COLUMBIA LIBRARIES OFFSITE
CU56121679
378.7CXO C63 Influence of E.T.A.

Digitized by Google
Original from
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

L378.7CX0 C63

Columbia University
in the City of New York
Library

GIVEN BY

Author

Digitized by Google

Original from
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Digitized by Google

Original from
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Digitized by Google

Original from
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Digitized by Google

Original from
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Digitized by Google

Original from
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Digitized by Google

Original from
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Digitized by Google

Original from
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

STUDIES IN PHILOLOGY

PUBLISHED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF

THE PHILOLOGICAL CLUB OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA

cop 2

VOL. III

The Influence of E. T. A. Hoffmann on the Tales of Edgar Allan Poe

— BY —

PALMER COBB

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF GERMAN IN THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, in the Faculty of Philosophy, Columbia University

CHAPEL HILL
THE UNIVERSITY PRESS
1908

Digitized by Google

Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

THE UNIVERSITY PRESS
CHAPEL HILL.

Digitized by Google
Original from
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

E.H. Oct. 6, 08

TO

M. L. S.

IN
FRIENDSHIP

Digitized by Google

Original from
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Digitized by Google

Original from
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

CONTENTS

PAGE

BIBLIOGRAPHY vii

INTRODUCTION 1

CHAPTER I

VARIOUS ESTIMATES OF POE'S INDEBTEDNESS TO GERMAN LITERATURE 4

CHAPTER II

GERMAN LITERATURE IN AMERICA AND ENGLAND IN THE THIRTIES AND FORTIES 15

CHAPTER III

POE'S KNOWLEDGE OF THE GERMAN LANGUAGE 20

CHAPTER IV

HOFFMANN'S *Elixiere des Teufels* AND POE'S *William Wilson* 31

CHAPTER V

HOFFMANN'S *Magnetiseur* AND POE'S *Tale of the Ragged Mountains* 49

CHAPTER VI

HOFFMANN'S *Die Jesuiterkirche in G——* AND POE'S *The Oval Portrait* 70

Digitized by Google

Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

CHAPTER VII

HOFFMANN'S *Doge und Dogaressa* AND POE'S *The Assignation* 81

CHAPTER VIII

POE'S STYLISTIC INDEBTEDNESS TO HOFFMANN 91

CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSIONS 103

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

References in the body of the text are made by foot notes under the name of the author or editor to the following works.

A. Barine, *Nevrosés.* Paris, 1893.

H. M. Belden, *Anglia*, 23. 376.

L. P. Betz, *Edgar Poe in der Französischen Literatur.* Frankfurt a.M., 1893.

W. v. Biedermann, Editor, *Goethes Gespräche.* Leipzig, 1889-96.

J. Bing, *Novalis. Eine Biographische Charakteristik.* Hamburg and Leipzig, 1893.

Bruhier, *Abhandlungen von der Ungewissheit der Kennzeichen des Todes.* Übersetzt von Johann Gotfried Jancke. Leipzig, 1754.

Cooper, *The Mohawk Edition of Cooper's Works.* New York, 1897.

G. Ellinger, *E. T. A. Hoffmann. Sein Leben and seine Werke.* Hamburg und Leipzig, 1906.

C. P. Evans. *Müncher Allg. Zeitung*, 1899. No. 229.

R. P. Gillies, *German Stories.* Selected from the works of de la Motte Fouqué, Richter, etc. London, 1826.

E. Griesebach, Editor, *E. T. A. Hoffmanns Sämtliche Werke.* Leipzig, 1906.

R. W. Griswold, *Life and Works of E. A. Poe.* New York, 1856.

G. Gruener, *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America.* March, 1904.

Gruendel, *E. A. Poe. Ein Beitrag zur Kenntniss und Würdigung des Dichters.* Schulprogram, Freiberg, 1895.

J. A. Harrison, Editor, *The Complete Works of E. A. Poe.* New York, 1902,

Havemann, *Deutsche Heimat*, 1902. Heft 3.

Digitized by Google

Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Hawthorne, *The Riverside Edition of Hawthorne's Works.*

E. v. der Hellen, Editor, *Schillers Sämtliche Werke, Säkular-Ausgabe.* Stuttgart und Berlin, 1905.

E. Heilborn, Editor, *Novalis Schriften.* Berlin, 1901.

J. E. Hitzig, *E. T. A. Hoffmanns Leben und Nachlass.* Stuttgart, 1845.

A. v. Humbolt, *Kosmos.* Stuttgart, 1845.

J. H. Ingram, Editor, *The Works of E. A. Poe.* London, 1899.

Lauvrière, *Edgar Poe. Sa Vie et Son Oeuvre.* Paris, 1904.

A. und H. Moeller-Bruck, Editors, *E. A. Poes Sämtliche Werke* Minden i. W. 1904.

Mrs. Ann Radcliff, *The Mysteries of Udolpho.* London, 1824.

Mrs. Ann Radcliff, *The Italian.* London, 1836.

R. H. Stoddard, Editor, *The Works of E. A. Poe.* New York, 1884.

E. C. Stedman, *E. A. Poe.* Boston, 1881.

E. C. Stedman and G. E. Woodberry, Editors, *The Works of E. A. Poe.* Chicago, 1896.

Van Vleuten, *Berliner Zukunft.* XI Jahrgang. No. 44.

Wiegler, *Berliner Tag.* 1901. No. 300.

G. E. Woodberry, *E. A. Poe.* Boston, 1885.

Digitized by Google

Original from
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

INTRODUCTION

"Goethe spoke much about the French, especially Cousin, Villemain, and Guizot. 'The insight, circumspection, and perspicuity of these men,' said he, 'is great; they combine complete knowledge of the past with the spirit of the nineteenth century, which, to be sure, works wonders.'

From this we passed to the newest French writers and to the significance of classic and romantic.

'A new expression has occurred to me,' said Goethe, 'which does not characterize the relationship badly. The classic I call the healthy, and the romantic the diseased. And in this sense the Nibelungen is classic, as well as Homer, for both are healthy and vigorous. The most of the new is not romantic because it is new, but because it is weak, sickly and diseased, and the old is not classic because it is old, but because it is strong, fresh, happy and healthy.'"[1]

This is Goethe's word relative to a certain phase of romanticism whose productions seemed to him to be unsound and unwholesome, because they did not emanate from minds which were "strong, fresh, happy and healthy."

It is with the productions of two such minds which Goethe characterizes as "diseased" that the present work has to do. The American Edgar Allan Poe, and the German Ernst Theodor Amadeus Hoffmann are both disciples of that phase of romanticism which had terror of the uncanny as its dominant note, and which Goethe calls "weak, sickly, and diseased" in in distinction from that which is "strong, fresh, happy and healthy." Both these men were powerfully fascinated by the mystery of the supernatural. They were tantalized by the hope of solving or guessing the secrets of another world which stretches away beyond the range of human intelligence. One may agree with Goethe that the theories they evolved and the

---

[1] Biedermann. Goethes Gespräche, Leipzig, 1889-96. Vol. 7, p. 40.

Digitized by Google

Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

tales they told are not food for the mind that is fresh, sound, and cheerful. But if their fancy and their speculation enticed them too far afield their genius accompanied them, and it will create for their work a lasting value.

It has been said that they were both exponents of one phase of romanticism, that their interests were frequently identical. To what extent was the one acquainted with the work of the other? In what measure did the one mind influence the other?

In the recently completed German edition of Poe's works,[2] the editor, in his prefatory account of the poet's life and work's remarks:

> Sein Leben war das eines Träumers aus dem alten Mutterlande Europa, und wenn man seine halb normannische Abkunft bedenkt, kann man schon ruhig sagen, eines germanischen Träumers — war ein Leben, ein Traumleben, geführt in dem brutal-realen, fast ausschliesslich merkantilen Milieu Nord Amerikas . . . Die Kreuzung von Leben und Mensch, die sich da ergab, die Mischung von bedingungsloser Kultur und unbedingtem Neuland, die dann so einzig ist, ist Poe, der Romantiker, verpflanzt auf den realitätenschwersten Boden, den man sich in damaliger Zeit nur überhaupt denken konnte.

This in general is the standpoint of the present work. It is Poe the "Germanic dreamer," the romanticist, that is here to be the subject of discussion, and always from the standpoint of his indebtedness to German literature, as to material and technique. Poe the romanticist and dreamer is probably nowhere more happily, and at the same time more briefly characterized than by his contemporary James Russell Lowell:[3]

> In his tales he has chosen to exhibit his powers chiefly in that dim region which stretches from the very

---

[2] Moeller-Bruck, E. A. Poe's Sämtliche Werke. Minden i. W., 1904. Vol. 1, p. 126.

[3] Graham's Magazine. February, 1845. Our Contributors.

Digitized by Google

Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

utmost limits of the probable into the weird confines of superstition and unreality. He combines in a very remarkable manner two faculties which are seldom found united; a power of influencing the mind of the reader by the impalpable shadows of mystery, and a minuteness of detail which does not leave a pin or a button unnoticed. . . .

He loves to dissect those cancers of the mind, and to trace all the subtle ramifications of its roots. In raising images of horror he has a strange success; conveying to us sometimes by a hint some terrible doubt which is the secret of all horror. He leaves to the imagination the task of finishing the picture, a task to which she only is competent.

Digitized by Google

Original from
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

CHAPTER I

Various Estimates of Poe's Indebtedness to German Literature

Poe's critics have from the very first connected his name and work with German romanticism. As early as 1833 he published in the March number of the *Southern Literary Messenger* his tale *Berenice*, and the editor of the magazine found it expedient to introduce it to his readers with the following note: "Whilst we confess we think there is too much German horror in his subject, there can be but one opinion as to his force and style." And from that time on critics of Poe have generally assumed a German influence in his tales. Some indeed have contested it. Poe himself was entirely conscious of this attitude on the part of his critics, and he has expressed himself on the subject as follows:

> I am led to think that it is the prevalence of the Arabesque in my serious tales which has induced one or two of my critics to tax me, in all friendliness, with what they have been pleased to call Germanism and gloom. The charge is in bad taste and the grounds of the accusation have not been sufficiently considered. Let us admit for the moment that the "phantasy pieces" now given are Germanic or what not. But the truth is that with a single exception there is no one of the stories in which the scholar should recognize the distinctive features of that species of pseudo-horror which we are taught to call Germanic for no better reason than that some of the secondary names of German literature have become identified with its folly. If in many of my productions terror has been the thesis, I maintain that terror is not of Germany, but of the soul.[1]

---

[1] Harrison, The Complete Works of E. A. Poe. New York, 1902. Vol. 17, p. 47.

Digitized by Google

Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

This utterance of Poe has been used as evidence by the few critics who deny the German influence in his works. In so doing they have overlooked the fact that Poe does not deny in general terms the influence of German romanticism in his tales. The statement is that, as far as terror has been the thesis of his tales, this terror was of his own soul and not of Germany. That is without doubt true. Of motives and technique of the German romanticists there is no word of denial. A few of the critics have also made that distinction.

The first American biographer of Poe, Griswold, has too much to do in his slanderous investigations of Poe's supposed debauches to treat of literary influences. There is no mention of German influence. Stedman discusses the subject briefly but does not find in Poe's work anything suggestive of far reaching German influence. Later, however, he seems to have changed his mind. In his introduction to the edition of Poe of 1895, he says: "Nevertheless, there is a pseudo-horror to be found in certain of his pieces, and enough of Hoffmann's method to suggest that the brilliant author of the *Phantasie Stücke*, (Hoffmann) whether a secondary name or not, was one of Poe's early teachers."

Again, on page 96: "Still, while Hoffmann was wholly of the fatherland, and Poe a misfitted American, if the one had died before the other, instead of thirteen years later, there would be a chance for a pretty fancy in behalf of the doctrine of metempsychosis, which both writers utilized." Stedman concludes that Hoffmann's influence is undeniable.

The next American biographer, Prof. Woodberry, is entirely against German influence, while the last biography, that of Prof. Harrison in the preface to his edition of Poe, makes no direct reference to E. T. A. Hoffmann. He declares, however,[2] that Poe was "saturated with the doctrines of Schelling," and speaks also of "Novalis and Schelling, his masters across the German Sea." Mention is also made of the translations of Tieck, de la Motte-Fouqué, Chamisso, the

---

[2] Harrison, Vol. 1, p. 153, 4.

Digitized by Google

Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Schlegels, Schiller, Heine, Uhland, — "opening up a wonder-world of picturesque Germanism."

Aside from the biographies of Poe, the subject is discussed in a brief article by Prof. Gruener in the *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, March, 1904. The article is entitled, *Notes on the Influence of E. T. A. Hoffmann on Edgar Allan Poe.* The author states that it is not his purpose to go deeply into the matter, and sums up his results as follows.

First, "Poe acknowledges the kinship of his tales to those of Hoffmann, when he calls them 'phantasy pieces.'" Gruener is of the opinion that Poe saw this term in Carlyle's discussion of Hoffmann in his *German Romance*, and that the American author appropriated thence the title which he applies to his tales. In a letter to his friend, Prof. Anthon, [3] Poe writes: "My tales, a great number of which might be called *phantasy pieces*, are in number sixty-six."

Secondly, Gruener believes that Poe took from Hoffmann his idea of the *Folio Club*, imitating the German author's *Serapionsbrüder.* Poe gave to his first collection of tales the title *Tales of the Folio Club.* They were submitted to the *Baltimore Visitor*, October, 1833, for a prize contest. He introduces them as follows: "I find upon reference to the records that the Folio Club was organized as such on the —— day ——— in the year ——. I like to begin with the beginning, and have a partiality for dates." The members were to be witty and erudite. The purpose of the club was the "instruction of society and the amusement of themselves." It was also resolved that some member should compose and read at each meeting a prose tale. The meetings were to be held at the homes of the members, and provision was made also for eatables and drinkables. The constitution of the *Serapionsbrüder* is strikingly similar.[4]

We read:

---

[3] Harrison, Vol. 17. p. 179.

[4] Griesebach, E. T. A. Hoffmans Sämtliche Werke. Leipzig, 1906. Vol. 7, p. 11.

Digitized by Google

Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Und hiermit erkläre ich die Präliminarien unsers neuen Bundes feierlichst für abgeschlossen, und setze fest, dass wir uns jede Woche an einem bestimmten Tage zusammen finden wollen, u.s.w.

"Herrlicher Einfall," rief Lothar, "füge doch noch sogleich, lieber Ottmar, gewisse Gesetze hinzu, die bei unsern bestimmten wöchentlichen Zusammenkünften stattfinden sollen. Z. B. dass über dieses oder jenes gesprochen oder nicht gesprochen werden darf, oder dass jeder gehalten sein soll, dreimal witzig zu sein, oder dass wir ganz gewiss jedesmal Sardellen-Salat essen wollen," u.s.w.

Again, page 55:

Es kann nicht fehlen dass wir. einer dem andern, nach alter Weise, manches poetische Produktlein, das wir unter dem Herzen getragen, mitteilen werden.

Thirdly, Gruener believes that Poe hit upon his title for his second collection of Tales, *Tales of the Grotesque und Arabesque*, through Hoffmann. In support of this theory, an article by Walter Scott in the *Foreign Quarterly Review* for July, 1827, is quoted. Poe, in one of his letters, quotes this very magazine[5] and he must have been attracted by this article of Scott's, which deals with German Romance. Scott speaks of the "fantastic mode of writing" and cites Hoffmann as the pioneer in this field: "He (Hoffmann) was the inventor, or at least the first distinguished artist, who exhibited the fantastic or supernatural grotesque in his compositions, so nearly on the verge of insanity as to be afraid of the beings his own fancy created. In fact, the *Grotesque* in his compositions partly resembles the *Arabesque* in painting." Gruener concludes that Poe must have noticed this passage, "particularly as Scott proceeds to charge Hoffmann with just those things with which Poe was charged in his lifetime." It is worthy of note also that the introduction to Poe's *Tales of the Folio Club* was first published in Harrison's edition. Poe

---

[5] Harrison. Vol. 17, page 161.

Digitized by Google Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

probably thought the resemblance to the *Serapionsbrüder* too striking.

Gruener discusses the passage in Stedman's biography of Poe which connects the latter's *Fall of the House of Usher* with Hoffmann's *Das Majorat.* The passage reads as follows: [6]

> A reader finds certain properties of the "*House of Usher*" and *Metzengerstein* in *Das Majorat* in the ancestral castle of a noble family, in a wild and remote estate near the Baltic Sea — the interior, where the moon shines through oriel windows upon tapestry and carven furniture and wainscoting, — the uncanny scratchings upon a bricked-up door, — the old Freiherr foreseeing the hour of his death, the ominous conflagration, — the turret falling of its own decay into a chasm at its base, — etc.

Gruener notes relative to this passage:

> These "properties" here enumerated are the very features which Scott, in his article on Hoffmann lays stress upon in the analysis of *Das Majorat.* In his own words he describes the castle and its inhabitants, quotes in translation the scene in the large hall at night with moonlight streaming "through the broad transom windows" into the hall in which the "walls and roof were ornamented — the former with heavy paneling, the latter with fantastic carving;" and also quotes the conclusion of the story. He notes that the Baron's name was Roderick; and that the lady is "young, beautiful, nervous, and full of sensibility." The most striking feature of the whole, however, is Scott's description of the castle itself, culled from various parts of Hoffmann's story: "It was a huge pile overhanging the Baltic sea, silent, dismal, almost uninhabited, and surrounded, instead of gardens and pleasure grounds, by forests and black pines and firs which

---

[6] Woodbery-Stedman Edition, The Works of E. A. Poe. Chicago, 1896. Vol. I, page 97.

Digitized by Google

Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

came up to the walls. *Part of the castle was in ruins; and by its fall made a deep chasm, which extended from the highest turret down to the dungeon of the castle.* Compare with this picture the description of the House of Usher, and note the close resemblance, chiefly, of the chasm from "the highest turret down to the dungeon" with that "barely perceptible fissure which, extending from the roof in the building in front, made its way down the wall in a zig-zag direction until it became lost in the sullen waters of the tarn."

In addition, other features of the life and incidents at the Entailed Castle agree most strikingly with those at the Castle of Metzengerstein as described by Poe. If Poe needed and got any outside suggestion for those two stories, he found them here in condensed form. There is a great temptation in hounding similarities to death, but it does not seem like forcing things too much to see in Scott's essay *On the Supernatural* the first germs of Poe's two stories, and to hold that these analogies confirm the conjecture that Poe saw this review and drew from it.

Gruener's generalizations are obvious. Nor does it seem like forcing things too much to suppose that Poe's interest in Hoffmann was greatly aroused by this article and that his acquaintance with the German author's work is to be dated from this time.

Gruener very rightly connects Poe's *Fall of the House of Usher* with this article of Scott rather than with a first hand reading of *Das Majorat*. The analogies do not extend further than Gruener traces them.

As to the resemblances between *Metzengerstein* and *Das Majorat*, they hardly justify a minute analysis. The two stories are constructed out of the same general romantic material, but a consecutive thread of resemblance is lacking. There is in both stories the dismal uninhabited castle tenanted by an eccentric hero, the last of his noble race. But the analogy hardly goes further. Poe's story has for its

Digitized by Google Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

basis what purports to be a Hungarian legend dealing with his favorite doctrine of metempsychosis, and combined with this a feud between two noble Hungarian families, all of which is lacking in Hoffmann's tale.

A tolerably accurate statement of the case would seem to be that Poe, having read Scott's article, used certain general elements of the German's story in his *House of Usher*, and possibly also in *Metzengerstein*, which elements seem to have been gathered from the review rather than from a first hand reading of the German story. As a result of the interest aroused by this review a closer acquaintance with Hoffmann's work followed. In other stories more striking and more significant resemblances are to be discovered.

Lastly, Gruener calls attention to a certain peculiarity of style common to Poe and Hoffmann. This belongs to a discussion of the language. Gruener believes also that it "can be proved that Poe knew German."

In an article in the *Anglia*[7] Prof. Belden utters also an opinion in the matter. The purpose of the article, as the author expresses it, is to "establish Poe's sincerity as a critic, with reference to a certain criticism which Poe made of Hawthorne, to the effect that the latter was strongly influenced by Tieck." The article discusses the justice or injustice of Poe's criticism, and the author notes also in passing: "It has been held by some that his (Poe's) *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque* get their peculiar title, if nothing else, from the *Arabesken* of the German Romanticists, and the *House of Usher* has been likened to Hoffmann's *Das Majorat*."

English and foreign criticism has been almost unanimous in deciding that Poe was indebted to Hoffmann and other romanticists for material and for a standard of technique in the tale. Stoddard, in the preface to his edition of 1884, remarks: "If Hawthorne's master was Tieck, as Poe declared, the master of Poe, so far as he had one, was Hoffmann." Ingram in his biography makes no mention of the subject.

---

[7] Vol. 23, page 376.

Digitized by Google

Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

A French critic[8] takes account of Poe's denial of German horror in his work as follows: "La critique américaine lui (Poe) reprochait d'avoir emprunté aux romantiques allemands le goût des histoires lugubres." Barine then quotes the passage from Poe which has already been given, and adds:

> Il disait vrai — La science extraordinaire de la peur, à tous les degrés et dans toutes ses variétés, n'avait été emprunté à personne. Poe n'en avait pas eu besoin. Il n'avait eu, comme il le dit, qu'à regarder dans son âme.

In another place Barine says:

> Edgar Poe conteur procède à la fois de Coleridge et des romantiques allemands, de Coleridge pour les idées générales, des romantiques allemands pour la technique. Il possédait son Hoffmann sur le bout du doigt. Non contentde lui emprunter son genre, il avait appris à son école à donner de la realité, par la précision et la variété du détail, aux fantasies les plus extravagantes.

Barine's criticism is important in that he makes the distinction between the terror which prevails in Poe's tales, and their motive and technique. In the first passage he justifies Poe's own statement with reference to the Germanic or non-Germanic character of the horror which is to be found in his tales. In the second passage he does justice to the German influence in general and to Hoffmann in particular. And this is the distinction which one may well hold in mind in a survey of Poe's works. Whatever of terror he has, he may easily have created out of his own fancy. But that in no wise precludes indebtedness to Hoffmann and others for material and method. It is interesting to note the standpoint from which Barine writes. He discusses his subjects in four chapters: *Hoffmann—Le vin*, *Quincy—L'opium*, *Edgar Poe —L'alcool*, and *Gerard de Nerval—La Folie.*

German criticism has little to say on the subject, but the few references we find assume, with one exception, an influ-

---

[8] Barine, Nevrosés. Paris, 1893. p. 209.

