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Internationale Forschungen zur  
Allgemeinen und  
Vergleichenden Literaturwissenschaft

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In Verbindung mit

Dietrich Briesemeister (Friedrich Schiller-Universität Jena) - Guillaume van Gemert (Universiteit Nijmegen) - Joachim Knappe (Universität Tübingen) - Klaus Ley (Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz) - John A. McCarthy (Vanderbilt University) - Manfred Pfister (Freie Universität Berlin) - Sven H. Rossel (University of Washington) - Azade Seyhan (Bryn Mawr College) - Horst Thomé (Universität Kiel)

herausgegeben von

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Institut für Vergleichende Literaturwissenschaft, Berggasse 11/5, A-1090 Wien

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# Kafka Gothic and Fairytale

Patrick Bridgwater



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## PREFACE

There is a contradiction between Kafka's persona with its love of fairytale and his Ka or shadow with its affinity with Gothic. The extreme lucidity of his style is at odds with his alarming, tortured, 'Kafkaesque' narratives and the endless ambiguities in which they are clothed. His admiration for Goethe is only partly the admiration of a great artist for a greater; he was also drawn to the calm certainty of Goethe's blessedly uncomplicated nature, as opposed to the endless involutions and convolutions of his own almost invariably troubled self-awareness, which the protagonist of each of his novels comes to share. This inner contradiction drove him simultaneously to reveal his meaning and to seek to conceal it, and because he craved understanding, yet feared it, there is a further contradiction between the fact that he writes, in prose, a form of poetry of the first voice, expressing and addressing himself, often, like his 'starvation-artist' persona, seemingly indifferent to the public, and the infinite trouble to which he went to throw the reader off the scent.

What follows is a comparative study of Kafka's work, especially the novels and some of the related shorter punishment fantasies, in relation to the Gothic and fairytale conventions. His deployment of Gothic motifs contrasts with his use of fairytale ones, which he (like the German Gothic or 'black' Romantics and twentieth-century practitioners of the Gothic Fairytale) knowingly subverts, but in each instance what counts are less the parallels and affinities, than the use to which he puts Gothic and fairytale, and how and why he leaves them behind. Max Brod dismissed the problem of Kafka's shadow by denying his Gothic side. It would have been easy, in the present context, to dismiss it in the opposite way, by assimilating him wholesale to the Gothic tradition as it developed from 1764 to 1924, but when all is said and done it is precisely the mixture of Gothic and its opposites in Kafka that makes him so interesting.

The perennial problem in Kafka-criticism has been how to reconcile the general and the particular. I therefore first consider the nature of Gothic and fairytale, and the dreamlike nature of his writing, before moving on to an examination of the novels, as I understand them to be, and some of the major shorter texts in the Gothic and fairytale contexts. Within the confines of a relatively short study of this kind it is, of course, neither possible nor appropriate to give consequential close readings of three whole novels, one of which is far from short. In a separate book, *Kafka's Novels: An Interpretation*, currently in the press, the problems inherent in reading Kafka are discussed at some length. Here let it simply be said that his creative technique,

described in Chapter 4 with reference to what Dilthey called the hermeneutic circle, is the key to understanding his writings, which are dreamlike in being governed by the alternative logic of dreams, so that 'normal' logic tends to be replaced by verbal association. Reading his texts means focusing on the secondary meanings of words and on metaphors which have been taken literally, for he was far too careful a writer to use words with irrelevant secondary meanings or which formed inappropriate verbal bridges. No analysis of his work is adequate that does not pay proper attention to the associations that he deliberately put in place and which constitute the deep structure and with it the meaning of his work.

A study such as this faces the risk not only of making Kafka's work seem more Gothic than it really is, but of making Gothic seem more Kafkaesque than it really was. I have tried to avoid both risks. It would have been easy, by mistaking the surface meaning of Kafka's work for its real meaning, and thus taking it as turning on an external conflict between the individual and an all-powerful public (as opposed to introjected paternal) Authority, to make it seem even more Gothic than it comes to seem in the following pages. In reality, however, the novels in particular are a classic example of how the surface meaning of a text serves to mask its real, 'unsayable' meanings, which in turn underlines the parallel between the creative process and what Freud calls the dream-work.

