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THE FABULOUS BEINGS IN THE "DIETRICH EPICS"

A Thesis

Presented for the

Master of Arts

Degree

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

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December 1991

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Dr. David E. Lee and Dr. C. J. Mellor for their interest and assistance, and Dr. Henry Kratz for his patience and guidance. Also, I would like to thank my father, Dennis Roger Shockley, without whom this work could not have been completed.

ABSTRACT

The fabulous beings in the Dietrichepen, German epic poems from the mid-thirteenth century loosely based on the life of Theodoric the Great, are investigated in this thesis. Giants, dwarfs, and dragons in Virginal, Goldemar, Sigenot, Eckenlied, and Laurin are prominent in the so-called "märchenhafte Epen," which are far removed from historical events.

Although there are exceptions, in general giants are depicted as being hostile and stupid, while dwarfs are clever and tricky, and possessed of great wealth and valuable devices, such as the tarnkappe, which bestows invisibility upon its wearer. Dragons are the embodiment of evil. These fabulous beings serve to test the nettle of Dietrich and his companions, and odd variety to their adventures.

As the anonymous authors of these works must have gotten their knowledge of these beings from Germanic folk tradition, for comparison their occurrence in the Elder Edda and Grimm's Märchen was also investigated. Parallels as well as differences between these beings and those in the Dietrichepen are pointed out.

Despite the differences due to the distances in time and space, there are striking similarities in all three sources.

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis will investigate the role of the fabulous beings in the so-called Dietrich epics (Dietrichepen), anonymous Middle High German narrative poems called folk epics from the mid-thirteenth century that are based loosely on the life of Theoderich the Great, known in these works as Dietrich von Bern (Verona). There are three types of fabulous beings involved: giants, dwarfs, and dragons. An attempt will also be made to compare these beings with their counterparts in Germanic folklore which must have served as their models.

Theodoric the Great (454-526), was an Ostrogoth, the son of Theodemer, who served Attila in 453. The following year, Attila died, and Theodemer led a successful revolt against the Huns. His brother Valamer served as King and the two led the Ostrogoths into Moesia in 473. The same year Theodemer succeeded his brother as King, being succeeded by his son in 475 (Gillespie, 25). In legend, Theodoric is associated with Attila, King of the Huns, Etzel in Middle High German, who in fact died the year before Theodoric's birth. The association is probably due to the one-time allegiance between Goths and Huns (McClintock, 100-101).

As a youth, Theodoric was sent to the court of Emperor Leo at Constantinople where he remained from 461-472. Theodoric grew close to Emperor Leo and became his consul in 478. In 475, Theodoric succeeded his father as King of the Ostrogoths and conducted many campaigns in the Balkans against Theodoric Strabo and the East Roman Sabinianus. After many battles and much wandering, the Ostrogoths allied themselves with Emperor Zeno. Twice in 489, Theodoric marched into Italy and defeated

the usurper Odoacer at Isonzo and Verona (Bern in the Middle High German epics). In legend, Odoacer has been replaced by Ermenrich who, in historical terms, was an Ostrogothic King who died in 376. Tufa, a general who had campaigned with Odoacer, defected to the Ostrogoths. However, his move was steeped in deceit. At Faventia, Tufa presented Odoacer with a huge Gothic force which drove Theodoric away from Ravenna (Raben). However, with the aid of the Visigoths, Theodoric once again forced Odoacer out of Ravenna after a three year siege. In 493, it was decreed that Theodoric and Odoacer should rule Italy jointly. However, on the fifteenth of March Theodoric murdered his rival and ordered his family and followers to be slaughtered. For years, he reigned peacefully, although there was constant religious strife and hostilities with the Franks. Around the age of 72, Theodoric died in Ravenna in 526. After his death he was labeled as demonic and anti-Christian. His body was removed from its tomb in Ravenna because the king never resigned his Arian faith. Theodoric's exhumation and the legends of his association with demons more than likely stem from the fact that he did not embrace Catholicism (Gillespie, 30-31). Thus, the Dietrichepen are at least loosely based on historical fact, as were some of their parallels, such as the tales of King Arthur and Charlemagne. These legends gave Germanic peoples a hero with whom they could identify, a figure exalted throughout the Germanic lands (Heinzle, 34).

The Dietrichepen can be divided into three groups:

1. Dietrichs Flucht, Rabenschlacht. Alpharts Tod;
2. Goldemar, Eckenlied. Sigenot, Virginal, Laurin, Rosengarten;
3. Biterolf and Dietleib.

The first division is loosely based on historical fact and deals with Dietrich's exile, a great battle, and the death of Alphart. The six epics contained in the second division are often referred to as "die märchenhaften Dietrichepin" (Gottzman, 1987, 137). Within this division, giants, dwarfs, and dragons appear frequently. The final division has often been referred to as the Rosengartendichtungen. The two epics in this division combine characters from the Nibelungenlied and the Dietrichepen. The heroes from the two sources battle each other in a rose garden.

"Die märchenhaften Dietrichepen" first appear in manuscript in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries (Heinzle, 40-44. It is certain that Goldemar was composed in the first half of the thirteenth century because it is the only poem in this division that contains the author's name, Albrecht von Kemanaten. He was known to have worked in the first half of the thirteenth century; therefore it is safe to assume the approximate date of the work (Heinzle, 40-44). The Eckenlied is believed to have turned up in manuscript around the same time as Albrecht's work, while the others are believed to have been transcribed either at the end of the thirteenth century or at the beginning of the fourteenth. Heinzle theorizes that these works originate from Tyrol as a result of certain characters and dialects present in the poems. Besides the later appearance of the manuscripts, this second division is distinguished by the fact that Dietrich and company have to deal with unnatural beings.

In Virginal (also known as Dietrich und seine Gesellen, Dietrichs Drachenkämpfe, and Dietrichs erste Ausfahrt) Dietrich and Hildebrand

venture into wilderness in order to seek adventure. Their first adventure is the defeat of the Saracen Orkise and his men, who have laid siege to the domain of Queen Virginal. A young girl, who thanks them for helping her queen, invites them to Virginal's court in Jeraspunt. As they travel, the two heroes slay dragons and free the Knight Rentwin who was trapped inside the mouth of a dragon. They then travel to Arona, where they are to be greeted and thanked by Rentwin's parents, Helferich and Portalaphe. The knights rest in Arona until Virginal's messenger Bibung arrives to inquire about their plans. A large contingent from Arona prepares to travel to Jeraspunt while Dietrich departs early. He loses his way and encounters a giant called Wicram. The giant overpowers him and takes him to the court of Prince Nitger in Muter. Nitger's daughter Ibelin becomes angry when the prince's giants mistreat Dietrich. She sends her messenger to alert Hildebrand of his pupil's predicament. Hildebrand and many others at Arona hasten to Muter to rescue Dietrich. In the meantime, Dietrich slays a giant who challenges him. The giant is the son of Wicram, and the father demands retribution. Hildebrand arrives in time, and the giants are defeated in eleven individual duels. As a result of his actions, Nitger must pay Dietrich a fee to retain his land. The victors continue to try to reach Jeraspunt. Once again, giants and dragons delay their arrival. Again, they are victorious, and the entourage eventually reaches Virginal's domain. They are welcomed to Jeraspunt with celebration and feasts. However, their stay is brief because Dietrich learns that Bern (Verona) is under siege.

Goldemar, the only epic whose author is known, is retained only in a fragmented form. It begins with Dietrich discovering a beautiful girl amongst dwarfs in a mountain kingdom. As Dietrich approaches, a dwarf-King, Goldemar, tries to conceal the girl behind him. This enrages the knight who demands the dwarf step aside. Other dwarfs whisk the girl away, which only compounds Dietrich's anger. As Dietrich and Goldemar exchange warnings, the manuscript ends. However, in the Anhang des Heldenbuches, it is stated that the beautiful girl is Hertelin, daughter of the King of Portugal. The notation also reports that Dietrich wins the girl from the dwarf-King and eventually marries her (von Keller, A., 8).

In Sigenot, Dietrich is once again taken captive by a giant. He is traveling through the wilderness when he happens upon the sleeping giant Sigenot. Dietrich insults the giant in a cave where dragons dwell. Then, Sigenot plans to defeat Hildebrand when the two meet in the forest. However, the wise, old warrior is able to defeat yet another gigantic foe. With the aid of a dwarf and a ladder, Hildebrand successfully rescues Dietrich just before the dragons arrive on the scene.

Eckenlied involves a young giant sent out by a queen to find Dietrich. If Ecke can bring the knight back to Jochgrimm, Queen Seburg has promised him his choice of three queens. Ecke wants a bride and he wants to impress the queen by fulfilling her wishes. Also, he has heard his brothers Fasold and Ebenrot speak of brave Dietrich. The giant also wishes to prove his worth in battle by defeating the knight and bringing him back to Jochgrimm. Ecke is aided in his search for Dietrich by a hermit, a wounded knight, and Hildebrand, who still wants Dietrich to be

challenged so that he can gain experience and fame. The two meet in a Tyrolian forest where Ecke tries to entice a reluctant Dietrich into battle. Ecke's continual verbal assaults bait the hero into battle. Verbal taunts and challenges are quite common in all the Dietrichepen. Before many of the battles take place, knights, giants, and dwarfs taunt each other perhaps to intimidate their opponent. This motif of the "taunting adversary" is common in numerous folklores (Mason, passim, 1976). Ecke initially takes the upper hand, but Dietrich soon recovers and subdues the giant. He demands Ecke pay him homage, but the giant refuses and begs Dietrich to behead him as proof that he fought valiantly. Reluctantly, he carries out the giant's last wish. Dietrich now sets out for Jochgrimm to find Queen Seburg. On the way, he encounters two women who tell him that his future will be difficult and dangerous, but they say that he will prevail. They also apply a healing salve to the wounds inflicted upon him by Ecke. Rested, Dietrich continues to travel to Jochgrimm. One by one, he encounters and defeats members of Ecke's family. He first meets Fasold, who is forcing a girl to marry him, while the giant also makes dwarfs serve him against their will. Dietrich defeats Fasold, forcing him to swear that he will now serve him. The young girl and the dwarfs are freed as a result of the knight's victory. Dietrich and his new servant, Fasold, continue traveling until they meet Ecke's other brother, Eckenot. He becomes enraged when his brother tells him that Ecke has been killed by Dietrich. Eckenot attacks but is vanquished by the knight. Next, Ecke's mother is killed when she attacks Dietrich, who is wearing some of Ecke's armor and clothes, which further angers the giants. The poem ends with

Ecke's sister Uodelgart being the next to try to avenge her brother's death. This manuscript ends with Dietrich grasping the giantess by the hair, ready to inflict the telling blow. From other manuscripts, we learn that Dietrich does indeed slay her.

