

Romantic Dreams

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The Dream as a Motif in E. T. A. Hoffmann's Works

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'Der Traum erschloß mir sein schimmerndes, herrliches Reich,
und ich wurde getröstet.' E.T.A. Hoffmann, *Kreiseriana*¹

Introduction

The dream motif in Hoffmann's works, as far as its defining character in terms of both structure and content is concerned, has yet to be analysed in detail, although some approaches do exist. Several authors have attempted to explain the natural phenomenon 'Traum' which is an abundant feature in Hoffmann's works. Petra Küchler-Sakellariou hinted at an important function in the fairy-tale *Der goldne Topf*. What I will later refer to as 'borderline experience' is 'durch Erklärungen wie Traum, Rausch oder Wahn in das Alltagsgeschehen integriert' (Küchler-Sakellariou [1989], p. 73). Inge Stegmann has taken what can be considered one of the closest looks at this topic, beginning with the observation that: 'Dem Phänomen und Problem des Traumes kommt in Hoffmanns Werken eine zentrale Stellung zu.' However, Stegmann is primarily concerned with Hoffmann's conception of reality. She speaks, for example, of the 'Reich der Poesie und des Traumes', without analysing the dream as a motif and its various uses and functions. Moreover, I do not agree with Stegmann's conclusion that Hoffmann's characters are only granted 'Erlösung' from the reality of the text in the world of dreams. Thus, we come to differing answers to similar questions.²

¹ HAA1, p. 400. For an explanation of the abbreviations in the text, see 'References' at the end of this paper.

² I. Stegmann, 'Die Wirklichkeit des Traumes bei E. T. A. Hoffmann', *ZfdPh.*, 95 (1976), 64 - 93, esp. p. 64, pp. 69 and 73.

An essay by Diana Stone Peters is closer to my approach. Peters identifies the dream in Hoffmann's works as a 'bridge' between two worlds, between this world and one 'beyond empirical reality'. However, this important essay places the emphasis on the link between the dream and artistic creativity. I will doubt the claim of balance between the two worlds (see Stone Peters [1973], esp. pp. 60f., 80 and 83ff.).

The dream is understood as an element linked with the plot. The main question to be answered relates to the function the dream fulfils within a text. Why does a particular character dream and what consequences does the dream have for the development of the plot and the end of the story? This approach based on narrative theory excludes all speculation regarding Hoffmann's and his characters' psychological disposition.

Schubert and Hoffmann

Schubert is fundamental to Hoffmann's familiar technique of stepping over the threshold from reality to fantasy and blurring the borders between the two.³ As we have already seen, an important aspect of this 'borderline experience' is the dream. Schubert's ideas are largely an amalgamation - for which he was reproached - of philosophical concepts fundamental to the romantic period at the beginning of the 19th century, e.g. those of Schelling or Fichte. However, this is of no significance to Schubert's importance for Hoffmann. Hoffmann directly incorporated Schubert's relatively enclosed view of the world in his literature, frequently turning it upside down with his irony.

In *Ansichten von der Nachtseite der Naturwissenschaft* Schubert assumes that there was a time when man was 'noch Eins mit der Natur'. He believed that this unity has to be restored, for man was a child and must consciously attempt to regain what he has lost at a higher level. The fact that man has alienated himself from nature by making it his object, means that he has also lost most of his understanding of nature. However, he still feels - as a kind of suspicion or presentiment

³ See Kaiser (1988), pp. 132ff. with reference to this poetic principle.

about the past and future - a 'Sehnsucht' 'nach dem höheren und göttlicheren Ideal' (Schubert [1808], pp. 7 - 11). Schubert claims it is possible to anticipate this other world: 'Endlich werden wir in mannigfaltigen Erscheinungen, das Eingreifen eines künftigen höheren Daseyns, in dem jetzige[n] minder vollkommene[n] anerkennen' (*ibid.*, p. 22). Precisely this form of anticipation can be found in Hoffmann's works. This, he achieves, by illustrating the permeability of both worlds. At this point, it should be said that Schubert had no concept of time whatsoever. On the one hand, a chronological sequence is postulated. On the other, he assumes that the alienated and non-alienated conditions exist in parallel with one another. It is the latter that Hoffmann picked up on.

Schubert supports his model with numerous scientific, philosophical and poetic evidence and arguments, some of which Hoffmann adapted to his works. *Der Bergmann zu Falun* (Schubert [1808], pp. 215f.; HAA4, pp. 206ff.) and *Die Naturmusik auf Ceylon* (Schubert [1808], p. 64; HAA4, p. 422: here Hoffmann makes a clear reference to Schubert's work) are perhaps the best-known examples. There are, however, other less obvious illustrations. At the end of *Meister Floh* George Pepusch and Dörtje Elverdink turn into plants and die the death of love: 'In der Mitte des schönen Bosketts war eine hohe Fackeldistel emporgeschossen, die ihre im Morgenstrahl verwelkte Blüte hinabsenkte, und um diese Blüte schlang sich liebend eine lila- und gelbgestreifte Tulpe'. Peregrinus Tyß comments on what happened in the following words: 'Das Mysterium ist erschlossen, der höchste Augenblick alles erfüllten Sehens war auch der Augenblick deines [des Paares; S.N.] Todes.' (HAA7, pp. 406f.).

Hoffmann follows Schubert's stance, putting him into perspective only through his irony (cf. e.g. the colouring of the tulip) and the mirror-image happiness of Peregrinus' and Röschen's love in everyday life. Schubert writes both dramatically and allegorically: 'Es welkt die Blume sogleich, wenn der höchste Augenblick des Blühens vorüber ist, und das bunte Insekt sucht in der einen Stunde der Liebe zugleich die seines Todes, und empfängt in dem Tempel der Hochzeit selber sein Grab. Ja es sind bey dem Menschen gerade die seeligsten und geistigsten Augenblicke des Lebens, für dieses selber die zerstörendsten, und wir finden öfters in dem höchsten und

heiligsten Streben unsres Wesens, einen seeligen Untergang' (Schubert [1808], p. 78).

Schubert's concept 'der Tod und die Liebe, der Untergang und die Wiedererneuerung der Dinge, zu Einem Bilde vereint' (Schubert [1808], p. 76) was used by Hoffmann in many different ways. The death of many protagonists at the end of his stories can be seen, not as their doom, but as a happy end in the fantastic sense of the word (e.g. Doge und Dogaresse) or, in the case of the gloomier works, as the only way out under the given circumstances (as in *Der Sandmann*, *Der Magnetiseur*). But it should not be understood as something final and therefore terrible as it appeared to the highly intelligent Hoffmann in reality.

