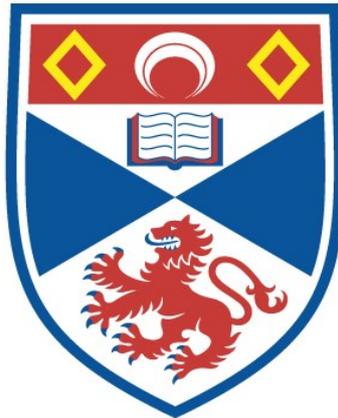


THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DESCRIPTION OF WORKS OF  
ART IN GERMAN PROSE FICTION FROM 1830-1900

Margaret Mair Cameron Hollis

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24. 10. 69

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## Introduction

This thesis covers the prose fiction of four prominent authors of the middle and later nineteenth century, Mörike, Storm, C.F. Meyer and Fontane. It examines the works of art - mainly paintings and sculptures - which they describe in their stories and novels, attempting to ascertain for what purposes these works of art are used and what special artistic needs led each author to employ descriptions of works of art as a literary device. Only rarely is a work of art described in great detail (see in particular Mörike's descriptions); in most cases the subject or content is mentioned, sometimes with a few comments on the style and technique. Our authors display little interest in the craft aspect of works of art, although any observations made to this point show that they do have some knowledge of technique. It is the content or subject which is all-important, because these descriptions have a special function; they are devices employed by the authors to reveal something about their characters' minds or situation, to indicate the outcome of the story or to sum up its theme. For this reason each author invents works of art to suit the needs of his own stories and rarely employs genuine works.

Descriptions or mentions of works of art appear throughout the work of Storm, Meyer and Fontane. Although Mörike employs them only in Maler Nolten, this work is too important and interesting not to merit a thorough investigation. Each of the four authors is examined individually in a chapter or set of chapters. An introduction takes a look at his creative life in order to establish his main aims and preoccupations, but biographical details have been kept to a minimum. For these I have drawn on the standard biographies of each author. (1)

My plan, following the introduction, is to show how each author employs his descriptions or mentions of works of art, and to determine the various uses to which he puts them both in the individual stories

(1) In the case of Mörike, the pattern is different, because a knowledge of his life is of no help in tackling the problems of Maler Nolten. See Conclusion pp.188-9

and in his work as a whole. Meyer has been dealt with last, because, as will be shown, his relationship with art and thus his use of works of art differs radically from that of the other authors. He is the only one for whom the visual arts are of fundamental importance, affecting every aspect of his creative work, whereas for Mörike, Storm and Fontane art is little more than an embellishment on life.

In the bibliography I list those works which have been most helpful to me in writing this thesis. I have found no general work dealing with descriptions of works of art in modern German literature, and few writers on individual authors consider their use of such descriptions. Christian Schuster's dissertation 'The Work of Art in German Literature', which covers the period from Winckelmann to the Romantics, is concerned mainly with the problems of describing works of art in a fitting literary style - of rendering one art form in terms of another. He deals more with writers on aesthetics than with authors of fiction, and although he includes a brief discussion of Maler Nolten (quoted on p.6 of the thesis), he says nothing about the symbolic significance of the picture.

B. Seuffert's study of Nolten and Mozart contains a fanciful attempt to link up all the characters and events in the novel with the figures and scenes in the picture of the ghostly concert. This is too strained the rather untidy construction of the novel and its lack of conscious effects makes it impossible to accept such contivance on Mörike's part.

C.A. Bernd in Theodor Storm's Craft of Fiction seizes upon Storm's obsession with transience and his attempt to combat it in Aquis Submersa and In St. Jürgen. Storm shows how men attempt to keep their memory alive by having their portraits painted or by giving donations to public institutions, such as the clock in In St. Jürgen, and how ironical the attempts are self-defeating, since the person and his story are forgotten even although the portrait remains, and the clock ticks to mark the passing of time and the fading of memory. The attempt to preserve memory and the awareness of transience are important themes in Storm and govern a great part of his use of descriptions of works of art.

Most writers on C.F. Meyer stress the importance for him of the visu

arts, but Baumgarten in particular has seen this as a negative facet of Meyer's character, underlining his preoccupation with life at second-hand. Recent critics like W.D. Williams (The Stories of C.F. Meyer) and K.S. Guthke (an essay entitled 'C.F. Meyers Kunstsymbolik') make a more positive evaluation of the influence of art on Meyer as a writer. They examine his descriptions of works of art and comment on their function and significance in their several stories. I have referred to these two writers frequently in the chapter on Meyer and quoted from them liberally, since they helped to form my ideas on the place of art in Meyer's life and his use of works of art in his Novellen.

F.E. Oppenheimer's dissertation 'Literary Allusion in the Novels of Theodor Fontane' considers Fontane's predilection for placing literary quotations in the mouths of his characters. It shows that Fontane uses these quotations for several purposes - to pass on information in an 'under cover' method, to indicate the cultural niveau of the speaker or his companions, or to criticise the culture and attitudes of his characters. From this it is not hard to see that Fontane uses description or more likely allusions to works of art for the same purposes.

My aim in this thesis is not to prove any proposition but to examine the descriptions and mentions of works of art which appear throughout the prose fiction of four major nineteenth century authors; to define the uses to which they put these descriptions and to assess the importance of this device in their works. In the Conclusion I summarise my findings and try to place the use of descriptions of works of art by the authors against the background of their literary period.

EDUARD MÖRIKE

Eduard Mörike

Maler Nolten

In his penetrating analysis of Mörike's novel Friedrich Theodor Vischer sums up its various aspects thus: „Wir haben also einen Roman, der zur Hälfte ein Bildungs-roman, die Geschichte der Erziehung eines Menschen durch das Leben, die Liebe namentlich, ein psychologischer Roman, zur Hälfte ein Schicksals-roman, ein mystischer Roman ist." (1) This fascinating and irritating work is a monument to the period of transition in which Mörike lived; it fascinates because it looks forward to the psychological novel of the later nineteenth century while still retaining the framework of the Romantic Bildungs- und Künstlerroman, and irritates because it is, finally, neither one nor the other.

Maler Nolten is, as Vischer points out, an unfortunate title for the work, since it seems to indicate the already out-of-date genre of Künstlerroman, which was not what Mörike intended to write. He makes Nolten a painter partly because of the Romantic tradition and partly because of his own interest in art. Nothing concrete is, however, said about plastic art. Mörike occasionally states that Nolten and his friends discussed aesthetic matters (2), and he relates a long conversation between Nolten and Larkens about Nolten's nature as an artist (3), but all that is said could just as well be applied to poet and a poet. But Mörike's main concern is not with Nolten as an artist but as a personality. He skates briefly over Nolten's development after his introduction to the painter Tillsen, showing how the young man changes from an out-and-out romantic to an exponent of classical beauty and harmony, how in the transference of his medium from water colours or pen and wash to oils he achieves the desired synthesis of classical form and technique and romantic inspiration and imagination. Otherwise Nolten is far from being the typical artist-hero. He has very ordinary bourgeois ideals and ambitions, in contrast to the sculptor Raymund. This is rather a wild young man with a beard, who appears

(1) F.Th. Vischer Kritische Gänge Bd.II (Tübingen 1844) p.225  
(2) See p.40 and p.256 in Sämtliche Werke I, (Winkler München 1967)  
(3) Werke I, pp.201-207

twice in the story, first of all working in the Hofrat's house, where his fiancée Henriette sits as a model, then at the 'pastoral' interlude in Neuburg, when Nolten and Agnes visit Pfarrer Amandus (1). On this occasion he distresses the ladies by recounting the trials of love which he imposes on the unfortunate Henriette. He is much more like the popular idea of the eccentric, irresponsible artist than Nolten is. But as Vischer says: „Nolten mußte doch etwas sein und man konnte doch keinen Referendarius aus ihm machen" (2). Certainly the products of his art are of great significance for the development of the story, but because of their significance they become a force in their own right, quite divorced from their creator; indeed one tends to forget that Nolten did create them.

The chief interest in Nolten's story is the effect of love on the course and development of his life, and incidentally of his art. His childhood passion for the portrait of a woman in his father's attic stimulates him to draw and paint, although his father is determined that he shall never be an artist. After his father's death he is brought up by a forester in the small town of Neuburg, where the local Baron is attracted by his talent and finances his education, including a tour of Italy. He then goes to study in the Residenz, where, after meeting the court painter Tillsen, he gains fame and popularity. At the same time he becomes disillusioned with his fiancée Agnes, the forester's daughter, whom he believes to be unfaithful to him, and he falls in love with the beautiful Gräfin Constanze. Both relationships prove to be inadequate: Agnes is too naive, Constanze too sophisticated. According to the usual pattern of development in a Bildungsroman, Nolten should go on to meet a woman embodying the ideal combination, who will lead him to intellectual and artistic maturity. The possibilities of a relationship with Margot, the Präsident's daughter, introduced at the end of the book, cannot fail to occur to the reader. She has both character and intelligence, and Nolten is not unaware of this. Was he therefore wise or right in returning to Agnes, especially as his

(1) See Werke I, pp.222-226 and pp.273-280 respectively

(2) op. cit. p.221

return does not come about in the natural course of events, but is forced upon him by his friend Larkens? And is Larkens justified, despite his good intentions, in deceiving Agnes by assuming the rôle of Nolten and maintaining the lovers' correspondance, and also in thwarting Nolten's development by keeping him tied to an outgrown friendship?

All these interesting questions, which arise if one regards this work as a psychological novel, are never pursued any further, because Nolten's future is settled from the outset by his relationship with the gypsy Elisabeth. They are joined first by ties of blood, Elisabeth being the daughter of Nolten's uncle Friedrich and a gypsy woman called Loskine. It was the portrait which Friedrich painted of his wife which was found by the boy Nolten and adored by him with an almost religious fervour. His first meeting with Elisabeth, who is so like her mother, is therefore something of a wish-fulfilment for the sensitive, lonely boy, and he is completely captivated by the beautiful, half-mad girl with her dark eyes and strange hypnotic powers. They enter into a peculiar type of betrothal, which Nolten forgets as he grows up and becomes sophisticated, but which so obsesses Elisabeth's sick mind that she pursues Nolten like a fury until finally, despite his resistance, she claims him for her own in death. She represents the evil destiny portrayed by the ancients which hangs over a man from the very moment of his birth, making nonsense of his attempts to govern his life rationally and at the last destroying him mercilessly.

Under this shadow any questions as to Nolten's psychological growth become irrelevant, and the novel becomes a tale of the working out of a dreadful, inescapable fate. It would seem from the ending that this was how Mörike intended the novel to be interpreted, and yet he goes to great lengths to provide a rational explanation for any so-called 'workings of fate'. Elisabeth is portrayed as a mentally unbalanced woman with an *idée fixe* - that Nolten is destined for her. For this reason she tries to end Agnes's engagement to

Nolten: „die Unglückliche glaubte sich in Agnes von einer Nebenbuhlerin befreien zu müssen, und leider kam der Zufall...ihrer Absicht gar sehr zu Hülfe. Ihre List mochte übrigens leicht von der Art sein, wie sie sich bei Verrückten häufig mit der höchsten Gutmütigkeit gepaart findet...(in that she tries to make the loss of Nolten acceptable to Agnes by offering her Otto, her cousin, as a more suitable substitute.)..Wie-viel eigentliche Lüge und wie-viel Selbstbetrug an jener verhängnisvollen Prophezeiung Anteil gehabt, wäre daher nicht wohl zu entscheiden, nur wird es jetzt um so begreiflicher, daß die Erscheinung und der ganze Ausdruck der Prophetin eine so gewaltsame und hinreißende Wirkung auf das kränklich reizbare Gemüt Agnesens machen konnte." (1)

This morbid imagination, from which all the characters suffer, makes them susceptible to the power of dreams, omens and portents. Constanze is a particularly good example; the strong impression made on her by one of Nolten's fantastic pictures gives rise to a dream which she interprets as a portent of early death. Confirmed in this belief by a sudden sight of Elisabeth, the original of the main figure in the picture, she falls into a nervous illness. Nolten wonders, on hearing about the dream and later about the illness, whether fate, in the shape of Elisabeth, may be pursuing him again by wrecking Constanze's life, but this passes and he ponders on the psychological causes of her mental disturbances. "Wie vieles, dachte er, muß hier zusammengewirkt haben, um den hellen und festen Geist dieses Weibes zu betören! Wie sehr ist nicht zu glauben, daß dies Gemüt lange zuvor mit sich selbst uneins gewesen sein müsse, eh solche Träume es gefangennehmen konnten!" (2) Yet Nolten firmly believes in the hand of fate guiding his own life. Not only has it tied him to Elisabeth, it has also united him with Agnes, especially after their estrangement and the sufferings which were caused by Elisabeth: „notwendig und daher auf ewig ist er mit ihr (Agnes) verbunden, Böses und Gutes kann für sie beide nur in einer Schale gewoge

(1) Werke I, p.86

(2) Werke I, p.232

sein." (1) Larkens mocks at this attitude. "Unstreitig hat dein Leben viel Bedeutung," he says, "allein du nimmst seine Lehren in einem viel zu engen Sinn: du legst ihm eine Art dämonischen Charakter bei, oder, ich weiß nicht was? - glaubst dich gegängelt von einem wunderlichen Spiritus familiaris, der in deines Vaters Rumpelkammer spukt." (2) In spite of his apparent scepticism Larkens has used exactly the same terminology - fate, higher powers, man being led - in describing the course of Nolten's life to the sculptor Leopold.

This dualistic attitude pervades the novel and characterises the persons in it. For the characters this is psychologically admissible - who has ever solved the old dichotomy between free will and predestination or fate? Unfortunately Mörike the craftsman has allowed himself to be afflicted by the same dichotomy in a way which is not admissible: he seems to be attempting to write a novel of character but his problems are solved by the external force of fate. The ending is the only one possible, given the ineluctable bond with Elisabeth, but it is incompatible with the rational, modern world in which the characters move for most of the time. The reader cannot but be dissatisfied with Mörike's attempt to combine the two opposing worlds of the rational and the mystical, a dissatisfaction expressed by Vischer in the conclusion of the sentence quoted above: "...beide Hälften gehen nicht ineinander auf, so bewundernswürdig des Dichters künstliche Bemühungen sind, sie ineinander zu verschmelzen, zugleich die verständige Wirklichkeit und zugleich das Wunder zu retten." (3)

To Mörike's attempts to unite the opposing streams in his novel belong the works of art described at the opening of the book. Having just seen some outstanding pictures in the house of Graf Zarin, Baron Jaßfeld rushes off to congratulate the painter Tillsen, whom he believes to be the artist, on a revival of his powers. Tillsen, however, is shamed by his praise, and subsequently admits to his brother-in-law that he did indeed paint the pictures, but the

(1) Werke I, p.283

(2) Werke I, p.203

(3) op. cit. p.225

inspiration he drew from sketches sold to him by a curious half-mad fellow who claimed to be an artist. The real author of the sketches Nolten, presents himself to Tillsen shortly afterwards, having just seen in the public gallery a version in oils of his own sketch on the subject of Polyxena. He explains that the sketches were stolen from him by his valet Wispel, who then sold them to Tillsen. The painter welcomes Nolten warmly and shows him the oil painting done after his pen and wash sketch entitled „Gespenstermusik im Walde und Mondschein“. This was one of the works which had so impressed Baron Jaßfeld. It shows a group of ghosts dancing in a clearing in the woods, while one, a striking figure with dark, soulful eyes, plays the organ. The other picture was a large oil painting of a young boy being rowed out captive over the sea by a satyr to a waiting mermaid.

These two pictures, described in detail at the outset, are symbolic of the two streams or elements in Maler Nolten. The mermaid picture represents the rational modern world. It is done in oils, which is evidence of greater skill and application on the part of the artist, thus of a more classical approach. The actual oil painting has, of course, been executed by Tillsen, but he is a man of culture who frequents the best society, and it is through him that Nolten acquires a higher degree of technique as well as the entrée into society in the Residenz. The subject too is of a classical nature and is typical of the works produced by the artists of the early nineteenth century, such as the Nazarenes, who admired and tried to imitate the paintings of the Italian Renaissance. The Baron describes it in the typical manner of the nineteenth century. 'He enumerates figures and shapes, narrates the story as a succession of events, and describes the innermost thoughts and desires of each figure - ..a good literary description, but so far as the reality of the work of art described is concerned, he mentions much that the observer would be unable to see.' (1)

(1) C. Schuster, 'The Work of Art in German Literature' (Diss.)  
Columbia (1948), pp.158-159

Nevertheless, the Baron also praises the composition: the mermaid is in the foreground, leaning towards the boy, who tries to draw away but reaches forward to her with one hand. An irregular triangle is completed by the figure of the satyr bowed over his oar, and the interest is permitted to remain with the group, because the empty end of the boat is concealed by seaweed and the background of the picture is uncluttered. The colouring, especially of the mermaid's hair, is praised - colouring seems to be one of Tillsen's best features - but the Baron detects a new breadth and boldness of vision which Tillsen's pictures have hitherto lacked. The artist has by his wide, empty seascape managed to evoke an uncanny atmosphere of loneliness and helplessness.

Classical in style and romantic in conception, this picture echoes Mörike's approach to writing. Although he chooses to narrate events in a rather complicated way, he writes clearly and simply but without ever losing the poetic spirit which imbues his lyrics and inspires some beautiful and delicate passages in his novel. These have often little to do with the main stream of the story; „Der letzte König von Orplid" - the play presented by Larkens and Nolten to Constanze's circle, and the two poem-cycles attributed to Larkens, are interpolated purely for the sake of the poetry. The 'pastoral interlude' in Neuburg, when Agnes and Nolten spend a happy day visiting relations, the legend of the Alexis-Brunn which Henni tells to Agnes, and the tender scenes with the blind Henni caring for Agnes in her madness do indeed show Mörike at his best, but from the point of view of the novel they must be declared distractions, being in a completely different key from the ending towards which the story is progressing.

The mermaid picture also throws light on the character of Mörike's hero, both as an artist and as a man, now that he has grown up and overcome the fantastic leanings of his youth. The picture is never men-

tioned again, but several references are made to Nolten's ability to combine romantic inspiration with classical technique - the much sought-after synthesis of Mörike's period. In their great discussion of Nolten's artistic nature Larkens says to his friend: „Du hast ..ein für allemal die Blume der Alten rein vom schön schlanken Stengel abgepflückt, sie blüht dir unverwelklich am Busen und mischt ihren stärkenden Geruch in deine Phantasie, du magst nun malen was du willst nichts Enges, nichts Verwickeltes wird jemals von dir ausgehen." (1) Nolten's visit to Italy in the early years of his training has been of great benefit to his art.

In hohem Grade fruchtbar ward ihm der Aufenthalt zu Rom und Florenz; aber selbst die mannigfaltigen Anschauungen dieser herrlichen Kunstwelt vermochten den Grundton jener früheren Eindrücke nie völlig zu verdrängen, deren mysteriöser Charakter zunächst in der Idee des Christlichen eine analoge Befriedigung fand. (2)

Larkens does mention the importance to Nolten of his Christian faith, although unfortunately it does not prove strong enough to defeat the dark influences from his past. These seem to have formed the inspiration of his earlier works, which the Hofrat criticises so bitterly in his conversation with Nolten's friend Leopold:

„Dieser Nolten ist der verdorbenste und gefährlichste Ketzer unter den Malern, einer von den halsbrecherischen Seiltänzern, welche die Kunst auf den Kopf stellen, weil das ordinäre Gehen auf zwei Beinen anfängt langweilig zu werden; der widerwärtigste Phantasie-Renomiste! Was malt er denn? eine trübe Welt voll Gespenstern, Zaubern, Elfen und dergleichen Fratzen, das ist's, was er kultiviert. Er ist recht verliebt in das Abgeschmackte, in Dinge, bei denen keinem Menschen wohl wird. Die gesunde, lautere Milch des Einfach Schönen verschmäh't er und braut einen Schwindeltrank auf Kreuzwegen und unterm Galgen." (3)

Nolten explains this criticism by suggesting that the Hofrat has some personal grudge against him: „denn daß ich es bloß als Künstler mit ihm verdorben habe, ist nicht wohl möglich, wenigstens täte er mir sehr Unrecht, indem der Vorwurf des Phantastischen, den er mir zu machen scheint, nur den kleinsten Teil meiner Erfindungen träfe, wenn es je ein Vorwurf heißen soll. Die meisten meiner Arbeiten bezeichnen in

- (1) Werke I, p.205
- (2) Werke I, p.195
- (3) Werke I, p.23

der Tat eine ganz andere Gattung." (1) A brief mention of the new work which Nolten started after his release from prison hints at another classical subject, Narcissus (2).

Nolten appears to believe that he has overcome his past, but herein he errs, for in the end it is this dark past which rises up again to claim him - the vision of Nolten's death seen by the blind boy Henni is very similar to the picture of the ghostly concert described at the opening of the book. This picture represents the other side - the 'Nachtseite' - attacked so vehemently by the Hofrat, of Nolten's inspiration and work, and also of his creator's, for Mörike, despite the classical nature of his style and psychological insight, is at heart a romantic, who believes that the answers to life's ultimate questions lie not with man but with some power beyond man's control. This is borne out by the place which Mörike gives to the picture symbolising this power, which is by no means a benevolent one - it is described right at the start, re-appears occasionally in the course of the story and is recalled by the conclusion.

The pen and wash sketch described by Baron Jassfeld is typical of nineteenth century German artists such as Moritz von Schwind, Karl Philipp Fohr and Joseph Anton Koch. As well as producing large oil paintings in the classical manner, like Nolten's mermaid, they used crayon or pen and wash for sketching scenes inspired by the more uncanny and fantastic aspects of mythology, both Germanic and classical. Nolten's sketch depicts a gathering of music-loving ghosts, who have come from a nearby graveyard to a clearing in the woods to dance or play their instruments. The central figure is a woman seated at a Gothic organ with a spring bubbling at its foot. Her dreamy eyes stare into space as though she were looking forward to another departure from this second bodily existence. By her side stands a youth, his face drawn with suffering and in his hand a torch. The Baron adds a description of various details which have struck him particularly, praises the beauty of some of the figures and remarks that the eerie effects of the lighting will emerge even better in the

(1) Werke I, p.25

(2) Werke I, p.256, referred to by the old Baron in Neuburg

finished oil painting. Although the picture is somewhat overloaded, the organist stands out as the dominant figure which makes a deep and lasting impression on all who see the work. This, Mörike would have us believe, is no coincidence, for the figure of the organ player was inspired by the gypsy girl Elisabeth and forms a sort of Doppelgänger to her in her rôle as the agent of Nolten's destiny. In the course of the novel Mörike gradually brings Elisabeth and the picture together. The narrative method employed is, however, so complicated that not until he has read two-thirds of the book is the reader fully aware of the relationship in which each character stands to the others.

Two stories are told: in straightforward narrative is presented the story of Nolten in the Residenz and chiefly of his love affair with the Gräfin Constanze. The story of Agnes is woven into it, related mainly by means of flash-backs and letters from the standpoint of Larkens the actor, who is maintaining the relationship on Nolten's behalf. Larkens does not discover until much later the reason for the estrangement between the two lovers: Nolten has accepted the flimsiest evidence of his fiancée's unfaithfulness and has discarded her without ever giving her the chance to defend herself. Agnes is a highly-strung person and suffers from doubts about her suitability to be Nolten's wife. She is recovering from a nervous illness when she meets the gypsy Elisabeth, who tells her that she and Nolten are not meant for each other, but that she should instead marry her cousin Otto. Otto is so encouraged by Agnes's friendly behaviour towards him that he writes to Nolten suggesting that the artist ought to relinquish Agnes to him. Nolten assumes that Agnes has actively encouraged Otto and stops writing to her. Larkens imagines that he is merely passing through a period of coolness and continues the correspondence so that Agnes notices nothing.

Elisabeth, who is the real cause of the rift, acts in her own person as the agent of destiny in the Agnes story. In the Constanze story this part is played by her Doppelgänger in the picture.

When Nolten introduces himself to Tillsen, he is utterly dumbfounded by the sight of the completed version in oils of his sketch of the ghostly concert already described by Baron Jaßfeld. He is

further alarmed when much later he hears how the picture has affected the Gräfin Constanze. She relates a dream in which the figure of the organist stepped out of the frame and, staring malevolently at her, announced: „Constanze Josephine Armond wird auch bald die Orgel mit uns spielen." Nolten ponders the significance of this dream.

Warum denn just diese Figur? Er wußte zu gut, daß er gerade in ihr das getreue Porträt eines Zigeunermädchens, einer Person dargestellt hatte, welche einst verhängnisvoll genug in sein eigenes Leben eingegriffen hatte. Auf der anderen Seite ließ sich alles und jedes ganz natürlich aus dem starken Eindruck erklären, welche das Gemälde auf eine sehr empfängliche Einbildungskraft machen mußte. (1)

Nolten's hopes of winning Constanze receive two major blows soon after this incident. At a soirée in Constanze's house he and Larkens read a play illustrated by slides which several of the spectators take to be a satire on the late king's love affair with a young lady of the court. On the same evening Larkens plants letters from Agnes to Nolten where Constanze can find them, in order to discourage her interest in him. The hurt to Constanze's feelings and pride is too great; when Herzog Adolf, the king's younger son and an admirer of Constanze, asks for her opinion of the play, she declares Nolten and Larkens guilty of deliberate malice. The duke at once has them sent to prison.

During their imprisonment the sculptor Leopold visits Larkens to relate his meeting with a gypsy whom he recognised as the organ player in Nolten's painting. He is much distressed by this appearance, which in the circumstances he takes to be a bad omen for Nolten. Larkens has already had dealings with Elisabeth. He had heard about her from Nolten and recognised her from the painting when she first appeared in the town a month or so before in search of the artist. She it was who, at Larkens' instigation, played the part of the Nachtwächter on the Albaniturm on New Year's Eve, when Larkens staged a little masquerade in order to remind Nolten of his duty to Agnes. The origins of Nolten's connexion with the gypsy are written down in an account entitled „Ein Tag aus Noltens Jugendlieben", which Larkens invites Leopold to read. The account describes

(1) Werke I, pp.64-65

Nolten's first meeting with Elisabeth and attributes the source of his artistic inspiration to her. This throws some light on the background of the picture, in that it reveals who Elisabeth is and shows what a powerful impression she has made on Nolten, but it does nothing towards explaining the direct motivation of this particular subject.

The full extent of the damage done by the picture is revealed when Nolten, after learning about Larkens' game with the letters, visits a friend of Constanze's, Frau von Niethelm, with the intention of explaining the whole affair to her and thus clearing his name with Constanze. Constanze is ill, smitten by remorse over her part in Nolten's imprisonment and by the shock received from seeing Elisabeth one day in church. This vision, as she then believed it to be, induced her to plead with Herzog Adolf for Nolten's release, and combined with her earlier dream to produce the morbid conviction that she would soon die. In response to Frau von Niethelm's questioning, Nolten explains that the figure seen by Constanze was a real person, the original of the organ player in the picture, who happened to be in the town at that time. Constanze has been the victim of an unfortunate coincidence.

Just before this episode, the story of Agnes and her illness has been made known through the letters from Agnes and her father to Larkens. After his release from prison Larkens vanishes from the Residenz, leaving a farewell letter to Nolten which clears up the misunderstandings and reveals the part played by Elisabeth. This information, together with the news of Constanze's fate, causes Nolten to wonder whether this chain of events can rightly be termed coincidence. „Das unbegreifliche Verhängnis, daß die rätselhafte Person der Zigeunerin aufs neue die Bahn seines Lebens, und auf so absichtlich gefahrdrohende Weise durchkreuzen mußte,...gab ihm mancherlei zu sinnen." (1) „Es war...nun gar kein Zweifel mehr, daß jenes ungeheure Wesen, so wie einst bei Agnesen mit Absicht, so nun hier bei der Gräfin unwillkürlich ihn abermals verfolgte. Es fing

(1) Werke I, p.221

dieser Eigensinn des Schickals ihm nachgerade ängstlich zu werden an." (1) Despite his attempts at rationalisation the superstitious fear remains, as Mörike intends. At last Elisabeth and her Doppelgänger have been united; the trouble caused by each on her own has been related.

From this point on the picture is not mentioned again, except once briefly. Before the departure from Neuburg Agnes confesses her fear to Nolten that the gypsy may come again, and he wonders whether she may have been upset by seeing the picture amongst his belongings. This is not so; Agnes appears to be unaware of the existence of this picture, indeed she seems to know nothing about Nolten's art and its inspirations, which is strange, since they spent their youth together, the very time when Nolten was under the influence of Elisabeth.

The end of the novel recalls scenes described earlier which, by the intervening distance and the rational tenor of the narrative, have been allowed to lapse into the background. The artist, with Agnes and Nanette, his youngest sister, sets off for the town in North Germany where he is to take up an appointment. On the way he encounters Larkens, who has come down badly in the world. Larkens, like Raymund, albeit in different ways, is also interesting as an embodiment of the artistic temperament. Mörike tells us a little about his character and fortunes, but he does not develop a Larkens plot. Using his ability as an actor, Larkens had thrown himself into his rôle as Nolten in the correspondence with Agnes perhaps too far for his own good. When he leaves the Residenz, it is hinted that he desires to break with Nolten because he has fallen in love with Agnes and thus placed himself in an impossible situation. Rather than resume the friendship now that Nolten and Agnes are reunited, Larkens commits suicide. While Nolten settles the funeral arrangements he meets the Präsident von K., a friend of Larkens who

(1) Werke I, p.232

had known and admired him as an actor. He asks the little party to his country house for a restful visit. The time passes pleasantly in the company of the Präsident's cultured daughter Margot, until Nolten, anxious to prove the debt which he and Agnes owe to Larkens, tells her about the fake correspondence. This so disturbs Agnes that she refuses to have any more to do with Nolten. An encounter with Elisabeth drives her completely insane, and later she drowns herself in an old well.

Elisabeth re-appears in a manner very reminiscent of her first meeting with Nolten in his boyhood. Her wild singing, recognised at once by Nolten, attracts first Agnes then the others out into the garden, where they find Elisabeth standing over Agnes, who is lying in a faint. She tells them to let Agnes die in peace - it is the best thing for her since she cannot have Nolten. Elisabeth claims him for herself, reminding him of their childhood betrothal. Nolten rejects her violently and banishes her, as he thinks, for ever, but the circumstances of his death show that he has not broken her hold over him. One night Nolten hears organ music coming from the chapel and goes to investigate. The gardner and his son, the blind boy Henni, are alarmed by a scream and the sound of a heavy fall. When they reach the chapel the gardner sees Nolten lying senseless on the floor, but Henni claims to see two figures by the organ. It is ironical that Henni had been accustomed to comfort Agnes in her madness by playing on this organ, which he had himself repaired. Later Henni explains that, when he stood at the chapel door, he suddenly became able to see: in the corner by the organ stood Elisabeth and Nolten - he recognised them from descriptions and from a glance at the artist's body on the floor. As he watched in horror, the pair came towards him, arm in arm, Nolten showing great reluctance. The shade of Nolten, passing over his own lifeless body, turned its eyes on Henni with a look of such despair that Henni fainted. This vision is seen only by Henni; his father does not understand what is wrong with the boy, but afterwards both he and the

Präsident feel sure that some supernatural power has been at work. In details Henni's vision recalls the picture of the ghostly concert. One remembers the suffering youth standing beside the organ - could this have been meant to represent the artist himself? The most outstanding feature of the picture was the expression in the organist's eyes - this made a lasting impression on all who saw the picture. Likewise in this scene it is the look which Nolten's ghost gives Henni which renders the boy senseless.

This ending is a masterly stroke in that it recalls the picture described at the beginning and so rounds off the work neatly. It also leaves the reader in no doubt as to the Weltanschauung behind the book. Both Elisabeth and the picture are symbolic of the supernatural forces which, according to this novel, govern man's life. Like a Leitmotif they crop up again and again, acting on behalf of the destiny which hangs over the main character, destroying him and all he touches. Though the device undoubtedly lends unity, its usefulness is marred because, like the whole supernatural background, it is not sufficiently well grounded. Mörike assumes that his readers are as firmly convinced of the power of irrational necessity as he is. Vischer, writing only seven years later, shows that this is not so. If the modern reader is to accept any supernatural intervention, it must be such that it can be explained down to one small detail which defies all human rationalisation. Now Mörike does much to explain the 'workings of fate' psychologically, but unfortunately he chooses to pass by the supernaturally controlled basis of his story, namely the relationship between Elisabeth and Nolten. Vischer compares it with the Eduard-Ottillie relationship in Goethe's Wahlverwandtschaften, which can be accounted for rationally excepting the ultimate reason for the attraction. „Hier aber (in Nolten's case) wirkt aus dem Verborgenen, ohne oder mit ganz geringer Nahrung durch wirkliche Annäherung der wahlverwandten Personen, verfolgend und zerstörend die prädestinierte Notwendigkeit, daher bleibt am Schlusse ein dumpfer, unaufgelöster Schmerz zurück.“

(1) No reason is given why the Wahlverwandtschaft should be so

(1) Kritische Gänge Bd. II, p.224

pernicious, since there is nothing but Elisabeth's madness to prevent a union. Neither is married, their blood relationship is within the permitted degrees, and both are the legitimate products of proper marriages. Elisabeth is portrayed through-out as a person of agreeable temperament, even though mentally defective. She is certainly not a raging fury determined on vengeance. When she feels betrayed by Nolten she is grieved rather than angry.

It is indeed hard to see how Elisabeth could have exercised such a strong influence on Nolten, either in a supernatural or practical way. She meets him once during his boyhood and apparently never encounters him again before the end. She traces him to the Residenz and is seen by Larkens and Leopold on different occasions, and of course by Constanze. Why does she fail to make contact then with the painter, while tracking him down to his obscure retreat in the Präsident's house? The episode on the Albaniturm, when Elisabeth plays a Nachtwächter who has observed Agnes's doings, is incredible. Nolten does not recognise her and she does not reveal herself to him; in view of their 'fatal' connexion one might have expected something to happen.

The real force in Nolten's early years is the portrait of Elisabeth's mother, which formed an object of his adoration and a stimulus to his artistic imagination. The meeting with Elisabeth is for Nolten the consummation of his artistic longings and encourages him further on a way already chosen by him. He has already been producing the „hexenhafte Karikaturen" which angered his father, the more so because „gerade solche Possen hat Onkel Friedrich in seiner Jugend gehabt" (1). When Onkel Friedrich himself, now disguised as the Hofrat, encounters this sort of work in the adult, though not yet mature Nolten, he reacts furiously against it. He evidently feels that his own youthful course had been a dangerous one, and he wants to preserve his nephew from similar mistakes.

The most important of Nolten's fantastic drawings, the picture of the ghostly concert, is also, we are told, inspired by the relation-

(1) Werke I, p.194

ship with Elisabeth. Brief mention is made of „eine gewisse Zeichnung... , welche von Nolten zur Zeit, als er die Schule zu ++ besuchte, entworfen, Elisabeths Gestalt in asiatischem Kostüm, mit Szenerie im ähnlichen Geschmack, darstellte" (1). Larkens was much impressed by this drawing, which inspired him to write a cycle of poems (2). The motivation of the chief drawing, however, despite its importance both for the characters and as a literary device, is never explained. Two good opportunities occur: when Nolten sees the completed oil painting in Tillsen's studio he starts back, „wie von dem Gespenst eines Doppelgängers erschreckt". But Mörike slides over this crucial point by remarking: „Wir sagen nichts von der unbeschreiblichen Empfindung des letzteren (Nolten) und erinnern den Leser an das wunderliche Geisterkonzert, wovon ihm der alte Baron früher einen Begriff gegeben" (3). And again, when Nolten hears of Constanze's dream he is strangely disturbed, because the original of the ghostly organ player has made such a decisive mark on his own life. Yet at no time does Mörike explain why Nolten was moved to paint Elisabeth in this particular setting.

Nolten dies of shock resulting from a vision of his overwrought senses. The vision resembles the picture of the ghostly concert which has made several significant appearances in the course of the novel. But surely the picture must have been inspired by some terrible vision similar to the one which kills the artist?

Mörike presents us with a novel which has a middle and an end, but no beginning. He portrays the working out of a destiny without adequately examining the origins of that destiny. The inset „Tag aus Noltens Jugendleben", which has the feeling of being tacked on as an afterthought, is hardly sufficient to explain the effect of Elisabeth on Nolten's destiny as a man, let alone his inspiration as an artist. It is well known that certain incidents in childhood can make a deep and lasting impression on the mind, and the reaction of Nolten the boy to Elisabeth is credible in view of his passion for the portrait of her mother. But Mörike does not

(1) Werke I, p.332

(2) Werke I, pp. 332-335 Usually known as the Peregrina-Lieder

(3) Werke I, p.19; see pp.10-12

show how this first meeting and the mystic betrothal continue to affect Nolten as he grows up.

As the work stands, it is an irritating cross between a psychological novel and a novel of fate, two tendencies summed up in the pictures described at the beginning. We can see what Mörike is trying to do: to modern, humanistic man, convinced of his own powers, he wants to show that life is governed by other powers. Even although he was a minister of the Christian gospel and had a nature which revolted against the harsh judgment which he depicted, he chose to portray these powers as cruel and inflexible. In fulfilling their purposes they take things apparently harmless and turn them into their tools - Elisabeth, a childhood friend who is insane, or the product of an artist's imagination, her double in the picture. Mörike's imagination in propounding his ideas was highly inventive, but his skill as a novelist was unequal to the difficult task of writing a novel of fate in the modern idiom. As a literary device, Leitmotif or symbolism giving unity and depth to the work, the use of Elisabeth and the picture remains incomplete because their *raison d'être* is not adequately motivated.

**THEODOR STORM**



of the study of mankind, however limited in their range, one must give full credit to his genius as an exponent of individual psychology. He does not pretend to be a social critic; he accepts most of contemporary bourgeois ethics and institutions. He criticises convention only when it leads to senseless and harmful preservation of forms for their own sake. In Im Schloß, for example, he attacks the class structure. The important thing is to act in accordance with one's personality, whether it be good or bad. The wicked man who is true to himself is preferable to the hypocrite.

The local background which one finds stressed in Storm's Novellen is closely bound up with his view of personality. Family, social position, historical, social and local conditions, natural surroundings - all have their part to play in human destiny, and are thus described in so far as they have a bearing on the action. The creation of atmosphere, especially in the natural world, is an important task of the exposition. Nature in particular acquires a great significance in Storm's work. The landscape of moor and wood sea and coast is shown as being so much in sympathy with the action and the mood of the characters that it almost becomes a power with a will of its own. But Storm never falls into the Romantic traps of Pathetic Fallacy nor, in the wider field, of a belief in fate. All action is carefully motivated psychologically; his characters succeed or fail according to how they deal with circumstances.

The problems with which Storm confronts his characters are those which concerned him throughout his own life: not, as has been pointed out, social or political questions, but personal ones of love and family life. In relationships with others the individual seeks relief from his own loneliness. Storm's early works show his characters as on the whole unsuccessful. Circumstances are too strong and they are too weak to seize the opportunities before them. The lover loses the beloved because he is forestalled by some more determined rival or because he feels that some other loyalty prevents him from achieving personal happiness. In face of his loss the only solution is to become resigned to his fate of continuing loneliness. The later works show a much more determined hero with a more positive and aggressive attitude to life, coupled

with a concern not only for himself but for his community too. The philosophy is now „Leben, so schön und lange, wie wir es nur können" (Viola Tricolor) (1). Where this is not possible, where circumstances prove stronger than the human will, the individual in the style of the true tragic hero goes down fighting.

After Storm's marriage and the coming of his family he turned from the theme of the individual seeking happiness in love with another to the problems of marriage and the relationship between parents and children. The family unit provides protection for the individual from the hostile forces outside, thus it is for Storm a great tragedy when this unit is destroyed. Here arises the problem of heredity, which on the whole is treated pessimistically; the bad traits seem to be more powerful and to cause the decline and ruin of a family.

The ruin of a family is also tragic because it shows once more how frail and transient is mankind. The family provides one way of preserving the individual. We are the heirs of our forefathers, our children are our heirs, and so our memory and that of those who went before us is carried on by our own flesh and blood throughout all generations. The transitory nature of mankind is most strongly and bitterly felt when a family dies out. Storm often portrays the extinction of a family, starting usually with the death of a mother in childbirth, leaving behind a child, a girl or a sickly boy, who grows up in some way aware of a responsibility for family guilt. Old sins committed by members of the family come to plague this child, who meets a violent end or kills himself under the burden of guilt.

The problem of transience was one which Storm never successfully solved. He was not a Christian, and his belief in the prospect of life after death he abandoned completely after the death of his wife Constanze in 1865. His awareness of the loss of the past and the impossibility of recalling it tortured him for the rest of his life and found expression in most of his succeeding works. Some take a fairly optimistic line, accepting the inevitability of transience and attempting to make the most of life, as in Viola Tricolor:

(1) Sämtliche Werke III (Insel Verlag Leipzig 1923) p.303

others are bitterly pessimistic and sceptical, like Aquis Submersus. Only in Der Schimmelreiter does he show a character who with grim determination creates a memorial to himself, and with some success.

Storm is a writer whose technique has been profoundly influenced by the underlying themes of his work. His favourite form is the „Rahmenerzählung“, the story within a story. This ranges in complexity from the very simple frame of Im Nachbarhause links, where one friend says to the other: 'Let me tell you a story...' to the framing exterior and framed interior recollections of Der Schimmelreiter. The excuses for the use of this form vary as well: some one may find an old manuscript of memoirs and edit it, another may tell a friend or casual acquaintance a personal experience or an interesting tale, or an old person may relate details of his life to a young friend. Common to all is personal contact. People tell their experiences to others as part of their attempt to make contact with a fellow human being, old people in particular remember their youth when they were happy and successful, because this relieves the loneliness of old age. Since they also want to preserve their memory they write their memoirs or relate the story of their life to a younger person. „Du mußt doch von mir wissen, wenn ich nicht mehr bin,“ says old Hansen in In St. Jürgen to the young man who is retelling her story (1).

The form used so much by Storm is clearly a manifestation of his attempt to grapple with the problems of loneliness and transience. To man's attempts to preserve his memory belong, as well as writing memoirs, the painting of portraits. A picture is the best way of commemorating some-one: it preserves his likeness after his death and relieves in some way the loneliness of those who have to live without him. It is not surprising, therefore, that Storm frequently introduces a portrait into a Novelle, especially one dealing expressly with the question of transience, such as Aquis Submersus.

(1) Werke III, p.79

The discussion of this question is what mainly prompts Storm's use of works of art. The forms of expression of the visual arts have made little impact on his style. Unlike C.F. Meyer, whose descriptions of scenes and characters are so vivid as to make pictorial illustrations unnecessary, Storm does not strive to present scenes which his readers can visualise. He rarely mentions colour, and his backgrounds, both interior and exterior, are but vaguely described. Atmosphere, as has already been said, is more important

It is perhaps curious that a man to whom painting and sculpture obviously meant little, who receives and conveys impressions through senses other than sight, should nevertheless make extensive use of works of art. For Storm, as for Mörike, pictures (and sculptures) provide handy symbols. He uses them to help in the evocation of background atmosphere, to illustrate the tastes of his characters and their times, to reflect the action of a story or to symbolise its theme, and always to stress the transience of each human life, to which even a portrait fails to erect an adequate memorial.

## Storm's Use of Descriptions of Works of Art.

### 1. Local Colour

Storm is not given to the same detailed description of setting in which Fontane rejoices. The location of most of his stories is imprecise; many of them are obviously set in Schleswig-Holstein, "an der norddeutschen Seeküste" or "in einem norddeutschen Seestädtchen". When describing interiors, Storm draws on his knowledge of the houses of Husum, the patrician homes such as that of his grandparents, or the humbler houses of the tradespeople with whom he was friendly. Several interiors are described in his early works, which are mainly sentimental, 'domestic' pieces. The works of art mentioned in these descriptions indicate the tastes of ordinary people in early nineteenth century Germany.

In Von heut und ehemals, which is more a reconstruction of his grandmother's girlhood than a piece of fiction, Storm describes the 'Pesel', or all-purpose public room in a patrician house:

Es war ein besonders tiefes, geräumiges Gemach; die Decke mit schwerer Stukkatur verziert, die weißen Wände mit Kupferstichen in den verschiedensten Manieren und einzelnen Pastellbildern fast bedeckt. Der kunstliebende Hauswirt hatte sich soeben den hageren Propsten eingefangen und demonstrierte mit ihm vor dem neu erworbenen Chodowiecki: "Zieten sitzend vor seinem Könige". Daneben unter Berghemischen Landschaften sah man zwei schöne Stiche nach Guercino: "Abram ancillam Agar dimittit" und "Esther coram Asuero supplex". Unweit davon, in Rothstiftmanier, hing ein Blatt, dem gewiß keine gefühlvolle Seele vorbeiging, die je bei Millers berühmtem Siegwart Trost in Thränen gefunden hatte. Von zwei grimmig blickenden Mönchen wird eine in spanischer Männertracht entflozene Nonne in ihr Kloster zurückgeführt; die in zierlichen Schleifenschuhen steckenden Füßchen schreiten wie in Todesangst; entsetzt unter dem breiten Federhut blicken die Augen aus dem Bilde heraus. "Und nun soll sie lebendig eingemauert werden!" so hatte oft das Großmütterchen ihren Freundinnen das Bild erklärt. "Seht nur, dort wird schon an dem Glockenstrang geläutet!" Doch was hier erregt wurde, war nur das Graue vor den Menschen. Dort neben dem Ofen aber, wohin bei Tagesabschied zuerst die Schatten fielen, befand sich ein kleineres Bild dem selbst die heiteren Augen des Großmütterchens nicht gern begegneten, wenn sie um solche Zeit allein das abgelegene Festgemach betreten mußte. Die jugendliche Gestalt in der düsteren

Kammer schien wie unbewußt vom Schlafe auf das Ruhebett hingeworfen; der Kopf mit dem zurückfallenden Haar hängt tief herab. Auf ihrer Brust huckt der Nachtmahr mit großen, rauhen Fledermausflügeln, sie vermag kein Glied zu rühren; vielleicht geht ein Stöhnen aus ihrem geöffneten Munde; hilflos in der Einsamkeit der Nacht ist sie ihm preisgegeben. Nur durch den Vorhang sieht der wildblickende Kopf eines Rappen, der ihn hierher hat tragen müssen, der selbst nicht von der Stelle kann. Zwar dem Großmütterchen war dergleichen niemals widerfahren.." (1)

This is an actual picture - "Der Nachtmahr", painted by Heinrich Fuesli in 1783, and one of the few genuine works of art which Storm mentions. Such detailed description is not common in his works; with its interest in the atmosphere, the reactions of the viewer and the 'story behind the picture' it is reminiscent of Baron Jaßfeld's description of paintings at the beginning of Maler Nolten (2). Since this painting is of no importance to the story, it is surprising that Storm should take so much trouble over it. The other pictures hanging in the 'Pesel' would seem to be representative of German taste in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, for Storm describes a similar décor in other Novellen where he recalls incidents from the recent past.

In Eine Halligfahrt he describes the living-room of a cousin who has retired from public life to live on a "Hallig", a small island in the North Sea.

Sein Wohnzimmer hatte sich der Vetter in dem größten Raume des Hauses, dem sogenannten Pesel, eingerichtet. Schränke mit Büchern, mit Conchylien und anderen Sammlungen, Karten und Kupferstiche nach Claude Lorrain und Ruysdael bedeckten die übrigens weiß getünchten Wände. (3)

Ein stiller Musikant mentions two wood landscapes by Lessing as well as a picture of the musician's mother "in trefflicher Kreidezeichnung". Chodowiecki also features again: the musician notes that the narrator is lacking a set of engravings illustrating Bürger's poetry and offers him the spare copy which he possesses.