In Laurin, Dietrich and Witege are challenged by Hildebrand to enter the rose garden of the powerful dwarf-King Laurin. He tells the two knights that Laurin vows to take the right foot and left hand from anyone who trespasses on his garden. The two accept the challenge and ride out to find Laurin. When they find the rose garden, they break the silk and gold thread which forms its borders. Once in the garden, their horses trample the roses. Not long thereafter, Laurin arrives, demanding payment for the destruction of his garden. Witege is ready to fight the dwarf, but Dietrich is once again reluctant. Witege attacks the dwarf, who makes short work of the knight. This angers Dietrich, who now confronts the dwarf, but he is at a disadvantage as a result of the numerous magical items which give Laurin strength as well as the ability to become invisible. Hildebrand, Wolfhart, and Dietleib arrive at the rose garden. Dietrich's mentor advises him what to do in order to defeat the dwarf. This advice works, and Dietrich prepares to kill the dwarf who has embarrassed them by defeating Witege in battle. Laurin pleads to Dietleib for his life because Künhild, sister of Dietleib, has been a guest at his court. Dietleib asks that the dwarf be spared, but revenge-minded Dietrich refuses the request. Dietleib orders Laurin to be taken into the forest and hidden there. This act leads to a short battle between Dietrich and Dietleib. Before the conflict becomes too intense, others intercede to ask the knights

to reconcile. An agreement is reached, and Laurin is spared. The dwarf asks that they all be his guests at his residence where they shall be greeted with celebration and feasts. The entourage, including a reluctant Dietrich and Hildebrand, travel to Laurin's court where they are welcomed by Künhild. Dietleib inquires about her welfare. She tells him that she has not been taken or kept against her will, but she still wants to leave because the dwarfs are pagan. Laurin does not want to lose Künhild; therefore he must act quickly. First, he tricks Dietleib into a cell, then he drugs Dietrich, Hildebrand, and the others. All are imprisoned in a cell, while Laurin tries to convince Dietleib to join his ranks. Of course, he refuses the dwarf's offer, and his sister soon learns of Laurin's deceit and frees her brother. Dietleib intends to free the other knights, but he must first fight several dwarfs who have heard the knight toss the weapons into the cell of his comrades. Künhild also helps in freeing the others, who quickly race to Dietleib's aid. By relieving Laurin of his magical items, and with the aid of Witege's and Wolfhart's swords Nagelrinc and Mimminc, the knights are able to defeat an army of dwarfs and giants who have aligned themselves with Laurin. Again, Laurin is spared. This time Künhild asks Dietrich to spare him and he agrees only because Künhild was instrumental in their rescue. Dietrich hands over the kingdom to a dwarf he trusts, Sintram. Laurin is taken prisoner, and the entourage returns to Bern. At Dietrich's court, Laurin is ridiculed and shamed. Künhild has left him, and he has also lost his kingdom. The ruler of Bern decides to take mercy on the dwarf. He tells Laurin that he may return his kingdom to him, if the dwarf swears him his allegiance and studies and embraces the ways of

Christianity. The poem ends with Laurin promising Dietrich that he will abide by his demands.

I. GIANTS, DWARFS, AND DRAGONS IN THE DIETRICHEPEN

Giants

The three types of fabulous beings encountered in the Dietrichepen, each in its own way, represent great dangers to be overcome. The primary function of giants is the representation of conflict. The reasons for conflict may generally be rescue, revenge, or pride. The character of the giants is also responsible for conflicts: giants are malevolent creatures sworn to oppose mankind. Finally, giants provide Dietrich and his companions with opponents larger than life. In defeating horrific giants, the heroic qualities of the knights are exalted to even higher planes.

In Virginal, Dietrich is unfortunate enough to encounter the giant Wicram. The giant despises the knight, and begins to insult him in character with the taunting adversary:

> 'Jô, ist daz diu sorge dîn
> daz du dienest Künigîn
> und anderen schoenen wîben,
> dem enritest du niht glich.
> dîn affenmuot der triuget dich,
> daz du niht lâst belîben
> daz du dich selben zückest vür.
> Sniudeln und mundaffen,
> Mich dunkt, du rîtest ûf der spür.
> du bist gar eflaffen.'[1]

Dietrich refuses to fight, so the giant will apparently allow him to pass, but as soon as the knight's back is to the giant, he strikes him. Wicram throws

---

[1]All citations to the Dietrichepen are to Jänicke for Laurin (Laur.) and to Zupitza for Virginal, (Vir.), Goldemar (Gold.), Sigenot (Sig.), and Eckenlied (Eck.).

the overpowered Dietrich over his back and takes him as a prisoner to Muter. Nitger decides to imprison the knight, and he allows the giants who serve him to taunt Dietrich. These acts set up a situation for rescue and revenge. The giants steal Dietrich's food while they continue to show their spite for the knight by insulting him. This treatment angers Ibelin, the daughter of Nitger. Eventually, she sends her messenger, the dwarf Beldelin, to Jeraspunt in order to alert Hildebrand to Dietrich's predicament. In the meantime, Wicram's son Grandengrus wants to fight Dietrich because his father has been accused of stealing the knight's food. Nitger has scolded the giant for such stupid actions. Dietrich is unarmed but finds a rock, which he uses to kill Grandengrus. He then grabs a sword hanging on the wall and challenges the giants, who have treated him with much disrespect. The giants swear revenge as they carry Grandegrus' body away. Their cries can be heard all around as they lament the loss of the young giant:

> Sich huop der aller wirste haz
> und diu ungehiurste Klage.
> daz hôrten lewen, beren starc,
> grôze wurme in herten arc:
> ir muot der wart in zage,
> dô der ungehiure schal
> mit sturme kam gedozzen,
> reht als ein wilder dunders val
> ûz hertem velse geschozzen. (Virg. 392, 2-10)

Beldelin returns from Jeraspunt with word that Hildebrand and others are on their way. Ibelin begs her father to free Dietrich because his companions plan to free and avenge him. Nitger, knowing the seriousness of the situation, orders the giant Vellenwalt to blow the horn to call the feared giant Hülle into battle:

Vellenwalt der blies ein horn
Kreftechlîche ein wîle,
daz es in daz gebirge erdoz.
daz hôrte ein rîse unmâzen grôz:
der lac wol drîger mîle.
in einem vinstern wüesten tan
riht er sich ôf ze berge. (Virg. 610, 2-8)

When Hülle is summoned, Ibelin frees and arms Dietrich. Before help can arrive, Dietrich must face Hülle. This time Dietrich is ready to fight and actually challenges the fierce giant. The battle lasts for hours until Dietrich delivers twelve powerful blows which bring the giant to his knees. However, the giant's strength is such that he can still strike Dietrich with a huge lance. The blow places the knight in grave danger, but Ibelin's tears provide him with second wind. With a burst of energy, Dietrich beheads the powerful giant. With Grandengrus and Hülle dead, and Hildebrand nearby with valiant warriors, the dumbfounded giants are amazed and discouraged. Some of the giants are afraid, and they express the desire to return to their isolated homes in the forest. Before the giants can decide their next move, Hildebrand walks into their camp. The giants now have no choice but to once again challenge the knights to battle. Hildebrand tells the giants they will meet in the morning to settle the issue.

In the morning, before the battle, both sides exchange their customary taunts and challenges. Afterwards, the first of two series of "elf Zweikämpfe" begins. King Imian is the first to enter the circle. Despite having his shield and helmet shattered by the giant Adelrant, the king runs the giant through for victory. Next, Heime, the son of Madelger, enters the circle. Again the giant, in this case Vellenwalt, gains the initial advantage. The two fight long and hard, but Heime charges the

giant, inflicting mortal wounds. Witege and his sword Mimminc defeat a confident, bragging giant called Wolferat, while Wolfhart, who is at first apprehensive due to the evil appearance of the giant Velsenstoz, is cheered and jeered into battle by his companions. Embarrassed, the knight becomes angry and slays the giant. Dietleib from Styria grabs Börian (Morean) by the beard and promptly decapitates him, while Bloedelin, who is also taunted by his comrades for taking too long to defeat his foe, eventually defeats Asprian. The duels continue in much the same manner except for different players. All the knights defeat the giants despite some difficulty: Gerwart slays Senderlin, Gernot slays the giant Wolfhart, Reinold defeats Ulsenbrand, Dietrich takes revenge upon Wicram, and Hildebrand beheads a giant who is not named.

The manner in which these conflicts are resolved is common throughout the Dietrichepen. The taunting has already been identified: it is responsible for many of the disputes and results. Other aspects that are evident in nearly all duels include the battles which can last for days, the knight recovering from terrible odds to defeat the giant, and the fact that both sides abide by rules of battle. When they fight, both giant and man step into the circle to fight one-on-one. This would suggest that giants sometimes adhere to some forms of civility.

Having vanquished Nitger and his forces, Dietrich spares the prince's life at the bidding of Ibelin. Nitger's lands will be subjected to Dietrich's rule. While the entourage again begins its journey to Jeraspunt, they encounter more giants and eleven "Einzelkämpfe" follow. The fights are comparable to the ones described in Muter. Imian defeats Glockebôz

while Dietleib slays Videlnstoz. Heime deals with a peculiar giant who is described as a brave, attractive knight. The giant Klingelbold is present and his appearance is such that normal-size women find him attractive. Nonetheless, his human qualities are not enough to help him win the duel. Witege slays Rumeroc, while the knights Bloedelin and Reinold defeat Rumendenwald and Schelledenwald. Schiltwin fights the entire day to defeat a giant whose size rivals that of a huge tree. The warriors Stutvuchs and Sigestab are anxious to enter the circle. Their opponents are Bitterkrut and Wolvesmage. The result of these battles are identical to the others. Finally, Ortwin defeats Giselrant while Biterolf slays Hohermuot.

The second round of duels has all the earmarks of a later addendum. This is in keeping with the tendency in precourtly literature (particularly in the minstrel epics) to tell the same story twice. The fanciful more or less humorous names of the giants in the second series (e.g. Glockebôz "stroke of a bell", Videlnstôz "fiddle stroke", etc.) point in this direction, too. Also, the names lend emphasis to the view of giants as stupid, silly beings.

Many of the conflicts between knights and giants in Virginal are the result of rescue and revenge. This motif is common throughout the märchenhaften Dietrichepen. Dietrich's companions oppose the giants so they can free their friend, as was the case at Muter. Many times after the rescue, the knights will challenge giants to seek revenge for some harm they have done. Giants also seek out knights to exact their own revenge.

The death of Grandengrus and Hülle are two instances where giants try to avenge the death of their own kind.