German text is quoted in translation unless the emphasis is on the meaning of individual words or phrases, in which case the words in question are quoted and their meanings discussed. The translations are mine unless specified otherwise. Since the book is not addressed to folklorists as such, I have generally translated 'Volksmärchen' by 'fairytale' (written as one word, as in *The Encyclopedia of Fantasy*, to emphasize that there are no fairies involved), although 'folk fairytale' and 'folktale' are occasionally used by way of emphasis.

For reading my first draft and making many useful comments I am much indebted to Alan Menhennet.

## ABBREVIATIONS AND SIGNS

The following abbreviations are used in the text and footnotes:

- BF *Briefe an Felice* , ed. Erich Heller & Jürgen Born (Frankfurt a.M.: S. Fischer, 1967)
- BM *Briefe an Milena* , ed. Willy Haas (Frankfurt a.M.: S. Fischer, 1952)
- Br *Briefe 1902-1924* , ed. Max Brod (Frankfurt a.M.: S. Fischer, 1958)
- BV *Brief an den Vater*, in *Er. Prosa von Franz Kafka* ([Frankfurt a.M.]: Suhrkamp, 1963)
- J Gustav Janouch, *Gespräche mit Kafka* (Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer Bücherei, 1962)
- T *Tagebücher 1910-1923*, ed. Max Brod (Frankfurt a.M.: S.Fischer, 1949)
- KHM J. & W. Grimm, *Kinder und Haus-Märchen*, Ausgabe letzter Hand, ed.Heinz Rölleke (Stuttgart: Reclam,1997)

The signs → and ← and ↔ are used to denote verbal association including displacement along a chain of associations.

In the notes, all references to a given work after the first are given in the shortest intelligible form. Titles of journals are abbreviated in the usual way.

A German (or, occasionally, Czech or Italian) word which is not actually present in the text in question is italicized.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Kafka's Gothic World

Kafka was a haunted personality, the dreams and day-dreams, of which his writing was the expression, filled with phantoms, the demons, or devils, as he generally called them, of self-doubt, self-accusation and self-judgment, fear of life and fear of death (to which he was inclined to ascribe his insomnia, although he also put it down to fear of his father). He saw the flames of Hell breaking through the very ground on which he stood (diary, 21 July 1913), an experience with which the poet Shelley would have sympathized. Shelley's own use of the image in his early and most Gothic phase, in a letter to Edward Graham in summer 1810 ('Persevere even though Hell [...] should yawn beneath your feet')<sup>1</sup> was conventional by comparison. But while the 'supernatural' in the form of all those plaguy demons by which he was tormented (see BM 25), and the 'supernatural assize' of conscience, whose agents they mostly were, was an everyday reality to him, he was, like Shelley, opposed to religious superstition, which he saw as dishonest and all too easy. God in particular he found implausibly abstract, although he believed in principle in the idea of a personal god and in the reality of a multiplicity of personal devils,<sup>2</sup> and was, to his misery, obsessed by the idea of the Fall, that ultimate superstition and *terminus a quo* of Gothic. Even without the pervasive Gothic iconography of his work with its theme of transgression against paternal power, he can immediately be seen to belong in the Gothic context. Writing was, for him, a transgressive act because of the weight of paternal disapproval it carried, and his novels, the subject of all three of which is transgression, are formally transgressive in being closer to the romance, to fairytale, to autobiography, and even to lyric poetry, than to the novel as such, of which he had a low opinion.

His *Brief an den Vater* (*Letter to my Father*), written in 1919 and never delivered, must be the most damning indictment of 'paternal tyranny' ever written. Putting in the shade Shelley's similar but less fully articulated criticism of his father, who was both more trying and more tried than Kafka *père*, whose son lacked Shelley's explosive propensities, it shows with painful clarity that Franz Kafka lived in a world dominated by precisely those uncertainties about the nature of power, law, society, family and

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<sup>1</sup> *The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. F. L. Jones, 2 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964), I, 10.

