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I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Karen Jill Simpson entitled "The Functions of Non-Christian Symbols and Characters in the Novellas of Conrad Ferdinand Meyer." I have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in German.

Carolyn R. Hodges
Carolyn Hodges, Major Professor

We have read this thesis
and recommend its acceptance:

Dora C. Adams
Nanette

Accepted for the Council:

Lawrence Mink
Vice Provost
and Dean of the Graduate School

THE FUNCTIONS OF NON-CHRISTIAN SYMBOLS AND
CHARACTERS IN THE NOVELLAS OF CONRAD FERDINAND MEYER

A Thesis

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Karen Jill Simpson
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An meiner Familie

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this thesis is to identify non-Christian symbols and characters in Conrad Ferdinand Meyer's novellas and to interpret their functions in each work. Relatively little criticism has been written on the topic; the majority of the interpretations of the novellas concentrate on classical allusions.

Meyer not only makes ample use of the symbols and figures from classical antiquity, especially from Greek and Roman mythology, but he also employs symbols and characters from a variety of religious traditions, such as Islam, animism, Judaism, and mysticism. In some cases, where he simply alludes to a particular figure or element in order to enhance the language or to create a striking image, they have a minor impact. Two examples are Plautus im Nonnenkloster and Angela Borgia. In others, wherein he combines non-Christian symbols and characters with Christian ones to create a tension within a character or situation, they play a more significant role. Such is the case in Der Heilige or Die Richterin.

The thesis is divided into eight chapters. Chapters 1 through 7 focus on one novella each as follows: Das Amulett; Der Schuß von der Kanzel; Plautus im Nonnenkloster; Die Richterin; Der Heilige; Die Hochzeit des Mönchs; Angela Borgia.

Chapter 8 covers four novellas which contain relatively few non-Christian symbols or characters: Jürg Jenatsch; Gustav Adolfs Page; Das Leiden eines Knaben; Die Versuchung des Pescara.

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INTRODUCTION

Throughout the novellas of Conrad Ferdinand Meyer there is evidence of usage of symbols and characters from religious traditions other than Christianity. In many cases such symbols and characters are adroitly combined with Christian ones. The term "pagan" has been avoided in the discussion of the novellas because of its pejorative connotations. Therefore, the term "non-Christian" shall be used to indicate those which are from any religious tradition other than Christianity. The functions of these non-Christian symbols and characters are varied, ranging from simple metaphorical ornamentation of the language to the creation a dichotomy in the personal philosophy of the character. Meyer himself was a Protestant; however, he was also humanistically educated. It is for this reason that Meyer is so familiar with the art and mythology of ancient Greece and Rome (Laane 99).

Robert Spörri quotes Meyer's sister, Betsy, who comments on Meyer's "Sonnenglaube." Betsy remarks, "Conrad's jugendlicher 'Sonnenglaube', der eigentlich kein Glaube, sondern alles Ernstes seine Jugendphilosophie, sein ursprüngliches Heidentum war, blieb ... der natürliche Untergrund seiner Poesie" (58). His admiration for the sun appears in several poems and it is also recognizable in some novellas. In Die Versuchung des Pescara, for example, Victoria Colonna swears by the sun, and Ascanio and Ezzelin also refer to the powers of

the sun in Die Hochzeit des Mönchs. Sun images are also found in Der Heilige, e.g. Prinzessin Sonne and references to King Henry.

Meyer was also a voracious reader, especially of history, and he incorporated this knowledge of history into the novellas, using his perception of a character or situation rather than historical fact. It is this free adaptation of history along with the non-Christian symbolism which Meyer used to sculpt his novellas, where he often included or eliminated specific elements in order to recreate the characters as he wished.

Relatively little criticism on the topic of non-Christian symbols and characters in Meyer's work has been written. The majority of the interpretations are concentrated on classical allusions. Meyer does indeed make use of numerous references to classical antiquity; however, such usage of non-Christian symbols and characters is not limited to the Greek and Roman mythology. Meyer also employs symbols and characters from religious traditions, such as Islam, animism, Judaism, and mysticism. One of the most in-depth examinations is Marianne Burkhard's book, C.F.Meyer und die antike Mythologie, which, as the title indicates, is a study of the allusions to classical antiquity. Burkhard's focus is primarily on Meyer's poetry; nevertheless, she includes a brief analysis of the allusions in the novellas. Tiit V. Laane has also researched the non-Christian symbols and characters in the novellas in Imagery in Conrad Ferdinand Meyer's Prose Works. Laane does not provide an analysis of the majority of the classical allusions, but she does dedicate an entire chapter to the

Islamic symbolism found in Der Heilige, which is a vital element in Becket's character and is often underestimated. Perhaps one reason that many of the non-Christian symbols and characters are not analyzed by critics is that they are often set in ambiguous circumstances and are therefore not easily interpreted. One might recall, for example, the conversation between the "Steinfrau" and the "Flußgöttin" in Das Amulett. Critics do not agree on the interpretation of this dialogue. Another possible reason for the neglect of certain non-Christian symbols or characters is that some are quite obscure.

The aim of this thesis will be to identify and examine the non-Christian symbols and characters and to interpret the function in each novella. Those novellas containing fewer non-Christian symbols or characters, namely Gustav Adolfs Page, Das Leiden eines Knaben, Die Versuchung des Pescara, and Jürg Jenatsch will be discussed in the final chapter.

CHAPTER 1

DAS AMULETT

Conrad Ferdinand Meyer's first novella Das Amulett appeared in 1873. The amulet referred to in the novella is an indication of superstition and of the non-Christian symbolism which it represents. Amulets were often used in non-Christian religious ceremonies, for it is believed that a magically enchanted ornament can generate powers which protect the worshiper who wears it. Carl Giles and Barbara Ann Williams define the historical function of amulets in Bewitching Jewelry: "Amulets were general protectors, worn by their owners...[they] are usually used as shields to safeguard the wearer from misfortune" (26). Often in non-Christian ceremonies the worshiper would hold the amulet and recite a magic word or phrase, which supposedly incurred some magical protection.

In the case of Meyer's novella the "amulet" is specifically a Catholic, not a non-Christian medallion. One can draw a parallel between the amulet of the non-Christian ceremony and the medallion held during the recitation of 'Hail Marys' because both serve as protective charms. By his choice of title, Meyer focuses attention on this magical object and in the course of the story shows how primitive superstition surrounds its use, and he demythologizes the function of a Catholic medallion or any other religious object which suggests the same type of superstition as that of a non-Christian amulet.

According to W.D. Williams, in The Stories of C.F. Meyer, Meyer's source for the novella is Prosper Mérimée's Chronique du règne de Charles IX, and one theme frequently mentioned by Mérimée is the superstition of the Catholics (28). Early in the novella, the main characters, Boccard and Schadau, disagree about the protective powers of the medallion, "the Virgin Mary of Einsiedeln." Boccard, a devout Catholic, believes in the powers which protect the wearer, and he also recommends that Schadau recite several 'Hail Marys' before he must duel Count Guiche. Schadau, as a devout Calvinist, repudiates Boccard's argument. At the duel, Boccard secretly slips the medallion into the pocket of Schadau's waistcoat, in order to protect his fellow countryman. Schadau feels little fear of the duel; as a pious Calvinist, he believes that his fate is predetermined and no medallion will save him if he is meant to die. Yet it is the medallion which deflects Guiche's sword and Boccard's good intentions which save Schadau's life.

When Schadau discovers this deception, he is angered that he owes his life to an "amulet"; he says disdainfully, "Läge ich doch lieber tot ... als daß ich bösem Aberglauben meine Rettung verdanken muß" (XI 48). Boccard, on the other hand, assumes that the "Virgin Mary of Einsiedeln" has spared Schadau. Schadau detests this superstition which surrounds the medallion, yet it is Boccard's friendship that saves his life. It is here that the non-Christian symbolism is manifest, and Meyer's choice of title is understandable, given the superstition in regard to the ability of a piece of forged

of metal to generate protective powers. Yet Meyer is not preaching the evils of Catholicism, and he refrains from defending either the Catholics or the Protestants. While there are few examples of non-Christian symbolism in the novella, the superstition surrounding the medallion is alluded to in several scenes which are essential to its interpretation. One should recall the definition and function of an amulet, i.e., an object which presumably protects its wearer, and note that in a twist of irony the medallion saves the nonbeliever and fails to protect the believer.

Other non-Christian symbols used by Meyer in the novella are the "Flußgöttin" and the "Steinfrau." At the climax of the novella, Bocard imprisons Schadau in the Louvre during the St. Bartholomew's Night massacre in order to protect him from the bloodbath. Almost driven mad by the thoughts of the perilous situation facing his wife, Gasparde, Schadau experiences a strange dream as he falls into a trance: "Endlich als der Morgen zu grauen begann, verfiel ich in einen Zustand zwischen Wachen und Schlummern, der sich nicht beschreiben läßt" (XI 52). Meyer employs the dream or vision in his later novellas for various purposes, most often to reveal background information to the reader or to prefigure the forthcoming plot. In Das Amulett, the dream is the means by which Schadau experiences spiritual enlightenment. Schadau believes he has seen a river goddess (Flußgöttin) rising up out of the waves of the Seine and leaning on an urn in a pose, exactly like the statue in the Fontainebleau. She speaks with a statue of a woman (Steinfrau), who is upholding the

balcony where the king, the Duke of Anjou, and Catherine de Medici stand awaiting the horrendous massacre. The river goddess asks, "Schwester ... weißt vielleicht du warum sie sich morden?" The statue answers, "Sie morden sich, weil sie nicht einig sind über den richtigen Weg zur Seligkeit. Und ihr kaltes Antlitz verzog sich zum Hohn, als belache sie eine ungeheuere Dummheit" (XI 62-63).

Meyer's motives for including this allegory are unclear. Perhaps Meyer wishes to criticize religious intolerance or perhaps he wishes to illustrate how mankind resists benefiting from the lessons taught by history. Ambiguity is often associated with Meyer's works; it is a stylistic feature which he rarely seeks to elucidate, choosing instead to leave the reader to his/her own conclusions. In "Religiösität ohne Vorurteil," G.H. Hertling interprets the caryatid's reaction as follows:

Dieser wiederum, in ihrer steinernen Zeitlosigkeit, ihrer Körper- und scheinbaren Ausdruckslosigkeit, entfalten die zeitlos-gültigen Worte, die als Meyers persönliches Bekenntnis zum Wahn- und Widersinn religiöser Intoleranz zu verstehen sind: man morde sich, "weil man nicht einig 'sei'," über den richtigen Weg zur Seligkeit. Als symbolisches Wesen ... als steinerne Figur aus der zeitlosen Perspektive historischer Unmittelbarkeit, erkennt sie des Menschen Fanatismus als dessen größte Dummheit, die der Mensch als transitorisches Geschöpf des historischen Prozesses so gern übersieht (535-536).

Here Meyer uses non-Christian symbolism, in the form of non-Christian

figures, to enlighten Schadau, and at the same time the reader, that in matters of religion there is no single, correct solution. It appears that through these examples of deus ex machina Meyer calls for a more liberal attitude in regard to religious tolerance.

The question still remaining is why Meyer chooses to employ these particular non-Christian symbols. In C.F. Meyer und die antike Mythologie, Burkhard quotes Kerényi in the following interpretation of this scene:

Im Bild der Flußnymphe, die für die Antike Ewigkeit besaß, ahnt er die Unerschöpflichkeit des Lebens, das immer neu hervorquillt, wie sehr es auch mit Tod beladen sei. Und in der steinernen Karyatide wird etwas von jener Dauer verkörpert, an der gemessen die so wichtig auftretenden Streitereien der Menschen nichtig, gegenstandslos erscheinen (14).

Meyer does not voice his opinion directly through one of his characters; instead, he creates this allegory. In response to a letter from Felix Dahn, who opposed the inclusion of the conversation between the river goddess and the caryatid, Meyer agreed with his criticism, but later explained in a letter to Anna von Doss on 2 October 1873: "Dahn hat Recht mit der weggewünschten Stelle, aber es war mir ein Bedürfnis meinen persönlichen Abscheu und Ekel auch mit Durchbrechung der Harmonie, in diesem im XVI. Jahrhundert überhaupt unmöglichen Traum auszusprechen" (53-54).

These symbols present a perspective partial to neither Catholicism nor Protestantism. Meyer needs an "objective observer" to

criticize religious intolerance, and he utilizes these non-Christian figures as his vehicle. Perhaps Meyer chose the conversation between the river goddess and the caryatid in order to demonstrate how history repeats itself, for it could refer to the senseless bloodshed during other religious wars. Through these non-Christian symbols Meyer might suggest that history is repetitive and that only earthly elements, such as the river and the stone, are enduring.

In "Historical Consciousness Versus Action in C. F. Meyer's Das Amulett," Dennis McCort views this allegory from a metaphysical standpoint. He interprets Schadau's "Zustand" as a type of "out of body" experience, in which he attains, instead of moral enlightenment, temporary spiritual growth and flexibility:

If, then, we view this scene as Schadau's attainment of metaphysical rather than moral insight, if his epiphany is the realization, not that fanaticism is evil, but that history will take its inevitable course, using human conflict as its vehicle of self-realization, then the caryatid's sarcastic response to her "sister" 's question is a comment on the inability of most mortals in their shrouded consciousness to perceive the true pattern of history rather than a preachment against the moral deficiencies of human character. (120).

It is indeed an interesting viewpoint, yet, as has been noted, Meyer himself states that the purpose of the allegory was an expression of his personal displeasure for religious intolerance.

Das Amulett meets with mixed criticism. Critics such as Paul

Wislicenus and Carl Spitteler received the novella with praise of Meyer's attention to style and detail, while other critics, for example, Robert d'Harcourt and Harry Maync, are more critical of the weaknesses of the novella and comment that it is "sehr trocken, sehr grau, ganz ohne Glanz" (all quoted in Martin 41, 46, 47). After the non-Christian symbols are examined, the need to understand their function and recognize their importance in the novella becomes clear. Meyer's writing style is meticulous and it is clear that his choice of images, words, and symbols is purposefully selected.

CHAPTER 2

DER SCHUß VON DER KANZEL

Meyer's novella Der Schuß von der Kanzel was published in 1877. As was manifest in Das Amulett, the title is of particular significance. Here it is an indicator of an underlying theme: "etwas an den falschen Ort gesetzt." This underlying theme is particularly noteworthy in the examination of the non-Christian symbols and characters in the novella. One of the main characters, General Rudolf Wertmüller, who also has a minor role in Meyer's 1874 novella, Jürg Jenatsch, delights in subtly provoking the conservative inhabitants of the small Swiss town of Mythikon by importing exotic people and things into their society. Due to this, the citizens regard Wertmüller with fear and skepticism. In this novella Meyer uses not only classical allusions but also Oriental references to contribute to the mysterious atmosphere around Wertmüller and his way of life. Examples of this near Eastern influence are: Hassan, Wertmüller's Moorish servant; the painting of the "Türkin"; a brief mention of the book of Arabian fairy tales, 1,001 Arabian Nights, used in relation to this painting.