Sigenot is another adventure in which rescue is involved. Dietrich is again in the forest seeking adventure when he happens upon a sleeping giant. Dietrich kicks and wakes the giant, who is not very pleased. The giant's mood worsens when he notices that Dietrich is wearing the helmet of his uncle Grine. Sigenot assumes that the knight has slain his uncle, and tells him that he will avenge Grine's death. As usual, Dietrich is reluctant to fight. Sigenot tells Dietrich that his bold nature will cost him his life. Dietrich tries to appease the angry giant with no success. He tries to continue, but the giant immediately thrashes him and imprisons him in a cave. Hildebrand becomes worried with his pupil's absence, so he decides to venture out to find his friend. In the forest, he encounters Sigenot, who plans on killing Hildebrand for training and associating with Dietrich. Sigenot is a very formidable foe, for he also defeats Hildebrand. During the battle, the giant strikes him so violently that Hildebrand's sword flies from his grasp. The giant grabs him by the beard and intends to take him back to the cave where Dietrich is captive:

> Bî dem barte er in gevie,
> hern Hiltebranten, unde gie
> gên dem holen steine,
> dâher Dietrîch inne lac:
> diz zôch sich ûf den andern tac. (Sig. 20, 1-5)

Before the giant puts him into the cave, Hildebrand breaks free and locates Dietrich's sword. He surprises the giant and slays him with the sword. Eventually, with assistance from a dwarf, he is able to rescue Dietrich from the cave.

The giant Ecke, the central figure in the Eckenlied, is somewhat different from other giants. Although his size and appearance do not allow one to mistake him to be a normal human, his character verges on that of an ordinary person. He is perhaps the closest a giant comes to being human in all the epics. Pride and revenge are the reasons that man and giant are brought into conflict in this piece.

Ecke is asked to find Dietrich by Queen Seburg, who has heard of the knight's heroics. If he is successful, Seburg will allow him to choose her or one of two other queens for his wife. Ecke agrees because he wants a wife, he is somewhat jealous of the queen's interest, and his brothers have told him how some say the knight is invincible; he wants to test his own talents while dispelling the myth of Dietrich. These are characteristics which would be typical of any proud, confident human warrior. Before Ecke departs, Seburg commands that he be outfitted in such a way that he would appear to be a chivalric knight, since he is in her service. Although Ecke is often compared to a normal human in several ways, Seburg's efforts to dress him as a knight fail. The armor and attire cannot conceal his gigantic size nor his fierce countenance. The most obvious sign that her efforts will be unsuccessful occurs when she presents him with one of her finest horses. The giant's size is too great for the horse to bear:

> Sî hiez im ziehen zehant
> daz beste ros übr alliu lant,
> daz im diu wäfen trüege.
> er sprach 'daz ros sol hie bestân,
> ich mac ze fuoze vil wol gân.
> jô bin ich ze ungefüege:
> ez treit mich doch die lenge niht
> mit aller sîner krefte. (Eck. 34, 1-8)

Thus, Ecke sets out to improve his standing, undoubtedly somewhat less enthusiastic and fiercer, due to Seburg's disappointment with his appearance. Ecke meets a knight who has been wounded by Dietrich. He tells the giant where he might find him. When Ecke finds Dietrich, he tells him that he can accompany him voluntarily to Seburg's court, or he will take him by force. True to form, Dietrich is reluctant to quarrel with the giant. And, true to the giant's reaction, Ecke begins to taunt and insult him. After repeated attacks on Dietrich's character, the giant draws him into battle. The battle lasts the day. Both deliver fierce blows which crack the other's helmet. As the sun begins to set, the giant takes the advantage. Dietrich tries to retaliate, but Ecke is proud and strong in maintaining his advantage. The gold from Dietrich's shield is knocked off by the giant's blows. Finally, Dietrich makes his bid for victory with a series of blows that leaves the grass at the giant's feet covered in blood. At this point, the knight praises the giant for fighting with such bravery and tenacity, but he demands that Ecke submit. The giant refuses because he would rather die than be shamed in front of Seburg. He asks that Dietrich take his head back to Jochgrimm to prove he fought bravely. Dietrich grants the giant his final wish, then he laments Ecke's death:

> Als er den sige an im gewan,
> do stuant er über den Küenen man
> und sprach vil jaemerlîchen
> 'min sige und ouch dîn junger tôt
> machent mich dicke schamerôt . . . (Eck. 141, 1-5)

It is extremely rare that a knight shows any emotions, except anger, towards a giant. He mourns the fact that Ecke died for love and honor. Dietrich sets out for Jochgrimm to protest the fact that Ecke was sent out to

retrieve him. It is at this point that he encounters Ecke's family. First, he encounters a young girl crying. She tells him that the giant Fasold has decided to take her as a wife. It is not uncommon for giants to favor women:

> der eine was sich her Vâsolt
> (dem wâren schoene vrouwen holt) . . . (Eck. 2, 4-5)

The girl gives Dietrich plants and roots to help heal his wounds; she hopes the knight will free her from Fasold. Finally, the giant makes an awesome, noisy appearance:

> Her Vâsolt einen ast gevie:
> den brach er abe eim boume hie,
> der was grôz unde swaere.
> der wart im schier zerhouwen gar.
> er greif nâch einem anderen dar:
> der boum wart este laere.
> er gebârte rehte als er den walt
> wolt loubes âne machen:
> wan hôrte deste mänicvalt
> ein halbe mîle krachen.
> er zart die boume dazs sich kluben luben:
> cdie hiu der Berner schiere,
> daz sî vil gar zerstuben. (Eck. 184, 1-13)

Despite the giant's fearsome approach, Dietrich is undaunted. He grasps his sword with both hands and strikes a blow which, for all practical purposes, ends the duel. Despite the fact that Fasold learns that Dietrich has slain his brother, the giant is reluctant to act because he has sworn allegiance to the knight, and, shortly before, was thoroughly thrashed. He is forced to travel with Dietrich as his servant. En route to Jochgrimm, Dietrich, the young girl, and Fasold travel through the mountains where they spend the night. The dwarfs are also subjects of Fasold, but on leaving the next morning, Dietrich tells them they are free of the giant's

tyranny. Next, they encounter Ecke's brothers Eckenot, who inquires why Fasold travels with the humans. Fasold tells him the news, and, of course, the giant becomes enraged. The battle lasts only moments before the giant is disposed of; his brother is unable to assist because of his oath. Finally, they reach Jochgrimm, where Birkhild, mother of the three giants, rushes to greet Fasold, whom she thinks is her son Ecke. Birkhild believes Dietrich to be her son because he is wearing some of the giant's attire. When she sees that it is not her son, she immediately realizes what has happened. She cries out in agony and wildly charges Dietrich, only to be run through by his sword. Hearing her mother's cries, Uodelgart rushes to the spot where her mother lies dead. Like her brother Fasold, ,this giantess decides to use a tree to kill the man who has brought such grief to her family:

> des boumes este brach sî dan.
> zehant lief sî den Berner an.
> mit micheleme grimme
> gap sî dem herren einen slac
> sô daz der degen küene
> bî sînem schilte nider lac
> ûfen dem anger grüene.
> sus kam er in vil grôze nôt,
> wan er was van der vrouwen
> vil nâch beliben tôt. (Eck. 244 4-13)

The manuscript ends with Dietrich grabbing the giantess by the hair, ready to kill her, but at this point the piece breaks off. This poem points out that giantesses willingly fight and fight well. Also, there is much lamenting when one of their kind dies. As in Virginal, the giants in Ecke become extremely emotional over the death of a relative. This points out another characteristic in giants that resembles those of humans. Also,

they seek to avenge wrongs done to their family and race. In fact, they seek revenge just like Dietrich, Hildebrand, and the others. Unfortunately for Ecke and his family, their thirst for retribution wipes out their entire family.

Laurin displays giants in a role similar to those who served Nitger. The dwarf-king Laurin finds himself and his kingdom in serious trouble as a result of retaliatory attacks from Dietrich and his companions. In order to strengthen his position, Laurin orders that a horn be blown to call the giants into battle. The blowing of horns is common in the Dietrichepen. Not only are they used to summon giants, but they are also the battle sound for dwarfs, as can be seen in Laurin. The presence of giants in Laurin is brief. They assist the dwarfs in battle and fight bravely, but the result is nevertheless the same; the giants are defeated.

Giants constitute a constant threat for Dietrich and his companions in the Dietrichepen. Several motifs employed in these epics bring giants and men into conflict. Revenge, rescue, mischief, and servitude are all involved in the situations in which the two sides are antagonists. Although the terms on which giants and knights come into contact are varied, the characteristics of these larger-than-life figures and their fate are simple. They are the few whose size and strength allow the knights to measure their fighting skills, cunning, and courage. Unfortunately for the giant-kind, they are always defeated in wits and battle.

Dwarfs

For the most part, the relationship between dwarfs and Dietrich is a friendly one. In fact, certain dwarfs prove to be extremely helpful and readily perform tasks which aid those who are in difficulty. Also, dwarfs go to great lengths to welcome Dietrich and others into their domain.

But the relationships are not exclusively friendly. Often, tension arises and violence erupts on both sides. The conflicts stem from actions carried out on both sides, but the knights have a habit of intruding into the dwarf's domain, creating disturbances.

Laurin is the epic which deals with dwarfs in detail. Witege and Dietrich trespass in the dwarf's rose garden, prompting Laurin to retaliate. The result is a thorough thrashing of Witege, with Dietrich about to receive the same if not for Hildebrand's advice. Instead of jousting with the dwarf, Hildebrand advises his pupil to fight the dwarf on foot because the dwarf is very adept on horseback. On the ground, the strategy initially seems to work, for Dietrich is able to pommel the dwarf about the head. The dwarf dashes to a table, where he grabs a tarnkappe, which renders him invisible. He also wears a belt that gives him the strength of twelve men. Equipped with these magical items, Laurin becomes a nearly invincible foe. However, Hildebrand's suggestion to take the duel to the ground proves to be advantageous, for Dietrich goads the dwarf into a wrestling match. This way, Dietrich can grasp his opponent and relieve him of his magical items:

> er greif im in daz gürtelîn:
> ûf huop er daz getwergelîn,
> von Berne der vil werde,

und stiez ez ûf die erde
daz im sîn gürtelîn zebrach:
des kom es in groz ungemach.
Daz gürtelin viel ûf doz lant:
ûf zucte ez meister Hildebrand.
zwelf man ne sterke hete ez vlorn. (Laur. 546-555)

By following Hildebrand's advice, Dietrich rids the dwarf of his magical strengths, thus allowing him to easily overpower the dwarf.