<sup>2</sup> An interesting parallel is Shelley's *Essay on the Devil and Devils* of 1819-20, in *Shelley's Prose*, ed. D. L. Clark (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1954), 264-275.

sexuality that have been said<sup>3</sup> to dominate Gothic fiction. The fact that Herrmann Kafka, a self-made man, was in his not always obvious way a loving father, much concerned about the future of his vulnerable, 'disappointing' son, does not mean that he was not also, at times, a tyrant in his son's estimation. There are two issues here: how the father actually was, and how his son, whose self-esteem was low, sometimes perceived and felt him to be. Recently published correspondence<sup>4</sup> shows more clearly than before that the father's heart was in the right place, but it does not, and cannot, unwrite the *Brief an den Vater*, or indeed *Das Urteil* and *Die Verwandlung*, in all three of which the father-son relationship has, however, been subjected to differing degrees of fictionalization. Even in the objective-seeming *Brief an den Vater* the real-life relationship has been subjected to poetic license, being exaggerated in the process, and, what is more important, it has been subjected to dream-distortion, so that the father not only represents the father as the son saw him, which is not how the father saw himself, but arguably stands as much for the writer's super-ego as for his 'old man'. Writing, as Kafka knew very well, of its very nature involves falsification. Feelings are not verbally perfect; once the expression is perfected, they are arguably no longer true. The *Brief an den Vater* is particularly 'stagey', but all Kafka's writings involve an act or fictional performance to which they self-consciously, if hermetically, draw attention. The sense of guilt that drove him to write was in the final analysis more the product of his own hypersensitivity than of his father's occasional unthinking insensitivity.

These important points made, Kafka spent much of his life as a 'slave'<sup>5</sup> in the household of a 'master' who was a law unto himself, recognizing only his own rules, laws and opinions, so that the son's every move was liable to be construed into a transgression against paternal law. He grew up with the ideas of tyranny, a term he uses repeatedly in the *Brief an den Vater*, and heresy, meaning, as always, disobedience vis-à-vis the patriarch's 'commandments'. No wonder, then, that he claimed that all his work was about his father. One should, of course, be wary of one who was more inclined to throw his critics off the scent than to abet them, as he would have seen it, in an act of intellectual voyeurism or rape, but these particular words need to be taken seriously. They do not mean that only a Freudian interpretation of the work is valid, just that this has a psychological dimension that no sensible overall reading can afford to ignore; that goes, above all, for Freud's account of the 'dream-work', which is tantamount to a description of the creative act that Kafka wisely left others to describe. There is no need to read Freud on the Devil as a

<sup>3</sup> Fred Botting, *Gothic* (London & New York: Routledge, 1996), 5.

<sup>4</sup> Franz Kafka, *Briefe 1900-1912*, ed. Hans-Gerd Koch, 5 vols (Frankfurt a .M.: S.Fischer, 1999- ).

<sup>5</sup> Hence the name of Raban (a self-projection) in *Hochzeitsvorbereitungen auf dem Lande* (cf. Czech *rab*, slave).

substitute for the father<sup>6</sup> to realize that Kafka *père*, who was given to referring to his ascetic son as a 'devil', himself gave him the devil of a time. Kafka's identification with the Devil, and with witches and vampires, derives from this bedevilled relationship. The world in which he lived, reflected as it is in the world of which he wrote, is very much a Gothic world, although its ruling tensions are those of fairytale too, for his father is also, as the *Brief an den Vater* makes clear, that archetypal projection of another's fear, the ogre of fairytale, the bogeyman of childhood. Given that Kafka, whose name (*kavka*) means 'jackdaw' in Czech, was in the habit of using the *Rabe* (raven) as an emblematic self-reference, it is appropriate, if not entirely fair, that the fairytale type of the *Rabenvater* (cruel father) can be construed as 'Kafka's father'. It is just the sort of linguistic nicety the son appreciated.