In *Meister Floh* the two caricatures of scientists, Leeuwenhoek and Swammerdamm, comply with Schubert's idea that a purely 'mechanische' interpretation of natural laws should be condemned. Schubert believed that these laws should be understood as a sign that an 'Ideal' rules (Schubert [1808], p. 14). Many of Hoffmann's other characters either do not see the ideal behind scientific observation or betray it through their behaviour. Here, the fundamental modification made by Hoffmann is that he places art not just on a par with science but above it. In *Der goldne Topf* Hoffmann has drawn on other passages from Schubert's book. The material for the myth of creation can, for example, be found in *Ansichten* which also contains the reference to the importance of phosphorus for the 'letzte Verwandlung' of man into an ideal state. Hoffmann based the young character, Phosphorus, on this idea. Set in this light, he almost receives an aspect of saving grace.⁴ Schubert's 'grüne Schlange' (Schubert [1808], p. 325) was transformed by Hoffmann into an ironic plural and diminutive of the golden green snakelets. Schubert gives the snake a significance that has its roots in Christian mythology and modifies it considerably. The snake stands for 'das klare Selbstbewußtseyn, die Reflexion, jene, welche einst dem Geist

⁴ That Schubert was the source of the Phosphorus Myth has been pointed out by R. Mühlher, 'Leitmotiv und dialektischer Mythos in E. T. A. Hoffmanns Märchen "Der goldne Topf"', *MHG*, 2/3 (1940), p. 75. With reference to the significance of Schubert's work for the Phosphorus Myth and other motifs in *Der goldne Topf*, see Dahmen (1926), pp. 77f. Dahmen's detailed study is, however, partially based on the false assumption that Hoffmann was familiar with *Die Symbolik des Traumes* in 1813, one year before it was first published.

des Menschen von der Unschuld der ersten Kindlichkeit herabgezogen'. Reference is also made to gold (here, we think of Hoffmann's golden green snake) and the lily which plays an important role in the myth of creation in *Der goldne Topf* (*ibid.*). Moreover, Schubert also speaks of the 'Wunderlande Atlantis', the kingdom situated 'jenseit der Kluft vieler Jahrtausende, nahe am Pol' in which the 'der Erde geweihte Urvolk' lives in a 'beständigen Frühling' and 'in der ersten heiligen Harmonie mit der Natur' (Schubert [1808], p. 4). Anselmus, the student in *Der goldne Topf*, enters precisely this Atlantis at the end of the story - a myth of redemption for which Schubert's *Ansichten* once again served as a basis (Schubert [1808], p. 325).⁵

You will surely be asking yourselves where the dream comes in to all this. As I have already hinted, the dream is actually contained in all that I have said so far. The dream represents, in its most positive and potent form the possibility of 'borderline experiences'. By dreaming, one's physical state, or better reality can be overcome and the future ideal condition can be foreseen.

Although Schubert does not directly address the dream in *Ansichten*, he later devoted an entire book to the subject. Instead, he refers to other experiences related to the dream, particularly the 'thierischen Magnetismus' or mesmerism, a fashion of the period which, stripped of its mysticism, would today be termed hypnosis. What Hoffmann portrayed as a great potential danger in *Der Magnetiseur*, is seen by Schubert as a fundamentally positive alternative to achieving a purely spiritual link between - in modern terminology - the hypnotist and the hypnotised person, which can ultimately lead to absolute domination (see Schubert [1808], pp. 326ff., p. 349).⁶ Magnetisation which was primarily used as a cure, is thus given a totally new meaning. Closely related to this 'magnetischer Schlaf' is somnambulism, or sleep-walking, which was

⁵ Schubert's ideas as a basis for Atlantis in *Der goldne Topf* and other aspects of Hoffmann's understanding of Schubert have been examined by Dahmen (1926), p. 78, and Schwanenberger (1990), pp. 76 - 83.

⁶ This area related to the dream is also dealt with in the work of Carl Alexander Ferdinand Kluge which was familiar to Hoffmann, *Versuch einer Darstellung des animalischen Magnetismus als Heilmittel* (Berlin, 1811). A brief introduction to mesmerism is offered by Feldges/Stadler (1986), pp. 27 - 30.

frequently referred to by Hoffmann. In Hoffmann's day the line between these two states was very thin. Moreover, Schubert talks of 'Visionen' (Schubert [1808], pp. 350f.) and believes that the condition of being magnetised is extremely close to death. In both instances, he claims, the 'kranken menschlichen Natur' is given back 'die verlohrene innre Harmonie' (Schubert [1808], p. 357). This fits in with the generally positive idea of death as a means of gaining quicker access to the better world.

Schubert's *Die Symbolik des Traumes*, printed in Bamberg in 1814, is a continuation and an elucidation of the *Nachtseiten* study. It is important to note that this book had no influence whatsoever on *Der goldne Topf*, *Der Magnetiseur* and the first volume of *Die Elixiere des Teufels*. Hoffmann finished the fairy tale on 15th February, and the first part of the novel on 23rd April 1814. On 24th March he was not familiar with *Die Symbolik des Traumes* as the book was just being printed. Schubert signed the preface on 17th April. Hoffmann does not refer to the long-awaited work until a letter dated 2nd September 1814. Although these facts are easy to establish,⁷ as late as 1994 a researcher assumed that *Symbolik* was used as a basis for *Der goldne Topf*.⁸

Schubert believes that the innate 'Hieroglyphensprache' of dreams comes closer to nature than the acquired 'gewöhnliche Wortsprache'. Moreover, 'Schicksal' speaks in the language of dreams. The language of dreams commands the past, present and future and only the 'versteckte Poet in unserem Innern' can speak it (Schubert [1968], pp. 25 - 27).⁹ Schubert stresses the proximity of the language of dreams to the 'Sprache der Poesie' - both have the 'Schlüssel zu unserem innern Räthsel' (Schubert [1968], p. 39). If one excludes the metaphysical component which brings a smile to the face of any modern researcher, Schubert focuses on two undeniable characteristics of the dream. On the one hand, it can only reproduce the past and, on the other, it allows 'ein freyes Spiel unserer Neigungen und Gelüste' (Schubert [1968], p. 34). These ideas became of central importance to Hoffmann, if we exclude the texts already

⁷ See E.T.A. Hoffmanns *Briefwechsel*, Vol. 1, pp. 420, 461, 463 and 483.

⁸ See D. Kremer, 'Alchemie und Kabbala. Hermetische Referenzen im *Goldenen Topf*', *HJB*, 2 (1994), pp. 38 and 43.

⁹ Hoffmann borrowed the term 'versteckter Poet' from Schubert and adopted it as his own (Feldges/Stadler [1986], pp. 26f.).

mentioned. Hoffmann's later works including *Kater Murr* and *Prinzessin Brambilla* were influenced by this work. The fact that fate is cast a central role in the conception of *Die Elixiere des Teufels* can be explained by the importance of this motif in Hoffmann's day, particularly in the 'Gothic novel'. In the second part of *Die Elixiere*, written after reading Schubert's book, fate appears as a motif with greater frequency and intensity, as do many dreams which transform Schubert's ideas into fictional reality.

Schubert also uses a term, which for some time has been considered typical for Hoffmann. Nature, Schubert believes, also has a 'geistige Bedeutung'. It reveals the work of a 'höheren Prinzips' [italics S.N.] with which the language of man's soul interacts and, in this way, brings forth dreams (Schubert [1968], pp. 49-51). In this way, Schubert once more sums up his work in the *Ansichten*. It is precisely this interaction of the higher principle that Hoffmann creates in the second part of *Die Elixiere des Teufels*. It can be assumed that Hoffmann based the end of his first novel on the following sentence by Schubert: 'Tod und Hochzeit, Hochzeit und Tod liegen sich in der Ideenassociation der Natur so nahe wie in der des Traumes, eins scheint oft das andere zu bedeuten, eins das andere herbeyzuführen oder vorauszusetzen' (Schubert [1968], p. 52). The death of Aurelie at the end of *Die Elixiere* is indeed equal to a wedding with Medardus.