Dietrich is responsible for saving Laurin's life at this point. He intervenes on Laurin's behalf because the dwarf tells him he has given his sister Künhild shelter at his court. Of course, Dietrich wants the dwarf to pay with his life for attacking him and Witege, the ones who destroyed his rose garden. Dietlieb hides Laurin in the forest, while he and Dietrich come to blows, but Hildebrand and others intervene to prevent any serious damage physically or mentally. Here we have a rare example of man against man in "die märchenhaften Dietrichepen, instead of man against fabulous being. A reconciliation is reached; Dietrich will allow Laurin to live if the dwarf returns and promises loyalty. The deal is struck, and all, including a reluctant Dietrich and Hildebrand, are invited by Laurin to travel to his court, where they will be honored. Laurin is not sincere in his promise to Dietrich and Dietleib. Künhild welcomes her brother and the others, and the dwarfs present their guests with valuable stones and fabrics. They entertain them with find food, wine, and music, but Laurin is plotting treachery because he loves Künhild and fears his guests are there to take her away. He hears her tell her brother that she has not been held against her will and has been treated well, but she wishes to leave because the dwarfs are pagans. Laurin first requests that Dietleib join him in private quarters where he hopes to enlist the knight's service. When the offer is

refused, Laurin leaves and orders the knight to be imprisoned in a cell. Meanwhile, having knowledge of magic potions as well as magic weapons, he has ordered Dietrich and his companions to be drugged:

> alsô wir es hoeren sagen,
> trinken hiez er dar tragen
> beide mete unde ouch wîn:
> twalm hiez er tuon dar în.
> dô si daz dô getrunken,
> Wie balde si ûf die benke sunken!
> wie balde der kleine wîgant
> in alliu vieriu zsammen bant!
> er warf si in einen karkaere,
> da liten si inne grôze swaere. (Laur. 1203-1212)

Now, Laurin, like the giants, has imprisoned his enemy, and he has time to woo Künhild into staying with him. She refuses and successfully frees her brother. He is ultimately able to assist in freeing the others, and thus begins a huge battle involving men, dwarfs, and giants. Although the knights enjoy initial success, Dietrich, as a result of more magical objects, finds it difficult to distinguish between the dwarfs and his companions. Hildebrand again advises him how to overcome an opponent with magic weapons:

> 'nim hin ditze gürtelîn;
> daz soltu gürten umbe den lîp,
> sô siehstu an der selben zît
> diu getwerc in dem berge wol:
> für wâr ich daz sprechen sol.' (Laur. 1417-22)

Dietrich wraps the magical belt around his waist and begins to see the dwarfs clearly. With this turn of events, Laurin tries to flee, but Dietrich follows close on the dwarf's heels. Laurin now wears the most treasured object: a magic ring which gives the owner considerable strength. Again, Hildebrand tells his pupil that he must take this ring from the dwarf king.

Dietrich attacks the dwarf, and, despite fierce resistance from Laurin and servants, the knight lops off the dwarf's finger and takes the ring. With this, the dwarfs panic. Their last hope is to summon giants who serve Laurin to come to their assistance. The horn is sounded alerting the giants in the mountain to come to battle, but their arrival, though they fight valiantly, does little to turn the tide of battle. Laurin and the dwarfs are defeated. The kingdom is to be controlled by Sintram, a dwarf who has proven to be true to Dietrich and his followers. Meanwhile, Laurin is taken prisoner to Dietrich's court in Bern (Verona) where he studies Christianity and serves Dietrich. Before leaving, Künhild visits the dwarf and tells him of her plans. Laurin's cries are heard throughout Dietrich's court, and they touch the heart of those who had treated the dwarf king with contempt and ridicule.

Besides opposing Dietrich, there are two other points to be addressed. The first is the rich abundance of examples of magical objects possessed by dwarfs in Laurin. In this epic, in addition to the dwarf king's rich costumes and fine gems and fabrics, he possesses several items that assist him in battle. This is a good example of the association of magical items with dwarfs. Also, like giants, many dwarfs also desire the company of women, which often brings them into conflict with men.

The antagonism between Dietrich and Goldemar in the poem, Goldemar, is a result of the two desiring the company of the same woman. Dietrich is en route to Trutmunt to seek more adventure when he sees a beautiful woman among dwarfs in a mountain kingdom. He approaches, but as he comes closer, Goldemar tries to conceal the girl. Although he hasn't

been invited to his court, the dwarf treats the knight with respect despite Dietrich's insolent tone. Only when Dietrich demands to have an audience with the girl he saw does Goldemar become defensive. He assures the great hero that he is aware of his famous reputation, and the dwarf honors his presence at his court, but his demand is not honored and the dwarf assures him that he will respond to any effort on Dietrich's part to try to interfere with the young girl. At this point, the manuscript breaks off.

These two poems show examples of knight and dwarf in conflict. The knights seem to disrespect the domain of dwarf kings, and they enter these areas in any manner they please. Certainly, dwarfs may be holding women against their will, as in Goldemar, but it is also certain that Dietrich and his companions are also responsible for the conflict.

The dwarfs in Virginal function in a much different manner. There is no taunting or mistreating of dwarfs, and in turn they prove to be very beneficial to Dietrich.

There are two central dwarf characters in this poem, both of whom function as messengers. In both cases, their service as messengers proves to be invaluable. Bibung, the first dwarf encountered in Virginal, is a vassal to Queen Virginal. He is sent out in search of Dietrich and Hildebrand after Virginal hears of their heroic deeds against her enemy Orkise. The dwarf finds the knights in the process of rescuing the knight Rentwin from fierce dragons. Bibung is amazed with the way the knights slay the imposing dragons. He follows them to Arona, where Rentwin's father Helferich reigns. At Arona, Bibung extends Virginal's invitation to

join her in Jeraspunt. The knights send Bibung back to tell Virginal they shall depart after recovering from their battles. Bibung tells his queen that they shall soon depart, and she orders all to prepare for their arrival. In the meantime, Dietrich has been captured by Wicram, delaying the entourage's arrival in Jeraspunt. Again, Bibung is sent to Arona to seek information, and he learns of Dietrich's capture. He immediately returns to give his queen the serious news.

It is easy to see how important this dwarf messenger is in providing news, vital information, and plans for departure and arrival. Yet the true importance of dwarfs as messengers is apparent when discussing Beldelin. He serves Princess Ibelin at Nitger's court. Ibelin sends him out to inform Hildebrand that Dietrich has been captured. He returns to her with the news that the valiant Hildebrand, Imian, Biterolf, and Dietleib, as well as others, are on their way to rescue and avenge Dietrich. Beldelin's service, as well as Bibung's, who was sent out to inform Imian, Biterolf, and others of Dietrich's plight, proves to be an important factor in rescuing the knight.

Bibung and Beldelin's ability to deliver messages involves the fact that they know the shortest routes through wilderness, where danger lies in wait. They are fabulous creatures; therefore they are familiar with those wild areas where these beings dwell. They are also aware of where dragons lie in wait to ambush; therefore they avoid danger. Also, Beldelin's name gives a clue as to why dwarfs function well as messengers. In Middle High German, Beldelin can mean "swift" or "fact" (Gillespie, 25).

Wolfhart is also assisted by dwarfs. On his way to Dietrich's rescue, he encounters a dragon and must slay the beast. In the battle he is wounded, but is fortunate enough to discover a dwarf kingdom in the mountains. Meizlin is the dwarf who rules the mountain kingdom, and he welcomes the weary knight with open arms. Wolfhart is fed and well cared for while resting at Meizlin's court. The dwarf gives him directions, and, as a result, Wolfhart is able to take part in the rescue. Meizlin's quarters are adorned with precious stones, jewels, and fabrics. Also, he entertains his guest with the finest food, drink, and music.

In Sigenot, a dwarf is instrumental in rescuing Dietrich. The knight has been imprisoned in a cave and is being threatened by dragons. He is without weapons, and Hildebrand knows his pupil will be killed if he cannot rescue him from the cave. Fortunately, Hildebrand decides to climb a mountain, where he finds the dwarf Eggerich. He wakes the dwarf abruptly and tells him if he does not help save Dietrich he will die. The dwarf is stunned, and he cannot understand why he is being treated so badly when he had denied the knight nothing:

> er ergreif ez bî dem barte.
> ez was geheizen Eggerîch.
> daz getwerc gar lobelîch,
> daz erschrac als harte.
> 'herre, wie hânt irs gedâht?
> ir hânt gerouft mich sêre.
> Wer hât mich ze ime brâht
> (verhelent michz niht mêre)
> daz ir mich sô geroufet hât?'
> do sprach Hiltbrandter Küene
> 'dîn leben an mir stât.
> Wilt aber behalten du dîn leben,
> sô muost du mir die lêre geben
> wie ich nu den Bernaere
> ner, der hie bî gevangen lît. (Sig. 34-34)

Despite Hildebrand's rude treatment of him, Eggerich still agrees to help; perhaps fearing for his life. He helps in the rescue by telling Hildebrand where he can find a ladder. The dwarf accompanies the knight to the cave, where they rescue Dietrich seconds before the dragons arrive.

Dwarfs in the Dietrichepen are not described in much detail in regard to their physical attributes. We know that they are diminutive in size, and they are strong, as witnessed in Laurin. Most descriptions deal strictly with their attire and armor, and, like their homes, these items are lavish and exquisite, as shown in the description of Laurin's approach to the rose garden.

Many of the dwarfs mentioned in this work live in mountains or among rocks. This point is important because their habitat gives them access to valuable stones and gems. The kingdoms of Laurin and Meizlin prove that Dietrichs in the Dietrichepen possess great wealth and knowledge of precious stones.

Dragons

Some of the fiercest battles in the Dietrichepen involve dragons. Virginal is one of the few poems with detailed accounts of them. This epic, often referred to as Dietrichs Drachenkämpfe (Zupitza V), is the richest source for examining dragons in the Dietrichepen. The dragons in this poem are big, and they blow fire:

> her Dietrich hat einen wurm
> mit slegen vür gevazzet,
> der was wol zwênzec ellen lane
> (ein hitze im ûz dem munde dranc
> die der von Berne hazzet),
> gröz unde ungevüege gar

(vröude machte er tiure),
umbe daz houbet kupfervar. (Virg. 144, 2-9)

Their size and unique ability to breathe fire not only harms their opponents, but also inflicts damage upon the landscape:

ein viur er ûz dem munde lie:
swâ daz traf die erde,
dâ saltez bloumen unde gras
der dürren heiden gar gelîch,
daz ê gelpfer varwe was. (Virg. 145, 9-13)

However, despite the odds, Dietrich and his comrades endure deadly struggles and emerge victorious. Such victories create heroes who are truly larger than life. Dragons serve as the ultimate measuring sticks for bravery and courage.

There are two major battles involving dragons in Virginal. The first occurs when Dietrich and Hildebrand are attacked in the forests by dragons. In this encounter, Hildebrand frees a knight from the jaws of one of them. Avoiding his fiery breath and sharp claws, Hildebrand uses his sword Vreise to deliver several telling blows which free Rentwin from his unusual cage. Meanwhile, Dietrich finds the going much more difficult. He first must come to the aid of his horse, which is about to be devoured. He saves his horse, but places himself in danger, as the dragon turns its attention to him. The battle is furious and long. Dietrich loses his sword and must retreat behind trees for cover. He is in grave danger until Hildebrand and Rentwin arrive. They find the knight by a path; he is tired, wounded, and without a weapon. Rentwin gives the knight his sword to allow him to defend himself. Despite his fatigue, he musters one

final stroke that brings the monster down, and he then beheads the monster which nearly killed him.