An interesting reflection of nineteenth century taste is to be seen in Drüben am Markt. When the little doctor decorates his

(1) Werke IV, pp.13-14

(2) See Mörike's Sämtliche Werke I (Winkler), pp.9-12

(3) Werke III, p.179

sitting-room prior to proposing to the Bürgermeister's daughter, he chooses a wallpaper illustrating scenes from Bernardin's novel 'Paul et Virginie'. The exotic scenes and colours might seem out of place in a North German sitting-room along with the solid, mahogany furniture, but the doctor has his reasons. When he was a boy he once delivered errands at the house of a wealthy merchant who had in his sitting-room etchings depicting scenes from the then very popular novel. The doctor associated them with his concept of bourgeois comfort and elegance, and felt that his house would not be complete without them.

The choice of pictures in the Novellen with a contemporary setting is in keeping with nineteenth century taste - landscapes, engravings and occasional horrific pieces. A similar selection is to be found in the novels of Fontane, in, for example, Unterm Birnbaum and Effi Briest.

In the historical Novellen works of art are used to evoke the atmosphere of a past age. This is well done in Renate: the superstition and fears of the times are illustrated by the reactions of the boy Josias to the life-like presentations of Death, angels and St. George in the dark church where he has been locked in.

A description of seventeenth century church art forms an introduction to the really interesting paintings in the village church in Aquis Submersus.

Da hing mitten in die Kirche hinab ein schrecklich übermenschlicher Kruzifixus, dessen hagere Glieder und verzerrtes Antlitz mit Blut überrieselt waren; dem zur Seite an einem Mauerpfeiler haftete gleich einem Nest die braungeschnitzte Kanzel, an der aus Frucht- und Blattgewinden allerlei Tier- und Teufelsfratzen sich hervorzudrängen schienen. Besondere Anziehung aber übte der große geschnitzte Altarschrank im Chor der Kirche, auf dem in bemalten Figuren die Leidensgeschichte Christi dargestellt war; so seltsam wilde Gesichter, wie das des Kaiphas oder die der Kriegsknechte, welche in ihren goldenen Harnischen um des Gekreuzigten Mantel wüffelten, bekam man draußen im Alltagsleben nicht zu sehen; tröstlich damit kontrastierte nur das holde Antlitz der am Kreuze hingesenkenen Maria; ja sie hätte leicht mein Knabenherz bestriicken können, wenn nicht ein anderes mit noch stärkerem Reize des Geheimnisvollen mich immer wieder von ihr abgezogen hätte. (1)

(1) Werke IV, pp.259-260

In Aquis Submersus, as in other stories about noble or patrician families, a description of the portrait gallery containing the pictures of the family lends local colour. But most of these stories concern the decline and extinction of the noble family, and an uncanny atmosphere attaches to the ancestral portraits: the persons portrayed have an unnatural look - as though they were dead already, rather than alive. These portrait galleries, with their constant evocation of death and the mouldering past, run like a leitmotiv through the chronicle and family stories and have a significance other than their function as background.

## 2. Influence on Imagination

The narrator in Aquis Submersus stresses the powerful impression made on him as a young boy by the pictures hanging in the church in his friend's village. His curiosity is so stimulated by the portraits of the dead child and the grim priest that he goes to considerable trouble to discover the story behind them. Since Storm's characters are on the whole sensitive people much aware of the world around them, it is not surprising that they should be affected by the works of art which they see. Children especially may be moved because of their more vivid and receptive imaginations. In particular their concept of God is influenced by pictorial art. A picture of the infant Christ makes a great impression on Ines, the young second wife in Viola Tricolor. As a small girl she was so strongly attracted to the infant Christ in a picture given to her at Christmas that one night she walked in her sleep to fetch the picture, and was found next morning sleeping with her head resting on the broken glass. She relates this experience to her husband after her sick fancies have caused her to sleep-walk again. Her love for the child in the picture had a strong maternal streak; the nightmare and sleep-walking during her pregnancy stem from a fear that Rudolf may reject her child, the offspring of his second marriage.

The lonely girl Anna in Im Schloß finds a companion in „der liebe Gott“ who accompanies her in all her doings on her father's remote country estate. Her vision of him is drawn from the church paintings, where he is represented as an old man with a long white beard and wearing a blue and red mantle. She preserves this anthropomorphic conception of the Deity well into adolescence, when it is shattered by her scientist uncle. But even before this, her imagination has been captured by another 'picture hero', the whipping-boy whose portrait hangs beside those of the noble children in the castle. It later finds a living counterpart, a Doppelgänger, in Arnold, Anna's second husband, who is probably a descendant of the whipping-boy.

The most powerful instance of the effect of art on imagination occurs in Renate. The atmosphere of this work, the fervour and superstition of Protestant North Germany in the seventeenth century, is set by a childhood experience of the hero, the theological student and later pastor Josias. He firmly believes in the existence of devils and evil spirits, and becomes convinced that the girl he loves, Renate, is a witch, as the superstitious villagers maintain. His first meeting with Renate takes place in his boyhood, while he is staying in the next town. One day he enters the church to listen to the organ; he imagines that the angels in the altar picture of the Crucifixion have been enticed from their places by the music and are flying around in the church. When the music stops the boy realises that it is nearly dark and the church has been shut. He wanders round looking for an exit until his attention is caught by the tomb of a former Bürgermeister, which depicts in a wood carving the figure of Death climbing up a man's face. In terror the boy runs for protection to the wooden statue of St. George fighting the dragon, although he condemns himself for his 'Papish fancies'. Suddenly he observes that a large dog has got into the church and is making for him. He leaps on to the horse and defends himself with St. George's lance, imagining by now in his panic that he is being attacked by the figure of Death itself. Just as he is about to give up with weariness, he hears a voice commanding the dog and looks down to see a little face framed in a gold cap. As he faints and falls to the ground he thinks that one of the angels from the altar-piece has come to his rescue.

He later discovers that the dog belonged to the church officer; the girl whom he took to be an angel he does not see until many years later, when in his home village he recognises her in Renate, the proud and disdainful daughter of a wealthy farmer. The farmer is condemned by the villagers for witchcraft, because his methods are more modern and scientific than theirs. Josias and Renate are kept apart by their respective fathers, but when they meet again in later life, Josias loses his fear of devils and sees Renate once more as the 'angel of his youth'.

### 3. Story told round pictures

Storm wrote two short stories concerning the genesis of a work of art. Eine Malerarbeit (1867) deals with a picture, Psyche (1875) with a piece of sculpture.

Eine Malerarbeit is a Rahmenerzählung of the simplest type: a doctor in a gathering of friends makes a remark which seems to the assembled company to have a story behind it. After some encouragement he tells the story of his friend the painter Edde Brunken, who is something of a Toulouse-Lautrec figure. His physical deformities and violent temper cause him much trouble, including misfortune in love. In the midst of his own self-pity he comes upon a farmer's son, Paul, who has tried to commit suicide because his father refused to let him study art. Edde decides to take Paul on as a pupil; when the doctor meets him some years later he is living happily in the country with his sister and her daughter, and looking forward to Paul's success as an artist and to his marriage with Marie, the niece. The moral of the story: „man muß sein Leben aus dem Holze schnitzen, das man hat" (1), is underlined by two pictures painted by Edde to illustrate his situation at two stages in his life.

One was painted when the doctor first knew Edde, at a time when he was in love with the doctor's pretty cousin Gertrude. He describes it as a „Studie zur Selbsterkenntnis". The picture shows a sunny park laid out in the French manner. In the foreground stands a statue of Venus, at her feet a hunchback looking up at her. He is recognisable as the painter, though without the beard and with his hair powdered in the eighteenth century fashion. In the background a young couple is walking away; the girl bears a faint resemblance to Gertrude. For something to say about this very revealing portrayal of a personal situation the doctor observes that Venus has arms, unlike the statuette of the Venus de Milo which Edde has been using as a model. Edde replies bitterly that she has arms to help all except such as his hunchback. Trying to adopt a gayer tone,

(1) Werke III, p.114

the doctor points out that Edde has nevertheless managed to depict his own rather fine eyes with success.

This work is very obviously a symbolic portrayal of Edde's situation, both literally - for Gertrude soon makes it clear that she is offended by his love for her - and in his capacity as an artist - he longs for contact with the beautiful but cannot possess it because of his own inadequacy. It is a subjective work, full of bitterness and self-pity, summing up the loneliness of the man cut off from companionship and love by being both an artist and physically deformed.

The second picture, painted after Edde has settled down to become a 'family man' with his sister, niece and pupil, shows an entirely different scene. In the foreground now is the young couple, bearing a slight resemblance to Paul and Marie; they are sitting beside the statue while the young man fixes a rose into the girl's hair. The artist has withdrawn to the background; he sits on a bench contentedly watching the couple. „Es galt nur eine Kleinigkeit," says Edde, „das liebe Ich aus dem Vorder- in den Hintergrund zu practicieren." (1)

The moral of the story is only too evident, emphasised as it is by the somewhat clumsy use of the Rahmentchnik. Nevertheless it is an interesting work in the study of Storm's development as a writer. He is an intensely subjective author, using his own character, friends, family, background and experiences as material for his works. The struggle for objectivity, expressed formally by his use of the Rahmentchnik, by means of which the story is told at one or two removes from the author, continues throughout his life and is never completely successful, except perhaps in Der Schimmelreiter. At this period of his life he was striving to overcome the death of his wife Constanze and to meet and accept the approach of old age. The works of this time show concern with the problems of old age and its attendant loneliness, but in the 1870's they move towards a more positive solution than the resigned

(1) Werke III, p.144

acceptance of fate propounded in the early works. The solution lies in grasping and making the most of life and in rejecting an over-indulgence in one's own problems. „Es galt nur eine Kleinigkeit...“; but in Eine Malerarbeit the artist is still very much concerned with himself, even though he may now be in the background.

Written eight years later, Psyche is from the stylistic viewpoint a better story, although from the psychological one it is unsatisfactory. Storm's friend and critic Paul Heyse complained that its foundation was too slight: he felt that Storm had been carried away by the idea of a man rescuing a girl from the sea and had failed to build an adequate story on it. The author himself was inclined to agree, and he quoted the comment of another friend, W. Jensen: „er meinte, es sei zu leichtsinnig, daß der Bildhauer sie so ohne weitere Bekanntschaft heirate“ (1). It is indeed hard to accept that two people who saw each other for one brief moment and exchanged no word could on their second meeting begin to talk of marriage.

Until this problematical ending the story shows the result on a young sculptor's life and work of a powerful experience. While swimming in the North Sea he saves a girl from drowning. Fear and embarrassment prevent the girl from enquiring after the man who rescued her naked from the sea, and he is likewise restrained by his sensibilities from attempting to discover anything about her. But the experience takes hold of him, the memory of the girl's face remains in his mind, until one day he starts to make a model of Psyche being carried from the river in which she had tried to drown herself by the god of the river, who feared the wrath of Eros. The finished work is displayed at an exhibition, wins the first prize and attracts a great deal of attention. It also causes a certain amount of scandal; many people wonder why the sculptor chose to portray the river-god as young, some claim to discern a resemblance to the artist, and finally one lady spectator declares that the work is surely the fruit of an experience and in particular

(1) Storm-Heyse Briefwechsel (herausgegeben von G.J. Plotke, München 1917) letter of 21.10.1875 from Heyse and reply (undated)

of a love-affair. The sculptor determines to remove the piece from the exhibition. When he goes to look at it for the last time he finds there the girl whom he had rescued and who has come with her family to view, with trepidation, the famous work.

The story is a simple tale of the effect of experience on art. It illustrates the nineteenth century attitude to art, which regarded works of both literature and the visual arts as expressions of the artist's personal feelings and experiences. The critical approach of deriving „Dichtung" from „Erlebnis" may be seen in a crude form in the conversation of the spectators in the museum, who are not content to accept the sculpture at its face value as a work of art, but are determined to unearth some actual event which was its motivation. Storm reveals the same attitude in Aquis Submersus, where Johannes' success in painting Katharina is attributed to his being in love with her and thus especially sensitive to her mood and expression.

#### 4. Symbolic Use of Works of Art

Eine Malerarbeit is a story about a picture, telling why the picture and its variation were painted and the experiences of the man who thus expressed himself. The pictures also have a symbolic value which the sculpture in Psyche has not. It is the central object in the tale, but it has no deeper significance, whereas the pictures in Eine Malerarbeit sum up the painter's situation and attitude to life at two different times. Paintings and sculptures occur with similar symbolic force in other works of Storm's. They may embody the underlying theme of the story, or indicate or illustrate the fate and situation of the characters.

#### Bötjer Basch

A good example of a work of art symbolising the theme of a story is the plaque above the door of the cooper's house in Bötjer Basch. The story opens with a description of the house and the plaque. It is a sandstone relief showing a man in a boat being hauled down into the waves by the figure of Death, who has swum up to him. The motto below is „Up Land un See". The work is said to have been done by the stone-mason who built the house in the early seventeenth century in memory of his father, who was drowned at sea. The house and plaque fascinate the cooper Daniel Basch, a rather solemn bachelor, who at last buys the house and comes to live and work there with his old sister Salome and his assistant Marten. When Salome becomes too old to work, she enters the St. Jürgen Stift, and Daniel marries Line Peters. After his marriage the first thing he does is to plaster over the stone relief. „Das paßt nicht mehr," he declares, and has a rose with a rosebud painted on instead. But Daniel's married happiness is short-lived; Line dies giving birth to her second child, which also dies. His son, Fritz, is a consolation for a short time. He works at first in his father's workshop, then leaves to acquire experience in the town and later goes to California in the hope of making his fortune. The business

declines because of competition from a larger firm and Marten has to leave. Daniel leads a lonely life, visiting Salome, going to church and working in his garden, which he plants with potatoes. Only Fritz's patch is left with its poppies, which remind him of his wife and son. The poppy motif is also to be found in Waldwinkel, where a room papered with a poppy pattern is described. In that case the „Blumen der Vergessenheit" have the opposite effect they were put there by a man who could not forget his past happiness and they rouse concern for his present situation in the heart of a later tenant. (1)

News comes to the little town from a tramp who had been in America that Fritz has been stabbed in a fight. This on top of the death of Salome throws Daniel into a deep melancholy. One day he is seen chipping the mortar with the painted roses away from the plaque. Ever since Fritz had left home he had been thinking off and on how unsuitable the picture was: „seine Rose lag ja längst im Grabe, und die Knospe war als großer, wehrhafter Bengel in die Welt gegangen" (2). The final blow occurs when Fritz's song-bird escapes. Daniel's mind gives way and he tries to drown himself, but is rescued by a troop of boys. During his ensuing illness Fritz returns home. Daniel's fortunes now improve: Fritz sets up business in the old shop, the song-bird is recovered by Magdalena, a girl who had befriended the old man, and soon Daniel can work again too. The suggestion is made that he should once again cover up the stone relief and paint on the roses, but Daniel replies that this can wait until he is gone, then Fritz can do this for his wife.

The plaque and its changing face are symbolic of the cycle of life and death, happiness and sorrow. With its Low German inscription reminding the spectator that death lies everywhere in wait, it resembles the house of Johannes in Aquis Submersus, which also has an inscription in Low German over the door, „wo er..noch mancher vorübergeht, an die Nichtigkeit des Irdischen erinnern möge" (3)

(1) See Werke VII, p.98 and Waldwinkel, Werke IV, pp.123-125

(2) Werke VII, p.92

(3) Werke IV, p.311

Here, however, the emphasis is not on death and transience; the last word lies with the young people, Fritz and Magdalena and their budding friendship, and old Daniel unselfishly rejoices in the thought of their life together after his death.

The symbolic nature of the plaque for the story is obvious, but hinted at delicately. Daniel takes time to make the changes; though he is aware of when the plaque in one form becomes unsuitable, he does not alter it at once, but waits until the situation is completely unequivocal.

### Im Schloß

Bötjer Basch is one of Storm's late works (1886) and shows a positive but calm and resigned attitude to the common run of man's life. In earlier works the attitude is similarly calm and resigned but utterly negative, thus it comes as a surprise to find in any of these a more positive stand taken in the face of tradition and circumstances. Im Schloß (1861) is the nearest approach to social criticism in Storm's work: it attacks the belief in the superiority of birth and upholds the nobility of the individual personality. The development of the heroine Anna in her attitude towards inherited and natural nobility is portrayed partly through her memoirs and partly through third person narrative. She is a lonely child, like many of Storm's characters, the daughter of a diplomat who sees little of his children. In her early youth the family, including her invalid brother and a rather eccentric uncle, moves to a castle in the country. It is far from the homes of other noble families, so Anna has no playmates. To make up for this she has a vivid imagination, stimulated by the works of art around her. A picture in the church of God the Father in red and blue robes gives substance to her image of God and provides her with a companion as she roams around the castle park. Her favourite haunt in the castle is the Rittersaal, where hang the ancestral portraits of the previous owners. She can spend hours studying

these portraits, which both fascinate and terrify her. The strangely-dressed people have unnatural expressions; the children in particular look already dead and buried. Especially unnerving is the picture of the knight with the bad conscience, who is said to blush when any-one looks at him. Anna often stares until his face seems to have turned crimson, then flees in fear to her uncle.

During Anna's early teens she notices and takes an interest in a portrait hanging beside those of the children. It shows a boy in a brown jerkin carrying a sparrow on his hand, doubtless as a sign of lowly birth. He was probably the child of a tenant, chosen to be playmate and whipping-boy to the children of the castle. Anna feels a sympathy with the boy and attempts to reconstruct his history. She notes a grim expression in his blue eyes and lines of suffering round his mouth. Had he much to endure from his noble companions, she wonders, and did he ever manage to avenge the injuries which they dealt him? One day the bright sunshine on the picture seems to make it come to life. Moved by a strange impulse Anna climbs up to it and shyly kisses the boy's mouth. Her interest in the picture can at this stage be put down only to the imagination and longing for companionship of a lonely child. Yet it is significant for the theme of social injustice underlying this story that Anna's interest should centre on the portrait of a whipping-boy, who must have suffered much from the nobility.

Anna is sent to town to complete her education in the house of an aunt who is very socially conscious. When she returns three years later she is almost surprised to see the picture there, the same as ever, and it now means little to her. A new member of the household arrives, her brother's tutor Arnold; he reminds her of some-one whom she cannot place. After initial coolness they become good friends, but the awareness of social differences begins to plague Anna. A series of incidents in which she or her family humiliate Arnold causes her great distress. Her upbringing has

taught her that he is of inferior status, yet she recognises that as a person he is worth far more than most of her noble acquaintance. She suddenly realises one day that he bears a resemblance to the whipping-boy, and excitedly points this out to him. Not knowing the cause of her excitement, Arnold is offended, thinking that she wishes to emphasise his inferior social position. Since his family comes from the district it is possible that an ancestor was whipping boy to the castle children.

Arnold has to leave the castle when his pupil becomes too ill to study any longer. Anna's life thereafter is narrated quickly. She makes a loveless marriage and moves to the town, where she meets Arnold again, now a famous professor. When her husband discovers their love affair he rejects her, and she returns to the country after her father's death to manage the estate. As she writes her memoirs she determines to seek a reconciliation with her husband, but he dies without answering her letter. Her uncle and Arnold come back to the castle, the uncle to administer the estate and Arnold to claim Anna as his wife. As they pass through the Ritter-saal full of plans for their marriage, the portrait of the whipping-boy still looks down with the bitter expression on his face, to see a new age where social differences are swept aside and a man is judged on his merits, not his birth. In an odd way he has got his 'revenge', since his descendant Arnold has overcome Anna's class prejudices and established his worth by his own achievements.

#### Von Jenseits des Meeres

Although in Im Schloß Storm does tackle the social question of class differences, he does so from a personal and not from a general angle: he is primarily concerned with Anna's problems in face of the dichotomy of birth and character. When he considers the question of heredity and environment in Von Jenseits des Meeres he also chooses a restricted field, the effect of heredity on a girl's attitude to love and marriage.

Jenni is the illegitimate daughter of a German planter and a West Indian woman. She sees little of her father, who spares no expense to have her well educated, first in the house of relations and then at a good boarding school. She has only the vaguest early memories of her mother, of a beautiful woman who sang to her and who wept and moaned pitifully as she was taken away by her father. As a child in her relations' house Jenni was gay and lively, something of a tomboy and a good friend to Alfred, the son of the house. After she goes to school he does not see her again until many years later, when he visits his brother's country estate. Jenni is also visiting; she was friendly with Alfred's sister-in-law at school. He finds her much changed: she is quiet and withdrawn and tries to avoid his company. Gradually he discovers that she has learned about her origins and feels that she no longer fits into the society for which she has been educated. More than anything she wishes to find the mother whom she remembers so romantically, for her father she can feel no affection. He is at best an unapproachable person and she regards him as having wronged her mother. At last she manages to save enough money to sail to the West Indies and find her mother. Alfred follows, guessing that she will be disappointed. She has refused his proposal of marriage on the grounds that she comes of negro stock and is likely to prove an embarrassment to him. When he finds Jenni in her mother's house she is, as he had expected, only too glad to see him, since her mother in reality proved to bear little resemblance to Jenni's romantic conception of her.

In Jenni's case, environment has completely overcome any evil effects which might result from her origins, the sinful union between her father and a woman of an exploited and degraded race. But Jenni cannot accept this, partly out of fear that some harm may still come and partly from a romantic and, as it turns out, misguided desire to identify herself with the less familiar half of

her origins. Alfred to is fascinated by this mysterious aspect, but he is sensible and realistic enough to recognise that Jenni is the product of her upbringing rather than of her birth, and that the nature of her birth can make no difference to his feelings for her.

The situation is illustrated by an episode which occurs shortly before Jenni's departure to the West Indies. Alfred is walking in the park around his brother's house on a fine evening when he comes upon a pond with a statue of Venus in the centre. His brother had already mentioned this statue, praising it as an example of best Louis XV style. Alfred sits for some time admiring it and thinking of Jenni. When at last he walks on he gets lost in the maze of avenues until he emerges once more at what he imagines to be the same pond, but the statue is gone. He sees the figure of a woman in white standing nearby and for a moment wonders whether the goddess is once again walking the earth to ensnare men's hearts. It is however Jenni, who asks him first to help her sell some jewelry, since she is in need of money, and secondly to return a ring she had given him, the only object which had come from her mother. Alfred asks her to marry him, but she refuses because of her negro blood and because she feels that her sinful origins are not to be overcome.

„Ich weiß wohl, daß wir schön sind," sagte sie dann, „verlockend schön, wie die Sünde, die unser Ursprung ist. Aber Alfred, ich will dich nicht verlocken."

Alfred is not dismayed.

„Ja, Jenni...du bist betörend schön; sie war nicht schöner, die dämonische Göttin, die einst der Menschen Herz verwirrte, daß sie alles vergaßen, was sie einst geliebt. Vielleicht bist du es dennoch selbst und gehst nur um in dieser seligen Nacht, um die zu beglücken, die noch an dich glauben. Nein, reiße dich nicht los; ich weiß es ja, du bist ein Erdenkind wie ich, machtlos gefangen in deinem eigenen Zauber; und wie ein Nachthauch durch die Blätter weht - spurlos, so wirst auch du vergehen. Aber schilt nicht die geheimnisvolle Macht, die uns einander in die Arme warf. Wenn wir auch willenlos das Fundament unserer Zukunft hier empfangen mußten - der Bau, den es

einstens tragen soll, liegt doch in unserer Hand." (1)

The statue of Venus represents the pagan and sinful elements of love, the type of love which produced Jenni. It may be contrasted with the picture of Cupid mentioned by Jenni's father and Alfred's mother. In the hall where they danced together in their youth was a painting of Cupid on the wall; Jenni's father delighted in embarrassing his partner by positioning her in front of this picture. It represents the playful, lighthearted face of love. The dark side of love attracts Alfred, just as he has always been intrigued by the dark half-moons, the sign of negro blood, on Jenni's fingernails. The statue in its bewitching beauty fascinates him too, but his realism makes him prefer the „irdisches Weib in meinen Armen". Eventually this realism prevails over Jenni also and she is able to accept the real present and future before them.

#### Carsten Curator

The problem of real, not merely imagined effects of heredity is dealt with in Carsten Curator in a much more conventional if more depressing manner. Very important for both the theme of the story and the characters in it is a picture of the Carsten family. It hangs in the living-room, which has changed little in its furnishing and appearance since the house was built several generations before. For Carsten Carstens, a small shopkeeper, known as Carsten Curator because of his work as financial adviser to many widows and unmarried women in the town, it recalls the stable family background of his boyhood and thus represents his ideal of bourgeois respectability. Executed during Carsten's boyhood, not long after his mother's death the picture is composed of silhouettes cut out of black paper and stuck on to grey blotting-paper. The family is shown taking an evening walk; the father supports his old mother-in-law, the two older children, Carsten and Brigitte, watch their little brother Peter on his hobby-horse. Nearby stands a tree which is losing its

(1) Werke III, p.29

leaves - an indication of autumn. The sky in the background is painted in the glowing colours of sunset; the father explained to the children that the sunset was a compensation for the loss of their mother. Whenever life seems difficult, Carsten and Brigitte usually find their way to the picture and stand before it remembering their happy youth. Brigitte allows her imagination to wander, building up pictures of the great things that Peter might have done had he not died at the age of five. In the course of the story we often hear that Carsten went to look at his picture.

The sunset is significant for the story, which relates the decline and ruin of Carsten's family, brought about by his profligate son. Carsten married late and most surprisingly a young and beautiful but flighty woman, who brought him little joy, since she spent most of their short married life in a social whirl flirting with other men. She died in childbirth leaving a son, Heinrich, who takes after her. Carsten, recognising this, tries to bring him up strictly, though Heinrich's charming and lighthearted manner makes this difficult. As the boy grows up he proves to be completely irresponsible, and from his first job on causes his father nothing but distress and disgrace by being constantly in trouble, usually debt. Much against Carsten's will, his ward Anna, who has been with the family since childhood and is the exact opposite of Heinrich in character, marries Heinrich and invests most of her inheritance in a small shop. This enterprise also fails, because Heinrich is not willing to work hard, but tries to make money by faster, dishonest means. When he is reduced to bankruptcy Carsten refuses to save him with the rest of Anna's money. In his determination to preserve some money for Anna and her son Carsten looks to his picture for support. After every scene with Heinrich, „er stand vor seinem Familienbilde und hielt stummen, schmerzlichen Zwiegespräch mit dem Schatten seiner eigenen Jugend" (1). On the day of Heinrich's final appeal he has been drinking, and Carsten

(1) Werke V, p.57

in disgust turns him out of the house into a rising storm. Heinrich is drowned in the floods and Carsten goes insane with the shock. Now the family is reduced to utter poverty and everything, including the house, has to be sold. This is the ultimate symbol of the family's ruin; along with the picture and other significant objects such as a clock and a pear-tree planted by Carsten's grandfather, the house stands for a stable, bourgeois family life, continuing peacefully from generation to generation. The decline foreshadowed by the sunset in the picture began, typically for Storm, with the death of Carsten's mother, was accelerated by his marriage, which as Carsten himself admits brought 'bad blood' into the family, and is now completed by the death of Carsten's son, the loss of all his possessions and of his own mental faculties. The one hopeful feature is the character of young Heinrich, Carsten's grandson, who takes after his mother Anna, thus indicating that the bad streak in the family has been exhausted.

This story is one of several, like Hans und Heinz Kirch and Zur Chronik von Grieshuus, in which Storm discusses family relationships and the decline of a family. Within the wider field of Storm's work the picture of the Carstens' family takes on another significance apart from its functions within the tale. As well as symbolising for Carsten his ideal of bourgeois respectability and hinting at the story's theme of the decline of a family, it is an embodiment of the family consciousness so important to Storm the North German with his 'tribal' view of society.

#### Drüben am Markt

A similar, though less important example of a work of art with more than one significance is to be found in Drüben am Markt. The exotic wallpaper in the doctor's sitting-room, showing scenes from Bernardin's novel 'Paul et Virginie', represents not only the doctor's ideas of bourgeois comfort and elegance, but also the rather exotic dreams which he harbours. He is an ugly and morose, albeit kind-

hearted man, and he fails to win the Bürgermeister's daughter, who marries his best friend instead. Before making his proposal to her he has his sitting-room refurnished with stylish mahogany furniture and the walls papered with scenes of Paul and Virginie on their South Sea island. The paper is as bright as his hopes with its scarlet flowers, parrots, cockatoos, palm-trees and natives. After being rejected by the girl, the doctor locks up the room and leaves it, though he seems occasionally to visit it. The little story opens and closes with the account of such a visit, which he has spent looking back on the past and remembering his hopes and disappointments. The wallpaper has faded - this is mentioned at beginning and end - just as his dreams of a happy family life, symbolised by the paper, have faded away leaving him lonely and miserable.

### Waldwinkel

The question of loneliness and old age is developed in Waldwinkel also with symbolic use of wallpaper and of a painting. The house known as 'Waldwinkel' was built by an old Junker to be a solitary retreat after the son on whom he had doted fell in love and married. He had the living-room decorated with a brown paper carrying a pattern of red and violet poppies, chosen because poppies are the flower of sleep and forgetfulness.

After standing empty for many years, the house is rented by a botanist named Richard, who has come to study the rich flora of the area and to find relief from troubles incurred in politics and marriage. He hears about the house while visiting an old friend who is Bürgermeister of the nearest town. He also meets Franziska Fedders, an orphan girl who has asked for court protection against her guardian, the schoolmaster. Richard is fascinated by her and arranges for her to join his household along with his old nurse, Wieb Lewerenz. Franziska remains for a long time indifferent to him, until one day the shoemaker, under whose protection she had been placed after the incident with the schoolmaster, comes to take

her away. A rich baker, to whom he owes money, wishes to engage her in his house. Richard solves the problem by lending the necessary money and wins Franzi by so doing. He is infatuated with her and fails to notice that she always preserves a certain distance. The age difference of nearly thirty years does not trouble them, for Richard is not aware of feeling old, until the day that his attention is drawn to the wallpaper by Wieb, who tells him why it was hung there. As Richard studies the wallpaper he observes for the first time a painting above the doorway to the hall. This painting comes to illustrate the situation of the main character rather in the manner of the works in Eine Malerarbeit, though it is employed much more skilfully. Its position in the narrative is significant as it performs the task of indicating the outcome and of summing up the final situation. It shows a moor landscape at sunrise with two young people in the background and an old man leaning on a stile in the foreground. Richard wonders who the old man could be - the old Junker, a personification of old age, or perhaps himself? Some verses are inscribed round the frame, apparently to explain the scene:

Dein jung Genosß in Pflichten  
nach dir den Schritt tät richten.  
Da kam ein anderer junger Schritt,  
nahm deinen jung Genossen mit.  
Sie wandern nach dem Glücke,  
sie schau'n nicht mehr zurücke. (1)

Richard considers the picture for a long time, suddenly aware that he too could meet the same fate, since he is no longer young. Some days later he has cause to remind Franzi of the age difference between them. Hearing music from a wedding procession in a nearby village, Franzi asks Richard why they do not marry. He is startled and upset, remembering his own unhappy marriage, and explains that the great gap in their ages might make her want to leave him some day. Although she denies this possibility, he thinks that he senses

(1) Werke IV, pp.124-124

an awareness of it passing across her mind. He straight away puts his papers in order, making over a considerable share of his fortune to Franzi, in case she should ever wish to become independent of him.

The idea of marriage does, however, gradually take possession of Richard, especially after an illness in which Franzi cares for him. He makes arrangements for the marriage, without noticing Franzi's lack of enthusiasm. She has meanwhile become involved with a young forester, a noted local lady-killer, who once appeared at the house to ask her to a dance. Richard took an instant dislike to him and sent him away, much to Franzi's disappointment.

On the night before the wedding, Richard retires to bed, glancing at the picture as he leaves the living-room. Although he apparently thinks nothing at that moment, this brief mention of the picture is significant in view of what happens thereafter. Richard is wakened in the night by a shot, and then he hears the main gate slamming. He guesses at once what has happened and rushes to the door where he finds his dog, shot by the forester. It seems to him that the wall round the house melts away to let him see two figures fleeing over the moor, as in the picture. He searches the house and finds that Franzi and her papers have disappeared. As Richard sits alone in the living-room, the sun rises and illuminates the picture. He imagines that the old man has turned round.

„Die Sonne stieg höher, an den Tapeten leuchteten die Blumen der Vergessenheit. Richard hatte die Augen noch immer nach dem Bilde. Es war sein eigenes Angesicht, in das er blickte." (1) By a weird trick of fate both the wallpaper and the picture have come to symbolise his situation as they were intended to symbolise the situation of the man who brought them into his house. The old Junker came to Waldwinkel to leave his son in peace: „Vergessen und vergessen werden," say Wieb, as she tells the story, and adds: „Wer lange lebt auf Erden, der hat wohl diese beiden zu lernen und zu leiden." (2)

{1} Werke IV, p.147

{2} Werke IV, p.123

Richard has come to the country to escape from the world and to recover from his unhappy past. He imagines that in this solitude with Franzi he can make up for everything which he has missed. But little incidents, such as Franzi's interest in the bell chiming at noon from the castle and her disappointment when he declines the forester's invitation to the dance, convince Richard that he cannot exclude the world. He therefore decides to marry Franzi and return to society, but by this time it is too late. She leaves him with even more to forget and the bitter knowledge that she will soon forget him.

## 5. Commemorative Function of Works of Art

Storm's predilection for the Rahmentechnik and its significance for his philosophy of life and for his works have already been mentioned. The concern to revive the past and preserve the present causes him to write stories which may be termed commemorative. The works of art mentioned in these stories fulfil a variety of functions.

### (a) Picture as excuse for story

A minor use of works of art is the mention of a picture which moves an old person to remember his past. The most famous example of this occurs in Immensee. The old man returns from his walk and sits in his room in the gathering dusk.

Wie er so saß, wurde es allmählich dunkler; endlich fiel ein Mondstrahl durch die Fensterscheiben auf die Gemälde an der Wand, und wie der helle Strahl langsam weiterrückte, folgten die Augen des Mannes unwillkürlich. Nun trat er über ein kleines Bild in schlichtem schwarzem Rahmen. „Elisabeth!“ sagte der Alte leise; und wie er das Wort gesprochen, war die Zeit verwandelt -; er war in seiner Jugend. (1)

The picture is not described, though it is presumably the one which Erich, Reinhard's rival, had drawn of Elisabeth and which she presented to Reinhard's mother.

The picture of Ehrenfried in Abseits is given even briefer mention. While visiting his old friend Meta, the schoolmaster looks at the picture of her fiancé, whom she never married, and encourages her to tell the story of how their marriage was prevented by her feelings of duty to preserve her brother from financial ruin rather than seek her own happiness.

The brief sketch Im Sonnenschein is divided into two scenes, the second of which is set in the present day and shows a grandmother trying to recall for her grandson the memory of her aunt Fränzchen, whose picture hangs among the family miniatures. She died young after an unhappy love affair of which she never spoke. At the same  
time

(1) Werke I, p.272

the family vault is being repaired, and when the grandson examines Fränzchen's coffin he finds a locket containing her lover's hair. The first scene, set in the seventeenth century, has shown Fränzchen with her lover, a handsome young officer. One gathers that they did not marry because of the difference in social status.

These three stories belong to Storm's early phase of simple commemorative narratives in which the characters make life bearable by remembering their past happiness. One of the weaknesses in the construction is that the catastrophe, the events or circumstances causing the loss of happiness, are never described; one is shown the scene before and after. Another weakness is in the use of symbols and motifs such as these pictures, which are mentioned briefly but never employed with any significance.

In Storm's later works a picture is often used to spark off a narrative. In Aquis Submersus the narrator's curiosity about the portraits in the church remains alive, so that he recognises the importance of the picture in the baker's house, and thus uncovers the story of the artist Johannes. The picture of the last member of the family is taken as a starting point for the story in Ekenhof. Although the castle which is the scene of the story has vanished, it is remembered by the local people, as are some of the pictures which hung in the hall:

noch jetzt weiß man von dem Bilde eines jungen blonden Obristen im Reiterkoller aus der Zeit der Grafenfehde, über dessen blasses Antlitz eine blutrote Narbe hingelaufen, und neben diesem von einer stolzen schwarzäugigen Dame mit Reiherfedern auf dem Schlappe und einem Stieglitz auf der Hand;...aber die Sage über sie ist verschollen....Neben der Tür aber...hing ein anderes Frauenbild, an welches unsere Erzählung ihre Fäden anknüpft. (1)

It is also the portrait of a woman, the wife of his host, which inspires the narrator in Späte Rosen to ask his friend for the story of his marriage.

These pictures have a more important function than merely sparking off the tale. It is however significant for Storm's concern to preserve the past that many of his stories are presented as being brought

(1) Werke V, p.229

to light by means of the narrator's or the listener's curiosity about a picture which preserves the likeness, but not the history, of someone in the past.

(b) Awareness of the loss of the past

The desire to preserve the past is what gives the impulse to Storm's early works. His characters find consolation in returning to the past in memory and enjoy talking about it to others. Yet even before his wife's death Storm was beginning to realise that living in the past is an unsatisfactory substitute for reality. One becomes ever more conscious that the past is inevitably past and cannot be recalled; as memories fade one finds it less easy to recall them. Storm's early characters like Reinhard in Immensee are not aware of the inadequacy of recollection. But with Rudolf in Späte Rosen we have a character who, suddenly realising that life has passed him by, is in the desperate position of having no memories to console him. (This story was written in 1859, ten years after Immensee.)

Rudolf relates the story of his marriage to a visiting friend. The friend has already been surprised by the tenderness between his host and hostess, as if between a young, newly-married couple. He is even more surprised by the look with which his host contemplates the portrait of his wife as a young and beautiful girl, a look of deep longing, as though she were a sweetheart whom he had lost. Rudolf relates that, although in his youth he was very much in love with his wife, he had to work so hard at his business that he had little time to spend with her. At one point a reading of Gottfriede Tristan reminded him of the joys of love, but he let the chance pass by. On his fortieth birthday his wife gave him a portrait painted when she was at her most beautiful. He was overwhelmed by it, since a further reading of Tristan had just re-awakened his sensibilities. He realised with great bitterness that all these years he had been blind to his wife's charms; now his youth was past and the opportunities for the enjoyment of love had slipped away, leaving him

with nothing to look back on. Then suddenly he remembered that his wife was still there with him - even though they were older it was not too late for them to develop a new and richer relationship.

The picture represents a past which is gone, and thus can only arouse bitterness and sorrow in the viewer, who knows that he can not recapture that past. Not until he changes his attitude to that past does the picture acquire the positive value of representing all that was good and lovely in the days gone by.

A similar problem presents itself to another Rudolf, the husband in Viola Tricolor, who despite his second marriage to the young and lovely Ines cannot forget his first wife Marie. His little daughter Nesi grimly refuses to come to terms with her mother's death. She almost worships Marie's portrait, which hangs in Rudolf's study Marie had died in that room, and it overlooks the garden of her parent's house, where Rudolf had first seen her. On the day that Rudolf brings his new wife home, Nesi enters the study with a rose and fixes it to the frame of her mother's picture. „Das schöne Antlitz schaute, wie zuvor, leblos von der Wand herab" (1) - but for Nesi her mother is in some way still alive, and she cannot accept Ines as her new mother. She insists on calling her 'Mama' instead of 'Mutter'. Ines is distressed by this, and is even more upset by the sight of the portrait with the rose affixed to it. For all Rudolf's assurances she feels like an intruder: „Diese Tote lebte noch, und für sie beide war doch nicht Raum in einem Hause!" (2) Ines' youth and lack of self-confidence, together with Nesi's rather hostile attitude, make it difficult for her to accept her position as a second wife, and her behaviour towards her husband and step-daughter is often unreasonable, if understandable. When they return one evening from a concert and find Nesi waiting up for them, Ines is angry, since she had hoped to enjoy the rest of the evening alone with her husband. Nesi is frightened, not understanding the reason for Ines' irritation; Rudolf understands,

(1) Werke III, p.273

(2) Werke III, p.277

but feels rather impatient. He meditates for a while in his study, recalling his life with Marie from their first meeting in her parent's garden until her death. He imagines that he is once again walking in the garden with her, but she does not look at him, and he must recognise the finality of death and the futility of trying to relive the past. „Er glaubte an den vollen Ernst des Todes; die Zeit, wo sie gewesen, war vorüber... Das war vorüber, aber er besaß sie noch in seinem Schmerze; wenn auch ungesehen, sie lebte noch mit ihm. Doch unbemerkt entschwand auch dies; er suchte sie oft mit Angst, aber immer seltener wußte er sie zu finden. Nun erst schien ihm sein Haus unheimlich leer und öde; in den Winkeln saß eine Dämmerung die früher nicht dort gesessen hatte; es war so seltsam anders um ihn her; und sie war nirgends." (1)

Ines does not realise that Rudolf does accept his loss; when she finds him in the study with a lamp and a vase of flowers below the portrait, she assumes that he has been indulging in happy memories of his dead wife, and accuses him of being unfaithful to her with a ghost. Although she at once feels ashamed of herself when she looks at the lovely, innocent face of Marie, she is not yet convinced that the dead woman is for Rudolf now a part of the past and not a threat to her present happiness. She is not strong enough to accept Marie and what she meant to Rudolf, and therefore refuses the key to the „Garten der Vergangenheit", which has been kept locked since Marie's death.

During pregnancy Ines' doubts and fears grow stronger, until one night she walks in her sleep into the garden. Even then she cannot bring herself to confess everything to her husband. When at last the child is born, Ines is so ill that she fears she will die. She asks Rudolf to have her photographed, since there is no time to have her portrait painted, and she wants to leave a likeness by which her child may remember her. At the sight of her emaciated face in the mirror she bursts into tears - she cannot leave the memory of such a face. Then she notices that Nesi is crying too - for her mother, th

(1) Werke III, p.285 and p.287

child explains. It seems that Ines suddenly realises what the child's mother meant to her, for she tells Nesi never to forget her

When she recovers, Ines has accepted the past. She now wants to know about Marie so that she can tell Nesi about her mother. She asks Rudolf to have the picture brought into the sitting-room for all to see; previously it has hung in the room where Rudolf is alone with his studies in classical archeology, surrounded significantly enough by „dem Schutt der Vergangenheit entstiegene Dinge" (This all provides him with the temptation to withdraw into loneliness and indulgence in his memories, had he not realised the futility of this. Now that he and Ines have accepted that the present and future belong to the living, the portrait can be moved into the living-room. It then represents all that is worth preserving about the past. Marie is remembered in the best possible way, in that she is taken into the life of the family and not merely treasured in the fading, secret memories of her husband and child.

We do, however, notice a certain ambivalence in Storm's attitude to portraits as a means of preserving a person's memory. He shows through the experience of Rudolf that it is neither possible nor desirable to retain a memory for ever. „Er glaubte an den vollen Ernst des Todes" - once a person has died he has gone for ever from the world and gradually he will fade from the memories of those left behind. They should not make their lives unhappy by missing him, but should devote themselves to the task of living - „Leben, so sch und lange, wie wir es nur können" (2), as Rudolf says to Ines.

Yet on the other hand, Storm portrays his characters as much concerned to preserve their memory by having a likeness made of themselves. Ines wants to have a picture of herself so that her child may remember her as Nesi does Marie. Similar examples are to be found in Aquis Submersus, where Katharina's portrait is to be painted before she leaves her ancestral home. It is the custom in the family to do this, so that daughters of the house may be remembered once

(1) Werke III, p.273

(2) Werke III, p.303

they are married and living elsewhere. The last of the family in Eekenhof promises her dying father to have her portrait painted and hung in the gallery so that the whole family is complete and „wie in einer Gruft beisammen" (1).

The vanity of attempting to preserve one's past is considered in a more humorous vein in Im Nachbarhause links, where a certain absurdity prevents the main character from appearing too pathetic. This story is an example of the sort of detective work undertaken to solve old mysteries in which Storm delights. Aquis Submersus and In St. Jürgen are similarly constructed, so that the narrator has his story completed through a series of coincidences such as lucky finds of old papers or fortunate meetings with people who can give him more information. The narrator in this story, the Stadtsekretär of a North German town, is telling a friend how two apparently unrelated persons turned out to be identical.

His next-door neighbour, when he first comes to the town, is Madame Sievert Jansen, an old lady living in utter isolation. No one knows anything definite about her, because she is never seen, but she is rumoured to be very rich. One day the Sekretär sees her in the garden and greets her politely, with the result that she sends him a basket of pears. In the winter she has an accident and calls him in to help her. He finds that she is worried about her financial affairs, and when he suggests that she commit them to some-one whom she can trust, she asks him to assist her, much to his surprise. He thus spends an afternoon counting and making a note of money and papers. After he has left, he notices that he has left his pencil and returns for it, thereby surprising the old lady in the task of counting a heap of gold coins from a silk bag. Fearing that he may take them away, she becomes very upset and pleads with him to leave her these, as they are her only joy in her loneliness. The Sekretär is reminded by these coins, some of which come from Mexico and Portugal, of a friend of his grandfather's whom he has been trying to trace.

(1) Werke V, p.230

Aufsätzen der Spiegel jene Glasmalereien mit auffahrenden Auroras oder einem speerwerfenden Achilleus. Auf den Fensterbänken lagerte dicker Staub und eine Schar von toten Schmetterlingen. Die Alte erhob ihren Stock und zeigte nach den beiden Kronleuchtern von geschliffenem Glase und nach den Fenstern auf die verschossenen Seidengardinen, die vorzeiten gewiß im leuchtendsten Rot geprangt hatten.

But the Sekretär is far more interested in a portrait hanging opposite the windows:

..das Bild eines bacchantisch schönen Weibes; eine weiße Tunika umschloß die volle Brust, durch das dunkle, kurz verschnittene Haar, von dem nur eine Locke sich über der weißen Stirn kräuselte zog sich ein kirschrotes Band mit leichter Schleife an der einen Seite; darunter blitzten ein Paar Augen von unersättlicher Lebenslust.

Fast wie ein Schrecken hatte es mich befallen, als ich dieses Bild erblickte, denn ich kannte es seit lange ganz genau. Es konnte kein Zweifel sein, dies war das Original jenes kleinen Porträts aus der Stube meines Großvaters; es war Zug für Zug dasselbe, nur mit allen Vorzügen eines lebensgroßen und in unmittelbarer Gegenwart gemalten Bildes. Ein bestrickender Sinnenzauber ging von dem jugendlichen Antlitz aus, das hier in wahrhaft funkelnder Schönheit auf mich herabsah. (1)

A few questions start the old lady remembering her youth and prove to the Sekretär that she is indeed his grandfather's former playmate and first love. She remembers his grandfather as the one man whom she really loved out of all those who courted her, and she admits to having made a great mistake in rejecting him for her rich husband. Now she would like to make good her error by finding some of his family and leaving all her money to them; she explains that the Sekretär won her confidence because of a resemblance to her old friend. Not wishing her to change her will in his favour and thus neglect her niece, the Sekretär does not reveal his relationship, but departs to make arrangements for the new will. In the night Madame Jansen dies before the will can come into force. Her good intentions, the first unselfish act in a totally selfish life, have ironically come too late.

The contrast between the old, wizened woman and the sparkling girl is rather absurd, and this lends a humour to the tale which is missed

(1) Werke IV, pp.241-242

He has already related that, soon after his arrival in the town, he had tried to find the house where his grandparents used to live. His grandfather often spoke about his childhood and particularly about his playmate, the girl next door. Her father was a wealthy sea-captain who spoilt his pretty daughter by bringing her costly presents from foreign parts. He also built her a little summer-house in the garden out of pieces of an old ship; the figure-head, a brightly painted Fortuna, was fixed above the door. The girl liked to sit on it playing with the gold coins which her father had brought back from abroad. Once the grandfather had shown his grandson a picture of the girl in her youth; the boy had been entranced, but was never allowed to see the miniature again. Not till much later did he learn that his grandfather had been in love with the girl, but she had rejected him. On his wanderings through the town in search of his grandfather's house, the Sekretär finds that the house has been demolished, but the one next door is still there with the summer-house and the brightly painted Fortuna in the garden. Still curious about the girl, he considers asking Madame Jansen, who is the oldest person known to him in the town, but she is so distressed by the episode with the coins that he forgets the matter.