Digitized by Google Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

ence from Hoffmann and the other romanticists. The exception is an article by Van Vleuten on Poe.[9] The author ascribes the whole of Poe's creative work to the inspiration of alcoholic delirium or epilepsy, a view which no one thoroughly conversant with Poe's works, or with modern criticism of the poet, could possibly hold. Van Vleuten remarks also:

> Man begnügte sich viel mehr meist damit, die Eigenart der Novellen Poe's dadurch zu erklären, dass man seine tiefgehende Beeinflussung durch E. T. A. Hoffmann, überhaupt durch die deutschen Romantiker annahm. Das war sehr oberflächlich; mann kann sogar sagen: Es war falsch." . . . .

Again:

> Unhaltbar ist die Annahme, Poe sei von E. Th. A. Hoffmann entscheidend beeinflusst worden. Hoffmann war kein Epileptiker, also auch kein Dipsomane. Was er (Hoffmann) am Schauerlichen und Unheimlichen bietet, stammt von den Romantikern, aus alten Zauberstücken und Mystikern: Gespenster, vergrabene Schätze, Doppelgänger, dazu eine Prise Mesmer, u.s.w.

The reader who is even superficially acquainted with Poe will at once observe that this list of motives which Van Vleuten has established as characteristic for Hoffmann recurs without exception, again and again, in Poe's tales.

A "Schul-programm"[10] of Freiberg, 1895, gives a short account of Poe's life and works. "Er (Poe) erinnert viel an E. Th. A. Hoffmann, dem er viele Anregung verdankte, sowie Tieck und Novalis." Wherever Hoffmann is discussed, the writer usually thinks involuntarily of Poe.

Havemann[11] denies the assertion of Ellinger (Hoffmann's last biographer) that the spectral and the ghostly no longer

---

[9] Von Vleuten, Berliner Zukunft. XI Jahrgang. No. 44.

[10] Gruendel, E. A. Poe. Ein Beitrag zur Kenntniss und Würdigung des Dichters. Schul-program, Freiberg, 1895.

[11] Havemann, Deutsche Heimat, 1902. Heft. 3.

Digitized by Google

Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

have the power to charm us. "Ich habe noch nie gehört, dass jemand E. A. Poe gelesen und die Achseln gezuckt hätte."

Wiegler [12] commenting on the Moeller-Bruck edition of Poe, remarks:

> Wonnig überrascht werden die Liebhaber des Dichters Poe jetzt erwägen können, wie er mit allerfeinster Kunst der Romantik verbunden ist. Von den deutschen Hymnen des Novalis hat er das Visionäre, von Tieck dessen *Reise ins Blaue* er citert, den märchenhaften Einschlag, den Begriff, dass es am Rheine alte, verfallene, schicksalsvolle Städte gebe, mit E. T. A. Hoffmann gemeinsam das Doppelgängermotiv, das er für die Beichte des *Wm. Wilson* verwandte . . . . Er hat einsame Schlösser, nach romantischer Weise irgendwo in den Appeninen mit alten Gemäldegallerien, finstere englische Abteien, oder Hintergründe von so magischem Entsetzen wie sein *House of Usher*, das hinter steifen Binsen und weisslich phosphoreszierenden Stämmen aus den bleifarbenen Gasen des finsteren Teiches sich hebt, von Pilzen überwuchert, mit Höhlen, die wie erloschene Augen stieren. Er versetzt seine Personem, ihre Nöte und Verzweifelungen, in hohe Turmgemächer, die er in dekorativer Wahllosigkeit mit Kandelabern, schwarzen Eichenholzdecken, schwarzen Sammetgardinen, veränderlichen Tapisserien, geschnitzten indischen Betten, darüber wie ein Leichentuch der Baldachin, dunklen Venetianer Scheiben, sarazenischen Skulpturen, und sogar in den Ecken, mit Sarcophagen aus Königsgräbern ausstattet.

A very striking resumé of the romantic setting of some of Poe's tales.

C. P. Evans, in a short article on Poe, says: [13]

> Poe litt an einer hochgradigen Plagiatenentdeckungssucht, die mit der Zeit immer schlimmer wurde und sich am Ende zu einer unheilbaren Monomanie

[12] Berliner Tag, 1901. No. 309.
[13] Münchener Allg. Zeitung. 1899. No. 229.

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

> steigerte . . . Um gleiches mit gleichem zu vergelten haben einige Critiker den krankhaften und unwiderstehlichen Hang zum literarischen Diebstahl, den Poe eifrig bestrebt war bei Longfellow nachzuweisen,[14] in noch höherem Grad bei ihm entdecken wollen.

Moeller-Bruck remarks in this connection [15]

> Poe ist ja überhaupt einseitig, und man muss immer, wenn man an ihn denkt oder von ihm spricht, festhalten, dass der Grundton seines Lebens und Schaffens *der Romantiker* ist, und dass er nur ein Echo im Amerikanischen hat . . . . Seine amerikanischen Zeitgenossen, Longfellow, u.s.w., den Hawthorne vielleicht ausgenommen, waren im Grunde ihres Wesens rein englische Dichter; und die dann kamen, Thoreau und vor allen Walt Whitman waren, was Poe nicht war, rein amerikanisch; während die deutschen Romantiker, auf die man sich bei Poe so gern bezieht, doch sozusagen Romantiker im eigenen Lande, Romantiker im Romantischen Lande sein durften.

L. P. Betz expresses the following opinion:[16]

> Weitaus am wichtigsten aber sind Poe's litterarische Beziehungen zu unserem Amadeus Hoffman. Stofflich und technisch dankt der Erzähler Poe, der Autor der *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque*, dem phantasie-reichen und phantastischen deutschen Dichter zweifellos vieles. Darauf deuten schon einige direkte Entlehnungen hin.

He speaks of Poe also as an "Anglo-Germane."

The quotations cited have been chosen with the view of setting forth the gist of American, French, English, and German criticism with respect to Poe's relationship to German literature.

---

[14] Westermanns Monatshefte, Oct. 1882, Jan., Feb., 1883.
[15] Vol. I, page 127.
[16] Edgar Poe in der Französischen Literatur. Frankfurt a.M., 1893.

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

CHAPTER III

German Literature in America and England in the Thirties and Forties

A question which naturally suggests itself is: What stimulus did Poe have for an interest in German literature? America was in those days far more isolated from Europe than in this latter-day era of express steamers and rapid transit. How was it possible for an American man of letters to be so in touch with the productions of a European country as to have his thoughts guided and his work colored by that of a European nation? The answer to this question leads to others. Namely, to what extent was German literature known and studied in America during the time of Poe's activity as a story writer, 1830 to 1848 in round numbers? What impetus would an American man of letters have had to a study of German literature: and, granting his interest once aroused, what means would he have had of gratifying this interest? Disregarding, for the moment, the possibility of a first hand access to the original, there remain two possibilities: translations, and magazine literature.

It is impossible, of course, to give anything like an exhaustive survey of this subject here. A few translations and magazine articles will suffice to indicate a general interest in those of the Romanticists to whom Poe is indebted. Up to 1845, the following translations of the works of E. T. A. Hoffmann had appeared in English: *Blackwood's Magazine* brought out as early as 1824 a translation of *Die Elixiere des Teufels*. There was also a separate print. In Carlyle's *German Romance*, London, 1827, there was a translation of *Der goldene Topf*, together with a discussion of Hoffmann. In 1826 there appeared in London three volumes translated by Robert Pierce Gillies, and containing translations of *Das Fräulein von Scudery*, and *Das Majorat*. In 1826 there also appeared a volume of translations by G.

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Soane, which contained a translation of Hoffmann's *Meister Floh*. In 1844 appeared translations of *Die Jesuiterkirche in G.*, *Der Sandmann*, and *Der Elementargeist*, by John Oxenford.

The following translations of Tieck appeared during the same period: *The Old Man of the Mountain*, *Love Charm*, and *Pietro of Abano*, London, 1831; *The Pictures* and *The Betrothal*, London, 1825; *The Poet's Life*, Leipzig, 1830; *The Roman Matron, or Vittoria Colonna*, London, 1845. No translations of Novalis are recorded up to 1845. Poe's first tale, *A Manuscript Found in a Bottle*, appeared in 1833.

Poe was always a close observer of French Literature, and the German romanticists were early cultivated in France. Hoffmann, even in those days, was better known and more widely read in France than in his own country. French literary journals were constantly busied with Hoffmann, and besides numerous single translations of his work, a complete edition was begun in 1829 by Francois Adolphe Loeve Veimars, and completed in 1833, the year of Poe's first tale.[1] Another edition was begun in 1830 by Th. Toussenel.

In 1829 also the *Revue de Paris* published a translation of a part of Scott's article in the *Foreign Quarterly*.[2] The article is entitled *Du Merveilleux dans le Roman*.

In the article by Prof. Belden (*Anglia 23*), already cited, the author discusses Poe's criticism of Hawthorne, namely, that the latter's style was identical with that of Tieck. He accords to Poe's criticism the high value which the poet himself placed upon it, and which is its undeniable due. But he questions Poe's knowledge of German. "To the question whether Poe knew German, it will probably never be possible to give a definite answer." Further, he asks himself: "What means had a man not master of German of knowing the character of Tieck's works?" These means, he decides, were the English and American periodicals. He concludes

---

[1] MS. found in a Bottle. Baltimore Saturday Visitor. Oct. 12, 1833.
[2] Revue de Paris. Vol. 1, page 25.

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

that Poe's criticism might have been perfectly sincere, solely from an idea of Tieck which he might have gathered from magazine articles. In substantiation of his theory he gives a survey of British and American magazine articles of the Thirties and Forties, some of which are as follows:

The American Quarterly Review, for example, contained between 1827 and 1831 six articles on German literature, one of which deals with Bouterwek's *Geschichte der deutschen Poesie und Beredsamkeit.* The article contained a critique of the Schlegels, Tieck, and Novalis. In 1836 there appeared in Boston a translation of Heine's *Zur Geschichte der neueren schöneu Literatur in Deutschland.* There were numerous translations from Fouqué. *The Democratic Review*, beginning with 1842, had in almost every number a translation from the German, or an article on some German writer. Fr. Schlegel's lectures were translated in New York in 1841, and mention of them is found in a short sketch by Poe.[4]

Besides these mentioned by Prof. Belden, there appeared a translation of Fouqué's *Undine*, New York, 1839, and a volume entitled *Tales from the German*, translated by Nathaniel Greene, Boston, 1837. The latter a two-volumed publication, contained several stories by C. F. van der Velde. In 1839 a small volume was published in New York containing *Der todte Gast*, by Heinrich Zschokke, and *Spieler Glück*, by E. T. A. Hoffmann. These two tales were printed in the original. A significant statement relative to American appreciation of German literature of the period is to be found in the *North American Review*, January, 1840, page 279. In connection with a review of a new German grammar the reviewer observes:

> Some of us, who are not yet past the *mezzo del cammin di nostra vita*, can remember the time when a German grammar and dictionary could not be had for love or money. The poets of Germany were as much unknown

---

[4] Ingram. Vol. IV, page 89.

Digitized by Google Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

as the poets of Tartary . . . . . *Nous avons changé tout cela.* Within a few years German literature has made great progress in this country. At some of our colleges, particularly Harvard University, almost every student of any pretensions to literary distinction masters the elements at least of the German language; and the opinions of German philosophers and theologians have already made themselves deeply felt, whether for good or evil, among the chaos of opinions around us.

The interest in German Romanticism in England was earlier awakened, and more lively. Carlyle's *German Romance* appeared in 1827. The article in the *Foreign Quarterly Review* for July, 1827, has already been mentioned. Besides this, the following numbers up to 1844 contained upwards of forty articles dealing with German literature, reviews, criticisms, etc. *Fraser's* for 1831 has articles on *The Old Man of the Mountain*, *Love Charm*, and *Pietro of Abano*, translations from Tieck. *Blackwood's* for February, 1833, has a criticism of *Bluebeard*. The same magazine for September, 1837, has a review of *Dichterleben*.

Among the translations, an important contribution included four volumes of stories entitled *The German Novelists*; *Tales selected from Ancient and Modern Authors*, translated by Thomas Roscoe, London, 1826. The work contained two tales from Fouqué, four from Schiller, four from Tieck, six from Langbein, and two from Engel. Another volume of translations appeared in 1826 in Edinburgh, entitled *Tales from the German*. The translator was Richard Holcroft. Another volume of *Tales from the German* appeared in London, 1829.

These statistics, though not exhaustive, will suffice to show that there was a lively interest in German Romanticism both in America and England in the Thirties and Forties. Poe, in his capacity of magazine editor, was a zealous reader of magazines and followed closely American and foreign publications. Compare his sketch, *How to write a Blackwood*

Digitized by Google

Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Article. It was impossible that he should not have been affected by this general interest in German romance. And it is just as impossible to read his works, especially his criticism, without recognizing that he had a more intimate acquaintance with German literature than it would have been possible to gain from magazine reading.

Digitized by Google

Original from
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

CHAPTER III

Poe's Knowledge of the German Language and Literature

Poe's writings are replete with quotations and references to German literature. Take for example his critique of Longfellow's Ballads. There are frequent allusions to the influence of German literature on Longfellow,[1] as for example:

> It will be at once evident that, imbued with the peculiar spirit of German song (a pure conventionality), he regards the inculcation of a moral as essential.

Poe cites Herder, Körner, and Uhland.[2] He prefers Longfellow's *The Luck of Edenhall* to Körner's *Sword Song* and adds: "We may observe of this ballad that its subject is more physical than is usual in Germany." And again: "But in pieces of less extent the pleasure is unique, in the proper acceptation of the term—the understanding is employed without difficulty in the contemplation of the picture as a whole; and thus its effect will depend, in great measure, upon the perfection of its finish, upon the nice adaptations of the constituent parts, and especially upon what is rightly termed by Schlegel the unity or totality of interest."

In a critique of Thomas Moore's *Alciphron*, Poe says:[3]

> The term mystic is here employed in the sense of A. W. Schlegel, and of most other German critics. It is applied by them to that class of composition in which there lies beneath the transparent upper current of meaning an under, or suggestive one.

Referring to the *Undine* of de la Motte Fouqué, our author says:

> There is little of fancy here, and everything of imagi-

---

1 Harrison, Vol. XI, Page 69.
2 Harrison, Vol. XI, Page 80.
3 Harrison. Vol. X, Page 65.

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

nation. *Rationale of Verse*:[4] If any one has a fancy to be thoroughly confounded—to see how far the infatuation of what is termed 'classical scholarship' can lead a book-worm to manufacture darkness out of sunshine, let him turn over for a few moments any of the German Greek Prosodies. The only thing clearly made out in them is a very magnificent contempt for Leibnitz's principle of a sufficient reason.

Poe's assertion that Hawthorne's manner was identical with that of Tieck has already been mentioned. The following from Poe's *Marginalia* is also a striking passage. He is discussing Fouqué's *Theodolf the Icelander* and *Aslacya's Knight*.

> This book could never have been popular outside of Germany. It is too simple—too direct—too obvious—too bold—not sufficiently complex—to be relished by any people who have thoroughly passed the first (or impulsive) epoch of literary civilization. The Germans have not yet passed this first epoch. . . . Individual Germans have been critical in the best sense, but the masses are unleavened. Literary Germany thus presents the singular spectacle of the impulsive spirit surrounded by the critical, and of course in some measure influenced thereby. . . . At present German literature resembles no other on the face of the earth,—for it is the result of certain conditions which, before this individual instant of their fulfilment, have never been fulfilled. And this anomalous state to which I refer is the source of our anomalous criticism upon what that state produces,—is the source of the grossly conflicting opinions about German letters. For my own part, I admit the German vigour, the German directness, boldness, imagination, and some other qualities in the first (or impulsive) epochs of British

[4] Harrison, Vol. XIV, Page 217.

Digitized by Google

Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

> and French letters. At the German criticism however, I cannot refrain from laughing, all the more heartily the more seriously I hear it praised. . . . It abounds in brilliant bubbles of suggestion, but these rise and sink and jostle each other until the whole vortex of thought in which they originate is one indistinguishable chaos of froth. The German criticism is unsettled and can only be settled by time. . . . I am not ashamed to say that I prefer even Voltaire to Goethe, and hold Macaulay to possess more of the truly critical spirit than Augustus William and Frederick Schlegel combined.[5]

Such quotations from Poe's works might be multiplied almost indefinitely. As a pendant to this opinion of Goethe and the Schlegels, it is interesting to compare two passages, the one from the *Fall of the House of Usher*, the other from *Morella:*

> Our books—the books which had for years formed no small portion of the mental existence of the invalid—were, as might be supposed, in keeping with this character of Phantasm.

In this list which, "for years had formed no small portion of the mental existence of the invalid," Poe mentions Tieck's *Journey into the Blue Distance.*[6]

Another passage from *Morella*:

> Morella's erudition was profound. . . . I soon found, however, that, perhaps on account of her Presburg education, she placed before me a number of those mystical writings which are usually considered the *mere dross* of German literature. These, for what reason I could not imagine, were her favorite and constant study—and that in process of time *they became my own* should be attributed to the simple but effectual influence of habit and example. In all this, if I err

---

[5] *Marginalia.* Harrison, Vol. XVI, Page 115.
[6] Harrison, Vol. III, Page 287.

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

not, my reason had little to do. My convictions, or I forget myself, were in no manner acted upon by the ideal, nor was any tincture of the mysticism which I read to be discovered, unless I am greatly mistaken, either in my deeds or my thoughts. It is unnecessary to state the exact character of those disquisitions which, growing out of the volumes I have mentioned, formed for so long a time almost the sole conversation of Morella and myself. . . . The wild pantheism of Fichte; the modified Παλιγγενεσια of the Pythagoreans; and, above all, the doctrine of Identity as urged by Schelling, were generally the points of discussion presenting the most beauty to the imaginative Morella.[7]

These passages are of particular importance for the purposes of this work. Poe finds German criticism unsettled and professes to prefer Voltaire to Goethe. In other words, for that which is generally considered best in German literature he has no appreciation. That which is usually considered the "mere dross" of German literature he describes as his constant and favorite reading. Scott's article in the Quarterly Review, on the *Supernatural in Fiction*, has already been mentioned. The author emphasizes the fact that E. T. A. Hoffmann is the type of the best among the "secondary" names of German literature. It will be remembered also that Poe, in discussing German terror in his tales, uses the phrase, "for no better reason than that some of the *secondary names* of German literature have been identified with its folly." In the passage from *Morella* he has evidently the same idea in mind when he speaks of the "mere dross" of German literature.

Poe's reference to this magazine has already been mentioned. He was undoubtedly impressed by Scott's article, and when he speaks of "secondary names" and the "mere dross" of German literature, like Scott he has Hoffmann in mind. And when one considers that this class of literature became

---

[7] Harrison, Vol. II, Page 27.

Digitized by Google Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

his favorite reading, the statement becomes significant for his relationship to Hoffmann. It is also quite significant that Poe nowhere mentions Hoffmann's name directly. The American was an inveterate pursuer of plagiarism (one recalls, for example, the strife about Longfellow). He would therefore naturally not have given the horde of his inimical critics an opportunity to turn his own guns upon himself by discussing openly a man whose work bore such a striking resemblance to his own.

Just as Poe's references to German literature in his works preclude the possibility of anything but a first-hand knowledge of sources, so also they imply a knowledge of the language. *The Mystery of Marie Roget*, for example, which appeared in the *Southern Literary Messenger*, November, December, February, 1842-1843, contained as a heading a quotation from Novalis's Fragments in the original, with the translation appended.

> Es gibt eine Reihe idealischer Begebenheiten, die der Wirklichkeit parallel läuft. Selten fallen sie zusammen. Menschen und Zustände modificiren gewöhnlich die idealische Begebenheit, so dass sie unvollkommen erscheint, und ihre Folgen gleichfalls unvollkommen sind. So bei der Reformation; statt des Protestantismus kam das Luthertum hervor.

Poe translates, and no one can question the knowledge of German displayed:

> There are ideal series of events which run parallel with the real ones. They rarely coincide. Men and circumstances generally modify the ideal train of events, so that it seems imperfect, — and its consequences are equally imperfect. Thus with the Reformation; instead of Protestantism came Lutherism.

Novalis is again quoted in one of Poe's Fragments.[9] "The Artist belongs to his work, and not the work to the Artist." Also, in Poe's *Tale of the Ragged Mountains*, we find a reference to Novalis's theory of dreams.

---

[9] *Marginalia*. Harrison, Vol. XVI, page 98.
Heilborn, Vol. II, page 563.

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Poe's reference to Tieck's *Journey into the Blue Distance*, in *The Fall of the House of Usher*, has been mentioned. At the time when this tale was written, 1839, no translation of Tieck's *Reise ins Blaue hinein* had appeared either in English or French.

Numerous German quotations in the original are scattered throughout Poe's works. In *Marginalia*,[10] he applies the term *Schwärmerei* to a certain style of criticism in America. He translates it, "not exactly humbug, but sky-rocketing." He has a note also on Goethe's *Sorrows of Werther*." He finds it difficult to conceive how the Germans could have admired it, and adds: "The title, by the way, is mistranslated, — *Leiden* does not mean sorrows, but sufferings;" which distinction is quite exact.

Poe's tale, *The Man of the Crowd*, opens with the following sentence: "It is well said of a certain German book, *es lässt sich nicht lesen*," and he then translates more literally than elegantly, "it does not permit itself to be read."

In the article on Longfellow's Ballads," Poe mentions Count Bielfeld's definition of poetry as "L'art d'exprimer les pensées par la fiction," and our author adds: "With this definition (of which the philosophy is profound to a certain extent) the German terms *Dichtkunst*, the art of fiction, and *dichten*, to feign, which are used for poetry, and *to make verses*, are in full and remarkable accordance."

While editor of Graham's Magazine, 1840-1841, Poe was much interested in cryptography and advertised in the magazine, inviting his readers to invent secret writings and submit them to him for solution. "Yet any one who will take the trouble may address us a note, in the same manner as here proposed, and the key phrase may be either in French, Italian, Spanish, German, Latin or Greek (or in any of the dialects of these languages), and we pledge ourselves for the

---

[10]Harrison, Vol. XVI, page 166.
[11]Ingram, Vol. III, page 477.
[12]Harrison, Vol. XVI, page 74.

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

solution of the riddle."[13] Poe received responses to his invitation, and did actually solve all the riddles which were submitted to him.

