengest mit dir den wankelmüt.
(Ratsg., F 840-6)

The strength of the author's conviction in this matter is such, that he even makes a brief personal intervention in first-person form:²⁴

Ich vordencken ... nicht (F 856)
Ich vordencke ... abir (F 860)

After a passage in which Rothe describes an ideal council, once more using the third person form to refer to the prince, he reverts to the second person in a scathing and direct judgment of the court:

Dyn dorfftigis armes hofegesinde,
Daz girit, kraczit also swinde,
Vff daz ez snelle werde riche
Vnd sich sinen genoßen gliche.
(Ratsg., F 872-5)²⁵

In this case, Rothe's disapproval would seem to be directed openly at Landgraf Balthasar of Thuringia who had accepted the bribe which had caused so much disgrace.

The author, however, turns away from the directness of this polemic to a more general plane with a reference to Aristotle (F 876-7) and a quotation ascribed to Jerome (F 879-85). The rest of the Fürstenratgeber, including a list of seven sins to be avoided by courtiers, is in an impersonal vein, punctuated at regular intervals by learned quotations and exempla. The well-told tale of Philip of France's jester (F 1106-65) deserves mention, since it introduces a new dimension to Rothe's didactic method.²⁶ In this tale, namely, the author neither intervenes nor comments as is his usual practice, but leaves the tale to unwind itself, and above all, leaves Philip himself to grasp the irony of the jester's quick rise to power and riches:

'Hat ein thore in eym iar
So großen schacz gesament gar,
Vmbe daz ich yme gehorchet han,
Wye großen schacz samen dan
Dy wisen vnd ratgebin,
Die erbirclichen by mir leben,
Vnd haben manigfalt
Glauben, ere vnd gewalt,
Vnd bie mir lange sint gewest
Vnd siczen aller nehest.'
(Ratsg., F 1156-65)

Although Rothe does not in this case spell out the connection, it is obvious that this exemplum, taken in conjunction with the comments about "Dyn dorfftigis armes hofgesinde" and the condemnation of bribery and simony throughout the work, takes on a direct significance for the Thuringian court. The key to Rothe's didactic method in the Fürstenratgeber is the balance between personal involvement and impersonal statement. Furthermore, the exempla in the Fürstenratgeber, like the allegory in the Lob der Keuschheit and the metaphor in Von des Rathes Zucht have, besides their generalising didactic purpose, the function of expressing Rothe's teaching in a manner designed to be pleasing to the reader.²⁷

The Ritterspiegel, like the Ratsgedichte, represents within Rothe's works the aim of accomplishing

improvement in a specifically social context. He hopes that his advice will help misled knights, and above all that it will be of use to them in a practical sense. The introduction to the Ritterspiegel ends with the following statement of the purpose behind the work:

Sehit, dit waz nu di sache,
daz ich schreib dit buchelin!
Kunde ich daz mynen frundin gemache
daz sy darbi gedechtin min
Und di hochfart lißin undir wegin
do di torheit sere hangit an!
Gar große herrin dinstis phlegin
dez sy ere und nicht lastir han.-
Solche gnade gebe mir god nu
daz ez den ediln werde nutzce,
En sterke craft und togunt darzcu
daz sy arme lутhe mogin geschutzce.
(Rsp., 65-76)

He hopes to enable the poverty-stricken knights of his day to regain their dignity and to become once more "rechte ritter":

Nu sehit abir in deßin spigil her
und lernit rechte ritter werdin.
(Rsp., 893-4)

The image of the mirror is, of course, one which can be found already in classical literature.²⁸ The medieval speculum-tradition is said to have its origin in St. Paul's letter to the Corinthians (I, XIII, 12):

Videmus nunc per speculum in aenigmate, tunc
autem facie ad faciem; nunc cognosco ex parte,
tunc autem cognoscam sicut et cognitus sum.²⁹

The fundamentally didactic purpose of the Ritterspiegel is manifest not only from Rothe's avowed aims stated in the introduction, but also from the outer form of the work, in which the image of the mirror is used as a framework for the didactic content:

Uz aschin werdit eyn glaz gemacht
und heißis bli gekoßin darin,
So gewinnet ez danne solche macht
daz ez gebit den wedirschin.
Waz man darkegin heldit,
daz sehit man wol darynne;
Dez gudin gesichtis ez weldit
und sterkit ouch di synne.

Daz herzce ez dem irfrowit
wer suberlich ist und wol gestalt,
Den crankin luthin ez drowit
und den di recht sint wordin alt.
Wer sich ouch had beremit
und besmerit mit ichte
Daz eme nicht wole zcemit,
dem betrubit ez daz gesichte.
(Rsp., 77-92)

Rothe, however, not content with the implications of the simple image of the mirror and the reflection, extends the parallels beyond the conventional boundaries to include a likeness with the human body which he can exploit for didactic purposes:

Von deßem spigil muez ich baz
mit gotis hulffe nu sprechin.
Von aschin machit man daz glaz,
gar licht ist sin zcubrechin.
Her bedutit dez menschin licham
der von aschin ist gemacht,
Darin eyn sele von gote quam
weich also daz bli geslacht.
Waz man darkegin heldit glich,
ez si bose adir si gud,
Eyn jungir mensche bildit ez in sich
daz her vel gerne darnach tud.
(Rsp., 93-104)

The mirror image reappears sporadically throughout the text as a linking feature for the various threads of Rothe's didactic theme. He combines it in a compound metaphor involving the Scriptures;³⁰ into this mirror, however, the knight is to look with the eyes of his soul:

di schrift di laz din spigil sin
Di dich zcu gotis dinst bericht;
mit diner sele ougin sich darin
Und beschowe dich gar ebin
wi sich din ynner mensche gehabe.
(Rsp., 338-42)

The concept of "inner eyes" is by no means original to Rothe; indeed it is already a common figure in commentaries of Genesis.³¹ The image of the Scriptures as an exemplary mirror gives way to yet another metaphor; where the Scriptures, or the written word in general, cannot be used as an example from which "manche behende und nutzce

synne" (Rsp., 387) can be reaped, a wise man can be invested with the duty of a mirror:

So sal her zcu eyne spigele nemen
eynen fromen, setigen, wisin man
Deme worte und werke wol gezcemen
und deme volgin wo mede her kan.
(Rsp., 401-4)

The image of the mirror, whether it be used to describe Rothe's work, the Scriptures, an exemplary character, or indeed the human body itself, has always two main functions, namely to divulge undesirable traits and to provide an ideal outline which can be followed. Into his mirror, Rothe casts the ideal reflection of a whole ethical code for the knightly classes of his day.

The stylistic method of the Ritterspiegel is also influenced principally by Rothe's didactic intent. A central passage of the work is worth examining in this light, and may stand as representative of Rothe's technique, for it demonstrates the various methods the author uses to weave the didactic elements into his text, in this case into the framework of the Spiegel. The passage concerned is that dedicated to the description of the seven privileges allowed to the knight on account of his status (Ritterspiegel, 1065-2220). The length of the passage alone, 1155 lines out of a total of 4108 lines, representing over a quarter of the whole work, is out of proportion with the relatively simple task of delineating the time-honoured privileges accorded to the nobility, namely the accolade, the permission to wear a gold ring, the advantage of having a squire to serve one, the legal right to wear gold and to have clothes of various colours not allowed to those of lower rank, the carrying of the title herre, and the privilege of washing one's hands at table. The fact that this enumeration accounts for over a quarter of the length of the Ritterspiegel makes it essential to uncover Rothe's true aim within the passage. A brief examination reveals that he uses the privilege in each instance as little more than a starting point from which

he changes over more or less arbitrarily to a discussion of a particular moral or social question which interests him. In each case he then returns as unassumingly as possible to the original theme. In the introduction to the passage, Rothe states that he hopes to explain (bedutin)³² the meaning of these privileges to his reader: "der wel ich uch bedutin eyn teil" (Rsp., 1068). The bedutin, however, takes on significant proportions, as an examination of the individual privileges will show.

The account of the first privilege, the accolade, is accompanied by a long diversion on the differences between fighting a war of aggression for one's own advantage, and fighting for God's cause and for justice. Biblical exempla³³ and patristic references³⁴ as well as quotations from classical authors³⁵ are used to underline and enhance the appearance of the main theme of the necessity for the knight to fight on the side of Christianity. In line 1157, Rothe appeals to his reader in what may conceivably be a link with the Spiegel-motif: "O werdir ritter sich dit nu an" (Rsp., 1157) and continues to address his reader in the second person du-form and in unmistakably parennetic tone:

hastu y zcu keynen stundin
Gevochtin adir hartin strid getan
und hast nicht obirwundin,
Daz had gehindirt din hochfart
adir di frevele, unrechte sache
Und hast dich kegin gote nicht bewart
der dich starg kunde gemache.
(Rsp., 1158-64)

Rothe then continues in the more impersonal third person, reporting Christ's advice on how to gain eternal life. The du-form returns in a quotation from Augustine (Rsp., 1201ff.); and significantly within the more direct address of the second person, the sword is mentioned again:

Lustit dich zcu habin den cristinnamen,
so sich ebin ane din swert
Und hab kegin gudin werkin nicht schamen.
(Rsp., 1209-11)

With the ensuing citation of Cassiodorus, Rothe once more returns to the third person. The final passage, however, returns once again to the sword and to the imperative second-person form:

Nu sich abir daz gehilzce an
daz du heldist in diner hant,
Und lerne gotis vorchte han.

(Rsp., 1237-9)

The conclusion can be reached that Rothe has purposely allowed direct address to alternate with examples of fitting behaviour and laudable aims in order to convey to the reader the moral point he hopes to make. Direct address is also skilfully linked in two central passages with the sword which was the starting point for the discussion, so that a plausible connection is established between the narrative and didactic levels.

The second privilege, the wearing of a ring, is accompanied by an account in metaphorical form of the metal ring which is equated with a knight's truwe and the precious stone which is the equivalent of the Christian faith. In this case, then, the surface level and the didactic intent are connected by metaphor. The word bedutit is again evident near the beginning of the passage, once more underlining the fact that the ring and its gem are significant at a symbolic level:

Daz vingirlin ist alumme zcu,
sin ring der had keyn ende.
Dez ritters truwe bedutit ez nu,
di sal ouch nergin wende.
Daruffe stet eyn edilir steyn,
daz ist der cristingloibe.

(Rsp., 1253-8)

Half-way through the passage, Rothe changes the metaphor of the ring and personifies its elements:

Dit ist der steyn und daz vingirlin,
beide di ritter und di phaffin
Di bi eynandir suldin sin
also si god darzcu had geschaffin.

(Rsp., 1333-6)

Thirty lines later, however, the author changes the figure of speech once again - presumably to enable him to treat

yet another point of his moral code within the same framework of the ring-image. In this case he uses a simile to compare the gem of the ring to the knight's companion:

Also nu der edelir steyn ist herte,
schone und dorchsichtig,
Also sal nu sin dez ritters geferte
gestrenge, toguntsam und uzrichtig.
(Rsp., 1361-4)

The ring and its stone, then, are used to allow Rothe to put forward three different points of his didactic code. Within the first image, (Ring = truwe, stone = Christian faith), the author discusses the extent of loyalty becoming to a knight, and in particular enumerates the qualities and abilities of faith (1277-1300), beginning with a reference to Augustine (1278). Within the second, personified metaphor, he points out the vital role to be played by the partnership of knight and cleric in the struggle against the heathen. The simile comparing the gem to the knight's companion is used to discuss the desirable qualities to look for in such a companion, and secondly to advocate fair treatment of one's servants or vassals. A short diversion on the virtue of wisdom leads to a completion of the development with a final mention of the ring to close the symbolic circle:

Deßis dich alz daz vingerlin
an diner hant vormane;
Wiltu eyn fromer ritter sin,
so gedenke dicke darane!
(Rsp., 1397-1400)

The third concession, that of having the services of a squire, is again interesting from the stylistic point of view; it contains within its framework a discussion of the preferability of nobility of the soul as opposed to nobility of birth. Once again, references to patristic writings, ancient authors and Biblical exempla are included to enhance the credibility and authority of Rothe's argument or opinion. The subject is unassumingly introduced by the according of the services of a squire to the knight on account of his nobility of birth: "Also eme geborit noch

siner gebort" (Rsp., 1405). In the same sentence, however, the way is already laid open for a discussion of nobility of the soul:

Also ir vor wol had gehort
von dez schonen adils heile,
Daz von togundin ist kommen zcu,
von freidikeid und von sterke
Und daz erbit uf ere kindir nu
ab si kunnen darnach gewerke.
(Rsp., 1407-12)

The subject proper is then introduced by a citation of Aristotle:

Aristoteles der meistir schribit
daz dez menschin sele vel edeler si
Dan der lip.
(Rsp., 1417-9)

There follows a general discussion of the role of the soul in the human make-up, and a pointer to the special qualities shown by those who ~~can lay claim~~ to nobility of the soul. The subject is then discussed within the exemplum of the bishop St. German³⁶ who had deposed a king and put a humble shepherd in his place. Rothe himself points to the true purpose behind his tale in his parenetic warning: "dit laßit uch allen sin eyn bilde!" (Rsp., 1488). There follows a generalising expansion of the theme which gives it more universal applicability:

Vel beßir ist ez uf deßir erdin
von eyne armen, demutigen geslechte
Czu eyne herrin adir ritter zcu werdin
danne von eyne herrin zcu eyne knechte.
(Rsp., 1489-92)

The expanded theme is then given depth by the introduction of three examples from the Bible, classical literature and medieval legend, namely Pilate, Nero and Julian the Apostate. Their lack of nobility is brought to light in a rhetorical question:³⁷ "Waz adils mochte mit en gesy?" (Rsp., 1501). The author returns to the general plane with a reference to Boethius's definition of nobility (adil) 1505-6, and continues with a common-place about the equality of all human beings:

Alle luthe uf deßeme ertriche
di sint kommen von eyner gebort.
(Rsp., 1517-18)

With reference to Jerome, Rothe develops the theme of the master/servant (knecht) relationship by means of a parallel which compares servitude to sin (personified as the devil) to lack of freedom in the feudal sense. Again the author uses a rhetorical question to make his point:

Waz adilz mag danne der gehabe
der mit libe und sele ist eigin
Und em alle friheit get abe
und di sunde en gar irsteigin?
(Rsp., 1537-40)

After this longish digression, Rothe finally returns to the original question of the privilege of having a squire, camouflaging the change in subject by means of the parallel that those who are free from sin are "edil und fry" (1545) and may therefore lay claim to the services of a squire. The squire in turn is to serve as a guardian of his lord's honour (adil) (1555-60). The final passages of this section give general advice on the behaviour fitting to a squire and on the correct treatment of the squire by his master, ending on the unimaginative note:

Dit ist daz derte vorteil nu
daz eyne ritter geborit zcu.
(Rsp., 1581-2)

The fourth privilege is that of wearing gold, a subject which gives Rothe ample scope to allegorize. Once again, the passage begins with a simple statement of the privilege:

Bilche tregit der ritter an eme golt
und spangin an sine gewande.
(Rsp., 1583-4)

The author quickly reverts, as was no doubt expected of him by the contemporary reader, to an astrological exposé³⁸ showing, with reference to Rhazes³⁹ that: "daz golt wechsit von der sunnen" (1588) and in turn that the sun is the most noble (edilstir, 1599) planet. Rothe then mentions that gold can be spun to thread, and goes on to equate a robe woven with thread of gold to a synthesis of gedult⁴⁰ and wissheit:

Gedult und schone wißheit
wo di zcusammen werdin gewerkit,
Daz bedutit wol eyn guldin cleit.
(Rsp., 1607-9)

The didactic purpose of this compound metaphor is emphasised by the author in the ensuing plea to his reader: "deße bedutunge ebin merkit." (Rsp., 1610)

The allegory of the golden robe is then left aside for a moment to allow for the Biblical image of David as the woodworm⁴¹ which, however, is extended by Rothe into a complex metaphor. The seeming softness and weakness of the worm's body and its contrasting ability to destroy even the hardest wood are compared to King David's complementary qualities of mercy towards friend and mercilessness towards foe. These qualities are then suddenly and incongruously identified by the author with the golden robe mentioned above:

Dit ist nu daz guldin gewant
daz eyn ritter sal antragin.
(Rsp., 1631-2)

The same golden robe is involved only a few lines later in yet another metaphor which hinges this time only on the quality of edil discussed previously in connection with the sun (1599):

Dit bedutit ouch daz cleid
daz edele und daz guthe
Daz her gotis liebe treid
stetlichin in sime muthe.
(Rsp., 1639-42)

The mere mention of the cloak is, however, insufficient to conceal Rothe's true purpose in the following twenty-six lines (1640-66), namely to introduce his all-important didactic theme of love of God and faith in His goodness towards His servant (knecht). The use of the verb sal (1647: Ganzcin gloibin sal her zcu eme han), and the introduction of imperatives such as dinet (1656), nemit (1657), scheme dich (1659), uzbreite (1660), sich an (1661), and bereite (1662) disclose his didactic aims. The direct exhortation to learn from his words is contained in line 1657: "Und nemit hirbi eyn bilde". The

mention of the golden buckles in line 1661 is used to re-unite the theme of service of God with the initial discussion of the privilege of wearing gold. The theme of gold proper is re-introduced by means of learned quotations from Albracht⁴² and Pliny which co-relate in retrospect with the hard/soft theme introduced in the woodworm image (weich und darzcu swere, 1670). Pliny points to the indestructability of gold, be it by fire or by rust (Rsp., 1673-80). The parallel with the knight is then renewed:

Also sal eyn ritter zcu allir zcid
deme golde geglichit werden.
(Rsp., 1681-2)

and the quality of rust identified with the destructive element of hatred which, says Rothe, is "dez herzcin rost" (1683).⁴³ Rothe now re-introduces the subject of gedult (patience) which, together with wisdom, had been cursorily identified with the golden robe almost a hundred lines before (1607). The last 70 lines of the sub-section on gold discuss the question of gilt buckles, which are made by covering silver with gold (1695-6). With reference to Albracht (Albert the Great), Rothe informs the reader that the gold will not find a hold on the silver if certain factors are present, namely:

Daz sint der stoub und der wint
und darzcu daz naße;
Wo deße dri darmede sint,
do kan ez keyn golt gevaße.
(Rsp., 1707-10)

The gold to be used in the gilding process is now equated with wisdom (di ediln, zcartin wissheid, 1712), and the three vices which hinder its reception are described as girheid (1714) (= stoube 1715); hochfart (1728) and unkuscheid (1741) (= fuchtikeid 1739). Within the discussion of unchastity, Rothe denounces "Hochfard, hure und worffilspel"⁴⁴ (1749), developing the theme with reference to Solomon. The section ends suddenly and without renewed mention of gold with the announcement:

Dit ist daz ferde stucke
daz eynen ritter sal smucke.
(Rsp., 1763-4)

The passage is a masterly didactic exploitation of a series of compound metaphors, loosely linked together usually by only one common element within the theme.

The fifth of the privileges accorded to the knight is the right to wear clothes of certain colours.⁴⁵ Rothe's main aim is again made clear already at the beginning of the passage. He finds it unnecessary or irrelevant to furnish his reader with a more detailed description of the colours permitted by law to those of knightly status; for him it is more important to explain the inner significance of the coloured robe:

Ez bedutit daz her si boßheit gram
und habe lieb di fromikeid
Und sich von bosir gesellschaft zcihe
wo her moge adir kunne,
Und schande und ouch lastir flihe,
den fromen ouch gutis gunne.
(Rsp., 1767-72)

There follow two citations from Socrates and Aristotle, both on the subject of leading a virtuous life, and having no direct bearing on coloured clothing. The second mention of colour comes in line 1797 with a pointer to the fact that one colour alone does not make something bunt. This truism is then applied to human-beings, and the image of the coloured dress is woven into the text once more:

Vele kunste und behendikeid
di machin eynen wisin man
An wen vel togunde sint geleid,
der tregit bilche bunte cleidir an.
(Rsp., 1805-8)

Rothe then makes use of another reference to Aristotle to introduce the key theme of moderation⁴⁶ into the discussion:

Der selbe meistir also spricht:
dy togunt in eyne mittil stehit.
(Rsp., 1813-4)

In the following lines, Rothe attempts to justify the ensuing didactic explanation of the subject:

Daz vorsten ouch vele lute nicht
wan en nicht uzlegunge geschehit.
(Rsp., 1815-6)

Suggestions for fitting behaviour are clothed by the author in semi-imperative verbs such as sal (1819) or ist nod daz (1820) followed by infinitives. Rothe then introduces the image of the archer's target to explain the virtue of moderation. He applies it in this instance particularly to the act of giving; too great a display of generosity (obirgiftig, 1838) is as wide of the target as miserliness (karg, 1854). The climax of the section is reached in the general statement on moderation, which has ceased to have any direct connection with the buntes cleid which is ostensibly being described:

Wer do gebit do her gebin sal,
und heldit do her sal haldin,
Und weiz der zcid und stunde obiral
und wi her dez sal waldin,
Der trifft daz mittil und daz zcel
und kan daz lastir uzgescheide;
Wan wez zcu wenig ist und zcu vel,
di zcwei sint lastir ouch beide.
(Rsp., 1865-72)

After application of this theory to the behaviour of a knight in battle who must find a compromise between cowardice and paranoia, Rothe quotes Seneca on virtue (togunt), and proceeds to create a liaison between several of the main themes of the section (themes are underlined for emphasis):

Togunt had masse zcu allin stundin ...
Di togunt wel eyenen furer han
und daz mag wol sin di wißeheid
Di si wole uzgerichtin kan
daz gar bunt werdit er cleid.
(Rsp., 1899-1904)

The section closes with a final statement of the main idea that only he is blessed (selig) who exemplifies a whole series of virtues, like the various colours which compose the pattern of the coat.⁴⁷ The clothes of various colours then, have been exploited by the author in much the same way as the gold of the fourth privilege - by simile, metaphor and direct explanation - to present the didactic themes.

The sixth privilege, namely the title herre⁴⁸ (1914), gives Rothe the opportunity to discuss nobility

of the soul as opposed to nobility of the body or outer appearance. Inner nobility, for Rothe, is contained within the blood and the heart, and he explicitly asks the reader to note this:

Edil nennit man sin blud
und sin herzce, merkit dit ebin.
(Rsp., 1919-20)

The title herre and the discussion of nobility of the spirit are re-united rather arbitrarily in line 1961:

Man nennit eynen ritter herre
nicht umme sin gelis, crusis har;
Man irbutit eme solche ere
umme sine togunde, daz ist war.
(Rsp., 1961-4)

After a quotation on the subject by Seneca (1973ff.), and a code of behaviour based on the same author and reported by Rothe in subjunctive verbs (si, 1989; brymme, 1990; sy, 1992; brenge, 1996) he continues with a catalogue of behaviour reminiscent of the advice given to Parzival by Gurnemanz,⁴⁹ and expressed by means of sal (1997, 2007) and a list of infinitives. A report of Plato's views on the qualities which stem from true nobility and those which are incidental culminates in a statement of Rothe's definition of the man who is truly praiseworthy:

Ist her danne von gudir ard
und veste in dem gudin synne
Und zcu gotlichin dingin gekard
und daz her gotis hulde gewynne,
Milde, kune, frolich und gutig
(dit gehorit alliz der sele zcu),
Wise, gruntlich, warhaftig, demutig
alrest ist her gelobit nu.
(Rsp., 2045-52)

The section closes with a mention of the privilege once more, and a pointer to the necessity of justification of the title herre by eigener fromikeid.⁵⁰

The last of the privileges, namely that of washing one's hands at table⁵¹, once more gives Rothe the opportunity to teach his views on various matters. The actual procedure of washing one's hands is mentioned only three times in the 155 lines (2066, 2073-4, 2161-2), each time

only a short reference being made. Rothe advises the knight, with reference to Augustine, not to exploit the poor or innocent (2077-2104) and not to destroy his enemy to the point of total destitution. There follows a condemnation of usury (wucher)⁵² with reference to the Jews.⁵³ The final passage contains Rothe's views on the key theme of the Ritterspiegel, namely the proper role of the poverty-stricken knight in the emerging late-medieval form of society governed by commerce and cash economy.⁵⁴ The pretext of describing the privilege of washing his hands has been completely omitted by the author at the end, as the more momentous question of livelihood occupies both author and reader.

At the end of this section, the reader is but scantily informed on the details of the privileges accorded to the knight. What he does know in detail are Rothe's views on the duty of the knight to fight for the cause of Christianity and his responsibilities towards his social inferiors; his views on the proper relationship between knight and squire, and the qualities to be striven after by both; his preference for nobility of the soul as opposed to rank inherited by birth; his esteem for patience, wisdom, love of God and faith, as well as his hatred of greed (girheid), arrogance (hochfart) and in chastity (unkeuscheid); his belief in the importance of nobility of the soul and the irrelevance of outer appearance; and finally his views on the role of the knight in the changing social pattern. Within the account of the privileges, there are twenty-two citations of or references to learned authors, as well as a large number of biblical references. These, significantly, do not apply to the privileges themselves, but to the moral points being made by Rothe. The privileges are merely part of the outer make-up of the knight, but the moral qualities which Rothe connects with them are to compose the inner picture which is to be interpreted from the

author's metaphorical mirror by the eyes of the soul (340).

In the case of Rothe's chronicles, the purpose behind his writing is, in keeping with the purpose of most medieval chronicles, both to teach and to glorify God.⁵⁵ The prologue to Chronik G contains several allusions to the didactic purpose behind the work; the author recommends a knowledge of past events as a method of learning how to deal with present and future problems:

Ist das her bedencket ebene,
Was etzwanne ist geschen,
Vnde dar nach schigkt syn leben,
So mag om nutz entstehenn.
(Prolog G, Str. 31)

This concept of history is, of course, by no means original to Rothe. The St. Albans monk Roger Wendover, for example, changes the well-known Ciceronian theme to suit his Christian creed, maintaining that history provides the necessary examples to improve mankind:

Being admonished by past evils ... they may betake themselves to humility and repentance, taking an example for imitation from the good, shunning the ways of the perverse.⁵⁶

Rothe develops this same theme in his Prolog G: the reader is to learn from examples of wisdom and of wickedness in the heroes and rogues of history:

Bilde mag her davon nemen
Vnde manche togunt wircken
Vnde der vntogunt sich schemen,
Ein bosis ende merken.
(Prolog G, Str. 32)

There follows a more general statement of the benefits to be reaped from history:

In dissen stucken so genant,
keinwertig, zcukunfftig, vorgangen,
Vindet man wißheit alzuhant,
Wer sie recht hath entpfangen.
(Prolog G, Str. 33)

and finally a direct exhortation to learn from the events of the past:

Nue lernet an vorgangen dingen,
Wie ir den keinwertigen sollet thun
Vnde mit den zukunfftigen ryngen
Nach eren vnde sehit zcu.
(Prolog G, Str. 34)

The final strophe of the prologue repeats the plea to learn from the examples of the past, and expresses the hope that the following Chronicle will fulfil a useful purpose:

Guter bilde nemet war
Hyrinne von den fromen,
So mag uch <ditz buchelin> gar
<Ditz buchelin> Zu nutze wol kommen.
(Prolog G, Str. 53)

At the beginning of the same prologue, Rothe gives a more general reflection on the purpose of his writing as a whole. He reflects on the works he has written and the success they have had, if one judges success in terms of usefulness or the fulfilment of a didactic purpose, as Rothe does. In his estimation of his own works he concludes:

Etzliche nutze waren,
Die sint bißher nach blebin.
Doch habe ich in den jaren
Or vil vmbstust geschreiben.
(Prolog G, Str. 2)

The works which had fulfilled no useful purpose had been in vain in Rothe's estimation. He regrets that his efforts have been to so little avail:

Gesammet ich sie hatte
Mit erbeit vnde mvhe,
Sie haben or kleine bathe,
Das muß mich nue ruwe.
(Prolog G, Str. 5)

Nevertheless, in his striving to do good, the author has decided to continue to write, comforted by the thought that even a good work can be of little use when the reader is blind (Strophe 6):

Sydder mich begonde
Nach woltat abir dorsten
Ich sammette alzo ich konde
Zwey buchere auch den fursten.
(Prolog G, Str. 7)

From the last two passages quoted here it is apparent that Rothe sees his writing within a background of

social duty - he is writing with difficulty and diligence (erbeit und mvhe, Str. 5) in order to fulfil a social purpose (woltat, Str. 7) from which he hopes to achieve something useful (nutze, Str. 2). If this aim has not been attained he considers his work useless (vmbsust, Str. 2; kleine bathe, Str. 5; wenig nutzce, Str. 6).

In the prologue to the later Thüringische Chronik L, Rothe again expresses a didactic aim. As in the prologue to Chronik G, the emphasis is on the practical use of a knowledge of history:

das keigenwertige dicke trüget,
deme zukunfftigen sicherheit gebricht:
das vorgangene wol bezuget.
(Prolog L, p.4)

The author stresses on several occasions within the prologue the advantage (nutz) which could be gained from the reading of history:

Fragit her das unde bedencket eben,
was vor gezeiten ist geschen,
unde schicket ouch dor noch sein leben,
sso magk om nutz dor von entstehn.
(Prolog L, pp.4-5)

Nemst ouch gutter dyng war
hir ynne von den fromen,
sso magk uch disse kronicke gar
zu guttem nutze komen.
(Prolog L, p.8)

The fact that the author includes once again in the Prolog L the regret that some of his works have been of little use:

doch han ich yn den jaren
gar vil umb sust geschreiben.
(Prolog L, p.2)

shows his deep awareness of his didactic task. The possibility that this self-critical assessment is a humility formula within the prologue should, however, not be discounted altogether. Such diffidence on the part of chroniclers is a well-known concept; humility formulae are found in Eusebius, Jordanes, Gregory of Tours, Bede and Einhard, as Hay points out.⁵⁷ Rothe's apology to Kurfürstin Anna that old age has prevented him from writing the work in verse could be understood in similar

vein. Even taking into account, however, that the prologues may contain assertions which obey the dictates of rhetoric rather than those of truth, the works in themselves show unmistakable traces of didactic intent. In Chronik L, for example, the reader's attention is on occasion drawn to the moral of the events being traced by means of formulaic imperative introductions such as nu mercket. At the end of the chapter which relates how King Andrew of Hungary's miners were led to treasure by supernatural voices, Rothe comments:

Nu mercket, das got den schatz yn der erden den fursten umbe togunde gebit.

(Thür. Chron. L, Ch. 409)

Similarly, the chapter in which the author describes how Landgrave Ludwig's faithfulness had been put to the test ends with:

Nu mercket des fursten togunt hirynne, wie gar sere her vorsmehete den ebruch an den leuten.

(Thür. Chron. L, Ch. 440)

Significant is Rothe's own indication as to what he regards to be one of the purposes of history-writing, namely to give a revealingly truthful picture, whether it be to the advantage or to the detriment of a historical personage:

Vorsweigen ssal man nicht in den kronicken der fursten unthogunden unde besundern ouch ire togunde, das der fromen loup gemeret werde unde der bossen geswechet, unde das eyn itzlicher doran gedencke, wie her seynen namen hynder om gelasse.

(Thür. Chron. L, Ch. 563)

In this matter Rothe shows himself more faithful to his didactic ends - and more objective - than Suger,⁵⁸ for example, in his Life of Louis the Fat, the aim of which is to "celebrate the king and mourn his death".⁵⁹ Hay makes the point that Suger was prepared to oversee Louis' faults, and later comments on William of Malmesbury:

It is interesting to observe in the preface ... his remarks on the need for charity towards William I, which echo the caution, or the charitable suspension of criticism, which we have observed in Suger.⁶⁰

Rothe, however, has little sympathy for a "charitable suspension of criticism"; on the contrary, he is constantly prepared to speak his mind, albeit often in the form of general statement without visible personal involvement. Such a historical value judgement is found, for example, in the chapter of Chronik L where he comments in general terms on the heresy of Emperor Frederick:

Cleglichen ist is wen die haupte der heiligen cristenheit yn irrethum vallen unde das sie schaden von den entphet von den sie beschirmunge habin sulde, also geschen ist von dem keisser Frederiche.

(Thür. Chron. L, Ch. 425)

Such general statements are also used by Rothe on occasion to voice approval:

Obir alle dyngk ist gut und nutze den steten eyntrechtigkeit unde gehorsam.

(Thür. Chron. L, Ch. 736)

By such means, then, the author hopes to lead the reader, without direct intervention, to an understanding of the moral behind history.

In his Liber devotae animae Rothe exploits the allegorical form in much the same way as in his early work Lob der Keuschheit. L. Ahmling judges that, "Allen Deutungen aber liegt die Tendenz einer praktischen Moral zu Grunde".⁶¹ He also points to the "imperativische Darstellungsform"⁶² which is often present, and which indicates an attempt to teach.

In the legends, the Passion and the Heilige Elisabeth, Rothe is at pains to describe the wicked deeds and character of a Pilate or a Judas, as well as the saintliness and piety of Elisabeth of Thuringia. Rothe was, of course, not the first author to use the legend for didactic purposes. There had been a steady flow of legends, Mariendichtung and hagiographic poetry since the end of the thirteenth century.⁶³ These legends were often conceived as Christian exempla and their aim was predominantly didactic, although the effort to entertain

the reader should not be overlooked. Rothe's chronicles already contain many of the elements - and indeed much of the material - later enlarged upon in his legends. The tendency to describe saintly or wicked characters had already been present, for example, in the Thüringische Chronik L.⁶⁴ Rothe's didactic aim in his legends, though inexplicit, is visible in the character studies and in the analysis of actions and deeds within them. As in the chronicles, the good are rewarded, if not always on earth, then in the afterlife; the wicked suffer a dreadful end and are subjected to the horrors of hell. The introductory imperative Nu merket, coupled with general statement, which was seen above to be a feature of the didactic method of Chronik L, and which Ahmling mentions as typical in the Liber devotae animae, can also be found in the Passion:

Nu merkit, waz daz gelt macht,
Daz alzo vel bosheit sacht.
(Pass. 709-10)

The tale of the coins⁶⁵ within the Passion to which the above quotation (daz gelt) applies, is a masterly example of God's manipulation of events on earth for His own purpose. Rothe calls upon his reader to follow the coins' journey through Old and New Testament.

A feature of Rothe's didactic method which is apparent in all his works is the absence of what he himself describes as "pointing the finger" (finger düten).⁶⁶ His teaching is accomplished by means of a certain progression. The first step is to divulge the misguided behaviour or decadent state of affairs. This is followed by mild chiding, usually in the third person rather than in the more direct second person; the scolding then gives way to an example of ideal behaviour or advice from patristic or scriptural sources which leads on to an exhortation to change one's ways. Didactic purpose is for Rothe no excuse to point the finger in scorn. He expresses this policy in several passages of his works, the longest theoretical treatment of it being in the Lob der Keuschheit.

The young priest uses Bernard as a guide to the ideal combination of chiding and teaching, quoting him on several occasions in the Lob der Keuschheit; for example:

du salt die lude orteiln mit nicht,
wan du van gote nicht bist gegeben
zu eime richter ubir ir leben ...
ir gesellschaft saltu aber nicht walde,
sundern straffe si also gutlich
das si dar van bekeren sich.
(LdK., 5463-5; 5475-7)

This is Rothe's own attitude throughout his didactic writings, although it is, of course, by no means original to him. The basic ideas are biblical,⁶⁷ already evident in the Old Testament, and also prevalent in Patristic writings.⁶⁸ In his estimation of sinners Rothe consistently recommends sympathetic treatment or at least understanding judgement. In the Lob der Keuschheit he advises, "des sal man di sunder nicht vorsmehen" (LdK., 1879). He emphasises on several occasions the privilege which has been shown by God to the sinless and chaste, and recommends that those who themselves are chaste have pity on sinners:

Ess sal ein kuscher zu allen geziten
mit den armen haben medeliten
in allen iren gebrechen.
(LdK., 5396-8)

The question is discussed at length with reference to Isidore and Bernard. Rothe draws attention to the latter's examples of Christ's leniency in his dealings with Zaccheus and Mary Magdalene.⁶⁹

The Ratsgedichte contain similar advice; in Von des Rathes Zucht Rothe condemns harsh treatment:

Bis sitig, czorne nicht sere!
Geistliche lute
Bewirdige, nicht finger düte!
(Ratsg., F 288-90)

Rothe may, of course, in this instance have been indirectly influenced by general tenets of the courtly code, where uncontrolled anger or Zorn was frowned upon as an element ill-becoming to hoevescheit or courtly behaviour.⁷⁰ He repeats his plea for lenient reasoning and restraint several times in Von des Rathes Zucht.

In the section Von dem Schultheißen, for example, he advises the judge: "In czorne nicht richte" (Ratsg., F460). He then recommends more explicitly:

Nicht schimphe vile,
Nicht vmb die habe [nicht] spile,
Auch gerne gelden,
Nymande slahen ader schelden
Danne mit dem rechten.
(Ratsg., F 464-8)

The emphasis on humane treatment is evident throughout Rothe's teaching. While by no means condoning the crimes committed, he asks of the judge:

Gnade vil erczeigen
Dye sich flehelich czü yme neigen,
Notdorfft vor sehen,
Den wytwen, weysen bie bestehen,
Sine hulffe wenden
Czu den armen vnd elenden,
Nach liebe, nach leyde
Von dem rechten nicht laßen scheide.
(Ratsg., F 470-7)

In his general advice to councillors, Rothe again emphasises the necessity to guide evil-doers with lenient, well-meaning treatment from which they must learn a lesson. Punishment, for Rothe, is not an end in itself, but above all a corrective influence:

Vberwynde mit gute,
Straff heimelich in sussem mute!
(Ratsg., B 286-7)

and

Susse schimphe gerne,
Daz man in schimphe lerne.
(Ratsg., B 296-7)

In his advice to the leader of the council, the Ratsmeister, Rothe again stresses the necessity for a gentle approach. The Ratsmeister should live a sinless life, says the author, and "senffte antworte geben" (Ratsg., F 370-1). In his relationship with the townspeople, he is to show benevolent interest and a willingness to comfort rather than to chastise:

Czu allen sachen
Der lute komen mit lachen;
Trostlichen rede
Vnd werke furen da myte.
(Ratsg., F 376-9)

In keeping with Rothe's respect for controlled good-will towards others, he includes in his list of those who may not give counsel: "Wer zcu gahe czornlich richtet" (Ratsg. F 333 see also B 494). Even the highest social rank is for Rothe no excuse to act impetuously; in the Fürsten-ratgeber he condemns anger as an impediment to wisdom:

Den herren bewegit bie wilten czorn,
So ist sin wisheit gar vorlorn.
(Ratsg., F 968-9)

The word czorn is again to be found at the beginning of the Ritterspiegel, where Rothe shows that anger and impatience provide no solution to problems. The nobleman, says Rothe, "zcornete sere" (Rsp., 5) and "waz gar ungeduldig" (Rsp. 10). He equates this kind of behaviour with hochfart⁷¹ (Rsp. 24) and untogunt (Rsp. 28) in contrast to the zcucht,⁷² hobischeit (Rsp. 44) and demud (Rsp. 52) which he would wish to find in the nobility of his day.

Later in the Ritterspiegel there is a striking passage on the follies of anger. In a stylised outcry, Rothe condemns anger, revenge and impetuosity as hindrances to wisdom:

Der zcorn der ist gar sere do wedir
daz man nicht gutis ratis beginnet;
Der zcorn der druckit di wißheit nedir
daz man nicht den schadin besinnet.
Der zcorn ist zcu der rache snel,
der wel zcu keynen gezciden
Horin dez wisin ratis spel
und geduldiclichin sich lidin.
Der zcorn und der snellir rad
sint der wißheid wedir sere.
(Rsp. 2517-26)

Thus wise and carefully thought-out action is Rothe's prime aim. Angry outbursts are rare in his works, and it is advice, teaching, examples and practical help which are the basis of his didactic theory. His Ritterspiegel contains several examples of behaviour which is a fitting alternative to czorn as a manner of dealing with problems or of putting forward one's views. He lays great store, for instance, by the power of example and upbringing rather than chastisement or fruitless anger:

Czuhit man kindir zcu guthe
daz si togunde mußin lernen,
Si wachsin en danne in dem muthe ...

(Rsp., 109-111)

He quotes the Psalmist David's view⁷³ that good children come from good parents (Rsp., 129).

Another alternative to mere anger is, in Rothe's estimation, the leading of an individual to a realisation of his failings. The first step to improvement, he argues, is self-recognition. One must be made aware of one's faults in order to correct them, and Rothe hopes with his Ritterspiegel to provide the mirror which will enable young knights to discover their failings:

Obir deßin spigil mache dich
und lerne dich baz irkennen.
(Rsp., 229-30)

Throughout Rothe's works, there is an emphasis on mildness and mercy and a condemnation of czorn and vingirdüten. The Ritterspiegel contains several passages which are of interest in this respect. The author stresses, for example, the importance of proper treatment of those dependent on one, be they servants or captured enemies. He emphasises the responsibility to treat one's lessers in a fair manner, reminding the reader that even those who are in influential positions and may judge over others, are themselves not exempt from God's judgment. This may be interpreted as a covert warning to the upper classes not to punish their lessers for failings while themselves committing excesses:

Hastu obir di luthe gewalt
und macht orteil zcu gebin,
Bistu darum danne uzgezalt
daz god nicht orteile din lebin?
(Rsp., 317-20)

In his treatment of how the ideal knight should behave at home towards his servants, Rothe cites Seneca (Rsp., 1985). The emphasis is on mildness and understanding which lead to help or improvement. Zcorn is once more condemned:

In sime huse si her frolich,
nicht also eyn bere her brymme
Daz zcirit sine sethe gar holich,
nicht gremelich sy sin stymme,
Mit sime gesinde kort sin zcorn
und mit senftin, ernstin wortin
Ane scheldin und ungesworn
so brenge her sy zcu fortin.
(Rsp., 1989-96)

Earlier in the same work, Rothe has warned the knight not to be "eyn lewe ... kegin sime huezgesinde" (Rsp., 1377-8). In keeping with this policy of mildness and fair treatment, Rothe warns the knight never to destroy an enemy to the point of beggary. The emphasis once more is laid on mane (Rsp., 2112), on teaching a lesson rather than on punishment and revenge.

The qualities of mercy and mildness are to be sought after, for these, and not force and anger, are the signs of true nobility:

Senftmutig und nicht gremelich
daz ist der ediln luthe gesmug.
(Rsp., 327-8)

Among the duties of a squire towards his master, Rothe mentions the obligation to watch that the knight "in zcucht sich halde harte" (Rsp., 1556) and to urge his master to exercise mercy (barmeherzcikeid, Rsp., 1559). The Psalmist David is chosen to exemplify the quality of mercy (barmeherzcig und gutig, Rsp., 1624), the emphasis being on his lenient treatment of those who asked forgiveness:

Wer eme flete, dem wart sin nyd
geduldig und gar senftmutig.
(Rsp., 1625-6)

The golden robe of the ideal knight is then equated with the qualities of mercy and forgiveness towards the poor or penitent:

Dit ist nu daz guldin gewant
daz eyn ritter sal antragen,
Also daz her sich irbarme zcuhan
wan eme di armin clagin,
Und den vorgebe ere schult
di eme gutlichin flehin.
(Rsp., 1631-6)

Rothe later reminds the knight that he need not be afraid in battle, since God is merciful and just (Rsp., 1650).