Some time later, the daughter of a merchant in the town becomes engaged to a nobleman. When Madame Jansen hears of this, she decides that her niece, the daughter of the chief of police, whom she has hitherto ignored, must also make a good marriage. She summons the Sekretär with a view to altering her will. A great party will be given in her state rooms, she declares, so that her niece may meet the right men. She leads the Sekretär to inspect the rooms, which clearly have not been used for many years.

Es war ein großer, nach hinten zu belegener Saal, den wir jetzt betraten, nachdem der Schlüssel sich kreischend und nur mit meiner Hilfe im Schloß herumgedreht hatte; die Wände mit einer verblichenen gelben Tapete bekleidet, in deren Muster sich kanelierte Säulen zu der mit Rosen verzierten Stuckdecke hinaufstreckten; die Möbel alle in den geraden Linien der Napoleonszeit, in den

in the other two stories. The question of the loss of the past is not treated in the same way; the portrait reminds Madame Jansen of her former beauty and power over men, but does <sup>not</sup> arouse in her any more than passing regret for her lost chance of real happiness. It is the Sekretär who stresses the work of time - the contrast between the old lady and her youthful image, the derelict state room and the vision of how it must formerly have looked. The reader is made aware of the transience of human life and beauty, a subject to be dealt with more thoroughly in Aquis Submersus.

(c) Family portraits and the awareness of transience

The motif of the family portrait gallery runs through Storm's works like a thread. It adds, as we have seen, to the local colour in stories about noble families, but it has a more symbolic significance. Storm's family stories which make mention of works of art: Auf dem Staatshof, Eekenhof and Aquis Submersus, deal with the decline and extinction of a family. In Im Schloß, the family which owned the portraits has already died out and the house has been sold to another family, but the theme of change in the family fortunes is still present, for the story deals with the heroine's break with tradition by her marriage to a man not of noble birth. This break is, however, regarded as something positive, because it abandons a convention which has become outmoded and harmful.

The destruction wrought by the extinction of a family is for Storm particularly tragic, for it involves the memory of many individuals. In the world at large, which Storm portrays as hostile to the individual, the memory of a man is soon lost. The family unit preserves it physically in the line of descendants: as long as the family continues the individual shares in a certain immortality. Once the family has gone even that slight share is no more, thus the experience of transience becomes all the sharper at the extinction of a family. The family portraits represent the family heritage and solidarity. In the last days of the family's prosperity the big

farm house in Auf dem Staatshof still had its fine reception room: „ein großes Zimmer mit goldgeblühten Tapeten, in welchem viele Bilder von alten, weiß gepuderten Männern und Frauen an den Wänden hingen" (1). Nearly twenty years later, once the family has been ruined and the farm is about to be sold, the room mirrors this decadence: „die goldgeblühten Tapeten waren von der Feuchtigkeit gelöst und hingen teilweise zerrissen an den Wänden; überall stachen noch die Stellen hervor, wo vorzeiten die Familienporträts gehangen hatten" (2). The once proud family, its pride symbolised by the portraits, has gradually declined, apparently as a result of overbearing pride and dishonest transactions; the last male members met an early death and the surviving girl, conscious of her family's guilt, is drowned whether by accident or design remains uncertain.

A good expression of family solidarity is found in the portrait gallery in Ekenhof. The last of the family instructs his daughter to have her portrait painted after his death, so that it may hang in the remaining space above the west door of the Rittersaal. „Das gehört noch an die leere Stelle," hatte er gesagt, „dann kann der Schlüssel abgezogen werden, wir sind dann Alle wie in einer Gruft beisammen." (3) While the girl is in town having her portrait painted, she is courted by Herr Hennicke, a younger son out to make his fortune by marrying an heiress. By the time of their wedding the picture is hanging in the empty space, completing the ranks of the dying family.

Hennicke does not prove a good husband, and the young woman leads a lonely life. During her pregnancy she sits in the Rittersaal sewing for the baby and looking at the portraits of her ancestors.

Fast von allen wußte sie, sei es, was ihr Leben einst erfüllt oder was, oft jählings, sie aus demselben hinausgetrieben hatte. Einst hatte die alte Maike ihr das erzählt; jetzt war ihr, wenn sie auf die einen oder anderen blickte, als erzählten es die toten Bilder selber, daß ihres Lebens Lust und Jammer nicht vergessen werde. (4)

- (1) Werke II, p.4
- (2) Werke II, p.26
- (3) Werke V, p.230
- (4) Werke V, p.233

She fears only the picture of a proud lady with dark eyes and feathers in her hat who carries a goldfinch on her hand. Legend has it that this bird begins to sing when one of the family is about to die, and the young wife constantly imagines that she hears its song. She has another frightening experience: it seems to her that she is no longer there in person, but only her picture looks down from the wall; once again she fears for her own life and that of the child. She does indeed die in childbirth, hearing the song of the goldfinch but her son survives, much to Hennicke's disgust, since he had hoped by the child's death to become lawful possessor of the lands.

After some years Hennicke marries another heiress and goes to live on her estate. Eekenhof is deserted, except for an old woman caretaker. Rumour has it that the ghost of the dead wife walks abroad looking for her son, Detlev, who has gone to live with his aunt in town. She dies when he is twelve years old, and he comes back to his father. He is not welcomed by any of the family in his stepmother's house, but goes frequently to Eekenhof to see his mother's picture and to play with the caretaker's granddaughter Heilwig. She is an illegitimate child of Hennicke, though Detlev does not discover this till many years later. The old woman tells them about the people whose portraits hang in the gallery, and Heilwig warns Detlev to walk quietly in the Rittersaal, because all the people are now dead.

When Detlev is older he quarrels with Hennicke over his treatment of the peasants, is beaten for this and leaves home. News comes that he has gone to sea, and the ghost is said to walk at Eekenhof again. Hennicke goes to destroy the picture once and for all, but quails before the calm eyes of his dead wife. Thereafter she walks only at the equinox; Heilwig and the old woman hear her dress rustling and pray for her and Detlev.

In the years that follow, Hennicke succeeds in having Detlev declared dead, so that he can claim Eekenhof for his own. But Detlev

has been making investigations, and he appears one day to take over his inheritance and to tell Heilwig that she is his half-sister. In the night after his return they sit in front of the picture of his mother, imagining that she looks kindly on them. Some-one creeps in and attempts to kill Detlev, doubtless Hennicke. This decides Detlev to renounce his claim; he and Heilwig vanish and are never heard of again. Hennicke's wishes have been fulfilled: he now owns Eekenhof and his second wife soon dies, leaving him her estate, but he is completely broken. The peasants whisper that the ghost of his first wife has destroyed him.

The portraits of the extinct family represent a kind of natural justice. To their own they seem friendly; the young wife sits at peace in the Rittersaal, where she had always felt happy, and finds companionship from the silent ranks of her long dead ancestors. Her portrait seems to smile in a friendly way on Detlev and Heilwig. Although Heilwig is not of this family, she does not feel any affinity with her father, and she has always treated the portraits with reverence. Hennicke, on the other hand, feels uneasy before them. He is unable to destroy his wife's portrait, which he blames as the cause of his unease, and he vows that when he comes to live in Eekenhof with Heilwig he will have the pictures removed: „ich will die begrabenen Augen nicht mehr um mich haben“, he declares (1).

Hennicke's wife never had this feeling of mortality which so terrifies him. To her the pictures seemed to go on telling the life-story of each ancestor so that none should be forgotten. The more common experience is that of Hennicke and Anna, the heroine of Im Schloß, who is constantly aware that the people whose pictures surround her are dead and vanished. They are mentioned three times in almost the same words:

die Bilder verschollener Menschen standen wie immer schweigend an den Wänden (2)

droben im Rittersaal hängen noch die Bilder; die stumme Gesellschaft verschollener Männer und Frauen schaut noch wie sonst mit dem fremdartigen Gesichtsausdruck aus ihren Rahmen in den leeren Saal hinein (3)

- (1) Werke V, p.260  
 (2) Werke II, p.99  
 (3) Werke II, p.100

dann begrüßte ich die altfränkischen Herren und Damen im Ritter-  
saal; aber ich trat unwillkürlich leiser auf, es war mir doch  
fast unheimlich, daß sie nach so langer Zeit ebenso wie sonst mit  
ihren grellen Augen in den Saal hineinschauten (1).

The emphasis is on 'verschollen' and 'stumm' - these people have been  
dead for centuries and even in their portraits they do not look like  
living beings. Like Detlev and Heilwig in Ekenhof, Anna feels that  
she must walk quietly as if among the dead.

Vor allem zogen mich die Bilder an; auf den Zehen ging ich von  
einem zu dem anderen; nicht müde konnte ich werden, die Frauen  
in ihren seltsamen roten und feuerfarbenen Roben, mit dem Papa-  
geien auf der Hand oder dem Mops zu ihren Füßen, zu betrachten,  
deren grelle, braune Augen so eigen aus den blassen Gesichtern  
herausschauten, so ganz anders, als ich es bei den lebenden Men-  
schen gesehen hatte. Und dann dicht neben der Eingangstür das  
Bild des Ritters mit dem bösen Gewissen und dem schwarzen krausen  
Bart, von dem es hieß, er werde rot, sobald ihn jemand anschaue.  
Ich habe ihn oftmals angeschaut, fest und lange; und wenn, wie  
es mir schien, sein Gesicht ganz mit Blut überlaufen war, so ent-  
floh ich und suchte, des Oheims Tür zu erreichen. Aber über diese  
Tür war ein anderes Bild; es mochten die Porträts von Kindern  
sein, die vor einigen hundert Jahren hier gespielt hatten; in  
steifen brokatenen Gewändern mit breiten Spitzenkragen standen  
sie wie die Kegel neben einander, Knaben und Mädchen, eines immer  
kleiner als das andere. Die Farben waren verkalkt und ausgebleicht  
und wenn ich unter dem Bilde durch die Tür lief, war es mir, als  
blickten sie alle aus den kleinen begrabenen Gesichtern mit ihren  
beerschwarzen Augen auf mich herab. (2)

Like Hennicke, Anna is aware that these people are all dead and  
buried - they represent a Memento mori for the living. But the  
whipping-boy, because he looks natural and human, is able to touch  
her heart, and she forgets that he too is long since dead: „ich ver-  
gaß es, daß diese jugendliche Gestalt nichts sei als die wesenlose  
Spur eines vor Jahrhunderten vorübergegangenen Menschen-lebens" (3).

Johannes in Aquis Submersus is conscious of a feeling of dread  
before the portrait of the evil ancestress, in whom he finds a true  
forebear of Junker Wulf.

Und siehe, da hing im schwarzen, von den Würmern schon zerfressene  
Holzrahmen ein Bild, vor dem ich schon als Knabe, als ob's mich  
hielte, stillgestanden war. Es stellte eine Edelfrau von etwa

(1) Werke II, pp.107-108

(2) Werke II, p.102

(3) Werke II, p.105

vierzig Jahren vor; die kleinen grauen Augen sahen kalt und stechend aus dem harten Antlitz, das nur zur Hälfte zwischen dem weißen Kinnuch und der Schleierhaube sichtbar war. Ein leiser Schauer überfuhr mich vor der so lang schon heimgegangenen Seele... Und wieder trat ich vor die beiden jüngsten Bilder (Herr Gerhardus and his wife), an denen mein Gemüt sich erquickte. (1)

Despite their age and often their poor state of preservation, the portraits still seem to possess life and power which make the living take note of them. Anna looks around shyly at the other portraits before kissing the whipping-boy, Katharina and Johannes tremble before the malevolent gaze of the ancestress, and Hennicke is defeated in his purpose by the calm eyes of his wife's picture. Yet it is always stressed that these people are dead, and in most cases their life-story has been forgotten. The portraits belong to the great past of a family which is now extinct or in the process of decline, they hang in remote castles in silent galleries, where, as Johannes in Aquis Submersus observes, the liveliest thing is the dust dancing in the sunlight. Often, as in Ekenhof, by the time the story comes to be written down, the castle is demolished and the pictures have been destroyed. Where the pictures remain they are a reminder of the failure of human memory - „die Sage über sie ist verschollen“ (Ekenhof) - without some-one or something to preserve the story of previous generations, their portraits, far from commemorating them, serve only to reinforce in their descendants the awareness of transience.

(d) The attempt to overcome transience

The narrator of the story In St. Jürgen describes the main hall of the old people's home where lives his grandmother's former servant, Agnes Hansen.

Es war ein mäßig großes, niedriges Gemach, das wir betraten. An der einen Wand sah man eine altertümliche Stutzuhr aus dem Nachlaß eines hier Verstorbenen, an der gegenüberstehenden hing das lebensgroße Bild eines Mannes in einfachem, rotem Wams; sonst war das Zimmer ohne Schmuck.

(1) Werke IV, p.281

"Das ist der gute Herzog, der das Stift gebaut hat," sagte Hansen; "aber die Menschen genießen seine Gaben und denken nicht mehr an ihn, wie er es doch bei seiner Lebzeit wohl gewünscht hat."  
 "Aber du gedenkst ja seiner, Hansen."  
 Sie sah mich mit ihren sanften Augen an. "Ja, mein Kind," sagte sie, "das liegt so in meiner Natur; ich kann nur schwer vergessen"

(1)

People have their portrait painted expressly so that they should not be forgotten; because Storm, and thus his characters, do not believe in the possibility of a life after death, they wish to leave something of themselves behind to prolong their presence upon earth. But their memory does fade with time, and this is right. Storm has shown in Viola Tricolor that the living should not spend their lives trying to recall the memory of the dead. "Vergessen und vergessen werden," says old Wieb to Richard in Waldwinkel;

Wer lange lebt auf Erden,  
 der hat wohl diese beiden  
 zu lernen und zu leiden. (2)

We must accept that as we forget others so too will we one day be forgotten.

Nobis cum semel occidit brevis lux  
 Nox est perpetua una dormienda (Catullus V)

But man rebels against the shortness of his life's span and even more against the thought of eternal oblivion. He attempts to perpetuate his memory in various ways: by writing -

So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,  
 So long lives this, and this gives life to thee  
 (Shakespeare, Sonnet XVIII)

and by painting - we think of the innumerable portraits of once famous men painted to hang in public places. Storm frequently uses the device of memoirs written by some-one many years ago and rediscovered in a later age, or that of an old person relating his life story to a younger friend. "Du mußt doch von mir wissen, wenn ich nicht mehr bin," (3) says Hansen as she begins her story. He also mentions commemorative portraits such as that of the "guter Herzog" in In St. Jürgen, the family portraits in Eekenhof and Im Schloß, and the

(1) Werke III, pp.77-78

(2) Werke IV, p.123

(3) Werke III, p.79 (In St. Jürgen)

portrait of Marie in Viola Tricolor. In Aquis Submersus we have Storm's most determined onslaught on the problem of transience with the combined use of memoirs and commemorative portraits.

As the narrator of the story is wandering through his home town one day, looking for lodgings for his young cousin, his eye falls on an inscription in Low German above the door of a baker's house:

Geliek as Rook un Stoof verswindt,  
Also sind ock de Minschenkind. (1)

Interested by this, he inquires in the house and finds that they have a room to let; as he is inspecting the room he notices a picture, apparently executed in the seventeenth century, of an elderly man carrying a little boy in his arms. Excitement grips the narrator:

Der Kopf des alten Herrn, so schön und anziehend und so trefflich er immer gemalt sein mochte, hatte indessen nicht diese Erregung in mir hervorgebracht; aber der Maler hatte ihm einen blassen Knaben in den Arm gelegt, der in seiner kleinen schlaff herabhängenden Hand eine weiße Wasserlilie hielt - und diesen Knaben kannte ich ja längst. Auch hier war es wohl der Tod, der ihm die Augen zgedrückt hatte. (2)

The narrator is familiar with the boy's face from a picture which used to intrigue him in his youth. It hung in a village church and attracted his attention on every visit to the village, where his best friend, the son of the clergyman, had his home.

Unter all diesen seltsamen oder wohl gar unheimlichen Dingen, hing im Schiff der Kirche das unschuldige Bildnis eines toten Kindes, eines schönen, etwa fünfjährigen Knaben, der, auf einem mit Spitzen besetzten Kissen ruhend, eine weiße Wasserlilie in seiner kleinen bleichen Hand hielt. Aus dem zarten Antlitz sprach neben dem Grauen des Todes, wie hilflos, noch eine letzte holde Spur des Lebens; ein unwiderstehliches Mitleid befiel mich, wenn ich vor diesem Bilde stand.

Aber es hing nicht allein hier; dicht daneben schaute aus dunklem Holzrahmen ein finsterer schwarzbärtiger Mann in Priesterkragen und Sammar. Mein Freund sagte mir, es sei der Vater jenes schönen Knaben; dieser selbst, so gehe noch heute die Sage, solle einst in der Wassergrube unserer Priesterkoppel seinen Tod gefunden haben. Auf dem Rahmen lasen wir die Jahreszahl 1666; das war lange her. Immer wieder zog es mich zu

(1) Werke IV, p.263 and p.311

(2) Werke IV, p.264

diesen beiden Bildern; ein phantastisches Verlangen ergriff mich, von dem Leben und Sterben des Kindes eine nähere, wenn auch noch so karge Kunde zu erhalten; selbst aus dem düsteren Antlitz, das trotz des Priesterkragens mich fast an die Kriegsknechte des Altarschranks gemahnen wollte, suchte ich sie herauszulesen. (1)

The narrator notices the letters C.P.A.S. painted in red in a corner of the picture. His friend's father tells him that A.S. is said to mean 'aquis submersus', which accords with the legend that the boy was drowned, but no-one knows what the other two letters stand for. Thinking of the grim face of the priest, the narrator suggests, rather to his host's dismay, the solution 'culpa patris'.

Beneath the picture in the baker's house stands a little box containing some papers; these relate the story of all three pictures and of the man who painted them. He was an artist called Johannes in the mid seventeenth century, who had been brought up by a friend of his father's and sent by him to study art in Holland. On his return after five years he finds that his patron, Herr Gerhardus, has just died, leaving the estate to his son, Junker Wulf, who is playing the tyrant. Johannes and Wulf had never agreed, but Johannes had a playmate and ally in Wulf's sister Katharina, whom Wulf is now planning to marry off to his neighbour, Kurt von der Risch, a dissolute young man and another old enemy of Johannes'. Wulf bids Johannes paint Katharina's portrait, which is to hang in the gallery after her marriage. During the painting of the portrait Johannes and Katharina fall in love. When Johannes goes to Hamburg to order a frame for the portrait, he also visits Katharina's aunt, who is an abbess, to ask her for sanctuary in the convent for Katharina, until the two lovers can make their escape to Holland, a land not ruled by class distinctions. Wulf discovers the plan and sets his dogs on Johannes. Climbing up the wall of a tower to escape, Johannes finds himself in Katharina's bedroom, and eventually spends the night there. He later asks Wulf formally for her hand in marriage, but Wulf in a temper shoots at him. When he recovers from the wound, Johannes

(1) Werke IV, p.260

goes to Holland alone, intending to return whenever he has made some money, but illness prevents him from doing so until nearly a year later. Despite all his investigations he cannot find Katharina. Rumour has it in the village that she has married Johannes; one night during the winter she left the castle with a clergyman and has not been heard of since.

About six years after this, Johannes comes to settle in a town on the North Sea, because he has received commissions to paint the *Bürgermeister* and also the raising of Lazarus in memory of a wealthy brewer. While he is working on the second task he is requested to come to a nearby village to paint the pastor, whose portrait is to hang in the church along with those of his predecessors. Johannes is intrigued by the pastor's son, a pale, unhappy looking child, and wonders what sort of woman his mother might be. A certain suspicion enters his mind, and on the day that a witch is to be burnt in town and every-one from the surrounding country-side is pouring in to watch the spectacle, he walks out to the village in the hope of seeing the pastor's wife. It is indeed Katharina, who has married the pastor in order to give Johannes' child a name. While they are talking, the child wanders away and is drowned. The pastor commands Johannes to paint the child so that his picture too may hang in the church: „Mög es dort die Menschen mahnen, daß vor der knöchern Hand des Todes alles Staub ist!" (1) Johannes adds a water-lily to the picture as a kind of gift to his child, and write in a corner the letters C.P.A.S. to signify 'culpa patris aquis submersus'. As he leaves he imagines that Katharina is calling his name, but the pastor sends him away without seeing her again. On his road home from the village he seems to hear the sea in the distance murmuring: *aquis submersus* - his child, Katharina, and all his happiness are lost to him for ever, partly by mischance and partly by his own fault.

(1) Werke IV, p.330

From the introduction to the second of the two notebooks in which Johannes has written his memoirs we gather that he has written them for the benefit of his nephew. As an old man, soon to die, he seeks relief from the disappointments of his life in communication with some-one who cares for him. He has abandoned all his former ideas of greatness, the ambition expressed to Junker Wulf to become a great artist and the contempt he felt for lesser men when he studied the poorly executed portraits of earlier pastors in the village church. He now remembers with sorrow his past defaults, constantly reminds himself, with the aid of the inscription over his door, of „die Nichtigkeit des Irdischen“, and looks forward to reunion with his loved ones after death. When we consider the end of his narrative, however, we get the impression that the writing of his memoirs has afforded him small comfort. He concludes with his departure from the village, full of despair. „Meine alte Wunde brannte mir in meiner Brust“ (1) - not only the physical wound from Wulf's shot, it would seem, but also the recollection of his sorrow and the re-awakening of his feelings of guilt are causing him pain. He breaks off his narrative without any attempts to achieve a mood of conciliation and resignation.

The narrator's conclusion is equally abrupt, and significant of the failure to overcome Storm's other great problem, not loneliness but transience. The narrator's introduction goes into considerable detail, building up a picture of the narrator in his quest for information about the paintings in the village church. The scenery is described - the interior of the church and the pastor's house, the baker's house with its inscription; the reader is encouraged to share the narrator's interest in the pictures and his delight in finding a solution to the mystery. The conclusion forms a telling contrast, even more telling when one considers that Storm made several attempts at writing one. Finally he discarded those which show the narrator trying to follow up traces of Johannes in local tradition.

(1) Werke IV, p.335

and legends, and ended with the stark, impersonal lines:

Dessen sich einstens Herr Johannes im Vollgeföhle seiner Kraft vermessen, daß er's wohl einmal in seiner Kunst den Größeren gleichzutun verhoffe, das sollten Worte bleiben, in die leere Luft gesprochen.

Sein Name gehört nicht zu denen, die genannt werden; kaum dürfte er in einem Künstlerlexikon zu finden sein; ja selbst in seiner engeren Heimat weiß niemand von einem Maler seines Namens. Des großen Lazarusbildes zwar tut noch die Chronik unserer Stadt Erwähnung, das Bild selbst aber ist zu Anfang dieses Jahrhunderts nach dem Abbruch unserer alten Kirche gleich den anderen Kunstschätzen derselben verschleudert oder verschwunden. (1)

In this tale Storm employs a combination of all the means whereby man's memory may be kept alive - painting, memoir-writing and popular tradition. This last is the most unreliable; it records only that the little boy was drowned, and can interpret only the letters A.S. of the inscription. In Ekenhof we notice a similar inadequacy of the popular memory. The ancestral pictures in the castle hall are remembered, even the details of two of them have survived:

Noch jetzt weiß man von dem Bilde eines jungen blonden Obristen im Reiterkoller aus der Zeit der Grafenfehde, über dessen blasses Antlitz eine blutrote Narbe hingelaufen, und neben diesem von einer stolzen schwarzäugigen Dame mit Reiherfedern auf dem Schlahute und einem Stieglitz auf der Hand. Das verbundene Geschick dieses Paares soll für das des ganzen Geschlechtes vorbestimmend gewesen sein; aber die Sage über sie ist verschollen. (2)

The pictures themselves are not forgotten after they have vanished or been destroyed, but even when they are to hand they are of little use without some person or some written word to tell the story of the people whom they commemorate. Without this key the pictures remain tantalisingly silent. „Jetzt brenne ich vor Begierde, noch einmal den Vorhang aufzuheben, hinter dem sich jenes nun wohl längst ver-rauschte Leben birgt“ (3) - thus the Sekretär in Im Nachbarhause links; „ein phantastisches Verlangen ergriff mich, von dem Leben und Sterben dieses Kindes eine nähere, wenn auch noch so karge Kunde zu erhalten“ (4) - the narrator in Aquis Submersus.

(1) Werke IV, pp. 335-336

(2) Werke V, p.229

(3) Werke IV, p.226

(4) Werke IV, p.260

In order to give up their secret the pictures require first a viewer who is filled with a desire to find out about the persons depicted, and then some extraordinary coincidences which enable him to solve the mystery. The task is made all the harder because the paintings or their explanatory manuscript are to be found, significantly enough, in rather inaccessible places and surrounded by an atmosphere of death and decay. The picture of Herr Gerhardus and his grandson hangs „im Schatten eines Schrankes“, the pictures of the boy and the pastor are in a church which has escaped destruction by the floods only because it stands on raised ground, and the portrait of Madame Jansen hangs in an unused room full of dusty furniture <sup>and</sup> faded curtains. A real stroke of luck allows the Sekretär to identify this old woman with his grandfather's first love, another unites the three portraits by Johannes with his memoir in Aquis Submersus.

The very fact that such coincidences are necessary before the past can be recovered indicates Storm's grave scepticism about man's ability to preserve the present for the future. Although a man may erect a memorial to himself, succeeding generations will have to make an effort to rescue his memory from the shadows of the past. The word 'Schatten' is frequently used by Storm. It refers not only to the obscurity in which the pictures are hidden, but to the people represented, who have departed to the 'realm of shadows'. Ines accuses Rudolf of being unfaithful to her „mit einem Schatten“, and she regrets that all that can be preserved of herself is a „Schatten für mein Kind“. Johannes works in the portrait gallery „unter den Schatten der Gewesenen“, Heilwig stresses that the people in the Eekenhof gallery are all now dead. Despite all attempts by man to preserve his memory, nothing remains but a shadow, „die wesenlose Spur eines vorübergegangenen Menschenlebens“ (1). The difficulty of overcoming transience is most firmly stated by Storm in the words of the grim pastor in Aquis Submersus: „Es ist nicht meines Sinnes, daß der Schein des Staubes dauere, wenn der Odem Gottes ihn verlassen“ (2).

(1) Werke II, p.105

(2) Werke IV, p.317

**THEODOR FONTANE**

## Theodor Fontane

### 1. The Social Background

Any one interested in the manners and morals of nineteenth century Germany can find much information in the works of Theodor Fontane. He writes about the upper classes in the second half of the century, the period of the rise of Prussia and of the Second Empire, describing the world of the Prussian Junkers, from whom the civil service and army personnel were drawn, and of the new wealthy bourgeoisie, which was gaining greater importance in social and political spheres. He ignores the court and the proletariat, since they are outwith his experience, but he gives the occasional glimpse into the lives of the peasants of the Mark Brandenburg and of the artisan classes in Berlin. His chosen section of the community draws its strength from marriage and property, and has a rigid code of behaviour to protect its interests and position. He shows it against the background of its pleasures and home life, painting lively scenes of dinner-parties, visits to the theatre, excursions by train or carriage, rides on horse-back and picnics or Landpartien, the favourite summer amusement in Berlin. In the course of the social gatherings he introduces his characters, people of wealth, culture and leisure, who enjoy nothing better than meeting their equals to engage with them in conversation, the great art and pastime of their day.

But Fontane is not a sociologist: he has indeed been<sup>er</sup> attacked by modern critics because he does not give a full picture of contemporary conditions and condemn the abuses of an autocratically ruled and increasingly industrial society (1). He is first and foremost a writer with a deep concern for human beings: he chooses, it may be noted, to describe not the sensational and outstanding lives, but the ordinary unexceptional ones. His concern extends also to the manner in which he describes these lives - he is an artist who looks carefully for the best means of portraying the character, circumstances and fate of real people, not merely of 'nineteenth century types'.

(1) G. Lukács Deutsche Realisten des 19. Jahrhunderts (Aufbau Verlag Berlin 1951) „Der alte Fontane“.

Because of his concern with people, Fontane regards plot as of little importance in his novels. They nearly all deal with problems of love and marriage, with unions which founder either on differences of age or temperament or of social status. All the novels, except for L'Adultera and perhaps Der Stechlin, end unhappily. Society is too strong for the individual: his happiness is not considered as being of paramount importance, and indeed it is regarded as well-nigh undesirable if a breach of social convention, such as divorce or the over-stepping of class barriers is needed to secure it. Those who do offend against convention are either forced to conform once more, or else they soon find life so impossible that death is the only solution.

Fontane does not attack the social morality of his day. To do this he would have had to write about strong, self-willed characters who defied this morality and showed it to be inhuman and hypocritical. Instead he portrays people of average sensibility and temperament who desire little more than a peaceful life in accordance with the recognised conventions. They usually drift, rather than plunge of their own volition, into a situation where they find themselves acting against the social code. But once the 'crime' has been committed and becomes known to society, there is no escape from society's retribution - utter rejection. This means destruction for the individual who is not strong enough to live in opposition. Fontane accepts this pattern because he knew that most people cannot live in complete freedom, but need a standard of conduct to guide them. Nevertheless, the pity and tenderness with which he portrays the fate of unfortunate transgressors such as Effi Briest, who are as much the victims of circumstances as of their own weakness, plead, if not for a slackening of the rules, certainly for more humanity in judgment from fellow human-beings.

## 2. Fontane's Method of Characterisation - the use of works of art

Fontane rarely characterises directly. He allows his characters to reveal themselves through speech, occasionally in soliloquy, but chiefly in conversation with others. His art in presenting conversation develops until his last novel, Der Stechlin, is nearly all conversation and has no action worth mentioning. The ability to converse freely and entertainingly was a valued - and necessary - skill among the leisured classes of the nineteenth century. It is made fun of in Irrungen Wirungen, where Baron Botho imitates dinner-table chit-chat for the benefit of his working-class friends, Lene Nimptsch and her mother and their neighbours the Dörrs.

„Nun“, fuhr Botho fort, „denke dir also, du wärest eine kleine Gräfin. Und eben hab ich dich zu Tische geführt und Platz genommen, und nun sind wir beim ersten Löffel Suppe.“

„Gut. Gut. Aber nun?“

„Und nun sag ich: Irr ich nicht, meine gnädigste Komtesse, so sah ich Sie gestern in der Flora, Sie und Ihre Frau Mama. Nicht zu verwundern. Das Wetter lockt ja jetzt täglich heraus, und man könnte schon von Reisewetter sprechen. Haben Sie Pläne, Sommerpläne, meine gnädigste Gräfin? Und nun antwortest du, daß leider noch nichts feststünde, weil der Papa durchaus nach dem Bayerischen wollte, daß aber die Sächsische Schweiz mit dem Königstein und der Bastei dein Herzenswunsch wäre.“

„Das ist es auch wirklich“, lachte Lene.

„Nun sieh, das trifft sich gut. Und so fahr ich denn fort: Ja, gnädigste Komtesse, da begegnen sich unsere Geschmacksrichtungen. Ich ziehe die Sächsische Schweiz ebenfalls jedem andren Teil der Welt vor, namentlich auch der eigentlichen Schweiz! Man kann nicht immer große Natur schwelgen, nicht immer klettern und außer Atem sein. Aber Sächsische Schweiz! Himmlisch, ideal! Da hab ich Dresden; in einer viertel oder halben Stunde bin ich da, da seh ich Bilder, Theater, Großer Garten, Zwinger, Grünes Gewölbe. Versäumen Sie nicht, sich die Kanne mit den tönernen Jungfrauen zeigen zu lassen, und vor allem den Kirschkern, auf dem das ganze Veterunser steht. Alles bloß durch die Lupe zu sehen.“

„Und so spricht ihr?“

„Ganz so, mein Schatz. Und wenn ich mit meiner Nachbarin zur Linken, also mit Komtesse Lene, fertig bin, so wend ich mich zu meiner Nachbarin zur Rechten, also zu Frau Baronin Dörr...“

Lene objects, at the end of his recital: „Wenn es alles so redensartlich ist, da wundert es mich, daß ihr solche Gesellschaften

mitmacht." But Botho replies: „Oh, man sieht doch schöne Damen und Toiletten und mitunter auch Blicke, die, wenn man gut aufpaßt, einem eine ganze Geschichte verraten. Und jedenfalls dauert es nicht lange, so daß man immer noch Zeit hat, im Klub alles nachzuholen. Und im Klub ist es wirklich reizend, da hören die Redensarten auf, und die Wirklichkeiten fangen an." (The 'Wirklichkeiten', for Botho and his friends, consist in playing cards for very high stakes!) (1)

An important part of Fontane's technique is hinted at in Botho's mention of 'glances which..reveal a whole story'. Only occasionally does Fontane describe directly the usual stuff of novels - an event or the state of a character's mind. He employs an equivalent of these 'telling glances' - vital information is imparted obliquely in conversation, often by means of a quotation, or through the reaction of the characters to some remark or sight, frequently the sight of a picture. His characters are themselves alive to this method of getting to know each other, and the reader too must be alert to this elusive technique.

The conversation of Fontane's people is perhaps at times superficial; one thinks of Stine explaining to her sister Pauline Pittelkow why young Graf Halderm comes to visit her: „Sieh, es liegt daran, er hat so wenig Menschen gesehen und noch weniger kennengelernt....wie Menschen sprechen, das hat er nicht gehört, das weiß er nicht recht." (2)

It is nevertheless an art, and to practise it one requires a knowledge of the accepted topics - politics, the theatre, travel, literature and art. The conversation in Cécile between Leslie-Gordon, the galant young civil-engineer, and Rosa Hexel the painter is a good example of the talk of educated people. Because of their wide reading interests and experience they can range over a wide variety of topics. Cécile forms a striking contrast to them. Her lack of education, hampered as well by her lack of interest in anything apart from herself betrays itself in her attempts to take part in the conversation. Gordon recognises her limitations while admiring her charm and beauty, but her husband St. Arnaud is constantly embarrassed by her displays

(1) Sämtliche Werke III, (Nymphenburg München 1959) pp.110-112

(2) Werke III, pp.272-273

of ignorance. When the St. Arnauds and Gordon first meet Rosa, she informs them that her Christian name and her profession of animal painter have earned her the nickname of Rosa Malheur - an unfavourable comparison with the contemporary French animal artist, Rosa Bonheur. Cécile does not understand the joke, and later asks St. Arnaud whether it is necessary to know about such things.

„Meinem persönlichen Geschmacke nach brauchen Damen überhaupt nichts zu wissen," he replies. „Und jedenfalls lieber zu wenig als zu viel. Aber die Welt ist nun mal, wie sie ist, auch in diesem Stück und verlangt, daß man dies und jenes wenigstens den Namen nach kenne." (1)

Familiarity with art and literature is displayed by most of Fontane's characters in the Gesellschaftsromane. He was himself fond of quoting freely from his extensive reading and attributes this predilection to several of his characters. The favourite authors of the time included Goethe, Schiller and Heine, as well as some Romantics like Brentano and Novalis. The quotations add spice to the conversation; they also provide a means of conveying information which cannot be stated directly. This was an age of extreme politeness, when persons of good breeding showed delicacy and sensitivity in dealing with certain touchy subjects. When Effi Briest wishes to discourage Crampas' advances she alludes to the ballad in Goethe's Faust and remarks: „Ich mag nicht als Reimwort auf Ihren König von Thule herumlaufen." (2) Kommerzienrat Treibel is tactful in choosing a literary allusion to indicate the past of one of his guests, Frau von Ziegenhals: „...wenn ich recht gehört habe, so pendelt ihre Vergangenheit zwischen verschiedenen kleinen Höfen hin und her. Lady Milford, aber weniger sentimental." (3)

The literary allusions also form a short-hand way of illustrating character and situation. In Cécile much play is made with Schiller's Wallenstein: this is instigated by Leslie-Gordon's name (4). St. Arnaud is compared to Oberst Buttler, thus indicating his violent

- (1) Werke IV, p.154
- (2) Werke VII, p.290
- (3) Werke VII, p.37
- (4) Werke IV, p.142

temper and ruthlessness in points of honour, and Cécile is shown to resemble Wallenstein in her belief in fate and portents.

It is quite natural to Fontane, because of his own qualifications as author and literary critic, to make use of literary allusions to impart information about his characters. Contemporary society, however, also took an interest in other aspects of culture, notably in the visual arts. Fontane shows no great knowledge or love of paintings, but nevertheless uses them in much the same way as he uses allusions to works of literature.

Contemporary taste, first of all, is indicated by the pictures which decorate the homes of Fontane's characters. These are primarily by artists of the Italian Renaissance and Baroque, not the greatest - Michaelangelo and Leonardo - but the gentler and more sentimental ones like Corregio and Guido Reni. Landscapes and still-lives by eighteenth century and contemporary artists are also popular. Holk in Unwiederbringlich, which is set in the year 1859, refers to Cornelius, one of the chief members of the Nazarene group of painters as a suitable artist for decorating a church or cemetery (1). Adolf Menzel, a contemporary and friend of Fontane, is mentioned by Manon in Die Poggenpuhls. Her wealthy Jewish friends, the Bartensteins, possess two works by Menzel - a court ball and a sketch of a coronation scene - which proves how cultured and modern they are (2). In Schach von Wuthenow and Effi Briest Fontane portrays two characters who pass the time while waiting for an interview by studying the pictures on the walls around them. As Frau von Carayon waits for her old friend General von Köckritz to arrange an interview with the king she amuses herself by looking at the colour prints of well-known pictures hanging in his room. These include angels by Reynolds, landscapes by Gainsborough, works by Italian masters, among which she particularly admires a Magdalene by Corregio (3). A copy of Guido Reni's 'Aurora' and some coloured etchings by Benjamin West hang in the hall of the Minister's house, where Effi Briest waits to speak with

(1) Werke V, p.15

(2) Werke IV, p.348

(3) Werke II, p.369

his wife. She hopes that this lady will act as an intermediary and persuade Innstetten to let Effi see her little daughter Anni again. It is symbolic of Effi's position as an outcast from society after her divorce that one of the West etchings shows King Lear in the storm (1).

Fontane does not describe any of these pictures: they are mentioned only by name. Obviously they are typical decorations in an aristocratic house of the later nineteenth century and would be familiar enough by name alone to his readers. The upper-class characters in Fontane's *Gesellschaftsromane* do on the whole have some knowledge of famous works of art; they have visited the art galleries in Germany and Italy and they possess copies of works by favourite or most fashionable artists. A good example is Van der Straaten in *L'Adultera*: he fancies himself as a connoisseur and has a large collection of pictures, including a copy of Paolo Veronese's 'Marriage of Cana' in his dining-room and a copy of Pintoretto's 'Woman taken in adultery' (2).

In many cases the pictures in the private rooms of Fontane's characters give an insight into their nature. Of Graf Petöfy's study in his Vienna palace Fontane writes: „Der Charakter seines Bewohners sprach sich in allem aus und verriet gleichmäßig den Militär, wie den Junggesellen und Theaterhabitué." (3) His sister Judith's salon is decorated with Correggio's 'Night' and Carlo Dolci's 'Mary Magdalene', which give a clue to her religious - she is a devout Roman Catholic - and slightly sentimental nature (4). The pictures hanging in the sitting-room of Botho von Rienäcker seem to say little about their owner: two still-lives by Albert Hertel, a copy of Rubens' 'Bearhunt' and a sea-storm by Andreas Achenbach sound very conventional. We learn that Botho won the Achenbach in a lottery, and this stimulated his interest in art so that he acquired a knowledge of both Achenbachs, Andreas and Oswald, a painter of gaily-coloured Italian scenes. Botho's naivety in artistic matters is revealed by his preference for the more lively Oswald, though he is man-of-the-world enough to recognise that

- (1) Werke VII, p.404
- (2) Werke IV, p23 and p.12
- (3) Werke II, p.9
- (4) Werke II, p.15

to admit this publicly would be to halve the value of his sea-storm by Andreas (1). The description of Botho's tastes in art turns out to be significant, because it holds good for his character as a whole. He is a conventional young nobleman who has by chance been led down a side-road in love. Although he enjoys Lene's naturalness and simplicity, he is wise enough to realise that marriage with her is impossible, the only union for him being a suitable and profitable match with his cousin Käthe.

Botho's interest in art is somewhat elementary, but other Fontane characters, particularly middle-aged men like Graf Petöfy and Graf Haldern in Stine, are well-informed and have a genuine, if occasionally exaggerated passion for art. When young Waldemar Haldern visits his uncle to discuss his plan of marrying Stine, the quiet, modest sister of the old Graf's mistress, Frau Pittelkow, he finds his uncle studying some etchings of Italian masterpieces, among which Waldemar recognises a Crucifixion by Mantegna. The Graf at once launches into a lengthy monologue on the work:

„Ja, Waldemar. Mantegna. Du wirst das Original in der Brera gesehen haben. Superbe. Wie das wohltut, eine verständnisvolle Seele zu finden. Alles redet von Kunst, aber niemand weiß etwas davon, und die wenigen, die die Wissenden sind, die fühlen wieder nichts oder wenigstens nicht genug. Ich möchte wissen, oder lieber nicht wissen, was der Baron zu diesem gekreuzigten und zugleich so wundersam verkürzten Christus sagen würde. Mantegna, für den ich beiläufig eine Spezialpassion habe (du hast doch hoffentlich seine Fresken im Gonzagaschen Palaste gesehen?), Mantegna, sag ich, hat den Leichnam Christi hier von der Fußsole her gemalt, ein Wunderstück der Verkürzung, etwas Klassisches, etwas Niedagewesenes, versteht sich in seiner Art. Ich wette zehn gegen eins, der Baron würde mir versichern, Christus sähe hier aus wie eine Badepuppe. Und wenn er sich dazu aufschwänge, so wär es nicht das Schlimmste. Denn das ist zuzugestehn: die ganze Gestalt hat etwas Verzweigtes, etwas Koboldartiges; und indem ich darüber spreche, kommt mir ein anderer Vergleich, der mit dem von der Badepuppe beinahe zusammenfällt. Wahrhaftig, dieser Zwerg-Christus erinnert mich an das in Holz geschnittene Christkind in Ara-Celi, an die Bambinopuppe. Findest du nicht auch?“ (2)

(1) Irrungen Wirrungen Werke III, p. 119 and pp.122-123

(2) Werke III, p.285

But Waldemar, although his uncle describes him as an 'Italianissimus', has more urgent matters on his mind and is in no mood for aesthetic discussion. More forthcoming is another nephew, Egon von Asperg, who admires a sketch by Hans Makart of the actress Charlotte Wolters as Messalina which his theatre-loving uncle has just acquired. Graf Petöfy is delighted by his appreciation and also begins to deliver himself of some remarks on artistic technique:

"Makart hat sich hier selbst übertröffen. Ich ziehe diese Skizze seinen größeren Bildern vor. Überhaupt in dem, was Künstler-Aufführung nennen, geht so viel von der Hauptsache verloren. Was der Moment schafft, ist immer das Beste. Byron hatte ganz recht, sich mit einem Tiger zu vergleichen, der alles gleich im ersten Sprunge packen müsse. Gleich oder gar nicht. So liegt es."

"Die Fachleute denken meist anders darüber," entgegnete der Neffe der die Vorliebe des Oheims für Kunstgespräche kannte. "Hört man sie, so sollte man glauben, skizzieren könne jeder und Ideen haben sei so ziemlich das Trivialste von der Welt." (1)

Even if these enthusiastic gentlemen are gently ironised, they do appear to have considerable knowledge of techniques and theories in art. No unlike them are Baron Jaßfeld and the Hofrat in Maler Nolten (2).

It is not surprising to find an interest in art among aristocrats, nor paintings hanging in the homes of the wealthy. Much more unusual it is to see them in the houses of the lower and less well off classes. The furnishings of Witwe Pittelkow's sitting-room in Stine help as much as the description of Botho's apartment to illustrate the character of the occupant.

Alles, was aus dem ihr zur Verfügung stehenden Material gemacht werden konnte, war daraus gemacht worden und ließ wenigstens momentan übersehen, wie sehr und zum Teil auch in wie komischer Weise sich die hier aufgestellten Sachen untereinander widersprachen. Ein Büfett, ein Sofa und ein Pianino, die, hintereinander weg, die von keiner Tür unterbrochene Längswand des Zimmers einnahmen, hätten auch bei 'Geheimrats' stehen können; aber die von der Pittelkow eben gerade gerückten drei Bilder stellten das im Übrigen erstrebte Ensemble stark in Frage. Zwei davon; 'Entenjagd' und 'Tellska-pelle', waren nichts als schlecht kolorierte Lithographien aller-neuesten Datums, während das dazwischenhängende dritte Bild, ein riesiges, stark nachgedunkeltes Ölporträt, wenigstens hundert Jahre

(1) Werke II, p.9

(2) See Maler Nolten, Mörike's Sämtliche Werke I (Winkler München 196 pp.7-12 and pp.22-24

alt war und einen polnischen oder litauischen Bischof verewigte, hinsichtlich dessen Sarastro schwor, daß die schwarze Pittelkow in direkter Linie von ihm abstamme. Gegensätze wie diese zeigten sich in der gesamten Zimmereinrichtung, ja, schienen mehr gesucht als vermieden zu sein... (1)

Pauline Pittelkow shows by means of this arrangement her provocative nature, contemptuous of the values and opinions of her upper-class patron, Graf Halder, and his friends, but frequently overdoing her defiance so that her more refined and sensitive sister Stine is painfully embarrassed.

The elderly caretaker couple in Schach von Wuthenow have quite a different attitude to the status quo. The parlour of their cottage on Schach's country estate boasts some etchings of scenes from the life of Frederick the Great (2). The old people share with many generations of Prussians a devotion to this monarch. On the whole, however, pictures and elegant furnishings in humble homes usually indicate pretensions above the station of the owners. We are expected to be intrigued by the parlour of Abel Hratscheck's house in Unterm Birnbaum.

Diese (Wohnstube) machte neben ihrem wohnlichen zugleich einen eigentümlichen Eindruck, und zwar, weil alles in ihr um vieles besser und eleganter war, als sich's für einen Krämer und Dorfmaterialisten schickte. Die zwei kleinen Sofas waren mit einem hellblauen Atlasstoff bezogen, und an dem Spiegelpfeiler stand ein schmaler Trumeau, weiß lackiert und mit Goldleiste. Ja, das in einem Mahagonirahmen über dem kleinen Klavier hängende Bild (allen Anscheine nach ein Stich nach Claude Lorrain) war ein Sonnenuntergang mit Tempeltrümmern und antiker Staffage, so daß man sich füglich fragen durfte, wie das alles hierherkomme. (3)

Hratscheck himself is an easy-going, rather lazy shop and innkeeper in a little village in the Oderbruch. He met his wife Ursel near Hildesheim, after her father had thrown her out of his house for having an illegitimate child. Once Ursel is married and in a different environment, she develops considerable airs and expects to maintain a standard of living above that of the other villagers. The fine furnishings of her parlour were acquired when the effects of an aristocratic house

- (1) Werke III, p.246
- (2) Werke II, p.356
- (3) Werke III, p.319

were auctioned. Ursel's pretensions, however, as well as earning her the hatred of the village women, also add another motive to her husband's murder of Sulzki, the traveller for a Polish firm to which Hratscheck is deeply in debt. He plays on her fear of disgrace and poverty in order to persuade her to help him in his plan of murdering Sulzki and then constructing a 'fatal accident' with his travelling-coach. Ursel's fear is so great that she eventually gives in, though afterwards her conscience torments her to death.

Much less sinister in their effects are the pretensions of Oberförster Ring and his wife in Effi Briest. The Rings hold an annual Christmas party for all the society of Kessin and district, which is attended by Effi and Innstetten in the second year of their marriage. Frau Ring comes of a family of wealthy merchants in Danzig and has brought many fine possessions with her. On the walls of the dining-room are portraits of her parents, a copy of Hans Memling's altar in the Marienkirche in Danzig, both a painting and a print of Kloster Oliwa and an old portrait of Nettelbeck, which Ring out of patriotism had rescued from oblivion at an auction (1). All this, together with a silver punch-bowl and a precocious daughter, arouses the wrath of Sidonie von Grasenabb, an embittered and malicious spinster from one of the local families. She observes to Innstetten that these furnishings are not suited to the status of a forester, even a head forester: Ring should not be allowed to overreach himself in this way.

