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The Techniques of Softening
E.T.A. Hoffmann's Presentation of the Fantastic

William Swann

1971

A Dissertation Presented to the Faculty of the
Graduate School of Yale University
in Candidacy for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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SUMMARY

The study is concerned with the problems of narrating the fantastic. It deals with literary history to the extent that it centers on the practice of one storyteller. However, its point of departure is more general. It asks--and offers answers--to two questions: What are the problems facing any author who tells a story abridging the conventions of everyday reality? What are the ways to meet those problems?

I have attempted to isolate the devices of narrative technique which any author of fiction can call upon to convey fantastic material to a rational public. Since these devices operate to cushion the shock of confronting rationally inexplicable elements in fiction, they are termed the techniques of softening. In my estimate, there are six such principal devices. Three of them operate within a text to assuage the rational reader, three of them operate extra-textually as part of the reader's analysis of the events presented. It seems natural, and indeed necessary, to consider these devices in conjunction with the intensity of the fantastic ultimately established. Presence, possible presence, and absence of the rationally inexplicable appear the only workable and sufficient distinctions. When these distinctions are combined with the six devices into a table, a form of structural analysis becomes possible for any author's fantastic fiction. Thirty-five pieces of Hoffmann's shorter fiction are considered. Substantive discussion is given to Das Fräulein von Scuderi, Ritter Gluck, Die Bergwerke zu Falun, Die Abenteuer der Silvester-Nacht, Das öde Haus, Klein Zaches genannt Zinnober, Ignaz Denner, and Nachricht aus dem Leben eines bekannten Mannes. Walpole's Castle of Otranto, Irving's Bold Dragoon, Chamisso's Peter Schlemihl, and Poe's Masque of the Red Death are also discussed.

There are several results for the analysis of Hoffmann's narrative technique. A "middle realm" in Hoffmann's fantastic narration emerges, a statistical preference for controlling affective response through softening of the fantastic "reality" in his narration. The exact narrative methods for achieving the "middle realm" are illustrated. Consideration is given to the issue of quality, with the argument made that outside the "middle realm" Hoffmann's fantastic fiction fails. Ignaz Denner and Das Fräulein von Scuderi are cited as such failures.

Further, a form of total softening--removal of all fantastic content by means of a narrative frame--was discovered in Ritter Gluck. This would seem to be a structural discovery of some interpretive significance, for it demonstrates a simple and seemingly hesitant narrative technique in an emerging author, a technique which was later refined and articulated into softening integrated with the entire construct of narration.

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"Sudden transformations are introduced of the most extraordinary kind, and wrought by the most inadequate means; no attempt is made to soften their absurdity, or to reconcile their inconsistencies."

--Sir Walter Scott on the narrative technique of E.T.A. Hoffmann and Washington Irving

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INTRODUCTION

This study is concerned with the problems of narrating the fantastic. It deals with literary history to the extent that it centers on the practice of one storyteller. However, its point of departure is more general. It asks--and offers answers--to two questions: What are the problems facing any author who tells a story abridging the conventions of everyday reality? What are the ways to meet those problems?

It is immediately apparent, then, that the study is concerned with procedural considerations. I have found it useful to posit a body of narrative techniques--which I call the techniques of softening--as the raw material of narrative method in fantastic fiction. These techniques are considered in broad perspective, with illustrations drawn from Hoffmann and other authors. My intent in employing non-Hoffmann texts is twofold: to illustrate narrative paths not chosen by Hoffmann, and to demonstrate the usefulness of the posited techniques as a general diagnostic tool. The core of the study, of course, concerns Hoffmann's own application of the techniques.

Why the term "softening"? Quite simply, the techniques isolated in this study are those which operate to cushion a reader's shock in confronting the irrational.

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This cushion of narrative devices "softens," as we will see, the apprehension of contravened normality.

In this study the techniques of softening are predominantly seen in the practice of one author, Hoffmann. It should be borne in mind, however, that they are structural responses to the general problem of conveying rationally inexplicable content to rational readers. In the examination of Hoffmann's shorter fiction which follows, it is hoped that the techniques will emerge as an analytical tool for all fantastic fiction.

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CHAPTER I

1. Scott

One of the most colorful pieces of criticism ever to appear on E.T.A. Hoffmann was written by Sir Walter Scott for the Foreign Quarterly Review of 1827.[1] It was an essay strongly negative in tone, combining biography and literary criticism. Scott undertook to make Hoffmann, who had died five years earlier, better known to English readers and to explain how the taste of this gifted man could have been "so strangely misled."[2]

The 1827 essay is not only a landmark in Hoffmann criticism but, as we will see, particularly germane to the issue of "softening." If yet another reason should be adduced for beginning our consideration of Hoffmann with Scott's treatment of him, it would be Scott himself, an author who demonstrates in his own narrative practice a keen awareness of the interplay between structure and the reader's perception, an author whose rendering of verity in historical novels is as consciously and, perhaps, as complexly structured as Hoffmann's rendering of verity in fantastic narration.

Scott tells us that Hoffmann's imagination was "ill-regulated, and had an undue tendency to the horrible and distressing,"[3] and that his life "could not be a

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happy one" with such a "mental malady."[4] In the elaboration of this theme which dominates the essay, Scott places few restraints upon his dissatisfaction with Hoffmann's narrative expression. Noting that "the inspirations of Hoffmann so often resemble the ideas produced by the immoderate use of opium, that we cannot help considering his case as one requiring the assistance of medicine rather than of criticism,"[5] a tone of condescension appears which, mingled effectively with outrage, produces a ringing dismissal of Hoffmann for English readers. Yet in the following year, 1828, Balzac's publishing house brought out a number of Hoffmann stories in French translation, beginning a Hoffmann "boom" in France.[6] It would seem that the time for the fantastic had passed in England--the first Gothic novel, Horace Walpole's The Castle of Otranto, had, after all, appeared there in 1764--whereas the literary vogue was yet to peak in France.

The tone of condescension continues, betraying genuine distress over the presumed waste of Hoffmann's abilities: "While we acknowledge that with a steadier command of his imagination he might have been an author of the first distinction, yet situated as he was, and indulging the diseased state of his own system, he appears to have been subject to that undue vividness of thought and perception . . . /which makes one/ at once the victim and the conqueror. Phlebotomy and cathartics,

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joined to sound philosophy and deliberate observation, might . . . have brought to a healthy state a mind which we cannot help regarding as diseased, and his imagination . . . might have reached the highest pitch of the poetical profession."[7]

What is the reason for such a dismissal? It is not simply a rejection of irrational content in fiction, for we know that Scott explicitly condoned the inclusion of supernatural agents[8] and to some extent practiced this himself.[9] Indeed, Scott scolds Mrs. Ann Radcliffe and her imitators for providing simple and natural explanations for events which had earlier seemed "mystic and marvellous."[10] This is a precaution, he says, which smacks of Snug the Joiner. No, the objection seems at least partly to concern the quantity of supernatural presented, not the fact of its presentation.[11] In comments on Walpole's Castle of Otranto, Scott notes, "we can . . . allow of supernatural agency to a certain extent, and for an appropriate purpose."[12] The character of Hoffmann's offense is becoming clear. It is an offense on two counts. Hoffmann employs the supernatural to excess and, largely, for the wrong purpose. It seems quite clear that Scott finds Hoffmann's putative state of mind personally distressing.

Scott's discussion is principally couched in terms of "the FANTASTIC mode of writing" (emphasis in the

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original), a species of composition which he advances as a rubric for examination of Hoffmann.[13] The mode, he says, was invented by Germans and is practiced in the English language only by Washington Irving. Of several modes "in which the wonderful and supernatural may be introduced into fictitious narrative," only the fantastic mode is to be rejected out of hand.[14] "Fantastic" is a term of disapprobation, used in contradistinction to designations such as "wonderful," "marvellous," and "supernatural,"--terms loosely employed by Scott to refer to rationally inexplicable occurrences. Since Hoffmann "led the way in this department of literature,"[15] it is of interest to look more closely at what is meant by the fantastic mode. In doing so we will touch on several matters which will recur frequently in the progress of the study.

* * *

Scott emphasizes that the fantastic mode is peculiarly German (although Washington Irving engages in it as well):

> . . . the attachment of the Germans to the mysterious has invented another species of composition, which, perhaps, could hardly have made its way in any other country or language. This may be called the FANTASTIC mode of writing,--in which the most wild and unbounded license is given to an irregular fancy, and all species of combination, however

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> ludicrous, or however shocking, are attempted and executed without scruple. In the other modes of treating the supernatural, even that mystic region is subjected to some laws, however slight; and fancy, in wandering through it, is regulated by some probabilities in the wildest flight. Not so in the fantastic style of composition, which has no restraint save that which it may ultimately find in the exhausted imagination of the author. . . . Sudden transformations are introduced of the most extraordinary kind, and wrought by the most inadequate means; no attempt is made to soften their absurdity, or to reconcile their inconsistencies; the reader must be contented to look upon the gambols of the author as he would behold the flying leaps and incongruous transmutations of Harlequin, without seeking to discover either meaning or end further than the surprise of the moment.[16]

Both counts of the offense are emphasized, extent and purpose. The fantastic mode overemploys the supernatural--"wild and unbounded license," "no restraint"--while its only purpose in introducing the supernatural is "the surprise of the moment."

Whereas Scott the novelist recognizes the distinct narrative value in the "excitation" produced by such surprises,[17] Scott the moralist feels that somehow there

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should be more involved than just the thrill of the supernatural. Therefore it is no surprise that Das Majorat, a story which is uncharacteristically direct in its morality, is a Hoffmann work which Scott praises. He observes that it is a tale "in which the wonderful is, in our opinion, happily introduced, because it is connected with and applied to human interest and feeling, and illustrates with no ordinary force the elevation to which circumstances may raise the power and dignity of the human mind."[18] That is to say, the supernatural is used as a means to portray human qualities, not as an end in itself. While Das Majorat garners praise for its reputedly didactic content, Der Sandmann is damned as "wild and absurd."[19] In another context which clearly illustrates a didactic emphasis, Scott countenances writing in which "the admission of the marvellous expressly resembles a sort of entry-money paid at the door of a lecture room,--it is a concession which must be made to the author, and for which the reader is to receive value in moral instruction."[20] Scott is here speaking of Mary Shelley's Frankenstein (1818).

With such predilections, then, it comes as no surprise that Scott prefers the prints of the Englishman William Hogarth (1697-1764) to those of the Frenchman Jacques Callot (1592-1635). Hogarth's works are for Scott "a garden carefully cultivated," while Callot's garden

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produces only "wild and fantastic weeds."[21] The botanical parallel, of course, is intended to approximate the relative presentations of mankind. Hogarth contributes to the "history of human manners," while Callot produces "diablerie." The reason for Scott's discursus into the graphic arts is Hoffmann's tribute to the French artist in his Fantasiestücke in Callots Manier (1814-1815). Perhaps it is Scott's distaste for Callot, not simple error, which led him to cite the title of the Nachtstücke (1816-1817), containing the much disliked Sandmann, as Night Pieces after the manner of Callot.[22]

Let us return for a moment to the long passage on the fantastic mode of writing. I hope that it will become abundantly clear that such an analysis is simplistic, overlooking the complexity in Hoffmann's techniques of narration. The verdict stands in odd contrast to Scott's own rich narrative skills. We would expect one craftsman to recognize another, but in this case it apparently did not happen. The explanation evidently lies in Scott's evaluation of Hoffmann's mental state: Hoffmann's "malady" eclipses narrative strengths. With such a malady, human qualities, didactic qualities, cannot flourish in fiction.

Scott was, however, very much interested in the manner of telling a story containing the supernatural. He had considered the problem earlier, in an essay on Ann

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Radcliffe which appeared two years before his Hoffmann review.[23] There Scott reveals an awareness of the problem of choosing between an explanation of a seemingly supernatural occurrence and, alternatively, "leav/ing/ something in the shade."[24] He concludes that the latter choice is perhaps "the most artful" solution.[25] It is difficult to tell what narrative techniques are embraced by the phrase, "leave something in the shade." But it would seem that if they were of any great number or complexity, it would be impossible for Scott to say that Hoffmann and Washington Irving write in a mode which has "no restraint save that which it may ultimately find in the exhausted imagination of the author. . . . Sudden transformations are introduced of the most extraordinary kind, and wrought by the most inadequate means; no attempt is made to soften their absurdity." This overlooks, for example, the heavy use which Hoffmann makes of unreliable observers when narrating supernatural events. Such an analysis can only be termed curiously wide of the mark.

Scott treats Washington Irving with similar roughness. In fact, the very passage Scott cites to illustrate the excess of Irving's The Bold Dragoon--an instance of animate furniture--is clearly marked by Irving as a dream, produced by drink and an overly warm bed. Let us look at that text:

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My grandfather, for his part, got into bed, and drew over him one of those great bags of down, under which they smother a man in the Low Countries; and there he lay, melting between two feather beds, like an anchovy sandwich between two slices of toast and butter. He was a warm-complexioned man, and this smothering played the very deuce with him. So, sure enough, in a little time it seemed as if a legion of imps were twitching at him, and all the blood in his veins was in a fever-heat.

He lay still, however, until all the house was quiet, excepting the snoring of the Mynheers from the different chambers; who answered one another in all kinds of tones and cadences, like so many bull-frogs in a swamp. . . . /My grandfather/ waxed warmer and warmer until at length the bed became too hot to hold him.

. . . . . .

From the opposite side of the room a long-backed, bandy-legged chair, covered with leather, and studded all over in a coxcombical fashion with little brass nails, got suddenly into motion, thrust out first a claw-foot, then a crooked arm, and at length, making a leg, slided /sic/ gracefully up to an easy-chair of tarnished brocade, with a hole in its bottom, and led it gallantly out in a ghostly minuet

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about the floor. . . . In short, all the movables got in motion: pirouetting hands across, right and left, like so many devils; all except a great clothes-press, which kept courtesying and courtesying in a corner, like a dowager, in exquisite time to the music; being rather too corpulent to dance, or perhaps at a loss for a partner.

My grandfather concluded the latter to be the reason; so being, like a true Irishman, devoted to the sex, and at all times ready for a frolic, he bounced into the room, called to the musician to strike up Paddy O'Rafferty, capered up to the clothes-press, and seized upon the two handles to lead her out:--when--whirr! the whole revel was at an end. The chairs, tables, tongs and shovel, slunk in an instant as quietly into their places as if nothing had happened, and the musician vanished up the chimney, leaving the bellows behind him in his hurry. My grandfather found himself seated in the middle of the floor with the clothes-press sprawling before him, and the two handles jerked off, and in his hands. . . .

Well, gentlemen, as the clothes-press was a mighty heavy body, and my grandfather likewise, particularly in rear, you may easily suppose that two such heavy bodies coming to the ground would

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> make a bit of noise. . . . The whole garrison was alarmed. The landlord, who slept below, hurried up with a candle to inquire the cause.[26]

We note that the landlord sleeping beneath the revel is awakened only when the dragoon (the narrator's grandfather) falls to the floor with the clothes-press; he is not awakened by the earlier music and dancing of a whole roomful of furniture, which would seem curious. Further, the music for the revel is described as "someone . . . trying to hum a tune in defiance of the asthma."[27] This sound would seem strangely like the various rumblings of the sleeping Lowlanders. When we also note that the story is couched in a constant tone of irony--for example, as the narrator replies to a skeptical listener, asserting, "The divil a bit of a dream! . . . There never was a truer fact in this world. Faith, I should have liked to see any man tell my grandfather it was a dream,"[28] --it is clear that the dance of the furniture never took place. This is, it must be insisted, a clear attempt to "soften the absurdity." Since Scott himself took pains to compartmentalize the supernatural, it is surprising that he apparently will not recognize analogous efforts in Irving and Hoffmann.

But we have dwelt on Scott's review of Hoffmann not in order to rejoice in possible oversights, but to suggest that the process of "leav/ing/ something in the shade"

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was overlooked by Hoffmann critics as early as 1827. And as will be shown shortly, the situation has not greatly improved since then. Hoffmann's masterful narrative techniques have been largely neglected. The structures of ambiguity, the several uses of the rational observer: these are the "techniques of softening" developed and used by Hoffmann to "soften the absurdity."[29]

* * *

While Hoffmann was exploring his German approach to fantastic fiction, Wordsworth and Coleridge in England became interested in a different approach to irrational material. Coleridge refers to it in his Biographia Literaria (1817) as a "willing suspension of disbelief."[30]

It should, perhaps, at this point be emphasized that any author of fantastic reading material has many options open to him. Coleridge points to one of these, the creation of the illusion that the events are real. Conventional drama also aspires to do this. It would seem that we can crudely distinguish two components in the suspension of disbelief--the author's skill in creating a "semblance of truth" so that the suspension is not difficult, and the basic willingness of the reader to be entertained. Schiller speaks along these lines, in a letter in 1789, with regard to his Geisterseher. "Der Leser," he observes, "muss gleichsam einen stillschweigenden Vertrag mit dem Verfasser machen, wodurch der

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letztere sich anheischig macht, seine Imagination wunderbar in Bewegung zu setzen, der Leser aber wechselseitig verspricht, es in der Delikatesse und Wahrheit nicht so genau zu nehmen."[31] Schiller makes it clear that the arrangement is quasi-contractual and of two parts.

It may be that the temptation to provide easy thrills is operative in making such an approach to fantastic material common. Certainly it seems safe to say that the example of drama encourages authors of fantastic material to work for an effective illusion of reality. The operating conditions of the two genres are of course fundamentally different, but there seems to be an interplay of requisites here. Tieck, for example, in his essay Shakespeares Behandlung des Wunderbaren (1793), noted Shakespeare's singular skill in achieving the audience's participation in poetic illusion: "Denn eben darin besteht der Probestein des echten Genies, dass es für jede verwegene Fiction . . . schon im voraus die Täuschung des Zuschauers zu gewinnen weiss; dass der Dichter . . . die Phantasie, selbst wider unsern Willen, so spannt, dass wir die Regeln der Aesthetik, mit allen Begriffen unsers aufgeklärteren Jahrhunderts vergessen, und uns ganz dem schönen Wahnsinn des Dichters überlassen."[32] These remarks are specifically directed to drama, although it has been argued that Tieck sought the same Shakespearean effect in his prose fiction.[33] Whether or not

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this is true, what Tieck admires in Shakespeare--the deception of the viewer, the surrender to the "beautiful madness"--adequately characterizes the two-faceted approach to fantastic material involved in the suspension of disbelief.

What I want to emphasize, however, in discussing the suspension of disbelief is not the two-fold nature of the process, but the participation in poetic illusion. Hoffmann departs from the common, "contractual" approach to fantastic material. He chooses a different route.

Instead of seeking to suspend disbelief, Hoffmann uses it as an operative force of narrative structure. That is, he allows the reader's natural response of disbelief to determine the telling of the story. This had not been much done in fantastic material prior to Hoffmann. To cite an extreme instance of what Hoffmann would most surely consider an abuse of a reader's rational expectations, in The Castle of Otranto the supernatural giant is introduced as narrative fact. It inspires horror, or at least did so in 1764, and its (literally) partial appearances at various points in the narrative create suspense. But the "credibility" of the giant--what in another context Werner Hoffmeister calls authorial "Bürgschaft" for a fantastic event[34]--is not at serious issue; disbelief is operative only to the extent that the contradiction between normal reality and the events of

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the story produces a thrill of horror. Let us recall for a moment Scott's phrase about "soften/ing/ the absurdity." For surely this is a narrative event which qualifies, even cries out, for softening. As we will see, in Hoffmann's narrative world of multiple observers, of flourishing ambiguity, of unreliability, such an unfiltered, "unsoftened" incident almost never occurs. It is among the tasks of this study to show how this filtering takes place. As we do this, let us cheerfully adopt Scott's term of disapprobation, "fantastic," to refer to events in Hoffmann's stories which are not rationally explicable.

2. Serapion

Hoffmann was not a literary theoretician. He did not read widely in literary matters and, according to his friend and biographer Eduard Hitzig, he turned to unfamiliar texts only when they were explicitly recommended to him.[1] Perhaps law and music--the other two-thirds of his professional life--left him little energy for literature beyond the practice of it. He seems to have known nothing of the eighteenth-century debate on the limits of artistic imitation. The disagreements between Leipzig and Zürich apparently never made their way to his reading table. The names Gottsched, Bodmer, Breitinger, Milton do not occur in his correspondence.[2] Perhaps it is regrettable that he didn't speak explicitly to the

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aesthetic issue which underlies his art and which had been extensively discussed long before he began to write. Yet his intuitive approach does not seem to have impaired his narrative technique.

In any event, it is evident from many passages in the stories that Hoffmann is concerned about the reader's reaction to the fantastic. That is, on the level of literary practice the aesthetic issues clearly have meaning for him. When a fantastic event is presented, reactions to it are often given in the text itself, as dry as those of any eighteenth-century rationalist: "Oh, come now, this is surely nonsense!" or, "I must be dreaming!" These anticipate and direct the reader's response. Often the responses are not so rational; often they change in the course of the story. Sometimes there are even multiple responses from which the reader may choose. Often--in a wholly different aspect of narrative control--Hoffmann throws doubt upon the fantastic event itself by presenting it through the eyes of an unreliable observer. More of this presently; the point is that Hoffmann's theory, by and large, must be seen in his practice.

However at one point in one of the stories, Das öde Haus, the characters of the frame do talk in terms which faintly recall Breitinger's distinction between "das Neue" and "das Wunderbare." The character Theodor cites a

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current dictionary of synonyms, stating, "Aus Eberhards Synonymik musst du wissen, dass wunderlich alle Ausserungen der Erkenntnis und des Begehrens genannt werden, die sich durch keinen vernünftigen Grund rechtfertigen lassen, wunderbar aber dasjenige heisst, was man für unmöglich, für unbegreiflich hält, was die bekannten Kräfte der Natur zu übersteigen, oder wie ich hinzufüge, ihrem gewöhnlichen Gange entgegen zu sein scheint" (FN 460).[3] In Breitinger's Critische Dichtkunst (1740), we find "das Neue" referred to as "alles dasjenige, was nicht durch den täglichen Gebrauch und Umgang bekannt und gewohnt, und daher auch in dem Wahne der Menschen gering und verächtlich worden ist."[4] Quite aside from the interesting disparagement of "das Neue" because it is new, the term might best be rendered in English as "the unusual." As the separation between the usual and the unusual increases, Breitinger continues, at a given point the unusual ceases to be merely unusual and becomes "das Wunderbare": "Wenn denn die Entfernung so weit fortgehet, biss eine Vorstellung unsern gewöhnlichen Begriffen . . . entgegen zu stehen scheinet, so verliehret sie den Nahmen des Neuen, und erhält an dessen statt den Nahmen des Wunderbaren."[5] In Das öde Haus the distant echo of this passage which we detect in Theodor's remark may, of course, be due to Johann August Eberhard's recourse to Breitinger's text. But it seems safe to say

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that Hoffmann (more exactly, the character Theodor), like Breitinger, views the distinction in the word-pair roughly as one denoting escalation. Das Wunderliche/Neue can be intensified to become das Wunderbare.

Perhaps the closest Hoffmann does come to theorizing on literary matters (excepting, of course, Des Vetters Eckfenster, a literary testament in the literal sense) is in the conversations which frame the approximately twenty-five stories and essays of Die Serapions-Brüder. These seem quite clearly to be conversations he is having in his own mind about art and reality and, later in the collection, about specific points of narrative technique.[6] I would like to call attention to two sections of this frame before proceeding specifically to the techniques of softening in Chapter II. The first of these passages occurs in the third of the four volumes of Die Serapions-Brüder, following Die Brautwahl. The second occurs at the very start of the collection and has to do with the hermit Serapion's view of reality.

Upon concluding Die Brautwahl, Serapions-Bruder Lothar enters into a discussion of the story which, according to the fiction of the frame, he himself has written. He notes that he has followed his usual penchant for introducing fantastic, fairy-tale elements into real-life settings. Theodor and Ottmar seize upon this point and develop a concise statement of the difficulties

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facing an author of fantastic material. Theodor begins by defending Lothar's technique and offers a metaphor for the process by which a reader can become involved in a fantastic text: "Deshalb gerieten aber jene Märchen /those which were not set in "das wirkliche Leben"/ meistens frostig, gleichgültig und vermochten nicht den inneren Geist zu entzünden und die Fantasie aufzuregen. Ich meine, dass die Basis der Minnelsleiter, auf der man hinaufsteigen will in höhere Regionen, befestigt sein müsse im Leben, so dass jeder nachzusteigen vermag. Befindet er sich dann immer höher und höher hinaufgeklettert, in einem fantastischen Zauberreich, so wird er glauben, dies Reich gehöre auch noch in sein Leben hinein, und sei eigentlich der wunderbar herrlichste Teil desselben" (SB 599). The ladder metaphor envisions a gradual increase in the reader's involvement in the fantastic, starting from a base-point in real life. Ottmar objects that the ascent of the ladder is not so easily attained; indeed, he says, there are three difficulties standing in the way of such involvement: "Vergiss aber nicht, Freund Theodor! dass mancher gar nicht die Leiter besteigen mag, weil das Klettern einem verständigen gesetzten Manne nicht ziemt, mancher schon auf der dritten Sprosse schwindlicht wird, mancher aber auch wohl die auf der breiten Strasse des Lebens befestigte Leiter, bei der er täglich, ja stündlich vorübergeht,

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gar nicht bemerkt!" (SB 599). If we expand somewhat upon this statement, the following emerges: an author of fantastic material may expect at least three types of readers, each of them difficult to deal with. The first type is knowledgeable and set in his ways; he rejects a story of the fantastic as unseemly reading material. His firmly established ideas of taste and propriety in literature forbid involvement with the fantastic. The second type experiences an over-reaction, becomes too enthusiastic, too involved, and swoons. This would seem to refer to a "sensibility" akin to that satirized by Jane Austen, but in fact Hoffmann seems to have believed seriously that involvement with the fantastic could be dangerous. The idea appears often (Der Elementargeist, Das öde Haus, Der Magnetiseur, and elsewhere) that a glance into "the most horrifying depths of nature" (SB 29) can cause a loss of self-control; this would seem to be more than just a posture of René Wellek's "spooky Hoffmann."[7] The third type of reader does not react at all. He is oblivious to the fantastic. When reading the entire passage about the ladder it is difficult not to think of Hoffmann's first-hand experience of the three types; the literary teas of Berlin and Bamberg, often presented in his fiction, must have provided some inspiration. Of the three difficulties, "nicht mag," presented by the first type of reader, perhaps occupied Hoffmann the most. This brings us to the

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second section of the Serapions-Brüder frame which I want to discuss.

In the opening pages of Die Serapions-Brüder, Hoffmann presents a confrontation between a rational figure from the framing discussion, Cyprian, and an attested madman, Serapion. Their confrontation leads to Cyprian's recognition that madness indeed can have a positive side. The story of the meeting with hermit Serapion constitutes, I suggest, Hoffmann's challenge to those readers (and critics too) who belong to the first type of the ladder metaphor--those who find the fantastic unseemly.

The man who claims to be the martyred Serapion, dismembered in Alexandria hundreds of years earlier, is in reality Graf P. of Munich, former diplomat and now poet, "ein wohlerzogener, vielseitig gebildeter Mann, der . . . sich im bürgerlichen Rangsklassensystem bewährt hatte,"[8] a man who is now incurably "insane." After attempts to cure him failed, his family acquiesced to medical advice that he be allowed to live in peace according to his delusion. "Serapion" established himself with a hut and garden in a forest near Bamberg. Leading the contemplative life of an anchorite, he soon won the respect of the surrounding farmers, to whom he gives sermons and advice. Much of his time is spent conversing with famous historical figures, visible only to him. Cyprian takes it upon himself to convince

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Serapion/Graf P. of his madness. "'Wie', rief ich . . . 'Sie halten sich für jenen Serapion, der vor vielen hundert Jahren auf die jämmerlichste Weise umkam?'" Serapion concedes that this may well seem strange: "'Sie mögen', fuhr Serapion sehr ruhig fort, 'das unglaublich finden und ich gestehe ein, dass es manchem der nicht weiter zu schauen vermag, als eben seine Nase reicht, sehr wunderbar klingen muss, allein es ist nun einmal so" (SB 22).

Cyprian's attempt fails. He is defeated both by Serapion's enormous presence of mind ("If I am really crazy, then you must be crazy for trying to convince me of it.") and by the realization that this man of great ability is completely at peace with himself. Cyprian sees that it would be cruel and foolish to persist in rational protests.