There is one interesting exception in the Ritter-spiegel to Rothe's belief in mildness and leniency; on one occasion Rothe advocates pointing the finger and explicitly wishes shame on the recipients. This is the treatment he recommends for a knight who has exploited the poor and helpless, thus making himself guilty of wucher. In this case, Rothe advises the good knights:

Der wuchir ouch nicht swigit
undir den fromen luthin,
Darmede her ouch irkrgit
di schande und vingirduthin.
(Rsp., 2133-6)

This would seem to indicate that Rothe considers wucher a worse sin than unchastity or weakness of the flesh. He pleads in the Lob der Keuschheit for understanding with sinners, since God has not given them the gift of chastity. On the other hand, when the sin must be considered calculated wrong-doing, as in the case of wucher, Rothe is merciless. He adumbrates a cycle of punishment whereby one generation of robbers will be ruined by the next, and in the last instance carefully insinuates that God will arrange the matter:

Vele lute habin den gloibin
god schicke ez wedir zcu rechte.
(Rsp., 2159-60)

On the whole, though, in his treatment of the sinner, Rothe pleads for leniency, and above all for understanding. His prime aim is to act out of wisdom and not for the sake of revenge or profit. Anger and mere "pointing the finger" are incompatible with wisdom. In keeping with this theory, angry outbursts are rare in Rothe's works; advice, teaching, examples, mild sympathy and practical help are the basis of his didactic creed. For Rothe, didactics are not only a means to an end in literary terms; they constitute a whole life code, and indeed govern both the style and content of Rothe's work as well as forming his whole outlook and personal life-style. Teaching through enlightenment, mild chastisement and example is his life's work.

1. Konrad von Würzburg, Der Trojanische Krieg, ed. Adalbert von Keller (Stuttgart, 1858) = Bibliothek des Litterarischen Vereins in Stuttgart, Vol XLIV, vv.188-195.
2. W. Stammer, "Geist und Form im Spätmittelalter", ZfdPh. 84 (1965), 486
3. See Sowinski, Lehrhafte Dichtung, p.3.
4. Denys Hay, Annalists and Historians: Western Historiography from the Eighth to the Eighteenth Centuries (London, 1977), p.19.
5. Herbert Grundmann, "Über die Welt des Mittelalters" in: Summa Historica: Die Grundzüge der welthistorischen Epochen, edd. Golo Mann, Alfred Heuß and Ernst Wilhelm Graf Lynar (Berlin, Frankfurt, Vienna, 1965) = Propyläen Weltgeschichte XII, 363-446. Grundmann discusses the medieval view of "das letzte Zeitalter", pp.369-73.
6. Sowinski, Lehrhafte Dichtung, p.68.
7. Goethe, "Über das Lehrgedicht" in "Über Kunst und Altertum" (1827), VI,1, cited by Sowinski, Lehrhafte Dichtung, p.1.
8. In the introductory passage of the Ritterspiegel Rothe expresses his intention to help "mynen frundin" (v.67) and "den ediln" (v.74).
9. Cited by Zander, "Johannes Rothe", p.46.
10. W. Rehm, "Kulturverfall und spätmittelhochdeutsche Didaktik", ZfdPh. 52 (1927), 312.
11. F. Ranke, "Vom Kulturverfall und Wiederaufbau in der deutschen Dichtung des Mittelalters" in: Gott, Welt, Humanität in der deutschen Dichtung des Mittelalters (Tübingen, 1952), p.95.
12. Eike von Repgow, Sachsenspiegel: Landrecht, ed. Cl. Frhr. von Schwerin (Stuttgart, 1969), p.19.
13. See C.S. Lewis, The Discarded Image (Cambridge, 1976), p.26. Lewis points to Ovid's description of the sun as mundi oculus (Met. IV, 228).
14. Matthew XVIII, 9: Et, si oculus tuus scandalizat te, erue eum et proice abs te; bonum tibi est cum uno oculo in vitam intrare, quam duos oculos habentem mitti in gehennam ignis.
15. For another aspect see the Fürstenratgeber, F 901-915.
16. Neumann, Untersuchungen, p.29.
17. Ibid., p.28.
18. Ratsgedichte, F 733-5; F 737-41; F 752-95; F 1065-7; F 1248-53; F 1258-63.

19. See, for examples, F.P. Pickering, Literature and Art in the Middle Ages (Florida, 1970) pp.105ff., 108. (Original title: Literatur und darstellende Kunst im Mittelalter (Berlin, 1966)). Also F.P. Pickering, Augustinus oder Boethius? II. Darstellender Teil (Berlin, 1976), p.90.
20. See, for examples Wilhelm Berges, Die Fürstenspiegel des hohen und späten Mittelalters (Stuttgart, 1938).
21. The shepherd/sheep image is, of course, a well-known Biblical image, e.g. Numbers XXVII, 17; 1 Kings XXII, 17; 2 Chronicles XVIII, 16; Matthew IX, 36; Mark VI, 34; Psalms XXIII, 1; Isaiah XL, 11; 1 Peter V, 4.
22. LdK. 333, 513, 1000, 1037, 2159, 2263, 2597, 3251, 3259, 4167, 4578, 5054, 5143.
23. See Herbert Backes, Bibel und Ars Praedicandi im Rolandslied des Pfaffen Konrad (Berlin, 1966), p.114.
24. Ibid., p.122.
25. This is a typical feature of sermons, and can be found, for example, in the Anegenge and Memento Mori.
26. For illustration of the uses of exemplum see Josef Martin, Antike Rhetorik: Technik und Methode (Munich, 1974), pp.119f. Also H. Lausberg, Elemente der literarischen Rhetorik. Eine Einführung für Studierende der klassischen, romanischen, englischen und deutschen Philologie. 4th ed. (Munich, 1971), p.135.
27. This is, of course, one of the classical uses of the exemplum. See Martin, Antike Rhetorik, p.119.
28. See Curtius, Europäische Literatur, pp.340f.
29. Ibid., p.340.
30. Curtius points out that the image of the mirror is not only common in classical works, but also biblical in origin. He points out that "die Weisheit ist 'speculum sine macula Dei maiestatis. et imago bonitatis illius'", Europäische Literatur, p.340.
31. For treatment of the distinction between "inner and outer eyes" in commentaries of Genesis, see B. Murdoch, The Fall of Man in the Early Middle High German Biblical Epic (Göppingen, 1972), pp.96f.
32. Cf. Ratsgedichte F 56: Dyt glichinisse wil ich vch dūten.
33. The Israelites 1105; David and Goliath 1137-48; Joshua 1149; Judas Macchabeus 1151; Christ 1169-81.
34. E.g. Augustine 1089-96; 1201-44.
35. E.g. Cassiodorus 1214-16.
36. Most probably St. Germain, Bishop of Auxerre, born ca. 378/448, who was sent to Britain to combat the Pelagians.
37. Frequent use is made of the rhetorical question e.g. v.1472, v.1475.

38. Rsp., vv.1587-1602.
39. Petersen, Rittertum, p.126 points out that Rothe's "Rasis" is Arrazes. For reference to Rhazes (ar-Rāzī), see Encyclopedia Britannica, 15th edition, 1975, Micropedia VIII, p.443.
40. Petersen, Rittertum, p.126 suggests that gedult is used here in the sense of Stetigkeit. On the other hand, Petersen may have been too strongly influenced by the staete of courtly works. A meaning of gedult which includes the sense of dulden or patient suffering in a Christian sense seems to fit better, especially since the allegory is continued with reference to David and an appeal for love of God (1641).
41. Psalm XXII, 6.
42. Albracht is Rothe's translation of Albertus Magnus.
43. The emphasis is once more on inner matters, albeit expressed as outer criteria, such as rust. Cf. also the "inner eyes" mentioned above.
44. The hure here could be equated with the unkuscheid above, while the worffilspel could, broadly speaking, be classified as the girheid of line 1714.
45. Throughout the Middle Ages, Sumptuary Laws laid down the proper mode of dress, its colour and the material. See, for example, the Nürnbergger Polizeiordnungen aus dem 13. - 15. Jahrhundert, ed. Josef Baader (Stuttgart, 1861). See also Petersen, Rittertum, pp.125-30 for further examples.
46. The concept of mâze is well-known as one of the ethical poles of the courtly code. In Rothe's work the term is often used to signify moderation in eating and drinking as well as avoidance of excesses in one's dress.
47. For examples of Rothe's use of the word bunt to refer to the grey and white fur of the squirrel and also to many-coloured cloth, see Petersen, Rittertum, pp.129-30. Distinctions in clothing were already evident in the Old Testament. The best-known example is, of course, Joseph's coat of many colours. (Genesis XXXVII, 3).
48. Petersen, Rittertum, p.131, disputes the fact that the title herre was ever directly connected with the accolade. He writes:
"Schwerlich hat es je eine Regel gegeben, die das Recht zur Führung des Titels Herr an den Ritterschlag band. Und wenn je einmal vereinzelt eine solche Bestimmung getroffen worden ist - praktisch ist sie nie geworden."

This doubt emphasises our point that Rothe was not so much interested in accuracy of detail or explicit description of the privileges as in the opportunity offered by these privileges to present his didactic exposition.

49. Wolfram von Eschenbach, Parzival, ed. Albert Leitzmann 6th ed., (Tübingen, 1963), see Book III.
50. fromikeid is used here, of course, in its MHG sense of "the art of making a useful contribution to society and mankind as a whole". See Chapter 6 below.
51. For details on habits of bathing and washing of hands in various social ranks, and examples from medieval writing, see Petersen, Rittertum, pp.134-7.
52. Wuocher or usury is discussed in detail below (Chapter 3). See also Petersen, Rittertum, pp.138-40.
53. The connection between wuocher and the Jews is typical in Rothe's times. He uses the horned hat, the Judenhut (v.2132) as a symbol of wuocher.
54. The change in the social pattern in Rothe's day will be discussed in detail below with reference to the role of the nobility. See Chapters 3 and 4 below.
55. See Hay, Annalists, p.34 and p.57.
56. Ibid., p.68.
57. Ibid., p.32, also Curtius, Europäisches Mittelalter, p.93.
58. Sugerius Abbas Sancti Dionysii, Abbot Suger on the Abbey Church of St. Denis and its art treasures, ed., tr. and annotated Erwin Panofsky, repr. Princeton, 1948.
59. See Hay, Annalists, p.55.
60. Ibid., p.55.
61. Ahmeling, Vorstudien, p.56.
62. Ibid., p.57.
63. For examples see Sowinski, Lehrhafte Dichtung.
64. Rothe dwells, for example, on the good deeds of Elisabeth of Thuringia and her husband, Ludwig, taking pains to give a character study.
65. Passion, vv.293-449.
66. Ratsg., F 290.
67. E.g. Ecclesiastes VII, 10: Ne sis velox ad irascendum, quia ira in sinu stulti requiescit.
68. Rothe cites Bernard and Isidore of Seville.
69. Luke XIX, 2ff; Luke VIII, 2.
70. See also Winsbeckische Gedichte nebst Tirol und Friedebrandt, ed. A. Leitzmann, 3rd rev. ed. Ingo Reiffenstein (Tübingen, 1962) p.14, Strophe 24:
gezoumet rehte sî dîn zorn:
sî gaebe umbe êre niht ein hâr.

71. For Rothe, hochfart amounts to sinful arrogance. Hartmann had already used the word in a similar sense in Der Arme Heinrich, v.111 and Gregorius, v.135. See also Winsbecke, p.23, Strophe 40:
Sun, hôchvart unde gîtikeit,
diu zwei sint boese nâchgebûr,
an den der tievel sich versneit.
72. Neumann (Ritterspiegel pp.IX-X) points out that Rothe uses terms such as zcucht and hobischeit in a sense which is no longer courtly, but rather bourgeois.
73. Conceivably Psalm 128, 3, although this would call for a very free interpretation. I have been unable to trace any other parallel in the Psalms.

CHAPTER 3: Didactic Purpose and its Effect on the
Portrayal of Contemporary Society in
the Ritterspiegel.

The Ritterspiegel has consistently been dubbed a realistic work. The realistic aspect of Rothe's portrayal has been stressed by most of the critics who have examined his work in any detail: Petersen, for example, claims of Rothe's treatment of the knighthood:

Was Rothe über das Rittertum zu sagen hat, das hat er keiner weltlichen oder geistlichen Dichtung in deutscher Sprache entnommen. Sein Ausgangspunkt ist die Beobachtung der Wirklichkeit.¹

Petersen's pupil, Neumann, expresses a similar conviction in the introduction to his edition of the Ritterspiegel:

Sein (Rothe's) Ausgangspunkt ist die Beobachtung der Wirklichkeit, und sein nüchterner Tatsachensinn bewahrt ihn vor romanhafter Ausschmückung.²

In an examination of cultural decline and late medieval didactic writing, W. Rehm also considers that the emphasis in Rothe's work is on the reality of his portrayal:

Rothe will das Tatsächlich-Objektive, den augenblicklich-wirklichen Zustand des Rittertums ohne alle Verklärung geben.³

Obviously, even a superficial comparison with other medieval works which tell of knights - particularly the epics of the Blütezeit, of which Auerbach rightly maintains: "Die geographischen, wirtschaftlichen, gesellschaftlichen Verhältnisse ... werden nie aufgeklärt"⁴ - throws into relief what then must appear to be a convincingly realistic background in Rothe's Ritterspiegel, for which economic and social considerations constitute the very raison d'être.⁵ Beyond this, however, it is necessary to stress Rothe's fundamentally didactic purpose in his work.⁶ A simple and superficial comparison of Rothe with the courtly epics runs the risk of implying some kind of causal link between the two, when in fact

there is none. Such a leaning is betrayed in Petersen's mention of "weltlichen oder geistlichen Dichtung", as well as in Neumann's "romanhafte(r) Ausschmückung" and Rehm's "ohne alle Verklärung". These expressions could be interpreted as a pointer to the fact that Rothe is distancing himself from some accepted norm. This "norm", however, is on a completely different plane from Rothe's work, which makes any attempt at such comparison at best irrelevant. Thus an attempt to claim "realism" for the Ritterspiegel on the grounds that it differs from the courtly epic must be dismissed.

The question of the place of realism in Rothe's Ritterspiegel is much more complex than the above-named critics would have one believe. Indeed, even the terminology involved in an examination of what Auerbach calls "die hoffnungslose Diskussion ... über die Definition des Begriffs Realismus"⁷ is problematic. It must suffice here to say that the term realistic will be used to describe Rothe's treatment of conditions when it appears historically acceptable on a general scale by reference to other sources. Unrealistic will be reserved for details which are fictitious, or clearly created ad hoc, while inauthentic will be used in a special, restricted sense to refer to Rothe's treatment when he describes events or conditions which, although basically realistic in the above sense, are either used out of context or archaically, or which are given a change of emphasis to suit the author's didactic purpose.

The main theme of the Ritterspiegel - the decline of the contemporary nobility - is introduced in the first lines of the work which describe an encounter supposedly close to the experience of the author. The conversation is introduced by the familiar formula "Ich horte",⁸ which creates an atmosphere of relatively close contact and confidentiality as well as the impression that the dialogue which follows is in fact the result of direct encounter:

Ich horte daz eyn edilman
von eyne großin geslechte
Clagete her mochte nicht gehan
also hy vor sin vater knechte.
(Rsp., 1-4)

After an account in reported speech of the young nobleman's question (introduced by "Her fragete") as to why some peasants enjoyed greater riches and higher standing than he, who had been born a nobleman, the author changes over to direct speech,⁹ emphasising the direct nature of the contact and the conversation. The passage begins with the introductory "Ich antwerte" followed significantly by a question, albeit rhetorical, which again creates a plausible atmosphere for a real encounter:

Ich antwerte: worum thud ir nicht
also uwir eldirn habin gethan?
(Rsp., 21-22)¹⁰

A condemnation of the behaviour of the nobility of the times, supported by a mild laudatio temporis acti, is followed by a reference to the biblical example of Joseph, who rose through his own efforts from being a faithful servant to become ruler of Egypt.¹¹ The speech ends with a general statement which points the moral of the exemplum and reminds the reader of the author's didactic purpose:

solche ere had dinst und werdige craft.
(Rsp., 64)

The form of the verbal exchanges gives the impression of a personal discussion of actual topics under everyday circumstances. The reality of tone could, of course, be used by the author as a purely aesthetic feature, even if the content were fictitious, but in the case of the Ritterspiegel, the details discussed are taken from topical themes and, one could argue, reflect historically acceptable reality. Again, however, the term is problematic, for "reality" as portrayed in literary works is a relative concept, and it can not ever mirror without comment the contemporary situation. To a certain extent it is formed by the mentality and the philosophy of the

period, by the social and economic structure of the society involved, by the relationship between Church and state, and not least by the history and culture of the people. An examination of all those factors is beyond the scope of this work. The following brief historical examination of social and economic conditions in Rothe's times aims to provide sufficient background information to enable contrast and comparison.

The predicament of the nobility in Rothe's times which features predominantly in the introductory dialogue and is indeed a central theme throughout the work, is well-known both from historically founded accounts and from other contemporary literary works. The gradual weakening of feudal ties and obligations¹² as well as the decline of the agricultural supremacy brought about by the growth in the volume of trade and a new cash economy had undermined the position of the landowning nobility in late medieval society.¹³ Vassals and serfs flocked to the new manufacturing centres, or to work for prosperous merchants in the growing towns, leaving their former masters not only short-handed but also with the burden of small holdings which no longer brought in rent or taxes. More and more municipal monopolies took over the neglected land and turned it to their economic advantage.¹⁴ Indeed, a few far-sighted profiteers even managed to amass considerable fortunes by taking over neglected lands at minimal cost. By the beginning of the fourteenth century the feudal-based economic system had been undermined to such an extent that England and France, for example, had been forced to find new sources of income to fill their depleted coffers and replace their former dependence on feudal rights.¹⁵

The feudal pattern of warfare was also giving way to a new system.¹⁶ This, obviously, affected a great number of the nobility, for now the battle field and the campaign no longer offered them an adequate livelihood

and a glamorous mode de vivre. Already by the fourteenth century, the armies of most European countries consisted no longer mainly of nobles and their vassals, but to a great extent of mercenaries.¹⁷ Mounted knights had to suffer the humiliation of being defeated by armies of peasants on foot: Kortrijk (1302), where Flemish infantry defeated French knights, Crecy (1346), Poitiers (1356) and Agincourt (1415), where English archers accounted for mounted French troops, were all such humiliating defeats for armies of knights.¹⁸ Stephenson analyses the situation:

Courtrai, Crecy and Poitiers were noteworthy victories of skilfully used infantry over the best of cavalry forces. And in the following century the coup de grace to the traditional system was administered by the Swiss when they destroyed the proud armies of Charles the Rash. Although knights ... were still fighting at the opening of the 16th century, it had come to be recognised that at least for defence, they had to be reinforced with units of pikemen, archers and other infantry.¹⁹

Earlier campaigns, especially the Crusades, which had given the poor knight or younger son the chance to win possessions or land in the conquered regions as a reward from his liege-lord, were by now an irretrievable greatness of the past.

The crisis with which the nobles were faced was to a certain extent the direct consequence of outside circumstances, such as the revolution in warfare, the advent of the modern cash economy based on work and payment, and the restructuring of the until then predominantly agricultural social pattern.²⁰ To this extent the crisis was inevitable and scarcely avoidable. On the other hand, it only reached such sizeable dimensions due to a failure on the part of both the knights and the landed nobility to recognise their problems soon enough and tackle them in an effective way. To most of them, a society in which the nobility did not control the key functions and enjoy the highest status - until then always laid down by the Heerschild²¹ - was unthinkable.

Rather than yield to the standards of the new middle class and adapt their way of life to allow for the economic restructuring, the nobles clung to their outdated privileges and customs.²² They consistently refused to take up any kind of manual work since this was considered unbecoming to their status. Rehm points to the extent of the upheaval brought about in the Middle Ages by the new economic situation:

Eine ganz neue Macht tritt in das Leben des mittelalterlichen Menschen ein, die wie nichts anderes so schnell und rücksichtslos die alte gesellschaftliche Ordnung und die Sittlichkeit 'wertwidrig' unterhöhlt und damit die alten ethischen Satzungen und Lebensansichten umstürzt.²³

The nobility fought against these changes, or disregarded them, trying for as long as possible to carry on as before, oblivious to outside developments. The expansion, however, soon reached such proportions that resistance became suicidal. In the eyes of the nobility, there were two sources for this evil: in short, the town and the penny. Already in the early twelfth century, Guibert of Nogent had described the growing towns as detestable communes which the serfs had set up to escape from their lord's authority and to annul his rights.²⁴ In England, Richard of Devizes comments: "Communia est tumor plebis, timor regni, tepor sacerdotii".²⁵ In German literary works of the Middle Ages, the pfennig as the symbol of the new cash economy is made responsible not only for the economic upheaval, but also for its social consequences. A fifteenth century poet describes the power of the pfennig as follows:

Der pfenning ist zû allen dingen vnuerdrossen,
Er (zû) erpricht purg wol verslossen.²⁶

Muskatblüt stresses in many poems the victory of the pfennig over time-honoured moral values:

Wer nacht raubt stilt, dar zû mort brent,
hat er dan vil pennynge,
vil balde wirt er zû hobe erkant.
die warheit mûs ich singen,
man spricht vil drat: "kom in den rat"
man zelt in zû den besten.²⁷

The same attitude is evident in another poem of Muskatblüt's, where both money and the towns are shown at discordance with life in rural areas:

Zücht nu ein bür in ein stat,
die warheit müsz ich sagen,
mit gelt so kumpt er in den rat,
zü hant so wil er dragen
marder vnd fuchse vehhüt vnd luchsz
er nent sich nymme büwer;
als balt der rok im ist getrennt, zü hant so schempt
er sich der fründe; ein stat, ein pünde
die zwei die scheit eyne müre.²⁸

The landowning nobility and the knights, seeing their very existence threatened by this new bourgeois²⁹ monetary economy, turned their energy to praising the standards of the past, still shunning any form of manual labour,³⁰ and heaping scorn on the means used by their former lessers to amass riches.³¹ Nevertheless, the growing towns, with their manufacturing and trading centres, became increasingly rich at the expense of the landowning nobility, whose capital and property, of course, had been directed almost entirely towards agriculture. Jacques le Goff also points out that the high standard of living required by rank, as well as the mounting cost of building castles and buying knightly armour, had exhausted the knightly classes financially.³² Also the Crusades and the many squabbles they fought out among their own ranks had had a long-term effect, so that in fact they were as a class severely undermined when the new economic system caught them un-awares and served the final blow. Some of the nobles, divested of their traditional functions of landlord and warrior, and impoverished by their loss of work-force and feudal dues, turned as a last resort to occupations even less becoming to their status than the bourgeois ethic they shunned. From a Bauernspiegel of 1425 (some ten years later than Rothe's Ritterspiegel) one can gain an indication of how complete the degradation of a part of the nobility had become in the description by Rolevinck of the Junker of his native Westphalia:

Ihr Leben betrachte ich als ein Weltwunder. Sie entstammen nämlich edlen Geschlechtern, sind von hohem Wuchse, haben riesige Körperkräfte und auch rege Köpfe und sind von Natur gutmütig. ... Hätten sie genug Geld, ihre Zeche zu bezahlen, nie verliessen sie die Schänke, um zu rauben. Viel Böses lehrt sie und zu vielem Übel treibt sie die unglücklichste Armut. ... Wie ich glaube, könntest du es nicht ohne Tränen ansehen, wie die hübschen Junker tagtäglich um ihr kümmerlich Brot und Kleid kämpfen und sich Galgen und Rad aussetzen, um Not und Hunger zu scheuchen.³³

The already precarious situation of the land-owning nobility was not, of course, improved by the Black Death which wrought havoc in Europe in the second half of the fourteenth century, bringing about a drastic reduction of the population in the towns, and to a lesser extent also in the countryside. It is reckoned that at least half the population was wiped out in the worst epidemic in 1348-9.³⁴ J.C. Russell claims that the average life expectation between 1348 and 1375 dropped to 17 years.³⁵ This reduction in population caused a surplus of crops which in turn forced down the prices of grain and other agricultural commodities - the nobles' main source of income. The plague had also accelerated the steady stream of labour away from the countryside to the towns, where jobs had been made plentiful by the toll of the Black Death. Wages rose in an uncontrolled measure as workers became scarce, and the gap between agricultural prices and the escalating industrial prices became excessive.³⁶ The petty landowners became poorer as their lands became steadily depopulated. The revenue they had collected from rents was lost, their untended crops were ruined and their fields gradually overgrown.³⁷ F. Lütge describes the effects of the Black Death in Europe as devastating:

An apocalyptic catastrophe destroyed an intellectual, spiritual, social and economic form of life which reached back in all essentials to the Carolingian era. ... forces were unleashed which were to transform all of intellectual, social, political and economic life.³⁸

Indeed, Lütge sees the Black Death as the primary factor which caused the far-reaching changes in fourteenth century life. The economic upheaval and the re-appraisal of the various social ranks and privileges can be seen, in Lütge's opinion, as a direct consequence of the conditions brought about by the plague.

The new social pattern, then, as well as the change in mode of warfare and the difficulties brought about by the Black Death, presented the nobility with the problem of acclimatising themselves to the changing balance of society and of finding a new sphere of action in which they could earn their livelihood without stooping to occupations considered unfitting for their social rank.

Not only history provides a yardstick for Rothe's portrayal of knightly life and the problems presented by the change in the structure of society; a brief examination of the works of well-known predecessors such as Neidhart von Reuenthal, Konrad von Würzburg and Wernher der Gartenaere enables one to detect a progression in the treatment of the knights' predicament.

Neidhart von Reuenthal immediately springs to mind as one of the early champions of the landowning and knightly classes in the face of opposition from the increasingly prosperous peasants.³⁹ Laudatio temporis acti is apparent, for example, in Neidhart's well-known verse describing the theft of a mirror:

nu ist in allen landen niht wan truren unde klagen,
sit der ungevüege dörper Engelman
der vil lieben Vriderune ir spiegel nam
do begunde truren vreude uz al den landen jagen,
daz si gar verswant
mit der vreude wart versant
zuht und ere; disiu driu sit leider nieman vant.⁴⁰

Opinions differ as to the universality of Neidhart's criticism. Ferdinand Schürmann, for example, argues that many of his songs are "Trutzlieder gegen einzelne Bauern und Bauerngruppen ohne Invektiven gegen den gesamten Stand."⁴¹ Gerhart Schindele, however, in his recent

interpretation goes so far as to suggest that the theft of the mirror in the poem quoted above should be interpreted as the theft of the "symbolische Repräsentanz feudaldadliger 'Zivilisation'".⁴² The truth lies, in fact, probably between these two interpretations. Neidhart complains about the lack-lustre state of contemporary society, mocking the peasants who, he has no doubt, are to blame for the passing of the courtly virtues (as zuht and ere above) which he esteems so highly. Nevertheless, there is no general bemoaning of the depraved state of knighthood; only a certain fear is expressed that the newly enriched peasants are destroying knightly society. Invective is heaped upon village boors and braggart upstarts, but no solution to the problem is offered, and indeed, the problem itself is not even articulately outlined.

The braggart upstart, who is little more than a caricature in Neidhart's work, comes into his own in Wernher der Gartenaere's Meier Helmbrecht.⁴³ Young Helmbrecht, as is well known, is a peasant upstart who aspires to knighthood and is indeed able with the financial help of his hard-working peasant father to equip himself in knightly fashion and join the entourage of a robber knight. Wernher paints a vivid picture of the masquerading, marauding so-called knights; young Helmbrecht tells his father of his treatment of the peasants with whom he comes into contact:

dem ich daz ouge ûz drucke,
disen hâhe ich in den rucke,
disen bind ich in den âmeizstoc,
einem ziuhe ich den loc
mit der zange ûz dem barte,
dem andern rîz ich die swarte,
einem mülle ich die lide,
disen henk ich in die wide
bî den sparrâdern sîn.
daz die bûren hânt daz ist mîn.
(Meier Helmbrecht, 1243-52)

The laudatio temporis acti in this work is preached from the lips of the father, significantly himself a peasant.

In the case of Neidhart's work, the noble author had pronounced a certain fear of usurpation of his rights by the peasantry. Now, however, in Helmbrecht the peasantry itself has come to recognise the potential danger involved in the social upheaval. Father Helmbrecht warns:

nû volge mîner lêre
des hâst du frum und êre.
wan selten im gelinget
der wider sînen orden ringet.
dîn ordenunge ist der phluoc.
(Meier Helmbrecht, 287-91)

The doubts of Helmbrecht's father are shown to be justified in the finale, when Helmbrecht's robber acquaintances are executed and he himself is left to wander the country as a cripple. He is no longer acceptable to his peasant father whom he had mocked with his modern knowledge, and he meets a didactically fitting end when he is hanged from a tree by the very peasants whom he had scorned and plundered. Thus, while the condemnation of the peasant upstart and his immoral way of life are in the foreground, the only suggestions the father can make are that his son return to his own standards. Wernher is conservative per se. He can see no other solution than a return to the rigid social order and moral standards of the past.

Another work from around the same time (ca. 1260) is Konrad von Würzburg's Heinrich von Kempten or Kaiser Otto mit dem Barte.⁴⁴ As in Meier Helmbrecht, one of the main themes of Konrad's tale centres around the laws governing the relationship between the social classes, although this time on a different plane. The action is sparked off by a child of the Duke of Swabia who, with childlike impatience, breaks the rules of courtly etiquette and begins to eat from a loaf of bread before the meal has begun. For his bad table manners, which constitute a breach of the Tisch-zucht,⁴⁵ the boy is beaten by the high steward, an action which contravenes the laws of social hierarchy.⁴⁶ This faux pas is, however, punished drastically by the noble Heinrich von Kempten (Ministeriale) who kills the steward and by so doing in turn breaks the law, which forbids acts

of violence at court (Hoffrieden).⁴⁷ Heinrich is thereupon banished by Emperor Otto. Years later, however, he is called upon by his feudal lord to fight abroad for Emperor Otto's cause. Since refusal would mean loss of his status and property, Heinrich follows the dictates of the social code and joins the campaign, carefully keeping his distance from Otto. While bathing, however, he is the witness of an attempt to murder Otto, and without hesitation he springs, naked as he is, to the Emperor's aid. Although he withdraws before Otto can recognise him, his identity becomes known, and the Emperor pardons him, lifting the banishment.

In the very outcome of the story one must see a certain progression away from the rigid ideals. At first, these ideals are adhered to absolutely and any breach of them is punished severely. Thus the child is beaten for its breach of Tischzucht; paradoxically, by punishing the child for this breach, the steward in turn commits a breach of the Heerschuld order. Yet again, punishment for a breach of the law leads to further contravention - namely Heinrich's act of revenge which breaks the laws of Hoffrieden. The complexity of this legal entanglement itself is enough to suggest a scepticism with regard to the rigidity of these courtly laws. The final outcome strengthens this attitude since, in the end, it is not another law which resolves the complex situation, but an instinctive action prompted by a humane element.⁴⁸

In Helmbrecht, the social code and the law had determined the outcome; in Heinrich von Kempten, however, there is no call to return to the standards of the past, but a tendency to depend on human qualities which are beyond the law. As yet, however, there is no suggestion of a specific alternative to the contemporary laws and rules governing the social strata.

Keeping in mind the social and economic climate of Rothe's day, and the attitude to social change shown by earlier poets, it is now revealing to take a closer look

at the reflection of contemporary society in the Ritterspiegel. Rothe's Ritterspiegel, in its treatment of the economic crisis, basically imparts information similar to that found in social history manuals, namely, that the nobility is becoming increasingly impoverished. In the Ritterspiegel, however, events and details are often interpreted in a fashion which is determined more by Rothe's didactic purpose and his world-view as a whole than by the facts themselves. For instance, he portrays the onset of poverty and its consequences for the nobility:

Wan den richin abeget er gud
also daz si mußin vorarmen.
(Rsp., 519-20)

The causes of this poverty, however, are seen by Rothe not as the consequence of social developments, but in keeping with his theocentric view of history, as God's punishment for shortcomings; the rich have become poor because:

... si nicht gebruchin wisir synne
und erin und gutis nicht achtin.
Und der untogunde wollin begynne
und daz zcukunftige nicht betrachtin
Und in den spigil nicht wollin sehin
wie vorgangin sint di richin
Und noch allezcid vorgehin
und er edilkeid vorblichin.
(Rsp., 521-8)

Several of the principal themes of the Ritterspiegel come together here: God deprives such people because they have disregarded their honour (ere, 522) and their former ethical standards (523, also 23, 28, 34, 44). They have failed to look wisely ahead (524, also 469-92) and have yet to learn that earthly riches are but transitory pleasures (526-8, also 197-208, 241-82). Rothe is in modern terms naive in his attempt to trace social and historical development; he fails to explain that the economic problem is caused to a certain extent by outside developments in the changing social pattern. Nor does his Ritterspiegel convey any connection between the social and economic problems of the nobility and the

Black Death to which modern historians have attributed such significance.⁴⁹ As will be examined in greater detail in connection with Rothe's chronicles, the author adhered in his historiography to the common medieval concept that the omnipotent Christian God not only controlled events on earth, but also determined the course of history by his direct intervention. Fluctuations in man's material prosperity were attributed to the just hand of God. The good were rewarded, the wicked were punished. In lines 521-8 quoted above, Rothe sees the impoverishment of the nobility in this light, namely as a direct result of divine intervention. Later in the Ritterspiegel, however, directly before the section in which the author suggests several ways in which the poverty-stricken nobles could earn a livelihood, he again discusses the subject of poverty briefly, this time with a change in emphasis. He is now prepared to concede the fact that although one should normally be satisfied with what God has provided, this amount may on occasion become too little to provide subsistence. This time, Rothe hazards no explanation for the change in circumstances; the line reads simply: "Ab daz nu werdit zcu geringe," (Rsp., 2173). Neither the cause nor the development of this impoverishment are discussed. The lack of explanation for their poverty is significant; indeed it is almost a silent acknowledgement of a state approaching Epigonentum. In the preceding lines, Rothe has urged the knights not to engage in robbery or exploitation of the poor if they wish to enjoy the privilege of washing their hands at table. The discussion of impoverishment then follows on directly with a reference to the Bible:

Daz ewangelium daz spricht
her sulle em laßin gnugin
Daran daz eme sin erbe uzricht,
und waz em god zcu wel fugin
Von sime dinste an deme solde
der eme werdit gegeben,
Beide an silbir und an golde
also em daz wol ist ebin.

Ab daz nu werdit zcu geringe,
wie sal her eme danne thu,
Sal her danne eyn hantweg dinge?
daz geborit eme doch nicht zcu.
(Rsp., 2165-76)50

One could argue that the fact that there is no mention here of God's punishment behind the impoverishment is a result of Rothe's disinclination to point the finger.⁵¹ On the other hand, the sympathetic treatment of the subject and the suggestions for amelioration which follow could well be the result of an as yet unconscious awareness in the author that the impoverishment is indeed caused to a certain extent by social factors over which the knights had no control. At the beginning of the Spiegel, the didactic purpose of the work had determined the choice of reasons for the change in circumstances. Now, however, at the climax of the discussion on the impoverishment of the nobility, sympathy and traces of an understanding of social problems motivate the advice given, albeit still within a didactic framework. Nevertheless, it is apparent that Rothe is still not fully conscious of the role played by social change and economic progress in the fluctuation of man's fortunes. Neither his world view, in which God determines all earthly life, nor the solely didactic purpose of his works would have allowed him to distance such a significant change as the impoverishment of the nobility from God's control. Thus Rothe's description of the impoverishment of the upper classes of his day can be called realistic in the sense described above; it is, however, unauthentic in so far as the author is moved by a didactic purpose which depends on the world view that ill fortune is due to punishment by a just God, and which fails to take sufficient account of the social and economic developments of the times.

Although he fails to perceive fully consciously the underlying causes of the economic crisis of his day, Rothe's work does represent a progression when compared with the works of his predecessors. Where Neidhart had done little else than slander, Wernher look to the values

of the past and Konrad call on general humane qualities, Rothe chooses to be forward-looking. His awareness of the consequences of the social and economic changes for some strata of the upper classes leads him to suggest several novel solutions to the problems of the impoverished knights and noblemen. He does not expect them to take up a trade, since he considers this to be beneath their station:

Sal her danne eyn hantweg dinge?
daz geborit eme doch nicht zcu.

(Rsp., 2175-6)

Keynerlei hantweg sal her ubin
wan em daz nicht wol zcemit.

(Rsp., 2197-8)

He does, however, suggest several occupations from which he considers a noble could make a livelihood without undue disgrace. He names certain agricultural pursuits in which the noble could engage:⁵²

Sinen pherdin abir an erin hubin
adir ab sy werin vorlemit,
Den mag her wole arczdigin,
had her icht dez gelernit.
Her darf sich ouch dez nicht vorzcigin
wanne her sin korn inernit,
Her griffe in der schunen zcu
daz ez werde gelegit.
Ouch mag her uf sime roße daz thu
daz sin lant werdit geegit.
(Rsp., 2199-2208)

The breeding of cattle is also considered a suitable pursuit for a noble landowner:

Di vihezucht ist ouch gar nutzce
beide rindir, schaffe und di swin.
(Rsp., 2217-8)

The rearing of horses for profit is allowed, although there is no mention of participation in the actual selling of them:

Pherde mag her wole koiffin
und di jung ufstallin
Und eyne winnunge daruz sloiffin
wan eme daz mag gefallin.
(Rsp., 2193-6)

Rothe surprisingly even concedes a limited activity in the field of commerce:⁵³

Mit eyne mag her anestehin
der etzwaz koifschatz tribit,
Und vorlusit darumme nicht sin lehin,
eyn gudir ritter her wol blibit.

Furit der koifman in di lant
pherde, worzce adir win,
Wachz, ledir adir gud gewant,
dez mag her eynen teil wol nemen in;
Wez her bedarf in sime huz,
daz laße her eme ouch brengin.
Sin gelt had her gegebin uz,
dez winnunge sal dit erlengin.
(Rsp., 2181-92)

In this case, Rothe's allowances are based on a realistic, and for his times progressive assessment of the growing importance of commerce. Given his ecclesiastical background and his didactic purpose, Rothe might have been expected to adhere to the common contemporary view that commercial activities were to be classed along with money-lending as usury (wuocher). Indeed, the denunciation of wuocher in its various manifestations is one of the main themes of late medieval didactic works. A century earlier than Rothe, Hugo von Trimberg in his Renner denounces Christians who engage in trade for a profit:

Got herre, lâz dir geklaget sîn,
Daz wûrze, getreide, sîde und wîn,
Tuooh, des vadem nie wart gespunnen,
Des varwe nie kam an weter, an sunnen,
Wirt nu verkouft von boesen kristen,
Die mit verfluochten boesen listen
Guot gewinnent wirs denne die jûden,
Die wir doch heizen des tiufels rûden!
(Renner, 4865-72)⁵⁴

Stricker, in his fable Der verflogene Falke, compares the noble falcon who despises the prey of lesser hunting birds to the nobleman who refuses to adopt the life-style of his money-hungry inferiors:

die valschen richen dunket reht
- er si ritter ode kneht -,
swie er sin guot gemere,
daz man in billich ere:
swelch ritter sich daz ane nimt,
daz einem koufman wol gezimt -
der tuot dem valken niht gelich:
er hoenet daz leben unde sich.⁵⁵

Freidank strikes a similar note of disapproval in his Bescheidenheit when he complains that the speculator (wucherer) makes as much profit by night as he does

by day.⁵⁶ The author of a didactic work from the beginning of the fifteenth century, Des Teufels Netz, comments:

also ist der koufflüt orden
ze rechtem wuocher worden.
(Des Teufels Netz, 9027-8)⁵⁷

This condemnation of profit made from money-lending and commerce was, of course, by no means original to these late medieval didactic writers. It was common Church policy, and indeed can be traced back to Aristotle's theory of the natural unprofitability of money.⁵⁸ The theme was discussed by theologians from Augustine to Luther, who still, a century later than Rothe, considered commerce to be Warenwucher if it was engaged in to reap profit.⁵⁹ The official and oft-stated view of the Church was, of course, that all forms of trade for profit were sinful.⁶⁰ Waas judges:

Auch die Kirche lehnte fast allgemein das Händler-
tum ab. Redliche Arbeit sei nur, was mit der Hände
Arbeit hervorgebracht sei, vor allem die Arbeit
des Bauern, aber der Verdienst des Kaufmanns, der
an dem gewinne, was andere erarbeitet hatten,
galt als ungerechtfertigt und darum unsittlich.
Diese Auffassung beherrschte lange die allge-
meine kirchliche Meinung.⁶¹

Trade for profit, and especially money-lending at interest were denounced by the Church at numerous synods and councils.⁶² The Fifth Lateran Council of 1512-17, a century after Rothe's Ritterspiegel, was the first official relaxation of the complete veto on money-lending.⁶³ Unofficially, of course, there had long been ways of evading these rules.⁶⁴

Rothe's attitude towards wucher is a two-fold one; he condemns it when poor people are the prey of selfish interests, but he condones a certain amount of profit-making commerce when no hardship is caused to others by it. In the Eisenacher Rechtsbuch Para. 104 Von wedderkouffe umme czinse ... Rothe sets forth the law on wucher in nine clauses. He condemns money-lending where no tangible object is involved:

104,4: Wer ouch eyn wedirkouf tud uf schulde und do zcinsse vone nemit, do nicht gut benant werdit, adir uf nichte, daz ist eyn ungotlich zcins, und mag wol wuchir heissin.

He also criticises the common, but deceitful practice of naming on the debt certificate a sum higher than that originally lent:

104,5: Ist daz eyner sinen zcins wedirkoiffit und wel geringer gelt gebin danne yener darumme bezcalt hat, daz ist unrecht, wan hirmete wirdit der koiffir betragen.

The ideas behind these laws were, of course, not original. Mosaic Law, which was compiled for small, compact communities, had already forbidden money-lending to one's "brother" for a profit.⁶⁵ Aristotle had also put forward the view that since money did not increase by itself, interest was sinful profit.⁶⁶ Thomas Aquinas's view was that money had only exchange value and was not in itself an object which could be purchased.⁶⁷ Usury was not only a sin which led to excommunication, but also a matter for civic law. Already the Schwabenspiegel had condemned it.⁶⁸ The usurer was often banned from the town; his possessions fell to the municipal authorities, the judges, and even to his debtors.⁶⁹ The treatment being meted out to usurers in Rothe's day has been recorded in the Seligenstädter Sendschreiben of 1390:

item wer da funten wirt für ein wucherer, der sal drie sontage vur dem ama geen mit deme wichwaszer umb die kirchen, wollen und barfusz und ein juden-hut uf han und ein besembe in siner hand han. Wan he umb die kirchen kompt, so sal er drus ligin vor die kirchthur und sal die lude obir sich laszen geen.⁷⁰

The only legitimate form of business was that in which one added labores, one's own work, to expensae, one's expenditure for raw materials (Thomas Aquinas's terms) and charged the resulting amount. Trading, therefore, where no actual manual labour was involved, was seen in a dubious light, and throughout the Middle Ages there was a stigma attached to the merchant class. One exception to

this prejudice is to be found in Rudolf von Ems's (ca. 1200-54) Der guote Gerhard.⁷¹ The hero of this work is a goodly merchant from whom Emperor Otto learns true humility and kindness.