The pictures decorating the Rings' house do more than tell us something about the Rings; they initiate a conversation which confirms the impression already given of Sidonie von Grasenabb's character as spiteful, trouble-making and envious of the good fortune of others. Fontane frequently uses pictures in this way to slip in information about his people or to stimulate a revealing conversation, which is always his favourite method of telling us what we need to know. A minor, but typical example occurs in Schach von Wuthenow, when the salon of Frau von Carayon is described:

(1) Werke VII, p.299 (Nettelbeck fought against the French in 1807)

Aber es war auch an stillen Tagen ein reizendes Zimmer, vornehm und gemütlich zugleich. Hier lag der türkische Teppich, der noch die glänzenden, fast ein halbes Menschenalter zurückliegenden Petersburger Tage des Hauses Carayon gesehen hatte, hier stand die malachitne Stutzuhr, ein Geschenk der Kaiserin Katharina, und hier paradierte vor allem auch der große, reich vergoldete Trumeau, der der schönen Frau täglich aufs neue versichern mußte, daß sie noch eine schöne Frau sei... Ob ihr Blick in einem solchen Momente zu dem Bilde des mit einem roten Ordensband in ganzer Figur über dem Sofa hängenden Herrn von Carayon hinüberglitt, oder ob sich ihr ein stattlicheres Bild vor der Seele stellte, war für niemanden zweifelhaft, der die häuslichen Verhältnisse nur einigermaßen kannte. (1)

It has already been made clear that Schach visits the Carayons frequently, but no-one is clear about whether he does indeed intend to marry one of them, since considerable drawbacks are attached to marrying either mother or daughter. This brief allusion re-focuses interest on the relationship between Schach and the Carayons, which has been allowed to slide into the background, and hints that Frau von Carayon is not indifferent to him.

Lene's feelings about her relationship with Botho von Rienäcker (Irrungen Wirrungen) are summed up in her reactions to pictures in her room at Hankels Ablage, a beauty-spot outside Berlin where the couple are spending a few days. Two engravings attract her: they are entitled 'Washington crossing the Delaware' and 'The Last Hour at Trafalgar'. Her inability to read the English titles reminds her painfully of her lack of education, a further barrier between her and Botho. Although an earlier scene in the story has shown how much he appreciates her letters for their freshness, in spite of the spelling mistakes, Lene knows that he attaches more importance to education and culture than he claims to do. She knows they cannot marry, and teases him for wishing every day that she were a countess, and by this stage in the narrative she is convinced that their happiness cannot last much longer. Her distress is increased by the sight of a lithograph entitled 'Si jeunesse savait'. Lene knows this work from the house of her neighbours the Dörrs, and since old Dörr has a rather crude sense of humour, the picture may be assumed to be in bad

(1) Werke II, p.290

taste. „Ihre feine Sinnlichkeit fühlte sich von dem Lüsternen in dem Bilde wie von einer Verzerrung ihres eigenen Gefühls beleidigt.“

(1) That Lene's attitude to her relationship with Botho is a nobler one than is common in such affairs is shown by the contrasting behaviour of Botho's brother officers and their 'ladies', and later by her own willingness to speak openly about her past to her suitor Gideon Franke.

If Lene feels no shame about her past, Cécile (in the novel of the same name) is desperately concerned to conceal hers, and this is underlined by her reaction to pictures. While she and her husband, ex-officer Pierre von St. Arnaud, are on holiday in the Harz, they are joined by a young civil-engineer called Robert von Leslie-Gordon. He is greatly attracted by Cécile's beauty and intrigued by her silence, although he soon realises that she is silent because she is incapable of conducting a conversation about anything beyond herself and her own limited interests. Out walking one day, the little party meets an artist, Rosa Hexel, whose passion is for painting animals, which she ironically describes as an 'unladylike' taste. Leslie-Gordon, who also sketches, examines her work with interest and well-considered comments. Cécile too is at first entertained, but her remarks display a complete lack of knowledge and embarrass her husband, so that she is glad when at last the drawings are put away.

Together with Rosa the three make an expedition to Quedlinburg. Cécile straight away makes another faux pas when Klopstock's house is pointed out to her: it is clear that she has never heard of the poet. The castle at Quedlinburg proves a disappointment, as all the treasures have been dispersed, leaving nothing but a gallery of portraits of the Princess-Abbesses who once ruled there. Cécile, rather bored by the castle, brightens up at the sight of a portrait of Gräfin Aurora von Königsmark, a mistress of August der Starke of Saxony. „...Ja, Cécile - die vor kaum Jahresfrist einen historischen Roman, dessen Heldin die Gräfin war, mit besonderer Teilnahme gelesen hatte

(1) Werke III, p.154

war so ~~hingegen~~ <sup>hingegen</sup> von dem Bilde, daß sie von der Unechtheit derselben nichts hören und alle dafür beigebrachten Beweisführungen nicht gelten lassen wollte." (1)

But events have already taken a dangerous turn during a conversation about the tomb-stone of a Princess's dog. Remarks are made about the faithfulness of dogs, and Cécile seems distressed. Now Gordon voices his opinion of picture collections such as the gallery of Princess-Abbesses, all of whom he finds hideous. Worse only are the 'Galleries of Beauties', frequently a passion of elderly, debauched noblemen. He concludes with a disparaging observation about court favourites, mentioning the mistress of the king of Bavaria: „Ich entsinne mich noch des Eindrucks, den der Kopf der Lola Montez, oder wenn Sie wollen der Gräfin Landsfeld, auf mich machte. Denn Gräfinnen werden sie schließlich alle, wenn sie nicht vorziehen, heilig gesprochen zu werden." (2) Cécile is badly affected and almost faints. She recovers her good spirits over lunch, but when Rosa works the conversation round to pictures she exclaims irritably: „Bilder und immer wieder Bilder. Wozu? Wir hatten mehr als genug davon." (3)

There have certainly been enough pictures to elicit more information about Cécile. Not only has her lack of education been illustrated once more, but her reactions to the conversations stimulated by the pictures has been one of great distress whenever the more sordid aspects of court life are mentioned. This has not escaped Gordon, who has been studying Cécile closely, particularly in her relationship with her husband. He concludes that Cécile has a 'past' connected with some court; he wonders why she should have married St. Arnaud, since the marriage has evidently ruined his career and brought neither of them happiness.

No further pictures are mentioned in the novel; those at Quedlinburg have done their work in building up the mystery around Cécile which Gordon is determined to solve. Knowledge brings disaster. Gordon writes to his sister asking for information about Cécile; after a lo

- (1) Werke IV, p.164
- (2) Werke IV, p.165
- (3) Werke IV, p.166

interval in which he frequents the St. Arnauds' house in Berlin, becoming ever more devoted to Cécile, he receives a reply. Cécile came of a poor Silesian family and was the favourite of a petty prince. She was rescued by St. Arnaud, who fell in love with her while he was stationed in that area. When his fellow-officers objected to the mésalliance he killed one in a duel, left the army and found himself frustrated and embittered, forced to live beneath his social sphere. Gordon is shattered by this news; almost immediately afterwards he sees Cécile at the theatre, apparently flirting with an elderly acquaintance, and he accuses her of reverting to type. A duel with St. Arnaud follows, in which Gordon is killed. Cécile cannot bear another such crisis and commits suicide.

In Unwiederbringlich pictures are also used at a crucial stage in the narrative, in Fontane's favourite indirect way, to build up the characters of the chief actors and to give some hints about their situation. The story is set around 1860, when Schleswig-Holstein was still a Danish possession. Helmut Holk is a German nobleman with a position as equerry to an elderly Danish princess, the king's aunt. When he is summoned late one autumn to assume his duties, he is not altogether sorry to leave home, where life has been growing increasingly difficult with his wife Christine. She is a woman of firm Christian character, but too serious-minded for Holk, whom she in turn considers superficial and careless, particularly in the matter of the children's education, which at this time is the cause of much bitterness between the couple.

Once in the free and easy atmosphere of Copenhagen and away from his stern wife, Holk is attracted to two women, first to Brigitte Hansen, the handsome and rather enigmatic daughter of his landlady, then to Ebba von Rosenberg, one of the Princess's ladies-in-waiting. Ebba had left the Swedish court after a love-affair with one of the Swedish princes and had been taken into the Princess's household. She is a lively young woman of emancipated views and behaviour. On first sight

she finds Holk pompous and goes out of her way to shock and tease him. The effect is, however, to detach Holk from his interest in Brigitte and strengthen his attraction to Ebba.

Before Christmas the Princess and her court depart for the castle of Frederiksborg, where she always spends this season. On the first evening there the court, together with the usual local visitors, Pastor Schleppegrell, his wife and her brother, Dr. Bie, assembles in the main hall of the castle. It is presided over by a fine portrait of King Christian IV, who like the Princess loved Frederiksborg. Holk admires the portrait and enquires about the painter, suggesting a Spanish master. Ebba refuses to allow an aesthetic discussion and asks about other pictures, showing an elderly man with a pointed beard and a woman in a white cap. They are Admiral Herluf Trolle, who about three hundred years previously had sold the castle to Frederick II, and his pious wife, Brigitte Goje. Their portraits were rescued from the old building, together with two pictures illustrating the Admiral's great victory, the sea-battle of Öland. The company examines the ancient, blackened pictures with interest, and asks Schleppegrell to tell what he knows about them. He is delighted to oblige, and informs them that one picture shows the preparations for battle, the other the blowing up of the Swedish flag-ship.

Ebba is much more interested in personalities and wants to hear about Brigitte Goje. (A parallel incident has already been reported some time before leaving Copenhagen, the Princess escorted two little nieces to an exhibition of historical portraits. They were mostly of kings, generals and other famous figures in Danish history. The girls found them boring and were instead intrigued by portraits of persons with a 'romantic' story attached to them [1].) Schleppegrell relates the story of Brigitte and the Bishop of Roskilde, whose advances she rejected. She had a great reputation for chastity and good works. Ebba and Penz, another of the Princess's equerries, jibe at Holk by making insinuating references to Brigitte Hansen. Holk remains unmoved.

(1) Werke V, pp.108-109

not because he has overcome his attraction to Brigitte, but because he has become infatuated with Ebba, a condition obvious to all but himself. (1)

Fontane uses this incident not only to illustrate Holk's change of loyalty and the court's amused reaction to it, but also to build up the characters of Holk and Ebba, which have gradually been revealing themselves in similar incidents. Holk is shown to be superficially cultured, in comparison with his wife. When he wants to build a new residence on a cliff-top he quotes enthusiastically the first verse of Uhland's ballad „Das Schloß am Meer". Christine, who would prefer to remain in the old castle, remarks that he obviously knows only the first verse, and quotes the last with its gloomy outcome (2). Ebba's estimate of Holk as pompous is borne out by his reaction to his family tree. As a died-in-the-wool aristocrat, he is quite horrified to hear that Ebba's family owes its recent ennoblement to a Jewish financier at the Swedish court (3). At Frederiksborg he attempts to engage Dr. Bie in a learned conversation about Iceland. The little doctor is not well versed in ethnology and literature, but he cleverly keeps the talk on more mundane matters, much to the amusement of Pastor Schleppegrell, who is aware of Holk's cultural pretensions. (4) That Ebba is too is shown by the picture incident. She prevents Holk from embarking on an aesthetic discussion of Christian IV's portrait, knowing that she will be bored by it. To her mind Holk, with his concern for abstract issues, misses anything of real importance. Ebba is interested in people, and in this she is Fontane's mouth-piece although he does not on the whole present her as a sympathetic character. During a later conversation, when a piece of gossip about Christian IV is under discussion, she makes the much-quoted remark: „Denn was heißt großer Stil? Großer Stil heißt so gut wie vorbeigehen an allem, was die Menschen eigentlich interessiert." (5) Little details from people's lives which help to illustrate their character

(1) Werke V, pp.132-137

(2) Werke V, pp.6-7

(3) Werke V, pp.470-472

(4) Werke V, p.150

(5) Werke V,

are both interesting and important: only by a study of the little details can we hope to gain a full understanding of our fellow men. Unwiederbringlich - and this holds true for other Fontane novels and characters too - is in part the tragedy of Holk's inability or refusal to read the small signs which reveal the character and intentions of others. First of all he deceives himself about his own motives; his wife Christine he has never understood, and he completely misunderstands Ebba. What was for her only a thoughtless flirtation to pass the time he construes as an attachment deep enough to warrant his divorcing his wife and proposing to Ebba. Holk is not solely to blame for the disastrous outcome of the story. Both Ebba and Christine are at fault, because they too show a lack of understanding of the real situation. Neither Holk nor any-one else concerned recognised the pointers to disaster contained in the picture incident at Frederiksborg, which gives a great insight into Holk's character and immediate state of mind. Here we see signs of his desire to appear cultured and his tendency to bore, his habit of taking himself too seriously and the mental confusion caused by his infatuation. Combined with the wrong sort of people and circumstances, these traits place Holk in a vulnerable position, as shortly becomes clear. The reader must always be on the alert for these pointers to the emerging situation. Fontane uses paintings, quotations, remarks and various objects, which later, as is so common in real life, acquire the significance of signposts to the catastrophe.

### 3. Art used for Social Criticism

We have just seen how Fontane uses literature and art to reveal two disagreeable facets of Holk's character. He is a nobleman who might have some pretensions to culture, but he is shown to be badly read and a bore. The superficiality of his culture emerges when he fails to see how inappropriate Uhland's poem is to his own situation, though ironically it is prophetic of the outcome, when Christine drowns herself and the house is left desolate. Ebba, fearing boredom, cuts short Holk's attempt to discuss Christian IV's portrait, which does not say much for his ability to discourse entertainingly on aesthetics.

In most of Fontane's *Gesellschaftsromane* we find similar situations: men who claim to be art connoisseurs and women who are utterly bored by pictures and art galleries. It is true that, as in the case of *Cécile*, their boredom stems from a lack of the education necessary for art appreciation. In the nineteenth century it was considered a waste of time to educate women, indeed, academic learning was regarded as unladylike. The disasters which overtake Fontane's women are largely the products of poor education: having no inner resources to sustain them in their rather inactive lives, they have recourse, like Effi Briest, to trivial love affairs which cause their downfall. Moreover, the unsympathetic attitude of their husbands does nothing to alleviate the plight of the women. Effi writes to her parents about Innstetten's reaction to her ignorance: „Hier in Padua (wo wir heute früh ankamen) sprach er im Hotelwagen etliche Male vor sich hin: 'Er liegt in Padua begraben', und war überrascht, als er von mir vernahm, daß ich diese Worte noch nicht gehört hatte. Schließlich aber sagte er, es sei eigentlich ganz gut und ein Vorzug, daß ich nichts davon wüßte. Er ist überhaupt sehr gerecht." (1) Nevertheless, she is ashamed to display her ignorance by asking how to spell the Pinakothek Museum in Munich! St. Arnaud, examining his wife's reading matter, criticises her taste because it does not yield the knowledge of fashionable literature necessary for conversation in good society. He is constantly being embarrassed by

(1) Werke VII, p.197

Cécile's ignorance, yet he appears to do nothing to help her, and on one occasion he even declares: „Meinem persönlichen Geschmacke nach brauchen Damen überhaupt nichts zu wissen. Und jedenfalls lieber zu wenig als zu viel.“ (1)

Fontane's husbands - Innstetten, Petöfy, Van der Straaten - seem given to crash courses in culture for their wives; these take the form of honeymoon tours of the Italian galleries which would weary even a knowledgeable art enthusiast. The unfortunate women cannot absorb so much at one time, become bored and exhausted and lose all interest in art. It is clear from Effi's letters to her parents that she is making little of the cultural education which her husband is imposing on her because she is seeing far more than her mind can deal with. Herr von Briest sympathises with his daughter. „Innstetten ist ein vorzüglich Kerl," he remarks, „aber er hat so was von einem Kunstfex, und Effi, Gott, unsere arme Effi ist ein Naturkind.“ (2)

Innstetten's attempts to educate Effi are an ominous portent of what happens later in Kessin, when Crampas hints that Innstetten is using the Chinaman's ghost to 'educate' his wife to good behaviour. His interest in art, does, however, seem genuine and well-informed. This is more than can be said for some other persons in the Gesellschaftsromane. Graf Petöfy starts off well enough, but his new wife is suspicious of the depth of his culture. Having arrived in her new Hungarian home after an Italian honeymoon, Franziska complains to her mother that Petöfy expected her to admire countless pictures, but never to criticise. Hannah, the maid, maintains that Franziska has every right to criticise, even in another department of art from her own one of acting. „Du bist aber doch selbst eine Künstlerin," she declares. Franziska explains her attitude:

„Eben weil ich es bin oder es zu sein mir wenigstens einbilde, gerade deshalb bin ich so sehr gegen Überspanntheiten auf diesem Gebiet. Immer nur die, die von Kunst wenig wissen und verstehen, finden alles himmlisch und göttlich. Auch der Graf hat mehr Begeisterung als Verständnis. Erwinnere dich nur: genaugenommen, wußt er auch vom Theater nicht viel, trotzdem er die Wolter elfmal als Messalina

(1) Werke IV, p.154  
(2) Werke VII, p.201

gesehen hatte. Das sieht wie Studium aus, bedeutet aber wenig oder nichts. Er kennt eigentlich nur Personen, die ihm gefallen, und solche, die ihm mißfallen. Und das nennt er nun Kunst und Kritik! Und nun gar Bilder.... Ja, was tat er? Er nannte die Namen, und diese Namen gingen ihm glatt genug über die Lippen, denn er spricht recht gut italienisch. Aber das ist auch alles. Und weil er zufällig viele Jahre lang in Verona gestanden hat, so sprach er am liebsten... Aber kennst du Paul Veronese?"

"Gott, Franziska, wir sind doch aus einem gebildeten Lande."

"Nun gut also. Da hättest du nun hören sollen, was er mir allvorschwärmte von Kolorit und pastos und satten Farben. Ja, du lachst, aber wirklich von satten Farben. Und das alles, wenn man elend und hungrig ist und kaum noch stehen kann, denn sie haben nirgends Stühle, bloß Bilder und immer wieder Bilder." (1)

Boundless enthusiasm indicates a lack of true appreciation, which has a standard of values and is able to discriminate between the good and the less good. Because of her superior knowledge and experience in aesthetic matters, Franziska is irritated by her husband's attitude. It is significant for their varying degrees of artistic appreciation that Petöfy is determined to show Franziska his ancestral portraits and battle scenes, which are of dubious aesthetic merit, and he hustles her past the collection of works by Gainsborough and Everdingen, brought into the family by his English grandmother, while Franziska is aware that these would be really worth seeing.

In the Treibels and Van der Straaten Fontane presents superficially cultured people at their most offensive. Petöfy is merely irritated and slightly ridiculous in his wife's eyes. But in these figures from the nouvelle riche bourgeoisie Fontane shows how culture has been abused. Treibel and Van der Straaten have familiarised themselves with popular works of literature from which they quote liberally on suitable and unsuitable occasions. They are at least redeemed by their ability to ironise themselves, whereas Frau Jenni Treibel's love of literature is utterly hypocritical. While professing a devotion to poetry and its higher values, she keeps a sharp eye open for the main chance and abandons all pretensions to 'higher things' when she sees her material status in danger.

(1) Werke II, pp.84-85

Van der Straaten's culture is a species of 'one-up-manship': it puts him on a level with the aristocracy and upper bourgeoisie into which he has made his way because of his money. Although he feels quite at home in this society, he nonetheless suffers from slight twinges of inferiority inspired by his wife's aristocratic origins. He is on the whole an agreeable person, but shows himself at his most unpleasant when he uses his superior knowledge to make Melanie look foolish. He concludes an argument about the foibles of women by declaring:

"...Ich werde mich übrigens davor hüten, den Mohren der Weltge-  
schichte, das seid ihr, weiß waschen zu wollen. Apropos, kennst  
du das Bild, 'Die Mohrenwäsche'?"

"Ach, Huzel, du weißt, ich kenne keine Bilder. Und am wenigst  
alte."

"Süße Simplicitas aus dem Hause de Caparoux," jubelte Van der  
Straaten, der nie glücklicher war, wie wenn Melanie sich eine Blö-  
gab oder auch klugerweise nur so tat. „Altes Bild! Es ist nicht  
älter als ich."

"Nun, dann ist es gerade alt genug."

"Bravissimo. Sieh, so hab ich dich gern. Übermütig und bos-  
haft." (1)

Melanie refuses to be distressed when her lack of education is shown up in such a way. She is much more disturbed on a public occasion, when Van der Straaten's enthusiasm for art leads to a social disaster. Murillo and Titian are being discussed: Van der Straaten declares that Murillo excels at painting madonnas while Titian is the artist of the goddess Venus. When Melanie, supported by her sister, expresses a dislike of the demonic qualities of Murillo's work, Van der Straaten launches into a violent attack on Wagner, who despite 'demonic qualities' is idolised by the ladies. The inability to control himself and keep the conversation as a polite discussion of an aesthetic subject shows that Van der Straaten is not, by nineteenth century standards, a truly cultured man. His basic lack of refinement, rather than his social faux pas, has always been a small source of pain to Melanie, but it becomes unbearable when she meets Rubehn, who like herself is of a more noble nature.

(1) Werke IV, p.19 (The picture was painted by Karl Begas in 1843)

Fontane is constantly, though very quietly, pointing out that nobility of nature has little to do with aristocratic connexions or with education. The working-class girl Lene Nimptsch is the real equal in personality of Botho von Rienäcker, but he marries a woman of his own class despite her lack of character. Birth and education have given Innstetten and St. Arnaud no understanding of their wives; their treatment of Effi or Cécile makes them appear harsh and unattractive. The aristocrat Holk is a badly-read bore, the parvenue Jenny Treibel is a hypocrite, and the connoisseur of art Van der Straaten uses his knowledge as a card to trump his wife's social superiority.

In the attitude which such characters display towards art the shallowness of their culture is revealed. Many of them have acquired this culture from motives which have little to do with enjoyment and appreciation of the great works of European masters. Their aim is generally to furnish themselves for a career in society, which expects a certain level of education, and to impress it with their learning. They do often achieve some measure of success, but are easily seen through by people of genuine refinement. The really well-educated like Gordon and Rosa (Cécile), or Franziska (Graf Petöfy), and the spiritually aristocratic like Melanie and Rubehn (L'Adultera) and Christine (Unwiederbringlich) recognise the veneer for what it is and despise it. And the fate of the poorer in spirit, like Effi, Cécile and St. Arnaud shows how hollow are education and noble birth without real human understanding. Fontane rejects the label of social critic, yet his novels lay bare the spiritual bankruptcy of many members of the upper classes, their inflexible adherence to a code of conduct long after the moral force behind it had evaporated. True to his love of indirect methods, Fontane uses references to literature and the visual arts to assist him in his criticism.

#### 4. Works of Art with Symbolic Function

Quite different from the use of allusions to works of art in order to reveal character is Fontane's occasional use of works of art as symbols which sum up a situation or as factors which effect changes in circumstances. Only in L'Adultera does he make use of a genuine picture: when it comes to pictures as symbols, Fontane, like all the other authors, invents his own. In one of his earliest novels, Schach von Wuthenow, a crucial part is played in the action by three caricatures.

The novel is set in the opening years of the nineteenth century. Fontane is concerned to depict the low morale of the nation, living on memories of Frederick the Great but crushed by Napoleon. Schach von Wuthenow is intended to be a typical army officer of the period - wrapped up in ideas about his own honour, hypersensitive to the opinion of others, especially of his social equals, and almost pathologically afraid of disgrace and ridicule. He attends regularly the 'salon' of Frau von Carayon, a beautiful widow, and speculation abounds as to whether he will marry her. But marrying a widow might cause him to lose face, and also Frau von Carayon has a daughter. Schach's name is coupled with hers too, for she is an intelligent and witty girl. The drawback to both matches is Victoire's appearance, which was ruined by smallpox in her childhood. Schach is unlikely, it is thought, to make an alliance involving an ugly woman.

Since Schach shows no clear signs of preference, Victoire determines that he shall marry her mother. During an excursion to Templehof, however, she receives indications of his interest in her. One evening he visits Victoire after attending a dinner at which the king's brother praised Victoire for possessing what he calls 'beauté de diable'. Under the influence of this remark Schach seduces her. Victoire eventually confesses to her mother, who insists on marriage. Schach agrees but before the marriage can be solemnised a series of caricatures is published in which Schach's position is exposed. They have been

perpetrated by an unknown enemy of Schach's, and are both sent to him and displayed for sale in a bookshop. The first is entitled 'Le chah du Schach' and shows a Persian shah wearing a tall sheepskin hat, with a distinct resemblance to Schach and attempting to choose between two women. Friends of the Carayons are outraged at the insult to the ladies, but two more caricatures appear. The second repeats the theme of the first: 'La gazza ladra' or 'die diebische Schachelster' depicts a magpie considering two rings of different value and appearing to set for the less precious - an unkind hit at Victoire.

Am weitaus verletzendsten aber berührte das den Salon der Frau von Carayon als Szenerie nehmende dritte Blatt. Auf dem Tische stand ein Schachbrett, dessen Figuren, wie nach einem verlorengegangenen Spiel und wie um die Niederlage zu besiegeln, umgeworfen waren. Daneben saß Victoire, gut getroffen, und ihr zu Füßen kniete Schach wieder in der persischen Mütze des ersten Bildes. Aber diesmal bezipfelt und eingedrückt. Und darunter stand: 'Schach - matt'.

The matter becomes a public scandal and Schach, unable to face the ridicule, flees to his country estate until the furor should die down. He knows that his duty is to marry Victoire, but he fears that marriage with a woman whom he cannot parade at court will condemn him to a life of boredom in the country. He wanders round his house looking at the portraits of his ancestors. All the men were in the army and won decorations, some of the women were beautiful, especially his mother. Schach envisages the problems arising when he and Victoire have to have their portraits painted. Already he is beginning to realise that there is only one way out of the situation. In much the same way Graf Petö is moved by a portrait to take decisive action. As he considers the love which has grown up between his young wife Franziska and his nephew Egon, he admits that he made a mistake in thinking that she could ever be happy with him. Youth belongs to youth; what has happened is according to the law of nature. Striding up and down in his study he catches sight of his portrait as a smiling young man in military garb. "Typischer Kavalier," he thinks, "was ich wollte, war eine Kavalierslaune." (

(1) Werke II, p.348

(2) Werke II, pp.161-162

And he thereupon sets out to take his life like a cavalier and leave the way open for Franziska and Egon to marry.

When Frau von Carayon appeals to the King to rescue Victoire from disgrace, the King sends for Schach and orders him to marry Victoire or be himself disgraced. Schach fulfils the letter of the command by going through with the marriage ceremony, but to save himself from what he believes to be a greater disgrace he shoots himself immediately afterwards.

The 'Madonnenbild' in Graf Petöfy does not exactly bring about Franziska's conversion to Roman Catholicism in the same way as the three caricatures cause the catastrophe in Schach von Wuthenow. But Franziska's movement towards the faith of her husband's family is expressed in her growing attachment to the little statue of the Madonna and Child which hangs in her room at Schloß Arpa, Petöfy's Hungarian home. When she first arrives in the castle after her honeymoon, she is startled to see the statue above her writing-desk. As an actress marrying a nobleman and a North German coming to Hungary, she feels ill-at-ease anyway, and the statue increases her feeling of strangeness. She is the daughter of a pastor and has always been a convinced Protestant. In discussion in Vienna with Gräfin Judith, Petöfy's sister, and her confessor Pater Feßler, Franziska has been polite, but unconvinced of the superiority of Roman Catholicism. At first she feels almost offended by the sight of the statue, and her strict Protestant companion Hannah most definitely objects to it.

When some time later Judith comes on a visit, she is surprised to see the statue, which had always been there in her childhood, still in Franziska's room. Franziska remarks that she had thought of placing it in Judith's room during the visit, but she had become so attached to it that she preferred to keep it with her. Being rather superstitious, she regards the statue as a symbol of protection because it was the first object which she noticed on entering her room. Judith agrees that Franziska needs the Virgin's protection; she is still young and must be strengthened by faith.

Judith's hopes that Franziska is turning towards Roman Catholicism are increased one day during an inspection of the family vault. Franziska is much impressed by a Byzantine Virgin hanging there, its smoke blackened face wearing an unusually stern expression. Judith imagines that her sister-in-law is experiencing a 'moment of truth', but this moment really comes for Franziska when she hears Petöfy remark that the vault will be full when he and Judith are lying there: if any-one else wants to come in the family will have to crowd together to make room. Franziska wonders whether she as a Protestant is still excluded from membership of the Petöfy family.

It is the Graf's suicide in Vienna which really moves Franziska to take the final step of conversion. After her return to Schloß Arpa, she turns more and more to the statue of the Virgin for comfort. One day Hannah finds her telling the beads of the rosary which hung by the statue. Her Protestant sensibilities are offended, but she realises that Franziska has been going in this direction for some time. Franziska is determined to be a true Petöfy, which involves becoming a Roman Catholic. She does not intend to marry Egon, the Graf's nephew, and when Judith asks her who then will protect her in the future, she points to the statue of the Virgin and says: „Ich denke sie, die schon so viele Gräfinnen Petöfy beschützt hat.“ (1)

A similar use of pictures which are not exactly symbols but rather Leitmotifs occurs in Unwiederbringlich with the pictures in the Prince's reception room. While Holk is waiting for his first interview with the Princess on his arrival from Schleswig-Holstein, he studies the portraits of the Princess's uncle, King Christian VII and of another relative, a Thuringian Landgraf.

Der Goldrahmen, der es einfaßte, war mit einem verstaubten Flor überzogen, und der Staub machte, daß der Flor nicht wie Flor, sondern fast wie ein Spinnweb wirkte. Des Landgrafen Gesicht war gut und tapfer, aber durchschnittsmäßig, und Holk stellte sich unwillkürlich die Frage, welche volksbeglückenden Regierungsgedanken der Verstorbene wohl gehabt haben möge. Das einzige, was sich mit einer Art Sicherheit herauslesen ließ, war Ausschau nach den Töchtern des Landes. (2)

(1) Werke II, p.168

(2) Werke V, p.76

This reflection contains a certain dramatic irony in view of Holk's later activities - his love affair with Ebba von Rosenberg and his inconsiderate treatment of his wife. After deciding to divorce Christine, Holk returns to court to ask permission of the Princess to marry Ebba.

Das Zimmer war dasselbe, darin er, gleich am Tage <sup>nach</sup> seiner Ankunft, seine erste Audienz bei der Prinzessin gehabt hatte. Da hing noch das große Bild König Christians VII und gerade gegenüber das des verstorbenen Landgrafen, der Flor um den Rahmen noch grauer und verstaubter als damals. Auf dem Sofa, unter dem Bilde des Königs, saß die alte Dame, verfallen und zusammgedrückt, von Prinzessin nicht viel und von esprit fort keine Spur. (1)

The Princess is still suffering from shock after a fire in Frederiksborg Castle which caused her to rush back to Copenhagen in the middle of the night. The accident occurred on the very evening that Holk thought he had gained an assurance of Ebba's love for him, but she too is indisposed and cannot receive visitors. He realises that he has chosen the wrong moment to approach the Princess on the subject of divorce and re-marriage.

Von der freigeistigen Prinzessin, die sonst ein Herz oder ~~doch~~ <sup>doch</sup> mindestens ein Interesse für Eskapaden und Mésalliancen, für Ehescheidungen und Ehekämpfe hatte, war in der alten Dame, die da vollkommengreisenhaft unter dem feierlichen Königsbilde saß, auch nicht das geringste mehr wahrzunehmen, und was statt dessen aus ihrem eingefallenen Gesicht herauszulesen war, das predigte nur das eine, daß bei Lebenskühnheiten und Extravaganzen in der Regel nicht viel herkomme, und daß Worthalten und Gesetzerfüllen das allein Empfehlenswerte, vor allem aber eine richtige Ehe (nicht eine gewaltsame) der einzig sichere Hafen sei. (2)

These pictures, especially the portrait of Christian VII, together with those of Admiral Herluf Trolle and his wife Brigitte Goje, evoke ideas of duty and fidelity which contrast with Holk's conduct. Trolle was a loyal servant of the crown, Brigitte a faithful wife. Thus without actually criticising Holk, Fontane succeeds by use of contrasts in stressing how badly he has behaved.

(1) Werke V, p.186

(2) Werke V, p.187

The most obvious use of a picture as a symbol is to be found in L'Adultera, where already the title points to both the theme and the significant picture, Tintoretto's 'Woman taken in adultery'. The action of the novel begins on the day when the picture is delivered to the house of Van der Straaten in Berlin. In the first chapter the characters of this wealthy business man and his wife Melanie are quickly delineated. In a union of old and young, plebeian and aristocrat, vulgar and sensitive, lie, so it seems, all the ingredients of an unhappy marriage, but so far the couple has lived together peacefully, even happily. The first sight of the picture offends Melanie, since she feels sure that it will arouse speculation among their acquaintances about the state of their marriage. She wonders whether her husband already suspects her of infidelity, but Van der Straaten explains that he has bought the picture merely in order to warn himself of the possibility that she might desert him. „Ich will es vor Augen haben, so als Memento mori, wie die Kapuziner, die sonst nicht mein Geschmaek sind." (1) Melanie laughs at him for taking such a dismal view of the future, and he agrees to forget the matter and hang the picture in the gallery, not in his study, but he feels that some day he may have to remind her of it. „Und wenn ich dich je wieder daran erinnere," he declares, „so sei's im Geiste des Friedens und zum Zeichen der Versöhnung." (1)

Van der Straaten's fears are, however, soon to be realised. A young bank representative called Rubehn comes to live with them; he and Melanie fall in love and run away together. Two years after Melanie's divorce and re-marriage, Van der Straaten sees her child in the park and feels moved to effect a reconciliation with her. He sends a large Christmas box to Melanie and Rubehn, at the bottom of which they find a miniature of the Tintoretto - he reminds her of it, according to his word, as a token of reconciliation. Melanie wants to wear it as a warning to herself, but Rubehn is against taking the incident too seriously. He sees the gesture as characteristic of Van der Straaten

(1) Werke IV, p.14

„wehllollend und ungeschickt" (1). Melanie's feelings on receiving the miniature are exactly those which she experienced on first viewing the picture. At that time she could not regard the picture of the adulteress as a portrayal of complete penitence and self-abasement:

„Ich kann mir nicht helfen, es liegt so was Ermutigendes darin. Und dieser Schelm von Tintoretto hat es auch ganz in diesem Sinne genommen. Sieh nur!...Geweiht hat sie...Gewiß...Aber warum? Weil man ihr immer wieder und wieder gesagt hat, wie schlecht sie sei. Und nun glaubt sie's auch, oder will es wenigstens glauben. Aber ihr Herz wehrt sich dagegen und kann es nicht finden...Und da ich dir's gestehe, sie wirkt eigentlich rührend auf mich. Es ist so viel Unschuld in ihrer Schuld. Und alles wie vorherbestimmt."

Now, after having committed adultery and abandoned her husband and children, Melanie cannot regard herself as wicked either, because she has been true to herself and her deepest feelings, instead of stifling them and living a lie.

Although Fontane uses Melanie's reaction to the picture to underline the difference between men and women in their conception of sexual morality, he does so too emphatically. Indeed the whole work, with its cardboard characters and improbable outcome, reads too much like an attack, albeit veiled, on the hypocrisy of contemporary marriage arrangements.

The picture is also meant as a portent of disaster, although its significance is too obvious from the very beginning. It is felt not only by the reader but by the characters themselves. Fontane's characters frequently do see omens in simple occurrences, Innstetten and Cécile being good examples of this, but again it is overdone in this case. The portents of disaster, which Fontane likes to insert early on in her novels, here fall so thick and fast that the symbolic content becomes unwieldy.

This attempt to make use of a concrete symbol is not a success. Symbolism is not subtle enough for Fontane's style, which relies so much on those „Blicke, die...eine ganze Geschichte verraten" (3): little pointers to the outcome of the story such as the twins' summons „Effi

(1) Werke IV, p.124

(2) Werke IV, pp.12-13

(3) See above, p.73

komme!" at the beginning of Effi Briest. In this novel his technique of imparting information by indirect means - literary quotations, strong remarks, telling glances - reaches its highest point. Here too he uses a concrete symbol, which J.P. Stern roundly condemns: 'The only blemish in the novel - the imagery of a mysterious Chinaman which Effi discovers on a set of chairs in Kessin, symbolical of her longing for freedoms far away - is a very minor one, a piece of bric-à-brac left over by "poetic realism".' (1)

It seems to me that the symbol of the Chinaman is much more significant than Stern allows. It has a double purpose - not only is it 'symbolical of her longing for freedoms far away', it also stands for her inability to live comfortably far away from her family home.

Effi is a romantic girl who dreams of a life of mystery, danger and excitement, while being at the same time unwilling to commit herself entirely to any course which might involve these. Her outlook is summed up in a remark to her mother before she marries Innstetten: „Ich klettere lieber und schaukle mich lieber, und am liebsten immer in der Furcht, daß es irgendwo reißen oder brechen und ich niederstürzen könnte. Den Kopf wird es ja nicht gleich kosten." (2) The East seems to her to be the embodiment of everything alluring and mysterious. She wants to have a Japanese canopy for her bed, black with golden birds on it, and a red lamp to light the bedroom. When she arrives in Kessin and sees the strange decorations in the house - a shark and a crocodile hanging in the hall - she compares it to an Indian palace, and Innstetten in his study seems to resemble a Persian or Indian prince in one of her childhood picture books. On their drive from the station to the house Innstetten has told Effi of the various nationalities represented in Kessin, and Effi was delighted to think that an exotic life awaited her there. When she hears that there was once a Chinaman in Kessin, with a curious story attached to him, she finds that too outlandish and fears that he might haunt her dreams. During her first night in the Landrat's house in Kessin, she hears strange noises in the room above,

(1) J.P. Stern Re-Interpretations: Seven Studies in Nineteenth Century German Literature (Thames & Hudson London 1964) p.319

(2) Werke VII, pp.194-195

a sound like satin slippers moving over the floor. Both Johanna her maid and Innstetten are taken aback at the news, although they seem to have expected it. Innstetten is further put out when they discover a little picture of a Chinaman in a blue jacket and yellow trousers; the servants had cut it out of a magazine and stuck it on to a cane chair which is stored in an empty room. Effi is surprised that he considers the incident important, and she thinks no more of the Chinaman until one night in winter, when Innstetten has to visit Bismarck and leaves her alone in the house. She awakens in the middle of the night and imagines that a figure resembling the Chinaman has passed her bed.

Innstetten refuses to take Effi's fears seriously, though he appears to believe in the existence of the ghost. Hoping to calm her, he tells her what facts are known about the Chinaman; that he was the servant of the previous owner of their house, a Captain Thomsen, and that he died and was buried in the dunes shortly after the mysterious disappearance of Captain Thomsen's niece during her wedding celebrations. The mystery is perhaps not very great, but it seems to be sufficient to give rise to a belief in the Chinaman's ghost which is shared by all in Innstetten's house. Effi gradually loses her fear, particularly after she engages Roswitha as a nanny for her child. Roswitha is a Roman Catholic, and Effi believes that this gives her a special protection against ghosts. Nevertheless, occasionally Effi wishes that the ghost would appear again in order to bring some excitement into her life. She even writes to her mother:

„Kannst Du Dir denken, Mama, daß ich mich mit unsrem Spuk beinahe ausgesöhnt habe? Natürlich die schreckliche Nacht, wo Geert drüben beim Fürsten war, die möchte ich nicht noch einmal durchmachen, nein, gewiß nicht; aber immer das Alleinsein und so gar nichts erleben, das hat doch auch sein Schweres, und wenn ich dann in der Nacht aufwache, dann horche ich mitunter hinauf, ob ich nicht die Schuhe schleifen höre, und wenn alles still bleibt, so bin ich fast wie enttäuscht und sage mir: wenn es doch nur wiederkäme, nur nicht so arg und nicht zu nah.“ (1)

Her mother is quite well aware of Effi's childish desire for excitement and points it out to her before her marriage. „Du bist eine phantastische kleine Person, malst dir mit Vorliebe Zukunftsbilder aus, und

(1) Werke VII, pp.256-257

je farbenreicher sie sind, desto schöner und begehrllicher erscheinen sie dir...Es kommt dir vor wie ein Märchen, und du möchtest einePrinzessin sein." And she warns her daughter against living in a fantas world: "Du bist ein Kind. Schön und poetisch. Das sind so Vorstellungen. Die Wirklichkeit ist anders, und oft ist es gut, daß es sta Licht und Schimmer ein Dunkel gibt." (1) Innstetten warns her even more expressly when she condemns the still, uneventful life of her ho at Hohen-Cremmen: "...Hüte dich vor dem Aparten oder was man so das Aparte nennt...Was dir so verlockend erscheint,...das bezahlt man in der Regel mit seinem Glück." (2)

Effi does not heed the warning, she becomes involved with the Territorial major, Crampas, and years later has to pay for her folly when Innstetten finds out. Of course Innstetten is greatly to blame in t he does not understand Effi and fails to treat her in such a way as t make the escapade - which is undertaken out of boredom - unnecessary. Effi dimly realises, "...was ihr in ihrer Ehe eigentlich fehlte: Huld gungen, Anregungen, kleine Aufmerksamkeiten. Innstetten war lieb un gut, aber ein Liebhaber war er nicht. Er hatte das Gefühl, Effi zu lieben, und das gute Gewissen, daß es so sei, ließ ihn von besonderen Anstrengungen absehen." (3)

When Innstetten announces promotion and a move to Berlin, Effi alim betrays herself by her expression of relief. She covers up by declaring that she had never overcome her fear of the Chinaman. In Berlin however, the fear lingers on. Whenever the conversation turns to li in Kessin, "...so fühlte sie sich immer aufs neue von den alten Vorstellungen gequält, und ihr war es zu Sinn, als ob ihr ein Schatten nachginge." (4) And indeed the shadow has followed her in symbolic form. Johanna has taken with her the little picture of the Chinaman which s had stuck to the old chair in Kessin. Effi is horrified to hear of this; she feels, only too rightly, that the past will not let her go. The Chinaman's ghost, although it failed to keep Effi from meddling w

(1) Werke VII, p.191

(2) Werke VII, p.242

(3) Werke VII, p.255

(4) Werke VII, p.361

'das Aparte', has by now become connected with her guilt in the Crampas affair. When she discussed the ghost, and Innstetten's refusal to do anything about it, with Crampas, he suggested that Innstetten cultivated the ghost as a means of keeping his wife in order.

The second use of the Chinaman imagery now becomes apparent: it illustrates Effi's helplessness in a strange milieu. It is made clear throughout the work how much Effi loves her home; her father even complains that she seems to prefer Hohen-Cremmen and her parents to her husband and child. Effi marries far too young and without real inclination, according to the wishes of her parents and the custom of her social class. She is, indeed, afraid of Innstetten, but once committed to marriage with him, she feels unable to break free. Whenever she arrives in her new surroundings in Kessin she becomes a prey to unfortunate influences. The Chinaman, who is first mentioned as Effi and Innstetten approach Kessin from the station, enters her life and plagues her during her stay there and thereafter to a lesser extent in Berlin. The environment of Berlin is less foreign to Effi, but she is still not truly at home. Only after the divorce and her period of loneliness and disgrace, when she is taken back to Hohen-Cremmen, does she find peace. She returns to her home and to complete dependence on her parents, she resumes the habits of her childhood, like wearing her old dress and sitting in the swing, and after her death her tombstone in the garden bears her own name.

The symbolic picture in Effi Briest is all the more effective because it is not over-exploited; the symbolism is not pushed into the foreground but allowed only to hint at Effi's situation and attitudes. Very brief use is made of a symbolic picture in Stine to indicate the unhappy situation of Woldemar von Haldern. After Woldemar's suicide Stine travels to his country home to attend the funeral. In the church there is an altar-picture showing the prodigal son as a miserable outcast in the foreign land, not yet re-united with his father. This is

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symbolic of Woldemar's position: as a sensitive, ailing child and yet he has always been an odd-man-out in his family. In Stine he finds a girl who understands and appreciates him, but she refuses to marry him because she cannot disregard class barriers. Woldemar can no longer face life and commits suicide. He knows that his family would reject him utterly if he went through with the mésalliance, but at his funeral none of them truly mourn for him. He has died as an outcast from his family, the prodigal son who did not live according to the laws of his class.

The pictures in Die Poggenpuhls, as well as having symbolic significance, also form much of the material of the novel. There is no real plot: this is rather a sketch of an aristocratic family in straightened circumstances. They are pictured at home in their mode pleasures and in their desperate attempts to make ends meet, which are finally relieved when an uncle dies leaving an inheritance.

The novel opens with a description of the Poggenpuhls' Berlin flat which is simply and scantily furnished, though every attempt has been made to keep up with aristocratic standards. In the parlour and in the living-room hang pictures of great importance to the family.

Über dem Sofa derselben 'guten Stube' hing ein großes Ölbildnis (Kniestück) des Rittmeisters von Poggenpuhl vom Sohnschen Husarenregiment, der 1813 bei Großgörschen ein Carré gesprengt und dafür den Pour le Mérite erhalten hatte - der einzige Poggenpuhl, der je in der Kavallerie gestanden. Das halb wohlwollende, halb martialische Gesicht des Rittmeisters sah auf eine flache Glasschale hernieder, drin im Sommer Aurikeln und ein Vergißmeinnichtkranz, im Winter Visitenkarten zu liegen pflegten. (1)

The living-room is decorated with family photographs, jokingly called the 'Ahnengalerie'.

Aber diese 'Ahnengalerie' war doch nicht alles, was hier hing. Unmittelbar über ihr präsentierte sich noch ein Ölbild von einigem Umfang, eine Kunstschöpfung dritten oder vierten Ranges, die den historisch bedeutendsten Moment aus dem Leben der Familie darstellte. Das meiste, was man darauf sehen konnte, war freilich nur Pulverquälm, aber inmitten derselben erkannte man doch ziemlich deutlich

(1) Werke IV, p.289

noch eine Kirche samt Kirchhof, auf welch letzterem ein verzweifelter Nachtkampf zu toben schien. Es war der Überfall von Hochkirch die Österreicher bestens 'ajustiert', die armen Preußen in einem pitoyablen Bekleidungsstand. Ganz in Front aber stand ein älterer Offizier in Unterkleid und Weste, von Stiefeln keine Rede dafür ein Gewehr in der Hand. Dieser Alte war Major Balthasar von Poggenpuhl, der den Kirchhof eine halbe Stunde hielt, bis er mit unter den Toten lag. Eben dieses Bild, wohl in Würdigung seines Familienaffektionswertes, war denn auch in einen breiten und stattlichen Barockrahmen gefaßt, während die bloß unter Glas gebrachten Lichtbilder nichts als eine Goldborte zeigten.

Alle Mitglieder der Familie...übertrugen ihre Pietät gegen den 'Hochkircher' - wie der Hochkirch-Major zur Unterscheidung von vielen anderen Majors der Familie genannt wurde - auch auf die bildliche Darstellung seiner rühmreichen Aktion. (1)

The eldest daughter Therese is particularly strong in the cult of these family heroes. She is class-conscious in an exaggerated and almost ridiculous fashion, constantly concerned with her position as a 'lady' and critical of her own mother and aunt for their bourgeois origins. She is forever pointing to 'der Sohrsche' and the 'Hochkircher' as models of Prussian officers and gentlemen. Her young brother Leo, a harum-scarum army cadet who is always worrying his mother and sisters by getting into debt, is sceptical about Therese's ancestor-worship and does not believe that the reputation of his forbears is likely to do him any good. The other two sisters have little time for Therese's social pretensions. Sophie, the practical one, supports the family by acting as a governess or painting armorial china for wealthy households. Manon, the youngest, is friendly with rich Jewish families and hopes to marry Leo off to an heiress.