The second battle involves Wolfhart, who is making his way to Muter to help rescue Dietrich. In the wilderness he hears a loud noise which turns out to be a dragon thrashing through the forest:

> nu hôrte er ein geschelle,
> daz was in dunres wîse grôz:
> ez vaste durchz gebirge erdôz.
> nu sach er in der telle
> einen grôzen wurm her gân
> mit ûf getânen munde. (Virg. 630, 3-8)

Wolfhart advances towards the beast with his lance poised to strike, but as he passes, his thrust into the monster's forehead shatters the weapon. He must then dismount and fight with sword and shield. The dragon begins thumping its tail, shaking and rattling the ground and the trees. Then, the tail thumps Wolfhart, a blow which sends the knight back with great force. Wolfhart then uses the trees for cover and awaits the dragon's next attack. After the dragon has breathed fire into the trees to try to flush out the knight, Wolfhart advances with his shield in front of him to protect himself against the fire. The dragon focuses on the shield, which he crushes with ease by biting it, but this move leaves the beast's underbelly exposed. Wolfhart swiftly and precisely runs the dragon through. The strike is final, and the dragon crashes to the earth, again shaking the entire area.

Besides these two examples, there is little mention of dragons. When people travel through wild forests and mountains, it is stated, their way is sometimes observed by dragons waiting near paths ready to ambush the

unlucky traveler. Yet, these are passages that are no more than a line or two, and their function is only to set a mood. Also, dragons are used to emphasize the seriousness of a situation, or to create a sense of panic. When Dietrich is thrown into the cave by Sigenot, he is in an area inhabited by dragons. Hildebrand must defeat Sigenot and find a way of getting Dietrich out of the cave before the dragons discover him.

The form of dragons in the Dietrichepen is typical. They are long creatures of some great size, and they use fire, claws, teeth, and tails to attack their foes. Being fabulous creatures, they are also found in those areas where only intrepid men dare go. Dietrich and Hildebrand sometimes venture into caves, dark forests, or cliffs to find the beasts and do battle. Dragons lie near paths, streams, and wells, probably to ambush those brave knights who dare to pass.

II. FABULOUS BEINGS IN GERMANIC TRADITION

The anonymous authors of the Dietrichepen must have become familiar with fabulous beings mainly from folklore, that is, from orally transmitted tales and perhaps poems that had been passed on for generations. It is possible that oral versions of the Dietrichepen themselves may have existed from which the written versions we know developed. It seems expedient, therefore, to consider in general terms what these creatures were like and what function they fulfilled in Germanic tradition.

In general we can say that the giants lived in remote areas, were ferocious, and not very bright. The dwarfs, on the other hand, typically lived in fabulous castles underground or in mountains, and were supplied with an abundance of the earth's treasures——gold and gems. They tended to be smarter than the giants, although often tricky, and not so hostile to humans. Dragons were fierce, fire-breathing monsters. The very incarnation of evil and destruction. These typical forms of fabulous creatures are known to us from the Old Norse Edda and Grimm's Märchen.

A. THE OLD NORSE TRADITION

Giants

In Old Norse mythology giants are associated with the primal forces of Nature. Their frames were so immense, that they could actually affect weather, seasons, and the contours of the landscape itself. The corpse of the first giant Ymir was used to shape the earth, sky, and sea. His body

served as the earth, his bones became mountains, his hair became trees and grass, his skull became heaven, and his brain the clouds. Finally, the gods used the giant's eyebrows to form man's world, Midgard (Neckel 48).

Natural phenomena were believed to be caused by giants. "Frost giants," as their name implies, caused sleet and snow. The giant Hraesvelg disguised himself as an eagle, and he caused winds by flapping his wings. Fornjot and his kin were responsible for several phenomena of Nature. His three sons, Ler, Logi, and Ker, controlled the sea, fire, and wind, while their offspring also affected Nature (Munch 35). Finally, the giant Svart, who set Asgard ablaze during Ragnarök, commanded fire (Thompson 17; 21).

Giants were antagonists of the gods and man. Generally, they are associated with that which is harmful and destructive. Ymir was the first creature to be created. He lived off the milk of the great cow Audhumla, which also licked the salt and ice to give birth to the god Bur. Both the giant race and the gods bore offspring. When the giants' numbers grew exponentially, Bur knew he had to act. He and his three sons, Odin, Vili, and Ve, who were given birth by the giantess Bestla, destroyed the entire giant race with the exception of Bergemir and his wife. This allowed the giants to prosper and grow in Jötunheim (world of the giants), and to come back to fight another day. This conflict began the rivalry between giants, gods, and men (Munch 1-2).

Giants and gods often matched wits, or they tried to trick each other. The gods found this helpful because the giants were the first species, and they had knowledge of the universe when it was first created.

The giants, despite their wisdom, were never a match for the gods. Odin's visit to the giant Vafthrudnir, whose name literally translated means "Mighty in Riddle" (Taylor 173), is typical of the mental contests between giants and gods. Odin asks the giants many riddles concerning creation, gods, battles, etc. to which Vafthrudnir responds with the correct answers. Odin wins the contest by asking him a question that only the god knows. The giant cannot know what was whispered in Balder's ear as he was placed on his funeral pyre (Neckel 1962, 55). The giant must acknowledge that Odin is the wisest of all.

A more comical example of gods outwitting giants is found in Thrymskvida, when Thor travels with Loki to the land of the giants to retrieve his hammer from the giant Thrym, who had stolen it. Thrym refuses to return the hammer until he is given Freya as a bride. Thor travels to Thrym's hall dressed as Freya, and Loki accompanies him as a bridesmaid. Thrym is defeated when he raises the veil and tries to kiss his bride-to-be. Before the giants can react, Thor grabs Mjölnir and kills all the giants. Again, it is obvious that the giant's intelligence is nowhere near that of the gods or man.

The function of giants during Ragnarök best illustrates their role as antagonists. Along with Hel, Fenris, and the Midgard serpent, the giants attack Asgard and bring about the fate of the gods. Hrym assaults the eastern edge of Asgard, while Svart slays Frey and burns the Norse universe (Neckel 11-15).

Despite these animosities, there are some examples of friendship and cooperation. Bur's wife Bestla was a giantess who gave birth to three sons

who helped fight the giants. Even Thor, the feared slayer of giants, is befriended by the giant Tew, who helps him obtain the huge keg of the giant Hymir so that they may quench the thirst of the gods. In the poem Hymiskvida, Tew and his mother help Thor get the keg, outsmart the giant, and generally make Hymir's life miserable. Hymir is yet another example of the stupid nature of the giants. Thor refers to Hymir as "brother of the apes," which indicates his distaste for the simple giants (Taylor 1967-69, 158).

The appearance of some giants suggests that they may possess human qualities. The comeliness of some giants is such that they are cherished by god and man. Guerber points out the story of the giantess Ilse, who was so fair that all in the countryside referred to her as "Princess Ilse." She is chosen by the Lord of Westerburg to be his bride despite objection from both families (Guerber, 236-237). Hymir's wife is said to be bright as gold and fair-browed. However, for the most part, giants are big and ugly. Their visage can be so fierce that it can shatter and destroy objects. This is the case when Hymir sees Thor in his house in Hymiskvida (Neckel 90-91). Often, giants were said to have tails, and, like Hymir's mother, they are often multiheaded (Neckel 89).

Bergelmir and his wife were chased from Asgard into the dark recesses of Jötunheim. This place was one of the nine worlds of Old Norse mythology, and was dangerous for god or man to enter. The names given to many giants indicated from whence they came: mountain-giants, cliff-giants, etc.

Dwarfs

Dwarfs and elves appear quite frequently in the Elder Edda, and they often vacillate between good and bad in their relationships with the gods and man. These fabulous beings are much more categorized than giants and dragons in Old Norse mythology. Munch points out that, in Norse mythology, there are distinctions and subdivisions. For instance, elves are usually classified somewhat differently than dwarfs, and their own species are divided. The good elves or "bright-elves" are friendly towards the gods, and the evil elves or "dark elves" are usually antagonistic toward gods and men (Munch 4). There is usually no sharp distinction between dwarfs and "dark elves" because of their appearance and their spite for the gods (Munch 41). Dwarfs themselves, with whom we are mainly concerned, are rarely divided into subclasses. They are usually found to associate with giants and other beings who oppose the gods, but if commanded or forced, they will perform tasks for the gods.

Despite their animosity towards the gods, several important items used by the gods are results of dwarf work. One of their primary functions in the Elder Edda is that of the master artificer. Whether forced or not, some of the gods' most prized possessions are produced by dwarfs: the sword Tyrfing, Thor's hammer Mjölnir, the great ship Skibladnir, the ring Draupnir, and Freya's gold necklace (Guerber 242). Dwarfs were so masterful as smiths because they dwelled underground or in rocks and mountains where they learned to use the metals, stones, and gems at their access.

Dwarfs also produced items which had magical qualities, and which they used to promote their own interests. Dwarfs have the ability to manufacture magical belts, rings, and potions, and they produced and possessed the tarnkappe, which rendered the one wearing it invisible. Thus, coupled with their access to precious stones and gems, and their knowledge of magic, being supernatural beings, dwarfs were capable of fantastic work.

In Alvíssmál, there is an example of the trickery associated with dwarfs. The dwarf king "Allwise" has tricked the gods into presenting Freya as a bride. He orders his servants to prepare for his bride's arrival and sets out to claim her. But on his way, Vingi, which is actually Odin or Thor, seeks to delay "Allwise" because they do not want to give him Freya. Vingi tells him that he must prove himself worthy of such a bride. The dwarf must solve the riddles spoken to him by the god in order to win Freya. "Allwise" provides a solution for each riddle, but the contest is a trap, for as Vingi tells the dwarf he has never met one so wise, the day breaks and the dwarf is turned to stone:

> In one man's breast I never saw more olden words.——With great wiles thou hast, I swear, been beguiled. The Day is upon thee, Dwarf; the hall is full of sunshine! (The Dwarf is turned to Stone.) (Thompson, 27)

Alvíssmál contains several characteristics typical of dwarfs in the Elder Edda and Old Norse mythology. For instance, dwarfs are very tricky, but in the end they are no match for the gods, usually Odin. Like giants, dwarfs desire Freya, and they often use force or trickery to try and win the beautiful goddess. Also, this poem points out a motif common

to dwarfs in Old Norse mythology: dwarfs cannot bear sunshine. Whenever dwarfs are exposed to the rays of the sun, they are turned to stone, for they are chthonic beings. Finally, dwarfs are similar to other vaettir, giants, elves, and fairies, in that their domestic life is similar to gods and men. Especially with dwarfs, elves, and fairies, the socialization of kingdoms and communities is extremely advanced and explains why they are successful in manufacturing.