Rothe, with his concessions in the field of commercial transaction, is at least moving towards a tolerant attitude and is taking a step forward to find an outlet for the knights' energy. Nevertheless, he is still adamant in his condemnation of wucher; he disapproves of exploitation. In his condemnation of the contemporary knightly class, for example, he regrets that its honour is endangered by:

... roibern und von dibin
di sich sere undir sy nu gebin,
Di wuchirschetzce zcu sere en libin
und gar veste an en clebin.
(Rsp., 821-4)

Elsewhere in the Ritterspiegel, Rothe repeats Christ's advice to the soldiers who ask how they should gain eternal life.⁷² Among the stipulations is:

Dy arme lute nicht beroibin
noch worgin adir beschatzin
Di do hettin den cristingloibin,
und mit wuchere zcu cratzcin.
(Rsp., 1185-8)

Significantly, Rothe's most detailed condemnation of wucher comes directly before his concessions to the knights in commercial affairs. By this means the author can best express the contrast and bring home the point that commerce need not always be contaminated by wucher. He paints a hateful picture of the profiteer:

Wuchirt ouch eyn ritter gud,
so sint eme di hende unreyne.
Sugit her der armen lute blud,
so werdit sin adil gar cleyne.
Den Judin sal her ez befelin
und kawerzcinern, den bosin cristin,
Di ez lachunde den luthin stelin
und brechen ez en abe mit listin.
(Rsp., 2117-24)

In keeping with Rothe's view of history, God will not only see this sin:

Sin sunde schriget zcu gothe
wan her den armen wuchir tud.
(Rsp., 2129-30)

but - as Wernher had also shown to be the case in Meier Helmbrecht - will even avenge it:

Von stelin, wuchir und von roibin
druet keynes mannes geslechte,
Vele lute habin den gloibin
god schicke ez wedir zcu rechte.
(Rsp., 2157-60)

The discussion of wucher in the Ritterspiegel ends on this didactic note, and the author proceeds to look for an alternative to wucher which will allow a poor knight to earn a livelihood. Paradoxically enough, this alternative is found in the much ostracised world of commerce, until now itself classed precisely as a form of wucher. The suggestion is subtly introduced by a rhetorical question. The traditional roles of the nobility are no longer open to the knight; can he then no longer fulfil a function in society, and is he to hide his predicament?:

Sy kunnen ouch nicht alle zcu hofe kommen
noch der forstin amchte ircrigin.
Nemen sy danne keynen frommen
und sullin eren gebrechlin vorswigin?
(Rsp., 2177-80)

The contrast to the knights who rob the poor and are guilty of wucher is brought out in the author's comment that even if the nobleman does engage in a certain amount of commerce, he:

... vorlusit darumme nicht sin lehin,
eyn gudir ritter her wol blibit.
(Rsp., 2183-4)

While Rothe has by no means reached the conclusion of Augsburg's town clerk, Conrad Peutinger, a century later, that the profit-winning verve of the merchants is in fact to the advantage of the community as a whole,⁷³ his aim to improve the conditions of the impoverished knights without forcing them to turn to immoral pursuits leads him to tolerate a certain amount of commercial activity. In

this case, Rothe's assessment is not only realistic, it also presents an authentic picture of the true circumstances, since it takes account of the social problems and trends of his day and recognises the true nature of the nobles' predicament. His attitude represents a significant progression towards finding a solution to problems which Neidhart, Wernher and Konrad had only delineated more or less clearly. A practical solution to the crisis had, until now, been scarcely adumbrated in the literature of the times. Rothe, however, foresees that if the nobility are to emerge from the current social re-development, they must find a new sphere of activity; and what is even more significant, he recognises that the ever-widening fields of commerce present the ideal opportunity for this new start. Such an interpretation of his views on commerce can be substantiated by his treatment of commercial matter in his other works. In the Ratsgedichte, Von der stete ampten, for example, he compares the function of trade to that of the vital pulmonary organ, the lungs,⁷⁴ and in the Lob der Keuschheit he repeats the biblical image of Christ as the merchant.⁷⁵

Besides the changes at economic and social levels, the most far-reaching development in the lives of the nobles was, as indicated above, the revolution in the field of warfare which was to deprive many of them both of their livelihood and of their whole customary way of life. Rothe's long account of military matters in the Ritterspiegel is less realistic than this picture of the social and economic changes. Although he does mention both the mercenaries and the guns of contemporary warfare, he goes on to give a complete compendium of archaic advice for combat on horseback between armed knights. His ideas and recommendations in these matters are by no means original; he took them from Vegetius, a fourth century Roman who wrote extensively on the art of warfare.⁷⁶ Rothe, like many of his contemporaries, does not take special account of the fact that Vegetius's mode of warfare and

its rules now frequently seem irrelevant to his own times.⁷⁷ A similar pattern is seen in the work of Philip of Leiden, whose theoretical work on warfare was also totally outdated in the fourteenth century.⁷⁸ The nobility, and especially churchmen like Rothe, had failed to notice the steady approach of a more modern technique of warfare, or they chose to disregard it; the author, for example, still recommends the tournament as the best preparation for war.⁷⁹ When one considers that the excursus on warfare occupies almost half of the Ritterspiegel, it is important to consider the author's reasons for including such a full discussion of the matter in his work. It is possible that his aim to teach and improve the nobility of his day leads him to advocate the kind of knightly life he himself admires, even if several aspects of this picture are out of date. Wernher and Konrad had also held up ideal characters to act as examples. In his Helmbrecht, Wernher had sung the praises of the hard-working peasant, whom he considers to be one of the most important elements in the social structure. Konrad had extolled the noble who had followed his principles and saved the life of his enemy, Emperor Otto, even at dire risk to himself. In the case of Rothe's Ritterspiegel, the mirror reflects the ideal Christian warrior knight as experienced in the heroism of the early crusading campaigns. Obviously, the individual Christian warrior knight, fighting for his principles, suited Rothe's didactic purpose much better than a mercenary or well-armed infantry soldier, fighting regardless of cause for his financial benefit. It may well be that Rothe purposely chooses in this respect not to present an authentic picture, but rather to create an ideal which suited his didactic aim. It may be for similar reasons that he clings to the reciprocal ideal of the feudal system. He advises the noble to treat his vassals fittingly, so that he may be certain of their loyalty in return:

Der ritter sal nicht eyn lewe si
kegin sime huezgesinde
Di em nacht und tag wonen bi,
her mochte sy ungetruwe vinde.
(Rsp., 1377-80)

He also puts forward the out-of-date theory that a lord's own vassals always make a better army than mercenaries:

Gud sint eyne herrin die soldener,
di manschaft di ist nutzcir vel
Wan si habin zcu vorlisiin mer.
(Rsp., 2237-9)

Loyalty to one's overlord and to one's principles, as exemplified in the figure of Roland, is an ideal which Rothe would like to impart to his reader. Nevertheless, his argument that the vassals will remain faithful when the mercenaries retreat to save their skins, since the former have more to lose, depends on feudal allegiance of a kind which was no longer in operation in fifteenth century Germany. In fact, the opposite was true: if a lord's nobles refused to bring their vassals to fight a dangerous battle, there was little he could do, since he was dependent on their work-force for the care of his lands; but the mercenaries, who were dependent on their pay and on the booty they could reap, constituted a much more reliable force.⁸⁰

The principle task of Rothe's soldier knight is still to combat heathens and heretics as well as to protect Christendom and Christian ideals in general. The author does not, however, name the particular heathens or heretic sect he has in mind. The Crusades had ended over a century before, when the Christians were forced to leave their last stronghold at Akkon in 1291. The campaigns against the French heretics were also past, and the religious troubles which came in the trail of Jan Hus's martyrdom had not yet begun when Rothe was writing his Ritterspiegel. Petersen is of the opinion that Rothe has a general, theoretical plan in mind rather than a specific scheme of action against a particular group.⁸¹ In the case of heresy, however, this opinion could be legitimately questioned, for

Thuringia in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries was a centre for a variety of heresies.⁸² Rothe indeed mentions several of these in his chronicles. He records the heresy concerning Frederick II in Ch. 508 of his Thüringische Chronik L, Von den ketzern keisser Frederichs. It is significant that Rothe, writing the Chronik in the second decade of the fifteenth century, stresses that this heresy is not to be dismissed as a thing of the past, but is indeed still to be found in the Thuringia of his day:

Von dissem keisser Frederiche dem ketzer erhub
sich eyne nuwe ketzerey die noch heymlichen under
den cristen ist.

(Chronik L, Ch. 508)

The populace was certain that Frederick would return from the dead and become the saviour of the poor masses. Moreover, it was believed that Frederick was in Thuringia, in the Kyffhäuser region, and that he would be resurrected. This sect could well account for Rothe's call to the knights to combat heretics; but there were also other possibilities, for Thuringia was the scene of some of the strongest heretical movements in fifteenth century Germany. Norman Cohn emphasises the strength of the flagellants in Thuringia:

... the flagellant leader assumed the title of King of Thuringia. Nowhere else, perhaps, had the flagellant movement of 1348-9 flourished quite so vigorously as in the large area of central Germany which at that time was known as Thuringia.⁸³

In 1414-16 a large community of flagellants was discovered in Sangerhausen in Thuringia,⁸⁴ so that even at the time of composition of the Ritterspiegel the flagellants constituted a heretical group to be reckoned with. As late as 1446 and 1454 flagellants were persecuted in Thuringia, and Cohn reports that the last-known flagellants were tried and burned at the stake there in the 1480s.⁸⁵ Again, as with the Frederick heresy, there is specific mention of the flagellants in Rothe's chronicles. He describes the uprising of 1348-9 in Chapters 688 and 689, Von den bussern, of his Thüringische Chronik L. In Chapter 493 of the same

work, Rothe touches upon yet another heresy when he mentions a certain Jacob, "eyn rechter bossewicht". This Jacob, or the Master of Hungary, as he was called, was the leader of a sect of Pastoureux who believed that God had chosen the poor and the lowly to carry out His work on earth, since the nobility and the knights had lost the necessary humility.⁸⁶

Although it is safe to assume with Petersen that Rothe's exhortations to the fifteenth century nobility to combat the forces of heresy and heathendom were to a certain extent theoretical rather than practical, the above examples show that in the case of heresy at least, there may have been a real plea involved. At the very least, one can interpret his advice as a plea to fight against these heresies with spiritual weapons.

The term heathen was, for medieval Christians, a confused concept; their wrath was expressed, for the most part, with regard to Saracens and Jews, whom they regarded as akin if not identical.⁸⁷ Rothe exhorts his ideal Christian knight to combat the Jews:

Daz man ez zcu vordirst dorch god tud
und den cristingloibin besinnet
Kegin den ketzcern, Judin adir heidin
und kegin den andirn bosin cristin.
(Rsp., 2267-70)

The Jews were the object of a particularly intense and unrelenting hatred in medieval Europe. They were seen as demons attendant on Satan⁸⁸ and were forced to wear horned, pointed hats⁸⁹ and yellow bands⁹⁰ to distinguish them from the rest of the community. The traditional image of the Jews as the betrayers and murderers of Christ,⁹¹ coupled with their money-lending activities⁹² which were regarded as the ultimate in usury (wucher) brought them the enmity and hatred of Western Europe. Indeed, a sexual relationship between a Christian and a Jew was regarded as on a par with incest, and the participants were often hanged.⁹³ Rothe discusses the legal aspects of the theme in his Eisenacher Rechtsbuch I, 1.7, where he advocates similar rights for the

children of a Jew and a Christian as for those conceived in incest, or by nuns or prostitutes.

In the Ritterspiegel, Rothe connects the Jews specifically with usury:

Den Judin sal her ez befelin
und kawerzcinern, den bosin cristin,
Di ez lachunde den luthin stelin
und brechin ez en abe mit listin.
(Rsp., 2121-4)

The very mention of people who exploit the poor conjures up in Rothe's mind the Judenhut, the pointed cap which the Jews had been ordered to wear by decree of the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215⁹⁴ and which makes them distinguishable in medieval paintings,⁹⁵ even in those depicting scenes from Biblical times. Rothe recommends as punishment for exploitation:

Sin sunde schriget zcu gothe
wan her den armen wuchir tud;
Obirtretit her solche gebothe,
so setzce man eme uf den judinhud.
(Rsp., 2129-32)

In the Ratsgedichte, Rothe rejects the Jews along with the heathens and the wicked from the Council:

Wer jüde, wer heyde,
Wer felscher ...
(Ratsgedichte, F 606-7)

In the course of his Thüringische Chronik L the author tells, albeit without personal comment, the story of the execution of thirty-two Jews in Fulda in 1228. They had been sentenced because two of their number had been accused of murdering a miller's five children and gathering their blood in waxed sacks. Rothe ends his account non-committally:

do melte sie das blut, das man sie angreif, und
sie bekantin is, und man erfant ouch die warheit
an der kynder lichname.
(Chronik L, Ch. 471)

This story is by no means isolated. The Endinger Judenspiel, for example, tells a similar tale of a mass execution of Jews in the Breisgau region.⁹⁶ Some of the speeches which have been preserved show that the horrific tales of Jews gathering Christian blood were very common.

The following is from a speech of ca. 1460:

Item darnach ist Merckly jud gefraget, er sölle sagen, warzu die juden das cristenblut bruchen, daruff hat er under vil worten geantwurt und des ersten geseit, die juden bruchen das cristenblut zu arznei, denn es sye gar heilsam.⁹⁷

There were several popular beliefs as to why the Jews needed Christian blood. It was said they required it to bake the unleavened bread for the Passover,⁹⁸ or that they used it to heal the "foetor judaicus" or stench with which they had been irrevocably cursed.⁹⁹

After the theory of the transubstantiation of the Eucharist had been accepted by the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215, an increasing number of cases were recorded of Jews piercing or pulverizing the host.¹⁰⁰ Other atrocities, such as outbreaks of the plague, were attributed to the poisoning of Christian wells by the Jews. Rothe relates such suspicions in Chapters 579¹⁰¹, 245¹⁰² and 687¹⁰³ of the Thüringische Chronik L. A similar accusation is made, for example, in Fritsche Closener's Strassburger Chronik:

Do wurdent die Juden zu Strosburg verbrent ...
Daz geschach darumb: man ziech su, su hettent
burnen und andere waszere entsufert mit vergift.¹⁰⁴

Thus the author's call to the knights of his day to combat heathen and heretic is not as incredible as it may seem at first sight. In the respect that in Rothe's day both heathen elements and heretics presented hated minorities which attracted persecution, the information is realistic. Even the detailed information on the crimes, peculiar customs and punishments of these elements must be accepted as realistic in the sense described above; the picture painted is at least zeitgemäss. The call to the knights is realistic enough too; the detailed military advice and information on strategy and training make it seem as if the author is serious in his call to arms. The one factor which makes the whole description seem less than authentic is the fact that even if the individual knights were prepared to take up arms and fight the heretic sects and heathens, they would have

found little opportunity to do so, at least in the kind of framework which Rothe describes. In this respect, it seems probable that the recommendations were impracticable and the realistic details and information more a product of Rothe's didactic aims than of the actual contemporary situation. As with his discussion on nobility, there are grounds to believe that the conflict with heathen and heretic exists not only at the level of reality, but also at a spiritual level. Just as Rothe calls on the knight to attain true nobility through humility and good deeds, so he calls upon him to combat the forces of heathendom and heresy by upholding Christian principles. These principles are, for Rothe, embodied in the Christian warrior knight; thus the long discussion on the military training and duties of such a knight, despite its irrelevance for his times. The archaic advice on warfare could, of course, be considered the result of ignorance in this field; on the other hand, the author shows himself to be well informed in most aspects of contemporary life, even the less pleasant aspects such as impoverishment, gambling, prostitution. It is also significant that the kind of warfare Rothe describes constitutes an important aspect of the kind of knight he is idealising and recommending as an example of faith, diligence and self-sacrifice. It suits his purpose to put forward an active soldier who is likely to provoke admiration and respect in his readers. In this instance, it would seem, Rothe has purposely turned to the military greatness of the former nobility to enhance his ideal knight, that he is willing to forfeit a completely authentic picture for the sake of an enhancing heroism which suits his didactic aim.

Thus the question of the place of realism and its effect on the portrayal of society in the Ritterspiegel must be answered in a way which leaves room for Rothe's didactic purpose, since this - and not a concern to be

objective and authentic - is the deciding factor in his choice and presentation of material, and indeed in his portrayal of contemporary society as a whole. His first interest is to rouse the manliness and the national pride of the degraded knightly class of his homeland. His Spiegel must cast an ideal reflection, a reflection which must entice, for example, the young noble of the introductory dialogue to do "also uwir eldirn habin gethan". (v.22) Obviously, the author must aim at making the knightly life of former times attractive enough to invigorate the younger generation and force them into making an attempt to renew the almost forgotten principles of the great era of Christian knighthood. He must, if he is to succeed in spurring the young knights on to action, offer them an alternative to the Epigonentum of which they are conscious and of which they are indeed themselves a product. This alternative is to a certain extent a return to the old, time-honoured ideals of the Christian knight, but with significant new elements. The old ideals incorporate the basis for their self-respect, while the new elements provide the basis for the practical business of day-to-day life and the financial support for a way of life in keeping with their social position. The reflection in Rothe's Spiegel must be attractive enough to rouse admiration, idealistic enough to earn general approval, realistic enough to inspire credence and authentic in the feasibility of financial independence. The author, then, must aim at presenting a reflection authentic enough to attract the young knights' faith in it as a feasible and financially acceptable solution to their problems and as a life-style fitting to their rank. It is this presentation of a feasible solution - namely the engaging in commerce and the breeding and care of animals while at the same time adhering to the rules of conduct and the principles of the knights of former times - which sets Rothe aside from his fellow didactic authors of his day. His reflexion is a subtle mixture -

a mixture of the old and the new, of the ideal and the real. This mixture is obtained by an equally subtle interplay of didactic intent, shades of an attractive heroism, and recommendations realistic enough to attract credence within the radically changing social and economic scene of his day.

1. Petersen, Rittertum, pp.50-51.
2. Neumann, Rsp., p.VII.
3. Rehm, "Kulturverfall", p.324.
4. E. Auerbach, Mimesis: Dargestellte Wirklichkeit in der abendländischen Literatur (1946, 5th ed. Bern/Munich, 1971), p.129.
5. See Rsp., 17-20; 65-66.
6. See especially Rothe's claims in the Prologues to his works which were discussed in Ch. 2 above.
7. Auerbach, Mimesis, p.509.
8. This formula is familiar in German, of course, as far back as the OHG Hildebrandslied (in W. Braune, Althochdeutsches Lesebuch, 15th.ed. E. Ebbinghaus, Tübingen, 1969, p.84f.): Ik gihorta dat seggen ... v.l. In later works, direct intervention of this kind is more than an oral formula. In Wernher der Gartenaere's Meier Helmbrecht, edd. H. Brackert, W. Frey and D. Seitz (Frankfurt, 1972) the author tries to gain credibility by implying directness of experience, in this case by seeing:
hie wil ich sagen waz mir geschach
daz ich mit mînen ougen sach.
(Helmbrecht, 7-8)
Thomasin von Zerklære in Der Wälsche Gast, ed. Heinrich Rückert (Berlin, 1965) also uses the formula to introduce a didactic theme:
Ich hân gehôrt unde gelesen,
man sol ungerne müezec wesen:
(Der Wälsche Gast 1, 141f.)
9. Rsp., 21-64.
10. Rothe may here be reflecting the common medieval father/son conflict which was treated not only in a special clause of the Reichsfrieden of 1235 (See Gerhard Schindele, "Helmbrecht" in: Literatur im Feudalismus, ed. D. Richter (Stuttgart, 1975) p.192) but also in several medieval literary works. (See Meier Helmbrecht which will be discussed later in this context.) The conflict is also treated in the Buch der Rügen. See Schindele, "Helmbrecht", pp.135ff and p.198, n.18: Das Buch der Rügen, ed. Theodor Karajan, ZfdA 2 (1842), 6-92 where there is a passage reminiscent of Rothe's introduction:
edel unde werdekeit
der iuwer vater hânt gephleit,
die verlieset ir dâ mit
daz ir den heidenischen sit
habt iuch genomen an.
als ich iu wol gesagen kan,
iu ist die kirche als der stal,
swâ man sol rouben über al ...
daz tuot ir allez umb den slunt.
(Buch der Rügen, 1177-84-1199.)

The thematic parallels here with Rothe's work may point to the influence of the Dominican Sermon used by the author of the Buch der Rügen, or even to a direct knowledge on Rothe's part of the Buch der Rügen. Rothe, however, chooses not to carry his didactic theme at the level of father/son as in Helmbrecht, but rather at the more general level of "the knights of former days" and "the knights of to-day". Indeed, it would be rash to treat the eldirn of Rsp., v.22 as the equivalent of NHG Eltern, since the possibility of "predecessors" is perhaps more probable in the context of the work. Lexer gives both meanings: altern, aldern sw.pl.: eltern, vorgänger. The vater of the Buch der Rügen could, of course, also be interpreted in such a general sense.

11. Genesis XXXVII - XLI. Joseph here exemplifies the devotion and faithful service ideally required of a knecht or squire.
12. See H. Pirenne, Economic and Social History of Medieval Europe, tr. I.E. Clegg (London, 1972), p.196
13. See, for example, J. Bühler, Die Kultur des Mittelalters (Stuttgart, 1948), p.180.
14. K. Stephenson, Medieval History (New York, 1943), p.307.
15. Ibid., p.571.
16. Bühler, Kultur des Mittelalters, p.180.
17. Ibid., p.180 n.1. See also the Propyläen Weltgeschichte, Vols.V and XII.
18. Johanna Maria van Winter, Rittertum: Ideal und Wirklichkeit, tr. A. Plantiko and P. Schmitt (Munich, 1969), p.28.
19. Stephenson, Medieval History, p.572.
20. See Bautier, Economic Development, especially Ch. 5 "The Late Middle Ages".
21. For an account of the technicalities of class and rank see van Winter, Rittertum, pp.80-96. For an account of the system of rank peculiar to German feudalism and a description of the Heerschild, see Marc Bloch, Feudal Society, tr. L.A. Manyon, 2nd ed. (London, 1971) Vol 2, Ch.XXV, "Class Distinctions within the Nobility", especially pp.336ff.
22. Indeed, it was rather the case that the patricians in the town copied the life-style and habits of the nobility. See Karl Bosl, Europa im Mittelalter (Vienna, 1970), p.267.
23. Rehm, "Kulturverfall", p.318.

24. Pirenne, Economic and Social History, p.52.
25. Ibid., p.52, n.1.
26. Cited by D. Kartschoke in: Literatur im Feudalismus, ed. Richter, p.230 from J. Bolte, "Zehn Gedichte auf den Pfennig", ZfdA. 48 (1906) 13-56. This poem is No. 5, vv79f.
27. Die Lieder Muskatplüts, ed. E. von Groote (Köln, 1852), p.189ff.
28. Ibid., p.192
29. For various interpretations of the term bourgeois which has degenerated almost to cliché-level, see K. Bosl, Europa, p.267; Els Oksaar, Mittelhochdeutsch: Texte, Kommentare, Sprachkunde, Wörterbuch (Stockholm, 1965), p.274; W. Stammer, "Die 'bürgerliche' Dichtung des Spätmittelalters", ZfdPh 53 (1928), 1ff.; D. Richter in Literatur im Feudalismus, p.27f.
30. See Meier Helmbrecht, 259-78 and 299-328.
31. One thinks of Helmbrecht's cap, Muskatblüt's ermine-clad bur and Neidhart's dandies. Also the fool in Rothe's tale of Philip of France's court.
32. J. le Goff, Das Hochmittelalter, tr. Sigrid Metken (Frankfurt, 1965), p.209.
33. Cited by Bühler, Kultur des Mittelalters, p.175.
34. Bautier, Economic Development, p.183.
35. Ibid., p.186.
36. Ibid., p.186.
37. Ibid., p.227.
38. F. Lütge, "The 14th and 15th Centuries in Social and Economic History" in: Pre-Reformation Germany, ed. G. Strauss (London, 1972), Ch.9.
39. The Songs of Neidhart von Reuenthal, edd. A.T. Hatto and R.J. Taylor (Manchester, 1958).
40. Neidhart von Reuenthal, Lieder: Auswahl. Mit den Noten zu neun Liedern, ed. Helmut Lomnitzer (Stuttgart, 1966), pp.84-91.
41. Ferdinand Schürmann, Die Entwicklung der parodistischen Richtung bei Neidhard von Reuenthal (Düren, 1898), p.9.
42. Schindele, "Helmbrecht", p.209, n.222.
43. Wernher der Gartenaere, Helmbrecht, edd. H. Brackert, W. Frey and D. Seitz (Frankfurt, 1972). Subsequent citation by line number in this edition.
44. Konrad von Würzburg, Heinrich von Kempten, Der Welt Lohn, Das Herzmaere, MHG-Text ed. E. Schröder, NHG tr. Heinz Rölleke (Stuttgart, 1968). Subsequent citation by line number in this edition.

45. Höfische Tischzuchten, ed. T.P. Thornton (Bielefeld/Munich, 1957).
46. The child is described as: "eins edeln fürsten fruht" (112), "herzogen" (129), "fürsten edellich" (132) "juncherren" (102). The steward's behaviour is clearly described as a breach of the courtly code:
waz habent ir gerochen
daz ir nu hânt zebrochen
iuwer ritterlichen zuht,
daz ir eins edeln fürsten fruht
als übelliche habet geslagen?
(Heinrich von Kempten, 109-13)
47. Otto accuses Heinrich of ruining his reputation:
ir hânt mîns hoves êre
und mînen prîs zebrochen.
(Heinrich von Kempten, 196-7)
48. Heinrich is described as a "ritter ûzerwelt" (v.94). Furthermore "sîn edel muot der haete sich/rîlicher manheit an genomen." (vv.96-7).
49. See Lütge, "Social History", Ch.9. Also Romano and Tenenti, Grundlegung der modernen Welt.
50. See Luke III, 14, also Hebrews XIII, 5.
51. For references in Rothe's works, see Chapter 2 above.
52. Lewis remarks in his Image, p.147: "A good medievalist (A.J. Carlyle) once said in my hearing, 'The typical knight of the Middle Ages was far more interested in pigs than in tournaments!'"
53. The theme of commerce and its connotations in the Middle Ages is treated by Stricker in his Pfaffe Amis.
54. Cited by Catherine Rapp in: Burgher and Peasant in the works of Thomasin von Zirclaria, Freidank and Hugo von Trimberg, (Washington, 1936), pp.96-7.
55. Der Stricker, Tierbîspel, ed. Ute Schwab (Tübingen, 1968), Der verflogene Falke, vv.123-30.
56. Freidank, Bescheidenheit, ed. H.E. Bezzenberger (Halle, 1872), 27,15ff., cited by Rapp, Burgher and Peasant, p.97.
57. Cited in P. Nolte, Der Kaufmann in der deutschen Sprache und Literatur des Mittelalters (Göttingen, 1909), p.54.
58. See C. Roth, Geschichte der Juden von den Anfängen bis zum neuen Staate Israel (Köln/Berlin, 1964) p.243.
59. See D. Kartschoke, "Weisheit oder Reichtum? Zum Volksbuch von Fortunatus und seinen Söhnen" in Literatur im Feudalismus, ed. Richter, p.237 and p.255, n.1.

60. M. Neumann, Geschichte des Wuchers in Deutschland bis zur Begründung der heutigen Zinsgesetze (Halle, 1865, repr. Leipzig, 1969).
61. A. Waas, Der Mensch im deutschen Mittelalter (Graz/Köln, 1964), p.185.
62. In Germany, the wuchirverbot was expressed at the Councils of Magdeburg (1383-1405) and Freising (1440) and at the Synod of Constance as late as 1609. The Second Lateran Council of 1139 (Can.13), the 3rd Lateran Council of 1179 (Para 25), the Council of Lyons of 1274 (Canones 26-28) and the Council of Vienne of 1311-12 all forbid usury. See Karl Stürmer, Konzilien und ökumenische Kirchenversammlungen (Göttingen, 1962), pp.99, 105, 141 and 154.
63. See Stürmer, Konzilien, p.211 for comment on Sessio X of 4.5.1515: Leihhäuser (montes pietatis): Daß zur Bekämpfung des Wuchers öffentliche Stellen Pfandhäuser errichteten und für die Beleihung eine Entschädigung verlangten, hatte angesichts des offiziellen Zinsverbotes lebhaft juristische und theologische Debatten ausgelöst. Das Konzil stellte fest: Solche Einrichtungen sind zum Schutz gegen Ausbeutung lobenswert. Wer anders lehrt und predigt, wird exkommuniziert. Es ist die erste offizielle Durchbrechung des Zinsverbotes.
64. See Roth, Geschichte der Juden, pp.246ff. and Brooke, Europe, p.113.
65. See Roth, Geschichte der Juden, p.243.
66. Ibid., p.243.
67. Thomas von Aquin, Summa theologiae, II,2,qu.77, 78, cited in: Stämmler, "Die 'bürgerliche' Dichtung", p.8.
68. Der Schwabenspiegel, ed. K. Eckhardt (Göttingen, Berlin, Frankfurt, 1974)
69. See R.M. Kulli, Die Ständesatire in den deutschen geistlichen Schauspielen des ausgehenden Mittelalters (Bern, 1966), p.141. Also Neumann, Geschichte des Wuchers.
70. Cited in Kulli, Ständesatire, p.141.
71. Rudolf von Ems, Der guote Gerhard, ed. J.A. Asher, (Tübingen, 1962).
72. Matthew XIX, 16; Mark X, 17; Luke X,25.
73. See Kartschoke, "Weisheit", p.242.
74. Ratsg., F 215-17.
75. LdK., 4992-7.

76. Flavi Vegeti Renati epitoma rei militaris, ed. C. Lang (Leipzig, 1885).
77. Ursula Liebertz-Grün makes an interesting point in her "Bürger, Fürsten, Dienstherren, Ritter und Frauen. Gesellschaftsdarstellung und Geschichtsbild in Jan Enikels Fürstenbuch" in: Euphorion 74 (1980), 77-94. The following quotation is from p.84:
Wenn Enikel den Geschmack seines Publikums getroffen hat ... dann war dessen Einstellung zum Thema "Krieg und Turnier" feudal-konservativ. Seine Hörer brachten militärischen Aktionen offensichtlich ein beachtliches Interesse entgegen und bewunderten kriegerische Tüchtigkeit und Versiertheit in ritterlicher Waffentechnik anscheinend als Zeichen menschlicher Vollkommenheit. Enikel geht jedenfalls sehr ausführlich auf militärische Vorgänge ein.
78. See van Winter, Rittertum, p.58.
79. Rsp., 2713. See also Petersen, Rittertum, p.172.
80. Helmbrecht's overlord, for example, was pleased to have bold riders and let them have booty in return.
81. Petersen, Rittertum, p.174.
82. See Norman Cohn, The Pursuit of the Millennium, 2nd ed. (London, 1970), p.142.
83. Ibid., p.146.
84. Ibid., p.146.
85. Ibid., p.147.
86. Ibid., pp.94-98.
87. Ibid., p.76. See also S. Stein, Die Ungläubigen in der mittelhochdeutschen Literatur von 1050 bis 1250 (Heidelberg, 1933, repr. Darmstadt, 1963).
88. Cohn, Millennium, p.78.
89. See A. Schulz, Das höfische Leben zur Zeit der Minnesänger, (Osnabrück, 1965), p.331: Conc. Viennense in Austria 1267 (Hartzh. III,635) XV: Cornutum pileum, quem quidem in istis partibus consueverant deferre et sua temeritate deponere praesumpserunt, resumant, ut a Christianis discerni valeant evidenter.
90. See Schulz, Das höfische Leben, p.331: Matth. Westmonast. 1275: Et ut possent a Christianis discerni, praecepit rex (Eduardus I) quod (Judaei) ad instar tabularum ad unius palmae longitudinem signa ferrent in exterioribus indumentis.
91. Cohn, Millennium, p.77.

92. Pirenne, Social History, pp.133ff.
93. Roth, Geschichte der Juden, p.251.
94. See Stürmer, Konzilien, p.117.
95. For examples in sculpture, relief etc. see Adolf Feulner and Theodor Müller, Geschichte der deutschen Plastik, (München, 1953):
pp. 122-137 - Naumburg, Dom.
The pointed caps are seen clearly in
Tafel 102 = Gefangennahme
Tafel 103 = Auszahlung der Silberlinge
Tafel 104 = Handwaschung d. Pilatus.
For examples in painting, see Albert Boeckler, Deutsche Buchmalerei, I+II (Königstein im Taunus, 1959), e.g. I,70 = Gefangennahme Christi, um 1240 - London, Brit. Museum Add. 17687. I,74 = Grablegung - Basel, um 1260 - Besancon, Bibl. Municipale, MS 54.
96. Das Endinger Judenspiel, ed. Karl v. Amira (Halle, 1883).
97. Ibid., p.8, also cited in Kulli, Ständesatire, p.16.
98. Roth, Geschichte der Juden, p.225.
99. Ibid., p.225.
100. Ibid., p.226.
101. Ch. 579: ... man gab on schult, das man yn yren schulen funde unde yn yren beheltenissen unssers herren lichname adir die ablatin, das sie mit suweln unde mit phrymen durchstochin weren ...
102. Ch. 215: ... do gab om eyen Jude, der hiess Sedechias, eynen trangk das her starp.
103. Ch. 687: wenn das gemeyne volk zeich sie (the Jews), das sie die wasser unde borne vorgifftiget hetten unde das man leynen buttil mit der vorgifft dor ynne funden.
104. Fritsche Closener, Straßburger Chronik, (Stuttgart, 1843 = BLVS I), p.82f.

CHAPTER 4: Didactic Purpose, Social Advancement
and the Ideal Knight in the Ritterspiegel.

An interesting social question arises from the young nobleman's assertion at the beginning of the Ritterspiegel that the sons of peasants are richer than he:

Her zcornete darum gar sere
daz eynes armen geburis son
Irwarb richtum und große ere
umme den dinst den her hatte gethon.

Obil sprach her unde swuer
und waz gar ungeduldig
Daz god beriete eynen gebuer
deme her ez nicht were schuldig,
Und liße di armen ediln lute
also jemmerlichin vorterbin;
Gar unglich gebe her sine buthe,
di ediln kunden nicht gud irwerbin.

Her fragete mich worum daz were,
daz eynen geburis son daz glucke
Irhube und gebe em gud und ere
und di ediln nu wolde vordrucke.
(Rsp., 5-20)

Indeed it is this question which Rothe himself states as having moved him to write his Ritterspiegel. The question raised by the last four lines is one of the utmost complexity. It entails a discussion not only about the decadent state of the order of chivalry, but also about the demerits of the geburis son (v.18). Furthermore, it throws into relief the puzzlement as to the fluctuations in the social structure of an until then rigidly ordered régime.¹ There are three agents, all within the sixteen lines quoted, in which the nobleman tries to see the instigator of the peasant's change in fortune. The first is personal effort: "den dinst den her hatte gethon" (v.8). The second is God (v.11), and the nobleman remarks significantly that there is no obligation on God's part to help a peasant, thereby suggesting a hidden accusation

that there is an obligation to uphold the nobility in their God-given privileged status. The third element is daz glucke (v.18) which, of course, is a force in itself problematic.² We may postulate here an influence of Boethius, who wrestles to find the reason for the difference between the certainty of natural progression and the uncertainty of human affairs.³ Daz glucke here is almost certainly influenced by Boethius' fortuna, although it is a factor suitable to the general moral climate of Epigonentum which was evident in Rothe's day.⁴ Probably unknowingly, Rothe has within the very first lines of his work lighted on the explanations which could in his times be put forward for the fluctuation in the social pattern, namely personal effort or lack of it, the dealings of an omnipotent God in a theocentrically orientated world-view, and the force of fortuna - or the illogical, incalculable swing in human affairs. The latter two may seem to contradict each other, but the fact remains that it was not always possible to attribute every event to God's just hand, and for such purposes, fortuna was a suitable concept. Rothe, although he certainly adheres to a theocentric view of history, occasionally resorts to glucke to explain an event. Significantly, however, he combines the ~~a~~moral force of glucke with the moral force of the first of the three elements mentioned above, namely personal effort or lack of it. His didactic aims can leave little room for the unbridled sway of fortuna which, as Rothe points out, moves "ane allirley irbarmen" (v.518). His discussion of the fluctuation in the social pattern begins with an assessment of the force of glucke and unglucke:

Dit had der lute wandilberkeid
in den gezcitin also vormengit
Di abe und zcu darmede treid
daz glucke und unglucke brengit,
Und dez selbin glichin noch wol tud
ane allirley irbarmen.
(Rsp., 513-18)⁵

He then restricts this force of unglucke to the fate of those who have been careless, frivolous, ill-prepared or

immoral (Rsp., 519ff.).

This didactically satisfying tendency in Rothe's moral scheme to have everyone treated according to his deserts, leads him obviously to look for a feasible explanation for the peasant's rise in fortune and the nobleman's decline. Just such an explanation is made readily available by the notion of nobility of soul as opposed to nobility of birth, which was becoming increasingly well-known as a concept to justify social change in Rothe's day. The concept, of course was not new. The question had interested western authors and philosophers since the time of the Greeks,⁶ and as will be shown, was a well-known theme in medieval European literature.⁷ On the other hand, however, the notion of divinely ordered social hierarchy which bore no infringement is also one which is held throughout the Middle Ages,⁸ and which is doubtless the reason for the anger and frustration of the young nobleman at the idea that God should allow a peasant to prosper, "deme her ez nicht were schuldig" (Rsp., v.12).

The notion of a divinely ordained rigid social pattern is defined by Berthold von Regensburg, whose attitude may stand as representative:

Wan unser herre alliu dinc mit wîsheit geordent hât,
dâ von hat er ouch dem menschen sîn leben
geordent unde geschaffen, als ér wil und nicht als
wîr wellen. ... Wer solte uns den acker bûwen, ob
ir alle herren waeret? ... Du muost sîn als got wil...
Wan wolte er dir ein hooher amt hân gegeben, daz
haete er getân. Sît er dir nû ein niderez hât
gegeben, sô soltû dich ouch nideren unde dêmüeten
durch got mit dînem amte, sô wil er dir oben
ûf dem himel ein vil hôhez amt geben.⁹

Dissatisfaction with one's God-given position and the attempt to raise oneself socially were akin to the sin of Adam and Lucifer, namely both disobedience and arrogance. Hildegard of Bingen writes the following in answer to the Abbess of Andernach's question as to why she admits only people of noble birth to her convent:

Gott achtet bei jedem Menschen darauf, daß sich der niedere Stand nicht über den Höheren erhebe, wie es einst Satan und der erste Mensch getan, die über ihren Stand hinausfliegen wollten ... Gott teilt sein Volk auf Erden in verschiedene Stände, wie die Engel im Himmel in verschiedene Gruppen geordnet sind.¹⁰

Such views are by no means restricted to religious writings; they find expression, for example, in Frauenlob's verse:

Ein smit sol smiden, ein bader baden,
ein jager jagen, ein trager tragen,
ein mâler bilde zirken.¹¹

and of course as the main theme of Wernher der Gartenaere's Meier Helmbrecht¹² in which a peasant's son who aspires to knighthood comes to a bad end as a consequence. The peasant reminds his son that "dîn ordenunge ist der phluoc",¹³ and the poet, stressing the moral of the tale, has the father say:

wan selten im gelinget
der wider sînen orden ringet.
(Meier Helmbrecht, 289-90)

Wernher sees young Helmbrecht's wish to escape from the peasant's bond as hybris; on the other hand, however, he is willing to concede that true nobility is not so dependent on high birth as on good breeding (guot zuht, 506). This view was becoming increasingly popular, for the notion of a divinely ordered social hierarchy was inconvenient and restricting to the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Indeed, it is surprising that the theory of the divinely ordained class privilege system was upheld for so long, since there is neither classical nor biblical support for it. On the contrary, Paul even points out that God has not chosen the noble to play a key function (1.Cor.I.26).¹⁴ With the growth of the towns and the increasing scope of the merchant class in the late Middle Ages, people of lowly birth occasionally had the opportunity to become rich and influential enough to buy themselves what birth had not given them. There was little difficulty in finding philosophical support for this new

idea: the unity of men through their common descent from Adam and Eve leads to egalitarian notions expressed at their most familiar in the question of John Ball (adapting Richard Rolle) in the late fourteenth century:

When Adam delved and Eve span
Who was then a gentleman?¹⁵

A parallel notion, already expressed by Wernher in the passage quoted above, is that it is nobility of spirit rather than the coincidence of birth which determines the value of the individual within society. This becomes a later medieval common-place, although it is a topos which, as mentioned above, is met with already in ancient Greek writings, in patristic writings and in vernacular works from the thirteenth century onwards. Curtius cites several authors in support of the view: Anaximenes (588-524 B.C.) recommends nobility of spirit as a rhetorical aid when one cannot praise someone on account of his birth. Euripides, Aristotle and Menandros all touch on the theme as do Ovid and Seneca later.¹⁶ Jerome and Boethius, leaning on Seneca's notion that the egalitarian state of nature had of necessity to be forsaken, carry the theme into Christian literature, and hence it is borrowed into the vernacular writings of the West. In France there is evidence of the theme in the songs of the troubadours and in the Roman de la Rose.¹⁷ In England, it finds expression, for example, in Chaucer's Wife of Bath's Tale:

Redeth Senek, und redeth eek Boëce,
There shul ye seen expres that it no drede is,
That he is gentil that doth gentil deeds.¹⁸

In Germany, Gottfried von Straßburg with his Tristan creates a whole new concept with his appeal to the edele herzcen.¹⁹ Walther von der Vogelweide, Hartmann von Aue and Reinmar von Zweter adumbrate the point,²⁰ while Der Teichner, writing much later, in the second half of the fourteenth century, takes up the theme and exploits it with specific reference to the peasantry. He goes so far as to claim that the peasant is a more valuable

member of society than the monk, and considers that a peasant who does his work diligently can be as noble as any man of high birth.²¹

At basic level, Rothe recognises and upholds the contemporary hierarchy in German society. M. Bloch points out the particularly deeply engrained hierarchical nature of German society in the High Middle Ages:

Although it was not always strictly respected in practice, this rigid ordering of the 'shields of knighthood' (Heerschild) expressed very strongly the spirit of a society which, having accepted the ties of vassalage only with some reluctance, refused to let them interfere with a firmly rooted hierarchic sentiment.²²

In his Ritterspiegel, Rothe takes the trouble to describe in detail this Heerschild or escutcheon of rank; he lists the seven ranks as follows: the first rank is held by the Emperor, while the second consists of kings and archbishops; the third rank belongs to princes and the fourth is for earls; the fifth group consists of standard-bearers, while nobles and lesser knights compose the sixth and seventh ranks.²³ The author also describes the seven privileges accorded to the nobility,²⁴ a fact which, along with his dismissal of any form of menial work for the nobility,²⁵ shows that he upholds a specific class system. In the Ritterspiegel, however, a work written ostensibly for and about the nobility, Rothe on occasion adopts an attitude which on the surface appears singularly favourable to the lower classes, but which, on closer examination, becomes problematic. He is at pains to show that death obliterates social class, earthly power and riches:

Wo sint die gewaldigin keisere
und di romischin konnige darmede?
Er gebod di heldit man nicht mere
noch kerit sich ouch an erin frede.
Korte froide, wertliche gewalt
und der begerunge sußikeid,
Großis gud, lust mannigvald
di werdin gar schere hengeleid.

...

Wo sint er großin palas,
er ritter und er knechte
Von den eyn großis volgin waz
di ouch wole kundin gevechte?
Deße ding sint gar vorgangin
und vorlouffin gar in kortir zcid.
(Rsp., 265-72; 277-82)

This theme, of course, is a common-place in medieval literature, and becomes even more popular later in the Baroque.²⁶ Rothe, like his contemporaries, preaches that man should be mindful of the fact that his earthly shell came from ashes and will return to ashes, and emphasises the fleeting nature of earthly existence in a manner reminiscent of the Memento Mori in the eleventh century:²⁷

Nu bedenke abir vordir mere
daz du hirnach salt werdin
Obir eyne cleyne zcid gar schere
wedir zcu aschin und zcu erdin.
(Rsp., 197-200)

Rothe, while making the point that death is the ultimate equalizer, paints a mild picture of death. It is without the dread expressed in Noker's work²⁸ and shows no traces of the longing for death found, for example, in the Anno-
lied.²⁹ There is none of the fanatical preaching to denounce the things of this world as advocated, for instance, by Heinrich von Melk,³⁰ but rather the mildness and feeling of justice expressed in Hartmann von Aue's Armer Heinrich where the heavenly reward promised and the just treatment of each individual according to his deserts are the main factors.³¹ The grotesqueness of the late medieval death dance descriptions and the pictures of decomposing bodies are totally lacking in Rothe's work.