Hoffmann is likely also to have been greatly influenced by the idea that both a good and an evil demon are at work within man and that both try to win him over. Schubert believes that the evil demon can hide his true identity, for example, by taking on 'die Gestalt des besseren Gewissens' (Schubert [1968], pp. 78f.). Indeed, these two demons interact within Medardus in such a way that neither the character nor the reader knows which ideas are the work of the good and the evil demon. Schubert goes so far as to describe man as a 'zweyleibige Mißgeburt' (Schubert [1968], p. 84). This complies with the *doppelgänger* which frequently features in Hoffmann's later works. Here, Schubert can be said to have strengthened, not aroused Hoffmann's interest in this context (after all, Medardus' *doppelgänger* also played a role in the first part of *Die Elixiere*). Similar links can be found between the concepts of madness. Schubert believes that destruction and

lust for murder, cunning and falseness are characteristic of madness (Schubert [1968], p. 126). In this sense, the words 'Wahnsinn', 'Traum' and 'Somnambulismus' are often used as synonyms. Accordingly, they give the individual an insight into the 'höhere geistige Region'. The highest possible state, however, is love, its greatest enemy arrogance. With the help of love, man can slowly build bridges to the other world. To achieve this goal, 'Selbstverleugnung und Aufopferung' are a must (Schubert [1968], pp. 138, 145, 152f. and 174ff.).

In his description of the Fall of Man, Schubert refers to the motif 'schicksalbestimmendes Getränk' which calls to mind the title of Hoffmann's *Die Elixiere*, although no direct influence is possible considering the chronology of the works: 'der Becher der Begeisterung, den der Liebende seiner Jungfrau sandte, daß sie aus ihm Weihe des reinen, göttlichen Sehns tränke, ist ihr zum Reizbecher niederer Lust, die reine in ihm wohnende Flamme zum Feuer niederen Taumels geworden. Was Sprache des Wachens sein sollte, ist uns nun dunkle Sprache des Traumes' (Schubert [1968], p. 102). This is yet another example of the similarity between Schubert's and Hoffmann's ideas. It is important to note that the dream, somnambulism and madness step over man's limits which now seem natural and open the doorway to the other, spiritual or higher world. Schubert insistently summarises this at the end of his work (Schubert [1968], p. 187).

Every Hoffmann enthusiast will already be familiar with a large number of Schubert's thoughts, many of which were widely popular at the time anyway. That is why Schubert should not be considered Hoffmann's only source. Whether or not such correlations point towards a direct link or should be seen in the context of the period is of little interest in the context of this presentation. Of greater importance is, for example, that the mental conception of Schubert and/or his contemporaries made it possible for our author to come to terms with the experience he had with Julia. Hoffmann was never able to forget his childlike pupil, Julia Mark, from Bamberg. She remained the love of his life even after she was married off and moved away. It, therefore, seemed reasonable to transcend this love with the help of Schubert and contemporary philosophy. This is precisely what happens in Hoffmann's works. Anselmus, the hero of *Der goldne Topf*,

marries Serpentina, a mythical creature, whose human equivalent is called Veronica who in turn gets married to a so-called honourable member of society. Medardus in *Die Elixiere* is not able to marry or even sleep with Aurelie in this world, as this would oppose all conventions and the artistic ethos. However, the death of the couple, Aurelie's martyrdom and Medardus' repentance, mean that nothing stands in the way of their spiritual happiness in the next world. In addition and as stated before, Schubert's *Ansichten* supplied Hoffmann with an enclosed view of the world which the non-religious Hoffmann gratefully used without taking it completely seriously.

I will now attempt to show how Hoffmann applied the dream as a motif, using three of Hoffmann's most important titles as examples, *Der goldne Topf*, *Die Elixiere des Teufels* and *Kater Murr*. I will also take a brief look at *Der Magnetiseur*, as this text was originally to be entitled 'Träume sind Schäume' (HAA1, p. 512), and *Prinzessin Brambilla* in which the dream motif helps to structure the work.¹⁰

A dream comes true: *Der goldne Topf*

As Günter Oesterle pointed out, Serpentina, heroine of the literary fairy tale *Der goldne Topf*, can be understood as an 'Allegorie für das dichterische Vermögen' or 'die autonome Phantasietätigkeit' (Oesterle [1988], p. 195). Here, it is important not to see the physical appearance of a beautiful erotic young girl purely as an allegorical embellishment. Serpentina undoubtedly owes much to Hoffmann's memory of Julia Mark. This memory contained a strong physical aspect which Hoffmann could only experience in 'dreams' or through his works.¹¹

¹⁰ The dream as a motif plays an important role in many other of Hoffmann's texts which cannot be looked at in the framework of this presentation; see the studies by Segebrecht (1967), p. 188 (*Ritter Gluck*); Küchler-Sakellariou (1989), p. 127 (*Meister Floh*); and Braun-Biehl (1990), pp. 238 - 244 (*Nußknacker und Mausekönig*).

¹¹ On 1.5.1820, around seven years after seeing Julia Mark for the last time, Hoffmann wrote the following to Friedrich Speyer: '[...] sagen Sie in einem Augenblicke des heitern Sonnenscheins Julien, daß ihr Andenken in mir lebt - darf man das nämlich nur Andenken nennen, wovon das Innere erfüllt ist, was im geheimnisvollen Regen des höheren Geistes uns die schönen Träume bringt von

One of the best known scenes is the first meeting between Anselmus and Serpentina which owes much to the elder tree scene in Kleist's *Kätchen von Heilbronn*.¹² Before the meeting which came about as a result of a series of unfortunate, or better, fortunate circumstances, Anselmus emphasises that so far his 'seligen Träume künftigen Glücks' had focused solely on his career in which he hoped to be promoted to the post of privy councillor (HAA1, p. 224). Lying under the elder bush on the banks of the River Elbe, Anselmus has his initial romantic experience. An 'ehrbare Bürgersfrau' and other individuals believe he is 'betrunken und wahnwitzig' (HAA1, p. 227). The clash of two worlds has a tragicomical tone to it, typical of Hoffmann. Because of his clumsiness, which makes him an outsider, Anselmus is predestined to step over the 'border'. The first borderline experience is then connected with a dream: 'dem Anselmus war es so, als würde er aus einem tiefen Traum gerüttelt oder gar mit eiskaltem Wasser begossen, um ja recht jähling zu erwachen' (HAA1, p. 228).

Thus two types of dream have so far been discerned. The first occurs within the real world and expresses prosaic wishes (career). The others cannot be termed dreams but rather the borderline experiences already described. Since this kind of experience is either unknown or purposely suppressed by most of the characters, the word dream is used in this book if the person in question has a vivid imagination, or in its absence, the pejorative phrase 'out of your mind' is preferred. Konrektor Paulmann, Registrator Heerbrand and the other bigoted citizens, some of whom do not realise that they are trapped in bottles, are totally incapable of having borderline experiences. Anselmus also requires a certain amount of time to recognise the reality of the unreal.