Fontane's view of the family 'cultus' is expressed in the way in which he describes the pictures. He strikes a humorous and ironic tone, with frequent use of bathos, such as the juxtaposition of 'der Sohrsche' and the double-purpose glass dish, or the description of the 'Hochkircher' minus boots. The veneration in which these men are held, compared with their achievement, is also comic. All this suggests that Fontane finds the Poggenpuhls slightly ridiculous in their determination to live up to the standards of their class, alth

(1) Werke IV, pp.293-294

they cannot afford to do so. He is not bitterly critical of Therese who is a thoroughly unpleasant snob, but his sympathies are clearly with the hard-working Sophie, the long-suffering mother and the cheerful, good-natured Uncle Eberhard and his wife. When <sup>Sophie</sup> goes to visit these relations, she observes that no portraits of her uncle and his family hang in the picture gallery. Some famous Prussians like Frederick the Great, Prince Heinrich and General Tauentzien are included, but otherwise the gallery is devoted to religious personalities from the days when the house was a monastery and to portraits of the aunt's first husband and his family. Uncle Eberhard remarks that he has no intention of introducing his Prussian relations to conflict with the pictures of the old Silesian nobility.

The original purpose of Sophie's visit, to paint a crested dinner-service, is quietly dropped and she undertakes some work for the church instead. Sophie feels that her aunt, who is from a middle-class family, does not like to make too great a display of her rise to the nobility. The restrained and sensible attitude to their position shown by Eberhard and his wife contrasts with the Poggenpuhls' frantic clinging to their lost status. The end of the work finds them unchanged. Therese hopes that the money left to them by Uncle Eberhard will mean a rise in their standard of living; she tries to persuade Sophie to give up working and Manon to abandon her Jewish friends. Manon scornfully refuses. Being more realistic she recognises that the legacy is only a stop-gap which will make life easier for a short time, especially for their mother. She pins her hopes for the family fortunes <sup>on her brothers,</sup> whom she visualises as outdoing the 'Hochkircher' and 'der Sohrsche' in renown.

The situation of the Poggenpuhls is symbolised by the precarious state of the 'Hochkircher's' picture, which falls down every time the old servant dusts it. The wall has become so riddled with holes that the nail cannot stay firm for long. It is typical of Fontane that he finds a humorous device for criticising the foibles of his declining aristocrats. Throughout his works he employs these oblique devices allusions to works of art and literature - to reveal character, to illustrate situation, and gently to criticise.

**CONRAD FERDINAND MEYER**

## Conrad Ferdinand Meyer

### 1. Meyer's Approach to Art

Coming to C.F. Meyer after studying the art symbolism of Mörike, Storm and Fontane, one soon notices a difference, not only in the use to which Meyer puts his symbolic works of art, but more especially in his attitude to art as a vehicle of symbolism. (Although 'art' here means chiefly the visual arts, literature should not be forgotten, since both Meyer and Fontane use literary allusions in a similar way to sculptures and pictures.)

The other authors regard a work of art as a convenient object for summing up a subject or theme in their novels: Mörike uses the picture of the ghostly concert to symbolise the supernatural powers which control Nolten's destiny, Storm sees portraits as symbolic of man's attempt to overcome transience, and Fontane's allusions to works of art illustrate the cultural climate of his times. In each case the author moves from the intangible to the concrete: he seizes upon the work of art as a 'thing', like a cypher in short-hand, which embodies what he has been trying to convey in many words.

Meyer reverses this process and moves from the work of art to the event, situation or character which he portrays in his story. The work can thus hardly be termed a symbol in the conventional sense, since it often prefigures the action instead of summing it up. The picture of Pescara and Vittoria Colonna playing chess, for example, occurs in the first chapter of the Novelle, whereas the hero himself does not appear until the third. The picture reveals the situation in which the characters around Pescara find themselves - they want to know what he proposes to do, but he plays with them all by keeping his destiny and his intentions hidden. The mystery remains until the fifth chapter, when Pescara is forced to 'make his move' and confess his imminent death to Vittoria.

The movement of Meyer's thought is indicated by his placing of the chess picture at the beginning of the Novelle. In his essay „C.F. Mey

Kunstsymbolik" K.S. Guthke illustrates this movement with reference to the poem 'Auf Goldgrund': Meyer describes first the saints depicted in the museum, then the reapers in the field, and concludes:

Um die Lasten in den Armen,  
Um den Schnitter und die Garbe  
Floß der Abendglut, der warmen,  
Wunderbare Goldesfarbe.

Auch des Tages letzte Bürde,  
Auch der Fleiß der Feierstunde  
War unflammt von heil'ger Würde,  
Stand auf schimmernd goldnem Grunde. (1)

The movement is from art to life and back to art. Guthke comments: "...das Leben wird an der Kunst orientiert und gewinnt erst Bedeutung im Hinblick auf die Kunst, in der es wesentlich präformiert ist. In dem Artefakt findet das Leben, und damit der Mensch, Vorbild und Urbild nur aus dem Bezug der Kunst erfüllt sich das Bild des Lebens und des Menschen mit Sinn. Die Kunst ist dem Leben vor- und übergeordnet." (2)

Meyer's conception of art as the fixed star by which life is guided is the clue to his handling of character, history and art-symbols. Guthke sums up his practice, comparing it with that of other nineteenth century authors.

Immer wieder wird der Mensch nicht in seiner individuellen Einmaligkeit gesehen, sondern im Hinblick auf eine bildliche oder literarische Gestaltung, in der er sich schon auf symbolische Weise vorweggegeben ist, so daß sein Leben oder seine jeweilige Situation lediglich als Wiederholung und Nachvollzug des in der Kunst bereits gültig Dargestellten zu verstehen ist. Während bei anderen Schriftstellern des 19. Jahrhunderts sich die über das Kunstwerk hinausreichenden Verweisungen auf die empirische, geschichtliche Wirklichkeit beziehen, wie es ja die Bezeichnung Realismus schon andeutet, so tritt bei Meyer gerade der umgekehrte Fall ein, daß die dichterische Wirklichkeit - an sich schon künstlerischen Charakters - wiederum an einer künstlerischen Realität orientiert wird. In dieser ist der Mensch mit seinen wesentlichen Zügen bereits vorgeformt. Leben und Mensch richten sich nach der Kunst aus. (3)

Guthke sees Meyer as a forerunner of Aestheticism and Symbolism, movements which saw art as the perfect and complete reality, the pattern

(1) Werke II, pp.46-47

(2) K.S. Guthke Wege zur Literatur: Studien zur deutschen Dichtungs- und Geistesgeschichte (Berlin und München 1969) p.190

(3) Guthke op.cit. p.200

for imperfect, unfinished nature. This point of view permits a new insight beyond that of a 'realist' critic like E.K. Bennett, who has perceived, but not quite understood, the basis of Meyer's art.

Like Platen, Meyer found his way to his own particular expression through contact with the art of Italy; but whereas Venice acted as the open sesame upon Platen's imagination and determined the form of his poetry, with Meyer it was the art of Rome. With both poets art overshadows life both as a source of inspiration - as the stimulus to write - and as the source of their subject matter. Both of them give a rarified form of life - a stylization of it, in the sense that the life they represent is not seen at first hand but already moulded by art, pre-eminently by the plastic arts. Thus Meyer's Novellen are full of reminiscences of paintings or sculptures, and he frequently has recourse to the description of an imaginary picture in order to present a psychological situation, to symbolize an event. (1)

In approaching Meyer as though he were a Realist writer like Storm or Fontane, Bennett is irritated by his artificiality, which would be a fault in a Realist. But for Meyer life really was 'already moulded by art'; as we shall see, he emphasises by many devices the artificial or man-made nature of his works. His concern is not to counterfeit life, but to produce a work of art. Only when we understand the aesthetic or art-centred orientation of Meyer's writings can we read them with sympathy.

(1) E.K. Bennett A History of the German Novelle (Cambridge 2nd Edition 1961) p.218

## 2. The Importance of the Renaissance for Meyer:

From early years Meyer had been interested in the sixteenth century the period of the High Renaissance in Italy, and the time when the spirit of the Renaissance was pervading the more northerly countries. He had read widely in histories of the period, particularly in the works of Jacob Burckhardt, who was, according to Adolf Frey, Meyer's biographer, in many ways a kindred spirit.

Eine eingehende Vergleichung Jacob Burckhardts mit Conrad Ferdinand Meyer müßte sehr lehrreich sein, wenn zugleich das Gemeinsame auf die gemeinsamen Quellen zurückgeleitet würde. Beide bezeichnen die entschiedene Abwendung von der Romantik und was damit zusammenhängt. Beide führt das Bedürfnis nach der großen Kunst zu den Alten und zu Renaissance. Der Gelehrte hat den Geist der Renaissance eigentlich entdeckt und erweckt; der Dichter hat ihm unvergängliche Gestalt gegeben. (1)

From Burckhardt's Kultur der Renaissance in Italien, which is a review of the intellectual and spiritual life of the Italian Renaissance, Meyer acquired his knowledge of Renaissance outlook and morality and also his concept of the Renaissance hero - clever, unscrupulous and power-loving, but cultured, appreciating beauty and respecting learning. Meyer softens some of the less pleasant aspects to produce an ideal hero like Pescara, although the real man probably deserved Guicciardini's description of him in Die Versuchung des Pescara: „falsch, grausam und geizig“ (2).

The Renaissance man appeared to Meyer to be an heroic type - in control of his fate, striving after beauty and grandeur, and working the raw material of life for his own purposes. Although his own life seemed singularly unheroic, Meyer shared the desires and motives of his heroes. Some of his critics have maintained that he was afraid of real life and tried to enjoy success and achievement through his fictional characters. But the historical setting prevented over-involvement these characters, since it removed them, and thus his own self as mirrored in them, to a safe distance. As he explains in the much quoted letter to Felix Bovet, '...je me sers de la forme de la nouvelle

(1) A. Frey Conrad Ferdinand Meyer Sein Leben und seine Werke (Stuttgart and Berlin 3rd Edition 1919) p.238

(2) Sämtliche Werke in IV Bänden mit einer Einführung von R. Faesi (Berlin 1928) IV, p.164

1'

historique purement et simplement pour y loger mes expériences et mes sentiments personnels, la préférant au Zeitroman, parce qu'elle me masque mieux et qu'elle distance davantage le lecteur. Ainsi, sous une forme très objective et éminemment artistique, je suis au dedans tout individuel et subjectif' (1). While Meyer does indeed say that he desires to portray his own feelings and experiences, he also stresses his method of so doing. He chooses, it should be noticed, 'une forme très objective et éminemment artistique'. Meyer always shows a concern for the formal aspects of writing such as is generally supposed to characterize writers employing the Romance languages. His studies in French writers may have helped him to this. His concern for form prevents him from becoming too embroiled in personal problems, a characteristic which he attributes to the poet Ariosto in the Novelle Angela Borgia: „Alles, was er dachte und fühlte, was ihn erschreckte und ergriff, verwandelte sich durch das bildende Vermögen seines Geistes in Körper und Schauspiel und verlor dadurch die Härte und Kraft der Wirkung auf seine Seele." (2)

But Meyer was also concerned with moral problems, and this is what prevents him from becoming an early 'aestheticist' as Guthke would have him. He was by upbringing and belief a convinced Protestant and delighted to portray such heroes of the faith as Gustavus Adolphus, Rohan and Coligny. He attributes 'reformed' tendencies to other characters: Becket shocks King Henry by announcing that he will seek guidance in the Gospels, Pescara is depicted as a stern judge in the Calvinist pattern who condemns the immorality of his Italian contemporaries. Although Meyer was inspired by the art of the Renaissance, and although he looked to its history for his themes, his Protestant nature finally revolted against the life and outlook of the Renaissance types. In his last Novelle, Angela Borgia, he concentrates on the theme which underlies many of his works - God's mercy and wisdom as opposed to man's craft and justice.

Angela Borgia is not completely successful precisely because the moral question, although it is present in all the other works, is here too

- (1) Letter to Felix Bovet, 14th Jan. 1888 Briefe Conrad Ferdinand Meyer herausgegeben von A. Frey (1908) II, p.138  
(2) Werke I, p.312

obtrusive. Formally it is weak, in that the story is less compact than is usual with Meyer - it extends over a long period of time and shifts its centre of interest between the two Borgias, Angela and Lucia. The action time of Meyer's Novellen is normally concentrated into a short period, much shorter than that occupied by the actual historical events on which the stories are based. In Der Heilige old He Burkhard objects that Hans the Bowman has confused the dates of two disasters, the rebellion of Henry's sons and the excommunication of the Archbishop of York by Thomas à Becket - „Liegt doch ein volles Jahr da zwischen, wenn die Zahlen auf den Rändern meiner Chronik nicht lügen!“ But Hans replies that historical time has no meaning when one is looking back on the life and deeds of a person now dead. „Ist einmal das letzte Sandkorn verrollt, so tritt der Mensch aus der Reihe der Tage und Stunden hinaus und steht als ein fertiges und deutliches Wesen vor dem Gericht Gottes und der Menschen. Beide haben Recht und Unrecht, Eure Chronik und mein Gedächtnis, jene mit ihren auf Pergament gezeichneten Buchstaben, ich mit den Zeichen, die in mein Herz gegraben sind.“

(1) This concentration makes not only for 'poetic truth', but also for a dramatic impetus which is lacking in Angela Borgia. The technique, of course, frequently adopted by dramatists, Schiller being a notable example. It is interesting that Schiller and Meyer, who saw himself as a 'dramatist manqué', have been compared with regard to their choice of character and situation as well as technique (2).

This treatment of art is also in tune with Meyer's attitude to art as ultimate reality. Since a work of art is the highest form of creation, history can be bent to suit it. It is a common practice of Renaissance artists to group together figures belonging to different historical periods. A favourite subject is the Madonna and Child with saints, or with the donor of the painting, such as the Titian Madonna di Ca' Pesaro in Venice, which Meyer mentions in Jürg Jenatsch. A famous example is the Crucifixion in Grünewald's altar-piece, in which

(1) Werke IV, pp.106-107

(2) See Paul Ernst Der Weg zur Form (München 1928) „Zum Handwerk der Novelle“ pp.72-73

John the Baptist stands pointing to the crucified Christ. The artist Grünewald sees nothing incongruous in placing John the Baptist, the herald of Christ's mission, at the Crucifixion, which is the consummation of that mission. Like these artists, Meyer was moved by a view of artistic and spiritual truth which makes historical and physical reality irrelevant.

On the level of technique, we see that Meyer has much in common with the artists of the Renaissance. Realism in rendering the human body was one of their great aims. The figures of Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael and Michaelangelo reveal the study of anatomy and of classical sculpture with which these men had prepared themselves. Giorgione and Titian were also concerned to portray a realistic background, and Bronzino painstakingly delineated the many ruffles and jewelled ornaments of his richly-dressed sitters. In his own attempt to achieve objectivity Meyer paid careful attention to the details of historical and local setting. In the opening paragraphs of each work he introduces the chief characters, sets the scene and the time and adds details about the weather and the personal appearance of the actors. Plantus im Nonnenkloster disposes of these preliminaries in the first paragraph and centres the attention as soon as possible on the figure of the storyteller Poggio.

Nach einem heißen Sommertage hatte sich vor einem Kasino der medicinischen Gärten zum Genusse der Abendkühle eine Gesellschaft gebildet. Florentiner um Cosmus Medici, den 'Vater des Vaterlandes', versammelt. Der reinste Abendhimmel dämmerte in prächtigen, aber zart abgestuften Farben über den mäßig Zechenden, unter welchen sich ein scharfgeschnittener, greiser Kopf auszeichnete, an dessen beredten Lippen die Aufmerksamkeit der lauschenden Runde hing. Der Ausdruck dieses geistreichen Kopfes war ein seltsam gemischter: über die Heiterkeit der Stirn, die lächelnden Mundwinkel war der Schatten eines trüben Erlebnisses geworfen. (1)

Meyer's skill in portraying a landscape and its atmosphere is excellently illustrated by the opening of Jürg Jenatsch:

Die Mittagssonne stand über den kahlen, von Felsköpfen umragten Höhe des Julierpasses im Lande Bünden. Die Steinwände brannten

(1) Werke III, p.124.

und schimmerten unter den stechenden senkrechten Strahlen. Zuweilen wenn eine geballte Wetterwolke emporquoll und vorüberzog, schienen die Bergmauern näher heranzutreten und, die Landschaft verengend, schroff und unheimlich zusammenzurücken. Die wenigen zwischen den Felszacken herniederhängenden Schneeflecke und Gletschersungen leuchteten bald grell auf, bald wichen sie zurück in grünliches Dunkel. Es drückte eine schwüle Stille, nur das niedrige Geflatter der Stei-lerche regte sich zwischen den nackten Blöcken, und von Zeit zu Zeit durchdrang der scharfe Pfiff eines Murmeltiers die Einöde.

From general background Meyer proceeds to an outstanding feature of the scene:

In der Mitte der sich dehnende Paßhöhe standen rechts und links vom Saumpfade zwei abgebrochene Säulen, die der Zeit schon länger als ein Jahrtausend trotzen mochten. In dem durch die Verwitterung beckenförmig ausgehöhlten Bruche des einen Säulenstumpfes hatte sich Regenwasser gesammelt. Ein Vogel hüpfte auf dem Rande hin und her und nippte von dem klaren Himmelswasser.

The bird brings a more reassuring element into this scene of wildness and uncanny light. Meyer adds a dog barking in the distance and a shepherd attending to his flock. But the landscape is still silent and terrifying, until the tension is finally broken: „Endlich tauchte ein Wanderer auf". (1)

In his treatment of persons Meyer shares with the Renaissance artists the tendency to stylise. Certain conventions obtained at this time in the depiction of Biblical and mythological scenes in order to permit easy identification. While allowing scope for individual expression, colour of robes, attitudes of body, gestures, grouping of figures are similar in the works of each artist. Typical is the pose of the Madonna in her red and blue robes and the Child Jesus whom she carries or worships. Sometimes the Child holds an apple as symbol of the world or a lamb to symbolise the Passion, sometimes He is playing with the infant John the Baptist. Meyer likewise adopts stylised gestures and speech for his characters; one thinks of Pescara extending his hand full of ashes to Moncada and asking: „Mein Ziel?" (2), or Dante declaring 'meiner griffelhaltenden Gebärde' „Ich streiche die Narren Ezzelins" (3). Some critics have attacked Meyers characters for lacking real life and

- (1) Werke I, pp.9-10
- (2) Werke IV, p.262
- (3) Werke III, p.230

individuality, but it is not Meyer's aim to create people of flesh and blood with whom his readers can involve themselves. The reader is meant rather to be carried beyond the story, beyond an interest in personal fate and feelings to an awareness of the problems on which the story is built. In Das Amulett, for instance, the problem is predestination, in Die Richterin it is the power of conscience. Meyer is not interested in the individual's reaction to the problem facing him - we see very little of Pescara's attempts to come to terms with approaching death, for Meyer prefers to concentrate on the consequences which Pescara's condition has for the world around him. He does not probe into the mind of Thomas à Becket in Der Heilige, trying to decide how far the desire for revenge on King Henry prompted his conversion and subsequent behaviour; through the narration of the puzzled crossbow-maker he conveys the riddle of the man who was Becket.

### 3. The Use of Works of Art

Most important of Meyer's devices for achieving objectivity are the works of art mentioned in each story. A cursory reading of the stories may produce the impression that pictures and sculptures are frequently mentioned, but in many cases these are only the 'reminiscences' which Bennett refers to. Meyer was so greatly influenced by the works which he had seen on his Italian journeys that his descriptions of landscape, individuals and groups of persons are modelled on what he saw (1). An interesting example, drawn from life instead of art, is surely the lit

#### 'Sposina' episode in Die Hochzeit des Mönchs:

Durch eine enge, finstere Gasse bewegte sich die schleunige Flucht: Antiope voran, von vier Sarazenen getragen, ihr zur Seite der Mönch und Ascanio, dann die Turbane. Abu Mohammed schloß den Zug.

Dieser eilte an einem kleinen Platz und einer erhellten Kirche vorüber. In die dunkle Fortsetzung der Gasse einmündend, stieß er in hartem Anprall mit einem ihm entgegenkommenden andern, von zahlreichem Volke begleiteten Zuge zusammen. Heftiges Gezänk erhob sich. „Raum der Sposina!“ rief die Menge. Chorknaben brachten aus der Kirche lange Kerzen herbei, deren wehende Flämmchen sie mit vorgehaltener Hand schützten. Der gelbe Schimmer zeigte eine geneigte Sänfte und eine umgestürzte Bahre. La Sposina war ein gestorbenes Bräutchen aus dem Volke, das zu Grabe getragen wurde. Die Tote regte sich nicht und ließ sich gelassen wieder auf ihre Bahre legen. (2)

Frey describes an incident in Rome which impressed Meyer deeply:

Am tiefsten wirkte ein liebliches Totengesicht auf ihn. Eines Tages schritt den Geschwistern auf der zum Forum ansteigenden Straße ein Leichenzug entgegen, voran auf offener Bahre die Leiche eines jungen Mädchens, farbig angezogen, mit vielem Flitterwerk behangen und die erblichenen Wangen mit etwas rot angemalt. So trug das bunte Gefolge die Entseelte nach Ara Coeli. (3)

The memory of this scene must have lived on so vividly in Meyer's mind that he felt compelled to make some use of it, although the incident in Die Hochzeit des Mönchs is of little significance, except to enhance the atmosphere of doom hanging over Astorre and Antiope.

It would scarcely be possible to trace to an actual work of art even a reminiscence in Meyer's stories (4). In his poems he frequently refer

(1) See further under Language §6 below.

(2) Werke III, p.276

(3) Frey Leben und Werke pp.121-122

(4) An attempt is made by E. Sulger-Gebing, „C.F. Meyers Werke in ihre Beziehungen zur bildenden Kunst“, Euphorion XXIII

to works which particularly impressed him, as in 'Die gezeißelte Psyché' and 'Der Musensaal', but in his Novellen he usually, like his fellow-authors, invents works suitable for his own purposes. Undoubtedly he drew on his knowledge of European art to assist his inventions.

Although 'reminiscences' are scattered throughout the stories, paintings and sculptures are employed sparingly and with special significance. Each is, on the whole, described or mentioned once and often is not mentioned again, though it may be referred to obliquely. One thinks of the Byzantine Christ-picture at Schaffhausen which Hans the Bowman introduces almost casually to give Herr Burkhard an idea of Becket's expression. We do not hear of this picture again, but we remember it when we encounter other instances of Becket being compared to Christ. These become ever more frequent as the story proceeds and build up the concept of Becket the martyr following in the way of his Lord. The relief depicting the Duchess Amalawsinte carrying her penitential cross is described by Poggio fairly near the beginning of his story (Plautus im Nonnenkloster); he does not refer to it again, but it is kept in our minds with later descriptions of scenes which resemble it.

Even those pictures introduced apparently only to lend 'local colour' have a deeper significance. The frescoes of Bacchus and his followers and of Christ feeding the five thousand which are described at the opening of Die Versuchung des Pescara are included not just to give an idea of the décor of a Renaissance princeling's palace nor even to provide a ironic comparison, appreciated by Sforza and Morone, between the merry reapers in the fresco and the reality of Lombardy and its people impoverished by war. These pictures sum up the state of Italy and its people - „sie heucheln Leben und sind tot in ihren Übertretungen und Sünden" (1). They have forsaken Christ and turned to Bacchus, they deserve no salvation and cannot be saved, even were Pescara able to help them.

(1) Werke IV, p.223

So small a work of art as Palma's ivory comb in Die Richterin is of more than passing importance. It forms part of the ransom which Palma pays to release Wulfrin from the brigands and is decorated with a relief showing Christ and the twelve apostles. This theme of Christ in judgment, often accompanied by the prophets, the saved and the damned as well as the apostles, was a popular one in the church art of the ninth and tenth centuries. This story is concerned with judgment, both Stemma, 'die Richterin', and Charlemagne being great judges, and thus the relief reminds the reader of the theme and leads him on to Meyer's underlying theme of the judgment of God. This 'association' technique is much favoured by Meyer. In this he resembles T.S. Eliot, who introduces quotations from the Bible, Shakespeare and ancient writings into his poetry, thus enriching its appeal to the reader as he is able to understand them. Meyer introduces many of the great figures of history into his stories, not out of arrogance, as E.K. Bennett objects (1) since he is not interested in trying to make them come to life as personalities; he wants them in his stories chiefly because of their associations, because they add to the universality of his work. He mentions Dürer in Gustav Adolfs Page, which begins in Nürnberg, and in Die Versuchung des Pescara references are made to Raphael, Michaelangelo Leonardo da Vinci and Macchiavelli. Thus the artistic glories of the Renaissance are evoked, but the corrupt political scene is not forgotten.

The importance of art for Meyer is such that every aspect of his work is affected. Under the headings of Form, Characterisation and Language we shall examine the influence of the visual arts on his thinking and his works.

(1) E.K. Bennett op.cit. pp.219-220

#### 4. Form

The Rahmenteknik was so popular in the nineteenth century that by now one regards it simply as a favourite convention, adopted to give the impression of cosy story-telling round the fire. In the Unterhaltungen deutscher Ausgewanderter Goethe upholds the traditional pattern which developed from the novella-cycles of the Italian Renaissance, but later writers adapt the technique for a variety of purposes. We have already seen how Storm found it the ideal vehicle for his peculiar type of story, the 'Erinnerungsnovelle', in which he attempts to preserve the past. Bennett describes Meyer's version as the 'virtuoso framework' (1), and remarks that in choosing this type Meyer could hardly have made his own task more difficult. Meyer said himself that he preferred the framework because it helped to distance the story from himself and to minimise its impact on the reader (2). It also prevents omniscient viewpoint on the author's part, as W.D. Williams observes (3). The sacrifice of omniscience is re-inforced by Meyer's refusal to pin down and analyse his characters. He suggests a multitude of reasons and motives which might lie behind their actions or attitudes and allows the reader to make his own decisions.

Of the eleven stories five employ the Rahmenteknik, but the others are written in such a way that the main character is not portrayed directly; he is seen from the standpoint of the other characters, thus a frame or barrier is built up around him. The idea of a barrier is significant for Meyer's attitude to his art. Storm uses the Rahmenteknik to bring his story closer to the reader; the frame-narrator edits or re-tells for the benefit of the contemporary public the tale told to him by an old person or rescued from some dusty chronicle. In Der Schimmelreiter Storm creates two frames to bridge the time-gap between the seventeenth century and his own day. Meyer uses the frame for almost the opposite reason: not to unite the reader and the story by means of a personal tie, but to make the reader stand back and remain

(1) Bennett op.cit. p.222

(2) See letter to Heyse, 12th Nov. 1884 Briefe II, pp.340-341

(3) W.D. Williams The Stories of C.F. Meyer (Oxford 1962) pp.21-22

aware all the time that he is dealing not with real life but with a work of art. The 'artistic' or 'artificial' nature of story-telling is stressed most heavily in Plautus im Nonnenkloster and Die Hochzeit des Mönchs. Both narrators have been asked to entertain their circle with a tale. Poggio gives a 'facetia inedita' from his own experience, while Dante develops his story from an inscription which he saw on a gravestone in Padua. Since both are attempting to entertain a highly cultured audience, they are more concerned with the telling than with the tale. Poggio apologises for introducing Swiss 'barbarians' into the refined circle of Cosmo de' Medici; he constantly declares how crude, trivial or amusing he finds their doings. Nevertheless he takes great pains with the exposition of his story, gradually building up the picture of the muddled fortunes of Hans and Gertrud by having each tell his or her side of the matter, then uniting and explaining all with his own observations. Just as he is more impressed by the aesthetic aspect of the convent's deception with the cross, so he overlooks his own knavery in gaining possession of the Plautus codex. He concentrates instead on developing his narrative to a fine climax and rounding it off with a satisfactory conclusion.

Dante's rôle as craftsman is even more obvious, since he is not telling a story which he knows but making it up as he goes along. Meyer emphasises the process by allowing him a pause for thought every so often: „Hier machte der Erzähler eine Pause und verschattete Stirn und Augen mit der Hand, den weiteren Gang seiner Fabel übersinnend" (1). During these pauses, Dante's eye usually falls on a member of the circle whom he decides to incorporate into the story. In one such he is held up by the majordomo, who annoys Dante both with his pedantic ways and his Alsatian accent. Dante therefore introduces a caricature of this man and enjoys his indignation as he has enjoyed the discomfiture of others such as the court fool and the 'vornehmer junger Kleriker' whom he has chosen to pillory. His little explanations of Paduan customs and the

(1) Werke III, p.227

discussion between him and Cangrande about the Emperor Frederick also remind us that this is art, not life.

It is possible to see in Dante a projection of Meyer himself, as far as intention and method are concerned. Dante is asked to tell a tale illustrating the theme of the renegade monk. He adapts the usual pattern with some new twists of his own: he develops the story from an inscription on a grave-stone and he invents the tale as he goes along, using the names and faces of his audience for his fictional characters. Before beginning, he invites discussion of the subject and shows that the outcome of his story has to be tragic. In his reply to the young priest who asks why there have to be monks, he indicates the greater theme behind his story - monks represent God's love and mercy in a world which has to be ruled by human justice. Meyer resembles Dante in introducing his characters early on in the story, in giving at least a hint of the outcome and in pointing to the problem or moral behind his tale. When Dante says to his audience: „euer Inneres lasse ich unangetastet, denn ich kann nicht darin lesen" (1), we have a clear statement of Meyer's attitude to characterisation - he refuses to explore the minds of his characters but lets them reveal themselves in speech and action. Certainly the characters in Die Hochzeit des Mönchs are particularly shallow, but this emphasises the more strongly the trap into which the unwary reader or listener can fall if he confuses art with real life. Dante's listeners become thoroughly involved with their fictional counterparts. In the rivalry between Diana and Antiope the two women around Cangrande see their own situation; they take sides with their opposite number and seize a chance to pay each other out when Dante relates how Astorre the monk fell in love with Antiope and rejected Diana. Cangrande's mistress begs Dante to describe the effect of love on Astorre:

„Laß den Mönch reden, daß wir teilnehmend erfahren, wie er sich abwendete von einer Rohen zu einer Zarten, einer Kalten zu einer Fühlenden, von einem steinernen zu einem schlagenden Herzen.."

„Ja, Florentiner," unterbrach die Fürstin in tiefer Bewegung und mit dunkelglühender Wange, „laß den Mönch reden, daß wir staunend vernel-

(1) Werke III, p.207

wie es kommen konnte, daß Astorre, so unerfahren und täuschbar er war, ein edles Weib verriet für eine Verschmitzte-hast du nicht gemerkt, Dante, daß Antiope eine Verschmitzte ist?" (1)

We watch the involvment of the Princess deepening slowly until, in her defence of Diana, she strikes a violent blow in the air, and the other woman, feeling for Antiope, trembles with fear. Dante is amused to see how easily his audience has been caught up in his story, although he does seem to feel that this has happened at the expense of their awareness of his underlying theme.

Meyer uses the frame-technique so that his readers shall not become involved like Dante's audience. His frame has exactly the function of a frame round a picture, which cuts the picture off from the room around it. The frame may be richly decorated, so that it becomes a work of art in its own right, but it is there to limit the picture, to stress that this is a painting of a man or a landscape and not the real thing. Even the narrators most involved in their story, Schadau (Das Amulett), Hans the Bowman (Der Heilige) and Fagon (Das Leiden eines Knaben) are portrayed as telling it a long time after the event, when they have become more reflective and can give thought to the form of their narrative.

Throughout his works Meyer makes constant use of pictures and sculptures, tableau-scenes, dreams and visions to foreshadow events and to illuminate action and character. (Other methods of doing this, such as the shadow plot and the eavesdropping scene should also be borne in mind - they are just as artificial as works of art. The shadow plot has the same function as the picture which reflects the action; for example in Die Richterin the serf Faustine who has murdered her husband is a parallel to Stemma, just as the Byblis-picture in the manuscript illustrates the situation of incestuous love in which Wulfrin believes himself to be. Likewise the eavesdropping situation is similar to the tableau - the listener or watcher is like the spectator in the theatre or art-gallery, because he cannot interfere with the action. After

(1) Werke III, pp.259-260

confrontation with Morone Pescara jokes with the eavesdroppers, Bourbon and Del Guasto: „Hier wurde Theater gespielt. Das Stück dauerte lang. Habt ihr nicht gegähnt in eurer Loge?" [1]) In the later stories, which have no framework, Meyer indulges far more in these means of distancing the reader. In Die Richterin and Angela Borgia several visions are used both to illuminate the action and to reveal the state of the dreamer's mind. Stemma, tortured by her guilty secret, but determined never to confess it, has a vision of her lover Peregrin whom she defies and drives away. She also tries to defy the vision of the mighty woman writing on a tablet, when she is aroused by the sound of Wulfrin blowing his father's horn. So wrought up is she that she imagines her late husband has returned to accuse her, and she blurts out her secret to the stone effigy on his tomb-stone. In Angela Borgia Don Giulio dreams that Angela blinds him. This reveals his subconscious involvement with Angela and prefigures the scene in which he is blinded partly through her fault. His brother Cardinal Ippolito, who instigated the blinding, falls ill and in his fever has terrible dreams of all his victims. The judgment theme is very obvious here - the Cardinal's dream ends with a vision of scales weighed down by great tears of blood wept by Giulio's eyes. The dreams of Meyer's characters are fairly coherent. They usually take the form of slowly moving scenes or almost still visions, such as Sister Perpetua's dream in Jürg Jenatsch.

Die betrubte Ordensschwester hatte in gottbegnadetem Traume die öde Zelle der Priorin betreten und dort plötzlich Lukretia erblickt, wie sie leibte und lebte, doch mit demütigen Angesichte und gesenkten Augen. Neben ihr aber stand St. Dominikus selbst im Glanze des Himmels und seiner schneeweißen Kutte, der ihr einen Lilienstengel überreichte. Der Träumenden war alsdann vorgekommen, als lege sich ein Abglanz seines Heiligenscheines um Lukretias erwähltes Haupt. (2)

The dreams are very similar to the tableau-scenes which Meyer so often favours. „Der Gesamteindruck der Meyerschen Erzählkunst läßt sich dem alten Opernform vergleichen: aus einer bewegten Handlung heraus erstarrten die Figuren zu einer Art von lebendem Bilde" (3). We have already

(1) Werke IV, p.214

(2) Werke I, p.135

(3) Helmut Himmel Geschichte der deutschen Novelle (Berlin 1963) pp.21-22

looked at one of these tableaux (p.114) when we considered the gesture of Pescara: confronted by Moncada, the Spanish spy, who asks him what his goal is, he extends towards the man a handful of ashes taken from the brazier in which he has just burned his secret papers. Meyer adds the comment „Staub und Asche“; Pescara does not need to say anything. The gesture is like a picture, it speaks for itself. Jürg Jenatsch in particular is full of these living pictures. Probably the most memorable is the final one, where Lukretia sits under the statue of Justice in the Rathaus at Chur with the murdered Jenatsch in her arms. The picture is reminiscent of a Pietà, and the picture of the lover killed by his lady may have been influenced by the Judith story, which is also found depicted by Renaissance artists.

In Verzweiflung richtete sie sich auf, sah Jürg schwanken, von gedungenen Mördern umstellt, von menschlichen Waffen umzückt und verwundet, rings und rettungslos umstellt. Jetzt, in traumhaftem Entschlusse, hob sie mit beiden Händen die ihr vererbte Waffe und trat mit ganzer Kraft das teure Haupt. Jürgs Arme sanken, er blickte die hoch vor ihm Stehende mit voller Liebe an, ein düsterer Triumph flog über seine Züge, dann stürzte er schwer zusammen.

Als Lukretia ihrer Sinne wieder mächtig wurde, kniete sie neben der Leiche, das Haupt des Erschlagenen lag in ihrem Schoße. Das Gemach war leer. Um die über ihr schwebende Gestalt der Justitia waren die Lichter heruntergebrannt, und das Wachs fiel ihr in glühenden Tropfen auf Hals und Stirn. Neben ihr stand Pankraz und legte die Hand auf ihre Schulter, während unter der Türe Fauch dem Bürgermeister Wasser das Ereignis jammernd erzählte. (1)

Thus after violent action the characters freeze into stillness, just at the end of a play. Meyer further imitates dramatic practice by gathering all his main characters on stage for the dénouement. Char magne and Alouin, who appear briefly at the beginning of Die Richter arrive at the end to judge Stemma and Wulfrin. While the other participants, Stemma's daughter Palma and her suitor Gracioso, look on, Stemma kills herself and is laid beside her tomb-stone together with her servant Faustine, who had committed a similar crime. The concluding tableau of Die Versuchung des Pescara shows the dead Pescara lying on the canopy of Sforza's throne, his head on Bourbon's lap, and his wife

(1) Werke I, p.256

Vittoria arriving to see this peaceful scene. The repose of the fine tableaux acts in the same way as the concluding part of the frame in a Rahmennovelle - it helps to release the tension built up by the climax and to produce a feeling of calm in the reader.

Like the tableau-scenes, the works of art mentioned throughout the stories also stop the action occasionally. Our attention is directed to paintings or sculptures which reflect the action, reveal the state of mind of one of the characters, or refer to the 'moral' behind the story. The last aspect has already been touched on in the discussion of the fresco in Sforza's palace (p.117). The theme of salvation as opposed to corruption, which runs through the story, is alluded to here at the outset.

Meyer avoids direct characterisation, but can equally well indicate a character's state of mind by describing his reaction to a work of art. After the capture of Jenatsch in Venice, his friend Wasser sits in the dining-room of his host Grimani worrying about Jenatsch's fate. Usually he takes care to turn his back on a beautiful picture of Venus, which distresses him by its resemblance to his late wife, but on this occasion he is so preoccupied that he forgets to do so.

Works of art are used like sub-plots and contrasting characters to provide a reflection or contrast. The Byblis illustration in Die Richterin appears to mirror the situation of Wulfrin and Palma, but Byblis is really a contrast to Palma, whose love is pure, not incestuous. The picture of Pentheus, however, painted for Julian in Das Leiden eines Knaben, does indeed foretell the fate of the unfortunate boy, who is victimised and beaten to death by the Jesuits.

The use of pictures, tableaux and dreams increases the artificiality of Meyer's stories and assists his purpose of alienation. He does not wish his readers to become involved in his work, therefore he stresses that it is man-made by the introduction of man-made objects, paintings and scenes resembling them. As Williams says: 'By all these means,

and by continual prefiguring of the next move in the action or of the final outcome, Meyer ensures that the plot as such never becomes the focus of our attention. Always we must look beyond it to the unfolding significance being built up piece by piece.' (1)

(1) Williams op.cit. p.125.

## 5. Characterisation

It has been stated already that Meyer's characters are stylised, meaning that they are figures constructed only to carry a story; they make no claim to interpret the historical persons whom they represent, nor do they pretend to be personalities in their own right. Fontane's characters, though they may resemble each other, are living people whom one can imagine, if one cares to indulge in this pointless exercise, as having independent life beyond his novels. Meyer's characters do not lend themselves to this.

While earlier critics like Baumgarten condemned Meyer's figures as lifeless cardboard dummies through which the author attempted to live out his own 'Wunschträume', modern critics like W.D. Williams have perceived that this lifelessness is not a failure on Meyer's part but a significant aspect of his technique. His characters are not meant to be interesting in themselves, though undoubtedly one does become involved with some of them. Their chief purpose is to carry a story, which in turn carries the reader to the consideration of a moral question. Meyer reveals his attitude to character by relinquishing omniscience; his use of the Rahmentchnik limits him to the viewpoint of one narrator, and he never sets forth the exact motivation of his persons but always suggests several possible reasons for their actions or attitudes.

Die unausgesprochene Freundschaft, die den einfachen Adligen und den Mann von königlichem Geblüte verband..., beruhte einfach auf dem Bewußtsein des Herzogs, daß seine Verbündung mit dem Feinde Frankreich der Achtung Pescaras keinen Eintrag tue. War es Klugheit, war es Gleichgültigkeit gegen die sittlichen Dinge, war es Freiheit von jedem auch dem begründetsten Vorurteil, oder war es die höchste Gerechtigkeit einer vollkommenen Menschenkenntnis, was immer - Pescara hatte den in kaiserlichen Dienst tretenden fürstlichen Hochverräter mit offenen Armen empfangen und mit der feinsten Mischung von Kollegialität und Ehrerbietung behandelt. (1)

Pescara's attitude to treachery is not made any clearer here than it is to Morone, who contemplates the picture of Pescara playing chess and wonders which way the general will move when tempted to treachery himself.

(1) Werke IV, p.197

Perhaps his unwillingness to probe into the mind and its workings prevented Meyer from choosing an artist to be the hero of any of his stories. In his poetry he concerns himself with Michaelangelo and even identifies with him in his struggles as an artist and as a man trying to come close to God. But Meyer's poetry is much more subjective than his Novellen. To write about an artist in a Novelle would entail too much self-revelation - and the whole object in writing historical Novellen was to mask the expression of his own thoughts and experiences. In the Novellen, therefore, the great artists - Michaelangelo, Leonardo, Raphael and Dürer appear only as part of the scenery, to lend 'local colour' to the stories set in Rome or Nürnberg. The painter Mouton in Das Leiden eines Knaben is hardly meant to be a serious study of the artistic temperament.

Instead, Meyer chose people from different spheres, who in their activity resemble the artist. He was fascinated by the ability of Renaissance men to exploit the possibilities of life, as a sculptor exploits the several advantages of stone, wood or metal. The determination of these men to develop their personalities to the full is ascribed by Burckhardt to the political conditions in which they lived.

Zunächst entwickelte die Gewaltherrschaft...in höchsten Grade die Individualität des Tyrannen, des Condottiere selbst, sodann diejenige des von ihm protegirten aber auch rücksichtslos ausgenützten Talente des Geheimschreibers, Beamten, Dichters, Gesellschafter. Der Geist dieser Leute lernt nothgedrungen alle seine innern Hülfsquellen kennen die dauernden wie die des Augenblickes; auch ihr Lebensgenuß wird durch geistige Mittel erhöht und concentrirter, um einer vielleicht nur kurzen Zeit der Macht und des Einflusses einen größtmöglichen Werth zu verleihen. (1)

These talents and resources were employed not only in writing, painting, making speeches and composing music, but also in running the state. The state was seen as material which man could mould as he willed, hence Burckhardt can speak of 'der Staat als Kunstwerk', a concept readily adopted by Meyer. The great generals, Gustavus Adolphus, Pescara, Jür Jenatsch, are seen as men who can form the destiny of nations. "Zücht dir die formende Hand nicht danach?" asks Morone of Pescara, pointing

(1) J. Burckhardt Die Kultur der Renaissance in Italien pp.132-133

to him the possibility of uniting Italy under his rule. „Ein vernünftiges Werk, eine ewige Gründung!" (1)

In the literary sphere, the story-teller is also compared to the artist. Dante's raw materials are the theme of the renegade monk, the inscription, the names and the faces of his audience. Fagon, the old doctor in Das Leiden eines Knaben, is practising his craft while telling a story, for he hopes by means of a tale well told to cure King Louis his blindness to the evil power of the Jesuits. Although Dante and Fagon are not of the Renaissance period, they share with Renaissance men and with Meyer's Renaissance characters the spirit of forming and creating so strong in Meyer himself.

A corruption of the formative urge in Meyer's characters is the tendency to manipulate or play with others. Frey ascribes this to a trait in the author's own character.

Er liebte eben, wie es bei kühlen, leidenschaftslosen Menschenkenne von Geist wohl geschieht, gelegentlich Paradoxen vorzubringen und zu weilen mit den Menschen ein wenig zu spielen, freilich in harmloser und freundlicher Weise. Diese Lust am Spiel haftet nicht umsonst mehr als einer seiner Figuren: Thomas Becket spielt mit seinem König Gustav Adolf mit Guste Leubelfing, Pescara mit Morone, in gewissem Sinne auch der Kardinal Ippolito mit Lucrezia Borgia, deren Briefschaften er auffängt und mit stillem Behagen durchkreuzt. (2)

It is not just the non-active figures like Thomas à Becket who indulge in this kind of game. The relationship between Gustavus Adolphus and the girl who is masquerading as his page is described as a game in which both take part: „so spielte der Löwe mit dem Hündchen und auch das Hündchen mit dem Löwen" (3). Pescara is frequently shown to be playing with others, and both he and they realise it. Vittoria, his wife, resents being fobbed off with jests when she wants to know about his political activities. „Du spielst mit deinem Weibe!" she exclaims indignantly. Morone also, although he knows he is a figure of fun, refuses to play games with Pescara and demands that for once he shall be taken serious. „Jetzt sei des Spieles ein Ende. Erniedrige den nicht zum Schauspiel welcher sein Leben wagt für die Rettung seines Vaterlandes! Pescara,

(1) Werke IV, p.205

(2) Frey Leben und Werke p.299

(3) Werke III, p.169

(4) Werke IV, p.240

ich bitte dich um Ernst!" (1) Pescara does indeed listen attentive to Morone as he reveals the schemes of the Holy League and invites the general to take command of the Italian forces, but after the interview he describes it as a 'Schauspiel' or 'Tragödie', which he entitles 'T und Narr'. Once again he is playing with the eavesdroppers Bourbon and Del Guasto, who have become enthusiastic for Morone's plans.

Meyer makes several references to the game of chess. Gustavus Adolphus and Wallenstein sit facing each other like opponents in „die das Schicksal Deutschlands bestimmende Schachpartie" (2). Lucrezia Borg and Cardinal Ippolito d'Este, each spinning intrigues, take a delight in confronting each other:

und dann entspann sich bald das anregendste Gespräch, in welchem eines das andere zu enträtseln und zu erhaschen suchte, dem feinsten Schachspiele vergleichbar. Nur daß die Herzogin jeden Vorteil erbenützte, während der überlegene Kardinal sie mitunter lächelnd auf einen von ihr begangenen Fehler aufmerksam machte oder eine von ihm genommene Figur großmütig stehen ließ. (3)

Influenced by the picture of Pescara and Vittoria playing chess, metaphors from the game recur throughout Die Versuchung des Pescara. The mystery of Pescara's 'next move' tantalises the other players until the game is adjourned by his death.

For the men of the Renaissance life and politics had become a game no longer governed by moral laws: all judgments had become aesthetic. In the humanist Poggio Meyer makes fun of this 'aestheticism'. Poggio traces all his reactions, his likes and dislikes, to the influence of his 'classical origina'. He judges people and actions as though they were works of art or literature - the cleverness of the convent's decision outweighs its depravity in his eyes. A much more pernicious form of this attitude is seen in the reaction of Morone and Sforza to the picture of Pescara and his wife which has just been presented to the young duke.

Auch die zwei vor dem Bilde Stehenden empfanden die Schönheit dieses Bundes der weiblichen Begeisterung mit der männlichen Selbstbeherrschung. Sie empfanden sie nicht mit der Seele, aber mit den feinen

- (1) Werke IV, p.207
- (2) Werke III, p.185
- (3) Werke I, p.345

Fingerspitzen des Kunstgefühls. (1)

The diplomats of the Holy League are bound by no moral scruples, and they ascribe the same outlook to Pescara. Guicciardini declares of him

„Aber ich glaube auch nicht an seine feudale Treue. Pescara ist kein Cid Campeador, oder wie die Spanier ihren loyalen Helden nennen, das ist er zu sehr ein Sohn Italiens und des Jahrhunderts. Er glaubt an die Macht und an die einzige Pflicht der großen Menschen, ihren vollen Wuchs zu erreichen mit den Mitteln und an den Aufgaben der Zeit. So ist er, und so paßt er uns. Unfehlbar, er wird unsere Beute und wir die seinige.“ (2)

Indeed, Pescara might have justified their expectations, had he not been in the power of death, whose touch enables him and raises him above their temptations.