The author stresses in the Ritterspiegel that true nobility cannot be passed on from father to son; birth alone does not make a man noble:

also werdit daz adil nicht angeborin. (Rsp., 452)

The theme of the basic equality of all human beings returns later in the Ritterspiegel:

Alle lute uf deßeme ertriche
di sint kommen von eyner gebort
Und si warin mit dem adil gliche
also ir hi vor had gehort
Darumme dir nicht kunnen gegeben
dine eldirn eyn schonis adil.
(Rsp., 1517-22)

Rothe sketches with approval the development of a hard-working, pious family throughout several generations from the completely unfree state of serfdom through the various grades of vassalage and lower nobility to the last stage:

So werdin si geforstint alzcuhand;
wer wolde dawedir rede?
Sterbit danne konnig adir keisere,
her mag an sine stad werde gekorin
Ab eme god had beschert di ere.
(Rsp., 447-51)

Having postulated the gradual ascent from peasant to Emperor,³² Rothe then continues, by means of examples from the Bible and history, to show how the mighty rulers of the world often rose from humble origins:

Konnig David zcu erst eyn scheffer waz
do her den resin Goliam irslug,
Her treib di schaffe vor an daz graz
und gewan do sedir adilz gnug.
(Rsp., 533-6)³³

At the opposite extreme, he shows how arrogant leaders frequently found themselves relegated to the ranks of their inferiors. In the Ritterspiegel, Rothe illustrates this theme with the exemplum of how St. German³⁴ put a pious shepherd boy in the place of a king who was banished to the peasants for his misdeeds. The author concludes his tale with an overt moralising comment:

dit laßit uch allen sin eyn bilde!
Vel beßir ist ez uf deßir erdin
von eyne armen, demutigin geslechte
Czu eyne herrin adir ritter zcu werdin
danne von eyne herrin zcu eyne knechte.
(Rsp., 1488-92)

Rothe is well-disposed towards those who, by their own efforts and with an industrious, pious life, have worked their way into a higher social class. Such advancement was not unknown in Rothe's day.³⁵ Richer peasants were beginning to become more prosperous, and their prosperity enabled their children often to enter the ranks of the Ministeriales. A detailed literary account of such a social advancement is contained in Seifried Helbling,³⁶ where

a rich peasant's son is sent to serve at court, marries the daughter of a poverty-stricken lower noble, and on the death of his well-off father, pays his way into knighthood.³⁷ Rothe, although condoning rise in fortune if brought about by hard work, is not always unequivocal in his praise of social advancement, and certainly frowns on the buying of social positions.³⁸ Indeed, the question as to Rothe's attitude towards social advancement is essentially ambiguous. It is conceivable that his interest in a theoretical and literary discussion of the matter led him to fail to see the consequences of the quotations which he borrows from other authors who indeed treated the same theme, but from a different perspective. In the Fürstenratgeber, for example, Rothe quotes the following words of (he tells us) Jerome:

"Dryerley lute saltu flihen
Vnd dich von ire geselleschafft czihe:
Da eyn kauffmann ist in geistlichem orden
Vnd ein beteler ist riche worden
Vnd ein gebüer sich czühit zü ritterschafft,
Gar suchtig ist ir fruntschafft."
(Fürstenratgeber, F.880-5)

The advice to shun a merchant who has turned priest contradicts Rothe's lenient attitude towards the merchant class displayed in the Ritterspiegel. Besides, the condemnation of the peasant who has risen to knighthood³⁹ contrasts starkly with the concessions in the Ritterspiegel:

So werdin si geforstint alzcuhand;
wer wolde dawedir rede?
(Rsp., 447-8)

Zander also notices a discrepancy in this theme and tentatively adds a note at the end of his work, commenting on the following lines of the Ritterspiegel:

So vindit man ouch keynen gebuer
in deßir werlde zcu rechte,
Her si kommen mit siner nathuer
von eyne konniclichin geslechte.
(Rsp., 509-12)

to the effect that:

Diese demokratische Anschauung muß in dem Munde
Rothes, dessen durch und durch aristokratische

Gesinnung geradezu einen Grundzug seines Wesens ausmacht, dem Verdacht verfallen, daß sie nur um des didaktischen Zweckes willen im Ritterspiegel Platz findet. ... Daß es nicht etwa in seiner Absicht liegt, aus demokratischen Gedanken dieser Art eine hochpolitische Nutzenanwendung zu ziehen, dafür spricht einfach und ohne weiteres, daß er der Verfasser eines Buches wie der Ritterspiegel ist, dessen ganze von der aufrichtigen Hinneigung des Autors zum Adel diktierte Tendenz es doch ist, dessen Stellung nach aussen wie vor allem auch im Innern wieder zu kräftigen. ...⁴⁰

Zander has difficulty in conceiving that Rothe, the friend of the nobility, could at the same time have what he calls a "demokratische Anschauung" which allows for the nobility of a peasant. On surface evidence alone, Rothe's treatment of the matter is ambiguous. At vocabulary level there are several contradictory statements. As indicated above, Rothe believes that true nobility is not necessarily a result of high birth. Both in the Ritterspiegel and in the Fürstenratgeber, however, Rothe establishes a clear link on the semantic level between true nobility of the soul and noble birth:

Ist her eyn wolgeborner man,
so thu her nymande leide
Der eme nicht leide had getan.
(Rsp., 2101-3)

The use of wolgeborn in this instance is linked with an implied moral obligation on the part of a noble-spirited man, rather than with the condition of being born of noble parents. Nevertheless the word used is one which relates opaquely to the notion of nobility by birth. In his discourse on the ideal counsellors in the Fürstenratgeber, Rothe gives the following advice:

Vnd sint die gewaldigen wol geboren
Vnd die ritter menlich und vß erkorn,
So ist der furste wise genand.
(Fürstenratgeber, F 818-20)

Once again, one of the qualities demanded of the counsellor is that he be wolgeborn.

In the Ritterspiegel one finds that even when Rothe is expounding his theory that true nobility is not necessarily a consequence of noble birth, he uses vocabu-

lary which is odd under the circumstances:

Waz fromit eyne sin edil gebort
mit bosin, geburischin setin?
(Rsp., 1469-70)

The qualifying adjective bosin and the contempt for geburische setin seem most incongruous at this stage, since Rothe has been at pains in the preceding pages to explain that even a peasant (gebur) who practises humility and kindness can be called noble, and can rise with God's help and by his own effort and merit to the rank of knighthood or even higher. The term geburisch here (v.1470) and also in line 1487 ('und wisete den konnig zcu den geburin') seems to conjure up in Rothe's mind something fundamentally distasteful; and yet a few lines later he writes:

Waz schadit ouch eyne geburis art
der redeliche wise und worte kan
Und ist vorstandin und wol gelart?
(Rsp., 1473-5)

Geburis art in this instance seems to be nothing undesirable. Nevertheless, even Wernher der Gartenaere, writing much earlier, seems to be aware of the connotations of the word under certain circumstances. Young Helmbrecht sneers at his father as geburekin.⁴¹ Der Teichner, on the other hand, distinguishes between the occupation of farmer and the term bur:

Ez ist niht biurischeit, dan niur sünde und unfuoc.
Der dâ drischt und habt den pfluoc, der ist dar
umbe niht ein bûr.⁴²

Martini maintains that the term gebûren has been steadily declining towards a meaning of "vulgar, unbridled" since the time of the courtly epic⁴³ - an example in point being that of the peasant in Hartmann's Iwein⁴⁴ - and points to the parallel development in the French word vilain.⁴⁵ Rothe seems to use the word to express both "vulgar, unbridled" and "lowly, industrious", which leads to a certain amount of confusion and ambiguity.

One of the major privileges which was dependent on noble birth was that of social and legal freedom. In the

Ritterspiegel, Rothe discusses in a passage which possibly belongs to the immediately preceding quotation from Jerome the qualities a man needs to be noble (edil) and free (fry):

Der ist alleyne edil und fry
der do had einen solchin mud
Daz her nicht undirtenig wel sy
der untogunt umme keynerlei gud.
(Rsp., 1545-8)

Once again, of course, this concept is almost a commonplace in medieval literature. Thomasin strikes a similar note in his didactic work:

Ruom, lüge, spot, swer die drî
hât, der mac niht heizen vrî
wan der ist schalc der schalkeit,
im sî mîn dienst widerseit.⁴⁶

The state of freedom mentioned by both authors is, obviously, figurative. It is not the freedom of the nobleman as opposed to the socio-legal servility of the serf, but freedom from sin which makes a man both noble and free (v.1545). In the immediately following lines of the Ritterspiegel, however, the reader realises that the author is in fact limiting his remarks here to those of noble rank:

Der sal ouch danne von rechte
wan her eyn ritter ist worden,
Eme laßin volgin di knechte;
daz heldit danne wol sinen ordin.
(Rsp., 1549-52)

One concludes therefore that the author is restricting the quality of nobility of soul to those who are of noble birth, or at least to those who fulfil the social and legal qualifications required to be invested ~~as a~~ knight. The concept of adel is connected in the author's mind with freedom - probably both at figurative and at social levels, as can be seen in the Ritterspiegel when he asks:

Waz adilz mag danne der gehabe
der mit libe und sele ist eigin
Und em alle friheit get abe
und di sunde en gar irsteigin?
(Rsp., 1537-40)

Before this question Rothe has maintained that a man living in sin is the devil's vassal and serves him "Glich noch eyne eigin knechte".⁴⁷ At first the question is discussed purely figuratively in the terminology of the feudal system. Then, however, it changes abruptly in line 1549 back to the level of social reality with the mention of the knight and his right to have a servant (knecht, 1551), which had been the point of departure, significantly enough, for the whole discussion of nobility (1401ff.). Within this discussion, (1453-64), Rothe postulates the situation of a young man of noble birth whose conduct leaves much to be desired. He then, starting with the impersonal Man spricht (1455), voices the popular opinion that perhaps the young man's mother had conceived him illegitimately for, they feel:

Were her eynes ediln mannes kint,
her hette ouch edellichin getan.
(Rsp., 1457-8)

A similar belief is to be found in Wernher's Meier Helmbrecht. Both young Helmbrecht and his sister Gotelint voice the suspicion that their mother had intercourse with a nobleman, and that their striving to belong to the nobility is but their birthright.⁴⁸ Rothe, however, having expressed the common view, continues that the young man's behaviour is not the result of his birth:

Dez libis adil ist gar gud
noch deme zcidlichin guthe,
Abir vel beßir ist waz man tud
noch eyne ediln muthe.
(Rsp., 1461-4)

Again the author points to the supremacy of nobility of the soul over nobility of birth, but once again, he is writing exclusively about people of noble birth. The serf does not enter into his comparison.

The material, then, is complex. In the case of nobility, Rothe's lesson is clear; namely that noble birth without the necessary moral attributes is not enough to make a man noble in the true and full sense of the word. In the case of the lower classes whose rise to a better station of life has been postulated by the author,

the evidence is much more obscure. The most plausible explanation for the ambiguity is that it arises from an imprecise or fluctuating vocabulary. Rothe's views are still unusual in the vernacular writings of his day. The traditional vocabulary, which was too deeply founded in his speech for him to disregard it completely, expresses his ideas inadequately. Although he adheres to his belief in nobility of the spirit regardless of birth, words like geburisch and wolgeborn which were the normal vocabulary of the times to express rough, ill-mannered and polite, well-behaved automatically suggest themselves where Rothe wishes to express such a meaning; they have become semantically fixed, and almost **formulaic**. In the Ritterspiegel their use leads to ambiguity due to the fact that they have a direct relevance on the semantic plane to the main argument. The other discrepancies, such as the passage attributed to Jerome which was quoted above from the Fürstenratgeber can be explained by the fact that they occur within quotations from the writings of others which coincide broadly with Rothe's main theme. Here, however, isolated by Rothe from their original context, they may seem to contradict his own argument rather than support it.

Despite Zander's claim that Rothe is a **cleric** whose sympathies lie totally with the nobility, the author does adhere nevertheless to that notion of universal human equality which had been borrowed by the Fathers from the writings of antiquity. Zander postulates for this theme the influence of the Roman de la Rose although this theory, despite the popularity of the Old French work, seems unlikely. The idea was a common topos in the Middle Ages, and it seems more likely that Rothe is influenced, directly or indirectly, by the Church Fathers whom he quotes on the subject - probably again via a florilegium or exempla.

Although the theme of the basic equality of all men is, as indicated above, widespread in ancient and medieval writings, only in isolated cases is it placed into a social or political context as, for example, in the English Peasants' Revolt. Rothe is far from sounding the call for social equality. He does, admittedly, take the matter one step further than the many writers who offered the theory of the approaching equality of death as consolation for the inequalities and injustices of earthly life.⁴⁹ Rothe aimed to show that a man could, by his own efforts, and with God's help, improve his lot; it was, however, merely a possibility for the few, and by no means an everyday occurrence. Rupprich, seeing the Ritterspiegel in a different light from Zander, sums up the work as follows:

Rothes Ritterspiegel hat kaum viel literarischen Erfolg gehabt, ist aber durch den Versuch, dem bürgerlichen Arbeitsethos Anerkennung und Gültigkeit zu verschaffen ein kulturgeschichtlich interessantes Stück spätmittelalterliches Ritterdidaxe.⁵⁰

Zander's impression of *Rothe as a friend of the nobility* and Rupprich's view of him as a friend of the bourgeois code are not contradictory; they complement each other. Rothe is a friend of the aristocracy and court circles; at the same time, however, he sees much that is admirable in middle class attitudes of his day, and is striving in his works to gain recognition for the hard work by which the middle classes had won themselves influence and prosperity. Rothe goes even further; he is at pains to procure a secure existential basis for the serfs and lower vassals, for he shrewdly points out that their work will be a reflection of the treatment meted out to them by their overlord:

Der ritter sal nicht eyn lewe si
 kegin sime huezgesinde
Di em nacht und tag wonen bi,
 her mochte sy ungetruwe vinde.
(Rsp., 1377-80)

While this might be taken by a Marxist critic as an argument advocating a subtler form of exploitation to the nobility, it seems rather to afford evidence of Rothe's attitude of basic human equality, or indeed of his con-

fidence in the two-sided feudal pact as extolled in works like the Rolandslied. It is misleading to see Rothe as the voice of any one particular class. Unlike many of his contemporaries, he is far-sighted enough to realise, albeit dimly and within his theocentric world-view, that the pattern of society is changing, and that the change will be irreversible. J.Huizinga points out the general lack of progressive thinking in the period:

The men of the 15th century could not understand that the real moving powers of political and social evolution might be looked for anywhere else than in the doings of a warlike or courtly nobility. They persisted in regarding the nobility as the foremost of social forces and attributed a very exaggerated importance to it, undervaluing altogether the social significance of the lower classes.⁵¹

This criticism would be inaccurate if levelled at Rothe. Admittedly, modern social historians would deem his arguments naive, but he has at least recognised the diminishing significance of the hitherto normal roles of the nobility and the ever increasing importance of the merchants and the town society as portrayed in his Ratsgedichte and exemplified in his own active participation in town politics. He has also sub-consciously taken stock of the changing pattern in German society which has been slowly emerging since the time of the Crusades. He may interpret the causes in a naive way, but he does accept the position and offer advice to the knight in his financial predicament; he points out possible ways of avoiding destitution and tries to assist the noble in finding a new role within society. He also recognises and accepts, albeit again within his theocentric views of society, the evergrowing importance of the middle classes, in particular of those involved in trade and commerce, and tries, with his Ratsgedichte, to temper their new-found power and prosperity with moral conscience. The whole process of social and historical change has, for Rothe, an inner significance and represents a progression

of divinely willed events on a moral plane. Thus the recognition of outer change must be accompanied by an interpretation of the inner consequences.

Rothe's point of departure for his description of the social scene was certainly fifteenth century reality ~~as~~ ~~now~~ recorded in documents and historical works. His society is made up of rich and poor, noble and commoner, knight and farmer, ecclesiastic and townsman, nun and prostitute. His world is concerned with trade, finance, cost of living, unemployment, agriculture, crime, simony, the protection of the poor, and social advancement. Nevertheless, in his portrayal of the socio-historical problem of the servant who is richer than the master, or the peasant who is richer and more powerful than the nobleman, Rothe's main concern is not, in fact, to give an absolutely authentic picture of the fluctuations in the social pattern of his day. On the contrary, he makes use of a deceptively realistic background to give force to his didactic aim. Teaching is his priority, not purely an analysis of the socio-historical problems of his day. This is apparent in the large number of quotations and supporting material taken from ancient or patristic literature. Rothe's portrayal of the social upheaval of his day is realistic in the sense described above; it is, however, not wholly authentic, since it depends on the juxtaposition of social "types" such as the robber knight and the pious peasant which become almost caricatures. These "types" are cast not in the form of reality, but are moulded by Rothe's didactic purpose. The cunning, wicked peasant who attains social advancement and prosperity through devious means or immoral pursuits is unthinkable within the social system of Rothe's Ritterspiegel. Social advancement is God's reward for hard work, humility and a pious way of life, while demotion on the social scale is usually a sign of God's punishment for arrogance or wicked deeds. The seemingly authentic background is in fact a stereotype

formed to accomodate the elements of Rothe's didactic plan and to contain his moral.

The theme of social advancement, important as it is in the Ritterspiegel, is by no means the only central issue of the work. One of Rothe's main purposes is to supply a compendium of advice for the ritter, a Spiegel or mirror in which the ideal is reflected for him. Prior to a discussion of the treatment of reality within the mirror section of the Ritterspiegel, it is necessary to clarify the meaning of the term ritter which plays such a vital part in the work. The discussion of nobility of birth or of soul presents no problems in this respect, for the participant is described as an edilmann, but the advice given by the author in his Spiegel is for the most part directed at ritter. Rothe uses the word for the first time in the Ritterspiegel in line 278 where it has the meaning "the vassal of a high lord":

Wo sint er groÛin palas,
er ritter und er knechte.
(Rsp., 277-8)

In lines 409ff. he explains the possible ascent from the unfree state of serfdom to the knightly class, the legal ascent, that is, to freedom and the social ascent to the knightly rank - and the possibility of hereditary nobility.

So mag ez en wol darzcu komme
daz si werdin zcu rittern geslagin.
(Rsp., 431-2)

In lines 696, 700, 701 and 705 the word ritter is used to denote the lowest element of the Heerschilde or table of rank:

an den sibindin sich di rittermeÛigen kerin
(Rsp., 696)
Den rittern und den knechtin
schribit man: den gestrengin.
(Rsp., 705-6)

Until this point there is nothing to lead the reader to believe that there is any reason to interpret the word ritter in Rothe's Ritterspiegel differently from its meaning in courtly works - i.e. an invested member of

a social group or class who fought on horseback, lived according to a rigid code of standards and who, by his birth and station in life, was suitable for admission to such a class. After line 725, however, the word ritter appears with increasing regularity, and is used to mean "one who fights, a soldier". Rothe, like many other writers of his day,⁵² has been misled by the Latin word miles of some of his sources, and translates it with ritter, even when a common soldier of pre-courtly times is referred to. Nimrod, an Old Testament figure, is introduced as founder of the fighting caste:

Her machte daz allirerste heer
daz uf ertriche y wart gesehin.
(Rsp., 745-6)

After a short description of the fighting activities of this army, Rothe goes on to say: "Dit waz der ritter ordin" (Rsp., 765). The next stage in the history of "kighthood" is at Troy where many were made "knights" (767-80). The author then leads his reader through the great events of history where these ritter or soldiers (Latin milites) played a role. It is, however, apparent from the start that Rothe is writing his Spiegel for young knights and nobles, not for the common soldier. He tells the reader that he is presenting the work to "myn(er) jungin herrin" (4048) and "der andirn myner frunde" (4049). The young lords mentioned are certainly no common soldiers.⁵³

The fact that Rothe translates the Latin miles as ritter leads to some incongruities and a good deal of confusion within the work. The most curious example is the recommendation of smiths (3473), carpenters and butchers (3477), stone masons (3478) and hunters (3480) as suitable companions for the knight in a campaign (gudin ritters genoz, 3459).

Despite such misleading use of sources and such confusion at semantic level, it is possible to deduce the kind of kighthood which Rothe was recommending. Rupprich writes of the Ritterspiegel:

Die Dichtung ist eine Standeslehre für das wirtschaftlich und moralisch abgesunkene Rittertum. Sie zeichnet aus städtisch-bürgerlicher Sicht und orientiert sich an geistlicher Tugendlehre das Ideal des adligen Kriegers.⁵⁴

"Das Ideal des adligen Kriegers" is an apt enough term for the ideal knight Rothe has in mind, with adlig meaning both high-born and noble-spirited. As is adumbrated in the phrase "geistliche Tugendlehre", Rothe's impression of the ideal knight is a specifically Christian one. The order of chivalry, to his mind, reached its peak with the coming of Christianity and its principles. Of this stage in its development he writes:

Do wart der ritter werdikeid
gar großlichin ouch irhabin
Und der werdin ritter ordin
gancz darnach vollinkommen.
(Rsp., 815-19)

The term ritter here certainly implies more than simply soldier, but the concept of knight as used in the courtly epic can scarcely be applied to the early Christian period. Perhaps the ideal of chivalry portrayed in the Roland and the chansons de geste is the nearest equivalent. It is akin to the code preached by Archbishop Turpin before battle:

"Seignurs baruns, Carles nus laissat ci.
Pur nostre rei devum nus ben murir.
Chrestientét aidez a sustenir!
Bataille avrez, vos en estes tuz fiz;
Kar a voz oilz veez les Sarrazins.
Clamez vos culpes, si preiez Deu mercit!
Asoldrai vos pur voz anmes guarir.
Se vos murez, esterez seinz martirs,
Sieges avrez el greignor pareïs."
(La Chanson de Roland, Laisse 89 vv.1127-35)⁵⁵

Having traced the history of "kighthood" from Nimrod to the ideal Christian knight, Rothe breaks off to consider the knights of his own day. The contrast between the praise of the ideal Christian Knight:

Do wart der ritter werdikeid
gar großlichen ouch irhabin.
(Rsp., 815-16)

and the disillusionment in the lines which follow rings out in the little word nu which opens line 820 and introduces the passage that bewails the present, depraved state of the knightly order. Several times in the Ritterspiegel we shall come across this nu set up against an etzwanne. Rothe compares his impression of modern knighthood with his memory of the knights of former times, and without exception finds the knights of his own day the worse for the comparison. He strikes the same note of disillusionment with present times in an aside in Chapter 742 of the Thüringische Chronik:

Truwe unde warheit vynden die fursten,
itzunt selden an yren mannen, also
sie etzwanne vor jaren gethan haben.

The important question for an assessment of the realism in Rothe's portrayal is whether the knights of his day were as corrupt as he describes them, and whether the knights of former times were as perfect as the picture he paints of them. The juxtaposition of more or less contrived opposites offers the author an ideal means of putting his didactic intent into practice. Indeed, it is almost a literary topos - especially within didactic writings - that present standards are measured against an idealised picture of the past, and found inadequate. Criticism of the knighthood is not just beginning in Rothe's day. Even at the height of the courtly period, dissent had been voiced. As early as 1200 Alain of Lille laments that the knights of his day have become "booty hunters", and "highwaymen".⁵⁶ Peter of Blois, writing in the late twelfth century, contrasts the plundering knights of his own day to those of former times who swore an oath that they would support the state, stand by it in battles, and that they would nurture public advantage more than their own selfish interests.⁵⁷ The fact that both these twelfth century passages are taken from the works of

churchmen is significant. Soon, however, such criticism began to be levelled by lay writers. As Rehm points out, the literature of the late Middle Ages is dominated by laudatio temporis acti.⁵⁸ Starting in fairly mild terms with Rudolf von Ems, Konrad von Würzburg, der Pleier, Heinrich von dem Türlin Konrad Fleck and Berthold von Holle, it strikes a more dominant note in the writings of the late fourteenth century.⁵⁹ Hugo von Trimberg, Frauenlob, der Teichner, Vintler, and of course Rothe fill their pages with plaintive yearning for the standards of the past.⁶⁰ Wernher, for example, in his Meier Helmbrecht writes:

der do was der wirste
der waere nu der beste.
hei wie wol ich etwenne weste
waz triuwe und ere merte
ez diu valscheit verkerte.
(Meier Helmbrecht, 964-8)

Konrad von Würzburg also finds his age lacking in manly and knightly qualities:

Dar umbe ein ieslich ritter sol
gerne sîn des muotes quec,
werf alle zageheit enwec
und üebe sînes lîbes kraft
wan manheit unde ritterschaft
diu zwei diu tiurent sêre ...
(Heinrich von Kempten, 744-9)

Der Teichner bewails "dirre werlde irreganc",⁶¹ and most of the clerical writers criticise the greed and usury brought about by the economic developments. Rehm judges:

Misstrauen allem Neuen gegenüber, besonders
dem Geld - das ist die Grundhaltung noch hin
bis zu Luther.⁶²

Most of these writers, including Rothe -- but especially the schoolmaster Hugo von Trimberg -- found fault with characteristics which were common human frailties⁶³, to be met with at all times and in all civilisations. The fact that Rothe was a churchman makes the situation more acute for him, since he measures contemporary reality against Christian ideals. He stresses the religious side

of chivalry more than the ideals of his own times demanded, and it is also from a religious stance that he views and assesses the decline of the order of chivalry. H. Neumann points to this discrepancy between Christian ideal and contemporary reality in the introduction to his edition of the Ritterspiegel:

(Rothe) denkt im ständigen Hinblick auf die durch die kirchliche Lehre an den Menschen gerichtete Forderung Gottes dem kommenden Reiche des wiederkehrenden Christus entgegen. Dies religiöse a priori bewirkt eine mächtig empfundene Spannung zwischen gelebter Wirklichkeit und idealem Sollen, eine Spannung, die das mittelalterliche Lebensgefühl überhaupt kennzeichnet.⁶⁴

The plague, too, which ravaged Europe in the second half of the fourteenth century, was interpreted as usual as a warning to mend one's ways, indeed as a direct intervention by God to punish the sinful. Thus we find in the literature of the period a constant plea to return to the ideals of the past. Rothe's picture of the ideal knight stresses a code of social consciousness. Indeed, both Petersen⁶⁵ and F. Ranke⁶⁶ come to the conclusion that it is not so much a specifically knightly code as a general, Christian humanitarian ideal that Rothe is expounding. In his Ritterspiegel Rothe reconstructs a picture of the ideal knight of former days, whom he sets up as an example to be followed. A closer examination of this picture reveals what Rothe demanded of the knights of his own times. The ideal knight went to Church and was invested with the order of knighthood during the celebration of mass:

In di kerchin her danne ging
also eyn fromer cristinman,
Undir meße her den ordin enphing
von eyne pristir wolgetan.
(Rsp., 829-32)

In this ceremony his sword, armour and spurs were blessed by a priest:

Der gebenedigete em sin swert,
sinen ritters gesmug und sporn.
(Rsp., 833-4)

and he became "vor gote eyn ritter wert" (835). The new knight then swore a solemn oath that he would always fight for Christendom (837-8) and for the Empire (839). He took it upon himself to protect widows and orphans (841), and promised to rout out heretics, heathens and wicked Christians:

Di ketzcer und ungloibigin heidin
und di andirn bosin cristin
Brengen wolde zcu leidin
und er keynen gerne fristin.
(Rsp., 845-8)

After taking this oath, the knight received from the priest a ring which signified his faithfulness to God's cause (849-53). The order of chivalry, the author then informs his reader, broke down the barriers of the legal class system; even princes who believed in God's cause became knights:

Also sint vel forstin ouch ritter wordin
in den der cristingloibe haft.
(Rsp., 863-4)

so that the social rank of knighthood was spread over several layers of the legal system of rank. Rothe chooses as his example of such a princely knight Ludwig of Thuringia (873ff.) whom he greatly admires.⁶⁷

A similar description of the knights of former times is given in a longer passage towards the end of the Ritterspiegel (3349-82). Beginning with the imprecise etzwann Rothe reports how these knights took an oath to work for the common good:

und swuer darobir eynen eid
Daz her noch erin begerdin
beschermen wolde den gemeynen nutz.
(Rsp., 3352-4)

and became "gotis ritter" (3355). Rothe again mentions the promise to protect Christendom (3356) and look after the interests of widows and orphans (3357). Furthermore, the knight undertook to fight for justice and for just causes: "wan man umme recht wolde stritin (Rsp., 3362), and not to flee or shirk his duty (3363). This description of the

ideal knight goes further than the previous one in portraying knightly devotion and selflessness, for Rothe maintains here that the knight promised:

... daz her sinen lip und sin lebin
dorch den heiligen cristingloibin
Und dorch gemeynen nutz wolde ufgebin
und dez solde en nymant beroibin.
(Rsp., 3365-8)

Rothe then stresses once again that the good knight received blessing in Church at the hands of a priest (3369f.), a fact which he also emphasises in his account of the investiture of Landgraf Ludwig.⁶⁸ The new knight thereupon proclaimed that he had become the child of Christendom (3374):

Er swerte si von deme altir namen
di selbin fromen gotis degin
Und bekantin daz si gote zcu erin
der cristinheit kindir werin wordin
Und woldin sich an keyne boßheit kerin,
sundirn haldin der fromen ritter ordin.
(Rsp., 3371-6)

He made known his intention to protect Churches and take revenge on evildoers (3377), as well as to look after the interests of the poor (3379). He also gave his assurance that he was prepared to take up arms for his fatherland at all times:

Sy woldin irlosin er vatirland
czu welchin gezcitin dez tede nod.
(Rsp., 3381-2)

The above descriptions are the two main instances in the Ritterspiegel where Rothe specifically enlarges upon the knightly order of former days. The resulting picture is reminiscent of the noble warrior knight as far back as in the chansons de geste. Rothe's knights are "cristenheit kindir" (Rsp., 3374) in much the same way as Roland was "Gottes kint".⁶⁹ Charlemagne's plea to his knights "wesit got untertan"⁷⁰ (Rol. 217) could equally feature in Rothe's Spiegel. Although Rothe does admit the existence of unworthy "knights" in former times,⁷¹ the general picture of the knight of bygone days which emerges

is an idealised one. The author fails, for example, to mention the plundering which took place in the name of crusading,⁷² and in general, the picture is distorted by the span of time which has passed.

It is revealing to compare the above picture of the knights of etzwanne with the description Rothe gives of the contemporary knights. In the first lines of the Ritterspiegel Rothe condemns the arrogance of the nobility and their unwillingness to work. Wernher's Meier Helmbrecht describes the plundering activities of a group of so-called knights who are unwilling to work for their living. As yet in the Ritterspiegel, Rothe is discussing not the order of chivalry, but the nobility in general. The first specific condemnation of contemporary knight-hood comes in line 819, after the author has traced the history of the knightly order. The description of the worthy "knights" of various eras is broken off with a condemnation of the knightly order of the present:

Nu ist her leidir swach gnug wordin. (819)

The nu at the beginning of the line emphasises the contrast between the noble order which has just been described and its degenerate descendant of the fifteenth century. The contemporary order is being deprived of its honour (820) by robbers and thieves who are now among its ranks and who delight in taking booty dishonestly:

sin ere werdit em benommen
Von roibern und von dibin
di sich sere undir sy nu gebin,
Di wuchirschetzce zcu sere en libin
und gar veste an en clebin.
(Rsp., 820-4)

The contrasting nu again appears in line 905 after the description of the investiture and undertakings of the ideal knights of former times. Rothe complains that some of the young men who are now being made knights have little honour (906) and maintains that they would not dare to ride to the tournaments:

Nu werdin ritter in deßin gezcitin
der etzliche nicht vel ere habin
Und nicht getorrin in di torney ritin,
wer wel en der ritter eid nu stabin?
(Rsp., 905-8)

Rothe then goes on to distinguish three goups of knights; it is not clear whether this is a general differentiation valid at all times, or a reflection on the contemporary state of the knightly order. The first of the three goups consists of the descendants of Pilate's "knights" whom Rothe calls

... di untoguntlichin man
Di do struthin und ouch mordin
und keyne ere uf erdin han.
(Rsp., 926-8)

The second gruop is equally bad, and consists of "knights" whom Rothe describes as "ritter obir kuwedrecke" (943) or "kuweritter" (961). The picture Rothe paints of this group is reminiscent of the behaviour of young Helmbrecht and his accomplices in Wernher's Meier Helmbrecht.⁷³ They go against the Christian cause and make widows and orphans instead of protecting them (934) as was called for both by law and by the dictates of the knightly code of conduct. They make a living by robbing (953) and by exploiting the poor (938, 944). They destroy churches and convents (950), exploit young girls (959f.) and wear luxurious clothes decorated with gold (974). Such conduct is already the object of severe criticism in the Lob der Keuschheit where Rothe calls for moderation in dress,⁷⁴ and in the Ratsgedichte where he pleads for the protection of the interests of the weak and the poor.⁷⁵ As old Helmbrecht in Wernher's work utters the premonition that such conduct can only lead to a bad end, so Rothe also warns that robbers themselves are not immune to the false dealings of their colleagues, and also that dishonestly accumulated property can never lead to true prosperity. He includes two learned quotations to confirm his arguments, the first biblical:

Der prophete Ysaiaſ der spricht:
sage mir roiber, waz ist din gloibe?
Meynstu daz ouch eyn andir nicht
dich wedir moge ouch beroibe?
Von roibe werdit man seldin riche.
(Rsp., 977-81)

This seems to be a commentary on Isaiah Chapters IX and X, and of great relevance for Rothe's Ritterspiegel in general, since it suits his didactic aim and supports his theocentric world-view. The second quotation, from the writings of Gregory the Great, expresses the same notion:

In dem schadin ez alliz vorterbit
den selbin luthin zcu angesichte
Waz man suntlichin und unerlichin irwerbit
daz ez hindinnoch werdit zcu nichte.
(Rsp., 993-6)

The author then discusses the third group, which consists of the noble-spirited knights. These are the knights who fight for the general welfare (gemeyn nutz) and for justice's sake (1000), or for the peace of their land. They work to combat the forces of heathendom and heresy (1002), help the poor (1004) and undertake a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Such knights enhance Christendom, notes Rothe:

Vor frome ritter ich deße habe
wan salde und heil mag en begeynen.
Daße ritter werdin recht geslagin
und mogin di cristinheit gezcirin.
(Rsp., 1007-1010)

Suddenly, as if Rothe once more feels compelled to compare these good knights with the bad exponents of the order, he introduces another short passage condemning the false knights (1011-28) whom he describes as cowardly and deceitful:

Dy andirn halde man vor zcagin,
sy getorrin vor lastir nicht tornirin.
(Rsp., 1011-2)

A further description of contemporary knighthood is to be found in the section beginning at line 3233. After quoting Petrus Perle's - presumably Peter of Blois⁷⁶ - condemnation of the idle, useless knight who has reached the point: "Daz her danne nicht nutzlichis tud/und werdit

gar unretig" (Rsp., 3255-6), Rothe complains that the knights who should be testing their strength in the cause of Christianity are abusing it now only with wine (3257-61). They live an idle life (3262) and enjoy rich food and drink (3263-4). They are tyrants in their own homes, but cowardly outside when confronted with their enemies:

lewin sint sy in erme huz,
Si lestirn sere di ritterschaft,
si sint hasin wan si kommen uz,
Si rithin uf den feldin,
do wollin si alz di hasin hetzcin.
(Rsp., 3270-74)

They complain of pain at the slightest discomfort (3277-8) and sulk like children if they do not get their own way (3279f.) After a quotation from Vegetius condemning weak knights, there follows a comparison between "di hertin ritter" (3293) who fight bravely and endure great discomfort for a good cause and "di zcertlinge" (3304) who sleep in fine bed-clothes, are no strangers to baths, enjoy rich food, and whose only weapons are the skewers for roasting geese or fowl⁷⁷ (3309-14). Rothe then makes a significant comment about this food:

Der wollin si vel me geniße
danne hi vor er eldirn tatin.
(Rsp., 3315-6)

The hi vor is scarcely more specific than the etzwanne found elsewhere in the Ritterspiegel, and it serves the same purpose, namely that of measuring the present against an idealised past, and of emphasising the lack of moderation in the life-style of the present-day knights. Wernher makes the same point in his Meier Helmbrecht when young Helmbrecht haughtily orders his father:

und izze dû gîselitze
sô wil ich ezzen ditze
daz man dâ heizet huon versoten.
(Helmbrecht 473-5)

Rothe goes on to quote a passage from Peter of Blois which reflects not only conditions in Peter's day, but also those in Rothe's Thuringia. Both authors agree that the order of chivalry is in decline. Peter of Blois laments:

... der fromen ritter ordin
beide undir jungin und den aldin
Der ist nu gar zcu nichte wordin.
(Rsp., 3325-7)

while Rothe maintains:

nu ist er togunt vorswundin,
Si kunnen wedir libis noch mutis gewaldin,
sy habin andir wise nu fundin.
(Rsp., 3346-8)

This nu passage is followed by the revealing comparison with the ideal age of etzwan (3349-82) already discussed above. This in turn is followed, once more for the sake of comparison, by another passage about the failings of contemporary knights. Again it is the little word nu which introduces the complaint:

Nu had ez sich alz ummegewand. (3383)

The all-encompassing alz (3383) is then specified. The modern knights think they have no God, laments Rothe (3384). They are made knights in those very fields where they have stolen widows' cattle:

Sy werdin nu ritter uf den veldin
wan si der wetwen kuwe tribin.
(Rsp., 3385-6)

Their mouths are tainted with foul language (3387) and they delight in *ravaging* churches and monasteries. These knights exploit Christendom: "Cristum si sines erbis beroibin." (3390) and rob the poor (3393). They are guilty of the sin of arrogance (3394) and seek the company of beautiful women (3398), committing the sin of unchastity. Rothe sums up the consequences of such behaviour as all-encompassing:

Lip, gud, sele und ere
di werdin also darvon vorletzcit.
(Rsp., 3401-2)

As is the practice of didactic writers in general, Rothe tends here to exaggerate the extent of the degeneracy of the knightly class of his day. At the other extreme, his didactic purpose leads him to paint too perfect a picture of the knight of former times. The general human frailties which he condemns in the knights of his own day are easily overlooked in the knights of a time to which he looks back as a Golden Age compared to the turbulent fifteenth century.

Previous centuries had, of course, been no less turbulent, but time lends an ordered aspect to even the most unsettled era, and the High Middle Ages are still today regarded as a period of relative harmoniousness. Besides, Rothe's stark contrasts between the knights of past and present are too contrived and too sweepingly generalizing to be considered authentic. Once more, Rothe's didactic purpose has determined the form and content of his description of the knightly class. The stark contrasts between nü and the unspecific etzwanne, the measuring of present knighthood against idealised standards of former times, the stereotype sermonising language used by the author and the supporting learned quotations all fulfil the dictates of his didactic aim.

To argue, along with Petersen, Neumann and Rehm, that Rothe paints a realistic picture of the knights of his day would be missing the point of the didactic Spiegel-genre and would almost certainly involve false and contrived comparison with completely fictitious works. Rothe's knights can be called realistic in the sense that they are of this world. The author, however, does not present an authentic picture, since his didactic aim has led him to set up exaggerated and contrived parallels for the sake of contrast. The picture he paints is on the surface historically accurate; in fact, however, his knights are the puppets of his didactic ideals in much the same way as the characters of the Blütezeit are made to comply with the conventions and standards of the courtly ideals. The poles of the ideal are no longer minne and aventiure but Gottesliebe and gemeyn nutz.

1. For a description of this rigidly ordered régime see Bloch, Feudal Society, II, 336f.
2. See Willy Sanders, Glück: Zur Herkunft und Bedeutungsentwicklung eines mittelalterlichen Schicksalsbegriffes (Köln/Graz, 1965).
3. Lewis, Image, p.21.
4. See Otto Mann, Deutsche Literaturgeschichte (Gütersloh, 1979) p.69. Also Ehrismann, Geschichte der deutschen Literatur II/ii/2 pp.21-22; pp.445-8.
5. See Arno Borst, Lebensformen im Mittelalter (Frankfurt/Berlin/Vienna, 1979) p.108 for the view of Pope Innocenz III:
"Das Vermögen nun, das Macht über die Zukunft geben soll, heißt auch bei Innocenz Fortuna. Es ist launisch wie das Glück und stets gefährdet; der einzelne, der heute angesehen ist, kann morgen verachtet sein, seltener kommt es umgekehrt."
See also Lewis, Image, pp.81-83.
6. Curtius, Europäische Literatur, p.188.
7. See, for example, the Roman de la Rose, vv.1860ff. For an account see Cohn, Millennium, pp.145-6, also Lewis, Image, p.198. Also Chaucer's Wife of Bath's Tale, cited by Curtius, Europäische Literatur, pp.188-9.
8. The obvious example is Wernher's Meier Helmbrecht.
9. Berthold von Regensburg, Predigten, ed. F. Pfeiffer (Berlin, 1965), I,14.
10. Cited by Bühler, Kultur des Mittelalters, p.123. Source: PL 197, 336.
11. In: Deutsche Liederdichter des zwölften bis vierzehnten Jahrhunderts, ed. Karl Bartsch, 8th ed. by Wolfgang Golther (Berlin, 1928), p.311.
12. At the Würzburg Colloquium 1978 (Proceedings in: Poesie und Gebrauchsliteratur im deutschen Mittelalter, edd. V. Honemann, K. Ruh, B. Schnell and W. Wegstein (Tübingen, 1979)) Georg Steer maintains in his paper "Rechtstheologische Implikationen der Helmbrecht-Dichtung Wernhers des Gartenaere", pp.239-50, ~~that since~~ Helmbrecht states he is of noble birth, he cannot be accused of social climbing, but rather of avaritia(p241). This juristic hair-splitting seems to me, however, to miss the point of the work. Must we believe Helmbrecht's statement? - or is this another of his dishonest ploys to reach his goal by any means? Moreover, if Steer's interpretation were accepted, old Helmbrecht's role would lose much of its colour and social significance. Also the parallels to Neidhart (the cap) would become insignificant as would old Helmbrecht's postulation about passing judgment on two unknown young men in unfamiliar surroundings.