Also the famous address of the narrator to the reader at the beginning of chapter ('Vigilie') 4 reveals several useful references regarding Hoffmann's use of the dream motif. The reader, says the narrator, is surely familiar with Anselmus' state:

dem Entzücken, dem Glück, das keine Arme von Fleisch und Bein zu erfassen, festzuhalten vermögen' (HAA1, p. 361). His regret that he did not have a physical relationship with Julia is still strong even after this long period - the negation of corporeality at the end would otherwise not have been necessary.

¹² See Puknus, 'Dualismus und versuchte Versöhnung, Hoffmanns zwei Welten vom *Goldnen Topf bis Meister Floh*' in Arnold (1992), p. 54.

'in dieser Sehnsucht nach dem unbekanntem Etwas, das dich überall, wo du gingst und standest, wie ein duftiger Traum mit durchsichtigen, vor dem schärferen Blick zerfließenden Gestalten umschwebte, verstummtest du für alles, was dich hier umgab' (HAA1, p. 243). Since the contemporary reader is more than unlikely to have had such an experience, this observation can also be understood ironically. The narrator not only teases the reader (something he does to a far greater degree later on), but he also underlines the possibility of a borderline experience occurring. The following conclusion is probably based on Schubert's *Ansichten*: 'in diesem Reiche, das uns der Geist so oft, wenigstens im Traume, aufschließt, versuche es, geneigter Leser! die bekannten Gestalten, wie sie täglich [...] im gemeinen Leben, um dich herwandeln, wiederzuerkennen. Du wirst dann glauben, daß dir jenes herrliche Reich viel näher liege, als du sonst wohl meinstest, welches ich nun eben recht herzlich wünsche und dir in der seltsamen Geschichte des Studenten Anselmus anzudeuten strebe' (HAA1, p. 244).

However, Anselmus must go through a development before this occurs. As long as he, like Veronika, attempts to brush aside his dreams as 'exaltierte Seelenzustände' or to convince himself that wedlock with Veronika is the goal of his dreams, he cannot marry Serpentina and move to Atlantis (HAA1, p. 289). These complications have a comical character about them. Veronika is bound to reality, but attempts with the help of a witch to prevent Anselmus from entering a wonderland she does not believe in. Anselmus' final test is the 'Fall ins Kristall', his incarceration inside a bottle. Once again, the narrator makes fun of the reader by assuming that the latter has never found himself in a similar situation, at most in his dreams (HAA1, p. 296). This can, of course, also mean that the reader likewise lives in a bottle without realising it, just like the 'Kreuzschüler' and the 'Praktikanten' who stand next to Anselmus on the shelf (HAA1, p. 297). The bottle is used as symbol for man's incarceration in the everyday world. This, however, could be interpreted further.

Whilst Anselmus breaks the bottle and with it his limitations, Veronika brushes aside her borderline experience as a 'albernen Traum' - although she should know better (HAA1, p. 308). At this point the narrator reappears, claiming to be searching for the end to the fairy tale 'wie ein Träumer' and to

be incapable of continuing (HAA1, p. 309). Archivarius helps out with a punch which prompts a vision. The final sentences once again underline Schubert's teachings: A 'Leben in der Poesie' reveals the 'heiligen Einklang aller Wesen als tiefstes Geheimnis der Natur' (HAA1, p. 315). Because of its ambiguity, the formulation 'Leben in der Poesie' may have an ironic connotation. Does it include everyone, i.e. both the author and the reader, or, taken literally, does it refer to Anselmus, who only lives within poetry, that is, between two book covers?

Nightmares and dreams: *Die Elixiere des Teufels*

In a letter to Kunz, Hoffmann's publisher, of 24. 3. 1814, Hoffmann wrote that he had received the inspiration for his first novel from 'Oneiros', the 'Traumgott' (HAA1, p. 358). And in the editor's preface, the following is said of the bequeathed papers of the Capucin monk, Medardus, which Hoffmann claims to have found: 'war es mir auch, als könne das, was wir insgesamt [sic] Traum und Einbildung nennen, wohl die symbolische Erkenntnis des geheimen Fadens sein, der sich durch unser Leben zieht, es festknüpfend in allen seinen Bedingungen, als sei der aber für verloren zu achten, der mit jener Erkenntnis die Kraft gewonnen glaubt, jenen Faden gewaltsam zu zerreißen und es aufzunehmen mit der dunklen Macht, die über uns gebietet. Vielleicht geht es dir, günstiger Leser! wie mir, und das wünschte ich denn aus erheblichen Gründen recht herzlich' (HAA2, pp. 6f.). Here, Hoffmann is making fun of the reader. Firstly, there is the transparent fiction of the editor, which he could not assume the reader would believe. The conjuration of fate and the 'dunklen Macht' creates a feeling of fear, intensified by the direct reference to the reader, who if he fails to learn from the book, is likewise said to be in grave danger. The wish at the end with the 'erheblichen Gründen' adds a final touch of exaggeration. And yet, no interpreter of the novel appears to have noticed this ironic aspect, with the exception of a few tentative comments. Instead,

the work's proximity to a Gothic novel is frequently emphasised.¹³

Hoffmann remains unspecific when it comes to the question of what a dream stands for. Whether it refers to a world beyond the real one is ironically left hanging in the air. Little changes in the text that follows, as the first-person narrator, Medardus, tells the story of his 'Sündenfall', the family curse and his repentance. One should bear this narrative perspective in mind, not least because the research conducted into this work so far, surprisingly has not cast a shadow of doubt on the truth of Medardus' report. The famous doppelgänger could, as is the case with the other unreal elements, simply be an invention by the Capucin in an attempt to excuse his crimes. In Freud's terminology one could speak of a displacement (Freud [1996], pp. 309ff.). Hoffmann's artistic decision to allow the partially mad character to narrate the story questions the credibility of the tale. Even the printed 'Pergamentblatt des alten Malers' is no proof against my claim as, according to the fictional 'Herausgeber', it served as part of the cover of Medardus' manuscript and could either be partly fictional in character (even if the family still lives in Italy, according to the editor) or have supplied Medardus with inventive ideas for incorporation in his life story (cf. HAA2, pp. 275ff. and p. 297). The end of the novel also makes it clear that the doppelgänger does not exist and that Medardus has a dual personality. Father Spiridion who wrote the 'Nachschrift' begins his account of the hours before Medardus' death in the following manner: 'Es mochte wohl um Mitternacht sein, als ich in der neben der meinigen liegenden Zelle des Bruders Medardus ein seltsames Kichern und Lachen und währenddessen ein dumpfes klägliches Ächzen vernahm. Mir war es, als hörte ich deutlich von einer sehr häßlichen, widerwärtigen Stimme die Worte sprechen: "Komm mit mir, Brüderchen Medardus, wir wollen die Braut suchen"' (HAA2, p. 351). Medardus, it seems, is speaking to himself; his other personality has an 'widerwärtige' voice which fits the crimes with which it is burdened. How else could the mysterious