The citizens of Mythikon look upon any "foreign" element with mistrust and reservation; therefore, they seek to distance themselves from Wertmüller because of his eccentric behavior and attitudes. Wertmüller realizes his position and intends to use the situation to

his advantage in order to realize his plan to unite Pfannenstiel, and his godchild Rahel, as well as his plan to expose his cousin, the pastor, as a proper choice for the army, because of the pastor's intense love of firearms.

In the first encounter with Pfannenstiel, the reader finds him on his way to visit Wertmüller to request a position as army chaplain with Wertmüller's regiment. As the reader later learns, Pfannenstiel is a great enthusiast of the Odyssey; he has even written his dissertation about its symbolism and dedicated it to Wertmüller. He tells Wertmüller that he would like to travel to Greece and tells him of his wish, "die Heimat Homers, die goldene Hellas kennenzulernen" (XI 93). His true intention, however, is to distance himself from Rahel, who has rejected his love for her. Even before the meeting between Wertmüller and Pfannenstiel, Meyer equates Pfannenstiel's surprise at being caught in the forest by Hassan with that of a surprised dryad, a forest goddess in Greek mythology. It seems ironic that the Protestant priest candidate, Pfannenstiel, is compared to a nymph, and Meyer uses this comparison primarily for the humorous contrasts that it provides. Pfannenstiel is the first to make such reference to non-Christian symbols. He attempts to present a scholarly image; unfortunately, his attempt simply does not suit his character. Early in the novella, as he is explaining to Rosenstock the reason for his visit to Wertmüller, he states, "Ich bilde mir ein, Rosenstock, der General werde mich nicht wie eine Lästrygone empfangen. Er ist mein Verwandter, wenn auch in entferntem Grade, und gestern noch habe ich

ihm meine Dissertation über die Symbolik der Odyssee mit einer artigen Widmung zugesendet" (XI 78).

One point mentioned in Pfannenstiel's remark to Rosenstock is his dissertation on the symbolism of the Odyssey, and its dedication to a man whose demeanor and attitudes toward the church are less than reverent. It is later discovered that Pfannenstiel's interpretation of the role of Odysseus is one in which he makes a comparison between Odysseus and Christ. Wertmüller feels that Odysseus represents "mißhandelte Wahrheit" (XII 90). In "Ein Jenatsch in komischer Maske," Gisela Vitt-Maucher points out: "Hier wird also bereits auf dem Wege der von Jenatsch signierten Odyssee Ausgabe die Grundnote der Novella angeschlagen, Wertmüllers Liebe für die Wahrheit" (116). Pfannenstiel's reference to the Lestrigons, who in the Odyssey are a race of giant cannibals in Sicily (Der grosse Brockhaus 1956 ed.), is a pompous remark not at all befitting Pfannenstiel's character.

Burkhard comments:

Die Mythologie ist hier auch Mittel der Komik. Der Unterschied zwischen den beiden Welten entlockt dem Leser ein Lachen, das wie in der Komödie einen wertenden Zug hat. Denn außer dem General ist niemand dieser antiken Welt gewachsen, auch Pfannenstiel nicht (17).

There are several other humorous references which pair Pfannenstiel and non-Christian symbols. While trying to escape the peninsula, he is confronted with a "frog choir," which Burkhard describes as "ein Aristophanes rezitierender Froschchor" (15). This particular scene is

referred to by Lothar Schmidt as a joke between the author and the reader (111). The attempted escape from the Au leaves Pfannenstiel feeling as if he were rising up out of the swamps of the Acheron, the river of the underworld in Greek mythology (Meyer, Sämtliche Werke Band 1 915).

Other characters are either compared to or are themselves non-Christian symbols or characters. Wertmüller once compares Rahel to a nymph, a mythological demigoddess, and Hassan, the Moorish servant, is a non-Christian character. However, their roles are not as significant as that of the painting of the "Türkin." According to Lee B. Jennings in "The Ambiguous Explosion," "The painting actually existed and was seen by Meyer; the historical Werdmüller [sic], however, also kept actual male and female Turkish slaves" (222). In Meyer's choice of the painting of the Turkish woman as a symbol, his selection represents something atypical to Mythikon, as well as to the rest of the Occidental world. Although only a painting of a Turkish woman, its role has two purposes. First, it represents the Oriental and exotic. Second, it also exemplifies the erotic, and it arouses the appropriate feelings in Pfannenstiel. The ferry man tells Pfannenstiel that he has seen the Turkish woman: "Nun ja, der Türkin des Wertmüllers; er hat sie aus dem Morgenlande heimgebracht, wo er für den Venetianer Krieg führte. Ich habe sie schon oft gesehen, ein hübsches Weibsbild mit goldenem Kopfputze und langen offenen Haaren; gewöhnlich wenn ich vorüberfahre, legt sie die Finger an den Mund, als piffe sie einem Mannsvolk ..." (XI 83-84).

As Pfannenstiel first sees the portrait, he describes the image as having "berauschende dunkle Augen und glühende Lippen" (XI 108). The "Türkin" is apparently an extremely foreign element in Mythikon, and its influence is not confined to the conscious level. The influence of the painting on Pfannenstiel, for example, is described as follows: "Es tauchte etwas, ihm bis heute völlig unbekannt Gebliebenes in seiner Seele auf, etwas dem er keinen Namen geben durfte,--eine brennende Sehnsucht, die glückselige Möglichkeit ihrer Erfüllung!" (XI 109). The image of the Turkish woman appears to Pfannenstiel one night in a dream, as partial fantasy and partial reality. The portrait awakens his feelings for Rahel, as the face of the Turkish woman is suddenly transformed into Rahel's. The image of the Turkish woman arouses Pfannenstiel's sexual feelings, which have been suppressed by his strict religious beliefs. He is distraught by this consequence, yet he has the same dream three times in one night. Thus, Pfannenstiel's inner conflict arises: he is attracted to the physical and sensual side of his being, yet this would diametrically oppose his spiritual and intellectual life. His love for Rahel represents the physical nature, while his religious convictions represent the spiritual nature. This bipolarity causes anxiety in Pfannenstiel and severe internal strife.

There is yet another non-Christian symbol presented in the ferry man who takes Pfannenstiel to the Au. Jennings remarks that "there is a hint of an underworld voyage in the boat trip across the uncanny realm: 'Schon warf das schweigsame Eichendunkel seine schwarzen

Abendschatten weit auf die schauernden Gewässer hinaus' (XI 83)" (217). It is indeed as if Pfannenstiel is making a transition from the protected shores of Mythikon to go to the mysterious peninsula of Wertmüller's realm.

The most complex character in the novella is Wertmüller. His seemingly unchristian behavior and fiery nightly activities cause him to be the subject of gossip and suspicion in Mythikon. "Vom Eindunkeln an bis gegen Morgen steigen feurige Drachen und Scheine aus den Schloten des Auhauses auf. Der General, statt wie ein Christmensch zu schlafen, schmiedet und schlossert zu weilen die ganze Nacht hindurch" (XI 80). It is rumored that Wertmüller is either involved in witchcraft, a pact with the devil, or he that he is the devil himself. Wertmüller, enjoys his semi-legendary status and condones public opinion in order to antagonize the citizens. He realizes that in his position he is able to live as he pleases, without much interference from the townspeople, because of the fear he instills in them. Rahel, Wertmüller's godchild, provides perhaps the most accurate description of his character. "Ich hielt Euch ... für eine Art Rübezahl ..." (XI 98). The "Rübezahl" is a mythological Siliesian mountain spirit, "dem es zuweilen Spaß macht, Gutes zu tun, und der, wenn er Gutes tut, dabei sich einen Spaß macht" (XI 99). Wertmüller is not only compared to a "Rübezahl," but also to "eine Ägyptische Gottheit" (XI 101), as well as to a "Kobold" (XI 98). As he and Rahel discuss their plan for Pfannenstiel, Wertmüller is as amused, "als hielten sich alle Faune und Panisken der Au die Bäuchlein über einen tollen und

gottvergessenen Einfall" (XI 101). The "Faunen und Panisken" are mythological gods of the forest and the herds (Meyer, Sämtliche Werke Band 1 915).

Although he is held in ill regard by the God-fearing townspeople, Wertmüller explains: "Ich gehe morgen in Mythikon zur Kirche--erstaunt nicht, Pfannenstiel, ich bin kein Heide" (XI 104). His plan includes making a trip to his cousin's church, in order to present an antique pistol to the pastor, who understandably assumes the trigger is old and rusted. Unknown to the pastor, Wertmüller has replaced the pistol with a loaded, hair-triggered replica. The pastor cannot resist pulling the trigger during the service and does indeed fire a shot from the pulpit. After the service with its disastrous event, Wertmüller's cousin asks, "Habe ich je in meiner Kirche auf dich gestichelt oder angespielt? Habe ich dich in deinem Heidentum völlig werden lassen und dich gedeckt, wie ich konnte? (XI 122).

Wertmüller is neither a highly religious man nor a polytheist, but he is, as Karl Fehr describes him, "der alte Spötter, Haudegen und Freigeist" (60). Wertmüller's only interest is that the truth about everyone be made known and that everyone be in the proper place. He does humiliate the pastor, but not out of malice. He merely wishes to prove that the pastor would be better suited to another type of work, such as an army officer.

Other references to non-Christian symbols in the novella are in relation to Wertmüller and Jürg Jenatsch, who is mentioned in two scenes. Vitt-Maucher suggests that there is a certain amount of

character similarity between Wertmüller and Jenatsch:

Die beiden expliten Bindeglieder zum Jenatsch des Romans sind die signatur Jenatschs in der seltenen aldinischen Ausgabe von Homers Odyssee und Wertmüllers Traum von Jenatsch. Die Schriftzüge des berühmten Bündners bestätigen zunächst die--wenn auch verblichene --Leibhaftigkeit dieses menschlichen 'Ungeheuers', der im Volksmund in der letzten drei Jahrzehnten eher zur Sagengestalt geworden ist. Das wertvolle Geschenk eben dieses Buches verweist außerdem auf eine subtile Wesensverwandtschaft zwischen dem Schenkenden Jenatsch, der offenbar Homers Odyssee hoch schätze, und dem Beschenkten Wertmüller, dessen Lieblingsgedicht die Odyssee ist" (115).

The meaning of Wertmüller's dream, in which Jenatsch appears as a giant, is interpreted by Vitt-Maucher as a warning to Wertmüller: "Die Worte, die Jenatsch im Traum 'niedergeschlagen' and 'mit verglühten Augen' an Wertmüller richtet, klingen wie eine Mahnung und Aufforderung an den Lebenden, seine Zeit zu nutzen, denn 'auch du, Wertmüller, bist tot' (XI 92)" (116).

The various non-Christian symbols and characters in Der Schuß von der Kanzel remain slightly unrefined for a novella by Meyer; they are mainly used to contrast the characters and for comic purposes. In comparison to his later works, there is less development of the non-Christian symbols in this particular novella. Meyer's sister, Betsy, with whom he often collaborated, comments that this novella is "eine mehr humoristische, als tragische Episode, aus dem Leben des seltsamen

General Wertmüller, der vor etwa zwei hundert Jahren auf der Au ...
sein Wesen trieb ... In vier bis sechs Wochen, meint er, könnte diese
kleine Erzählung vollendet sein" (XI 249).

CHAPTER 3

PLAUTUS IM NONNENKLOSTER

Meyer describes his 1881 framework story, Plautus im Nonnenkloster, as his "Novellchen, das zwar nicht viel zu bedeuten hat, aber solid gebaut ist," and to Gottfried Keller, he writes that it is "stichfest, aber unbedeutend" (XI 266). This is the first of Meyer's framework stories. There has been little literary criticism of this novella, especially in comparison with Das Amulett or Der Heilige. Perhaps there is so little written of the novella, because Meyer himself did not regard it as an especially important work.

In this story Meyer parodies the Italian novella of the Renaissance. He also satirizes the church and its superstitions, and in Plautus im Nonnenkloster, as in many of Meyer's novellas, he employs numerous non-Christian symbols, especially those from classical antiquity. Meyer does not develop most of the non-Christian symbols in this novella to the extent that he does in many others. Like his other framework stories, Die Hochzeit des Mönchs and Das Leiden eines Knabens, Meyer presents a narrator, in this novella Poggio, who tells a story to a group of social superiors at the court of Cosmus Medici; the narrator speaks to them in a condescending manner, yet he speaks so skillfully that the audience does not realize that it is being patronized.

Plautus im Nonnenkloster deals with the Humanist cleric, Gian

Francesco Poggio Bracciolini (Poggio), and the alleged theft or discovery of the manuscript by the Roman comic-poet Titus Maccius Plautus in a convent near Lake Constance. Walser quotes a letter from Meyer to Friedrich von Wyß regarding his purpose for the Poggio character:

In den drei Figuren sind die drei historischen Bedingungen der Reformation in komischer Maske verkörpert: die Verweltlichung des hohen Klerus (Poggio, der wahre Typus des Humanisten: Geist, Leichtsinn, Nachäffung, und übertriebene Schätzung der Antike, Unwahrheit, Rachsucht, [er 'kreidet' es der Äbtissin an]), Diebstahl und Bettelei (die Beschenkung des Cosmus ...), die Vertierung der niedrigen Geistlichkeit (das 'Brigittchen'). Sie steht als die grobe mit der feinen Lüge des Poggio im Gegensatz.... Die beiden, die sich gegenseitig ihre Wahrheiten sagen, stehen im Gegensatze mit dem ehrlichen Fond in der deutschen Volksnatur (Gertrude), ohne welchen die Reformation eine Unmöglichkeit wäre (255).

The purpose of Poggio's story is, as he tells the audience, twofold: "möge sie euch ergötzen ... und zugleich belehren" (XI 134). He wants to explain that he indeed found the manuscript; it was not stolen. About Poggio's comment, Heinz Dill states, "Die Kombination 'ergötzen-belehren' ist zu auffällig, als daß dahinter nicht das horazische 'delectare et prodesse' zu vermuten wäre" (67). By his use of this statement from Horace, it could be interpreted as Poggio's first use of a non-Christian symbol to prove his knowledge of classical

antiquity. As a Humanist, one expects Poggio to make such allusions to classical Greece and Rome. Laane states, "His narration is interspersed with Latin (XI 156, 162) and learned mythological apostrophes (XI 138). Analogies are freely drawn from mythology and literature" (133). After Meyer establishes the frame story, Poggio tells the individual story within the frame, which focuses on the following: Gertrude's vow to join the convent; on whether the Virgin Mary will save her mother from death; on the love between Gertrude and Anselino (Hans) de Spiuga; and finally, on the abbess, Brigittchen, and the deceptive wonder of the two crosses.