13. Meier Helmbrecht, v.291.
14. 1. Cor. I, 26; Videte enim vocationem vestram, fratres; quia non multi sapientes secundum carnem, non multi potentes, non multi nobiles.
One may, perhaps, postulate a certain influence of the gradualistic theory of Scholastic teaching: in the ordered state of being, every individual and object has its specific place in the world and in relationship to God. C.S. Lewis makes an interesting observation (Image, p.10): "At his most characteristic, medieval man was not a dreamer nor a wanderer. He was an organiser, a codifier, a builder of systems. He wanted 'a place for everything and everything in the right place'."
15. Cited by Cohn, Millennium, p.199. See also Borst, Lebensformen, pp.275-6.
16. Curtius, Europäische Literatur, p.188.
17. See Cohn, Millennium, pp.195-6.
18. Cited by Curtius, Europäische Literatur, p.189.
19. Tristan und Isolde, ed. F. Ranke, 5th ed. (Berlin, 1961), pp.1-3 (vv.1-240). See also X. von Ertzdorff, "Das Herz in der Lateinisch-theologischen und frühen volksprachigen religiösen Literatur", PBB/Halle 84 (1962), 249-301. Also W. Spiewok, "Zum Begriff edelez herze bei Gottfried von Straßburg", Weimarer Beiträge 9 (1963), 27-41. Also Klaus Speckenbuch, Studien zum Begriff "edelez herze" im "Tristan" Gottfrieds von Straßburg (Munich, 1965).
20. See Rosenfeld, "Ethos", p.286.
21. Ibid, p.286.
22. Bloch, Feudal Society, II, 336.
23. Rsp., 677-96
24. Rsp., 1065-2076
25. Rsp., 2197-8
26. For examples of this theme at various periods see Huizinga, Waning, pp.134-6. We may refer also to the topos of the dead ruler owning seven feet of earth and nothing more - a familiar memento mori topos applied, for example, frequently to Alexander (vide the Vorauer Alexander).
27. Huizinga, Waning, p.137.
28. Hildegard Reifschneider, "Die Vorstellung des Todes und des Jenseits in der geistlichen Literatur des XII. Jahrhunderts", (Diss. typescript, Tübingen, 1948), p.48.
29. Ibid., p.39

30. Sowinski, Lehrhafte Dichtung, p.76 and bibliography p.78.
31. Reifschneider, "Vorstellung des Todes", p.57.
32. For an account of the ascent of a peasant's son to knighthood, see Schindele's account of Seifried Helbling in "Helmbrecht", pp.134-5; pp.166-7.
33. The exemplum of David is one of the most often used biblical examples in the Middle Ages. See Backes, Ars Praedicandi im 'Rolandslied', p.130. Also Pickering, Literature and Art, pp.105ff and p.108, also Pickering, Augustinus oder Boethius? II,90.
34. See Ch. 2, note 36.
35. See, for example, the tale of St. Godric's rise to prosperity in: Pirenne, Social History, pp.47-8.
36. Schindele, "Helmbrecht", pp.134-5.
37. Ibid., pp.166ff.
38. See, for example, Ratsg. F1166ff. and Chronik L, Ch.271. In the latter, Rothe assures us that Pope Gregory VI was against "geistlichen wucher", which he specifies further: "also das sie geistliche lehn kouften unde verkouften unde ouch etzliche sacramente."
39. A condemnation in very similar terms is to be found in the Buch der Rügen (ca. 1276/7) where the author accuses the "gepaurn die sich zuo hoveleuten geleichent" of the sin of hōchvart(superbia). See Schindele, "Helmbrecht", pp.134-42, here p.137.
40. Zander, "Rothe", p.154, n.140.
41. Helmbrecht, v.764.
42. Cited by Fritz Martini, Das Bauerntum im deutschen Schrifttum von den Anfängen bis zum 16. Jahrhundert (Halle/Saale, 1944), p.124.
43. Ibid., p.123.
44. Hartmann von Aue, Iwein, edd. G.F. Benecke and K. Lachmann, rev. L. Wolff, 7th ed. (Berlin, 1968), vv.418-600.
45. Martini, Bauerntum, p.123, n.73. See also Alfred Ewart, The French Language, 2nd ed. (London, 1953), p.328, §558.
46. Thomasin von Zirclaria, Der Wälsche Gast, ed. Heinrich Rückert (Berlin, 1965), vv.217-20. Also vv.3860ff.
47. Rsp., 1529-36
48. Helmbrecht, 1374-83; 1384-92.

49. This view of death is, of course, common in the Bible - e.g. The Sermon on the Mount, and Matthew XIX, 30: Multi autem erunt primi novissimi, et novissimi primi.
50. Rupprich, "Das ausgehende Mittelalter", p.298.
51. Huizinga, Waning, p.54.
52. See Petersen, Rittertum, Ch. 5.
53. The assertion that an author is writing for the iuvenes is almost a topos in medieval literature.
54. Rupprich, "Das ausgehende Mittelalter", p.298.
55. La Chanson de Roland, ed. F. Whitehead (Oxford, 1968), p.34.
56. van Winter, Rittertum, p.38, n.12.
57. Ibid., p.52, n.33.
58. Rehm, "Kulturverfall", p.305.
59. Sowinski, Lehrhafte Dichtung, p.94, points out that these late medieval works have only recently attracted research, particularly on account of "Wirklichkeitsspiegelung und zeitkritischen Bezüge".
60. Rehm, "Kulturverfall", p.308. See also Sowinski, Lehrhafte Dichtung, pp.88f., 92, 104.
61. Rehm, "Kulturverfall", p.309.
62. Ibid, p.329.
63. Ibid, p.316.
64. Neumann, Rsp., p.V. See also Sowinski, Lehrhafte Dichtung, p.75 on the influence of Christian morals on medieval didactic works.
65. Petersen, Rittertum, p.183.
66. Ranke, "Von der ritterlichen zur bürgerlichen Dichtung", p.250.
67. Ludwig's investiture to knighthood is described in Ch. 383 of the Thüringische Chronik (L), and in Ch. 392 Rothe gives a description of Landgraf Ludwig which amounts to a picture of his ideal:

Disser lantgrave Lodewigk der dritte furste der was gar eyn erlauchtir fromer furste, yn den streiten menlich unde ufsetzigk, ynn den reden vorsichtigk unde wisse, yn dem wederwillen geduldigk unde senftmutigk, keigen armen lewten barmherzigk unde gutlich unde vortrugk on ir geschrei unde ir clage die sie zu om taten, also ap her on die almossen vonn rechte schuldigk were her nerethe sie, her cleidete sie unde vorteidingete sie, her was also gar eyn fromer cristen, das man on mer hilt von demut unde gebete vor eyne monch denn vor eyne ritter.

68. Chronik L, Ch. 383: unde on gebenedigete do eyne
bischof under der messe zu ritter, also der
aldin fromin cristen sete was, den eyne furste
das swert gap unde eyne bischof ader eyne prister
die ritterliche gebenediunge.
69. See Backes, Ars Praedicandi im 'Rolandslied', p.150.
70. Das Rolandslied des Pfaffen Konrad, ed. D. Kart-
schoke, (Frankfurt, 1970), v.217.
71. E.g. the "knights" who crucified Christ (Rsp. 915)
and Pilate's men whom he calls tufilz kint (Rsp. 920)
72. See accounts in Chronik L, e.g. Ch. 284.
73. See Helmbrecht, e.g. vv.1195-1256.
74. Also in the Ratsgedichte, Rothe urges the townsmen
to expel from office people who practise "ubermasse/
An cleydern, (an fliehen) an qwaße/Und an gebuwe".
(Ratsg. B476ff.).
Also Lob der Keuschheit, 803ff., 1720ff.
75. Ratsg., F389, F473-5.
76. See v. Winter, Rittertum, p.52.
77. For an account of eating habits in the Middle Ages
see Borst, Lebensformen, pp.187-90.

CHAPTER 5: Didactic Purpose and Rothe's Chronicles:
History as the Manifestion of Universal
Subjection to the Divine Will.

(i) Aims and Historiographic Background.

Rothe's purpose in writing history is manifold. As is already evident in the titles given to the works by Rondi - namely Eisenacher Chronik, Thüringische Chronik and Thüringische Weltchronik, his works are in a sense a eulogy of his homeland, Thuringia. Secondly, as is fitting for a churchman, he aims to provide a history of the popes and their deeds. Thirdly, as a teacher, he intends to provide for his pupils a text based on classical and patristic authorities; finally, as one interested in social, economic and political developments, it is understandable that he should trace the history of these for posterity on the year-to-year basis already established by the Easter tables¹. Nevertheless, Rothe's aim in writing history, as in his other works, is fundamentally didactic. Before examining the scope and purpose of his chronicles (here in particular the Thüringische Weltchronik (L)), however, it is appropriate first to sketch briefly some of the tenets of medieval historiography and the general tenor of a medieval chronicle. The study of historiography has been at the centre of a considerable amount of research and scholarship in recent years, and it is clearly beyond the scope of this work to examine in detail the varying theories of historiography. The following comments are concerned to place Rothe's chronicles into a comprehensible historiographical context.

The credibility of what we have been taught to regard as "historical facts" is questioned in statements such as that by E.H. Carr:

When I read in a modern history of the Middle Ages that the people of the Middle Ages were deeply concerned with religion, I wonder whether we know this, and whether it is true. What we know as the facts of medieval history have almost all been selected for us by generations of chroniclers who were professionally occupied in the theory and practice of religion, and who therefore thought it supremely important, and recorded everything relating to it, and not much else.²

Such assertions lay open the vexed question as to the definition of history. Modern historiographers are unanimous only in their view that any attempt at a definition must be relative, taking into account the views of the age which provides it, and the philosophy of the individual who formulates it. R.G. Collingwood, for example, summarises his views on the matter as follows:

St. Augustine looked at history from the point of view of the early Christian; Tillemont from that of a 17th century Frenchman; Gibbon from that of an 18th century Englishman; Mommsen from that of a 19th century German. There is no point in asking which was the right point of view. Each was the only one possible for the man who adopted it.³

Perspective and individual opinion are, by the very nature of the task, evident in history-writing, so that no history can ever be wholly objective. G.M. Trevelyan, in the essay "Clio, a Muse" was one of the first to show the fallacy of the nineteenth century positivist theory that history was purely a matter of proving as many historical facts as possible.⁴ More recently, D. Thomson has used the example of the UNESCO- history volumes to show that perspective plays a large and important role in history writing, and that "to compile a generally accepted 'objective' history of world developments is impossible".⁵ Rather earlier, Croce tended in the same direction in his well-known theory that "All history is contemporary history".⁶

The nineteenth century positivist school, however, (which showed a particular interest in medieval studies), still held objectivity and demarkable facts to be the

key components of history, in adherence to Ranke's criterion of "wie es eigentlich gewesen".⁷ Collingwood points out the consequence of such a philosophy of history for the estimation of medieval works:

When medieval historiography is looked at from the point of view of a merely scholarly historian, the kind of historian who cares for nothing except accuracy in facts, it seems not only unsatisfactory, but deliberately wrong-headed.⁸

On the whole, nineteenth century historians regarded the chronicles of the Middle Ages as subjective accounts which often related random extraordinary happenings rather than proven facts, and as such, unworthy of the name of history. One cannot, of course, necessarily judge the literature and philosophy of the Middle Ages by modern standards, even if the highest praise the nineteenth century historian could accord a medieval work was to determine a certain modernity in its views or themes. To allow a work to reveal essential information on medieval life and thought it must, of course, be regarded as a philosophical and literary product of an age vastly different from the present. Carr points out that "history cannot be written unless the historian can achieve some kind of contact with the mind of those about whom he is writing".⁹ The same could be maintained of the literary historian or critic of medieval works; he is certainly faced with similar problems, for if he does not draw back from judgment by modern critical standards, he must conclude that medieval history-writing seems, in the words of J. Spörl, "unkritisch, tendenziös, bar echten, historischen Sinnes, in spekulativer Theorie befangen".¹⁰

Another problem facing the literary critic of medieval works is the extent to which, for example, a chronicle or a poem relating historical events, must be classified as literature rather than as a purely "historical" account. The problems surrounding the concept of "historical literature" - particularly for medieval works - have been discussed within the framework of modern historiography

by B. Murdoch in his "Saucourt and the Ludwigslied".¹¹ The medieval chronicle can also profitably be examined in the light of "historical literature". The basic "historical facts", the laconic comments of the early Easter tables and first annals, are refracted by the critical judgment of the chronicler. Collingwood lights on a dichotomy often evident in the work of the medieval history-writer:

His only criticism is a personal, unscientific unsystematic criticism, which often betrays him into what, to us, seems foolish credulity. And on the other side of the account he often displays remarkable stylistic merit and imaginative power.¹²

Medieval chroniclers, of course, usually had a specific aim behind their history-writing; John of Salisbury describes it as follows:

All chroniclers have a common purpose, to reveal God's works, to teach by example, and to provide soundly based precedents for customs and privileges.¹³

The medieval chronicler sees history not as something made or even influenced by man, but as the inevitable, unswayable unfolding of God's plan for His world. Collingwood has discussed this attitude of the medieval chronicler in general:

He saw history not as a mere play of human purposes, ... but as a process, having an objective necessity of its own, wherein even the most intelligent and powerful human agent finds himself involved, ... because God is provident and constructive, has a plan of his own with which he will allow no man to interfere; so the human agent finds himself caught up in the stream of the divine purpose, and carried along in it with or without his consent. History, as the will of God, orders itself, and does not depend for its orderliness on the human agent's will to order it.¹⁴

Medieval history-writing is, then, in a sense a record of eschatological progression, the tracing of God's guiding of the world towards the Last Judgment. The chronicler sees his task in recording the fulfilment of

God's will and the development of his hidden purpose in his world. The twelfth century theologian Rupert of Deutz looked on history as the unfolding of the Trinity,¹⁵ while Hugh of St. Victor regarded it as the "slow but sure advance of Christ's kingdom".¹⁶

Most medieval chronicles begin with a prologue in which they enlarge upon the ancient principle that the lessons taught by the examples of history are the best education a man can have.¹⁷ Polybius, for example, states that "the knowledge of past events is the sovereign corrective of human nature". He enlarges upon the subject as follows:

The young are invested by it with the understanding of the old; the old find their actual experience multiplied by it a hundred-fold; ... soldiers, again, are encouraged by the posthumous glory which it promises, to risk their lives for their country; the wicked are deterred by the eternal obloquy with which it threatens them from their evil impulses.¹⁹

Obviously, the medieval chronicler sees the rewards and punishments in a specifically Christian context - Rothe's soldiers do not fight for posthumous secular glory, but for a place in Paradise.²⁰ The educative principle of Rothe's sort of history-writing is, however, essentially similar to that of ancient history-writing.

As was examined above in the discussion of Rothe's didactic aims and methods, the prologues follow a general pattern common to most medieval chronicles - the author proclaims his inadequacy for the task, and proceeds to claim that he has taken the work upon himself in order to provide useful examples of good behaviour to be emulated. An interesting facet of Rothe's introduction to Chronik G (Prolog G)²¹ is his pointer to the fact that written records are the only way to avoid important deeds and persons being either forgotten or falsely and incompletely recorded.²² Significantly, Rothe also sees the chronicle as the best possibility of following things

back to their beginnings or origin (orspring Str.41, v.3). Not only does he hope to help his reader to learn from the single events of history, but also how these things have come about: "Wie sie sint uffkommen" (Str.46, v.1), and "An deme mag man lerne / Wie es her kommen sye" (Str.47, vv.1-2). He sees his chronicle, then, not just as an annalistic relating of dates and events, but as a continuous series of pieces of information having some kind of causal connection. That this causal connection must be theocentrically controlled is an obvious consequence of Rothe's world view. One is to learn not only from the examples, but also from the way God intervenes, rewarding good deeds and punishing wickedness. Stanzas 45 - 48 of Prolog G may serve as a useful catalogue of some of the subject-matter Rothe hopes to treat in his chronicles:

Fursten, grauen, was fryen
Vnde stete han getreben,
Or vortorben vnde gedegen,
Das findet man beschrebin.

Wie sie sint uffkommen
Vnde was sie han geant,
Orin schaden vnde fromen,
Gebuwit auch die landtth.

An deme mag man lerne,
Wie es her kommen sye.
Es fordert on gar gerne,
Wer fursten wonet bye.

Reddelich von allen sachen
Die kronicken aussrichten.
Gar loufftig einen machen
Die buchere von geschichten.
(Prolog G, Str. 45-8)

The method, then, is reddelich (Lexer: verständig, recht-schaffen, ordnungsgemäß) and the recipient is rendered loufftig (Lexer: weltläufig, bewandert) by the information.

(ii) Examples from Chronik L of Divine Manipulation
in the Lives of the Great.

Throughout his chronicles, Rothe is at pains to emphasise his belief in the omnipotence of God and in the

divine ordering of men's lives and of universal history. An example from Chronik L underlines his conviction that the individual is powerless to influence the course of events determined by God. Rothe tells, in Chapters 260-264, the tale of Emperor Conrad II in his dealings with Count Lupold's son, Heinrich. The Emperor has sworn to punish severely anyone who commits a breach of the laws governing matters of public peace (Landfrieden).²³ Count Lupold, having committed such a breach, is sentenced to death. He is warned in time by friends, however, and escapes to a charcoal-burner's hut in the woods. As chance would have it, the Emperor arrives at the same hut and is waited upon by Count Lupold's wife, now on the threshold of childbirth. He fails to recognise her, and a son is born during that same night. Emperor Conrad, however, hears a voice in his sleep:

do horte her zu dreien malen, das eyns ynn dem
slaffe zu om sprach "Conradt, dis kynt ssal noch
daynn erbe besitzen". (Ch. 260.)

Next morning, Conrad orders his men to take the child from its mother and kill it. As in the popular folk-motif²⁴, the king's men take the child into the woods, and let it suffice to leave it there, reporting to the Emperor that it is dead. The child is, however, found alive by a nobleman whose hounds come across it during a hunt. Thus the first attempt of an individual to change the course of events is thwarted by presumably divine influence. Significantly, the one-day old child possesses outer qualities which persuade the nobleman to take it home to his wife:

unde do is der ritter also vant unde gesach, das
is von leibe unde gestalt also wol geschicket
was, do nam her is zu om unde liess von der
jagit unde brachte is heym seyme weibe.²⁵

The child - again in keeping with the folk motif - grows to be a fine young man and an accomplished knight:

do wart is zu male schone vonn leibe unde wol
redende unde weisse, gar behende zu der ritter-
schaft unde zu allem dynste, das her vorname
wart yn allermelchis angesichte.²⁶

Not least the Emperor is struck by the young knight's ability and qualities (seyner hobischeit togunt unde weissheit)²⁷ and invites him to his court. He is full of praise for his new young courtier, but the jealousy rife at court soon takes the upper hand, and an envious courtier reports to Conrad that the young man is a foundling. Thereupon Conrad's suspicions are awakened and he sends for the supposed father, who admits to having found young Heinrich as a baby in the woods at the appropriate time. The Emperor immediately determines to dispose of his rival and uses all his wits to think out a suitable method:

Dornoch sso trachte der keisser, wie her on
unbeschemit mochte lassen getoten. (Ch. 261).
Mit listen wolde das keisser Conradt uss richten
unde heymlichen, das disser ungelyngk vonn dem
leben qweme. (Ch. 262).

He thereupon sends him off secretly to the Empress with a letter ordering her to have the bearer killed immediately. Providence again, however, takes over, and while Heynrich is overcome by sleep in a Church, the village priest reads the letter and, moved by pity, changes the wording to alter the content into "Marry the bearer to our daughter immediately". Rothe points out that the priest was a noble man (eyn hobischer man)²⁸ who was able to change the lettering so skilfully that it didn't show (sewberlich, vv.2 and 4, Ch. 263). He also emphasises that the priest only had to change a few letters in order to completely reverse the instruction contained in the letter to the Empress:

Es was der pherner yn dem dorffe eyn hobischer
man und tilgete sewberlichen yn dem briffe kume
drei buchstaben, do also stundt "den tot anlegen",
das is wart "die tochter bey legen; unde brachte
den briff sewberlichen weder yn seyn yngesegil zu
sampne unde gyngk do in die kirche unde tat ym den
briff weder yn seynen bewtil. (Ch. 263)

When the Empress receives the letter in her husband's writing and bearing his private seal, she hesitantly

obeys the instruction and arranges the wedding for the following day. Thus Heynrich, Count Lupold's son, becomes Conrad's son-in-law. Once again, the motif is one of fairy-tale inevitability. The details are unravelled for Conrad by the charcoal burner, who supplies the all-important missing information about the circumstances of Heynrich's birth. The Emperor's reaction is highly significant, for in the sequence of coincidences and manipulations he recognises gotliche schickunge, or the manifestation of God's intervention in the events of the world:

Ich sehe unde erkenne wol, das der gotlichen schickunge nicht zu wederstehen ist, unde wormete man das hyndern wil, do vordirt man is mete, was nu got gehabt wil haben, das ssal mir ouch behegelich seyn". (Ch. 264).

Thereupon, he realises the consequences of "was nu got gehabt wil haben" and makes his son-in-law a duke. For Rothe, the most important moral behind the tale is, of course, that God's will is revealed in the seeming coincidences of history, and that no man, however influential and powerful, can resist the divine plan. The most significant turning-point in the episode takes place appropriately not only at the hands of a priest, but even inside a Church and also after Heynrich has prayed (bette eyn wenig, Ch. 262). These facts suggest that the chronicler was at pains to divulge the instigator of the "coincidence" even in the outer form of the tale.

God's omnipotence is expressed in many miraculous tales throughout Chronik L. Indeed, much of the material could be considered to belong to the domain of the religious legend.²⁹ This is, of course, familiar in the medieval chronicle. Jansen Enikel, for example, had included Biblical legends alongside tales of Emperors and of German peoples and customs.³⁰ Indeed, the religious aspect of the medieval chronicle had already been evident

in the Kaiserchronik,³¹ although in this case, in a specifically Augustinian concept. In Rothe's work, several of the examples of divine intervention in earthly affairs concern Popes or Saints. In Chapter 184 of Chronik L, for example, Pope Martin's assailants are mysteriously blinded, and the murder averted:

Dissen (Martin) wolde Olympius der herzoge obir
dem altir lassen erslaen, unde do sie die swerte
zogen, do worden sie blynt.

Significantly the central scene of the miracle is once more - as in the saving of Heinrich above, the interior of a Church. A similar episode is accounted in Chapter 203, where Rothe tells of the miracle which occurred when the Roman populace put out Pope Leo III's eyes and cut out his tongue:

do tat got seyn zeichen obir den armen babist,
das her clare ougen weder gewan unde wol ge-
sprechen kunde.

A third instance of a remarkable intervention to save a pope concerns Pope Victor II who is saved from poisoning by the fact that the cup containing the poison becomes "unliftable":

unde do her on (den kelch) noch der gebenedeiunge
sulde uff heben, do kunde her sin nicht uff geboren.
unde do her got badt, das her om offinbarin wolde
wes schult das were, do fuer der tufel yn den
epistoler unde schumete unde schreiete. (Ch. 255.)

The tale of Pope Gregory VI is in a different vein; the Pope has been accused of murder and requests on his deathbed that his body be laid before the closed doors of St. Peter's, maintaining that if it is God's will, these will open of their own accord. Rothe records the ensuing events as follows:

Also her gestarp, do taten die cardinal unde
die Romer noch seyner begerunge unde slossen
die thor an sente Petirs monster vor ym veste
zu unde satzten on dovor. Do qwam eyn grosser
wynt unde zureiss die thör unde warf sie uf
bis an die wende. (Ch. 253).

Thus the wind, as God's instrument, performs a manner of Gottesurteil, novel insofar as the subject is already dead.

The calling of St. Gregory to the papacy is a startling example of direct divine intervention. The chronicler relates how Gregory is overcome by a storm on the Sea of Jerusalem and fears that all will be drowned. Suddenly, however, he experiences a startling encounter:

do erscheyn mir unsser herre Jhesus Christus
unde begreif mich bey meyner hant unde sprach:
Gregorius, ich enwil nicht das du ertrinckest.
ich wil das du lebinde bleibest unde wil das
du babist werdist unde das die cristenheit vonn
dir weder erkrige das heilige lant, unde das du
die kirchen zu der eynunge des glouben brengist.
(Ch. 526).

This episode obviously has strong biblical echoes.³² Indeed, none of the above tales of God's intervention in the lives of the popes is original to Rothe. Hans Patze has pointed to the strong influence on Rothe of the Geschichte über die Landgrafen von Thüringen, better known as the Eccardiana after a later publisher.³³ This chronicle was the work of travelling monks, and shows Dominican and Franciscan influence. Such influence explains, of course, the religious emphasis in the above examples. Nevertheless, despite the lack of originality, the cumulative effect of the examples Rothe has selected is interesting from the point of view of his general philosophy. Considered out of context, these supernatural, even grotesque happenings, would lay his work open to the criticism of depending upon foolish credulity. Seen within his theocentrically orientated world-view, however, they become examples of his theory of direct divine intervention in human affairs.

The power of prayer as an effective call for help in situations of distress is emphasised repeatedly in Rothe's Chronik L. The outcome of battle is often shown to be a direct consequence of a prayer for help in what had seemed to be a hopeless situation. A prayer in the heat of battle against the heathens, for example, brings

Emperor Heinrich the help of St. Lawrence, St. George and St. Adrian who "slugen uff die heiden unde machten sie alle fluchtigk". (Ch. 244) Such direct intervention in battle is, of course, well-known from the famous duel between Charlemagne and Baligant in the Chanson de Roland:

Carles cancellet, por poi qu'il n'est caüt;
Mais Deus ne volt qu'il seit mort ne vencut.
Seint Gabriel est repairét a lui,
Si li demandet: 'Reis magnes, que fais tu?'
(Chanson de Roland, vv.3608-11)

In Chronik (L), the power of prayer is encountered several times in the account of St. Elisabeth of Thuringia, although in this case, the results are of little importance to the course of history, but belong rather to the sphere of religious legend which, as we have seen, was considered by the medieval chronicler to merit a place in his chronicle of God's purpose in the world. Due to St. Elisabeth's prayer, for example, a blind person's sight is restored (Ch. 465). A youth whom Elisabeth has rebuked for wearing splendid clothes agrees to pray along with her in Church, the result being that "Dornoch gar kortzlichen quam her yn der barfussen ordin". (Ch. 464).

Reward and punishment, and indeed determination of the individual personal fate are very much in the hands of God the judge. Reward for a good and pious life sometimes even takes the form of financial enrichment, rather than the usual promises of other-worldly riches. Chapter 183 of Chronik L "Von konigk Gunderam dem der engel schatz weissete" tells in an almost fairy-tale atmosphere how a good king was led in a dream to treasure by an angel. The didactic element in the rewarding is evident in the description of Gunderam's goodly and pious life: "Derselbe konigk was gar eyynn fromer heiliger man unde gap vil almosen unde stiffte closter unde kirchen". A similar occurrence is related in Chapter 409, although on this occasion it is "eyne stymme" - later linked specifically with God - which leads Christian miners to a hoard of treasure destined for their pious king and his

people. Rothe's final comment again shows the didactic intent of his chronicle by overtly pointing a moral of general tenor: "Nu mercket, das got den schatz yn der erden den fursten umbe togunde gebit". Even the elements are at God's command to assist in his manipulation of man's fate. A town of pious, good-living people is being threatened by fire. God, however, commands the wind to avert the danger, thus saving the just from harm: "unde also das got wolde sso wante sich der wynt". (Ch. 620).

Similarly, God's influence is equally evident in the meting out of punishment for misdeeds. Rothe tells the famous tale of Hatto, Bishop of Mainz, who had promised the poor and starving people help, gathered them in a barn and had them burned to death. As a retaliation he had, according to the well-known tale, been eaten alive by mice. Rothe emphasises the didactic note by commenting that Hatto's influence and social position could not help him out of this punishment:

den frassen die musse unde kunde sich der ynn
alle seyner herschaft nicht erwerben. (Ch. 230).

The author then states what under the circumstances must have been obvious, namely "dis was eyn plage vonn gote".

Another influential individual whose personal fate, according to Rothe, is manipulated according to his desserts is Emperor Heinrich V, whom God punishes for his sins by allowing him to die without an heir:

Dornoch sso starp keisser Heynrich umbe der
untogunt willen die her an seyme vatir begyngk
ane erben. (Ch. 355).

Heinrich V's death in 1125 was a significant historical turning point, since the Salian dynasty was left without an heir. There now began a struggle between two contenders, Friedrich II of Swabia and Lothar von Supplinberg, Duke of Saxony. Thus Heinrich V's "untogunt" was to have far-reaching historical consequences. In such cases, not only the individual fate is involved, but the course of history and the fate of the individuals dependent on the great.

In Rothe's concept of history, then, all human-beings are dependent on the divine plan; this plan is, however, always seen as just and cannot be swayed by influence, power or richness. Accordingly, the good always emerge as victorious, while the wicked without exception suffer defeat or the torments of Hell. In a different perspective, those who lose in battle or forfeit their possessions or prestige do so because God wills it as a punishment for their sinfulness - which may be visible, or merely inferred on the grounds of God's punishment as in the Old High German Ludwigslied.³⁴ Similarly, those who win in battle and whose personal lives are crowned with success can be assumed to have deserved God's favour by their goodness and piety. Once more, as in the examination of social conditions in the Ritterspiegel, reality is bent to fit the author's didactic purpose and to suit the rigid scheme of things in God's just and ordered world. The model of most medieval historians in this matter is, of course, the Old Testament, I-II Samuel and I-II Kings, where God's faithful are victorious and His enemies defeated. The dealings of David with Nabal and Abigail may serve as an example:³⁵ Nabal has offended David, and his wife Abigail sets out to dissuade David from avenging the disgrace with his own hands. She argues: Aufer iniquitatem famulae tuae; faciens enim faciet Dominus tibi domino meo domum fidelem, quia proelia Domini, domine mi, tu proeliaris; malitia ergo non inveniatur in te omnibus diebus vitae tuae. (1. Samuel, XXV, 28). God does then indeed avenge the disgrace of this servant who fights His battles: Nabal awakens from a drunken stupor only to suffer a heart attack of which he dies ten days later. The author of this illness is, of course, God:

Cumque pertransissent decem dies, percussit Dominus Nabal et mortuus est. Quod cum audisset David mortuum Nabal, ait: Benedictus Dominus, qui iudicavit causam opprobrii mei de manu Nabal et servum suum custodivit a malo et malitiam Nabal reddidit Dominus in caput eius.

(1. Samuel, XXV, 38-39).

As in the Old Testament, Rothe's God is an all-powerful judge who looks after his own. The rhymed prologue to Rothe's Thüringische Landeschronik (G) contains, besides the threefold expression of Rothe's hope that his readers will learn from the examples of the past, a reference to the all-important role of God, the supreme judge and ruler:

Torheit ist das alles gar,
Was ane gotis forchte geschyet.
Darvmbe so nemet des eben war:
Sin hant alles an deme ende slet.
(Prolog. G. Str. 24).

God's will, then, is the power which moves the medieval chronicler's world, the force which makes the history he is at pains to record; and it is the various individual manifestations of this divine will which shape the pattern of the historical development of God's plan for His world. C.S. Lewis points out the lack of general observation in medieval history and the emphasis on the individual:

Medieval historians dealt hardly at all with the impersonal ... The chronicles, like the legends, are about individuals; their valour or villainy, their memorable sayings, their good or bad luck.³⁶

It is a model,³⁷ based on the manifestations of divine will in individual occurrences - usually concerning the great or the mighty - which reduces the disconcerting complexities of medieval life to a clarified, simplified system which becomes comprehensible to the chronicler and the reader of his day. The various nuances of grey are expelled, and only black and white, evil and good, punishment and reward remain to confront one another within God's system.

(iii) Divine Manipulation in the Field of Battle;
God's System of Reward and Punishment.

The most common scene of confrontation of the forces of good and evil is, of course, the battle-field, and here, once more, divine will is evident in the course

of events and outcome. Divine manipulation of the outcome of battle is a well-known theme which is evident throughout the Old Testament and in vernacular writings in well-known battle episodes such as Saucourt and Roncesvalles.³⁸ Rothe utters confidently several times throughout the Thüringische Chronik (L) and the Ritterspiegel that God will reward the faithful with victory on the battlefield, especially, of course, if they are fighting for the Christian cause. In the Ritterspiegel, Rothe consistently quotes Augustine in the matter of the "holy war",³⁹ and in the chapters of his chronicles dedicated to crusading episodes, he stresses that God will never forsake His own servants on the field of battle. This belief is apparent, for example, in Chronik L in the speech of comfort given to the Christians by a priest at Antioch in the course of a crusading campaign:

Lieben bruder, vorzwyvelt an gote nicht, der
die seynen, die gantz getruwen zu om han, nye
vorliess. (Ch. 316).

The Augustinian concept of a bellum Deo auctore has been interpreted in a new light by Murdoch, who suggests the meaning of "a war originated by God",⁴⁰ rather than the hitherto accepted translation as "a war by God's authorization". An understanding of the medieval concept of history does, indeed, lead one to accept the notion of God as the originator of the holy war. An episode in the Thüringische Chronik (L) lends support to this view: The priest at Antioch relates a vision had by his friend, in which a pilgrim had appeared to him:

Do sprach der pilgrym: glewbe gewisslichen,
das dis gescheffte von gote komen ist, der
vil cristen geheischet hat zu der martir,
das sie von om ewiglichen gekronet werden,
die sich uf dem heiligen wege hütten vor
dubereyn unde geyerheit, ebruch unde
unkewscheit. (Ch. 316).

In the Ritterspiegel too, Rothe sees the war against heathendom as one which is originated by God:

Von deme himmel kommit der strit
mit obirwindin und angesegin,
God vorleBit di sinen zcu keyner zcid.
(Rsp., 1129-31)

Rothe emphasises consistently that God controls the outcome of the battles: e.g.:

god der liez sy do gewinnen (Rsp. 1116)
Ist uwir herzce zcu gote gekart ...
Ir werdit daz obirwindin gelart. (Rsp. 1125 and 7)
Neyn, god wel ez nicht also han!
her had ouch dines stritis macht.
(Rsp., 3133-4)

In keeping with the belief that God controls the outcome, the biggest mistake a soldier can make in battle is to regard himself and his strength as significant; he must put himself wholly in God's hand and fight purely as an instrument:

Wer sich uf sine (i.e. his own) sterke let
und uf sin großis gesinde,
Ez kommit daz en eyn crenkir slet
und kan dez nicht vorwinde.
(Rsp., 3137-40)

Any form of self-reliance is to be regarded as sinful arrogance (hoen mud). This is, of course, a common theological point which finds expression also in medieval vernacular works such as Der arme Heinrich. Rothe demands the all-important quality of humility (demud e.g. v.1113)⁴¹ in all one's dealings with God:

God vorleBit di sinen zcu keyner zcid;
di mit rechte habin gekregin
Und nicht tribin hoen mud
und laßin sich uf er (i.e. their own) sterke,
den geschit darvone alliz gud.
(Rsp., 1131-5)

Consistent with this view of the role of the soldiers only as an important instrument is the emphasis on God as the true weapon. Rothe once more looks to Augustine as his source:

Und daz di wile merke
daz god din hoestis wappin ist,
Der dir gebit dez libis sterke
und dich behutit zcu allir frist.
(Rsp., 3905-8)

Where God is not named directly as the weapon, the form of the cross at the hilt of the sword is evident as the source of divine strength:

Ist uwir herzce zcu gote gekart
und sehit dez swertes gehilzce an,
Ir werdit daz obirwindin gelart
wan ez daz cruzce bedutin kan.
(Rsp., 1125-8)

Confidence in God's help for the faithful is expressed in Rothe's quotation of a passage from Augustine's De civitate dei in the Ritterspiegel:

God gebit gnade den rittern sin
di en vorchtin in allir tad,
Daz si mit toguntlichin synnen
in demud mit deme rechtin
Di strite mogin gewynnen
und menlichen ouch gevechtin.
(Rsp., 1091-6)

By way of encouragement, Rothe assures the knights in the Ritterspiegel that even when the odds seem to be overwhelmingly against them, there is no need to fear defeat if they are fighting for God's cause. The emphasis is once more, as in the above quotation, on the Augustinian concept of divine grace (sin gnade):⁴²

... ab nu eyn große schar
der vinde wedir uch stritin
Und hochfertlichin kommen dar
und uch frevelich aneritin
Und er geschrei machin groz
uf daz sy uch irschreckin,
God machit uch allir sorgin loz,
sin gnade kan uch bedeckin.
(Rsp., 1117-24)

Not only does God supply the physical strength necessary to win, but also the certainty of victory if one humbly puts one's faith in him:

Her gebit dir ouch di wißheid
daz du den seg wol beheldist
Ab sich din hoffin zcu em treid
und dine hende kegin em feldist.
(Rsp., 3909-12)

Rothe is continually at pains to remind the reader of God's omnipotence. He is judge over all actions and He alone determines the outcome of all earthly struggles. The only role as a free agent which Rothe accords the

individual knight in these matters is the choice whether to participate in a project or not; before acting, he must carefully consider whether the project is just and honest (i.e. God's province) or whether "icht basis" (v.493) is involved:

Wiltu icht gutis antribin
daz saltu vor gar wol besynnen
Und danne stete daran blibin,
so machtu ez von gote gewynnen.
(Rsp., 489-92)

Rothe's concept of God's role on the battlefield is, of course, well-known from Patristic and medieval vernacular works. Sentiments similar to those expressed by Rothe on the "just" or holy war are to be found much earlier in vernacular works such as the Chanson de Roland, where the Christian soldiers at the Battle of Saragossa are convinced that God will help them to victory over the heathens since Charles is "in the right", a formula which is the equivalent of Rothe's rechte sache:

Dient Franceis: 'Damnedeus nos aït!
Charles ad dreit, ne li devom faillir'.
(Laisse 247)

'Charles ad dreit vers la gent ...
Deus nus ad mis al plus verai juïse.'
(Laisse 248)

It is taken for granted throughout the Old French work that the pagan gods - unlike the just Christian God - are powerless to help their followers since they are not "in the right", and indeed Roland states the contrast in a celebratedly clear-cut fashion:

Païen unt tort e chrestïens unt dreit.
(Laisse 79)

The question of right or wrong cause is - despite the temporal and cultural gap between the two works - equally decisive in Roland and in Rothe's works.

Besides the influence of patristic writings and echoes of the chansons de geste, biblical influence is evident throughout in Rothe's depiction of divine omnipotence. Rothe's God, like the God of the Psalms, is an all-powerful overlord; the terminology of the feudal system is sometimes used to describe the relationship:

Ganzcain gloibin sal her zcu eme (God) han
daz her nicht vorlaße sinen knecht.
(Rsp., 1647-8)

Rothe furnishes the reader of Chronik L with examples of divinely manipulated battles. In Chapter 363, for example, he tells of an encounter in the course of the Crusades where "got was mit seynen gnaden mit om, das her mit andirhalp tussent mannen die 10 tussent bestreit". A similar occurrence is related in Chapter 365:

unde got der worchte wunderwergk mit om unde
gnade, also das her mit cleynem volke grosse
dyngk anthe unde gewan die zwey land Apulien
unde Clabrien.

The God of Rothe's chronicles exercises a strangely physical power, again reminiscent of the God of the Old Testament, as in Deuteronomy III, 2-3, when God intervenes to help Moses against Og, King of Bashan:

Dixitque Dominus ad me: Ne timeas eum, quia in manu tua traditus est cum omni populo ac terra sua; faciesque ei, sicut fecisti Sehon regi Amorrhæorum, qui habitavit in Hesebon. Tradidit ergo Dominus Deus noster in manibus nostris etiam Og regem Basan et universum populum eius, percussimusque eos usque ad internecionem.

Rothe furnishes his lessons in the Ritterspiegel with various Old Testament examples. A significant one is that concerning the people of Gabaa,⁴³ who while they condone wicked deeds, lose in battle. Afterwards, however, they repent and victory is assured:

Do fletin si gote in großir demud
und begundin sich besinnen,
Darnach ward er stritin gud,
god der liez sy do gewinnen.
(Rsp., 1113-6)⁴⁴

Divine intervention in battle comes, then, like the influence on individual destinies discussed above, not only in the form of a reward for the faithful, but is also used to punish the wicked. One of the striking examples of such punishment in the Thüringische Chronik (L) is when God punishes Magnus of Denmark for the murder of his cousin Erich's son by making his vassals flee in

a battle in which his enemy had originally been greatly outnumbered:

... unde do qwam seyn heer von gotlichem vorheng-
kenisse sogethane furchte an, das 20 tussent
weppener von om flogen vor 300 Dutzschen. (Ch. 363)

Elsewhere, God causes illness among the ranks:

das rach dornoch got, das eyn bosser stynckender
nebil qwam unde brachte eyn snelles sterben yn
des keissers heer. (Ch. 382)⁴⁵

The sins of the people of Genua cause God to give a
foreboding of his anger by tinting a stream with blood.

This sign is then followed by an invasion of Saracens:

do floss zu Janua yn der stadt eyn born mit
blute zu eyne zeichen das sie got umbe ir
sunde willen plagen wolde. In demselben jare
qwomen die Sarracenen unde gewonnen die stat
unde slugen die cristen dorynne todt unde
nomen uss der stat unmessiglichen grossen
schatz. (Ch. 223).

Within the account of the crusades, defeat in battle for
the Christians is understood as a sign of God's punishment
for sin. In Chapter 288 of Rothe's Thüringische Chronik (L),
the pilgrims are defeated because "sie liessen ... von
unzcemlichen bossen wercken nicht". In this matter Murdoch
cites the Pseudo-Turpin,⁴⁶ where Roncesvalles is seen as
God's punishment for soldiers who have stooped to a sinful
way of life. Elsewhere in Rothe's Chronik (L), the
Christian leaders, hearing that the Prince of Denmark and
his army have been routed by King Soliman, conclude that
God must be punishing them for sins committed, and seek
to remedy the situation not by improving their warfare
technique, but by seeking to be pleasing in the sight of
God:

Dis achten die fursten, das diesse plage geschee
umbe des volkes sunde, unde vorboten on alle
untogunt under dem volke unde satzten richter
dor obir, das man obir sie zu stundt richte, wo
man untadt gewar wart. (Ch. 309).

This kind of penance after confrontation with adversity
is a medieval common-place. Fritsche Closener's Straßburger
Chronik recounts the moral consequences following an
earthquake:

Man verbot ouch mannen und frouwen, silber und
golt und ander gezierde zu tragende, wande allein
rittern wart golt nûr verboten.⁴⁷

Even as late as the cholera outbreak of 1830, a remedy
was sought in fasting and an emphasis on humility.⁴⁸

In the medieval scheme of things, then, God is seen
to be using evil for his own purposes; the Saracens and
infidels, as well as disease and plague, are made to act
as the implements of God's justice. The idea that God
punishes sinful peoples by sending a foreign invasion is
one which is well-known from the Old High German

Ludwigslied:

Lietz her heidine man Obar sēo līdan,
Thiot Vrancōno Manōn sundiōno.
Sume sār verlorane Uurdun sum erkorane:
Haranskara tholōta Ther ēr misselebēta.
(Ludwigslied, 11-14)

and which helps to explain how a good and just God allows
such misfortunes to befall the faithful of His world.
Biblical examples of the theme are plentiful, as are, of
course, references to the Viking invasions in Old English
and German works.⁴⁹

Occurrences which might not seem to fit in to the
system of good/reward and evil/punishment are made by the
medieval historiographer to do so. In Chapter 215 of the
Thüringische Chronik (L), for example, the Emperor Karl
dies, probably as a result of the plague mentioned in the
same chapter. This scourge, however, was generally regarded
as God's way of punishing the sinful, and since the Emperor
had been a good man and a beloved ruler undeserving of
God's punishment, it was much more comprehensible for his -
and Rothe's - contemporaries to blame a Jew's poison for
his death:

do gab om eyn Jude, der hieß Sedechias, eynen
trangk das her starp.⁵⁰

This, of course, was made all the more plausible by the
common belief that the Jews were the devil's helpmeets.⁵¹

Divine influence, then, is used in the most varied
ways throughout Rothe's Thüringische Chronik (L) to ex-
plain events in such a way that the reader can learn from

history the all-important lesson that God consistently rewards the just and punishes the wicked. The happenings ascribed in Chronik (L) to God's influence on world affairs are too numerous and of too varied a nature to allow a discussion of them all here in detail. Let it suffice to say that God's power is continually evident in the workings of history, and is often called upon by the chronicler to explain preternatural events. Phrases such as the following are frequent in the Thüringische Chronik (L):

Abir got was mit seynen gnaden mit om (Ch. 363)
got der worchte wunderwergk mit om (Ch. 365)
unde got der halff seyner gerechtigkeit (Ch. 374)
das rach dornoch got (Ch. 382, Ch. 620)
die hant gotis tet das (Ch. 398)
wunderzeichen das got gethan hatte (Ch. 399)
es ted der engil gotis (Ch. 404)
mit gotis hulffe (Ch. 511, Ch. 523)
do wolde des got nicht (Ch. 588, Ch. 780)
von dem gerechten gerichte gotis (Ch. 606)
also das got habin wolde. (Ch. 685)

While many of these phrases may be formulaic, the frequency of their use at significant turning-points and in important situations is evidence of the medieval chronicler's belief that the force which determines world events and ultimately the course of history, is divine will.

(iv) Paranormal Phenomena and the Divine Will.