If life has become a game, it is one in which every player is bound to lose. This holds even for those who seem to be in control: they too are pieces to be moved about as fate wills. The irony of those characters who are portrayed as craftsmen is that their creative impulse is doomed to be thwarted, because they are not the free agents they are assumed to be. Pescara is due to die while seemingly at the height of his powers, the ruthless Jenatsch who stops at no obstacle is tied both to Rohan and to Lukretia Planta - he must destroy the one and be destroyed by the other. The literary craftsmen are no more fortunate; Fagon cannot alter the course of history by enlightening his king and preventing religious persecution, and Dante makes it clear from the outset that his tale must end in disaster. Baumgarten condemns Meyer's characters as decadent, broken and divided, because they are not true Renaissance men - their troubles are all caused by an over-active conscience. It is interesting that he chooses a pictorial comparison:

Nicht an Carotos berühmtes Condottiere-Gemälde und nicht an Tizians Avalos-Porträt, das einen Feldherrn aus Pescaras eigener Familie zeigt, wird man denken, will man Meyers Menschen mit Augen schauen. Bronzinos und Francisbigios Bilder werden auftauchen, auf denen die Enkel schwertragender Ahnen in schönen Händen kostbare Bücher halten. (3)

In most of his stories Meyer portrays the last days and death of his heroes. The melancholy of their approaching end weighs upon them and

(1) Werke IV, p.158

(2) Werke IV, p.179

(3) F.F. Baumgarten Das Werk Conrad Ferdinand Meyers: Renaissance-Erfahrungen und Stilkunst (2nd Edition München 1920) p.

„sie sind ein Ende. Meyers Helden haben keine Söhne“ (1). But the 'message' conveyed by these characters even in their death is not one of hopelessness and the futility of human endeavour. Meyer's stories end satisfactorily because they reach the only possible solution. Astorre and Antiopa have offended against all the conventions of civilised society, and they are both so lacking in self-control that further life in the normal world would be impossible for them. Thomas à Becket welcomes death because life has broken him; we are left to decide for ourselves whether he realised that his death would win him the finest revenge over King Henry. Pescara could not have saved Italy, because it was too corrupt, thus it was better that both should have been spared the attempt.

Meyer himself does not regard his stories as ending in despair, for he provides them with a calm and peaceful conclusion. In the Rahmen novellen the illusion of reality is broken by the completion of the frame, and we return from the world of fiction to the story-tellers around the fire. In those without a frame he stages a final tableau the figures freeze into stillness, again reminding us that they are actors in a play. Storm and his characters fail, both by means of memoirs and pictures, to overcome transience. But Meyer's characters are not failures. In stressing the peace of death which rounds off life of hectic action, Meyer the Protestant 'moralist' would doubtless remind his readers that death is the gateway to eternal life.

(1) Baumgarten op.cit. p.86

## 6. Language

The most obvious influence of the visual arts on Meyer's language is to be seen in his metaphors. The following examples are all drawn from Jürg Jenatsch (Werke I), in which he makes extensive use of this type:

Auf dem düsteren Hintergrunde des Julier malte seine Seele ein farben-  
lustiges Bild, in dessen Mitte wiederum Herr Pompejus mit seinem  
Töchterlein Lukretia stand. (p.16)

Er entwarf dem Herzog mit wenigen scharfen Zügen ein Bild der geogra-  
ischen Lage seiner Heimat.. (p.52)

Ihre vor dem Schreckbild scheuende Einbildungskraft erging sich in  
abenteuerlichsten Sprüngen. (p.67)

Er erging sich in heitern Reiseerinnerungen, erzählte von London und  
dem Hofe Jakobs I.,...und entwarf von dem wunderbarlich pedantischen,  
aber, wie er hinzuzufügen sich beeilte, keineswegs auf den Kopf ge-  
fallenen König ein ergötzliches Bild. (p.117)

.. 'Und wenn jeder unserer Berge eine Statue wäre..', hier stockte der  
Redner und erstarrte selbst zum Steinbilde. (p.212)

In this last example Meyer ironises his own predilection for such meta-  
phors. They are certainly common enough, but it is significant that  
Meyer, with his habit of visualising each scene in his works, should make  
such frequent use of them. „Durch energische Vergegenwärtigung eines  
Vorganges, durch langes, wiederholtes Hinblicken darauf gelang es ihm,  
eine Szene plastisch völlig bildmäßig zu sehen und die entscheidenden  
Linien, Züge und Farben gleichsam abzulesen." (1) He does not, however,  
make much mention of colours. He describes scenes as 'farbenlustig',  
full of 'Farbenglanz' or 'leuchtende Farben', but he does not state what  
colours are to be seen. Only rarely is a colour-adjective used. He is  
more interested in light and life: the Titian Venus in Grimani's Venetian  
dining-room is of 'blendender Schönheit', and the painting of the Turk  
girl in Der Schuß von der Kanzel is executed 'in jener naturwarmen, be-  
strickenden Weise' which characterises the Flemish artists. The most  
startling effects are achieved by the moonlight shining on the picture  
in Milan of Pescara and his wife playing chess.

„Er ist unter uns und lauscht!" schrie der Herzog mit gellender Stimme  
daß alle zusammenfahren. Ihre Blicke folgten seinem geängstigten.

(1) Frey Leben und Werke p.287

Der Mond, der als blendende Silberscheibe über den Horizont getreten war und seine schrägen Strahlen in das kleine Gemach zu werfen begann spielte wunderbarlich auf der Schachpartie. Viktorias hervorquellende Auge blickte erzürnt, als spräche es: Hast du gehört, Pescara? Welche Verruchtheit! Und jetzt fragte es angstvoll: Was wirst du tun, Pescara? Dieser war bleich wie der Tod, mit einem Lächeln in den Mundwinkeln. (1)

Meyer likes to use the shaft of light to illuminate scenes and persons as well as pictures. The dead Gustavus Adolphus is lit up by the sun as if he had a halo:

Ein Strahl der Morgensonne - dem gestrigen Nebeltage war ein blauer wolkenloser gefolgt - glitt durch das niedrige Kirchenfenster, verklärte das Heldenantlitz und sparte noch ein Schimmerchen für den Lockenkopf des Pagen Leubelfing. (2)

The altar of the little Roman Catholic church in Jürg Jenatsch's parish is lit up partly by the candles and partly by a last ray of the setting sun. The curious illumination plays tricks on the superstitious congregation and causes them to think that the ghost of an old priest is kneeling by the altar. While Guicciardini and Morone, in Die Versuchung d Pescara, are discussing their plan for tempting Pescara, a flash of lightning, which seems to Guicciardini to be an omen, lights up the fine proportions of the new Vatican building. In Angela Borgia too a flash of lightning reddens the statue in the grove where Don Giulio was blinded.

We see from this that Meyer perceives and describes persons and scenes as though they were works of art. In his descriptions he makes use of terms from the language of art like 'Kopf' and 'Gruppe'. Hans the Bow in Der Heilige often refers to the head or face of Becket: 'dieses unkörperliche Antlitz', 'ein blutiges, totes Haupt', 'ein sterbendes, lächelndes Haupt', and he compares it unfavourably with 'der (Anblick) dieser langen ruhigen Gesichter, welche Eure Stadtheiligen hier in den Händen tragen' (3), and he points to the picture in Herz Burkhard's room of the saints Felix and Regula. The description of the diplomats of the Holy League who assemble in Sforza's palace in Milan touches only on their faces.

(1) Werke IV, pp.171-172

(2) Werke III, p.201

(3) Werke IV, pp.17-18

Keine Gesichter konnten unähnlicher sein als diese dreie. Den häßlichen Kopf und die grotesken Züge seines Kanzlers freilich wußte er auswendig, aber es fiel ihm auf, wie ruhelos dieser heute die feurigen Augen rollte und wie über der dreisten Stirn das pechschwarze Kraushaar sich zu sträuben schien... Daneben hob sich das Haupt Guicciard durch männlichen Bau und einen republikanisch stolzen Ausdruck sehr edel ab. Der Venezianer endlich war eines schönen Mannes Bild mit einem vollen, weichen Haar, leise spottenden Augen und einem liebenswürdigen, verräterischen Lächeln. Auch in der Farbe unterschieden sich die drei Angesichter. Die des Kanzlers war olivenbraun, der Venezianer besaß die durchsichtige Blässe der Lagunenbewohner, und Guicciardin sah so gelb und gallig aus, daß der Herzog sich bewegt fühlte, ihn nach seiner Gesundheit zu fragen. (1)

Meyer arranges his characters in groups or tableaux, and he also names them 'Gruppen'. He describes old Vicedomini lying in an arm-chair with his son Astorre standing at one side and his bereaved daughter-in-law Diana kneeling at the other. „Der Gruppe gegenüber saß Ezzelin, die Rechte auf das gerollte Breve wie auf einen Feldherrnstab gestützt" (2) He employs the term frequently in Der Schuß von der Kanzel, where other art terms are used: Rosenstock has 'kräftiges Kolorit' and old General Wertmüller „behandelte die weiblichen Wesen als Staffage und pflegte sie schlechtweg mit dem Malerausdrucke 'Figuren' zu benennen" (3). Wertmüller, who is small, forms 'eher eine komische als zärtliche Gruppe' as he kisses his tall niece Rahel. Later in the story, „...der General... gewährte durch das Blattgitter seine Schützlinge in einer Gruppe, die er sich durchaus nicht erklären konnte" (4) - Rahel is sewing on to Pfanne-stiel's coat the buttons which the General had pulled off.

Figures, groups and tableaux are sometimes provided with a frame. This is often coupled with the eavesdropping situation, as when Gustel watches Gustavus Adolphus and Wallenstein through a chink in the wall, or Waser spies upon Pompejus Planta and the assassin Robustelli plotting the murder of Jenatsch in the Maloja Hospice. The scene resembles a Flemish painting with the untidy table, littered with papers and bottles and the two men making expressive gestures. In Jürg Jenatsch several

(1) Werke IV, pp.158-159

(2) Werke III, p.217

(3) Werke III, p.89

(4) Werke III, p.122

characters are seen by others with a frame round them. Fausch is observed standing under an archway in Jenatsch's garden, then in the doorway of his shop in Venice. Jenatsch and Wertmüller, coming to wait on the Duc de Rohan, first catch sight of him through the pillars in the entrance hall - he sits reading by the fire, framed by the decorated mantelpiece. Watching a scene from a window is another frame-like situation. Lukretia observes Jenatsch from a window on more than one occasion, without being seen by him. When Rohan and his wife arrive to visit the church of the Madonna dei Frari in Venice, the scene is described as though it were a picture:

Der dunkle Steinrahmen der Tür umschloß ein Bild voll Farbenglanz, Leben und Sonne. Im Vordergrund wurden eben an den Ringen der Landungstreppe zwei mit zierlichen Schnitzwerke und wallenden Federsträußen geschmückte Gondeln befestigt. (1)

Now Meyer divides his set-piece into three fields: the ducal party in the foreground, a group of laughing courtiers in the background and Wertmüller on his own in the middle.

Even where there are no onlookers to make a frame necessary, Meyer describes a scene as though he were looking at a picture which was in need of interpretation:

Da, wo der weite Park von Belriguardo in die ferraresische Ebene ob Grenzmauer verläuft, saßen auf einer letzten verlorenen Bank im Schatten einer immergrünen Eiche zwei, die, aus Haltung und Miene zu schließen, voneinander Abschied nahmen. (2)

It is as though Meyer had fallen into the 'aesthetic' attitude which he censures in his Renaissance characters and had come to look on the persons in his story not as people but as figures in a tableau. His aim is, of course, to prevent the reader from becoming involved with the characters but he does not normally stylise them quite so radically. Usually the balance between realism and stylisation is better kept; the detailed description and careful choice of words bring the stories to life for the reader, but the constant use of artistic words and metaphors remind him that he is dealing with a work of art.

(1) Werke I, pp.87-88

(2) Werke I, p.271

## 7. Works of Art in the Individual Novellen

Having study Meyer's general practice, we must now examine each story individually, looking at his particular use of works of art and assessing the influence on the story of his attitude to art and to writing. In every Novelle Meyer mentions one, or occasionally two, picture or sculpture: these are always employed in different ways, according to the needs of each story.

### Jürg Jenatsch

Several works of art are described in the second book of this novel when the action takes place in Venice. The picturesque nature of the city is evoked by references to the canals, spanned by elegant bridges and bordered by noble churches and palaces. Reminiscences of Titian are woven in. The book opens with a visit by the Duc de Rohan to the famous painting by Titian of the Pesaro family which hangs in the church of the Madonna dei Frari. The arrival of the ducal party is observed by Fausch, formerly a Protestant pastor in Bünden, now an innkeeper in Venice. He passes on the information to Jürg Jenatsch, who has come hastily from his post in the Venetian army in the hope of meeting the Duke. Rohan is about to lead French troops into Bünden to liberate it from the occupying Spanish and Austrian forces, and Jenatsch has been conducting a military correspondence with him. Jenatsch enters the church to find the party admiring the picture. The custodian is explaining it to Wasser, an emissary from Zürich and former schoolmate of Jenatsch; he draws attention to the youngest Pesaro, a little girl, who is looking straight out of the picture and whose eyes follow the spectator all round the church. The Duchess admires the painting, but a good Protestant wishes that the noble family could have been portrayed at its devotions without the accompaniment of the Madonna and saints Peter, Francis and George. Jenatsch seizes the opportunity to introduce himself to Rohan, alluding to St. George's heroic deed in rescuing the princess from the dragon and hailing the Duke as the hero who is

save Bünden from the Spanish.

Having arranged to meet and confer with Jenatsch later, the Duke commends him to the care of his adjutant Wertmüller, a sceptical young man who is delighted to have the chance of examining Jenatsch more closely. His theatrical presentation of himself has made a bad impression on Wertmüller's cynical mind. He remembers an experience from his childhood: he was listening to a wandering musician singing a ballad about Jenatsch and his companions who had just murdered a powerful Catholic landlord, Pompejus Planta. To illustrate his saga the minstrel displayed a brightly-coloured picture of the murder. With this recollection Meyer presents another view of events which have not been related directly: an account had already been given in Book I, chapter 7 by means of a letter from Dr. Sprecher in Chur to Waser in Zürich.

Wertmüller is further disgusted by Jenatsch's extravagant praise of Gustavus Adolphus, under whom he had served. „Ich aber meine“, observes Wertmüller, „das Auftauchen außerordentlicher Menschen und das Aufflackern großer Leidenschaften, das bei der mißlichen Beschaffenheit der menschlichen Natur doch einmal nicht von Dauer ist, reiche nirgends an. Um aus den durcheinandergewürfelten Elementen der Welt etwas Planvolles zusammenzubauen, braucht es meines Bedünkens kältere Eigenschaften: Menschenkenntnis..“ (1), and he praises the Jesuits as especial masters of this art. He has been led on to this line of thought by the sight of the new Jesuit church, built in the Baroque style. Seen from behind and below, the statues on the roof appear curiously foreshortened. The iron bars which support them are also visible, they come to resemble butterflies with their floating draperies, huge butterflies speared on pins. The church is an anachronism here, since it was not built until the beginning of the eighteenth century. It is significant that Meyer, who is usually careful about such details, nevertheless could not refrain from introducing a work of art which must have made a great impression on Wertmüller likes to examine other people as though they were specimens

(1) Werke I, pp.99-100

pinned down for his inspection, but he is not so skilled in 'Menschenkenntnis' as the Jesuits and makes little progress in sounding out Jenatsch.

After his interview with the Duc de Rohan Jenatsch is taken prisoner by order of his former employer, the Provveditore Grimani, who foresees the harm that he will inflict on Rohan. Grimani's guest, Wasser, is concerned to save Jenatsch, so concerned that he even forgets the picture of Venus decorating Grimani's dining-room.

...ein voller Lichtstrahl..verweilte, von den verlockend sarten Farben angezogen, auf einer lebensgroßen Venus aus Tizians Schule. Von der Sonne berührt schien die Göttin, die auf mattem Hintergrunde wie fröhlich über der breiten Türe ruhte, wonnevoll zu atmen und sich vorzubeugen, das stille Gemach mit blendender Schönheit erfüllend. (1)

Wasser objects to the picture because the goddess reminds him vaguely of his late wife, although her decent and modest character seems to him to be in sharp contrast to anything associated with Venus. It has already been said (p.125) that this picture, so beautifully described that it becomes interesting in itself, is used in an unusual way, but characteristic of Meyer, to reveal Wasser's agitated frame of mind.

The description of this painting is recalled by Wertmüller's description of Lucretia Planta in the letter to his cousin in Milan :

Sie sei zwar keine blondlockige üppige Schönheit, wie sie Paul der Veroneser und der flotte Tintoret, die Naturmöglichkeit überbieten aus golddurchwirktem Damaste hervorquellen lassen. (2)

Thus in a sentence Meyer quickly characterises the art of two Italian painters.

The Venus and the Madonna di Ca' Pesaro are the only works of art described in the novel, and the Pesaro picture is the only instance of an actual work of art mentioned by Meyer. He describes in great detail the wooden panelling and the tiled stove in Dr. Sprecher's living-room in Chur. This has no significance in the story: it is 'local colour' in the description of an interior in a patrician Swiss household. He may have been remembering a similar room in a house in which the Meyer family

(1) Werke I, p.115

(2) Werke I, p.131

after the death of Meyer's father (1). The carved wooden, gaily painted figure of Justice in the Rathaus at Chur can hardly be termed a work of art. It is important because Jenatsch dies beneath it, an ironic twist of fate, since Jenatsch has shown no respect for law and justice in fighting for the freedom of Bünden.

The influence of art on Meyer is shown most clearly in Jürg Jenatsch in the descriptions of scenes - pageants and groups of people - and of individuals, landscapes and dreams. More exterior scenes and landscapes are portrayed here than in any other work - Meyer tends to be an 'indoor' writer. In the wild mountain scenes one recognises Meyer's familiarity with the countryside as well as the influence of the realistic landscape backgrounds of Leonardo and Raphael. Tableau-scenes are much used, generally at the beginning or end of a chapter. This novel is the last of Meyer's works to be published, and the use of these scenes is not so carefully calculated as in his later works.

But in the second book is to be found the finest memorial of his visit to Italy, with the reminiscences of Venetian painters and fine descriptions of the Venetian scene.

(1) See Frey Leben und Werke p.48

### Das Amulett

The amulet of the title is not of great value as a work of art, it is important because it symbolises the problem of freewill as opposed to predestination, two philosophies which claim to explain the course of events and to decide the ultimate fate of man. It is first described in the opening paragraphs as „ein großes rundes Medaillon von Silber mit dem Bilde der Muttergottes von Einsiedeln in getriebener, ziemlicher roher Arbeit" (1). Schadau the narrator spies it suddenly while he is visiting his old neighbour Boccard. Painful memories are aroused and he resolves to allay them by writing down the story of the strange conjunction of his fate with that of old Boccard's son Wilhelm.

The climax of the action is the massacre of St. Bartholomew's Eve in 1572, thus the background of the story is the Counter-Reformation and the controversy between rival doctrines, such as predestination and freewill. Schadau has been brought up as a strict Calvinist in Canton Bern. When the Protestant Admiral Coligny is re-instated as commander of the French forces, Schadau sets out to join him in his campaign against the Spaniards in the Netherlands. On the way he meets Wilhelm Boccard from Fryburg and the elderly Councillor Chatillon with his niece Gasparde. The conversation develops into a religious argument in which the Catholic Boccard cleverly refutes the doctrine of predestination. To cover his confusion Schadau lists the abuses of the Roman church. Boccard hears him calmly until he attacks the worship of the Virgin Mary, whereupon Boccard almost challenges him to a fight. He feels it incumbent upon himself to protect the honour of the Virgin, who by a miracle healed him from paralysis in his childhood, after his parents had made a pilgrimage to the shrine of Our Lady of Einsiedeln. The story is depicted on a votive tablet in the monastery church, and Boccard wears a medallion with great devotion.

Despite their religious differences, Schadau and Boccard become friends when they meet again in Paris, where Boccard belongs to the King's Swiss Guard and Schadau has been taken on as the Admiral's secretary. He

(1) Werke III, p.10

his good fortune to the recommendation of Councillor Chatillon, a friend of Coligny's. Gasparde is also connected with Coligny, being the illegitimate daughter of the Admiral's brother Dandelot. This makes her all the more attractive in Schadau's eyes.

Schadau is already familiar with Coligny's appearance from a woodcut which had been circulated in Switzerland.

Der Admiral mochte damals fünfzig Jahre zählen, aber seine Haare waren schneeweiß und eine fieberische Röte durchglühte die abgewehrten Wangen. Auf seiner mächtigen Stirn, auf den mageren Händen traten die blauen Adern hervor, und ein furchtbarer Ernst sprach aus seiner Miene. Er schaute wie ein Richter in Israel. (1)

Almost the same description is applied to King Gustavus Adolphus, as he prepares to censure his officers for plundering refugee peasants.

Dieser trat ein, ein anderer Mann, als er vor zwei Stunden verritten war, streng wie ein Richter in Israel, in heiliger Entrüstung, in loderndem Zorn, wie ein biblischer Held, der ein himmelschreiendes Unrecht aus dem Mittel heben muß, damit nicht das ganze Volk verderbe.

Pescara too is described as a terrifying judge when he condemns his nephew Del Guasto for causing the death of a girl whom he had seduced, and also when he denounces Italy as too corrupt for salvation. This attack on corruption is to be found throughout Meyer's works.

The corrupt state of Paris seems to Schadau to be summed up in the rather free sculptures and paintings decorating the Louvre. The combination of medieval and Baroque architecture also seems symbolic. "Die Mischung zweier Zeiten vermehrte in mir den Eindruck, der mich, seit ich Paris betreten, nie verlassen hatte, den Eindruck des Schwankenden, Ungleichartigen, der sich widersprechenden und miteinander ringenden Elemente." (3) Schadau has had enough time to notice the perilous position of the Huguenots in Paris, but this observation is almost a premonition of what is to come.

While in the company of Bocard, Schadau has a contretemps with the Comte de Guiche, a notorious trouble-maker and lady-killer, who had already insulted Gasparde in Schadau's presence. A duel is arranged as

(1) Werke III, p.29

(2) Werke III, p.176 (Gustav Adolfs Page)

(3) Werke III, p.43

Boccard warns him that de Guiche is an expert swordsman. He soon realizes that Schadau is no match, since he moves too slowly, and he weeps with despair. To comfort him Schadau invokes his belief in predestination - if he is to die on the morrow then resignation is the best policy. Boccard rejects this philosophy impatiently and encourages his friend to pray insistently to Our Lady of Einsiedeln. Not surprising Schadau in his turn rejects this proposition. Next morning, when Boccard fetches him for the duel, Schadau wonders at his excess of emotion. Boccard embraces him and lays his head on Schadau's breast. The reason is revealed after the duel. Boccard had slipped his medallion into Schadau's breast-pocket, where it prevented the Count's point from penetrating and gave Schadau the chance to parry and kill de Guiche. At first Schadau is furious. He feels that he has saved his life by cheating, and now owes it to an 'idol' and to Boccard's superstition. But when he reflects how much life has to offer him at the moment he has to be grateful for his escape.

Boccard saves his life once again on the Eve of St. Bartholomew. He leads him into the Louvre on a pretext and locks him up, intending him to stay there until the planned massacre of the Huguenots has been accomplished. From a fragment of conversation which he overhears, Schadau gathers that some dreadful calamity is about to take place. At midnight he peers out of the window and sees on a balcony the three figures of the king, his brother and their mother, Catherine de Medici, who stand there until the signal is given for the massacre to begin. Schadau goes nearly mad thinking of the plight of Gasparde, whom he has just married. He has a vision of a river-goddess, who resembles one of the statues at Fontainebleau, conversing with a stone figure which forms one of the balcony's supports: they seem to mock at men who murder each other in the name of religion.

When Boccard reappears in the early morning, Schadau begs to be set free so that he may rescue Gasparde, but Boccard remains unmoved. Seeing him touch the medallion, Schadau appeals to him in the name of Our Lady

of Einsiedeln, and he relents. Disguised as king's guardsmen, they are in time to rescue Gasparde from the mob, but as they leave Boccard is shot down with the pistol which Schadau had abandoned. He dies pressing the medallion to his lips.

The medallion forms a leitmotif in the friendship of Schadau and Boccard. It helps to bring out the differences in their character and outlook, which are influenced by their religious beliefs. The conflict between predestination and freewill, the opposing standpoints which Schadau and Boccard represent, is opened but not solved, as the story can be interpreted by neither one scheme nor the other. Meyer seems to incline towards predestination in his characterisation of Schadau, and he certainly fills the story with coincidences. He adds one too many at the end by allowing Schadau to make good his escape from Paris with the aid of his old fencing master, to whom he had once done a good turn. But the rôle of the medallion reveals Meyer's ambivalent attitude towards the problem - ironically enough it saves the life of the man who despises such fetishes, but cannot preserve the one who stakes his life on its power.

### Der Schuß von der Kanzel

This is a charming story, the only one of Meyer's works which deserves the epithet. It is the first of his two comic, light-hearted stories the other being Plautus im Nonnenkloster. The young curate Pfannenstiel finds himself in a desperate position: he is in love with Rahel, the daughter of his former vicar and niece of the famous General Wertmüller. Convinced that he has no chance with her, he is resolved to leave the district by applying for the post of chaplain to Wertmüller's Venetian troops. His friend Rosenstock advises him against this; Wertmüller has no love for the clergy since he was fined for blasphemy, and to prove this he treated Rosenstock shamefully when that worthy man went to reproach him for his scandalous doings. One of his favourite tricks is to seize his interlocutor by the coat buttons and screw them off. Pfannenstiel, however is not to be discouraged. He hopes that the General will look more favourably upon him after reading his commentary on the *Odyssey*, which is Wertmüller's favourite book.

The boatman rowing Pfannenstiel across the Zürchersee to Wertmüller's home points to the room in which the General keeps his Turkish woman. It is generally believed that this person exists: the following day, while Wertmüller is greeting the congregation at church, one old woman pushes her daughter out of sight, „sonst nimmt er dich und macht dich zur Türkin!“ (1) The boatman describes her:

„...er hat sie aus dem Morgenlande heingebracht, wo er für den Venezianer Krieg führte. Ich habe sie schon oft gesehen, ein hübsches Weibsbild mit goldenem Kopfputze und langen, offenen Haaren; gewöhnlich wenn ich vorüberfahre, legt sie die Finger an den Mund, als pfändete sie einen Mannsvolk, aber gegenwärtig liegt sie nicht im Fenster.“

Wertmüller, as Rosenstock had foreseen, does indeed deal rather roughly with Pfannenstiel, but he guesses why the young man wants to leave home and he discovers from Rahel, who visits him while the curate is there, that she returns his affection. He therefore decides to unite them, at the same time playing a cunning trick on his cousin the vicar, a man with an uncontrollable passion for shooting. The only drawback, in the General's opinion, is Pfannenstiel's mild and retiring disposition: he th

(1) Werke III, p.106  
 (2) Werke III, p.79

that women prefer virile types, and so he encourages Pfannenstiel to kidnap Rahel, threatening to shoot himself if she refuses to come. The curate, unaware that Wertmüller is teasing him, is outraged. At last, confused and exhausted, buttons torn off, he retires to bed, only to realise that he is in the room next to that of the Turkish woman. He makes up his mind to discover the worst.

Er betrat einen reichen türkischen Teppich und stand, sich zur Rechten wendend, vor einem lebensgroßen Bilde, welches von vergoldetem üppig Blätterwerk eingerahmt war und die ganze, dem Fenster gegenüberstehende Wand des kleinen Kabinetts füllte. Das Bild war von einem Niederländer oder Spanier der damals kaum geschlossenen glänzenden Epoche in jener naturwarmen, bestrickenden Weise gemalt, die den Neuern verloren gegangen ist. Über eine Balustrade von maurischer Arbeit lehnte eine junge Orientalin mit den berausenden dunkeln Augen und glühenden Lippen, bei deren Anblicke die Prinzen in Tausendundeiner Nacht unfehlbar in Ohnmacht fallen.

Sie legte den Finger an den Mund, als bedeute sie den vor ihr Stehenden: Komm, aber schweige! (1)

This description corresponds with that of the boatman, and explains how a rumour about Wertmüller's 'harem' has got about. The effect of the picture on Pfannenstiel is devastating. He experiences feelings of longing and desire hitherto unknown to him and most alarming to his chaste soul. This is the most powerful account in Meyer's work of the effect of art on the mind; he shows here an awareness of the workings of passion not usually allowed him by those critics who call him cold and lifeless.

Pfannenstiel passes a wretched night, tormented by visions of the Turkish girl, who suddenly turns into Rahel. He enacts with her the kidnapping scene proposed by Wertmüller, ending by waking up as he shoots himself.

On the following day the General's plan works perfectly: he tricks his cousin into taking a little pistol into the pulpit, and the parson, in the heat of his sermon, pulls the trigger, scandalising the congregation with the loud shot. Wertmüller pacifies them by promising to install the parson as gamekeeper on his estate and replace him with Pfannenstiel, who is to be betrothed to Rahel. Meanwhile Pfannenstiel has made his way

(1) Werke III, pp.103-104

Rahel, worried about his lack of virility, but she, having persuaded him to tell the story of his adventures with the General, assures him that she prefers him as he is. Meyer here shows a victory of nature over Pfannenstiel is confused by art in the shape of the picture and Wertmüller's machinations, but his head is cleared the next day by the fine morning and his mind is set at rest by Rahel's pure and straightforward character. Even Wertmüller with all his love of intrigue is forced to give credit to natural human feeling. He is impressed by the spontaneous expression of affection between Rahel and Pfannenstiel.

Er vermehrte seltsamerweise die erste süße Verwirrung der beiden mit keinem Scherzworte. Ist es nicht, als ob ein tiefes und wahres Gefühl in seinem natürlichen und bescheidenen Ausdrucke aus dieser Welt des Zwanges und der Maske uns in eine zugleich größere und einfachere versetzte, wo der Spott keine Stelle findet? (1)

The contrast between artificiality and naturalness is underlined throughout by the use of allusions to Baroque art, which is very contrived. Wertmüller is a 'baroque' character in the early sense of the term - bizarre and extraordinary. The meaning of bizarre is intended in the description of the landscape at the beginning of the story. The scene is treated like a work of art - note the word 'idealisiert'.

Die ersten Tage der Lese waren die schönsten des Jahres gewesen. Die warme Föhnluft hatte die Schneeberge und den Schweizersee auf ihre Höhe idealisiert, die Reihe der einen zu einem einzigen stillen, großen Leuchten verbunden, den anderen mit dem tiefen und kräftigen Farbenglanze einer südlichen Meerbucht übergossen, als gelüste sie eine barocke Landschaft, ein Stück Italien, über die Alpen zu versetzen.

Heute aber blies ein heftiger Querwind, und die durch grelle Licht und harte Schatten entstellten Hochgebirge traten in schroffer, fast barocker Erscheinung dem Auge viel zu nahe. (2)

In Meyer's day the term 'Rococo' was almost synonymous with 'Baroque'. Thus he describes the hymn sung by the parishioners of Mythikon:

Es war das beliebteste des neuen Gesangbuchs, ein Danklied für die gelungene Lese, erst in neuerer Zeit verfaßt und aus Deutschland gekommen, mit dreisten und geschmacklosen Schnörkeln im damaligen Rokoko stile, aber nicht ohne Klang und Farbe.

Jede Strophe begann mit der Aufforderung, den Geber alles Guten

(1) Werke III, p.92

(2) Werke III, pp.73-74

vermittels eines immer wieder andern Instrumentes zu loben. Dem Autor mochte ein Kirchenbild vorgeschwebt haben. Aber nicht jene zarten, musizierenden Engel Giambellinis, welche an das Dichterwort erinnern:

Da geigen die Geiger so himmlisch klar,  
Da blasen die Bläser so wunderbar...

Nein! sondern die auf einer robusten Wolke lagernde und mit allen möglichen Instrumenten ausgerüstete pausbackige, himmlische Hofkapel irgendeines Bravourbildes aus der Rubensschen Schule. (1)

The works of Giambellini, which Meyer knew from his visit to Venice, all inspired him in the writing of the verse idyll Engelberg, according to

Für die Vision der singenden Engel und die Zartheit der idyllischen Stimmung machten sich die Werke eines andern venezianischen Meisters fühlbar: die lieblichen Engel Gianbellins. (2)

The words 'Baroque' and 'Rococo' were used in a derogatory sense in the nineteenth century. Meyer was no doubt influenced by Burckhardt, who equated Baroque with corrupt Renaissance art in his Cicerone, a work with which Meyer was very well acquainted (3). The idea of decadence is brought out more than once. The painting of the Turkish woman was executed during „der damals kaum geschlossenen glänzenden Epoche“ and in a manner „die den Neuern verlorengegangen ist“. Wertmüller reminisces of Jürg Jenatsch: „damals moderte der der fragwürdige Bündner schon seit Dezennien in der Domkirche von Chur, während sein Bild in zahmen und unpatriotischen Zeiten sich zu einem widerwärtigen verzerrt hatte“ (4).

In his preoccupation with death Wertmüller is in line with Baroque sympathies. He keeps a skeleton done up as a bodyguard outside his bedroom and he dreams that he and Jenatsch meet, both as ghosts, at Jenatsch's funeral. He seems to feel himself unfavourably compared to Jenatsch and envies him his violent death. Pfannenstiel too is decadent, not sharing Rosenstock's Protestant enthusiasm for attacking blasphemy and witchcraft. He rather resembles Astorre in Die Hochzeit des Mönchs, especially when the painting inflames him with unfamiliar passion. But he is fortunate in the hands of a kinder fate than Astorre; it establishes him in a club and gives him his beloved to wife.

(1) Werke III, pp.109-110

(2) Frey Leben und Werke p.243

(3) For history of 'Baroque' see C.T. Carr, 'Two words in art history: I Baroque', Forum for Modern Language Studies, 1.2

(4) Werke III, p.86 (emphasis mine)

## Der Heilige

"The whole story, in a sense, is a piece of eavesdropping" (1), says W.D. Williams of Der Heilige, which along with Die Hochzeit des Mönchs is an outstanding specimen of the Rahmenerzählung. At the end of the year 1191 the English martyr Thomas à Becket is being canonised. Sitting at a large fire in his monastery in Zürich, the aged Chorherr Burckhard encourages his guest, Hans the crossbow maker, to relate his experiences of Becket from the time which he spent at the court of Henry II. Hans had found his way to England after a chequered career in Germany and Spain, and had attached himself to the best crossbow maker in London. His invention of a refinement to the crossbow led him to employment with the King, and he soon became an intimate both of King Henry, whom he accompanied on his hunting and amorous adventures, and of the Chancellor Becket because of his knowledge of Arabic and Moorish culture. Hans is somewhat afraid of Becket, not just because of his supreme power in the state but because he feels there is something uncanny about the man; from the first he experiences „Scheu vor seinem blassen und übermenschlich klugen Antlitz" (2). Although ruthless in government, Becket is revolted by bloodshed; he refuses to attend executions, he throws away the sword with which he has just killed a man, he allows no hunting on his estates and he rejects the superstition of his age which burns a woman for witchcraft. Hans explains this by reference to Becket's Saracen origins and pagan beliefs, and indeed Becket himself makes use of these to motivate his actions and attitudes. His character, as a 'heathen' and as a man of cultural refinement is illustrated by his artistic preferences.

„So vergnügte er sein Auge - wemgleich der große falsche Prophet durch Seinigen diese bildlichen Ergötzungen untersagt hat - oft an den weissen und ruhigen Gliedmaßen der keuschen Marmorweiber, die er in seinen Palästen aufgestellt hatte. Ihr habet wohl noch keine gesehen. Sie werden aus dem Schutte zerstörter Griechentempel hervorgezogen, und der Herr von Byzanz hatte dem Kanzler für eine politische Gefälligkeit deren einige zugeschickt. Es sind tote Steine ohne Blick und Kraft der Augen, aber betrachtet man sie länger, so fangen sie an zu leben und nicht selten bin auch ich vor diesen kalten Geschöpfen stehen geblieben, um zu ergründen, ob sie heitern oder traurigen Gemütes sind." (3)

- (1) Williams op.cit. p.208
- (2) Werke IV, p.35
- (3) Werke IV, pp.42-45

With the introduction of these statues - quite unnecessary to the action or even to the understanding of Becket's character - Meyer draws Becket forward into the Renaissance. He sees him neither as a Saracen nor as a medieval Christian, but as a Renaissance humanist who despises the primitive outlook and behaviour of his contemporaries. In a letter to Rodenberg, the editor of the Deutsche Rundschau in which Der Heilige first appeared, Meyer writes:

„Ich glaube so viel hineingelegt, das Mittelalter so fein und gründlich verspottet zu haben und in Becket einen neuen Charakter gezeichnet zu haben.“ (1)

Becket further shows his independence in artistic matters by building a little woodland palace, in which his daughter Grace is kept, in the Modern style.

„Auf einer goldgrünen Waldwiese stand ein Schlößchen, wie ich seinesgleichen wohl im Königreiche Granada gesehen hatte. Es war von hohen glatten Mauern aus gelbem Steine umgeben, über welchen eine kleine blauschimmernde Kuppel emporstieg, und schlanke dunkle Baumspitzen ragten, die ich Zypressen genannt hätte, wären wir unter einem südlicheren Himmel gewesen. Das zierliche, feste Bauwerk war frisch und neu und glänzte im letzten Lichte wie ein Juwel.“ (2)

Inside the wall is an elegant courtyard with fountains and marble seats. The servants in the castle complain that Becket has brought up his daughter as a heathen. He tells her fairy stories which present the world as a happy and beautiful place and gives her no idea of wickedness, pain and suffering. No crucifix hangs in the little chapel, because it portrays too vividly the agony of Christ.

After the death of Grace, which occurs when she is being kidnapped by the King's orders, Becket does seem to turn more to the figure of the suffering Christ. Hans occasionally hears him praying to a crucifix.

„In der Vorhalle...hing in einer düstern Ecke ein großer hölzerner Crucifixus, ein grobes, mageres Werk, aber ein Haupt mit rührenden Zügen. Der König hielt ihn hoch in Ehren, weil sein Vorfahr, Wilhelm der Eroberer, ihn vor der Schlacht bei Hastings inbrünstig angebetet und durch seine Macht dann auch den Sieg erlangt hatte. Auf dieses Bildwerk hatte der Kanzler sich sonst wohl gehütet seine verwöhnten Augen zu richten.“

(1) Letter to Rodenberg, 10th May 1879 Ein Briefwechsel herausgegeben von A. Langmesser (2te Auflage Berlin 1918) p.49

(2) Werke IV, pp.46-47

zu heften; denn er verabscheute das rieselnde Blut und das Häßliche. Aber in jener Zeit hörte ich zuweilen mit Verwundern, wie er mit dem gebräunten Crucifix Zwiesprach hielt." (1)

Later, at his martyrdom, Becket again addresses a crucifix. Knowing he is about to die, he begs Christ to take possession of him and grant him His Passion. As the four knights attack him under the high altar he stretches out his arms, „wie der Gekreuzigte über ihm, als hätte sich dieser verdoppelt" (2). The equation of Becket with his master is complete. The conversation with the crucifix which Hans overhears, in which Becket prays for help „damit ich in deine Stufen trete" (3), is used along with an increase in his good works to motivate Becket's conversion and to lessen the shock of his complete volte-face when he is created Archbishop of Canterbury. Becket's sainthood has already been hinted at: when he refuses to burn an old woman for witchcraft he declares that she is as much a witch as he is a saint, and when Hans first sees him going to visit his daughter Grace, he is reminded of a dedicated knight seeking the Holy Grail, so enraptured and devout is Becket's expression. After Grace's death the marks of his suffering become visible in his face, and Hans compares it to the face in a picture of Christ.

„Habt Ihr das aus Byzanz gekommene Bild gesehen, das die Mönche in Allerheiligen zu Schaffhausen als ihren besten Schatz hüten? Es ist ein toter Salvator mit eingesunkenen Augen und geschlossenen Lidern aber betrachtet man ihn länger, so ändert er durch eine List der Zeichnung und Verteilung der Schatten die Miene und sieht Euch mit offenen Schmerzensaugen traurig an. Eine unehrliche Kunst, Herr! Denn der Maler soll nicht zweideutig, sondern klar seine Striche ziehen.

Mit dem Kanzler aber ging es mir umgekehrt. Wenn ich sein Antlitz länger betrachtete und er gerade schwieg, so war es, als schlossen seine Lider und es sitze ein Gestorbener mit dem König zu Tische."

This is the first time that Becket is compared to Christ, but from now on the comparisons become more frequent. (The works of art at Allerheiligen where Hans had spent part of his youth as a monk, had obviously made a great impression on him, for he compares his hatred of Gui Malherbe, the Norman knight who had ruined his sweetheart Hilde, with the feelings he had for the soldier piercing Christ's side in the monastery's altar-p

- (1) Werke IV, p.78
- (2) Werke IV, p.135
- (3) Werke IV, p.79
- (4) Werke IV, p.74

After Becket's conversion relations between him and the King deteriorate, accompanied by several bad omens, as Hans sees them. When Becket hands back to the King the sign of his office as Chancellor, Henry in horror drops it. Hans picks it up to discover that a crack runs down the centre of the jewel bearing the royal coat of arms. Eventually Henry banishes Becket, who takes refuge in France. The affairs of England are soon in a perilous state, with the King's sons warring against each other and their father. Richard, the only one to remain loyal, decides to journey to France in order to persuade the Archbishop to be reconciled with the King, and Hans goes with him. On the way they meet Bertrand de Born, who is stirring up dissidence in France and encouraging the English princes in their rebellion. He proclaims Becket as a secretly, whose quiet scheming is destroying Henry as surely as open warfare. Bertrand's companions mention a piece of ancient sculpture which has been recently excavated at Arles and is seen as an omen of great disaster - „ein marmornes Mädchenhaupt...mit gebrochenen Augen und der Bitterkeit des Todes auf dem Munde, und wenn man seine geflochtenen Locken näher betrachtete, so seien es züngelnde Nattern" (1).

Richard and Hans reach Becket's monastery, and Richard succeeds in arranging a meeting between King and Archbishop. Hans watches the conversation, studying the architecture of the cloisters the while. The monastery is built in the 'latest' style, with much ornamentation on the pillars and capitals, which are crowned with alternate musical angels and grinning devils.

„Da mußte ich, wehe, über den Häuptern der zwei ein steinernes kleines Scheusal erblicken, das, auf dem Gurt eines Pfeilers hockend, mit seinem Krötenbeinchen höhnisch nach ihnen stieß und dazu die Zunge reckte. Dieses mißfiel mir, obschon es ein Zufall war, und ich hätte die beiden Herren lieber erst am nächsten Pfeiler sich scheiden sehen wo ein harfenierender Engel seine Schwanenfittiche ausbreitete." (

Reconciliation is not accomplished, and Becket's death becomes certain. His martyrdom is portrayed as genuine: he makes it clear to the knights who come to kill him that the sin lies on the King's head for refusing

(1) Werke IV, pp.111-112

(2) Werke IV, pp.116-117

submit to the will of God and honour the privileges of the Church. Hans, as a medieval man, though he watches the martyrdom with pious horror cannot but imagine that Becket wanted his revenge on Henry. When the King comes to do penance at the tomb, he receives a letter from his son Richard, who declares that he renounces his father for not avenging Becket's murder. Henry collapses, and it seems to Hans that the effigy on the tomb - a good likeness though of little artistic merit - smiles contentedly at this misfortune. Hans mentioned this smile in his account of the martyrdom, and at the beginning of his tale he prefigures the end when he recalls with a shudder „das..heilige Hohnlächeln, mit dem er verschied als erwiesen ihm seine Henker gerade einen Liebesdienst" (1).

The story of Becket is told by a devout man, who is willing to allow every-one his chance of salvation and who rejoices to see Becket moving in a direction which seems to assure his. Nevertheless, he has seen close quarters the relationship between Becket and the King and heard of Becket's thoughts about Henry. He cannot square Becket's death as martyr with his obvious inability to forgive Henry's destruction of Canterbury and his, to Hans, natural desire for vengeance. Was Becket motivated by this desire, even though unaware of it? As Bertrand de Born said: „glaubst der Liebe zu dienen, aber der Haß ist der mächtigere" (2).

One might direct Meyer to Hans' words about the picture of the dead Christ - „Eine unehrliche Kunst..., denn der Maler soll nicht zweideutig sondern klar seine Striche ziehen". Meyer is being deliberately 'zweideutig'. By using a narrator who sees everything from a special vantage point but cannot read the hearts of the chief characters, Meyer makes clear that he is not going to sound the motives behind Becket's conversion. His narrative thus resembles one of those pictures which baffle Storm's narrators so much: they ask, where is the story to explain this painting to me? Meyer says: here is my story which is like a painting - it goes away no more than what your own eyes can collect as evidence.

(1) Werke IV, p.17

(2) Werke IV, p.111

## Plautus im Nonnenkloster

The tale is the account of bizarre adventures among the 'barbarians' north of the Alps, the frame-setting is the cultured court circle of Cosimo de' Medici. To entertain this circle the humanist Poggio tells the story of his discovery of a codex of Plautus.

„Meine Fabel," parodierte Poggio die den italienischen Novellen gewöhnlich voranstehende breite Inhaltsangabe, „handelt von zwei Kreuzen, einem schweren und einem leichten, und von zwei barbarischen Nonnen, einer Novize und einer Äbtissin." (1)

Here we find one of those jokes against his own style which Meyer occasionally inserts into his stories, just as in Der Heilige we saw him point to his own ambiguity and refusal to commit himself. Meyer has taken the Novelle form from Renaissance literature and with it the habit of indicating at the start the outcome of the action.

While Poggio, as a young man, is attending the Council of Constance, he journeys to a nearby nunnery in the hope of finding the copy of Plautus said to be preserved there. His guide is a glum young man, and to cheer him up Poggio starts telling jokes. He asks whether Hans is familiar with the story of St. Peter's release from prison by an angel; Hans replies that he knows the painting showing this story in the church at Tossignano. Peter realised that his guide was an angel, explains Poggio, because he was not asked for a tip. Instead of being amused, Hans looks even glumlier. He tells Poggio that he has agreed to accept so little payment for his services, because he is glad of any chance to visit the nunnery and see his sweetheart Gertrude for the last time before she takes the veil.

On his arrival at the nunnery Poggio finds this same Gertrude in the church, and she tells him why she has rejected Hans to enter the convent. As a child she promised the Virgin Mary that she would become a nun at the age of twenty if the Virgin would keep alive her sick mother until then. The Virgin has kept her side of the bargain, and now Gertrude is prepared to keep hers. She knows that she does so unwillingly and she prays that the Virgin will help her to be a good nun as she helped the wicked Duchess Alaiswinte to carry her heavy cross. So saying she looks up at a stone

(1) Werke III, p.126

depicting this scene. Poggio spoke to Gertrude in the first place because the relief had attracted his interest.

Das Steinwerk enthielt zwei, durch ein Kreuz verbundene Gestalten, und dieses Kreuz glich an Größe und Verhältnissen vollständig dem an der Klosterwiese zu Schau stehenden, welches von beiden dem andern nachgeahmt sein mochte. Ein gewaltiges, dorngekröntes Weib trug e fast waagrecht mit kraftvollen Armen auf mächtiger Schulter und stürzte doch unter ihm zusammen, wie die derb im Gewande sich abzeichnenden Knie zeigten. Neben und vor dieser hinfälligen Gigant schob eine kleinere Gestalt, ein Krönlein auf dem lieblichen Haupte ihre schmalere Schulter erbarmungsvoll unter die untragbare Last. Der alte Meister hatte - absichtlich oder wohl eher aus Mangel an künstlerischen Mitteln - Körper und Gewandung roh behandelt, sein Können und die Inbrunst seiner Seele auf die Köpfe verwendend, welche die Verzweiflung und das Erbarmen ausdrückten. (1)

The description of Becket's effigy is similar: „Nicht des Mannes Kunst aber die Ähnlichkeit des Bildes war groß; denn er hatte sich den Prim bei dessen Lebzeiten wohl eingepägt und sich seines Antlitzes bemächtigt" (2). In these instances, where devotion is involved in portraiture Meyer seems to allow the artist the same gift of capturing the spirit essential likeness of a person or scene which characterises Storm's portrait-painters; one thinks of Johannes' portrait of Katharina which catches the expression of love in her eyes (Aquis Submersus).