Serapion then proceeds to extend his autonomy of identity to an autonomous view of the world as a poet. He tells Cyprian Novelle after Novelle, "angelegt," as Cyprian says, "durchgeführt, wie sie nur der geistreichste, mit der feurigsten Fantasie begabte Dichter anlegen, durchführen kann" (SB 26). These are the visions which Serapion has when, having climbed to the peak of a nearby hill, he views the towers of distant Alexandria (Bamberg). He notes that many people have told him that his visions are not reality, but, he argues, that which the mind

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perceives is reality: "Viele haben das auch unglaublich gefunden und gemeint, ich bilde mir nur ein, das vor mir im äussern Leben wirklich sich ereignen zu sehen was sich nur als Geburt meines Geistes, meiner Fantasie gestalte. Ich halte dies nun für eine der spitzfündigsten Albernheiten die es geben kann. Ist es nicht der Geist allein, der das was sich um uns her begibt in Raum und Zeit, zu erfassen vermag? . . . Ist es nun also der Geist allein, der die Begebenheit vor uns erfasst, so hat sich das auch wirklich begeben was er dafür anerkennt" (SB 26). As if this were not a sufficient statement of his conception of poetic reality, Serapion underlines it firmly by relating a dispute he had "yesterday" with Ariosto. The poet of the Renaissance had told Serapion that he (Ariosto) had created in his own mind figures which had never existed in time and space (a cow with a fish's head? Milton's angels?). Serapion maintained, and Ariosto was forced to concede, that it is only a deficiency of higher comprehension ("Mangel höherer Erkenntnis") which leads a poet to want to confine everything to his own brain which he with his poetic vision has seen "in full life" (SB 26).

It is interesting, although as noted earlier no specific contact can be demonstrated, that this argument is almost a reprise of Bodmer's defense of the poet's creative role. Milton, for example, says Bodmer, worked "mittelst einer Art Schöpfung, die der Poesie eigen ist."[9]

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Bodmer emphasizes the imaginative faculties, saying that poetry works "vornehmlich mit der Einbildungs-Kraft auf die Einbildungs-Kraft."[10]

The emphasis on vision in Serapion's comment, "dass es manchem der nicht weiter zu schauen vermag, als eben seine Nase reicht, sehr wunderbar klingen muss," is not coincidental. The inability to see as Serapion sees is a limitation. This is a conclusion which is endorsed by the figures in the frame of Die Serapions-Brüder and leads to the formation of the "Serapiontic principle." Following Serapion's example, they vow to present in their own literary creations only what they have "really seen." The stress, of course, in "really" is exactly Serapion's: that which is real to the mind. "Jeder prüfe wohl," says Lothar, "ob er auch wirklich das geschaut, was er zu verkünden unternommen . . . Der Einsiedler Serapion sei unser Schutzpatron, er lasse seine Sehergabe über uns walten" (SB 55-56). This emphasis on the author's vision, here incorporated as the principle of Hoffmann's major literary collection, recurs again in Des Vetters Eckfenster as the deathbed testament of a noted author to his young cousin.

The hermit Serapion's impact on the rationalist Cyprian is programmatic for the entire collection. This is not to suggest in any way that Hoffmann is beating the drums for mysticism. Far from it. "Wirklich geschaut"

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still retains its primary referent, empirically experienc-able reality, as a necessary component of the author's craft. Acute observation, as the Eckfenster makes clear, is the stuff of literature when combined with an active imagination.[11] But Serapion's victory is relevant to the type of reader in the ladder metaphor, "/der/ gar nicht die Leiter besteigen mag, weil das Klettern einem verständigen gesetzten Manne nicht ziemt." It is a victory over the narrow categories dictated by propriety.

It is helpful to remember Serapion, and the ladder, as we proceed to a closer consideration of the problems of narrative technique. For in each of the stories in which Hoffmann treated the fantastic, he is working, I submit, with the categories of the ladder metaphor in mind--perhaps particularly the first type, the proper rationalist, but certainly with the other two as well. As will be shown, it is the narrative techniques of ambi-guity and rational observation which help these readers from rung to rung.

* * *

Hoffmann constantly presumes a rational reader, an actively rational reader. This might not appear to be a significant presumption, but the recollection of Schiller's Geisterseher comment or a glance at the stories of Edgar Allan Poe shows in fact that this is a primary narrative decision. Poe's Fall of the House of Usher, for example,

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presumes that one of the author's tasks is to titillate his reader with fantastic elements. Accordingly, Poe allows himself liberties of narration which he might otherwise shun out of respect to an actively rational reader (e.g., the superhuman strength of sickly Lady Usher in rending her coffin after a debilitating week within it; the cataclysm which swallows the family mansion as the narrator flees). Hoffmann garners the benefits of "excitation," too, but within a narrative structure based on a wholly different premise. As I stated earlier, Hoffmann presumes rational protest and works to exploit it for his narrative.

Exploiting rational protest does not mean disarming it. Other alternatives are open--among them, anticipating the protest, confusing it, postponing it. But the important thing is that the rational objection, or its possibility, determines the rules of narration.

This raises the issue of the author's relationship with his reader, an issue which is normally complicated enough--as Stanzel, Lämmert, Booth, and others involved in the field of narrative structure analysis have indicated.[12] With the inclusion of fantastic subject matter, the author-reader relationship must bear the even greater burden associated with the presentation of in-credible--and hence questionable--narrative material. This often leads to a greater prominence of author-reader mechanics

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(e.g., the "Dear reader" address), to greater complexity of form, and often to both.

The greater burden is accounted for by the reader's natural response to fantastic material, namely to ask, "Does the author really expect me to believe this?" The author of course--at least one who deserves the designation--has anticipated the question and has built his structures to meet it. I do not wish to raise the question of whether a reader ought to confront a text with rational criteria; it is sufficient for our purposes here to note that Hoffmann expects his readers to use such criteria and constructs his narratives accordingly. The evidence that Hoffmann does this is spread throughout the following chapters and does not require discussion now. But in anticipation, it is sufficient to note that extensive passages of rational observation follow and counterbalance fantastic appearances in Hoffmann's prose fiction. Nor do I wish to raise the question of whether Hoffmann "really believed in ghosts." Though biographically interesting, the question does not bear on either the ultimate fantastic content in a story or on the techniques used to achieve it. Our concern is with the fantastic within the narrative world Hoffmann presents in each story--not with the testimony the story may offer on Hoffmann's own relation to fantastic phenomena.

In Washington Irving's Bold Dragoon we noted that a

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relationship is established in which the reader knows he is not to take the fantastic events seriously. The dramatized narrator of the tale may assert its verity until blue in the face: the reader and the personality creating the Bold Dragoon know differently. They share, as it were, a community of superior minds. "Il existe," Tzvetan Todorov remarks generally, "des récits qui contiennent des éléments surnaturels sans que le lecteur s'interroge jamais sur leur nature, sachant bien qu'il ne doit pas les prendre à la lettre."[13] Horace Walpole's Otranto, on the other hand, presents a supernatural agent which the reader knows he is expected to accept literally, that is, as real within the novel. Here the relationship between the reader and the personality creating the piece of literature is straightforward: there simply is a giant and it is taller than Manfred's castle. These are two instances of quite different authorial choice in the presentation of the fantastic. The differing degrees of narrative "reliability" have no necessary connection with the use of a dramatized narrator in Dragoon or its omission in Otranto. The issue goes much deeper. Both authors seek to establish a relationship with the reader which, given the reader's consent, makes it possible to achieve a desired effect.

Here it is advisable to introduce a term given currency by Wayne Booth, namely that of the author's

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"second self," or the "implied author": that intelligence envisioned by the reader behind the printed page.[14] This second self, not identical with the historical author, is a composite personality which the reader creates for himself as he reads. It is the result of the interplay of all the conscious and unconscious choices made in telling the story with the intelligence and experience of the reader. Primarily, however, this second self is the product of what (as it seems to the reader) the second self chooses for the reader to read. He is inferred as an "ideal, literary, created version" of the real author; he is the "sum of his own choices."[15]

It is important to keep Booth's distinction in mind not because Hoffmann's second self differs remarkably from his historical self on fantastic issues: for even if it were possible to ascertain exactly what the historical Hoffmann believed in matters of the occult, it would not be of great relevance to analysis of his narrative technique. Nor is Booth's distinction crucial because the second self differs radically from story to story: differences are ascertainable, but they are not momentous and are not central to our interest in narrative method. The importance of Booth's contribution is in the cleanness of procedure. It forbids the easy confusion of author and storyteller, insisting on clarity of apprehension.

In fantastic texts, the crucial issue in defining

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the second self is usually the position taken on the fantastic event(s). This can be summed up in the question: Does he, with all his influence, stand as guarantor for the events presented? Walpole's second self answers yes, Irving's no. With Hoffmann, significantly, the second self is not similarly concerned to establish a clear position. His is a second self interested in the problems of verifiability in a narrative; and this is a verifiability, we will see, which is often unattainable; it is a second self much more technically oriented than Irving's or Walpole's. In fact, it is so technically oriented that a distinct term is justified for its procedures, the techniques of softening.

3. Secondary Literature

In one way or another, most Hoffmann criticism has dealt with the meaning of the fictional products. That is, the emphasis has been upon determining what the aesthetic, psychological, or philosophical message--intended or unintended--of the works may be. This is entirely appropriate, for it is clear that the works are, for the most part, careful expressions of a highly articulate and thoughtful sensibility. At the same time there has been a remarkable lack of attention to the precise details of narration, to the mechanics of storytelling by which any such meaning is conveyed.

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For example, there has been a great deal written about "duality" in Hoffmann's fiction. In his foreword to the most recent translations of Hoffmann, by Leonard J. Kent and Elizabeth C. Knight, René Wellek observes that "many of Hoffmann's stories revolve around a conflict between mind and matter, soul and body, art and life. His writings are pervaded by a nostalgia for a happier world in which the artist and all spiritual men must find consolation for the failure of life."[1] Wellek's emphasis here is very much that which is presented, in varied ways, by Egli,[2] Willimczik,[3] Baumgart,[4] Ohl,[5] von Planta,[6] and Taylor,[7] to name only a few: that the fiction presents the struggle between an artist-figure and his base environment. Further, Hans-Georg Werner argues in Darstellung und Deutung der Wirklichkeit im dichterischen Werk (Weimar, 1962) that the duality between "Alltags-wirklichkeit" and "Ideal" contains social criticism, that Hoffmann's duality was an ideological response to the conditions around him. Hans Mayer--who will receive more attention in a moment--also presents this theme of the "Gegeneinander der beiden Welten, der realen und der mythischen" as an "Ausdruck ungelöster deutscher Zeitverhältnisse."[8]

It is only natural that Hoffmann's biography has reinforced the "duality" school of criticism. But however interesting such attempts at integration of

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biography and literary production may be--by von Schaukal, E.T.A. Hoffmann: Sein Werk aus seinem Leben (Zürich, 1923); by Egli; by von Schenck, E.T.A. Hoffmann: Ein Kampf um das Bild des Menschen (Berlin, 1939); by Rosteutscher, Das ästhetische Idol (Bern, 1956); and to some extent by Tretter, Die Frage nach der Wirklichkeit bei E.T.A. Hoffmann (Diss. München 1961), and Segebrecht, Autobiographie und Dichtung (Stuttgart, 1967)--they are in the last analysis of no interest to the study at hand. Our concern is that of narrative method.

Similarly, other thematic approaches which may be roughly distinguished are of only occasional interest. These include Das Dämonische als Stilform by Raydt (Diss. München 1912); the theme of insanity presented by Nipperdey, Wahnsinnsfiguren bei E.T.A. Hoffmann (Diss. Köln 1957), and Lawson;[9] the theme of mythology presented by Willimczik, and by Negus, E.T.A. Hoffmann's Other World (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1965). James McGlathery has written a fascinating study of the religious content of Der goldne Topf,[10] but, once again, it is a study of only peripheral interest here.

Some interpreters have sought to combine a thematic approach with simple considerations of structure. Klaus Kanzog, for example, in his "'Das Fräulein von Scuderi' als Kriminalgeschichte" (Mitteilungen der E.T.A. Hoffmann-Gesellschaft, 11, 1964), pays attention to dramatic and

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epic exposition, to narrative perspective, and to the sequence of plot elements, while treating the work within the mystery story genre. In his study of the grotesque, Wolfgang Kayser makes some very perceptive--seemingly off-hand--remarks about structure in Hoffmann's fiction, as we will see in Chapter II.

It is not surprising therefore that a dissertation written under Kayser's direction should be particularly strong. Christel Schütz's Studien zur Erzählkunst E.T.A. Hoffmanns (Diss. Göttingen 1955), goes a long way toward clarifying how fictional reality is established for the reader. Let us look more closely at the study, for it is one of the few which deal with the question of narrative reality and the methods of establishing it, concerns which will be of prime interest in the following pages. "Im allgemeinen," Schütz observes (and here her analysis of narrator-stance is reminiscent of Demetz' on Scott, note 9, section 1, above), "lässt sich für die Nachtstücke, aber auch für die übrigen Hoffmannschen Erzählungen, die Tendenz feststellen, die 'teuflischen' Mächte perspektivisch von den Gestalten der Erzählung her zu sehen, bzw. 'von aussen' zu beobachten, d.h. dem Erzähler Aussagen über die Realität des Dämonischen und eine eigene Stellungnahme zu ersparen. So kann besonders in den späteren Erzählungen nachgewiesen werden, dass der Erzähler bemüht ist, sich selbst der Stimme zu enthalten."[11]

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The issue at hand is responsibility for fantastic content or, if you will, the guaranteeing of verity for rationally inexplicable occurrences. As we will see in our discussion of the techniques of softening, the use of narrative viewpoint is one of several devices for creating ambiguity around fantastic plot elements. Schütz speaks of the "Einbeziehung des Lesers," a fruitful concept, as a feature of Hoffmann's narrative method. She means by this chiefly a control of affective response via a narrator who, involved in his story, involves the reader as well, through a "magische Gewalt des Erzählens." This would seem very close to "narrative immediacy." The important step in Schütz's analysis is that she concentrates upon the effect of the fantastic on the reader, and the means by which that effect is attained. Hubert Ohl's study[12] of the same year examines the Fantasiestücke with similar emphasis, in some cases with even the same analytical vocabulary. Nikolaus Rockenbach argues in his Bauformen romantischer Kunstmärchen (Diss. Bonn 1957) that the Märchen present an overall structure reminiscent of drama, with alternating scenes of the fantastic and the real world; naturally, Der goldne Topf is the basis of his argument.

Schütz's "Einbeziehung des Lesers" is an emphasis carried further by Lothar Köhn in his Vieldeutige Welt: Studien zur Struktur der Erzählungen E.T.A. Hoffmanns und zur Entwicklung seines Werkes (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1966).

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Köhn sees the reader as a part of the structure of each work, noting that "Hoffmann schreibt im Hinblick auf den Leser, und er weiss, dass sein Werk in dessen Geist 'lebendig' wird" (p. 15). Köhn's emphasis is on the multiplicity of viewpoints in narration; his particular emphasis in talking of this "Fülle der Aspekte," as might be expected, is on Der Sandmann. The study does not, however, set itself the specific goal of dealing with the rationally inexplicable in Hoffmann's narration.

Despite the contributions of Schütz, Köhn, and Ohl, I would suggest that there has been remarkably little attention to the narrative mechanics by which objective narrative reality is rendered in Hoffmann. For an author dealing in visions, distortions, and rationally questionable supernatural phenomena, the question of just what is narratively real would seem to precede the considerations of meaning which have preoccupied Hoffmann scholarship. Or, at the very least, it would seem to constitute a concomitant of any investigation. Hermann Todsen's early, pleasant (but little more) study, Über die Entwicklung des romantischen Kunstmärchens (Diss. Berlin 1906), mentions the importance of distinguishing between Anselmus' errors of observation and the genuine fantastic. Despite this, his treatment is more a résumé of favorite Hoffmann passages than a serious study of narrative technique. Paul-Wolfgang Wührl's Die poetische Wirklichkeit in E.T.A.

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Hoffmanns Kunstmärchen (Diss. München 1963) examines some aspects of narration, stressing setting, atmosphere, and plot details; his attention to language is close; and he gives some attention to rational observation in the narration of Klein Zaches genannt Zinnober. However he is not chiefly concerned with the presentation of the fantastic but with story-telling technique as a whole. Klaus Günther Just's "Die Blickführung in den Märchennovellen E.T.A. Hoffmanns" (Wirkendes Wort 14, 1964) is a brief yet outstanding examination of one aspect of the filtering intelligence(s) interposed between reader and narrative reality in Hoffmann's fiction. As is obvious from the title, Just's emphasis is on the "visual" rendering of narrative events. Occasionally in Wulf Segebrecht's Anmerkungen to the Serapions-Brüder (e.g., SB 1065), and throughout Hans Mayer's 1959 essay, "Die Wirklichkeit E.T.A. Hoffmanns," there are attempts at the unencumbered examination of narrative reality--and the methods of rendering that reality.

Mayer raises precisely the two questions which are at the center of this study, namely the realities or irrealities of Hoffmann's fiction, and how they are conveyed. Noting that "die erste Hoffmann-Erzählung enthüllt bereits, dass Hoffmanns Wirklichkeitsauffassung der Eindeutigkeit entbehrt,"[13] Mayer shows that in Ritter Gluck the reader is confronted with a problem to which

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there is no rational solution: two mutually exclusive realities.[14] The authorial management of this the reader's dilemma is one of our chief concerns in the following pages.

* * *

Before proceeding to our examination of the techniques of softening, a recent study by Tzvetan Todorov deserves some attention.[15] In Introduction à la littérature fantastique (Paris: Seuil, 1970, Todorov defines the fantastic not as I do in this study, that is, simply as the rationally inexplicable, but as "hesitation." Todorov thus presents the fantastic in terms of the reader's response: the pause, the uncertainty as to the classification of the narrative event(s) presented. Is the event, the reader asks himself, to be classified merely as strange (but nevertheless conforming to natural laws) or as marvellous (conforming to laws unknown to us): "Dans un monde qui est bien le nôtre, celui que nous connaissons, sans diables, sylphides, ni vampires, se produit un événement qui ne peut s'expliquer par les lois de ce même monde familier. Celui qui perçoit l'événement doit opter pour l'une des deux solutions possibles: ou bien il s'agit d'une illusion des sens, d'un produit de l'imagination et les lois du monde restent alors ce qu'elles sont; ou bien l'événement a véritablement eu lieu, il est partie intégrante de la

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réalité, mais alors cette réalité est régie par des lois inconnues de nous" (p. 29).

The fantastic, then, "occupe le temps de cette incertitude." As soon as the reader chooses the one or the other response, he leaves the realm of the fantastic "pour entrer dans un genre voisin, l'étrange ou le merveilleux." The fantastic, Todorov sums up, is the hesitation experienced by a being who knows only the laws of nature, faced with an event apparently transcending those laws.

What Todorov has done is define the fantastic as a mental state of the reader. The advantage of such a definition is that it cleanly circumscribes the titillation, the narrative thrill, surrounding the introduction of the (perhaps) rationally inexplicable. The term would seem to have limited application to analysis of works, however, for it can merely designate where the hesitation lasts briefly, for an extended period, or throughout an entire work. Further, it would seem that affective response is more accurately designated by the three-part classification which I advance in the next chapter: certain fantastic (equivalent to "le merveilleux"), uncertain fantastic ("le fantastique"), no fantastic ("l'étrange"). Be that as it may, Todorov's presentation of the fantastic as a state of mind rather than an objective narrative reality is an invigorating perspective.

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CHAPTER II

THE TECHNIQUES OF SOFTENING

Up to now we have referred to Hoffmann's structures of ambiguity and rational observation without precisely defining them. It is now time to examine them more closely.

I propose to do three things in this chapter. The first is undertake a consideration of the techniques of softening ("The Techniques"). This will be followed by brief remarks on the intensity or level of fantastic in a story ("The Levels of the Fantastic"). The third section will apply the results of the first two sections to a large number of Hoffmann's stories ("The Combination"). A table will be used for clarity. Following chapters will discuss some of the distributions and relationship which emerge in the table.

1. The Techniques

In the Introduction I stated that the techniques of softening cushion the shock of confronting the irrational. This may now be expanded to read: the techniques of softening in a story are narrative techniques which cushion or soften the rational reader's confrontation with the fantastic by:

(1) Inner-textual evaluation. Making clear to the

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> reader that at least one character in the narrative shares his criteria of everyday causality. A conventional character or a dramatized narrator may do this.

or

> (2) Extra-textual evaluation. Allowing the reader to believe that, despite appearances, everyday causality has not been contravened.

Inner- and extra-textual evaluation of the fantastic are essential elements in the rational reader's weighing of a story. Let us consider how these operate.

The evaluation of a fantastic event within the text itself is perhaps the most obvious of the devices an author can use to influence the reader's reception of the fantastic. In the case of the rational reader, it articulates his own protest: it calls attention to the discrepancy between the event and "normal" reality. It also has great power to modulate the reader's reaction to the fantastic, since it is basically a device which the reader welcomes for its reassertion of his own criteria of everyday causality. The reader is susceptible, as it were, to a familiar voice.

In its forms, inner-textual evaluation can range from the incredulous, "This cannot be true!" of a character in the story, to the, "Dear reader, I recognize that this may seem a bit strange," of a dramatized narrator. Whatever form the inner-textual protest takes, the figure who articulates it functions as an at least

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ostensibly rational observer of narrative events. Let us refer to him, then, as a "rational observer."

The uses of inner-textual evaluation, or to be more concise, the uses of the rational observer, are various. I distinguish at least three basic ones. The most frequent use of a rational observer is for relief. This is an important use. When a narrative has developed to the point at which fantastic, or seemingly fantastic, elements are present, a tension develops. The contradiction of normal causality produces a thrill, strong interest, and tension. A comment by a rational observer relaxes the tension. Normal causality is reasserted as a standard which has relevance for the author--or to be more exact, relevance for the author's second self.[1] The author of course usually follows the relaxation with a heightening of the fantastic--a heightening made possible because the reader has been reassured that the canons of normal causality still prevail. It is a reculer pour mieux sauter.

A clear example of this first basic use of rational observation is found in a principal scene of Der Elementargeist. As the narrator (more exactly, the inner narrator) and the Captain wait fearfully in the dark for Major O'Malley to demonstrate his touted supernatural powers, the Captain asserts that what is to come can only be silly deception: "Ich vernahm in der undurchdringlichen Finsternis die Atemzüge eines dicht neben mir Stehenden.

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'Bist du es Hauptmann?' rief ich. 'Allerdings', erwiderte der Hauptmann; 'gib acht Vetter, es läuft alles auf dumme Taschenspielerei hinaus; aber,'" he continues less certainly, "'es ist ein ganz verdammter Ort, wo uns der Major hingeführt, und ich wollte, ich sässe wieder beim Punschnapf; denn mir beben alle Glieder vor Frost, und wenn du willst auch vor einer gewissen kindischen Bangigkeit'" (SW 383). To this, the narrator comments, "Mir ging's nicht besser, wie dem Hauptmann. Der rauhe Herbstwind pfiff und heulte durch die Mauern, und ein seltsames Flüstern und Ächzen antwortete ihm aus der Tiefe. Aufgescheuchtes Nachtgeflügel rauschte und flatterte um uns her, während ein leises Winseln dicht über den Boden weg zu schleichen schien" (SW 383). The relief which is generated by the first part of the Captain's statement comes from the insistence on normal causality.[2] But quickly his rationality stands revealed as mere whistling-in-the-dark ("Ich wollte, ich sässe wieder beim Punschnapf") and his and the narrator's remarks intensify the eeriness of the narrative.

A second basic use of the rational observer might be called the "Horatio phenomenon." It conditions the reader's reception of the fantastic much in the way Horatio's change from skeptic to believer in the opening scene of Hamlet helps us to accept the ghost of Hamlet's father. We objectify and delegate our skepticism. "Mit der

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Hörerschaft," notes Kayser in Das sprachliche Kunstwerk, " . . . gewinnt der Dichter ein Mittel, um reale Leser zu beeinflussen. Die integrierende Hörerschaft kann dazu dienen, uns vorzufühlen, sie kann uns zeigen, in welcher Haltung wir das Erzählte aufzunehmen haben."[3] If Horatio believes in the ghost, then it must be real. Horatio is met as the "scholar," gently mocking the soldiers' claim to have seen the ghost twice. Yet after the ghost's next appearance we hear him say, "Before my God, I might not this believe / Without the sensible and true avouch / Of mine own eyes." It is of course fundamental to this use of the rational observer that he be a credible witness. Polonius cannot take Horatio's place.

The Horatio phenomenon is clearly seen in Hoffmann's Der unheimliche Gast, a story having to do with telepathy, prescience, and magnetism. In this particular instance it is a most level-headed, intelligent woman, the Obristin, who expresses profound skepticism for all supernatural phenomena (SB 602, 604, 606, 608-09) and who in the end is brought to a certain acceptance of the supernatural: "'So muss ich,' begann endlich die Obristin leise, 'so muss ich an Dinge glauben, gegen die sich mein innerstes Gemüt sträubt'" (SB 638).[4]

A less forceful variety of the Horatio phenomenon is one in which the reader does not witness the process of conversion. It is as if Hamlet began with Scene ii.

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The rational reader could then accept Horatio's testimony to the ghost's reality, but only on the basis of Horatio's general probity. In this variation of rational observer usage, the case for the observer's soundness of judgement must be particularly strong. An example of this usage is found in Das Majorat. Advokat V., a seventy-year-old man of uncommon good judgement, accepts and deals with the reality of the revenant Daniel.

Yet a third basic use of the rational observer is that of the undercut rational observer. In this case the reader finds a figure so undercut by the conditions of narration that the reader cannot accept him. This is usually achieved through ridicule; it can be immediate or gradual. If it is immediate, then the rationalist must be shown sufficiently silly to deserve the treatment. Usually it is more effective when done gradually. In this case, a rational observer is presented who makes the correct protests, who says the right things from the point of view of the rational reader, but as the narrative progresses, he becomes unworthy of the reader's esteem. The reader is forced to reject the advocate of his own skepticism. At the most this forced rejection wins the reader's acceptance of the fantastic; at the least it undermines his skepticism. Such a rational observer can also have a minimal involvement in the plot, and may even never voice an objection to those events. In such a

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case, however, he will be distinguished by a methodical, pedantic manner--and will be devastatingly undercut. It is also possible to have several varieties of undercut rational observers in one story, presenting different species of rational comment.

An example of immediate undercutting of a rational observer is offered by Amandus von Nebelstern in Die Königsbraut. Here it is a university student, whom we might expect to bear the weapons of rationality, who is presented as a vain and foolish pseudo-poet. He is presented in the first chapter by means of a letter to his beloved. It reads in part: "Himmlische Maid! Siehest du - empfindest du - ahnest du deinen Amandus, wie er selbst Blum und Blüte vom Orangenblüthauch des duftigen Abends umflossen, im Grase auf dem Rücken liegt und hinaufschaut mit Augen voll frommer Liebe und sehnender Andacht! - Thymian und Lavendel, Rosen und Nelken, wie auch gelbäugichte Narzissen und schamhafte Veilchen flicht er zum Kranz" (SB 950). Our intellectual here has been painted with a very heavy brush.

A case of the gradual undercutting of a rational observer is that of Tusmann in Die Brautwahl. In this loving yet rigorous satire of Berlin ways, Tusmann suffers numerous fantastic experiences. It is his pedantry, his love of titles, his naiveté which, gradually revealed, disqualify him as a rational observer. At the outset he

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clearly perceives fantastic occurrences and is upset by them. Though up past his bedtime, suddenly in love, and out of his milieu, he protests that Leonhard has tricked him with the mysterious image in the Rathaus window. "Ich glaube gar," he says, "Sie wollen mich äffen durch allerhand kindische Künste, und vermessen sich, die Demoiselle Albertine Vosswinkel selbst lieben zu wollen, und haben die Dame porträtiert auf Glas und mir mittelst einer Laterna magica, die Sie unter dem Mantel verborgen, das angenehme Bildnis gezeigt am Rathausturm! - O mein Herr, auch ich verstehe mich auf solche Dinge, und Sie verfehlen den Weg, wenn Sie glauben, mich durch Ihre Künste, durch Ihre groben Redensarten einzuschüchtern!" (SB 543). Although it would be a misplaced emphasis to argue that Tusmann ever embodies much of a rational reader's protest, that which he does garner is soon lost as the measure of his pedantry and infatuation comes full. At the conclusion of the story Tusmann, bibliophile, is seen contentedly playing with a magic book whose identity can be changed at will merely by wishing.

It should be apparent that the second and third basic uses of the rational observer constitute evaluations which, as the first use, are within the narrative itself. (The three uses are listed in summary form on page 55, following. Thus far the system is in a sense hermetic: the reader is a witness but not an active participant to evaluation.