God's will is the main driving force behind Rothe's universe, but what could loosely be termed astrology - albeit usually made clear to be a reflection of God's will - is not denied a certain significance in foretelling future events. W.J. Brandt claims that "we can most readily understand the medieval feeling for causation in human history (and in human life) if we begin by considering that almost omnipresent feature of clerical chronicles, the innumerable comets, bloody rains, and so forth that the clerical chronicler reported".⁵² In keeping with this medieval chronicle tradition, Rothe mentions comets, eclipses,

fires in the sky and bloody rains, even allowing them a certain prophetic quality on occasion. The term "astrology", which denotes the practice of foretelling future events by study of the stars is not strictly accurate for the kind of causation evident in medieval chronicles which depends on historically attested or potentially verifiable paranormal phenomena either invented or noted and often used after the event for underlining a point. It is interesting to assess the significance Rothe accords such portents within his didactically orientated interpretation of history. For the people of the Middle Ages, comets and eclipses were mysterious events. Their significance for human affairs was taken for granted, although what they specifically portended was usually uncertain. Indeed they were often interpreted only post factum as presaging an event of some importance. Before considering Rothe's stance in this matter, it is interesting to look at the various positions taken up by Italian chroniclers of roughly the same period, for despite the differing social and cultural climates of the two lands, the chronicles show striking similarities in their presentation of historical causation. It is, of course, probable that the chronicles of the itinerant Franciscan and Dominican preachers had a wide and basic influence. Green has examined the works of several medieval Italian chroniclers, analysing their use of paranormal phenomena.⁵³ For the well-known fourteenth century chronicler, Giovanni Villani, for example, comets signify a turning-point in events, or pestilences, even the advent of some political figure, while eclipses foretell death and decline.⁵⁴ His successor, Matteo Villani, tends to search for natural consequences of celestial signs, such as drought or long spells of rain.⁵⁵ He is loath to see causal connections between the stars and the course of human life, and tries rather to confine the relationships to the outside, physical world. Marchionne, a later Italian chronicler who used Giovanni Villani's work as his source also steers decisively away from the supernatural link between the stars and man. He expresses his disbelief as follows:

many spoke variously of the signs that should come to pass through it (an eclipse), as it is the practice always to speak of this, but we will remain silent on it.⁵⁶

In the three above-mentioned chroniclers whose work Green has examined, there is a steady progression away from the tendency to link cosmic events with human lives, and an increasing desire to find plausible explanations for such events in the phenomena of nature.

The position Rothe takes up in this matter is once more consistent with his didactic aim in his chronicles, and above all consistent with his theocentric view of history. The latter point may seem almost paradoxical, but as will be shown, the medieval concept of divine omnipresence extends also to natural phenomena.

There are several mentions of comets in the Thüringische Chronik (L). The most complete description occurs in Chapter 238:

Zu den gezeiten wart gesehn eyynn grosser stern mit eyne langen zagel, der brante alsoo eyn wisch, der heisset cometa unde bedutit allewege etzwas gutis ader obils zukunftiges, etzwanne die gebort eynes grossen fursten, etzwann eyn grosses gemeynes sterben der lewte, etzwann missewachsen der fruchte, unde noch dissem sso qwam eyn grosser hunger, das vil lewte yn den landen hungers storben.

In this passage, Rothe envisages the possibility both of influence in human matters such as death, and in physical, outside events, such as the famine which does in fact ensue. Interesting is the use of the word allewege⁵⁷ in the description; we may then conclude that if a comet always portended something in Rothe's opinion, he considers the comet as having been specifically created for this purpose. There is no place for it as a mere physical happening - but as in the case of the bellum deo auctore discussed above as a war originated by God, so too could the comet be considered a sign specifically sent by God⁵⁸ rather than a natural phenomenon which may be invested with a portent. Rothe's description of the comet shows

certain similarities with what Brandt considers the representative definition of a comet, namely the description which occurs in the Chronicle of Melrose:

A comet is a star which is not always visible, but which appears frequently upon the death of a king, or on the destruction of a kingdom. When it appears with a crown of shining rays, it portends the decease of a king; but if it has streaming hair, and throws it off, as it were, then it betokens the ruin of the country.⁵⁹

In the above definition, however, it is only the human aspect which is considered; the Melrose chronicler omits to mention any of the natural and atmospheric connections found in Rothe's account. Another significant difference is that for Rothe the comet can portend happy events (Ch. 238: etwas gutis), while for the Melrose chronicler it foretells doom in every instance.

In the other chapters of the Thüringische Chronik which specifically mention a comet, namely Ch. 503 and 753, there is, however, little evidence of direct prophetic significance. In Chapter 503 the appearance of the comet is recorded seemingly purely for its own sake:

Noch Cristus gebort tussent 257 jar an sente
Oswaldis tage do erscheyn an dem hymmel eyne
cometa, das ist eyne stern mit eyner langen zagel,
des morgens fru vor tage yn deme uffgange der
sonnen, der hatte vil flammen vonn om gehn
unde den sach man alle tage wol 14 wochen, wenn
is nicht gewolckent was.

In Chapter 753 the appearance of a comet is again mentioned, but here even fewer details are given:

Also man zalte noch Cristus gebort 1402, do
wart an dem hymmel gesehin eyne cometa, das ist
eyne stern mit eyner langen zagel, vor vastnacht.

Nicolaus von Jeroschin's Krönike von Prûzinlant,⁶⁰ translated between 1330 and 1341 from Peter von Dusberg's Chronicon terrae Prussiae of ca. 1326, shows the same interest in comets as Rothe's Chronik (L). In the case of Emperor Henry's death, Nicolaus connects the appearance of the comet very directly with this event of human and historic significance:

des selbin jâris man vernam,
daz keisir Heinrich tôt gelac
an sent Bartolomêus tac.
zên tage lûchte der comête
und dâ mit bezeichint hête
zên tage, di der keiser warb
in wêtagen, ê er starb.⁶¹

Eclipses in Rothe's chronicles can equally prophecy events; these events are often confined to the natural world, but have sometimes indirect influence on human affairs. Brandt mentions that towards the end of the twelfth century, Richard of Devizes had maintained that people of influence now believed that there was no prophetic significance attached to eclipses.⁶² Nevertheless, remarks Brandt, chroniclers continued to record them and to look for human and natural consequences which followed them. The only case in which Rothe directly connects an event of human significance to an eclipse is the birth of Alexander the Great, which is preceded by an eclipse accompanied by thunder, lightning and an earthquake:

Nectanabus ... sagitte ir, das die zeit nu were,
wenn die ssonne betrubite alle elemente. unde zu
hant dornoch gebar sie. unde alsso das kynt uf
das ertreiche qwam, do wart gross donner unde
blikg, unde das ertreich erbebete. (Ch. 87)

In the account of the year 1093 (Ch. 279) Rothe records an eclipse:

Noch Cristus gebort tussent 93 jar do vorloss
die ssonne yren scheyn.

The next sentence reads:

In dem andern jare dornoch belagk Keisser
Heynrich Ousspurk unde gewan is.

Rothe leaves the reader to draw his own conclusions as to whether the two events are connected with each other. He establishes no causal relationship, but leaves the possibility of connection open by placing the two sentences alongside each other.

An implication of connection can also be seen in Chapter 380 where the mention of the eclipse is followed in the same sentence by the mention of a famine:

Do vorloss die ssonne yren scheyn yn dem mittage
zwo stunden, unde dornoch quam gross hunger yn
welschen unde dutzschen landen.

Whether the dornoch⁶³ in both the above instances is to be regarded merely as a temporal adverb, or whether it is to be understood causally is left for the reader himself to decide. It is, however, probable that the reader of Rothe's day would automatically connect the eclipse with the famine. A similar phenomenon in other chronicles is the drought of 1357 which Walsingham, the Brut and a continuator of the Polychronicon all directly connected with an eclipse in the same year.⁶⁴

The eclipse which occurs in 1241 (Thür. Chron.(L), Ch. 480) is an interesting case. Rothe's account of it is more detailed than in the two cases mentioned above:

In demselben jare verloss die ssonne yn dutzschen
landen gantz yren scheyn an sente Marcustage, der
in dem herbiste noch sente Franciscustage kompt.
dis was yn der 11. Stunde des tagis unde werethe
eyne stunde noch mittage er is yn gantz vorgyngk.

Again there is no clear causal connection with the peculiar event which follows the eclipse, namely a storm in which it rains lumps of meat. The following sentence, however, begins with a temporal phrase which could be considered to have the same function as the "dornoch" of the last two examples:

In dem jare do wart eyynn grosses weter ynn
Doryngen unde yn dem dorffe Sule bey der
blossin loubin. do reynete is yn eynes
gebuers houf alleyn grosse stücke fleisches
von 10 ader 12 phunden, unde also die hunde
und die vogil der eyn teil vortrugen unde
geassen unde die ssonne begunde zu scheynen,
do zusmulzen sie also eiss. (Ch. 480).

It is again probable that Rothe's contemporaries would look upon this bizarre event as the aftermath of the eclipse despite the absence of a clearly stated causal connection.

The eclipse mentioned in Chapter 638 is even more loosely connected with what precedes or follows; the description of the eclipse itself is, however, expanded to include an explanation for the darkness:

Dornoch yn dem selben jare vorloss die ssonne
yren scheyn an sente Johannes unde Paulstage
des morgens fru also sie uff gegangen was,
wenn der monde tradt dor vor wol zwu stunden.

This eclipse may, of course, be connected to the description of the deeds of the "vil rouber unde bossewichte" related in the same chapter. Matthew Paris, for example, had suggested that astrological phenomena were disturbances reflecting preceding turbulent events in the world.⁶⁵ A mass gang war among the youths of London in 1400 was also interpreted by various chroniclers as a forerunner of universal warfare or plague.⁶⁶ Another eclipse which occurs in the same year as the death of a ruler is described in Chapter 757. Once again there is no clear statement of cause or prophetic connection, but merely a temporal coincidence:

Also man schreib noch Cristus gebort 1406 jar,
do starp der erluchte furste lantgrave Balthasar
zu Doryngen uff dem slosse Warpergk ... In dem
selbin jare do verloss di ssonne yren scheyn an
dem andirn tage noch sente Vitus tage zu mitte-
morgen unde das werde wol eyne stunde.

The record in Chronik L of the eclipse in the year 1433 (Ch. 792), (probably the work of Rothe's successor) reports subsequent flooding and high prices for crops.

The Italian chronicler Giovanni Villani connects the death of Pope Gregory IX in 1241 with the eclipse of the same year.⁶⁷ Rothe, however, merely includes the information after his description of the "storm of meat" discussed above. The temporal coincidence is once more the only connection stated by Rothe:

In demselben jare do starb ouch der babist
Gregorius der IX des namen. (Ch. 480)

Thus the position Rothe takes up in the matter of prognostication by celestial signs is not without complexity.

The fact that he considers them important enough to record, even when not directly connected with a specific event, shows that he had a certain respect for their significance - and possibly a suspicion that they were bound to portend something and should therefore be recorded.⁶⁸ For the medieval chronicler, such forebodings were unmistakable landmarks in the mass of individual details and events; they pointed to God's will and gave shape to the occurrences of history. Thus it is the cumulative effect of these signs and the insight they give to the chronicler's concept of the pattern of history which is of importance rather than the single mention, the sources, or the consequence attributed to each individual sighting. The fact that Rothe often supplies only a temporal link rather than a causal one or even the certainty of prognostication, implies an unwillingness to commit himself to a specific link. In principle, however, he is prepared to accept the possibility, especially if it fits in to his didactic plan.

While comets and eclipses are the most common of the prognostical phenomena named by Rothe, he also records several other celestial signs which he considers to be problematic. In Chapter 748 of the Thüringische Chronik (L), for example, he reports the sighting of three peculiar fires in the sky. This example is especially interesting due to three additions by Rothe to his sources (additions shown in brackets of Liliencron's text):

In dem selbin jare, ... do erhubin sich drey fuer umbe Isenache yn der luft (unde doch nicht hoch von dem ertreiche) bis yn den Horsselbergk, do qwomen sie alle drey yn. (Dis sahn die wechter vor der stat unde die vischer an den wassern, das ir 16 waren fromer) lewte von Fischback ... unde hir von sso wart yn dem lande grosse sage, die do meyneten is bedute etzwas grosses zukunfftigen dynges (das ouch hir nach ergyngk.)

The first addition is of a purely descriptive nature and could be classed as similar to the many instances where

Rothe adds lists of names to his sources to render his account more detailed and interesting.⁶⁹ The second addition is of a more significant nature; its aim is to gain credence for the phenomena which have been reported by providing trustworthy witnesses, significantly described as fromer lewte. The third **addition** is a confirmation that the "etwas grosses zukunftigen dynges" which was believed to have been prophesied by these heavenly fires did, in fact, come to pass. The significance of the number three in such sightings has been interpreted as a reflection of the trinity. P. Kern gives several examples of three-fold phenomena at the time of Christ's birth, for example the appearance of three suns in the sky, and the growth of three shoots from Noah's ark.⁷⁰

An unnatural event which Rothe links specifically with God's hand is the bloody rain of Chapter 764. In this case the "retrospective prophecy" is very detailed and precise:

Gross wunderzeichen von dem Hymmel geschach yn
dem jare also man schreib noch Cristus gebort
1416 jar zu Behemen ... das is schone blut
reginte. dis was yn dem owiste unde was eyne
zeichen von gote eynes zukunftigen mordes unde
obils das geschen sulde zukunftiglichen yn
Behemen umbe yrer ketzerey willen

The well of blood in Chapter 223 is also interpreted as "eyne zeichen das sie got umbe ir sunde willen plagen wolde". Again it is God who is seen as the instigator of this natural phenomenon which precedes the Saracen invasion of the town. Such bloody wells/fountains are, of course, a common-place of medieval chronicles⁷¹ but nevertheless they are worthy of mention as an integral part of the chronicler's philosophy of history. In Rothe's case, for example, it is most significant that he combines this prognostic phenomenon with God's will. Another similar instance is the report of cosmic prognostic phenomena in Chapter 765, where God is once more seen as the instigator of the sign:

Es geschach ouch eyn wunderzeichen von gote, das
do wart gesehen eyn schone wolken an dem hymmel,
dorynne stunt eyn grosser rynck gleich zirckel-
recht, der was mancherley varbe also eyn reyn-
bogen. der ryngk was helle unde hatte uff vier
ortirn vier crutze ...

Rothe this time mentions two possible interpretations,
the one uttered by das Volk that it was a sign of the
king's justice, the other put forward by eyn teil that
it was a warning to the king, who allowed heresy to
prevail in the kingdom. Rothe merely states the two
opinions and once again withdraws, leaving the reader to
draw his own conclusions. He states no personal opinion.

An earlier chapter (Ch. 522) contains an account of
a similar vision in the clouds, this time a vivid des-
cription of an armed man on a horse:

do qwam ... von deme ufgange der ssonnen eyn
gewopenter man uf eyne gewopenten pherde unde
reit mitten durch die ssonne bis zu dem under-
gange.

This is followed by a vision of two horses and a detailed
description of the sighting of a murderer hanging on the
gallows:

do sohin wir eynen grossen man yn der ssonnen
also eynen morder gehangen mit eyne strange an
eynen galgen unde seyne hende uf seynen rucken
gebunden zu male bescheidenlichen. undo also dis
eyne weile gewerte, do vorgyngk is unde die ssone
qwam wedir zu yrem rechten scheyne.

Despite the vivid description, Rothe makes no attempt to
interpret this striking vision, nor does he even juxta-
pose a possible explanation. He seems to find it interest-
ing enough on its own merit to accord it a place in his
chronicle. He does, however, deem it necessary to support
his information with the witness of "vil worhaftiger
leuwe":

Dis gesichte an der gnanten stat sahin gar vil
worhaftiger leuwe uf dem berge, die wunderwergk.⁷²

A further cloud phenomenon for which Rothe explicitly
mentions the prognostication of future events is found in
Chapter 739 where God's hand appears in the clouds above
Rome as if it were swearing an oath. Rothe again stresses

that "gar vil fromer lewte" witnessed the sign, but this time states with personal conviction that the phenomenon was "eyn bedutenisse eyne zukunfftigen dynges das got mit dem babiste wircken wolde unde mit der stat zu Rome". Once more, divine will must not only be seen as the content of the prognostication, but indeed God as the instigator of the sign itself, for the chronicler identifies the hand in the clouds as "die hant gotis". A belief in God as the author of such cosmic events rather than merely as the user or interpreter could explain the chronicler's inclusion of reports of such phenomena even when these have no immediately obvious subsequent significance.

If one compares the ring of rainbow colours in Chapter 765, which was discussed above, with a similar occurrence in Chapter 788, a significant progression becomes apparent. It should, however, be mentioned that the latter chapter is possibly the work of Rothe's successor, for it relates events which took place in 1432, two years before Rothe died. The entry, or at least a note, could conceivably be Rothe's but the difference in the treatment of the cloud phenomenon points to the work of a probably younger successor. He records the appearance of three suns and a semi-circle of rainbow colours on the third day after Epiphany (the feast of the Three Wise Men) which were seen for three hours from nine until twelve. Despite the accumulation of threes which cry out for a connection at symbolic level with the Trinity⁷³, the chronicler connects the cosmic phenomenon only with unusual events in the natural world: peculiar ant-like insects which had never been seen before in Thuringia, and an exceedingly heavy fall of snow. There is a conscious move away from the supernatural linking of stellar signs and human events to a more natural explanation - a progression which was noted above for roughly contemporaneous Italian chronicles. In this case there is no need to inform the reader that "many trustworthy and pious people" had witnessed the event

and, even more significantly, these natural signs are this time in no way linked with or attributed to God. The connection with the insects and the snow is made only by temporal juxtaposition: "dornach vant man".

Not only celestial phenomena are seen in Rothe's chronicle as signs of divine participation in worldly events, but so too are natural events such as storms, earthquakes and fire considered to be instruments of divine manipulation. In the Thüringische Chronik (L) there is mention of a wicked, stinking mist which causes illness and death (Ch. 382), a plague of man-eating wolves (Ch. 527) a severe earthquake⁷⁴ (Ch. 533), a destructive storm with thunder⁷⁵ and lightning (Ch. 598), wind which spreads fire (Ch. 673) a flash of lightning followed by a harsh winter and famine (Ch. 694). Without exception the above omens and phenomena are specifically linked with God's will. In keeping with the observation made above with reference to the celestial prognosticating phenomena, God is seen here too in the case of these natural events not only as the user or manipulator of these signs, but once more as their originator:

das rach dornoch got, das eyn bosser
stynckender nebil qwam ... (Ch. 382)
do sante got seyne plage hyn (Ch. 527)
Unsser herre got der versuchte die von Rome
und plagete sie ... mit eyner grossen ert-
bebunge. (Ch. 533)
unde do qwam von gotis plage eyn wynt unde
treyb das fuer (Ch. 673)

The chronicler once more, as in the case of the bellum deo auctore regards God as having sent these natural phenomena to try his people. For the chronicler with his didactic aims such events present a perfect opportunity of warning the reader to mend his ways. Any natural event which is out of the ordinary is therefore immediately ascribed a significance beyond its surface level by the chronicler; it is to be interpreted either as the instrument of God's justice or as a foreboder of divine punishment.

Towards the end of the Thüringische Chronik, however, a development is discernible. Earthquakes (Ch. 710), storms (Ch. 759), plagues (Ch. 744), hard winters (Ch. 786) and famine (Ch. 763) are recounted purely for their own sake, as interesting natural manifestations, and not as the instruments of divine justice. This can be taken as evidence of a progression away from pure historicism. This tendency may, however, be ascribed to the influence of a younger chronicler. Rothe himself, with his theocentric world-view and his didactic aims, lays emphasis on God's intervention in world affairs.

The general question arises here, of course, as to the position of "astrology proper" within the teachings of the fifteenth century Church, to which Rothe, as a priest, was committed. C.S. Lewis, basing his argument on Aquinas's Summa 1^a, CXV, Art. 4, states that orthodox theologians were free to believe that the planets could have some influence over events and the human psyche, and a great deal of effect on plants and minerals.⁷⁶ The Church did, however, take exception to the belief that man's free will could be dominated entirely by stellar forces, and it is also Aquinas's argument which Rothe follows in his discussion of astrology in the Ritterspiegel:

Etzliche ramen gudir zcid
noch dez himmels loiftin
Wan si sullin haldin den strid.
...
Moses und ouch Abraham
kundin deße kunst gar wol
Abir god en mere zcu hulfte quam
und liez syner gnade sy sich irhol.
Ab wol der himmel wedir sy waz,
dannoeh sy di strite gewunnen;
Dez himmels meistir machte daz
den sy allezcid wol besunnen.
(Rsp., 4013-5, 4021-8)

It is significant that in the short discourse in the Ritterspiegel on the positions of the various planets and their reputed effects, especially on the outcome of

war, Rothe mentions God's power and His superiority to astral influence nine times in the sixty-four lines (Rsp., 4016-80).⁷⁷ He discusses, for example, the advantages to be gained by beginning battle when the moon is in certain positions;⁷⁸ nevertheless, he states clearly that it is God who will decide the outcome of the battle. Rothe is careful to add the premiss that the soldiers act in a humble manner and fight for a just cause:

Wan der mand in den zwillingen ist
adir in dem crebiße adir schutzcin,
Mit gotis hulffe zcu der frist
den luthin si danne nutzcin
Di dez stritis beginnen,
habin si darzcu rechte sache
Und in demud mit gotis hulffe gewinnen,
do sal er mud nicht ane swache.
(Rsp., 4053-60)

Similar conditions are added to the astrological information about the position of Saturn. The soldier is to show humility and may not shed innocent blood. At the same time he must put his trust in God and not in his own ability. These, of course, are the moral stipulations necessary to fulfil the criteria of a rechte sache which have been evident throughout Rothe's work. When these criteria are fulfilled, astrological prognostication may then be consulted. Once more the stipulations are in no way practical or strategic, but purely moral obligations:

Wan Saturnus ist bi der sunnen
adir Mars mit Mercurio sted,
So werdit der strid von deme gewonnen
der zcu dem erstin darzcu ged.
Dit sal geschen ane hochfard
und alz ane großin obirmud
Und daz man zcu gothe si gekard
und nicht vorgiße unschuldigis blud.
(Rsp., 4065-72)

The position Rothe consistently adheres to is that the stars may possess a certain amount of prognostic power; he leaves one in no doubt, however, that even the stars are manipulated by the divine will, and that God is the all-important force behind the shaping of the history of the universe:

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Vel nutzcir der Judin gehorsam waz
den si alz zcu gothe trugin,
Danne di lune di man den heidin laz
di sy ane were irslugin.
Noch so ist ez gud darmede
wer solche kunste wole kan,
Abir god gebit den seg und den frede
wedir daz gesterne wem her ez gan.
(Rsp., 4037-44)

In addition to the recording of natural phenomena such as the comets, eclipses, earthquakes and celestial signs discussed above, the Thüringische Chronik (L) contains much which could be considered grotesque. One finds a stoat jumping out of a human mouth (Ch. 183), a snake in a grave in place of the human-being who had been buried there (Ch. 191), images bending over to look down (Ch. 221), a dead Pope with the head of a donkey and the body of a bear (Ch. 251), and a scholar who pays a visit to Hell and is never normal again. (Ch. 378). Such fairy-tale elements - much more frequent in the early chapters of the work - as well as the numerous miraculous events befitting the religious legend would seem to lay Chronik (L) open to the criticism of depending on childish credulity. Rothe, however, no doubt shared the opinion of most medieval chroniclers that it was not his duty to be objective and selective about the material in his sources, but to record for his readers the events about which he has read elsewhere and to provide them with a version of old tales and legends which form a part of their culture. Otto von Freising, for example, takes the precaution of defending his work against a possible accusation of untruth:

Nor can anyone rightly accuse me of falsehood in matters which - compared with the customs of the present time - will appear incredible, since down to the days still fresh in our memory I have recorded nothing save what I found in the writings of trustworthy men, and then only a few instances out of many.⁷⁹

The fact that Rothe includes grotesque and miraculous tales in his chronicles does not, obviously, mean that he

necessarily believed them to be true. He is merely following the path dictated to him by the genre he is writing in, and remaining faithful to his sources as is expected of a medieval chronicler.⁸⁰ Besides, as has been emphasised repeatedly, Rothe's principle aim in the writing of history is a didactic one; the horrific and supernatural tales serve this purpose very well by displaying the consequences of misbehaviour and impiety.

(v) Conclusion

C.S. Lewis has pointed out that "the relative size of objects in the visible arts is determined more by the emphasis the artist wishes to lay upon them than by their sizes in the real world or by their distance".⁸¹ This emphasis, in the case of Rothe's literary works, is the will to teach through the examples of history and to show that the course of history and the outcome of events in the world are completely dependent on the divine will. The logic of the medieval chronicle is not that of the causal connections which shape modern history, but the logic of eschatology, whose motivating power is the hand of God aided by the elements and celestial bodies. To return to modern historiography with which this chapter began, E.H. Carr has, for example, answered the question "what is history?" with the following formula; it is:

a continuous process of interaction between
the historian and his facts, an unending dialogue
between the present and the past.⁸²

Die Thüringische Chronik (L) can also be said to be the "result of a process of interaction between the historian and his facts", that is, between Rothe, the medieval priest with his didactic aims and his belief in God's direct intervention in the world's progress, and the facts, that is, the sources which a medieval author was forced to follow if he were to be deemed a serious writer. The result is "an unending dialogue between Rothe's past and

present"; but it is a dialogue shaped too by the literary art of its composer and influenced by his didactic purpose and his theocentrically orientated world philosophy.

1. Hay, Annalists, pp.39-43.
2. E.H. Carr, What is History?, (Harmondsworth, 1964), pp.13-14.
3. R.G. Collingwood, The Idea of History, (Oxford, 1961), p.XII. This passage is cited by the editor, T.M. Knox, from an unpublished manuscript of Collingwood. The same passage is discussed critically by Carr, What is History?, pp.26-7.
4. G.M. Trevelyan, Clio, A Muse, and other Essays, (London, 1913), pp.1-55.
5. David Thomson, The Aims of History, (London, 1969), p.9.
6. Cited by Thomson, Aims of History, p.49, with reference on p.56, note 1.
7. Ranke, Geschichten der romanischen und germanischen Völker, preface to the first edition in Werke, (Leipzig, 1874), vol. XXXIII - XXXIV, p. VII.
8. Collingwood, Idea of History, p.56.
9. Carr, What is History?, p.24.
10. Johannes Spörl, Grundformen hochmittelalterlicher Geschichtsanschauung, (Munich, 1935) p.13. See also Walshe, Medieval German Literature, p.55. Walshe shows little evidence of a true understanding of medieval history when he calls the Kaiserchronik "a regular hotch-potch of anecdotes, novelistic tales, legends of saints and pseudo-historical trifles of all kinds". He also maintains: "Its critical standards were weak".
11. Brian Murdoch, "Saucourt and the Ludwigslied: Some Observations on Medieval Historical Poetry," "Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire LV, (1977), 841-67.
12. Collingwood, Idea of History, p.52.
13. Cited by C. Brooke, Europe in the Central Middle Ages, (London, 1964), p.17.
14. Collingwood, Idea of History, p.53
15. Friedrich Heer, The Medieval World, tr. J. Sondenheimer, (New York, Toronto, London, 1962), p.282.
16. Ibid., p.282.
17. Hay, Annalists, p.57.
18. Ibid., p.3
19. Ibid., p.6.
20. e.g. Rsp., 2329f.; 3307f.

21. The Prolog to Chronik G. is printed on pp.101-7 of Wolf's edition of Rothe's Ratsgedichte.
22. Prolog G, Strophen 41-44.
23. See, for example, Wolfgang Schnellbögl, Die innere Entwicklung der bayerischen Landfrieden des 13. Jahrhunderts, (Heidelberg, 1932). Also Rothe's Eisenacher Rechtsbuch, III, 109, 1.
24. As a folk-motif the notion is attested in such familiar contexts as the Oedipus legend, or even in that of Snow White. An instance familiar to German studies is the would-be murder of Brangaene in Tristan.
25. Ch.261. Note the typical medieval emphasis on outward appearance as a pointer to nobility, even in a baby.
26. Ch.261. In this passage there is once again evidence of the common belief that nobility of birth shines through in outer behaviour and appearance, even when the child is a foundling. Compare similar motif in Gottfried's Tristan, also the parody of the same theme in Wernher's Meier Helmbrecht.
27. Ch.261. Note the use of the term hobischeit twice in this chapter with regard to the foundling, Heynrich.
28. Ch.263. The use of the adjective hobisch with regard to the priest emphasises firstly Rothe's sympathetic attitude towards this deed which, in effect, amounts to crime, and also the fact that the man was educated enough to change the lettering meticulously.
29. Much of the information recorded in Rothe's chronicles appears again in his late works, the Elisabethlegende and the Passion.
30. Jansen Enikels Weltchronik. In: Jansen Enikels Werke, ed. Philipp Strauch, (Hannover, 1891).
31. Walshe, Medieval German Literature, p.55.
32. e.g. Matthew XIV,31 (of Peter): Et continuo Iesus extendens manum apprehendit eum.
33. Geschichte Thüringens, edd. Hans Patze and Walter Schlesinger, (Köln, Wien 1968-74) I, 14-15.
34. In: Althochdeutsches Lesebuch, ed. W. Braune, 14th edition, revised E. Ebbinghaus, (Tübingen 1965), pp.136-8.
35. I Samuel, XXV.
36. Lewis, Image, p.182.
37. See Lewis, Image, for a discussion of the model of medieval history.

38. See Murdoch, "Saucourt".
39. e.g. Ritterspiegel, 1089ff., 2289ff., 3085ff., 3100ff., 3133ff., 3901ff.
40. Murdoch, "Saucourt", p.851.
41. See also the emphasis on demut in Lob der Keuschheit, e.g. 1784ff.
42. See, for example, Walther von Loewenich, Augustin, Leben und Werk, (München/Hamburg, 1965), pp.119ff.
43. Rothe is referring here to Gibeah (Judges XIX).
44. A similar episode is mentioned by Murdoch, "Saucourt", p.850, with reference to divine treatment of the Assyrians in the Old Testament.
45. das refers to a massacre of Roman citizens inside St. Peter's at the hands of the Germans. (Ch.382).
46. Murdoch, "Saucourt", p.862.
47. Fritsche Closener, Straßburger Chronik, pp.113f.
48. Murdoch, "Saucourt", p.856 + Note 55.
49. For example, Hosea XIII,11; Jeremiah XXV,8-9; Job XXXIV, 30. Interesting too is the reaction of Father Giuseppe Pagliuca whose church in Balvano collapsed during Mass as an earthquake hit S. Italy in 1980; "God has his own ways of working, of testing the faithful". Time 1 (1981) 33.
50. The Jews were regularly accused of poisoning wells and causing outbreaks of plague among the Christians. See Roth, Geschichte der Juden, p.275:
In Chillon wurde ein Jude namens Blavingus verhaftet und gefoltert. Er "gestand", daß in Südfrankreich von einigen seiner Glaubensgenossen, ... eine richtiggehende Verschwörung angezettelt worden wäre. Die Verschwörer hätten ein Gift hergestellt, das aus Spinnen, Fröschen, Eidechsen, Menschenfleisch, Herzen von Christen und geweihten Hostien bestand. Das Pulver, das aus diesem Hölleugebräu erzeugt worden wäre, sei an die verschiedenen jüdischen Gemeinden verteilt worden, um es in die Brunnen zu werfen, aus denen die Christen ihr Wasser bezogen.
Fritsche Closener writing in the second half of the 14th century, also reports such an episode; he tells in his Straßburger Chronik, p.76, how Jews were burned at the stake in the Rhine region in 1349:
Daz geschach darumb: man ziech sû, sû hettent burnen und andere waszere entsûfert mit vergift.
51. See Cohn, Millennium, p.78.
52. W.J. Brandt, The Shape of Medieval History. Studies in Modes of Perception, (New Haven/London, 1966) p.52

53. L. Green, Chronicle into History. An Essay on the Interpretation of History in Florentine fourteenth century Chronicles, (Cambridge, 1972).
54. Green, Chronicle into History, p.30.
55. Ibid., p.60.
56. Ibid., p.103.
57. Lexer gives the meaning of allewege as "stets, immerhin".
58. Brandt, Shape of History, p.61 maintains:
It is ... certain that, on the level of perception, a comet or a prodigy was not necessarily the will of God; this is shown by the fact that theological appeals could be made against them.
This is not necessarily the case, however, for as was seen in Old Testament examples, it was also possible to appeal against God's decision - and if the behaviour was humble and pious, the decision could be rescinded, as in the case of the people of Gibeah. Thus Brandt's argument is not convincing enough to prevent an interpretation of such prodigies as divine will.
59. Brandt, Shape of History, p.53 cites the Chronica de mailros, ed. J. Stevenson, (Edinburgh, 1835), p.70.
60. Nicolaus von Jeroschin, Krônike von Prûzinlant. In: Die Deutschordenchronik, ed. Franz Pfeiffer, (Stuttgart, 1854, repr. Hildesheim, 1966).
61. Nicolaus von Jeroschin, Krônike von Prûzinlant, p.104, Ch.46, vv.1-7 (MSS. 173bc).
62. Brandt, Shape of History, p.56 cites Richardus Divisiensis, De Rebus gestis Ricardi Primi in: The Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II and Richard I, (RS, 82: 3, 406).
63. There are several examples of dornoch or similar adverbial expressions of time being used to mean "thereupon" e.g. Chronik (L), Ch. 223, 380, 382, 440. While this cannot be termed "causal", there is a factor involved which is not purely temporal, as the one event is seen as the follow-up of the other, even if this connection is not strong enough for the event to be seen as the direct consequence of the other.
64. Brandt, Shape of History, p.56.
65. Ibid., p.60.
66. Ibid., p.59.
67. Green, Chronicle into History, p.29.

68. Brandt, Shape of History, p.60 points out that the time sequence was not always significant and gives an example where there was an interval of several hundred years between the prognosticating sign and the event itself.
69. e.g. Thüringische Chronik (L), Ch.377, 468, 509.
70. P. Kern, Trinität, Maria, Inkarnation, (Berlin, 1971), see pp.14ff on "Die drei Sonnen" and pp.20ff. on "Die drei Hölzer der Arche".
71. Brandt, Shape of History, p.58.
72. Rothe often assures the reader in the case of eclipses, comets and other natural phenomena that many "good people" had seen this event. This may be interpreted as a sign of uncertainty on the author's part, and at least as a sign that he fears his readers are liable to be sceptical. Examples are: Ch. 479; 424b-twice; 598 as well as the passages treated within the text.
73. See Kern, Trinität, Maria, Inkarnation for medieval understanding of the trinity and examples of symbolic and allegorical features in medieval texts.
74. Brandt, Shape of History, p.58, points out that earthquakes were commonly seen as prognostic signs.
75. Prognostication of dire events was introduced to Western Europe by the Venerable Bede. See Brandt, Shape of History, p.55.
76. Lewis, Image, p.103.
77. Rsp., 4023, 4027, 4030, 4036, 4038, 4043, 4055, 4059, 4071.
78. For some of the phenomena attributed to the changing aspects of the moon, see Konrad von Megenberg's influential Buch der Natur (1349-50). The second book, Von den himmeln und von den siben planeten contains a section Von dem monen. In: Das Buch der Natur von Konrad von Megenberg, ed. Franz Pfeiffer, (Stuttgart, 1861, repr. Hildesheim/New York, 1971), pp.64-68.
79. The High Middle Ages, 1000-1300, ed. B. Lyon, (New York, 1964), p.192.
80. Cf. Wolfram's embarrassment with sources for Parzival.
81. Lewis, Discarded Image, p.101.
82. Carr, What is History?, p.30.

CHAPTER 6: Gemeyn nutz, nutz and the Ethos of Work
in Rothe's Didacticism.

(i) gemeyn nutz

The growth of the towns is, of course, one of the most striking features in the social and economic development of fourteenth and fifteenth century Europe.¹ Obviously, such a development caused significant changes within the moral code of the society concerned. Until the growth of the towns, people had been bound together in small social groupings or familiae.² These groups were, in the case of the lower strata of feudal society, clustered around the manor of the liege-lord. The familia supplied the necessary security for the individual and provided the background for effective working units. Bosl emphasises the compactness of these social groupings which he describes as possessing "ein grösseres, auf ein personales, wirtschaftliches, geistiges Zentrum hin orientiertes... Gemeinschaftsbewußtsein."³ The twelfth and thirteenth centuries, however, saw this system become weak enough to allow for the mobility which is associated with the growth of the towns.⁴ Discussing the effectiveness of the loyalty of feudal engagement, Bloch is of the opinion that "as a paramount social bond designed to unite the various groups at all levels, to prevent fragmentation and to arrest disorder, it showed itself decidedly ineffective."⁵ One of the results of this ineffectiveness of the feudal system was the appearance of towns and a new social pattern dependent on them. Between the years 1000 and 1500 the number of towns in German territory rose from ca. 200 to ca. 4000.⁶ By the time of Rothe's birth there has been a noticeable increase also in the population of the towns, although losses caused by the

plague and epidemics of the preceding years make the growth seem less pronounced.⁷ In Hamburg, for example, the average annual number of new citizens was 52 in the first half of the fourteenth century, 88 in the second half, and 92 in the first half of the fifteenth century. In Frankfurt there was a slight decrease in the second half of the fourteenth century which was, however, balanced by a larger increase in the first half of the fifteenth century.⁸

As individuals broke away from the security - or indeed often rigid servitude - of the manor of their lord, and moved into the towns to seek their fortune and win their freedom⁹, there arose a need for a new group solidarity based on different criteria, which would replace the now disrupted manorial society of the familiae. This new form of group solidarity would obviously have to be on a much more universal basis than the previous, narrowly confined groupings. Individuals could no longer be so closely controlled by their new employers in the towns. Bosl, writing about these changing social patterns and commenting on the ensuing enforcement of Landfrieden maintains:

Friede und Recht für alle, schon einmal
Programm unter Karl dem Grossen, werden nun
zum eigentlichen Ziel der Herrschaft, die
sich vor den bewußter gewordenen Menschen
legitimieren muß durch eine soziale Leistung.¹⁰

As a result of the re-orientation in the fundamental aims of this increasingly socially conscious society, there is a renewed emphasis on the demand for peace and justice, as well as on the importance of fulfilling one's social duty within the community.¹¹

This re-orientation towards a social sense of duty is also evident in the literature of the times. Wernher's Meier Helmbrecht, for example, sees his activity as a peasant in a social context. He points out to his son the vital nature of the work he does:

... bûwe mit dem phluoge.
sô geniezent dîn genuoge.
dîn geniuzet sicherlîche
der arme und der rîche,
dîn geniuzet der wolf und der ar
und alliu creatûre gar
und waz got ûf der erden
hieze ie lebendic werden.

(Meier Helmbrecht, 545-52)

At the level of the knight, Thomasin von Zerclaere describes in Der Welsche Gast what he considers to be riters reht (the duty of a knight) (7765). In a passage reminiscent of much of Rothe's Ritterspiegel, Thomasin emphasises the social duties involved in the exercise of true knighthood:

Wil ein riter phlegen wol
des er von rechte phlegen sol,
sô sol er tac unde naht
arbeiten nach sîner maht
durch kirchen und durch arme liute.

...
ir sult daz vûr war wizzen,
im wirt sîn ritterschaft verwizzen,
swer sîn ritterschaft so hât
daz er nien gît helpe unde rât.

(Der Welsche Gast, 7801-5; 7811-14)

In Rothe's works, one finds not only a vital interest in social justice and peace, but also a plea to serve the bonum commune or, as Rothe calls it, gemeyn nutz. The Thuringian priest, in his socio-historically orientated works, recommends that every member of society should work towards the common weal to the extent that his abilities and status allow. Hans Neumann emphasises the significance attached to gemeyn nutz in the Ritterspiegel:

Er (Rothe) betont den Adel der ehrlichen Arbeit wie den der Tugend, und als höchstes irdisches Ziel des Lebens gilt ihm der gemeyne nutz, dem sich auch der privilegierte Stand des Ritters unterzuordnen hat.¹²

Rothe's concern to promote justice, peace and the common weal is evident in his praise of the noble-spirited knights of former times:

Dy dertin ritter sint edil alleyne
di do werdin zcu den gezcitin,
Wan herrin und forstin umme nutz gemeyne
und umme rechte sache stritin
Adir umme eynes landis frede
adir wedir ketzcer adir di heidin

Adir wedir di bosin cristin darmede
di den armen luthin leidin,
Adir ab si zcihin zcu dem heiligin grabe
und laßin sich do zcu ritter seynen;
Vor frome ritter ich deße habe
wan salde und heil mag en begeynen.
(Rsp., 997-1008)

Throughout the Ritterspiegel Rothe advises the knights to fight not for their personal prestige with their own strength and private means, but, with divine help, to take up arms for the common weal (gemeyn nutz), for the sake of peace and of justice. Particular emphasis is also laid on the protection of Christendom from the forces of heathen and heretic. At the opposite extreme, Rothe describes aggressive war for private advantage and without God as an ally; the author condemns such forms of aggression as adventure (aventiure)¹³, the term now bereft of the honour involved in its usage in the works of the courtly period. Indeed, Rothe uses the word with the meaning of "senseless recklessness". Within his condemnation of the group of knights whom he calls "ritter obir kuwedrecke" (943) or simply "kuweritter" (961) he despises their ornamental clothes which they have been given by young ladies or nuns:

Man mag sy wol anschowin
di guldin cleidir tragin an
Dy si von geistlichin jungfrowin
also ebinturlichin irvochtin han.
(Rsp., 957-60)

Once more, Meier Helmbrecht, with its vivid description of young Helmbrecht's splendid outfit, comes to mind as a parallel. Disregard for the sumptuary laws also called for mockery and condemnation by Rothe's contemporaries Oswald von Wolkenstein and Hans Vintler,¹⁴ although their remarks, unlike Rothe's, were directed almost exclusively at the bourgeois ranks. In the description of the kuweritter above, the use of the term ebinturlichen is almost certainly ironic - the more so since Rothe has used the terms ere, ritterlich and frome cristin ironically in the same passage:

Nu merkit umme di freidigin degin
wi sy darzcu er ere bewarin,
Wan sy den clostirnunnen enzcegin
und kegin en also rittirlichin varin!
Und ab sy ouch frome cristin sint,
di clostir und kerchin wollin vorterbinnen.
(Rsp., 945-50)

The second time the word ebinturlich is used in the Ritterspiegel, it is used to describe a mode of war which Rothe considers to have its beginnings in arrogance (hochfart 1161) and an unjust cause (frevele, unrechte Sache 1162) which goes against God's interests:

O werdir ritter sich dit nu an!
hastu y zcu keynen stundin
Gevochtin adir hartin strid getan
und hast nicht obirwundin,
Daz had gehindirt din hochfart
adir di frevele, unrechte sache
Und hast dich kegin gote nicht bewart
der dich starg kunde gemache.
Wer sich uf sine jogunt und sterke
und harnasch alzcu sere wiget,
An deme sal man daz wole merke
daz her ebinturlichin krigit.
(Rsp., 1157-68)

There follows - obviously as a direct contrast to this sense of ebinturlich, connoting a form of war - a description of the Christian mode of war with religious and social aims in the foreground, and with a guarantee of a happy outcome, since even in the case of death one's soul will be saved and all sins forgiven. Rothe bases his advice in the matter on Christ's answer to those who had asked how they might gain eternal life. The author emphasises that a knight should not take up arms against someone who has done him no harm, unless his opponent be a heathen (Rsp. 1177-80). It is his duty to protect the poor (1183) and to further actively the course of justice (Den rechtin sachin, 1191). The message once again is the same: it is the duty of the knight to uphold peace, justice and the common weal. In contrast to the warrior knight of the chanson de geste and the "adventurous" knight of the courtly epic, who both fulfil their duty within the

boundaries of an artificially limited society,¹⁵ Rothe's ideal knight possesses general social consciousness and a Christian conscience which he is called upon to exercise in every-day life. Adventure in the courtly sense has no place within this duty. Rothe was, of course, not the first author to express disregard for aventure, especially if it was used to fulfil ambitions of a personal nature. Already Thomasin von Zerclaere, for example, had criticised in Der Welsche Gast two centuries earlier the striving after personal glory usually implied by the aventure of the courtly romances. Also Heinrich von dem Türlin had shown signs of rejecting basic elements of chivalry in Diu Crône (ca. 1230).¹⁶

In the Ritterspiegel, Rothe's general advice to the knight on his mode of life is: "richte dich ganz uf woltad" (303). This consists, for example, in helping and protecting widows and orphans (1084, 3375);¹⁷ the poor and defenceless are to be supported, and by no means exploited (1183, 1185, 2119-20, 2129-30, 3081-2, 3211). In the exercise of his profession as a soldier, the knight must unfailingly be on the side of justice (das recht or rechte sache)¹⁸ 1094, 1132, 2282, 2405, 3362):

Den rechtin sachin wesin hold
und uf daz selbe ouch stritin.
(Rsp., 1191-2)

Der sterbit ouch gar seldin wol
der nicht stet noch dem rechtin
Und ist großir sunde vol ...
(Rsp., 3153-5)

Despite the preoccupation with matters of warfare within the Ritterspiegel, Rothe emphasises that peace, if it can be reconciled with one's honour, is always preferable:

ungerne saltu crigin.
Kanstu dez danne ummegegen
mit erin und mit guthe,
So ist din ding wißlich geschen;
(Rsp., 2480-3)

War is to be engaged in only to combat the forces of heathendom and protect Christianity, or to stem an

aggressor and restore the country's peace. Those who fight to restore peace and to protect their country in general are called "God's children":¹⁹

Sint di nu gotis kindir genant
di gerne dez landis frede machin
Und di armen schutzcin und daz lant.
(Rsp., 3209-11)

This is, of course, hardly original to Rothe's moral code - it is a common-place of medieval liaterature, the locus classicus being in the Beatitudes:

Beati pacifici, quoniam filii Dei vocabuntur.
Beati qui persecutionem patiuntur propter
justitiam, quoniam ipsorum est regnum caelorum.
(Matt. V, 9-10)

Rothe, having emphasised that a knight may not destroy someone who has inflicted no harm or injustice on him and his possessions (1177-8; 1195; 2102), calls for merciful treatment of one's enemies and points out that the knight's own honour is at stake in the matter:

Besitzcit her sines vindis erbe
und had her en gevangin,
Her sal en nicht zcu grunde vorterbe;
...
Ist her erbar, her gebe em tag
und mane en wanne her wolle, in.
Nymandin sal her schatzcin bloz
daz her muße bethil gehin;
Wer daz tud, der werdit erloz ...
(Rsp., 2105-7; 2111-5)

The emphasis in each instance is on the social duty of the knight. The term which Rothe uses to express his conscious social ideal is, as already adumbrated, gemeyn nutz. In the passages of the Ritterspiegel where the term occurs, there are always pointers to the qualities which Rothe deems to be part of this complex social concept. Besides the passage praising the knights of former times examined above, there are three interesting occurrences of the term in the Ritterspiegel. The first of these occurs within a discussion of the justifiability of war. The author points out with reference to Augustine, that participation in a war for unjust causes results in

damnation, should one die on the field (2289 - 2304). As a direct contrast, he then describes the virtues of taking part in a war for a righteous cause:

Ist abir di sache umme daz recht,
so sted ez wole zcu lidin;
Her sy ritter adir sy knecht,
so mag her frilichin stridin.
Ist daz her danne lidit nod
und muez darumme sterbin,
So gewinnet her eyne ediln tod
und mag darmede irwerbin
Daz eme god sine sunde vorgebit
dorch gemeynen nutz der lute.
(Rsp., 2305-14)

The author then draws a parallel between the sacrifice of the knight and the vicarious suffering of Christ:

Her dirloste unz darmede
daz her vor unz leid di pin,
Und irwarb unz den ewigen frede.
gelobit muße her ummer sin!
Wer umme den frede werdit irslagin
und umme den nutz gemeyne,
Den sal man nicht zcu sere clagin
und alzcu vel beweyne.
(Rsp., 2321-8)

This parallel may conceivably reflect the strivings towards imitatio Christi preached by the Dutch Devotio moderna movement which had been gaining influence in Germany since ca. 1401, and which had a centre at Erfurt in the early fifteenth century.²⁰ The subordinate tasks which, for Rothe, combine to form the supreme ideal of the service of gemeyn nutz are once more the readiness to act on the side of justice (2305) and for the sake of peace (2325).