Poggio has already seen the great cross displayed on the nunnery meadow, with the little abbess dancing around and promising the age-old miracle at Gertrude's clothing-ceremony. Gertrude explains that the Duchess Amalawinte had been a murderess, but had escaped justice until her conscience began to trouble her. She did penance by carrying a heavy cross, and would have collapsed under its weight had not the Virgin Mary come to her aid. Since then the miracle has been repeated for every novice at the convent. Poggio realises that a trick is being played, perhaps out of superstition or perhaps for sordid economic reasons, and it occurs to him how he can turn this to advantage in his search for a copy of Plautus. By pretending to be an official from the Church Council with an edict against false miracles and heathen literature, Poggio deceives the Abbess into admitting that a fake cross is substituted for

(1) Werke III, p.132

(2) Werke IV, p.137

the heavy one and that she does have a codex of Plautus. She offers him the codex if he will keep silence, but he orders her, on pain of disclosure to have the fake cross destroyed. Satisfied with his success, Poggio retires to enjoy his Plautus, but his peace is shattered by the sound of Gertrude weeping as she spends the night in vigil in the church. Poggio's conscience is stirred and he resolves to help her by revealing the deception with the crosses to her.

The next day Gertrude destroys the miracle for ever. She smashes the fake cross, finds the real one and tries to carry it into the choir of the church. It proves too heavy and she falls, knocking herself unconscious. On coming to herself again she joyfully accepts her failure as a sign that the Virgin Mary does not want her as a nun, and she turns to Hans. Poggio is disappointed to see her return so soon to normal life after her moment as the representative of truth annihilating the works of falsehood.

The stone relief portraying the Duchess Amalawite is not mentioned again after Poggio's description of it, but it overshadows the rest of the story. Meyer uses this carving as he does the picture of Byblis in Die Richterinnen - to illustrate the situation or prefigure the action. Guthke says: „Wieder ist sich der Mensch in einem künstlerischen Urbild vorweggegeben, nicht zeitlich, sondern wesenhaft, und er paßt sein Handeln die Präfiguration an" (1). Gertrude compares herself with Amalawite and states that she will need even more help from the Virgin if she is to be happy in the nunnery. In her struggle with the cross she re-enacts the scene on the relief, only, as Poggio observes, no divinity comes to her. Guthke is not quite accurate in saying that the work of art reveals the inner nature of the character. Gertrude may resemble Amalawite in appearance and in religious zeal, but she has no great sin to atone for, so her sacrifice is unnecessary. The right course for her is to marry and have children. As we shall see, the situation mirrored in the Byblis picture is also not a real one.

This is one of Meyer's most 'artificial' stories. Poggio is entertaining a cultured audience, thus he is much concerned with his method of

(1) K.S. Guthke Wege zur Literatur p.196

presentation. He shows skill in unfolding the story of Hans and Gertrude gradually, allowing each to add his or her side of it. He gives an amusing sketch of the little Abbess, whom he develops throughout the tale; she is there at the beginning, displaying her miraculous cross, and she is there at the end, gathering up the fragments of the false one for firewood.

The concern with the aesthetic aspects of the story leads to comic effects. Poggio portrays himself as the aesthete par excellence, who dare not offend his courtly audience by representing exactly what Gertrude said in her crude Alemannic dialect. He objects to the extravagances of Gothic architecture and is soothed by the classic proportions of the nunnery church. He always refers to the Swiss as 'barbarians', and is inordinately proud of his 'klassischen Ursprung', evident in his face, and in his Florentine citizenship.

Poggio's culture enables him to see life as a game and to judge men's actions aesthetically instead of morally. This leads to misunderstandings among simpler people. He offends Gertrude by admiring her fine arms; she suspects him no doubt of baser feelings. When he sees the fake cross he feels sure that only an Italian could have had skill enough to make such a perfect imitation and he praises the artistry. The Abbess thinks that he takes a cynical view of the deception and tries to bargain with him for his silence against the Plautus. He sees Gertrude and the Abbess as actors in a drama, and is robbed of aesthetic pleasure when Gertrude abandons so quickly her rôle as the agent of truth. But he is not so heartless as he pretends to be, and in his old age, troubled by worthless sons, he repents „die Unbefangenheit meiner Standpunkte und die LÄßlichkeit meiner Lebensauffassung" (1). He can even tell the joke against himself that the Abbess handed over to him as a 'banned book' a copy of his own 'facetiae'! It is when men can no longer distinguish moral from aesthetic judgments that they have reached a truly corrupt state as Meyer shows in Die Versuchung des Pescara.

(1) Werke III, p.125

### Gustav Adolfs Page

Writing about Meyer's youth, Adolf Frey gives an account of an early unpublished Novelle which portrays the situation of a man between two sisters, one with too much moral strictness, the other with too little.

Die Vorliebe Meyers, einen Vorgang durch einen entsprechenden, von bildender Kunst dargestellten symbolisch zu verstärken und eindringlich zu machen, zeigt sich schon hier in aller Schärfe; wie in „Gustav Adolfs Page“ die Tatsache, daß der Vater Leubelfing den Sohn so gut geopfert hat, durch die an der Zimmerdecke in Stuck ausgeführte Opferung Isaaks durch Abraham erläutert und verdeutlicht wird, so geschieht etwas ganz Ähnliches in der Erstlingsnovelle: es handelt sich um den Augenblick, wo Graf Bettine zwischen den Schwestern wählen soll, da sein Fürst zum Heiraten aufgefordert hat. „Klara, den emporgerichteten edlen Kopf in die Hand gelegt, betrachtete gedankenlos eine verdunkelte Freske der Decke, die sie wohl noch nie eines Augenmerks gewürdigt. Ein verachteter Maler hatte vor langer Zeit das bekannte Urteil des Paris abgebildet und, boshaft genug, nicht, wie sonst, Venus die sich hier mit Juno schon abgewandt, sondern die reine Minerva vor den unbescheidenen Hirten gestellt. Diese Posse entrüstete Klara, hätte sie dieselbe auf sich gedeutet.“ (1)

Written almost thirty years before he published anything, this attempt already employs two of Meyer's favourite techniques, the use of contrast characters and of works of art to reflect the action. The representation of the sacrifice of Isaac with which Frey compares this early use of a work of art, occurs, as is usual with Meyer, near the beginning of the story. The Nürnberg merchant Leubelfing receives a note from King Gustavus Adolphus, who is at that moment visiting the town.

Kaum aber hatte er die wenigen Zeilen des in königlicher Kürze verfaßten Schreibens überflogen, wurde er bleich wie über ihm die Stukkatur der Decke, welche in hervorquellenden Massen und aufdringlicher Gruppe die Opferung Isaaks durch den eigenen Vater Abraham darstellte. (2)

Old Leubelfing has indiscreetly boasted to the King that his son desired to be a royal page, and now that his previous page has been killed in battle, the King has summoned the young man to replace him. Young Leubelfing, however, is not of an heroic disposition, and trembles for his life. He accuses his father of having sacrificed him and gazes pitifully up at Abraham's knife, which hangs directly above him. This scene represents the situation of the characters, but with significant differences. Un

(1) Frey Leben und Werke p.73

(2) Werke III, pp.155-156

Isaac, who willingly submitted himself as a victim, Young Leubelfing is anything but willing to submit to his, even to save the honour of the family. He is rescued by his cousin Gustel, who has a hero-worshipping love for the King. She disguises herself in her late father's uniform and takes her place as page, undetected by Gustavus Adolphus because of his short sight. Thus it is Gustel who is sacrificed by her family, although she is happy to die for the King.

The motif of disguise, like that of sacrifice, is also given pictorial illustration. Gustel jokes to her cousin: „Wir wollen dich..wie den jungen Achill im Bildwerk am Ofen dort unter die Mädchen stecken, und der listige Ulysses vor ihnen das Kriegszeug ausbreitet, wirst du nicht auf ein Schwert losspringen." (1) The mythological allusion is continued when Old Leubelfing makes to embrace Gustel and beg her to help, „nicht anders als, um den Körper seines Sohnes bittend, der greise Priamus die Knie Achills umarmte" (2). The representation of both Biblical and mythological subjects was popular in the seventeenth century, under the influence of the Reformation and the Renaissance.

The setting of Nürnberg gives Meyer the chance to introduce Dürer. The young officer who brings the King's note to the Leubelfings announces that he will visit the famous paintings in the Council Chamber while waiting for the new page. But he finds a nearby tavern more attractive than „die grauen Mauerbilder Meister Albrechts" (2). These are presumably the two paintings of the Apostles John and Peter, Paul and Mark, which Dürer painted as a gift to the town of Nürnberg. The allusion to them helps to build up the atmosphere of militant Protestantism which surrounds Gustavus Adolphus. He is compared to a judge in Israel (see above p. 133) and in death his face is lit up by the sun (above p.134), as though by the halo of a saint. Meyer obviously admired Gustavus Adolphus, and although he gives but a sketchy portrait of him in this story, he does set him up as a Protestant hero, almost a saint. It is as though Meyer felt the need of such a character to counterbalance the unscrupulous, pagan Renaissance men of some of his other stories.

(1) Werke III, p.161

(2) Werke III, p.162

### Das Leiden eines Knaben

In his book The Stories of C.F. Meyer W.D. Williams has much to say about the artistry of this work. He shows that the little anecdote taken from Saint-Simon's Mémoires, which could so easily have become a confession of Meyer's own unhappy and frustrated youth, has instead be turned into an example of the story-teller's art which approaches Die Hochzeit des Mönchs in virtuosity. For Fagon is trying to do what Da achieves - to bring his audience to examine their deeds and the motive for them and thus stand revealed to themselves. The real importance the story is not the sad tale of Julian Boufflers, but Fagon's attempt to cure Louis XIV of his blindness towards the Jesuits and the damage they are doing in France.

Louis tells Madame de Maintenon that his old doctor, Fagon, has disgraced himself by being rude to Père Tellier, the new royal confessor. Fagon enters at this moment and defends himself by explaining that this Jesuit once caused the death of a noble youth, Julian Boufflers. The King orders him to recount the story and so pass the time before dinner. He remembers Julian as a shy, stupid boy and feels little sympathy towards him, though he had once admired his pretty, if equally stupid mother. Madame de Maintenon was friendly with Julian's mother, and promised her on her deathbed that she would care for the boy. Fagon knew the family well, and realised that Julian was not intellectually well endowed. He persuaded Marshal Boufflers to send the boy to a Jesuit college, where Julian at first flourished under the kind treatment. The Jesuits were particularly attentive, since they had gathered from hints dropped by Fagon that Julian might be a son of Louis himself. But after the Mar exposed some sharp practice of the Jesuits they began to take their revenge on Julian, and he lost all the self-confidence which he had gained.

One of the few people who seemed to understand Julian was the animal painter Mouton, who was a protégé of Fagon's and had a studio in his house. There Fagon found Julian having a painting lesson. His picture of a set with cows drinking in a river showed a certain talent, and the suc

made Julian happier. Fagon examined Julian's drawings and was particularly impressed by the careful drawing of a bee. If only he had known then, he sighs, that Julian's death would be caused by sketching a bee! His attention is attracted by one drawing which Julian explains is not by him, but by Mouton. It portrays the scene in Ovid's Metamorphoses where Pentheus is pursued and torn to pieces by the Maenads. Mouton might have heard the tale from Julian, as he worked on his Latin translation, and been moved by certain similarities.

„Ein Jüngling, unverkennbar Julian in allen seinen Körperformen, welch Moutons Malerauge leichtlich besser kannte als der Knabe selbst, ein schlanker Renner, flöh, den Kopf mit einem Ausdrucke tödlicher Angst nach ein paar ihm nachjagenden Gespenstern umgewendet. Keine Bacchantinnen, Weiber ohne Alter, verkörperte Vorstellungen, Ängstigungen, folternde Gedanken - eines dieser Scheusale trug einen langen Jesuitenhut auf dem geschorenen Schädel und einen Folianten in der Hand - unerschrocken erst die Felswand, wüst und unerklimmbar, die vor dem Blicke zu wachschien, wie ein finsternes Schicksal!" (1)

Julian sees nothing peculiar in the sketch, but Fagon in horror tucks it out of sight into the middle of the bundle. Later he discovers that it is lying right on the top.

The prophecy of disaster soon fulfilled itself. Julian's class devised a new way to make fun of their teacher, Père Aniel: Julian was asked to draw a bee on the blackboard and to write 'bête à miel' underneath. The ensuing uproar attracted the attention of Père Tellier, head of the school and worst of Julian's persecutors, who thrashed the boy until he collapsed. Fagon told his father of the incident, although Julian did not want him to know, and accused the Marshal of neglecting his son. Julian died of a brain fever, but his father managed to help him to die easily by making him imagine he was fulfilling his ambition - fighting the King and capturing an enemy flag.

Fagon fails in his attempt to draw the King into the story, to make aware that he too, by his preference of the Jesuits, has assisted in Julian's death as well as in the wider issue of Protestant persecution. Louis remains blind and self-centred, interested only in the artistic

(1) Werke III, p.329

telling of a tale, „deren Wege wie die eines Gartens in einen und denselben Mittelpunkt zusammenliefen: der König, immer wieder der König!“

As a contrast to the cultured, almost stylised Louis, the painter Mouton is introduced. His manners are abominable, as a painter he is a naturalist. Fagon compares him to the Flemish artists, whom Louis dislikes, and observes that Mouton „durch die Sachlichkeit seines Pins ...die Holländer bei weitem überholländerte“ (2). But the presence of Mouton, as a foil to Louis in manners, to Fagon in style, or as a friend to Julian, is not sufficiently motivated. Julian is well enough provided with people who understand and appreciate him, also he is a skillful fencer to compensate for his lack of scholarship. It looks very much as though Meyer wanted some work of art to reflect or foretell the action. In order to introduce the work of art - the Pentheus picture which admirably indicates Julian's situation and his fate at the hands of the Jesuits - he felt it necessary to introduce an artist.

Guthke points to a literary reference to which Meyer gives the task usually performed by a work of art. At the beginning of Fagon's story Julian's mother is introduced by an account of the première of Molière Le Malade Imaginaire. Fagon quotes the speech of the doctor Diafoirus recounting the achievements of his son Thomas. The satirical portrait of the foolish father praising his mentally retarded son distresses Madame de Boufflers, who recognises herself and Julian. The situation of Julian as a backward child is paralleled by that of Thomas Diafoirus but the parallel can be carried no further. Thomas is an unsympathetic character, being arrogant as well as stupid, whereas Julian's humility and kindness endear him to those with eyes for his virtues.

In his use of devices to reflect the situation and prefigure the outcome, Meyer has here fallen between two stools. His literary allusion is not entirely apt and his artistic device, impressive though it is, not completely convincing in its motivation.

(1) Werke III, p.347

(2) Werke III, p.316

### Die Hochzeit des Mönchs

Although this story is one of Meyer's most 'artistic', it is the one which contains no important work of art. The artistry of Dante, and Meyer, has already been discussed under the heading Form. Dante takes up the theme of the renegade monk which has been adopted by the circle around Cangrande's fire, although he makes his monk an unwilling renegade, thus ensuring a tragic outcome - „wer mit freiem Anlaufe springt, springt gut; wer gestoßen wird, springt schlecht" (1). He develops his story from the inscription on a tombstone in Padua: 'hic jacet monachus Astor cum uxore Antiopa. sepeliebat Azzolinus', and to supply his secondary characters he takes the names and faces of his listeners. To the all main theme Dante adds the theme of the man who rejects his bride on the wedding-day because he has suddenly fallen in love with another woman.

Astorre the monk is shown to be lacking in true self-control. He originally became a monk because it was the custom for the fourth son of his family to do so, but the strict rule enabled him to lead an exemplary life. He left the cloister only under extreme moral pressure from his dying father, who insisted that as the surviving son he must marry his brother's widow and perpetuate the family. But Astorre has no innate principles of right and duty, and without the safeguard of the monastic régime proves incapable of living in the world.

During the preparations for Astorre's wedding with Diana, the Canossa family is mentioned. Ascanio, Astorre's friend, is unwilling to ask Olympia and her daughter. The old lady is mad and out of favour with Ezzelin, ruler of Padua, since her husband was executed for taking part in a conspiracy. Astorre remembers this only too well, having been the officiating priest at the execution. His imagination recalls the scene vividly: Count Canossa expected to be reprieved and struggled with the headsman. As he was forced down on to the block, his little daughter laid her head beside his, so that Astorre feared for her life too.

Jetzt leuchteten die Farben so kräftig, daß der Mönch die zwei neben einanderliegenden Häuse, den ziegelroten Nacken des Grafen und den

schneeweißen des Kindes mit dem gekräuselten goldbraunen Flaume vor  
Schritte vor sich in voller Lebenswahrheit erblickte. Das Hälschen  
war von der schönsten Bildung und ungewöhnlicher Schlantheit. (1)

This picture tortured Astorre for a long time afterwards. As he said  
his prayers in the monastery chapel and looked at the altar picture of  
the execution of St. Paul, who with his black hair and red neck was  
unlike the Count, he seemed to see Antiope's head lying beside the Ap-  
tle's, and he trembled again as the axe fell. He confessed this vision  
to the Prior, who soothingly interpreted it as a sign from heaven and  
not as an indication of Astorre's suppressed desires. Now that he is  
free of his monk's vows, an unfortunate concatenation of events gives  
these desires a chance to express themselves. While Astorre is buying  
a ring for Diana, one of the rings which he is examining is knocked out  
of his hand and rolls towards none other than Antiope Canossa. Her  
mother places it on Antiope's finger, and the sudden arrival of Astorre's friend  
Germano prevents him from recovering it. In her madness Antiope's  
mother takes this for a genuine promise of marriage, and at the betrothal  
ceremony of Astorre and Diana she accuses the monk of betraying her  
daughter. She insults Diana so cruelly that Diana strikes at her, but  
instead hits Antiope, who has thrust her mother out of the way. Diana's  
brother Germano offers to marry her and make good the insult, but Antiope  
refuses. She and Astorre have fallen in love and lost their wits com-  
pletely; they marry secretly then plead with Ezzelein to annul the ob-  
ligation to Diana and permit them to continue as man and wife. Diana is  
not satisfied with the arrangement and kills Antiope, whereupon  
Astorre and Germano attack and kill each other.

Just as the two women, Antiope and Diana, are contrasted in charac-  
ter and appearance, so they are described in contrasting allusions to paint-  
ing and sculpture. Frequent references are made to Diana's statuesque  
figure: the comparison with the chaste Greek goddess Diana is hinted  
throughout, and at the final masked ball she disguises herself as the  
goddess. Olympia Canossa describes her as „dieses kaum aus dem Hohen  
gehauene breite Stück Marmor! Diese verpfuschte Riesin, die Gottvater

(1) Werke III, p.244

stümperte, als er noch Gesell war und kneten lernte!" (1). Antiope associated with pictures. When Astorre and Germano enter the Canossa residence to present Germano's suit they find Antiope sitting by a window.

Sein in dem Umriß eines Kleeblattes endigender Bogen war voller Abglorie, welche die liebreizende Gestalt im Halbkreise von Brust zu Nacken umfing. Ihre gezäumte Haarkrone ähnelte den Spitzen eines Dornenkranzes, und die schwachtenden Lippen schlürften den Himmel.

The wording recalls the poem 'Auf Goldgrund', in which farm labourers are compared to the pictures of medieval saints. No doubt Meyer wishes to stress Antiope's readiness to suffer for others, but she repeats the gesture of self-sacrifice too often - for her father, her mother, and finally for Astorre, when she makes to shield him from a hostile mob. The allusions to sainthood are faintly ridiculous, as when Rudolf Platsch says to Jürg Jenatsch: „Ihr schweigt?.. Das gilt wohl bei Euch, wie gemalten Heiligen und schönen Frauen, als Ja" (3). They are also sacrilegious: Astorre's devotions are disturbed by his unadmitted worldly love, and once this love finds its object in Antiope, the two abandon all decency and self-restraint in order to become united. The references to sacred art do not throw a favourable light on Antiope, rather they serve to emphasise the enormity of this 'Tragödie der Haltlosigkeit', as Baumgarten calls it.

- (1) Werke III, p.257
- (2) Werke III, p.267
- (3) Werke I, p.208

### Die Richterin

In this complicated story Meyer deals with the problem of conscience which demands punishment for a crime, even one that is known to none. He sets the story in the Swiss mountains at the time of Charlemagne, a time and place where Christianity is only beginning to take hold, and witchcraft and superstition are deeply rooted.

In a long exposition the main characters and their past history are introduced. The judge Stemma has ruled her area of Switzerland for many years with great success, and has a reputation for virtue as well as for legal skill. One episode in her past is unclear - her husband, Comes Wulf of Malmort, fell dead at her feet after drinking the wine with which she welcomed him home from the expedition to avenge her father's murder. She manages to clear herself of any implication in this death, but she did in fact murder her husband, protecting herself from the poisoned wine with an antidote. Stemma killed him because she was already with child by another man, a young priest named Peregrin, whom her father had thrown over a precipice. The child, Palma Novella, is accepted by all as Wulf's daughter. All this is revealed when Stemma is visited by Peregrin in a dream; she drives the ghost away, declaring that he has no share in her child. She has tried to convince herself that she has committed no crime, both for the sake of Palma and of her subjects. Thus she refuses to judge her serf, Faustine, who begs to be put to death for a similar crime. But the strain of concealing her guilt through long years is beginning to tell on Stemma, and the action of the story shows how she breaks.

The other part of the exposition, contained in the first chapter, concerns Wulf's son, Wulfrin, who is attached to Charlemagne's court. He is sought out in Rome by Graciosus, a neighbour of Stemma's, who has come to find some of Alcuin's works for his uncle, the Bishop of Chur, and to urge Wulfrin to present himself to Stemma, since she wishes to justify herself to him. Together the two young men rehearse the circumstances of Comes Wulf's death. Wulfrin finds them disagreeable and concludes: „Ist das zum Abmalen und an die Wand Heften?" - a metaphor typical of Meyer (1)

(1) Werke III, p.361

Wulfrin inherited a hunting-horn from his father, by means of which Graciosus recognised him. The Wolf family owns two famous objects - hunting-horn and a cup, which was given to an early Wolf by a fairy. the Wolf's wife drinks to him from the cup and recites the charm engraved on it, then marital happiness is assured. The horn is of Biblical origin, said to have been sounded for the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, later dug up by a Wolf crusading in the Holy Land. If the Wolf sounds on his return home, his wife is compelled to confess all that she has done in his absence. The two objects play a considerable part in the story, the cup symbolising love and the horn conscience. The horn saves Wulfrin's life when he is travelling to Malmort. He is captured by brigands who want news of Charlemagne's movements. They are about to kill Wulfrin for refusing to give it, but he is recognised and ransomed instead. A girl among the band knows the horn and sees a resemblance between Wulfrin and the effigy on his father's tombstone.

The tombstone effigy of Comes Wulf also has its part to play. The cophagus stands in the middle of the castle yard carrying the effigies of the Comes, complete with horn, and of Stemma, her hands folded in prayer on her breast. Wulfrin looks at the inscription round her head: *Ora pro magna peccatrice*, and accuses her of hypocrisy, but Stemma declares that even in sinning she acts on a large scale. The tombstone as well as the horn becomes symbolic of the conscience which is forcing Stemma to confess her secret. She dislikes the horn, free from superstition as she is, because it causes stirrings of conscience. Wulfrin blows it as he reaches Malmort for the first time, alarming Stemma in the midst of dream about Peregrin and her husband. At the first opportunity she takes it from him and throws it into the river.

Once the question of Stemma's guilt seems to have been settled by Wulfrin's formal exoneration of her, which takes place before her assembled household, the story turns to the love of Palma and Wulfrin. Palma innocently believes her affection to be sisterly, but Wulfrin realises from the first that he has fallen in love with this girl whom he has n

before nor known as a sister. He is glad to comply with Stemma's suggestion to betroth her to Graciosus, and together they set off for his castle. After the betrothal ceremony Palma asks Graciosus to show her the book with the picture of a brother and sister. She explains it to Wulfrin as a portrayal of their original situation, when he would have nothing to do with her.

Über dem lateinischen Texte war mit sauberen Strichen und hellen Farben abgebildet, wie ein Behelmer den Arm abwehrend gegen ein Mädchen ausstreckt, das ihm zu verfolgen schien. Mit dem Krieger dachte er sich nichts gemein zu haben als den Helm, doch je länger er das gemalte Mädchen beschaute, desto mehr begann es mit seinen braunen Augen und goldenen Haaren Palma zu gleichen. Um die Figur aber stand geschrieben: Byblis. (1)

In Ovid's story it is Byblis who desires her brother; he is horrified by her confession of love and drives her away. It seems to Wulfrin that the picture reveals his own situation to all and he wildly tears up the page. When Palma gaily crowns him with roses he can bear the sight of her no more and orders her to go home, even drawing his sword against her. He himself sets out on the other road to Malmort, which leads through a gorge. The Föhn is blowing and a storm is raging. Wulfrin meets Fantine, the serf, and they exchange confessions of their guilt. Later he encounters Palma, loses control completely and hurls her against the cliff. When he wakes up next morning he cannot understand how he could have acted in such a way.

Ein tückischer Becher ungewohnten Weines, oder das freche Bild einer ausschweifenden Fabel, oder der heiße Hauch des Föhnes oder was es sonst gewesen sein mochte, hatte ihn betört und verstört. (2)

He discusses the matter with Stemma. She tells him to keep his secret to himself and overcome his problem; he declares that he will confess to Charlemagne, who together with Stemma must pass sentence on him.

Wulfrin recovers his horn, which seems to give him back his self-confidence, and he decides to blow his father awake and ask him for the truth about Palma's origins. The blast wakens Stemma from a vision of a mighty woman who seems to represent Justice. She has no idea of what Wulfrin

(1) Werke III, p.404

(2) Werke III, p.409

is doing; in her confusion she imagines that her late husband has returned from the dead to interrogate her. She rushes into the courtyard: „das Comes ließ sein Horn zurückgleiten und die steinerne Stemma hob die Hände als flehe sie: Hüte das Geheimnis!" (1) She rages at the effigy, blurt out the whole story of her crime; when she comes to herself again she finds that Palma has heard every word.

Stemma agrees to confess to Charlemagne, but not because her conscience forces her to. The horn, which symbolises conscience, moves her to speak openly of her guilt, but this is not a true confession, since she is unaware of the witness. Yet it cannot be said that her confession to the Emperor is motivated solely by mother-love. The beginning of the story shows her already near breaking-point, the guilty visions becoming ever more persistent. The realisation that her silence will kill Palma and ruin Wulfrin is the last straw which forces her to speak and thereupon to kill herself.

Meyer uses other concrete symbols to highlight the contrast made by the Wulfenhorn and Wulfenbecher between love and conscience, paganism and Christianity. The court of the Christian emperor Charlemagne is the height of culture and learning. While in Rome Charlemagne admires an equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius which has been preserved because it was thought to represent Constantine. Charlemagne merely laughs when Alouin tells him this, showing that his faith is firmer than that of those pietists who would have destroyed a fine work of art because of its non-Christian origins. The Christian culture of Charlemagne's court is secure, but in Switzerland it is making little headway. The crozier of Bishop Felix of Chur displays the angel of the Annunciation, but the Bishop has difficulty in preaching the good news to his fierce flock.

Twice illuminated manuscripts are used to describe Palma. As Wulfrin watches her ringing the castle bell for morning service she reminds him of an angel in the decoration of a capital letter. The Christian parallel portrays Palma in her innocent joy, but when she has become a danger

(1) Werke III, p.417

and a temptation to Wulfrin, the illustration is taken from Ovid, who is the heathen poet of love. The introduction of this picture is not well motivated - it is another of Meyer's coincidences. But the whole story is very artificial: Meyer makes little attempt to camouflage the mechanics of his exposition, but uses soliloquy, visions and recitals of facts well known to all the parties involved. In the midst of such blatant contrivance the picture is not out of place, and once it has been introduced it is well used. Like the stone relief in Plautus im Nonnenkloster it illustrates what appears to be the situation, though with certain differences - Wulfrin thinks that it reflects his incestuous love, but he and Palma are in no way related. The picture has the added function of initiating action: it reveals Wulfrin's secret clearly to himself and brings on the bout of madness which in turn leads him to the deeds which cause the dénouement.

### Die Versuchung des Pescara

Just as Die Hochzeit des Mönchs is Meyer's finest Rahmenerzählung, the second pinnacle of his art, in the stories without frames, is Die Versuchung des Pescara. Instead of a frame Meyer makes extensive use of contrasting characters, parallel plots and various illustrations of the theme of temptation and betrayal. Unlike Die Hochzeit, this story does not contain many references to works of art. 'Indeed the proliferation of pictures and statues here is appropriate, since the whole story concerns the discrepancy between reality and illusion, the open and the hidden, the representation and that which is represented. All the characters operate according to pictures they have formed in their minds, and these are continually changing, so that the continual reminder that a picture is not a truth but only one particular vision of the truth, is a fundamental part of the artistic design.' (1) We have seen that the other three authors use works of art to reveal information, especially about their characters. Meyer's pictures and sculptures, on the other hand, really tell us nothing. They appear to reflect or prefigure the action but always with significant differences: Old Leubelfing, unlike Abraham in the ceiling decoration, is not willing to sacrifice his son, and Wulfrin's love, which seems to be illustrated by the Byblis picture, is not incestuous at all. In Die Versuchung des Pescara works of art help to deepen the air of mystery which surrounds the hero. The most outstanding is the picture of Pescara and his wife playing chess, which is described early on in the work.

The story begins in Milan, in the palace of the duke, Franz Sforza. His chancellor, Morone, is attempting to persuade him to join the Holy League, which is to unite the Pope, Venice, France and England against the Emperor Charles V. The Constable Bourbon, one of the imperial generals, arrives with a message from the Emperor, requesting Sforza to keep out of the League, on pain of losing his dukedom. Sforza is so terrified that he urges Morone to conclude negotiations with the League representatives at once. These gentlemen are already in Milan and

(1) Williams op.cit. p.210

waiting to dine with the Duke. On their way to dinner Sforza and Morone find that a painting, a gift from the ruler of Mantua, has been hung in the conference room.

Der Herzog ergriff seinen Kanzler an der Hand, und beide Italiener näherten sich mit leisen Tritten und einer stillen, andächtigen Frev dem machtvollen Gemälde: auf einem weißen Marmortischchen spielten Schach ein Mann und ein Weib in Lebensgröße. Dieses, ein helles und warmes Geschöpf in fürstlichen Gewändern, berührte mit zögerndem Finger die Königin und forschte zugleich verstohlenen Blickes in der Miene des Mitspielers, der, ein Krieger von ernsten und durchgearbeiteten Zügen, in dem streng gesenkten Mundwinkel ein Lächeln versteckte.

Beide, Herzog und Kanzler, erkannten ihn sogleich. Es war Pesca. Die Frau errieten sie mit Leichtigkeit. Wer war es, wenn nicht Viktoria Colonna, das Weib des Pescara und die Perle Italiens? (1)

After dinner the politicians discuss the problem of finding a general to lead the armies of the League. Morone suggests Pescara: he will visit him personally and put the case, while the Venetian delegate pays the writer Petrus Aretinus to spread abroad the likelihood of Pescara's treachery. Excited by all this scheming, Sforza imagines that the portrait of Pescara has been listening to the conversation, and Viktoria's face seems to express indignation at their suggestions. But although these unscrupulous men see no moral objections to their scheme, they cannot feel quite sure of their man. He remains a mystery to them. Morone, studying the picture, asks: „Wie wirst du spielen, Pescara?“ - and the answer is not at all clear.

The scene changes to Rome, where Pescara's wife Viktoria is taking leave of the Pope in order to join her husband at his camp in Novara. This chapter is full of allusions to works of art, which are used partly to lend local colour and partly to point the action. Meyer cannot refrain from a reference to the art of Raphael.

In der weiten hellen Fensternische jener edlen vatikanischen Kammer, an deren Dielen und Wänden Raffael die Triumphe des Menschengeltes verherrlicht, saß ein Greis mit großen Zügen und von ehrwürdiger Erscheinung. Er sprach bedächtig zu dem emporgewendeten, mit dunkelblonden Flechten umwundenen Haupte eines Weibes, das zu seinen Füßen saß und mit einem warmen menschlichen Blut in den Adern ebenso schön

(1) Werke IV, pp.157-158

war als die Begriffe des Rechtes und der Theologie, wie sie der Urbornate in herrlichen weiblichen Gestalten verkörpert. Der betagte Papst mit seinem langen gebückten Rücken und in seinem fließenden weißen Gewande ähnelte einer klugen Matrone, welche lehrhaft mit einem jungen Weibe plaudert. (1)

Meyer is not just giving a particularly eloquent description of Viktorias reference to Raphael enhances the Roman atmosphere of the High Renaissance, which Meyer also builds up with his later references to Leonardo and Michaelangelo. The choice of frescoes portraying the 'Triumph des Menschengestes' is far from arbitrary; Viktoria is a poetess and woman of great intellect, and she is surrounded by cunning schemers, the Pope, his ambassador Guicciardin, and Morone, who are all using her in their attempts to win over Pescara to their side.

As Viktoria leaves the Pope a storm arises and a flash of lightning illuminates the new Vatican buildings. Guicciardin sees this as an omen and expresses to Morone his premonition of a hindrance to their plans for Pescara. To shelter from the storm, Viktoria enters the ancient Pantheon, „und unter dem Vordache des alten Bauwerkes kehrte ihr Geist in ein noch früheres Altertum zurück, dessen Tugenden die flüssige Bildkraft des Jahrhunderts verherrlichte, ohne sie zu besitzen oder auch nur begreifen zu können in ihrer eintönigen Starrheit und strengen Wirklichkeit" (2). Viktoria recalls all the famous Roman matrons like Cornelia and Lucretia; she enters the temple and prays to deities Christian and heathen to save Italy from the Spanish yoke. This mingling of Christian and pagan is noble and innocent in Viktoria, who takes the best from the ancient world. At the very beginning of the story Meyer has shown some less noble results of this combination. He describes a set of frescoes in Sforza's palace in Milan, which depict the feeding of the five thousand and Bacchus with his followers. The portrayal of the miracle has been so secularised that the focal point of the picture is not the wonderful working Christ but the reapers making merry in the foreground. Thus the condition of Italy is revealed: she has turned from Christ and given herself to Bacchus, she has forgotten her great Roman past but indulges in pagan corruption.

(1) Werke IV, p.172

(2) Werke IV, p.182

Once back in her own house, Viktoria takes up the Gospel to read. She opens at the account of the temptation of Christ in the wilderness; her mind is so full of the events of the day that the story presents itself to her as a kind of vision. She sees Christ, tempted by the devil, lay his hand on the place where his side is to be pierced by the lance. Then suddenly it is Pescara whom she sees, and the devil turns into a curious figure in a lawyer's gown. She looks up to find Morone there, who has come to beg her assistance in persuading Pescara to desert to the Holy League.

The temptation of Pescara takes place in the third chapter; this is the first time that we encounter Pescara in person, although his presence has hung over the story until now, particularly as embodied in the picture of the game of chess. But Morone's interview with Pescara ends without yielding an answer to the question „Wie wirst du spielen?" Pacing impatiently up and down in his room, Morone spies a frieze above the panelling. It is said to have been painted by Leonardo da Vinci while he was in the service of Ludovico il Moro. (Morone wears a necklace allion of the Moor by Leonardo.) The frieze shows the animals from the coats of arms of the Milanese families - the fiery dragon of the Sforza and the snake with a child in its jaws of the Visconti; they are entwined in a pattern which continues all round the walls. It seems to Morone's over-heated mind that the creatures begin to writhe and undulate until he feels sick. This is, of course, symbolic of the treachery and deviousness of the politics in this story.

Pescara and Viktoria amuse themselves with more agreeable works of art. He shows her two groups of statues: the one, a young couple embracing, represents the present, the other, two girls lost in thought the past. More works of art are mentioned in their conversation. Viktoria refers to Michaelangelo, and they talk about the Sistine chapel. Pescara describes some of the figures - a caryatid, some prophets, a sibyl, and wonders what they are prophesying. Viktoria declares that they bewail Italy's slavery and proclaim her saviour, but Pescara is

convinced that they preach judgment, since the time for salvation is past. He gives Viktoria no chance to discuss the plans of the Holy League, although he guesses that the Pope hopes to bribe him with the offer of a crown; he even teases her by handing her a crown-shaped sweetmeat. Finally Viktoria can bear no more and demands to be taken into his confidence. She has had to admit to herself before this that she does not really know her husband's inmost thoughts. He has always turned to her for relaxation, just as he prefers Ariosto and Raphael Dante and Michaelangelo. „Die Kunst ist eine Ergötzung," he remarks to explain why he finds no delight in artists whose natures are like his own. He at last tells Viktoria, not because he wants to, but because an attack of pain and breathlessness forces him to, that he has not been cured of the spear-wound received at Pavia. His doctor has kept him alive as long as possible, and he has not much longer to live. The irony of the situation is plain - Italy, dead in corruption and immorality, has been trying to win for its leader a man about to die.

Now that Pescara's secret has been revealed after four chapters in which he has been frequently accused of playing games - with Viktoria Morone, or Italy itself - the chess picture loses its prominence and another takes over. This, already prefigured by Viktoria's vision of Pescara with a wound in his side, is the altar painting of the Crucifixion in the convent of Heiligenwunden, to which Viktoria retreats when Pescara marches on Milan. Pescara is fascinated by the depiction of the soldier who is thrusting his spear into the side of Christ.

Dieser war offenbar ein Schweizer; der Maler mußte die Tracht und Haltung eines solchen mit besonderer Genauigkeit studiert oder frei aus dem Leben gegriffen haben. Der Mann stand mit gespreizten Beinen, von denen das linke gelb, das rechte schwarz behost war, und stach mit den behandschuhten Fäusten von unten nach oben derb und gründlich zu. Kesselhaube, Harnischkragen, Brustpanzer, Arm- und Schenkelschienen, rote Strümpfe, breite Schuhe, nichts fehlte. Aber nicht diese Tracht, die er zur Genüge kannte, fesselte den Feindherrn, sondern der auf einem Stiernacken sitzende Kopf. Kleine, blaue, kristallhelle Augen, eingezogene Stumpfnase, grinsender Mund

blonder, krauser Knebelbart, braune Farbe mit rosigen Wangen, Ohr-  
ringe in Form einer Milchkeule, und ein aus Redlichkeit und Ver-  
schmitztheit wunderbar gemischter Ausdruck. Pescara wußte gleich  
mit dem Gesichtergedächtnis des Heerführers, daß er diesen kleinen  
breitschultrigen, behenden Gesellen, dessen schwarz-gelbe Hose den  
Urnar bedeutete, schon einmal gesehen habe. Aber wann und wo?  
Da schmerzte ihn plötzlich die Seite, als empfinde er einen Stich,  
und jetzt wußte er auch, wen er da vor sich hatte: es war der  
Schweizer, der ihm bei Pavia die Brust durchbohrt. (1)

On his way back from the convent to his army Pescara meets with this  
very Swiss soldier, saves him from being hanged by a party of Spaniards  
and learns how he came to feature in the altar picture. After the  
battle of Pavia he had taken refuge on a farm and worked as a servant.  
Some painters passed that way and sketched him in his costume and arm  
promising to make honourable use of the drawing. When he later entered  
the church at Heiligenwunden he was horrified to see himself stabbing  
his Saviour!

The comparison of Pescara to Christ is constantly made. Pescara  
hailed as the saviour of Italy, but he jokes about this, saying that  
is not the right man despite the wound in his side. Viktoria's visit  
of the temptation of Christ or Pescara reinforces the comparison, and  
the final scene in the story, with the dead Pescara lying in Bourbon's  
arms, resembles a Pietà. Meyer appears to like comparing his charac-  
ters to Christ, although he chooses the most unsuitable ones, like  
Antiope in Die Hochzeit des Mönchs of Thomas à Becket and Pescara, who  
both have the name of being pagans. The important point about these  
comparisons, however, even though the reader may consider them unsuit-  
able is that Meyer underlines them by using works of art. The two pictures  
show the change in Pescara brought about by the approach of death.  
From the cold, mysterious chess-player of the first picture he gradu-  
ally turns into a man of insight and compassion, resembling Christ in  
that he can forgive his enemies and accept his fate with resignation.

(1) Werke IV, pp.249-250

### Angela Borgia

In his last story Meyer turned again to the theme of conscience which he had handled in Die Richterin. This time his heroine is not a criminal whose conscience forces her to confess and atone for her crime, but a woman who is only remotely responsible for a disaster, yet feels so much to blame that she cannot rest until she has made restitution.

When Lukrezia Borgia comes to Ferrara as the bride of the duke, Alfonso d'Este, she brings with her a cousin, Angela Borgia. One of Alfonso's brothers, the cardinal Ippolito, falls in love with Angela. He cannot, of course, marry her, but he is bitterly jealous of his youngest brother, Giulio, and accuses Angela of favouring him. Don Giulio is beloved by all because of his charm and his beautiful eyes, although he leads an utterly depraved life. Angela condemns Giulio for his dissolute ways, and he imagines himself quite indifferent to her, but they are more involved with each other than they realise. Before long it becomes clear that Giulio is not safe in the neighbourhood of the Cardinal, and the Duke arranges that he should leave for Venice. But he does not leave in time to prevent disaster.

The court is gathered round Lukrezia in a favourite grove of the castle park.

Hier stand in der Mitte auf einem verwitterten Marmor ein eherner Kupido, der sich mit zerrissenen Flügeln und verschütteten Pfeilen in Fesseln wand. Dieses Bild sagte in der wunderbar freien Sprac des Jahrhunderts, daß für die verheiratete Lukrezia die Zeit der Leidenschaft vorüber sei, und hier in der Runde auf den Steinbänke pflegte die Gemahlin des Herzogs Alfonsos im Sommer hofzuhalten. (

Ben Emin, a Persian guest, entertains the company with an apocryphal story from the life of Christ: the disciples looked with revulsion on the dead body of a dog, but Jesus pointed to the one beautiful thing about it - its fine white teeth. Ippolito observes bitterly that Oh would have found nothing at all to praise in Don Giulio. Angela defies him by declaring that even the Cardinal's envy cannot take away Giulio's eyes, and the Cardinal is so infuriated that he at once has his broth-

eyes put out by his band of brigands. The blinded man rushes into the grove and throws himself at Ippolito's feet; he, horrified at what he has done, blames Angela, who becomes convinced that she alone is responsible for the deed.

Das dunkle Boskett war verlassen.

Jetzt rötete ein Blitz den gefesselten Amor, Windstöße sausten durch den Wald und beugten die Wipfel der Bäume. Bald war der Himmel lauter Lohe und die Luft voller Donnergetöse. Dann stürzten die finsternen Wolken auf die Erde, und schwere Regen wuschen und überschwemmten den mit Blut und Sünde befleckten Garten. (1)

The chained Amor is symbolic not only for Lucrezia but for all the other chief characters. They have restrained their passions until the Persian's tale releases a flood of emotion in them and Giulio's blinding results. Lucrezia, as it turns out, has not been chained; her brother Cesare has retained his hold over her, and when news comes that he has escaped from prison, Lucrezia becomes once more the victim of the same passion which unites the Borgias. She seduces the chief justice of Ferrara, Hercule Strozzi, into betraying the Duke and attaching himself to Cesare. Her careful scheming in aid of Cesare is thwarted by the vigilance of the Cardinal, who thus prevents her from ruining herself. Cesare's death puts an end to the disturbance, and Alfonso willingly forgives his wife, knowing her to be the victim of a form of madness, but he destroys her helpmate Strozzi.

The contrast between Lucrezia, who calmly forgets her past misdeeds and starts afresh, and Angela, who torments herself by wondering how she can compensate Giulio for her share in his loss, is brought out by the different reactions to a work of art. This is a ceiling painting in the so-called Roman chamber of the ducal palace.

Gerade über dem Tische im mittleren Felde der mit Malerei geschmückten Tafeldecke ragte über einem scheuenden Zweigespann die verbrecherische römische Tullia und zerquetschte unter den Rädern ihrer Biga die Leiche des eigenen gemordeten Vaters. Aus dem nächsten Bilde aber streckte der von seinem Bruder Romulus erstochene Remus einen kolossalen Fuß heraus.

(1) Werke I, p.307

Unter dieser Tullia und über sie pflegten Lukrezia und Angela, wenn sie im Sommer die Kühle dieses Saales suchten, in scherzhaftem Streit zu geraten. (1)

Angela condemns Tullia, whom she regards as unnaturally wicked. Lukrezia excuses her by explaining that she must have been in love with a man who had her completely in his power; from her own experience Lukrezia knows what this can lead to. This picture is described just before she hears of Cesare's escape and succumbs once more to his power over her. The reference to Romulus and Remus also underlines the state of affair among the Este brothers: Giulio and Ferrante are to be executed for conspiring against Alfonso, but are saved by Ippolito's intervention.

Meyer mentions few works of art in this story, and they have not the same importance as have those in the other Novellen. By the time he came to write his last story he had turned away from the Renaissance, disgusted by its corrupt morality. Angela Borgia represents an attack on Renaissance values: with such an honest and incorruptible heroine Meyer wanted to avoid the play with appearance and reality which is so interesting in the character of Pescara. For this reason perhaps he introduced few works of art, so that the reader should be drawn close to reality and not separated from it by intervening works of art, which rarely in Meyer's stories reflect reality without distortion.

Instead he employed a device which he had trifled with in Das Leid eines Knaben and used without much point in the Wondschein-Märchen of Der Heilige. The story told by Ben Emin foreshadows the development of the chief characters. The example of Christ's pity is narrated to an audience singularly lacking in this virtue, as the blinding of Giotto shows. But in the course of time all the characters change to become more compassionate: Giulio begins by treating his peasants better, Ippolito repents of his evil past and saves Lukrezia from destruction, Alfonso and Lukrezia develop into model rulers, and Angela becomes the embodiment of Christian compassion as she seeks out and restores the fallen Giulio.

(1) Werke I, pp.330-331

## Conclusion

### The Descriptions of Works of Art

From the foregoing chapters it has probably become clear that our four authors have little in common, but at least in describing works of art they all follow much the same pattern. They state whether the work is a piece of sculpture - these are not very common - or a painting, and then whether it is a portrait, a landscape or a group-scene. Next the subject is mentioned, and frequently the description stops at that, but if more detail is required the landscape is described, the poses and expressions of the characters are outlined, colours are stated, the 'atmosphere' of the work is touched on and sometimes the impression made on the viewer is included. Only rarely is the technique of the painter or sculptor discussed. Since our authors are not writers on aesthetics they cannot be expected to describe a work of art in an expert and technical fashion as though for an artistic catalogue. Moreover, they are not really interested in their paintings or sculptures as works of art; they are using them as literary devices for various purposes, which will be detailed below. How much description of the work is given depends on the purpose for which it is being used; for instance, if a work of art is to prefigure the action then it must be described in considerable depth, whereas a mention of the subject suffices when the work is no more than an item in the list of furnishings of a house.

This does not mean that the authors are not interested at all in artistic technique. They are evidently able to appreciate the technical aspects of works of art, as is shown by some of the comments included in their descriptions or in discussions among their characters. Fontane shows most interest in this technical aspect. This emerges from the conversation of his wealthy cultured noblemen like Graf Petöfy and Graf Haldern (Stine), who have studied the arts and understand how the artist achieves his effects. But their comments usually form part of an aesthetic discussion and not of the description of a work of art. Fontane seldom describes a work of art in detail, because he is on the whole referring to well-known works which require no description for the educated readers of his day.