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In successful deployment of rational observers--or at least in successful deployment of them by Hoffmann--the reader is kept engaged and pacified, as it were, by the inner-textual evaluation of the fantastic; he is not allowed to reach the point at which he willfully rejects the fantastic events.

Inner-textual evaluation usually appears to its best advantage when dove-tailed with the other basic means of softening, that which operates through extra-textual evaluation. Let us consider what is involved in this.

* * *

Extra-textual evaluation of the fantastic event(s) in a story is concerned chiefly with establishing the reality of the fantastic for the narrative world. The reader brings to the story his own criteria of cause-and-effect, of everyday reality, performing an evaluation of the events upon the basis of all the facts presented him by the author. It is an evaluation which applies the standards of reality of the outside world to the narrative world, to the literary creation. It is an evaluation which the reader must do on his own (hence, extra-textually) if he is to confront the text as a rational reader. Did the event take place? Is it the figment of a character's--or of the dramatized narrator's--imagination? If the event did take place, is it fantastic? These are the sort of questions a rational reader poses at first

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subconsciously and then consciously.

Ambiguity is the device of extra-textual softening. The fantastic event or aspects of it are so presented that the rational reader cannot firmly establish them as real within the narrative.[5] This allows him to conclude, as noted earlier, that everyday causality, has not been contravened, or in cases where only aspects of the fantastic are at issue, it makes the extent of the contravention unclear.

Three basic uses of ambiguity appear to be operative. The first, ambiguity arising from narrative viewpoint, is by far the most common. Here the fantastic is perceived or related by a character who is, or may be, unreliable. This is, of course, nothing more than the application to fantastic content of a narrative device which undergirds the epistolary novel and, to some extent, is present in all prose fiction: the perceptual and intellectual peculiarities of a character operating as the perimeters of narration.[6]

When Anselmus in Der goldne Topf observes the departing Lindhorst at the close of the fourth vigil, the reader, confined to Anselmus's perception of the event, cannot know whether Lindhorst has taken wing or not:

> und nun schritt er /Lindhorst/ rasch von dannen, so, dass er in der tiefen Dämmerung, die unterdessen

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> eingebrochen, mehr in das Tal hinabzuschweben als zu gehen schien. Schon war er in der Nähe des Koselschen Gartens, da setzte sich der Wind in den weiten Überrock und trieb die Schösse auseinander, dass sie wie ein Paar grosse Flügel in den Lüften flatterten, und es dem Studenten Anselmus, der verwunderungsvoll dem Archivarius nachsah, vorkam, als breite ein grosser Vogel die Fittige aus zum raschen Fluge. - Wie der Student nun so in die Dämmerung hineinstarrte, da erhob sich mit krächzendem Geschrei ein weissgrauer Geier hoch in die Lüfte, und er merkte nun wohl, dass das weisse Geflatter, was er noch immer für den davonschreitenden Archivarius gehalten, schon eben der Geier gewesen sein müsse, unerachtet er nicht begreifen konnte, wo denn der Archivarius mit einem Mal hingeschwunden. (FN 202)

The reader can only conclude with Anselmus, "Er kann aber auch selbst in Person davongeflogen sein der Herr Archivarius Lindhorst," for the ambiguity cannot be resolved from the passage. If the passage were rewritten to give an unreliable Anselmus a clear view of Lindhorst taking wing, a different sort of narrative viewpoint ambiguity would result--which brings us to the next point.

It is naturally very important in the use of ambiguity of narrative viewpoint to establish the weaknesses which

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make, or might make, a character unreliable as an observer of the fantastic. To cite an obvious example, a character who is intoxicated can render only a somewhat impaired testimony. A character who is designated by the narrator or other characters as a visionary is also somewhat suspect. The potential of narrative undercutting for establishing ambiguity is evident. It is clearly demonstrated in Der Sandmann by the uncertainty which is generated narratively through Nathanael's shaky grasp of reality.[7] Similarly, the mere absence of a positive valuation of a character's reliability establishes the limitations of his strengths; a neutrally valued observer is one who can be wrong.

Ambiguity can also arise from the event itself. In this second basic use of ambiguity, the reader is confronted with an apparently fantastic event which might just possibly be a colossal coincidence. A classic case of this use of ambiguity is provided in the conclusion of Die Bergwerke zu Falun. The aged Ulla Dahlsjö there asserts that a legendary figure, Torbern, told her she would see her fiancé again after his disappearance in the mine. The body is in fact recovered, fifty years later, and precisely on the one day of the year Ulla traditionally visits the mine. She may be insane and have received no such prophecy, but the extraordinary coincidence of her arrival and the recovery of the body

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(one day out of 365) lend support to her contention--support, not proof.

This type of ambiguity has distinct narrative advantages. It is, however, a type which is quickly overworked. The extreme strains it places upon the reader are not unlike those created by the contortions of a Radcliffean narrative, and lead just as readily to feelings of distaste on the part of the reader.

A third basic use of ambiguity arises from tactical omissions by the author. This form produces ambiguity by means of holes in the narrative. A fact which would corroborate or deny the existence of the fantastic for the reader is simply omitted. The omitted fact is not merely a detail which might be added to the story; it is already an operative part of it; the characters in the story, or some of them, know the fact. But it is withheld from the reader. This narrative refinement can be richly used, but Hoffmann makes relatively little of it. Annette von Droste-Hülshoff richly uses this technique in Die Judenbuche.

* * *

Let us summarize the techniques of softening, then, according to what we have established so far. We find two clear narrative practices: the use of rational observers (inner-textual evaluation) and of ambiguity (extra-textual evaluation). They may be summed up accordingly:

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(1) The use of rational observers (one or more)
   a) for relief, relaxation of narrative tension; usually followed by a heightening of the fantastic
   b) for objectification and delegation of the reader's skepticism: the "Horatio phenomenon"
   c) for undercutting rational protest through undercutting the rational observer

(2) The use of ambiguity
   a) arising from narrative viewpoint: observer or narrator is himself plainly unsure what has happened; or possible unreliability of events narrated, due to unreliability of observer or narrator (undercutting of observer or narrator is present), or due to unattested reliability (neutral valuation) of observer or narrator
   b) arising from the event: possibility of coincidence
   c) arising from insufficient information (tactical narrative omissions)

Both narrative practices enable the rational reader to continue reading. Because the fantastic events are not presented unequivocally, he is not repulsed by what might otherwise appear to be unbridled nonsense. Further, both narrative practices prolong the tension between two mutually contradictory causalities, encouraging the rational reader to find a resolution.

In theory, a dramatized narrator can be employed in any of the three basic uses of the rational observer. He can also be used to produce ambiguity arising from narrative viewpoint (2a above). It is interesting that Hoffmann makes relatively little use of dramatized narrators for softening; when they are so used, it is chiefly as rational observers for relief (and the subsequent heightening) of tension (1a). Even this use is

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restricted more than we would expect when we recall its skillful employment in Der goldne Topf, or in Klein Zaches genannt Zinnober. Der goldne Topf shows particularly effective use of a dramatized narrator in controlling affective response to the fantastic. There the narrator comments to the reader as Veronika and Liese practice witchcraft during the autumnal equinox. With a lengthy "Dear reader" development, the narrator in fact involves the reader in the scene by skillfully positing a hypothetical involvement. The discursus both relieves and escalates the tension: "Ich wollte, dass du, günstiger Leser! am dreiundzwanzigsten September auf der Reise nach Dresden begriffen gewesen wärest. . . . Wie du nun so in der Finsternis daherfährst, siehst du plötzlich in der Ferne ein ganz seltsames flackerndes Leuchten. Näher gekommen erblickst du einen Feuerreif, in dessen Mitte bei einem Kessel, aus dem dicker Qualm und blitzende rote Strahlen und Funken emporschiessen, zwei Gestalten sitzen. . . . Ich glaube wohl, dass dir, günstiger Leser! kenntest du auch sonst keine Furcht und Scheu, sich doch bei dem Anblick dieses Rembrandtschen oder Höllenbreughelschen Gemäldes, das nun ins Leben getreten, vor Grausen die Haare auf dem Kopfe gesträubt hätten" (FN 220-21).

Let us now turn to the material to which the techniques of softening apply, fantastic content, and consider the

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question of the level of fantastic in a story.

2. The Levels of the Fantastic

In considering the intensity, or level, of fantastic content in fiction, it seems advisable to avoid complicated subdivisions. There are three basic levels of fantastic possible in a narration: certain fantastic, no fantastic, and possible fantastic. This would appear to be a fair approximation of the conclusions a rational reader arrives at in reading. That is to say, he can objectively determine whether a story contains a fantastic event, does not contain a fantastic event, or perhaps contains a fantastic event.

To be sure, within the category of the certain fantastic we intuitively feel that some stories are "more fantastic" or "less fantastic" than others. Yet the degree of the certain fantastic is impossible to quantify in any meaningful way. We can, for example, count the number of times normal causality is abridged, but are there not some abridgements more severe than others? We can postulate a table of severities, but will it not be arbitrary and artificial?

It seems that the best way out of such a procedural difficulty is to avoid it altogether. When we realize that the narrative difficulties for an author are roughly the same given any amount of fantastic, then the question

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of the exact quantity assumes less importance. For an author must, in fact, contend with the same constellation of rational expectations regardless of the degree of fantastic in his text. This is even true in the extreme, namely in the "Kunstmärchen" of German Romanticism, where perhaps the most striking characteristic is the thoroughgoing suspension of normal causality.

It seems better to proceed via a simple breakdown into three levels of fantastic, based on the fantastic content as it appears to a rational reader. This necessarily takes the techniques of softening into account. Accordingly, if it should later appear desirable to speak of gradations within the certain fantastic, this can be done in terms of the degree of softening employed. The less softening an author employs in a fantastic narrative, the more intense is the confrontation with the fantastic.

Merely for the sake of orientation, then, among the stories already mentioned, Des Vetters Eckfenster has no fantastic content, Die Brautwahl has certain fantastic content, and Die Bergwerke zu Falun has possible fantastic content.

3. The Combination

Let us now turn to a consideration of these levels of the fantastic in combination with the techniques of softening.

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If a given complex of narrative techniques is chosen for consideration with three levels of the fantastic, then six combinations arise: each of the three basic levels appearing with or without the complex of narrative techniques. In our case, however, there are only five different combinations possible, since it happens that the narrative techniques chosen for consideration include all those which treat uncertainty about the presence of the fantastic. Thus, stories of uncertain (possible) fantastic content must employ the chosen complex of narrative techniques. The sixth combination--uncertain fantastic plus no techniques of softening--becomes impossible by definition. In order of increasing irrationality, then, the five viable combinations are: (1) stories with no fantastic content, told with no softening techniques; (2) those with no fantastic content, but with softening techniques nevertheless; (3) those with possible fantastic content, presented with softening techniques; (4) those with certain fantastic content, presented with softening techniques; (5) those with certain fantastic content, but with no softening techniques.

Upon a moment's reflection it becomes clear that the softening techniques spoken of in the second combination cannot be the same referred to in the other four combinations, for indeed how can something be softened which is not there? As will be explained later in greater detail,

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the softening techniques of the second combination are in fact different, being techniques operative only while the story is in progress, while those of the other combinations achieve a softening of the fantastic in the end effect of the story. The second combination embraces stories which--one thinks of Ann Radcliffe--temporarily create the impression of rationally inexplicable elements abroad in the narrative world, only to explain those elements away quite rationally before concluding.

If these combinations--which represent a range of possibilities open to all fantastic fiction--are applied to a large number of Hoffmann's stories, the following distribution results:

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NO FANTASTIC NO SOFTENING 1	NO FANTASTIC SOFTENING 2	POSSIBLE FANTASTIC SOFTENING 3	CERTAIN FANTASTIC SOFTENING 4	CERTAIN FANTASTIC NO SOFTENING 5
Die Fermate Der Artushof Die Jesuiter-kirche Das steinerne Herz Meister Martin Signor Formica Der Zusammen-hang der Dinge Die Doppelt-gänger Die Genesung Des Vetters Eckfenster Datura Fastuosa	Ritter Gluck* Das Fräulein von Scuderi Die Marquise de la Pivar-diere *The case for this classifi-cation will be argued in Chapter V.	Die Automate Die Abenteuer der Silves-ter-Nacht Der Sandmann Das Gelübde Die Bergwerke zu Falun Der Elementar-geist	Der goldne Topf Der Magnetiseur Nussknacker und Mausekönig Das fremde Kind Das öde Haus Das Majorat Die Brautwahl Klein Zaches genannt Zinnober Der unheimliche Gast Ein Fragment aus dem Leben dreier Freunde Eine Spukgeschichte Die Königsbraut Vampirismus	Ignaz Denner Nachricht aus dem Leben eines be-kannten Mannes

We note right away that columns 2 and 5 are nearly empty, that column 4 contains a very large number of stories, and that the stories of column 4 are so different among themselves that further differentiation might be useful. These are points which must be discussed, but let us first examine three stories from the table. This will furnish more substance for the classifications and, in so doing, will further illustrate Hoffmann's uses of softening.

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CHAPTER III

THE USE OF THE TECHNIQUES IN THREE TEXTS

For anyone who has an extensive acquaintance with Hoffmann's prose fiction, the preceding table may have contained some surprises. In order to concentrate on the principal questions raised by the table, let us leave the discussion of columns 2 and 5 for a later chapter, in which we can consider what is involved in these categories and why so little of Hoffmann's energy was devoted to them. Columns 3 and 4 present issues which are of primary importance to the concept of softening and--by extension--to the larger attempt to categorize Hoffmann's prose fiction by softening and fantastic level. Why--for example--are stories evidently as similar as Der Elementargeist and Der unheimliche Gast in different columns, while stories seemingly as different as Das öde Haus and Klein Zaches genannt Zinnober are found in the same column? These are questions which can only be answered after a closer look at several individual stories which, for the techniques they display, may be regarded as representative.

1. Die Bergwerke zu Falun

Die Bergwerke zu Falun is one of several striking stories which rely heavily on ambiguity as a narrative technique. Seen strictly technically, the greatest part

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of the ambiguity in Bergwerke proceeds from the unreliability of Elis Fröbcm as observer. That is, we must ask to what extent we are given hallucinations experienced by the young sailor-turned-miner, and to what extent we are given "objective" narrative reality. Where does the one stop and the other begin? Since the third-person narrative is told largely from Elis' viewpoint, the question for the rational reader becomes: Independent of Elis' perceptions, what evidence is offered to the presence or absence of the fantastic? The reader who would proceed rationally must thus be something of a detective. He weighs the evidence, the testimony, and the probabilities. It must of course be conceded that the impact of the story does not directly rest on the outcome of such investigation, but upon the subjective effect of all the artistic elements employed. It is, however, fair to say that among these ambiguity is a primary factor in the involvement of the reader, even if he never deals with it consciously.

The search for evidence independent of Elis' perceptions must concentrate on the figure of Falun legend, on Torbern, for it is he who--depending on the reading of the story--principally effects or principally manifests Elis' madness. Does the story, we must ask, present us with a fantastic figure to be accepted as real within the narrative?--that is, with a miner of supernatural abilities who, as legend relates, was buried in the great

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collapse of the Falun mine over a century ago, and yet continues to appear to local miners? Or does the story present us with a literary case history of a young sailor's mental breakdown? Elis' progress is after all one which begins with severe depression and ends in extreme schizophrenia. Hoffmann's studies of madness while in Bamberg cannot have hampered the portrayal of Elis.

If Torbern is real, that is, really what legend says (and hence a fantastic figure within the narrative), then the story should be put into column 4 or column 5. If, on the other hand, Torbern can be clearly demonstrated as nothing more than legend and Elis' hallucination, then the story belongs in column 1 or column 2. However there is yet a third possibility. If, as I hope to make clear, each of Torbern's four appearances is skillfully made ambiguous, then we have a story of uncertain fantastic content. Each element which would testify to a fantastic occurrence is questionable, and each element which would declare the events natural is in turn tempered with opposing evidence. Let us turn to the story with these considerations in mind.

There is a fundamental resource of ambiguity which should be noted first of all. It is available to all authors and is perhaps the most essential tool of fantastic narratives: the omission of independent confirmation for extraordinary occurrences. In Die Bergwerke zu Falun we

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see it in the fact that at no time does any third person in the narrative observe Elis with Torbern. What does this achieve? Uncertainty. In general, any narrative pronouncement resting on the perception of only one character is subject to scrutiny for unreliability. This simple narrative technique rests upon what is not done. It creates an ambiguity of narrative viewpoint or, in the classification on page 55, ambiguity 2a. This is the widest and most general use of narrative viewpoint ambiguity; hereafter we will chiefly be concerned with its more restricted uses.

Within the narrative world established in Die Bergwerke zu Falun, there is no definite independent confirmation of Torbern's existence. Elis' testimony by itself is not sufficient testimony; it is, after all, his reliability which is under examination. Why, we may ask, should Elis' testimony be questioned at all? There are at least three reasons. First, Elis is given no credentials of reliability; on the contrary, he is presented to the reader as an extremely depressed and labile young man. Second, as Elis himself realizes, he is having difficulty in keeping his dream fantasies separate from real life. Third, as we shall see, there is at least one crucial scene in which objective evidence casts Elis' testimony into doubt. We shall consider this in a moment.

Of the two principal techniques of softening,

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ambiguity and rational observation, the use of ambiguity is by far the more important in Die Bergwerke zu Falun. Let us look at several of its uses in the story, starting with Torbern's fourth and final appearance.

As we noted earlier, Ulla's annual visit to the mine occurs on the exact day that Elis' body is recovered, fifty years after his death. She asserts that years ago Torbern appeared to her, telling her she would see Elis again. This might seem to us to be an independent confirmation of Torbern's existence. Innocent Ulla has seen Torbern as well. However, on closer consideration we recall that the legend of Torbern was widely known in Falun,[1] and that Elis' Obersteiger believed Torbern responsible for Elis' madness. It is fair to conclude that Ulla heard of Torbern prior to his "appearance" to her. When we recall the cruel shock she received on her wedding day, it is at least possible that her grief and its supposed source have combined in a comforting mental projection. In stronger words, Ulla is deranged. Her testimony is, at the very least, questionable, uncorroborated--a clear example of recourse to technique 2a, the ambiguity which narrative viewpoint produces.

This does not, however, explain how she manages to appear on the very day of the year on which Elis is unearthed. There does seem to be something more than mere chance operating in the discovery of Elis' body on the

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one day of the year, Midsummer day, on which Ulla traditionally comes to the mine. It would seem that the extreme coincidence lends some credence to Ulla's claim to have a prophecy from Torbern. But conversely, it may merely be that the coincidence is extreme and there is no fantastic in play whatsoever. There is here, then, also ambiguity of event, a technique referred to earlier as 2b in the table of page 55. Ulla's reunion with Elis encourages us to believe in Torbern, but does not confirm his existence. This technique of ambiguity is an important one, but one which Hoffmann uses much less frequently than ambiguity of narrative viewpoint.

As noted, Torbern's first appearance--to Elis in Götaborg--can be considered from a technical point of view as the widest application of technique 2a, ambiguity of narrative viewpoint. Hoffmann clears the stage, as it were, of all witnesses before Torbern appears. Elis' crewmates and the prostitute from the alehouse have left him alone. There is no confirmation by any witness that Elis had a conversation with anyone, no confirmation beyond the basic testimony of the narrator as storyteller (which will be considered in a moment). But there is in the text a different sort of confirmation: upon being welcomed in Falun, Elis repeats part of his conversation of Götaborg. It turns out that it is replete with mining knowledge. "'Ei', rief der Obersteiger voll Erstaunen,

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'Elis Fröbom, wo habt Ihr denn die schönen Kenntnisse her?'" (SB 185). Elis must in fact have had a conversation with someone versed in mining in Götaborg. There is no certainty that the someone outside the alehouse was Torbern; it may simply have been a retired miner. But since the conversation is thus confirmed as a fact, it also encourages us to believe in the possibility that Torbern exists.

The second appearance of Torbern is also to Elis, several times on the road to Falun. We recall that at the outset of his journey to Falun, Elis stands at the city gates of Götaborg: "Da schritt eben ein grosser Mann vor ihm hindurch. Elis glaubte den alten Bergmann erkannt zu haben und eilte unwiderstehlich fortgetrieben ihm nach, ohne ihn zu erreichen" (SB 180). The statement clearly employs ambiguity of narrative viewpoint, leaving the rational reader with no certainty as to the identity of the figure. We recall the ambiguity inherent in the statement, "Es /kam/ dem Studenten Anselmus . . . /vor/, als breite ein grosser Vogel die Fittige aus zum raschen Fluge." At this point in Götaborg the ambiguity only concerns identity. Soon, however, the ambiguity becomes more complicated:

> Elis wusste deutlich, dass er sich auf dem Wege nach Falun befinde und eben dies beruhigte ihn auf besondere Weise, denn gewiss war es ihm, dass die

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> Stimme des Verhängnisses durch den alten Bergmann zu ihm gesprochen, der ihn nun auch seiner Bestimmung entgegenführe.
>
> In der Tat sah er auch manchmal, vorzüglich wenn der Weg ihm ungewiss werden wollte, den Alten, wie er aus einer Schlucht, aus dickem Gestripp, aus dunklem Gestein plötzlich hervortrat, und vor ihm ohne sich umzuschauen daherschritt, dann aber schnell wieder verschwand.
>
> Endlich nach manchem mühselig durchwanderten Tage erblickte Elis in der Ferne zwei grosse Seen, zwischen denen ein dicker Dampf aufstieg. . . . /Er unterschied/ in dem Rauch ein paar Türme und schwarze Dächer. Der Alte stand vor ihm riesengross, zeigte mit ausgestrecktem Arm hin nach dem Dampf und verschwand wieder im Gestein.
>
> "Das ist Falun!" rief Elis, "das ist Falun, das Ziel meiner Reise!" - Er hatte recht. (SB 180)

What we note first of all is that, superficially at least, the identity of the figure has been resolved. We are told that it is the old miner from Götaborg. However, the phrase, "in der Tat," raises several questions. Just what is the narrator saying? Is he telling us that Elis saw the old miner--that is, saw him in his own mind as he, Elis, made his way to Falun--there being no necessary agreement between objective reality and Elis'

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perceptions? The phrase "in der Tat," it should be noted, need not guarantee that what follows is "Tatsache." Or again, is the narrator speaking in the most direct manner available to him, asserting that the guiding figure in fact exists, that it is the old man from Götaborg, and that Elis saw him? This would be the equivalent in theater of a character stepping out of the action to address the audience.

The two possible interpretations exist simultaneously, testifying both to the complexities of narrative assertion in general, and to Hoffmann's control of them. Let us look at the problem a little more closely.

The first of the two interpretations of "in der Tat" obviously concerns ambiguity of narrative viewpoint: Elis in his confused state cannot offer reliable testimony to the figure he sees. This reading, however, must also take note of an ambiguous confirmation of Torbern's existence which will occur to the rational reader. This is namely that Elis <u>does</u> find his way from Götaborg to Falun, which in turn might indicate that the old miner did direct him. But of course there are ways, other than having a spirit-guide, in which a traveller can find his way from one major town to another. Elis may simply be distorting the experience. His arrival in Falun does not indicate that he had such a guide; the rational reader is simply dealt a fact--the arrival--which is inconclusive.

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The second of the two interpretations of "in der Tat," that the narrator is speaking directly to us to establish a point, deserves careful attention. It concerns a basic problem of literary interpretation, the reliability of a narrator as conveyor of information. The narrator's reliability is particularly important to our consideration of Hoffmann, since in this study we are directly interested in the structures used to convey or--as is often the case--to muddle narrative reality.

Some speculations can best illustrate the direct use of a narrator's voice. Let us use the sentence, "Drei Tage trieb sich Elis Fröbom in den Strassen von Götaborg umher, unaufhörlich verfolgt von den wunderlichen Gebilden seines Traums, unaufhörlich gemahnt von der unbekannten Stimme" (SB 180). This is simply a fact of Elis' state of mind prior to leaving Götaborg for Falun. The sentence says nothing about the reality of the voice--either that is an hallucination or that it is the voice of a fantastic power. Even if the narrator had said at this point, "Elis was warned for three days by a voice from the realm of the queen of the earth," the reality of the assertion would still in no way be altered, since the assertion can be interpreted as referring to Elis' point of view. That is to say, the narrator need in no way be committing himself to the reality of the voice or, for that matter, to the reality of the queen of the earth.

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In reading Hoffmann it is a generally safe point of departure to accept such an impersonal narrator as a reliable source of information. However, an important qualification arises: we must be aware when the story is (or may be) being presented from a character's point of view. This of course alters its reliability. Sometimes it is obvious when a character's point of view is being presented. For example, "Es war ihm" may introduce the observation. At other times it is not immediately evident whether a statement is an objective narrative fact or is subject to the limitation of a particular character's filtering intelligence. Close scrutiny is required.

A different situation arises when the narrator is no longer impersonal, but to some extent a part of the story. Here his own filtering intelligence may radically color the events. Such a narrator may be literally a part of the story, an articulated figure interacting with other figures in the plane of the narrated (e.g., Das Majorat, Grass's Katz und Maus) or simply an articulated narrator who "tells" the story in his own right (e.g., Der Sandmann, Thackeray's Vanity Fair).

Let us consider another change in the presentation of Die Bergwerke zu Falun. If the narrator had said, "There really is a queen of the earth, and a voice from her realm warned Elis for three days," then the narrator would have abandoned the posture of a rational conveyor of information,

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the posture of an intelligence who shares the reader's criteria of everyday cause and effect. He would have chosen to encounter the reader directly, in this case delivering an aside to the events of the story. (Incidentally, direct address is relatively infrequent in columns 3, 4, and 5; when it does occur it is usually directed to the establishment of a mood conducive to the fantastic, rather than to a manifesto on its workings.)

In the case of the last example, the rational reader becomes faced with two choices. He can accept the subsequent narration as the product of an ironic narrator--or, at one more remove, of an ironic second self--in which case the intelligence creating the story is spinning fantastic skeins which he does not himself accept as reality, but for which he has a certain purpose. The rational reader's second choice is to accept or reject the story as the product of an irrational intelligence. (We recall that Scott rejected Hoffmann, emphasizing mental sickness.)

The sentence drawn from Die Bergwerke zu Falun, "Drei Tage trieb sich Elis Fröbom in den Strassen von Götaborg umher, unaufhörlich verfolgt von den wunderlichen Gebilden seines Traums, unaufhörlich gemahnt von der unbekannten Stimme," and its two hypothetical variations indicate, then, in sum, that the reliability of the narrator's voice in fantastic fiction is subject to (1) the limitations

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which may be imposed when the narrator--impersonal or articulated--speaks from a character's point of view; (2) the limitations imposed by an articulated narrator's own intelligence (if such a narrator be present); (3) on another level, the limitations operative in an author writing a story he himself knows to be an impossible abridgement of cause-and-effect reality. With this third point we are talking about the relation of fiction to ultimate truth. It is a consideration which is relevant to Hoffmann's more fantastic stories in column 4, and obviously points toward the "meaning" of Hoffmann's fantastic stories. I cite it here only for completeness, since the concern of this study is not the meaning of the fantastic but how it is rendered by the tools of narration.

If the foregoing has been successful, then it should now be easier to turn from Elis' encounters with Torbern on the road to Falun to look at the third of Torbern's four appearances, the appearance to Elis in the mine. This is the most important of the four appearances in the rational reader's weighing of reality and illusion.

Elis' third meeting with the old miner from Götaborg might certainly seem to offer confirmation of the fantastic, for Elis' Obersteiger asserts that he, Elis, has just encountered Torbern. But if we look more closely we discover that here, too, Hoffmann has carefully structured ambiguity into the occurrence.

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Elis is working alone, once again a situation without witnesses. "Es begab sich, dass Elis Fröbom einmal in der tiefsten Teufe arbeitete in dicken Schwefeldampf gehüllt, so dass sein Grubenlicht nur schwach durchdämmerte und er die Gänge des Gesteins kaum zu unterscheiden vermochte" (SB 187). The problems of vision would seem to be directly significant, but no, we are told that the mist clears just before Torbern appears. However, the Schwefeldampf mentioned was earlier described as "betäubend," namely as Elis first viewed the mine opening at Falun: "Im Abgrunde liegen in wilder Zerstörung durcheinander Steine, Schlacken--ausgebranntes Erz, und ein ewiger betäubender Schwefeldunst steigt aus der Tiefe . . ." (SB 181). On the day of Torbern's third appearance, sulfur fumes are emphasized three times as Elis' immediate environment. He is working as we have read, "in dicken Schwefeldampf gehüllt." As Torbern appears we are told, "Mit eins gewahrte er dicht neben sich einen schwarzen Schatten und erkannte, da eben ein schneidender Luftstrom den Schwefeldampf verblies, den alten Bergmann von Götaborg . . ." (SB 187). And again, after the vision, the Obersteiger exclaims, "Um Christus willen, was ist dir widerfahren, Elis, du siehst blass und verstört aus wie der Tod! - Gelt! - der Schwefeldampf, den du noch nicht gewohnt, hat es dir angetan?" (SB 188). The text of the entire vision is presented in Appendix A.

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It seems evident that under these conditions Elis may be in something of a somnambulic state. Further, it seems not unlikely that the encounter can best be read as a manifestation, by means of a vision, of Elis' own anxieties. Let us remember that Elis has heard Pehrson Dahlsjö's speech about total dedication to mining: "Es ist ein alter Glaube bei uns, dass die mächtigen Elemente, in denen der Bergmann kühn waltet, ihn vernichten, strengt er nicht sein ganzes Wesen an, die Herrschaft über sie zu behaupten, gibt er noch andern Gedanken Raum, die die Kraft schwächen, welche er ungeteilt der Arbeit in Erd und Feuer zuwenden soll" (SB 185). Elis, of course, has become a miner for love of Ulla; he works with divided loyalties. Although he has not yet heard the Torbern legend when he sees "Torbern" in the mine, he has met an old miner in Götaborg. Is it not possible that he becomes intoxicated by sulfur fumes, and filled with anxieties, has a vision which combines the substance of Dahlsjö's speech with the experience in Götaborg? When he then tells the vision to the Obersteiger, the older man recognizes the general traits of the Torbern legend and interprets Elis' vision wholly in accordance with the Torbern tradition. Elis in turn accepts this interpretation, and it determines his future fantasies.

We note further that in the case of this critical appearance of Torbern, there is no supporting evidence of

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the reality of the occurrence--not even the ambiguous evidence provided elsewhere in that Ulla did appear on the one correct day of the year, that Elis did arrive in Falun with mining knowledge, and that he did find his way from Götaborg to Falun. The one bit of information which could provide such evidence, the existence of the Trappgang (rich vein) announced to Elis by Torbern, is suppressed. Although it seems reasonable to assume that this particular divination was as fruitless as those later ones by Elis which Pehrson and the Obersteiger do investigate (SB 193), we are not told that this particular Trappgang is pursued again by anyone other than Elis. This omission despite the Obersteiger's remark to Elis, "Ist es nun wirklich der alte Torbern gewesen mit dem du Streit gehabt im Schacht, und hat er von einem herrlichen Trappgange gesprochen, so ist es gewiss dass dort eine reiche Eisenader befindlich, der wir morgen nachspüren wollen" (SB 189). Such an omission would seem to be a clear instance of an intentional hole in the narrative. A fact which would do much to corroborate Torbern's existence is simply omitted. We referred to this technique earlier as 2c, that is, ambiguity arising from a tactical narrative omission. It seems reasonable to assume that the Trappgang was in fact sought for, due to its economic importance and its value to the Obersteiger in confirming the Torbern legend.

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* * *

Enough of ambiguity in Die Bergwerke zu Falun. The other major technique of softening, the use of rational observers, receives relatively little currency in the story, as noted earlier. This may be due the extreme Kleistian economy with which the story is told. Pehrson Dahlsjö is the principal exponent of rational assessment, telling the Obersteiger that not Torbern, but love for Ulla, has unbalanced Elis: "'Ach Herr', lispelte der Alte Pehrson Dahlsjön leise ins Ohr, 'ach Herr! dem armen Jungen hat's der böse Torbern angetan!' 'Glaubt', erwiderte Pehrson Dahlsjö, 'glaubt nicht an solche Bergmannsmärlein, Alter! - Dem tiefsinnigen Neriker hat die Liebe den Kopf verrückt, das ist alles. Lasst nur erst die Hochzeit vorüber sein, dann wird's sich schon geben mit den Trappgängen und Schätzen und dem ganzen unterirdischen Paradiese!'" (SB 193-94). Here and in his rescue of Elis from the mine, Dahlsjö as rational observer relives the tension of the narrative. This is the primary use of a rational observer, technique 1a.

Elis himself functions as a rational observer early in the story, discounting his first dream as "curious trash," the product of sickness: "'Es konnte', sprach Elis, als er sich mit Mühe gesammelt, zu sich selbst, 'es konnte wohl nicht anders sein, es musste mir solch wunderliches Zeug träumen. Hat mir doch der alte

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Bergmann so viel erzählt von der Herrlichkeit der unterirdischen Welt, dass mein ganzer Kopf davon erfüllt ist, noch in meinem ganzen Leben war mir nicht so zumute als eben jetzt. - Vielleicht träume ich noch fort - Nein nein - ich bin wohl nur krank, hinaus ins Freie, der frische Hauch der Seeluft wird mich heilen!'" (SB 179). This assessment relieves the tension generated by Elis' dream sequence, a sequence equal in botanical surrealism and psychosexual suggestion to Aschenbach's daydream at the beginning of Thomas Mann's Der Tod in Venedig.

2. Das öde Haus

Although Das öde Haus is set in the social round of early nineteenth-century Berlin and its fantastic events are quite different from those of the pits of Falun, the manner in which the techniques of softening are employed is fundamentally the same. As in Die Bergwerke zu Falun, there is heavy use made of the ambiguity of the main character's perceptions. And again as in Bergwerke, there is recourse to rational observation, chiefly for the relief of narrative tension; however, the use of rational observation is somewhat more extensive in Das öde Haus.

A fundamental difference between the two stories is that Das öde Haus definitely contains a fantastic event. This is what sets the story apart from those in column 3 (Bergwerke, Der Elementargeist, Das Gelübde, Der Sandmann,

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Die Automate, Die Abenteuer der Silvester-Nacht). The conditions of narration which establish the event as real within the narrative world are precisely those which were lacking in Die Bergwerke zu Falun: the presence of a level-headed observer who verifies the perceptions of the main character. Let us briefly consider this event, and then look at the use made of rational observation and of ambiguity.

The fantastic event is the appearance of Edmonde's image in Theodor's pocket mirror. The image appears to Theodor not only at home alone, but also in the presence of Doktor K., whom Theodor consults for help. This is a decidedly different order of occurrence from the appearances of Torbern. Where those appearances were carefully imbedded in structures of ambiguity which left the reader with no certainty, here a fantastic event is witnessed and corroborated by a responsible person. Doktor K. is given credentials of reliability within the narrative world: he is an esteemed physician specializing in insanity and psychosomatic illnesses; not only does the student Theodor consult him, but the noble family S. does so as well. He witnesses the event, and, for the narrative world at least, a rationally inexplicable event becomes fact.

Doktor K. is one of several rational observers in the story and, as will readily be concluded from the preceding, one who provides more than narrative relief through

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his observations. His calm manner and his medical advice--the stock in trade of every doctor: plenty of rest, nourishing food, and don't think about your problems--emphasize his rational approach. But the credence he gives to Theodor's story influences the reader's attitude. Theodor says, "Er hörte mich sehr ruhig an, doch bemerkte ich wohl in seinem Blick tiefes Erstaunen" (FB 474). The astonishment is as yet an equivocal response for the rational reader, encouraging him to speculate just what it may mean, but when the doctor himself sees the image, the case is made: "Die Gestalt kam wieder, der Arzt, mit mir in den Spiegel schauend erblasste, dann nahm er mir den Spiegel aus der Hand, schauete nochmals hinein, verschloss ihn in dem Pult, und kehrte erst, als er einige Sekunden hindurch die Hand vor der Stirn schweigend dagestanden, zu mir zurück" (FN 475). This is a particularly clear instance of what I earlier called the Horatio phenomenon in rational observation. The reader witnesses, as it were, a reliable figure's conversion to belief in the fantastic. The fact that Doktor K. has a certain openness to psychic phenomenon from the outset, due to his work with psychosomatic maladies, in no way lessens the force of the scene.

There is yet another instance of the Horatio phenomenon in the story. This is of the less forceful variety mentioned earlier (p. 46). In this technique, the process

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of conversion is omitted; the reader is simply confronted with a highly articulate and rational character who maintains a receptive attitude toward fantastic phenomena. An author presenting such a character is really engaging in a form of argument-through-association: the fact that such a character is present, positively disposed to the fantastic, argues indirectly for the reality of the central character's fantastic experience. In the case of Das öde Haus, the character, "ein als scharfsinniger Beobachter bekannter Mediziner," expresses belief in the potential of Magnetism to unlock certain mysteries. To be sure, in the interplay of viewpoints within the world of the narrative, this is only one man's opinion. But it would seem a viewpoint which Hoffmann intends to weigh heavily in the reader's consideration of those elements in Das öde Haus which are rationally inexplicable. Not only does the designation of the medical man as an acute observer lend special emphasis to his comments, but the forceful manifesto he delivers on human perception seems indeed of a wholly different order to intensity and style from the rest of the story. He begins with something of a disclaimer, ". . . so wenig ich der Meinung bin, dass in dem dunklen geheimnisvollen Reiche, welches unseres Geistes Heimat ist, auch nur ein einziges, unserm blöden Auge recht hell leuchtendes Lämpchen brennt, so ist doch so viel gewiss, dass uns die Natur das Talent und die

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Neigung der Maulwürfe nicht versagt hat. Wir suchen, verblindet wie wir sind, uns weiterzuarbeiten auf finstern Wegen." The analogy is then extended specifically to blind humans: "Aber so wie der Blinde auf Erden an dem flüsternden Rauschen der Bäume, an dem Murmeln und Plätschern des Wassers, die Nähe des Waldes, der ihn in seinen kühlenden Schatten aufnimmt, des Baches, der den Durstenden labt, erkennt, und so das Ziel seiner Sehnsucht erreicht, so ahnen wir an dem tönenden Flügelschlag unbekannter, uns mit Geisteratem berührender Wesen, dass der Pilgergang uns zur Quelle des Lichts führt, vor dem unsere Augen sich auftun!" (FN 477). The passage presents a generally Romantic evocation of a realm of light sought haltingly by hindered mortals; in functional terms it is a metaphoric extension of the medical man's scientific views. It is, we might say, a poetic brief for magnetism. But whether or not the afflictions suffered by Theodor in the story are of magnetic origin--and the issue is not resolved in the story--the passage encourages a rational reader to proceed with an open mind.

The story of course contains instances of rational observation which are more ordinary. As narrator,[1] Theodor himself provides relief for the story. At points he distances himself from his own earlier behavior: "Meine Fantasie war im Arbeiten" (FN 468), he says of himself at one such juncture. As a narrator he also

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anticipates, and in some cases reacts to, the protests of Lelio and Franz. "Ihr lacht? - Ihr seid mit mir fertig, ihr haltet mich für einen unheilbaren Träumer . . ." he says, interrupting his account of the first appearance of Edmonde's image, "aber sprecht, denkt was ihr wollt, genug, die Holde blickte mich an aus dem Spiegel" (FN 473). Or again, after telling his dream of a maiden held prisoner by black magic, he says, "Ha! - ich merke es an euerm Lächeln, dass ihr schon wieder in mir den träumerischen Geisterseher findet" (FN 469). Such comments restore the rational reader's confidence that behind the story there is an intelligence who shares his own criteria of cause and effect.

In addition to serving as vehicles to reduce narrative tension, Lelio and Franz function as auditor-substitutes. That is, in functional terms they stand in for the reader, allowing Hoffmann a disguised form of direct address; in place of the classic "Dear reader" of Das steinerne Herz or Der goldne Topf, we have the surrogate "Dear Lelio and Franz." An example is provided by the encounter with the old servant in the confectioner's shop: "Denkt euch /Lelio and Franz/ einen kleinen dürren Mann mit einem mumienfarbnen Gesichte. . . . Denkt euch, dass diese kleine dürre Figur doch, vorzüglich was die übergrossen Fäuste mit langen starken Fingern betrifft,

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robust geformt ist. . . . Denkt euch das und urteilt selbst, ob hier Grund war, Seltsames zu ahnen oder nicht" (FN 466). Is this not simply a less direct approach to the reader than a passage such as: "Kommst du einmal, vielgeliebter Leser! des Weges, so scheue weder den kleinen Aufenthalt deiner Reise, noch das kleine Trinkgeld, das du etwa dem Gärtner geben dürftest, sondern steige fein aus dem Wagen, und lass dir Haus und Garten aufschliessen. . . . Bei näherer Betrachtung weht dich ein besonderer wunderbarer Geist aus diesen bemalten Steinen an und mit einem leisen Schauer, der dich überläuft, trittst du in die weite Vorhalle" (FN 587). Both passages--the second is drawn from Das steinerne Herz--tell the reader what his response to a scene should be; the first heavily implies that Lelio and Franz (and by extension, the reader) should indeed conclude that there is reason to sense something strange; the second passage flatly tells the reader what he is feeling.

These instances of rational observation on the plane of the narrator--that is, of Theodor, Lelio, and Franz--complement those which occur within the plane of narrated events. Let us cite a few of the more striking uses. To begin with, the factor which prompts Theodor's visit to Doktor K. is his own very rational fear that he may be going insane: ". . . das Werk /Rhapsodien über die Anwendung der psychischen Curmethode auf Geisteszerrüttungen

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by Johann Christian Reils (1759-1813)[7] zog mich unwiderstehlich an, aber wie ward mir, als ich in allem, was über fixen Wahnsinn gesagt wird, mich selbst wiederfand!" (FN 474). Early in the basic story he chides himself for his interest in the house: "Bist du nicht ein recht wahnsinniger Tor, dass du das Gewöhnlichste in das Wunderbare zu ziehen trachtest, schelten deine Freunde dich nicht mit Recht einen überspannten Geisterseher?" (FN 463). Or, after becoming entranced upon seeing a bottle placed on the window ledge of the house: "Ich schlich mich leise fort, und der prosaische Dämon flüsterte mir sehr vernehmlich in die Ohren, dass soeben die reiche, sonntäglich geschmückte Konditorsfrau eine geleerte Flasche feinen Rosenwassers o.S. auf die Fensterbank gestellt" (FN 464). Despite being involved in the mystery of the house, Theodor, as we see, is able to step back from himself and assay that involvement. Similar objectivity is shown by the old man who finds Theodor gazing fixedly at the house through his pocket mirror. "Nehmen Sie sich doch vor Taschenspiegeln in acht, die so hässlich lügen" (FN 472), he says.

It is important to bear in mind the function of such objectivity in what is essentially a mystery story. Das öde Haus is not a mystery story of crime, as is Das Fräulein von Scuderi, but its method of exposition is every bit as complicated, and its residue of unanswered

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questions even greater. In such a story a certain amount of reliable commentary is necessary to lead the reader, as with the thread of Ariadne, through a maze of conflicting, partial, and faulty information. On first reading it is of course not apparent which information is reliable; from the vantage of hindsight we see that the essential facts for maintaining orientation were given within the plane of narrated events. This is quickly done in only two passages--passages kept almost telegraphically brief. The first occurs after the visit to the confectioner's shop: "So viel stand nun fest, dass die Nachrichten des Grafen P. über das Eigentum und die Benutzung des Hauses falsch waren, dass der alte Verwalter dasselbe seines Leugnens unerachtet nicht allein bewohnte, und dass ganz gewiss irgend ein Geheimnis vor der Welt dort verhüllt werden sollte" (FN 467). The second occurs after the nocturnal visit to the house: "Dass der Hausverwalter zum tyrannischen Wächter einer wahnsinnigen Frau von vornehmer Geburt, deren Zustand vielleicht der Welt verborgen bleiben sollte, bestimmt worden, daran war nicht zu zweifeln, wie aber der Spiegel - das tolle Zauberwesen überhaupt - doch weiter - weiter!" (FN 481). It would seem the author is contending with the problem of leading the reader without pulling him, and chooses brevity to cloak "true" information. In such a story we see a happy coincidence of a basic narrative need with the relief of

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narrative tension through rational observation.

It now remains to examine the use of ambiguity in Das öde Haus.

If it is true that a fantastic event is firmly established in Das öde Haus, it may seem odd to speak of the use of ambiguity in the story. In fact, however, the two phenomena exist side-by-side: the ambiguity does not touch the basic fantastic event (the image in the mirror) but only other, ancillary occurrences which may or may not be fantastic. The ambiguity thus concerns the extent rather than the existence of the fantastic. This is frequently the case in Hoffmann. Often only one event--and it need not be one of central importance--can be firmly established as fantastic, while others are subject to manifold ambiguity and merely draw, as it were, on the certainty of the established event.

The principal use of ambiguity in Das öde Haus proceeds, as in Die Bergwerke zu Falun, from narrative viewpoint. This is made more structurally evident in the story than in Bergwerke, for Theodor is relating events which happened to him to his two friends. Since the narrator (really an articulated "inner narrator") is thus the same person whose perceptions are affected within the story, it can be insisted that nothing Theodor says provides reliable information about the narrative world. If we accept this, however, we are faced with a completely

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suspect narration and have no foothold. This would seem an excessively strict approach. I suggest that it is in keeping with Hoffmann's interest in skilled storytelling to preserve the interplay of fact and uncertainty. In this light it would seem fair to accept the narrating Theodor's presentation of speeches as faithful; this then gives us perspectives on narrative action essentially different from his. It further seems fair to accept Theodor's own assessments as reliable but subject to confusion at given junctures in the narrative. These junctures are usually made clear from the conditions prevailing at the time. Thus Theodor's entranced gazing at the house via pocket mirror renders his perceptions at that moment as questionable as those of Elis under the influence of sulfur fumes.

Das öde Haus works carefully to establish ambiguity of narrative viewpoint in a way which is common to many Hoffmann stories. We find it, for example, in Cyprian of the Serapions-Brüder frame, in Nathanael of Der Sandmann, in the young nephew of Das Majorat, and here in Theodor: a character states his own susceptibility to believing in fantastic goings-on. This simultaneously qualifies and disqualifies him as a rational observer: he is rational enough to recognize his weakness for the fantastic, but too weak for the reader to accept his testimony as wholly rational. The device brings with it the

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additional benefit of relief of narrative tension, since it essentially functions as a passage of rational observation. Even though the character reveals himself as not wholly dependable in fantastic matters, his appeal to a higher standard of dependability is reassuring to the reader.

Theodor readily confesses his own susceptibility to the fantastic to Lelio and Franz. "Ihr wisst es ja alle," he says, "ihr wackern Kumpane meines fröhlichen Jugendlebens, ihr wisst es ja alle, wie ich mich von jeher als Geisterseher gebärdete und wie mir nur einer wunderbaren Welt seltsame Erscheinungen ins Leben treten wollten, die ihr mit derbem Verstande wegzuleugnen wusstet! - Nun! zieht nur eure schlauen spitzfündigen Gesichter, wie ihr wollt, gern zugestehen darf ich ja, dass ich oft mich selbst recht arg mystifiziert habe, und dass mit dem öden Hause sich dasselbe ereignen zu wollen schien, aber - am Ende kommt die Moral, die euch zu Boden schlägt, horcht nur auf!" (FN 462). Despite the final assertion that Lelio and Franz will be forced to concede Theodor his fantastic occurrence, the passage is essentially a two-edged sword; a journalist with a weakness for ghosts is not the best man to cover a séance. As Theodor admits, even as a child he had a susceptibility to the fantastic: "Mit Beschämung muss ich euch bekennen, dass mir jenes Ammenmärchen einfiel, womit mich in früher Kindheit meine

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Wartfrau augenblicklich zu Bette trieb, wenn ich mich etwa gelüsten liess, abends vor dem grossen Spiegel in meines Vaters Zimmer stehen zu bleiben und hinein zu gucken. Sie sagte nämlich, wenn Kinder nachts in den Spiegel blickten, gucke ein fremdes, garstiges Gesicht heraus, und der Kinder Augen blieben dann erstarrt stehen. Mir war das entsetzlich graulich, aber in vollem Grausen konnt ich doch oft nicht unterlassen, wenigstens nach dem Spiegel hinzublinzeln, weil ich neugierig war auf das fremde Gesicht. Einmal glaubt ich," he concedes, "ein Paar grässliche glühende Augen aus dem Spiegel fürchterlich herausfunkeln zu sehen, ich schrie auf und stürzte dann ohnmächtig nieder. In diesem Zufall brach eine langwierige Krankheit aus, aber noch jetzt ist es mir, als hätten jene Augen mich wirklich angefunkelt" (FN 471). This anecdote of Theodor's childhood, similar in its general lines to that in Der Sandmann, could be read as a part of the case history of an excessively active imagination. When it is combined with Theodor's capacity for dreaming--both day and night--a character emerges who is an ideal vehicle for ambiguity of narrative viewpoint.

To expand upon a point made earlier, the ambiguity which Theodor's narrative viewpoint produces affects the extent, not the existence, of the fantastic. This means that while the fantastic mirror image is corroborated, other possible fantastic elements remain unresolved.

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Does Angelika have magic or magnetic powers? Does she exercise them on Theodor? On Graf S.? Does a telepathic communication of her death come to Theodor, as he believes? (FN 488). None of these questions can be answered with any assurance. This is due partly to narrative viewpoint ambiguity and partly to the fact that some issues are raised so briefly that there is little information with which to deal.

There are many mysteries to Das öde Haus in addition to those associated with the fantastic. For example, why does Graf P. tell Theodor that the house is part of the adjoining bakery? Is this merely misinformation which he has himself received, or is it an intentional lie? Does he perhaps know the real story of the families Z. and S. and want to divert Theodor? Is Angelika's sudden departure for Berlin a cover for pregnancy? The "gewisse Ursachen" (FN 485) which induce her father, Graf A., to allow her departure are not specified; by her own assertion later, she bore a child of Graf S. Perhaps this explains why Graf S.oddly gives Angelika his servant for her Berlin exile, even though his own impending marriage to Gabriele and the subsequent expansion of his household would make the gesture particularly untimely. There is enough time for a child of Angelika and Graf S. to be of the same age as the missing child of Gabriele and Graf S., for if Angelika does have power over Graf S., the conception

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can have occurred prior to his sickness and supposed departure for Pisa. By this reading, the child brought by the gypsy woman is Angelika's, as Angelika asserts, and Gabriele's child is truly missing.

If this is the case, then it accounts for the exceptional state of nerves of Edmonde at the dinner party: the visit she and her "mother" Gabriele paid on Angelika has revealed that Edmonde is Angelika's daughter. This, presumably, is something the old servant of Graf S. knows, which may account both for the Graf's willingness to pack him off to Berlin before the wedding, and for Gabriele's rather vengeful decision to remove her sister from the servant's care. It is interesting that at this one point--the conversation of Angelika and Gabriele--Doktor K.'s otherwise explicit report is incomplete. "Bei diesem Besuch," he tells Theodor, "muss sich Wunderliches ereignet haben, doch hat mir die Gräfin nichts darüber vertraut, sondern nur im allgemeinen gesagt, dass es nun nötig geworden, dem alten Kammerdiener die Unglückliche zu entreissen" (FN 487). It is further curious that Doktor K.'s report to Theodor does not mention what Graf P. tells Theodor at the dinner party about the old servant: namely that the old servant is sick and close to death. This would seem to be a fairly important bit of information and certainly one Doktor K. would know, as he is to undertake the care of Angelika. It also contrasts

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oddly with the robust performance of the servant in the confectioner's shop.

Perhaps Graf P. is spreading a version of the events which is intended for Berlin society. It would seem possible that Gabriele has fabricated a socially acceptable reason for separating Angelika and her servant. Graf P.'s remarks at the dinner party seem linked with his earlier misinformation that the house served as baking and storage area for the confectioner next door. Of course he could give this misinformation unknowingly--that is, he himself could have been misled. There is a clear instance of such innocent misinformation elsewhere in the story. We recall that the old man who awakens Theodor from his mirror trance, a most rational observer, unknowingly furthers an incorrect version of the house's disposition when he says, ". . . eben nahm der Bediente, der dort, wie ich weiss, als Kastellan das Absteigequartier der Gräfin von S. ganz allein bewohnt, das Bild . . . fort" (FN 472; emphasis mine). But Graf P. could also give misinformation about the house with the direct intention of diverting Theodor's interest. If this were the case, his concern for protecting family S. would also lead him to speak for Gabriele at the dinner party.

In this connection, a further point of Graf P.'s information is of note. He refers to the putative daughter of Gabriele as "Edwine" (FN 483), while Doktor K. calls her

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"Edmonde" (FN 487, FN 488). This has usually been regarded as Hoffmann's careless oversight, but perhaps more is involved. If we remember that the information Doktor K. imparts to Theodor constitutes an "inner view" of the events, being the confidences of a patient (Gabriele) to a doctor, then it is reasonable to assume that Gabriele's information to Doktor K. was given in the assurance that it would go no further. If she had learned from Angelika and the servant that her daughter, Edwine, was really her niece, Edmonde, born of Angelika, there would be no reason for her to avoid using the correct name in the privacy of the doctor's office, particularly after the shock she has undergone. Graf P.'s use of the old name "Edwine" would then represent Gabriele's decision to continue to hide the now even more lurid family scandal by continuing to live officially as mother and daughter.

The inner view which is afforded by a double break of medical ethics--Doktor K. to Theodor, Theodor to Lelio and Franz--leaves a further unanswered question. That is, does Gabriele conceal the (putative) child-substitution from Doktor K. ("Bei diesem Besuch muss sich Wunderliches ereignet haben, dich hat die Gräfin mir nichts darüber vertraut . . .") and simply, inadvisedly or unintentionally, use the "real" name, Edmonde? Or does she tell everything to Doktor K.? It would then be he who conceals the

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information from Theodor. The latter would seem supported by the manner in which the doctor rapidly winds up his account, after the awkward omission of what transpired between Gabriele and Angelika: "'Es würde wohl' (so schloss der Arzt seine Erzählung) 'ganz überflüssig sein, Sie, gerade Sie auf den tiefern Zusammenhang aller dieser seltsamen Dinge aufmerksam zu machen'" (FN 487).

On the contrary, it would seem anything but superfluous to provide more information at this point, for the "tiefer/er/ Zusammenhang aller dieser seltsamen Dinge" is not explained by Theodor's entrance into the house. This puzzling, rapid conclusion of the Doctor's story must be dictated by medical and ethical concerns. Might it not be that he is giving Theodor sufficient information, in strictest confidence, to benefit him but not enough to compromise Gabriele? His use of the name "Edmonde" to Theodor is then done to allow Theodor to puzzle out the events for himself.

* * *

Das öde Haus is a complex story; it imparts information from many perspectives, and some of these perspectives are partly, even largely, unreliable. An impressive array of intervening, filtering intelligences processes, colors, and conveys objective narrative reality to the reader. In Appendix B I have attempted to show graphically how information is passed. The crux of the problem in

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determining what has in fact happened to the families S. and Z. is that Graf Z. possessed the crucial facts, and he is dead.

Even the reaction of Lelio and Franz is ambiguous. Perhaps just such a reaction--capable of more than one interpretation--is the only reasonable response to the story; in practical terms, however, Lelio and Franz increase the reader's quandary. Their response is difficult to pin down; impressed but noncommittal, they seem convinced Theodor has had an extraordinary adventure, but are skeptical of his psychic gifts.

I suggest that it is the ultimate irony that Hoffmann commences this most opaque story with the phrase, "Man war darüber einig" (FN 459).

3. Klein Zaches genannt Zinnober

With the consideration of Klein Zaches genannt Zinnober, the third and final story to be dealt with in this chapter, we are treating not only one of Hoffmann's most enjoyable creations, but also one of his most interesting from a technical standpoint. This is because the softening employed in the story is rich and varied, and of only one kind, rational observation. Ambiguity is not used in the telling of the story (or, as I will point out later, it is an ambiguity of a limited and special sort). In Klein Zaches, Prosper Alpan rides upon his dragonfly, Stiftsfräulein

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von Rosenschön casts her magic spells, and the fantastic is clearly fantastic.[1]

This might seem only natural in a story designated as a "Märchen," or fairy tale. After all, in a genre of which one of the conditions is the suspension of normal causality, why need there be the possibility of more than one interpretation of a given event? The answer, of course, is that there is no such necessity; the fantastic can be presented with no intervening ambiguities. However, we find that in three of the five stories designated as Märchen,[2] Hoffmann does employ ambiguity. One such example is, as we have seen, in Der goldne Topf. We noted Anselmus' uncertainty--and, consequently, the reader's--with regard to the form of the departing Lindhorst. Passages of this kind are not to be found in Klein Zaches genannt Zinnober. If Archivarius Lindhorst were to be transposed from Anselmus' Dresden to Balthasar's Kerepes, he would take wing under the new narrative conditions with Balthasar observing clearly.

It is evidence of Hoffmann's awareness of the thrill produced by the introduction of the fantastic that he gives to Klein Zaches a beginning which is consistently realistic. Frau Liese, Zaches' mother, "ein armes zerlumptes Bauernweib" (SW 7), laments her poverty, constant misfortune, and deformed child. As Frau Liese sleeps, Stiftsfräulein von Rosenschön undertakes to aid

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Zaches through magic. Yet, her words and actions remain carefully within the perimeters of everyday cause-and-effect. The rational reader can only suspect that this curious lady is indeed most curious. The sudden ability of Zaches to walk and talk is unusual. But perhaps, the rational reader reflects, it was only stubbornness which was holding the child back. It is only when the village pastor finds Zaches attractive, and even attributes his own son's words to Zaches, that the reader realizes he is in the presence of the fantastic.

At this juncture, precisely where the rational reader would raise his protest, the narrator addresses the reader in magnificent understatement, saying, "Wollte ich auch zur Zeit noch gänzlich darüber schweigen, du würdest, günstiger Leser, dennoch wohl ahnen, dass es mit dem Stiftsfräulein von Rosenschön, oder wie sie sich sonst nannte, Rosengrünschön, eine ganz besondere Bewandtnis haben müsse" (SW 11-12). In Klein Zaches, then, it is apparent that the narrator is a figure involved in rational observation. He recognizes that the Stiftsfräulein's capabilities contradict the reader's notion of cause-and-effect reality, and he labors to help the reader. With excellent humor playing upon self-consciousness of narrative technique, the narrator announces, "I will tell you everything, so that you won't skip ahead in the story." "Du könntest, lieber Leser, aber doch,

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trotz deines vortrefflichen Scharfsinns, in falsche Vermutungen geraten oder gar zum grossen Nachteil der Geschichte viele Blätter überschlagen, um nur gleich mehr von dem mystischen Stiftsfräulein zu erfahren; besser ist es daher wohl, ich erzähle dir gleich alles, was ich selbst von der würdigen Dame weiss" (SW 12). And the upshot of this Fieldingesque magnanimity is that Fräulein von Rosenschön is presented as the "renowned, world-famous fairy, Rosabelverde" (SW 14), one of a small number of supernatural personages left after the introduction of the Enlightenment by Prince Paphnutius.

Obviously, this is rational observation of a very special type. Direct address here functions through a narrating rational observer who accepts the reality of fairies; that is, he is not a rational observer in a conventional sense, but an observer for whose rationality fairies are no contradiction. The very openness with which the narrator assumes their existence is paired with the awareness that the reader may be somewhat taken aback. We might expect that the narrator would ask his readers to revise their standards of the possible, but no, the story proceeds with no such direct appeal. Indeed as the story concludes, the narrator's stance still comprises essentially the same juxtaposition of irrational elements and the reader's difficulty in accepting them: ". . . rückblickend auf alle Ereignisse, wie sie in den neun

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Kapiteln vorgekommen, fühlt er /the narrator/ wohl, dass darin schon so viel Wunderliches, Tolles, der nüchternen Vernunft Widerstrebendes enthalten, dass er, noch mehr dergleichen anhäufend, Gefahr laufen müsste, es mit dir, geliebter Leser, deine Nachsicht missbrauchend, ganz und gar zu verderben" (SW 97). And so he brings the story to a speedy conclusion.

Perhaps in the strictest sense this is not rational observation at all. For although such passages clearly function as rational observation--creating relief through appeal to the reader's standard of reality--it is equally clear that the narrator's concept of reality embraces some most abnormal phenomena. Still in functional terms the narrator is a rational observer, and a strict definition of what constitutes rationality would be a disservice to analysis of how the text operates.

There are three principal kinds of rational observation in Klein Zaches genannt Zinnober: that of the narrator, that of conventional rational observers, and that of undercut rational observers. This third type was not encountered in Die Bergwerke zu Falun or Das öde Haus. As we have already devoted some attention to the narrator in Klein Zaches, let us consider the two latter types of rational observation.

Frau Liese, the mother of Zaches, is one of several conventional rational observers in the story. In her

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meeting with the village pastor mentioned above, it is her response to the pastor's inordinate praise of Zaches which keeps the story on an even keel. "Aber Frau Liese stand ganz verblüfft vor dem Geistlichen und schaute ihn an mit aufgerissenen starren Augen, und wusste gar nicht was sie denken sollte: 'Ach lieber Herr Pfarrer', begann sie endlich mit weinerlicher Stimme, 'ein Mann Gottes, wie Sie, treibt doch wohl nicht seinen Spott mit einem armen unglücklichen Weibe, das der Himmel, mag er selbst wissen warum, mit diesem abscheulichen Wechselbalge gestraft hat!'" (SW 10). Through her rational view of the scene, the reader can assess the pastor's action. Rational observation of this nature does double duty in a clearly fantastic story: it establishes that the story is in fact clearly fantastic, and it provides the basic relief of rational observation (technique 1a).

Three other minor figures, not to mention Balthasar and Fabian at key points in the story, provide such basic rational observation. They are the violinist Sbiocca, the clerk Adrian, and Balthasar's friend Pulcher. All are victims of Zaches' strange power to garner their attributes in the public eye. All clearly see, and state, that this is insane, irrational, and cannot be--in short, that this does not conform with rational expectations of cause and effect.

It is a different matter with the rational observation

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provided by Mosch Terpin, the scholar Philadelphus, and--at times--Fabian. Here we have to do with the technique discussed in Chapter II as 1c, the use of undercut rational observers. As is clear, the result must be a qualification or even devaluation of rational analysis. In most cases, and especially in Klein Zaches, it is particular types of rational analysis which are pilloried. Here there are three different species of rational comment under fire--that of the fool, the pedant, and the cocky youth. Professor Mosch Terpin does not immediately appear as a fool: his development is gradual, beginning as a superficial natural scientist who has neatly and stupidly categorized all of nature. "Er hatte," the narrator tells us, "die ganze Natur in ein kleines niedliches Kompendium zusammengefasst, so dass er sie bequem nach Gefallen handhaben und daraus für jede Frage die Antwort wie aus einem Schubkasten herausziehen konnte. Seinen Ruf begründete er zuerst dadurch, als er es nach vielen physikalischen Versuchen glücklich herausgebracht hatte, dass die Finsternis hauptsächlich von Mangel an Licht herrühre" (SW 22). As he rises in favor within the principality, his ever-faulty scientific method is granted access to the royal kitchens and wine cellar. Mosch Terpin, as Pulcher reports in his letter to Balthasar, "erforscht insbesondere die Natur in der Residenz und deren Bereich. Dieser Beschäftigung halber bekommt er

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aus den fürstlichen Waldungen das seltenste Geflügel, die raresten Tiere, die er, um eben ihre Natur zu erforschen, braten lässt und auffrisst. Ebenso schreibt er (wenigstens gibt er es vor) eine Abhandlung darüber, warum der Wein anders schmeckt als Wasser und auch andere Wirkungen äussert" (SW 71). And as the story concludes, his degradation is complete. The pseudo-scientist, who denies the existence of fairies and magic, has become a public drunk, explaining all magic happenings "naturally": "Indessen hatte sich ein kleiner kristallner Wagen, mit zwei schimmernden Libellen bespannt, die der Silberfasan führte, aus den Lüften hinabgesenkt. 'Lebt wohl - lebt wohl!' rief Prosper Alpanus, stieg in den Wagen und schwebte empor über die flammenden Regenbogen hinweg, bis sein Fuhrwerk zuletzt in den höchsten Lüften erschien wie ein kleiner funkelnder Stern, der sich endlich hinter den Wolken verbarg. 'Schöne Mongolfiere', schnarchte Mosch Terpin, und versank von der Kraft des Weines übermannt in tiefen Schlaf" (SW 100).[3]

The scholar Philadelphus presents a different vice of rationality: pedantry. He actually has nothing to do with the development of the plot. He is introduced at the beginning of the second chapter, immediately following the historical discursus which explains how fairy Rosabelverde was forced to become the civilian Fräulein von Rosengrünschön (the name was later shortened to

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Rosenschön to make the "von" more credible). It would seem that the placement of Philadelphus' appearance in the story is intended to influence the rational reader's reaction to the preceding documentary on fairies. The narrator pointedly makes clear that those who would define, and thereby limit, the world to that with which they are familiar will commit errors: "Du gewahrst, o mein geliebter Leser, dass man ein grosser Gelehrter und doch mit sehr gewöhnlichen Erscheinungen im Leben unbekannt sein, und doch über Weltbekanntes in die wunderlichsten Träume geraten kann. Ptolomäus Philadelphus hatte studiert und kannte nicht einmal Studenten, und wusste nicht einmal, dass er in dem Dorfe Hoch-Jakobsheim sass, das bekanntlich dicht bei der berühmten Universität Kerepes liegt" (SW 22). The inference is that if a scholar can be unacquainted with students, then students (and other rational men) can be unacquainted with the fantastic. This would clearly seem to be a corner of the plot written with the ladder metaphor of Die Serapions-Brüder in mind.

In terms of affective functioning of the story, the important thing here is not that Philadelphus is a pedant, but that the reader recognizes that he, too, might be something of a pedant for reacting negatively to Rosabelverde. Since the introduction of Mosch Terpin follows hard upon the Philadelphus episode, it would

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seem that the intent is to counterpoint Rosabelverde with two ludicrous apostles of rationality.

Fabian is yet a third undercut observer, the cocksure firebrand who knows better. Of the three undercut observers, he is decidedly the one who functions as an advocate of the reader's own skepticism. Prosper Alpanus' carriage is for him not as Balthasar sees it, namely: "Der Wagen glich einer offenen Muschel von funkelndem Kristall, die beiden hohen Räder schienen von gleicher Masse. Sowie sie sich drehten, erklangen die herrlichen Harmonikatöne, die die Freunde schon aus der Ferne gehört. Zwei schneeweisse Einhörner mit goldenem Geschirr zogen den Wagen, auf dem statt des Fuhrmanns ein Silberfasan sass, die goldnen Leinen im Schnabel haltend. Hinten auf sass ein grosser Goldkäfer, der mit den flimmernden Flügeln flatternd dem wunderbaren Mann in der Muschel Kühlung zuzuwehen schien" (SW 47). Fabian knows full well that the carriage is a colossal deception;[4] according to him, "/das/ Kabriolett hat die Form einer Muschel und ist über und über versilbert, zwischen den Rädern ist eine Drehorgel angebracht, welche, sowie der Wagen fährt, von selbst spielt. Das, was du für einen Silberfasan hieltest, war gewiss sein kleiner weissgekleideter Jockey, so wie du gewiss die Blätter des ausgespreiteten Sonnenschirms für die Flügeldecken eines Goldkäfers hieltest. Seinen beiden weissen

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Pferdchen lässt er grosse Hörner anschrauben, damit es nur recht fabelhaft aussehn soll" (SW 51). Although it is difficult to imagine anyone screwing horns onto ponies, Fabian's description does strike a sympathetic note for the rational reader. After all, the entrance of the carriage into the story is the first appearance of the spectacular fantastic which surrounds Prosper Alpanus; perhaps, the rational reader may think, the carriage really is a fraud and the narrative environment is still, well, relatively stable. But soon he finds the young firebrand with a bewitched coat and bitten fingers (from trying to unmask Prosper Alpanus' genuine ostrich-doorman). Fabian's hard-headed rationality changes him into a butt of ridicule, and the rational reader loses his advocate. Clearly, there is something of the Horatio phenomenon (technique 1b) in play here as well, for Fabian converts wholeheartedly to the belief in wonders after his painful experience as skeptic.

* * *

I mentioned at the beginning of this section that, although the only significant form of softening in Klein Zaches is the use of the various techniques of rational observation, there is a limited and special sort of ambiguity employed. This is a form of ambiguity which will receive greater attention later in Chapter IV (pp. 141 ff.). but should be mentioned now for the sake of completeness.

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If we recall the sudden ability of Zaches to walk and talk after his first hair-grooming, we have an instance of this ambiguity. At this point in the plot, the reader does not know that Fräulein von Rosenschön is a fairy. Therefore, when Zaches begins to walk and talk, it is possible that the three-and-a-half-year-old child has simply decided that the time has come. The event is capable of more than one interpretation. Hoffmann extends the moment--the first appearance of the fantastic--by keeping the description of Fräulein von Rosenschön, and her speech, carefully ambiguous:

> /Fräulein von Rosenschön/ blieb stehen, und wurde, da sie von Natur fromm und mitleidig, bei dem Anblick des Elends, der sich ihr darbot, sehr gerührt. . . . 'Ach könnt ich doch nur helfen wie ich wollte! - Doch das, was mir noch übrigblieb, die wenigen Gaben, die das feindselige Verhängnis mir nicht zu rauben, nicht zu zerstören vermochte, die mir noch zu Gebote stehen, die will ich kräftig und getreu nützen, um dem Leidwesen zu steuern. Geld, hätte ich auch darüber zu gebieten, würde dir gar nichts helfen, arme Frau. . . . Aber ich weiss es, mehr als alle Armut, als alle Not, nagt an deinem Herzen, dass du jenes kleine Untierchen gebarst, das sich wie eine böse unheimliche Last an dich hängt, die du durch das Leben tragen musst. - Gross -

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> schön - stark - verständig, ja das alles kann der Junge nun einmal nicht werden, aber es ist ihm vielleicht noch auf andere Weise zu helfen.' /Sie/ strich leise und linde mit der flachen Hand ihm über den Kopf von der stirn herüber bis in den Nacken. Allmählich glättete sich während des Streichelns das struppige Haar des Kleinen aus, bis es gescheitelt, an der Stirne fest anliegend in hübschen weichen Locken hinabwallte auf die hohen Schultern und den Kürbisrücken. (SW 8-9)

There is no way to know at this point what kind of help she has in mind, or that "das feindselige Verhängnis" and "die wenigen Gaben" refer respectively to the Enlightenment and to the few magic powers she has retained after being forced underground. This is clearly a temporary ambiguity, one which spices the reading momentarily and is then removed. Let us call it "in-progress ambiguity," to indicate its temporary nature.

A similar instance of in-progress ambiguity is encountered in Das öde Haus. When Theodor describes the appearance of the face in the pocket mirror, a physical wonder, he himself introduces the possibility (for the rational reader) that he is merely seeing his own reflection: "Wie gesagt, oft, wenn jenes Bild ganz verblasst war, ergriff mich ein körperliches Übelbefinden, die Gestalt trat, wie sonst niemals, mit einer Lebendigkeit,

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mit einem Glanz hervor, dass ich sie zu erfassen wähnte. Aber dann kam es mir auf grauliche Weise vor, ich sei selbst die Gestalt, und von den Nebeln des Spiegels umhüllt und umschlossen" (FN 474). As we saw, with the progress of the story this ambiguity is removed by the testimony of Doktor K. to the reality of the foreign image.

* * *

In this chapter we have briefly considered the use of softening techniques in three stories. Although in general mastery these stories may be considered as exceptional within Hoffmann's corpus, they are in no way extraordinary in functional terms. There is a lower incidence of rational observation in Die Bergwerke zu Falun, perhaps, than in the companion stories of column 3 but, as I suggested earlier, this is due rather to the Kleistian economy of the story than to basic differences of narrative technique.

A striking difference of softening techniques is evidenced by Klein Zaches. The total abandonment of ambiguity of the sort used to great advantage in Bergwerke and Das öde Haus would seem to indicate quite a different order of narrative machinery. For indeed, once an author removes ambiguity of interpretation from potentially fantastic occurrences--be they only ancillary to the central fantastic event--his narrative attains a different character. It has a certain finality of fictional statement.

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For this reason I think that more than heuristic grounds speak for distinguishing between stories in column 4 which employ both rational observation and ambiguity, as does Das öde Haus, and those which employ rational observation alone, as does Klein Zaches. (In-progress ambiguity, being temporary, does not affect the classification, which is based on the story's end effect.)

I propose, then, to separate the stories of column 4 according to the presence or absence of ambiguity. Quite obviously, both subdivisions have to do with stories of the certain fantastic and hence remain within column 4. The revised table then appears as follows (I have added dates of first publication, according to Harich[5]):

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1	2	3	4a	4b	5
NO FANTASTIC NO SOFTENING	NO FANTASTIC SOFTENING	POSSIBLE FANTASTIC SOFTENING	CERTAIN FANTASTIC SOFTENING		CERTAIN FANTASTIC NO SOFTENING
			RO, Ambiguity	RO only	
Die Fermate (1815)	Ritter Gluck (1809)	Die Automate (1814)	Der goldne Topf (1814)	Klein Zaches genannt Zinnober (1819)	Ignaz Denner (1816)
Der Artushof (1816)	Das Fräulein von Scuderi (1819)	Die Abenteuer der Silvester-Nacht (1815)	Nussknacker und Mausekönig (1816)	Die Königsbraut (1821)	Nachricht aus dem Leben eines bekannten Mannes (1819)
Die Jesuiterkirche (1816)	Die Marquise de la Pivardiere (1820)	Der Sandmann (1816)	Die Brautwahl (1819)	Der Magnetiseur (1814)	
Das steinerne Herz (1817)		Das Gelübde (1817)	Das fremde Kind (1817)	Das Majorat (1817)	
Meister Martin (1818)		Die Bergwerke zu Falun (1819)	Das öde Haus (1817)	Der unheimliche Gast (1819)	
Signor Formica (1819)		Der Elementargeist (1821)		Ein Fragment aus dem Leben dreier Freunde (1819)	
Der Zusammenhang der Dinge (1820)				Eine Spukgeschichte (1819)	
Die Doppeltgänger (1811)				Vampirismus (1821)	
Die Genesung (1822)					
Des Vetters Eckfenster (1822)					
Datura Fastuosa (1822)					

One point which is evident right away is a curious bridging of attributes. The stories of columns 3 and 4a display the same softening techniques (rational observation and ambiguity) although they present different levels of the fantastic (possibility versus certainty); the stories of columns 4a and 4b display different softening techniques (4b lacks significant ambiguity), although they have the same level of fantastic.

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CHAPTER IV

THE ISSUE OF QUALITY

Perhaps at this point it would be wise to emphasize the general nature of the preceding table. It was not designed--and is not presented--as a classification applicable only to Hoffmann's fiction. Rather, the table is intended as a system of narrative classification applicable to all fantastic fiction: to Edgar Allan Poe and Ludwig Tieck as well as to Hoffmann. The distributions which appear when the table is used for the works of any particular author in no sense necessarily reflect a normative distribution for the genre, but only the narrative practice of that writer. For example, when the classifications of page 113 are applied to Edgar Allan Poe, quite a departure from the Hoffmann pattern emerges--and yet both Poe and Hoffmann wrote excellent fantastic stories.

Does such a pattern tell us anything? Or better: Does it do anything more than provide the rather sterile information that Author X has, let us say, a demonstrable preference for category 4b? I think so. To begin with, the categories themselves are meaningful: they represent distinct technical and ontological possibilities for fantastic fiction. A story in column 4b is intrinsically different from a story in any other category, either by

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virtue of its fantastic certainty or by virtue of its method of presentation, or by both. The pattern of distribution in Hoffmann's case indicates his conscious or unconscious decision to concentrate on stories which extensively pamper the reader's rational sensibilities. The pattern also tells us that by conscious or unconscious decision he avoided columns 2 and 5, that is, stories of the specious fantastic and the unbridled fantastic. In and of itself this information is only material for speculation, but if--upon examination of those few stories which do occur in columns 2 and 5--characteristics emerge which we tend to value negatively, then we might begin to think in terms of a rationale behind the overall pattern. We need not assert that the decision to concentrate in columns 1, 4, and (close behind) 3 was a conscious choice by Hoffmann; he may only have followed his artistic sense. The decisive point--and the one of interest to literary analysts--is whether a justification for the distribution can be found, an inner logic, which allows us to say the distribution falls the way it does because it seems to correspond to Hoffmann's narrative talents. I believe that there is exactly such an inner logic for Hoffmann's quantitative preference for columns 1, 4, and 3. I believe that what is involved is the issue of quality.

* * *

Let us briefly consider each of the columns.

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What of column 1? The stories here are not fantastic and as such are not the real concern of our study. They contain neither significant fantastic material nor softening techniques. Yet their importance is greater than mere presentation of one end of the range of possible combinations. Their importance is that there are many of them and that, by any fair standard, most are strong.

Similar observations as to quality and quantity can be made about the stories of columns 3 and 4. There is a quantitative preference for: (1) stories of the possible and certain fantastic which employ both rational observation and ambiguity, and (2) stories of the certain fantastic which employ rational observation with or without ambiguity. This sharing or bridging of attributes between 3 and 4a, and between 4a and 4b, seems to indicate that as far as the pattern of distribution is concerned, we should see columns 3 and 4 as something of a unity, and at any rate not as separate phenomena. A glance at the stories contained in this cluster indicates that here, as in column 1, most of the stories are very strong. The uniformity of quality is, however, less solid than in column 1 and will require some comment later.

This brings us to columns 2 and 5. What can be said about the striking vacancies presented here? What can explain the evident avoidance of stories with these narrative conditions? Aside from the famous Das Fräulein

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von Scuderi, there is little of note in the two columns. We know that it is possible to write outstanding stories of the unmitigated fantastic (column 5); Poe's Masque of the Red Death proves that. We know that the apparent fantastic (column 2) can be effective: Ann Radcliffe, after all, is not to be dismissed. At the risk of being premature in the utterance, I would assert that the stories of columns 2 and 5 are simply not up to the standards of fantastic narration almost consistently attained in columns 3 and 4. It would seem reasonable to conclude from the quantitative spread of the table that Hoffmann knew this, or at least sensed it, and avoided stories involving the narrative conditions present in columns 2 and 5. Since this harsh assessment falls upon one of the beloved gems of the Hoffmann corpus, Das Fräulein von Scuderi, let us discreetly begin our consideration with column 5 and a weaker vessel, Ignaz Denner. We shall proceed from there to Scuderi by way of some intermediary material, including Peter Schlemihls wundersame Geschichte by Chamisso and the use Hoffmann makes of the same material in his Geschichte vom verlornen Spiegelbilde.

1. Ignaz Denner

Perhaps we should start by noting that in some ways Ignaz Denner does not belong in column 5 at all, for it does employ softening techniques. What I hope to make

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clear is that the softening that is present is insignificant. Indeed, it is probably unlikely that Hoffmann could have written a fully-rounded story with less softening than is used in Ignaz Denner. At the conclusion of our consideration of the story, we will need to give some attention to a question of narrative theory: What are the characteristics of a narration wholly without softening? We will look briefly at Hoffmann's Nachricht aus dem Leben eines bekannten Mannes in this context.

The argument that the stories of columns 2 and 5 are not up to the standards of fantastic narration Hoffmann attains elsewhere is, ultimately, one which cannot be won conclusively. That is, to the extent that it depends on individual preference and taste the argument must be inconclusive. But there are some firmly definable indices of narration, wherein success and failure can be reliably judged. Success in them alone of course does not produce successful narration, but failure in them extensively blemishes the final product. Two such indices are plot consistency and character motivation.

On both these counts it would seem that Hoffmann's Ignaz Denner is a failure. Andres, the hero of the story, performs deeds which appear merely odd to the reader on first encounter; unfortunately, upon closer examination the oddness is seen to stem from clumsy resolution of plot exigencies. An example of such clumsiness is Andres'

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unexplainable decision to hide Denner, the convicted murderer of his (Andres') younger child, in his own home. This of course exposes the older child to the murderer as well. The injured Denner (who has leaped from the tower in which he was imprisoned) reveals to Andres that he is his father-in-law--a surprise for Andres and one, we would think, which would make the preceding infanticide even more horrible. Andres' response: "Ohne daran zu denken, was künftig mit dem Trabacchio /Denner/, der der Obrigkeit entflohen, werden sollte, brachte ihn Andres in ein einsames Zimmer und pflegte ihn auf alle nur mögliche Weise, aber so behutsam ging er dabei zu Werke, dass niemand die Anwesenheit des Fremden ahnte" (FN 408). The only reasonable explanation for this act is that the plot requires it: Denner must be furnished the opportunity for a second murder. Even piety could not induce such blindness in a father. To compound the improbability, Andres' master, Graf von Vach, who is responsible for the observation of law within his domain, accedes to the plan of harboring an escaped murderer (!) secretly (!) in the same house with the brother of the child he murdered. Parent and count seem to have lost their senses. Nevertheless, Denner is so accomodated, the second murder is attempted, and the story can end.

Offenses against plot consistency are breaches of the rule that every event in a story must be a logical

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and necessary part of the whole, that all actions and interactions must contribute to an internal harmony of events. An event which stands revealed as merely a structural component without intrinsic necessity weakens a story. It is not intrinsically necessary for Andres to perform his illogical act, even less so for Graf Vach to approve it.

Offenses against plot consistency are often clearly separate from the second index of narration, character motivation. An example of such a clearly separate offense against plot consistency is Isabella's highly illogical discovery, in The Castle of Otranto, of a trap door, revealed by a ray of moonshine which, "streaming through a cranny of the ruin above, shone directly on the lock they sought."[1] The maiden escapes the lusting Manfred, but Walpole must bear the criticism of willfully distributing his plot elements. On the other hand, as we have seen in Ignaz Denner, such offenses can coincide with offenses against character motivation. This is the case with Andres' decision to harbor Denner: it is both a clumsy response to a plot exigency (the second murder attempt must be facilitated) and an offense against the normally-motivated response we would expect from Andres and Graf von Vach.

A second instance of faulty character motivation in Ignaz Denner occurs just as Andres is released from prison.

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He has been told that the elder Trabacchio killed numerous children for their hearts' blood, and that Trabacchio's son, Denner, was completely raised to the ways of his father. Denner has already killed Andres' second son in just such a rite and is languishing in prison (prior to the incident discussed above) as Andres reflects: "Nun sah er erst recht ein, in welch grosser Gefahr er geschwebt hatte seit der Zeit, als Trabacchio /Denner/ in sein Haus getreten; wiewohl er noch immer nicht begreifen konnte, warum es denn der Verruchte so ganz und gar auf ihn und sein Weib gemünzt hatte, da der Vorteil, den er aus seinem Aufenthalt in dem Jägerhause zog, nicht so bedeutend sein konnte" (FN 406; emphasis mine). Even though he does not yet know of the family relationship, is it not impossible for Andres to overlook Denner's principal reason for using Andres' cottage, namely to obtain the blood of the child? Since we are not told that Andres is demented, such an oversight, combined with his extreme gullibility in leaving his remaining son with Denner--even after learning that Denner is again being visited by his supernatural father, and noting, "indessen war es, als würden Trabacchio's Augen wieder glühender, er lächelte zuweilen so seltsam höhnisch, wie sonst" (FN 410)--such an unlikely response must be seen as faulty handling of character motivation.

I stated earlier that the softening which is present in Ignaz Denner is insignificant. We might therefore

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expect that if we were nevertheless to classify the story into column 4, it would belong in the "b" column, where only rational observation is employed. Curiously, the story fits in neither the "a" nor the "b" column; it is so irretrievably direct in its commitment to the supernatural that only a few shreds of softening-through-ambiguity remain. Rational observation has gone by the boards--which, incidentally, would seem a strange option for an author who only the previous year (1813) had written the highly successful Der goldne Topf, employing heavy softening of both basic types. There is obviously no simple linear development in Hoffmann's talent.

But, it might be contended, is not Andres himself a rational observer? He is somber, stolid, no schizophrenic Elis, no "reisender Enthusiast." He would appear to qualify at first glance, but his intense religiosity renders him ineligible. For him fantastic events are merely the work of the devil, real, and hence no cause for rational protest. As a result, the rational reader is granted no respite, no common-sense interlude from the ever-mounting fantastic level. The story is exhausting and, after a point, I would suggest, even tedious. Part of the monotony is structurally determined by the narrative viewpoint--almost entirely Andres' perspective. With the exception of the "reports from Naples," Georgina's report of what transpired while Andres was in Frankfurt,

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and testimony at the trial, all events are given through Andres as eye-witness or--as at the beginning and end--are presented from his perspective. Since the narrator does not take on any individuation, the story remains rooted in Andres' point of view, a rather primitive story of the fantastic told in an unadorned, direct manner. The three insertions of other perspectives would offer sufficient opportunity for effective rational observation, but they are not utilized.

The significance or insignificance of what softening there is in Ignaz Denner must be evaluated in light of the story's fantastic events. There is a clear instance of internal "independent" confirmation of the fantastic. That is, events themselves confirm the reality of a rationally inexplicable event within the narrative, independent of any ambiguity. The key incident is Andres' "vision" while in prison:

> Da war es ihm /Andres/ als lösten sich die Steine aus der Mauer, und als fielen sie krachend herab auf den Boden des Kerkers. Ein blutroter Schimmer drang durch und in ihm trat eine Gestalt hinein, die, unerachtet sie Denners Züge hatte, ihm doch nicht Denner zu sein schien. Glühender funkelten die Augen, schwärzer starrte das struppige Haar auf der Stirn empor und tiefer senkten sich die finstern Augenbrauen in die dicke Muskel herab, die über der

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> krummgebogenen Habichtsnase lag. Auf grässlich seltaame Weise war das Gesicht verschrumpft und verzerrt, und die Kleidung fremd und abenteuerlich, wie er Dennern niemals gesehen. Ein feuerroter mit Gold stark verbrämter weiter Mantel hing in bauschichten Falten der Gestalt über die Schultern, ein breiter niedergekrempter spanischer Hut mit herabhängender roter Feder sass schief auf dem Kopfe, ein langer Stossdegen hing an der Seite, und unter dem linken Arm trug die Gestalt ein kleines Kistchen. (FN 393-394)

The attention to detail here is important, for it later confirms the reality of the vision. That is, when the "reports from Naples" arrive, their description of Dr. Trabacchio agrees exactly with Andres' perceptions in prison, although he had never seen nor heard of Dr. Trabacchio before. The gold-trimmed red cloak, sword, chest of medicaments, and contorted face agree in both accounts (FN 393, FN 399). At the very least then, the "reports from Naples" confirm a rationally inexplicable prescience; more likely they testify to the physical presence of the elder Trabacchio in Andres' prison cell. At any rate the congruity lends support to the basic content of the reports, as does the agreement between Denner's own methods of infanticide and those ascribed to his father in the "reports from Naples." The other evidence to the presence of the fantastic--it might be

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called "circumstantial evidence"--now weighs more heavily: Denner's pocket-light (FN 380), the murder of the three robbers in prison (FN 383), the mysterious occurrences during the prayer sessions at the conclusion (FN 410), the presence of the elder Trabacchio at the would-be murder of nine-year-old Georg (FN 411). The story is thus unabashedly fantastic.

Interestingly enough, despite the unabashedly direct character of the fantastic, there are some slight attempts at softening via ambiguity. For example, Andres is in a somnambulic state, exhausted from torture and giddy with wine, when he sees Trabacchio in prison: "Man stärkte ihn, wie es nach erlittener Tortur gewöhnlich, mit Wein und er fiel in einen zwischen Wachen und Schlafen hinbrütenden Zustand. Es war ihm als lösten sich die Steine aus der Mauer, und . . ." (FN 393). But as we have seen, the possible unreliability of Andres as observer (ambiguity arising from narrative viewpoint) is dashed by the later confirmation in detail of his vision. The ambiguity of Elis Fröbom's vision, we recall, was preserved, a vision occurring under similarly unreliable conditions of observation. Perhaps the relative achievements of Die Bergwerke zu Falun and Ignaz Denner suggest that for Hoffmann there may be some correspondence between narrative success and the degree of softening employed. This is a point which will require some elaboration in the

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next chapter.

There is an instance of ambiguity of insufficient information (technique 2c) at the end of Ignaz Denner: the old hunter attached to Andres' household twice sees a figure clothed in a red cloak with gold trim whisk out the window of Denner's room (FN 409-410). We are not told whether the hunter is acquainted with the details of the Trabacchio story (likely, due to its sensational nature), or, if so, whether he has been told that the man in the house is Trabacchio's son. We note that once again the issue turns on the red cloak with gold trim, a certain poverty of variation.

It would seem that such instances of softening might well have been omitted altogether, for they serve little function in their overwhelmingly fantastic context. Indeed why are they present at all? Is it because they are remnants of an elsewhere successful narrative formula?

* * *

Hoffmann's Bamberg publisher Kunz found the story "nicht würdig genug" (Briefwechsel II, 38) to be published, as originally intended, as part of the Fantasiestücke. Since Kunz's constant, perhaps dominant, characteristic in his dealings with Hoffmann was a concern for profit, it must be concluded that he felt Denner (or, as it was then titled, Der Revierjäger) was so weak that it would impair the sales of the Fantasiestücke. But the story is

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not without its strengths; it has a rapidity and simplicity of beginning which skillfully evoke the poverty of Andres' household; some elements of the morality-tale foundation are effective, e.g., Georgina's naive preference for worldly goods. An Italian, she chiefly cooks, evidences distress, and wastes away in the sunless North; Denner's wealth brings a welcome change into her life. Money turns out in fact to be the root of all evil, but the demonstration is not wholly without the Hoffmann touch. Yet even in the final published version (the story was rewritten for the Nachtstücke after Kunz's refusal), it is, I trust, evident that Hoffmann's high achievements in fantastic narration did not prevail in his Ignaz Denner.

2. Nachricht aus dem Leben eines bekannten Mannes

An interesting aesthetic problem is raised by Ignaz Denner. As we have seen, the story does not wholly live up to the conditions of column 5. It has some softening, however much we might wish in the interests of methodological purity that it did not. Hopefully it should be clear by now that what softening there is is inconclusive--expression, perhaps, of little more than vestiges of narrative practices elsewhere used with proficiency. What would Ignaz Denner be like with no softening at all? Certainly no better, it is safe to say, albeit more consistent. What, indeed, would be the characteristics of a story wholly without

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softening? Did Hoffmann write any short fiction which more closely approaches this absolute state than Ignaz Denner?

The questions bring us to consideration of a very short story, perhaps better termed an anecdote, and to some general reflections on the nature of the problems posed by column 5. Nachricht aus dem Leben eines bekannten Mannes (1819) is a story based upon Hafftitz' chronicle, Microchronicon berolinense;[1] the story presents the Devil as a (largely) normal Berlin resident, a witch, and a miraculous metamorphosis combined with aerial rescue from the burning stake. The story is short, humorous, and utterly fantastic. It is either wholly without softening or fitted out with softening of a particularly minimal variety, depending on one's evaluation of the Berliners' reaction to one of the Devil's practices, following.

The Devil, of course, is lame. In his guise as Berlin resident, he occasionally found himself unable to cross a broad gutter, "denn unerachtet er sonst gross und schön gewachsen, hatte er doch einen lahmen Fuss und musste sich auf einen Krückstock stützen" (SB 521). He would often be helped out of his difficulty by a fellow resident, with a curious scene resulting: "Reichte ihm nun einer die Hand, so sprang er mit ihm wohl an die sechs Ellen hoch in die Luft, und kam über die Gosse hinweg zwölf Schritte davon auf die Erde nieder. Das verwunderte

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die Leute ein wenig und mancher verstauchte sich hin und wieder auch wohl das Bein" (SB 521). A clearly fantastic occurrence, which in the longer fantastic fiction of Hoffmann would be fitted out with a panoply of softening techniques. Here, recourse is taken only to a delightfully ironical turn which can hardly be seen as the rational response we have examined in texts up to now. The Berliners are "verwundert," to be sure, but the explanation they receive is quite curious: "Der Fremde entschuldigte sich aber damit, dass er sonst, als noch sein Fuss nicht lahm, an dem Hofe des Königs von Ungarn Vortänzer gewesen, dass ihm daher, verhelfe man ihm nur zu einigem Springen, gleich die alte arge Lust anwandle, und dass er wider seinen Willen dann erklecklich in die Luft fahren müsse, als tanze er noch zu selbiger Zeit. Dabei beruhigten sich die Leute und ergötzten sich zuletzt daran, wenn bald ein Ratsherr, bald ein Pfaff, bald ein anderer ehrenwerter Mann mit dem Fremden hopste" (SB 521). The people are calmed by this explanation; the rational reader detects the authorial irony; and the whole is treated as amusing fiction.

The story is humorous; the narrating persona is the source of the assurance (through irony) that the rational reader need not be disquieted. In the plane of the text there is, let us agree, no softening of the varieties with which we are familiar. The story might, however,

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have employed no irony; in this case the rational reader would have been confronted with an intense assault upon his standards of everyday causality.

Nachricht aus dem Leben eines bekannten Mannes may well suggest the textual limits endemic, or properly endemic, to column 5. That is, it may be that stories of the unsoftened fantastic are unable to sustain the massive tension produced by direct contravention of normal reality for more than a relatively brief period. Perhaps such a story can only be effective as a cry of the irrational, direct, high-pitched, and curt. Serapionsbruder Theodor himself remarks that the best feature of the clever Nachricht is "dass sie sich nicht zu breit macht" (SB 525).

A masterpiece of the column 5 category, Poe's The Masque of the Red Death, offers some confirmation to the conjecture. It moves rapidly, presents its fantastic with no mediation, and terminates abruptly. The untenanted robes of the supposed impersonator, Death, receive no evaluation save that of horror. There is no rational protest, no ambiguity, only fact and the end of the story: "The revellers . . . /seized/ the mummer whose tall figure stood erect and motionless within the shadow of the ebony clock, gasped in unutterable horror at finding the grave cerements and corpse-like mask . . . untenanted by any tangible form. And now was acknowledged the presence of the Red Death. He had come like a thief in the night.

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And one by one dropped the revellers in the blood-bedewed halls of their revel, and died each in the despairing posture of his fall. And the life of the ebony clock went out with that of the last of the gay. And the flames of the tripods expired. And Darkness and Decay and the Red Death held illimitable dominion over all."[2] Neither the Hoffmann nor the Poe story employs softening. As Lothar, the author of the story according to the Serapions-Brüder frame, tells us; "Mag der ehrliche alte Hafftitz Anlass gehabt haben, jenes seltsame Ereignis wie der Teufel in Berlin ein bürgerliches Leben geführt, anzumerken, welchen er will, genug, die Sache bleibt für uns rein fantastisch" (SB 526).

If we recall Ignaz Denner at this point, it would certainly seem that the putative failure of that story is not due necessarily to the unsoftened subject matter. Rather, the failure, if such it is, seems structurally determined. It is either the lack of internal structures to cushion the blow of irrational elements which is at fault, or it is the narrative structure as a whole which is simply too extensive to sustain the high-pitched scream. The latter situation may be analogous to what pertains in amusing stories with punch lines: interest declines if the conclusion is not reached in a relatively short time. Brevity is the soul of wit.

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3. Schlemihl and Spiegelbild: An Opting-for-Softening

Some of the foregoing remarks find confirmation in Adalbert von Chamisso's Peter Schlemihls wundersame Geschichte (1814). I trust I am not alone in experiencing a declining interest in Schlemihl's woes and whereabouts once past the middle of the story. Or to state the matter positively for this remarkable narrative, the chains which bind the reader in the first two chapters become subsequently looser. If my subjective response to Schlemihl be shared, then the conjecture advanced above regarding the proper brevity of the unsoftened fantastic is more meaningful. Schlemihl is simply too long for its content.

For I would argue that Peter Schlemihls wundersame Geschichte is a story which--as far as the fantastic is concerned--should properly be considered as a work for column 5. Its fantastic content is all but unmitigated. To be sure, Schlemihl reacts incredulously to the strange abilities of the gray man: "Denke dir, um Gottes willen! drei gesattelte Pferde noch aus derselben Tasche, woraus schon eine Brieftasche, ein Fernrohr, ein gewirkter Teppich, zwanzig Schritte lang und zehn breit, ein Lustzelt von derselben Grösse und alle dazu gehörigen Stangen und Eisen herausgekommen waren! - Wenn ich dir nicht beteuerte, es selbst mit eigenen Augen angesehen zu haben, würdest du es gewiss nicht glauben."[1] This is rational observation of an exemplary nature, but it

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exists only in the first of eleven chapters. It is also important to note that there is no ambiguity whatever in the story. Rational observation, and that radically limited, constitutes the entire concession to the reader's expectations of a reasonable course of events. After the above scene, the powers of the gray man and the absence of the shadow are treated as mere facts. The world at large, curiously enough, is morally but not also rationally alarmed at the absence of Schlemihl's shadow. The seven-league boots of the final three chapters are introduced with no softening techniques whatever. It would seem, then, that Chamisso is at pains to attain the narrative plane of chapters two through eleven as quickly as possible, and that rational resistance to the fantastic and ambiguity in narration do not greatly interest him. I suggest that the absence of softening after the first chapter indicates that the use of rational observation at the story's outset constitutes merely the modicum of common-sense response which Chamisso felt belonged there naturally. It has no extended significance for him as a narrative device.

E.T.A. Hoffmann, however, takes the Schlemihl material, which we know fascinated and delighted him, and reworks it in a manner evidencing quite different technical priorities.

To begin with, the structure surrounding the central fantastic occurrence of Die Abenteuer der Silvester-Nacht,

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the loss of Erasmus Spikher's reflection (mirror image), is quite elaborate. Where Peter Schlemihls wundersame Geschichte begins directly, "Nach einer glücklichen, jedoch für mich sehr beschwerlichen Seefahrt erreichten wir endlich den Hafen,"[2] and proceeds via first-person, chronological narration to the end, Die Geschichte vom verlornen Spiegelbilde is part of a larger, six-part structure employing three different time planes. A distancing, indeed seemingly a double distancing, of the reality of Spikher's narrative is achieved. Die Abenteuer der Silvester-Nacht is the larger title for four short pieces, the last of which is the actual variation on Chamisso's loss-of-shadow motif. The collection is introduced by an editor's preface, "Vorwort des Herausgebers," and concluded by a postscript. The preface tells the reader that he is about to receive "abermals ein Callotsches Fantasiestück" from the diary of the Travelling Enthusiast. (Die Abenteuer der Silvester-Nacht appeared, Easter 1815, along with a second installment of Kreisleriana, as volume four of the Fantasiestücke.) The "reisender Enthusiast," a musically sensitive, highly emotional figure, was introduced in volume one of the Fantasiestücke as a convenient vehicle of narration. Here in volume four he continues his narratively useful lability, being described by the editor as someone who "offenbar sein inneres Leben so wenig vom äusseren trennt, dass man beider Grenzen

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kaum zu unterscheiden vermag" (FN 256).[3]

This clearly throws that which follows into a rationally suspect light. In fact, one might even speak of a frame of rational observation in Die Abenteuer der Silvester-Nacht, although it does not exist in the usual sense, for the editor does not reappear in the postscript. Instead, there is a "Postskript des reisenden Enthusiasten" performing the same function for the rational reader which the editor would, namely reaffirming the questionable reliability of the diary's material.

Let us look more closely at the preface and the postscript to determine what devices are employed in the softening of the highly fantastic occurrence, and then briefly turn to the four Abenteuer which constitute the bulk of the piece (Die Geliebte, Die Gesellschaft im Keller, Erscheinungen, Die Geschichte vom verlornen Spiegelbilde).

First and foremost, the preface softens what is to follow by omitting any assertion that it is true. As noted above, the piece begins: "Der reisende Enthusiast, aus dessen Tagebuche abermals ein Callotsches Fantasiestück mitgeteilt wird, trennt offenbar sein inneres Leben so wenig vom äussern, dass man beider Grenzen kaum zu unterscheiden vermag" (FN 256). Here we have the first two parts of a strikingly candid progression. He, the Enthusiast, obviously separates inner life from its

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surroundings so minimally that one is hardly able to distinguish the respective boundaries in the diary. The third part of the progression involves the reader by means of direct address, explaining quite openly that this difficulty of perception facilitates narrative seduction: "Aber eben, weil du /emphasis mine/, günstiger Leser! diese Grenze nicht deutlich wahrnimmst, lockt der Geisterseher dich vielleicht herüber, und unversehens befindest du dich in dem fremden Zauberreiche, dessen seltsame Gestalten recht in dein äusseres Leben treten und mit dir auf du und du umgehen wollen, wie alte Bekannte."[4] From "Enthusiast" to "man" to "du," the machinery of storytelling is brought to the reader for inspection, with the statement that he will have perceptual difficulties making him more susceptible of capture. The editor could not be more honest, nor more rational. The reader is forewarned about the Enthusiast, who is labeled a "Geisterseher"; he is also told that being forewarned may not help. The editor provides rational observation; further, his characterization of the Enthusiast establishes an ambiguity for all the Enthusiast's observations.

This ambiguity is reinforced by the postscript, which further operates to undercut the reality of the mirror incident. The ambiguity of narrative viewpoint is stressed again: "Du siehst, mein lieber Theodor Amadäus Hoffmann," says the Enthusiast, "dass nur zu oft eine

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fremde dunkle Macht sichtbarlich in mein Leben tritt, und den Schlaf um die besten Träume betrügend, mir gar seltsame Gestalten in den Weg schiebt" (FN 283). The "dark foreign power" cited by the Enthusiast is enough to raise the hackles of any rational reader; the effect is once again to qualify the Enthusiast's account.

The four Abenteuer themselves also contain elements of softening. Chief among them is repeated emphasis on the Enthusiast's excesses and possibly resultant impairment of perception. The first three pieces of Die Abenteuer der Silvester-Nacht are, according to the literary convention, pages from the diary of the Enthusiast, the fourth an account reputedly written by Erasmus Spikher himself. Let us not dwell on the four adventures, other than to point up a literary trick perpetrated by the Enthusiast. It seems clear from the textual parallels between his own descriptions of Julie in Die Geliebte and the manuscript reputedly by Spikher (Die Geschichte vom verlornen Spiegelbilde) that the latter text is in fact written by the Enthusiast. The "discovery" reduces what appeared to be double distancing, cited earlier, to that of one remove, but due to the extensive rational observation and ambiguity of narrative viewpoint, it would not seem that the softening is thereby significantly reduced.

One more point should be made about the preface. The editor's comment about the magic realm into which the

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Enthusiast may lure the reader recalls the passage from the Serapions-Brüder frame discussed earlier. For the sake of comparison, I give the passages side-by-side:

Aber eben, weil du, günstiger Leser! diese Grenze nicht deutlich wahrnimmst, lockt der Geisterseher dich vielleicht herüber, und unversehens befindest du dich in dem fremden Zauberreiche, dessen seltsame Gestalten recht in dein äusseres Leben treten und mit dir auf du und du umgehen wollen, wie alte Bekannte. (FN 256)

Ich meine, dass die Basis der Himmelsleiter, auf der man hinaufsteigen will in höhere Regionen, befestigt sein müsse im Leben, so dass jeder nachzusteigen vermag. Befindet er sich dann immer höher und höher hinaufgeklettert, in einem fantastischen Zauberreich, so wird er glauben, dies Reich gehöre auch noch in sein Leben hinein, und sei eigentlich der wunderbar herrlichste Teil desselben. (SB 599)

In both passages the emphasis is upon the literary device which facilitates entrance into the magic realm of the fantastic. The editor's preface, left, to one of the Fantasiestücke in Callots Manier clearly states a principle operative in the outstanding text of that collection, Der goldne Topf: the narrative coordination

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of fantasy and reality. This is a principle which will be fully elaborated some five years later in the literary conversations of Die Serapions-Brüder.

4. Das Fräulein von Scuderi

As we noted at the conclusion of Chapter II, the stories of column 2 temporarily create the impression that fantastic elements are operative in the narrative world, and then conclude quite rationally. The process is somewhat analogous to the resolution of a Dickens novel--Bleak House comes particularly to mind--where relationships are revealed at the end which easily explain what had earlier appeared to be hopeless complication. An "artificial" tension is thus involved. That is, the narrator--who knows very well how the story comes out--artistically holds back the information to maintain the interest level. This is "artificial" in the sense that the material of the story does not require the narrator to mystify his audience. By contrast, in Die Bergwerke zu Falun the elements of the story do not permit the narrator to establish, and then remove, the illusion of the fantastic. The presentation does not deceive for the sake of effect. The story of Elis unfolds--artistically to be sure--but it cannot be said that at any point information is withheld which would destroy the fantastic tension of the story. At the conclusion of a column 2

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story of the apparent (temporary) fantastic, a most sombre rational reader may feel that he has been titillated unfairly. (Of course, it must be conceded that all fiction is artificial; the point in question is that of tension produced which is not inherent in the sum of narrative events.)

The softening techniques used in column 2 differ in function from those of columns 3 and 4, although they are otherwise the same. The difference is simply a matter of the job to be performed, namely a softening of the confrontation with (seemingly) fantastic elements for as long as those elements are maintained in the narration. That is, the softening techniques operate only while the story is in progress--indeed, they cannot operate longer because the end effect of the story is the non-existence of the fantastic. We encountered this in-progress softening earlier in Klein Zaches genannt Zinnober, where we noted the ambiguity which Zaches' first hair-grooming temporarily creates. His sudden ability to walk is rendered ambiguous by the narrative veiling of Fräulein Rosenschön's magic.

Such in-progress softening is only an adjunct to the stories which employ the more usual end-effect softening. But in column 2, in-progress softening is the only softening used. As such it assumes correspondingly greater functional importance. We might well ask: Why does it have any role? Is it not contrary to an author's purpose

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to cushion what is really only an illusion to begin with? Is this not the narrative equivalent of double negation? The answer is that an author profits in two ways from the seemingly illogical softening of an illusion. The first embraces all the conventional benefits of softening discussed in Chapter II (e.g., the relief of rational observation, the comfort of ambiguity). The second way an author profits is peculiar to column 2 and pertains only to inner-textual evaluation (rational observation). Let us look at this for a moment.

Under the narrative conditions of column 2, rational observation takes on a function which is relatively unimportant in the other categories of fantastic narration. The presence of rational observation implies that there is a need for it. That is, the sheer occurrence of rational observation implies that there is fantastic content to be dealt with. This is useful in column 2, for the effect produced on the reader is heightened awareness that the fantastic may be at hand. This is a most fruitful reciprocity, bringing to mind the Pushme-Pullyou of Hugh Lofting's Doctor Doolittle stories. There the four-legged animal, composed of two forebodies joined end-to-end, Janus-like, demonstrates the mutual benefit of wholly integrated but technically independent motions. In fantastic fiction of column 2, the reciprocity between softening and illusion alternately comforts the reader by

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rationally disclaiming the fantastic and, in so doing, suggests that there really is a problem. This reciprocity is only of significant value under the narrative conditions of column 2 in which, ultimately, the fantastic is to be removed.

The foregoing remarks suggest what is in fact the situation: that rational observation is the principal softening technique of column 2. This is what we would expect, given the advantages cited. Extra-textual softening (ambiguity) can be used too, but it brings with it no particular benefits. When we recall our discussion of column 5, we note a certain symmetry: there the softening present--in Ignaz Denner at least--was primarily extra-textual; here in column 2 the primary softening is inner-textual. This symmetry, however, does not seem to be of any great moment.

Das Fräulein von Scuderi[1] contains one key event which confronts the rational reader with what seems to be the rationally inexplicable. Desgrais, an official of the Parisian mounted police, describes to his superior the near-capture of the murderer (later discovered to be Cardillac). Hoffmann, via Desgrais' description, establishes a narrative world imbued with the fantastic. The scene is done with careful attention to possible rational protest:

> "Im Mondesschimmer erkenne ich den Marquis de la Fare. Ich konnt ihn da erwarten, ich wusste, wo er

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hinschlich. Kaum ist er zehn - zwölf Schritte bei mir vorüber, da springt wie aus der Erde herauf eine Figur, schmettert ihn nieder und fällt über ihn her. Unbesonnen, überrascht von dem Augenblick, der den Mörder in meine Hand liefern konnte, schrie ich laut auf, und will mit einem gewaltigen Sprunge aus meinem Schlupfwinkel heraus auf ihn zusetzen; da verwickle ich mich in den Mantel und falle hin. Ich sehe den Menschen wie auf den Flügeln des Windes forteilen, ich rapple mich auf, ich renne ihm nach - laufend stosse ich in mein Horn - aus der Ferne antworten die Pfeifen der Häscher - es wird lebendig - Waffengeklirr, Pferdegetrappel von allen Seiten. - 'Hierher - hierher - Desgrais - Desgrais!' schreie ich, dass es durch die Strassen hallt. - Immer sehe ich den Menschen vor mir im hellen Mondschein, wie er, mich zu täuschen, da - dort - einbiegt; wir kommen in die Strasse Nicaise, da scheinen seine Kräfte zu sinken, ich strenge die meinigen doppelt an - noch funfzehn Schritte höchstens hat er Vorsprung - " "Ihr holt ihn ein - Ihr packt ihn, die Häscher kommen", ruft la Regnie mit blitzenden Augen, indem er Desgrais beim Arm ergreift, als sei der der fliehende Mörder selbst. - "Funfzehn Schritte", fährt Desgrais mit dumpfer Stimme und mühsam atmend fort, "funfzehn Schritte

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vor mir springt der Mensch auf die Seite in den Schatten und verschwindet durch die Mauer."
"Verschwindet? - durch die Mauer! - Seid Ihr rasend", ruft la Regnie, indem er zwei Schritte zurücktritt und die Hände zusammenschlägt. "Nennt mich", fährt Desgrais fort, sich die Stirne reibend wie einer, den böse Gedanken plagen, "nennt mich, gnädiger Herr, immerhin einen Rasenden, einen törichten Geisterseher, aber es ist nicht anders, als wie ich es Euch erzähle. Erstarrt stehe ich vor der Mauer, als mehrere Häscher atemlos herbeikommen; mit ihnen der Marquis de la Fare, der sich aufgerafft, den blossen Degen in der Hand. Wir zünden die Fackeln an, wir tappen an der Mauer hin und her; keine Spur einer Türe, eines Fensters, einer Öffnung. Es ist eine starke steinerne Hofmauer, die sich an ein Haus lehnt, in dem Leute wohnen, gegen die auch nicht der leiseste Verdacht aufkommt. Noch heute habe ich alles in genauen Augenschein genommen. - Der Teufel selbst ist es, der uns foppt." (SB 658-659)

Note the articulated rational response, "Verschwindet? - Durch die Mauer! - Seid ihr rasend," of la Regnie, and Desgrais' own disclaimer, "Nennt mich, gnädiger Herr, immerhin einen Rasenden, einen törichten Geisterseher, aber . . ." appropriating the reader's own responses.

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Were direct address used in the story, we might find the "günstiger Leser" of Der goldne Topf (FN 220) filling the role of the "gnädiger Herr" la Regnie, or the passage might be retained with an additional address to the reader following. Note also the effort to anticipate possible explanations of the disappearance, "keine Spur einer Türe, eines Fensters, einer Öffnung."

With this one event, then, the seemingly fantastic content of the story is established. The illusion is maintained until Olivier Brusson, much later, explains what really happened at the stone wall.[2] Perhaps it is regrettable that Hoffmann limits the fantastic repertoire to the one event above: Cardillac's creative pathology receives little more than a facile explanation based on current superstition (that pre-natal woes of his mother determined his psyche).[3] When we recall the artists and alchemists Gluck, Kreisler, and Coppelius--and even the frustrated productivity of Elis Fröbom--we wonder whether Hoffmann did not neglect a singular opportunity for a probing portrayal, most likely employing fantastic elements, of the pathology of genius.[4]

Be that as it may, the story stands with its one seemingly fantastic event supplying the narrative tension which is peculiar to the contravention of everyday reality. Let us see how well the event stands up to the indices of successful narration discussed in connection with Ignaz

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Denner, plot consistency and character motivation.

We earlier noted that a consistent plot is one which is internally harmonious, each event being logical and intrinsically necessary for the whole. We suggested that any event which is present for mere narrative convenience (lacking intrinsic necessity) weakens a story. The incident at the stone wall raises the brambly issue of necessity: on the one hand the mystifying experience is "necessary" to the narrative tension Hoffmann desires; on the other it is a gratuitous complication added to the basic plot for the mileage it brings. Looking more closely at the incident, we see that the liberties Hoffmann has taken with his reader are great. Olivier Brusson's description of the wall contrasts oddly with Desgrais'. Olivier describes the wall this way: "An Cardillacs Haus in der Strasse Nicaise schliesst sich eine hohe Mauer mit Blenden und alten, halb zerstückelten Steinbildern darin. Dicht bei einem solchen Steinbilde stehe ich in einer Nacht und sehe hinauf nach den Fenstern des Hauses, die in den Hof gehen, den die Mauer einschliesst. . . . Ich drücke mich an das Steinbild, in die Blende hinein, doch entsetzt pralle ich zurück, als ich einen Gegendruck fühle, als sei das Bild lebendig worden. In dem dämmernden Schimmer der Nacht gewahre ich nun, dass der Stein sich langsam dreht, und hinter demselben eine finstere Gestalt hervorschlüpft, die

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leisen Trittes die Strasse hinabgeht. Ich springe an das Steinbild hinan, es steht wie zuvor dicht an der Mauer" (SB 687). Desgrais emphatically asserted that there was "keine Spur einer Türe, eines Fensters, einer Öffnung." Has Desgrais overlooked the statue niches? Obviously not; he even returned in daylight to examine the wall. It is the author himself "der uns foppt" in this instance. Hoffmann here engages in more than the fruitful sin of narrative omission; his offense is one of commission as well, for he falsifies.

Returning to the question of necessity, we might conclude that the particular excess with which Hoffmann (unfairly) establishes the miracle of rue Nicaise indicates his awareness of the artificiality of the device. Desgrais' three-fold assertion ("keine Spur einer . . . Öffnung"; "starke steinerne Hofmauer"; "heute alles in genauen Augenschein genommen") then appears born of an authorial commitment which might be described as "in for a penny, in for a pound." Perhaps, one could contend, Desgrais is exaggerating the integrity of the wall in order to impress la Regnie with the impossibility of the capture. However, it is unlikely that the lie ("keine Spur einer . . . Öffnung") will remain undiscovered. The site has been investigated by a number of policemen, and the event becomes public knowledge in Paris. We cannot avoid the conclusion that Hoffmann is manipulating testimony for

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narrative convenience.

A similar but less glaring lack of consistency might also be seen in Desgrais' assertion that the inhabitants of the house in question are people "gegen die auch nicht der leiseste Verdacht aufkommt." Who, after all, might be more interested in jewels than a jeweler? And isn't the congruence at any rate one which Desgrais would be likely to mention to his superior? The patrolling police also fail to make such an association when they find Olivier, whom they recognize as the famous Cardillac's assistant, standing over the body of a victim (!) (SB 688). While mentioning inconsistencies, we might also note the curious ability of one man, throwing stones, to give the impression of a band of robbers (SB 657).

As for character motivation in Scuderi, there is the peculiar behavior of Baptiste. After having been stopped for questioning by the police in his own street, finding the door open with the key in it upon arriving home, and seeing a disguised figure fleeing the house, dagger in hand, he is alarmed. But before he asks the chambermaid, "Sagt, was hat das alles zu bedeuten?" (SB 652) he divests himself of twenty lines of explanation on why and how he came home. This is either unmotivated behavior or an effort to characterize Baptiste as a prolix fool. If the latter, it lacks significant later development.

Scuderi herself commits an odd oversight. We are

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told that she was fond of Anne Guiot Brusson, whom she raised, and Anne's son, Olivier Brusson. Scuderi favored the child "wie die zärtlichste Mutter" for several years; then the Brussons left Paris for Geneva and little was heard from them (SB 683-684). After the years of close contact with both the mother and the son, how is it that Scuderi does not react to the name, Olivier Brusson, but must have her memory prodded by Olivier himself (SB 683)? The suspicion arises that the author's desire for a teary surprise reunion produced this narrative difficulty. Or again--to mention one more infelicitous turn--isn't the delayed facial identification of the man of the Pont Neuf with the man in jail ponderous (SB 670, 679-680)? This is achieved by having Scuderi arrive in the rue Nicaise after Olivier has been taken to jail but propitiously before Madelon has gone the same route (SB 673). What is gained by this manipulation? Clearly, the drama of Scuderi's shock and refusal to talk with the prisoner Olivier Brusson (whose name she has not yet recognized). My point is that in Das Fräulein von Scuderi, the bones of structure obtrude all too often, hindering even the most benevolent reader's search for harmonious composition.

Even the language--and this will be the last of the slings and arrows directed at the story--at times egregiously departs from the acceptable.[5] Let us recall only the confrontation between Louis XIV and Madelon, the high

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point of the narrative and simultaneously perhaps Hoffmann's all-time nadir in descriptive prose: "Angst - Bestürzung - scheue Ehrfurcht - Liebe und Schmerz - trieben der Armen /Madelon/ rascher und rascher das siedende Blut durch alle Adern. Ihre Wangen glühten in hohem Purpur - die Augen glänzten von hellen Tränenperlen, die dann und wann hinabfielen durch die seidenen Wimpern auf den schönen Lilienbusen" (SB 705). We would expect more than lame Baroque conceits at the culmination of the narrative.[6]

It is not my intention to indict Scuderi or Hoffmann, but merely to direct attention at what seems the more than random coincidence of some striking deficiencies in the story, some of which are endemic to column 2, with the paucity of stories in that column. If we incline toward a high opinion of Hoffmann's critical judgement--and I do--then it is only natural to suspect a causal connection. That is to say: the conditions of narration offered by column 2 are inappropriate to Hoffmann's talents. He would seem to have recognized this and to have avoided the category, despite the immediate public success of Scuderi. The only other effort in the same classification, a clear failure, is Die Marquise de la Pivardiere, which seems to be an attempt to utilize material found in Pitaval's Causes célèbres et intéressantes while researching Das Fräulein von Scuderi.[7]

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Ritter Gluck, the only other story appearing in column 2, is so listed for special reasons which will be discussed in the next chapter.

* * *

As I suggested at the beginning of this chapter, if the stories of columns 2 and 5 are of lower standards of fantastic narration than Hoffmann attains elsewhere, this is not due to the impossibility of effective fantastic fiction in these categories: other authors excelled in them. But for Hoffmann there seems to be a connection between the narrative conditions provided by columns 2 and 5 and the lower quality of the fictional product. Chapter V will develop this further.

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CHAPTER V

THE MIDDLE REALM

1. Structure and Narrative Control

When we reflect in leisurely moments upon the narrative worlds of C.P. Snow and Adalbert Stifter--two widely divergent examples--we do not find it unnatural that for each a milieu comes to mind which is relatively constant. For Snow it is the privileged, harried existence of the English professional man: the social round, the drive to accomplish, the leisure of the cultivated. For Stifter it is the recurrent natural order, didactically rendered as exemplary for man.

But if we were to extend the concept of milieu beyond settings such as Snow and Stifter offer, we might conceivably include abridgements of everyday causality as part of an author's milieu. What I am suggesting is that the relationship of a fantastic narrative to its own perimeters of rational content and presentation is as characteristic for a given author of fantastic tales as is the relationship between a given "conventional" author and his narrative milieu. That is, there are limits of milieu within which every author works most successfully.

It is only a step from these observations to the analysis of the distribution shown in Hoffmann's short fiction. When, as we have seen, an extensive selection

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of Hoffmann's shorter pieces is analyzed according to narrative milieu in the broader sense (table, page 113), two striking concentrations emerge. The one avoids the fantastic altogether (column 1), the other presents it, but with intervening apparatus to confuse or comfort the reader (columns 3 and 4).

That such a quantitative breakdown is also a qualitative one does not follow, nor can the correspondence be established in any absolute way. Hoffmann's fiction demonstrates two principal loci, but to say that there he is successful, and that outside those loci he is exceedingly awkward, must remain assertions. Nevertheless they are unavoidable assertions for several reasons, particularly as far as fantastic fiction (columns 2 through 5) is concerned. The conditions of narration in column 1 are so different that I do not wish to emphasize the stories unduly. For the purposes of the study, they are interesting principally in terms of quantity, for they emphasize the paucity of stories in columns 2 and 5. If we also incline to evaluate the column 1 stories as strong, so much the better for my suspicion that Hoffmann recognized and avoided those areas where he was weak.

Let us look at the table of page 113 again. We see that within the categories concerned with fantastic fiction, the quantitative and (posited) qualitative concentration falls within those columns exhibiting

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softening techniques, i.e., columns 3, 4a, and 4b. That is, the distribution of Hoffmann's shorter fantastic fiction would seem to argue that, for Hoffmann, extensive softening techniques are a necessary component to narrative quality. By softening techniques I mean here the full-fledged variety--end-effect softening--which pertains to a substantive fantastic dilemma, not merely to the passing illusion of the fantastic offered in column 2.

But what about this issue of quality? Earlier, at the beginning of Chapter IV, reference was made to the lack of uniform quality in column 4. Even the most partial Hoffmann devotee would concede that Ein Fragment aus dem Leben dreier Freunde, Eine Spukgeschichte, and Vampirismus are of a wholly different, and inferior, order of achievement to Klein Zaches, Die Königsbraut, and Das Majorat. What does this indicate? Is it merely unevenness in creativity, or is perhaps more involved than chance fluctuation of Hoffmann's authorial powers? The resolution would not seem to be bound to a distinction between Märchen and what might be termed documentary, or pronouncedly real-world, narratives; within column 4b Das Majorat conveys the reality of the East Prussian castle as roundly as the two Märchen present Zaches and King Daucus Carota.

No, it would seem that something else is involved, something which operates irrespective of the particular

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fantastic subject matter. Once again a structural consideration seems to offer some illumination--and it is by now a familiar one: softening. Does there not seem to be a coincidence between the directness of presentation of the fantastic in those stories at the bottom of column 4b--two of which, Eine Spukgeschichte and Vampirismus, state the supernatural openly--and their very modest achievements as fiction? There seems to be a recalcitrance, an autonomy to the fantastic in these stories which testifies to an escape from the narrative control which establishes Hoffmann's mastery elsewhere in the column. Is it not tempting--even necessary--to postulate that, as the stories of column 4b approach the condition of unsoftened fantastic narration exemplified by Ignaz Denner, there is an increasing decline in the narrative control of affective response, the control which distinguishes Hoffmann in his best stories?

It then becomes a question of some interest to speculate about a structurally dictated cut-off point, namely a point of minimum softening beyond which Hoffmann's clearly finite and particular narrative skills could not shape an impressive fictional product. I would see this point, in the stories listed, between Der unheimliche Gast and Ein Fragment aus dem Leben dreier Freunde. Perhaps this is merely an idle interest, in pragmatic terms, for no definitive answer can be attained due to variances in

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literary tastes; however, the speculation itself seems fruitful for what it indicates about the interplay between a literary construct and the skills of the author manipulating it. We might imagine a bicycle and rider: the rider has command of the bicycle as normally constructed; he is even able, let us say, to move his seat on the bicycle further and further to the rear of the frame and still retain control by extending himself. However, there comes a point at which he is no longer able to extend himself to reach the handlebars, and the entire undertaking escapes him. Just as cyclists should avoid bicycles whose handlebars they cannot reach, authors should not engage in fictional structures inappropriate to their skills. Perhaps Hoffmann has committed just this error of structural judgement in Ignaz Denner and the latter stories of 4b.

But what of the cluster of stories in columns 3 and 4 above any such cut-off point? Does there not seem to be, between column 2 and the soft lower edges of column 4b, what we might call a "middle realm" in which the structures are appropriate to Hoffmann's skills? In Chapter III we examined three stories in detail, one from each of the columns concerned (3, 4a, 4b). If these stories--Die Bergwerke zu Falun, Das öde Haus, Klein Zaches genannt Zinnober--are taken as fairly representative of the narrative conditions present in their columns, then we

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can speak of certain characteristics of this "middle realm."

In Chapter IV it was noted that there were qualities shared among the three columns, 3, 4a, and 4b, which made it unwise to view the columns as three essentially distinct categories. We see that Die Bergwerke zu Falun and Das öde Haus employ both basic types of softening, although the fantastic content of Die Bergwerke zu Falun is uncertain and that of Das öde Haus is firmly established. Correspondingly, Das öde Haus and Klein Zaches differ in their softening--Klein Zaches employs only rational observation--but the fantastic content of both is certain. I would suggest that the stories of the three columns share a fictional ambience dependent more upon the techniques of softening than upon the particular subject matters. Whether or not it is justifiable to speak of the three columns as a cluster, it certainly cannot be argued that individual plot elements or even themes (e.g., prescience or magnetism) do more than establish correspondences and similarities between or among parts of the columns. We note that even the five Märchen do not fall uniformly into one column. It would be reasonable to expect that stories whose most striking characteristic is the suspension of normal causality would fall in column 4b, but no, ambiguity is present in Das fremde Kind, and is extensively employed in Der goldne Topf and Nussknacker und Mausekönig.

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The "middle realm," then, refers to the narrative province between the two extremes represented by columns 2 and 5; it is "middle" in regard to all possible treatments of fantastic material. The term is, of course, applicable to any writer of fantastic fiction; it takes on particular interest for our consideration because it coincides so closely with what I see as Hoffmann's strengths in fantastic narration.

Let us recall for a moment the literary discussions conducted in the frame of Die Serapions-Brüder. We remember that Theodor uses the metaphor of a ladder to describe the process by which a reader becomes involved in a fantastic text. "Ich glaube," he says, "dass die Basis der Himmelsleiter, auf der man hinaufsteigen will in höhere Regionen, befestigt sein müsse im Leben, so dass jeder nachzusteigen vermag." It would seem that this formulation speaks to the issue of Hoffmann's extensive concentration upon the middle realm of fantastic fiction, for does it not exclude the narrative conditions found in columns 2 and 5? The higher regions to which the heavenly ladder leads do not and cannot exist in any fiction of column 2, based as it is on an elaborate construct of deception. There are no "höhere Regionen" in column 2, only their passing illusion. The fiction of column 5 would seem to be excluded by the prescription that the foot of the ladder must be made fast in the

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everyday world (im Leben), so that every individual may be able to ascend. The narrative conditions of the unsoftened fantastic do not facilitate a reader's entrance to the fantastic realm: they simply present the fantastic as a narrative fact, with no rational protest, with no ambiguity. The ladder is not anchored in real life. I would argue that Theodor's formulation, "so dass jeder nachzusteigen vermag," is of supreme importance--is implicit--in Hoffmann's fantastic fiction. To set a story in contemporary Dresden, "im wirklichen Leben," is one thing. To ease, to cushion the reader's entrance into the higher regions of the fantastic is quite another undertaking. It requires "Dresden" in a special sense: the rational fundament of everyday reality must be built into the fiction, providing protest, providing seductive possibilities to explain away contraventions of normal causality.

Is it the first of the three types of readers discussed by the Serapion Brethren, the "/verständiger, gesetzter Mann, dem/ das Klettern . . . nicht ziemt," to whom the "middle realm" of columns 3, 4a, 4b, seems primarily addressed? Perhaps. It is clear that he needs devices to facilitate his unwilling ascent. Or is it the reader who becomes dizzy on the third rung who is the principal addressee? Certainly the rational content of inner- and extra-textual evaluation offer him stability. Or is it

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the reader dead to the ladder's presence who is the greatest problem? For him, the paraphernalia of Dresden qua city can provide a lead-in, an approach, to be furthered by the techniques of softening.

In our earlier discussion of the three types of readers (Chapter I), it was proposed that the first type was perhaps uppermost in Hoffmann's mind. This would suggest that the aesthetic issue--the impropriety of fantastic subject matter--was one which particularly concerned Hoffmann. There is some evidence of this concern in Ritter Gluck, the story to be considered next, but the larger question is one which really deserves no answer beyond this: the techniques used in the "middle realm" will get all three types of reader up the ladder.

2. Ritter Gluck

Ritter Gluck, subtitled Eine Erinnerung aus dem Jahre 1809, appeared in 1809 in the Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung of Breitkopf und Härtel, Leipzig. If for no other reason than that it is the first published piece of Hoffmann's prose fiction the story would command interest. For our particular concern with Hoffmann's presentation of the fantastic, Ritter Gluck demands special attention because it displays, I suggest, a hesitation to commit the story to the realm of the fantastic--to the "middle realm" of the works yet to come. The table of page 113

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presents Ritter Gluck in column 2, that is, in a category of fiction which I have argued is peripheral to Hoffmann's mastery of the fantastic genre, a perilous category for his particular narrative skills. How can this be? The story is widely acclaimed. It is frequently cited as containing the essence and structure of all Hoffmann's later fiction.[1] If this admittedly strong story in fact belongs in column 2, what happens to the argument that Hoffmann's narrative skills in fantastic fiction excel only in those narrative structures provided by the "middle realm"?

I hope to make clear that Ritter Gluck is classified in column 2 because of a structural peculiarity which apparently has to do with the development of Hoffmann's narrative posture in fantastic fiction. The story contains what perhaps can best be termed a structural safety device by which Hoffmann could disarm any assertion that he had written a rationally inexplicable story. The peculiarity as we find it here is not repeated in subsequent stories and constitutes, I suggest, an experiment in form which was subsequently dropped as unnecessary.[2] In all respects but this one the story belongs to the "middle realm"; it is in fact, as I hope to make clear, a preparation for the "middle realm."

Interpretations of the story differ widely as to its fantastic content. Much of the problem is attributable to

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the interpretation of Hoffmann's letter of the 12th of January, 1809, to the editor Rochlitz at the Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung (Briefwechsel, I, 261). The passage in question reads: "Ich wage es einen kleinen Aufsatz, dem eine wirkliche Begebenheit in Berlin zum Grunde liegt, mit der Anfrage beyzulegen, ob er wohl in die Musik/alische/ Zeitung aufgenommen werden könte?--Aehnliche Sachen habe ich ehmahls in oben erwähnter Zeitung wirklich gefunden zB. die höchst interressanten Nachrichten von einem Wahnsinnigen, der auf eine wunderbare Art auf dem Clavier zu fantasiren pflegte." (Orthography is that of the Briefwechsel.)

To this passage, Wolfgang Kron comments in his Anmerkungen to the Winkler edition (FN 777), "Hoffmanns Brief an Rochlitz . . . lässt keinen Zweifel darüber, dass /er/ seinen Helden als Partiell-Wahnsinnigen aufgefasst wissen wollte." This is simply untrue. Hoffmann's story can be "similar" to other material in the AMZ without being identical in this point of content. It may well be, however, that Hoffmann was happy to have Rochlitz adopt the "insanity" reading in order to have the manuscript accepted. Kron's blanket statement would have us believe Hoffmann's general intent in the story is made clear in this letter, whereas there is really no light shed on the basic issue whatsoever.

The interpretations of Gluck as a figure in the story

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fall roughly into three categories: the first reads Gluck as a madman, the second as a genuine revenant--the composer Gluck died twenty-two years earlier, in 1787, in Vienna--, and the third (my own position) reads him as a projection of the narrator.

The difficulty many critics have in accepting Gluck as a revenant reflects the situation of my oft-mentioned rational reader. These interpreters see Gluck as an extremely gifted but deranged musician who has so identified himself with the historical Gluck that he is able to re-compose Gluck's music with variations demonstrating a creative brilliance properly attributable only to the original composer.[3] The difficulties of this reading are great. As Hans Mayer keenly observes, "Niemals aber kann Anverwandlung und Identifizierung dazu führen, dass das Originalwerk durch Veränderungen ebenbürtiger Art gleichsam neu komponiert wird, ohne dass dabei Epigonentum entsteht. Ein 'wahnsinniger Musiker', in dem Glucks Genius schöpferisch wirkt, ist ein musikalischer Genius: in ihm muss mehr sein, als eine Epigonenrolle aus dem Jahre 1809 hergeben kann."[4]

This, then, is the problem of the text: the quality of musical achievement requires that the musician be Gluck himself, while the fact of his death in 1787 requires that he cannot be alive in Berlin in 1809. Further, Gluck died at the age of seventy-three; accordingly

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he would be ninety-five in 1809. However, the narrator tells us that the man he encounters "mochte über fünfzig sein" (FN 15). There are then, as Mayer argues, two realities present. This situation constitutes a conflict for the reader, one which is quite familiar to us at this point in the study:[5] the world of everyday cause and effect has been abridged, producing the thrill attendant upon the appearance of a second system of causality.

What is not familiar to us in the composition of the text is Hoffmann's recourse to a device which has not been noted by the critics. This is the device of an unclosed frame.

We recall that the narrator first meets Gluck in the Tiergarten pavilion of Klaus and Weber. "Dicht an dem Geländer," he tells us, "welches den Weberschen Bezirk von der Heerstrasse trennt, stehen mehrere kleine runde Tische und Gartenstühle; hier atmet man freie Luft, beobachtet die Kommenden und Gehenden, ist entfernt von dem kakophonischen Getöse jenes vermaledeiten Orchesters: da setze ich mich hin" (FN 14). As this passage continues, the narrator ingenuously reveals that in this pleasant spot he falls into musings, into daydreams: "Da setze ich mich hin, dem leichten Spiel meiner Fantasie mich überlassend, die mir befreundete Gestalten zuführt, mit denen ich über Wissenschaft, über Kunst, über alles, was dem Menschen am teuersten sein soll, spreche." To our

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ears, acquainted by now with the vocabulary of the Serapiontic principle, this would seem an echo of a passage considered earlier: "Täglich," said the hermit Serapion to Cyprian, "erhalte ich Besuch von den merkwürdigsten Männern der verschiedensten Art. Gestern war Ariost bei mir, dem bald darauf Dante und Petrarch folgten, heute abends erwarte ich den wackern Kirchenlehrer Evagrius und gedenke, so wie gestern über Poesie, heute über die neuesten Angelegenheiten der Kirche zu sprechen. . . . Viele haben das auch unglaublich gefunden und gemeint, ich bilde mir nur ein, das vor mir im äussern Leben wirklich sich ereignen zu sehen was sich nur als Geburt meines Geistes, meiner Fantasie gestalte" (SB 25-26).

This passage, probably composed in November or December of 1818,[6] seems to be a restatement nine years later of a situation introduced here in Hoffmann's first published fiction. In 1818 it is incorporated into the frame discussions of Hoffmann's major collection, Die Serapions-Brüder; in 1809 it occurs, as I hope is emerging, as an explanation--a clue, if you will--to the operative literary structure in Ritter Gluck.

The encounter with Ritter Gluck is a daydream or, as the subtitle permits us to read it, a remembrance of Gluck: a speculation upon, a projection of, the figure of Gluck himself.[7] He is a "befreundete Gestalt" for the literary critic of the Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung, an imaginary

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presence perhaps reinforced by the Tiergarten ensemble's chance playing of Gluck themes. As the narrator muses, it seems that the ensemble may be playing the overture of Iphigenia in Aulis, the priestesses' chorus from Iphigenia in Tauris, and sections from Armida. However, actual musical accompaniment to the musings is merely a possibility; the basic "Erinnerung" is of the Gluck performances which took place in Berlin in 1807 and 1808.[8]

The transition from the reality of the frame to the reality of the daydream is smoothly accomplished by rhythmic prose which, one might argue, has a lulling effect: ". . . mit denen ich über Wissenschaft, über Kunst, über alles, was dem Menschen am teuersten sein soll, spreche. Immer bunter und bunter wogt die Masse der Spaziergänger bei mir vorüber, aber nichts stört mich, nichts kann meine fantastische Gesellschaft verscheuchen." The Spaziergänger facilitate the transition, for they operate in both planes of reality. They are the pedestrians on the Heerstrasse as well as the procession of mental images enjoyed by the narrator as he abandons himself to the play of his imagination. The assertion that nothing can frighten away this fantastic company is followed by a curious contradiction, "Nur das verwünschte Trio eines höchst niederträchtigen Walzers reisst mich aus der Traumwelt." (Note here the statement that the narrator was--is?--in a dreamworld!) The contradiction is curious

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because it is preceded by the double denial that anything can disturb him, and also by the careful geographical assertion that at his table he is "entfernt von dem kakophonischen Getöse jenes vermaledeiten Orchesters."

It would seem, in sum, that the author allows his narrator to reveal a prolonged daydream, perhaps even without the narrator being aware of it as such. There is no awakening from the dream presented; the frame is not closed. "Ich bin der Ritter Gluck!" terminates the text, leaving the reader with two mutually exclusive realities, if Hans Mayer's reading is sufficient. But Mayer's reading applies to the text which follows the introduction we have examined--and for that text his reading would seem wholly fitting. I would argue, however, that Hoffmann has structured a frame to the story which must be considered as well. This frame remains open to encourage the illusion of two mutually exclusive realities.

It seems clear that Ritter Gluck presents us with a major statement of Hoffmann's compositional method or, at least, of the manner and degree of subjective immediacy he felt in literary visions. Ritter Gluck adumbrates not only the later restatement in Die Serapions-Brüder but, with its emphasis on "wirklich schauen," the literary testament Des Vetters Eckfenster as well. Accordingly it is no exaggeration to designate the story a literary credo on creative method. But the significance of

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Ritter Gluck does not stop here. In its unclosed frame the story displays the structural explorations of a beginning author, a tentative manipulation of structural components.

It is tempting to speculate--and speculation it must remain--about the reason for such a frame. Might it not be Hoffmann's timidity to present an unresolvable contradiction of normal reality in his first published fiction? Might it not be a device to protect an emerging author against the indictment of having written aesthetically irresponsible fiction? The fantastic, after all, is questionable fare for serious men. Gottsched's canons lived--and live--on.

We recall Serapion's defense of such artistic creation, restated nine years after Ritter Gluck. Is it unlikely that in 1809 a struggling composer and music critic would feel the need of a device to protect himself? As far as we know, an indictment fortunately did not arise. The experiment in form--unsoftened fantastic with an unclosed frame--did not need to be repeated. The way was opened for the Hoffmann fiction of the next thirteen years.

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CONCLUSION

In this study we have dealt--in some cases intensively, in other cases only in passing--with the vast majority of Hoffmann's shorter prose fiction. It is now appropriate briefly to summarize that treatment and to speak of the results.

I have attempted to isolate the devices of narrative technique which any author of fiction can call upon to convey fantastic material to a rational public. In my estimate, there are six such principal devices. Three of them operate within a text to assuage the rational reader, three of them operate extra-textually as part of the reader's analysis of the events presented. It seems natural, and indeed necessary, to consider these devices in conjunction with the intensity of the fantastic ultimately established in the piece of fiction. Presence, possible presence, and absence of the rationally inexplicable appear the only workable and sufficient distinctions. When these distinctions are combined with the six devices into a table, a form of structural analysis becomes possible for any author's fantastic fiction--the entire corpus or isolated stories. I applied the table to Hoffmann's shorter fiction; clear statistical perferences became obvious.

* * *

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What has emerged, then, in this study?

Before turning to the particular results for Hoffmann, I think that it is important to stress that one of the principal "results" of the study as a whole is its conceptual framework, i.e., that which was attained before the close textual examination of Hoffmann commenced. The preparatory work produced, I suggest, a tool for exact analysis of the affective dimension in fantastic narration. That which I have chosen to call the "techniques of softening"--in a glib but descriptive borrowing of Scott's term--is a codification of the principal means by which an author dealing in the rationally inexplicable can preserve the confidence of his readers.

As far as particular results for Hoffmann scholarship are concerned, I would see several principal results from the undertaking. The most striking is the clear emergence of a "middle realm" in Hoffmann's fantastic narration. The table demonstrates Hoffmann's statistical preference for controlling affective response by means of softening of the fantastic "reality" in his narration. Within the columns dealing with fantastic material (2 through 5), the statistical preference for softened possible fantastic and softened certain fantastic is overwhelming; the temporary fantastic (column 2) and the unmitigated fantastic (column 5) are represented by only a very few stories.

The question of the quality of the fiction within

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and without the "middle realm" arises. While it is clear that the degree of softening has no necessary connection with quality in fiction (e.g., both Poe and Hoffmann are excellent), for a particular author it often appears that he performs best in a given relationship to his reader. In fantastic fiction this may mean at a relatively characteristic level of fantastic softening. This would certainly seem to obtain in Hoffmann's case. Two arguments were advanced in this context. The first may be summed up in the assertion: for Hoffmann's fantastic fiction, softening techniques are a necessary element of high-quality narration. This indicates that the stories of columns 2 and 5 were found wanting; Das Fräulein von Scuderi and Ignaz Denner were judged awkward in two indices of narration, plot consistency and character motivation. The second argument is more hypothesis than argument: that Hoffmann recognized his insufficiency under the narrative conditions offered in columns 2 and 5 and avoided such fiction. The heavy circumstantial evidence of quantitative and qualitative emphasis upon columns 1, 3, and 4 is the principal support which can be adduced for the argument. But in addition, Hoffmann's reworking of the Schlemihl material in his Geschichte vom verlornen Spiegelbild may be seen to demonstrate an operative preference for softening.

Another result of the study is the emergence of great flexibility in the softening techniques. It was found

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that Hoffmann employs the same techniques for different levels of fantastic content, that is, that the entire panoply of softening is employed for the certain as well as the uncertain fantastic. At the same time it emerged that the certain fantastic can be treated with inner-textual softening (rational observation) alone. Both these situations can be stated succinctly: Hoffmann varies fantastic content (uncertain versus certain) without varying the softening, or varies the softening within a fixed fantastic content.

The difference in the softening techniques led to a differentiation in column 4 between those stories employing rational observation and ambiguity and those employing rational observation alone. It emerged that despite this basic distinction of technique there is no corresponding distinction in the type of stories falling into each column. Märchen were found in both, as were stories with a more pronouncedly real-world orientation.

Throughout the study, "softening" referred to a cushioning of the shock of confrontation with the fantastic; our index in ascertaining fantastic content was that ultimately attained in each story. However, a temporary variety, termed "in-progress-softening" received some discussion. It was found to be the mainstay of column 2 stories, but to have occasional adjunct use in columns 3 and 4.

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Finally, amidst the considerations of technique, at least two interpretive results appeared. Firstly, the table makes obvious that there is no clear linear development in the maturation of Hoffmann's handling of the fantastic. Ritter Gluck, a limited masterpiece, initiates the entire corpus. Der goldne Topf is followed within a year by the technically abysmal Ignaz Denner, followed in turn by the entire production of Die Serapions-Brüder. Secondly, I suggest that a form of total softening--by removal of the fantastic via a narrative frame--has been discovered in Ritter Gluck. This would seem to be a structural discovery of some interpretive significance, particularly for my concerns in the study, for it demonstrates a simple and, if you will, hesitant narrative technique in an emerging author, a technique which was later refined and articulated into softening integrated with the entire construct of narration.

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APPENDIX A:

THE VISION AT FALUN

Es begab sich, dass Elis Fröbom einmal in der tiefsten Teufe arbeitete in dicken Schwefeldampf gehüllt, so dass sein Grubenlicht nur schwach durchdämmerte und er die Gänge des Gesteins kaum zu unterscheiden vermochte. Da hörte er, wie aus noch tieferm Schacht ein Klopfen heraustönte als werde mit dem Puchhammer gearbeitet. Da dergleichen Arbeit nun nicht wohl in der Teufe möglich, und Elis wohl wusste, dass ausser ihm heute niemand herabgefahren, da der Steiger eben die Leute im Förderschacht anstellte, so wollte ihm das Pochen und Hämmern ganz unheimlich bedünken. Er liess Handfäustel und Eisen ruhen und horchte zu den hohl anschlagenden Tönen, die immer näher und näher zu kommen schienen. Mit eins gewahrte er dicht neben sich einen schwarzen Schatten und erkannte, da eben ein schneidender Luftstrom den Schwefeldampf verblies, den alten Bergmann von Götaborg, der ihm zur Seite stand. "Glück auf!" rief der Alte, "Glück auf, Elis Fröbom hier unten im Gestein! - Nun wie gefällt dir das Leben, Kamerad?" - Elis wollte fragen, auf welche wunderbare Art der Alte in den Schacht gekommen; der schlug aber mit seinem Hammer an das Gestein mit solcher Kraft, dass Feuerfunken umherstoben und es wie ferner Donner im Schacht widerhallte und rief dann mit entsetzlicher Stimme: "Das ist hier ein herrlicher Trappgang, aber du schnöder schuftiger Geselle schauest nichts als einen Trum, der kaum eines Strohhalms mächtig. - Hier unten bist du ein blinder Maulwurf, dem der Metallfürst ewig abhold bleiben wird, und oben vermagst du auch nichts zu unternehmen, und stellst vergebens dem Garkönig nach. - Hei! des Pehrson Dahlsjö Tochter Ulla willst du zum Weibe gewinnen, deshalb arbeitest du hier ohne Lieb und Gedanken. - Nimm dich in acht du falscher Gesell, dass der Metallfürst, den du verhöhnst, dich nicht fasst und hinabschleudert, dass deine Glieder zerbröckeln am scharfen Gestein. - Und nimmer wird Ulla dein Weib, das sag ich dir!"

Dem Elis wallte der Zorn auf vor den schnöden Worten des Alten. "Was tust du", rief er, "was tust du hier in dem Schacht meines Herrn Pehrson Dahlsjö, in dem ich arbeite mit aller Kraft und wie es meines Berufs ist? Hebe dich hinweg wie du gekommen oder wir wollen sehen, wer hier unten einer dem andern zuerst das Gehirn einschlägt." - Damit stellte sich Elis Fröbom trotzig vor den Alten hin und schwang sein eisernes Handfäustel, mit dem er gearbeitet, hoch empor. Der Alte lachte höhnisch auf, und Elis sah mit Entsetzen wie er behende gleich einer Eichkatz die schmalen Sprossen der Leiter heraufhüpfte und in dem schwarzen Geklüft verschwand.

Elis fühlte sich wie gelähmt an allen Gliedern, die

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Arbeit wollte nicht mehr vonstatten gehen, er stieg herauf. Als der alte Obersteiger der eben aus dem Förderschacht gestiegen, ihm gewahrte, rief er: "Um Christus willen, was ist dir widerfahren, Elis, du siehst blass und verstört aus wie der Tod! - Gelt! - der Schwefeldampf, den du noch nicht gewohnt, hat es dir angetan? - Nun - trink, guter Junge das wird dir wohltun." - Elis nahm einen tüchtigen Schluck Branntwein aus der Flasche die ihm der Obersteiger darbot, und erzählte dann erkräftigt alles was sich unten im Schacht begeben, sowie, auf welche Weise er die Bekanntschaft des alten unheimlichen Bergmanns in Götaborg gemacht.

Der Obersteiger hörte alles ruhig an, dann schüttelte er aber bedenklich den Kopf und sprach: "Elis Fröbom, das ist der alte Torbern gewesen, dem du begegnet, und ich merke nun wohl, dass das mehr als ein Märlein ist, was wir uns hier von ihm erzählen. Vor mehr als hundert Jahren gab es hier in Falun einen Bergmann, namens Torbern. Er soll einer der ersten gewesen sein, der den Bergbau zu Falun recht in Flor gebracht hat, und zu seiner Zeit war die Ausbeute bei weitem reicher als jetzt. Niemand verstand sich damals auf den Bergbau so als Torbern, der in tiefer Wissenschaft erfahren, dem ganzen Bergwesen in Falun vorstand. Als sei er mit besonderer höherer Kraft ausgerüstet, erschlossen sich ihm die reichsten Gänge und kam noch hinzu, dass er ein finstrer tiefsinniger Mann war, der ohne Weib und Kind, ja ohne eigentliches Obdach in Falun zu haben beinahe niemals ans Tageslicht kam, sondern unaufhörlich in den Teufen wühlte, so konnte es nicht fehlen, dass bald von ihm die Sage ging, er stehe mit der geheimen Macht, die im Schoss der Erde waltet und die Metalle kocht, im Bunde. Auf Torberns strenge Ermahnungen nicht achtend, der unaufhörlich Unglück prophezeite, sobald nicht wahre Liebe zum wunderbaren Gestein und Metall den Bergmann zur Arbeit antreibe, weitete man in gewinnsüchtiger Gier die Gruben immer mehr und mehr aus, bis endlich am Johannistage des Jahres eintausendsechshundertundsiebenundachtzig sich der fürchterliche Bergsturz ereignete, der unsere ungeheuere Pinge schuf, und dabei den ganzen Bau dergestalt verwüstete, dass erst nach vielem Mühen und mit vieler Kunst mancher Schacht wieder hergestellt werden konnte. Von Torbern war nichts mehr zu hören und zu sehn, und gewiss schien es, dass er in der Teufe arbeitend durch den Einsturz verschüttet. - Bald darauf, und zwar, als die Arbeit immer besser und besser vonstatten ging, behaupteten die Hauer, sie hätten im Schacht den alten Torbern gesehen, der ihnen allerlei guten Rat erteilt und die schönsten Gänge gezeigt. Andere hatten den Alten oben an der Pinge umherstreichend erblickt, bald wehmütig klagend, bald zornig tobend. Andere Jünglinge kamen so wie du hieher und behaupteten, ein alter Bergmann habe sie ermahnt zum Bergbau und hieher gewiesen. Das geschah allemal wenn es an Arbeitern mangeln wollte, und wohl mochte der alte Torbern auch auf diese Weise für den Bergbau sorgen. - Ist es nun wirklich der alte Torbern

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gewesen, mit dem du Streit gehabt im Schacht, und hat er von einem herrlichen Trappgange gesprochen, so ist es gewiss dass dort eine reiche Eisenader befindlich, der wir morgen nachspüren wollen. - Du hast namlich nicht vergessen, dass wir hier die eisengehaltige Ader im Gestein, Trappgang nennen, und dass Trum eine Ader von dem Gange ist, die sich in verschiedene Teile zerschlägt und wohl gänzlich auseinandergeht."

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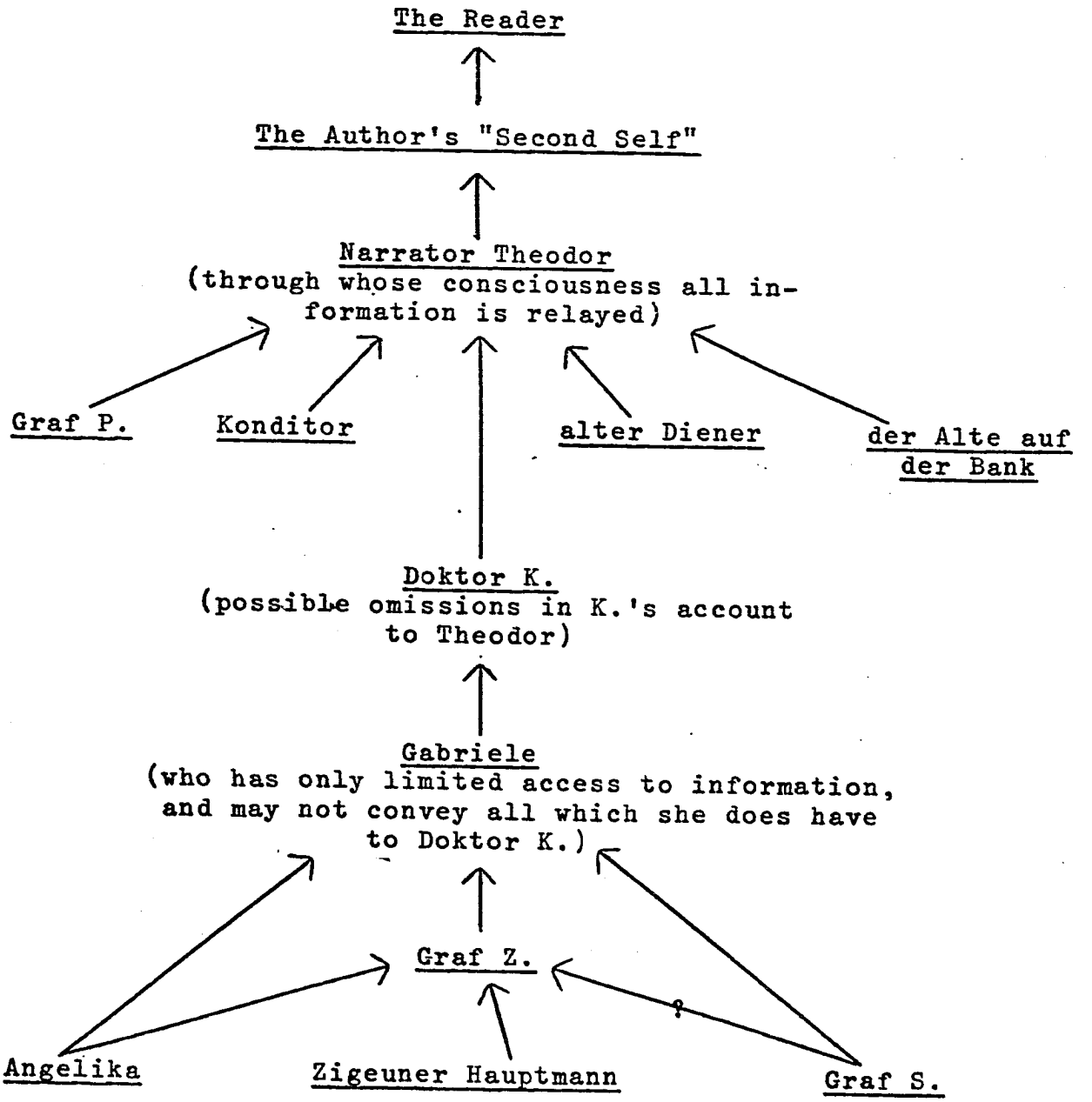
APPENDIX B:

THE PASSAGE OF INFORMATION TO THE READER IN

DAS ÖDE HAUS



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FOOTNOTES

Because von Maassen's historical-critical edition of Hoffmann remains incomplete, quotations from Hoffmann's works refer to the Winkler-Verlag edition (1960-65) of Walter Müller-Seidel. Volumes I (Fantasie- und Nacht-stücke), II (Die Serapions-Brüder), and IV (Späte Werke) are henceforth cited as FN, SB, and SW, respectively. This is done for easier bibliographical orientation and because the Winkler edition does not carry formal volume numbers.

CHAPTER I

1. Scott

[1]Walter Scott, The Miscellaneous Prose Works (Edinburgh, 1834), vol. XVIII.

[2]Ibid., p. 307.

[3]Ibid., p. 306.

[4]Ibid., p. 307.

[5]Ibid., p. 331.

[6]Pierre-Georges Castex, Le Conte Fantastique en France (Paris: Librairie José Corti, 1951), p. 45. Elizabeth Teichmann, in her La Fortune d'Hoffmann en France (Geneva: Droz, 1961), sees the years 1826-40 as the period of Hoffmann's popularity in France, with 1830-37 the peak of his influence.

[7]Scott, XVIII, 331.

[8]Scott, III, 370-71.

[9]Cf. Peter Demetz, Formen des Realismus: Theodor Fontane (Munich: Hanser, 1964), p. 38. Demetz points out that Scott gives with the one hand and takes away with the other: fantastic material is always presented through a character, the narrator remaining neutral. "Die Figuren der Erzählung mögen dem Zauber immerhin unterliegen, die magischen Kräfte reflektieren und an das Unglaubwürdige glauben, aber sie tun es auf eigene Verantwortung; der Erzähler teilt ihren Glauben jedenfalls nicht . . ."

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[10]Scott, III, 370. Scott is well aware of the dilemma facing the storyteller. He notes that "while it is expected of him /the storyteller/ that his narrative be interesting and extraordinary, /he/ is neither permitted to explain its wonders by referring them to natural causes, on account of their triteness, nor to supernatural agency, because of its incredulity" (III, 376).

[11]Scott, XVIII, 275. The key phrase is that the fantastic should be "rare, brief, and indistinct." Cf. Demetz, p. 37.

[12]Scott, III, 37.

[13]Scott, XVIII, 290 ff.

[14]Ibid., pp. 290-291.

[15]Ibid., p. 293.

[16]Ibid., pp. 290-291.

[17]Scott, III, 376. Also XVIII, 270, 273.

[18]Scott, XVIII, 325-326. Since Das Majorat is in many respects an uncharactersitic story for Hoffmann, Scott's praise is two-edged.

[19]Scott, XVIII, 330.

[20]Ibid., p. 292.

[21]Ibid., p. 325.

[22]Ibid.

[23]Scott, III.

[24]Ibid., p. 373.

[25]Ibid.

[26]Works, Geoffrey Crayon Edition (New York: Putnam, 1888), IV, 60-65. Punctuation and spelling follow the edition exactly.

[27]Ibid., p. 61.

[28]Ibid., pp. 63-64.

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[29]S. S. Prawer also comments on Scott's reading of Hoffmann, "Hoffmann's Uncanny Guest: A Reading of 'Der Sandmann,'" German Life and Letters (new series), 18, No. 4 (1965), 297-308. Prawer's emphasis, however, is on Scott's reaction to Hoffmann's content, not his narrative method.

[30]Chapter 14.

[31]In a letter of February 12, 1789. Friedrich Schiller, Sämtliche Werke (München: Hanser, 1967), V, 1066.

[32]Ludwig Tieck, Kritische Schriften (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1848), I, 37.

[33]Cf. V.C. Hubbs, "Tieck's Romantic Fairy Tales and Shakespeare," Studies in Romanticism, 8, No. 4 (Summer 1969), 229-234.

[34]In the article, "Die Doppeldeutigkeit der Erzählweise in Heinrich von Kleists 'Die heilige Cäcilie oder die Gewalt der Musik,'" in Festschrift für Werner Neuse (Berlin: Die Diagonale, 1967), pp. 44-56.

2. Serapion

[1]Hitzig notes, ". . . denn ohne ausdrücklich darauf hingewiesen zu werden, las Hoffmann nichts neues." /Julius Eduard Hitzig/, Aus Hoffmanns Leben und Nachlass (Berlin: Dümmler, 1823), II, 147. Quoted from Briefwechsel (see following footnote), II, 288.

[2]I refer here to the recent 3-volume E.T.A. Hoffmanns Briefwechsel (München: Winkler, 1967-69) edited by Friedrich Schnapp. Subsequent references to Briefwechsel refer to this edition.

[3]The reference is to Johann August Eberhard (1739-1809), Versuch einer allgemeinen deutschen Synonymik in einem kritisch-philosophischen Wörterbuche der sinnverwandten Wörter der hochdeutschen Mundart (Leipzig, 1795-1802), VI, 91 ff. FN 460 refers to p. 460 of the Winkler Fantasie- und Nachtstücke. See the explanatory note at the head of the Footnotes.

[4]Johann Jacob Breitinger, Critische Dichtkunst (Zürich: Conrad Orell, 1740), I, 111. Faksimiledruck nach der Ausgabe von 1740, Deutsche Neudrucke (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1966).

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[5]Ibid., p. 129.

[6]The fact that the collection takes its name from an actual literary society made up of Hoffmann, friends and occasional guests, should not tempt us to identification of the fictitious Serapions-Brüder with actual counterparts. Wulf Segebrecht speaks to this point (SB, 1032, 1034-36, and elsewhere in the Anmerkungen). See also Marianne Thalmann, Das Märchen und die Moderne on this point (1961; Stuttgart: Urban Bücher, 1966), pp. 79-80.

[7]In his foreword to Selected Writings of E.T.A. Hoffmann, ed. and trans. Leonard J. Kent and Elizabeth C. Knight, 2 vols. (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1969), I, 3.

[8]Cf. Marianne Thalmann, "E.T.A. Hoffmanns 'Fräulein von Scuderi,'" Monatshefte, 41, No. 2 (1949), 107.

[9]Critische Abhandlung von dem Wunderbaren (Zürich: Conrad Orell, 1740), p. 32. Faksimiledruck nach der Ausgabe von 1740, Deutsche Neudrucke (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1966).

[10]Ibid., p. 14.

[11]Cf. Klaus Günther Just, "Die Blickführung in den Märchennovellen E.T.A. Hoffmanns," Wirkendes Wort, 14 (1964), 389-90.

[12]Franz Stanzel, Die typischen Erzählsituationen im Roman (Wien: Braumüller, 1955). Eberhard Lämmert, Bauformen des Erzählens, zweite, durchgesehene Auflage (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1967). Wayne C. Booth, The Rhetoric of Fiction (1961; Phoenix edition, Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1967).

[13]Introduction à la littérature fantastique (Paris: Seuil, 1970), p. 36.

[14]Booth, pp. 71-76.

[15]Ibid., p. 75. The proof that the second self and the historical author are not to be equated is that different second selves can emerge from the various works of one author. Booth cites the second selves of Fielding's Tom Jones and Amelia.

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3. Secondary Literature

[1]Selected Writings of E.T.A. Hoffmann (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1969), p. 2.

[2]Gustav Egli, E.T.A. Hoffmann: Ewigkeit und Endlichkeit in seinem Werk (Zürich, 1927).

[3]Kurt Willimczik, E.T.A. Hoffmann: Die drei Reiche seiner Gestaltenwelt (Berlin, 1939).

[4]Wolfgang Baumgart in Annalen der deutschen Literatur, ed. Heinz Otto Bürger (Stuttgart, 1952).

[5]Hubert Ohl, Der reisende Enthusiast: Studien zur Haltung des Erzählers in den Fantasiestücken E.T.A. Hoffmanns, Diss. Frankfurt/M. 1955.

[6]Urs Orland von Planta, E.T.A. Hoffmanns Märchen Das fremde Kind (Bern, 1958).

[7]Ronald Taylor, Hoffmann (New York: Hillary, 1963).

[8]"Die Wirklichkeit E.T.A. Hoffmanns," introductory essay to the Aufbau-Verlag 6-volume edition of Hoffmann, Poetische Werke (Berlin, 1963), I, xix. This essay originally appeared in 1959 in Mayer's Von Lessing bis Thomas Mann, pp. 198-246. In a 1970 essay for Merkur (24, 514-521) Mayer plays down the ideological interpretation, in favor of a more aesthetic reading of the duality: "Hoffmann ist wohl der erste und bewusste Schöpfer einer Literatur der künstlichen Paradiese: aus Verzweiflung an einer Wirklichkeit, die sich immer unergiebiger erwies für poetische Illuminationen." (516)

[9]Ursula D. Lawson, "Pathological Time in E.T.A. Hoffmann's 'Der Sandmann,'" Monatshefte, 60, No. 1 (1968), 51-61.

[10]"The Suicide Motif in E.T.A. Hoffmann's 'Der goldne Topf,'" Monatshefte, 58, No. 2 (1966), 115-123.

[11]p. 53.

[12]Op. cit.

[13]Mayer, p. viii.

[14]Part 2, Chapter V, following, presents a lengthier discussion of the two realities.

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[15]The following remarks follow Todorov's explication, Introduction à la littérature fantastique, pp. 28-38.

CHAPTER II

1. The Techniques

[1]Hereafter in order to be more concise I will generally refer only to "the author." The second self should be borne in mind, however, and the distinction applied where appropriate.

[2]Or see Anselmus' rational attempts to explain away his first encounter with the three snakes (Der goldne Topf, FN 183). First he tries "der Abendwind" as the source of the "Rieseln und Rascheln" which sounds like whispering; then to explain the green-gold snakes, he suggests, "Das ist die Abendsonne, die so in dem Holunderbusch spielt." Cf. Just, "Die Blickführung in den Märchennovellen," p. 391.

[3]Zehnte Auflage (Bern: Francke, 1964), p. 202.

[4]Kayser also cites this example, Das sprachliche Kunstwerk, p. 202: ". . .dann geht auf den Leser ein Zwang aus, das Erzählte gleichfalls ernst zu nehmen oder doch irgendwie gelten zu lassen."

[5]Wulf Segebrecht notes in his Anmerkungen to Die Serapions-Brüder (SB 1065): "Die Wirklichkeit in Hoffmanns Erzählungen ist in Wahrheit mehrdeutig und sie gehört mehreren Ebenen zu. Der Leser wird absichtlich in die Unsicherheit miteinbezogen, in der sich die Figuren befinden."

[6]Just (p. 392) stresses the visual limitations imposed through Hoffmann's narration. He cites Anselmus' view of the snakes on Ascension day as a camera-like concentration on only one detail of the Elbe landscape. The point is that the reader is forced to see as Anselmus sees.

[7]Kayser notes for example in Das Groteske (Oldenburg: Stalling, 1957), p. 80, "die ständige Unsicherheit des Lesers, wie es sich denn un die Wirklichkeit verhalte."

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CHAPTER III

1. Die Bergwerke zu Falun

[1]Cf. the Obersteiger's account of the Torbern legend, SB 188-89.

2. Das öde Haus

[1]More exactly, inner narrator. The ultimate narrator is not prominent, appearing only in occasional observations: "Mit diesen Worten zog Theodor sein Taschenbuch hervor . . . und erzählte, dann und wann in dies Buch hineinblickend, folgende Begebenheit, die der weiteren Mitteilung nicht unwert scheint" (FN 460).

3. Klein Zaches genannt Zinnober

[1]Cf. Just, pp. 394-95.

[2]The five stories so designated are Der goldne Topf, Ein Märchen aus der neuen Zeit; Klein Zaches genannt Zinnober, Ein Märchen; Die Königsbraut, Ein nach der Natur entworfenes Märchen; Nussknacker und Mausekönig; and Das fremde Kind. The latter two do not bear the designation in their Serapions-Brüder titles, but they were considered Märchen by Hoffmann (letter to Kunz, 18 March 1818) and they originally appeared in the collection Kindermährchen which Hoffmann, E.W. Contessa, and Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué edited.

[3]A hot-air balloon, named for the inventors, Jacques-Etienne and Joseph-Michel Montgolfier.

[4]Cf. Wührl, Die poetische Wirklichkeit, pp. 157-58.

[5]Walter Harich, E.T.A. Hoffmann: Das Leben eines Künstlers (Berlin: Reiss, 1920), II, Anhang. In some cases the actual dates of publication preceded the dates shown on title pages. This was particularly common with almanacs. As far as possible I have given the actual dates of publication.

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CHAPTER IV

1. Ignaz Denner

[1]Ed. Montague Summers (London: Constable, 1924), p. 38.

2. Nachricht aus dem Leben eines bekannten Mannes

[1]Written in 1525. Cf. SB 1078.

[2]Works (New York: Hovendon, 1902), IV, 14-15.

3. Schlemihl and Spiegelbild: An Opting-for-Softening

[1]Werke (Leipzig, /1907?/), II, chapter 1.

[2]Ibid.

[3]For a psychological interpretation of the story see Jean Giraud, "E.T.A. Hoffmann: 'Die Abenteuer der Silvester-Nacht': Le double visage," Recherches Germaniques, 1 (1971), 109-145. The argument here is that the fact Spikher seems to have two faces (as well as having lost his mirror-image) is a literary reference by Hoffmann to his own mental condition. Giraud offers up yet another variation of the "duality" theme.

[4]Wührl, p. 84, notes the same technique in Der goldne Topf: "Hoffmann legt es darauf an, den Leser von einem Bereich in den anderen zu führen, ohne dass er die Übergangsschwelle spürt."

4. Das Fräulein von Scuderi

[1]J.M. Ellis presents a review of the secondary literature on the story: "E.T.A. Hoffmann's 'Das Fräulein von Scuderi,'" Modern Language Review, 64 (1969), 340-50. As noted earlier, Kanzog's essay, "'Scuderi' als Kriminalgeschichte," is to be recommended for narrative considerations.

[2]In and of itself, of course, there is nothing suspect to such a device. As Kayser notes (Das sprachliche Kunstwerk, p. 214), "Durch die Verlegung der Perspektive

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in eine Nebengestalt lässt sich belebende Mehrschichtigkeit gewinnen, der gegenüber die Verlegung der Perspektive in die Hauptgestalt (oder die Wahl des Standpunktes der Allwissenheit) nur flache Wirkungen hervorriefe (vgl. E.T.A. Hoffmann Das Fräulein von Scuderi)." The point at issue in my treatment of Scuderi is this particular use of Desgrais' perspective. Will it stand the test of close examination?

[3]With regard to the issue of fantastic content: even if such relationships could be demonstrated biologically, the particular event in Cardillac's past is not corroborated in the story as a fantastic event; it is only Cardillac's opinion that the incident affected him.

[4]Marianne Thalmann ("E.T.A. Hoffmanns 'Das Fräulein von Scuderi,'" p. 113) also finds this resolution of Cardillac's pathology weak: "Der Kammergerichtsrat Hoffmann weiss, dass sein Publikum von einer Prozessführung auch mildernde Umstände und Schäden der Umgebung zu hören erwartet." J.M. Ellis, on the other hand, argues (p. 343) that Cardillac's story of his mother's pregnancy is an important piece of evidence about him.

[5]Helmut Müller, Untersuchungen zum Problem der Formelhaftigkeit bei E.T.A. Hoffmann (Bern: Haupt, 1964), p. 83, notes that "Entsetzen"/"entsetzlich" occurs 44 times in Scuderi, "verrucht" 20 times.

[6]Of course, despite these criticisms, the story remains a monument in the development of the mystery-story genre, as Walter Müller-Seidel notes in his "Nachwort" (SB 1014).

[7]Compositional work on Scuderi began in March of 1818 (SB 1089). Pivardiere, as far as can be told, was composed in the late summer of 1820.

2. Ritter Gluck

[1]For the sake of brevity, I cite only the two most recent such statements: Christa Karoli, "Ritter Gluck: Hoffmanns erstes Fantasiestück," Mitteilungen der E.T.A. Hoffmann-Gesellschaft, 14 (1968), 1-17. John Fetzer, "Ritter Gluck's 'Unglück': The Crisis of Creativity in the Age of the Epigone," German Quarterly, 44, No. 3 (1971), 317-330.

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[2]Gabrielle Wittkop-Ménardeau finds experimental traits in Ritter Gluck, too, but her emphasis is on the extent of descriptive material, "das bei ihm /Hoffmann/ ungewöhnlich ist." E.T.A. Hoffmann in Selbstzeugnissen und Bilddokumenten (Hamburg: Rohwolt, 1966), p. 66.

[3]In addition to Kron, other critics to endorse the "madman" interpretation include Ochsner (E.T.A. Hoffmann als Dichter des Unbewussten /Frauenfeld, 1936/), p. 73; Korff (Geist der Goethezeit, IV /2nd ed.: Leipzig, 1956/) 550; Rosteutscher, p. 163; Nipperdey, p. 136; Taylor, p. 33; Scher (Verbal Music /New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1968/), pp. 56-78. Fetzer, p. 320, argues a variation on insanity, namely that the table guest is a committed epigone.

[4]p. viii. See note 8, Chapter I, section 3.

[5]Mayer notes (pp. xiv-xv) "ein Gefühl der Unsicherheit und Mehrdeutigkeit." Cf. the discussion of Todorov, Chapter I.

[6]Wulf Segebrecht, Anmerkungen to the Winkler edition, FN 1036.

[7]Lothar Köhn, p. 37, also notes the possible irreality of the table-guest: "Der Leser /bleibt/ über den Wirklichkeitscharakter dieses Tischgenossen im Zweifel."

[8]Cf. FN 777.

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