¹³ See the summary of research in Kaiser (1988), pp. 45 - 51. A general introduction to the interpretation of the novel is offered by W. Néhring, 'Die Elixiere des Teufels (1815/16)' in *Romane und Erzählungen der deutschen Romantik: Neue Interpretationen*, ed. P. M. Lützel (Stuttgart, 1981), pp. 325 - 350.

doppelgänger have got into the monk's cell just before he died? This suggests that Medardus killed Aurelie himself.¹⁴ It is no coincidence that Spiridion's words regarding this murder are very neutral: 'Wir bemerkten, daß es Tag und Stunde war, in der voriges Jahr die Nonne Rosalia auf entsetzliche Weise, gleich nachdem sie das Gelübde abgelegt, ermordet wurde' (HAA2, p. 352). All the other accounts by Medardus, who named the doppelgänger Viktorin, can be explained by his dual personality. However, this interpretation of the doppelgänger motif should be seen as a possible alternative and as demonstrative of how Hoffmann consciously constructed his texts not to be interpreted in just one way.

Medardus' youth, i.e. the period before entering the monastery, appears to him 'wie ein seliger Traum' (HAA2, p. 16). This can be seen as an ironic contrast - after all, one enters monastic life to achieve bliss, not to lose it. Initially the positive state of youth remains with him, as he describes his early days as a monk: 'Die gemüthliche Ruhe, die in allem herrschte, goß den himmlischen Frieden in meine Seele, wie er mich, gleich einem seligen Traum aus der ersten Zeit meiner frühesten Kinderjahre, im Kloster der heiligen Linde umschwebte' (HAA2, p. 28). Five years later, Medardus becomes better acquainted with the monastery's relics including the elixirs which lend the book its title. Medardus claims to feel their 'bösen Zauber' even before drinking from them and beginning his career of sin (HAA2, p. 31). It should, however, be pointed out that the significance of the relics is reduced in a conversation prior to this, since many of them are not genuine and because the 'magic' of an object can certainly be doubted. Instead, emphasis is placed on the effect of believing in the relics' power (HAA2, p. 30).

It therefore seems plausible that the 'devil's' elixirs are not what they claim to be and only contain wine. In the case of the count and his steward who are the first to open and try one of the bottles, it is perfectly clear that the content is delicious wine (HAA2, p. 41). The reader is not told that the elixirs later have a devilish influence on these two minor characters. Thus, it is

¹⁴ References to this possibility can be found, although the assumption is usually made that two individuals exist (Medardus and Viktorin), who are described as being psychologically dependent on one another in an undefined way (see Schwanenberger [1990], pp. 180 and 183, and von Matt [1994], p. 131).

possible that Medardus drinks just wine which has an adverse effect on him only because he believes in its powers. In other words: the wine subconsciously provides him with justification for his crimes. It should not be forgotten that the young monk had probably never drunk alcohol before.¹⁵

Here, speculation is appropriate once again as the novel does not commit itself. The same applies to the doppelgänger theory. When Medardus says that he sees himself as an inexplicable mystery, separated from his ego (HAA2, p. 71), this duality provides him with the chance to reject subconsciously all responsibility for his actions whilst also sanctioning them. After all, his evil conscience can only be excluded but not shaken off: 'So war es mir, wenn Träume mir die Begebenheiten im Schlosse wiederholten, als wären sie einem anderen, nicht mir, geschehen; dieser andere war doch wieder der Kapuziner, aber nicht ich selbst' (HAA2, p. 109).

The dream motif also appears in the framework of the 'Begebenheiten im Schlosse' to which the last quotation refers. However, it does not represent a borderline experience - on the contrary, Medardus informs his lover Euphémie, that he is not Viktorin and that Viktorin is dead. The next day Euphémie is composed, although the shock is still written on her face. Her excuse is that she has fallen 'in eine Art Somnambulismus' (HAA2, p. 90). This is followed by another lie when she tries to convince Medardus that they had both had 'gestern schwere ängstliche Träume gehabt' (HAA2, p. 91). In this way, she wishes to deceive him so that she can poison him. Medardus sees through her plan and swaps glasses.

Aurelie's dreams are of a different nature. Medardus ascertains that they anticipate 'Verrat und Mord', which is why she prays in her sleep (HAA2, pp. 91f.). This premonition is more than justified. Hermogen prevents Medardus from raping and possibly murdering Aurelie, paying with his life (HAA2, p.

¹⁵S. Olson also noted that the authenticity of the other relics is previously doubted. On the basis of this and other parts of the text, she draws the following conclusion: '[...] der Genuß des Elixiers entspricht der bewußten und willentlichen Hingabe des Helden an seine leidenschaftlichen Triebe.' This, however, is an unlikely exaggeration: Medardus does not consciously give into to his instincts; he is driven by an inner feeling of distress and has a totally different goal in mind (to become a good speaker again), making it a subconscious or, at most, a semi-conscious act. See S. Olson, 'Das Wunderbare und seine psychologische Funktion in E.T.A. Hoffmanns *Die Elixiere des Teufels*', *MHG*, 24 (1978), p. 35.

92). Medardus had a dream-like 'Vision' which called him into Aurelie's room and which anticipates the close spiritual relationship between the two and the discovery of their fateful mutual love.

The monk must, however, pay dearly for his arrogance as he is followed by a doppelgänger subsequent to the murder of Hermogen and the death of Euphemie. When he stays at the forester's lodge, he soon falls 'bald in tiefen Schlaf, aber es folterte mich ein entsetzliches Traumbild. - Auf ganz wunderbare Weise fing der Traum mit dem Bewußtsein des Schlafes an'. In this state of waking sleep, Medardus notices 'eine dunkle Gestalt', whom he recognises to be himself, in his capucin attire. With the mention of the other ego, a motif is introduced which returns on several occasions throughout the work. The other one demands that Medardus accompanies him on to the roof to the weather vane, 'die ein lustig Brautlied spielt, weil der Uhu Hochzeit macht. Dort wollen wir ringen miteinander, und wer den andern herabstößt, ist König und darf Blut trinken' (HAA2, p. 126).

The doppelgänger motif found widespread use in Hoffmann's day. Jean Paul and Tieck interpreted it in their works in a psychological manner. However, I am of the opinion that, contrary to the oppressive reality of the narration, the doppelgänger and Medardus are one and the same person. I do not think one can believe all that the narrator claims not least because the text contains many signals supporting my assumption. This means that Medardus is being confronted with his suppressed guilt. The cool reasoning of the traveller is only a façade, as his emotions, drives, passions and guilty conscience can only be suppressed to a certain degree. Having studied madness in some detail, Hoffmann is likely to have been familiar with a fundamental phenomenon of this nature. The problem concerning the contrast between reason and emotion was known in his day and was a frequent subject of discussion.