Prof. Gruener, in an article in *Modern Philology*, Vol. 2, page 125, entitled *Poe's Knowledge of German*,[14] argues in favor of Poe's ability to read German. Prof. Gruener enumerates, in part, the evidence given here, and in addition calls attention to a German motto which appeared on the title page of Poe's *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque.* The motto in question is a verse from Goethe's *Die Göttin:*

Seltsamer Tochter Jovis,
Seinem Schlosskind,
Der Phantasie —

Prof. Gruener also adduces as evidence a passage in Poe's *Eureka* translated from Alexander Humboldt's *Kosmos.* Previous to the publication of *Eureka*, two translations of this work had appeared; one by Prichard, London, 1845, another by Col. Sabine, London, 1847. The passage referred to is to be found in the *Kosmos*, Vol. i, page 151:

> Betrachtet man die nicht perspectivischen eigenen Bewegungen der Sterne, so scheinen viele gruppenweise in ihrer Richtung entgegengesetzt; und die bisher gesammelten Thatsachen machen es aufs wenigste nicht nothwendig, dass alle Theile unserer Sternenschicht oder gar der|gesammten Sterneninseln, welche den Weltraum füllen, sich um einen grossen, unbekannten, leuchtenden oder dunkel Centralkörper bewegen. Das Streben nach den letzten und höchsten Grundursachen macht freilich die reflectirende Thätigkeit des Meschen, wie seine Phantasie, zu einer solchen Annahme geneigt.

Prichard's translation of the passage[16] reads:

---

[13]Harrison, Vol. XIV, page 124.

[14]The attention of the author was called to this article after the foregoing had been completed.

[16]Vol. I, page 154.

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

If the non-perspective, proper motion of the stars be considered, many of them appear group-wise opposed in their directions; and the data hitherto collected make it at least not necessary to suppose that all parts of our astral system, or the whole of the star islands which fill the universe, are in motion about any great unknown luminous or non-luminous central mass. The longing to reach the last or highest fundamental cause, indeed, renders the reflecting faculty of man, as well as his fancy, disposed to adopt such a proposition.

Sabine's translation[17] is as follows:

If we consider the proper motions of the stars, as contradistinguished from their apparent or perspective motions, their directions are various; it is not, therefore, a necessary conclusion, either that all parts of our astral system, or that all the systems which fill universal space, revolve around one great undiscovered luminous or non-luminous central body, however naturally we may be disposed to an inference which would gratify alike the imaginative faculty and that intellectual activity which ever seeks after the last and highest generalization.

Poe's translation[18] reads:

When we regard the real, proper, or non-perspective motions of the stars, we find many groups of them moving in opposite directions; and the data as yet in hand render it not necessary at least to conceive that the systems composing the Milky Way, or the clusters generally composing the Universe, are revolving about any particular centre unknown, whether luminous or non-luminous. It is but man's longing for a fundamental First Cause that impels both his intellect and fancy to the adoption of such an hypothesis.

---

[17]Vol. I, page 135.
[18]Harrison, Vol. XVI, page 299.

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Relative to the passage which Poe quotes from Novalis, Prof. Gruener notes that it had appeared in a volume entitled *Fragments from German Prose Writers*, translated by Sarah Austin, London, 1841. Poe's story, *The Mystery of Marie Roget*, in which the passage from Novalis is used as a motto, appeared in November, 1842. But Poe's translation of the passage and that of Mrs. Austin diverge as radically as do the foregoing versions of the passage from the *Kosmos*.

In Poe's story, *The Premature Burial*, he recounts several supposedly authentic cases of persons having been buried alive. One of his instances he says he has found in "a late number" of the "Chirurgical Journal" of Leipsic."[19] Prof. Gruener suggests that Poe was perhaps in the habit of consulting this journal in search of novel material, and that he did actually read the story in the original. A search of all the medical periodicals in the libraries of Berlin for the period 1834-1844 (Poe's *Premature Burial* was published in 1844) failed to result in a discovery of the case cited by Poe, although, at that time, there was apparently a lively interest in the subject among surgeons and numerous similar cases were recorded.

The same story affords some evidence of Poe's unreliability as to his statement concerning his source. In addition to the case of premature burial just mentioned, Poe gives in the same story the facts in another case; that of a young woman rescued from her grave by her lover. Poe states that this event occurred in Paris in the year 1810, and gives the names of the persons concerned. This latter is a very commonly quoted case, and can be traced in various slightly different forms as far back as the year 1754.[20]

The same story appears also in the following works:

"Über die Ungewissheit des Todes und das einzige untrügliche Mittel sich von seiner Wirklichkeit zu überzeugen." C. M. Hufeland, Weimar, 1791.

---

[19]Harrison, Vol. V, page 299.
[20]Bruhier.

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

"Beweis, dass einige Leute lebendig können begraben werden." J. P. Brinckmann, Düsseldorf; Cleve, und Leipzig, 1772.

The same story is found in the *Causes Célèbres*[21], and this is probably the source of all the other versions. Bruhier states that this is his source. Poe states that the event occurred in Paris in 1810, and provides the persons concerned with names. It would seem, then, that his statement relative to the source of the other case which he says he took from the *Chirurgical Journal of Leipsic* might be regarded also as somewhat untrustworthy.

So much we may deduce with certainty from the foregoing. First, that in England and America, in the Thirties and Forties, there was a lively interest in German contemporary literature. Secondly, that Poe as a magazine editor was thoroughly *en rapport* with this wave of interest, and that among his favorite reading he counted some of the secondary productions (meaning probably Hoffmann) of German literature. Finally, the American author possessed at least an ability to read German in the original, though in view of the meagreness of the information which we have concerning his life, it is impossible to discover when and where he acquired this ability.

It now remains for us to see what echo of his German reading we find in his own work.

In this connection it is interesting to take account of certain utterances of Poe with reference to his theory of the tale.

> A skilful literary artist has constructed a tale. If wise, he has not fashioned his thoughts to accommodate his incidents; but, haviug conceived with deliberate care a certain unique or single *effect* to be wrought out, he then invents such incidents—he then combines such events as may best aid him in establishing this preconceived effect.....And here it will be seen how full of prejudice are the usual animadversions

[21] Vol. 8, page 452.

Digitized by Google Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

> against those *tales of effect*, many fine examples of which were found in the earlier numbers of *Blackwood.*[22]

It was worth noting that Hoffmann's *Elixiere des Teufels* appeared in an "early number of *Blackwood*" for 1824.

We have a similar utterance on the same subject in the *Philosophy of Composition.*[23]

> I prefer commencing with the consideration of an *effect.* Keeping originality always in view—for he is false to himself who ventures to dispense with so obvious and so easily attainable a source ot interest—I say to myself in the first place, 'Of the innumerable effects or impressions of which the heart, the intellect, or (more generally) the soul is susceptible, what one shall I, on the present occasion, select?' Having chosen a novel, first, and secondly, a vivid, effect, I consider whether it can be best wrought by incident or tone—whether by ordinary incidents and peculiar tone, or the converse, or by peculiarity both of incident and tone—afterwards looking about me (or rather within) for such combinations of event or tone as shall best aid me in the construction of the effect.

The last sentence, especially the phrase "looking about me (or rather within) for such combinations," is significant. Poe has placed the words "or rather within" in parentheses, lest the foregoing might be construed as a confession of his literary borrowings.

In looking about him for combinations of event or tone, what did he find that was serviceable among the productions of the German romanticists?

---

[22]Ingram, vol. IX, pages 216, 217.
[23]Ingram, vol. III, page 266.

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

CHAPTER IV

HOFFMANN'S *Elixiere des Teufels* AND POE'S *William Wilson*

A motive which Fouqué, Novalis and Hoffmann have al used in their narratives is that of the double existence. The idea is that the personality is divided into two parts and that the individual leads then a double existence, mental and physical. The motive appears in Fouqué's *Zauberring* rather as a minor incident. It plays a role of secondary importance. In the second part of Fouqué's novel (chapter 13), the young German knight, Otto von Trautwangen, meets, in a combat with the Finns, another knight in armor who is his exact double. The mystery is explained by the fact that both men are the sons of one father by different mothers.

Novalis has also made use of the idea in *Ofterdingen*, where various personages are in the end revealed as one and the same. And Heinrich himself is the poet of Klingsor's *Märchen.*[1] One of Novalis's *Fragments* reads: "A really synthetic person is a person who is several persons at once, — a genius."[2]

It is one of Hoffmann's favorite themes. He drew from life. He was frequently haunted by the idea that he was being pursued by his double.[3] The idea is the basic one in the story of the *Doppelgänger*. It occurs also in *Kater Murr*, and plays a large role in the *Elixiere des Teufels*. It is from the latter story that Poe drew suggestions, which, according to his method, he combined and transformed in his narative, *William Wilson*.

---

1 Heilborn, Vol. I, page 191.
2 Just Bing, page 120.
3 Ellinger, page 121.

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

In Hoffmann's tale a monk relates the story of his life. He begins with his childhood, passes rapidly to his reception in the monastery, and describes with great exactness events and persons which are of importance in the development of his own destiny. We follow minutely the course of his life. We learn of the temptations which beset him, how the germ of evil in his soul, at first infinitesimal, grows and waxes strong, and finally overpowers and drives him from the monastery and into a life of vice and crime. We learn further of his repentance, heavy penance, and his return to his monastery. He writes the story of his life on the eve of death.

The first chapter deals with the life of the monk, Medardus, in the monastery. The underlying idea of the chapter is to depict the gradual growth of evil in Medardus. This is motivated first by the awakening of the sexual impulse, and secondly by a fiction of certain elixirs of the devil, from which latter incident the story takes its name. Medardus, the hero, is custodian of the relics of the monastery, and among these are certain flasks of wine which St. Anthony had received from the devil, in a temptation to which the former was subjected in the wilderness. Medardus succumbs to the temptation to drink of the wine; and the effect is a magical growth of evil in his soul, which constantly increases and finally overpowers him.

The next chapter deals with Medardus's entrance into the world. He is sent by his Prior on a mission to Rome. Traveling through the mountains, Medardus comes suddenly upon a man lying asleep over a precipice. Startled out of his sleep by the sudden appearance of the monk, he falls over the precipice and, as Medardus supposes, meets his death. This incident marks a turning point in the monk's career. He supposes himself a murderer, and from that time on his life is a history of crime. We learn later that this stranger is Graf Viktorin, a half brother of Medardus, and the latter's exact counterpart as to figure and appearance. Viktorin has not been killed but has received wounds which resulted in insanity. His insanity takes the remarkable form that he

Digitized by Google

Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

believes himself to be the monk Medardus. In this fashion Hoffmann works out the fiction of the double existence on quite natural grounds.

Viktorin is involved in an illicit relationship with the wife of a nobleman, whose castle lies in the immediate vicinity. Medardus enters the castle, and is mistaken by the Baroness for her lover Viktorin in the garb of a monk. He assumes Viktorin's role, but becomes enamored also of the daughter of the house, and in an attempt to seduce her he is forced to flee from the castle, murdering in his flight the son of the house, Hermogen, who attempts to stop him. Fleeing from the castle, Medardus is for the first time confronted by his blood-stained double, who utters the very words which the monk himself has in mind.

The third chapter gives a series of adventures, of which the principal one takes place at a lonely hunting lodge in the midst of the forest. Medardus has discarded his monk's garb, and is traveling as a private gentleman. His carriage breaks down in the forest and he is received by the forester in the latter's home for a short time. In the middle of the night his double appears, clothed in a monk's cassock. The following morning Medardus learns that an insane monk is being harbored by the forester. The latter believes him to be the monk Medardus, of whose disappearance he has heard. The supposed monk is of course Viktorin.

We next find Medardus at the court of a prince, where he mingles freely with the society of the court. Among the ladies of the court is that Aurelie, the daughter of the Baron of the previous chapter, whom Medardus attempted to seduce. Aurelie recognizes him as the murderer of her brother. He is imprisoned and about to be executed when he is saved by the intervention of the insane Viktorin, who declares (and believes) that he is the monk Medardus. The real Medardus is liberated and is about to be married to Aurelie, when he falls a victim to insanity, attempts to murder his bride, and flees from court. In prison and in his flight from the castle, Medardus is repeatedly visited by his double with terrorizing effect.

Digitized by Google

Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

We find Medardus next in Italy, recovered from his insanity, and in repentant mood. He passes some time in a monastery near Rome, confesses the story of his life to the prior, and submits himself to the severest penance. Here also, as everywhere, he is visited by his tormentor in the shape of his double. He is received by the Pope, wins notoriety by his conspicuous piety, and finally returns to his own monastery. He learns that Aurelie is about to take the vows as a nun in a neighboring convent. During the ceremony of consecration she is murdered by Medardus's insane double, Viktorin. With her death Medardus wins his victory over the evil.

Poe's story, as compared with that of Hoffmann, is greatly reduced and constructed with infinitely more simplicity. Here also the hero relates his own story. We are introduced first to a school for boys in England, the life of which in its simplicity and monastic monotony bears much resemblance to that of the youthful Medardus in his monastery. The idea of Poe's story is also the contention of the good with the evil for supremacy. William Wilson learns that in the school there is another pupil of the same name, and by a singular coincidence his counterpart in appearance and, as we learn later, born on the same day. The two lads are also of similar coustitution mentally, both imperious, and rivals for leadership among their fellow-pupils. Outwardly, the two boys are friendly, but inwardly both are conscious of their rivalry. We are told also that a favorite device of William Wilson the Second for annoying his rival, William Wilson the First, was an exact imitation of the latter as to personal appearance, gait, manners, and above all as to voice and speech. There is no explanation of the relationship between the two boys, and at first no suggestion of the supernatural; nothing more than a striking resemblance. Finally, the first William Wilson, in playing a practical joke on his namesake, slips into the latter's room at night, draws aside the curtains of the bed in preparation for the perpetration of the joke, and is suddenly overcome and hor-

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

rified by the idea that it is his double who lies before him in sleep. He rushes from the room and from the school, never to return again. This incident is the first suggestion of a supernatural relationship between the two.

The narrator mentions briefly his course of vice and crime of the next few years, and describes next a night of excess at Eton. Surrounded by his boon companions, flushed with wine and in the midst of their orgies, William Wilson is summoned to the door by a visitor. In the darkness he distinguishes the form of his double, and hears the words, William Wilson, in a solemn whisper. After which, the apparition disappears.

A similar scene is described at Oxford, where William Wilson, having ruined a fellow-student at cards by fraudulent play, is exposed by the appearance of his double, who explains to the company the secret of Wilson's winnings, namely, cards hidden in his sleeve.

The hero is everywhere relentlessly pursued by his double.

> Villain! at Rome, with how untimely, yet with how spectral, an officiousness stepped he in between me and my ambition! At Vienna too — at Berlin — and at Moscow! Where, in truth, had I not bitter cause to curse him within my heart? From his inscrutable tyranny did I at length flee, panic-stricken, as if from a pestilence; and to the very ends of the earth I fled in vain.[4]

The culminating scene is described in Rome during the carnival time. The double appears again to frustrate Wilson's plan. This time it is a question of a love intrigue with the young wife of an old Roman nobleman. Wilson, in a frenzy of rage, seizes his double and challenges him to fight. In the duel which follows the double is killed, his death typifying the final extinction of the good in William Wilson's heart.

---

[4] Harrison, Vol. III, page 321.

Digitized by Google

Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

The idea on which both narratives are constructed is the simple one of the contention of two inimical forces in a man's soul; the evil and the good, struggling for supremacy and final victory. In carrying out the idea, both authors have availed themselves of the device of a double existence to achieve their purpose. Such a division of the human personality they have romanticized by the fiction of two selves, physical as well as mental, both of which are well nigh identical as to physical appearance and as to mental characteristics. One self is the type of the good, the other is the embodiment of the evil. The atmosphere of mystery thus created works an effect of terror, as, in the successive stages of the development of the story, the hero at some critical point of the narrative is confronted by his double. This in general is the basic idea which Poe has borrowed from Hoffmann.

The German traces the growth and struggle of evil, in his hero's life, very minutely. We observe the first foothold which the "dunkle Macht" wins in Medardus's soul, and we trace the growth of this germ of evil step by step, until with giant power it plunges the victim into an abyss of crime. Early in Medardus's career, we find reference to the evil which is beginning to beset him. His sermons are characterized by unusual eloquence, and the fame which he wins by them arouses his vanity. In a letter from his patroness, the abbess, we hear:

> Der Geist des Truges ist in Dich gefahren, und wird Dich verderben, wenn Du nicht in Dich gehst und der Sünde entsagest . . Der heilige Bernardus, den Du durch Deine trügerische Rede so schnöde beleidigt, möge Dir nach seiner himmlischen Langmut verzeihen, ja Dich erleuchten, dass Du den rechten Pfad, von dem Du durch den Bösen verlockt abgewichen, wieder findest, und er fürbitten könne für das Heil Deiner Seele.[5]

---

[5] Grisebach, Vol. II, page 37.

Digitized by Google

Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

The references to this evil force in Medardus's life are to be found on almost every page. The Baroness relates to Medardus that their secret relation is suspected by Hermogen as follows:

> In allerlei Andeutungen, die gleich schauerlichen entsetzlichen Sprüchen einer dunklen Macht, die über uns waltet, lauten, hat er (Hermogen) dem Baron einen Verdacht eingeflösst, der ohne deutlich ausgesprochen zu sein mich doch auf quälende Weise verfolgt. — Wer du bist, dass unter diesem heiligen Kleide Graf Viktorin verborgen, das scheint Hermogen durchaus verschlossen geblieben; dagegen behauptet er, aller Verrat, alle Arglist, alles Verderben, das über uns einbrechen werde, ruhe in dir, ja *wie der Widersacher* selbst, sei der Mönch in das Haus getreten, der von teuflischer Macht beseelt, verdammten Verrat brüte.[6]

On the eve of his marriage with Aurelie, Medardus is overcome by this "teuflische Macht." From a window he sees his double being carried to execution for crimes which he has committed.

> Da wurden die Geister der Hölle in mir wach, und bäumten sich auf mit Gewalt, die ihnen verliehen über den frevelnden vurruchten Sünder.[7]

Medardus relates his life to the Pope, and we hear again of this evil power:

> Glaubt Ihr, dass der Wein, den Ihr aus der Reliquienkammer stahlet und austranket, Euch zu den Freveln trieb, die Ihr beginget?

The answer comes:

> Wie ein von giftigen Dünsten geschwängertes Wasser gab er Kraft dem bösen Keim, der in mir ruhete, dass er fortzuwuchern vermochte.[8]

---

[6] Grisebach, Vol. II, page 70.
[7] Grisebach, Vol. II, page 199.
[8] Grisebach, Vol. II, page 239.

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Again Medardus recapitulates himself this growth of evil in his soul. He calls himself "einen muthlosen Feigling" without strength to resist the devil.

> Gering war der Keim des Bösen in mir, als ich des Konzertmeisters Schwester sah, als der frevelige Stolz in mir erwachte, aber da spielte mir der Satan jenes Elixier in die Hände, das mein Blut wie ein verdammtes Gift in Gärung setzte . . . . Wie eine physische Krankheit, von jenem Gift erzeugt, brach die Sünde hervor.[9]

We follow exactly the same development in Poe's tale. Hoffmann rescues his hero at the end from the "dunkle Macht." Poe gives the victory to the evil force. Medardus writes the story of his life when he has, in a measure at least, conquered the devil and gained peace. William Wilson narrates his story when he realizes that he is hopelessly lost, his soul a forfeit to the powers of darkness. Hoffmann's narrative takes the reader up to the point where his hero gains the victory. Poe's tale ends at the point where Wilson finally and definitely destroys the last germ of good still extant in his soul. We are told in the beginning that the remainder of his life was a history of crime and debauch. Medardus and William Wilson both write their histories as they feel the approach of death.

The history of Medardus's struggle against the evil which has been traced finds its exact counterpart on the first page of William Wilson's story. We hear at once:

> From comparatively trival wickedness I passed, with the stride of a giant, into more than the enormities of an Elagabalus. What chance — what one event brought this thing to pass, bear with me while I relate. Death approaches, and the shadow which foreruns him has thrown a softening influence over my spirit. I long in passing through the dim valley for the sympathy, I had nearly said for the pity, of my fellow-men. I would fain have them believe that I have been in some measure the slave of circumstances beyond human

Digitized by Google

Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

control. I would wish them to seek out for me, in the details I am about to give, some little oasis of *fatality* amid a wilderness of error. I would have them allow, what they cannot refrain from allowing, that although temptation may have erewhile existed as great, man was never *thus* at least tempted before, certainly never *thus* fell. And is it therefore that he has never thus suffered? Have I not indeed been living in a dream? And am I not now dying a victim to the horror and the mystery of the wildest of all sublunary visions?[10]

Medardus's "Gering war der Keim des Bösen in mir" is Wilson's "comparatively trivial wickedness" with which the latter begins his career. Hoffmann's "dunkle Macht," "das vom Teufel beseelte Prinzip," "der bose Feind," find their counterpart in Poe's "slave of circumstances beyond human control," "oasis of *fatality* amid a wilderness of error," and the greatness and character of his hero's "temptation."

Of Wilson's life at Eton we hear also:

> I do not wish to trace the course of my miserable profligacy here — a profligacy which set at defiance the laws, while it eluded the vigilance of the institution (Eton).

Again:

> Let it suffice, that among spendthrifts I out-Heroded Herod, and that, giving name to a multitude of novel follies, I added no brief appendix to the long catalogue of vices then usual in the most dissolute university of Europe (Oxford).

The climactic scene in Wilson's career is the final one of the story. It is the duel with his double. It is also the climax, or rather the decisive event, in the contest of the good and evil.

> The contest was brief indeed. I was frantic with every species of wild excitement, and felt within my single arm the energy and power of a multitude. In a

---

[10]Harrison, Vol. XIV, page 299.

Digitized by Google

Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

few seconds I forced him by sheer strength against the wainscoting, and thus, getting him at mercy, plunged my sword with brutal ferocity repeatedly through and through his bosom. At that instant some person tried the latch of the door. I hastened to prevent an intrusion, and then immediately returned to my dying antagonist. But what human language can adequately portray *that* astonishment, that horror which possessed me at the spectacle then presented to view? The brief moment in which I averted my eyes had been sufficient to produce apparently a material change in the arrangements at the upper or farther end of the room. A large mirror — so at first it seemed to me in my confusion — now stood where none had been perceptible before; and, as I stepped up to it in extremity of terror, mine own image, but with features all pale and dabbled in blood, advanced to meet me with a feeble and tottering gait.

Thus it appeared, I say, but was not. It was my antagonist — it was Wilson who then stood before me in the agonies of his dissolution. His mask and cloak lay where he had thrown them upon the floor. Not a thread in all his raiment — not a line in all the marked and singular lineaments of his face which was not, even in the most absolute identity, *mine own*!