In the next instance (2997-3012) the author once more makes use of a contrast to express the necessary qualities which lead to a knight's serving gemeyn nutz. He quotes Cicero as saying that if an individual throws himself into the heat of battle and risks his life for the sake of personal glory (Dorch rum und dorch itelichkeit 3001), then this is "eyn torlicheerbeid" (3003). In contrast, however,:

... wan dez selbin tede nod
und queme dahren zcu statin
Und trete danne in den tod,
daz mochte en allewege gebatin.
Wan beßir ist ez gestorbin
dorch gemeynen nutz und frede
Danne schadin und schande irworbin
und uf en eyne bose nachrede.
(Rsp., 3005-12)

Effort for personal glory is a foolish and dishonourable task, doomed to failure, whereas selfless engagement in war for the sake of peace is service of the common weal (gemeyn nutz) and brings reward.

The final mention of gemeyn nutz in the Ritter-spiegel is reminiscent of the first passage (997ff.) in which Rothe described the ideal knight. Now, towards the end of the work, (3349ff.) Rothe once more presents two contrasting pictures - one of the degenerate knights of his own day, and the other of the knight of the idealised time of etzwan who swore an oath:

Daz her noch erin begerdin
beschermen wolde den gemeynen nutz
Und gotis ritter also werdin
und der cristinheid merin schutz,
Wetwen und ouch di weisin
beschermen wo her kunde,
Vor unrechte und vor freisin
ez tedin vinde adir frunde,
Und vorne an der spitzcin sten
wann man umme recht wolde stritin,
...
Und daz her sinen lip und sin lebin
dorch den heiligin cristingloibin
Und dorch gemeynen nutz wolde ufgebin.
(Rsp., 3353-62; 3365-7)

Once more the emphasis is on the duty of the knight towards society as a whole; he is to stand in the front line of battle when justice (3362) is at stake, and as God's knight, is to protect the Christian faith (3366) and Christendom as a whole.

The sacrifice on the part of the individual knight for gemeyn nutz is, however, also to his own advantage, for a rich reward awaits him in heaven:

Wer umme den frede werdit irslagin
und umme den nutz gemeyne,
Den sal man nicht zcu sere clagin ...
Her had sin lebin wol angelegit
wan her also scheidit von hinnen.
(Rsp., 2325-2330)

The idea that the heroes of a battle will automatically be rewarded with the gifts of heaven in the afterlife is, of course, a topos which is already to be found in classical Greek literature.²¹ The idea is found in a specifically Christian concept in the chansons de geste; Roland and his comrades who had died fighting for Christendom were promised such a reward,²² as were the pious crusaders of the Ordenschronike²³ and indeed of Rothe's Thüringische Chronik (L).²⁴ Posthumous honour and a reward in heaven are, remarks Rothe, worth more than present bodily safety and a bad name (3009-12). God always rewards his servants for their loyalty:

Her (God) ist di hoeste warheid
und belonit waz man eme tud.
(Rsp., 1653-4)

Rothe describes this reward more fully later in the Ritterspiegel:

Furit her danne eyn toguntsam lebin
und wel den strid wedir di ungloibigin thu,
God wel em sin riche gebin
und der merteler cronen darzcu.
(Rsp., 3145-8)

The author then notes, citing Isidore, that those who have served God faithfully should not be unduly mourned:

Man sal sich abir nicht betrubin
umme di zcu gothe wendin sich
Und sich in siner liebe ubin,
der tod ist zcumale lobelich.
(Rsp., 3165-8)

Within the idealised eulogy of the standards of the knights of former times, Rothe maintains that every true knight was willing to give up his all to fight for gemeyn nutz (3349ff). In fact, however, Rothe is here juxtaposing his own ideals on to the events of this idealised scene of the past in order to attain didactic effect. In the

campaigns he is describing, men fought principally out of loyalty to a liege-lord within the bounds and duties of the feudal pact. As for the Crusades, the reasons for participating were many; there was the emotional, religious enthusiasm evident in the motto Deus le volt, but there was also the lure of reward both spiritual and material. Many indigent younger sons were able to better their financial position considerably.²⁵ The often essentially selfish motives of the soldier knights of the crusading era are transformed by the author of the Ritter-spiegel into the altruistic motive of aiding gemeyn nutz. This manipulation of historical fact within a didactic work is neither new nor surprising. Gemeyn nutz is a retrospective addition; to the religious and material aims of the crusader Rothe adds a social one, to the reality of history he adds the idealism of his didactic aims.

The quality of gemeyn nutz is also evident in the earlier Ratsgedichte, which allow Rothe to present his social code in the sphere of municipal administration. In the first of the poems, Von der stete ampten, Rothe elaborates on the medieval commonplace of the body politic, in which the individual must work towards the well-being of the whole. Ullmann points out that this figure takes into consideration two typical features of medieval society, namely the system of ranks and the belief, based on Christian cosmology, that every member of society has been given a task to do.²⁶ The emphasis in Rothe's Ratsgedichte on eyntrechtigheit must also be seen in this light; the unity of the various elements is responsible for the well-being of the body politic, or in the case of the Pauline example, for the well-being of the unum corpus Christi.²⁷ In Von der stete ampten Rothe describes the code of social interdependence and the duty of all members to contribute to the whole, while

in Von der Rathes Zucht the emphasis is laid on the duty of the councillors and functionaries to look after the interests of the weaker elements. The social aspect of the town councillors' duties is emphasised in both works. They are to strive, like the knights in the Ritterspiegel, not for their own prestige or personal advantage, but for the common good of the town and the people they represent. Their function within the town is compared with that of the heart in the human body:

Dye ratislute vnd dy wisen alden
Hat daz hercze behalden.
An den ligit gar sere
Der stad macht, warheit vnd ere,
Truwe, glaube vnd ere güt.
(Von der stete ampten, F 73-7)

If a councillor fails to carry out his duty with adequate consideration for the people he represents, or if he proves to be lacking in social consciousness, the author recommends that he be ruthlessly expelled from the council:

Dise vorbeschribin
Ist güt, daz sie vß sint getriben
Vnd siczen mit nichte
Yme rate noch an gerichte,
Wanne sie nicht nützen,
Noch gemeynen nucz nicht enschützen.
(Von des Rathes Zucht, F 336-41)

Later in the same work, Rothe expresses the hope that the chamberlains (kemerer) will devote themselves to the interests of gemeyn nutz:

Daz lantrecht vnd eyde staben,
Allez trachten vffe ere
Vnd gemeynen nucz vbin sere.
(Von des Rathes Zucht, F 425-7)

The B-Version of Von des Rathes Zucht also shows evidence of the importance for Rothe of the bonum commune. In his advice to the councillors he includes:

Din rat sey nuczlich,
Fridsam, tröstelich vnd schuczelich!
Waz du salt rechen,
Daz saltu selber nicht brechen.
Des nymmer vorhengen,
Waz gemeyn nucz nicht enbrengen.
(Von des Rathes Zucht, B 377-82)

In the Fürstenratgeber Rothe embraces in his social programme yet a higher social rank. He advises the prince that if he really wishes to put his counsellor to the test, he should find out the answers to the following:

Ab he sinen herren da czu reiße:
Beyde rate vnd heiße
Wyder den gemeinen nütz tü
Vnd vnerlichen geniß fuge czu.
(Fürstenratgeber, F 698-701)

If the counsellor advises his prince to act contrary to the interests of his subjects, against gemeyn nutz, then he is an unsuitable counsellor ("eynen snoden, torechtin ratgeben", F 695). In this statement, Rothe implies more than the words express: namely, if the prince is to employ counsellors who advise him according to the needs of the people, it follows that the prince himself is to rule his land according to the dictates of gemeyn nutz regardless of his territorial ambitions or private enrichment. This view of kingship was by no means original to Rothe. That it was a ruler's duty to look after the interests of the weakest elements of society was emphasised in the many Specula regum²⁸ of the Middle Ages. Pauline influence is apparent in the theme, but also patristic writings show interest in the subject. Isidore of Seville writes in his Synonyma II, 77: Summa bonitate subditos rege, non sis terribilis in subjectis.²⁹ Isidore also discusses the subject in his Sententiae III, 49: Dedit Deus principibus praesulatum pro regimine populorum, illis eos praeesse soluit .. nec dominando premere, sed condescendo consulere ...³⁰ In keeping with these views on kingship, Rothe, in his Fürstenratgeber tries to temper possible absolutism with social conscience. Once more in the Ratsgedichte, as in the Ritterspiegel, he stresses the importance of peace and justice for the people. Among those who are to be expelled from the council are "Wer vil gekrigit" (Ratsg. 622, B545, B563). Knight, councillor, ruler, all are to avoid involving their people in war for selfish

motives or an unjust cause. They are to look first and foremost to the interests of society as a whole and of their Christian civilisation.

Like most of Rothe's other major ideas, his views on gemeyn nutz were not completely original. Indeed the view that the needs of society as a whole should have priority over private ambitions or opinions regardless of the rank or position of the individual, was a medieval commonplace. It is best-known as the formula: "Utilitas publica prefertur utilitati privatae".³¹ The well-being of the people as a whole was regarded as the supremum bonum which was to take priority over all other considerations; individual views which differed from generally accepted theories were regarded with suspicion, and as Ullmann points out, this striving to protect the general well-being led finally to the activity of the Inquisition.³² In Rothe's code, however, the utilitas publica represents a state of harmonious Christian social interdependence for whose well-being it is in the individual's interest to be active, even at the cost of possible personal sacrifice. This code of gemeyn nutz offers within the elements of the new social pattern in Rothe's day an alternative to the rigid treue-relationship within the familia. The individual was no longer answerable to his direct feudal overlord or vassal - in place of the personal two-sided feudal pact, the new social pattern called for the subordination of the individual member for the good of the whole of which he is part.

As Wolf points out, the subordination of the individual for the general well-being had already been propagated in the Catharina Divina of Rothe's contemporary and compatriot Johannes von Vippach.³³ Also in Des landgrafen Ludwig des frommen von Thüringen Kreuzfahrt one finds soldiers fighting for gemeyn nutz.³⁴ Even the sumptuary laws were aimed at promoting a code in which the

individual is willing to sacrifice egoistic extravagance and bow to the necessities of the community as a whole. A sumptuary law issued in the Nürnberg district gives the reasons for its necessity:

darumb dem allmechtigen got zu lobe, gemaynem nutze zu gut, ... so haben wir ... zu vermeydung und verdruckung der hoffart, fürwytzkayt unnd überflüssiger kostlichayt fürgenomen ...³⁵

The same principle of the individual's duty to serve society as a whole is also to be found in Rolevinck's "Bauernspiegel" De Regimine Rusticorum.³⁶ Rolevinck points out that man is God's creature and is destined to return to God after his earthly life. He has been placed by God in a particular station in life and a particular class of society. Holzapfel, in his commentary of the work describes Rolevinck's lesson in the following terms:

Die Forderung für alle Stände heißt: Zum Nutzen des andern und des Ganzen seine Pflicht tun.³⁷

This sentence could be adopted into a commentary of Rothe's works, for it expresses a code similar to that which pledges one to serve gemeyn nutz. Holzapfel also points out that the code expressed in Rolevinck's work is based on Augustine's De civitate dei.³⁸ The picture of the ideal king who rules his land according to the dictates of the common weal and of peace and justice does not only extend to Charlemagne's efforts, but in theory to Augustine and his rex pacificus, rex iustus. Augustine considers it the duty of man in his God-given station in life to sacrifice private interests for the good of God's creation.³⁹ In such views one can also see the forerunner of Rothe's social code based on gemeyn nutz. The significant difference between the Augustinian concept and the Rothean ideal is that the former is basically other-worldly while the latter is focused on social, this-worldly considerations. However religiously orientated Rothe's works may be, and however strong his belief in the afterlife (Rsp., 2329-30; 4137-8; LdK 1430ff.), there is no note of yearning for death in his works; there is no contempt

for the world as is the case in the De civitate dei. Rothe's outlook is basically optimistic, a positive attitude of acceptance of the world. He is concerned to promote with his social and didactic aims a code of conduct which makes life on earth more bearable and more pleasant. Whether he took the basic concepts of gemeyn nutz, frede and rechte sache from Augustine, or whether he was influenced by Fürstenspiegel and other medieval literature or preachers is difficult to assess. A complex use of sources is the most plausible explanation, for although Rothe frequently quotes Augustine,⁴⁰ there is no quotation directly concerning gemeyn nutz. There is no doubt, however, that Rothe's term gemeyn nutz is to be interpreted as a social, worldly concept. It is the basic Augustinian concept styled to fit the needs of fifteenth century society and made suitable to take the place of the code of the old familiae in the new urban and socially orientated society. Morality is not to be practised for one's personal glory nor for one's overlord, nor exclusively for one's own reward, but for society, for Christendom as a whole, for peace, justice and the common good. In Rothe's concept of gemeyn nutz there is a muted sign that the old views on absolutism, often practised under the protection of the theocratic theory of kingship, are gradually being questioned. Whoever "Wyder den gemeynen nütz tü" is guilty of "Vnerlichen geniss" (Fürstenratgeber, 698f.), guilty of selfish, personal satisfaction which one can no longer legitimately enjoy in a society based on mutual help.

(ii) nutz

Rothe's ideal code is not only socially and religiously orientated; it is also essentially pragmatic. The focus on gemeyn nutz is paralleled by an emphasis on nutz as a value in itself. Although the use of the term within a group must frequently be considered a

formula, the word nutz constitutes a significant component of Rothe's ideal code. He uses the term to express an important criterion in judging both people and actions; indeed, it is also the gauge by which he measures the success or failure of his own activity as a writer:

Durch lust in myner jogunt
Schreib ich vnde tychte.
Nach mynes synnes mogunt
Ich mancherleye ußrichte.
Etzliche nutze waren,
Die sint bißher nach blebin.
Doch habe ich in den jaren
Or vil vmbsust geschreiben.
(Prolog G, Str. 1-2)

Throughout his works, Rothe stresses the importance of thinking ahead and being prepared for all eventualities. Nutz is one of the criteria he considers important in making a decision as to future actions. He refers to Cicero in this context:

Meistir Tullius der spricht:
wiltu wisin rad halde
So thu en unbedacht nicht
und sprich en nicht uz balde.
Dryerlei bedenke gar ebin:
hobisch, nutzce und gud;
Darnach saltu dinen rad gebin
mit welchem man allirbeste tud.
Had di sache deße alle dry:
den nutz, di togunt und di ere,
So merke welch daz beste sy.
(Rsp., 2553-63)

The determining factors are that the action be "hobisch, nutzce und gud" (2258) or, as Rothe repeats it four lines later, the action should have "den nutz, di togunt und die ere". The quality of nutz, then, ranks in Rothe's mind with such key qualities as hobisch, gud, togunt und ere. This combination, once again, has been borrowed by Rothe from classical and patristic sources, most probably by means of florilegia. In Isidore's Etymologiae II. 4,4,⁴¹ for example, honestum, utile and possibile are recommended as criteria in the suasio. Also Fulbert of Chartres' letter to Duke William V (the Great) of Aquitania in 1020⁴² contains within its discourse on faithfulness an interesting

combination of qualities including honestum and utile:

Qui domino suo fidelitatem jurat, ista sex in memoria semper habere debet: Incolume, tutum, honestum, utile, facile, possibile. ... Honestum, ne sit ei in damnum de sua justitia, vel de aliis causis quae ad honestatem eius pertinere videntur. Utile, ne sit ei in damnum de suis possessionibus.

Fulbert's influence on the subject of faithfulness was to last several centuries⁴³ and is echoed both in religious writings and in secular and juristic works throughout the Middle Ages. The influence of twelfth century Traktatlteratur (treatises) such as Wernher von Elmendorf's Tugendspiegel⁴⁴ must also be considered probable. Wernher had, in turn, been influenced by William of Conches's⁴⁵ Moralium dogma philosophorum (alternative title: Moralis philosophia de honesto et utili) which presented quotations of classical authors on honestum and utile, especially from Seneca's De beneficiis and Cicero's De officiis. This would explain the many quotations in Rothe's works from Cicero, such as the passage quoted above on "den nutz, die togunt und die ere".

Although the basic meaning of Rothe's term nutz is, of course, the Latin utilitas, it is interesting to note how he uses it, often as a collocation, with a loaded meaning to express important elements of his didactic code. Several times he combines "usefulness" with "honour" to form the collocation nutz (or from⁴⁷) und ere. This must be considered a formula, possibly already derived as such from Latin sources. The collocation is also to be found, for example, in the expression frum und ere (332 and 288) in Wernher's Meier Helmbrecht.

In Rothe's Ratsgedichte, the phrase seems in some cases indeed to be little more than a commonplace. Within the description of the duties of the various functionaries of a town, the kemerer (chamberlains) are compared to the hands of the human body:

Dy kemerer, daz sint dy hende,
Dy sal man czu nütze vnd eren wende.
(Von der stete ampten, F85-6)

A similar description is given of the butchers who are likened to the stomach:

Dieser haben die stet nucz vnd ere (B 138).

Towards the end of Von der stete ampten, Rothe discusses the theme of unity (eintrechtigkeyt) which plays an important role in his code. The effect of zweyetracht (disunity or discord) (B227) within the council is that the town has

Nirgen keyn fride sicherlichen,
Nach vortheidunge, narunge, nach schucz,
Nach keynerley ere, nach nucz.

(B 224-6).

In the above case, ere and nucz express more than in the other, often commonplace uses of the terms in this work; ere is used to mean "standing", even "authority", while nucz is "advantage of a material, administrative kind".

In the second of the three Ratsgedichte, Von des Rathes Zucht, the reader again finds the combination of nucz and ere in a theme which Rothe treats more fully in the later Ritterspiegel and which was mentioned above in connection with the Cicero quotation, namely that a wise counsellor should always think ahead and consider carefully the various courses of action open to him. In the Ratsgedichte the ratesmeinster (mayor) is advised:

Der stat czü güte
Wol wegen in dem müte,
Abe ez nucz bringe
Adir ere, waz her vorhenge.

(Von des Rathes Zucht, F 392-5)

Nucz and ere in this context are no longer only the components of a commonplace, but significant features of a socially orientated code. Nucz is the practical advantage of the town, while ere is the collective standing of the town and its people.

Similar advice is given in the Fürstenratgeber to the prince's counsellor who is to seek the advantage and enhance the honour of his master:

Vor allen dingen sere
Süchen sinen nucz vnd ere.
(Fürstenratgeber, F800-801)

The group nutz und ere also occurs in composite form in the allegory of the twelve brass lions in the Lob der Keuschheit. The eighth of these lions is one

das widdir ere nach notz wil betrachte
sundern alles in frevil lin.

(LdK., 1143-4)

From this it appears that nutz and ere are in opposition to frevil,⁴⁸ which is obviously to be avoided. The topos appears again in composite form - this time, however, using fromen (in its MHG. sense a synonym of nutz) with ere - within Rothe's warning against keeping bad company at the end of the Lob der Keuschheit. Once more, he uses his typical didactic method of contrasting the right kind of behaviour with that which brings neither "honour" nor "advantage":

besser ist ess das der mensche kusch blibe
unnd sin zyd mit gode vordribe
danne das her in bosen wirtschefften were,
der her gewonne widder fromen nach ere.

(LdK., 5624-7)

In the Ritterspiegel the collocation nutz und ere occurs in two significant passages, in the first instance as a reward for refusing to fight for a wicked or unjust cause:

Enzcebistu abir icht bosis daran
so saltu zcuhanf wedirkere
Und glimphlichin abelan,
dez hastu nutz und ere.

(Rsp., 493-6)

In the second instance it represents the reward of the knight who fights for God's cause:

Her mag nummer obil gesterbin
wer noch gotis gnadin ringit,
Her mag wol nutz und ere irwerbin
gar snel eme ouch gelingit.

(Rsp., 3141-4)

In the above cases, the collocation of nutz (fromen) with ere must be considered a formula, and the composite nature of the expression enables it to contain a meaning beyond the mere addition of the two terms. Whereas in the Ratsgedichte the concept of nutz und ere must be considered as "advantage" in a practical sense and "honour" in the sense of moral integrity and the aura of respect which surrounds it, the focus is changed in the Ritterspiegel

to emphasize the religious or personal benefit. The nutz und ere after which the knight is to strive constitute the advantage of God's reward as well as personal standing and a good name. The virtues of nutz (fromen) und ere which are recommended to the addressees of the Lob der Keuschheit must, on the other hand, be considered as the qualities which safeguard the soul from sin, thus being "of use" in their striving to lead a sinless life. The meaning of this particular topos, then, especially of the component nutz, is dependent on the didactic code presented by Rothe in each work; in the case of the Ratsgedichte a socially orientated political code, in the Ritterspiegel an equally socially orientated religious code of chivalry, and in the Lob der Keuschheit a monastically orientated religious code.

The group nutz und gud is to be found twice in the Lob der Keuschheit. In the one case it is used with regard to humility:

gotiz forcht brenget di demut
unnd di ist dir nütz unnd gud;
(LdK., 637-8)

The other example occurs within Rothe's exposition of a topos of medieval Christian thought, namely that man must be aware that his qualities are gifts from God and not to be attributed to one's own strength. This theme is evident in Rothe's citations of Augustine on the subject of success in war⁴⁹ and may well be influenced by commentaries on Job who serves as an exemplum of the theme.⁵⁰ Rothe points out in the Lob der Keuschheit that freedom from sin is a God-given quality, and indirectly that all things "nutze unnd gud" are also gifts from God:

unnd bedencke auch in dinen sinne
das du van dir selber nicht künst begynne
das dir nutze sy unnd gud,
wan god sine gnade van dir thud.
(LdK., 1895-9)

While the composite use of nutz und gut, like nutz und ere, must be considered a formula, Rothe has invested it with a significance of a religious kind in the Lob der

Keuschheit; the meaning in the above passages is "to one's own advantage in a morally justifiable sense", in the sense that it will contribute in the last instance to one's personal salvation in a Christian afterlife.

The combination nutz und fromen also occurs in Rothe's works; he uses it in his description of the duties of a servant⁵¹ in the chapter "Von den dienern" in Von des Rathes Zucht:

Si sullen ir herren
Czu allen geczijten auch eren,
Vnd war sie komen
Czü czihen nütz vnd frümen.
(Von des Rathes Zucht, F 544-7)

The expression seems here once again to imply more than simply "usefulness" or "advantage"; it includes an aspect of "standing" or "respect". The group nutz und fromen appears also in the Ritterspiegel, this time with a less abstract meaning:

Nummer sal man dez begynnen
daz di vinde gerne sehin,
Sundirn allezcid daruf synnen
wi nutz und frome moge entstehin.
(Rsp., 3881-4)

In this case the expression seems to imply advantage of a more direct kind, namely of a strategic nature in battle.

The verbs nützen and frumen are used frequently to ask rhetorical questions, a feature which once more must be assessed as a formula. It is already apparent in the biblical "Quid proderit?"⁵² and is used by Rothe to emphasise the futility of specific actions or modes of behaviour. In the Ritterspiegel, for example, he asks:

Was ist nutzce di erbeid
der man wedir god begynnet?
(Rsp., 1719-20)

There is, of course, in this case neither practical advantage, nor reward in the afterlife, nor honour of any kind to be gained. Such questions occur several times in the Ritterspiegel and also in the early work Lob der Keuschheit⁵³ to express futility:

Was fromet auch den licham rein unnd gut
wanne befleckt ist der meide mut?
(LdK., 1802-3)

In every case, something which is potentially good,
potentially useful, is destroyed by a bad quality.

The combinations of nutz or fromen with other adjectives of quality as well as the stereotype rhetorical question may, then, be considered as formulaic expressions; nevertheless, even within these expressions, nutz has often a loaded meaning. This is also true of the term nutz (or fromen) on its own. At its simplest, nutz is used to express "usefulness"; in accordance with the author's belief in a practical, useful life, everything he recommends in the Ritterspiegel as training for the young knight, be it jousting, swimming, climbing or reading, is recommended on account of its usefulness. Climbing, for example, "werdit wol nutzce in den crigin" (Rsp. 2711)⁵⁴. In his recommendations for the education of the knight, Rothe leans heavily on scholastic tradition. He cites Cicero and Cassiodorus to express his opinion that reading is geared to develop critical faculties and encourage power of judgment, and that books will guide the reader to an understanding and recognition of his own advantage -- once again the criterion is nutz:

di kindir in der jogunt
Di buchir laßin lerne
und manchir hande togunt;
Daz werdit en sere nutzcin,
wi wenig sin etzliche achtin
Di sich mit tummen redin schutzcin
und kunnen den nutz nicht betrachtin.
(Rsp., 2586-92)

In the same passage, Rothe makes the general statement that:

Kunst und togunt di sint frunde
dy vel nutzcis kunnen geberin.
(Rsp., 2615-6)

It soon becomes apparent, however, that kunst and togunt are to be understood not in a general sense, but specifically as the seven liberal arts and the seven virtues

of the scholastic curriculum.⁵⁵ Rothe proceeds namely to quote word for word (without acknowledgement) a passage from Chapter 6 of Petrus Alfonsi's Disciplina clericalis⁵⁶ in which he recommends "di sibir fry kunste", "sibir fromikeid" (in v.2665 as "di sibir togunde") and "di sibir behendikeid".⁵⁷

Not only the knights are to aim at pursuing useful tasks; also the nuns in the convents, for example, are to engage in useful work:

si sal in irem kloster bliben
unnd da lessen, beten unnd schriben
nehen, wircken unnd spinnen
unnd da czemliche erbeid beginnen.
(LdK., 3712-5)

In general, people are to be judged not according to their status or influence, but according to the usefulness of their lives. The elderly, for example, whose worth Rothe often stresses, are not to be treated with contempt, for

So sint si dennoch in erin tagin
gar nutzce in großin stritin:
Sie kunnen gudin rad gegeben.
(Rsp., 3619-21)

In the Ratsgedichte Rothe advocates the dismissal of councillors "Die lande ader lute nicht nuczen" (Ratsg. B 548, also F 625). "Usefulness" is, then, also one of the main requirements stipulated by the author for a councillor. The usefulness which is used to measure the worth of poet, nun, knight, old man, councillor cannot, however, be measured in terms of personal enrichment, but is seen in terms of the advantage to be gained by the society of which these individuals are part. Seen in this light, it is possible to determine an interconnection between the meaning of nutz and that of gemeyn nutz. Even in the one sense in which nutz must be seen as "personal advantage", namely in the religious sphere where it is often used to signify the reward for the faithful in the afterlife, it is compatible with gemeyn nutz. As already discussed, the knight who

fight for God's cause is promised nutz und ere (Rsp., 3143). By doing his duty in battle against the heathens, the knight is not only serving the interests of gemeyn nutz, but is also working for his own salvation (nutz); the two concepts are inextricable; gemeyn nutz brings nutz in its trail, and one's own true advantage involves behaviour becoming to the general weal.

In the Ratsgedichte one can determine a similar interplay between nutz and gemeyn nutz. Rothe asks of the servants that they further the nutz und ere (F 545) of their Prince. At the same time he demands of the Prince that he employ only those who seek to serve the interests of gemeyn nutz, and by implication that he himself also rule according to the dictates of the general weal. It therefore follows that the nutz und ere becomes almost identical with the interests of gemeyn nutz. Similarly, in Von des Rathes Zucht Rothe asks of the clerks (schribere) that they

Gutlichen den luten
Iren nutz dick bedeuten.
(Von des Rathes Zucht, B 462-3)

By pointing out to the less gifted or less far-sighted people what is to their personal advantage (nutz), the councillor is in turn fulfilling his duty towards the common weal. Once again nutz and gemeyn nutz are by no means incompatible; they complement each other.

Where nutz is used to mean either advantage of a justifiable moral nature within the bounds of the social code, or specifically as the Christian's reward in the afterlife, the opposite unnutze similarly means not only passively useless, but often actively harmful. The latter meaning seems to be common in religious or theological texts. Rothe, for example, advises in his Lob der Keuschheit:

dine hand halt vor dime munde,
das du werdest zu keiner stunde
in dinen worten gefangen
di du unnützlich hast begangen,
unnd werdest dar van zu schanden,
wan man si dar nach had zu handen.
(LdK., 5202-7)

If these unnützlich words had only been "useless", they would not bring shame (schanden) upon the speaker. The commonplace unnütze rede is used frequently in the Lob der Keuschheit to express "idle talk" of a malicious, harmful nature. An extension of what the author means by unnütze worte is given in the following lines from the Lob der Keuschheit:

ein mensche lebet an gotes forchte
das vol ist der unnützen worte
unnd der lute spottit unnd si affter koset
unnd mit unkuschen worten boset,
da ist di kuscheid schir verlorn.
(LdK., 5254-8)

The concept of "idle talk" is, of course, not new; it is already apparent in the Bible as verbum otiosum (Matth XII, 36) or stultiloquium (Eph. V, 4) as well as in the Wiener Genesis as gechose.

Just as nutz was found alongside gud, so too does unnütze collocate with bose to form a formulaic expression used often to refer to verbal utterances:

wer des hertzen reinikeid lip had,
der beslusset sinen mund an aller stad,
das nummer unnütze nach bose wort
van sime munde wirt gehort.
(LdK., 4346-9)

There is a trace of the meaning "harmful" in the above example, and in the following lines the collocation is used to express maliciousness:

di zunge wird dem gelost
der in sinen unnützen reden bost.
(LdK., 5264-5)

In the same work, Rothe compares unnütze gekrute to persons who

in bosen gedancken ... allezyd sten
unnd vol suntlicher begerlickeid.
(LdK. 3204-5)

Thus as a parallel to the nutz, gut and the reward of the faithful in the afterlife, one can establish unnutz, böse and sinfulness. In his allegorical description of the apple, Rothe also likens the skins which are wenig nütze

(LdK. 3411-13) other than to be fed to the pigs, to the lives of unrepentant sinners who "gehoren in der tuvel swin / di allezyd in der helle sin" (LdK. 3434-5). The young girl who is nymant nütze (LdK., 4314) is also described as des tuvels schütze (4315). Thus uselessness and sin seem to go hand in hand, just as usefulness had led to honour and reward. Sin as a religious concept is, within Rothe's code, a factor which harms one's personal advantage (nutz) since it destroys one's reputation, one's standing in the community and one's chance of a reward in the afterlife. It also, however, detracts from the general well-being of the society of which one is part (gemeyn nutz). Concern for the latter is evident in Rothe's stipulation that a town representative or a court advisor should be morally impeccable.⁵⁸

Thus, in every social grouping Rothe addresses, he pleads the case for a useful life which in turn contributes to the general well-being. In the Lob der Keuschheit the young girl may choose to serve society by marrying and earning God's reward (lone LdK., 4313) by caring for her husband or children.⁵⁹ She may, however, prefer to follow the vita contemplativa, in which case she is expected to make herself useful by doing czemliche erbeid (LdK., 3715), such as reading, writing, sewing, spinning (LdK., 3713-4). Emphasis is laid on the carrying out of etwas nutzlichs (LdK., 3240) and etwas tegelicher erbeid (LdK., 3247).

In the Ratsgedichte Rothe shows the importance of the task of the individual for the well-being of society as a whole. From the most insignificant messenger to the prince of the Fürstenratgeber, every individual must dedicate his life to the well-being of the whole, and by so doing gain his own reward and advantage.

In the Ritterspiegel the knight can better his own precarious livelihood and at the same time serve the general weal either by fighting for Christianity (e.g. Rsp., 1002) or by engaging in commerce and looking after

his own property (Rsp., 2207 ff).

Thus usefulness (nutz) occupies within Rothe's moral code a position alongside goodness, honour and freedom from sin. It plays a major role in the individual service of the general weal (gemeyn nutz) and leads the way to God's reward as well as to its own earthly dividend. At the opposite extreme, uselessness (unn^eütze) ranks with wickedness, dishonour, shame, sinfulness and a subserviance to the devil.

(iii) The Ethos of Work.

From the concept of "usefulness" and leading a useful life it is a short step to the concept of "work" and "working for one's living". Until the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the nobility had lived principally from the revenue of their usually hereditary feudal fiefs. Reward from their overlord for help in battle was also frequently in the form of land and the title and privileges which accompanied it. Feudal relationships were based on a system of rank and class privilege. The effect of work as a marketable commodity was almost unknown, as was the exchange value in terms of money. This changed gradually with the appearance of a new social and legal rank, known as servitus ac libertas⁶⁰ which represented the first step to middle-class freedom. By paying their overlord a yearly sum to free them from their duties, these urbani⁶¹ not only made work available for others, but also became free to dedicate themselves to new tasks in the towns. The new towns with their "tiefgreifenden Wandel von Wirtschaft, Gesellschaft, Verhalten, Mentalité",⁶² encouraged a new kind of social interdependence which resulted in a new series of equivalents based on work and money. A system based on payment by money began to take over from the system whereby goods or agricultural produce changed hands to meet responsibilities. It has been maintained

that Thomas Aquinas's theory of payment based on laborae and expensae was possible only within the kind of society which was being established in the new towns.⁶³ While Hagenauer, taking account of Thomas's inclusion of the social standing of each particular occupation in the calculation of the price for the finished article, considers him "der Vertreter der ständischen Welt mit ihren konstanten Wirtschaftsverhältnissen",⁶⁴ I. von der Lüche and W. Röcke add that he is also to be considered "als Vertreter neuer Elemente, die die ständische Gliederung allmählich zersetzen".⁶⁵ Labour force and commerce as symbols of the inter-dependence of the various ranks and professional groups within the towns were beginning to replace the feudal type of dependence based on a system of privilege. Instead of the system of rank propagated within feudal society, there gradually emerged in the towns a social climate in which "jenes System der Dienste, von dem Gewaltsinn und den Brutalitäten gereinigt, auf freier Arbeit und persönlicher Leistung für das ganze beruht".⁶⁶ This complex, new code of behaviour typical of the developing towns has been simplified by literary historians into the cliché bürgerliches Arbeitsethos.⁶⁷ Hans Rupprich, for example, claims for Rothe's Ritterspiegel that it propagates a bürgerliches Arbeitsethos:

Rothe's Ritterspiegel hat kaum viel literarischen Erfolg gehabt, ist aber durch den Versuch, dem bürgerlichen Arbeitsethos Anerkennung und Gültigkeit zu verschaffen, ein kulturgeschichtlich interessantes Stück spätmittelalterlicher Ritterdidaxe.⁶⁸

A similar view is expressed by H. O. Burger:

Am Fuß der Wartburg werden die Ritter jetzt in der Schule zu bürgerlichem Arbeitsethos erzogen.⁶⁹

In order to judge the truth of such statements, it is, however, necessary to examine in closer detail than the scope of a history of literature allowed, the extent and the direction of Rothe's bourgeois leanings in his work in general and in the Ritterspiegel in particular. A

definition of the complex concept bourgeois must, obviously, precede any judgment of Rothe's code in this light. It is then important to determine the extent to which the code of the Ritterspiegel is bürgerlich and the extent to which it is influenced by ethical leanings evident in Rothe's work as a whole. Other earlier or contemporary works must also be taken into consideration in order to determine possible influences and the extent of Rothe's originality in this matter.

The term "bourgeois" will be used here to describe the life-style of the active elements of the population of the growing towns. This life-style is characterized by a new dynamic economic programme, business aptitude and a revitalized commercial activity. Above all, work is raised to a new level of importance and esteem, and the term Arbeitsethos appears frequently in modern social and economic studies of the period.

The call to work for one's living was not new in Rothe's day. The Franciscans had raised "work" to one of the main components of their creed, and Berthold von Regensburg, within his series of sermons - which were, of course, aimed at combatting the growing influence of heretical sects who roused social unrest - had shown that to work in one's God-given position within society was not only a social necessity, but also a religious duty within God's scheme of things. Röcke and v. d. Lühe have studied Berthold's 10th and 2nd sermons with a view to highlighting the social significance of his preaching.⁷⁰ Berthold, in the course of his anti-heretic campaign, preached in Thuringia in 1263,⁷¹ and his influence is still evident as late as the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, so that to postulate at least indirect influence on Rothe seems feasible. Röcke and v.d. Lühe stress that "usefulness" within society is an important factor of Berthold's social creed. In his 10th sermon, good and honest work is regarded not only as the moral duty of the

tradesman, but also as his social duty in terms of its "use" for the consumer. Berthold expresses this within the example of the tailor whom he tells: if you take the measurements correctly, "so behieltest du dine triuwe unde waere den liuten nützlich" (1, 146).⁷² While the tenth sermon confines the creed of work to those elements of society which, within the feudal system would in any case have had to work, Berthold broadens the concept in the 2nd sermon to include all ranks and at the same time widens it to a religious concern:

Wan unser herre hât eime ieglichen menschen ein
amt verlihen, er hât niemen ze müezekeit geschaffen,
wir müezen uns alle eteswes underwinden, dâ mite
wir genesen. (I, 13)⁷³

Berthold appeals to a different sense of duty from that involved in a feudal relationship between lord and vassal. He appeals to a socially-orientated sense of duty; he points out, for example, the potential endangerment of the social code through dishonest work of the individual tradesman:

wan swaz der krâmer gewinnet mit sîner unrechten
wâge, daz verstilt im der winman, der zapfenaere,
her wider an dem wîne, unde der snîder unde sîn
kneht an dem gewande. ... Alsô stilt der dem, sô
stilt er dir morgen her wider mit sînes amtes
trügenheit. (I, 17)⁷⁴

Rothe expresses a similar view in his Ritterspiegel, the emphasis in this case being, however, on the thieving habits of the robber knights:

Nicht werdit her darvon riche
ab her ez samment sinen kindin.
Ez kommit ouch hirnach sin gliche
der ez eme kan abegeschindin.
Di arme lute also vorterbîn
und nemen en zcu unrechte er habe,
Uf den dertin si daz nicht erbin
wan ez get en wedir bozlichin abe.
(Rsp., 2149-56)

Rothe, having pointed out the social dangers and appealed to his readers' reason (ist her clug, line 2147), then discusses the matter from an ethical, religious point of view:

Von stelin, wuchir und von roibin
druet keynes mannes geslechte,
Vele luthen habin den gloibin
god schicke ez wedir zcu rechte.
(Rsp., 2157-60)

I.v.d. Lühe and Röcke establish a progression in Berthold's 2nd sermon away from the ethical, religious code towards a more socially orientated sense of duty, and conclude:

Nicht mehr individuelle Ethik und - im Falle der Verfehlung - eine mystifizierende Höllenstrafe determinieren menschliches Verhalten, sondern allgemeine gesellschaftliche Verantwortung, deren Allgemeinheit erst durch die Ausweitung des Arbeitskonzepts und der Arbeitsteilung begründet wird.⁷⁵

Nevertheless, while social implications can be discerned both in Berthold's and in Rothe's work, the basis of their respective codes must be sought in their ethical strivings for brotherhood and in their religious faith, rather than purely in what would be extraordinary social foresight. Both authors present an inextricable combination of social, didactic, religious and ethical aims. In the light of the modern, socially conscious approach to the literature of feudal times, it is fashionable to lay most emphasis on the social consciousness of the author and to gloss over the fact that the religious and ethical convictions of a writer like Rothe are equally important in an assessment of his social code. It must therefore be emphasised that Rothe's social programme based on nutz and gemeyn nutz would be unthinkable without the background of his theocentrically-orientated religious world view. On the other hand, it would be equally misleading to claim that Rothe's religious leanings make him naive in his attempt at a socially acceptable ethical code. It is important to recognise that the religious and the social aspects of his teaching are two interrelating and wholly compatible elements of his didactic code.