In coming to see his father as an ogre, Georg Bendemann, the protagonist of *Das Urteil* (see 9.1), was re-enacting his creator's similar perception, for Kafka was at times intellectually and emotionally overwhelmed by his father, 'that huge man [...] the ultimate authority' (BV 140): 'You were so gigantic, a giant in every respect' (BV 151), he wrote, flinching as he described 'the sense I have of your magnitude' (BV 186). When the son was deemed to have failed, notably in not being a replica of his father in some particular respect, he would find 'a great voice thundering at him' (BV 146), a childhood experience that is echoed in Chapter 9 of *Der Proceß* when the Priest calls out to Josef K. in a tone of voice that will brook no disobedience. The father, that is to say, was an ogre not only in the sense of being an intimidating physical presence, but in a moral sense as well. Describing himself - in his usual self-deprecating way - as a weakly, timid, wavering person, Kafka found his father 'too much' for him, too vehement, too domineering. His approach to those he regarded as inferiors (his son, his employees) was liable to be confrontational. Like Ann Radcliffe's Montoni, he seemed the very incarnation of the domestic tyrant: 'From your armchair you ruled the world. Your opinion was correct, any other being mad, hare-brained, crackpot, not normal' (BV 142). As a result, the father took on, for his son, 'the enigmatic quality that all tyrants possess whose rights are based not on reason but on their person' (BV 142). Kafka was devastated by the force of his father's personality, hectoring temperament and tyrannical nature, to say nothing of the loudness of his voice and the hotness of his temper.

In one form or another this relationship resting on what Nietzsche had dubbed the dual morality of master and slave lies behind works such as *Das Urteil*, *Die Verwandlung*, *Der Verschollene*, *Der Proceß* and *In der Strafkolonie*, all of them dreamlike self-punitive fantasies turning on Kafka's father-complex. Pointing to *Das Urteil*, he writes of 'your judgment of me', and goes on: 'you don't charge me with

<sup>6</sup> See 'A Seventeenth-Century Demonological Neurosis' (iii. 'The Devil as a Father-Substitute'), in Sigmund Freud, *Art and Literature* (London: Penguin, 1985), 397-408.

anything downright improper or wicked' (BV 136), which takes the reader back to the first sentence of *Der Proceß*. The 'parasitism' with which the son was to imagine himself being charged by his father (BV 191, cf. T 23f) first appears in symbolical form in the 'Ungeziefer' (with which Kafka had identified since 1910) of *Die Verwandlung*. What was particularly difficult to bear was 'that awful hoarse undertone of anger and utter condemnation' (BV 147), 'the words of abuse flying around me in swarms' (BV 148). As a child Kafka cringed before his father, hiding from him and only daring to emerge when he was so far away from him that his power could no longer reach him (BV 148). For the child the orders barked at him were tantamount to 'a heavenly commandment' (shades, here, of the autocratic, quasi-divine Old Commandant, a variation on the universal dream figure of the 'old man').

To make matters worse, the father did not keep the commandments he imposed on his son, for whom the world was thus divided into three domains:

One, in which I, the slave, lived under laws that had been invented for me alone [...] then a second world, infinitely remote from mine, in which you lived, concerned with governance, the issuing of orders and [the venting of] your annoyance when they were not obeyed; finally, a third world where everybody else lived happily, free alike from orders and having to obey them. (BV 145)

From his father's intemperate condemnation of him and all his works the son acquired an intense sense of guilt that never left him. When he said that all his writings were about his father, he meant they were about the boundless sense of guilt that, he sometimes felt, formed his paternal inheritance, for the authority of the father was inevitably introjected, becoming a tyrannical inward monitor. He goes on to write of 'this terrible trial that is pending between us [Franz and Ottla, the youngest sister who was similarly demonized by their father because of her independence of spirit] and you [...] a trial in which you keep on claiming to be the judge' (BV 164). The relevance of this to *Der Proceß* is obvious, although the situation described in the novel is more complex, having been fictionalized in multiple ways. Given the father's constant complaint that his commandments were not being obeyed, 'heresy' became, for his son, an inescapable personal condition. No wonder it looms so large between the lines of *Der Proceß*. At a very early stage the son was forbidden to speak in the sense of answering back: "'Not one word of contradiction!" you would say, and the raised hand that accompanied your words has been with me ever since' (BV 147). It can be seen to this day on the first page of *Der Verschollene*, where it is, ironically, attributed to the Statue of 'Liberty'.

Even the portrait of Diana, goddess of the hunt, in *Der Proceß* is, among other things, a reflection of the state of affairs in the Kafka household in those fatally formative years, in which, as Kafka put it in the letter to his father, his mother unconsciously played the part of a beater during a hunt, so that the concept of the hunt with himself as prey was a part of the psychological burden he carried forward. He even suffered imprisonment at the 'tyrant's' hands, describing the 'extraordinary

feeling of terror' when he was carried off to the balcony and locked out from the family: the sense of exclusion left its mark, as did the ogre's threat to 'tear him apart like a fish' (BV 149; tearing someone to pieces is, of course, a fairytale motif)<sup>7</sup>. The negative feelings engendered by being browbeaten as a child, and well into adulthood, are commonplace in the Gothic novel. I mean the feelings of being disinherited, of despair, guilt, and terror. The inner world of which Kafka wrote was in many ways a Gothic one because he spent virtually all his life in such a world. 'Gothic', in his case, is more than a literary kind; it is an existential condition.

## 1.2. Kafka and Gothic

Given the manifold ways in which it has been read (and misread, the latter far outweighing the former), it is astonishing that Kafka's work has not already been placed in the context of literary Gothic, which has a strong Bohemian side stretching from the anonymous *The Secret Tribunal; or, The Court of Wincelous. A Mysterious Tale* (chapbook, 1803) to Heinrich Zschokke's *Drakomira mit dem Schlangenringe oder die nächtlichen Wanderer in den Schreckensgefängnissen von Karlstein bei Prag. Eine Schauer Geschichte aus Böhmens grauer Vorzeit* (1847) and Marion F. Crawford's *The Witch of Prague* (1891), which even has a character named Israel Kafka, and thence to the successive versions of *The Student of Prague* (film, 1913, 1926, 1935). Aside from Kafka's Gothic side having been denied by Brod, the main reasons for this are probably the fact that Gothic, for all its supposed German origins, is essentially an Anglo-American and Anglo-French phenomenon, and that what passed as its German equivalent, the so-called *Schauerroman* (chiller or thriller), was long considered too 'sub-literary' to be worth serious critical attention. Until comparatively recently German censure of 'popular' literature even extended to Tieck's *Abdallah*, a work with some literary pretensions.

Far from being a reason for excluding him from the Gothic context and pantheon, the fact that Kafka is one of the jewels in the crown of high modernism is all the more reason for placing him in it, for modernism with its subversion of existing forms goes back precisely to the period of high Gothic at the end of the eighteenth century. This is when most of the modernist revolutions and revaluations began, the intertextualities between Kafka's novels and the Gothic novel being just one aspect of a fundamental pattern of cultural and intellectual parallels between the turn of the eighteenth century and the turn of the nineteenth.<sup>8</sup> The modern, post-Richardsonian novel began with the Gothic novel, and the idea of playing with existing literary forms is as much a feature

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<sup>7</sup> See Stith Thompson, *Motif-Index of Folk Literature*, 6 vols (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1955-58), VI, 783.

<sup>8</sup> See Patrick Bridgwater, 'Backdating Modernism', *Oxford German Studies*, 30 (2001), 107-132.

of Ludwig Tieck's early work as it is of high modernism as described by the Devil in Thomas Mann's *Dr Faustus*. The leitmotif of that novel, that 'everything seemed to have been done', was first voiced by the Marquis de Sade (to whom I return in 2.4) in his *Idée sur les romans* a century and a half earlier.