It was Wilson: but he spoke no longer in a whisper, and I could have fancied that I myself was speaking while he said: "You have conquered and I yield. Yet, henceforth art thou also dead — dead to the World, to Heaven, and to Hope! In me didst thou exist — and, in my death, see by this image, which is thine own, how utterly thou hast murdered thyself."[11]

The death of his double is the death of the good principle in Wilson's life. "Dead to the world, to Heaven, and to Hope:" it is the triumph of evil, the ultimate extinction of

---

[11]The Italics are Poe's.

Digitized by Google

Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

the good. It is what Medardus also fears and struggles against."

> Ich bin verflucht, ich bin verflucht! — Keine Gnade — kein Trost mehr, hier und dort! — Zur Hölle — zur Hölle — ewige Verdamnis über mich verruchten Sünder beschlossen.

Again:

> O Gott — o, all' ihr Heiligen! lasst mich nicht wahnsinnig werden, nur nicht wahnsinnig — denn das Entsetzliche muss ich sonst thun, und meine Seele preisgeben der ewigen Verdamnis![13]

Poe's very dramatic final scene is an adaptation of a motive in Hoffmann's story. The motive, as Hoffmann has used it, is entirely secondary. Poe, with a better estimate of its dramatic possibilities, has elevated it to the very climax of his story, with striking, almost startling effect. When Medardus, shortly after leaving his monastery on his trip to Rome, comes upon his brother-double sleeping in the forest, the latter, startled suddenly out of his sleep by the appearance of the monk, falls over a precipice, and as Medardus supposes, meets his death. For a long period of time the monk supposes that he has been the cause of Viktorin's death.

> Seinen scheinbaren Tod, vielleicht das leere Blendwerk des Teufels, musste ich *mir* zuschreiben. Die That machte mich vertraut mit dem Gedanken des Mordes, der dem teuflischen Trug folgte. So war der in verruchter Sünde erzeugte Bruder das vom Teufel beseelte Prinzip, das mich in die abscheulichsten Frevel stürzte und mich mit den grässlichen Qualen umhertrieb.[14]

In other words, the supposed death of his double, which Medardus ascribes to himself, acquaints him with crime. It is the initial act of crime, which introduces the series of

---

[12]Grisebach's, Vol. II, page 213.
[13]Grisebach, Vol. II, page 272.
[14]Grisebach, Vol. II, page 277.

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

crimes which follows. Poe has taken exactly the same notion, and made it the climax of his narrative. In the real death of William Wilson's double, the last spark of good in the former's soul is extinguished, and like Medardus, what follows is a history of crime. The seeming death of Medardus's double marks the seeming victory of sin in the monk's life. But Viktorin's death is only apparent, and Medardus in the end gains his victory. Wilson, on the contrary, kills his double in actual fact, and becomes thereby the victim of the evil for all time.

The American author has adopted also Hoffmann's idea of the personification of the two powers in a man's soul. Medardus's double, Viktorin, is the personified incorporated principle of evil. William Wilson's double, on the other hand, is the living embodiment of the good principle. Both authors expressly state as much. Poe has taken this idea from Hoffmann, but in so doing he has inverted it. William Wilson's double is an agent of the good.

Medardus's double, Viktorin, serves the power of evil. After Medardus confesses to the prior on his return to his monastery, the latter says:

> Es ist gewiss, dass Viktorin auf wunderbare Weise errettet wurde aus dem Abgrunde, in den du ihn stürztest, dass er der wahnsinnige Mönch war, den der Förster aufnahm, der dich als dein Doppelgänger verfolgte und hier im Kloster starb. Er diente der dunklen Macht, die in dein Leben eingriff, nur zum Spiel — ach, Bruder Medardus, noch geht der Teufel rastlos auf Erden umher, und bietet den Menschen seine Elixiere dar![15]

And in the passage already quoted:

> So war der in verruchter Sünde erzeugte Bruder *das vom Teufel beseelte Prinzip*, das mich in die abscheulichsten Frevel stürzte. — u. s. w.[16]

---

[15]Grisebach, Vol. II, page 267.
[16]Grisebach, Vol. II, page 277.

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Poe has used the same motive but has made William Wilson's double an agent of the good. We hear of the school days:

> Yet at this distant day, let me do him the simple justice to acknowledge that I can recall no occasion when the suggestions of my rival were on the side of those errors or follies so usual to his immature age and seeming inexperience; that his moral sense, at least, if not his general talents and worldly wisdom, was far keener than my own; that I might have today been a better, and thus a happier man, had I less frequently rejected the counsels embodied in those meaning whispers which I then but too cordially hated and too bitterly despised.[17]

In the scenes at Eton and Oxford, the appearance of William Wilson's double is always with the intent of frustrating his vice or crime. At Eton for example:

> Upon my entering, he strode hurriedly up to me, and seizing me by the arm with a gesture of petulant impatience, whispered the words, "William Wilson!" in my ear. I grew perfectly sober in an instant. There was that in the manner of the stranger, and in the tremulous shake of his uplifted finger, as he held it between my eyes and the light, which filled me with unqualified amazement; but it was not this which had so violently moved me.[18]

Again, at Oxford, when the double exposes Wilson's cheating at cards:

> The darkness, however, was total and we could only feel that he was standing in our midst. "Gentlemen," he said, "Gentlemen, I make no apology for this behavior, because in thus behaving I am but fulfilling my duty."

---

[17]Harrison, Vol. XIV, page 310.
[18]Harrison, Vol. XIV, page 314.

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

And in the final scene, already quoted, the death of the double marks the extinction of the remaining good.

It is characteristic of Poe's story in general that he has taken certain secondary or minor incidents of the Hoffmann story and made them of prime importance in his narrative in the production of desired effects. Such a motive was Hoffmann's incident of the murder of Medardus's brother-double, and its baneful consequences; namely, the introduction of the monk to his subsequent career of crime. William Wilson's murder of his double forms the climax of Poe's story, and serves also as the climax of a series of crimes which closes forever the road to repentance, and makes Wilson for all time a slave of the evil.

Another such a motive in Hoffmann's story is the whisper and the voice of the *Doppelgänger*. Poe has appropriated this motive also and used it as a means of heightening the mystery of his story. With Hoffmann, the exact correspondence of voice and the whispered utterances of Medardus's double, are of no special significance. They are part and parcel of the general correspondence between Medardus and his double-brother. Poe has seized these two incidents to create an atmosphere of mysterious fatality, to transport his reader at once into the realm of the supernatural.

In the appearance of the *Doppelgänger*, while Medardus is in prison, there are the whispered tones:

> Endlich rief es *leise*, *leise*, aber wie mit hässlicher, heiserer, stammelnder Stimme, hintereinander fort: *Medar-dus! Medar-dus!* Ein Eisstrom goss sich mir durch die Glieder!"[19]

Again, in his flight after the scene with Aurelie:

> Als ich durch die finstre Nacht der Residenz zueilte, war es mir, als liefe jemand neben mir her, und als flüsterte eine Stimme: "Imm ——immer bin ich bei di —— dir"[20]

---

[19]Grisebach, Vol. II, page 158.
[20]Grisebach, Vol. II, page 74.

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Medardus does not know at times whether he is speaking, or whether it is the voice of his double which he hears. In his flight from the castle after the murder of Hermogen:

> Da lachte ich grimmig auf, dass es durch den Saal, durch die Gänge dröhnte, und rief mit schrecklicher Stimme: "Wahnwitzige, wollt ihr das Verhänghis fahen, das die frevelnden Sünder gerichtet?" Aber des grässlichen Anblicks! — vor mir — vor mir stand Viktorins blutige Gestalt, nicht ich, er hatte die Worte gesprochen."

Poe has made this whisper and correspondence of voice play a much larger and more effective role in his story. In the description of the life of the two boys at school, we learn that the favorite device of the second William Wilson for annoying his rival, was an exact imitation of his person, dress and voice. But the first William Wilson, owing to a physical defect of speech, could not raise his voice above a whisper:

> His cue, which was to perfect an imitation of myself, lay both in words and in action, and most admirably did he play his part. My dress it was an easy matter to copy; my gait and general manner were without difficulty appropriated; in spite of his constitutional defect, even my voice did not escape him. My louder tones were of course unattempted, but then the key, it was identical; and his singular whisper, it grew the very echo of my own.

In the scene at Eton where the double appears:

> It was the pregnancy of solemn admonition in the singular, low, hissing utterance, and, above all, it was the character, the tone, the *key*, of those few, simple and familiar, yet *whispered* syllables, which came with a thousand thronging memories of by-gone days, and struck upon my soul with the shock of a galvanic battery.

---

[21]Grisebach Vol. II, pages 124-125.

Digitized by Google

Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

In the appearance of the double at Oxford:

> "Gentlemen," he said, in a low, distinct and never-to-be-forgotten *whisper* which thrilled to the very marrow of my bones, "gentlemen, I make no apology for this behavior."

Poe uses everywhere italics to emphasize the whisper. In the final scene of the duel:

> It was Wilson; but he spoke no longer in a whisper, and I could have fancied that I myself was speaking while he said:—

Another incident which has its counterpart in Hoffmann's story is the gambling at Oxford. While Medardus is at the Prince's court, he is induced by the latter to take part in the games of faro which form the principal diversion of the Prince and the court. The result is that Medardus wins constantly. The episode forms a part of Hoffmann's use of the supernatural. We are told that Medardus wins by favor of those evil forces which are then controlling his destiny.

> Es lag für mich etwas Entsetzliches darin, dass, indem die gleichgültige Karte, die ich blindlings zog, in mir eine schmerzhafte herzzerreissende Erinnerung weckte, ich von einer unbekannten Macht ergriffen wurde, die das Glück des Spiels, den losen Geldgewinn mir zuwarf, als entsprösse es aus meinem eignen Innern, als wenn ich selbst, jenes Wesen denkend, das aus der leblosen Karte mir mit glühenden Farben entgegenstrahlte, dem Zufall gebieten könne, seine geheimsten Verschlingungen erkennend.

William Wilson's gambling is a passion, — a part of his depravity, — and his winnings are explained on the ground of cheating:

> It could hardly be credited, however, that I had, even here, so utterly fallen from the gentlemanly estate as to seek acquaintance with the vilest arts of the gambler by profession, and having become an adept in his despicable science, to practice it habitually as a means of increasing my already enormous income at the

Digitized by Google

Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

> expense of the weak-minded among my fellow-collegians. Such, nevertheless, was the fact:[22]

The treatment of the supernatural by both authors shows a difference in degree only, and little in kind. Ellinger, Hoffmann's biographer, remarks:

> Der ganze eigenthümliche Zusammenhang zwischen Medardus und Viktorin einerseits und Medardus und Aurelie anderseits, die geheimnisvollen Beziehungen, die sich sonst gelegentlich ergeben, schweben auf der Grenze der Möglichkeit und sind von Hoffmann mit grosser Kunst auf dieser festgehalten. Sie sind in hohem Grade unwahrscheinlich, ganz ausgeschlossen sind sie, wenn man von einigen bereits berührten Einzelheiten absieht, nicht, und bei der eigenartigen Kraft, mit der der Dichter sie darzustellen gewusst hat, gewinnen sie eine solche lebensvolle Anschaulichkeit, dass es schwer ist, sich dem Banne der aus diesen Verhältnissen sich ergebenden Vorstellungen zu entziehen.

Again speaking of the relation between Medardus and Viktorin:

> Er (Viktorin) wird durch den Sturz wahnsinnig, und im Wahnsinn hält er sich für den Medardus. Wie er Kenntnis von der Persönlichkeit des Medardus erhalten, sagt der Dichter nicht, doch lässt sich dafür leicht eine Erklärung finden. Wenn er aber im Wahnsinn Dinge aus dem Leben des Medardus erzählt, die kein Anderer als der eigentliche Medardus kennen kann, so treten wir aus dem gebiete des Wirklichen in das des Wunderbaren hinüber.[23]

Poe goes a step further and takes his material entirely out of the realm of the natural. There is no explanation of the resemblance between the double hero, as in Hoffmann. It is the evident purpose of the American author to create a setting of the supernatural and to remove his reader wholly out of the reasonable, to transport him to the realm of the

---

[22]Harrison, Vol XIV, page 316.
[23]Ellinger, pages 120, 121.

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

inexplicable, and to create an impression of awe, even terror, by contact with the supernatural. As a means to this end, Poe uses with striking effect the mysterious whisper as well as the identity of voice between the two doubles.

Grisebach remarks also:

> Bei der Form der Mitteilung aus dem eigenen Leben, die Hoffmann gewählt hat, konnte ein Dichter leicht der Versuchung nachgeben, alles Leben auf die Hauptperson zusammenzudrängen, das übrige aber nur kurz und skizzenhaft zu behandeln. Hoffmann hat diese Gefahr durchaus zu vermeiden gewusst.

Poe uses, of course, the same form of narrative, and he has done just what Hoffmann "knew how to avoid." But in so doing he has achieved a more telling, striking effect than has the German author. In so doing he has sacrificed all detail, all characterization, and the love episode, in order to centre all action and interest around his double hero. Hoffmann vacillates on the border of the supernatural, crossing and re-crossing it, and leaving his reader in doubt as to whether the author himself believes in it or not. Poe leads at once, and boldly, into another world, and keeps us in this region of mystery, at least as long as we are reading his story.

William Wilson is constructed after Poe's own receipt. He has started out to produce an effect of awe-inspiring mystery, and he has gathered and gleaned such motives as best served his purpose, remolding them and fitting them together in such a way as to make of the finished product something all his own. In "looking about him for combinations of events or tone," he has drawn largely on Hoffmann: first, for the idea of the double existence, and secondly, for its typification of the good and evil forces in man's soul. Also, various other motives of minor importance in Hoffmann's story have been used by the American; — such as the murdering of the double with its consequent extinction of the good principle; the mysterious, solemn whisper, and the exact correspondence of the double's voice; and, finally, the gambling proclivities of William Wilson. These all have their counterparts in Hoffmann's story.

Digitized by Google Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

CHAPTER V

HOFFMANN'S *Magnetiseur* AND POE'S *Tale of the Ragged Mountains.*

Poe and Hoffmann, both ever alert for the novel and the fantastic, were powerfully attracted by the doctrines of Mesmer and the theories of hypnotism. The absolute novelty of the discovery and the fact that its principles were but half understood, lent to the subject an additional charm of interest. The disciples of the new theories tantalized themselves with promises of the discovery of many of the deep secrets of nature which have always allured and baffled the brain of man. Both authors busied themselves very earnestly with the study of the subject, and both turned to good account in their stories the results of their investigations. Among Poe's best known stories are perhaps *Mesmeric Revelations* and *The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar*, both of which represent a flight of fancy into the realm of the unknown, motivated by the fiction of a conversation with a person hypnotized just previous to death.

The doctrine of hypnotism plays more or less of a role in all of Hoffmann's stories. On almost every page of his works one finds such expressions as, "das höhere geistige Prinzip," "eine fremdliche feindliche Kraft," "innige geistige Verbindung," and a dozen other similar phrases, all savoring of the mystery of the influence of mind upon mind. In two of his stories, *Der unheimliche Gast* and *Der Magnetiseur*, Hoffmann has based plot and incident upon the hypnotic relationship existing between his characters. The general features of both these stories agree, as Hoffmann himself points out.[1]

Aside from the large role which hypnotism plays in Poe's and Hoffmann's stories, they have also in common a large interest if not positive belief, in the doctrine of metempsycho-

---

[1] Grisebach, Vol. I, page 131.

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

sis. Both authors have used this singular belief in their stories. Ingram remarks[2] with reference to the story *Berenice :*

> Among the peculiarities of the early draft of this work — some of which disappeared in later versions — it will be noted by his readers, is the first development of Poe's assumed belief in metempsychosis, a doctrine that, in subsequent writings, he recurred to again and again, and which it is scarcely assuming too much to say at times he evidently partially believed in.

This doctrine forms the basic idea of the stories *Ligeia*, *Morella*, and *Eleanora*, and plays more or less of a part in several other tales.

Hoffmann's collection of stories which he calls the *Serapionsbrüder* (from which Poe got his idea of the *Folio Club*) takes its title from the story of the hermit monk Serapion, whose insanity consists in the belief that he is the martyred monk Serapion, whose death had occurred four hundred years previous to the time in which the story is told. Hoffmann, with a characteristic mixture of realism and mystery, makes his monk insane, but makes the wisdom of his insanity superior to that of the sanity of his fellows, who try to convince Serapion that he is suffering from monomania or a fixed idea. In the end, Hoffmann leaves his reader with the idea that the monk is sane and the rest of the world too ignorant to understand him. The new club is dedicated to this monk Serapion, the members style themselves the "Serapionsbrüder," and "das echt-Serapionische" is the standard of excellence set up for their productions.

There is nothing singular in the fact that both authors should have evinced strong interest in hypnotism and in the doctrine of metempsychosis, nor does the fact that they both used these motives in their stories necessarily imply an influence of the one upon the other. But when we find both of these motives united in one story, and worked out with almost

---

[2] Page 101.

Digitized by Google

Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

exact similarity of motivation and even detail, and when we consider the novelty of the idea, it is safe to assume that the two authors did not accidentally hit upon the same singular combination of singular motives, without the one having received a suggestion from the otherr In Poe's *Tale of the Ragged Mountains*, and in Hoffmann's *Magnetiseur* we find a union of the doctrines of hypnotism and metempsychosis, and both interwoven with almost exact correspondence in the work of both authors. The similarity manifests itself not only in general outlines, but is evident even in unimportant details, so as to form a consecutive thread of resemblance. It is worth noting also in this connection that the tale *Morella*, in which Poe expresses his interest in "those mystical writings which are usually considered the mere dross of German literature," is also the story in which his fancy for the doctrine of metempsychosis is most unmistakably expressed. Throughout the story, Poe has in mind, evidently, his German reading. Besides these "mystical writings" of German literature, we hear in the same story of the "pantheism of Fichte," and "the doctrine of Identity as urged by Schelling." In thus writing on the subject Poe admits, more or less, a German source for his interest in the subject. But it is in the *Tale of the Ragged Mountains* that he has drawn most closely on Hoffmann, from the latter's *Magnetiseur*.

Hoffmann's tale suffers somewhat from lack of unity. There are three distinct elements in the story, all of which are somewhat loosely joined together by the participation of the same persons in all three of the incidents. We are first introduced to a family group, the members of which are gathered around a cheerful fire on a stormy autumn evening, and engaged in a lively discussion of the nature of dreams. This serves as an introduction to a story which the Baron, the head of the family, is induced to relate. The story in question has to do with a dream or experience of his youth. He proceeds to describe one of his instructors, an officer of colossal stature, gaunt, lean, and with a "burning glance." Hoffmann builds up an atmosphere of mystery around this Danish

Digitized by Google Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

major by the description of his person, various personal attributes, and finally by the hypnotic influence which he exerted on his pupils.

> Im höchsten Grad jähzornig, konnte ihn ein Wort, ein Blick, in Wuth setzen. Er bestrafte die Zöglinge mit ausgedachter Grausamkeit, und doch hing alles an ihm auf eine ganz unbegreifliche Weise.[3]

The Baron tells also of the influence of the Major on him, and comes at last to the climax of the story, in which he sees in a dream the Major enter his room, and hears the words,

> Armes Menschenkind, erkenne deinen Meister und Herrn . . . . Ich bin dein Gott, der dein Innerstes durchschaut, und alles, was du darin jemals verborgen hast oder verbergen willst, liegt hell und klar vor mir.

The Baron awakes out of his dream as the Major plunges a dagger into the dreamer's brain. Terrified, the Baron throws open his window and sees the Major disappearing through the garden into the open country beyond. The mystery of the situation is enhanced by the fact that all doors and exits are locked and there is no natural way to explain the Major's presence in the garden. Other inmates of the house being aroused, they break into the Major's room and find him lying dead in his blood.

The Baron ends his story thus, a general discussion is again resumed, and we hear next a second dream-story from the Baron's son, Ottmar. The latter has his story from his friend Alban, who is a convert to hypnotism, or, as Hoffmann terms it, magnetism. The relation of characters is somewhat confusing. Ottmar relates the story as he has heard it from his friend Alban, and the story deals in its turn with another friend of Alban's, Theobald, who is not otherwise concerned in the action, and a stranger to the group in which the tales are being related. Theobald is described as follows:

> Seine ganze Musse — und daher sein Leben wollte er dazu verwenden. soviel als möglich in die geheimnis-

---

[3]Grisebach, Vol. I, page 143.

Digitized by Google

Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

vollsten Tiefen der psychischen Einwirkungen zu dringen, und fortwährend seinen Geist fester und fester darauf fixierend, sich rein erhaltend von allem dem Widerstrebenden ein würdiger Lehrling der Natur zu werden.[4]

In Theobald's absence at the university, his fiancée comes under the influence of a stranger, an Italian officer, and becomes so enamored of the latter that she forgets her first lover. The story hinges about the theory of dreams. The girl is so beset by tormenting dreams of her Italian lover, who is absent on a campaign, that she falls into insanity. Theobald, returning home finds her in this condition. He applies his principles of hypnotism, and effects a cure. He proceeds in such a manner that the influence of his mind upon that of the girl is made to supersede the influence of the Italian. Gradually, Theobald supplants the Italian lover in her dreams, and she is restored.

> Auguste empfing ihn (Theobald) mit der höchsten Aufwallung der innigsten Liebe. Bald nachher gestand sie unter vielen Thränen, wie sie sich gegen ihn vergangen; wie es einem Fremden auf eine seltsame Weise gelungen, sie von ihm abwendig zu machen, so dass sie, wie von einer fremden Gewalt befangen, ganz aus ihrem eigenen Wesen herausgeraten sei, aber Theobalds wohlthätige Erscheinung in lebhaften Traümen, habe die feindlichen Geister, die sie bestrickt, verjagt; ja, sie müsse gestehen, dass sie jetzt nicht einmal des Fremden aüssere Gestalt sich ins Gedächtnis zurückrufen könne, und nur Theobald lebe in ihrem Innern.[5]

This is the end of the second episode. The third element forms the real centre of the tale. As Ottmar finishes his narrative his sister Maria, who has been present during the narration of both tales, falls in a faint, and Ottmar's friend,

---

4 Grisebach; Vol. I, page 154.
5 Grsiebach; Vol. I, page 157

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Alban, the "Magnetiseur," is called to attend her. The latter has been so attracted by Maria that he determines, although she is already betrothed, to bring her under the power of his will by means of hypnotic influence. Maria falls into a hypnotic trance, and Alban is called to attend her. He effects a cure, but in so doing succeeds in impressing his will and thought with such power upon her that she exists wholly within the sway of his will. Maria writes to her friend:

> Nur in diesem mit Ihm und in Ihm sein kann ich wahrhaftig leben, und es müsste, wäre es ihm möglich, sich mir geistig ganz zu entziehn, mein Selbst, in toter Öde erstarren; ja, indem ich dieses schreibe, fühle ich nur zu sehr, dass nur Er es ist, der mir den Ausdruck gibt, mein Sein in ihm wenigstens anzudeuten.[6]

On her wedding day Maria falls dead at the altar, Alban flees, the bridegroom is killed in a duel with Ottmar, the old Baron dies of grief, and the story ends in general misery.