Meyer's choice of title is again significant. Here he presents the mystery of an obviously non-Christian manuscript being hidden inside a cloister. Fehr states this novella was originally entitled, "Das Brigittchen von Trogen," which leads to the problem of the focus of the story (66). Rodenberg, publisher of Der Deutsche Rundschau, and Meyer had different opinions on the title, and it underwent at least five changes before publication (XI 265). The role of the Brigittchen character, the magna peccatrice, who is similar to Stemma in Die Richterin, fascinates Meyer (Williams 114). Brigittchen is a precursor to the Stemma character, for both are women in powerful positions, i.e., Brigittchen is an abbess and Stemma is a judge, and both must hide secrets which threaten them.

While this novella contains numerous non-Christian allusions, they are primarily classical references, which Meyer employs for several purposes. The first of these is as an indicator of status

demonstrating that the speaker has a knowledge of classical antiquity. As Poggio learns of Hans's tragic love for Gertrude, he exclaims, "Bei dem Bogen Cupidos ... ein unglücklich Liebender!" (XI 138). His exclamation serves no purpose other than as a sign that he is familiar with this myth. The second function of these non-Christian symbols is to show Poggio's intertwining of Christian and non-Christian symbols. Here, Laane states:

mythological and Christian realms mix within one image and serve as a sign of his dual orientation as cleric and scholar. He begins his narration with this type of image: "In jenen Tagen, erlauchter Cosmus, da wir unserer zur lernäischen Schlange entstellen heiligen Kirche die überflüssigen Köpfe abschlugen, befand ich mich in Constanz ... (XI 135) (133).

And he later explains his feeling before Gertrude's rescue from the nunnery by saying, "Auch ich wandte mich in freier Fromnigkeit an jene jungfräuliche Göttin, welche die Alten als Pallas Athene anriefen und wir Maria nennen" (XI 157).

The final function of these non-Christian symbols is to demythologize the superstition surrounding the miracles and religious artifacts of the church in much the same manner as in Das Amulett. Poggio knows that there must be a logical explanation for the miracle of the novices carrying the weighty cross through the church. Brigittchen tells the villagers that the Virgin Mary enables the novices, if they are pure of heart, to lift the cross "wie ein Federball" (XI 140). Poggio realizes there must be two crosses, and

indeed he does discover the genuine wooden one as well as a perfect imitation made of cork. His discovery allows him to bribe the abbess for the manuscript. Poggio proves that he extorts the manuscript; therefore, the accusation of theft is false.

Throughout the novella, Meyer uses non-Christian symbols as indicators of status and education, not only with respect to Poggio, but also regarding the fictional audience of the frame story. Poggio begins by explaining that this is the story of two crosses, a heavy one and a light one, and two "barbaric" nuns, a novice and an abbess. One audience member, Ippolito, says, "Von der Art jener treuherzigen germanischen Vestalen, mit welchen du in deinem bewundernswerten Reisebriefe die Heilbäder an der Limmat wie mit Najaden bevölkert hast,--das Beste was du geschrieben, bei den neun Musen!" (XI 135). This quotation serves two purposes: first, it illustrates the attitudes of the nobility toward the people outside Italy. Secondly, it demonstrates the audience's knowledge of classical mythology. The naiads, water nixies, represent the women whom Poggio sees at the cure baths, and the muses are the inspiration for his impressive letters. Burkhard states, "Schon bei den ersten Beispielen spürt man mit welcher Leichtigkeit Poggio und die florentinische Gesellschaft die Gestalten aus der antiken Mythologie in ihre Rede einflechten" (20). Poggio employs many other classical references; however, they are simply to reflect his Humanist character and they are not used in the significant manner of the other novellas. Examples are: his reference to Cupid (XI 138); the singing of the muses and the angels (XI 137);

his giving thanks to the muse of comedy (XI 145); references to Lydias and Glyceres (147); the three judges of the underworld in Plautus's manuscript (XI 148); the chaste muses (XI 149); the influence of a god or goddess and the game of a muse (XI 152); the comparison between the human conscience and Proteus (XI 155); Gertrude's gesture, which is like that of tearing off snakes (XI 156); Pallas Athene (XI 157); the three oracles (XI 158); his comparison between Cosmus and a laughing satyr (XI 163). Since Poggio as well as his audience are representatives of the Humanist period, the reason is clear as to Meyer's choice of these non-Christian symbols. Burkhard notes, "Derartige mythologische Anspielungen spiegeln das Denken und die geistige Haltung der Renaissance" (21).

The juxtaposition of Christian and non-Christian symbols and characters is not uncommon in Meyer's works. However, in Plautus im Nonnenkloster, Meyer pairs genuine and imitation Christian symbols and characters, such as the comparison of the Virgin Mary and Pallas Athene, the authentic cross and its perfect counterfeit, and the two nuns, Brigittchen and Gertrude. Along with the juxtaposition of symbols and characters, Meyer through Poggio also seeks to nullify much of the myth surrounding the church, particularly the Catholic church, regarding belief, ritual and ceremony. When Poggio compares the function of the Virgin Mary in the modern church to that of Pallas Athene in classical mythology, he reduces the divine figure to an allegorical one, reminding the reader of the non-Christian origin of some Christian rituals. As a Humanist cleric, Poggio is familiar with

both beliefs. Burkhard notes, "Er ist sich der Unterschiede wohl bewußt, doch diese hindern ihn keineswegs daran, Christliches und Heidnisches zu vermischen, im Gegenteil, sein ausgedehntes Wissen versagt sich die Belustigung nicht, die Dinge durcheinander zu bringen" (21). In Christian belief, the cross symbolizes martyrdom, acceptance of suffering and sacrifice, and faith (Cooper 46). Therefore, the counterfeit cross, used in the initiation ceremony, despoils everything symbolized by the authentic cross. The imitation makes a mockery of the entire ritual; it is not based on faith, rather, on an artificial cross made of cork and on the superstition of the people.

The last examples of parallelism between Christian and non-Christian characters are Brigittchen and Gertrude. Brigittchen, the abbess, should be an outstanding example of Christian values. She is not only aware of the deceit of the crosses; in fact, she reinforces the deception each time a novice is initiated. It is true, however, that she is merely following the traditions of hundreds of years. Nevertheless, Brigittchen does not reflect the morals taught by Christianity. The novice, Gertrude, is the positive parallel to Brigittchen. Gertrude feels compelled by her oath to the Virgin Mary to fulfill her obligation to join the nunnery, without regard for her own happiness. The attributes which symbolize the authentic cross could also be used to describe Gertrude. She is willing to sacrifice her love for Hans by entering the convent, and she acts as a martyr when she carries the genuine cross. While the examples of the

imitation cross and the "unchristian" nun have their Christian counterparts, these symbols are more important in this story, because they represent a unique type of non-Christian symbol, one which is not particular to a specific religion. They are the antitheses to certain Christian symbols; therefore, these symbols could be interpreted as non-Christian.

A typical novella by Meyer was subject to numerous revisions with painstaking care given to detail and style, yet he produced Plautus im Nonnenkloster in a relatively short time, for he did not feel that it was of great importance. It is for this reason perhaps that Meyer leaves so many of the non-Christian symbols in rudimentary form and the entire novella somewhat underdeveloped. That is, however, not to say that Meyer produced an inferior work; it is simply not as refined as other of his works, for example, Der Heilige or Die Hochzeit des Mönchs.

CHAPTER 4

DIE RICHTERIN

Containing perhaps the most numerous examples of non-Christian symbolism, especially animistic symbolism, is Meyer's 1885 novella Die Richterin. The primary function of the non-Christian symbolism in Die Richterin is to serve as direct opposition to Charlemagne's imposed Christianity on the population of Rhaetia. The second function is to show the power of superstition, which at the time of the story still existed among the people of Rhaetia, despite their apparent conversion to Christianity. Edward M. V. Plater, in "Alcuin's 'harmlose Fabel'," states that

'der kolossale Hirte' and 'die glockenlose Herde' in Alcuin's fable suggests the general context in which the events of the novella take place. They bring to mind the Biblical references to the Lord as a shepherd and the faithful as His flock. The fact that the flock is without bells suggests that the process of taming and domestication has not been completed. This corresponds in general the situation in Rhaetia, where even though Christianity has made significant inroads into the region and the consciousness of its people, old superstitions and pagan beliefs still persist and marauding and murder and other acts of violence have been plaguing the countryside for years (322).

In addition, certain symbols, such as the picture of Byblis or the

magic spell which Palma wishes to recite for Wulfrin, represent an "incestuous" love between Palma and Wulfrin. The non-Christian symbols on which Meyer places the most emphasis are the "Wulfenhorn" and the "Wulfenbecher"; they are the most important, because they have multiple uses in the novella. These two symbols combine the superstitious nature of the Rhaetians with the ever present conflict between Christianity and animism.

The story begins in Rome just before Charlemagne is to be crowned Emperor. One of his major goals was to spread Christianity among the peoples of the Holy Roman Empire. Charlemagne is admiring a statue of a horseman, whom he incorrectly assumes to be Emperor Constantin, but which in reality represents, as he is told by Alcuin, the Roman emperor, philosopher, and polytheist, Mark Aurel. In Der gesunde Gelehrte, Christoph Schweitzer analyzes Alcuin's comment about the statue saying that "das Reiterstandbild zerstört worden wäre, wenn man gewüßt hätte, daß es sich bei dem Reiter um den Heiden Marc Aurel handelte" (62). Meyer's choice of this symbol subtly suggests the animistic beliefs which were still common in Rhaetia.

Informed by Alcuin of the statue's true identity, Charlemagne only smiles and comments "Wirklich?" Schweitzer, elaborating further upon Charlemagne's half ironic remark, points out:

Karl der Große mag sogar einen persönlichen Grund haben, diese Thematik, den es sich doch eigentlich bei der doppleten Identifikation des Reiters handelt, so spontan zu verstehen, um dann Alcuins Erklärung gleich wieder mit dem 'Wirklich?'

beiseite zu schieben. Im Laufe der Novelle erfahren wir nämlich, daß der als vorbildlich geltende Kaiser eine Mätresse hat.

Vielleicht läßt sich so auch am besten sein Lächeln auf die Aufklärung durch Alcuin deuten. Einerseits lächelt er wohl über den Wissensstolz des gelehrten Alcuin, anderseits, eben auch, weil er die Parallele zwischen der Zweideutigkeit der Reiterstatue und seiner eigenen Situation erkennt (64).

Although the statue is often overlooked as a meaningful symbol, Meyer has an express intent in choosing it especially in regard to its historical significance, for, as stated in the annotations, the statue of Mark Aurel "stand ursprünglich auf dem lateranischen Feld und wurde erst 1538 auf das Kapitol versetzt" (376).

As was previously mentioned in the introduction, an important symbolic motif is superstition. Superstition appears not only among the people of Rhaetia, but also in the main characters Stemma, Palma, and Wulfrin. The conflict arises in that they all claim to be Christians, yet the only true Christian is Stemma's "Doppelgänger," Faustina, for she feels that she must be absolved of her sins, lest she be eternally damned. It is evident that there is still a strong belief in animistic gods and ritual, because of the regard for the "Wulfenhorn" and the "Wulfenbecher," which are no ordinary objects in the minds of the characters. Stemma, for example, still believes in the powers of the "Wulfenhorn," which is presumably a gift of the elves. She is already familiar with the powers of the horn, which forces one to tell the truth; therefore, she feels compelled to rid

herself of it by throwing it into the river, so as to destroy her secret along with it. Wulfrin, Palma, and Gabriel speak of elves which inhabit the valley. Wulfrin refuses to acknowledge the existence of any such superstitious beings, yet Gabriel responds, "Nein ... es gibt keine [Elben], nur darf man sie nicht mit wüsten Worten rufen oder gar ihnen Steine ins Wasser schmeißen" (XII 204). The ancient Celtic religions contained the belief that "the waters, lakes, sacred wells, etc. have magical properties and are the dwelling places of supernatural beings" (Cooper 188). Before Wulfrin's arrival, Palma prays to the gnomes to protect him (XII 175). Along the way Palma also says that if she were to see an elf, "mich würde es nicht wundern" (XII 205).

The suggestion of Wulfrin's superstition emerges during the storm in the valley. He professes that he does not believe in superstition, yet at one point he imagines seeing horrible creatures during the raging storm. In Wulfrin's extreme state of anxiety, reason gives way to ancient belief. As he begins his journey, a bat flies down and becomes entangled in his hair, and suddenly he imagines that he sees monsters, dismembered limbs, and a giant pounding its chest and roaring. Under these circumstances it is understandable that Wulfrin's imagination deceives him; he is already suffering at the thought of having incestuous feelings for Palma, and, in addition, he is wandering through the valley during a terrible storm. After his frightening experience in the valley, when he decides he must leave Palma, he makes further reference to the nixies which will remind him

of her. Wulfrin is especially vulnerable in this fragile emotional condition; he again imagines seeing something unreal and believes he sees an elf swimming through the water carrying the Wulfenhorn. The elf is, in reality, Gabriel, who found Wulfrin's inheritance while fishing. Evidence of superstition remains at the close of the scene where the narrator notes, "obwohl aus dem Elben ein Menschenknaben geworden war, zitterte doch über dem Strom ein Schimmer von Geisterhilfe" (XII 223).

An especially important non-Christian symbol is the picture of Byblis in the book which Gnadenreich refuses to let Palma see. Byblis is the woman in Ovid's Metamorphoses who has an incestuous love for her brother Caunus, who resists her pursuit (XII 380). When Wulfrin, Palma, and Gnadenreich are together at the engagement of Palma and Gnadenreich, Palma finds the book and looks at the picture, which Gnadenreich realizes is Byblis. Wulfrin does not understand Gnadenreich's reaction and Gnadenreich replies: "Die Schwester im Buch liebt den Bruder" (XII 213). Wulfrin still does not realize what he is implying. Gnadenreich responds: "Sie liebt ihn sündig! sie begehrt ihn" (XII 213). Burkhard interprets the inclusion of the Byblis story as a subtle representation of the emerging love between Palma and Wulfrin. "Die antike Sage, den meisten Lesern unbekannt, wird vom Dichter gerade soweit erklärt, daß der Zusammenhang mit Wulfrin und Palma durchschimmert. So verschlüsselt Meyer die scheinbar verbotene Liebe zwischen den beiden" (34). Also noteworthy is the fact that superstition is also apparent in Gnadenreich's behavior. When Wulfrin

questions him about reading the book which contains the picture of Byblis, Gnadenreich answers "Ich lese mit christlichen Augen ... zu meiner Warnung und Bewahrung, daß ich den Versucher kenne und nicht unversehens in die Sünde gleite!" (XII 214).