Reginsmál, Fafnismál, and Sigrdrifamál are three complex poems that point out other characteristics of dwarfs. Regin, Fafnir, and Otter are the sons of the dwarf Reidmar. They are all excellent craftsmen, but they are also ill-natured and suffer from greed. Otter, who often appeared in the form of an otter, was killed by Loki, probably for his pelt. Odin, Hoenir, and Loki have been invited to Reidnar's to eat, but the hospitality is short-lived because the host recognizes the pelt as his son Otter! He insists that he be compensated for his son's death and for the pelt the gods possess. Loki decides to take the treasure of the dwarf Andvari, who often lives in Andvari Falls in the shape of a pike. Loki catches the pike and forces him to turn over his treasure, but the angry dwarf curses a small ring which is among the treasure. Anyone who wears the ring will be cursed; therefore Loki turns over the treasure to Reidmar. The curse manifests itself in the form of murder, when Fafnir kills his father in order to steal the treasure. Fafnir transforms himself into a dragon and takes his treasure to the Gnita Heath. There is symbolism involved here because greed is associated with the dragon; this will be detailed in the section on dragons. The other brother Regin, apparently upset at this treachery, forges the sword Gram

and gives it to the warrior Sigurd so that he can avenge Reidnar's death. Fafnir is destroyed, and, as Regin insisted, Sigurd takes the beast's heart. The organ is roasted, and when Sigurd tastes the blood oozing from the heart, he gains the power to understand the language of the birds. The birds warn him that Regin plans to kill him and take the treasure. Before the dwarf can implement his deceit, Sigurd kills Regin.

There are no detailed description of dwarfs' appearance in the Elder Edda other than the obvious fact they are small. The poem Voluspá describes the creation of the dwarfs, who were created from the blood and "black" bones of Ymir. Also, as Durin, a dwarf king, commanded, they were also made from the earth. Therefore, we know they had a dark or even black complexion (Neckel 2 [9]). This is the area in which it is difficult to distinguish between dwarfs and "dark elves." Also, both species were said to dwell underground and were artificers; therefore it is difficult to say if they were actually related or not. Nonetheless, it is obvious that the appearance of dwarfs is diametrically opposed to the fair beauty of the elves. Again, Alvíssmál provides support that dwarfs are somewhat inhuman in appearance:

> What fellow is this? why art thou pale about the nose? Wast thou sleeping with corpes? There is something oger-like about thee; thou art but a sorry bridegroom! (Thompson, 25)

Although they are small in stature, they were believed to be extremely strong. The gods entrusted, ironically, the support of their universe to four dwarfs. At the four corners of their world, the gods placed Nordri, Sudri, Austri, and Vestri in order to hold up the universe (Neckel 3 [11]).

Dwarfs, like giants, had the power to alter their shape, as shown by the case of Andvari, Otter, and Fafnir.

Dragons

Dragons appear in two forms in the Elder Edda: as serpents and dragons. The term for dragons and serpents in the Elder Edda is ormr, despite the fact that they seem to be different species. Ormr is the Germanic term for dragon, but sometimes dreki, a loan word from Latin, is employed in Old Norse mythology. Aside from some differences in form, the function of dragons in the Elder Edda is the same. They are, as in many mythologies, the archenemy of the gods and mankind. They symbolize chaos in the Norse universe, and their actions result in catastrophic events.

The archetypical dragon in the Elder Edda is the Midgard serpent or the "world snake." Its name is derived from the fact that the "All-Father" cast the beast to the bottom of the sea because he believed it to be a threat to the gods. It grew so large while in the sea that it was able to coil itself around Midgard, the world of man (Munch 22-23). Whenever the dragon moved or made an appearance it usually involved a disaster. Its writhing and lashing caused great waves that devastated Midgard, while its hissing and cries shook the "Old Earth" when Thor hooked it while fishing (Neckel 91 [19]).

Yet, these actions pale in comparison to the serpent's actions in Ragnarök. One of the events that signals the beginning of this fateful occurrence is the appearance of the Midgard serpent, whose

presence spells disaster. Although Thor slays the serpent, the monster is able to spew venom at the god, which brings about the demise of the great giant-killer:

> Then shall Hlodyn's glorious child, Woden's son [Thor], go forth to fight with the Dragon. Earth's Holy Warder shall slay him in his might. Nine paces back from the accursed serpent reels the Son of Earth [Thor]. (Thompson, 17)

There are many passages hinting at dragons spewing venom. Coupled with the fact that the serpent was coiled around the world, venom proves that it was indeed a serpent. Nidhögg is more of a typical dragon. Unlike the Midgard serpent, this dragon breathes fire. Also, it is said that the beast flies up from the netherworld; therefore it has wings. Fire and wings are typical of dragons. These two characteristics are pointed out in Voluspá (Neckel 15 [66]). It is Nidhögg that represents chaos in the world. This dragon gnaws through the roots of the "world-tree" Yggdrasil. This tree represents stability and order in the Norse universe. The fact that the dragon assaults the tree emphasizes its position as the opponent of goodness and order (Neckel 9 [39]).

The final dragon is Fafnir. Originally, Fafnir was a dwarf, but after murdering his father and stealing his treasure, he turns himself into a dragon in order to hoard his treasure. It seems symbolic that as a result of Fafnir's transgression, he becomes a dragon, a beast which is the incarnation of evil. Sigurd travels to the heath where Fafnir practices his vices of greed and selfishness, and after a game of riddles, he slays the dragon and cuts out his heart.

There is not much detail concerning Fafnir's shape. It is likely that it is a dragon similar to Nidhögg because it lives in a lair and is associated with fire. Also, Fafnir tells Sigurd that he spews venom. Therefore, this dragon apparently is a combination of the other two beasts in that it breathes fire and spews venom (Thompson 77-78).

B. THE FABULOUS BEINGS IN GRIMM'S FAIRY TALES

Giants

The Märchen were collected and written down by Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm some six-hundred years after the medieval works in this thesis. The fact that there is a great time difference between the two literary periods would of course mean that there are differences in style involving fabulous beings. One example of this difference is the didactic element associated with dwarfs in the Märchen. However, the fairy-tales more than likely have their origin in the medieval oral tradition; therefore they will have parallels to the Edda and the Dietrich epics because they stem from similar sources.

Giants in the Märchen are huge, strong beings who crush rocks, uproot trees, and hurl objects great distances. They are usually encountered in dark forests, where they occupy caves, ravines, and cliffs. They dwell in isolated areas where they have little contact with humans. The giants probably avoid contact with men because their meetings usually end with the giants being tricked.

In the Märchen, giants are extremely vulnerable to man's trickery. Das tapfere Schneiderlein, Der Riese und der Schneider, and Der König

vom goldenen Berg illustrate the stupidity of giants in these fairy tales. In Der König vom goldenen Berg, a lost merchant encounters three giants who ask the merchant to help them divide their inheritance because they believe "little people" excel in such matters. Their inheritance consists of a magical sword which could be used to behead anyone simply by uttering the words "all heads off except my own," a tarnkappe, and a pair of boots that transports the wearer to any place he desires. The merchant asks to see the items, and when he has possession of all three, he puts on the boots and wishes himself back to Golden Mountain. The giants lose their inheritance as a result of being duped by the merchant.

Giants in Grimm's Märchen act as measuring sticks for mortal courage, wisdom, and strength. If one is brave enough to match wits and strength against a giant, and if one is fortunate enough to prevail, then these actions can liberate a kingdom from the tyranny of a giant's reign. Many times a young man will oppose a giant in order to save a princess who has been chosen by an admiring, gigantic suitor. If he defeats the giant, he can be assured of praise, wealth, and love. This is a typical motif when discussing the giants in the Märchen, and it is present in Der gelernte Jäger, Das tapfere Schneiderlein, Der Königssohn der sich vor nichts fürchtet, and Der Trommler.

Things do not always completely turn out in the favor of humans. Der Räuber und seine Söhne concerns an old man who at one time commanded a group of robbers. The story begins with the capture of the old man's three sons, who were attempting to take horses from the queen's stable (Grimm II, 521). After being captured by the queen's sentries, the fate of the old man's three sons depends upon his ability to entertain the

queen. He tells the queen a story reminiscent of the Cyclops adventure in the Odyssey (Homer 135-142) about the band of robbers he once commanded. The old man and some two-hundred more thieves were once robbing the caves of giants when they were surprised by the early return of a giant. The old man describes how the giant held the band captive and how he had a taste for the boiled flesh of human beings, a treat that giants often enjoy in the Märchen. The old man is able to blind the giant and escape to a cottage, where he hides from the giants who desire revenge. He hides in the cottage with an old lady and a young boy, whom the giants want to eat because they desire tender flesh. The man decides to sacrifice himself in order to save the young boy, and he is in horror as the giants hover over him preparing to feast:

> Sie schärften ihre Zähne, wetzten ihre Messer uber mir und bereiten sich, mich zu schlachten und zu essen. (Grimm 1980, 527-528)

Fortunately for the old man, a terrible storm erupts, sending the giants fleeing in horror. The old man's story pleases the queen so much that she agrees to release his three sons. This story, like many other in the Märchen, has a didactic motif. Many of them are used to deliver messages like the treachery of thieving or the results of not telling the truth.

The giants in this story are much more monstrous and ferocious than others in these fairy tales. The fact that they consume human flesh makes this group of giants much more menacing.

There is one exception to the typical function of giants in the Märchen. The giant in Der junge Riese chooses to treat humans favorably instead of disdaining them. A young boy has been ill, and despite all

efforts by his parents, he remains sickly. A giant takes the boy under his wing and begins to care for him. The giant's training, wisdom, and caring allow the boy to recover and grow into a wise, strong young man. This theme of kindness between giants and men is rare, but it serves to remind us that there are examples of friendship between the two camps.

Dwarfs

Dwarfs are popular figures in the Märchen. They appear quite frequently, as do elves and fairies. Many times, there are references to "dark" and "light" elves, with little distinction made between "dark elves" and dwarfs. Both are very wise and vacillate between positive and negative relationships with humans, while "light elves" and fairies generally have a good rapport with men.

Dwarfs dwell underground or in other areas where few mortals dare travel. Dat Erdmänneken is a tale whose title indicates that dwarfs live beneath the earth. Schneeweisschen und Rosenrot involves a dwarf who emerges from beneath the earth in Spring when the ground has thawed (Grimm II, 281). Their habitat is important because it explains why they are so adept as artificers.