At several points in the story the Baron expresses his distrust of Alban. and finds a singular resemblance between him and the Danish Major of his story. On the eve of Maria's wedding, the old Baron, meeting Alban in the corridor, mistakes him for the Major in the flesh. The reader is left with the suggestion that the Danish Major of the first part of the story, and Alban, the "Magnetiseur," are one and the same person, although the Major is long since dead, and described as an old man in the Baron's youth, while Alban is of the same age as the Major's son. It is thus that Hoffmann uses the theory of metempsychosis.

Poe's tale has the same elements,—hypnotism, the metempsychosis theory, and the dreams and visions. As frequently in Poe's tales, there is no love episode. We learn first of a singular relationship existing between the two characters of the story, Bedloe, an invalid, and his physician, Dr. Templeton. The latter is a disciple of Mesmer, and uses

---

[6] Grisebach, Vol. I, page 164.

Digitized by Google

Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

the mesmeric method in the treatment of his patient. Poe briefly explains the relationship existing between Bedloe and Templeton, and what follows, the real story, is an account of a dream or vision of Bedloe on a solitary walk in the mountains of Virginia. Growing tired, he seats himself under a tree for rest. He is oppressed by the closeness of the atmosphere. He observes suddenly that the tree under which he is sitting is a palm, the surrounding mist rolls away, and a panorama of the orient is unfolded to his view.

> I found myself at the foot of a high mountain, and looking down into a vast plain, through which wound a majestic river. On the margin of this river stood an Eastern-looking city, such as we read of in the Arabian Tales, but of a character even more singular than any there described . . . . The streets seemed innumerable, and crossed each other irregularly in all directions, but were rather long winding alleys than streets, and absolutely swarmed with inhabitants. On every hand was a wilderness of balconies, of verandas, of minarets, of shrines, and fantastically carved oriels. Bazaars abounded, and in these were displayed rich wares in infinite variety and profusion — silks, muslins, the most dazzling cutlery, the most magnificent jewels and gems. etc.'

Bedloe arises and descends into the city. There everything is tumult and confusion. Strife is raging between two factions of the populace. Bedloe joins the weaker party, is with his confrères overcome and compelled to seek refuge in a kiosk. From there he observes "a vast crowd, in furious agitation, surrounding and assaulting a gay palace that overhung the river. Presently from an upper window of this palace, there descended an effeminate-looking person, by means of a string made of the turbans of his attendants. A boat was at hand, in which he escaped to the opposite bank of the river."[8] In a sally from the kiosk he is struck by an

---

[7] Harrison, Vol. V, page 169.
[8] Harrison, Vol. V, page 172.

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

arrow. "I reeled and fell. An instantaneous and dreadful sickness seized me. I struggled — I gasped — I died." When Bedloe comes to his original self again he is again in the mountains, and proceeding on his way home, after his walk. The narrative of the dream ends thus: "And not now, even for an instant, can I compel my understanding to regard it as a dream."

At the conclusion of Bedloe's narrative, Dr. Templeton, Poe's "magnetiseur," who is present, produces a water-color portrait which is an exact likeness of Bedloe's features. The explanation is as follows:

> You will perceive the date of this picture — it is here, scarcely visible, in this corner — 1780. In this year was the portrait taken. It is the likeness of a dead friend — a Mr. Oldeb — to whom I became much attached at Calcutta, during the administration of Warren Hastings. I was then only twenty years old. When I first saw you, Mr. Bedloe, at Saratoga, it was the miraculous similarity which existed between yourself and the painting which induced me to accost you, to seek your friendship, and to bring about those arrangements which resulted in my becoming your constant companion. In accomplishing this point, I was urged partly, and perhaps principally, by a regretful memory of the deceased, but also, in part, by an uneasy and not altogether horrorless curiosity respecting yourself.
>
> In your detail of the vision which presented itself to you amid the hills, you have described, with the minutest accuracy, the Indian city of Benares upon the Holy River. The riots, the combats, the massacre, were the actual events of the insurrection of Cheyte Sing, which took place in 1780, when Hastings was put in imminent peril of his life. The man escaping by the string of turbans was Cheyte Sing himself. The party in the kiosk were sepoys and British officers headed by Hastings. Of this party I was one, and did all I could to

Digitized by Google

Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

prevent the rash and fatal sally of the officer who fell, in the crowded alley, by the poisoned arrow of a Bengalee. That officer was my dearest friend. It was Oldeb. You will perceive by these manuscripts (here the speaker produced a note book in which several pages appeared to have been freshly written) that at the very period in which you fancied these things amid the hills, I was engaged in detailing them upon paper here at home.[9]

The tale ends with the death of Bedloe. The author's attention is attracted to it by the announcement in the paper of the death of a Mr. Bedlo. By a typographical error the name has been written without the *e*. The reader's attention is called to the fact that *Bedlo* is *Oldeb* reversed. Thus we have the same suggestion, — Bedloe is the reincarnation of Oldeb, — the doctrine of metempsychosis.

Both author's have made use of hypnotism, metempsychosis, and the phenomena of dreams. In both stories these singular motives are united. Poe and Hoffmann have built up their tales around the same general framework.

The three parts of Hoffmann's story already outlined portray a group of people all more or less subject to the will of the "magnetiseur," or hypnotist. In each case the centre of interest is a man of commanding will, who exerts a mesmeric influence over certain other persons of the tale. It is first the Danish major of the Baron's tale, who establishes this relationship between himself and his pupils.

> So hiess es von ihm, er könne das Feuer besprechen, und Krankheiten durch das Auflegen der Hände, ja durch den blossen Blick heilen, und ich erinnere mich, dass er einmal Leute, die durchaus von ihm auf diese Art geheilt sein wollten, mit Stockschlägen verjagte. . . . . Erfüllte mich nun mein Beisammensein mit ihm auch mit einem gewissen Wohlbehagen, so war es doch wieder eine gewisse Angst, das Gefühl eines

---

[9]Harrison, Vol. V, page 174.

Digitized by Google Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

> unwiderstehlichen Zwanges, das mich auf eine unnatürliche Art spannte, ja das mich innerlich erbeben machte. War ich lange bei ihm gewesen, ja hatte er mich besonders freundlich behandelt und mir, wie er denn zu tun pflegte, mit starr auf mich geheftetem Blick meine Hand in der seinigen festhaltend, allerlei Seltsames erzählt, so konnte mich jene ganz eigne wunderbare Stimmung biz zur höchsten Erschöpfung treiben.[10]

In Ottmar's narrative, the same principle plays the chief role.

> Der wieder erweckte thierische Magnetismus sprach seine ganze Seele an, (Theobald) und indem er unter Albans Leitung eifrig alles, was je darüber geschrieben, studirte, und selbst auf Erfahrungen ausging, wandte er sich bald, jedes physische Medium, als der tiefen Idee rein psychisch wirkender Naturkräfte zuwider, verwerfend, zu dem sogenannten barbareiischen Magnetismus, oder der älteren Schule der Spiritualisten, u. s. w.[11]

Theobald undertakes the cure of his fiancée by means of magnetism and the control of her dreams. The real crux of the story is the hypnotic relationship which exists between Alban and Maria. As the latter falls into a trance, Alban is called to attend her, and uses the magnetic treatment in her cure. Maria describes her recovery in a letter to her friend:

> Nun muss ich dir aber etwas Besonderes sagen — nämlich, was mein Genesen betrifft, das habe ich einem herrlichen Mann zu danken, den Ottmar schon früher ins Haus gebracht, und der in der Residenz, unter all den grossen und geschickten Ärzten der einzige sein soll, der das Geheimnis besitzt, eine solche sonderbare Krankheit, wie die meinige, schnell und sicher zu heilen

---

[10]Grisebach, Vol. I, page 143.
[11]Grisebach, Vol. I, 153.

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

. . . . So wie Alban überhaupt in seiner Bildung, in seinem ganzen Betragen, eine gewisse Würde, ich möchte sagen, etwas Gebietendes hat, das ihn über seine Umgebung erhebt, so war es mir gleich, als er seinen ernsten durchdringenden Blick auf mich richtete; ich müsste alles unbedingt thun, was er gebieten würde, und als ob er meine Genesung nur recht lebhaft wollen dürfe, um mich ganz herzustellen."[12]

We have also Alban's standpoint, in a letter to a friend.

> Maria fiel bald darauf in einen fantastichen Zustand, den Ottmar natürlicherweise für eine neue Krankheit halten musste, und ich kam wieder als Arzt ins Haus, wie ich es vorausgesehen. Maria erkannte in mir den, der ihr schon oft in der Glorie der beherrschenden Macht als ihr Meister im Traum erschienen, und alles, was sie nur dunkel geahnet, sah sie nun hell und klar mit ihres Geistes Augen. Nur meines Blickes, meines festen Willens bedurfte es, sie in den sogenannten somnambulen Zustand zu versetzen, der nichts anders war, als das gänzliche Hinaustreten aus sich selbst und das Leben in der höheren Sphäre des Meisters. Es war *mein* Geist, der sie dann willig aufnahm und ihr die Schwingen gab, dem Kerker, mit dem sie die Menschen überbaut hatten, zu entschweben.

Thus the theme of the whole story is the mastery of one mind over another by means of hypnotism. The hypnotist proceeds gradually. He wins at first an influence, more or less powerful, over his subject. This is gradually increased till at length the subject is wholly subservient to the master's will. A glance, or even the mere concentration of the hypnotist's will is sufficient to put the subject into the hypnotic state, which is described as "das gänzliche Hinaustreten aus sich selbst und das Leben in der höheren Sphäre des Meisters." Hoffmann's hypnotist always controls the dreams of his subjects while in the hypnotic state. The Baron's

---

[12] Grisebach, Vol. I, page 163.

Digitized by Google Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

dream of the dagger in his brain is suggested to him by his hypnotic master, the Danish Major. There is always the idea of the mastership of the "Magnetiseur," and the helplessness of the subject, connected in each case by the dream phenomena. The Major's words in the Baron's dream are typical of this: "Armes Menschenkind, erkenne deinen Meister und Herrn."

Theobald cures his fiancée's insanity by his hypnotic mastery of her dream:

> Er setzte sich daneben (by the side of her bed), und den Geist mit der ganzen Kraft des Willens auf sie fixierend, schaute er sie mit festem Blick an. Nachdem er dies einige Mal wiederholt, schien der Eindruck ihrer Träume schwächer zu werden, denn der Ton, mit dem sie sonst den Namen des Offiziers gewaltsam hervorschrie, hatte nicht mehr das die ganze Seele Durchdringende, und tiefe Seufzer machten der gepressten Brust Luft. Nun legte Theobald auf ihre Hand die seinige, und nannte leise, ganz leise, seinen Namen. Bald zeigte sich die Wirkung . . . . Bis jetzt war Auguste am Tage still und in sich gekehrt gewesen, aber an dem Morgen nach jener Nacht aüsserte sie ganz unerwartet der Mutter, wie sie seit einiger Zeit lebhaft von Theobald traüme, und warum er denn nicht käme, ja nicht einmal schriebe.[13]

Alban's mastery over Maria is achieved in the same way. In the letter of Maria, already quoted, the following passage occurs:

> Das Besondere ist aber, dass in meinen Traümen und Erscheinungen immer ein schöner ernster Mann im Spiele war, der, unerachtet seiner Jugend, mir wahrhafte Ehrfurcht einflösste, und der bald auf diese, bald auf jene Weise, aber immer in langen Talaren gekleidet, mit einer diamanten Krone auf dem Haupte, mir wie der romantische König in der märchenhaften Geisterwelt erschien und allen bösen Zauber löste . . .

[13]Grisebach, Vol. I, page 157.

Digitized by Google

Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

> Ach, liebe Adelgunde, wie erschrack ich nun, als ich auf den ersten Blick in Alban jenen romantischen König aus meinen Träumen erkannte.[14]

These are exactly the relationships which exist in Poe's story between Bedloe and his physician, Templeton; the latter, like Alban, a disciple of Mesmer.

> Dr. Templeton had been a traveler in his younger days, and at Paris had become a convert in great measure to the doctrines of Mesmer. It was altogether by means of magnetic remedies that he had succeeded in alleviating the acute pains of his patient; and this success had very naturally inspired the latter with a certain degree of confidence in the opinions from which the remedies had been educed. The Doctor, however, like all enthusiasts, had struggled hard to make a thorough convert of his pupil, and finally so far gained his point as to induce the sufferer to submit to numerous experiments. By a frequent repetition of these, a result had arisen, which of late days has been so common as to attract little or no attention, but which, at the period of which I write, had been very rarely known in America. I mean to say, that between Doctor Templeton and Bedloe there had grown up, little by little, a very distinct and strongly marked *rapport* or magnetic relation. I am not prepared to assert, however, that this *rapport* extended beyond the limits of the sleep-producing power; but this power itself had attained great intensity.[15]

This corresponds exactly with the situation between Alban and Maria. The former's supremacy over the latter is gained gradually, until at length "nur meines Blickes, meines festen Willens bedurfte es sie in den ogenannten somnambulen Zustand zu versetzen."

This is also Templeton's experience with Bedloe.

---

[14]Grisebach, Vol. I, page 163.
[15]Harrison, Vol. V, page 164.

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

> At the first attempt to induce the magnetic somnolency, the mesmerist entirely failed. In the fifth or sixth, he succeeded very partially, and after long continued efforts. Only at the twelfth was the triumph complete. After this, the will of the patient succumbed rapidly to that of the physician, so that, when I first became acquainted with the two, sleep was brought almost instantaneously by the mere volition of the operator, even when the invalid was unaware of his presence."[16]

Hoffmann's "Magnetiseur," as has already been shown, always controls the dreams of his subjects. The whole of Poe's story is the narrative of a dream which the hypnotist suggests to his patient. When Bedloe finishes the narrative of his vision, Templeton, the hypnotist, comes forward with this explanation:

> "You will perceive by these manuscripts," (here the speaker produced a note-book in which several pages appeared to have been freshly written) "that at the very period in which you fancied these things amid the hills, I was engaged in detailing them upon paper here at home."[17]

In other words, the explanation is that Bedloe is in the hypnotic trance, that his mind is under the control of the hypnotist, and that the dream is the result of suggestion from the latter, — exactly the status of affairs which exists in Hoffmann's story between the Danish Major and his pupils, Theobald and his fiancée, and Maria and Alban.

In addition to this use of hypnotism, the two stories have in common a similar treatment of metempsychosis, a form of the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, — the idea that an individual after death may be reincarnated and lead a second existence, and that there may be even a thread of connection between these two periods of existence. Poe and Hoff-

---

[16] Harrison, Vol. V, page 165.
[17] Harrison, Vol. V, page 165.

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

mann both further accentuate the idea, and add to the mysterious by creating between their individuals of the first and second existence, a physical and psychic resemblance. Such is the relationship which exists between Hoffmann's Major and Alban, the "Magnetiseur," and also between Poe's Oldeb and Bedloe.

Hoffmann's description of the Major's person is as follows:

> Seine Riesengrösse wurde noch auffallender durch die Hagerkeit seines Körpers, der nur aus Muskeln und Nerven zu bestehen schien; er mochte in jüngern Jahren ein schöner Mann gewesen sein; denn noch jetzt warfen seine grossen schwarzen Augen einen brennenden Blick, den man kaum ertragen konnte; ein tiefer Funfziger hatte er die Kraft und die Gewandtheit eines Jünglings."[18]

Poe, in describing Bedloe, is evidently painting from this model:

> But in no regard was he (Bedloe) more singular than in his personal appearance. He was singularly tall and thin. He stooped much. . . . . His eyes were abnormally large and round like those of a cat. The pupils, too, upon any accession or diminution of light, underwent contraction or dilation, just such as is observed in the feline tribe. In moments of excitement, the orbs grew bright to a degree almost inconceivable, etc.

Bedloe is the officer Oldeb in the second existence, Alban is the Danish officer also in the second exlstence.

Hoffmann, ever loath to quit absolutely the field of the natural, suggests rather than states explicitly this state of affairs. Early in Hoffmann's story the Baron expresses his distrust of Alban, the "Magnetiseur."

> Als Ottmar ihn vor mehreren Monaten als seinen innigsten Freund zu uns brachte, war es mir, els habe ich ihn irgend einmal schon gesehen; seine Feinheit,

---

[18] Grisebach, Vol. I, page 141.

Digitized by Google Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

> sein gewandtes Betragen gefielen nur, aber im ganzen war mir seine Gegenwart nicht wohlthuend."[19]

In the same conversation we have the first suggestion also of the identity of the Major and Alban.

> Aber Bickert! merk! wohl auf — Die sonderbarste Erscheinung dünkt mir, dass seitdem Alban hier ist, ich öfter als je an meinen dänischen Major, von dem ich vorhin erzählt habe, denken muss. Jetzt, aber jetzt, als er so höhnisch, so wahrhaft diabolisch lächelte, und mich mit seinen grossen pechschwarzen Augen anstarrte, da stand der Major ganz vor mir — die Aehnlichkeit ist auffallend.

At the end of the story the general catastrophe is related by Bickert, the Baron's old friend, and the only survivor of the original group of characters. We hear of the following occurrence in the night preceding the day set for Maria's wedding:

> Sonderbares Ereignis! — Als ich meinen Freund (der Baron) mit dem ich in die Nacht hinein manches vom Herzen gesprochen, über den Korridor in sein Zimmer begleitete, rauschte eine hagere Figur im weissen Schlafrock mit dem Licht in der Hand vorüber — Der Baron schrie auf! "Der Major! Franz! der Major!" Es war unbestritten Alban, und nur eie Beleuchtung von unten herauf mochte sein Gesicht, welches alt und hässlich schien, verzerren."[20]

Then follows the direct suggestion that Alban and the Major are one and the same person.

> Sollte der feindliche Dämon, der sich dem Baron schon in früher Jugend verkündete, nun wie ein über ihn waltendes böses Prinzip wieder sichtbarlich, und das Gute entzweiend ins Leben treten? Doch weg mit den finstern Ahnungen! Überzeuge dich, Franz, dass das hässliche träumerische Zeug oft das Ereignis des verdorbenen Magens ist.

---

[19]Grisebach, Vol. I, page 160.
[20] Grisebach, Vol. I, page 176.

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Hoffmann thus mystifies his readers by suggesting the identity of the Major and Alban and then scouts the idea as the result of a disordered stomach.

Poe goes a step further, and leaves his reader to infer that he believes in the identity of the officer Oldeb with Bedloe. Like Hoffmann, with his Danish Major, he makes an atmosphere of mystery around Bedloe by the peculiarity of the latter's person. Bedloe seems young and yet there were moments "when one might have easily believed him to be a hundred." His eyes seemed "to emit luminous rays, not of a reflected, but of an intrinsic lustre, as does a candle or the sun; yet their ordinary condition was so totally vapid, filmy, and dull, as to convey the idea of the eyes of a long interred corpse."[21] These touches carry with them the suggestion of death in connection with Bedloe. Again, in Bedloe's description of his dream, when he comes to the point where he is struck by an arrow, and in his dream sees himself die, the author interrupts him by the question,

> "You will hardly persist now" said I, smiling, "that the whole of your adventure was not a dream. You are not prepared to maintain that you are dead?"
>
> When I said these words, I of course expected some lively sally from Bedloe in reply; but to my astonishment, he hesitated, trembled, became fearfully pallid, and remained silent. I looked towards Templeton. He sat erect and rigid in his chair—his teeth chattered, and his eyes were starting from their sockets.

At the conclusion of Bedloe's narrative of his dream, Templeton (Poe's hypnotist) explains the vision as an actual occurrence in the city of Benares in India, produces a portrait which is the exact reproduction of Bedloe's features, and explains that it is a likeness of his dead friend Oldeb, who played exactly the part in the insurrection which Bedloe plays in the dream. The story ends with this suggestion from the author, who, shortly afterwards, reads in a local newspaper of Bedlo's death.

---

[21] Harrison, vol. V, page 164.

Digitized by Google

Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

> "Then," said I, mutteringly, as I turned upon my heel, "then indeed has it come to pass that one truth is stranger than any fiction, for Bedlo, without the e, what is it but Oldeb conversed? And this man tells me it is a typographical error."

Bedloe's dream is the result of hypnotic suggestion from Templeton, the dream itself is identified with an actual occurrence, and Bedloe himself is identified with Oldeb, an officer long since dead.

Parallel motives in Hoffmann's story are Alban's control of Maria by hypnotic suggestion, especially in her dreams, and the identity of the Danish Major and Alban.

The phenomena of dreams and sleep, especially of magnetic sleep, interested both authors keenly. Elsewhere in Poe's works there are numerous passages relative to this subject which echo opinions and experiences of the German author. For example, the dream of Bedloe, as he relates it, contains certain elements, the suggestions for which Poe undoubtedly drew from a dream of Medardus in "Die Elixiere des Teufels." It will be recalled that Bedloe in a vision saw himself killed, and viewed with the eyes of his soul his lifeless body. Let us compare Madardus's dream with that of Bedloe. The incident in question occurs at that point in the story where the monk is recovering from his illness in a monastery near Rome.

> Der Arzt versprach meine baldige Herstellung, und in der That empfand ich nur in den Augenblicken jenes Delirierens, das dem Einschlafen vorherzugehen pflegt, fieberhafte Anfälle, die mit kalten Schauern und fliegender Hitze wechselten. Gerade in diesen Augenblicken war es, als ich, ganz erfüllt von dem Bilde meines Martyriums, mich selbst, wie es schon oft geschehen, durch einen Dolchstich in der Brust ermordert schaute . . . Statt des Blutes quoll ein ekelhafter farbloser Saft aus der weit aufklaffenden Wunde und eine Stimme sprach: Ist das Blut vom Märtyrer vergossen? Ich war es, der dies gesprochen, als ich

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

mich aber von meinem toten Selbst getrennt fühlte, merkte ich wohl, dass ich der wesenlose Gedanke meines Ichs sei, und bald erkannte ich mich als das im Aether schwimmende Rot. Ich schwang mich auf zu den leuchtenden Bergspitzen . . . So wie ich tiefer und tiefer niederfiel, erblickte ich die Leiche mit weit aufklaffender Wunde in der Brust, aus der jenes unreine Wasser in Strömen floss. Mein Hauch sollte das Wasser umwandeln in Blut, doch geschah es nicht, die Leiche richtete sich auf und starrte mich an mit hohlen grässlichen Augen und heulte wie der Nordwind in tiefer Kluft. . . . Die Leiche sank nieder; alle Blumen auf der Flur neigten verwelkt ihre Häupter, Menschen, bleichen Gespenstern ähnlich, warfen sich zur Erde und ein tausendstimmiger trostloser Jammer stieg in die Lüfte. . . . Stärker und stärker wie des Meeres brausende Welle, schwoll die Klage! der Gedanke wollte zerstäuben in dem gewaltigen Ton des trostlosen Jammers, da wurde ich wie durch einen elektrischen Schlag emporgerissen aus dem Traum. [22]

Bedloe's dream has all the same features and even literal correspondences of phrase. He is describing the peculiar arrows of the enemy:

> One of them struck me upon the right temple. I reeled and fell. An instantaneous and dreadful sickness seized me. I struggled! I gasped! I died. For many minutes my sole sentiment, my sole feeling, was that of darkness and nonentity, with the consciousness of death. At length, there seemed to pass a violent and sudden shock through my soul, as if of electricity. With it came the sense of elasticity and of light. This latter I felt—not saw. In an instant I seemed to rise from the ground. But I had no bodily, no visible, audible or palpable presence. . . . Beneath me lay my corpse, with the arrow in the temple, the whole head

[22] Grisebach, Vol. II, p. 250.