Another key non-Christian symbol is the ritual with the magic spell. When Comes Wulf returns, Stemma recites the magic spell along with a toast to her husband. The effect of the spell, which has to be recited once forward and once backward, as a type of "prayer," is to make the wife more pleasing to the husband. It is commonly believed that the spell has magical powers; therefore, Stemma wants to prevent Palma's recitation of the inscription on the "Wulfenbecher." Conjuring is an important and particularly precise element in mystic ritual; the spell is most effective when spoken while the conjurer holds a magical object. As in the novella Das Amulett, one could interpret Meyer's use of this type of mystic ritual as a parallel to the Christian religion and ritual which Charlemagne imposes on the people of this area. Palma wants to honor Wulfrin by reciting the inscription. Stemma is aware of the presumed power and intervenes, for a love between Palma and Wulfrin dare not occur, since they are theoretically related. Stemma attempts to hide her secret; therefore, she interrupts Palma and explains that the inscription may only be recited by the wife. Palma must not recite the spell, lest an "incestuous" love arise.

The "Wulfenhorn" and the "Wulfenbecher" are two of the most evident non-Christian symbols; they have various purposes: as purely animistic symbols; as reminders of the superstitions of the people;

and finally as another link between animism and Christianity.

Although, as Wulfrin notes while explaining to Gnadenreich the story of his inheritance, "Der Wulfenbecher ... [ist] heidnisch,--das Horn ist biblischen Ursprungs ... Verstehe : beide, Horn und Kelch, sind zwei Altertümer, mit Tugenden und Kräften begabt" (XII 166). Wulfrin refers to its simultaneous Christian and animistic qualities. He says that, indeed, the horn has its own magical powers, although it does not explain the source of its powers, unlike the chalice, which has been enchanted by the elves. When the husband blows the horn, it causes the wife to confess all her activities in his absence, in particular, her sins.

The belief in the powers of the horn and the chalice raises doubts about the belief in Christianity in Rhaetia. Rhaetia, now part of northern Italy, where Palma, Stemma, and Wulfrin live, was settled by a Celtic tribe which practiced a polytheistic religion. Weber states: "Als die Römer kamen, verehrten die Bewohner des Alpenvorlandes ihre keltischen Gottheiten" (184). As Meyer was an avid reader of history, he was probably well aware of the traditions of this area, and, therefore, interwove these attributes into the novella. The Lombards, another people which populated this area, were a Germanic tribe whose heritage was also most likely rooted in animistic tradition. Both peoples revered gods and goddesses which were part of nature, for example, elves (gods/goddesses of the earth and forest), nixies (water goddesses), and nymphs (nature goddesses). This belief in animism runs directly counter to Charlemagne's

Christianization of the empire. As Plater has already indicated, animism was still prevalent among these peoples (322). Perhaps that is the reason why Meyer chose to illustrate how the animistic peoples usually returned to their former practices as soon as the Christian rulers left the land. The Lombards, who also inhabit Rhaetia, are especially problematic. Meyer provides an ironic description of the Lombards' behavior through Gabriel's observations as a spy for Stemma: "Sie beten den Teufel an, der das Regiment führe, und doch ... sind sie gläubige Christen, denn sie stehlen aus unseren Kirchen alles heiligen Gebein zusammen" (XII 203). At the beginning of the novella, when Wulfrin is captured by the Lombards, a messenger comes to inform Palma that they demand a ransom for his release. The Lombard swears "bei dem da unten" (XII 179), as he looks toward the ground, that Palma shall see her brother again, if she will pay the ransom. The Lombards clearly are still resisting any foreign authority in their land.

Although Alcuin's fable is also of significance, since it foreshadows the rest of the novella, little criticism has been written about it. It is noteworthy, not only because of its foreshadowing, but also because of its rich symbolism. Alcuin uses varied non-Christian symbols to represent characters in the novella. Plater, in the article "Alcuin's 'harmlose Fabel' ... " maintains that Stemma is represented by the serpent queen, and the tiny etched figure of a writhing serpent on the vial of poison is a possible link between Stemma and the "Schlangenkönigin," which, as if enticed by a saucer of milk, weaves

her way toward a smooth body of water (318). The symbol of the serpent figures prominently in non-Christian as well as in Christian religions. In Die Richter it is, nevertheless, an enigmatic symbol with many possible interpretations. Here, the various aspects of the serpent could represent Stemma's character. According to J.C. Cooper, "the symbolism of the serpent is polyvalent.... As a killer it is death and destruction; as renewing its skin periodically it is life and resurrection.... It is ... life and death, ... good and evil, wisdom and blind passion, healing and poison, preserver and destroyer" (146-147). Meyer's choice of symbol is easily understandable in reference to Stemma; she embodies most all aspects of the serpent symbol. Furthermore, Plater states, "the serpent queen's attraction to the calm water as if to a saucer of milk symbolizes Stemma's longing for inner peace.... Milk is, of course, a universal antidote for poisoning" (320-321).

There are also Biblical allusions, e.g. "der kolossale Hirte" and "die glockenlosen Herde," mentioned in the fable, which are discussed in the section on superstition. Plater equates Palma with another non-Christian symbol important to the fable: the fairy. Plater theorizes,

the image of the fairy ... who is disconsolate because she has a vague inkling of eternal bliss but cannot attain it--'sie ahnt das ewige Gute und kann nicht selig werden'--prefigures the plot revolving around Palma, who suffers almost until the very end the unhappiness and frustration of unfulfilled love. The

fulfillment of her love for Wulfrin is the unattainable bliss of the fairy, unattainable because of the fiction that Palma and Wulfrin are brother and sister (324).

As has been discussed, the fable is an important vehicle by which Meyer conveys to the reader a short plot summary. His obvious use of non-Christian symbolism in this fable is an attempt to enlighten the reader as to the personalities of the characters and the situation in Rhaetia.

The dream or vision is often employed by Meyer in order to provide a character with some type of revelation or realization. At times it is also difficult to differentiate between dreams and reality in Meyer's novellas. In the case of Stemma, she experiences recurrent dreams or visions, which threaten to expose her crime. Another function of the dream is to provide the reader with background information about her love affair with Peregrin. These dreams also contain recurrent symbols and motifs which are instrumental in the interpretation of the novella. Burkhard gives the following interpretation of the dream of Peregrin: "Peregrin, der ehemals Geliebter, kommt aus der Unterwelt, wie sich die Alten vorstellten, es ist, als wate er mühsam durch den Styx, der sie umgibt, noch einmal ans Ufer des Lebens" (33). Here Meyer uses Peregrin's appearance, with its allusion to his return from the mythological underworld, as an explanation of the unusual circumstances surrounding his death. Stemma dreams not only of Peregrin, but also of the Comes Wulf, as well as another "Judicatrix," which W.D. Williams refers to as "'Nemesis'

recording her [Stemma's] crime" (134). Stemma is suffering under extreme anxiety, in fear that someone will discover that she poisoned the Comes in order to protect her unborn daughter. After Stemma sees the "Judicatrix," she hears the horn for the third time and believes it to be the Comes demanding her confession. Stemma's psychological state, as well, perhaps, as ancient superstition, impairs her judgment.

Die Richterin is one of Meyer's least highly regarded novellas. As W.D. Williams points out, the story is highly contrived and at times completely far fetched, and the reader has little sympathy for the characters, because they are not well developed; however, the idea of the great sinner (magna peccatrix) had long fascinated Meyer, and he began developing this idea in Plautus im Nonnenkloster with Brigittchen, who is only a secondary figure (114-115). Die Richterin is nevertheless an interesting work, because of its rich symbolism and the local color in Rhaetia, which Meyer uses as an historical reminder of the non-Christian heritage of many Christian rituals.

CHAPTER 5

DER HEILIGE

Der Heilige, perhaps one of Meyer's most critically acclaimed novellas, appeared in 1880. W.D. Williams states that Meyer's source for the novella is Thierry's Conquête de l'Angleterre par les Normands and that Meyer's initial purpose is to solve the mystery surrounding Saint Thomas à Becket (39-40). Meyer borrows many elements from Thierry, yet he takes considerable liberties with the plot. He abandons the idea of solving the mystery of Becket's conversion and invents an episode which adds to the complexity of Becket's defiance of King Henry II. In the novella Meyer emphasizes the legend of Becket's Oriental heritage; he tells the story of Becket's Saracen mother coming to London to search for Becket's Saxon father, Gilbert. Thus, Becket's dual heritage is a source of his inner turmoil.

In Colin Walker's article "Unbelief and Martyrdom in C.F. Meyer's Der Heilige," he maintains that "Becket is neither Christian nor Saracen, but a forerunner of Renaissance paganism" (112). Yet it is Becket's adherence to the Muslim teachings that compel not only Becket but also his daughter, Gnade, to be subservient to their masters, be it King Henry or God, thus giving Meyer free reign to create a basic contradiction in Becket's character. Although Becket's heritage is a popular legend, Walter Silz, in Realism and Reality, quotes a letter from Meyer to the writer Betty Paoli about the

ambiguity surrounding Becket in "Der Heilige": "Die Wahrheit ist, daß ich den Thomas so sah. Damit gut" (95). Meyer's inclusion of the legend provides a reasonable argument for Becket's behavior. The complex figure of Meyer's Becket remains an enigma, for Meyer chooses to leave the mystery of Becket's conversion unsolved. Not surprisingly Meyer uses various non-Christian symbols in association with Becket and his Saracen heritage. The medieval definition of Saracens makes Meyer's choice of symbolism seem reasonable. Der Grosse Brockhaus defines Saracens as follows: "Im Altertum die einen Teil der Steppe des nordwestlichen Arabien und der Sinai-Halbinsel bewohnenden Araber; bei den Byzantinern und den christlichen Schriftstellern Volk der Araber und später auf alle Mohammedaner der Mittelmeerwelt, besonders auf die Gegner der Kreuzfahrer" (1956 edition).

Meyer also includes a fictitious daughter, Gnade, (or Grace/Grazia), whose function in the novella is much disputed by critics. Colin Walker disagrees with Lily Hohenstein's theory that "the corruption of Gnade symbolizes Henry's rejection of God's Grace and thus the unforgivable sin against the Holy Ghost" (116). One critic, W.A. Coupe, cites several critics who support the assertion that the inclusion of Gnade and the story of her murder provide the grounds for Becket's vengeance against the king; other critics maintain that the story is merely a partial instigator of the conversion of Becket (Coupe 109). The ambiguity in the Gnade episode is left unexplained by Meyer in the text itself; however, Wetzel quotes from the critically annotated edition: "Meyer selbst äußerte,

daß sich in Becket's Bekehrung 'Rachsucht und Frömmigkeit auf eine unheimliche Weise durchdringen'" (204). Coupe quotes Meyer's comments about the motives of Becket's metamorphosis, yet Meyer's remarks still do not lead to any precise conclusion (109). Two critics, Walter Silz and W.A. Coupe, give different sources from which Meyer theoretically drew his character Gnade. Silz states that Gnade is taken from the story of one of the king's mistresses, the fair Rosamond (95). Coupe claims she is based on Henry's relationship with Aliz, the daughter of King Louis XII of France (105). Meyer creates an especially close relationship between Becket and Gnade. Becket seeks to protect his daughter from the cruelties of the outside world by hiding her in a Moorish-style castle, which is shrouded in Oriental mystery. Becket particularly wants to spare Gnade the life at the court of King Henry, which Becket is gradually beginning to despise. Yet as important as her character is, Gnade is murdered early in the novella. The impact on Becket is long-lasting and devastating. The use of images and symbols in connection with Becket's background and Gnade is rich and brilliant. It is in this description that Meyer uses non-Christian symbols to vivify his characters.

The fairy-tale of Prinz Mondschein, which Meyer freely invents, is told by the narrator, Hans der Armbruster, to his listener, the Chorherr Burkhard. It is a fairy-tale which Hans heard while in Grenada. Although Hans never explicitly states that this tale is the story of Becket before his arrival at court, the reader is led to believe this. Hans never states whether this story is true, or whether

perhaps it was simply invented for the benefit of his listener. One must also consider the reliability of Hans, and whether he gives an accurate account in the entire novella; the critics dispute where Hans's sympathies lie. Again, Meyer does not seek to clarify this ambiguity. The fairy-tale of Prinz Mondschein, as in most Arabic tales, is like an intricately painted picture, and the symbols are true to Arabic traditions. Becket is often associated with the moon and its attributes (i.e., Prinz Mondschein). As in many other religions, the moon in the Muslim tradition is of great significance.

Finally, most of the non-Christian symbols and characters in the novellas examined thus far are either Greek or mystic, with the exception of Der Schuß von der Kanzel, in which Meyer uses Hassan and the "Türkin." Der Heilige is noteworthy because of the numerous Islamic symbols. But for the first time Meyer also includes a Jewish character, "der Jude Manasse." The Greek, mystic, and Jewish symbols and characters here are of lesser importance than the Islamic, but Meyer does not include symbols at random. The Greek symbols Meyer depicts are statues in a temple, a statue of Medusa's head, Laocoon, the gods of the forest, and a mermaid. The character associated with mysticism is "die schwarze Mary," a woman accused of witchcraft, and, again, brief mention is made of a fairy and an elf. Hans's father owes money to the Jewish character, Manasse. With the exceptions of the statues and "die schwarze Mary," the rest of these symbols are mentioned only once in descriptions of various situations. The Islamic symbols are most significant in this novella and will therefore be

examined more closely.

The qualities one frequently attributes to the moon, such as pallor, whiteness, and luminescence, as well as the moon symbol itself, are closely associated in this story with Becket. In J.C. Cooper's Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Traditional Symbols, it is stated that the moon usually represents a feminine power, yet in the Islamic, Iranian, and Sumero-Semitic religions, it is depicted as a male deity and it is universally symbolic of the rhythm of cyclic time or universal becoming. The phases of the moon symbolize immortality and eternity, perpetual renewal and enlightenment (106-108). The interpretations of the moon symbol by other religions also describe aspects of Meyer's Becket. According to Cooper, in Buddhism the moon represents peace, serenity, and beauty; the full and new moon are times of strength and spiritual power. In Taoism, it represents truth; in Chinese and Hindu, it is a symbol of immortality (108). Use of this symbol to represent immortality could be viewed as an allusion to the Christian concept of life after death, as Becket finally embraces the Christian faith. In closer relation to Becket's Saracen background, Cooper states that in Islamic tradition, the crescent moon represents divinity and sovereignty and it is, along with the star, a symbol of Islam. In Sumero-Semitic traditions, the moon deity is the masculine god of wisdom (108). Other symbols related to the moon are pearls and ivory. According to Cooper, "Ivory is associated with the symbol of whiteness: incorruptibility and moral strength (88) and pearls are symbolic "stones of the moon". Cooper asserts that pearls are "lunar;

the essence of the moon" (128).

In the text there are numerous examples which illustrate Meyer's association of Becket with the moon and its attributes: "sein farbloses Antlitz" (XIII 29); "die ganze Reihe seiner Perlenzähne schimmerte" (XIII 36); "das Antlitz schimmerte wie Mond und Sterne" (XIII 49); "weißer Schein" (Becket's Arabian stallion) (XIII 61); "das weiße Roß" (XIII 69); "aber in allmähligem Erblassen wich jede Farbe aus seinem Antlitz" (XIII 84); and "sein bleiches Haupt" (XIII 87). The whiteness or paleness often connected with the moon can have many symbolic interpretations according to Cooper: "White symbolizes holiness, sacredness, spiritual authority, a triumph of the spirit over the flesh: it is worn in mourning in the Orient and as it was in ancient Greece and Rome" (41). The first association of Becket with the moon image is in the fairy tale of Prinz Mondschein; it is here that Meyer establishes Becket as a fatalist. In Tiiu Laane's book, Imagery in the Works of C.F. Meyer, she states that "The moon becomes a symbol of him as a Saracen, a man ruled by the stars and an overwhelming sense of fate" (198).

Becket does indeed seem to be influenced by the stars, and there are even three separate remarks about the control of the stars: one by Hans of Becket in Cordova, and two made by Becket. Hans comments to Burkhard, "Durch Acquitaniën und Spanien sei er an die maurischen Höfe gezogen, von seinem mütterlichen heidnischen Blute getrieben, und beim Könige von Cordova in die höchste Gunst gekommen. Dort habe er mit mit Weisen aus dem Morgenlande Sterndeutung und geheime Wissenschaft

getrieben, worin er seine Meister bald übertroffen [habe]" (XIII 28). Hans's description parallels the tale so closely that the reader is led to believe that Becket and Prinz Mondschein are the same person. Later in the novella, Becket tells his daughter that he must send her away to be married and again makes a reference to his belief in astrology saying, "Wenn es sein kann und dich dein Stern dahin führt" (XIII 56). The last remark that Becket makes about his belief in the stars is when he tells Henry that he does not want to be forced to be his Primate: "Dein Kanzler muß ich bleiben, denn ich glaube, unsere Sterne und Geburtsstunden stehen zueinander in Beziehung" (XIII 87). Walker points out that "his fatalism has roots in Saracen astrology ... and it is fairly safe to link it with that of the Arab astrologer ... who believed in a universe so fixed that all human and divine choice was excluded, so that there was no room even for the wrath or the grace of God" (112). The star as a symbol, along with the crescent moon, represents Islam (Cooper 108). This seems to bring the symbols of the moon and the stars in closer relation to Meyer's Becket.

Another frequently occurring symbol connected with Becket is the snake or the eel. The many interpretations of the snake symbol have been previously discussed in regard to Stemma in Die Richterin. In contrast to Stemma, the comparison of Becket to the snake suggests "cunning, power, and possibly the vicious aspects of nature" (Cooper 147-148). There are also numerous examples from the text which illustrate this: "dieser sonnte sich, wie eine schlanke, weiße

Schlange, in den Strahlen der fürstlichen Gunst" (XIII 36); "Du bist doch keine schillernde Schlange, welche die Haut wechselt" (XIII 93). Laane interprets the snake symbol as "Meyer's most common metaphorical symbol of evil" and notes, furthermore, that the images of whiteness and the snake create a dichotomy in Becket (197). This could also be interpreted as a reference to Becket's Oriental heritage, which is linked to a philosophy which recognizes the presence of good and evil in everyone.

It is in the fairy tale of Prinz Mondschein that the moon image is first associated with Becket and, as is often the case in Meyer's novellas, the tale is used as a type of foreshadowing. The fairy tale is in the form of a tale from 1,001 Arabian Nights. Hans tells the tale of Prinz Mondschein, which he heard while he was learning to build crossbows in Grenada. He does not say that this tale is about Becket before his arrival at King Henry's court, but the reader is gradually given clues which suggest this. The fairy tale is of significance because it contains non-Christian symbols which are important in analyzing Becket's character. As one is given to understand from the text, Prinz Mondschein represents Becket, who is represented by the moon symbolism. The moon symbolizes Becket's strength, serenity, wisdom, and sovereignty. Prinz Mondschein finds favor at the court of Cordova through of "den Zauber seiner Gestalt und Rede und durch seine Meisterschaft in Schachspiele" (XIII 22), and because of "die Blässe und Sanftmut seines Antlitzes" (XIII 23), the Caliph gives him his name. The Caliph also gives him his most

beautiful sister, Prinzessin Sonne, as a wife. The sun symbol, usually masculine in Greek, Roman, or Egyptian belief, here represents a feminine principle. Cooper defines the portrayal of the union of the sun and the moon as "the male and female powers in conjunction" (162). It is here that the first sun-moon symbolism is introduced. Later in the novella the sun-moon symbolism takes on another meaning. It refers to the mutual antagonism between King Henry and Becket. The sun images associated with Henry are of physicality, sensuality, and life, whereas the moon images with Becket represent spirituality, intellect, and death.

While the Greek, mystic, and Jewish symbols and characters discussed in Der Heilige are not of great consequence, they nevertheless are clearly intentionally introduced to convey a specific idea. The character associated with mysticism, "die schwarze Mary," illustrates Becket's compassion for a woman who is justly, or perhaps unjustly, accused of witchcraft. His refusal to sign her death warrant and his irreligious attitude toward the church reveal the first aspects of Becket's essentially non-Christian character. Becket realizes how one can be irrevocably judged, especially in matters of religion. Becket tells Hans, "Die Mary ist eine Hexe, wie ich ein Heiliger! ... es gibt Augenblicke, da mir gleichermaßen graut vor dem, was die Menschen sind, und vor dem, was sie sich zu sein einbilden" (XIII 39). The episode with "die schwarze Mary" gives the reader an insight into Becket's philosophy and provides the introduction of "eine schlimmere Hexe" (XIII 40), Queen Ellenor. The remaining

animistic symbols are the "Fei" and the "Waldelfe" which Hans uses to describe the Gnade episode.

The Greek symbols Meyer uses are: the temple statues which Becket admires, the Medusa's head statue, the "Waldgötter," and the "Melusine," whom Hans again includes in the Gnade episode, and Laocoon. Although the statues are referred to only in one scene in the novella, Manfred Jacobson states, "He [Hans] speaks about art and Thomas à Becket, subjects on which his competence may indeed be challenged" (267). As previously stated, it is often difficult to rely on Hans as an impartial narrator. Jacobson interprets Hans's remarks about the statues as having threefold significance: they illustrate Hans's appraisal of the qualities Becket valued in women; they stress Becket's extreme fastidiousness; they illustrate Hans's assertion in order to subvert its apparent praise of Becket, by suggesting that Becket lacks the capacity to respond to real people and can only find satisfaction in art (268). Perhaps Jacobson's most interesting theory is Hans's view of Becket: "Whatever Hans's intention is here, he makes use of the statues to label Becket a heathen. Becket, he asserts, is a Mohammedan and thus a heathen and this view of him seems to be reinforced by his liking for the statues which are heathen art" (269). Burkhard holds a similar viewpoint of Becket's connections to the Greek statues. She states that, "Da die Antike im Zusammenhang mit Thomas genannt wird, liegt es nahe, sie als eine geistige Zufluchtsstätte aufzufassen, die jenen Kräften Raum gewährt, die im gegenwärtigen Leben am Hof brach liegen müssen--sei es wegen der

Unwissenheit der anderen, sei es wegen der Verschiedenheit der Denkweisen (19). The discovery of the Medusa's head is interpreted by Burkhard as "einen wirklich erschreckenden Gegensatz zur Lebensfreude der südlichen Länder" (18).

The last non-Christian character is "der Jude Manasse," whom Hans describes as a cruel man to whom his father owes money. Hans is overcome by "ein Erbarmen mit meinem siechen Mütterlein und auch mit dem blutigen Leiden unseres Heilandes, den die Juden grausam gemartert haben" (XIII 18), until he is moved to beat Manasse to death. To avoid the death penalty, Hans takes refuge in the monastery. Meyer's stereotypical characterization of Manasse is problematic.

The inclusion and consequence of the episode with Becket's fictitious daughter are much debated by critics. Coupe, for example, maintains that "Meyer has cheated in the solution of his self-imposed task and has imported the unhistorical Grace into an historical context in order to motivate Becket's behavior in terms of a desire to avenge the crime perpetrated against her" (108). Other critics, such as d'Harcourt, Maync, and Williams, feel that the episode is of importance, while still others, for example, Coupe, Walker, Tusken, and Böker, view it as having less impact on the novella. In the text Hans does state that the killing of Gnade was not the reason for Becket's conversion (XIII 66), yet, again, one must question the reliability of the narrator.

The episode does contain non-Christian symbols which are pertinent to Becket. The moon is once again a symbol of Becket; the

moon is present in the form of an ever-changing guard watching over Gnade. At the beginning of the episode, it begins with a new moon that slowly wanes to a crescent moon at the end, signifying death. Like the changing phases of the moon Uwe Böker asserts, "Becket ist ein Mensch, der sich ständig zu wandeln, allen Situationen anzupassen und Masken anzulegen weiß, niemand vermag ihn zu ergründen, selbst nicht Hans, der ihn belauscht" (74). Hans observes the seduction of Becket's daughter. He realizes that King Henry is corrupting the child, whom Becket tries to protect from outside influences. The old guard, Äscher, tells Hans of the conditions in the castle: "Kein Kruzifix, kein Meßbuch, keinen Heiligen halten wir im Hause! ... Mit arabischen Lettern bedeckte Pergemente brachte er dem Kinde, heidnische Märchen, die den grausamen Weltlauf zu einem süßen Abenteuer verfälschen" (XIII 53). Gnade is being poorly brought up according to the servants, for she is not instructed in any "real" religion. Walker posits that "he has not had his child brought up wholly as a Muslim. Rather he has given her a reverence for the divine within a framework of very limited and painless Christianity. Like her foster father, Calas, they both pray the 'Our Father' (XII, 56), no doubt in Arabic" (113).

In the episode after Gnade's death, Hans gives a vivid description of the interior and of the shrine where Gnade's body is placed. As he looks inside the chapel, he states: "Aber da war kein Crucifixus und kein ewiges Licht, und statt eines heiligen Leichnams unter dem Altare lag in einem Schreine vor demselben, ebenso reich geschmückt, die tote Gnade" (XIII 64). Hans is so touched by the sight

of Gnade that he recites a verse from the Koran, with which he became familiar while in Grenada. Although Hans is a Christian, he can appreciate the value the Koran verse has for Becket, who is half Saracen. Hans remarks, "Kaum war der Spruch meinen Lippen entfahren, so ging mit dem Gesichte des Kanzlers eine Veränderung vor. Es glitt eine Bewegung der Freude und Liebe darüber hin. Er wandte sich langsam zu dem, der ihn mit diesem Koranvers getröstet hatte" (XIII 65). There is one last Islamic symbol which is mentioned by Hans. As he and Becket stand outside Henry's bedroom, Hans quotes a saying which is frequently heard among the Arabs in Grenada, which Becket immediately recognizes: "jedesmal wann von Schlummer und Schlaf geredet wird, hinzufügen: 'Gelobt sei, der nicht schläft noch schlummert!'" (XIII 35). Although this saying is not noted in the text as a quote from the 1,001 Arabian Nights, it is listed in the annotations (XIII 349). Hans makes this comment perhaps to illustrate his familiarity with the traditions in Islamic cultures or perhaps to ingratiate himself with Becket.

CHAPTER 6

DIE HOCHZEIT DES MÖNCHS

Die Hochzeit des Mönchs, which was completed in 1883, is one of Meyer's most critically acclaimed novellas. As has been seen in Plautus im Nonnenkloster, Der Schuß von der Kanzel, and Das Amulett, the title is indicative of the paradox in the novella. Meyer uses the same technique of the framework story as in Der Heilige, Das Leiden eines Knaben, and Plautus im Nonnenkloster. One of his favorite motifs, which is common to Der Heilige and Plautus im Nonnenkloster, as well as Die Hochzeit des Mönchs is the character who leaves either a monastery or a convent, i.e., Astorre, Hans, and Gertrude (XII 307). In Plautus im Nonnenkloster Meyer chooses an historic character, Poggio, as the narrator, and here, he chooses yet another. He portrays the Italian poet Dante Alighieri telling a story of "plötzlicher Berufswechsel" to the Cangrande of Verona and his courtiers. The story Dante tells is that of a monk who leaves the monastery in order to marry and how this "plötzlicher Berufswechsel" led to his demise. Williams attributes the skeleton of the story within the frame to a story from Niccolò Machiavelli's Istorie florentine and notes that the historical Dante mentions the affair between the Buondelmonti and the Amidei families in the Inferno; that is perhaps the reason why Meyer chose Dante as the narrator (86-87). Zeller and Zäch maintain that, "Der Anstoß zu der Dichtung ist kaum von einem literarischen oder

historischen Fund ausgegangen, sondern von dem persönlichen Grunderlebnis des 'entkutteten Mönches', einem bei Meyer oft wiederkehrenden Motiv" (XII 253-254). This novella is indeed an exceptional work and one which displays Meyer's artistry in the nineteenth-century novella. Although the non-Christian symbols and characters in this novella are not as numerous as in his other novellas, their function is, however, significant. In Die Hochzeit des Mönchs there are the expected "Meyerean" references to classical antiquity, which are the most critical to its interpretation, as well as other non-Christian symbols and characters, such as the Jewish doctor Isaschar and the Saracen doctor Abu Mohammed al-Tâbi who are mentioned, but are of lesser importance.

Within the frame story, there is little non-Christian symbolism, although that which is included is consequential. Meyer begins the novella with Cangrande and his courtiers around a fire telling stories on a snowy winter night. Dante, who has been expelled from Florence, is a guest there. Dante is not particularly pleased to be among the group because there are certain members present whom he would rather avoid and to whom he is in a certain sense socially superior. Fehr states, "Als aus der Vaterstadt Verbannter ißt Dante bei diesem [Cangrande] das Gnadenbrot" (86). Similar narrative situations are presented in Plautus im Nonnenkloster, Das Leiden eines Knaben, and to an extent, in Der Heilige. Meyer was a great admirer of Dante and La Divina Commedia (XII 254). Dante is depicted as an ethereal character and as "ein gravitätischer Mann, dessen große Züge und lange Gewänder

aus einer anderen Welt zu sein schienen" (XII 7). As Dante is invited to join them, Cangrande remarks, "'Beurlaube die Göttinnen'--er meinte wohl die Musen--'und vernüge dich mit diesen schönen Sterblichen'" (XII 7). Cangrande regards Dante as an artist who is inspired by the muses. Gocciola, the court jester, is envious of Dante, and attempts to ridicule the poet by comparing his shadow to "einem Riesenweibe mit langgebogener Nase und hangender Lippe, einer Parze oder dergleichen" (XII 8). The comparison between Dante's shadow and a goddess of Fate is cleverly portrayed, according to Fehr: "Nicht umsonst wirft Meyer sein Schattenbild an die Wand gleich '...einer Parze...', die ihren Faden spinnt; er 'zerschneidet' das Geschwätz der Isotta, weist jeden Einwurf der Zuhörer streng zurück und führt die 'Schemen' zu seinem Endzwecke" (152). Dante does indeed act as a 'Parze'; he creates the story quite spontaneously and thereby determines the fate of its characters. Finally, Dante swears to the muses, telling the listeners not to interrupt the story again or they will still be there well after midnight (XII 65).

There are abundant non-Christian symbols and characters in the story within the frame. Dante's story begins on the river Brenta, as the "Brautfahrt" of Umberto Vicedomini and Diana Pizzaguerra turns tragic when Duke Ezzelin rides past and the boat sinks. The boat trip across the river is symbolic of the crossing of the river Styx in Greek mythology. Cooper maintains that "crossing waters is to change from one ontological state, or plane to another; it is also separation as in crossing the sea or river of death, but, as water can be both

the power of life and death, so it can also divide and unite" (188). The boat trip not only symbolizes death, but also the end of an old life and the beginning of a new one. Death is represented by the drowning of the monk Astorre's brother, Umberto, and his three nephews. New beginnings are reflected in the new lives in which Diana and Astorre find themselves. There is yet another mention of a voyage by boat which symbolizes death. The old, dying Vicedomini tries to persuade Astorre to abandon his vows to the church, since all the other heirs are now dead. Vicedomini threatens, "Lässest du mich meines Wunsches so ungewährt, so weigert sich dein Väterchen, in den Kahn des Totenführers zu steigen, und bleibt zusammengekauert am Dämmerstrande sitzen!" (XII 23).

Meyer uses little non-Christian symbolism in conjunction with Astorre, who is forced by his father to leave the monastery and who is warned by Ezzelin against altering his fate. Astorre's friend, Ascanio, describes him as he falls in love with Antiope as having been "plötzlich wie von einem Zauberstabe berührt" (XII 46). Dante describes Astorre's love for Antiope saying, "Ich sehe ihn, der wie der blühendste Jüngling schreitet. Mit beflügelten Füßen durchschwebte er den Saal, als trüge ihn Zephyr oder führte ihn Iris" (XII 65). Ascanio also warns him not to become involved in this love affair because, "Wenn du dir den Pfeil des blinden Gottes nicht rasch und heldenmütig aus dem Herz ziehst, ermordet er dich, Antiope und noch ein paar andere, wen es gerade treffen wird" (XII 67).

Another symbol often associated with Astorre is the snake. Laane

interprets Meyer's use of snake imagery as follows:

The snake is a rich full emblem for evil human deeds and passions. Meyer endows intrigue, persecution, betrayal, suspicion, lies, and revenge with poisonous snake-like attributes. Baskets or nests of snakes especially strike Meyer's imagination, as in this description of jealousy: "Seine Brust empfand einen scharfen Biß, dann einen zweiten noch schärfer, daß er hätte aufschreien mögen. Und jetzt wühlte und wimmelte schon ein ganzes Nest grimmiger Schlangen in seinem Busen" (XII 71) (95).

Dante makes further reference to Astorre and the snake image. In the beginning, Dante describes Astorre as he first encounters the world outside the monastery: "Zum ersten Male griff der aus dem Klosterfrieden Geschiedene, gleichsam mit Händen, wie die schlüpfrigen Windungen einer Natter, den Argwohn oder Verrat der Welt" (XII 43). Using other snake symbols to illustrate Astorre's belief that he has overcome his jealousy, Dante then comments: "Er griff in die Brust und glaubte, durch himmlischen Beistand stark wie Hercules, die Schlangen erwürgt zu haben" (XII 72). Astorre assumes that he is no longer jealous; however, it is clear that Germano's proposal to Antiope offends Astorre's sensibilities, or perhaps "krümmte sich eine Natter?" (XII 73). Dante explains that Astorre finds Germano's proposal extremely insensitive; Germano treats her as a prisoner of war. Dante then asks rhetorically, "oder zischte die Schlange?" (XII 73). In Greek mythology the snake represents passion and wisdom

(Cooper 150). Perhaps Dante's comparison of Astorre's jealousy with the snakes is due to the fact that Dante understands the jealousy which Astorre does not recognize.

Astorre's betrothed, Diana, is a character who is often associated with non-Christian symbols. The name is a reference to the virgin goddess of the hunt. Even before Meyer explains this comparison literally, he hints at this through Diana's warning to Astorre:

Ihr werdet an mir ein gutes und gehorsames Weib besitzen. Doch habe ich zwei Eigenschaften, welche Ihr schonen müßt. Ich bin jähzornig, wenn mir Recht oder Ehre antastet, und darin peinlich, daß man mir nichts versprechen darf ohne es zu halten ... sonst verliere ich den Glauben und kränke mich schwerer als andere Frauen über das Unrecht (XII 29-30).

The goddess Diana is known for her violent temper; this characteristic is displayed, according, to Burkhard, in the episode involving the boy, Aktäon, "der sie im Bade erblickt hat, [den sie] unerbittlich straft" (29).

The next reference to the goddess Diana comes as Astorre asks Diana which costume she will wear to the wedding festival. Diana answers: "Kommen werde ich als die, welche ich mich nenne und welche ich bin: die Unberührte, die Jungfräuliche" (XII 90). There is yet another allusion as Diana comes to the festival dressed as the goddess. A student attempts to flatter her by saying that she is not dressed as Artemis (Diana) and points to the silver half moon on her forehead: "Er zeigte auf den silbernen Halbmond über der Stirn der

Göttin" (XII 93), which is a symbol of Diana. The student tries to appeal to her vanity by saying that she is dressed as Aphrodite and he refers to himself as her symbol, the dove, saying, "Hier sitzt dein Täubchen" (XII 93). Here, Dante remarks: "[Diana] aber schmeichelte nicht wie Aphrodite, sondern zürnte wie Artemis" (XII 93). Diana then takes an arrow out of her quiver and pierces his hand. The final parallel between the goddess and Diana comes when Antiope must retrieve Astorre's ring. Dante explains: "Die Göttin schien nicht öffentliche Demütigung, sondern Demut des Herzens zu verlangen" (XII 96). As revenge for her wounded dignity, Diana murders Antiope by plunging an arrow through the back of her neck.

One of the most complex characters is the duke, Ezzelin, who is based on the historical figure Ezzelino da Romano. Dante begins his story by explaining that it is based on an inscription that he once saw on a grave which read: "Hier schlummert der Mönch Astorre neben seiner Gattin Antiope. Beide begrub Ezzelin" (XII 11). The discussion then turns to the subject of the cruelty and tyranny practiced by Ezzelin. Dante states that he does not know if all that which is accredited to Ezzelin is true. However, Ezzelin's nephew, Ascanio, asks his friend Germano if he saw how the duke "Bei seinem kargen Mahle in dem durchsichtigen Kristall des Bechers sein Wasser mit den drei oder vier blutroten Tropfen Sizilianers färbt, welche er sich gönnt?" (XII 40). Ezzelin is himself a polytheist. He often speaks of his belief in astrology, gods, and fate. The dying Vicedomini shrieks accusingly at Ezzelin of his belief in fate and the stars, in

"Schicksal und Sternguckerei und Beschwörung, und Verschwörung und Enthauptungen" (XII 20). Vicedomini is referring to the slaughter of soldiers due to Ezzelin's belief in determination according to the stars and comments further on Ezzelin's non-Christian beliefs. Ezzelin replies: "Ich zwar habe mit der Kirche nichts zu schaffen. Sie läßt mir gleichgültig" (XII 20).

Ezzelin acts as a type of guardian of unchangeable fate, and he attempts to persuade Astorre not to leave the monastery. As the following quote illustrates, stars and one's fate are intertwined. He claims:

ermahnend oder segnend ... 'Glücklicher! Du hast einen Stern!
Dein Heute entsteht leicht aus deinem Gestern und wird
unversehens zu deinem Morgen!... Würdest du in die Welt treten,
die ihre eigenen Gesetze befolgt, welche zu lernen für dich zu
spät ist, so würde dein klarer Stern zum lächerlichen Irrwisch
und zerplatzte zischend nach ein paar albernen Sprüngen unter
dem Hohn der Himmlischen! (XII 25-26).

Sound heightens the effect of the symbol. In reference to this scene Laane gives the following interpretation of Ezzelin's speech: "The repetitive "s" and "z" sounds reproduce the fizzing of a star, and the jarring consonants imitate the movement of an object which is rocking wildly. Visual and onomatopoetic effects unite here to foreshadow the inevitability of Astorre's doom" (111).

Meyer incorporates various non-Christian and Christian symbols when Ezzelin instructs Ascanio to read a papal letter regarding the

"Gottlosigkeit" of Kaiser Friedrich II. First Ascanio reads that Friedrich declared that there are only two true gods: nature and reason; then he reads: "Friedrich habe geredet: drei Gaukler, Moses, Mohammed, und --er stockte--hätten die Welt betrogen. 'Oberflächlich' tadelte Ezzelin, 'sie hatten ihre Sterne'" (XII 41). In regard to Friedrich II, Ezzelin, and polytheism, Walker gives an interpretation of the scene involving the Emperor's verse by noting that

the sun has non-Christian connotations for Meyer, for instance as it is associated with that other enigmatic figure that so fascinated him--the Emperor Friedrich II... Meyer gives several pointers to Friedrich's love of the sun, but most interesting ... is the blasphemous triplet on the Eucharist quoted by Duke Ezzelino.

So viele Ähren, so viele Götter sind,

Sie schiessen empor in der Sonne geschwind

Und wiegen die goldenen Häupter im Wind (XII 42).

Here Meyer has added a personal touch to the Emperor's paganism by extending the original comment--'Wie viele Götter wird man aus diesem Getreide machen'--and introducing the sun as the constant enriching force on which the evanescent gods depend. Ezzelino remembers the composition of the triplet 'mit derselben Klarheit, welche an jenem Sommertage über der Insel glänzte'... (XII 42). Thus Meyer reinforces our impression of Ezzelino's own paganism through the repetition of a sun motif which has been given a specifically pagan association (115).

To further emphasize Ezzelin's belief in polytheism, he says, even before his reference to the sun, that he remembers how Friedrich recited the verse to him as they rode through the fields "mit welchen Göttin Ceres die sizilische Scholle gesegnet hat" (XII 42).

As previously stated, Ezzelin is a believer in astrology, and he bases his decisions on the interpretations of the constellations. Astrology was suddenly a quite powerful force in thirteenth century Italian life (XII 310-311). Meyer uses Ascanio and Germano to discuss the influence of astrologers on the court of Ezzelin. Germano explains:

Der gelehrte Guido Bonatti und Paul von Bagdad ... haben ihm ...
ein neues seltsames Sternbild einmütig folgendergestalt
enträtselt: in einer Kürze oder Länge wird ein Sohn der
Halbinsel die ungeteilte Krone derselben erringen mit Hilfe
eines germanischen Kaisers, der für sein Teil jenseits der
Gebirge alles Deutsche in einen harten Reichsapfel
zusammengeballt. Ist Friedrich dieser Kaiser? Ist der König
Ezzelin? Das weiß Gott, der Zeit und Stunde kennt, aber der
Gebierter hat darauf seinen Ruhm und unsere Köpfe gewettet (XII
39-40).

There is further mention of the stars: Astorre's astonishment at the power of the stars (XII 40); Ezzelin's comments regarding Astorre's fateful star (XII 25-26); Ezzelin's explanation of the three false prophets following their stars (XII 41); Ascanio looking toward the star-lit sky and breathing a sigh (XII 39); Diana's "Unstern" (XII

83).

Certain non-Christian symbols refer to classical antiquity, but are not fully developed. First is the comparison of Olympia Canossa and a "Mänade." In Roman mythology a maenad is "a female participant in the cult of Bacchus ... a frenzied raging woman" (Webster's New International Dictionary 1949 edition). There is also Germano's non-specific reference to a "Gottheit." In the matter regarding Ezzelin's resolution to the problem involving the Pizzaguerras and the Vicedominis, Germano is dissatisfied because his father accepted the mines instead of insisting on the honor of Diana. Germano says: "Vor Zeiten ... unter den blinden Heiden gab es eine Gottheit, welche gebrochene Treue rächte" (XII 89). It is unclear to which god/goddess Germano is referring, but it could be interpreted as the goddess Juno, the goddess of marriage (XII 314).

Non-Christian characters which play minor roles are the Jewish doctor, Isaschar, and the Saracen doctor, Abu Mohammed al-Tâbi. The Jewish doctor, like the Jewish character in Der Heilige, is a source of conflict in the Middle Ages. While the old father is dying, the doctor is by his side. Ezzelin asks Astorre why he protects the doctor against the anti-Semites (XII 26). The doctors of the time were often Jewish, and the persecution of Jews was apparently a common occurrence (XII 309). The doctor in Ezzelin's guard, Abu Mohammed, is probably used as a symbolic character because he is a Saracen, and the fact that Ezzelin's soldiers are either Saracens or Germans is perhaps because both are said to be indisputably true to their masters.

Therefore, the belief in Saracen loyalty still prevails. This extreme loyalty to the master, e.g. Becket and Gnade, has already been discussed in reference to Der Heilige.

Many of the non-Christian symbols in the novella are not obvious. One must consider the historical characters and background of the novella, as well as the symbols which Meyer carefully selects.

CHAPTER 7

ANGELA BORGIA

Meyer's final novella was completed in 1891. It is not, as the title suggests, simply the story of Angela Borgia; it treats several members of the Borgia family of the High Renaissance. Williams quotes letters from Meyer to Friedrich von Wyß and Hermann Haessel in which Meyer states that the "central nerve of the work is the contrast between a woman with too little conscience, Lucrezia, and one with too much, Angela" (169).

Lucrezia, Angela's cousin, is depicted as a woman who is condemned to failure, despite her efforts to overcome her past and resist the influences of her father, Pope Alexander, and her brother, Cäsar. She is aware that she will succumb to their wishes; however, she must betray her new husband, Duke Alfonso von Este. Angela is pursued by two of the duke's brothers: Cardinal Ippolito and Giulio. Although the cardinal may not marry until he resigns his position, he is obsessed with Angela. He is unwilling to resign his position, yet the thought of Angela with his younger, more rebellious brother, Giulio, is more than he can bear. In response to one of Ippolito's jealous rages, Angela praises Giulio's "wundervolle Augen" (XIV 54). It is this praise which causes Ippolito to send his henchmen to blind Giulio. After the crime is committed, Ippolito tries to defend himself against the accusation that he is responsible. Ippolito replies in an unnatural voice, "Nicht ich!... Das

Weib hat mich verführt!... Sie lobte deine Augen!" (XIV 54). Thereafter Angela feels that she has caused Giulio's blindness. She feels compelled to make restitution to Giulio, and after overcoming many obstacles, she is eventually able to marry him.

Many of the non-Christian symbols and characters in Angela Borgia do not follow any type of clear line but instead serve primarily as "intellectual imagery" (Laane 101). The classical references are easily interpreted, as they generally describe aspects of the character's personality. There is little written about the non-Christian character, the Persian merchant, Ben Emin. It is he who tells the "persische Legende" (XIV 50) of Christ who finds good in even the worst things. Once again there is a blending of non-Christian and Christian symbols and characters. This scene could be parallel to the scene in Der Heilige, when "he [Becket] addresses Christ in Arabic perhaps because Christ, too, was Oriental, perhaps because Arabic has been the language of his private devotion" (Walker 117). Perhaps it is because the tale is told from the perspective of another Oriental that Meyer chooses to have Ben Emin recount the story.

The classical allusions in this novella are fewer than in previous works. They are associated primarily with two characters: Lucrezia and Giulio. The most numerous comparisons to classical allusions are in reference to Lucrezia. Hansen quotes three letters from Meyer regarding his desire to change the historical character of Lucrezia as portrayed by Professor Gregorovius. Meyer writes: "Zwei große Frauen, die eine mit zuviel, die zweite mit zu wenig Gewissen, diese keine Geringere--noch

Bessere—als Lucrezia Borgia, die es mich bannte, den Professoren [Gregorovius] aus den Händen zu nehmen und in ihre authentische Frevel einzusetzen" (23). Assuming that most readers would be familiar with Lucrezia, Meyer does not fully explain her story; most of the historical information about Lucrezia is explained in the annotations. In the text there is evidence of her lack of conscience, for example, the scene where one of the four professors wonders how such a carefree being could have such a sordid past (XIV 5). Hansen comments further:

Daß Meyers Opposition zu Gregorovius nicht näher untersucht worden ist, ist um so erstaunlicher, als er, der große Ironiker, in der Einleitung der Novella nicht weniger als vier Professoren sich an einer Lösung des psychologischen Rätsels der Lucrezia versuchen läßt. Einer von ihnen, 'ein Mathematiker und Astrolog, hielt die Fürstin für ein natürliches Weib, das nur, durch maßlose Verhältnisse und den Einfluß seltsamer Konstellationen aus der Bahn getrieben, unter veränderten Sternen und in neuer Umgebung, den Lauf gewöhnlich Weiblichkeit einhalten werde'(XIV 5). Das ist der Standpunkt von Gregorovius (25).

Meyer does explain that Lucrezia is a rather opportunistic woman and that she is aware that she will yield to the temptation presented to her by her brother Cäsar. She wants to establish a new life with Alfonso, yet her past still haunts her. In the text Meyer describes Lucrezia as she rides through the welcome parade and contemplates her past: "Diese würde noch hinter ihr drohen und die Furienhaare schütteln, aber durfte nicht nach ihr greifen, wenn sie sich selbst nicht schauernd umwandte

und zurücksah und solche Kraft traute sie sich zu" (XIV 6).

This creates a complex portrait of Lucrezia. Of her motivations, it is implied in the text that her love and devotion to her family is her driving force. Burkhard notes that in the comparison between Lucrezia and the goddess Diana it is not clear whether it is meant ironically or as a consequence of the scene describing the forest (38). "Nun begab es sich an einem heißen Sommertage, daß aus dem Dunkel des Eichenwaldes ... auf weißem Zelter eine helle Waldfee mit ihren Gespielen, oder vielleicht Göttin Diana mit ihrem Jagdfolge, oder gar die erlauchte Donna Lucrezia mit ihren Frauen emporstieg und die Pforte klopfte" (XIV 12). Meyer then draws many parallels between Lucrezia and various mythological figures, simply for the images that they invoke. He compares Lucrezia and Alfonso to "Venus neben dem rußigen Vulcan" (XIV 13); Lucrezia's expression is likened to a "Medusenblick" (XIV 18); as Bembo mentions Lucrezia's love for her father and brother; once again her expression is compared to a "Meduse" (XIV 95), as she convinces Strozzi to ally with Cäsar; and she is equated with a "Danaide" (XIV 121) due to the guilt which she feels to be an unending cycle of damnation. Although not related to classical mythology, a nevertheless interesting analogy is made between the manner in which Lucrezia drinks her wine, as if "Lucrezia Menschenblut [trinke]" (XIV 101), while she tries to convince Alfonso not to kill Strozzi. Cooper asserts that "blood and wine are interchangeable symbols. Drinking blood is usually symbolic of enmity, but it can also absorb the power of the foe and render him harmless after death" (22). It was also thought that Ezzelin

drank blood in Die Hochzeit des Mönchs (XII 40).

Burkhard interprets the passage which describes the fettered Cupid as a scene rendered more powerful and direct because of the classical reference. In the scene there stands

in der Mitte auf einem verwitterten Marmor ein eherner Cupido, der sich mit zerrissenen Flügeln und verschütteten Pfeilen in Fessel wand. Dieses Bild sagte in der wunderbar freien Sprache des Jahrhunderts, daß für die verheiratete Lucrezia die Zeit der Leidenschaft vorüber sei, und hier in der Runde auf den Steinbänke pflegte die Gemahlin Herzog Alfonso im Sommer Hof zu halten (XIV 27).

Burkhard notes: "Die Figuren aus der antiken Götterwelt ermöglichen manche freie Aussage, die in nackten Worten allzu gewagt wäre" (38).

The second character with whom Meyer associates many classical allusions is Giulio. According to Walker, Giulio is "a Hellenist, 'ein in der Sonne Atmender' [XIV 54], a pagan, however of a more sensualist variety" (121). Meyer draws parallels between Giulio's debauchery and the god Bacchus. Giulio describes one of his orgiastic events as

ein klassisches Bacchusfest.... Du hättest nur die Coramba mit ihrem wilden Reizen als Ariande sehen sollen! Trage ich vielleicht die Schuld, daß die Krönung der Ariadne durch den Mißverstand meiner Bauern in den Raub der Sabinerinnen und in centaurischen Mord und Totschlag ausartete? (XIV 28).

It is often the case with Meyer's characters that they experience some sort of dream or hypnotic trance in which a revelation or a truth

manifests itself. Giulio also experiences a type of dream in which he imagines:

Zuerst versank der Müde in eine traumlose Tiefe, Vergessen schlüpfend in langen, durstigen Zügen; dann öffnete sich langsam sein inneres Auge, und daran vorüber eilte, aufdämmernd, eine flüchtige Jagd, ein hastiges Gedränge bacchischer Erscheinungen, rasende Körper, rücklings geworfene Häupter, geschwungene Zimbeln, Pauke und Evoeschrei. Horch in weiter Ferne, aus anderer Richtung, zuerst kaum hörbar, dann schwer anschwellend, dröhnende Posaunen (XIV 34).

It is also interesting to note here the symbolism of the eye which, associated with Giulio, plays a major role in the novella. Through this dream it is first revealed to Giulio that some evil fate will befall him because of his hedonism. Meyer also takes this opportunity to disclose to the reader the plot which is to unfold in the novella in much the same manner as he uses Stemma's dream in Die Richter. Giulio himself makes various allusions to classical mythology, which serve to exemplify his Hellenistic tendencies. Laane maintains that "the bacchanalian analogies in his own speeches at first express his hollowness and disgust with the world.... After he is blinded, such images of wine, blood and bacchanalian frenzy give way to metaphorical language that underlines his childlike helplessness and renewed innocence" (46-47). The following examples are found in the text: he compares Lucrezia to "die Göttin der Gerechtigkeit" (XIV 15 and 28) and Angela to "die Göttin der Huld" (XIV 15); he claims that he is too young to hold "die heilige

Waage der Themis" (XIV 39); he refers to Strozzi, saying "armer Ixion"¹, du umschlingst statt der Göttin die Wolke" (XIV 41), as he comments on Strozzi's ardor for Lucrezia; and he vows "bei Bacchus ... Das Mädchen ist mir so gleichgültig wie die Göttin Diana" (XIV 45), when Ippolito confronts him with his affection for Angela.

There are further mythological allusions which are made but not fully developed in relation to a particular characters; however, they are seemingly employed only for the "intellectual imagery" (Laane 101). Cäsar's escape for his Spanish prison cell for instance is described as if he were "aus dem Orcus"² gestiegen" (XIV 19); Ippolito tells Angela that his tormented passion for her is like "das Rad des Ixion" (XIV 23); Lucrezia describes Ariost's face as they meet saying, "Man sieht ... daß Ihr aus dem Strahlenkreis der Musen kommt, so licht is Euer Antlitz" (XIV 25); "Nemesis" is mentioned in regard to Giulio's hatred for humanity shortly following his blindness (XIV 59); Angela is compared to an "Amazone" (XIV 63); Angela sees Giulio's face and describes it, noting, "die Stunde des Pan träumte auf seinen Zügen" (XIV 65); Cäsar's attacks on the battlements are like that of "der Blitz des Jupiters" (XIV 95); "die tragische Muse" seems to have visited the house of von Este (XIV 111); and Father Mamette swears "bei dem Gericht der Unterwelt

1. The mythological king who was in love with the goddess Hera, Zeus's wife. Zeus created a cloud image of Hera in order to trick Ixion. He was then condemned to a fiery wheel in the underworld (XIV 419 and 421).

2. The mythological underworld (Meyer, Sämtliche Werke Band 1 934).

und der Nachtwelt" that Giulio shall be released (XIV 118). Another symbol that could be interpreted as a mythological allusion is the ferry man who brings Giulio across the river (XIV 64). This is similar to the scene in Die Hochzeit des Mönchs, in which the boat trip could represent a new beginning. It is here that Angela decides that she does love Giulio, although he rejects her.

Dragon or snake images are also a part of Meyer's blending of non-Christian and Christian symbols. The image of a snake is perhaps one of Meyer's most recurrent symbols. Already seen in Die Richterin, Die Hochzeit des Mönchs, and Der Heilige, the snake can have various interpretations, both Christian and non-Christian. In Angela Borgia it is a symbol of evil. As a first example, it is often mentioned in connection to Lucrezia. One of the professors wonders "ob auf dem unheimlichen, mit Schlangen gefüllten Hintergrunde einer solchen Vergangenheit ein so frohes und sorgenloses Geschöpf eine menschliche Möglichkeit wäre" (XIV 6). It is also associated with Kratzkralle, who "wie eine Schlange" crawls out of bushes to follow Ippolito's instructions and blind Giulio (XIV 52). The snake and dragon are often interchangeable in many Eastern religions. The dragon image, like the snake, is a sign of evil, which is most often associated with Cäsar, e.g. whose possible escape is described as his "Drachenkraft" (XIV 19). This symbolism is perhaps explained in the following interpretation: "Dragons, as monsters, are autochthonous 'masters of the ground', against which heroes, conquerors and creators must fight for mastery or occupation of the land" (Cooper 55).

Little has been written of Ben Emin, who tells the "persische Legende." Here Meyer blends a non-Christian character with a Christian legend. Ben Emin has been entertaining the courtiers in the garden near the statue of Cupid. He tells a story, not, as Alfonso has surmised, of Friedrich Barbarossa, Friedrich II, or Charlemagne and the Caliph of Baghdad, rather of Christ finding a positive aspect in something which most would regard as undeserving. Lucrezia recounts the story for the duke and then applies the analogy to her own situation, which causes her to weep. This "persisches Märchen" serves yet another purpose. Weishaar categorizes Ben Emin as "den persischen Teppichhändler ... dessen orientalische Christuslegende der Anlaß zur Blendung Giulios wird" (47). Ippolito offends Angela when he remarks, "Der Narazener fand an dem ekeln Aase noch etwas Schönes, an dem Hunde Don Giulio hätte er es nicht gefunden" (XIV 52). After his insult, Angela errs by praising Giulio's eyes. This sends Ippolito into a rage which leads to Giulio's blinding. Therefore, Ben Emin's story could be interpreted as one of the causes of Giulio's blindness.

This was Meyer's last major work due to his failing health. Although it contains relatively few examples of non-Christian symbols and characters, Meyer still included some allusions to classical mythology. It seems that Meyer employs them because the novella takes place during the Renaissance, a time when Hellenism and foreign influences flourished.

CHAPTER 8

JÜRGEN JENATSCH; GUSTAV ADOLFS PAGE;
DAS LEIDEN EINES KNABEN;
DIE VERSUCHUNG DES PESCARA

Discussed in this chapter are the four novellas containing the fewest examples of non-Christian symbolism. Jürg Jenatsch, which was actually begun much earlier, was published in 1874. Jenatsch was the legendary Swiss hero from the Thirty-Years' War. Gustav Adolfs Page, Meyer's 1882 novella, treats the history of King Gustav Adolf of Sweden and his page. Das Leiden eines Knaben appeared in 1883; here is presented the story of the "murder" of a young boy, Julian Bouffler, by the Jesuit priests at the time of Louis XIV. Die Versuchung des Pescara, 1887, is the novella in which Pescara, while dying of a side wound, is presented with a tempting offer to become the savior of Italy by betraying his Emperor.

JÜRGEN JENATSCH

After many years of revisions, Meyer's Jürg Jenatsch was published. It contains few non-Christian symbols, perhaps because of the historical period in which this story occurs. This novella takes place during the Thirty Years' War and treats the legendary hero of Graubünden, Jürg Jenatsch. Most of the examples of non-Christian symbolism which are incorporated into the novella are extracted from

Greek and Roman mythology. Burkhard states, "Anspielungen auf die antike Mythologie finden sich nur selten" and that the allusions which are mentioned "besitzen lediglich den Wert geblümter Redensarten" (14).