After this nightmare, Medardus observes that he can hardly tell 'wo der Traum übergegangen sei ins wirkliche Leben' (HAA2, p. 128) which is symptomatic of his advanced state of ill-health. It is not until Medardus is thrown into the dungeon accused of murder that he stops denying and justifying himself for what has happened. His repentance begins. However, he is

released before he has the chance to plead guilty (HAA2, p. 214). A dream temporarily prompts him to admit his guilt. In this dream he is brought before a spiritual court, to which he wishes to answer for fear of being tortured. Yet: 'Statt des ernstesten, reuigen Bekenntnisses verlor ich mich in ungereimte, unzusammenhängende Reden. [...] Nochmals strengte ich mich an, aber in tollem Zwiespalt stand Rede und Gedanke' (HAA2, p. 211). The dream contains the message: Repent before it is too late. The short-lived effect can be attributed to the physical threat he is under. The dream is triggered by the chains Medardus is wearing in the dungeon and by the length of his imprisonment.

When Medardus wakes up, he believes he can see his ancestor, the old painter, and says: 'Mein Traum trat in das Leben' (HAA2, p. 212). Due to his imprisonment, Medardus loses his grasp of reality to an even greater degree as he can barely differentiate between dream and reality. This is also illustrated by the excuse Medardus gives the personal physician to the prince who is surprised that Medardus is so well-informed about the events at the palace of Baron von F.: 'Ein lebendiger Traum hat mir alles dargestellt' (HAA2, p. 217). Medardus not only lies to the physician but also to himself: 'Ja! - ein schwerer Traum dünkte mir nicht nur die letztvergangene Zeit, sondern mein ganzes Leben, seitdem ich das Kloster verlassen'. Now he can only discern a 'Frevel sündhafter Träume' (HAA2, p. 222). These quotations place yet another question mark over the authenticity and honesty of the monk's account.

Not only Medardus (HAA2, p. 225) but also Aurelie (HAA2, p. 230) suppresses what has passed (after all, Medardus killed her brother). This is because they love each other and would like to give in to their 'Begierde'. However, their consciences and society do not allow them to release their sexual desires. In the case of both Medardus and Aurelie, their suppressed wishes and doubts find expression in their dreams (Aurelie: HAA2, pp. 239-242, p. 338; Medardus: pp. 248, 269, 271, 308). At one point in the novel, the longed-for sexual union almost occurs; however, the memory of guilt wedges itself between them. For this reason, Aurelie has to and wants to die - the love of the couple can be realised only in the other world where the dominance of their physical instincts can be excluded by the

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spirit. This future spiritual union is also anticipated in a dream. Medardus sees a bloody Christ who sacrificed himself for the sins of others: 'aus jeder seiner Wunden perlte ein Tropfen Bluts, und wiedergegeben war der Erde das Rot, und der Menschen Jammer wurde ein jauchzender Hymnus, denn das Rot war die Gnade des Herrn, die über ihnen aufgegangen! Nur Medardus' Blut floß noch farblos aus der Wunde [...].' A rose hears his plea and announces his redemption in an image (HAA2, p. 316). The rose is, of course, Aurelie. Now and later when Medardus dies, his cell is filled with the fragrance of roses. Roses also decorate the altar at which Aurelie is ordained Sister Rosalia (!) only to die a sacrificial death (HAA2, pp. 322, 336 and 342).

In *Die Elixiere des Teufels* the dream as a motif is once again used in two different ways. It refers to reality in the form of an excuse, lie and, above all, self-deceit. In *Der Goldne Topf* it shows the banality of everyday life. In this novel, however, imprisonment within reality has a totally different aspect. The two types of person - either bound to reality or capable of borderline experiences - is joined by what one could simply call a mixture, whose ability to step over the threshold is disturbed by a mental illness. Secondly, the possibility of borderline experiences is revealed within the dream. Dreams anticipate the better world which Medardus and Aurelie can enter through repentance and sacrificial death, that is, in a different way from Anselmus who did not have to struggle with instincts suppressed by a monastic education.

Dream melody of love: *Lebensansichten des Katers Murr*

In Hoffmann's *Kater Murr* seriousness and comedy are evenly balanced. The novel contains parodistic and demonic elements whereby the parodistic aspects are clearly in the majority. For this reason, I believe it is quite possible that Hoffmann might have ended the novel with a happy end for Kreisler and Julia in this world. On the other hand, the problem concerning how the novel should end might be an explanation for Hoffmann's

waning interest in writing the story.¹⁶ His memory of Julia Mark, as far as it found expression in his texts, fluctuates between resignation (*Der Magnetiseur*, *Der Sandmann*), hope of a purely spiritual love (*Der goldne Topf*) and a more or less parodistic fulfilment on earth (*Meister Floh*, *Die Königsbraut*).

Kater Murr's dreams are limited to this world, but in a harmless manner as they do not affect his immediate environment. For example, he remains, 'mich meinen Träumen hingebend, unter dem Ofen' (HAA6, p. 65). This is the typical place for a coward and philistine. The self-deceit and banalities are joined by misleading dreams. Princess Hedwiga feels 'ein inneres Grauen' after seeing Kreisler for the first time. 'Ich sah diesen Menschen schon in irgendeine fürchterliche Begebenheit verflochten, die mein Herz zerfleischte - vielleicht war es nur ein spukhafter Traum, dessen Andenken mir geblieben' (HAA6, p. 59). Hedwiga softens her defence reaction and Julia who accompanies her adds that she believes Hedwiga is imagining things and that the stranger is anything but unpleasant. A possible reason for Hedwiga's behaviour is that she, like Julia, has fallen or will fall in love with Kreisler but does not wish to admit it to herself, or alternatively that she has a different relationship with Kreisler which is not explained in the unfinished novel. It is also possible that this part of the story anticipates the arrival of another stranger - Hektor - who was indeed 'involved in a terrible matter'. In this instance, her premonition hinted at the wrong person.

In this novel, borderline dreams likewise occur, although the term dream usually does not refer to the physical process of sleep. Worth emphasising is a discussion between Kreisler and the princess in which the different attitudes of the two become apparent. For Hedwiga the 'Liebe des Künstlers' is just "'ein schöner herrlicher Traum des Himmels - nur ein Traum, ein leerer Traum. -'" "Sie scheinen", nahm Kreisler das Wort, "Sie scheinen, Gnädigste, für Träume eben nicht sehr portiert, und

¹⁶ A highly informative introduction to the research into and the possible interpretations of *Kater Murr* is offered by H. Steinecke in his epilogue to the Reclam edition (Stuttgart, 1996, pp. 491 - 516; see also the references on pp. 487 - 490 which, however, are not totally up to date). The possibility of a happy end to the story has already been referred to by U. Schadwill, 'Der dritte Teil des *Kater Murr*. Überlegungen zu seiner Rekonstruierbarkeit', *MHG*, 34 (1988), 43-51, esp. p. 49. Schadwill takes one of Kreisler's dreams as an example which I will consider further on.

doch sind es lediglich die Träume, in denen uns recht die Schmetterlingsflügel wachsen" (HAA6, p. 172). Kreisler's attitude towards dreams is already made clear earlier in the book. Kreisler has fallen in love with Julia, primarily due to their identical views on music, an external sign of which is Julia's beautiful voice. Kreisler is enraptured: 'Ha, mein Fräulein! als Sie sangen, aller sehnsüchtige Schmerz der Liebe, alles Entzücken süßer Träume, die Hoffnung, das Verlangen wogte durch den Wald und fiel nieder wie erquickender Tau in die duftenden Blumenkelche, in die Brust horchender Nachtigallen!' In this speech which is, on the one hand, typical for the romantic period (metaphors of nature, synaesthesia etc), but, on the other, is exaggerated and ironic, the way is paved for stepping over the border. We can compare it to Anselmus' elder tree experience.

Kreisler has suffered in a world which does not strive towards such borderline experiences synonymous with the 'Höheren'. Initially, Kreisler was often close to madness because he was not consciously aware of his suffering. The deficit he felt frequently led to outbursts reminiscent of Medardus: 'ein wüstes wahnsinniges Verlangen bricht oft hervor nach einem Etwas, das ich in rastlosem Treiben außer mir selbst suche, da es doch in meinem eignen Innern verborgen, ein dunkles Geheimnis, ein wirrer rätselhafter Traum von einem Paradies der höchsten Befriedigung, das selbst der Traum nicht zu nennen, nur zu ahnen vermag, und diese Ahnung ängstigt mich mit den Qualen des Tantalus. [...] Nur einen Engel des Lichts gibt es, der Macht hat über den bösen Dämon. Es ist der Geist der Tonkunst' (HAA6, pp. 78f.). The paradise of the highest satisfaction would be a union with Julia, but - as is suggested in the quotation - this union would not be reduced to a sexual level (this is where the danger lies which is symbolised by the doppelgänger). A spiritual union with Julia would also signify a union with music (cf. also HAA6, p. 83). Julia has similar feelings without the inner struggle with her sexual instincts which, in the context of the novel, makes her an exemplary character. Her love for Kreisler is likewise most clearly expressed in a dream, however, in a dream she has while sleeping. This demonstrates her greater naivety and unconsciousness as opposed to Kreisler. The dream also anticipates the threat posed by Hektor who later pesters

Julia (HAA6, pp. 211f.). Other dreams and day dreams have a similar function (e.g. Hedwiga's: HAA6, p. 423).

Whether or not Kreisler and Julia reach their highest goal is left open by the incomplete novel. The fact that Kreisler starts suffering from a dual personality must be seen as a potential threat (HAA6, p. 178). Kreisler, however, never succumbs to this threat. He wins back his inner balance during his stay in the monastery. There, he composes sacred music and often has his 'seligen Traum' of a concert with Julia. Here, the notes are not on note sheets but 'fertig in seiner Brust', and the 'Engelsgestalt' Julia sings his Agnus dei 'mit Tönen des Himmels' (HAA6, p. 303). The religious metaphor serves to transcend their love which finds early fulfilment in this dream. Kreisler now knows that he can no longer lose Julia, as he is 'geborgen, wo nie mehr der schöne Traum zerstört werden kann, der nichts anderes ist als die Begeisterung der Kunst selbst' (HAA6, p. 304). His 'Schmerz' has been lost 'in der Hoffnung, in der Sehnsucht der ewigen Liebe' (HAA6, p. 313). And Julia can say of herself: 'Rein und schuldlos ist das Gefühl, das ich für den teuern Mann hege in dieser Brust, und sehe ich ihn niemals wieder, so wird der Gedanke an ihn, den Unvergeßlichen, in mein Leben hineinleuchten wie ein schöner heller Stern. - Doch gewiß, er kehrt zurück!' (HAA6, p. 328)

In *Kater Murr* there is an interesting discussion about the dream as a phenomenon in general. Abraham distinguishes from dreaming 'das träumerische Hinbrüten, [...] das somnambule Delirieren, kurz, [...] jenen seltsamen Zustand zwischen Schlafen und Wachen, der poetischen Gemütern für die Zeit des eigentlichen Empfanges genialer Gedanken gilt' (HAA6, pp. 32f.; cf. also a similar discussion on pp. 98f.). This ironic section once again underlines the two levels of dreaming. The true dream goes far beyond the banal and instinctive dreams of prosaic individuals. The genuine dream is poetic, but not every dream deemed poetic is genuine.

Are dreams but shadows?

Hoffmann originally wanted to call *Der Magnetiseur*, which forms part of the *Fantasiestücke in Callots Manier*, 'Träume sind Schäume'. This ironic title has remained the sub-title of the

first section of the narration in which Hoffmann wished to point to the dangers of magnetic sleep, a popular cure in his day. He probably wrote this work very much under the impression of Schubert's *Ansichten*. It is unlikely that Hoffmann planned to give this work a different emphasis. This premise is put forward by the commentators of the Aufbau edition who explain that Hoffmann originally wanted to look at the 'Verhältnis von Traum und Leben' (HAA1, p. 506). Magnetic sleep also falls into this category.

Already at the beginning of the work, a discussion takes place about dreams. The old baron affirms the proverb 'Träume sind Schäume', simultaneously doubting his words as he remembers 'manches merkwürdigen Traumes aus meiner Jugendzeit!' His son Ottmar corrects him: What dreams are 'nicht merkwürdig'. He particularly thinks of those, 'die uns gleichsam mit Gewalt in das dunkle geheimnisvolle Reich stoßen, dem sich unser befangener Blick nur mit Mühe erschließt'. In the saying 'Träume sind Schäume' Ottmar even discovers a fitting allegory as the 'höhere geistige Prinzip' shows itself in the froth of bubbling champagne (HAA1, p. 175f.). This remark shows that Ottmar also does not take the topic seriously enough.

Subsequently, the discussion takes on a more serious note. The baron does not deny that some dreams extend beyond physical reality. However, he warns against playing with fire, that is with the 'Theorie des magnetischen Einflusses', which Ottmar's friend Alban practices. The baron continues that nature cannot bear it 'daß ihr mit täppischen Händen an ihrem Schleier zupft'. He warns that excessive curiosity could be punished 'mit euerem Untergange' (HAA1, pp. 177f.). The baron's prophetic words ultimately surpass themselves. Driven by his pure desire for power, Alban's successful attempt to use magnetism to obtain absolute control over Ottmar's sister leads to personal downfall and death. The magnetic influence causes Maria to die in front of the altar. Her bridegroom, Hypolit, has a duel with Ottmar, who he accuses of being an accomplice to Alban. Hypolit's death leaves Ottmar with no other honourable alternative than a 'Heldentod in der Schlacht'. The baron cannot cope with the course of events either, and finally his best friend Bickert also dies of grief. The only person to escape this fate is the guilty Alban (HAA1, p. 220).

The narration calls for magnetism to be treated with the utmost caution. It assumes that an individual can obtain a dangerous amount of power over others, beyond all control. An assertion of this kind could be understood as a rejection of the abuse of power and as a call for individualism; in a more modern approach one could see it as a criticism of all medical experiments that undermine human dignity. *Der Magnetiseur* also looks at the possibility of borderline experiences in one's dreams. However, the theme of artistic abuse of the dream plays a more important role. *Prinzessin Brambilla* can be seen as a cheerful contrast. In this 'Capriccio' the 'Gegensatz zwischen Traum und Wirklichkeit' is, according to Joachim Schwanenberger, of central importance (Schwanenberger, [1990], p. 198). Robert Mühlher wrote as early as 1958: 'Hoffmanns Capriccio ist eine Traumichtung und treibt mit der schwermütigen Narretei des Traumlebens ein verwirrendes Spiel.' The principle of the work could be expressed in the following words: 'Das existentielle Ich wird aber nur gefunden, wenn sich der Träumer im Spiegel der Kunst als einem zweiten Traum erkennt und sich bewußt wird, daß er träumt.'¹⁷

Dreams are a constant feature of this work. Indeed, the line between reality and fantasy is much thinner in this fairy tale (which it is despite the subtitle, *Capriccio*) than in *Der goldne Topf* and sometimes disappears altogether. With the exception of just a few characters, the reality of fantasy is readily accepted. At the beginning of the second chapter the narrator explains his intentions to lure the reader 'aus dem engen Kreise gewöhnlicher Alltäglichkeit', 'dich in fremdem Gebiet, das am Ende doch eingeeht in das Reich, welches der menschliche Geist im wahren Leben und Sein nach freier Willkür beherrscht, auf ganz eigne Weise zu vergnügen' (HAA7, p. 153). The story is, therefore, about consciously giving the imagination a free rein. This principle is rooted in the triadic history model of the romantic period: 'Zu erwähnen wäre freilich noch, daß wir im Leben oft plötzlich vor dem geöffneten Tor eines wunderbaren Zauberreichs stehen, daß

¹⁷ R. Mühlher, 'Prinzessin Brambilla. Ein Beitrag zum Verständnis der Dichtung', *MHG*, 5 (1958), p. 6. Mühlher also emphasises the significance of the imagination (p. 8) and of irony (p. 16). I cannot, however, follow when he concludes that the true artist's life leads through hell (p. 22). This contradicts the fact that the text in question is of a humorous nature.

uns Blicke vergönnt sind in den innersten Haushalt des mächtigen Geistes, dessen Atem uns in den seltsamsten Ahnungen geheimnisvoll umweht' (*ibid.*). The narrator describes this as a 'Traum'. But he teases both the reader and himself when he contrasts this dream with dreams caused by indigestion, too much wine or a temperature (HAA7, p. 154). Once again, a distinction is made between the profane everyday dream and the poetic dream in which borderline experiences are possible. The playful character of this narration is illustrated by the wording on two purses: 'Gedenke deines Traumbilds!' (HAA7, p. 165) Giacinta and Giglio are each given one of these purses whose content sheds an ironic light on their dream of a rich and noble marriage. It takes a while, however, before they recognise their blindness and Giglio calls out at the end: 'Es liegt wie ein schöner Traum hinter mir, das Urdarland - der Urdarsee! - Aber nein! - es war kein Traum - wir haben uns erkannt! - O meine teuerste Prinzessin!' (HAA7, p. 283).

The consistently humorous and partly ironic character of the text is often overlooked by researchers. The drollery in the highly praised fairy tale within the narration about the land of Urdargarten contains more humorous than serious overtones and should therefore not be over-interpreted as Hoffmann's philosophical credo. The painter, Franz Reinhold, rightly says that the Urdar source is identical with humour which one can understand to be 'die wunderbare, aus der tiefsten Anschauung geborene Kraft des Gedankens, seinen eignen ironischen Doppeltgänger zu machen, an deseem seltsamlichen Faxen er die seinigen und [...] die Faxen des ganzen Seins hienieden erkennt und sich daran ergetzt' (HAA7, p. 192). This can be termed a poetic creed of Hoffmann's which should be applied to all of his texts.

Conclusion

Our short journey through the magic world of several texts has shown that Hoffmann used the dream motif with great frequency and in a variety of different ways. In some instances, the motif helps determine the structure of the text. Wherever it appears, it is always of considerable significance. Sometimes the dreams contain an abundance of symbols which help the

reader interpret the text whilst being difficult to interpret due to their open nature. In other cases, dreams tell us much about the course of events or anticipate important occurrences. Otherwise, they help to characterise either a person or one of the two worlds. Hoffmann's use of the dream frequently bears witness to his great understanding of psychology and his feel for situations and people which almost anticipates Freud. The suppression of guilt and the sexual instincts of Medardus or Kreisler's musical love dream are impressive examples of this. Such accounts of dreams are a precursor to Freud's maxim that every dream represents a fantasy about the fulfilment of wishes in which the desire may be expressed openly, in a concealed manner or maybe censured by the conscious (Freud [1996], pp. 136ff.).

It is interesting to point out that the distinction between day dreams and night dreams is of little significance for Hoffmann's work. Freud likewise attached little importance to this differentiation, preferring to emphasise the analogies (Freud 1996, p. 485). In the case of Hoffmann, the narrator occasionally plays with the distinction in order to dip events into the diffuse light of the questionable, i.e. to ironise the plot in a romantic and also rhetorical sense. The banal dream of the philistine, the purpose of which is to reveal this philistinism, is as independent of sleep as the contrasting possibility of stepping out of the fictional reality into the world of fantasy, which according to Freud corresponds to the actions of reading and writing.¹⁸ With the aid of psychoanalytical categories, some might be tempted to accuse Hoffmann of expressing his subconscious wishes, e.g. sexual union with Julia Mark, in the dreams he created in his literature. In answer to this, I would claim that Hoffmann not only consciously plays with the dream motif, but also with all other elements of the text and even the reader. From this point of view, he moves far beyond the ideas conveyed by Schubert whose work was meant to be of a purely serious nature.

Hoffmann's ingenious texts are masquerades. *Prinzessin Brambilla* demonstrates this most clearly. This poses the question of whether Hoffmann can really be considered a

¹⁸ See the famous analyses of Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* and Shakespeare's *Hamlet* in Freud (1996), pp. 268 - 275.

representative of the romantic period. Perhaps it would be more accurate to claim that he overcame the romantic period. This would make him a precursor to Heine. Those who believe that this assumption goes too far should bear in mind Hoffmann's words which shed light on his attitude towards his literary and musical works. On 24th March 1814 he wrote to Kunz, the Bamberg wine merchant and publisher: 'Mit der Undine führe ich ein herrliches Leben. Sie besucht mich alle Morgen, und bringt (Gott weiß, wo sie sie hernimmt) die herrlichsten Blumen, auch allerley bunte, glänzende Steine mit, da setzen wir uns hin und spielen wie die Kinder' (*E. T. A. Hoffmanns Briefwechsel*, I, p. 457).

In a relatively recent study on dreams I found the following assertion: 'So lehren uns die Träume, daß wir über die Grenzen, die wir selber ziehen, immer auch schon hinaus sind, denn sonst könnten wir ihrer gar nicht gewahr werden; umgekehrt scheinen wir der Realität nur dann wirklich gewachsen zu sein, wenn wir vergessen, daß sie Grenzen hat, die wir immer wieder ziehen müssen' (Heise [1989], p. 10). Hoffmann's work bears witness to his awareness that one can go beyond such limits without having to deny them, not only in one's dreams but also in literature. Dreams and literature are windows to the infinitely wide world of the imagination.

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