Digitized by Google Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

> greatly swollen and disfigured. But all these things I felt — not saw. . . . Volition I had none, but appeared to be impelled into motion, and flitted buoyantly out of the city, retracing the circuitous path by which I had entered it. When I had attained that point of the ravine in the mountains at which I had encountered the hyena, I again experienced a shock as of a galvanic battery; the sense of weight, of volition, of substance returned. I became my original self, and bent my steps eagerly homeward.[23]

Both dreamers see themselves killed, the one by a dagger, the other by an arrow. Separation of the soul and body follows. The soul is then dissolved into the ether, after which the body with its gaping wounds is plainly visible. Finally, a reunion of the body and soul takes place; in Hoffmann's story "durch einen elektrischen Schlag," in Poe's narrative by a "shock as of a galvanic battery." Poe has thus adopted Medardus's dream without change of incident, and almost without change of language.

Other passages in Poe's works which have to do with dreams and their attendant phenomena reveal the unmistakable influence of Hoffmann. Medardus's dream, quoted above, occurs in "den Augenblicken jenes Deliriérens, das dem Einschlafen vorherzugehen pflegt." The same expression occurs in *Kreisleriana*.[24]

> Nicht sowohl im Traume, als im Zustande des Deliriérens, der dem Einschlafen, vorhergeht, vorzüglich wenn ich viel Musik gehört habe, finde ich eine Uebereinkunft der Farben, Töne and Düfte.

In Poe's *Colloquy of Monos and Una*,[25] there occurs a passage which embodies the same experience. The passage in Poe occurs where the hero of the story, Monos, is describing the sensations of death.

> The senses were unusually active, although eccentric-

---

[23] Harrison; Vol. V, page 172 and following.
[24] Grisebach; Vol. I, page 46.
[25] Harrison; Vol. IV, page 206.

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

> ally so — assuming often each other's functions at random. The taste and smell were inextricably confounded, and became one sentiment, abnormal and intense.

Again in Poe's *Marginalia* we find a description of a condition preceding sleep which corresponds to Hoffmann's "Augenblicken, die dem Einschlafen vorherzugehen pflegen." Poe remarks that the common experience that certain thoughts are beyond the compass of words is based on a fallacy:

> For my own part, I have never had a thought which I could not set down in words. . . . There is, however, a class of fancies, of exquisite delicacy, which are not thoughts, and to which as yet I have found it absolutely impossible to adapt language. I use the word *fancies* at random, and merely because I must use *some* word; but the idea commonly attached to the term is not even remotely applicable to the shadows of shadows in question. They seem to me rather psychic than intellectual. They arise in the soul (alas, how rarely!) only at its epochs of most intense tranquility, when the bodily and mental health are in perfection — and at those mere points of time when the confines of the waking world blend with those of the world of dreams. I am aware of these 'fancies' only when I am upon the very brink of sleep, with the consciousness that I am so. [26]

Poe's "fancies" which he experiences "on the very brink of sleep," are evidently the same as Hoffmann's "Träume im Zustand des Delierierens, der dem Einschlafen vorherzugehen pflegt."

Both authors also give expression to the idea that it is in dreams that men are permitted to catch fleeting glimpses of another world. That dreams are, in a way, a partial revelation of those secrets of the universe which tantalize and baffle the powers of the intellect.

Hoffmann's *Magnetiseur* opens with the proverb "Träume sind Schäume." In the long discussion of the subject of

---

[26] Harrison; Vol. XVI, page 88.

Digitized by Google Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

dreams, the following will suffice to show the gist of the opinions others expressed:

> Sieh die tausend kleinen Bläschen, die perlend im Glase aufsteigen und oben im Schaume sprudeln, das sind die Geister, die sich ungeduldig von der irdischen Fessel loslösen; und so lebt und webt im Schaum das höhere geistige Prinzip, das frei von dem Drange des Materiellen frisch die Fittiche regend, in dem fernen uns allen verheissenen himmlischen Reiche sich zu dem verwandten höheren Geistigen freudig gesellt, and alle wundervollen Erscheinungen in ihrer tiefsten Bedeutung wie das Bekannteste aufnimmt und erkennt. Es mag daher auch der Traum von dem Schaum, in welchem unsere Lebensgeister, wenn der Schlaf unser extensives Leben befängt, froh and frei aufsprudeln, erzeugt werden und ein höheres extensives Leben beginnen, in dem wir alle Erscheinungen der uns fernen Geisterwelt nicht nur ahnen, sondern wirklich erkennen, ja in dem wir über Raum und Zeit schweben.

In the same passage in Poe's *Marginalia*,[27] quoted above, the description of the "fancies" or dreams is quite in accord with the passage just quoted from Hoffmann.

> These "fancies" have in them a pleasurable ecstasy, as far beyond the most pleasurable of the world of wakefulness, or of dreams, as the heaven of the Northman's theology is beyond its hell. I regard the visions, even as they arise, with an awe which, in some measure, moderates or tranquilizes the ecstasy — I so regard them, through a conviction (which seems a portion of the ecstasy itself) that this ecstasy, in itself, is of a character supernal to the human nature — is a glimpse of the spirit's outer world.

---

[27] Harrison; Vol. XVI, page 89.

Digitized by Google

Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

CHAPTER VI

HOFFMANN'S *Die Jesuiterkirche in G . . .* AND POE'S *The Oval Portrait.*

A traveler detained on his journey, rests for a period by the way. In the place of his temporary sojourn the traveler's attention is called to a painting, a work of startling genius, singular for its quality of lifelikeness. The traveler's interest in both the picture and the artist is keenly aroused and he succeeds in learning the history of both. The face of the woman which is portrayed on the canvas is that of the artist's wife. The story is of the painter who falls in love with his model, in this case the ideal which inspires him to production. Having won and possessed her, his wife falls a victim to the selfishness of his former mistress,—Art,—and dies, her life the price of her husband's success.

These are the motives which form the skeleton of Poe's story, *The Oval Portrait*, and Hoffmann's *Die Jesuiterkirche in G . . .* The incidents thus recounted appear in both stories identically. But Poe relates a short story, solely for the telling, and to produce a certain effect. Hoffmann tells a long tale with the same central incidents, but embellished with infinitely more details. He satisfies his zest for the narrative for its own sake, and in addition provides himself with a vehicle for the expounding of his general theories of art. Poe's tale comprises scarcely a half dozen pages, and the personages of the story are two in number. The action proceeds rapidly, and reaches a climax which is quite in keeping with the author's oft-defined standard of excellence for the short story; namely, the producing of a desired effect. Hoffmann's story introduces a number of characters, gives a variety of description and incident not necessary to the development of the action, and sets forth at some length its author's opinions on the subject of art.

Digitized by Google

Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

The theme of both stories is the selfishness of art, and both authors have used exactly the same incidents to serve their purpose. With Poe, the telling of his story is the first object, the illustration of his theory a secondary consideration. Hoffmann's story, on the contrary, is so thoroughly infused with his ideas on the subject of art as to make its tone seem at times almost didactic.

Poe adopts Hoffmann's device for the introduction of his story, varying from the German only in the setting. Hoffmann's story begins in the first person. A traveler tells of an accident to his traveling carriage which necessitated a stop of several days, for repairs, in a small village, apparently in South Germany. The traveler naturally casts about him for ways and means of entertaining himself during his enforced stay at the small country inn. He bethinks himself of a certain Professor in a Jesuit College located in the town, a man known to him by reputation. Claiming the right of his acquaintance by virtue of common friends, the traveler seeks out the Professor, and the latter, among other things, shows him the College and the neighboring Jesuit Church. It is during their passage through the church that we catch a first glimpse of the artist whose life story comprises the tale.

> Dem Hochaltare links war ein hohes Gerüste errichtet, auf dem ein Mann stand, der die Wände in Giallo antik übermalte . . . Der Maler wandte sich nach uns um; aber gleich fuhr er wieder fort zu arbeiten, indem er mit dumpfer beinahe unvernehmbarer Stimme sprach: "Viel Plage—krummes verworrenes Zeug—Kein Lineal zu brauchen—Tiere—Affen—Menschengesichter—O ich elender Thor!" Das letzte rief er laut mit einer Stimme, die nur der tiefste im Innersten wühlende Schmerz erzeugt; ich fühlte mich auf die seltsamste Weise aufgeregt, jene Worte und der Ausdruck des Gesichts, der Blick, womit er zuvor den Professor anschaute, brachten mir das ganze zerrissene Leben eines unglücklichen Künstlers vor Augen.[1]

[1] Grisebach, Vol. III, page 90.

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Thus, in his very introduction, Hoffmann invests his hero with a mystery. Going through the church, the Professor and the traveler pass a picture which is covered. An explanation follows.

> "Dies Bild," sprach der Professor, "ist das Schönste, was wir besitzen, es ist das Werk eines jungen Künstlers der neueren Zeit—gewiss sein letztes, denn sein Flug ist gehemmt—wir mussten in diesen Tagen das Gemälde aus gewissen Gründen verhängen lassen, doch bin ich vielleicht morgen, oder übermorgen imstande, es Ihnen zu zeigen."

The promise is fulfilled the next day, and the picture is described as follows:

> Die Komposition war wie Raphaels Stil, einfach und himmlisch erhaben! Maria und Elizabeth in einem schönen Garten auf einem Rasen sitzend, vor ihnen die Kinder Johannes und Christus mit Blumen spielend, im Hintergrunde seitwärts eine betende männliche Figur! Marias holdes himmlisches Gesicht, die Hoheit und Frömmigkeit ihrer ganzen Figur erfüllten mich mit Staunen und tiefer Bewunderung. Sie war schön, schöner als je ein Weib auf Erden, aber so wie Raphaels Maria in der Dresdner Gallerie verküundete ihr Blick die höhere Macht der Gottes-Mutter . . . Sprachen die weichen halbgeöffneten Lippen nicht tröstend, wie in holden Engels-Melodien, von der unendlichen Seligkeit des Himmels?

The picture is the work of the artist already introduced, the features of the Virgin are those of his wife, and what follows is the story of their lives.

Poe's introduction has identically this background with a variation of locality and local color. Poe's traveler has been wounded in a fight with bandits in the Apennines. He is carried by his valet into a deserted chateau to rest and recover. The description of the chateau is an excellent example of the richness and variety of Poe's imagery.

Digitized by Google

Original from
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

> Its (the chateau's) decorations were rich, yet tattered and antique. Its walls were hung with tapestry and bedecked with manifold and multiform armorial trophies, together with an unusually great number of very spirited modern paintings in frames of rich golden arabesque. In these paintings which depended from the walls,—not only in their main surfaces, but in very many nooks which the bizarre architecture of the chateau rendered necessary,—in these paintings my incipient delirium perhaps had caused me to take deep interest; so that I bade Pedro to close the heavy shutters of the room—since it was already night—to light the tongues of a tall candelabrum which stood by the head of my bed, and to throw open far and wide the fringed curtains of black velvet which enveloped the bed itself. I wished all this done that I might resign myself, if not to sleep, at least to the contemplation of these pictures, and the perusal of a small volume which had been found under the pillow, and which purported to criticise and describe them.[2]

Having thus read for a time, the traveler changes the position of the candle in order that the light may fall more directly on his book. The result is the discovery of the picture.

> But the action produced an effect altogether unanticipated. The rays of the numerous candles (for there were many) now fell within a niche of the room which had hitherto been thrown into deep shade by one of the bed posts. I thus saw in vivid light a picture all unnoticed before. It was the portrait of a young girl just ripening into womanhood. I glanced at the painting hurriedly, and then closed my eyes. Why I did this was not at first apparent, even to my own perception. But while my lids remained shut, I ran over in my mind my reason for so shutting them. It was an impulsive movement to gain time for thought—to make

---

[2] Harrison, Vol. IV, page 245.

Digitized by Google

Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

sure that my vision had not deceived me—to calm and subdue my fancy for a more sober and more certain gaze. In a very few moments I again looked fixedly at the painting.

That I now saw aright I could not and would not doubt; for the first flashing of the candles upon that canvas had seemed to dissipate the dreamy stupor which was stealing over my senses, and to startle me at once into waking life.

The portrait, I have already said, was that of a young girl. It was a mere head and shoulders, done in what is *technically* called a vignette manner; much in the style of the favorite heads of Sully. The arms, the bosom, and even the ends of the radiant hair, melted imperceptibly into the vague yet deep shadow which formed the background of the whole. The frame was oval, richly gilded and filagreed in Moresque. As a thing of art, nothing could be more admirable than the painting itself. But it could have been neither the execution of the work nor the immortal beauty of the countenance, which had so suddenly and so vehemently moved me. Least of all, could it have been that my fancy, shaken from its half slumber, had mistaken the head for that of a living person. I saw at once that the peculiarities of the design, of the vignetting, and of the frame, must have instantly dispelled such idea —must have prevented even its momentary entertainment. Thinking earnestly upon these points, I remained, for an hour perhaps, with my vision riveted upon that portrait. At length, satisfied with the true secret of its effect, I fell back within the bed. I had found the spell of the picture in its absolute *life-likeness* of expression, which, at first startling, finally confounded, subdued and appalled me. With deep and reverent awe I replaced the candelabrum in its former position.[3]

---

[3] Harrison, Vol. IV, page 246. and following.

Digitized by Google Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

What follows is, in Hoffmann's story, the life history of the artist.

Hoffmann relates the story of his hero from his youth on to the denouement of the tale. The young German artist Berthold journeys to Italy and becomes the pupil of Hackert, under whom he studies landscape painting. In the course of time he grows dissatisfied with his work, but has his confidence in himself and his enthusiasm for art restored to him by an unknown artist. The latter succeeds in dissuading him from the mere copying of nature, and fires him with inspiration for what he conceives to be the true spirit of art. But Berthold can see the figures which he wishes to paint only in dreams. When he attempts to reproduce them on canvas they elude him.

> Ich mühte mich, das, was nur wie dunkle Ahnung tief in meinem Innern lag, wie in jenem Traum hieroglyphisch darzustellen, aber die Züge dieser Hieroglyphenschrift waren menschliche Figuren, die sich in wunderlicher Verschlingung um einen Lichtpunkt bewegten. Dieser Lichtpunkt sollte die herrlichste Gestalt sein, die je eines Bildners Fantasie aufgegangen; aber vergebens strebte ich, wenn sie im Traum von Himmelsstrahlen umflossen mir erschien, ihre Züge zu erfassen.[4]

Finally Berthold discovers the embodiment of his ideal in the person of a Neapolitan princess whom he chances to see in the grounds of her villa near Naples. He recognizes her as the woman of his dream, and henceforth her face appears in all of his pictures.

> Wie von göttlicher Kraft beseelt, zauberte er mit der vollen Glut des Lebens das überirdische Weib, wie es ihm erschienen, hervor. . . . Er wählte mehrenteils heitere Gegenstände christlicher Legenden, aber überall strahlte die wunderherrliche Gestalt seines Ideals hervor. Man fand, das Gesicht und Gestalt der Prinzessin Angiola T. . . . zum Sprechen ähnlich sei[5]

---

[4] Grisebach, Vol. III, page 107.
[5] Grisebach, Vol. III, page 108.

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

She is also the model for the Virgin in the picture already described at the beginning. At the fall of the kingdom of Naples, Berthold chances to rescue the princess, and her family all having perished, she flees with him to Germany, and becomes his wife. As his ideal, she has served as inspiration for all his work, the source of his joy in all his achievement. Now, she having become his wife, a new relationship grows up between them. The artist loses interest in his work as well as actual ability to paint. His wife, in time, comes to embitter all of his pleasure in his work, even to be actively a hindrance to him. It is at this point that he conceives the plan for the picture in the Jesuit Church.

> Der einfache Gedanke, Maria und Elisabeth in einem schönen Garten auf einem Rasen sitzend, die Kinder Christus und Johannes vor ihnen im Grase spielend, sollte der ganze Vorwurf des Bildes sein, aber vergebens war alles Ringen nach einer reinen geistigen Anschauung des Gemäldes. So wie in jener unglücklichen Zeit der Krisis, verschwammen ihm die Gestalten, und nicht die himmlische Maria, nein, ein irdisches Weib, ach, seine Angiola selbst stand auf greuliche Weise verzerrt, vor seines Geistes Augen. . . . Aber seine Kraft war gebrochen, all sein Bemühen, so wie damals, nur die ohnmächtige Anstrengung des unverständigen Kindes. Starr und leblos blieb, was er malte, und selbst Angiola — Angiola, sein Ideal, wurde, wenn sie ihm sass und er sie malen wollte, auf der Leinwand zum toten Wachsbilde, das ihn mit gläsernen Augen anstierte.[6]

His disappointment and anger is vented on his wife.

> Nein — sie war nicht das Ideal, das mir erschien, nur mir zum rettungslosen Verderben hatte sie trügerisch jenes Himmelsweibes Gestalt und Gesicht geborgt. In wilder Verzweiflung fluchte ich ihr und dem unschuldigen Kinde. Ich wünschte beider Tod, damit ich

---

[6] Grisebach, Vol. III, page 111.

Digitized by Google Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

erlöst werden möge von der unerträglichen Qual, die wie mit glühenden Messern in mir wühlte. Gedanken der Hölle stiegen in mir auf. Vergebens las ich in Angiolas leichenblassem Gesicht, in ihren Thränen mein rasendes freveliches Beginnen — du hast mich um mein Leben betrogen, verruchtes Weib, brüllte ich auf, und stiess sie mit dem Fusse von mir, wenn sie ohnmächtig niedersank, und meine Knie umfasste.'

Berthold's brutality causes his wife's death, and we are given to understand that not until after her death does he succeed in giving life-likeness to her picture. In other words, the price of the success of the picture is the life of the model.

Berthold erschien bald darauf (after his wife's death) zu N, in Oberschlesien; er hatte sich seines Weibes und Kindes entledigt, und fing voll heitern Mutes an, das Bild zu malen, das er in N. vergebens begonnen hatte.[8]

The major portion of Poe's story is comprised in the introduction and the description of the picture. The story of the artist he professes to take from a book in the chateau.

She was a maiden of rarest beauty, and not more lovely than full of glee. And evil was the hour when she saw, and loved, and wedded the painter. He passionate, studious, austere, and having already a bride in his art; she, a maiden of rarest beauty, and not more lovely than full of glee; all light and smiles, and frolicsome as a young fawn; loving and cherishing all things; hating only the Art which was her rival; dreading only the pallette and the brushes and other untoward instruments which deprived her of the countenance of her lover. It was thus a terrible thing for this lady to hear the painter speak of his desire to portray even his young bride. But she was humble and obedient, and sat meekly for many weeks in the dark high turret-chamber where the light dripped upon the pale canvas

---

[7] Grisebach, Vol. II, page 112.
[8] Grisebach, Vol. III, page 112.

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

only from overhead. But he, the painter, took glory in his work, which went on from hour to hour, and from day to day. And he was a passionate and wild and moody man, who became lost in reveries; so that he *would* not see that the light which fell so ghastly in that lone turret withered the health and the spirits of his bride, who pined visibly to all but him. Yet she smiled on and still on, uncomplainingly, because she saw that the painter (who had high renown) took a fervid and burning pleasure in his task, and wrought day and night to depict her who so loved him, yet who grew daily more dispirited and weak. And in sooth some who beheld the portrait spoke of its resemblance in low words, as of a mighty marvel, and a proof not less of the power of the painter than of his deep love for her whom he depicted so surpassingly well. But at length as the labor drew near to its conclusion, there were admitted none into the turret; for the painter had grown wild with the ardor of his work, and turned his eyes from the canvas rarely, even to regard the countenance of his wife. And he *would* not see that the tints which he spread upon the canvas were drawn from the cheeks of her who sat beside him. And when many weeks had passed, and but little remained to do, save one brush upon the mouth, and one tint upon the eye, the spirit of the lady again flickered up as the flame within the socket of the lamp. And then the brush was given, and then the tint was placed; and for one moment the painter stood entranced before the work which he had wrought; but in the next, while he yet gazed, he grew tremulous and very pallid, and aghast, and crying with a loud voice, "This is *Life indeed!*" turned suddenly to regard his beloved: — *She was dead.*[9]

To Poe belongs the credit of superior dramatic effect. He has adopted Hoffmann's motives and the latter's guiding thought, but the American's story is more closely constructed and more impressive in its climax.

Digitized by Google

Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Hoffmann tells the story of an artist who, having possessed the woman who had served as his artistic inspiration, finds the very possession of her to be fatal to his creative impulse. He regains his lost power at the price of his wife's life. Only after her death is he able to execute his picture of her.

Poe uses the same motives, but with a keener eye for the telling possibilities of the story, he establishes a relation of cause and effect between the successful completion of the painting and the death of the woman. The artist paints the life of his wife into the canvas. It is this life-likeness of the picture which makes it startling.

The theme of both stories is the jealousy of Art as a mistress.

Digitized by Google

Original from
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

CHAPTER VII

HOFFMANN'S *Doge und Dogaressa* AND POE'S *The Assignation*

The resemblances between Hoffmann's story, *Doge und Dogaressa*, and Poe's *The Assignation*, have been cited in support of Poe's debt to the earlier author by most of the critics who have argued in favor of such a debt. Stedman, in the introduction to the Woodberry-Stedman edition of Poe, remarks relative to the two tales:[1]

> *The Assignation* derives from Hoffmann's *Doge und Dogaressa*, and the tableau with the Marchesa is a radiantly poetic variation upon the balcony scene in the earlier tale.