Mörike's descriptions, on the other hand, are minutely detailed because he is trying to present works by an unknown artist which are striking and

impressive in both their subject and technique. (The paintings are Nolten in inspiration and composition, even although Tillsen executed those which excite Baron Jaßfeld's enthusiasm.) Coming as they do at the beginning of the book, the paintings arouse our curiosity about Nolten, who is soon introduced, and set the tone of the novel by presenting us with products of the two outlooks, classical and romantic, rational and irrational, which struggle for precedence in this story and in its hero. The descriptions, which are very long, deal mainly with the content of the pictures and with the Baron's personal interpretation of them, but Mörrike has not neglected the technical side. In the 'Mermaid' picture much is said about the skillful composition and the colouring, but the picture of the ghostly concert is so full and so confusing that the Baron finds it almost impossible to describe, and concludes by remarking that it will look even better in oil.

Storm says practically nothing about technique, although he has three stories about artists. His descriptions, except for those in Von heut und ehedem, are brief. As he mainly uses portraits, it is not necessary to much more than state whom the portrait portrays. He holds the rather romantic notion that an artist is able to capture by an almost magical power usually lent him by love, an emotional moment or the essential nature of his sitter. The excellence of the sculpture in Psyche or the portrait of Karina in Aquis Submersus stems from this power. In his descriptions of ancestral portraits, however, Storm does capture their strangeness; like Anna in Im Schloß, we must all have wondered whether the people of bygone days really looked quite so unnatural.

Meyer too is fairly brief in his descriptions. He gives a swift, compact account of the appearance and content of each work of art, usually adding a comment on its style and quality. Although Meyer economises with words in his descriptions, he lends them impact by placing them strategically in his story, generally right at the beginning or just before the crisis, with the result that they are fixed in the reader's mind and remembered, without Meyer making any further reference to them, throughout the rest of the action.

The emphasis in the descriptions is therefore on the content of the work of art, and this is significant for the purposes to which the descriptions are put. An author rarely describes a work of art merely to let his rea

know what it looks like: he usually intends it to play some part in his poem or novel. When Virgil in Aeneid viii describes the shield of Aeneas made at the request of his mother Venus by the smith-god Vulcan, he is not only paying tribute to Homer and giving a typical epic account of the hero's armour. The shield foretells the history of the Romans, the descendants of Aeneas. A series of scenes - quite impossible to portray in metal, but this does not worry Virgil - depicts first early Roman legends, like the story of Romulus and Remus and the she-wolf, or the rape of the Sabine women, then contemporary history - the battle of Actium and the triumph of Augustus. Thus Virgil fulfils part of the wider aim of the Aeneid - to glorify Rome and Augustus - without actually writing an epic on Roman history or the deeds of the emperor. This description admirably illustrates the three uses to which works of art may be put - it gives local colour, it has symbolic importance and it is a structural device.

1. Local Colour Every author, particularly Poetic Realists like Storm and Fontane, add substance and authenticity to their stories with detailed descriptions of milieu - the countryside, the towns, houses and rooms in which his characters live. When describing his characters' homes he may mention the works of art which adorn them, as these give a clue to the inhabitants' tastes, education, social position and aspirations. Storm's characters are drawn mainly from the middle classes of a small North German town. Their tastes are simple: on their walls hang etchings or coloured lithographs of landscapes, Biblical scenes, illustrations from popular novels or poems, and even the occasional family portrait. Family portraits figure more largely in the historical Novellen, in which most castles have an ancestral gallery. Meyer likewise, as an historical writer, is careful to add details which fix the period of his stories by reference to contemporary art and architecture. Die Richterin uses illuminated manuscripts: Palma is compared to an angel in a capital letter, and Wulfrin sees his own worst thoughts portrayed in an illustration of the Byblis story in Graciosa's beautiful manuscript of the Metamorphoses. Reference to Gothic architecture in Der Heilige and to the new Renaissance building of the Vatican in Die Versuchung des Pescara shows Meyer's concern for local colour. He makes a mistake in Jürg Jenatsch, however, when in his anxiety to evoke the Venetian scene and to lend emphasis to an observation about the cunning of the Jesuits

he describes the Baroque Jesuit church which was not built until about a century after the events of his story. But Meyer never uses works of art merely for local colour, as Storm does. Although they help to set the scene they are always introduced for a more important purpose.

It could be said that Fontane uses works of art entirely for local colour, but as with Meyer this is not as simple as it looks. Fontane desires to give an accurate, detailed description of the surroundings of his characters because this is part of his way of passing on information about them. He does not indulge in much direct characterisation; he prefers to let his characters reveal themselves in their conversation, in their reactions to remarks, to objects and to situations, and in the way they furnish their houses. If therefore Fontane describes a sitting-room with its works of art, he is also telling us much about the people who live in it. The conventional appointments of Botho von Rienäcker's living-room reveal the nature of the man, who will conform to the pattern laid down for his class despite all temptations to rebel. The fine furniture and the pictures in the parlour of the village merchant in Unterm Birnbaum betray the social pretensions of his wife, and the curious mixture of pictures and other ornaments in Pauline Pittelkow's room (Stine) confirms our impression of her as a contradictory person who defies social conventions.

2. Symbolic Function A work of art which has a symbolic function in its story is one which is used to represent a character, a situation or a theme, so that whenever this work is mentioned it recalls one or other of these to the reader's mind. This is most clearly seen in Fontane's L'Adultera, at the end of which a miniature of Tintoretto's picture is sent to Melanie and Rubehn as a sign that Van der Straaten has forgiven her. The reader is reminded of the conversation between Melanie and her former husband at the beginning of the story, when a copy of the picture arrived in their house. This conversation revealed much about the Van der Straatens and their relationship; it also gave Melanie a chance to express feelings which she later acted upon, thus prefiguring the outcome of the story. Fontane uses symbolic works of art less often than the other authors (see §4. Works of Art with Symbolic Function pp.93-106),

and the works can hardly be described as symbols, better as leitmotifs, since they are not so loaded with meaning as is the picture in L'Adultere.

Meyer prefers to give his works of art a structural function, but they often have a symbolic significance as well. In Die Versuchung des Pesca two pictures sum up the position or rôle of Pescara in the two halves of the Novelle. The chess picture represents Pescara as he appears to those around him - a complete enigma, nobody knowing how he will react to the schemes of the Holy League. The second picture, the Crucifixion altarpiece in the nunnery at Heiligenwunden, reveals the Christ-like state of Pescara after he has realised that death is approaching: he has lost all personal ambition, he cares only for the good of others and he is able to judge men and deeds rightly and impartially. The medallion in Das Amule is the only work of art used by Meyer as a 'conventional' symbol to sum up the theme of the story. The strange fortunes of the medallion, which protects the man who despises it as an 'idol' but not the man who regards it as a sacred object, remind us of the two contradictory philosophies, predestination and free will, which are upheld by the two main characters in the story, and make the point that no such simple explanation of life is possible. (See §7. Works of Art in the Individual Novellen pp.137-179; in which each description of a work of art and its functions is dealt with.)

Storm's use of works of art for symbolic purposes is, like Fontane's, quite straightforward. (See §4. Symbolic Use of Works of Art, pp.34-47) The family picture in Carsten Gurater, the black paper silhouettes of Carsten's family taking a walk at sunset, symbolises for Carsten the feeling of family solidarity which has always upheld him in his lonely, hard-work life. At moments of crisis he and his sister Brigitte seek comfort from this picture, recalling as they gaze at it the happy days of their childhood. The sunset in the picture foretells the decline of Carsten's family, the disastrous life and death of his son and his own loss of sanity. In the context of Storm's work and thought this picture represents his own strong family feeling and his deep distress and sense of finality when a family declines and dies out.

Nolten's pictures in Maler Nolten are used by Mörike to fulfil several functions, one of which is to represent the opposing facets of Nolten's

character. The 'Ghostly Concert' shows the susceptible Romanticist, at the mercy of his subconscious mind and its fancies, while the mermaid picture reveals a more sophisticated type, both as man and artist, his vision and technique improved by travel and education, his manner smoothed by contact with cultured society. The pictures also symbolise the two worlds, rational and supernatural, which fight for control of Nolten, with victory going to the supernatural world, as indeed it is the picture of the ghostly concert which makes the greater impression on all who see it.

3. Structural Use Virgil's use of the description of Aeneas' shield permits him to introduce material - the history of Rome and the deeds of Augustus - which is extraneous to his proper theme. The description is used for a structural purpose. Our four authors use works of art for this purpose and in a variety of ways. On the simplest level a work of art may provide the excuse for a story. Storm is fond of this device (see §5 (a) Picture as Excuse for Story), introducing a commemorative tale by means of the listener asking the narrator to tell him about a person whose picture is hanging on the wall. Even in a more complicated tale like Aquis Submersus it is the narrator's curiosity about the story behind the picture of the drowned child which enables him to recognise the same face years later, when he sees another portrait of the child in the house of a local baker. His enquiries about the picture bring to light the story of the artist Johannes, who had fallen into oblivion.

In Schach von Wuthenow Fontane uses a set of caricatures to bring about a turning point in the action. The drawings satirise Schach's relationship with the Carayon ladies, and so arouse his fear of ridicule that he breaks his promise to marry Victoire and retreats to the country. He brings about his own downfall, for Frau von Carayon appeals to the king, who compels Schach to keep his word.

The picture of the ghostly concert in Maler Nolten is used ingeniously by Mörike as a Doppelgänger to the gypsy girl Elisabeth. In person she breaks up Nolten's engagement to Agnes, and her double in the picture affects the health and sanity of his new love, the Gräfin Constanze. The scene at Nolten's death resembles the picture in some details, thus the gypsy and her double are united at the end to destroy the artist. It could even be said that the picture prefigures Nolten's death. Meyer

of course, more than any other, makes extensive use of works of art which prefigure the outcome of the story or parallel the action. (One example occurs in Storm - in Waldwinkel; the description of a painting of an old man watching a young couple walk away across a moor foreshadows the end of the tale, when the botanist Richard is forsaken by his young mistress Franzi in favour of a man nearer her own age.) Many examples of the device are to be found in Meyer's Novellen. In Der Heilige Thomas à Becket's expression is compared to that of a picture of Christ. This comparison is made before Becket's conversion, but similar comparisons, or references to works of art depicting Christ's passion, become more frequent as Becket approaches his martyrdom. In Das Leiden eines Knaben Julian's persecution and death at the hands of his Jesuit schoolmasters is horrifyingly prefigured in Mouton's sketch of the Pentheus story, in which Pentheus resembles Julian and the Maenads are dressed like Jesuits. Meyer likes to employ works of art to parallel, sometimes ironically, the situation in which his characters find themselves. The Byblis picture in Die Richterinnen appears to present a parallel to Wulfrin's love for Palma. The chained Cupid in Angela Borgia is particularly ironic, since the court which gathers round this statue is seething with ill-controlled passions that break out in the blinding of Don Giulio.

It is, of course, quite common for the description of a work of art to fulfil more than one function. The picture of the ghostly concert in Maler Nolten is such a multi-purpose work. Meyer is economical in his use of descriptions of works of art because he expects them to play several parts in his stories - providing local colour, paralleling the action and prefiguring the outcome, or pointing beyond the story itself to a wider significance. Storm and Fontane are more simple in their use of descriptions, not demanding such hard work from them.

From this oversight of the various uses of descriptions of works of art it can be seen that our four authors resemble each other in employing their descriptions according to the three categories detailed above - for local colour, with a symbolic or structural purpose. This is one of the few things which these authors have in common, but a discussion and comparison of their use of descriptions of works of art under these three headings can be no more than superficial. In order to treat each autho

in depth and study his descriptions and their uses carefully, I have found it better to adopt the scheme of examining each author individually in a chapter or set of chapters. A brief summary of the findings of each chapter should bring out the great differences between the authors in their reasons for employing descriptions of works of art and in the importance which the device has for their writing.

Mörike It has already been said that the works of art described in Male Nolten fulfil more than one function: they symbolise the rational and supernatural aspects of the story, of the artist's character and also of the author's character and outlook. The 'Ghostly Concert' performs the structural function of keeping the figure of the gypsy Elisabeth in view throughout the novel. The pictures may even be said to lend local colour to a novel set in the author's own times, since they resemble works by Mörike's contemporaries Schwind and Friedrich, or the Nazarenes Fohr and Koch. Nolten's works, like those of the Nazarenes, combine a Romantic view of nature with a Classical respect for form and colour. The symbolic and structural functions, however, are of primary importance.

Mörike had the brilliant idea of providing his character Elisabeth, the instrument of Destiny, with a new type of Doppelgänger - her image in a picture painted by her partner in destiny, the artist Nolten. This makes it possible for Destiny to work in two places at once, to bring doubt and distress into the lives of Agnes, through the personal appearance of Elisabeth, and of the Gräfin Constanze, through her image in the picture followed by a personal appearance. In the first part of the novel both Elisabeth and the picture have an important part to play, notably the picture, which is well known to all Nolten's friends in the Residenz, the main setting of the first part. The connexion between the two and the full tale of the damage which they have wrought separately and together, is explained at the end of Part I in 'Ein Tag aus Noltens Jugenleben' and at the beginning of Part II, when Nolten visits Constanze's friend the Gouvernantin, before leaving the Residenz to return to Agnes. Thereafter both the picture and Elisabeth are abandoned until the very end when Elisabeth appears to claim her destined partner Nolten, and he dies in circumstances, witnessed only by the blind gardener's boy Henni in a

freakish vision, which strongly resemble the picture of the ghostly concert. The problems raised by the use of this picture have been discussed at the end of the chapter on Mörike. It is hard to understand why the picture should be so important and have such a powerful effect on all who see it, because Mörike never really explains its origins. The inset 'Taus Noltens Jugendleben' describes the boy's first meeting with Elisabeth which was so significant for him because he already nursed a devotion to the portrait of her mother, his uncle's gypsy wife Loskine, but it does not follow up the influence of Elisabeth on his life and painting, nor relate any experience or vision which might have inspired this picture. Supernatural elements are by definition unaccountable, but if they are to be used effectively and credibly in a novel their origins must not be left in such obscurity as in Maler Nolten.

Mörike wanted to write a novel of fate in the terms of the modern psychological novel, showing how rational man's best-laid schemes could be nullified by the working-out of a pre-ordained fate. Although the force of the irrational win the day in Maler Nolten, Mörike's attitude to the supernatural in general is hard to define. In his youth he and his university friends enjoyed the stories of Tieck and Hoffmann, and during the 1830s and 40s he was friendly with Justinus Kerner, who investigated supernatural phenomena. Mörike took a lively interest in this work and could even report an experience of his own, when he met the figure of a long-dead farmer surveying the fields which he had once owned. But the friendship with Kerner and the interest in the supernatural came after the period when Mörike was working on Maler Nolten. His letters during this period 1828-32, contain few references to the novel and nothing about persons or experiences which might have stimulated him. Any attempt to reconstruct Mörike's life on the basis of his fiction is condemned by Hildegard Emme in her study of the Peregrinadichtung (1). This poem-cycle, incorporated into Part II of Maler Nolten, and also the character of Elisabeth, are

(1) Hildegard Emme Mörikes Peregrinadichtung: Ihre Beziehung zum Noltenroman (Weimar, 1952)

supposed to reflect Mörike's experience as a student with a strange girl called Maria Meyer. Emuel points out that Mörike destroyed all material such as letters relating to this episode, and that he did not start work on the novel until 1828, four years after it, by which time he could be drawing on his relationship with Luise Rau. (She quotes letters to Lui in support of this, comparing them with passages in Maler Nolten.) Thus nothing from his biography throws any light on the central problems of the novel for this thesis - the inspiration of the picture of the ghostly concert and the rôle Mörike intended it to play.

Mörike was not a 'conscious' artist like G.F. Meyer; the construction of the novel alone, which is loose and rambling, proves this. One is inclined to wonder how far he had worked out any scheme of functions for the characters and pictures in the novel. It seems clear that he intended the figure of the organist in the picture to act as a Doppelgänger to Elisabeth, but he omitted, either out of laziness or out of a fear of probing too deep into mysterious things, to give an adequate explanation of their connexion. The reader may see the pictures as symbolic of trends, attitudes or aspects in the novel, its hero or its author, but how much of this the author actually planned must remain unresolved. If Mörike had been more of a 'conscious' writer, Maler Nolten might have been a novel like Oscar Wilde's The Picture of Dorian Gray, in which the picture is the symbol of an unspoken, Faust-like pact, whereby the hero can enjoy utter debauchery without showing any outward signs; but Mörike was not familiar with real evil and thus could not conceive a hero who commits a sin or enters into a bargain which finally results in his destruction.

Storm and Fontane Because these two wrote a great deal more than Mörike it is possible to talk of a pattern emerging from their works of the use of descriptions of works of art. Fontane's novels were produced as mature works in close succession during the last twenty years of his life thus his use of descriptions shows little development, those in his early novel Graf Petöfy being used in much the same ways as in his later works. In Storm's Novellen, however, we can see a great difference between the

simple use of a portrait in Immensee (1849) and the complex of pictures and memoirs in Aquis Submersus (1876).

The two authors have certain things in common. They were acquainted and knew each other's works, though they cannot be said to have influenced one another. Being both 'poetic realists' they were interested in the ordinary people whom they saw around them, in their way of life and their affairs. Storm describes the life of the 'Bürger' and artisans of a small North German town, or the peasants and seamen of the countryside and coast; Fontane chooses the very different world of the middle class of Berlin during the Second Reich - the Junkers, army men and civil servants; the nouveaux riches, bankers and merchants, and the tradespeople and entertainers, who supplied the needs of the wealthy. In most of their novels and stories the tale itself is slight, usually a love story with an unhappy ending or a family crisis, but the characters live as real people because of the careful descriptions of their persons, their conversation and their surroundings. In the paragraph on Local Colour I mentioned the use of works of art to fill out the picture of the characters' environment and to give some clue to their social and cultural niveau. Local colour is of little importance to Mörike, whose characters float in vague, undefined milieus, and since Meyer is more than just a writer of historical romances, he does not feel the need to do more than ascertain the background for his stories. But for Storm and Fontane local colour is of considerable, almost symbolic significance, since they are strongly aware of the effect of environment upon character.

Both of them use works of art as symbols (see §4 in each chapter), either to sum up a theme which is expressed in a story (as with the placard in Bötjer Basch, which illustrates the cycle of life and death), or to pin-point a problem affecting one of the characters (such as the picture of the Chinaman and the rest of the oriental imagery in Effi Briest which indicates Effi's longing for the mysterious and her inability to live with it). But neither of these two makes his symbolism dependent on works of art, as does Meyer. Storm has other symbols, such as the sea and swallows, which express his main themes, and Fontane, who like Meyer is something of a fatalist and often prefigures later events in his novels, prefers doing so by means of a remark, a gesture or a parallel story.

Every aspect of an author's work - his form, style, symbolism - is subordinated to the task of expressing his main preoccupations. Likewise the use of descriptions of works of art is turned to this end by Storm and Fontane. Here, of course, any similarity between them ends, for these two writers, who seem outwardly to have much in common, are very different in aims and outlook. It has been stressed throughout the chapter on Storm that the problems which perplexed him both as a man and as an author were the loneliness of the individual and the transience of all his efforts and his happiness. Storm's works reveal his lifelong battle with these problems, which he never really solved. Artistically he adopted the form of the memoir, the 'Erinnerungsnovelle', in which an old person tells his story to a young friend, or an old manuscript is found and edited by a contemporary narrator. Storm soon realised that this was not a satisfactory method of preserving the past. He shows how closely these written memoirs escape destruction, often being only partially preserved, and in the historical Novellen his narrators lament how soon a man's memory is forgotten.

The difference between Immensee and Aquis Submersus is not just one of external complexity; Storm's attitude to the past has changed entirely. The chief character of the early Novelle, Reinhard, is content with his attempts to preserve the past. He sits in his darkening room, the moonlight illuminates the portrait of his former love, and he is able to recall to his satisfaction and comfort details from his childhood and early youth. The narrator of Aquis Submersus, on the other hand, demonstrates how hard it is to preserve the past. Only a fortunate chance has preserved two of Johannes' pictures, while others have been destroyed, and an even luckier coincidence leads the narrator to link up the pictures, uncover Johannes' memoir and edit it for his own times. A deep scepticism about any man's ability to preserve his memory for posterity breathes from the conclusion of Aquis Submersus.

Again and again Storm shows how frail is mortal life and memory. Most of his stories deal with the extinction of a family - the young, hopeful members are killed or lost and only the old, sometimes just an old family servant, are left to tell of their passing. Storm's chief symbol of man's attempt to preserve his memory is the portrait - most of the works of art he describes are portraits. Other works of art have been dealt

with in §§ 1-4 of the chapter on Storm, but more than half of the chapter is occupied by §5 on the commemorative function of works of art, this being by far the most important aspect. In his use of these commemorative works of art Storm moves from the earliest stories, in which the characters are content with a portrait's power to keep alive the memory of a dear one, through a growing awareness that one must not live in the past and that one cannot do so, because one forgets it despite the aid of portraits, to the bitter scepticism of Aquis Submersus with its emphasis on the transience of human life and happiness and the susceptibility of all things to decay and oblivion. After this Novelle Storm abandoned the use of portraits as a commemorative device, partly because they had come to symbolise transience instead of combatting it and partly because he seems to have felt that the attempt to preserve one's memory is not altogether worthy. His last story, Der Schimmelreiter, has a hero who wanted to build a dyke which would last for ever and keep his name alive. Hauke Haien's hopes for himself are dashed, because he dies in the flood which he thinks is destroying his dyke. But it is not so: a century later the narrator of the tale rides along the dyke which is still known by Hauke's name. However a man's personal ambitions may be fulfilled, it is only, Storm realises, the work which he does for others which has any chance of survival.

Fontane does not, like Storm, use works of art to help him in the working out of a personal problem. Storm's Novellen are subjective utterances, revealing to a greater or lesser extent the author's personality and state of mind. It is not nearly so easy to see between the lines of Fontane's novels into his mind; only a careful examination of his literary devices can lead us to an estimate of his own views.

Fontane's chief aim is to depict the life of his contemporaries in their activities, but mainly in their pleasures, since this is when they relax and show themselves as they really are. People reveal themselves best as they talk, thus much of Fontane's novels is taken up with accounts of conversations. His characters, drawn mainly from the middle and upper classes, are on the whole educated, interested in literature, the arts, theatre and politics, all of which provide them with topics for discussion. In the course of such discussions the characters make th

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selves known to us in an indirect way. Fontane does not often describe his characters directly, and they are themselves too well-bred or well educated to impart certain pieces of information baldly, in so many words. Both Fontane and his characters resort to allusion, literary and artistic in order to express themselves tactfully. Crampas refers to poems by Goethe and Heine, rather than make an open declaration of love to Effi; the Berlin guests in Cécile, moved by Leslie-Gordon's name to make jest about Wallenstein, help to reveal the characters of Cécile and her husband and unwittingly foretell the tragic outcome of the novel; Herr Treibel mentions Lady Milford from Kabale und Liebe, whose activities at court were paralleled by one of the guests at his dinner-party.

Artistic allusions are used to reveal characters or to elicit a reaction. The furnishings of Hratscheck's parlour in Unterm Birnbaum, particularly the landscape by Claude Lorrain, indicate his wife Ursel's desire to be a cut above the village women. Cécile's reaction to the picture of a king's mistress arouses the curiosity of Leslie-Gordon, and we are not surprised to learn much later that she once occupied a similar position. A dinner-party conversation about Murillo in L'Adultera leads Van der Straaten on to a tactless assault on Wagner's music, which offends his guests and shows that his culture is only skin-deep.

Fontane's literary and artistic allusions are used not only to reveal character but to criticise, which is another of his aims as a novelist. He was not a virulent critic of society: on the whole he respected the status quo with regard to morality and social class. He does not condemn the changes brought about by the Bismarckian empire and the industrial revolution, such as the increasing power of money and the attempt of the nobility and the upper bourgeoisie to combine in marriage the advantages of both classes. Fontane is without prejudice of this sort and wishes well to those couples in his novels who try to overcome class barriers. Their failure to do so is more often caused by their own weakness of character than by external pressures.

What Fontane does object to is exaggeration and pretence. He mocks at the over-enthusiastic art connoisseurs and theatre-lovers like Graf Petöfy, old Graf Haldern or Van der Straaten, because too much enthusiasm often stems from a lack of discrimination, as Franziska points out in

Graf Petöfy, and thus indicates a lack of culture and real feeling for the arts. He deals more severely with those whose culture is merely a veneer, acquired automatically in the course of education, as with the nobility, or by careful study of the 'right' things, as with the wealthy bourgeoisie. Such people may be well read and familiar with famous works of art and music, but this familiarity is of use to them simply because it makes them acceptable in the circles in which they wish to move; it has not made them spiritually better. The crassest examples of this approach occur among the rising bourgeoisie, Frau Jenny Treibel being the most notable, but the representatives of this class figure largely in our two novels, Frau Jenny Treibel and L'Adultera. Fontane often criticises the upper classes, whose culture is equally superficial and whose nobility is not of the heart. Their treatment of others betrays their spiritual poverty. For Innstetten, upper class morality has become a tyranny which compels him to divorce his wife and kill her lover; he lacks the greatness of heart to forgive Effi and swallow his hurt pride. Cécile is shown to be a woman without the knowledge of poetry, art or history expected of her class, but this is excused by her disordered life and lack of proper education. The criticism is reserved for her husband, St. Arnaud who is constantly being embarrassed by her displays of ignorance and who criticises her for not reading the sort of books which might enable her to impress society.

As in the case of St. Arnaud examining Cécile's book-shelf, Fontane often uses a literary or artistic allusion to point his criticism. In Die Poggenpuhls he makes use of the family portraits, poor works of art portraying mediocre people, to poke fun at the desperate attempts of the aristocratic Poggenpuhls to maintain their family spirit and prestige even while they gradually compromise with their situation.

Fontane's use of works of art - which are usually just mentioned, not described in detail - cannot be separated from his use of literary allusions. He certainly does occasionally employ a work of art for a symbolic or structural purpose, as for example the caricatures in Schach von Wuthenow of the 'Madonnenbild' in Graf Petöfy, but on the whole he uses

them as he does literary allusions - to impart information, to reveal character and to make criticisms of society. Since Fontane is not a great art lover, artistic allusions are less frequent than literary ones. Like literature, theatre and politics, however, the visual arts have the place in the world of Fontane's characters, and therefore he draws them into the picture of his characters, their interests and their conversations.

Meyer: The summaries of the achievement of Mörike, Storm and Fontane show that they are all firmly rooted in realism - they desire to portray the world and people as they really are; if they have a personal problem to work out, a moral to point or a criticism to make, they do this within the framework of a story which tries to describe ordinary people facing the sort of situations with which life is liable to confront us. If they employ descriptions of works of art, they use them as devices to lend local colour, to act as symbols or to fulfil a structural purpose. But none of the descriptions of a work of art is essential to its story: the author could easily have found some other device which would have filled the same rôle. Nolten's pictures become completely detached from the artist - Mörike could have made him a poet, omitting the pictures, and, had he wanted a Doppelgänger for Elisabeth, given her a twin instead. Fontane does not make much use of works of art, since the visual arts mean little to him. His use of works of art with a symbolic function is not particularly successful, and despite his own characteristic use of artistic allusions for conveying information indirectly, he prefers to use literary quotations for the same purpose, which is only to be expected from one with his love for literature. The use of portraits is evidently more important to Storm, since they emphasise so strongly his problem of the transience of human memory, but he is interested in the portraits only as symbols for this purpose and not as works of art.

C.F. Meyer's use of descriptions of works of art, however, is an intrinsic part of his style, since his writing arises from his concept and experience of art. Meyer studied history, literature and the visual arts for many years before he began to write his Novellen, and it was his experience of the art of Renaissance Italy which at last provided the impetus.

Meyer's concept of art and the important position it occupied in his life emerges from the study of his Novellen. In these Meyer does not endeavour - and this differentiates him at once from the 'realist' writer - to give a true picture of life. The visual arts do not copy life; the painter or sculptor chooses what Lessing calls the 'most pregnant moment' and fixes it for ever. He produces a complete and finished entity, something which is not dependent on the world around it and is therefore superior to that world. A great work of art needs no 'story' to explain it; it becomes the model for life instead of 'holding a mirror up to nature', for what is perfect cannot model itself on what is fragmented, changing and incomplete, as is human life.

This concept of art as superior to life is what determines the form and style and characterisation in Meyer's stories. The moral - as opposed to the story-content is determined by Meyer's strong Christian belief in the power and mercy of God, and all his Novellen look beyond the 'story' to this theme. Once these two basic conditions have been recognised, it is possible to understand Meyer's stories as earlier critics could not. They criticised his language as over-elaborate and stylised, his characters as stiff and lifeless, the tone of his work as decadent and his portrayal of life as experience at second-hand. More modern critics, aware of Meyer's starting-point, show that immediacy in character and experience is not what Meyer aimed at, indeed it is what he tried to avoid. Meyer did not want his readers to become involved in the story-content of his Novellen, to live with and feel for his characters as though they were real people. He was creating a work of art, which, like a picture or a piece of sculpture, can only be appreciated if the spectator walks calmly round it or stands still and views it from a distance. He also had a moral purpose, which cannot be discerned if the reader becomes too involved in 'story'. Those features which the critics considered faults in his writing are all deliberately planned aspects of his technique - foreshadowing the 'Verfremdungseffekte' of Brecht.

Meyer's stories in many respects resemble pictures, particularly wo

by painters of the Renaissance. He chooses his themes from history, so that he is dealing with well-known characters, just as the painter draws on the Bible or classical mythology. Like the Renaissance artist, carefully painting the details of robes or parts of the body, delighting in bright colours, Meyer's description is always close and detailed, and he loves to describe a landscape or a pageant. The figures in a painting are motionless, fixed in stylised groups, and their thoughts and emotions are revealed to the spectator only to a limited extent. Meyer too allows his characters little scope; their fate is often fixed from the outset of the story and their real feelings are seldom expressed - they are generally seen from the outside, through the eyes of the other characters. Meyer uses the frame-technique in his earlier Novellen; later he employs shadow or mirror plots and motifs, just as an artist might add mirror-motifs and symbols, for example a lamb appearing in a picture of the Passion. His language features metaphors from painting which reflect his procedure of visualising a scene and then trying to paint it in words.

A painting by Vermeer shows the artist at work on the portrait of a young woman. Meyer's style is like this - he constantly emphasises the artificial nature of his stories. When he employs the frame-technique his narrators are shown busily constructing their story for the delight and instruction of an audience. The narrator is an artist, manipulating his story and his listeners as does Dante in Die Hochzeit des Mönchs. In other works Meyer uses many devices to alienate the reader from the plot, and in such profusion that the alienation is magnified. He introduces parallel plots and characters, eavesdropping scenes, tableau-scenes and works of art relative to the action. All these combine to emphasise the theme of the Novelle but to detract from the interest of the plot and characters.

Considering this emphasis on the artificial or man-made nature of his stories, it is only to be expected that Meyer should turn to works of art as suitable devices to express artificiality. Yet he does not use the same symbols of artificiality as Storm uses portraits as symbols of trans-

The descriptions themselves rather than the works of art described are important, because of the tasks they have to perform. Meyer does not describe many works of art for purposes of local colour, although he does mention buildings or famous artists in order to evoke the atmosphere of city or an historical period. Only in Jürg Jenatsch with its reminiscences of Venice does he lay any stress on local colour. Every Novelle except for Die Hochzeit des Mönchs which is quite artificial enough, has in it one important work of art, which usually has structural significance. Meyer describes this work of art in some detail and rarely refers to it again, but its significance emerges in the course of the Novelle, when it becomes clear that the work of art has prefigured the end of the story or mirrored a situation in which the characters have found themselves. It is this structural function which makes the description itself so important. The works of art are rarely connected personally with the character except for the chess portrait of Pescara or the Pentheus-picture in Das Leiden eines Knaben, but when the character is confronted with the work of art he recognises it as decisive for him. The chess portrait of Pescara is decisive not for Pescara himself but for Morone, for whom it sums up the problem facing the Holy League - their proposed general is a complete mystery whose reactions are incalculable. The Byblis-picture in Die Richterin opens Wulfrin's eyes to the nature of his love for Palma and he at once tries to drive her away from him. Even in a light-hearted story like Der Schuß von der Kanzel a work of art is used - the picture of the Turkish maiden - to galvanise the vacillating Pfannenstiel into declaring his love for Rahel and asking her to decide his fate.

Meyer never uses two works of art in the same way. It is possible to talk generally about prefiguring or mirroring the action, but many variations occur. The situation which Wulfrin sees mirrored in the Byblis-picture is not a real one, although he does not know this, since he and Palma are not brother and sister. The Pentheus-picture in Das Leiden eines Knaben does indeed prefigure Julian's death at the hands of the Jesuits, yet the picture means nothing to him: it is Fagon who sees a reference to Julian's situation and fears impending evil. In Gustav

Adolfs Page young Leubelfing recognises himself as the sacrificed son in the ceiling decoration of Abraham and Isaac, but it is his cousin Gustel who is sacrificed to save the family honour, and who willingly gives her life in the service of the king whom she loves.

Occasionally one feels that Meyer overworked this device. The Pentecost picture makes a powerful effect, but in order to introduce it Meyer had to invent the character of Mouton, which is quite unnecessary to the plot. The Crucifixion altar-piece which appears in the last chapter of Die Versuchung des Pescara certainly balances the chess portrait which dominates the first half of the Novelle and indicates the change which has come over Pescara, but the comparison with Christ is rather forced and were better not made.

The position of Meyer's descriptions of works of art is important as it is in no other author. Usually they occur early on in the story, sometimes on the first page, as in Gustav Adolfs Page, but they may also occur as in Der Schuß von der Kanzel or Die Richterin, at a climax in the story before a new phase of the action begins. Guthke says "Leben und Menschlichkeit richten sich nach der Kunst aus" (1); this positioning of the descriptions underlines the difference between Meyer and the other authors in the importance attached to art - for Meyer art comes first because it is whole and perfect. While the others look from life to art for a summing up of the manifold strands of life, which they regard as reality, Meyer sees art as the true reality, to which man must try to conform. Life in all its variety goes out from art: all its manifestations are already prefigured in the complete and perfect forms of art. Meyer's use of descriptions of works of art, perhaps more than any other aspect of his technique, bears witness to the supreme importance of art and his concept of it in his work.

In being so profoundly influenced by art Meyer fits into a tradition extending from Winckelmann to Rilke and the present day of authors whose thought and writing have been inspired and moulded by their experience of the visual arts. Our other authors have not been so greatly affected. Mörike was, like Meyer, something of a painter himself, and as a late

(1) See p.108 above

Romantic he shared the Romantics' devotion to painting and music. Visco claims that Mörike made his hero an artist because of his own love for painting, but Mörike nowhere treats Nolten seriously as an artist - his career and its special problems are not a central feature of the novel. Storm clearly understands little about painting. His lack of interest in detailed physical description, especially colour, makes it unlikely that the visual arts would appeal to him strongly, and we know the music was his chief love among the arts. In his stories about artists he presents the rather romantic concept of the artist having a special power to portray his subject so that the story behind it is revealed. This may reflect the popular art of the time, where the painter was concerned to paint pictures with a story. Fontane also reveals the tastes of his time by giving an account of the works of art hanging in his characters' homes. Although Fontane knew something about painting technique and artistic appreciation, his use of works of art shows that he regarded pictures merely as a part of interior decoration.

Doubtless all the authors were familiar with the contemporary art scene. Mörike in later life was friendly with Moritz von Schwind, and he probably had the works of his contemporaries in mind when he invented Nolten's pictures. Some of the scenes in Storm's early Novellen resemble the 'Biedermeier' works of painters like Spitzweg, Schwind and Menzel - girls dressed in white, family groups, lovers parting. Adolf Menzel and Fontane were close friends, and Menzel in his own way also documents the life of his period. Fontane refers to Menzel in Die Poggenpuhls and mentions other nineteenth century painters like Cornelius and the Achenbachs as well as the artists of the Renaissance and the later English and Dutch landscape painters. Meyer seems to have been little interested in art apart from the Renaissance, to judge from his Novellen. He condemns the Baroque period, as did his contemporaries, seeing it as decadent. In his biography of Meyer, Frey compares him with the painter Anselm Feuerbach; although the two men did not know each other, Feuerbach was working in Italy at the time of Meyer's journeys and like Meyer he turned away from Romantic influences and sought inspiration in the classical works of the Renaissance.

It cannot be said that our authors, apart from Meyer, fit into any tradition of being influenced by the visual arts. Still less can it be claimed that they fit into a tradition of the use of descriptions of works of art in literature, since such a tradition does not really exist. Only scattered examples of this use are to be found in German literature. The first important novel in the nineteenth century to employ descriptions of works of art as structural and symbolic devices is Goethe's Die Wahlverwandtschaften, which is similar to Meyer's stories in using works of art to illuminate a character's situation or to prefigure later events. In the second part of the novel *Luciane*, Charlotte's daughter visits the country house with her fiancé and a crowd of friends. As an amusement for them another visitor, an elderly count, suggests that the company should present well known works of art in the form of tableaux. They choose 'Esther devant Assuerus' by Poussin, 'Date Obolum Belisarius' by Van Dyck, and 'Instruction Paternelle' by Terborch, which, says the narrator, is known to all from the engraving by Wille. H.G. Barnes in his book on Die Wahlverwandtschaften interprets all these pictures with reference to Otilie.

The tableaux vivants which the Graf proposes and from which Otilie is excluded are all closely connected with the main action, although the narrator reveals it only of Belisarius in the last chapter of the novel. The performance of the tableau of the blinded Byzantine general foreshadows that Otilie will be blinded by passion and conditionally yield to Eduard's hopes of marriage (II.13). The tableau of Esther fainting before Ahasverus, to whom she must reveal the secret of her origin, points forward to Otilie in 'ihrem halben Totenschlaf' (II.14) in the presence of Charlotte, to whom she will relate 'das Geheimnis ihres Lebensganges' (II.15). The third tableau, in which Luciane is admonished, although she is in no particular need of paternal admonishment, symbolizes Otilie's need of admonition. This she will receive through the death of the child: 'Auf eine schrecklich Weise hat Gott mir die Augen geöffnet, in welchem Verbrechen ich befangen bin' (II.14).

The exclusion of Otilie from these performances leads to the climax of the pictorial presentation of Otilie in the Nativity tableau... Most poignant is the ambivalence of the Nativity tableau. It foreshadows indeed Otilie's relationship to Eduard's child for whom she will be a virgin mother, 'eine andere Art von Mutter' (II.11), and for whose sake she will be ready to renounce Eduard. But it also foreshadows Eduard's revelation to her that the child was begotten

spiritual adultery and his frantic belief that this crime can only be atoned for in her arms. The actualization of the Nativity tableau, when Otilie presses the lifeless child to her naked bosom and then raises it in speechless prayer as she kneels in the motionless boat, marks the turning point in the action which then leads up to Otilie's apotheosis. (1)

This apotheosis is also foreshadowed by a work of art, namely the Architekt's restoration of the side-chapel in the local church, which he decorates in a neo-gothic style with medieval Roman Catholic images of the saints and wall-paintings of angels. His devotion to Otilie achieves the same result as his love for Eduard: as her hand-writing came to imitate his exactly, so the angels which the Architekt paints become increasingly like Otilie. After her death, when she is lying in state in the chapel the Architekt comes to take farewell of her, standing by her coffin as he had stood before Belisarius in the tableau. Her maidservant Nanni relates her miraculous cure and convinces the Architekt that Otilie is now a saint in heaven, able to work wonders on earth.

Goethe's use of these tableaux vivants, as Barnes interprets it, is the same as Meyer's use of works of art to prefigure action in Plautus im Nonnenkloster, Die Richterin or Das Leiden eines Knaben. But it is unlikely that either Meyer or Mörike, in his use of the 'Ghostly Concert' to prefigure Nolten's death, was much influenced by Goethe.

The Künstlerroman, flourishing around the turn of the century, has very little to do with works of art. It is concerned with the nature of the artist, whether painter, poet or musician, with his rôle in society as the messenger of a 'higher sphere', rather than with his creations. Mörike's Malers Nolten shares in this tradition with its discussions of Nolten's artistic personality. Keller's novel about an artist, Der grüne Heinrich, describes the life and training of a young painter and includes aesthetic discussions, but no significant description of a work of art. His Novelle Regine, however, one of the cycle Das Sinngedicht, contains pictures and a sculpture which have structural and symbolic functions.

The diplomat Erwin Altenauer returns briefly from Germany to his American home leaving his wife Regine, a former maidservant, in the care of three ladies known as 'die drei Parzen'. They are most unsuitable people for this task, being shallow socialites, but Regine is not sophisticated

(1) H.G. Barnes Goethe's Die Wahlverwandtschaften (Oxford, 1967)

enough to see through them and to look after herself in society. They encourage her to sit for a young female painter, rather a disreputable character, who paints Regine twice, attired in exotic garments. Erwin catches sight of both these pictures, one of which has been bought by a Brazilian ambassador, and he imagines that Regine has compromised herself. He then hears that during his absence she has been visited at night by a young man - her brother on the run after committing a murder - and concludes that she has been deceiving him. He does not ask her to explain either the pictures or the nocturnal visit and she is afraid to tell him of her own free will. The pictures help to widen the rift caused by mistrust between man and wife; they also show how a noble character can be perverted by bad company. The fate of the Venus de Mile further emphasises how beauty and nobility can be degraded by vulgar people who do not truly appreciate them. The statue is being vulgarised by mass-production in cheap plaster copies, one of which is given to Regine by the three 'Parzen'. One day the narrator of the story, Reinhard, who was friendly with the Altenauers, passes the house and sees the statue being removed.

Ein Arbeiter hielt sie mit Gelächter aufrecht und rief: "hüh!", während der andere den Wagen zog. Ich schaute ihr lange nach wie sie sich fortbewegte, und dachte: So geht es, wenn schöne Leute unter das Gesindel kommen! Ich glaubte, die Regine selbst dahin schwanken zu sehen. (1)

Adalbert Stifter's long novel Der Nachsommer is, like Der grüne Heinrich, the story of the artistic education of a young man, although Stifter's hero is educated in artistic appreciation, not in the practice of any art. Stifter is interested in the craft attaching to all arts and gives long accounts of the techniques of wood-carving, etching, stone-cutting and landscape-gardening, as well as painting on various material. The hero develops over a period of years under the direction of his friend Risach from being quite uninformed about the fine arts into a connoisseur with a knowledge of many arts and crafts. Accompanying his development is his changing attitude to two sculptures; one is a genuine Greek piece which stands on a staircase in Risach's house, the other is a marble nymph in the classical style which adorns the grotto at the Sternenhof, the home of Risach's friend Mathilde and her family. On first seeing the Greek statue Heinrich looks at it without comprehension of its quality, but gradually his appreciation grows until it seems to

(1) G. Keller Gesammelte Werke (Stuttgart & Berlin, 1902) VIII, p.117

him the epitome of beauty in art. The growing appeal of the statue is paralleled by the growth of his love for Natalie, Mathilde's daughter. It is in the grotto that he declares his love for her, where the nymph has become for him a symbol of the beauty and purity which he admires in Natalie.

These are, however, only isolated instances in the works of Keller and Stifter, who do not consistently employ descriptions of works of art as do our four authors. K.S. Guthke in his essay on Meyer remarks that the use of works of art is unusual in the literature of the later nineteenth century. This is true, in that one might have expected it to be wider spread in view of the great interest in art at that time. Several writers painted and were friendly with artists; it is surprising that more do not look to works of art as useful literary devices. Although I have studied four authors who do make extensive use of descriptions of works of art, I can find no evidence of a tradition in German literature of such a use. A European tradition seems even less likely, since English writers of the same period show very little interest in the device. Occasional examples occur in the works of Scott, Charlotte Bronte and George Eliot, but only Wilde's The Picture of Dorian Grey is built round a work of art.

The lack of any tradition in German literature is well illustrated by the cultural history of that famous work of art, Dürer's engraving, 'Ritter, Tod und Teufel'. In his book Faust und das Faustische Hans Schwerte devotes his final chapter to examining the myth which has built up around this work. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries it was regarded as a portrayal of the 'Weltmensch', the sinful man, probably a soldier in particular, who is overtaken in his wicked ways by Death and claimed as his own by the Devil. In the nineteenth century, however, starting with Romantics like Friedrich Schlegel, the attitude towards the picture changed until it was seen as the embodiment of all that was best in the German character - persevering in the Christian way, resigned to adversity, yet triumphant over what is base and evil. Nietzsche saw it as the expression of humanistic determination not to be defeated by despair. Thomas Mann in his day realised that the engraving was being interpreted in a perverted manner for ideological purposes, and he attempted to explode the myth of the perfect German knight in Doktor Faustus, by showing the work to be a representation of all the worst facets of the German character. „Aus dem konkreten Ritter oder Reiter des Stich

dem einmaligen künstlerischen Bildvorgang," writes Schwerte, "formte Thomas Mann ein verallgemeinernd- abstrahierendes 'Dürersches Reiten', das sowohl das vermeintlich verhängnisvolle Zurückgebliebensein im dämonisch-spukhaften Mittelalter wie auch das auf trotzende, unreife Gehabe deutsch-nordischer Schicksalsverschwommenheit in eine knappe Klang- und Bildvorstellung bringen sollte. Die scheinbar kanonische Übereinkunft, in diesem Dürerstich eine Art (positives) Selbstbildnis deutschen Wesens, wie immer umschrieben, zu sehen, wurde nicht nur in Zweifel gestellt, sondern in ihr Gegenteil verkehrt." (1)

The point which I wish to draw from this summary of Schwerte's chapter is that the engraving, despite its appeal to Germans since Dürer's time is used only three times as a symbol in literature, according to Schwerte's reckoning. Fouqué was inspired by it to write the story Sintram und seine Gefährten (1814), which he subtitles 'Eine nordische Erzählung nach Albrecht Dürer'. Sintram is portrayed as the type of the Christian 'nordic' hero. C.F. Meyer also regarded Dürer's 'Ritter' as the Christian soldier triumphing over Death and the Devil. In Huttens letzte Tage the parson on the Ufenau, with whom Hutten is lodging, gives him a copy of the engraving and remarks: "Der Ritter, Herr seid Ihr". Hutten agrees with him.

Dem garstgen Paar, davor den Memmen graut,  
Hab immerdar ich fest ins Aug geschaut.  
Mit diesen beiden starken Knappen reit  
Ich auf des Lebens Straßen allezeit,  
Bis ich den einen zwing mit tapferm Sinn  
Und von dem andern selbst bezwungen bin.

Meyer completely accepts the nineteenth century's 'positive' conception of the picture, which Thomas Mann demolishes when he speaks of German religiosity as a 'Dürersches Reiten zwischen Tod und Teufel'. (In his detective novel Der Verdacht, not considered by Schwerte, Dürrenmatt likewise adopts the 'positive' attitude to the engraving. It hangs in the hospital room of the old police chief, supposedly to remind him that he is dying, but it strengthens him in his conviction that he has done right in trying to bring a Nazi war-criminal to justice.)

Despite the attention which the engraving has received from art critics and collectors, from theologians or moral and political thinkers

(1) Hans Schwerte Faust und das Faustische (Stuttgart, 1962) p.245

it has not been taken up into literature as a popular symbol, which would seem to argue against any tradition of works of art being used in this way in German literature.

Our four authors, therefore, stand apart from other German writers in their use of descriptions of works of art and from each other in the individual ways in which they employ these descriptions. None is influenced by the others nor by a German tradition; each makes use of works of art for symbolic and structural purposes peculiar to himself, which can be fully understood only after a study of his complete prose fiction. This device - the use of descriptions of works of art - must be studied in conjunction with other literary devices used by each author, but it appears frequently enough to merit special examination on its own. My account of the descriptions of works of art employed by Mörike, Storm, C.F. Meyer and Fontane does not reveal any general trends or traditions in nineteenth century German literature, but attempts, by an assessment of the significance of these descriptions, to contribute to the understanding of each individual author.

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