As one might imagine, beings who dwell beneath the earth have unattractive appearances, and this is true of many dwarfs in the Märchen. The dwarf in Der König vom Goldenen Berg is actually described as being "dark":

> . . . und wie er so auf und abging, stand auf einmal ein kleines schwarzes Männchen neben ihm, und fragte warum er so traurig wäre, und was er sich so sehr zu Herzen nähme. (Grimm II 1980, 44)

Schneeweisschen und Rosenrot provides another example of the somewhat hideous appearance of dwarfs in the Märchen:

> Als sie näher kamen, sahen sie einen Zwerg mit altem verwelktem Gesicht und einem ellenlangen schneeweissen Bart. (Grimm II, 281)

In both examples, the dwarfs are antagonistic towards the people they encounter. The ugly dwarf in Schneeweisschen und Rosenrot turns a prince into a bear in order to steal his treasure. Also, he insults the two protagonists of the story before the prince traps the dwarf and reverses his curse. Der König vom goldenen Berg involves a merchant who has lost all of his wealth. A "dark" dwarf agrees to assist the merchant in retrieving his lost wealth if the merchant agrees to give him the first thing that brushes against his leg. With the terms set, the merchant returns home only to have his infant son crawl by and brush against his leg. Twelve years later, the merchant opens a chest in which he finds a fortune, but that same day the dwarf appears demanding his son. However, the boy has been baptized; therefore, the pagan dwarf cannot take the christened youth. The dwarf claims the merchant cannot keep him either because of their deal. The boy is placed on a float and sent down a river to decide his fate. The boy washes ashore in a distant land where he becomes king, a definite biblical reminiscence. A motif similar to the one just discussed is present in Hurleburlebutz. Again, for his assistance a dwarf demands a king repay him with his child. In this case, the dwarf demands the king's daughter, whom he wishes to marry. Despite the well-intended efforts of the "white" dwarf, the princess refuses to marry him. He agrees to allow the princess to leave, but only if she does what he tells

her. She will see three doves, of which she must catch and behead the middle one. To her amazement, the beheaded dove turns into a prince who was actually the "white" dwarf, and it turns out that he had been bewitched by a fairy. A dwarf in Dat Erdmänneken proves to be exceptionally mischievous when he attacks brothers searching for an abducted princess. The two older brothers fall prey to the dwarf's trickery and pay a painful price:

> Den annern Dag, da gaet de twei jüngesten söken, un de öleste mot to Huse bliewen. Am Middage kümmt der so en klein klein Männeken un hölt un 'n Stükesken Braud ane, da nümmt he von dem Braude, wat he da funnen hädde, un schnitt en Stücke rund umme den Braud weg un will ünne dat giewen, indes dat he et ünne reiket, lett et dat kleine Männeken fallen un segd, he sulle dok so gut sin un giewen ün dat Stücke wier. Da will he dat auck doen un bucket sik, mit des rümmet dat Männeken en Stock un päckt ünne bie den Haaren un giwt ünne düete Schläge. (Grimm II, 40)

Finally, the youngest brother refuses to pick up anything for the dwarf, and when the dwarf becomes angry, the young man thrashes him. He forces the dwarf to tell him of the princess' whereabouts. The overpowered dwarf must do what is commanded of him, and the young man is able to rescue the princess.

A didactic element is certainly associated with dwarfs in the Märchen. This motif centers around the adage, "do unto others as you would have them do unto you." Dwarfs treat people, in some cases, in accordance with the way they are treated. Die drei Männlein im Walde involves a young girl who suffers from her stepmother's nasty demeanor. She sends the young girl into the snow-covered forest to find strawberries while the stepmother and her natural daughter relax at home. She finds a

cottage deep in the woods in which three dwarfs live. They ask her to do some things for them like sharing her food and helping them clean their house, and when she goes to their back stoop to sweep off the snow, she finds a basket of strawberries. The dwarfs are so pleased with the girl's pleasant nature they declare: she will grow more beautiful each day; whenever she opens her mouth, a gold piece will fall out; and she will meet and marry a king. When the stepmother and her grumpy daughter see the good fortune the girl enjoys, they decide that the other daughter in the family should also be granted such luck. But, when the dwarfs ask the other daughter to help, she insultingly declines, angering the dwarfs. When she leaves they command that: each day she will grow uglier; each time she opens her mouth, a frog will jump out; and she will suffer an unfortunate death. A similar motif is employed in Das Wasser des Lebens when three brothers try to find magic water with healing qualities. Again, the one who treats the dwarf with respect will prosper, while the others will suffer the wrath of dwarfs who have been mistreated. In this fairy tale, the two older brothers are very hateful towards a dwarf who asks them where they are going. The oldest brother calls the dwarf names; thus he is cursed. The same happens to the middle brother. They both will find that their path will narrow so that both man and horses will become trapped. The youngest brother, when asked where he travels, tells the dwarf he is searching for the "water of life" in order to heal his dying father. The dwarf, impressed with the young man's politeness, tells the man where he can find the magic water, and the young man locates it, gives it to his ailing father, saving his life, and is appointed to be the next in

line to rule the kingdom for being successful in his endeavors. As both of these stories exemplify, not only do the good characters avoid the curses, spells, and animosity of dwarfs, but, as a result of their kindness toward them they are rewarded, while those who offend find themselves suffering cursed luck and usually die in misery.

Das blaue Licht contains a motif that is somewhat related to the didactic elements already discussed. A soldier who has been double-crossed by a cruel king is ostracized and seeks shelter in a cottage which belongs to a witch. She tricks the soldier into drawing water for her, and when he does, she pushes him into the bottom of a well. She plans on leaving the intruder at the bottom of the well, but he is able to gain control of the witch's blue light. Suddenly, a "dark" dwarf appears, telling the soldier that the light is magical, and, since he had possession of the light, the dwarf will serve him. The dwarf uses the light to free them both from the well, and also to help the soldier get his revenge on the king who mistreated him. The dwarf appears to the king's daughter in the form of a dream and abducts her, bringing her to the soldier's house. After this occurs several times, the princess believes that she is not dreaming and that something magical is involved. Her father tells her to wear red slippers, and when she thinks that she is dreaming, remove one of the slippers. This ploy eventually implicates the soldier, who is arrested. Just before his execution, he summons the dwarf, who appears as a blur, whizzing about, beating those who seek to harm the soldier. When the soldier is freed, he attacks the king and the judge who condemned him. The king, in exchange for his life, promises the soldier his daughter and

his kingdom. The soldier agrees to the terms, and, in the end, everyone is happy, largely as a result of the dwarf's assistance.

This story as well as Das Wasser des Lebens points out that magical items are frequently associated with dwarfs in the Märchen. For the most part, these objects are used to help those individuals who have been kind, like the young girl in Die drei Männlein im Walde. Also, Das blaue Licht contains an example of a belief that dwarfs could take the forms of dreams or nightmares usually employed to stealthily assault humans. One reason that there are so many examples of bad relations between dwarfs and man involves the dwarf's envy of human stature. This envy manifests itself in one of the stories in the trilogy Die Wichtelmänner. "Changelings" are dwarf children sent in the place of abducted human children. A "changeling" is present in the third tale of this trilogy. In order to get her child back, the mother is told to place the dwarf-child on a warm hearth, while next to it boils water in two eggshells. This process will drain the "changeling" of its power and force it to laugh uncontrollably. This laughter forces the dwarfs to return the human babe and claim their own child (Grimm I, 218-219).

Dragons

Dragons in the Märchen function as man's archenemy. There are few examples of these beasts in the Grimm collection, but the three tales involving dragons present an interesting view of their function and form.

Der Teufel und seine Großmutter involves three deserters who strike a deal with a dragon in order to escape court-martial. The soldiers have no idea that they have actually struck a deal with Satan himself:

> Da packte sie der Drache in seine Klauen, fuhrte sie durch die Luft über das Heer hinweg und setzte sie weit davon wieder auf die Erde; der Drache war aber niemand als der Teufel. (Grimm II, 185)

Being the devil, the dragon has the power of speech. The only escape for the three soldiers is to solve a riddle spoken to them by the dragon. Fortunately, the grandmother of the beast assists them, and they escape. However, this tale supports the view of dragons in medieval literature. Their power and danger was such that they could actually be connected with the devil himself.

In Die zwei Brüder, there is yet another dragon that speaks. Although this beast is not Satan, it does warn the young man who opposed it that many have tried and many have died:

> Als er den Jäger erblickte, verwunderte er sich und spach: "Was hast du hier auf dem Berge zu schaffen." (Grimm I, 318-319)

The young man is fortunate enough to survive his encounter with the beast, save the king's daughter, and enjoy the wealth gained when one defeats a dragon. The dragon in this tale demands a virgin as sacrifice or else he will lay waste the village and land in his domain. Once again, this exemplifies the dragon's attempt to destroy all things good, clean, pure, and virtuous. The dragon seeks to weaken the stability of order in the world. There is a similar motif in Dat Erdmännken, in which three princesses have been forced to descend into a deep well where there are

three lairs. In each lair, a princess must groom the dragon. Again, dragons covet and hoard something precious and beautiful. The fact that they control the princesses allows a brave man to measure his worth by killing the dragons and rescuing the girls, and if he prevails, then he will win fame and fortune.

Dragons in the Märchen are of the classical type. They fly, breathe fire, possess great size, and have tails and claws. These are typical characteristics of dragons in medieval literature. The description of the dragon in Der Teufel und seine Großmutter serves as an example of the others found in the Grimm collection:

> Indem kam ein feuriger Drache durch die Luft geflogen, der senkte sich zu ihnen herab und fragte sie, warum sie sich da versteckt hätten. (Grimm II, 187)

Another element in Die zwei Brüder and Dat Erdmänneken, sometimes to be associated with medieval dragons, is multiple heads, which add to their reputation as deadly beings. Also, the number of heads may be symbolic. Two of the dragons in the Märchen were seven-headed, while one had nine heads and the other four.

Finally, like other fabulous beings, they live in desolate areas. Deep wells, cliffs, and mountain tops, areas foreign to men, serve as homes to dragons.

III. CONCLUSIONS

Giants are the most common enemies of gods and men, and those fortunate enough to defeat these beings enjoy exalted reputations as valiant warriors. Giants are larger-than-life foes who present their enemies with several complications involving strength and size. Deitrich's fame, like Thor's, is enhanced by being known as a giant-killer. In the Märchen, one earned wealth and fame by outwitting giants, as in the case of the quick-thinking merchant in Der König vom goldenen Berg, and in the Elder Edda the gods earn fame for their wisdom by tricking giants. The giant architect, who had outwitted the gods, is himself tricked by Loki and later killed by Thor.

However, it is not correct to say that these beings are exclusively stupid and easily fooled. Odin visits the giant Vafthrudnir in order to gauge his wisdom, for the gods believed the giants, being the first species in the universe, had knowledge of things from the past. Dietrich is tricked by the giant Wicram in Virginal. This slip by Dietrich nearly costs him his life. It is obvious that deceit plays a large role in the relationships between giants and gods or men, and for the most part, the giants end up losers in this test of wits.

Episodes of matching wits, rescue, and revenge are all common in literature involving giants. Dietrich is twice tricked and overpowered in Virginal and Sigenot, and it is Hildebrand and others who hasten to the knight's rescue. Thor often makes timely appearances to slay marauding giants who were often cheated by the gods. And, in Der Räuber und seine

Söhne, a thief helps a young boy and his grandmother escape from giants who plan on eating the boy.

Despite all the animosity associated with giants, there are some examples of friendship between them and gods or men. In the Elder Edda, the giantess Bestla marries the god Bur, and this union produces three offspring who are influential in the initial conquest of the giants. In the Dietrichepen, although they oppose Dietrich and his comrades, giants do ally themselves with the prince Nitger in Virginal. Der junge Riese is a fairy tale involving a sympathetic giant who befriends and cares for a sickly young boy.

Finally, giants have some effect on the dynamic phenomena of Nature. This, of course, is very apparent in the Elder Edda due to the use of Ymir's corpse to create the universe, and the other giants who create wind, fire, frost, etc. In the Dietrichepen and the Märchen, the actions of giants affect the contours of the landscape, while their roars are said to be thunder.

The most common similarity between giants is their immense size and strength. Giants in the Elder Edda and in Old Norse mythology could hurl huge objects great distances, while those in the Dietrichepen often fought with huge lances and tree trunks. In the Märchen, there are also examples of giants using trees as weapons, and in Das tapfere Schneiderlein, a giant squeezes a rock so hard that water actually comes from the stone.

A giant's countenance is usually described as fierce and monstrous. They are said to be large, ugly creatures with very bad tempers resulting in vicious scowls on their faces. However, the mother of Tew in the poem

Hymiskvida is said to be bright and fair, proving that there are examples of beautiful giantesses in these collections.

Generally, dwarfs function as beings who support gods and men. In the Elder Edda, four dwarfs were appointed by the gods to hold up each end of the universe. Dwarfs in this literature often oppose the gods, but when commanded, they produce fantastic items for the gods. Two dwarfs in Virginal function as messengers, and their work proves to be essential in the rescue of Dietrich. In the Märchen, those individuals wise enough to treat dwarfs with respect are rewarded and spared from being punished by insulted dwarfs.

Their knowledge of precious metals, gems, and magic is often used to assist gods and men. Many of the gods' most prized possessions were constructed by dwarfs, while in the Dietrichepen many knights were presented with fine armor, weapons, and lavish fabrics, and this is all a result of their access to certain objects. Grimms Märchen have several examples of dwarfs who use magical items to aid those they serve. Die drei Männlein im Walde and Das Wasser des Lebens are examples of tales involving characters who are kind to these beings, and they are rewarded with gold, love, and magical things such as lifegiving water.

The habitat of dwarfs explains their association with such renowned objects as the tarnkappe, Thor's hammer Mjölnir, the great ship Skidbladnir as well as countless other items. In all three collections, dwarfs dwell in mountains, caves, or underground, where they have access to the materials needed to produce such fabulous objects. Being fabulous beings and having access to valuable materials, dwarfs are able to use

magic in producing swords that fight by themselves, belts and rings that enhance strength, and capes rendering the wearer invisible.

Often, dwarfs use these objects to oppose gods and men. Laurin used the tarnkappe, a magic belt and ring, and potions to create havoc and danger for Dietrich and his comrades. Those individuals in the Märchen who oppose or anger dwarfs find themselves cursed and bewitched. Their mistreatment of dwarfs can lead to their being transformed into animals and trapped or killed.

Dwarfs also use their cunning to trick gods and men, as in the case of the dwarf Alvis who tricks the gods and nearly wins Freya. The dwarf king Laurin is able to trick Dietrich and his comrades and imprison them, while the "black" dwarf in Der König vom goldenen Berg nearly tricks a merchant into giving him his son. In most cases, those involved are able to overcome the dwarf's trickery except for those who have wronged these beings.

One reason dwarfs may have practiced such deceit may be their resentment of their physical appearance. The Elder Edda tells us that dwarfs were fashioned from the black bones of the giant Ymir, and they were angry at the gods who chose their form. Because of their hideous figures they were forced to remain chthonic beings, who, if exposed to the sun, would turn to stone. They envy the human form, and often try to take human women and children. Laurin and Goldemar are two examples in the Dietrichepen of dwarfs who covet the company of women, and these desires bring dwarfs and knights into conflict. The Märchen has an example of a "changeling." This is proof of the dwarf's desire to be around

humans, but unfortunately for the dwarf-child who is substituted for the human babe, it is usually tortured in order to make it cry. These cries force the dwarf to return the child and claim their own. In the Elder Edda, dwarfs, like giants, constantly try to deceive the gods into giving them the goddess Freya.

There are few lines describing the appearance of dwarfs, but judging from their creation in the Elder Edda, they were surely hideous beings. In Schneeweisschen und Rosenrot, the dwarf is described as having a long, thin nose, a white beard, long hair, dark skin, and rotten teeth. The only description of dwarfs in the Dietrichepen alludes to their attire, which is very lavish and festive, as is the case with the dwarf king Laurin. One final aspect concerning the appearance of dwarfs is "shape-shifting." This phenomena is present in the Elder Edda in the case of Fafnir, and in the Märchen when dwarfs take the forms of animals.

The Elder Edda provides two archetypical dragons or serpents. The "world snake" encompasses Midgard, and when it moves it causes destruction and chaos in the realm of mankind. The dragon Nidhogg gnaws at the roots of the great tree Yggdrasil, which symbolizes the beast's threat to order and stability. Although dragons are not personified as threats to the very existence of the universe in the Dietrichepen, they still function as the deadliest foes of Dietrich and his comrades. Their fiery breath not only threatens the lives of the knights, but they affect Nature as well by scorching the surrounding countryside.

Dragons also function as measuring sticks for courage and bravery in literature. Only the strongest and bravest dare face the dragon in

order to save the princess or rescue the kingdom. Whenever one emerges successful from such an encounter, he is assured fame and fortune.

Perhaps the most effective example of the dragon's ominous role is found in the Märchen. Like the other works of literature, dragons in the fairy tales represent evil, destruction, and monstrous obstacles for heroes to overcome, but their sinister nature is also associated with Satan. The dragon which Wolfhart slays in Virginal hints at being a spawn of the devil, but in Der Teufel und seine Großmutter, Satan appears as a dragon. Although not common in these works of literature, it is not uncommon for dragons to be associated with Satan in Germanic mythology or others (Hundsnurscher II, 185-86).

Although they appear less frequently than giants or dwarfs, their function is not diminished. To support this, one need only examine the Midgard serpent's actions during Ragnarök. The venom from the beast kills Thor, the bravest, most talented warrior among the gods.

The greatest point of contrast in this literature may lie with the physical form of the dragon or serpent. It is obvious that there are distinctions between the serpent in the Elder Edda and the "medieval dragon" in the Dietrich epics and the fairy tales. The physical contrasts are clear: the serpent slithers, coils, and spews venom, while the "medieval dragon" has wings, claws, a tail, and breathes fire (Gould 192-193). However, this is not to say that dragons are not present in the Elder Edda, because Nidhögg and Fafnir are often referred to as dragons, and they show characteristics of both serpents and dragons.

The presence of the supernatural is not as evident in the Dietrichepen as in the other tales, in fact, they seem to possess more human qualities than their relatives in other literature. The Eckenlied proves to be an excellent example of this. First, Ecke's mission to find Dietrich is a result of his desire for love and to impress, and Queen Seburg even tries to outfit him, although unsuccessfully, in the form of a noble knight. When Ecke does confront Dietrich, there is taunting and challenging of the knight by the giant, and, in nearly all confrontations involving giants and men, the battle is prefaced by such exercise, showing that, as in many duels involving knight against knight, or army versus army, there is confidence and pride on both sides. The fact that Dietrich laments the killing of Ecke is extremely rare, and indicates he saw a different quality in the giant other than the typical monstrous aspects of giants.

Ecke served at the court of Seburg, and it is not uncommon to find giants in the service of humans in these poems. This is peculiar because in folklore, giants are mostly very antisocial, and when they do congregate, it is usually with their own. Prince Nitger had several giants who represented him, and who had specific duties at his court, and they were part of a social unit which included ordinary human beings. This behavior is a far cry from that of the race of giants who were banished into the dark, remote frontiers of Jötunheim.

Giants became extremely emotional when one of their race has been wronged or killed. Grandengrus attacks Dietrich because he was distantly involved with Nitger's disciplining of his father Wicram. Wicram and other

giants become extremely distraught when Grandengrus and Hülle are killed, and they not only cry for their fallen, but they also seek to avenge their dead. The giant Sigenot becomes enraged when he discovers that Dietrich has killed one of his relatives and is wearing some of his armor.

Ecke's family, once they learn of his death, become extremely emotional and vengeful. All try to kill Dietrich for his actions, but his mother and sister weep nearly uncontrollably over the death of their relatives.

Laurin becomes emotional when he loses Künhild, the woman he loved. The dwarf sacrifices his kingdom and freedom in trying to win the woman's love, and when Künhild tells him that she is leaving, Laurin wails intensely so that all in Dietrich's court can hear him.

Like giants, dwarfs are also found in the service of humans. Bibung and Beldelin serve as messengers, who, without question, venture into dangerous areas in order to deliver important information assisting those they serve. Socialization among dwarfs is very common to Laurin, Virginal, and Goldemar. They reside in kingdoms filled with riches and servants similar to the way it might be in the courts of nobility. These fabulous beings are more social in their own relations and those with humans than any other present in this literature. Dwarfs depend on a social unit to protect themselves, their treasures, and to mine the valuable stones they need in order to produce fabulous objects (Hundsnurscher I, 62-63).

Dwarfs not only prize the human physique and the company of women, but they are also honored when they could entertain humans at

their court. Wolfhart is shown the greatest honor when he wanders into Meizlin's court, and he is given the best drink, food, fabrics, and jewels, and is entertained by the finest players and servants. All this proves the point that, generally, dwarfs are comfortable with human company.

Dwarfs are described in very extravagant terms in the Dietrich epics. Whether it be Laurin's attire, armor, and general regalia, or Meizlin's beautiful court, which is adorned with the finest gems and fabrics, dwarfs are rarely matched in their love of wealth and treasure.

In the Elder Edda and the Märchen there are hints at subcategories in the dwarf race, but there is none of this in the Dietrichepen. In these poems, dwarfs are simply dwarfs, and thanks to a lack of description, there is no hint at "light" and "dark" elves or dwarfs. Many do live in mountainous terrains, or in underground dwellings, but many also reside in the courts of nobility. And, perhaps the most important point, when Laurin is taken to serve at Dietrich's court, he eventually embraces Christianity.

Generally speaking, fabulous creatures are present in the Dietrich epics simply to lend variety to the adventure of the heroes, to cause them to face extraordinary dangers rather than the known dangers of ordinary men. While there is little progression in the difficulties of the adventures in any of the works we have discussed, in a way, the fantastic epics represent this progression, as compared with the "historical" epics (Dietrichs Flucht and Rabenschlacht), which have little of the fantastic in them. While the Dietrichepen draw on folklore for the nature of fabulous

beings, the authors seem sometimes to forget that they are not ordinary humans.

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VITA

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