In Lauvrière's Life of Poe,[2] the same suggestion occurs.

> On a bien dit que la chute de la Maison Usher, la scène du balcon dans *L'assignation*, et le *Portrait Ovale* devraient beaucoup au *Majorat*, au *Doge et Dogaressa*, etc.

The story of the Venetian Doge, Marino Faliero, (1354), forms the historical setting for Hoffmann's tale. The first suggestion for his work came, as he himself tells us in the beginning of the story, from a picture which he saw at an exhibition in Berlin in 1816. The picture portrays an old Doge standing with his young and beautiful Dogaressa at his side, with a panorama of Venice as a backgrouud. A discussion among a group of friends as to whether the picture was intended to portray a historical event, or whether the subject was simply an invention of the artist, calls forth the story of old Faliero and his youthful bride, Annunziata.

Hoffmann introduces his story with a somewhat extended extract from Venetian history, having to do with the causes

---

[1] Page 96.
[2] Page 595.

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

which led up to and resulted in the calling to the ducal throne of the old warrior, Faliero. This is an element of the story which may be here disregarded. The old Doge is described as a gray-headed octogenarian, but a man still possessed of great strength of body, acuteness of mind, and decision of action. At his first entry into Venice, after his election, his life is endangered by a storm which threatens for a time to engulf his barque. He is saved and landed at St. Mark's by a common gondolier. The latter, the hero of the story, has already been introduced by Hoffmann as follows:

> Gerade in dem Augenblick, als nämlich Marino Falieri[3] den Bucentoro zu besteigen im Begriff stand, und das war am dritten Oktober abends, da schon die Sonne zu sinken begann, lag vor den Säulen der Dogana, auf dem harten Marmorpflaster ausgestreckt, ein armer. unglücklicher Mensch. Einige Lumpen gestreifter Leinwand, deren Farbe nicht mehr kenntlich und die sonst einem Schifferkleide, wie das gemeinste Volk der Lastträger und Ruderknechte es trägt, angehört zu haben schienen, hingen um den abgemagerten Körper. Vom Hemde war nichts mehr zu sehen, als die eigne Haut des Armen, die überall durchblickte, aber so weiss und zart war, dass sie der Edelsten einer ohne Scheu und Scham hätte tragen können. So zeigte auch die Magerkeit nur desto besser das reinste Ebenmass der wohlgebauten Glieder und betrachtete man nun vollends die hell kastanienbraunen Locken, die zerzaust und verworren die schönste Stirn umschatteten, die blauen nur von trostlosem Elend verdüsterten Augen, die Adlernase, den fein geformten Mund des Unglücklichen, der höchstens zwanzig Jahre zu zählen schien, so war es gewiss, dass irgend ein feindseliges Schicksal den Fremdling von guter Geburt in die unterste Klasse des Volks geschleudert haben musste.[4]

---

[3] Hoffmann spells the name with a final *i* instead of *o*.

[4] Grisebach; Vol. VII, page 105.

Digitized by Google

Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Hoffmann thus suggests that his hero does not belong by birth in the class of society in which we find him.

The next step in the development of the story makes the reader the witness of a scene between the newly chosen Doge and one Bodoeri, the latter a Venetian noble and a member of the Council of Ten. Bodoeri, in the furtherance of his political ambition, wishes to marry his niece, a young girl of eighteen, to the old Doge. Bodoeri so skilfully depicts the charms of the young girl to the old warrior that the latter is soon obsessed with the idea, and the marriage is arranged.

In the meantime, the story of the Doge's rescuer, the latter now occupying another position in life by means of the gold which he has received as reward, is continued. Young Antonio learns from his former nurse the story of his German parentage, an attack of the plague having obliterated entirely the memory of his childhood and youth. To the days of this childhood and youth belongs a love affair with Annunziata, Bodoeri's niece, and now the young Dogaressa. The sight of her bridges the gulf between him and his past, awakens within him all the recollections of his childhood, and arouses with renewed ardor his love for the sweetheart of his childhood, now old Faliero's wife. The love of the young Antonio for the old Doge's young wife is the key to the tragic culmination of the tale. What follows is the story of Antonio's intrigue to gain an interview with Annunziata. In order to be near her, he bribes the old Doge's gondolier, and serves himself as a gondolier. Also by means of a bribe he succeeds in taking the place of the man who, on "Giovedi grasso," according to the old Venetian custom, descends by means of cords and pulleys from the top of St. Mark's to the balcony of the Doge (erected in the square), and presents a bouquet to the Dogaressa. Finally, by means of an intrigue which is aided and abetted by his old nurse, Antonio gains admittance to the Ducal Palace. Instead of keeping tryst with his mistress, however, Antonio becomes involved in a revolution which he finds brewing, the purpose of which is to overthrow old Faliero. Later, in the consequent uproar

Digitized by Google

Original from
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

and confusion, he escapes with Annunziata. The pair of lovers, together with the old nurse, find death in a storm at sea while they are making their escape.

> Wie ein fröhlicher Liebesbote tanzte der helle Mondesschimmer auf den Wellen vor ihnen her. Sie waren auf hoher See. Da begann es seltsam zu pfeifen und zu sausen in hoher Luft—finstere Schatten kamen gezogen und hingen sich wie dunkle Schleier über das leuchtende Antlitz des Mondes. Der tanzende Schimmer, der fröhliche Liebesbote sank herab in die schwarze Tiefe voll dumpfer Donner. Der Sturm erhob sich und jagte die düstern zusammen geballten Wolken mit zornigem Toben vor sich her. Hoch auf und nieder flog die Barke. "O hilf, o Herr des Himmels!" schrie die Alte. Antonio, des Ruders nicht mehr mächtig, umschlang die holde Annunziata, die, von seinen glühenden Küssen erweckt, ihn mit der Inbrunst der seligsten Liebe an ihren Busen drückte. "O mein Antonio!" "O meine Annunziata!" So riefen sie des Sturmes nicht achtend, der immer entsetzlicher tobte und brauste. Da streckte das Meer, die eifersüchtige Witwe des enthaupteten Falieri, die schäumenden Wellen wie Riesenarme empor, erfasste die Liebenden und riss sie samt der Alten hinab in den bodenlosen Abgrund![5]

Poe, as is often the case, writes his story to produce an effect. In the achievement of this purpose, only the points most salient to the story are touched upon. The number of characters is also reduced to three. Hoffmann gives us the story of the old Doge, his young wife, and the latter's lover, Antonio, the whole interwoven with a chapter of Venetian history, and provided with a number of characters more or less sharply and clearly drawn. The tale is carefully constructed and, so far as technique is concerned, is worked out on a somewhat elaborate scale. Poe presents the same story in the same setting. We have again the old Doge, his young

---

[5] Grisebach, Vol. VII, page 144.

Digitized by Google

Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

wife, the latter's lover, and the tragic death of the last two at the climax. But Poe's method of execution is quite different. He omits all introductory facts of history, disregards entirely characterization, and reduces the number of characters to three. The technique is of the simplest. The story is presented in two pictures, the first of which is strikingly similar to the corresponding scene in Hoffmann's story.

Hoffmann's story opens with a description of the picture, painted by Kolbe and exhibited in Berlin in 1816, which inspires his story:

> Mit diesem Namen war in dem Katalog der Kunstwerke, die die Akademie der Künste zu Berlin im September, 1816, ausstellte, ein Bild bezeichnet, das der wackre tüchtige C. Kolbe, Mitglied der Akademie, gemalt hatte und das mit besonderm Zauber jeden anzog, so dass der Platz davor selten leer blieb. Ein Doge in reichen prächtigen Kleidern schreitet, die ebenso reich gesmückte Dogaressa an der Seite, auf einer Balustrade hervor, er ein Greis mit grauem Bart, sonderbar gemischte Züge, die bald auf Kraft, bald auf Schwäche, bald auf Stolz und Übermut, bald auf Gutmütigkeit deuteten, im braunroten Gesicht; sie ein junges Weib, sehnsüchtige Trauer, träumerisches Verlangen im Blick, in der ganzen Haltung. Hinter ihnen eine ältliche Frau und ein Mann, der einen aufgespannten Sonnenschirm hält. Seitwärts an der Balustrade stösst ein junger Mensch in ein muschelförmig gewundenes Horn und vor derselben im Meer liegt eine reich verzierte mit der venetianischen Flagge geschmückte Gondel, auf der zwei Ruderer befindlich. Im Hintergrunde breitet sich das mit hundert und aber hundert Segeln bedeckte Meer aus, und man erblickt die Türme und Paläste des prächtigen Venedig, das aus den Fluten emporsteigt. Links unterscheidet man San Marco, rechts mehr im Vorgrunde San Giorgio Maggiore.[6]

[6] Grisebach, Vol. VII, page 101.

Digitized by Google Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Poe, with a masterful stroke and with a half dozen sentences, conjures up the mystery and romance of Venice, and in this setting paints a picture which is strikingly like the one just quoted from Hoffmann:[7]

> **Yet I remember—ah! how should I forget?—the deep midnight, the Bridge of Sighs, the beauty of woman, and the Genius of Romance, that stalked up and down the narrow canal.**
>
> **It was a night of unusual gloom. The great clock of the Piazza had sounded the fifth hour of the Italian evening. The Square of the Campanile lay silent and deserted, and the lights of the old Ducal Palace were dying fast away. I was returning home from the Piazetta by way of the Grand Canal. But as my gondola arrived opposite the mouth of the Canal San Marco, a female voice from its recesses broke suddenly upon the night in one wild, hysterical and long-continued shriek. . . . Like some huge and sabled feathered condor, we were slowly drifting down towards the Bridge of Sighs, when a thousand flambeaux flashing from the windows and down the staircase of the Ducal Palace, turned all at once that deep gloom into a livid and preternatural day.**
>
> **A child, slipping from the arms of its own mother, had fallen from an upper window of the lofty structure into the deep and dim canal. The quiet waters had closed placidly over their victim; and, although my own gondola was the only one in sight, many a stout swimmer, already in the stream, was seeking in vain upon the surface the treasure which was to be found, alas! only within the abyss. Upon the broad black marble flagstones at the entrance of the palace, and a few steps above the water, stood a figure which none who then saw can have ever since forgotten. It was the Marchesa Aphrodite—the adoration of all Venice—the**

---

[7] Harrison, Vol. II, page 110.

Digitized by Google

Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

gayest of the gay—the most lovely where all were beautiful—but still the young wife of the old and intriguing Mentoni, and the mother of that fair child, her first and only one, who now, deep beneath the murky water, was thinking in bitterness of heart upon her sweet caresses, and exhausting its little life in struggles to call upon her name.

She stood alone. Her small, bare and silvery feet gleamed in the black marble beneath her. Her hair, not as yet more than half loosened for the night from its ball-room array, clustered amid a shower of diamonds round and round her classical head, in curls like those of the young hyacinth. A snowy-white and gauzelike drapery seemed to be nearly the sole covering to her delicate form; but the midsummer and midnight air was hot, sullen and still, and no motion in the statue-like form itself stirred even the folds of that raiment of very vapour which hung around it as the heavy marble hangs around the Niobe. Yet, strange to say, her large lustrous eyes were not turned downwards upon that grave wherein her brightest hope lay buried—but riveted in a widely different direction. The prison of the Old Republic is, I think, the stateliest building in all Venice; but how could that lady gaze so fixedly upon it, when beneath her lay stifling her own child? . . .

Many steps above the Marchesa, and within the arch of the water-gate, stood, in full dress, the satyr-like figure of Mentoni himself. He was occasionally occupied in thrumming a guitar, and seemed ennuyé to the very death, as at intervals he gave directions for the recovery of the child . . .

Poe's use of the motive of the drowning child is a device for the introduction of the hero:

All efforts proved in vain. Many of the most energetic in the search were relaxing their exertions, and yielding to a gloomy sorrow. There seemed but little hope

Digitized by Google Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

> for the child (how much less then for the mother!), but now, from the interior of that dark niche which has already been mentioned as forming a part of the Old Republican prison, and as fronting the lattice of the Marchesa, a figure muffled in a cloak stepped out within reach of the light, and pausing a moment upon the verge of the giddy descent, plunged headlong into the canal. As in an instant afterwards he stood with the still living and breathing child within his grasp upon the marble flagstones by the side of the Marchesa, his cloak heavy with the drenching water became unfastened, and, falling in folds about his feet, discovered to the wondering spectators the graceful person of a very young man, with the sound of whose name the greater part of Europe was then ringing.[8]

Poe mentions the singular lack of emotion displayed by the mother at the rescue of her child, and comments upon the fact that she blushes as she receives the child from the hands of its deliverer. The relationship between the Marchesa and the rescuer of her child is then suggested in the following paragraph:

> Why *should* the lady blush? To this demand there is no answer — except, having left in the eager haste and terror of a mother's heart, the privacy of her own boudoir, she has neglecled to throw over her Venetian shoulders that drapery which is their due. What other possible reason could there have been for her so blushing? for the glance of those wild appealing eyes? for the unusual tumult of that throbbing bosom? for the the convulsive pressure of that trembling hand? that hand which fell, as Mentoni turned into the palace, accidentally, upon the hand of the stranger. What reason could there have been for the low, the singularly low tone of those unmeaning words which the lady uttered hurriedly in bidding him adieu? "Thou hast

---

[8] Harrison, Vol. II, page 112.

Digitized by Google

Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

> conquered," she said, or the murmur of the waters deceived me; "thou hast conquered — one hour after sunrise — we shall meet — so let it be."

This is the "Assignation," and this picture of the old Mentoni and his young wife forms the first part of Poe's story.

The second part describes a visit to the palazzo of the stranger, early in the morning of the next day. It is largely a typical Poe description, the gorgeous description of the gorgeous apartments of the stranger, the rescuer of the previous evening. This description of the "princely magnificence" of the Venetian palazzo belongs to Poe's best descriptive work, and is evidently entirely the product of his fertile imagination. Among the paintings described is a portrait of the Marchesa di Mentoni:

> Human art could have done no more in the delineation of her superhuman beauty. The same ethereal figure which stood before me the preceding night upon the steps of the Ducal Palace, stood before me once again. But in the expression of the countenance, which was beaming all over with smiles, there still lurked (incomprehensible!) that fitful strain of melancholy which will ever be found inseparable from the perfection of the beautiful. Her right arm lay folded over her bosom. With her left she pointed downward to a curiously fashioned vase. One small fairy foot, alone visible, barely touched the earth; and scarcely discernible in the brilliant atmosphere which seemed to encircle and enshrine her loveliness, floated a pair of most delicately imagined wings.[9]

An hour after sunrise, the two men pledge each other in goblets of wine, and the stranger quotes these lines:

> Stay for me there! I will not fail
> To meet thee in that hollow vale——

He throws himself upon an ottoman, confessing the power of the wine. At this moment an interruption occurs:

---

[9] Harrison, Vol. II, page 122.

Digitized by Google Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

> A quick step was now heard upon the staircase and a loud knock at the door rapidly succeeded. I was hastening to anticipate a second disturbance, when a page of Mentoni's household burst into the room, and faltered out, in a voice choking with emotion, the incoherent words, "My mistress!—my mistress—poisoned—poisoned——," etc.
>
> Bewildered, I flew to the ottoman, and endeavored to arouse the sleeper to a sense of the startling intelligence. But his limbs were rigid in *death*. I staggered back towards the table — my hand fell upon a cracked and blackened goblet — and a consciousness of the entire and terrible truth flashed suddenly upon my soul."

The lovers have kept their tryst. They poison themselves simultaneously, and this is the "Assignation."

Hoffmann's denouement is certainly more in harmony with the setting of his story. He makes copious use of the Venetian legends of the sea, and in the end it is the sea that claims the lovers as its victims.

The Venetian setting, the story of the old Venetian noble and his young wife, the latter's lover, and the tragic death of the two lovers. These are elements for the suggestion of which Poe is indebted to Hoffmann. In the development of his story he departs radically, both as to method and incident, from his model. It is in the picture of the young and beautiful Marchesa and her gray-headed husband, as they appear in the opening pages of Poe's story, that one recognizes most readily their prototypes from Hoffmann's tale, namely, the old Doge Falieri, his young and beautiful wife, Annunziata, and the latter's lover, Antonio. [11]

---

[10] Harrison, Vol. II, page 124.

[11] This same story has been made the subject of a tragedy by Byron and by Casimir Delavigne. Cf. Kaiser, *Ueber Byron's und Delavigne's Marino Falieri*, Schulprogramm Düsseldorf, 1870. Byron and Delavigne make the conspiracy of the old Doge and his tragic end the subject of their dramas. Hoffmann and Poe disregard this element, making the fate of the young Dogaressa and her lover of paramount interest in their stories.

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

CHAPTER VIII

Poe's Stylistic Indebtedness to Hoffmann

Reference has been made to an implication which Prof. Gruener makes in his article in the Publications of the Modern Language Association to the effect that Poe imbibed a certain trick of style from Hoffmann. The statement is as follows:

> Every one conversant with Poe's Tales, who has read them with some attention to their style, has probably noticed one idiosyncrasy of style, which, owing to its frequent occurrence becomes a downright vice. I refer to the peculiar habit of the author in conversational dialogue of beginning a sentence with one or more words, inserting thereupon the word of saying, by itself or with others, and then repeating the opening words before proceeding with the rest of the sentence. E. g., "Thou hast conquered," she said, or the murmurs of the water deceived me — "thou hast conquered."[1]
>
> "What think you," said he, turning abruptly as he spoke — "What think you of this Madonna della Pieta?"[2]
>
> "They have given the signal at last," cried the Pharisee, "they have given the signal at last!"[3]
>
> Such examples might be multiplied by scores. These repetitions take various forms, differing in minor details, which may be classified in three types for the sake of convenience.
>
> The first type is the one of which examples have just been given, i. e., with some expression of saying inter-

---

[1] Harrison, Vol. II, page 114. *The Assignation.*
[2] Harrison, Vol. II, page 118. *The Assignation.*
[3] Harrison, Vol. II, page 218. *Tale of Jerusalem.*

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

vening between the opening words and their repetition. The second type is that in which a statement is made and followed by a parenthetical explanation or interruption, whereupon the first words are repeated with "I say!" E. g., "Do you know, however," continued he musingly, "that at Sparta (which is now Palaeschori), at Sparta, I say, to the west of the citadel," etc.[4]

There is a sub-class of this type in which the phrase "I say" is omitted. As, "The person of the stranger —let me call him by this title, who to all the world was still a stranger — the person of the stranger is one of these subjects," etc.[5]

The third type is a mere repetition with or without any parenthetical phrase, but with a change to strengthen the opening statement. E. g., "Very well! — very well, sir! Very well indeed, sir!" said his Majesty, etc.[6] "See! See!" cried he, shrieking in my ears, "Almighty God! See! See!"

Prof. Gruener cites many examples of these types of repetition from Poe's works and observes further that they "can be accounted for only as a habit, a trick of style, which, as far as I have been able to recall or learn by inquiry, is peculiar to Poe, at least among English writers." In a foot-note he states that he has applied to Professors Lounsbury, Beers and Cross, who "were unable to recall any other English writer who shows this peculiarity to anywhere near such an extent, if at all.

Prof. Grűener then calls attention to the fact that examples of such repetition abound in the works of Hoffmann. He quotes a correspondingly large number of examples from the latter's tales. After examining the facts, he reaches the following conclusion:

---

4 *The Assignation.* Vol. II, page 117.
5 *The Assignation.* Vol. II, page 114.
6 *Bon Bon.* Vol. II, page 140.
7 *M. S. Found in a Bottle.*

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Hence there can only be one inference from these facts; Hoffmann grew into the peculiarity, Poe grew out of it; with Hoffmann it was natural, self-developed, with Poe something extraneous, acquired, but thrown off as he grew more and more independent in style and in method. So much seems established beyond a reasonable doubt. But, if this peculiar habit was acquired, if it was an imitation, there is only one writer Poe could have learned it from, and that was Hoffmann, from whom he seems to have obtained so many suggestions for his tales, particularly the earlier ones.

Is the statement that this peculiarity of style is not common to any other English writers accurate? Is there anything so singular in this trick of style that its repeated use by any author would constitute a distinguishing characteristic of the style of the author in question? If it can be shown that an indefinite number of examples of this form of repetition can be found in the works of other English authors, and such authors as Poe must have been well acquainted with, is it not seeking too far afield to make him the debtor of Hoffmann for this stylistic characteristic? As a matter of fact, the peculiarity in question seems to be a tolerably common rhetorical device, used by various authors in greater or less degree, as an aid to clearness.

Among English writers, with whose work Poe must have been familiar, such repetitions are particularly common in the weird novels of terror by Mrs. Ann Radcliff. Among American writers, both Hawthorne and Cooper make copious use of the same device.

Following are a few examples from Mrs. Radcliff's *Mysteries of Udolpho*[8], taken from a cursory survey of the first one hundred and thirty pages.

"You are worse then, sir!" said Emily, extremely alarmed by his manner; "you are worse, and here is no assistance." (Page 31.)

"I feel," said he at length, "I feel how insufficient all

---

8 *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, by Mrs. Ann Radcliff, London, 1824.

Digitized by Google Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

attempt at consolation must be on this subject." (Page 49.)

"His hand deposited them here," said she, as she kissed some pieces of the coin, and wetted them with her tears — "his hand which is now dust." (Page 51.)

"Ah, I see," said Valancourt, after a long pause, during which Emily had begun and left unfinished two or three sentences — "I see that I have nothing to hope." (Page 52.)

"So, niece," said Madame Cheron, casting a look of surprise and inquiry on Valancourt — "so, niece! how do you do?" (Page 54.)

"Emily," said Valancourt at length, as he pressed her hand in his, "Emily! — " and he was again silent. (Page 75.)

"I had hoped, sir, that it was no longer necessary for me to disclaim it," said Emily; "I had hoped from your silence," etc. (Page 102.)

"But this morning," continued Annette, lowering her voice and looking around the room, "this morning as it was broad daylight," etc. (Page 124.)

"Nay, prythee, good Annette, stay not talking," said Emily in a voice of agony — "go, prythee, go, and see what it is." (Page 125.)

Nobody, I believe, ma'am," replied Annette, "nobody has been with her," etc. (Page 128.)

"Hear me, Emily," resumed Morano, "Hear me! I love, and am in despair — yes — in despair." (Page 128.)

The same sorts of repetition are to be found in the *Italian*[9] by the same author.

"Stop! for heaven's sake stop!" said Bonarmo. (Page 26.)

"Tell me, I conjure you, instantly tell me," etc. (Page 37.)

"Three weeks ago, say you! you said three weeks, I think?" (Page 58.)

"Yet I will not suppose, Signor, I say I will not suppose," raising his voice significantly, "that you have dared," etc. (Page 63.)