So long as the German equivalent of Gothic was thought to be the preserve of literary adventurers like Grosse and Kahlert, Spieß and Weber, it would have seemed neither appropriate nor useful to consider Kafka in that context, although the truth is that Grosse's *Der Genius. Aus den Papieren des Marquis C. von Grosse*,<sup>9</sup> better known outside Germany as *Horrid Mysteries*, inspired both Tieck's *William Lovell* and the novel Hoffmann wrote in 1795-96 and then probably destroyed after it had been turned down by a publisher, *Cornaro: Memoiren des Grafen Julius von S.* Tieck revelled in *Der Genius*, the first two parts of which he and his friends Schmohl and Schwinger read aloud to one another in a mammoth ten-hour session back in the heroic days of Gothic (and enthusiasm) in June 1792, and Hoffmann's most (and most influentially) Gothic work, the novel *Die Elixiere des Teufels* (1814-15), is reminiscent of *Der Genius* in respect of its 'constant sense of characters being manipulated by powers outside their control'.<sup>10</sup> To speak of Grosse's work as 'low-brow' and Hoffmann's as 'high-brow' is to over-simplify, and in any case writers like Grosse represent only the marginally literary fringes of Gothic, for in Germany the early Gothic novel in the form of the *Bundesroman* of, say, Veit Weber, was appropriated by the Romantic novelists, for instance by Tieck in his *William Lovell*, who took over much of its ultimately explained supernatural and gave it a psychological basis<sup>11</sup> which is important in the present context in that in Kafka the dark imagery of spectral terrors appears in psychological guise.

Whereas in England the novel, for a time, gave ground to the Gothic romance, in Germany both the Gothic romance and the Romantic novel lost ground, at much the same time, to the fairytale, for the literary part of the German Gothic romance was appropriated by the German Romantic novel, which quickly yielded the high ground to the *Märchen* (and to the *Novelle*, which need not concern us here). Kafka is thus the inheritor not only of the German Romantic view of the novel as poetry, and of the internalized 'Gothic' of the German Romantic novel as such, but also of the *Märchen*. How very close the relationship is between fairytale and Gothic will become ever clearer as we proceed. Veit Weber was seen at the time as a *schauerlicher Märchenerzähler* (a teller of horrific fairytales), and Tieck's recipe for a Gothic novel ('Giants, dwarfs, ghosts, witches, a touch of murder and violent death, moonlight and

<sup>9</sup> The title is imitated from that of Schiller's *Der Geisterseher*.

<sup>10</sup> Eric A. Blackall, *The Novels of the German Romantics* (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 1983), 231.

<sup>11</sup> Blackall, 64.



dusk, all this sweetened with love and sensibility to make it more palatable<sup>12</sup>) is scarcely less applicable to fairytale than it is to Gothic. The weird fairytales Shelley used to tell his sisters were very much of a piece with his Gothic tales.

As Tieck pointed out as long ago as 1795, in the foreword to his *Peter Lebrecht*, 'horridness' (in Jane Austen's sense) is a characteristic not just of the likes of Grosse, but of the whole German early Romantic phenomenon that we now know as the Sturm und Drang, which corresponds to English-language Pre-Romanticism and Gothic Romanticism. German readers at this time expected to have their hair made to stand on end: 'The reader is happy so long as the events served up are as ghastly as they are ghostly'. Besides, once literary labels and evaluative preconceptions are set aside, and German Gothic is seen to include not only the early work of Schiller (notably *Der Geisterseher. Aus den Papieren des Grafen von O.* [1787, incomplete], but also the banditti-tragedy *Die Räuber* [1781], which so impressed the English Romantics) and Tieck (*Abdallah* [1795], *Der blonde Eckbert* [1797] and *Liebeszauber* [1812, translated by that Gothic dark horse Thomas De Quincey in 1825]), but the anonymous *Die Nachtwachen des Bonaventura* (1804), Hoffmann (*Die Elixiere des Teufels* [1814-15], translated by De Quincey's friend R. P. Gillies in 1824) and Achim von Arnim (notably *Der tolle Invalide* [1818], a tale of diabolical possession, and *Die Majoratsherren* [1820]; Heine rated Arnim's evocations of terror above those of Hoffmann<sup>13</sup>), the case for considering Kafka in the Gothic context suddenly looks more reasonable. However, the point is academic since the parallels, which mostly concern the non-German Gothic novel as such, will be seen to speak for themselves.