This interrelationship had already been evident in Berthold's preaching. Röcke and v.d. Lühe conclude that for Berthold the main criterion in the purpose of one's

God-willed activity is its "Nutzen für den Einzelnen und - unter Voraussetzung wechselseitiger Verpflichtung der einzelnen Ämter - für die anderen Stände, die auf die nützliche Tätigkeit jener angewiesen sind".⁷⁶ In the biblical parable of the talents in his second sermon, Berthold judges according to the usefulness attained:

Swër alsô guot unnützelîchen anleget, dem wirt gebresten an der sorcsamen reitunge des vierden pfundes. Habet ir ez aber nützelîchen angeleit, sô sît ir an dem einen teile ledic.⁷⁷

The criterion of usefulness, then, and the recommendation to work for one's living in one's God-given social position for the good of the society of which the individual is part were already a feature of Berthold's religious ethical code. The parallels to Rothe's concepts of nutz and gemeyn nutz are apparent, although obviously the material and the treatment of it differ considerably.

Two other writers cited already in the context of Rothe's treatment of the fluctuation in the social system of rank, Konrad von Würzburg and Wernher der Gartenaere, again afford interesting material for comparison in the question of the appropriateness of working for one's living. Konrad von Würzburg's Heinrich von Kempten, for example, is rewarded for saving his Emperor's life by a substantial sum of money⁷⁸ as well as the reinstatement in the position of favour he lost by his behaviour which represented a breach of the Hoffrieden laws. H. Fischer and P.-G. Völker claim that Konrad, himself a member of the lower nobility, and writing under noble patronage, is trying to gain acceptance for the life-style of the soldier-knight.⁷⁹ They maintain that Konrad, by disclosing the amount of the reward, hopes to demonstrate, as a counter to the rival attraction of the bourgeois way of life, that the occupation of soldier is as lucrative and justifiable as any other. They conclude:

Es scheint, als könne der Erzähler vorbildlich-ritterliches Verhalten dem Publikum nicht anders mit Erfolg empfehlen, als daß er das Eintreten für die gemeinsamen feudalen Interessen dem Einzelnen zum ganz besonderen Vorteil ausschlagen läßt.⁸⁰

This theory must be treated with care; it seems to miss the point of the cleverly-told tale of the complex relationships between the partners of the feudal pact, and above all lays a disproportionate amount of emphasis on a very minor detail if it is to be accorded such importance. It should not, however, be completely discounted, especially since Fischer and Völker were able to detect that the mention of the large reward and the epilogue in which Konrad laments that "manheit unde ritterschaft" (748) have become rare qualities, are connected by Dar umbe (v.744) and by continuation of the rhyme sequence (Reimverklammerung).⁸¹ Both the dar umbe and the rhyme, however, could be claimed with at least as much justification to link the epilogue to the antecedent ruom (v.742) which is mentioned after the reward and the consequent prosperity, thus completely reversing Fischer and Völker's theory. While the theory in itself may not find acceptance, however, the mention of the reward must be seen at least as an interesting detail which adumbrates that the feudal relationship is no longer practised purely on the basis of treue⁸² and that financial reward is a possibility to be considered.

The above quotation from Fischer and Völker contains significant parallels to Rothe's social code; "das Eintreten für die gemeinsamen feudalen Interessen" could be seen as the equivalent of gemeyn nutz, while "dem Einzelnen --- besonderen Vorteil" is similar to Rothe's nutz which, as discussed above, usually implies a reward such as a good reputation or a place in heaven. It is, however, significant to note that even Rothe sometimes clothes such immaterial rewards in terms which are equally

at home in the world of finance: for example, the Christian soldier has "sin lebin wol angelegit" (Rsp., 2329) and God "belonit" such actions (Rsp., 1654). Although such terms are by no means to be understood as financial payment, they at least indicate that Rothe is at pains to show that the work which one does for gemeyn nutz has an equivalent value in the form of a reward, and that it will not be in vain.

In the case of Wernher der Gartenaere's Meier Helmbrecht, young Helmbrecht heaps scorn on the work his father does:

mir sulen ouch dîne secke
nimmer rîten den kragen.
ich sol ouch dir ûf dînen wagen
nimmer mist gevazzen.
sô solt mich got gehazzen,
wenne ich dir ohsen waete
und dînen habern saete.
(Helmbrecht, 264-70)

Nevertheless, Meier Helmbrecht is portrayed not as a poor wretch, but as a respected and prosperous farmer whose family lacks nothing. Young Helmbrecht, however, at the outset of his adventures enters into the service of a nobleman who can neither afford to pay him for his services nor provide him with his horse and arms - which are, paradoxically enough, supplied by the socially subordinate Meier. His life as a "knight" is, as his father had already warned him (e.g. vv.244-6), not without hazards and hardship. In order to gather the fare for Gotelint's and Lemberslint's wedding, for example, they spend from morning till night robbing:

waz si trunken und âzen
daz wart gesamet wîten.
bî den selben zîten
vil unmüezig si beliben.
(Helmbrecht, 1470-73)

In contrast, one remembers the treatment he enjoyed at the hands of his family on his first visit home; indeed, the author laments:

Unsaelde sî verwâzen
ich bin vil gar erlâzen
sô guoter handelunge
als dâ hêt der junge.
(Helmbrecht, 839-42)

Thus Wernher der Gartenaere shows in the action of his tale and preaches, significantly in the peasant's words, that honest work is not only preferable to dishonest plundering at a moral level, but also from a financial perspective. It is not the prosperity gained in conscientious work which has led to young Helmbrecht's downfall, but the resulting wealth coupled with social arrogance and by what Gotelint recognises too late as girscheit (1596).

The theme of money also plays a key role in Stricker's Pfaffe Amis, which shows the changing social structure from yet another angle. G. Schindele expresses the paradox of this work succinctly:

Um das Geld als vorgestellte Totalität der Waren und damit eines tendentiell schrankenlos zu geniessenden Reichtums in seinen Besitz zu bringen, ist Amis gezwungen, gerade die Werte der Feudalgesellschaft zu destruieren, die zu realisieren und zu erhalten sein höchstes Ziel und seine musterhaft exemplarische Funktion im Rahmen der Erzählung ist.⁸³

The role of work and of money, then, as well as the question of the justifiability of the noble's working for his living, either within his traditonal role (Heinrich von Kempten) or within a new, until then ostracised role within the world of commerce (Pfaffe Amis), were subjects which were not new to Rothe's works. Rothe, nevertheless, has an important contribution to make, especially when one considers the many-sidedness of his approach. As a Churchman, he considers work from the religious point of view (Lob der Keuschheit); as a townsman, he views work distribution from the aspect of municipal inter-relationships and unity (Von der stete empten); as a friend of the nobility he ponders the practical use of certain tasks for the knight (Ritterspiegel); as a lawyer he is careful to remain within the legal boundaries concerning usury

(wucher) and the time-honoured privileges of the nobility.

In his early religious work, Lob der Keuschheit, Rothe, with reference to St. Paul,⁸⁴ utters a principle to which he is to remain faithful throughout his works, namely the worth of practical activity and the condemnation of idleness: (mussiggang, 3179)

der appostel sant Paulus
der redet von der arbeit alsus:
ein itlich sal mit den henden erbeiten
unnd etwas nutzlichs bereiten
wanne her nicht gebetes phlit,
unnd mussig sin zu keiner ziit.

(LdK., 3237-42)

Occurring as it does within a religious work, this opinion is reminiscent of the Franciscan plea to work for one's living as noted above in connection with Berthold von Regensburg's sermons. The Pauline view to which Rothe refers is probably that expressed in I Thessalonians IV, 10-11:

10. Rogamus autem vos, fratres, ut abundetis
magis. 11. et operam detis ut quieti sitis et
ut vestrum negotium agatis et operemini manibus
vestris, sicut praecepimus vobis ...

Significant is Rothe's use of the word nützlich, which does not appear in the biblical version, and which again underlines his pragmatism. It is, of course, the religious aspect which predominates in the picture of work given in the Lob der Keuschheit; work is a helpmate of chastity, while idleness breeds sin. Directly after the Pauline quote, Rothe refers to Isidore in the matter:

Ysidorus spricht: ess sal zu rechte
geboren eyne gotez knechte
addir einer frommen gotiz magit
an underlass unnd ungeklagit
das si etwas tegelicher erbeid
beginne auch in zemelicheid,
uf das der mussiggang icht den mut
brenge in der unkuscheid flut.

(LdK., 3243-50)

Significant in the passage is also the use of the terms for feudal relationships, gotez knechte, gotiz magit.⁸⁵ Despite their being commonplaces in medieval literature, they take on a new significance when they are found along-

side the plea to do tegelicher erbeid. The reward for this work, however, in keeping with God's spiritual overlordship, is a religious one:

god wil sinen heiligen ir arbeit belonen
nach disser zyd mit der ewigen kronen.
(LdK., 3277-8)

Nevertheless, even the religious reward is described within the allegory in material terms, namely a crown which, besides being of considerable material value is also the symbol of rank and influence. The heavenly crown as a reward is, of course, not original to Rothe. In the Rolandslied "eine kunincliche chrone"⁸⁶ is promised, and in Der arme Heinrich "die himelkrône".⁸⁷

In the Lob der Keuschheit Rothe, like Berthold von Regensburg, also establishes work as a religious necessity for salvation:

ess mag nymand zu grossem lone
komen der sines liebes wil schone
unnd nicht grosser erbeid wil thu
nach ander lute halden dar zu,
deme ess geboret von rechte,
unnd vor di gotes diner fechte.
(LdK., 3287-92)

In both the above passages, work and reward or payment are directly connected with each other: arbeit belonen, 3277; grossem lone ... grosser erbeid, 3287-9. As yet, in the Lob der Keuschheit, it is, as mentioned above, a religious, non-material reward.

The discussion of work in the Lob der Keuschheit is, however, by no means lacking in social significance; Rothe introduces direct social criticism in a passage of scornful condemnation of those who seek the prestige while leaving others to do the necessary work:

also den prelaten, fursten unnd heren,
den gar lip ist zu den eren,
aber zu der arbeit ist en swer.
(LdK., 3293-5)

Once again, however, one must be wary of attaching purely social significance to the passage, for the matter is seen - as in Berthold - principally in religious terms. The behaviour described, which constitutes an abuse of social responsibilities, is punished not within the

social system by temporal, secular hardship, but by religious, other-worldly measures such as the loss of the heavenly reward in the afterlife:

dar umme werden si des lones lere
das en god nach dissem leben
gar richlichen wolde geben.
(LdK., 3296-8)

Rothe, the young priest of middle-class origin, questions the lives of "prelatten, fursten unnd heren"; this criticism, however, is not as outspoken as might at first be supposed, since the only conclusions drawn are religious ones which have no direct significance on the social plane. As yet, therefore, it would be misleading to label Rothe's call to work in the Lob der Keuschheit as "bourgeois" in the sense that he was deliberately propagating bourgeois ideals. That the atmosphere of the times in general may have had indirect influence in the matter is, however, probable. In the Lob der Keuschheit we must see Rothe's Arbeitsethos in the light of the Franciscan movement's plea to work for one's living, and in the light of Church teaching in general that work is the best hindrance of sin. In terms of Rothe's own system, those who do not work serve neither gemeyn nutz nor any useful purpose, nor indeed their own personal advantage (nutz). Unnütze gekrute (LdK., 3201-3) is the expression he uses to describe "di lute, di da stetlich mussig gehen".

In the Ratsgedichte Rothe once again stresses the importance of carrying out one's task with diligence (Fleiss - B211; F510,511; F539, F553), and criticises idleness (müßgang - F1273, F1277). In his Von der stete ampten he shows the importance of cooperation and unity (eyntrechtigkeit) in the fulfilling of the various tasks and duties confronting a social entity such as a town. Each individual has a task to accomplish on which the well-being of the others depends and is in turn equally dependent on the work of the others.

The call to work for a living is, of course, of particular socio-historical interest in the maturer Ritterspiegel. Indeed, it is one of the problems at the very core of the work, and one which is introduced already in the introductory dialogue between the author and the impoverished young nobleman. Rothe points out that the nobility is being destroyed by arrogance, and that the young noblemen of his time are unwilling to carry out the tasks which bring the peasant's son prosperity and social upgrading:

Ez duchte uch eyne große schande
soldit ir mistin eynen stal
Eyme herrin in eyne fremmedin lande;
mit demud kommit man in den sal.
Ir meynit daz nymant gud gnug si
und uwir arme dinstis wert.
Dez geburis son machit sich henbi,
darumme werdit em wez her gert.
(Rsp., 49-56)

This general statement is followed by the biblical examples of Jacob and Joseph.⁸⁸ Significant within the whole passage is the use of the feudal term dinst, (vv.8,42,48,54,58,64,71)⁸⁹ The verbs chosen express that in both cases the success had been earned, for the author mentions that Jacob "irwarb vel gutis", while Joseph "vordine de z landis formundeschaft". Rothe ends the passage on a general note:

solche ere had dinst und werdige craft. (Rsp., 64)
Thus Rothe shows his knightly readers, significantly enough in a biblical framework, that dinst brings not only standing, but also material reward with it. What the author means by dinst is not exactly described; in the majority of cases, he mentions it in connection with a great lord. The examples given are the cleaning out of a stall and arme dinstis, probably armed combat, so that Rothe seems to be using the term as the feudal concept of service, either in the form of domestic or agricultural chores, or as armed combat for one's feudal lord. The result of this dinst, however, both in the case of the peasant's son and in the biblical examples, is a material reward. As has

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been argued for Heinrich von Kempten,⁹⁰ one could put forward the view that Rothe is here at pains to show that even within the bounds of the feudal system there is still a place for the lower nobility if they are willing to work.

The word arbeit is also to be found in the Ritter-spiegel, especially towards the end of the work in the passages centred around quotations from Peter of Blois and Vegetius. Rothe combines his praise of arbeit with criticism of mussiggang; he quotes Peter of Blois:

Petrus Perle also spricht:
keyn betruplichir ding man sehit
An eyne ritter, dez sit bericht,
danne daz her stetlichin mußig gehit;
Darmede her der gudin gewonheit
siner ritterschaft gar vorgiBit
Und kommit danne in vordroßinheit
di eme di ritterschaft frißit
Und machit eme ouch sinen mud
unlustig und unfletig,
Daz her danne nichts nutzlichis tud
und werdit gar unretig.
(Rsp., 3245-56)

The erbeid of which the author speaks is almost exclusively work of the kind required in a military campaign and resulting in severe bodily discomfort (3295, 3302, 3425 - the peasant is accustomed to hartir erbeid, 3434, 3476, 3601, 3770)⁹¹. It is, however, significant that the reward for this work is several times mentioned in terms of material payment. Rothe grudges, for example, the payment from the court coffers for knights who do not earn it worthily:

Waz ist der tregir ritter nutzce
der ungeubit erbeitit ungerne?
Her kan wedir lant noch lute geschutzce,
her wel ouch keynerlei gutis lerne;
Vorlorn zcu grunde ist der solt
den man eme von hofe gebit.
(Rsp., 3545-50)

Rothe includes another surprisingly pragmatic piece of advice, again based on Vegetius; a leader should not overtax his soldiers or pay them poorly. If they are not

overburdened with work and have a good salary, they will constitute a more willing and efficient working force, he comments:

Wo der lute erbeid ist groz
und di wappin swere zcu tragin,
Der geniez cleyn und dankis bloz,
di zcucht herte und wol zcu clagin,
Do werdit von daz heer gar cleyne
wanne dit di lenge also werit;
Di eynunge vorget ouch reyne
wan man dez fredis nicht begerit.
Vel liebier hulffin si darzcu
wo di erbeit cleyne were
Und wo man en gutlichin wolde thu
und en den solt ouch mere.
(Rsp., 3601-12)

This plea for better, fairer treatment of the soldiers could be seen as a startling social comment. On the one hand there is the concern for the soldiers, but on the other hand there is also the pragmatic consideration of the advantage of the masters. The same idea, albeit without reference to Vegetius, is also found earlier in the Ritterspiegel.

Und danne zcu hulffe neme god
und frome ritter und knechte.
Den selbin sal her gutlichin thu
mit lihin und ouch mit gebin
Daz sy gerne rithin darzcu
und wagin bi eme er lebin.
(Rsp., 2231-6)

Similar advice is given for dealings with the members of one's household (Rsp., 1377-80) and for the proper treatment of one's squire:

Du salt en in keyner wise betrigen
hastu dinen nutz an eme gesen ...
(Rsp., 1577-8)

Reward for work is once more assured by Rothe in a passage in which he - again with reference to Vegetius - informs the fromir ritter (3739) that their discomfort and suffering will not go unrewarded:

Ab en darnach di ere enstehit
vor andir borgere und gebuer,
Ummesuz daz werlichin nicht geschehit
wan er wage ist groz und werdit en suer.
(Rsp., 3753-6)

Work and reward, then, are seen by Rothe to be directly dependent on each other; the reward, described in early works such as the Lob der Keuschheit in terms of non-material reward in the afterlife, is mentioned in the Ritterspiegel in specifically material terms, such as the payment of one's soldiers. Thus, seen in this light, the call to the nobility in the Ritterspiegel to work for a living takes on a new significance. Rothe realises that a life within the bounds of feudal service is not possible for the whole of the nobility, especially since the great feudal lords are becoming increasingly impoverished in the face of the new economic structure for fourteenth and fifteenth century German society. The existence of a rich and respected section of the middle classes who worked hard for a living, but enjoyed in return comfort, prosperity and social standing, allowed Rothe to put forward plausibly the recommendation that impecunious nobles also attempt to earn a socially acceptable living by engaging in similar pursuits. His suggestions as to specific activities are styled by the life of the bourgeois elite in the towns. Nevertheless, the basic ethical code is one which reaches back far beyond bourgeois morals, as has been demonstrated by Rothe's view of work in his Lob der Keuschheit. The plea to work for one's living was basically religious in Rothe's code; as in the case of Berthold, however, the social and historical developments of the times turned this religious code into something more - a socially-orientated tenor was added to the basic religious significance. The major influences are threefold. Firstly, the new money-based economy and the slackening of the usury laws gave commerce a new importance. It was only with the rise of a solid merchant class and the increase in the volume of trade in the previous century and the proportional increase in respectability that Rothe, a Churchman, could dare to suggest to the lower nobility that they might take up trading, this occupation so long con-

demned by the Church as usury, to improve their financial position. Secondly, the bourgeoisie had proved that working for one's living need by no means be accompanied by social disgrace. Indeed, their activities within the town community nurtured a social and political consciousness which ensured them influence and prestige in the new balance of society which was emerging. Thirdly, the state of the nobility, who both as landowners and as knights had lost their key functions and were becoming increasingly impecunious or degenerate made the code of working for one's living both necessary and acceptable.

Thus it is above all in the Ritterspiegel that Rothe develops the religious code of work of the Lob der Keuschheit and the ethical code of "fair play" of the Ratsgedichte into a specifically socially-orientated moral code which derived from the economic-historical pattern of his times. The emphasis within the Ritterspiegel is still basically an ethical one, as was seen above in connection with social developments within the Heerschild, but to regard the call to the nobility to take part in trade negotiations and in the upkeep of their property as purely a plea not to turn to the Raubrittertum of their fellows would be ingenuous; bourgeois ethics, and above all the flow of social change had convinced Rothe of the advantages of working for one's living in the field of commerce if the need arose. The bourgeois elements which were alive around him had helped to shape his argument, and had helped to develop a basic, religious and ethical code of behaviour into one which took account of the social necessities of the times.

1. See for example Bautier, Economic Development. Also D. Hay, Europe in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries (London, 1966), p.198f.
2. K. Bosl, "Gesellschaftsentwicklung 900-1350" in: Handbuch der Deutschen Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte, edd. H. Aubin and W. Zorn (Stuttgart, 1971), I, 230. See also Bloch, Feudal Society II, 443-6.
3. Bosl, "Gesellschaftsentwicklung", p.230.
4. Borst, Lebensformen, pp.431-422: "Bauern und Bürger", see especially p.357.
5. Bloch, Feudal Society, II, 445.
6. H. Rößler, Deutsche Geschichte: Schicksale des Volkes in Europas Mitte (Gütersloh, 1961), p.173.
7. See Hay, Europe, pp.76f.
8. R. Sprandel, "Sozialgeschichte 1350-1500" in Aubin and Zorn, Handbuch, I, 375f.
9. See for example Pirenne, Economic and Social History, p.52, also Lyon, Middle Ages, p.57 and Borst, Lebensformen, pp.339-401, 408-9.
10. Bosl, "Gesellschaftsentwicklung", p.263. Underlining by present author.
11. Ibid., p.264.
12. Neumann, Ritterspiegel, p.XI.
13. The concept of aventure is best known as one of the poles of behaviour striven after by the knights of the courtly epic. Hartmann von Aue gives a definition of the term in the witty scene in Iwein where the peasant asks the knight what aventure is:
dô sprach der ungehiure
'âventure? was ist daz?'
'daz wil ich dir bescheiden baz.
nû sich wie ich gewâfent bin:
ich heize ein riter und hân den sin
daz ich suochende rîte
einen man der mit mir strîte,
der gewâfent sî als ich.
daz prîset in, und sleht er mich:
gesige aber ich im an,
sô hât man mich vûr einen man,
und wurde werder danne ich sî.
(Iwein, 526-37).
14. Burger, Renaissance, Humanismus, Reformation, p.60.
15. See for example Auerbach's studies of the Chanson de Roland and Yvain in his Mimesis, Chapters V and VI. On the Chanson de Roland, Auerbach writes:
Daß dabei nur ein sehr kleiner, überaus enger, von der Formelhaftigkeit der Ordnungen umschnürten Teil des Wirklichen zur Anschauung kommen kann, ist einleuchtend (p.114).

16. See L. Jillings, "Ordeal by Combat and the Rejection of Chivalry in Diu Crône", Speculum 51(1976), 262-276.
17. A commonplace also in courtly texts. Clerics, widows and orphans were also protected by law - they were fehdeunfähig. For further details see Otto Brunner, Land und Herrschaft: Grundfragen der territorialen Verfassungsgeschichte Österreichs im Mittelalter (Darmstadt, 1973). In pp.1-110 Brunner discusses "Friede und Fehde".
18. The concept of God as "ein rehtir rihtaere" is well-known. See for example Vom Recht in: A. Waag, Kleinere altdeutsche Gedichte des 11. und 12. Jahrhunderts (1916), rev. ed. W. Schröder (Tübingen, 1972) p.70f. Recht or reht is a complex concept in the Middle Ages for it combines the notions of "rights" and "duties". An example of the latter use is Thomasin's definition of riters reht quoted above. On the meaning of reht see H. Eggers, Deutsche Sprachgeschichte (Reinbek, 1965) II,85. Eggers defines reht as "die Antwort der Kreatur auf Gottes Willen". Rothe's use of the term - particularly in the concept of rehte sache - seems also to include the notion of conforming to God's will in one's actions.
19. As also found, for example, in the Rolandslied, 3062, 3061, 3444, 4586, 8613. For biblical references see also Backes, Bibel und 'ars praedicandi'.
20. See Burger, Renaissance, Humanismus, Reformation, pp.40f., and 54.
21. Curtius, Europäische Literatur, pp.183-4.
22. For example Rolandslied, vv.96,220-1, 3124, 3888, 6205.
23. For example Nicolaus von Jeroschin's Krônike von Prûzinlant:
 ô sûzir got, nim in gemerc,
 waz er den vîndin dîn gevêrc
 hât getân pînlicher werc,
 und breng in ûf der wunnen berc.
 mit dînen kempfin in dâ birc
 in des himelrîchis zirc
 bî der engele gespirc,
 des sîn sêle î was girc.
 (Ch.44, vv.64-71, MS.s.171b).
In the anonymous work Gesta Francorum et Aliorum Hierosolymitanorum, the crusaders are promised a place on the right hand of God. See Lyon, Middle Ages, p.121.
24. For example Chronik (L), Ch.314: Steiget frolichen,
 wen got wil uch umbe uwir arbeit das ewige leben
 geben. Ch.316: glewbe gewisslichen, das dis gescheffte
 von gote komen ist, der vil cristen geheischet hat zu
 der martir, das sie von om ewiglichen gekronet werden.
25. See Cohn, Millennium, pp.61-2.

26. See Walter Ullmann, Individuum und Gesellschaft im Mittelalter, tr. Ruprecht Paqué (Göttingen, 1974), p.33.
27. 1 Corinthians XII, 4ff.; Ephesians I, 23; Romans XII, 5. See Ullmann, Individuum, p.34.
28. See Wilhelm Berges, Die Fürstenspiegel des hohen und späten Mittelalters (Stuttgart, 1938). Berges treats, for example, works by John of Salisbury, Gilbert of Tournai, Thomas Aquinas, Juan Manuel, Philip of Leiden.
29. PL LXXXIII, 862.
30. PL LXXXIII, 721a.
31. Ullmann, Individuum, p.30.
32. Ibid., loc. sit.
33. See Wolf, Ratsgedichte, p.32.
34. Des Landgrafen Ludwig des frommen von Thüringen Kreuzfahrt, ed. v.d. Hagen (Leipzig, 1854), v.16.27.
35. Nürnberger Polizeiornungen aus dem 13.-15. Jahrhundert, ed. Josef Baader (Stuttgart, 1861), p.95.
36. E. Holzapfel, Werner Rolevincks Bauernspiegel (Basel, Freiburg, Vienna, 1959).
37. Ibid., p.79
38. Ibid., loc. sit.
39. See L. Sandrock, Das Herrscherideal in der erzählenden Dichtung des deutschen Mittelalters (Emsdetten, 1931), p.3.
40. E.g. Ritterspiegel, vv.389, 1089, 1201, 1277, 2081, 2290, 2921, 3085, 3901; Ratsg., F931.
41. PL LXXXII, 126.
42. PL CXLI, 229.
43. See Heinrich Mitteis, Lehnrecht und Staatsgewalt: Untersuchungen zur mittelalterlichen Verfassungsgeschichte (Darmstadt, 1958), p.313f.
44. See Sowinski, Lehrhafte Dichtung, pp.80 and 86.
45. Curtius, Europäische Literatur, p.515. Within the excursus, "Das Ritterliche Tugendsystem", Curtius discusses the questionable authorship and the influence of William of Conches's Moralium dogma philosophorum.
46. See Curtius, Europäische Literatur, pp.512f. and Notes.
47. The main meaning of the MHG. from is "tüchtig, nützlich" (Lexer); from here it extends its semantic boundaries to include "gottgefällig" and hence to the modern meaning of fromm = pious.

48. frevel: Gewalttätigkeit, Übermut, Vergehen (Lexer).
49. See references in Chapter 5 above.
50. The theme that man does not have qualities per se but from God and that it is consequently a sin to attribute one's good deeds or qualities to oneself is treated not only in Job, but also in Hartmann von Aue's Armer Heinrich. On this subject see Günther Datz, Die Gestalt Hiobs in der kirchlichen Exegese und der 'Arme Heinrich' Hartmanns von Aue (Göppingen, 1973).
51. Within the feudal pact, treue (loyalty) was the all-important and complex concept on which relationships between lord and vassal depended. Fulbert of Chartres's treatment of the subject remained influential for centuries, and Hincmar of Reims wrote a Deliberatio on loyalty (PL CXXV, 1125).
52. E.g. Gen. XXV, 32; XXXVII, 26; Job XXI, 15; Psalms XXX, 9; Eccl. I, 3; III, 9; V, 16. See also James II, 14-16 where the use is similar to that in Rothe's works: Quid proderit, fratres mei, si fidem quis dicat se habere, opera autem non habeat? Nunquid poterit fides salvare eum? Si autem frater et soror nudi sint et indigeant victu cotidiano, dicat autem aliquis ex vobis illis: Ite in pace, calefacimini et saturamini; non dederitis autem eis quae necessaria sunt corpori, quid proderit?
53. E.g. Rsp., 241-2, 1469-70, 3545-6; LdK., 2357-8.
54. This recommendation is almost certainly due to the influence of Petrus Alfonsi.
55. See Curtius, Europäische Literatur, pp.46-52.
56. See Petersen, Rittertum, p.152, also Curtius, Europäische Literatur, p.499.
57. Alfonsi's equivalents are 7 artes, 7 probitates, 7 industriæ. These amount to perfecta nobilitas.
58. Ratsg. B.369-89. Qualities such as ersam, clug, vorbedechtig, warhafftig, getraw, eintrechtig, bescheiden and frome are requested.
59. Rothe's view of woman's role in society was by no means shared by all his contemporaries. Since the treatment of the subject in the O.F. Roman de la Rose, the so-called Querelle des Femmes had been upheld by extreme views on both sides. Monastically oriented works tended to portray woman as the temptress. See K. Bücher, Die Frauenfrage im Mittelalter, 2nd. ed. (Tübingen, 1910).
60. Karl Bosl, "Gesellschaftsprozeß und Gesellschaftsstrukturen im Mittelalter" in: Karl Bosl and Eberhard Weis, Die Gesellschaft in Deutschland (Munich, 1976) I, 84.

61. Ibid., loc. cit.
62. Karl Bosl, Die Grundlagen der modernen Gesellschaft im Mittelalter (Stuttgart, 1972), p.356.
63. See Irmela von der Lüche and Werner Röcke, "Ständekritische Predigt des Spätmittelalters am Beispiel Bertholds von Regensburg" in: Literatur im Feudalismus, ed. D. Richter, p.64.
64. S. Hagenauer, Das "justum pretium" bei Thomas von Aquino (Stuttgart, 1931), p.56. Cited by v.d. Lüche and Röcke, "Predigt", p.66.
65. See v.d. Lüche and Röcke, "Predigt", p.66.
66. E. Troeltsch, Die Soziallehren der christlichen Kirchen und Gruppen in his Gesammelte Schriften (Tübingen, 1923) I, 312. Cited by v.d. Lüche and Röcke, "Predigt", p.64.
67. See Dieter Richter's evaluation of the "Etikett bürgerlich" as used by critics such as Stammeler, Naumann, Schneider, Schlegel et al. in "Ritterliche Dichtung" in: Literatur im Feudalismus, ed. D. Richter, pp.27f.
68. H. Rupprich, "Das ausgehende Mittelalter", p.298.
69. Burger, Renaissance, Humanismus, Reformation, p.62.
70. See v.d. Lüche and Röcke, "Predigt", p.48.
71. Ibid., p.42.
- 72.-77. See v.d. Lüche and Röcke, "Predigt", pp.53-59.
78. Konrad tells his audience: ein gelt gab er im unde lêch/daz jâres galt zweihundert marc. (Heinrich von Kempten, vv.738-9).
79. Fischer and Völker, "Konrad von Würzburg" in: Literatur im Feudalismus, ed. Richter, pp.88-130.
80. Ibid., p.111.
81. Ibid., p.112. On the Reimverklammerung see also the Epilogue by H. Röllecke to Konrad von Würzburg, Heinrich von Kempten, Der Welt Lohn, Das Herzmaere, ed. E. Schröder (Stuttgart, 1976), p.154.
82. From the point of view of treue (loyalty), Konrad's Heinrich von Kempten offers another interesting detail: a conflict of loyalty and duty. By obeying his direct overlord's order to join in the campaign, Heinrich disobeys the ban of his ultimate overlord, the Emperor Otto. Mitteis discusses such a conflict in theoretical terms: "Es kann ein Pflichtenkonflikt eintreten, der den Mann von seiner Treuwahrung entbindet, oder - besser ausgedrückt - den Mann verpflichtet, im Namen der richtig verstandenen Treue einen Befehl des Herrn unbefolgt zu lassen, der eine Rechtswidrigkeit in sich enthält." Mitteis, Lehnrecht, p.546.

83. G. Schindele, "Helmbrecht" in Literatur im Feudalismus, ed. Richter, p. 182
84. See also Ephesians IV, 28: Qui furabantur iam non furetur, magis autem laboret operando manibus suis quod bonum est, ut habeat unde tribuat necessitatem patienti.
85. Cf. the use of the term knecht in the Rsp., 1401ff. Einen fromen knecht der ritter habe (1401) Also eme geborit noch siner gebort (1405).
86. Rolandslied, v.103.
87. Hartmann von Aue, Der arme Heinrich, ed. Friedrich Maurer, 2nd. ed. (Berlin, 1968), v.1168.
88. Jacob and Joseph are chosen, obviously, as examples of individuals who overcame adversity by their own efforts and by loyalty and service.
89. The primary meaning of dinst is "knecht sein". See Friedrich Kluge, Etymologisches Wörterbuch der Deutschen Sprache, 20th ed., rev. W. Mitzka (Berlin, 1967). See Backes, Bibel und 'ars prae-dicandi', p.131 for examples of dinst in the Rolandslied: 94, 1076, 1676, 2258, 3063. The term took on a new, loaded meaning in the Minnesang, namely as Minnedienst. Rothe uses the term to mean "self-sacrificing service of another".
90. See above the references to Fischer and Völker, "Konrad von Würzburg".
91. The primary meaning of arbeit is "Mühsal". The emphasis is on physical discomfort and the arduous nature of the task. This use of the word is well-known from the first lines of the Nibelungenlied:
Uns ist in alten maeren wonders vil geseit
von helden lobebaeren, von grôzer arebeit.
The fact that Rothe often mentions some kind of reward for arbeit, albeit often of a non-material nature, suggests that the term may already be in the process of widening its meaning from purely Mühsal towards its modern meaning of "work" rather than "labour".

Appendix:

Instances of "nutz" "gemeyn nutz" "fromen"

Lob der Keuschheit:

- 370 - unnutze reden
- 392 - ane fromen
- 638 - nütz unnd gut
- 1143 - widder ere nach notz
- 1178 - nützlich)
- 1179 - notze)
- 1802 - was fromet?
- 1897 - nutze unnd gud
- 2061 - sechs nutze
- 2063 - der erste nutz etc.
- 2347 - das ess nutze
- 2351 - was wer en nütze?
- 2632 - ir arbeit wirt aber unn^eütze
- 3028 - vil unn^eützer rede
- 3201 - unn^eütze gekrute
- 3237 - etwas nutzlichs bereiten
- 3413 - wenig nütze
- 4314 - sust bistu nymant nütze
- 4348 - nummer unn^eütze nach bose wort
- 5017 - nutz
- 5021-3 fromen --- nutz
- 5205 - unn^eützlich (words)
- 5217 - unnutze rede
- 5246 - manig unn^eütze geschrey
- 5255 - unn^eütze worte
- 5265 - unn^eützen reden.

Ratsgedichte:

- F10 - frümen mannen
- F60 - nütz
- F86 - czu nütze und eren
- F105 - frome
- F198 - nützen
- B138 - nutz und ere
- B226 - ere, nutz
- B349 - gemeyn nutz

B375 - frome
B382 - gemeyn nutz
F341 - gemeyn nutz
F394 - nütz -- adir ere
F402 - früme
F427 - gemeyn nutz
F547 - nütz, frümen, ere
F625 - Dye lant, lute nicht nützen
B463 - Iren nutz dick beduten
B548 - Die lande ader lute nicht nützen
F679 - früme rethe
F700 - gemeyn nutz
F801 - süchen sinen nütz vnd ere
F863 - früme
F919 - frümen, ere
F926 - Durch keinerleye sinen selbis frümen
F1195 - nucze.

Prologue to Thüringische Chronik (L)

(31) - nutz entstehenn
(49) - Togunt vnde fromickeit

Ritterspiegel:

74 - daz es den ediln werde nutzce ... togunt
142 - fromikeid
241- Was fromit hochfart?
348 - fromer
387 - manche behende und nutzce synne.
415 - frome gebure
429 - toguntsam und fromme
496 - nutz und ere
718 - frome
726 - fromen
999 - nutz gemeyne
1469 - Was fromit eyne sin edil gebort ...
1719 - Was ist nutzce di erbeid ...
1851 - Kommit von sime nutzce snel
2314 - gemeyn nutz

- 2326 - gemeyn nutz
- 2558 - hobisch nutzce und gud
- 2562 - den nutz, di togunt und di ere
- 2589 - buchir .. sere nutzcin
- 2592 - kunnen den nutz nicht betrachtin
- 2711 - nutzce in den crigin
- 3010 - gemeyn nutz
- 3143 - nutz und ere
- 3281 - Unnutzce ist des ritters lebin ...
- 3354 - gemeyn nutz
- 3367 - gemeyn nutz
- 3545 - Waz ist der tregir ritter nutzce
- 3620 - gar nutzce in großin stritin
- 3622 - fromit
- 3884 - wi nutz und frome moge entstehin
- 3888 - noch nutzce mogin gephlegin

In Conclusion: Rothe's Achievements as a
Didactic Writer.

In the introduction Rothe's position as an "Einzelgänger von schwer zu beurteilender Nachwirkung"¹ was mentioned. Having examined his didactic aims and methods as well as his treatment of the social and economic developments of his times, we must now attempt an estimation of his influence. He represents the period of Thuringian history which was cast in the shadow of the more glorious events of Landgraf Hermann's court and the age of Minnesang at the Wartburg. At the other extreme Rothe's period dulls into insignificance when compared to the age of turmoil which was to follow in the wake of his compatriot Luther's history-making influence. Rothe can lay claim neither to startling originality nor to immediate or epoch-making influence with his works. He typifies an age which, conscious of the reproach of Epigonentum, nevertheless makes an impact through steady progress, and which, almost without realising it, provides a new basis on which others can build when the time is ripe. His constant striving to improve the standards both moral and economic of all layers of society is witness to an all-encompassing concern to foster the well-being of the people around him and indeed shows a depth of social consciousness unusual for his time. To dismiss Rothe's didactic writings as the works of a mere "do-gooder" would be a grave injustice. His influence inside Thuringia must be judged considerable and his significance for the town of Eisenach without parallel. Patze judges him "die bedeutendste geistige Persönlichkeit in Eisenach ... an der Wende zum 15. Jahrhundert"². In the course of his activity as town clerk of Eisenach he furthered a policy of unity and social improvement. With his Ratsgedichte he provided

Eisenach with a guiding line for municipal administration based on moral integrity and consciousness of a social duty. His emphasis on the importance of unity and the sacrifice of the individual for the sake of the bonum commune (gemeyn nutz) led to an inner stability in the structure of the town which was not to be equalled for several generations afterwards. Patze comments: "Nach dem Tod des für das Rechtleben der Stadt förderlichen Johannes Rothe scheinen wirtschaftliche Kraft und innere Stabilität der Stadt (Eisenach) zurückgegangen zu sein."³ In this respect Rothe's legal works were of the utmost significance. His Eisenacher Rechtsbuch represents a synthesis of the major legal works of his times, and without this work as its legal basis, it is improbable that Eisenach would have achieved its status as Oberhof, a position which lent the town considerable influence and prestige. This in turn meant advantage of both political and economic nature over other towns of similar size and potential. It is important, however, to avoid awakening the impression that Rothe's legal works were of only local significance. Medieval legal tradition was such that it was impossible for newly composed laws to find acceptance, so that original thought in this field was no asset. Rothe's function as compiler and the resulting synthesis of hitherto accepted laws represent a significant contribution to German law. Patze rightly points out the many-sidedness of this contribution:

Dieses Rechtsbuch ist ein sinnfälliges Abbild der Kräfte, aus denen das Zeitalter lebte: Deutschtum, Antike und Christentum, sein Verfasser ein Beispiel für die Repräsentanten dieser Epoche, halb Geistlicher, halb Bürger, aufgewachsen in der Frömmigkeit des Mittelalters, aber von den Ursprüngen der Reform um eine Strecke getrennt, schon einer neuen Welt verbunden.⁴

This suggestion of a new world is most readily appreciable in the Ritterspiegel, which must be seen as a valuable document of social and economic conditions in

Rothe's day. The new world portrayed is that of the growing towns with their acceptance of cash economy, of trade and of work force. Rothe shows more than a tentative approval of this new world in his suggestions for the alleviation of the increasing poverty of the landowning nobility. As discussed above, his suggestion that the nobility could profitably play a role in the until then much ostracised world of commerce must be considered a daring step, the more so since Rothe, as a priest, was bound to accept the wucher-laws of the Church. The approval of "work" as a means of gaining one's livelihood or, in the case of the nobility, as an honourable way of reaching a level of subsistence becoming to their status is also a pointer to Rothe's acceptance of the standards of the new world and of the changing social structure which went with it. Rothe's Ritterspiegel contains enough of the traditional code of Christian chivalry and behaviour to find acceptance as a guide for the contemporary nobility. At the same time, however, the author introduces daring new concepts which must have exercised considerable influence. The influence in this case is of a social nature - namely a plea to the nobility of the times to adapt their life-style to the changing social pattern and to accept the new system of cash economy based on work-force.

The influence of Rothe's chronicles is, obviously, of a completely different nature. They have proved valuable sources for local Thuringian history and provide interesting details for the folklorist or medieval economic historian. Above all they testify to Rothe's theocentrically orientated world view and supply examples of the medieval chronicler's view of history as discussed above. Rothe's Thüringische Chronik L provided a source for several later chroniclers, such as Adam Ursinus who used it as a basis for his own work of the same name which was completed in 1547.⁵

The influence of Rothe's religiously orientated works, the Lob der Keuschheit and the Liber devotae animae,

is more difficult to assess. It is probable that they were used in monastery and convent schools as edifying texts and examples of fitting behaviour. His legends, too, the Passion and the Elisabethlegende, may have been read in convents or Church schools such as the one at the Marienstift of which Rothe was schoolmaster until his death in 1434. They also may have served as sources for later legends on the same theme, but there are so many versions of both that the question of sources is usually a complex matter.

An estimation of Rothe's achievements and influence as a didactic writer must take account of the unusually wide scope of his works and the many-sidedness of his approach. It must also take into consideration his social standing as priest, school-teacher, chronicler and town-clerk, positions which assured him of the necessary prestige to exercise influence with his works. Besides, his wide knowledge of classical and patrological sources provided him with the basic material to assure his writing of acceptance as serious works of didactic literature. His friendship with nobles such as Bruno von Teutleben and his good relationship with the ruling Landgrafen were no doubt also of advantage for the reception of his works. Rothe's immediate influence inside Thuringia is not to be underestimated; his legal works were the basis for the Thuringian law of his day; his influence in the town council of Eisenach, backed by his scholarly Ratsgedichte, was such that the town suffered a period of recession after his death. His religious works were almost certainly read in convents throughout Thuringia and already point to abuses such as simony and extravagance among clerics, which were later to become burning issues in the arguments of the Reformers. His Ritterspiegel paves the way for a more general acceptance of fluctuation in the social pattern, of commercial activity and of the right to work for one's living.

Outside Thuringia it is more difficult to assess Rothe's influence. Obviously, the limits drawn by local boundaries within the German territory of the fifteenth century were much more restricting than in modern times. It is, however, probable, that Rothe's legal works and the advice given in his Ratsgedichte were emulated in towns of a nature similar to Eisenach. The issues discussed in the Ritterspiegel - such as the superiority of nobility of soul over nobility of birth, and the integration of the impoverished nobles into the new social system based on cash economy and work force - were of such contemporary significance that they no doubt found an echo in similar didactic works and sermons of the times. Finally, the interest in Rothe's writing, which has continued without significant interruption down to the present day, is a pointer to the value of the works in themselves - as literary documents of an era which ushered in the new life-style of the towns while clinging still to the old values of medieval chivalry and the basic principles of pre-Reformation Christianity.

1. See p.2. above.
2. Patze and Schlesinger, Geschichte Thüringens, II, i, 346.
3. Ibid., II, i, 342.
4. Ibid., I, 14.
5. Ibid., I, 16.

B I B L I O G R A P H Y

A. PRIMARY LITERATURE

1. The Works of Johannes Rothe.
2. Other Primary Texts.

B. SECONDARY LITERATURE

1. Studies on Johannes Rothe
2. Literary and Linguistic Studies.
3. Linguistic Reference Works.
4. Historical and Theological Reference Works.
5. History, Historiography, Social and Economic History.

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