Two such examples cited by Burkhard are: Grimani's bitterly referring to himself as the mythological fortune teller "Kassandro," and the reference to the Bündners as the "Söhne des Mars" (14). In the text Grimani states further, "Nicht Apollo aber hat mich zum Seher gemacht, sondern ein enttäuschter Geist und ein erkältetes Gemüt" (X 133). There is also a slight variation in Burkhard's statement from that of the text; it reads:

Im Gegensatz zu der gedrückten Stimmung auf der anderen Seite der Gasse unter den Söhnen der Themis, herrschte hier unter den Kindern des Mars eine frische und beherzte, der sie sich unbefangen überließen, da sie sahen, daß der bündnerische Diktator zur Verabschiedung seines Opfers nicht erschiene (X 221).

Laane posits that the characters are compared with mythological figures that link them to certain traits or characteristics and that extending the image adds visual impact. This is exemplified by the idea that Jenatsch's betrayal stares at him like the head of the Medusa (X 235) (Laane 100). Further mythological allusions which are used for purposes of embellishment but possess no deeper meaning are references to Klio (X 232), the muse of history, and Justitia (X 257), the goddess of law (Webster's 1949 edition).

In Jenatsch's dream astrology and magic also play minor roles. In his dream he envisions that in Chur there is a Hungarian astrologer and sorcerer practicing his arts. Jenatsch forces the sorcerer to tell his future, in which he sees a map of Bünden, mild and pale, and Count Heinrich Rohan (X 54). The fact that a cleric would resort to consulting an astrologer is somewhat problematic. In the annotations it states that the historic Jenatsch had consulted an astrologer: "Vor Jahren hatte er (Jenatsch) 'einem deutschen Medico von Kaiserstuhl ein Prognastikum ausgepreßt, der ihm [sic] gesagt, daß er eines gewaltigen Todes sterben würde'" (X 386).

There is another connection to this non-Christian concept of magic. Rudolf Wertmüller appears in a smaller role than in Der Schuß von der Kanzel; nevertheless, his early character development has a significant impact on the later novella's character. Wertmüller is already beginning to offend the public opinion with his free thinking and his knowledge of the surreptitious sciences. The people are highly suspicious of him and consider him a "Hexenmeister." Vitt-Maucher notes, "Kraft seines forschenden Geistes also und seiner fortschrittlichen Kenntnisse (Züge, die skizzenhaft im Jenatsch-Roman angelegt waren: X 194 und 250) wird Wertmüller bereits zu Lebzeit zu einer halb gefürchteten, halb verehrten Sagengestalt, ähnlich wie Jenatsch (X 212)" (117).

While Wertmüller is in Zürich, the people regard him with reservation and mistrust believing "Sei es ihm gelungen ... durch allerlei physikalischen Hokusfokus, der ihn dem freilichen törichten

Verdachte der Zauberei aussetzte, bei dem gemeinen Manne unheimliche Furcht zu erregen" (250). It states in the text that he was known for his "Kartenkünste und Zauberstücke, die dem Locotenenten in den untersten Schichten seines Wirkungskreise den ernstgemeinten Ruf eines Hexenmeisters eintrugen" (X 194). Meyer bases Wertmüller on an actual historical character; however, he conceives and exaggerates the notion of Wertmüller's mysterious and eccentric behavior.

DAS LEIDEN EINES KNABEN

Meyer once again uses the frame story technique in his 1883 novella Das Leiden eines Knaben. Williams asserts that Meyer used an anecdote by Saint-Simon as the inspiration for the novella, yet the protagonist, Julian Bouffler, is in many respects quite similar to Meyer himself (71). Little non-Christian symbolism is used in this novella; the names of mythological gods and goddesses are used primarily as signs of classical education and they remain undeveloped. In one key scene, however, Meyer uses an image of Pentheus, mythological king of Thebes who was torn to pieces by his mother and sisters, to prefigure the fate of Julian (Webster's 1949 edition). He sets the frame story at the court of King Louis XIV. Dr. Fagon is the narrator of the frame story to the king and Frau von Maintenon. Fagon tells the king that he should not trust his new confessor, Père Tellier, who is a Jesuit priest. It is because of Tellier that the simple-minded young boy, Julian Bouffler, died due to complications

from the beating he received from Tellier. The Jesuit fathers hate Julian's father; therefore, they take their revenge on Julian while he is attending the Jesuit college. Julian is a below average student; however, he is a gifted artist.

One of the most important non-Christian symbols contained in this novella is a drawing made by Julian which foreshadows his fate. The drawing depicts the intricate sketch of a bee, yet beneath it, Fagon notices another sketch by Julian's friend, the artist Mouton. Fagon studies Mouton's picture

welches die wunderliche Parodie einer ovidischen Szene enthielt: jener, wo Pentheus rennt, von Mänaden gejagt, und Bacchus, der grausame Gott, um den Flüchtenden zu verderben, ein senkrechtes Gebirge vor ihm in die Höhe wachsen läßt. Wahrscheinlich hatte Mouton den Knaben, der zuweilen seinen Aufgaben in der Malkammer oblag, die Verse Ovids mühselig genug übersetzen hören und daraus seinen Stoff geschöpft. Ein Jüngling, unverkennbar Julian ... ein schlanker Renner, floh, den Kopf mit einem Ausdrücke tödlicher Angst nach ein paar ihm nachjagenden Gespenstern umgewendet. Keine Bacchantinnen, Weiber, ohne Alter, verkörperte Vorstellungen ... eines dieser Scheusale trug einen langen Jesuitenhut auf dem geschorenen Schädel und einen Folianten in der Hand--und erst die Felswand, wüst und unerklimmbar, die vor ihm zu wachsen schien, wie ein finsternes Schicksal! (XII 135).

With this example Fagon plainly illustrates Julian's fate. Burkhard

interprets Mouton's sketch of Pentheus as "eine intuitive Erfassung von Julians Situation" (31). Williams maintains that the story of Julian's suffering is a representation of Meyer's own lost childhood (71). Similarly, Burkhard notes that "Die Verschlüsselung von Julians Leiden im Bild des gehetzten Pentheus ermöglicht es Meyer, überhaupt von diesen Dingen, die im Grunde die Qualen seiner eigenen Jugend sind, zu sprechen" (41).

Examples of the non-Christian symbols which are not developed are the steer worship of the ancient Egyptians, which Julian explains to Mouton (XII 125); Amor and Psyche used as descriptions of Julian and Mirabelle (XII 134); flying horses which drive the carriage (XII 143); Argenson's statement that he would rather drag Cerberus out of hell than take Tellier to Versailles (XII 152). Meyer does not use many non-Christian symbols in this novella, apparently because he is trying focus on the suffering and sympathy for Julian.

GUSTAV ADOLFS PAGE

Completed in 1882, Gustav Adolfs Page tells the story of Gustel Leubelfing, who exchanges places with her cousin, August Leubelfing, in order to become the page for King Gustav Adolf. Burkhard maintains: "Begreiflicherweise hat die antike Mythologie in der Umgebung des grossen christlichen Helden wenig Platz" (24). Although the classical allusions used in this novella are not abundant, they are employed quite skillfully by Meyer. He describes the scene in

which the plan is formed to send Gustel as the page instead of August. Gustel first teases August saying, "Wir wollen dich ... wie den jungen Achill im Bildwerk am Ofen dort unter die Mädchen stecken, und wenn der listige Ulysses vor ihnen das Kriegszeug ausbreitet, wirst du nicht auf ein Schwert losspringen?" (XI 172-173). August becomes quite disturbed by Gustel's treatment and replies, "Weißt du was ... gehe du als Page zu dem König! Er wird, bubenhaft wie du aussiehst und dich beträgst, das Mädchen in dir ebenso wenig vermuten, als der Ulysses am Ofen von dem du fabelst, in mir den Buben erraten hätte!" (XI 173). As soon as the words leave August's mouth, Gustel begins to seriously consider the idea of taking his place. Gustel felt a strong sense of loyalty, almost love, toward King Gustav Adolf ever since she was a small child. She certainly does not want her father's name to be ridiculed because of her cousin's cowardice and her uncle's concern for the family business; and thus she decides to go. Here Meyer compares Achilles and Ulysses, who masquerade as girls, and Gustel, who masquerades as a boy. It is not explained in the text whether Gustav Adolf does indeed know that Gustel is not a boy; however, certain reactions by the king, such as the way he strokes her hair and the way he speaks to her, might lead one to this conclusion.

When the Swedish cornet comes for August, Gustel's uncle, out of fear for his son and the business, falls before her, "machte eine Bewegung, die Kniee seiner Nichte zu umfassen, nicht anders als um den Körper seines Sohnes bittend der greise Priamus die Kniee Achills umarmte" (174). Here is the last reference to classical antiquity in

the novella, and the comparison between Gustel's uncle and Priamus is an ironic one. Burkhard notes, "Ob die Angst des Vaters um den Sohn auch verständlich ist, so scheint in ihm doch der Geschäftssinn denjenigen für Ehre und Würde zu beweisen, so daß ihn der Vergleich mit Priamus, der um seinen toten Sohn trauert, in noch schlechteres Licht rückt" (25).

DIE VERSUCHUNG DES PESCARA

Meyer's 1877 novella, Die Versuchung des Pescara, occurs in the Italian Renaissance "which he [Meyer] loved" (Williams 143). Pescara, the general of the Imperial army at the battle of Pavia in 1525, is as enigmatic a character as Becket in Der Heilige. Chancellor Morone, Francesco Sforza's minister, attempts to entice Pescara to leave the Imperial army and join the League of Italian States, in order to combine forces against Charles V of France. Contrary to the title, Pescara is not tempted to betray the Emperor. The reasons for his refusal of the temptation remain in question: perhaps he is truly loyal to the Emperor or perhaps it is due to the fact that he is dying, and in his opinion, Italy does not deserve to become an independent nation. Although Pescara's motivation remains equivocal, he does not succumb to Morone's enviable proposal, despite the lack of a deserving reward given his victory at Pavia. Meyer adumbrates Pescara's death by allowing the reader a vital piece of information--Pescara has received a fatal wound to the side. Pescara's

wound is in exactly the same place as Christ on the cross, and Pescara is often associated with him. The comparison between the protagonist and Christ is another similarity to Der Heilige.

There are surprisingly few non-Christian symbols for a Renaissance novella by Meyer; nevertheless, he employs references from classical antiquity as non-Christian symbols, most of which are used simply to decorate the language of the classically educated nobility. One example of a non-Christian symbol which is used for another purpose is the fresco of Bacchus. In the beginning of the novella the Duke Sforza, in order to avoid the distressing financial situation in Italy, looks away from his books and regards two frescoes. The first is that of Bacchus with his servants, and the second is Christ feeding the multitudes in the desert. The two frescoes respectively represent the non-Christian and Christian influences in the Renaissance. Illustrated here again is the combination of the non-Christian and Christian symbolism. Burkhard asserts that they are "oberflächliche, spielerisch gemeinte Parallelen" (36) and Plater maintains that the bacchanalian fresco is "merely a mythological allusion ... it has little functional value ... [and] it reflects the moral and intellectual atmosphere of the historical period" ("The Banquet of Life" 97).

Plater places greater emphasis on the fresco of Christ and the parallels between Christ and Pescara. This is not the first example where Meyer has portrayed his non-Christian symbol in a work of art, e.g., the caryatid in Das Amulett; the Greek statues in Der Heilige;

the statue of Cupid in Angela Borgia; the painting of the "Türkin" in Der Schuß von der Kanzel; the statue of Marc Aurel in Die Richterin. The reason that Meyer so often expresses the non-Christian symbols through art works is probably because "he was humanistically educated and thoroughly familiar with ancient mythology and art, both from studies of Roman and Greek writers, and from studies of the Renaissance" (Laane 99-100).

The allusions which Burkhard describes as purely decorated with rhetorical ornamentation (34) are the references to Helena (XIII 268) and to the Pope's idea as being formed like Athena from Zeus's forehead (XIII 272). Other allusions which are briefly mentioned are: the god Mars (XIII 163); the riddle of the Sphinx (XIII 273); Achilles (XIII 176); Hades (XIII 193); Hercules (XIII 236); the fields of the underworld (XIII 248). Laane also refers to "the letters of betrayal [which] dance around in bacchanalian circles like naked, threatening and tempting figures" (XIII 173) (102).

Non-Christian symbolism does not play a significant role in this novella as compared to others such as Der Schuß von der Kanzel, Das Amulett, Die Richterin, or Der Heilige. However, the function of the art works in these novellas is more substantial than in Die Versuchung des Pescara. It seems that following Der Heilige the usage of non-Christian symbolism becomes decreasingly important. Even in a novella which takes place in the Renaissance, such as Die Versuchung des Pescara, the function of non-Christian symbols seems to be simple metaphorical adornment.

CONCLUSION

The novellas have been shown to contain numerous non-Christian symbols and characters which are important to the interpretation. Most non-Christian elements are allusions to classical antiquity. Those referring to Islam and animism are the second most prevalent. The fewest non-Christian elements are those which refer to mysticism and, finally, to Judaism. They sometimes have a minor impact on the novella, particularly when they serve to enhance the language of the intelligentsia, as illustrated in Der Schuß von der Kanzel, Plautus im Nonnenkloster, Die Versuchung des Pescara, and Angela Borgia.

The non-Christian elements also play more extensive roles. In Der Heilige, for instance, they create the inner turmoil in Becket, and in Die Hochzeit des Mönchs the symbolism associated with Diana is critical to the interpretation of her character. In Die Richterin Meyer illustrates how important non-Christian symbols were to the people. It is through the allegory of the river goddess and the caryatid in Das Amulett that Meyer expresses his opinion about conflicts among Christians. In both Gustav Adolfs Page and Das Leiden eines Knaben Meyer converts non-Christian symbols into prefigurations of the plots. Even in the novella Jürg Jenatsch it is important to note that although there is little non-Christian symbolism, there are still examples to be found. In novellas such as Plautus im Nonnenkloster, Der Heilige, and to a lesser degree in Angela Borgia Meyer blends Christian and non-Christian elements. It has been shown

that the many types of non-Christian symbols and characters are used purposefully and that they do indeed function efficaciously within the novellas.

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VITA

Karen Jill Simpson was born in Knoxville, Tennessee on February 9, 1965. In June 1983, she graduated from Halls High School in Knoxville. From September 1983 to June 1987, Ms. Simpson studied at The University of Tennessee in Knoxville. From June 1986 to August 1986, she studied at the Goethe Institut in Iserlohn, Germany and from September 1987 to August 1988 she studied at Philipps Universität in Marburg, Germany. In December 1988, she received a Bachelor of Arts degree in German from The University of Tennessee. In January 1989, she began her graduate studies toward a Master of Arts in German at The University of Tennessee. While in that program, she also worked as a teaching assistant in the Department of Germanic and Slavic Languages. The Master's degree was awarded in December, 1990.

Ms. Simpson is a member of Delta Phi Alpha and the recipient of the Kind and Maria Harris scholarships. After graduation, she will continue study in Stuttgart, Germany.