Exactly how much Kafka knew of the Gothic novel is not clear. Notwithstanding some parallels between his work and Grosse's *Der Genius*, there is no particular reason to think that he came across any of the *Schauerromane* as such. On the other hand he greatly admired the work of Heinrich von Kleist, especially *Michael Kohlhaas*, which contains elements of Gothic, has been shown to be indebted to E. T. A. Hoffmann, and may also have been familiar with works such as *Das Zauberschloß* and *Der Geheimnisvolle* (a copy of which was owned by Scott) by Ludwig Tieck, that earlier master in the exploration of anguish and anxiety, although much of Tieck's earlier work in particular has always been relatively inaccessible, buried alive in the twenty-eight volumes of *Ludwig Tieck's Schriften* (1828-54). Like Tieck's *Abdallah* and *Der blonde Eckbert*, Kafka's novels are fantasies of guilt with their literary roots in Gothic and fairytale, which they play off one against the other. Like Hoffmann's *Die Elixiere des Teufels*, and like some of Dostoevsky's early work, they feature aspects of personality acting as characters. Because of the issues they raise, parallels

<sup>12</sup> *Ludwig Tieck's Schriften in 28 Bänden* (Berlin: Reimer, 1828-54), XIV, 164. Brentano, in his *Chronika eines fahrenden Schülers* (1803), used the word 'gotisch', linking it with 'modisch'.

<sup>13</sup> S. S. Prawer, *Caligari's Children. The Film as Tale of Terror* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 18.



between Kafka's work and that of Hoffmann and Tieck, which overlaps with what in English literary history is called Gothic Romanticism, are discussed (in 5.5.1) in the context of the *Kunstmärchen*, and parallels between Hoffmann and Kafka are also discussed (in 3.4) in the context of the uncanny. 'Romantic' and 'Gothic' do not, of course, mean the same thing, for Romanticism is a literary period and mode, whereas Gothic is a literary form, but much Gothic writing was produced in the Romantic period, and not a little Romantic literature is, in England as in Germany, Gothic. There are overlaps in that both mode and form favour the romance (imaginative, non-mimetic fiction) and share a concern with dreams and nightmares, the supernatural, and the figures of Cain, the Wandering Jew and the Satanic hero-villain. Romantic-period Gothic is marked by the internalization of early Gothic motifs and thus, in Maturin and Brockden Brown, an increasing emphasis on the psychological, the development of which Kafka is, via Dostoevsky, the distant heir. *Melmoth the Wanderer* has rightly been seen<sup>14</sup> as a forerunner of Dostoevsky, who admired Maturin's work, and of Kafka, who, despite his engagement with the Wandering Jew, is not known to have read it.

For the present we therefore pass from Hoffmann to two of his many Russian admirers, Gogol and Dostoevsky (who claimed to have read, in both Russian and German, every word that Hoffmann ever wrote), both of them among Kafka's favourite writers from university onwards. Gogol he read repeatedly. *The Nose* offered him a model for a tale of metamorphosis, while the fact that Gogol starved himself to death may have given him, on one level, the idea for the starvation-artist and its echo in *Forschungen eines Hundes*. Gogol's Ukrainian tales abound in devils and fairy-tale elements, as do Kafka's works, in which the devils in question are internalized and disguised. However, interesting though the parallels between Kafka's work and Gogol's are, they belong in the context of the grotesque, of which Gothic may be an effect, rather than the Gothic as such. With Dostoevsky it is a different matter.

Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky's<sup>15</sup> early works in the Gothic mode stand as a monument to the once overwhelming impact of Hoffmann on writers from Anton Pogorel'sky (*The Double*, 1828, a tale which spawned a host of others, most of them similarly named), to the Gothicism and so-called 'Russian Hoffmann', Vladimir Fyodorovich Odoevsky (*The Salamander*, 1841-4), and thence to Dostoevsky's *The Double* (1846). Jessie Coulson wrote of this that it 'might have cropped up as one of

<sup>14</sup> See C. R. Maturin, *Melmoth the Wanderer*, ed. Douglas Grant (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), iii-xiv.

<sup>15</sup> One probably need look no further for the origin of the name of Oberportier Feodor in *Der Verschollene*, whose name represents a German version of the Russian spelling (Fëdor[Fyodor]) of Theodor(e).