"I understand," said the abbess, on whose appearance the alarmed Ellena had arisen, "I understand," said she, without

---

[9] *The Italian*, Mrs. Ann Radcliff. Londony: 1826.

Digitized by Google

Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

making any further signal for her to be seated, "that you are the young person," etc. (Page 83.)

"Avaunt," cried he, in a tremendous voice, "Avaunt! sacrilegious boy!" (Page 129.)

To a less degree the same device is found in Horace Walpole's *Castle of Otranto*.[10]

"I sent for you, lady," said he, and then stopped under great appearance of confusion. "My Lord! Yes, I sent for you on a matter of great moment," resumed he. (Page 72.)

"Theodore!" said Manfred, mournfully, and striking his forehead; "Theodore, or a phantom, he has unhinged the soul of Manfred." (Page 168.)

"Thou art no lawful prince," said Jerome, "thou art no prince;" (Page 191.)

"Forgive him, dearest mother — forgive him my death." (Page 215.)

From Hawthorne such quotations could be multiplied indefinitely.[11] A few will suffice.

"Thou knowest," said Hester, for depressed as she was, she could not endure this last quiet stab at the token of her shame — "thou knowest that I was frank with thee." (Page 97.)[12]

"Where," asked he, with a look askance at them — for it was the clergyman's peculiarity that he seldom, nowadays, looked straight forth at any object, whether human or inanimate — "Where, my kind Doctor," etc. (Page 160.)

"Thus, a sickness," continued Roger Chillingsworth, going on in an unaltered tone without heeding the interruption — but standing up and confronting the emaciated and white-cheeked minister, with his low, dark and misshaped figure — "a sickness, a sore place," etc. (Page 166.)

The following examples are from the *House of Seven Gables*.

---

[10] Philadelphia: 1826.
[11] The Riverside Edition of Hawthorne's Works.
[12] *The Scarlet Letter*.

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

"Strange! forsooth! very strange!" cried the lieutenant. (Page 21.)

"Poor business!" responded Dixey, in a tone as if he were shaking his head, — "poor business!" (Page 59.)

"Well, child," said she, taking heart at sight of a person so little formidable, "well, my child, what did you wish for?" (Page 61.)

"For what end," thought she, giving vent to that feeling of hostility which is the only real abasement of the poor in the presence of the rich, — "for what good end, in the wisdom of Providence, does that woman live?" (Page 67.)

"Take it as you like, Cousin Jaffrey!" muttered the maiden lady, as she drew back, after cautiously thrusting out her head, and looking up and down the street — "take it as you like!" (Page 71.)

"So you have really begun trade," said he — "really begun trade." (Page 75.)

"Ah! but these hens," answered the young man, — "these hens of aristocratic lineage would scorn to understand the vulgar language of a barn-yard fowl." (Page 107.)

"There is nothing but love here, Clifford," she added, "nothing but love!" (Page 125.)

"I like that, Cousin Phoebe!" cried he, with an emphatic nod of approbation. "I like it much, my little cousin!" (Page 139.)

The following examples are from *Mosses from an Old Manse.*

"Nay, pluck it," answered Aylmer, — "pluck it, and inhale its brief perfume while you may." (The Birthmark, page 52.)

"Carefully now, Aminidab; carefully, thou human machine; carefully, thou man of clay." (The Birthmark, page 63.)

"It is nonsense," murmured the Oldest Inhabitant, who, as a man of the past, felt jealous that all notice should be withdrawn from himself to be lavished in the future, — 'sheer nonsense to waste," etc. (A Select Party, page 76.)

"O, how stubbornly does love, — or even that cunning semblance of love which flourishes in the imagination, but

Digitized by Google Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

strikes no depth of root into the heart, — how stubbornly does it hold its faith," etc. (Rappacini's Daughter, page 125.)

"Dear Beatrice," said he, approaching her, while she shrank away as always at his approach, but now with a different impulse, — "dearest Beatrice, our fate is not yet so desperate," etc. (Rappacini's Daughter, page 137.)

"Madam," said I holding the newspaper before Mrs. Bullfrog's eyes, — and, though a small, delicate, and thin-visaged man, I feel assured that I looked very terrific, — "Madam," repeated I, through my shut teeth," etc. (Mrs. Bullfrog, page 47.)

The following examples are from *Blithedale Romance*:

"And bellowing, I suppose," said I, — not that I felt any ill-will towards Fourier, but merely wanted to give the finishing touch to Hollingsworth's image — "bellowing for the last drop of his beloved *lemonade.*" (Page 391.)

"I cannot conceive," observed Zenobia, with great emphasis — and, no doubt, she spoke fairly the feeling of the moment, "I cannot conceive of being so continually as Mr. Coverdale is within the sphere," etc. (Page 397.)

"I wish, Mr. Moodie," suggested I — not that I greatly cared about it, however, but was only anxious to draw him into some talk about Priscilla and Zenobia, — "I wish, while we sit over our wine," etc. (Page 325.)

The following examples are from *Twice Told Tales*:

"There," cried Endicott, looking triumphantly on his work, "there lies the only Maypole in New England." (The Maypole of Merry Mount, page 80.)

"To think," ejaculated the Lord de Vere, rather to himself than to his companions, the best of whom he held utterly unworthy of his intercourse — "to think that a fellow in a tattered cloak," etc. (The Great Carbuncle, page 180.)

"Perhaps," slyly remarked the grand-daughter of Colonel Joliffe, whose high spirits had been stung by many taunts against New England,, "perhaps we are to have" etc. (Howe's Masquerade, page 279.)

Digitized by Google

Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

"As yet," cried the stranger, — his cheek glowing and his eye flashing with enthusiasm — "as yet, I have done nothing." (The Ambitious Guest, page 368.)

"The children," said he to himself — and sighed and smiled — "the children are to be my charge." (The Three-fold Destiny, page 536.)

The following are from *Tanglewood Tales*:

"Oh! I am stung!" cried he, "I am stung!" (The Paradise of Children, page 94.)

"Oh, tell us," they exclaimed, — "tell us what it is." (The Paradise of Children, page 100.)

"Go back," cried they all, — "go back to your own home!" (The Three Golden Apples, page 113.)

Many other examples could be adduced from Hawthorne's works. The foregoing will suffice to show that he made a large use of this form of repetition in his dialogue.

In the novels of James Fenimore Cooper the same trick of repetition is to be found on almost every page.

From *The Pathfinder*.[13] Vol. 17.

"More's the pity, boy; more's the pity." (Page 17.)

"You are wrong, — you are wrong, friend Cap; very wrong to distrust the power of God in anything." (Page 20.)

"It's no great secret — no great secret," returned Pathfinder. (Page 22.)

"Call him in," whispered Jasper, scarce able to restrain his impatience; "call him in, or it will be too late." (Page 54.)

"I ask your pardon, Pathfinder," said the repentant Jasper, eagerly grasping the hand that the other permitted him to seize, "I ask your pardon humbly and sincerely." (Page 57.)

"Keep well up the current, Jasper," shouted the gallant guide, as he swept the water with long, steady, vigorous strokes of the paddle; "keep well up the current." (Page 64.)

---

[13] *Mohawk Edition of Cooper's Works*, New York, 1897.

Digitized by Google

Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

"Ay, empty your rifles, like simpletons as you be," said the Pathfinder, who had acquired a habit of speaking when alone, from passing so much of his time in the solitude of the forest; "empty your rifles with an unsteady aim, —" (Page 64.)

"How beautiful!" she exclaimed, unconscious of speaking, as she stood on the solitary bastion facing the air from the lake, and experiencing the genial influence of its freshness pervading both her body and her mind. "How very beautiful!" (Page 112.)

"Can this be so, Sergeant?" said the guide, whose meek and modest nature shrank from viewing himself in colors so favorable. "Can this be truly so?" (Page 135.)

"Walk in, Sergeant, walk in, my good friend," said old Lundie, heartily, as his inferior stood in a respectful attitude at the door of a sort of library and bedroom into which he had been ushered; "walk in, and take a seat on that stool." (Page 142.)

"I protest, Major Duncan, I protest," cried Muir, hurrying back towards the stand, with both arms elevated by way of enforcing his words, — "I protest in the strongest terms," etc. (Page 166.)

From *The Prairie*, Vol. 20.

"Come nigher, we are friends," said the trapper, associating himself with his companion by long use, and probably through the strength of the secret tie that connected them together; "we are friends," etc.

"Mischief," deliberately returned the squatter; but with a cool expression of defiance in his eye, that showed how little he was moved by the ill-concealed humor of his children, "Mischief, boy; mischief!" (Page 100.)

"Come on, friend," he said, waving his hand as he observed the stranger to pause a moment, apparently in doubt, "Come on, I say." (Page 111.)

"Asinus excepted," muttered the Doctor, who by this time was discussing his portion of the hump in utter forgetfulness of all its scientific attributes. "Asinus domesticus Americanus excepted." (Page 115.)

Digitized by Google

Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

"It seems to me," said Dr. Battius, speaking with the sort of deliberation and dignity one is apt to use after having thoroughly ripened his opinions by sufficient reflection, "it seems to me — a man but little skilled in the signs and tokens of Indian warfare, especially as practised in these remote plains, but one who, I may say without vanity, has some insight into the mysteries of nature; — it seems, then to me," etc. (Page 148.)

From *The Pioneers.*

"Lie down, you old villain," exclaimed Leather Stocking, shaking his ramrod at Hector as he bounded towards the foot of the tree, "lie down, I say." (Page 37.)

"Draw up in the quarry — draw up, thou king of the Greeks; draw into the quarry, Agamemnon, or I shall never be able to pass you." (Page 38.)

"Cover thy poll, Gaul, cóver thy poll," cried the driver, who was Mr. Richard Jones; "cover thy poll, or the frost will pluck out the remnant of thy locks," etc. (Page 38.)

"A twelve-pounder!" echoed Benjamin, staring around him with much confidence; "a twelve-pounder!" (Page 73.)

"Reach me the scissors," said Mr. Jones when he had finished, and finished for the second time, after tying the linen in every shape and form that it could be placed; "reach me the scissors, for there is a thread." (Page 83.)

These three novels of Cooper (*The Pathfinder*, *The Prairie*, and *The Pioneers*) were chosen at random. One hundred and seventy-five pages of *The Pathfinder*, one hundred and fifty of *The Prairie* and one hundred of *The Pioneers* were examined and possibly two-thirds of the examples which occur within those pages were cited.

Enough evidence has been adduced to show that the statement that this peculiarity of style is peculiar to Poe among English authors is not accurate. On the contrary, it is to be found abundantly in the works of other authors, and authors with whose work Poe was unquestionably familiar. One may therefore conclude that, unless there is other evidence of Hoffmann's influence in Poe's style, it is not necessary to sup-

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

pose that Poe acquired this stylistic habit from Hoffmann. This other evidence is lacking. A careful reading of the two authors can but lead to the conviction that Poe's acquaintance with Hoffmann was not of so intimate a nature as to have left stylistic traces in the former's work. They both, to be sure, work with the same general romantic material — with the same superlative vocabulary of the weird tale of mystery; but Poe was not so saturated with Hoffmann as to have absorbed from him any of those characteristics of style which were peculiarly his own. The American is indebted to the German for motives and combinations of motives, not for stylistic attributes.

With reference to this form of repetition in Hoffmann's works, it is worthy of note, that he most likely acquired it from Schiller, who made a large use of it in *die Geisterseher*, and to less extent in *die Raüber*. Hoffmann's style was undoubtedly influenced by Schiller."[14]

> Die Einkleidung dieser Ideen (Hoffmann's *Vision auf dem Schlachtfelde zu Dresden*) ist indessen offenbar beinflusst von dem Traum des Franz im fünften Akt der 'Räuber', wie denn überhaupt die Räuber, wahrscheinlich schon seit Hoffmanns Jugendzeit eine nachhaltige Wirkung auf sein Phantasieleben ausgeübt haben; auch in den rollenden Worten der Vision glaubt man einen Nachhall von Schillers Sprache zu vernehmen.

Again:

> Schillers 'Geisterseher' wird zwar in den Briefen nicht erwähnt, aber wir wissen aus späteren Bekentnissen, wie stark das Buch gerade damals auf seine Phantasie gewirkt hat.

This, taken in connection with the fact that in Schiller's *Geisterseher* examples of such repetition are found on every few pages, establishes, at least a probability that Hoffmann's use of this trick of style was acquired from Schiller, and that it was not a thing "natural, self-developed," as suggested by

---

[14] Cf. Ellinger.

Digitized by Google Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Prof. Gruener. Space permits the enumeration of a few examples from the *Geisterseher.*[15]

"Sie haben uns," sagte er, indem er ihm zugleich einige Goldstücke in die Hand drückte, "sie haben uns aus den Händen eines Betrügers gerettet." (Page 254.)

"In der Tat," rief der Prinz mit einer Miene zugleich des Verdrusses und der Verwunderung, indem er mir besonders einen bedeutenden Blick gab, "in der Tat," rief er aus." etc. (Page 260.)

"Ihr Trauring!" rief der Prinz mit Befremdung. "Ihr Trauring!" (Page 277.)

"Das wir unter einander da so glücklich sind," hub endlich der Greis an, der allein unter uns allen den Unbekannten nicht zu bemerken oder sich doch nicht über ihn zu verwundern schien: "Das wir so glücklich sind," sagte er, etc. (Page 280.)

---

[15] v. d. Hellen, Vol. 2.

Digitized by Google

Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, one may sum up the facts relative to the question which this work undertakes to discuss, as follows:

First, from about the year 1825 there was a constantly increasing interest in current German literature in England and America. The expression of this interest is to be observed in the numerous translations from the German, as well as the frequent articles which deal with German literature in the magazines and periodicals of the time.

Secondly, Poe, as a magazine editor and a contributor to the magazines, followed closely English and American periodicals, and therefore must have been affected more or less by this interest. His attention was probably first attracted to Hoffmann by Scott's article in the *Foreign Quarterly Review*, and the interest this article aroused in him led to a closer acquaintance with Hoffmann's works.

Thirdly, Poe possessed the ability to read German, although his reading of Hoffmann was by no means dependent upon this ability, since he might have read him in both English and French translations.

Fourthly, five stories of Poe show the indubitable influence of Hoffmann. These five stories are, in the order of their publication, *The Assignation*, *Southern Literary Messenger*, July, 1835; *Fall of the House of Usher*, *Burton's Gentleman's Magazine*, September 1839; *William Wilson*, *Burton's Gentleman's Magazine*, October, 1839; *The Oval Portrait*, *Graham's Magazine*, April, 1842; and *The Tale of the Ragged Mountains*, *Godey's Lady's Book*, April, 1844. It cannot be claimed that Hoffmann's influence dominated Poe during this whole period, 1835 to 1844. It was rather a question of his "looking about him for such combinations of events or tone",[1] and finding in Hoffmann's works at various times such motives as struck his fancy, or suited his purpose. Above all,

[1] Harrison, Vol. XIV, page 194.

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

it was probably Hoffmann's interest in mesmerism and metempsychosis that attracted Poe's attention. At that period when these subjects were absorbing his interest, he went naturally to Hoffmann's tales, and drew from them in his own work dealing with the same subject.

This interest in mesmerism, metempsychosis, etc., and the expression of this interest in the prose tale was, of course, not confined to Poe and Hoffmann alone. These subjects, as well as other motives used by Poe and Hoffmann, play a part in that tale of terror the principal exponents of which were Mrs. Radcliff, Horace Walpole, and M. G. Lewis. The kinship of Poe's tales to those of Hoffmann is not attested by the fact that the motives in question are peculiar to Poe and Hoffmann. They may be found in other sources both English and German.

The verification of Poe's indebtedness to the German is to be sought in the similarity of the treatment of the same motives in the works of both authors. The most convincing evidence is furnished by the way in which Poe has combined these themes in the exact agreement with the grouping employed by Hoffmann. Notable examples of this are the employment of the idea of the double existence in conjunction with the struggle of the good and evil forces in the soul of the individual, and the combination of mesmerism and metempsychosis as leading motives in one and the same story.

Finally, Hoffmann's influence on Poe did not extend to the latter's style. It was solely a borrowing and adaptation of motives.

Digitized by Google

Original from
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

VITA

I was born near Blackwell, Caswell County, N. C., April 1, 1880. My youth was spent in Danville, Virginia, to which place my parents had removed when I was two years old. I attended various private schools in Danville. My preparation for college was received at the Danville Military Institute. I entered the University of North Carolina in February, 1898, and received the degree of Bachelor of Philosophy in 1901. The following year, 1901-02, I was Instructor in French and German in the same university. 1902-03, I was Scholar in German, Columbia University, New York. From this institution I received the degree of Master of Arts in 1903. During the summer of 1903 I was a student at the University of Jena, Germany. In September 1903, I was appointed Tutor in German in the College of the City of New York, which position I held until June, 1907, except for the academic year 1905-06, during which time I was on leave and a student at the University of Kiel, Germany. In June, 1907, I was appointed Associate Professor of German in the University of North Carolina.

It is a pleasure to acknowledge here my indebtedness to Professor W. H. Carpenter, of Columbia University, Professor Friedrich Kauffmann and Professor Ferdinand Holthausen of the University of Kiel, Germany, for kindly advice and suggestion.

To Professor Calvin Thomas of Columbia University my especial thanks are due for proof reading, valuable criticism, and guidance in the preparation of this dissertation. More especially for that spirit of ready helpfulness and sympathetic interest which characterizes his relationships with those who are privileged to do work under his direction.

Digitized by Google

Original from
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

STUDIES IN PHILOLOGY

PUBLISHED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF
THE PHILOLOGICAL CLUB OF THE UNIVERSITY OF
NORTH CAROLINA

VOL. III

The Influence of E. T. A. Hoffmann on the Tales of Edgar Allan Poe

— BY —

PALMER COBB

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF GERMAN IN THE
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, in the Faculty of Philosophy, Columbia University

CHAPEL HILL
THE UNIVERSITY PRESS
1908

Digitized by Google
Original from
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

STUDIES IN PHILOLOGY

PUBLISHED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF

THE PHILOLOGICAL CLUB OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA

C. ALPHONSO SMITH, EDITOR

Vol. I. Chaucer's Relative Constructions. By Louis Round Wilson.

Vol. II. Studies in the Syntax of the King James Version. By James Moses Grainger.

Vol. III. The Influence of E. T. A. Hoffmann on the Tales of Edgar Allan Poe. By Palmer Cobb.

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Digitized by Google
Original from
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Digitized by Google
Original from
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Digitized by Google

Original from
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Digitized by Google

Original from
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Digitized by Google

Original from
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Digitized by Google

Original from
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Digitized by Google

Original from
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Digitized by Google

Original from
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Digitized by Google

Original from
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

DUE DATE			

13192698
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES
BUTLER STACKS

Digitized by Google
Original from
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Digitized by Google
Original from
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

STUDIES IN PHILOLOGY

PUBLISHED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF

THE PHILOLOGICAL CLUB OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA

cop 2

VOL. III

The Influence of E. T. A. Hoffmann on the Tales of Edgar Allan Poe

— BY —

PALMER COBB

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF GERMAN IN THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, in the Faculty of Philosophy, Columbia University

CHAPEL HILL
THE UNIVERSITY PRESS
1908

Digitized by Google

Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

STUDIES IN PHILOLOGY

PUBLISHED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF

THE PHILOLOGICAL CLUB OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA

cop 2

VOL. III

The Influence of E. T. A. Hoffmann on the Tales of Edgar Allan Poe

— BY —

PALMER COBB

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF GERMAN IN THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, in the Faculty of Philosophy, Columbia University

CHAPEL HILL
THE UNIVERSITY PRESS
1908

Digitized by Google

Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

STUDIES IN PHILOLOGY

PUBLISHED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF

THE PHILOLOGICAL CLUB OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA

cop 2

VOL. III

The Influence of E. T. A. Hoffmann on the Tales of Edgar Allan Poe

— BY —

PALMER COBB

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF GERMAN IN THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, in the Faculty of Philosophy, Columbia University

CHAPEL HILL
THE UNIVERSITY PRESS
1908

Digitized by Google

Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

STUDIES IN PHILOLOGY

PUBLISHED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF

THE PHILOLOGICAL CLUB OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA

cop 2

VOL. III

The Influence of E. T. A. Hoffmann on the Tales of Edgar Allan Poe

— BY —

PALMER COBB

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF GERMAN IN THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, in the Faculty of Philosophy, Columbia University

CHAPEL HILL
THE UNIVERSITY PRESS
1908

Digitized by Google

Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

STUDIES IN PHILOLOGY

PUBLISHED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF

THE PHILOLOGICAL CLUB OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA

cop 2

VOL. III

The Influence of E. T. A. Hoffmann on the Tales of Edgar Allan Poe

— BY —

PALMER COBB

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF GERMAN IN THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, in the Faculty of Philosophy, Columbia University

CHAPEL HILL
THE UNIVERSITY PRESS
1908

Digitized by Google

Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

STUDIES IN PHILOLOGY

PUBLISHED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF

THE PHILOLOGICAL CLUB OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA

cop 2

VOL. III

The Influence of E. T. A. Hoffmann on the Tales of Edgar Allan Poe

— BY —

PALMER COBB

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF GERMAN IN THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, in the Faculty of Philosophy, Columbia University

CHAPEL HILL
THE UNIVERSITY PRESS
1908

Digitized by Google

Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

STUDIES IN PHILOLOGY

PUBLISHED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF

THE PHILOLOGICAL CLUB OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA

cop 2

VOL. III

The Influence of E. T. A. Hoffmann on the Tales of Edgar Allan Poe

— BY —

PALMER COBB

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF GERMAN IN THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, in the Faculty of Philosophy, Columbia University

CHAPEL HILL
THE UNIVERSITY PRESS
1908

Digitized by Google

Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

STUDIES IN PHILOLOGY

PUBLISHED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF

THE PHILOLOGICAL CLUB OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA

cop 2

VOL. III

The Influence of E. T. A. Hoffmann on the Tales of Edgar Allan Poe

— BY —

PALMER COBB

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF GERMAN IN THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, in the Faculty of Philosophy, Columbia University

CHAPEL HILL
THE UNIVERSITY PRESS
1908

Digitized by Google

Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

STUDIES IN PHILOLOGY

PUBLISHED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF

THE PHILOLOGICAL CLUB OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA

cop 2

VOL. III

The Influence of E. T. A. Hoffmann on the Tales of Edgar Allan Poe

— BY —

PALMER COBB

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF GERMAN IN THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, in the Faculty of Philosophy, Columbia University

CHAPEL HILL
THE UNIVERSITY PRESS
1908

Digitized by Google

Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY