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**MIRRORS:
LITERARY REFLECTION
AS PSYCHIC PROCESS**

By

Linda Sue Singer Bayliss

A DISSERTATION

**Submitted to
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1984

ABSTRACT

MIRRORS: LITERARY REFLECTION AS PSYCHIC PROCESS

By

Linda Sue Singer Bayliss

Although critics have frequently dealt with doubles in literature, they have not extensively examined the characteristic environment in which literary mirroring occurs to see whether it, too, might reflect the more obvious doubling of central figures. The present study considers the doubling impulse in literature on a larger scale as a manifestation of a mythic mode typified by the subject matter. Separate chapters discuss three related novels of doubling, M. G. Lewis' The Monk, E. T. A. Hoffmann's Die Elixiere des Teufels and James Hogg's The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner, to demonstrate that a mirroring effect is inherent in diverse areas of the text, including structure, narrative technique, juxtaposition of different genres or languages and ambiguities of spatiotemporal relations. Indeed, like Gothic portraits that come to life, the texts even intrude uncomfortably into the detached security of their readers to suggest that the text itself is an enigmatic doppelganger of its audience.

Linda S. Bayliss

To adequately describe this milieu of the mirror, an ancient deity, Hermes, is invoked as guide. Hermes might very well be considered the patron of this literary double-dealing, since his attributes parallel and amplify those literary contexts which seem to resist the limitations imposed upon them by characteristic patterns of human expectation; he is also the patron of literary critics' hermeneutics. Hermes' realm of uncertainty is characterized by sudden discovery and and sudden loss; one of the most uncertain and miraculous events in human experience is the sudden revelation of meaning and one of the most frustrating is the inability to convey meaning. Hence the reflections in and of literary works like these suggest the reflective processes of the human psyche whose apparent splittings and mergings of subject and object make criticism paradoxically relevant and irrelevant.

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CHAPTER ONE

VARIETIES OF DOUBLE VISION

I came to feel that what we call simply dream and imagination might represent the secret thread that runs through our lives and links its varied facets; and that the man who thinks that, because he has perceived this, he has acquired the power to break the thread and challenge that mysterious force which rules us, is to be given up as lost.¹

Introduction

Like spiders, some Romantic writers spin attractive webs that prove much more difficult to penetrate than they appear to be at first glance. These colorful, labyrinthine literary webs seem fragile, loosely layering old, dusty, and apparently useless filaments with the tar-sticky new strands of empiricism in a confused tangle of overlapping frameworks. For the Hindus, the spider is the great creator-goddess of the illusive world, Maya. For the Romantic writer she becomes a metaphor for the creator of literature spinning out tales. That pale, grey spider at the center of the web is the moon goddess in many myths.² Sooner or later, trapped in the complexities of the web, each victim will confront the moon-spider--this emblem of creative and

destructive reflection. The Romantic author, too, lies hidden near the center of the web, never very far away from the reader, always closer and stronger than the delicacy of the encompassing filaments would suggest. And like the goddess the author reflects the light which is provided: whether absolute paralysis or a new form of creative release will follow depends upon the reader's assumptions about the web. The spider itself does not seem to care. Destruction and creation are its contrary motions: it must spin webs so that is what it does.

In this thesis I will explore three inter-related novels: The Monk: A Romance (1796) by Matthew Gregory Lewis;³ Die Elixiere des Teufels (1816) by Ernst Theodor Amadeus Hoffmann and The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner (1824)⁴ by James Hogg. The author of each of these novels seems to weave an intricate web of relevant and irrelevant material which creates as much confusion and disorientation in the reader as in the characters who undergo the various ordeals of the plots. Illusion, deception, inversion, and ambiguity characterize the structure and style of many Romantic and Gothic works. In addition, some novels like the ones under consideration also address the complex processes of perception and conception that make these illusive creations so fascinating to the reader. By evoking predictable responses in the reader based upon expectations derived from previous reading or from innate, archetypal "sets," the author is able to heighten the readers' awareness of these processes

themselves and the way in which they influence the reading of the novel.

There can be little doubt that the reader, like many of the characters in these novels, is often identified with the seeker in an initiatory mystery. The name "Cowan," which is very close to George's surname and is connected explicitly with Robert in Hogg's Confessions, was a term customarily applied to the uninitiated Freemason. There is, as I will suggest, every reason to think that the readers of each of these novels are "Cowans" who have not been admitted to insight. But while the neophyte may think that the purpose of all this ambiguity is to attune the reader to "true" insight, he/she may instead discover that "truth" is an irrelevant term in these chaotic literary realms: there are as many truths as there are seekers. Hence, as Hoffmann suggests in the quote at the beginning of this chapter, if we wish to think of these novels as enlightenments or initiations, we have to abandon any notions that the initiate will be provided with a magic thread to get him/her safely through the maze and back to everyday business-as-usual. Instead, this type of novel is itself a riddle about riddles; its structure reflects its content because it is concerned with process rather than product. Each of these authors is always busy with the milieu of the mirror--that instant at which one thing becomes unaccountably confused with another, when expectations are upset, causality overturned and customary truths inverted: the liminal moment.

Each of the three novels that I will discuss in detail

explores the violation of boundaries. These liminal motifs include mirroring (since the mirror renders boundaries ambiguous) and the related phenomena of doubled and multiplied characters. In addition, there are interpenetrations of past, present, and future as well as ambiguities in spatial and causal contexts. Sexual motifs--particularly rape and incest--constitute further borderline conjunctions invoking both material and social violations. And then there are the violations of the expected boundaries of the text itself: the mating of myth and mimesis; the mixing of genres and the complicated framing and re-framing of narratives so that beginnings and endings are never really clear-cut. And next there are the incestuous relationships among various texts and their forebears which are particularly well expressed by the relations among the three novels I will discuss. Finally, there is the intentional violation of the usual distance between reader and text. Hogg's Confessions provides a particularly effective example of this commerce between seemingly autonomous systems.

It will be useful, I think, to look briefly at Hogg's work to illustrate this treatment of ordinarily inviolable boundaries. The web that connects (or seems to connect) every aspect of life is an especially pertinent metaphor in each of the three sections of Hogg's Confessions. The first mention occurs in the Editor's Narrative just prior to the meeting of the two brothers at Arthur's Seat. It is moreover, a scene strongly reminiscent of a meeting between two brothers in Hoffmann's Elixirs. It is seen through the eyes

of a narrator very sympathetic to the point-of-view of young George Colwan who is the actor:

he perceived that the black glossy fur of which his chaperon was wrought was all covered with a tissue of the most delicate silver--a fairy web, composed of little spheres, so minute that no eye could discern any one of them; yet there they were shining in lovely millions. Afraid of defacing so beautiful and so delicate a garnish, he replaced his hat with the greatest caution, and went on his way light of heart. (p. 37)

The second web is not so benign: we find the character caught up in it. In fact, the author/spider himself seems to move briefly into the frame as Robert Wringham describes his ordeal in the house of the weaver, an ordeal not unlike the reader's own ordeal in the "house" of Hogg's teasingly labyrinthine text:

My feet had slipped down through the double warpings of a web, and not being able to reach the ground with them (there being a small pit below), I rode upon a number of yielding threads, and there being nothing else that I could reach, to extricate myself was impossible. (p. 195)

Sounding suspiciously like a stand-in for the reader, Robert pleads:

"Friend, I beg your pardon . . . I wanted to be at the light, and have somehow unfortunately involved myself in the intricacies of your web, from which I cannot get clear without doing you a great injury. Pray, do lend your experienced hand to extricate me." (p. 195)

The weaver's wife begs mercy for the unfortunate captive:

"Now Johnny Dodds, my man! . . . think if that be like a Christian and ane o' the heroes of Boddell Brigg, to entertain a stranger, an' then bind him in a web wi' his head down, an' mell him to death!" (p. 196)

But the weaver continues unheroically to "mell" both Robert and the reader.

In a final weaving reference in the third portion of the same novel where the editor again takes up the narrative, the woven fabric becomes, perhaps, a paradigm for the structure of the novel and the inter-weaving of its parts:

Among such a confusion, we had hard work to find out all his pockets, and our guide supposed that, after all, we did not find above the half of them . . . We found a comb, a gimblet, a vial, a small neat square board, a pair of plated knee-buckles, and several samples of cloth of different kinds, rolled neatly up within one another. (p. 227)

Cloth samples rolled up inside one another, pockets full of meaningless paraphernalia: so many cul-de-sacs in the labyrinth, so many spiders' victims neatly rolled up in a web and so many "sample" versions of one story rolled up inside another. This may be Hogg's mysterious evocation of the experience of his novel; but it is by no means a solution to the problem of three separate narratives with three separate sets of "facts." As Hoffmann suggests, the seeker who thinks that because he perceives the web he can understand

it is lost. Michael York Mason, in discussing Confessions puts it this way:

We are certainly invited to treat the data as clues . . . but we must not expect a solution. The jigsaw of evidence is so designed that no complete fit is possible.⁵

It should be evident, then, that looking for a specific answer to Romantic ambiguity may put the critic in the questionable position of collapsing a multidimensional vision into a flat and doubtful unity by leaving a great deal of detail the author obviously considered important hanging over the edge. While reductive criticism can shed light on the particular aspects of a novel which it addresses most specifically, it is often at the cost of ignoring a very large portion of the novel's material. To avoid at least some of the difficulties of too narrow a focus, I would like to consider as many of the different dimensions of these novels as is possible. In order to do this, it will be necessary in some ways to emulate the peculiarly complex inter-weaving of motif and structure, the interpenetration between author and reader, and the ambiguous circularity of movement which seems to characterize the novels under examination. This will require frequent digressions, overlapping and enclosures which in some way suggest the intricacies of the originals, but by no means exhaust their potential. It will be necessary to invoke a god along the way who can facilitate this meandering motion between alternate spheres of reality, much as the Romantics evoked heavenly

and infernal beings for this purpose. My intention, however, will be to enter without an overly-large encumbrance of preconceptions into the realm of Romantic double vision, expanding upon, elaborating, relating, and connecting this material in a manner meaningful to literary criticism, psychology, and in particular, the study of Romantic doubling.

Mirror Images: The Double

Ich bin das was ich scheine und scheine
das nicht was ich bin, mir selbst ein
unerklärlich Rätsel, bin ich entzweit
mit meinem Ich! ⁶

"Like is an ill mark. Sae ill indeed,
that I would hardly swear to ony thing."
(Confessions, p. 67)

The list of Romantic doubles is a long--and certainly impressive--one. Among the best-known works in this genre are Percy Shelley's Prometheus Unbound, Mary Shelley's Frankenstein, Edgar Allan Poe's Ligeia and William Wilson, Byron's Cain, much of Melville's work and almost all of the work of E. T. A. Hoffmann. Even Goethe did not object to Faust being referred to as an example of doubling.⁷ There are, of course, any number of works about doubles which could be cited, some obvious candidates, some with more questionable credentials.

The three works upon which I have focused are not necessarily the most illustrative so far as the doubling motif is concerned, although most critics who deal with

doubles do feel compelled to refer to Elixirs and Confessions. The third work, The Monk, with its paired characters and brother-sister incest motif can certainly be classified as a book about doubles, but I have incorporated it here largely because it is both overtly and subtly the progenitor of the other two novels. Together this triad constitutes a set of multiple imagings of similar characters and events with a familial resemblance of text not unlike the familial resemblances of successive generations of characters in the novels themselves. In essence, the two later authors develop reflections on the reflections of the earlier work, amplifying, intensifying, and inbreeding the "original sins" of the father-text.

Before we consider the particular examples of doubling manifested in the novels themselves, however, it will be useful to examine the mythic and anthropological context of this motif as it has appeared in various situations. This may make it a little easier to focus on the precise milieu which is invoked when duplicity in literature--or life--is a major mythic leitmotif.

Nearly everyone is familiar with instances of paired or twin characters in fairy tales and mythic contexts. Cain and Abel, Lilith and Eve, Esau and Jacob, and Judas and Christ (or even Satan and Christ as older and younger sons of God) are familiar pairs from Judeo-Christian tradition. Kastor and Pollux, Romulus and Remus, Demeter and Persephone, and Gilgamesh and Enkidu are other pairs whose mythic exploits have contributed to western literary tradition.

Dual heroes, as a matter of fact, are extremely common throughout the world in myth and literature.

Brother-sister twin pairs also constitute an important motif in world myth and one anthropologist remarks "cross twins [a brother and sister pair] are almost universally considered to be the first humans."⁸ Even if Adam and Eve were not strictly brother and sister, it would be difficult to suggest how their children married without a shade of incest (as Byron implied in Cain). The Greek pantheon, too, was headed by a brother and sister pair, Zeus and Hera, whose incestuous mating apparently was an essential component of their divinity.⁹ The Egyptians, whose pharaohs were considered incarnate divinities, allowed royal brothers and sisters to marry although such unions were otherwise taboo, presumably because pairing arrangements of this sort were attributes of immortal deities, not ordinary people.

Not surprisingly, the birth of actual twins seems to have had supernatural implications, engendering a variety of ritual precautions in almost every ancient and primitive society. In some cases, when twins were born both twins and mother were sacrificed; in other cases only the twins were sacrificed or just one of the twins. In still other societies, twins were given special religious duties, particularly those associated with fertility rituals. The usual explanation for this special treatment of twins was that multiple births were the result of spirit-impregnation. In most instances the mother of the twins was thought to have been visited by a spirit or deity (a good or evil omen

depending on the society's current collective opinion of the spirit-world) who fathered one of the twins. Mythically, this notion is reflected in the tale of Zeus and Alkmene. Alkmene bears twin sons: Herakles, fathered by Zeus, and Iphikles, fathered by her mortal husband, Amphitryon. In societies no longer so familiar with the spirit-world, this formula was translated into more mundane terms: a woman who bore twins was an adultress. Both in ritual and myth, then, the birth of twins and the related events were highly significant and carefully circumscribed with appropriate ritual reactions aimed at safely channeling the potent energies such a critical event unleashed. If nothing else, the enormous number of surviving twin-myths from all over the world suggests that doubling or multiplication of real human beings was more important as a psychic event than it was on the physical plane. Its continued prominence in an era when twins are no longer considered supernatural events hints that the psychic dimension may have always been foremost. One further intimation of this seems to be the fact that twins in myth are often twins in only the loosest way--sometimes merely brothers or friends or perhaps enemies of comparable strength and valor--yet they are often specifically referred to as twins. Perhaps on the metaphorical plane twinning has further implications as a process not reducible to the simple wonder that two human beings born at once of one mother can seem to be exact replicas of each other. In myth, in fact, twins are much more often

complementary or antagonistic opposites than mere physical duplicates.

In dream, fantasy and myth the psychic significance of the multiplication of one figure into many--either by division or duplication--is frequently in evidence. The sixteenth-century Chinese novel, Monkey, like modern tales of cloning, presents the familiar fantasy in which the seeker must select from a number of identical replicas the "real" person or object. In dreams, too, it is often the very multiplicity of the threatening enemy which seems to engender the horror--not the nature of the enemy itself. One might be able to deal comfortably with one snake or even half a dozen, but not with a world transformed into snakes.

Confusion of opposites is another related motif in fairy tale and story: an ugly frog becomes a handsome prince, a lovely lady is transformed into a croaking raven or a hideous old hag turns into an eligible young maiden. In literature these motifs appear in works ranging from the animal-metamorphoses in ancient Greek and Latin literature to James Hogg's "Hunt of Eildon" (in which a peasant is turned into a hog) or the bizarre cockroach-transformation of Kafka's "Metamorphosis." Closely related to these themes are the déjà vu motifs: men seem transformed into machines while machines take over human functions. We see this happening in E. T. A. Hoffmann's "The Sandman" when Nathaneal, aided by magical spectacles becomes a mere puppet-admirer of the mechanical doll, Olympia. In a modern fantasy, Star Wars, the droids behave like individualized,

empathetic humans while the human storm troopers act with the uncaring precision and impersonal identity we ordinarily equate with machines. These, then, are some of the areas of literature and myth which are particularly involved with the problem of doubling or twinning. Before we consider the precise implications of this motif as it appears in Romantic literature, however, it is necessary to clarify the specific approach to the problem of doubles which I will make use of in relation to the way that other critics have employed the term.

Doubles have been a concern of literary critics at least since Jean Paul Richter coined the term doppelganger for his novel Siebenkas in the late eighteenth century. Since the motif continues to proliferate in literature, movies and television, it is not surprising that twentieth-century critics increasingly direct their interpretive energies toward this recurrent theme. There seem to be two distinct approaches to the doubling-motif in literature in twentieth-century criticism which follow broadly the lines of inductive and deductive techniques. In the first place, there are writers like Otto Rank¹⁰ and more recently, Robert Rogers,¹¹ who have attempted to approach the doppelganger through psychoanalytic theory. Since the theory itself clearly carries more weight with these critics than the actual instances of doubling in various literary works with which they deal, these works tend to be found wanting when they do not aptly illustrate Freudian tenets and to be pronounced particularly fine when they do. Measuring

literary motifs by means of a Freudian yardstick does enable the writers to make some interesting and acute observations about the possible underlying meanings of some of the relationships between literary doubles on the material plane and in the area of subconscious desire. However, it largely ignores other aspects of doubling, including the peculiar nature of the literary contexts in which doubling tends often to occur. It is obvious, too, that the reductive bent of Freudian theory will tend to clash with the expansive motion of a great part of Romantic literature. It is not too surprising, then, that Rogers fails to discern the mythic element in Hogg's Confessions:

The novel presents us with the paradox of a study which dwells on the subject of evil, largely in psychological terms, yet fails to involve our emotions deeply because of the way in which evil is accentuated and isolated in a diabolical other self.¹²

Presumably, when Rogers refers to Hogg's novel being presented "in psychological terms," he means that the characterization follows the general lines of a mimetic "case-history" closely detailing the patient's succession of symptoms, like those written later by psychoanalysts. Perhaps Rogers should have given a little more attention to Bessy Gillies' pronouncement in the Confessions that "like is an ill mark," (p. 67). Or he might have looked more carefully at the "Fac-simile" of the supposed original manuscript of Wringham's Confessions which was bound into the front of the first edition of the novel, but does not exactly match the

printed version. The tenets of psychoanalysis seem, at any rate, inappropriately applied in the fact-simile realm of Hogg's mythic milieu; they would likewise be misapplied in the context of Lewis' or Hoffmann's creations. Certainly the appearance of all three novels is deceptively mimetic at the outset, but their hybrid nature practically eludes any attempt at an airtight analysis. This situation often leads the critic to decree that the author's creative abilities are at fault. This is an unfortunate conclusion for both critic and author, since it reduces the author's work to a symptom of artistic incompetence and forces the critic to condemn the mythic aspects of literature by dubious name-calling ("the characterization of the main figures is crude, and melodrama bulks large in the story"¹³) if he wishes to be strictly consistent in establishing his criteria for esthetic excellence. Since it is apparently most important for psychoanalysts like Rogers to find a certain type of mimetic consistency in the works to which they address themselves, it seems unlikely that they can be comfortable with an author's intentional inconsistencies or treat them fairly. Thus far, then, it does not seem that the tools of psychoanalysis have been effectively utilized in exploring these peculiarly liminal novels.

C. F. Keppler's The Literature of the Second Self¹⁴ is by far the best example of the second type of work dealing with the motif of doubles in literature. This book provides a painstaking delineation of the different types of doubles which have appeared in literature and myth from antiquity to

the twentieth century. Keppler's careful analysis finely separates the different forms of the double according to the particular circumstances of their appearances in literature: twin brother, pursuer, tempter, vision of horror, savior, and beloved. He devotes a chapter and extensive explanation to each of these and also includes a chapter on the double in time. He details the context in which each pair of doubles occurs and draws some conclusions about the general traits of "second selves." However, since his emphasis is always on the double, he makes few attempts to link this particular motif with other aspects of the literature in which it occurs:

I have avoided any attempt to use this figure [the second self] in order to shed light on certain works of literature, but instead have used relevant works of literature . . . to shed light on the figure of the Double, in the hope of providing a groundwork that has not yet existed for more specialized studies.¹⁵

And yet, as Keppler himself admits, these motifs which he separates into classifications interpenetrate one another to such an extent that a taxonomic analysis seems ultimately of somewhat dubious value:

This Janus-faced duality of the second self, this interpenetration of his evil side with his good, should not really surprise us. It is all the same figure we have been studying, and though one or another aspect is more prominent depending on the angle from which he is seen, all aspects are bound to be present at all times: the Tempter in the Pursuer, the Horror in the Tempter, the

saint in the sinner, the male in the female and vice versa. To try to excise one aspect and discount or ignore the rest is like the task imposed on Shylock: to excise the flesh and shed no drop of blood.¹⁶

In Keppler's own terms, then, it seems somewhat self-defeating to draw the lines he has drawn. One might go further to suggest that it is likewise impossible to excise the double motif from its literary context, the peculiar crucible in which the epiphany occurs. Keppler's work, however, does provide a useful foundation for the understanding of the particular traits of doubles and their relationship to each other, emphasizing the doubles' preoccupation with each other, as well as the ambiguous nature of the appearance of the "other" self "the unbidden interloper who is also the bidden guest."¹⁷ All in all, then, Keppler provides a usable field guide to the doubling motif and its recognizable traits but conscientiously ignores its habitat. Again, the ambiguity of the material itself seems to force the critic into making arbitrary distinctions in order to avoid the confusion and disorientation which are symptomatic of many of the works involved. Although his observations about the paradoxical nature of literary doubles are acute, his conclusions seem vague and unconvincing. This is indeed a "groundwork" for further study.

The difficulty critics have in dealing effectively with literature about doubles and doubling is in one sense the central motif of my thesis, for it would appear to me that it is the critical faculty itself whose potentials and

limitations are weighed and which engenders these odd borderline conjunctions of multiple selves. But before turning to a more thorough explication of the way in which doubles function in these multi-layered novels about multiplicity, it is essential to clarify as well as possible my own use of the terms "double" and "doppelganger," which have certainly been used in a great many different contexts.

"The word double is embarrassingly vague as used in literary criticism," Albert J. Guerard remarks.¹⁸ Keppler adds:

An even more serious difficulty about these words [double and doppelganger] is that they have been so loosely used by writers on the subject that they can mean virtually anything: in other words, they have no real meaning.¹⁹

There seems, in fact, to be a duplicity or ambiguity about the very terms used to describe this phenomenon which is quite consistent with the mythic milieu in which doubling appears. Keppler particularly objects to the tendency of critics to classify all sorts of different types of doubles under this one category:

the word "double" is used interchangeably for a case of biological twinship and for a case of psychopathic hallucination, with no apparent realization that the two are entirely different things.²⁰

This may be so in life, but I would suggest that whenever the doubling process is evoked in literature a similar archetypal "set" is brought into play; the "reality" or

"unreality" of the circumstances has little to do with the story. A pair of "real" twins in a novel are after all no more real than a devil or an angel in a novel and may convey similar mythic content. Keppler's preference for the term "second self," on the other hand, seems more interpretive than descriptive and unnecessarily cumbersome. I will, then, incorporate the words "double" and "doppelganger" in my discussion as conveying the appropriate ambiguity for the subject whenever obvious doubling or multiplying of figures occurs in a text--whether it is between brothers, brother and sister, man and devil, lovers or strangers, imagined figures or real flesh-and-blood people.

As I have already suggested, it is not necessarily the twins themselves which seem to constitute the main preoccupation of authors who delve into this material. Instead, it would appear to be the ambiguous distance between them, the unseen boundary which, as it were, functions to keep them in separate worlds yet dramatizes their uncanny relatedness. One metaphor for that space or tension between the two is the mirror. Since glass is an insubstantial and fragile substance through which we can readily see, but not move, it seems an apt emblem of that critical point between opposites which seems to support and sustain their relationship while firmly dividing them. It will be useful here, then, to look a little more closely at that mirror-metaphor since it in many ways amplifies the phenomenon of doubling in literature.

Some Reflections on Mirrors--Magic and Mundane

Between us and events, between the doer
and the deed, there is a reflective mo-
ment.²¹

At least since Narcissus and Perseus, magic mirrors of one sort or another have been a firm but ambiguous fixture in literature and myth. Their obvious affiliation with the reflective capacity of the moon and the spirit-world in general (after all, it is a "ghost," not a "real" person who appears in the mirror) insures that whenever people summon up their twins by consulting the looking-glass they are likely to get a good deal more than they bargained for. Medieval prints depict malicious imps presenting their backsides to startled noble ladies who are admiring themselves in their mirrors. Presumably these images were intended to point up the parallels between women's vanity and demonic hubris. In fact, though, the mirror is often the nexus of inversion wherein the "head" world or upper realm confronts the "gut" world or lower realm. The mirror-image may often present a topsy-turvy parody of the common-sensical upright world as it does in Lewis Carroll's Through the Looking Glass. In this story, too, it acts as the Symplegades by means of which access to the "other world" is attained. Mythic mirrors, then, like mythic twins, often reflect more--or less--than they seemingly ought to. Like Matilda's magic mirror in The Monk, they may summon up spatially-distant events, or, like the crystal balls used by fortune

tellers, they may reflect images of the past or future. On the other hand, it may be significant when a mirror reflects nothing at all, as in the cases of image-less ghosts and vampires or the unnamed man in E.T.A. Hoffmann's New Year's Eve Tale who sold his reflection.

In order to get a somewhat firmer grasp on this metaphor, let's look at the attributes of a mirror. Reflection encompasses an interesting ambiguity that we tend to take for granted. Whereas a mirror produces a double exactly like myself in all aspects of appearance, dress, and gesture, that reflection is at the same time a precise contradiction of myself. While I am right-handed, it is left-handed. While the right side of my body is more physically developed and coordinated, it is the left side of my mirror-image that displays these traits. My "double" is in fact my complete--sinister--contradiction in terms of left-right orientation. And there are other contradictions: while I am "real," the image is ghostly, fleeting, gone with a movement or the flick of a light switch. While my body is warm, soft, contoured, the surface of the mirror is cold, hard, flat--as rigid and unyielding as death. It is I, but it is not I. Considering this paradox, it is hardly surprising that in the past mirrors were pressed to the lips of the dying to determine whether or not the soul had fled. It was not a mere handy test for condensation, but a complex symbolic dramatization of the boundary line that mirrors seem to epitomize: the dead in truth cannot affect the mirror as the living can, for their image is fixed and

immobile, no longer the flitting of spirit. The possibility of the dead confusing themselves with their mirror-image since they may not be aware that they have "crossed the boundary" is also reflected in the universal custom of covering household mirrors or turning them to the wall when there is a serious illness or death in the household.

Alice wasn't the only person ever to discover that a mirror could be a literal means of access to the Other World. Primitives have often used mirrored pendants to induce trance-states; mirrors provide a significant vehicle for modern cocaine-use. Obviously, the mirror's ambiguities of form and substance still entrance us whenever we turn to the looking-glass to "see ourselves as others see us."

Fiction, too, is a mirror and the mirror of fiction is no more likely to reflect the mundane, customary world of ordinary life than is the mirror in fiction. In fiction's House of Mirrors, each image is as devastatingly true and as appallingly false as the next. We cannot prefer one image to another simply because it is more nearly aligned with our current ideals of the way things ought to be. Certainly many misleading notions about the necessity of "realism" in fiction might be avoided if we recognize that a mirror, by its very nature, never produces an exact likeness, but only a curious mimesis or aping as if we were seeing the real thing. Fiction, too, is always as if it were real life. But fictive life is also mediated by the reflective vehicle through which it passes (the text), implying that the organizing, story-making function of consciousness forms a

chaos of external events into an intelligible series of internal experiences. As we shall see, the novel's emphasis on time--especially the significance of the moment at which one mirror-twin encounters the other--also directs attention to the reflective, organizing capacity of the experiencing mind. As Immanuel Kant suggested, time, space, and causality are the primary categories of self-consciousness by means of which we "make sense" of what happens to us. These three likewise function as organizing categories in the mirrorings of fiction, but--in the novels we will be examining--their frequent confusion, ambiguity, and overlapping imply almost infinite refractions, opening up a multiplicity of experiential dimensions in each event, each with its own logic and "sense." In antiquity, each of these dimensions was assigned to the jurisdiction of a particular deity so that one set might be referred to as "Hera's happenings" and another as "Apollo's events." In modern psychology, similar configurations are referred to as "complexes," a descriptive and useful term which has unfortunately taken on negative connotations. At any rate, like the multiple mirrors in a clothing store, these "complex" fictions reflect and re-reflect, endlessly inter-linking, re-visioning and re-combining. In fiction the actualities that are produced from the potentialities of time, space, and causality available seem as random as the combinations of a gene-pool, but ultimately, these seemingly chance events appear to be governed by an unseen over-bearing teleological Fate toward which both individual and species tend.

In the realm of these fictions, the amplifications of the mirror-image--like those of literary critics--often undermine or invert the mundane literal appearance of the subject to insist on a metaphorical understanding. Conversely, metaphor presented from the "mirror side" must always be taken to mean exactly what it says, even though it is couched in deceptive, double-edged oracular terms (and often in verse). Hence, surface appearances of the subjects in these novels are never what they appear to be when we are dealing with the ordinary world. Yet whenever an "underworld" figure appears--such as a gypsy, a demon, or a ghost, his/her words, though ambiguous, are always literally true. The mirror, it would seem, never lies and even the Father of Lies in Hogg's novel never once tells a real lie. As readers, we can usually make the distinction between one side of the mirror and the other if we are at all familiar with Romantic conventions. But the characters in the novel seem like the dead for whom we cover mirrors in that they are confused about "which side" they are on. Often they mistake the reflection for the real thing, not realizing that they have "crossed over."

The lies of literature, the lies of perception and the lies of mirror-likeness seem firmly woven into the fabric of Romantic literature, for duplication can never be fully separated from duplicity and the Father of Lies is often referred to as "the Deuce." It is not too surprising, then, that the devil manages to get into these mirror-tales so often. And since it is incumbent upon him to put in an

appearance whenever he is mentioned, we might as well render him his dues before we venture into his domain. The three novels about which I will be writing all have the devil in them in one shape or another. But before we look at exactly what the devil might be doing in the mirror (presumably with his backside foremost in the traditional fashion), it will be useful to see what he--or a mythic figure very closely related to him--might have to do with all this non-sense about spiders, mirrors, time, and twins.

Hermes Psychopomps

This initiation [Samothraki] does not make us whole; rather it makes us aware of always being in a syzygy with another figure, always in a dance, always a reflection of an invisible other.²²

If literary critics have a patron deity, perhaps that deity is Hermes, particularly in his guise as psychopomps or spirit-guide, leading the way into the underworld of amplified meaning and inversion. From Hermes we get the term "hermeneutics," an operation that is carried out as much by the critics' efforts as by the authors'. That critical function is also much in evidence in works of literature like the ones I will be dealing with in which the author and/or certain characters take on the role of Hermes psychopomps to initiate the reader into an underworld labyrinth of layered meanings.

Hermes is a god of penetration, meeting and movement

from one place to another. Like Janus he governs thresholds and like the serpent his undulating, often phallic, form can move in and out of adjoining realms, sometimes occupying several simultaneously. In antiquity, stone cairns set up at boundaries and at magical spots (where the natural met the super-natural) were called "herms." The name "Hermes" may be derived from these stone heaps, but came to signify "interpreter" or "mediator," suggesting that the aspect of the god manifested at these points was his ability to move easily across boundaries.²³ This attribute is evident in Hermes' ritual ushering of the dead into Hades as well as in his actions as a go-between conciliating the claims of Olympus with those of Hades. James Hillman describes the Mercurial realm in this way:

For Hermetic consciousness, there is no upperworld versus underworld problem. Hermes inhabits the borderline; his herms are erected there, and he makes possible an easy commerce between the familiar and the alien.²⁴

There were numerous boundaries sacred to Hermes: those places on mountains where heaven met earth; the caves which gave ingress to Old Mother Earth; the ancient, sacred spots; crossroads and the points where lands with different governments or owners met; the burial places of suicides or sacrificial victims, and, of course, the time and place at which human beings underwent the transition from life to death. Although the sacred rites of boundaries have in our own era been largely transformed into the sacred rights of

property, in this, too, we can see Hermes' hand, for he was the deity of merchants and, logically enough, commerce. Transition naturally suggests initiation and certainly we must credit Hermes with facilitating every sort of rite-de-passage with his unsurpassed skill at penetration, an attribute exceptionally well expressed by his phallic character. Hermes' sexual nature also relates him to the darker mysteries of commerce of all types. According to the Homeric Hymn²⁵, Hermes as an infant successfully stole Apollo's cattle and lied skillfully when confronted with the crime. Thus he was a god of thieves and liars of all kinds with a clever turn for alibis. Bandits, robbers, deceitful merchants, con-men, gamblers, and assassins all paid homage to Hermes. And no doubt illicit lovers did, too. As a matter of fact, sacrifices left at herms were supposed to be stolen by anyone who had need of them.²⁶ Significantly, though, Hermes' own theft of Apollo's cattle was not for selfish personal gain, but for religious reasons: he sacrificed the cattle. This detail suggests the mystical, religious nature of Hermes' whimsical tricks. Ultimately this ritual act seems to reflect the wider, symbolic nature of the mythic god whose behavior often seems so human and personalized that it is difficult to think of him as one of the immortal Olympians. At times he has the appeal of a lovable two-year-old brat overturning furniture just to see what will happen. But in fiction, at least, the characters who mistake the cosmic manifestations of Hermes' tricksterish nature for ordinary human events from which they may derive personal

gain very quickly find themselves in over their heads. Like the maiden in "The Water-King," they do not recognize the full implications of their commitment; if they had, they would not have made it:

Oh! had some spirit deigned to sing,
 'Your partner is the Water-King!'
 The Maid had fear and hate confest,
 And cursed the hand which then She pressed.
 (Monk, p. 290)

As a master of transmutation, Hermes was also a god of Fortune--not just good luck, but any sudden turn of fortune whether propitious or not. In this respect, he is clearly related to the Gemini, the mythic twins who were said to be responsible for fortune and who were invoked well into the twentieth century with the phrase "by Gemini." Hermes himself is often represented as a deity of dual aspect. C. G. Jung cites the duplicity of Mercurius, his simultaneously metallic and pneumatic nature²⁷ in connection with the traits assigned him (and the metal named for him) by alchemists. Ancient representations of Hermes, indeed, confirm his dual nature by falling into two distinct categories: on the one hand there are the crude, squarish, primitive human-headed stele or herms with clearly-defined phallic attributes and on the other hand there are the elegant, handsome, naturalistic "messenger" Hermes with winged boots and/or hat and scarcely any suggestion of a primitive fertility idol. To favor one type of Hermes over another, however, as mythographers often do,²⁸ is to ignore the characteristically metamorphic nature of a god who once

transformed a mundane tortoise into Apollo's poetic instrument, the lyre.

Hermes' multiform, transmutative function is no doubt also reflected in his frequent representation as a three-headed deity. In this respect he resembles Hecate, the awful three-headed Mistress of the Underworld as well as Cerberus, the hell-hound. These figures seem in turn to be linked to the three Gorgons and the three Fates and even the Nordic triad of Norns. All are in some sense liminal or threshold figures. Hence the tri-partite or "Trismegistos" (thrice-born) aspect of Hermes appears also to express symbolically his role as mediator between two evidently irreconcilable poles, just as the threefold nature of the Christian God suggests mediation between the heavenly and the earthly realms.

It is evident, then, that the ancients viewed Hermes as an embodiment of a particular kind of interpenetration or cohabitation between two normally polarized worlds. The obvious expression of this process would be a sexual analogy, an attribute often emphasized in the ancient herms. In fact, it would be quite simple to reduce all Hermes' functions to symbolically sexual ones. To do so, however, would seem too simplistic and reductive, for we must not forget that any number of ancient deities--such as Aphrodite, Priapus, Dionysus, Zeus and Eros--can also be equated with sexual functions. Each, however, was viewed as a very different sort of being governing quite diverse areas of human activity. It is evident, then, that Hermes'

borderline presence must have wider implications for human understanding than a simple sexual allegory. Perhaps we can invert our proposition (as Hermes encourages us to do) and say that human sexuality is itself an invocation of Hermes, activating an immense psychic field of implications that relate as much to the past and future of the species Homo sapiens as to individual life. But I will return to this question in my conclusion. We need now to turn to Hermes' explicit connection with Romantic novels, and, particularly, the devils that inhabit these works.

Hermetic Sympathy for the Devil in Romanticism

The Christian devil does not derive exclusively from the ancient Hermes, for he borrows attributes from a variety of Eastern and Western deities, including the Zoroastrian Ahriman, the Roman Pan, the Greek Hades, the Hebrew Sathanas, and a plethora of minor male and female nature-gods. Many of the devil's most prominent characteristics, however, do bear a close correspondence to the more notable attributes of Hermes. For example, the dual or "deuce" qualities of the devil (ironically and linguistically related to "deus")²⁹ are not limited to his cloven hoof. He is often shown literally with two faces--one in the ordinary spot and the other either incorporating his genitals or anus. He also combines opposites in his androgynous nature and throughout the Middle Ages he was generally given woman's breasts. In addition, he combines man and beast, for

his upper parts are ordinarily human while his nether equipage includes the satyr's hirsute thighs, a tail, and either animal hoofs or bird's talons. These, however, seem to be merely standardized techniques for conveying the mercurial nature of the devil symbolically, for it was generally believed that this underworld ruler could readily transform himself into a beautiful woman, a charming boy, a hideous monster, a puff of smoke, a bat or anything else that suited his current needs. Like Hermes, then, Satan proves extremely adept at metamorphosis and duplicity. He also has a reputation for being an expert liar and master of irony and double-edged expression like Gil-Martin in Hogg's Confessions and Matilda in The Monk. He acts as patron of liars and thieves, especially very deceitful ones like the gang of robbers in The Monk, providing them with windfalls in the form of naive victims. But like Gil-Martin he is a thoroughly unreliable patron who may also be the instrument for ultimately bringing the criminals to justice when they feel most secure from discovery; revelation and discovery are, after all, some of the devil's (and Hermes') most obvious duties.

In the Middle Ages and the Renaissance the devil was particularly associated with business and commerce, especially as the instigator of Jewish merchants and userers. It is not too surprising, then, that a certain closeness with money and financial shrewdness characterize Gothic-novel inhabitants associated with the devil. Heathcliff, for example, exhibits a great deal of business sense, and,

to a lesser extent, so does Robert Wringham.

Satan, like Mercurius, moves across all sorts of boundaries with ease--a skill particularly noticeable in Milton's Satan who seems constantly to be travelling from one realm to another. Like Hermes, the devil's mediating ability is suggested by his association with the number three as well as with the number two: Dante's titanic figure of Lucifer has three heads and many traditional devils carry tridents indicating their penetrating, interpretive role as well as their function in mirroring the doings of the heavenly trinity, for "That which is on high is like that which is below."³⁰ In many respects, hell in Christian doctrine becomes an inverted, parodied heaven, a mirror image of the divine realm.

One author suggests that "the original Hermes was the most liable of all gods to adventure which had unfortunate after-effects."³¹ The deity's involvement (though slight) with the Judgement of Paris is an instance of this. There always seems to be a "catch" to Hermes' events which is connected, no doubt, with his involvement in sudden turns of fortune. There is an obvious parallel here with the devil's doings, for we know that whenever humankind gets assistance from the Great Enemy, the results will be mixed at best if not thoroughly disastrous.

The devil's sexuality, like Hermes', is prodigious. His sexual prowess, in fact, seems to have been the central focus of the fertility rites of the "old religion" celebrated in the Witches' Sabbaths. Again, though Hermes had

"many love affairs and many children . . . mostly they were rather unhappy."³² It is evident in literature, as well, that love affairs instigated by the devil like Faust's dalliance with Marguerite or Ambrosio's involvement with Antonia are foredoomed to tragedy.

Hermes psychopomps appeared to guide the dead to the underworld; the devil often appears in art and fiction to escort the sinner to his new world. The devil also appears at decisive moments in people's lives to tempt them to make unwise decisions. The burial of suicides at crossroads, presumably because such deaths invoked the devil, seems to suggest a propitiation of the deity whose province it is to move across borderlines. It is presumptuous in a human being to move himself across the borderline between life and death; consequently ritual precautions are required to prevent the dead person's spirit from being trapped "between," since it has not had the benefit of a spirit-guide.

In drawing these lengthy analogies, I have tried to hint at some of the ways in which Romantic authors invoked the devil--especially the Hermetic aspects of the devil. The Christian devil was traditionally intended to represent the enemy of God; in doing so, he must be in every respect antithetical to the deity. It is evident, though, that the ancient Hermes from whom the devil derives so many of his attributes was neither evil nor good, but apparently symbolized an order outside these ordinary dualistic concepts. I believe the Romantics, who so often wrote of the devil and sympathized with Milton's Satan, were particularly concerned

with retrieving this mediating aspect of the devil which had been largely lost or obscured. In doing so, they sought to re-define the entire complex of associations the devil evoked by removing him from the sinister side of Christian dogma (unbottling him, so to speak) and restoring him to his Hermetic position as the master magician who not only led the dead to the sad realm of Hades but also brought Persephone back from Hades each year.

My goal (if goal-orientation is an appropriate term in this context) in the following text is to offer a new perspective on the mythic mirroring process in Romantic novels. Ultimately, I will suggest that there is some method in this deliberate Romantic madness of self-reflection and rank organic growth, but that it requires a different sort of spectacles from those to which critics are accustomed to use in adjusting their vision to these complex liminal productions. Such a re-vision of sight and insight, moreover, activates a special set of psychic processes which in antiquity were grouped under the general designation of "Hermes." These texts, I would suggest, are hermetically sealed like the elixirs or Robert Wringham's manuscript: "I will now seal up my little book, and conceal it; and cursed be he who trieth to alter or amend!" (p. 217). So much for critics! But Hermes is a god of sudden revelation as well as closure and under his auspices we may be able to experience the process of creative re-imagination as it happens in these novels without invoking the curse by trying too hard to rationalize miracles.

In this chapter, I have outlined some of the most significant manifestations of mirroring in literature and myth which I have designated "Hermetic." In the following chapters I will amplify, develop and elaborate on these Hermetic themes, addressing my comments to several key questions raised by my initial observations: 1) how is Hermetic multiplicity and duplicity manifested in each novel? 2) what are the internal and external literary circumstances under which a figurative epiphany of Hermes occurs? 3) how does Hermetic vision function as a paradigm for the reading and writing of literature, i.e., what specific relationships exist between Hermetic themes and Romantic notions about the reading and writing of literature? Finally, in my concluding chapter, I will generalize further to consider the ways in which these Hermetic insights develop a metaphor for envisioning the conjunctions of ordinarily antithetical entities whether these entities are male and female characters, "twin" characters, sympathetic scenes, different literary modes or author and reader.

CHAPTER TWO

MULTIPLICITY AND THE MONK

Why This Novel?

At first glance it may not be evident that The Monk (1796) is a book of mirrors and doubling. Although Lewis' novel is occasionally referred to in critical works dealing with the doppelganger motif, its treatment of the double is usually considered marginal. Certainly if we look only at the superficial arrangement of characters, there are no obvious twins like those who appear in Elixirs or Confessions. Yet, since both these latter novels can trace their origins--at least in part--to techniques employed by Lewis in The Monk, we must assume there is some basis for viewing Lewis' novel as an important ancestor in the family tree of doppelganger literature.¹

Although in The Monk there are no doubles per se--characters who can readily be mistaken for one another or who seem to share the same being--there is a bewildering dialectical rhythm of roughly parallel characters and incidents constantly changing places, submerging, re-emerging and metamorphosing. There are several pairs, too, whose relationships seem to verge upon those of mythic twins: Ambrosio and Antonia with their incestuous mutual attraction

and idealized physical attributes have some of the characteristics of archetypal male-female twins; Lorenzo and Raymond are the Gemini-like heroes of the novel; Agnes has a twin both in the Bleeding Nun and her drawing of it; she also makes a drawing of herself for Raymond and in this she evokes the portrait Matilda had sent to Ambrosio and its original. Matilda, like many mythic figures, embodies twins in herself when she appears as the novice Rosario evoking Satan's traditional Hermaphroditic quality. She also functions as Ambrosio's Mephistopheles when she exhibits a far-reaching awareness of his hidden motives and nature and plots a temptation exactly suited to his weaknesses. Like Gil-Martin in Hogg's Confessions, Matilda is constantly aware of her victim's blindness to mythic "truths" and exploits this blindness to bring about the Monk's damnation. The Bleeding Nun is also Raymond's doppelganger, appearing (as the Wandering Jew tells him) constantly by his side though only visible for one hour during the twenty-four. And there are minor doubles. Leonella and Donna Rudolpha, for example, function at the negative and positive poles of the same constellation--as foolish old women enamoured with young noblemen. Even the monastery and convent with their tyrant-overseers mad for power are mirror-images united by a garden and a crypt in which sexual unions take place.

A number of incidents in the text are likewise mirrored and re-reflected. Thus, in several instances a desireable lover becomes a loathesome corpse, a vain old woman holds a young, beautiful one prisoner or a work of art (or

literature) literally comes to life. Sometimes incidents are repeated with different results, like a set of scientific experiments. Thus incident, character and motif are intricately interwoven in Lewis' textual tapestry with each pattern repeating endlessly, though never identically.

It appears, then, that the particular species of mirroring employed by Lewis in The Monk involves a far more comprehensive view of the implications of duplicity and deception than he has received credit for creating. Not only is his text a vehicle for stories about doubling, but his innovative approach to multiple-vision allows the novel to explore the Hermetic fertility of contrariety that reverberates--as we shall see--through every layer of his work just as the actions of the novel affect every aspect of the religious structure at its center from the burial vaults beneath to the public arena of the cathedral. And the influence of Lewis' technique extends both to other Gothic novels and those like Elixirs and Confessions which can trace their origins to Lewis' work, and to a great deal of later literature that tackled this pervasive problem of duplicity and duplicating world-views juxtaposed. Perhaps after Lewis' seminal treatment of doubling as a shaping technique for the novel in both its internal and external dimensions, it was impossible for later writers to ignore the immense implications of a double vision in the writer which in turn made the reader aware of his/her own multiplicity instead of a simple cloning of characters that did not demand the reader's active involvement. The Monk,

then, is a novel of double vision in every respect, as we shall see in a closer examination. But before considering the novel itself in detail, let us look briefly at the critical reaction to Lewis' Gothic vision in order to try to determine the focal points of modern criticism.

Criticism: Ambiguity and Conflict

From its publication The Monk has been involved in disputes over its validity as a legitimate work of literature. Perhaps it is not too surprising that in relation to a novel concerned with heredity and causality at every level there should be a critical response to its legitimacy. Although some critics praised the work, others were vehement in their denouncements. The worst of these was certainly Tobias Mathias in The Pursuits of Literature (1797). His "another Cleland see in Lewis rise"² seems inappropriate and his attacks on Lewis' narrator's espousment of Elvira's Bowdlerized Bible seem unwarranted in light of the fact that similar versions of the Bible were common in Lewis' day.³ As Montague Summers points out, Lewis' novel continued to suffer from a largely unwarranted reputation as "lewd" literature throughout the nineteenth century. Its originality was attacked, too, despite Lewis' ready acknowledgement of several of his literary debts in his Advertisement. George Daniel, a book collector and critic, for example, said,

The chief merit that belongs to The Monk is in bringing together an accumulation

[illegible]

1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100. 101. 102. 103. 104. 105. 106. 107. 108. 109. 110. 111. 112. 113. 114. 115. 116. 117. 118. 119. 120. 121. 122. 123. 124. 125. 126. 127. 128. 129. 130. 131. 132. 133. 134. 135. 136. 137. 138. 139. 140. 141. 142. 143. 144. 145. 146. 147. 148. 149. 150. 151. 152. 153. 154. 155. 156. 157. 158. 159. 160. 161. 162. 163. 164. 165. 166. 167. 168. 169. 170. 171. 172. 173. 174. 175. 176. 177. 178. 179. 180. 181. 182. 183. 184. 185. 186. 187. 188. 189. 190. 191. 192. 193. 194. 195. 196. 197. 198. 199. 200. 201. 202. 203. 204. 205. 206. 207. 208. 209. 210. 211. 212. 213. 214. 215. 216. 217. 218. 219. 220. 221. 222. 223. 224. 225. 226. 227. 228. 229. 230. 231. 232. 233. 234. 235. 236. 237. 238. 239. 240. 241. 242. 243. 244. 245. 246. 247. 248. 249. 250. 251. 252. 253. 254. 255. 256. 257. 258. 259. 260. 261. 262. 263. 264. 265. 266. 267. 268. 269. 270. 271. 272. 273. 274. 275. 276. 277. 278. 279. 280. 281. 282. 283. 284. 285. 286. 287. 288. 289. 290. 291. 292. 293. 294. 295. 296. 297. 298. 299. 300. 301. 302. 303. 304. 305. 306. 307. 308. 309. 310. 311. 312. 313. 314. 315. 316. 317. 318. 319. 320. 321. 322. 323. 324. 325. 326. 327. 328. 329. 330. 331. 332. 333. 334. 335. 336. 337. 338. 339. 340. 341. 342. 343. 344. 345. 346. 347. 348. 349. 350. 351. 352. 353. 354. 355. 356. 357. 358. 359. 360. 361. 362. 363. 364. 365. 366. 367. 368. 369. 370. 371. 372. 373. 374. 375. 376. 377. 378. 379. 380. 381. 382. 383. 384. 385. 386. 387. 388. 389. 390. 391. 392. 393. 394. 395. 396. 397. 398. 399. 400. 401. 402. 403. 404. 405. 406. 407. 408. 409. 410. 411. 412. 413. 414. 415. 416. 417. 418. 419. 420. 421. 422. 423. 424. 425. 426. 427. 428. 429. 430. 431. 432. 433. 434. 435. 436. 437. 438. 439. 440. 441. 442. 443. 444. 445. 446. 447. 448. 449. 450. 451. 452. 453. 454. 455. 456. 457. 458. 459. 460. 461. 462. 463. 464. 465. 466. 467. 468. 469. 470. 471. 472. 473. 474. 475. 476. 477. 478. 479. 480. 481. 482. 483. 484. 485. 486. 487. 488. 489. 490. 491. 492. 493. 494. 495. 496. 497. 498. 499. 500. 501. 502. 503. 504. 505. 506. 507. 508. 509. 510. 511. 512. 513. 514. 515. 516. 517. 518. 519. 520. 521. 522. 523. 524. 525. 526. 527. 528. 529. 530. 531. 532. 533. 534. 535. 536. 537. 538. 539. 540. 541. 542. 543. 544. 545. 546. 547. 548. 549. 550. 551. 552. 553. 554. 555. 556. 557. 558. 559. 560. 561. 562. 563. 564. 565. 566. 567. 568. 569. 570. 571. 572. 573. 574. 575. 576. 577. 578. 579. 580. 581. 582. 583. 584. 585. 586. 587. 588. 589. 590. 591. 592. 593. 594. 595. 596. 597. 598. 599. 600. 601. 602. 603. 604. 605. 606. 607. 608. 609. 610. 611. 612. 613. 614. 615. 616. 617. 618. 619. 620. 621. 622. 623. 624. 625. 626. 627. 628. 629. 630. 631. 632. 633. 634. 635. 636. 637. 638. 639. 640. 641. 642. 643. 644. 645. 646. 647. 648. 649. 650. 651. 652. 653. 654. 655. 656. 657. 658. 659. 660. 661. 662. 663. 664. 665. 666. 667. 668. 669. 670. 671. 672. 673. 674. 675. 676. 677. 678. 679. 680. 681. 682. 683. 684. 685. 686. 687. 688. 689. 690. 691. 692. 693. 694. 695. 696. 697. 698. 699. 700. 701. 702. 703. 704. 705. 706. 707. 708. 709. 710. 711. 712. 713. 714. 715. 716. 717. 718. 719. 720. 721. 722. 723. 724. 725. 726. 727. 728. 729. 730. 731. 732. 733. 734. 735. 736. 737. 738. 739. 740. 741. 742. 743. 744. 745. 746. 747. 748. 749. 750. 751. 752. 753. 754. 755. 756. 757. 758. 759. 760. 761. 762. 763. 764. 765. 766. 767. 768. 769. 770. 771. 772. 773. 774. 775. 776. 777. 778. 779. 780. 781. 782. 783. 784. 785. 786. 787. 788. 789. 790. 791. 792. 793. 794. 795. 796. 797. 798. 799. 800. 801. 802. 803. 804. 805. 806. 807. 808. 809. 810. 811. 812. 813. 814. 815. 816. 817. 818. 819. 820. 821. 822. 823. 824. 825. 826. 827. 828. 829. 830. 831. 832. 833. 834. 835. 836. 837. 838. 839. 840.

of supernatural horrors, and skillfully
arranging them in an interesting tale--
it is German from beginning to end.⁴

But, originality aside, critics past and present as Daniel implies, have been intrigued by the organization and arrangement of the materials Lewis manipulated in his Gothic novel.

Although it might seem absurd in a Post-Freudian era to insist on unity in a human personality, critics continue to search for artistic unity and consistency in works of literature. Hence, many of the critics who have dealt with Lewis' novel have either faulted it for its ambiguous flux between mythic and mimetic poles or have attempted to reconcile the separate visions by collapsing them all into one. Even Robert Kiely, who readily accepts the mixed nature of Romantic novels as an inherent characteristic of the species, has his reservations, "For most [Romantic novelists other than Bronte, Hogg and Scott] confrontation and breakdown are not merely fictional themes but structural and stylistic problems."⁵ But Kiely also cautions against an over-emphasis on continuity which may result in simplistic interpretations: "In looking at specific works one is tempted to focus on split character types or contradictory ideologies; that is, to bring order to the problem by tracing a single pattern of disjunction."⁶ As a matter of fact, such a temptation is not unlike that offered by Matilda to the Monk: trust in me, she counsels, and we can circumvent the old laws of society (and literature) with our

new magic (science), cutting through the Gordian knots of decorum with our theoretical wealth. In Lewis' *House of Mirrors*, though, it is not, after all, so surprising that Matilda, who encourages the utmost freedom from social norms and literary traditions, is in the end only an old cliché representing one of the earliest "laws" of literature and society, the devil. Thus, if the critic attempts to cut through these mazes or levitate above them like Ambrosio, he/she may be equally cut off from the very sources of nourishment. Generalizing from one set of characters or incidents to the whole novel can be an extremely risky undertaking when we are dealing with the slippery pitfalls of Romantic double vision. At its best, a reductive explanation can shed light on an isolated segment or character in the novel; at its worst it results in a breakdown of the critical function itself, generating impossible critical demands. The most glaring instance of this imposition of critical tyranny on The Monk is Montague Summers' argument that Matilda's shift from mortal to demon at the end of the novel is artistically at fault:

This [alteration] runs counter to the whole tenor of the narrative. We cannot accept the temptress as a female Mephistopheles. If Matilda was a succubus, many of the preceding incidents are impossible or out of gear. The whole discrepancy, which is serious, could have been obviated by the omission of . . . one sentence . . . and the story would have gained. I like to think that the vaunt of the demon is mere oversight, and in reading, I delete it--at least mentally--from the text.⁷

Later critics have not all agreed with Summers, of course, but often have bent over entirely in the opposite direction. Peter Grudin, for example, goes to great pains to prove that Matilda is completely consistent as a character of the succubus type, concluding "That Matilda is demonstrably consistent creates a new respect for the formal coherence of The Monk."⁸ Grudin paints himself into a critical corner, too, however, for immediately after proving Matilda's consistency he has to admit that other aspects of the novel--particularly the interpolated narrative of Raymond--still lack this unity he has been at such pains to demonstrate. Even Mathias believed that unity was a crucial concern in this novel, arguing "As a composition the work would have been better, if the offensive and scandalous passages had been omitted."⁹ Critical opinions, then, seem to agree that consistency (particularly in the character of Matilda) would comprise a primary requirement for optimal literary quality in Lewis' novel. In other words, if consistency could somehow be demonstrated, the novel's worth would increase.

Other critics have approached Lewis' work by excusing his faults due to his youth (he was only nineteen years old when he wrote The Monk) or because he was writing primarily to provide money for his mother. Every rationalization, though, seems aimed at delivering him--or excusing him--from the crass charge of inconsistency. Such, then, has been the tenor of a large share of the criticism directed at this novel and thus, the question of consistency becomes a

crucial concern for any critic who tackles this complex essay into human experience.

Is consistency a legitimate basis for artistic judgment? If so, can this novel be considered consistent? Or was its author deliberately attacking our assumptions about the nature of experiential unity? In this discussion I will argue that the novel aims deliberately at disturbing, unbalancing and disorienting its readers in order to force them to consider the bases of their assumptions about both the unity of human experience and the unity of literary experience. Furthermore, I will argue that this novel's innovative approach to the problem of multiple vision engendered its own "doubles" in the form of descendents like Elixirs and Confessions that amplified and enlarged upon these concepts of deliberate and frustrating disjunction. The critics are right: consistency is a key concern in The Monk, but let us allow that the author might have taken a wider view of the problem of consistency as it exists in the relations between author, narrator, text and reader rather than simply within individual characters in the novel.

One might, of course, argue that deliberate inconsistency is, after all, only another sort of consistency and I would certainly not dispute that point. I would only contend that the inconsistency present is not a symptom of artistic incompetency. It functions rather to alert the reader to ever-widening circles of reverberating vision and multiple perspectives both within and outside the text, in effect integrating the act of reading the novel into an

exploration of the intricate processes of perception and understanding which make that reading possible in the first place. If the reader expects that the data given by Lewis will be effortlessly recorded on some inner tabula rasa by the mere act of reading, he/she is bound to be quickly disillusioned. The neophyte who opens this novel will not be permitted to pursue a straightforward course over a smooth, clearly-marked textual terrain. Instead, he/she will be forced into frustrating by-ways and surprised by cul-de-sacs in the maze. Progress, if possible at all, is bound to be slow and difficult just like Lorenzo's movement from the lost ideal of Antonia through painful struggle and mourning to Virginia de Villa-Franca. Lewis' sudden shifts of perspectives and jolting metamorphoses hint at the infinite complexity of the organ of sight itself with its multiple ties to physiological and psychological networks which may cause it to see unclearly, to see doubly, to see what is not "really" there or even to see nothing at all. The reader's eye--and behind it, the reader's mind--is no simple video recorder, but a subtly co-ordinated system of ideals, expectations and perceptual data with feedback from dozens of different points. Thus, Lewis' assault on the reader's expectations raises important questions about the preconditions of perception itself and, more precisely, the act of reading. In order to consider this particular aspect of Lewis' vision a bit more thoroughly, let us turn for a moment to the author's vehicle for The Monk, the novel.

Novel and Novelty in Vision

Lewis' choice of the novel as the vehicle for his multiple vision underlines the integral connection between the rise of the novel as a literary form and the evolution of a specifically Gothic Weltanschauung. Though Lewis later wrote for the stage, and The Monk has frequently been compared to contemporary drama, his preference for the novel format in this instance suggests some of the limitations of other, more traditional, modes of literary expression. In order to further explore this decision, it will be useful to turn briefly to another Gothic writer who wrote for the stage but whose most significant achievement (insofar as the later development of the Gothic genre is concerned) was his only novel.

Horace Walpole's The Castle of Otranto (1764) is generally designated as the first Gothic novel. Certainly Walpole's undertaking does include many of the characteristic themes, scenes, episodes and characters which were so conspicuous in later Gothic fiction. Hence Otranto and the play The Mysterious Mother (1768) provide a useful comparison of Walpole's perception of the differences between a Gothic novel and a Gothic drama; this contrast may also shed some light on a similar choice made by Lewis.

Perhaps the most obvious discrepancy between Walpole's play and novel is in the unity of the material. The entire play revolves around the monumental Phaedra-like Countess whose "secret sin" is the obsession of both characters and

readers. In plot and rhetoric, the play hearkens back to ancient and early-eighteenth-century versions of the Phaedra-and-Hippolytus story and ultimately reveals the Mother's sin as incest with her son. The plot is further complicated when the son unknowingly falls in love with the offspring of this illicit union. Like the hierophantic figures in ancient drama, the Countess does almost nothing in the play except voice her fears and guilt. Yet she constantly informs every layer of the five-act drama with her powerful presence--her excessive grief, her paradigmatic virtue and her monstrous guilt--whether she is onstage or offstage. The drama, then, focuses intensely and unrelentingly on this horrifying paradox of a virtuous-maiden-in-distress who is persecuted by her own past self and her innocent children.

When we turn to Otranto, however, we see a rather different arrangement of similar material. Most notably, a central, focusing character seems to be missing. Although there are a number of significant actors and actresses, none matches in intensity and development the ubiquitous Countess. While the motif of Mysterious Mother seems to be that it is impossible to escape the repercussions of one's past evil deeds, in Otranto it is the "sins of the fathers" that are visited on the children of later generations. Of course, the Countess' children are also afflicted by her guilt, but the emphasis in the play is on the effect their affliction has on the Countess. Hence, the novel emphasizes the lack of individual control over fate and circumstances

while the play seems much more intent on developing circumstances out of character.

Also in Otranto there is a great deal more emphasis on the supernatural. The impulse to mix literary modes ordinarily associated with two different forms of literature, i.e., the novel of social mores and the romance or mythic tale seems, like other Gothic techniques, to have originated with Walpole's Otranto. In his second edition, Walpole mentions that he intended a "blend" of these modes,¹⁰ but as Kiely explains,

Though Walpole's stated aim was to create a "blend," he obviously had it particularly in mind to correct an imbalance by letting fanciful and mysterious deeds flow abundantly over the familiar ground cultivated by the novelists of "common life."¹¹

Walpole's blend seems to us more like a mixture of oil and water, but it, too, can trace its origin to the drama to a certain extent. It is interesting and revealing to note that drama in the eighteenth century also offered an odd sort of balancing mechanism which would be put to use frequently in Gothic novels in a much more pervasive way. Walpole's own epilogue to his obviously serious, classical tragedy The Mysterious Mother is a good example of this technique at work. In this case the author shifts abruptly from the serious mood of the play to a burlesque treatment of the epilogue. A few lines will demonstrate this turn-about:

So very guilty and so very good,
 An angel, with such errant flesh and blood!
 Such sinning, praying, preaching--I'll be, kist,
 If I don't think she was a Methodist!¹²

Although these lines do accurately describe and sum up the character of the Countess, their comic style functions almost as a parody of the high-seriousness of the preceding drama and hints at an inherent sympathy between high tragic and low comic modes of expression. They also imply a whimsical self-consciousness on the part of the playwright who uses this method to remind his reader or viewers that this is, after all, a play. Comic plays could also have tragic epilogues. Hence, when Walpole mixed two contrasting modes in his novel and later Gothic novelists followed suit, they were simply amplifying a tendency already present in contemporary drama but not really integrated with its format. Thus, the Gothic novel owes an obvious debt to drama, but offers a much more experimental and tentative spectrum of literary forms of consciousness than its progenitor.

The primary differences between the Gothic novel and drama as they developed in the late eighteenth century, then, seem to stem from the more pronounced use of the intrusion of contrasting literary modes, including mythic and supernatural materials, and the breakdown of individual personality as the focal point for dramatic action. As a matter of fact, the only apparent constant in the shifting scenes of Otranto seems to be the castle itself. Thus as the titles of the respective works suggest, the mother unifies and binds together the drama while the castle

provides the unifying force in the novel. The effect of this shift is to subjugate characters to their surroundings. Thus, characters in Gothic novels tend to merge with their surroundings as pawns of greater structural forces that shape their lives, whereas characters in drama, whether Gothic or classical, seem much more in control of their circumstances.

Because the novel was a relative literary upstart at the time Lewis wrote, it clearly was receptive to more innovative treatment and structuring than a form so highly dependent upon tradition as the drama. The novelist was largely unencumbered by formal expectations from the reader although, of course, readers certainly expected certain conventions in characterization, mode and style to be carried over from other forms. At any rate, the reader of the novel was less likely to expect it to conform in every respect to traditional rules. In fact, the experimental frame in which Lewis wrote had already had precedents in words like Tristram Shandy, epistolary novels like those of Richardson and Smollett's Humphry Clinker and, of course, Walpole's merging modes. The stage was set for a novel about experiencing a novel--a multi-dimensional exploration of human consciousness itself that would move the whole problem outside its usual confines to encompass the audience as well as the participants in the drama.

Sympathetic Structure: Architectural Anatomy in The Monk

Both as literal fact and as metaphor, structure is a crucial conception in The Monk. As I have already noted, Gothic novels typically revolve around architecture more than characters. Even though Lewis' novel does focus on the character of Ambrosio, all the diverse strains of the narrative seem to be eventually funneled into the embracing religious complex. The monastery, with its mirror-image, the convent, joined by the garden and crypt in which the major transformations of life occur--sexual passion, birth, death, and decay--broods over the novel at every critical juncture. Like the overarching systems that keep lovers apart, the parental imagos of convent and monastery tower over the individual's conscious intentions, re-forming them in their own image.

Just as the structure of the religious complex is omnipresent, so is the structure of Lewis' narrative. Apart from the usual movements in the text--backward and forward into time and space, up into the daylight of the cathedral or down into the darkness of the vault, there is a third dimension which might be characterized as "in" or "out" relative to the reader. The three-dimensional aspect of the novel (which I will elaborate on in a later passage) is further underscored by the so-called "boxed" structure of its narratives. Raymond's long interpolated narrative, for example, harbors within it Marguerite's narrative of her captivity in the robber's hideout and the Wandering Jew's

tale of the Bleeding Nun. In addition, there are Mother St. Ursula's narrative and Agnes' account of her sufferings in the vault as well as other, shorter tales within the main body of the narrator's account of the events. Each of these internal narratives is couched in causal terms which attempt to explain--or justify--how a current state of affairs came to be by invoking past events. Thus, in a sense, what is "inside" each box is its cause or parent. The ambiguous pattern of inter-relationships between different times and places--both in the near and distant past and in the future via prophecy--has much the same blurring and confusing effect on familial relationships of events in the novel as does the incest motif which constitutes such a significant aspect of the plot.

Temporal and spatial structure often merge when the repetitive pattern of human events in history is invoked in scenes like the temptation of Ambrosio (and Agnes) in the garden or the tendency of children to repeat the sins of their parents (Antonia, for example, like her mother, falls in love with a nobleman and at the same time is attracted to Ambrosio because, it seems likely, he resembles her father). Hence, human linear history (the history of the human species) converges with individual history much as they would later converge in twentieth-century psychological theory.

The preliminaries of Lewis' novel provide another interesting introduction to its structural complexity. These preliminaries include: after the title a pair of lines from Horace, then a set of verses in "Imitation of Horace," next

a Table of Poetry, then an Advertisement, and, finally, at the head of the first chapter, a set of lines from Shakespeare's Measure for Measure. Each chapter in the novel is also preceded by a verse. It will be interesting, I think, to look for a moment at the way in which these outer courtyards of the text reflect the experience within its inner sanctum. The title itself has two parts: The Monk / A Romance. Moreover, the quote beneath the title is also divided in two, a quotation in Latin from Horace and beneath it a translation into English as follows:

Dreams, magic terrors, spells of mighty power,
Witches, and ghosts who rove at midnight hour.

The doubling via translation on the title page is made much more explicit, however, in the next "Imitation of Horace." It should first of all be kept in mind that the quote on the title page, which seems to conjure up a tragic, frightening tale is from Horace and the verses are in imitation of the same poet. These verses, however, like the prologues and epilogues of plays which I have mentioned, take an entirely different tack. In a self-consciously comic style they hint at the possible fate of the book itself:

Soon as your novelty is o'er,
And you are young and new no more,
In some dark dirty corner thrown,
Mouldy with damps, with cobwebs strown,
Your leaves shall be the Book-worm's prey

These humorous lines do, of course, reflect closely the fates of Antonia and Agnes as well as Agnes' newborn child.

Do they also draw an implicit connection between the fate of the thoughtless reader and that of Ambrosio and the Prioress who fail to see how closely they themselves are bound up in the destinies of their victims? Or do these lines simply parody the gullibility of those who believe in the supernatural and therefore would be inclined to buy Gothic novels? As we shall see, something of both attitudes is included.

From the title page on, Lewis' novel deliberately identifies itself with literary tradition. Not only does he specifically set his novel within the genre of "romance" but he invokes Horace, a prominent figure in ancient literature, to suggest the historical consciousness of his work. Furthermore after his initial references to Horace, he includes information in his Advertisement about the other sources of the material in his novel. Moreover, he credits the authors of each of the quotes at the heads of his chapters. In addition, he gives a Table of Poetry which calls attention to the poems interpolated into the text, evidently so the reader may refer to them later. Hence, in his preliminaries Lewis emphasizes both the historicity of his text and its firm foundation in literary tradition, presumably in order to counter any claims that its origins are less than legitimate. But the question of legitimacy can be a tricky one in The Monk and appearances are invariably deceptive.

Duplicity and Duplication in The Monk

The treatment of twins or mirror-images in literature always involves a paradoxical conflict like the contradiction between ourselves and our mirror-selves or that between imitation and what is imitated. Thus, one of the most obvious ways for a writer to deal with twins has been to create two very different individuals who are externally similar enough to be mistaken for one another. This is a standard device in comedy; Lewis himself wrote a farce along these lines performed at Drury Lane in 1799, "on the subject of two twin brothers, one a rake-hell and the other a broad-brimmed Quaker, who are constantly mistaken for one another."¹³ The play was entitled The Twins or Is It He or His Brother?, a title reflecting both Lewis' interest in the dramatic potential of the twinning motif and his particular concern with the notion of imposture. Unfortunately, the play does not survive, so we can only guess at how Lewis might have dealt with a topic very similar to the one James Hogg would later develop into a masterpiece of mirroring.

Lewis' involvement with the drama certainly qualified him to deal with imposture and trickery whether at the level of the relationships between text and audience or within the action of the drama itself. Let us consider for a moment, then, some of the manifestations of deceit and imposture in this amazingly slippery novel.

The tradition of stage-deception is evoked at the beginning of the first chapter by a quotation from

Shakespeare's Measure for Measure:

--Lord Angelo is precise;
 Stands at a guard with envy; Scarce confesses
 That his blood flows, or that his appetite
 Is more to bread than stone. (p. 7)

The scene that follows this quotation sets the stage appropriately for this drama of deceit. At the outset we see an enormous gathering of evidently-pious people who have come to hear a sermon in Madrid's principal cathedral. But are they really pious? The narrator at once assures us:

The audience now assembled in the Capuchin Church was collected by various causes, but all of them were foreign to the ostensible motive. The Women came to show themselves, the Men to see the Women: Some were attracted by curiosity to hear an Orator so celebrated; Some came because they had no better means of employing their time till the play began; Some from being assured that it would be impossible to find places in the Church; and the one half of Madrid was brought thither by expecting to meet the other half. (p. 7)

It is at once apparent--at least to the narrator--that almost no one in the audience has come to the Capuchin Church for the "right" reasons; they are all imposters and actors using the holy works for their convenience and pleasure, "Boys suspended themselves upon the wings of Cherubims; St. Francis and St. Mark bore each a spectator on his shoulders; and St. Agatha found herself under the necessity of carrying double" (p. 8). The audience, who seem concerned only with fulfilling social expectations and confirming their favorable opinions of themselves rather than

becoming enlightened by the sermon also suggest the idle and curious readers who might pick up Lewis' novel for no other reason than that others were reading it or not reading it. Is there a suggestion, too, that the narrator's "sermon", like Ambrosio's, may have an underlying duplicity? Just as Lord Angelo's conduct is "too righteous," so is the behavior of Ambrosio and his audience misleading and also that of all actors playing roles and all audiences watching them--including the storyteller and his audience. We see at the outset, then, that no one is exempt from imposture and role-playing whether character, narrator, writer or reader; each person is something other than what he/she appears to be although they are not necessarily aware of it yet.

Almost everywhere in the novel, "like is an ill mark." Lewis begins with a Monk who seems to be superhumanly devout and--like the narrator--above the petty pretenses of ordinary people. Later the Monk (and perhaps the narrator as well) seems merely to be puffed up with pride in his own paradigmatic humility. Next the reader meets an apparently-pious nun, Agnes, using a saint's statue for another illegitimate purpose: to hide a note to a young nobleman by whom she is pregnant. Ultimately, of course, she is shown as justified in her actions due to another tragic series of role-confusions. Early in the novel the reader also encounters a boy, Rosario, who turns out to be a girl, Matilda, who is also a Madonna in a painting admired by Ambrosio, again, for the wrong reasons. Finally Matilda is revealed to be "really" a demon sent from hell to tempt the

Monk. Raymond, in his interpolated narrative, tells of an amiable woodcutter with a vixenish wife who later is revealed to be a vicious murderer with a compassionate wife who helps save Raymond's life.

Acting, too, has its dangers, whether it is the danger of acting overly righteous as in the case of Ambrosio and the Prioress or the danger of evoking the supernatural by presumption--the crime of Agnes and Raymond as well as the Monk. In Lewis' novel real demons tend to respond to impersonations of them. Even the innocent are not exempt from these dangers. Virginia de Villa-Franca's impersonation of St. Clare in the procession nearly leads to her death at the hands of the enraged mob. Thus, when Antonia in reciting her prayer intones:

Yet may not my unconscious breast
Harbor some guilt to me unknown?
Some wish impure, which unrepent
You blush to see, and I to own?
(p. 254)

we are invited to see, even in this innocent-in-distress, a poseur. Of course, Antonia does harbor a secret sexual longing for her own brother, even if she is innocent in conscious terms. We cannot even be sure that the dead are "really" dead: zombie-like they come back to haunt us. Thus Raymond, the Bleeding Nun, Donna Rudolpha, Agnes, Antonia and Ambrosio all fall into death-like sleeps at some time in the novel. Duplicity, then, is everywhere in The Monk and every appearance is undercut by the subject's or viewer's presumption or assumption. Ultimately, the reader

may even be confused about who is supposed to receive his/her sympathy and who are the villains of the piece. The inordinate complexity of this novel with its counter-poised trios of male and female characters seems indeed to set the reader against him/herself, engendering a disturbing species of double-mindedness in audience as well as in the participants of the drama.

Duplicity in literature--and particularly in the literature of the stage--is traditionally rooted in two seemingly contrary attitudes toward art: on the one hand duplicity implies the shallow mimicry of artists who depict only shadows of shadows, but know no more than a parrot what they are imitating; on the other hand, it evokes the artists' communion with a higher or inner reality which cannot be expressed at all in ordinary mundane material terms, but can only be approximated by art. Plato held the former view; the Neo-Platonists tended toward the latter. Both attitudes, however, seem to arise from the equivocal nature of imitation itself--at once tawdry and sublime. This duality is particularly evident in that art most imitative of human social interaction: theatre. Shakespeare, an extremely important influence on Lewis and other Gothic and Romantic writers, expertly summoned up the ambiguities of stage and art when, for example, he produced boy-actors taking the parts of girls masquerading as boys. Such confusing shifts of basic identity tend to appreciably grey the line between life and imitation, raising questions about the nature of the relationship between imitation and reality:

where does the stage-act end and "real life" begin? When we hold up a mirror to a mirror do we have a greater or lesser understanding of who we are and who is in the mirror?

Like Shakespeare, Lewis was particularly sensitive to this ambiguous interplay between actors and roles, life on stage and the stage of life. Hence, imposture and even the imposture of imposture were themes especially suited to Lewis' stage-conscious style. As Kiely remarks, "The world of The Monk is theatrical, a world of performers and spectators, because every word and act is a work of art, and every work of art a pretense."¹⁴ But for Lewis, at least, we might argue conversely that every pretense is also a work of art.

Is art for Lewis, then, merely a cheap sleight-of-hand or is it a true approximation to an exalted ideal? While Kiely seems to favor the former interpretation, "No one could have been more conscious than Lewis of the trivial and charade-like quality of his art,"¹⁵ it is not altogether evident in the text itself that Lewis preferred one notion over the other. As we shall see in considering the narrator's role, it is always difficult to determine exactly what Lewis himself felt about the ultimate value of the work he was creating and we may finally have to say that whichever side he seems rhetorically to favor at any given moment is at the selfsame time under keen and cynical scrutiny by an opposing eye. Hence, as I have mentioned in discussing Lewis' choice of the novel as the vehicle for his double vision, Lewis' work presents the infinite regress of someone

looking at himself looking at himself etc. etc. so that every new perspective is both an inner and an outer one. If the regress is not infinite, there is certainly a suggestion that it may be circular and self-reflexive.

The ghostly doubles in The Monk run the gamut from comic to tragic, from ape to angel, and we can never be quite sure whether these spectral beings, drawings, paintings, statues, poems-within-stories, stories-within-stories, statues-imitating-saints and people-imitating-saints are approaching the most sublime or the most ridiculous forms of their existence--or both at once. Satan, after all, is both the burlesque "ape of God" and a mighty archangel fallen from glory: a sexual clown and a tragic hero. In fact "worldly" and "other-worldly" seem much more closely connected than we ordinarily imagine. Whether imposture is a diabolical joke on humanity or our closest approximation to God, it does seem to be the paradoxical foundation of Lewis' treatment of character, incident, structure and narration in The Monk. In fact, it pervades every dark corner of the novel with its slippery surprises, opening trap-doors in the most solid-seeming substance and erecting impenetrable walls out of cob-webs and mist to interrupt the straightforward progression of reader and character alike.

The Marriage of Myth and Mimesis

Lewis' novel is introduced by a gentlemanly narrator who informs us in a smug, confidential tone more or less along these lines: "Look here, I'll show you what the world's about; I've been around, you know." This parental pose pervades the narrative treatment of the first passage as we have seen above, coloring it with the sort of self-confident playfulness of a virtuoso who knows his art. The narrator is reminiscent, too, of the witty guide in Tom Jones who safely sees the reader through to Tom's comic triumph. The narrator seems clever, cynical and altogether in control of his material; the reader feels safe because the story is so conspicuously and consciously manipulated by the maestro. Although the narrator is cynical, his comic tone and metaphors--together with his pretense of thoroughgoing knowledge of the foibles of human beings--suggest that comic justice will eventually prevail in this novel as in others of its apparent ilk. Like the narrator of Tristram Shandy, however, this narrator's smug self-confidence tends to alert the reader to some peculiarities and possible prejudices--even something a bit pompous--in the guide's personality. Could the narrator himself be as naive as Ambrosio about the mystery in which he enacts a part?

Lewis, like Walpole, wed the mythic realm with the world of social reality, though generally with more credibility than his predecessor was able to attain. As we have already seen, Lewis' preoccupation with inversions,

metamorphoses and duplicities of every sort predicated a shifting point of view for the structure of the novel itself. Thus, when the initial theatrical scene closes, a darker mood settles on the drama. The farce of imposters being imposed upon by an imposter shifts to the dark, abandoned cathedral "after the show." Lorenzo, melancholy over the loss of his sister, Agnes, to the convent and the presumed obstacles to a union with Antonia, has a premonitory dream. In this dream, he is about to marry Antonia when a monster intervenes "on [whose] forehead was written in legible characters--'Pride! Lust! Inhumanity!'" (p. 28). This monster attempts to drag Antonia into a "Gulph," but she eludes his grasp and ascends toward heaven, assuring Lorenzo that they shall "meet above." The abrupt movement from a narrator who smugly reveals the secret foibles of the assembled audience to a narrator who unflinchingly relates the incredible events of an oracular dream straight out of Romantic tradition provides a sharp contrast with the previous events and sets the stage for a number of similar juxtapositions throughout the novel. The effect of the dream is in itself dual. On one hand, we could say that its presentation is as mimetic as the previous scene--it is, after all, a possible dream empirically described. On the other hand, it seems inconsistent that a narrator who had so much to say about the ridiculous behavior of people would have nothing at all to say about an evidently absurd dream.

In addition, this dream stirs a separate set of mythic or romantic expectations in the reader based upon the

conventions of romance. Unlike the extraverted and humorous dialogues of the first passage, the solitary internal drama of this scene evokes a tragic mood,

The calm of the hour and the solitude of the place contributed to nourish Lorenzo's disposition to melancholy. He threw himself upon a seat which stood near him, and abandoned himself to the delusions of his fancy. (p. 27)

The narrator quickly recovers his worldly, witty voice, however, when the now-awakened Lorenzo displays a little duplicity of his own as he watches the strange cavalier, "'I will go,' said Lorenzo. And Lorenzo stayed, where He was," (p. 29). This decision leads to Lorenzo's discovery that Raymond has left a note for Agnes, which in turn leads to the long interpolated narrative in which Raymond justifies his actions to Lorenzo.

But before the narrator allows the reader to eavesdrop on Raymond's elaborate (and sometimes incredible) excuses, he relates another significant episode. This takes place outside Antonia's lodging as she returns home. A recognizably Romantic figure--a Gypsy or Prophetess--appears, whirling so madly that Antonia wonders whether the woman is insane. The chieromancer has all the conventional attributes of a figure from the "other" world; in fact, her attributes re-appear in descriptions of similar figures in other parts of the novel: "eyes fiery and strange," exotic "deep olive" complexion and "a long black Rod, with which She at intervals traced a variety of singular figures on the

ground" (p. 34). This awe-inspiring woman immediately suggests the idea of the crossing of literary modes as well as the cross motif associated in most religions with the meeting of spiritual and substantial realms by the opening lines of her solicitation:

Come, cross my hand! My art surpasses
All that did ever Mortal know (p. 35)

Like Lorenzo's dream--and indeed like the author himself--this being from the mythic realm is in direct contact with future events--she knows how the story will "turn out:"

For 'tis to me the power is given
Unclosed the book of Fate to see;
To read the fixed resolves of heaven,
And dive into futurity. (p. 35)

In her prophetic abilities, the Gypsy seems to exist outside ordinary temporal limitations, reminding us of Hermes' female counterpart, the multi-hued messenger goddess, Iris, who also easily moved between evidently-disparate realms. In this the Gypsy also resembles the Wandering Jew in Raymond's narrative. He, too, transcends mundane time by his familiarity with the actual past of the Christian world. Matilda shares this clairvoyant function in her ability to overcome the normal limitations of space by means of an invocation pronounced over her magic mirror:

On pronouncing certain words, the Person
appears in [the mirror] on whom the Ob-
server's thoughts are bent; thus, though
I was exiled from your sight, you, Am-
brosio, were ever present to mine. (p.
270)

Thus, these three Romantic beings with their abilities to ignore the usual limitations of humankind put the characters toward whom their efforts are directed in touch with a wider mythic reality from which they themselves seem to have been transplanted. Like the author and the narrator, they seem to know a great deal more about both the causes and outcome of the tale than the mundane characters.

The Gypsy's sensitivity to separate modes of being is evident in her contrasting responses to Leonella's and Antonia's palms. Like the other quasi-mythic figures in the novel, she draws her conclusion from a direct knowledge of the "givens" (perhaps we might even say the "heredity") of the person she addresses. Thus, the Gypsy advises Leonella (who has already condemned the seer, "Out upon such Vermin! If I were King of Spain, every one of them should be burnt alive" [p. 36]) to give up her futile Romantic yearnings. This is very much in keeping with Leonella's comic role as a foolish old woman. But when the prophetess turns to Antonia, it is with "an expression of pity and astonishment" that--both in language and form--moves the reader once more into the tragic realm of the young girl's fate. Although both prophecies are recited in verse, they are extremely different in their effect on the reader, reminding us of the Romantic Horace posed against the comic Horace in the author's preliminaries.

Hence, in the first chapter two prophecies of Antonia's fate are presented--both of them accurate from the point of view of the seer. In the same chapter, the reader has

already made the acquaintance of a worldly, no-nonsense narrator who would not seem to condone such prophecies, yet relates them. He/she has also met a comic old woman whose condemnation of the Gypsy tends to make the reader even more attentive to what she has to say. Already in the opening chapter, then, Lewis' novel takes on a quaint jig-saw quality like the Gypsy's dress, "composed of shreds of various-coloured silks and Linens fantastically arranged, yet not entirely without taste" (p. 34). As we move deeper into the novel, the silken strands of myth will become increasingly tangled with the linens of ordinary existence.

Lewis uses poetry prophetically in several instances in The Monk and in every example it is associated with a movement into the "other," mirroring world. For example, in the second chapter when Ambrosio meets Rosario in the hermitage, they examine an inscription in verse which extols the cloistered virtue. This leads to a conversation about the hermit's life and its advantages. Ambrosio rejects the life of the hermit thus:

'[The hermit] looks round and finds himself alone in the universe: the love of society revives in his bosom and He pants to return to the world which he has abandoned. Nature loses all her charms in his eyes: No one is near him to point out her beauties, or share in the admiration of her excellence and variety. Propped upon the fragment of some Rock, he gazes upon the tumbling water-fall with a vacant eye. He views without emotion the glory of the setting sun.' (p. 54)

The Monk's words here in response to the poetry seem

strangely prophetic of his own fate at the end of the novel where he finds himself alone among the splendors of nature he cannot appreciate, hurled upon rocks beside running water and pressed upon by a merciless sun that he cannot see.

In several other places poetry reflects the contrast between one realm and another by comparing exile and social being. The most obvious of these is the poem written by Elvira's husband when he left Spain. It, too, suggests the fates of Antonia, Ambrosio and even Agnes:

Dreams of the land where all my wishes centre,
Thy scenes, which I am doomed no more to know,
Full oft shall Memory trace, my soul's Tormentor,
And turn each pleasure past to present woe.
(p. 217)

Agnes, for example, describes herself chained in the bowels of the convent in similar terms:

that She should in one moment become a
Captive, separated from the world forever,
weighed down with chains, and reduced to support life with the coarsest
aliments, appeared a change so sudden
and incredible that I believed myself
the sport of some frightful vision. (p.
311)

And Ambrosio tells Antonia when she awakens in the tomb, "Society is for ever lost to you," (p. 382). Thus, the father's poem, "The Exile," seems relevant to the fate of both his children as well as Agnes. Poetry, then, transcends time to summon up future states of existence far different from those of the present. Interestingly enough, all these passages also emphasize the suddenness of the change from

one state to its reverse--a transformation aptly echoed by the abrupt shifts from myth to mimesis already noted in the structure of the text.

Poetry intrudes into the framework of Lewis' text so often that it provides another instance of the doubling of vision by the obvious mixture of literary forms. Lewis' use of poetry as a vehicle for "other-worldly" intrusions is by no means surprising in light of literary tradition and reader expectation. In Antiquity and the Middle Ages most tales were told in verse and the poet was often regarded as a kind of priest who was "in touch" with the deities. Like Lewis' Gypsy, he/she might even be regarded as a shaman whose evident madness was engendered by the working of the deity within. Of course, as Sir Walter Scott and other collectors amply demonstrated, verse-ballads were still very much in existence among the lower classes and rural population in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Both the still-standing architectural remnants of Gothic churches and monasteries and these enduring ballads provided tangible links with the underlying strata upon which the modern world had been built. Their continued existence, moreover, seemed to be proof that the outlet for human emotions provided by the old ways had not yet ceased to provide a useful service to humankind. Like the supernatural figures of the Bleeding Nun or the Wandering Jew, poems also transcend time and space, surviving long after their composition albeit in somewhat altered form. In this sense they are the hereditary Old Laws of literature, which,

if literally invoked as rules of the art can lead to stagnation and imprisonment; we are reminded of the old law the prioress ironically invoked against the modern, non-superstitious Agnes:

The law had been long exploded. Alas!
It still existed, and the revengeful
Prioress now determined to revive it.
This law decreed, that the Offender
should be plunged into a private dungeon,
expressly constituted to hide from
the world for ever the Victim of Cruelty
and tyrannic superstition. (p. 351)

The prioress, because she is a representative of the old ways of the past activates the law literally, although, as we shall see, the modern perspective must address them metaphorically if it addresses them at all.

Poems, too, can activate those old and seemingly forgotten laws. This is especially evident in the case of Raymond who "never composed more than six lines in my life: Those six produced so unlucky an effect, that I am fully resolved never to compose another" (p. 198). The lines, though innocent in intent, produced an incantation that caused the Bleeding Nun to attach herself to the unfortunate traveller:

Agnes! Agnes! Thou art mine!
Agnes! Agnes! I am thine!
In my veins while blood shall roll,
Thou art mine!
I am thine!
Thine my body! Thine my soul!
(pp. 155-6)

The infernal marriage consummated with his long-dead

ancestress by this vow (which the Nun repeats nightly to him) suggests that the productions of art (no matter how amateur) have implications that go far beyond the simple usages people put them to. When statues are used for boosting spectators or hiding notes or aberrant nuns; when pictures of Madonnas are used for erotic stimulation; when religious processions are produced to parade a prioress' pride, the art itself seems to take over and insist upon bearing its original message. Thus Raymond's verses or Antonia's "Midnight Hymn," innocent as they may seem, carry far greater implications than are immediately apparent to reader or character. Even the words themselves are deceptive in their apparently-utilitarian qualities, for each image or word engenders a whole set of literal and symbolic associations with which characters (or readers) may be ill-equipped to deal.

When Theodore, the Cupid-like compatriot of Raymond attempts to compose poetry, Raymond responds with a dissertation on writers and writing that seems to come from the author of the novel and certainly reflects the "Imitation of Horace." But whereas in that poem the book took on the role of exiled outcast, here the author does:

An Author, whether good or bad, or between both, is an Animal whom every body is privileged to attack; For though All are not able to write books, all conceive themselves able to judge them. . . . In short to enter the lists of literature is willfully to expose yourself to the arrows of neglect, ridicule, envy, and disappointment. . . . But I am conscious, that all these sage observations

are thrown away upon you. Authorship is a mania to conquer which no reasons are sufficiently strong; and you might as easily persuade me not to love as I persuade you not to write. (pp. 198-9)

It is interesting in light of Raymond's use of the word "mania" for poetic composition that the first poem in the novel (aside from the preliminaries) was recited and composed by a woman whom Antonia thought was mad and certainly appeared so. Thus, Lewis seems to make an analogy between being madly in love and being possessed by the poetic muse. For Lewis, at least, both mean a sort of uneasy marriage beset with disapproving relations living and dead. The literary composition, like the bride-to-be, must be held up for approval from its ancestors, much as ancient Romans lifted their brides above their thresholds so that the Lares and Penates (ancestral spirits) could express their opinion of the new addition to the family. Reproduction--whether physiological or artistic is a highly dangerous procedure in The Monk. The marriage of contraries implied by each attempt at image-multiplication in the material or ideal sphere unleashes extremely potent forces on every side. For example, when Raymond meets his future bride's guardian for the first time and is thus prepared for his initiation into the role of bridegroom, he immediately becomes aware that he is in great danger. The vehicle by means of which he is made aware of his danger is significant, too: the bloody sheets on his bed. Now those bloody sheets are supposed to show Raymond that a former visitor to the cottage was

sacrificed, but they also hint at the well-known traditional ritual of hanging out the bloody bridal sheets the morning after a marriage to give proof to the community of a bride's virginity. Consummation of marriage thus seems to be equated with murder. This connection is made even more explicitly when the Bleeding Nun, who murdered her mate in their bed, attaches herself to Raymond after a series of movements in the direction of image-making: Agnes' reproduction of herself and the nun in art and then her physical imitation of the nun, Raymond's production of a poem to Agnes, and the couple's declaration of love for each other. Raymond, because he is related to the Bleeding Nun, is forced to comply with her wishes in order to be freed from her. Even though the Bleeding Nun appears to be nothing more than a foolish old Romance convention, then, (much like the other supernatural figures and ballad imitations in the novel) she must receive proper tribute before she can be laid to rest permanently. This tribute includes both the actions Raymond performs according to the information given him by the Wandering Jew, and also his re-telling of the tale to Lorenzo (and the reader). Thus, Raymond acknowledges his literary debt and passes the tradition on much as Lewis in his Advertisement acknowledges his debt to The Guardian and to German tradition. Evidently, literature's debt to its fathers and ancestors cannot be ignored, for despite the archaic absurdity of their appearances, old literary materials convey vital information about the relationships between mythic and social realities. Lorenzo, as

we shall see below, is the only character in The Monk who consistently attempts to reconcile these separate spheres by a careful critical study. But even he must eventually relinquish his hold on the Romance heroine, Antonia, to marry the more suitable Virginia de Villa-Franca. Union with the other world--the union of opposites--is the obvious source of fertility and future generations both for ordinary human beings and for artists. But this union is so dangerous and beset with so many obstacles that exile the prospective bridegroom or bride from the very company he/she craves most that, like Ambrosio, one may easily die of thirst only inches from a lifegiving stream.

Commerce between different worlds--or opposite sides of the mirror--takes place through archetypally significant means. One of the most relevant figures in The Monk who facilitates communication between two opposing realms is Theodore. This boy enacts the part of Cupid on several occasions by helping Raymond "get through to" the inaccessible Agnes. Theodore's trickster-like behavior allows him to rescue Raymond and Donna Rudolpha from the robbers' house, in essence making it possible for Raymond to meet Agnes in the first place. Like the narrator and Matilda, Theodore is in contact with (or knows how to get in contact with) nearly everyone in the novel. He is the means by which Raymond is able to meet the Wandering Jew; he also lets down a basket in order to obtain a message from Agnes while she is a prisoner of Donna Rudolpha. Finally, Theodore disguises himself as a beggar and sings a Romantic

ballad to insinuate himself into the good graces of the nuns in the convent. Though his attempt to locate Agnes by means of singing a ballad whose lines would be answered by her fails, the answer to his question nonetheless does arrive: Mother St. Ursula presents him with a basket lined with pictures from the legend of St. Genevieve under which is concealed a cryptic message providing a means of reaching Agnes. Agnes, too, locked in her dungeon, longs for the arrival of her basket of provisions, the only tangible sign that she has not been utterly abandoned by the world of social interaction.

Like a number of other artifacts in the novel, the basket, woven of several different criss-crossing strands, represents a continuum from antiquity (basket-weaving is undoubtedly one of the most ancient of human arts) veneered with superstition, but nonetheless reaching into the modern world with a critical message "neither folded nor sealed" (p. 294). As St. Ursula apprises Theodore, "Though its value seems insignificant, it has many hidden virtues" (p. 292). In this, the basket resembles other religious representations in the novel, including the statue of St. Francis which conceals Raymond's note, the statue of St. Clare that guards the passage to Agnes' dungeon and the portrait of the Madonna in Ambrosio's cell which hides eroticism under the veneer of religion. It appears that within the seemingly-archaic, out-grown forms of human expression--old religion, ballads, ancient artwork--there is crucial data about the workings of human nature. Moreover, this core truth can

only be extracted from its thick overlay of superstition by careful attention to--and respect for--the medium by which it is transmitted. If we expect to use art for our own purposes, disregarding this message from the past, we are likely to summon up an unwelcome reminder of our presumptuousness like the Bleeding Nun. If we are careful, like Theodore, to accept the premises of the other world and abide by their mythic laws while we are there, we may be able to retrieve the useful elements without being enslaved by the dangerous ones.

The Hermetic act of fusing two realms which seem by definition to be mutually exclusive is a mystery symbolically expressed in terms of reproduction: the union of male and female, the welding of past and present literary forms or even the juncture of time and eternity. William Blake expressed this paradoxical union in similarly erotic terms, "Eternity is in love with the productions of time."¹⁶ And in The Monk at least it certainly does seem that the figures from "the other side" are constantly interested in the goings-on in the mundane world.

The "mixed" character of the conjunction of opposites appears unavoidable: in order to express the sudden epiphany of mirror-image alongside subject, the text itself must make jolting leaps to bridge the gap between realms ordinarily mutually exclusive. Raymond's criticism of Theodore's "mixed metaphors" thus addresses a problem much more central to the novel than might at first be evident:

For instance, you make a terrible confusion of metaphors; You are too apt to make the strength of your lines consist more in the words than sense; Some of the verses only seem introduced in order to rhyme with others; and most of the best ideas are borrowed from other Poets, though possibly you are unconscious of the theft yourself. (pp. 199-200)

Certainly Raymond's comment focuses on several crucial dimensions of the relationships between poets and their material. More to the point, though, it offers a critique of the novel itself (which undoubtedly does have many of these characteristics), but at the same time it hints at another, paradoxical aspect of that critique: Raymond can scarcely be called a poet; his own relationships with the "other" world have been quite disastrous. Theodore, whom he criticizes, however, consistently manages to move successfully from one realm to the other. Even his poem "Love and Age"--the subject of Raymond's criticism---evokes Theodore's exceptional skill in uniting contraries. Does the author, then, identify with Theodore's erotic and poetic acumen in opposition to the sage advice of Raymond with his rather conventional critique? Or does Lewis offer this passage as an examination of his own shortcomings--the central problems of his text? As usual, it is by no means clear where he actually stands. Hence, a further investigation into the complex interactions of narrator, author and reader may be useful to shed light on these questions.

Mirror Images:

Literary Experiments in Telling and Re-Telling

In The Monk, every sacred precinct seems to be penetrated by Lewis' Hermetic technique: the monastery becomes the scene of sexual passion, the convent garden is the locus of conception, soldiers penetrate the nunnery; even the cells of the Inquisition are not inviolable. Naturally enough, other traditionally secure boundaries are also marked for violation by Lewis' authorial insights. One of these is the "appropriate" distance between text and reader or storyteller and listener. As critics have pointed out, Lewis' narrator seems never to be quite sure where he wants to stand and, consequently, he (or the author) seems at times to be looking critically over his own shoulder as he writes, observing with obvious pleasure or painful grimace his own involvement in the process from which he supposedly remains aloof. The effect of this intensely self-conscious style is to shake the reader's usual security in the forms and conventions that are evoked. Hence, for example, the narrator applauds Elvira's decision to censor Antonia's Bible by removing or altering the indecent material thus:

Many of the narratives can only tend to excite ideas the worst calculated for a female breast: Every thing is called plainly and roundly by its name; and the annals of a Brothel would scarcely furnish a greater choice of indecent expressions. Yet this is the Book, which young Women are recommended to study; which is put into the hands of Children, able to comprehend little more than

those passages of which they had better remain ignorant; and which but too frequently inculcates the first rudiments of vice, and gives the first alarm to the still sleeping passions. (p. 259)

We are not terribly surprised at this gesture until we later realize that the narrator blames Elvira's failure to be more straightforward about the Monk's designs as a cause for her and her daughter's destruction: "Elvira had not sufficiently explained herself upon the nature of his designs, to make a Girl so ignorant of the World as her Daughter, aware how dangerous was his acquaintance" (p. 326-7). If Elvira's prudishness was at fault, then what are we to think of the narrator's evident applause for it? Moreover, at the beginning of the novel, the narrator does much the same as Elvira for his readers when he benignly intrudes upon Leonella's attempt to enlighten Antonia on the differences between male and female anatomy:

'I should like to see you give people to understand, that you know that a Man has no breasts, and no hips, and no . . .'
 Luckily for Antonia's ignorance which her Aunt's lecture would soon have dispelled, an universal murmur through the Church announced the Preacher's arrival.
 (p. 18)

Clearly the author does his own bit of titillating Bowdlerizing here, teasing the reader to fill in the ellipses, but modestly omitting any indecencies of language or behavior.

The narrator's rhetorical stance, then, would seem to favor a species of modesty. Why, if this is the case, has

The Monk been historically regarded as an immoral or pornographic novel? Why did Mathias find Lewis' arguments for Bowdlerizing the Bible so shocking? It is interesting to note that while the narrator's rhetoric argues against arousing "sleeping passions," the story of Ambrosio does include several erotic scenes involving the innocent heroine, Antonia. In the first place, this inclusion would seem to violate the narrator's own precept of avoiding material unfit for a naive audience (or perhaps we are to assume that women and children should not be allowed to peruse the novel). In the second place, it seems strikingly dissonant with usual literary conventions to allow the heroine to appear stark naked (as she does in the looking glass) or only partially clothed as she does when the Monk finds her in bed or later when he rapes her. This might be an appropriate position for a comic peasant, but it seems out of character for an elevated, tragic Romance heroine.

The mirror image of Antonia is a particularly revealing one both literally and metaphorically in that its explicit description, while certainly modest by modern standards (or even by Cleland's standards) does intrude uncomfortably into the usual distance between reader and text. To a certain extent, the reader who looks over Ambrosio's shoulder into the magic mirror experiences the same erotic promptings as the Monk. Thus, the introduction of this explicit description has the effect of violating the reader's determination to remain unaffected by the events of the story. It deliberately upsets the ability of the audience to remain aloof

from the Monk's point-of-view (as the narrator often pretends to) by forcing participation in Ambrosio's highly disturbing experience. Though Antonia undresses to Romantic elevations that compare her to Venus, she still undresses and in her powerful nakedness strikes a responsive chord in the reader whether he/she objects strenuously (as many critics did) or responds positively to the stimulus. The point is that we cannot remain benignly detached or neutral about the heroine's embarrassing (or tempting) state.

The vision of the naked Antonia is not the only instance in which the reader is denied the luxury of uninvolvement. The narrator toys mischievously with reader expectations, self-consciousness and mirrored events in another relevant passage. In Volume III, Chapter 2, Antonia sees the ghost of her dead mother. Then, Jacintha, who has not actually seen a ghost, describes the spectre to Ambrosio. Finally, the Monk waits in the haunted room fully expecting a ghost to appear and finds only Flora whose curiosity has prompted her (like the reader) to view with interest the outcome of Ambrosio's ghost-watching.

Antonia's ghostly visitor is introduced with all the causal explanations usual in Lewis' time: Antonia's perusal of the romantic story of "Alonzo the Brave and Fair Imogene" was

ill calculated to dispel [her] melancholy. She had naturally a strong inclination to the marvellous; and her Nurse who believed firmly in Apparitions, had related to her when an Infant so many horrible adventures of this

kind, that all Elvira's attempts had failed to eradicate their impression from her Daughter's mind. Antonia still nourished a superstitious prejudice in her bosom (p. 316)

Further, the narrator explains, "the hour and the scene combined to authorize [her apprehensions.]" Her terror builds until "Suddenly She fancied, that She heard a low sigh drawn near her" (p. 317). Up to this point, the analysis could be purely psychological--an empirical description of the circumstances under which people imagine they see ghosts. Or it could be comic. We might discover that Antonia, due to her naivet  , fancied that she saw a ghost. But the narrative takes a different and unexpected turn (though certainly not a turn without precedent in the novel) when it presents the real ghost of Elvira, who pronounces what we will later learn is a perfectly correct death-time for Antonia.

In this scene, two separate traditions are again juxtaposed: on the one hand, the comic and relatively comfortable situation in which a susceptible and superstitious person thinks he/she sees an apparition, and, on the other hand, the romantic tradition (suggested by the ballad Antonia was reading) in which tragedy is introduced by certain obvious verbal signals:

The wind howled around the House, the doors rattled in their frames, and the heavy rain pattered against the windows. No other sound was heard. The Taper, now burnt down to the socket, sometimes flaring upwards shot a gleam of light

through the room, then sinking again
seemed upon the point of expiring. (p.
316)

It is, of course, by no means insignificant that Antonia, prior to seeing Elvira's ghost, has been reading a poem--in particular, a poem about ghosts. It might seem natural, though, for the narrator to continue his explanation as the ghost appears, informing the reader that Antonia thought she saw a ghost or heard it speak to her. The narrator, however, as in the case of Lorenzo's dream, does nothing to dispel the impression that the ghost is real. In fact, he describes the ghost's actions with as much seeming objectivity as he relates the actions of the spectators in the church,

The Figure stopped opposite to the
Clock: It raised its right arm, and
pointed to the hour, at the same time
looking earnestly upon Antonia, who
waited for the conclusion of the scene,
motionless and silent. (p. 318)

The impression we get as readers is that Elvira's ghost is an actual visitation--a fact sharply out of line with the narrator's evident support of Elvira's attempts to eradicate Antonia's superstitious prejudices. We are uncertain as to how we should respond to this seeming paradox. It is, after all, not just Antonia who has been reading suggestive poetry, but her audience as well. Presumably the reader shares the text's paradoxical double prejudice in favor of the appearance of an apparition "on cue" and opposed to the possibility of any such thing happening in a sane, modern

world. As readers of romance, we know that this prediction is true; as modern novel-readers, we hope that there is another explanation. Some of the complexity of our initial reactions is further developed by the series of mirrorings Lewis constructs for the incident which in turn reflect much of the spectrum of conscious and unconscious reactions that this traditional literary theme evokes.

Was Elvira wrong after all? Is superstition a useful way of understanding? The next passage seems to hold superstition up for ridicule. This scene develops the comic and absurd elements of the first one when Jacintha explains to Ambrosio (much as the narrator has just explained to us) what happened and why it happened. Although she has not actually seen any ghost, Jacintha's imaginative production of what the apparition ought to have been like gives us some further insights into narrative technique. First of all, her narrative draws on the loquacious-comic-peasant genre. After a long number of digressions, she reveals the reason for her visit to Ambrosio: Antonia has seen the ghost of Elvira "'a great tall figure . . . out of its mouth came clouds of fire, its arms were loaded with heavy chains . . . and every hair on its head was a Serpent as big as my arm!'" (p. 324). Like the narrator, Jacintha offers a causal explanation based on a religious/superstitious thesis rather than a psychological/empirical one: Elvira suffers because she ate a chicken wing on Friday. The second narrative, with its exaggeration and absurdity (at least to modern ears) nevertheless tends to cast doubts on the former

narrator's account, by acting as a parody of it. The ridiculousness of Jacintha's tale reflects on the seeming sanity of the narrator's version of the causes of the incident, hinting that they are both the products of the innate prejudices of the storyteller.

To complicate matters still further, when Ambrosio stays in the supposedly-haunted room, another series of events is set up which echoes the events following Antonia's reading of "Alonzo the Brave and Fair Imogene." There is one significant difference, though: this time the reader does not get a chance to share the material Ambrosio reads. The outcome of Ambrosio's ghost-watching episode is also highly significant for an understanding of narrative technique. Ambrosio, who finds that he can't concentrate on his book, "his eyes ran over the characters without his mind being conscious of their import" seems to imagine a visitation based, perhaps, on his feelings of guilt: "He fancied that He heard a foot-step" (pp. 336-7). Like Antonia, he notices that a door which has been shut is suddenly unbolted. He is also terrified by a white figure. But this time the experiment works itself out in a different way: Ambrosio's fears are completely ungrounded; the white figure is Donna Flora who has slipped in to hide in the bed and see what the Monk is doing. The comic resolution of Ambrosio's ghost-hunting thus stands in sharp contrast to the tragic prediction of Antonia's death in the earlier passage. Which version are we to believe? Clearly Ambrosio's story is more amenable to a modern frame-of-mind. Yet we know that

Ambrosio, too, is superstitious due to his education and that, moreover, he has seen an actual demon in the convent vaults with Matilda. Psychologically, he should be even more prepared than Antonia to see a ghost. But he sees nothing more than his own foolish fears. In this he seems to confirm the sane point-of-view of the narrator at the beginning of this series of related "versions" which accords with eighteenth-century views of superstition as the product of suggestion. Perhaps Jacintha's story is then more consistent with Medieval or Ancient expectations of the way in which the tale ought to be told. But what about Antonia? Can we be sure that the vision she saw was "only in her head?" And, if so, is it suggested that we carry a knowledge of our death-hour within us which only seems to appear outside? The several versions reverberating off the material nevertheless suggest that something important has happened here, but we are left with more questions than answers when we try to analyze them.

There is yet another link in this complicated mesh of comedy and tragedy interlinked. Lewis added as a note to his fourth and fifth editions a parody of the "Alonzo the Brave" poem entitled "Giles Jollop the Grave and the Brown Sally Green." This comic poem details the amours of a physician and his low-life betrothal to Sally Green. In this version of the poem, events similar to those in the "Alonzo the Brave" tale are related, but with a comic twist based on traditions of peasant-behavior: "Sally wept, till she blew her nose sore!" and "Tooth and nail like a wolf

fell the bride on the feast" (p. 451n). It is further remarked by the author that this parody is itself a borrowing from another,

I must observe, that the lines in *Italics*, and the original idea of making a Brewer of the Baron, and a Physician of the Knight, are borrowed from another parody which appeared in the newspapers under the title of "*Pil-Garlic the Brave and Brown Celestine.*" (p. 450n)

Hence the origins--the parentage--of even this parody are almost as complicated and difficult to delineate as the relations among the characters in the tale. Altogether the several resonances of this ghost passage create a peculiar double-mindedness in the reader, stemming perhaps both from the narrator's equivocal stance and our own innate dual attitudes toward supernatural phenomena. In effect, though, the comic and tragic seem once more to be brought into close contact, implying an intrinsic inter-connectedness.

A great deal of Lewis' novel--but this portion in particular--moves in a peculiar labyrinthine fashion, making sudden turnabouts and switches from one mode to another which demand a much more active involvement on the part of the reader than is usually the case in novels. The information the ghost gives is crucial and accurate. Can we ignore it because the situation in which it is given is absurd? Or is there an intrinsic sympathy between the comically ridiculous, the blatantly superstitious and the tragic truth? As readers we are confronted with these questions at every turn in the labyrinth, but we are never

provided with a magic thread to get us out of our dilemma.

Another, related problem in The Monk and many other Gothic novels is the difficulty of recognition. Recognizing a mirror image (or any supernatural visitation) is always a key concern in twinning novels. Readers often recognize archetypal situations when characters don't. Perhaps, though, there are also some points where the reader is likely to slip up. The Monk, for example, receives a number of broad hints as to Matilda's real origins and mythic meaning, yet is unable to recognize their relevance to him. Perhaps he is simply too naive due to his cloistered upbringing, but more likely he is voluntarily naive like later critics (including Summers) who found Matilda a charming and tragic innocent. Matilda's arch rhetoric, as Peter Grudin points out, is, however, quite consistent with the traditional techniques employed by demons to tempt humankind into damnation.¹⁷ Her deep understanding of the Monk, her association with poetry, her appearance as a double of the portrait in Ambrosio's cell, her shapeshifting and her general involvement in witchcraft all suggest her true origin. The Monk, despite his presumed knowledge of the Bible and the Temptation in the Garden of Eden which closely parallels his own situation, seems afflicted with a species of tunnel vision:

The Monk reflected, that to vanquish temptation was an infinitely greater merit than to avoid it: He thought, that He ought rather to rejoice in the opportunity given him of proving the firmness of his virtue. St. Anthony had

withstood all seductions to lust; then why should not He? Besides, St. Anthony was tempted by the Devil, who put every art into practice to excite his passions: Whereas, Ambrosio's danger proceeded from a mere mortal Woman, fearful and modest, whose apprehensions of his yielding were not less violent than his own. (p. 83)

Ambrosio's failure to recognize that his hubristic self-assurance is comic leads to tragedy; he cannot see himself as a joke.

A number of other situations arise in which lack of recognition is a key factor: Raymond does not recognize Donna Rudolpha's advances; Donna Rudolpha fails to see the real import of Raymond's attentions to her; Antonia does not understand the meaning of Ambrosio's amorous behavior; Raymond does not recognize the dangerous intentions of the robbers in the forest and he also fails to discern that the Bleeding Nun is not Agnes. Each of these situations leads to tragedy or near-tragedy for the characters involved. Clearly too narrow a perspective can be dangerous in The Monk. Moreover, such closure tends to proceed from a myopic focus on social interaction that completely ignores the powerful underlying realm of expectations and ideals that colors the perception of each participant in the drama.

The preconceptions "built into" each of these characters determine their fates. They see only what they intend to see; when they look into the mirror, they see only how they "look". They are trapped in this circular reflection of their own image, since the way they see determines what

they see. Repeatedly, these characters fail to recognize archetypal situations because they are functioning on a literal wave-length that equates empirical material or social reality with absolute truth, entirely ignoring the symbolic and vital consideration: how is it possible to move beyond oneself to that formidable and elusive Other? There can be little doubt that the self-critical functions of self-consciousness inform much of Lewis' manipulation of his text, causing the material to fan out into tangential lines of reverberation at crucial points--in effect, to reproduce itself in various ways--instead of proceeding in the expected linear, progressive fashion. As we have already seen, at times this in-turning, self-critical impetus seems to impede movement entirely or to imply that whatever movement seems to take place only appears so from our particular vantage point. From somewhere else it would simply appear as another form of stagnation. Thus, when it seems that characters are acting in a way that will produce certain results--when Elvira, for example, attempts to prevent the arousal of sexuality in Antonia--these results are already predestined and unavoidable, hence her actions are ultimately futile. From the outset the Gypsy knew Antonia's fate; the efforts to prevent it seem ridiculous in light of this information. The novel plays and re-plays versions of Antonia's destiny from a number of different sources, but none are significantly altered from the earliest predictions of Chapter One. Characters seem to be trapped by the essential "givens" of their circumstances. Characters who appear

to be striking out in bold, new directions end by repeating the errors of their own parents or forming incestuous unions that further inbreed the original traits.

Is it the point of this novel, then, to conclude that we are locked into our heredity, that every conscious effort is futile and pointless in a scheme already pre-arranged? We have seen some ways in which evident stagnation can be controverted, or at least re-visioned and we will, in this section, look at some others. Although critics like Kiely find a pessimistic message in the work of Lewis and other Romantics regarding aesthetic concerns, we can follow one strand of optimism for critical interpretation--and through it initiation--into the complexes of causal circularity and beyond them. If this direction does not absolutely break the magic circle of reflection and re-reflection, it does provide a new metaphor for the inter-action between mirror-images which envisions them as copulating male-female pairs reproducing an image that mirrors both parents, instead of an endless echo of one.

The attitudes of different characters and even the narrator toward various works of art is crucial in this context. As I have already explained, a number of people in the novel "use" art for their own purposes--especially Agnes, Ambrosio, Raymond, and the Prioress. As the Monk tells Rosario in the Hermitage, "This inscription was merely placed here for the ornament of the Grotto, and the sentiments and the Hermit are equally imaginary" (p. 53). Like many other characters in the novel, Ambrosio has a naive

aesthetic understanding. We have seen that the inscription is far more relevant to his life than he supposes. In fact, in every case where art is used for private purposes without regard for its ancestry, enormous repercussions result. Every image--whether poem, ghost, painting, child, procession, speech or imposture--opens a window on another world and invites the original of that reproduction to appear. The resultant apparition may be blood-stained and grotesque like the Bleeding Nun or starved, bedraggled and unrecognizable like Agnes after her sojourn in the vault, but it must nonetheless be recognized and appropriately propitiated before it can be laid to rest or assume a normal role in society: it must be allowed to tell its version of the story.

As we have seen, one kind of reproduction tends to evoke another kind of reproduction, hinting that the urge to reproduce is as much a function of the artist or writer as of the lover. Raymond, in discussing the poet's role with Theodore makes this explicit. Both Raymond and Lorenzo do succeed in marrying eventually, but the obstacles they must first overcome are considerable and suggest the difficulty of moving beyond oneself to union with another. It will be useful, then, to see by what means marriage is accomplished.

Each eligible woman in the story is, in a sense, held captive by an older, threatening woman. Although Elvira generally has our sympathy, she still prevents what seems to be a perfectly reasonable marriage. Agnes is at first under the control of the vengeful Donna Rudolpha and later the

Prioress. Virginia is also under the Prioress' control, and, in fact is "nearly related to" the head of the convent. Raymond manages to be united with Agnes after great hardship, illness and severe trials, by means of the interventions of Lorenzo and Theodore. Raymond himself, however, does little except relate his tale to Lorenzo, who may seem surprisingly gullible in light of the extraordinary nature of the story. This is an important point, I think, for Lorenzo is undoubtedly a key figure in uniting the mythic and modern realms by means of a critical technique that we see at work first in the species of depth-therapy he does with Raymond and later, much more precisely, in his reinterpretation of the Prioress' story about the statue of St. Clare. Lorenzo is a careful critic in every instance. He does not--like Agnes and the narrator--disregard or discount evidences of supernatural activity. Nor does he blindly accept such evidences, becoming enamoured with the supernatural simply because it is attractive (as perhaps some of the Medieval-Revivalists of Lewis' time did). Instead, Lorenzo is a thoroughly modern man who is neither superstitious nor blind. As he observes the procession of nuns, he is seriously cynical, not even showing the narrator's tolerant amusement at the follies of humankind:

every heart was filled with reverence for religion. Every heart but Lorenzo's. Conscious that among those who chaunted the praises of their God so sweetly, there were some who cloaked with devotion the foulest sins, their hymns inspired him with detestation at their Hypocrisy. He had long observed

with disapprobation and contempt the superstition, which governed Madrid's Inhabitants. His good sense had pointed out to him the artifices of the Monks, and the gross absurdity of their miracles, wonders, and supposititious reliques. (p. 345)

Although Lorenzo has no tolerance for superstition, he is not immune from the charms of a young woman who appears in the procession imitating St. Clare. Later, he follows this same young woman, fleeing from the enraged mob to a statue of the same saint. Lorenzo is immediately aware of groans coming, seemingly, from the statue. The nuns tell him that these must be the groans of a robber who once tried to steal a ruby from the saint's finger, but whose hand stuck fast and had to be severed before he could be released. The statue functions here as a kind of stand-in for the Prior-ess. Like Oedipus, Lorenzo has to unravel this Sphinx's mystery in order to free the nuns from tyranny. Success will ultimately allow him to marry, i.e., to safely reproduce by uniting himself with the feminine sphere represented by the nuns, St. Clare and the convent. It is not surprising, then, that the robber was supposed to have tried to steal a ruby from the finger of the saint (specifically the finger upon which a wedding ring is usually placed) for Lorenzo is solving a dilemma that will lead directly to his own marriage and the recovery of his "lost" sister. It will also engender the death of Antonia, his first love. The use of a mummified hand in connection with a robber is interesting in light of a tradition among thieves that actual

mummified hands would put to sleep the inhabitants of a house when carried by a robber. In addition, these "hands of glory," as they were called, were used to point out the location of hidden or buried treasure.¹⁸ Both these concerns are highly relevant to Lorenzo's situation. The hand and its accompanying story is intended to lull the nuns' suspicions--in effect, to put them to sleep. And, of course, the statue does conceal a hidden treasure, Agnes. In addition, the red gem represents the primary sacred act around which much of this novel revolves both at the literal and metaphorical levels: sexual consummation. Hence the robber who tries to steal the ruby (as both Raymond and Ambrosio stole the virginity of their mistresses) may remain "stuck fast" to an image of a woman. In fact, Raymond does get "stuck fast" to his infernal doppelganger, the Bleeding Nun, while Ambrosio stagnates in prison and ultimately in the maternal precincts of nature when he is cast into the Sierra Morena.

To avoid the dangers of presumption and theft in the sacred precincts which Ambrosio and Raymond incurred, Lorenzo must look for a cryptic message in the statue with its groans (sexual sounds?) and its mummified hand (impotence?). Under the facade of religion--or beneath the religious decorations on Mother St. Ursula's basket--is concealed a relevant core of information which Lorenzo must use to unravel the Sphinx's riddle and avoid stagnation himself. Lorenzo's rubric, then, provides a gloss for the Prioress' myth: a modern re-interpretation which suggests that this myth hides

a mechanical contrivance placed over a significant and powerful locus to prevent the entry of the uninitiated. Lorenzo's New Law decrees that Agnes, a modern woman, will be freed from the tyranny of the Old Law of the mythic realm; but it likewise decrees that Antonia, who is closer to the world of Romance than to the modern world, must die. Agnes' child, born of the illicit, stolen passion of the convent is also doomed, because it was conceived under the Old Law of Romance.

As a critic, then, Lorenzo neither takes what he finds literally, believing that the statue is moaning because of the destruction of the convent, nor does he ignore it. Instead, he examines it closely, clearing away the patina of age to descry what lies underneath. He discovers that while the statue appears to be made of stone, it is actually made of painted wood and much lighter than it seems to be. There is a button hidden beneath the mummified hand to effect the opening and closing of the mechanism that releases the trap door which leads to Agnes. Thus, the statue is, after all, a crucial link with self-knowledge, even though it is concealed in the outward forms of superstition. Lorenzo's reinterpretation makes his material available to a modern, empirieal audience: an audience much more attuned to the understanding of mechanisms (whether physical or psychological) than far-fetched tales of miracles, yet allows the mythic sphere its own validity. Hence, Lorenzo finds a modern technique by means of which he can align the mythic with the modern world--a Symplegades which opens for a

moment a passage by which Agnes can re-enter society. But a miracle does occur, nonetheless: Lorenzo manages to free his sister and to give up his fixation on the impossibly-perfect image of Antonia. Ultimately, he settles for a mate who is a less-dissonant match (for Virginia is, after all, his social equal while Antonia was not), but still is "nearly related to" the old dragon-Prioress who dominated the convent and reportedly constructed the myth in the first place. Clearly, if we are to follow Lorenzo's example as the most viable way through Lewis' labyrinthine text, we need to recognize how difficult it is to make the interpretive decisions we need to make at every turn in the text and how painful the process of discovery (and self-discovery) is bound to be.¹⁹

CHAPTER THREE

THE DEVIL'S ELIXIRS: HOFFMANN'S MARRIAGE OF HEAVEN AND HELL

The Ursprungs of Hoffmann's Text

E. T. A. Hoffmann's Die Elixiere Des Teufels (The Devil's Elixirs) was written in two parts: the first in 1814 and the second in 1815. It was published as a whole in Berlin in 1816. Although some critics argue that the two parts are integrally related and that there is no significant difference between the treatment of the two separate portions of the narrative,¹ it should certainly be noted in the context of an author so preoccupied with the phenomenon of doubling and multiplicity as Hoffmann that even his only completed novel had a tendency to disintegrate into a dualistic pair. In addition to the duplicity of its composition, it is important to note that Elixirs is also an intentional response to M. G. Lewis' Monk. Not only does Hoffmann's tale closely parallel Lewis' in several crucial aspects, but Lewis' novel--or a double of it--actually appears in Hoffmann's novel as a significant book read by the heroine, Aurelia. She, in turn, resembles both Lewis' Antonia, the naive and innocent heroine sacrificed to a monk's lust, and his Matilda, the dangerous succubus-double of a religious painting who tempts the monk to damnation. In many

ways, some of which we will explore in this chapter, Hoffmann's novel is a reproduction of Lewis'--a child of the father-text whence it is derived. Yet the complex relationship between these two novels is nearly as difficult to analyze as the exact relations between the members of Medardus' family in the novel. As in The Monk there are several literary traditions at work here, though they are much more subtly woven into the fabric of the novel and into the personality of its narrator than are the similar materials in this novel's progenitor. While Lewis seems to revel in quasi-scholarly reference to Medieval and classical materials much like Sir Walter Scott at a later date, Hoffmann is intent on integrating these "relics" tightly into the novel's scheme by internalizing them in the focal character of Medardus.

Although Lewis' novel is not generally categorized as "doppelganger" literature, Hoffmann's is most decidedly a novel of multiples. As we have already seen, there are many reasons that Hoffmann might have chosen to center his own novel about doubling around Lewis' text, but there are no doubles in Lewis' work which can be effectively compared with the several "versions" of Medardus that appear in Hoffmann's. These pairings, like the set of revisions Lewis did in the instance of the appearance of the ghost of Elvira, seem to re-vision or experimentally re-experience the doubling of the main figure, Medardus, in several different ways, so that we are left with far more than mere doubles.

We experience instead a constant fluidity of transition that rarely conforms to our assumptions about the way in which such multiplicity can be rationalized by empirical investigations into its sources. Over and over again, Hoffmann teases the reader to tackle and solve the puzzling mystery of multiple images, yet undercuts every apparent solution by raising further complications. Each time we feel elated over our apparent success in unravelling these snarls of information, we are effectively led into a cul-de-sac producing the deflating sense that we have only returned to the starting point again; it is much the same sensation that Medardus feels when he is asked for the second time, "What's so funny?" As we shall see in a moment, though, the imaginative process involved effectively triumphs over our doubts about its validity, leaving us with an intense, if frustrated, sense that we have been witness to something highly significant if ultimately impenetrable. James Hillman suggests that the ancients who witnessed the central mystery of a mystery religion were left unable to explain what happened or why simply because it was the nature of the experience to leave them in such a state;² a similar sensation of inexpressible significance informs Hoffmann's text. This chapter, then, will not attempt to solve Hoffmann's dilemmas of duplicity by reducing them either to mutually exclusive polarities or to the hallucinations of an unbalanced mind. Instead, we will look closely at the characteristics of these visions and their relationships to the prior visions of Lewis to attempt to grasp the milieu in which they exist

and its significance for the reader.

Although there is some obvious overlap, the most prominent characters in The Monk tend to be sharply separated and delineated as social entities. In The Elixirs, on the other hand, the often-comparable characters of Medardus, Count Viktor, Aurelia, Euphemia, the Old Painter and Pietro constantly slip into--and out of--each other's identities, as unexpectedly as the Old Painter steps out of the painting above the altar. Because images merge, submerge and emerge with the astonishing facility of a dream-sequence, we are prompted to view all of the participants--including the Editor and the monk who records the final moments of Medardus' life--as interchangeable components of a matrix rather than separate individuals. Thus, for example, when Antonia is stabbed by Ambrosio, we can suspect that the Monk's rash action may have been precipitated by the imminent appearance of Lorenzo and the soldiers. The relationship between Medardus' mental process and the sacrifice of Aurelia, however, is much more explicitly drawn: although Medardus seems to have overcome his urge to stab Aurelia, a double appears to act out his previous intentions the moment he seems to surrender to heavenly thoughts. Furthermore, we know that Medardus has himself desired the martyrdom conferred upon Aurelia during his penitence in Rome. In fact, he described the imagined scene of his assassination by "a dark figure [who] emerged from the shadows" (p. 285) in much the same terms as he later described the scene after Aurelia's death. Thus the Capuchin's intimate mental

involvement in the actions of other characters effectively blends his identity with theirs. A sympathetic relationship seems to link these multiple images such that whenever one appears to have gained the ascendant position it is almost immediately subverted by a complementary mirror-image that inverts the original, mocking the notion that goodness can exist exempt from evil or that evil can exist exempt from good. Indeed, it is by no means clear-cut in Medardus' tale--despite the religious rhetoric--whether any given image is diabolical, heavenly or a combination of the two, for there is the constant possibility that what appears to be a paradigm of virtue (such as Aurelia) may also be a diabolical imitation of it. Like Medardus, reader and author participate in the elation and horror over Aurelia's martyrdom without being implicated in it. And like Leonardus, we may be able to rationalize our fascination with this scene reproduced from The Monk by telling the angry mob that it was none of our doing and "that the assassin was not a monk at all but a madman who had been given refuge in the monastery" (p. 315). But it is difficult to ignore the fact that Medardus, the narrator with whom the reader identifies, is also given asylum in a monastery when he is believed mad after he has presumably killed Aurelia.

Character, version and episode splinter into multiple visions on every hand under Hoffmann's Hermetic guidance. Medardus meets his first double in the Christ-like child in the Holy Linden; later he finds himself equated with the semi-mythic figure of St. Antony; when he leaves the

monastery, he accidentally causes another likeness of himself, Count Viktor, to fall off a cliff and believes he has killed him; shortly thereafter, he meets the mad Hermogenes, who also is habited as a monk; after he kills Hermogenes, another mad monk, who is evidently Viktor dressed in Medardus' cast-off habit, appears. In addition, Medardus takes on different identities himself, particularly the identity of Leonardus, his monastic mentor, when he adopts the guise of the Polish gentleman, Herr Leonard von Crczynski. The Old Painter's mentor, of course, was also a famous Leonard--Leonardo da Vinci. The reader discovers in the end that the majority of the major characters in the book are either Medardus' half-brothers or sisters.

Clearly, (if there is anything clear about this chaos of undifferentiated potentiality) Hoffmann's novel attempts to explore the artistic problem of unity-in-multiplicity and the manner in which it is possible to closely knit together the elements of a novel which include both mythic and mimetic material, while probing the very sources of diffraction. Hence, in this chapter I will attempt to explore not only the fairly obvious doublings of character (most previous critics have concentrated their efforts strictly upon the mirror-images of Medardus and Count Viktor), but also the peculiar ribbon-candy redoublings of vision both in the novel's form and in its reflection of various mythic materials which, like the magic spectacles in another of Hoffmann's tales, have as much effect upon the spectator as the panorama itself. Whether this effect is adverse, benign or

neutral will depend, it would seem, upon the assumptions with which the spectator encumbers him/herself before participating in Hoffmann's mystery of diversity-in-unity.

After the initial title and the Editor's Preface, which parenthetically notes that the tale we are about to read is "From the posthumous papers of Brother Medardus, a Capuchin Friar," (p. 1), the reader moves into a brief, private "sitting" with the editor, who quietly introduces the novel, quickly moving offstage to allow his main character, Medardus, to speak for himself. The editor, however, before putting the manuscript into our hands finishes with an enigmatic caution:

After I had with great diligence read through the papers of Medardus the Capuchin . . . I came to feel that what we call simply dream and imagination might represent the secret thread that runs through our lives and links its varied facets; and that the man who thinks that, because he has perceived this, he has acquired the power to break the thread and challenge that mysterious force which rules us, is to be given up as lost.

Perhaps your experience, gentle reader, will be the same as mine. For the profoundest of reasons, I sincerely hope that it may be so. (p. 2)

The tone of the editor is sagacious, low-key and hushed as the womb-like monastery of the Holy Linden where

No hostile beast, no harmful insect lives in the sanctuary of the blessed; neither the buzzing of flies nor the chirruping of crickets disturbs the holy silence. The stillness is broken only by the devout chanting of the priests who, together with the pilgrims, file

past in long lines, swinging golden
censors from which ascends the odour of
sacrificial incense. (p. 4)

There is no trace of the cynicism of Lewis' narrator, none of the flamboyant and dramatic showman, only an appealing note of wisdom and mystery which resembles Leonardus' curiously enigmatic remonstrance to Medardus, "'My son, the worst superstition is doubt!'" (p. 18). Nothing except the supposed original manuscript is revealed at this point to the seeker, and all that we know about its origins is that it was written by a monk in the monastery and that the prior thought that it should be burned (p. 2).

It is evident from the outset that although Hoffmann's novel is highly dependent upon its forebear and is even to some extent a reproduction of it, there are major differences in the treatment of the material by each author which suggest in themselves divergent though related perspectives. Hence, while Lewis' tradition is borrowed quite blatantly from an eclectic variety of romance conventions of both antiquity and the Middle Ages, Hoffmann weaves these conventions into the mentality of the story-teller himself, so that they are more closely integrated with the over-all pattern of the novel and seem more personal than Lewis' borrowings. Heredity in Lewis' novel tends to take on a historical, global character, affecting every level of society and every individual member of it in various ways as represented by the levels of the monastery: old clashes with new, the superstitious view clashes with the empirical one, and poetry clashes with prose. In Hoffmann's novel,

however, the repercussions of heredity are much more personal: Medardus is himself of two minds, as one of his doubles, Pietro, explains:

"I have tried in vain to make sense of the contradictions in your nature and your movements. . . . 'Ex profundis clamavi ad te Domine--Oremus--Et in omnia saecula saeculorum. Amen.'" Belcampo chanted these words in a hoarse, croaking voice, at the same time faithfully imitating the posture and movements of a monk. He turned as if before an altar, knelt, and stood up again; then he assumed a proud, defiant attitude, furrowed his brow, opened his eyes wide and cried:

'Mine is the world! I am richer, wiser, cleverer than you all.'" (p. 90)

The dissonance between mythic and mimetic, old and new is centered in the dissonance between the various identities of the storyteller, Medardus, and the doubles he describes. In fact, each of Medardus' doubles could also be described as having a similar dual identity: the Old Painter appears as a benevolent saint and a proud, cynical observer "above" Medardus' foibles; Aurelia is both St. Rosalia and a diabolical tempter; Pietro is Medardus' half-witted comic sidekick but also a witty philosopher who seems to know every one of Medardus' hidden motivations and thoughts. While personal heredity forms a significant theme in The Monk which surfaces dramatically at the end, in Hoffmann's novel it is a real concern from the beginning when Medardus describes the miraculous events of his nativity and early childhood and their relationship to his family. While Lewis does not tell us until the final chapter that his novel is

about Ambrosio's family (though there are certainly several hints), Hoffmann makes that connection explicit almost from the birth of the hero whose father dies "at the moment I was born" (p. 3). The connections between the various branches of Medardus' family are, moreover, increasingly cemented as the novel continues and finally given fairly explicit form in the elaborate geneology related by the Old Painter. Hence, geneology informs the structure of Hoffmann's work much more explicitly than it does Lewis,' suggesting a personal, internal conflict--an introverted view rather than the more social, extraverted spectacle of Lewis' work.

In addition, whereas Lewis gives a good deal of specific attention to distinguishing different representatives of the "old way" and their particular roles in the drama--the Wandering Jew, the Prioress, the Bleeding Nun and the Gypsy--Hoffmann is intent on blurring these lines and leading the reader to consider the possibility that the various figures surrounding Medardus are capable of altering their identity at will--perhaps because they are not really distinguishable from the mind which perceives them. Indeed, Pietro--who also has at least two identities--explains that the Old Painter could be several different people, some positive, some negative in connotation: "'this painter is Ahasuerus the Wandering Jew, or Bertrand de Born, or Mephistopheles, or Benevenuto Cellini, or Saint Peter'" (p. 103). While Lewis concentrates on the careful delineation of the tragic from the comic, the old mythic material from the modern view, Hoffmann effects a merger of the two disparate

realms, insisting on the impossibility of strictly limiting specific archetypal configurations. There is one noteworthy result of this deliberate violation of boundaries: while the revelation of Ambrosio's identity at the end of The Monk is an extremely significant event in the novel, pulling up, as it were, both reader and character in the elaborate net of the narrative, in Hoffmann's novel a similar revelation seems scarcely to matter at all, despite the Editor's promise to "make Medardus' story intelligible" (p. 251). As Hewett-Thayer suggests of the Old Painter's interpolated tale:

One may reasonably query whether the novel does not lose more than it gains by the introduction of this intricate pattern of kinship . . . it is like the creation of an intricate crossword puzzle for others to solve; one may chuckle in anticipation over their perplexity. And yet the essential elements of the story are only slightly involved in this complicated web of family relationships.³

Sigmund Freud, who wrote briefly about The Elixirs, had a similar reaction to the peculiar explanation of familial relationships offered in the Old Painter's account:

Towards the end of the book the reader is told the facts, hitherto concealed from him, from which the action springs; with the result, not that he is at last enlightened, but that he falls into a state of complete bewilderment.⁴

The only real effect this piece of information seems to have on the reader is very interesting, however: it creates a

need to draw out a map of the complex geneology (as I did when I read the novel and as many critics have done). In fact, this form of diagrammatic classification seems to be the only method by means of which the reader can effectively manage to comprehend the complicated system of incestuous relationships between the members of Medardus' family. In the end, though, the means seems inadequate to the task. Understood in terms of its classification of relationships, there appears to be little significance to this geneology and I was left with the distinct feeling that Hoffmann had led me to believe that something important was concealed in the geneology that was not really there at all. This presentation of empirical data thus fails to provide a satisfactory sense of meaning for the events related, although it looks so impressive that we feel we ought to be able to find some "key" to the novel there.

Perhaps the point of its inclusion is not so much to enlighten the reader on the nature of Medardus' family connections as to explore the limitations of the reader's prior assumptions about the nature of explanation. We are effectively thrown back on our own resources and very probably find ourselves a bit embarrassed by our futile efforts to escape from this literary labyrinth. Perhaps this is, after all, a trick on the reader, very much like the tricks we will later see James Hogg plying on his unsuspecting audience. If so, its effect is to force the reader to confront a paradox of explanation that fails to explain and from this cul-de-sac to re-trace the train of thought that may have

led to it, in order to plot a new course of understanding. It is entirely possible in Hoffmann's context that an explanation which ties up all the loose ends neatly will destroy the imaginative facility of the vision itself as the Editor enigmatically suggests in the Preface:

It may even be that, as you look more closely, what seemed formless will become clear and precise; you will come to recognise the hidden seed which, born of a secret union, grows into a luxuriant plant and spreads forth in a thousand tendrils, until a single blossom, swelling to maturity, absorbs all the life-sap and kills the seed itself. (p. 2)

The limitations of empirical classifications that lead to a monistic Weltanschauung and the means by which they may be transcended are primary romantic concerns much in evidence in all three of the novels I will consider. Let us look for a moment, though, at Hoffmann's apparent critique of the limitations of his novel's forebear.

Criticism: The Child Confronts the Parent

At one point in the novel, Medardus, in the character of a learned gentleman, digresses on the manner in which ancient and Gothic forms can be successfully incorporated into art. He criticizes the Prince's garden architecture, suggesting that earlier artistic visions must be spiritually emulated, not copied, and, perhaps at the same time he raises questions about the validity of Lewis' incorporation of so many ancient materials into his novel with so little

continuity between them:

the only architect who will achieve anything genuine in this [Gothic] style is he who is inspired by its inner spirit, the spirit which filled the old masters who were able to fuse the apparently separate and contradictory elements into a single glorious, meaningful entity. In a word, the Gothic architect must be impelled by a particular awareness of the Romantic, since here there is no question of his keeping to a pattern of rules, as he can with Classical forms. (pp. 128-9)

The Curator of the Prince's art gallery seconds Medardus' critique of the Prince's historicism and careful planning that seems to exclude spontaneity:

"With pedantic thoroughness [the prince] gave the architect descriptions and sketches of every detail of the buildings, and the slightest departure from these plans, in the preparation of which he had drawn on all manner of historical works, worried him as greatly as did the occasions when this or that aspect could not be adapted to the smaller scale on which the restricted scale compelled him to work." (p. 130)

Like any careful scholar, the prince acknowledges his sources and meticulously executes the letter of these architectural "laws" of prior times :

Everywhere [the prince] named the originals on which the buildings had been modelled, drew my attention to the precise manner in which the tasks had been carried out, and expatiated on the principles which underlay the arrangement of his park and which ought to underlie the arrangement of every park. (p. 132-3)

Although the Prince admires "the strange webs and patterns woven by an invisible force we call chance" (p. 134), he is unable to trust them fully and ironically gives "the most carefully formulated rules how to play into the hands of chance" (p. 139). The prince's imitations--whether of antiquity or spontaneity--are academic in style and constantly limited in scale, intimating that the expansive grandeur they feebly represent needs careful, thoughtful control to prevent unexpected dangers. The prince's domain is small and secure--a parlor-toy imitation of some greater cosmic reality--which has none of the fearful, wanton fertility of imagination that, as we shall see, constitutes the experience of St. Anthony's elixirs.

Certainly the Prince's failure to re-create Gothic or classical splendor has to do with his "modern" mentality which seems split from the aesthetic understanding of his ancestors, just as Medardus is unable to fully comprehend the significance of the ancient elixirs given into his keeping, and tries to reduce their meaning to mere wine or allegory. Thus there may be irony in Medardus' criticism of the Prince's efforts as there is in Raymond's critique of Theodore's poetic endeavors. Medardus is himself unable to successfully unify the polarized and fragmented world around him to restore the perfection of the Holy Linden. The comic barber, Pietro, however, seems to be as proficient as Lewis' Theodore in effecting translation from one sphere to another and in assisting Medardus to do so. He suggests to Medardus that the division between deficient modernity and ancient

mentality has to do with the omission of a lower function which he identifies with the shaving of the beard currently fashionable:

"O for the golden days when beard and hair formed a single growth to adorn the head of man and were the delectable charge of a single Artist! But those days have gone. Man has spurned his noblest pride, and a shameful class of persons has surrendered itself to the destruction of the beard with horrid instruments." (p. 91)

Pietro, who mourns the loss of the primeval unity, is an artist whose medium is hair, not an empirical hair-splitter like modern "barbers." To a certain extent, then, Pietro's critique of the state of head-dressing and Medardus' criticism of the Prince's endeavors (which is affirmed by the Physician) imply a critique of The Monk. This is further evidenced in Hoffmann's treatment of the physical setting in contrast to Lewis'. Although in each novel the monastery seems to form an overarching structure that connects the different episodes and characters of the story, in Hoffmann's Elixirs the actual architectural structure seems to be pushed into the background in favor of its symbolic implications as a circumscribed sacred system. Hence the monastic garb of various characters as well as the closed, incestuous geneology of the novel function to evoke the same ritually-sealed and -violated milieu as the monastery in Lewis' novel without the architectural encumbrances of the building itself. The Gothic mood is thereby maintained without the limiting factor of the specifically Gothic

locale. Other images in Hoffmann's text also undercut the "typical" Gothic trademarks. For example, we find that the monastery in the earlier portion of the novel is depicted as a pleasant sanctuary from a troublesome world, guided by devout and sagacious masters, while the scene at the Vatican suggests the more typical Gothic emphasis on cruel, hypocritical, power-hungry representatives of the established religion bent on torture and revenge like Lewis' Ambrosio and the Prioress. So while evoking certain elements of the typical Gothic apparatus, Hoffmann seems once more to attempt to transcend their limitations by expanding their symbolic potential.

Hoffmann's novel as a whole, then, is in many ways a gloss or commentary on the images developed in The Monk, expanding, amplifying and re-combining their symbolic potential by intense inbreeding. Like Raymond's dissertation to Theodore on the nature of the poet's task, these exegeses also suggest the infinite generative potential of the images evoked as opposed to the limited tools of the poet's (or novelist's) trade and their application to the explicit and implicit structure of the novel itself. Thus Hoffmann moves strongly in the direction of a text that is materially unified with fewer interpolated tales and "relics" of the literary past, while at the same time creating a dazzling and bewildering display of multiplicity. Hoffmann's text reflects Lewis' and reflects on it. The author of The Elixirs seems to take one more self-consciously reflective step backward than his predecessor to include the viewer in the

picture frame as participant instead of passive bystander. Like Lewis' Lorenzo, we discover that the drama is about us.

Translation as Paradigm

As a descendent of The Monk, Hoffmann's Elixirs is as complexly conceived on the literary level as is his narrator, Medardus, on the psychological and geneological planes. Clearly Hoffmann drew on several German traditions in constructing his story, including the well-known short story of doppelgangers by Adelbert von Chamisso entitled "Die wunder-same Geschichte von Peter Schlemihl" (1813) in which a man sells his shadow to a diabolical figure. German "fate" dramas, extremely popular in Hoffmann's time, must certainly also have had an impact on the often-devastating determinism of the events in the novel.⁵ But Hoffmann amplified the themes of his predecessors much more extensively than they had done, just as he re-visioned the work of Lewis so considerably that it is only on rare occasions that the reader, with a sudden uncanny twinge of dèjà vu, is clearly able to glimpse the features of the parent in the child.

Elixirs, in addition to its more obvious ancestors, draws heavily upon other English literary traditions. We are strongly reminded of Shakespeare's clowns, for example, in the figure of Pietro Belcampo. The Irish comic figure, Ewson, also seems typical of the English stage and contemporary novel, reminding us particularly of the creations of Smollett in his whimsical eccentricity and national pride.

In fact, the Englishman Dr. Green, who accompanies Ewson in a round of comic drunkenness, imitates Shakespearian speech, albeit in German translation, even infecting others with his curious malady.

"'It's just like being at the theatre, is it not?' said the friendly bailiff to me. 'The doctor, who normally never looks at German books, once happened to find Schlegel's translation of Shakespeare in my house, and since then, to use his own expression, he has been playing old and familiar tunes on a strange instrument. You may have observed that even the landlord speaks rhythmically; the doctor has, as it were, iambicised him.'" (p. 150)

Thus, while Lewis, like Dr. Green, was accused of an excessive debt to German tradition, Hoffmann might similarly be accused of blatantly borrowing from the English.

This dialectic between England and Germany is itself no doubt symptomatic of the genre in which the doppelganger motif is manifested. Translation is unquestionably one of the hallmarks of the Gothic mode, whether considered literally in the movement from one language to another or metaphorically in the movement from one mirror-world to the other (as, for example, in the translation into sainthood). In fact, the Hermetic task of movement from one state of being to another very different one can be described as "translation" just as in antiquity Hermes was denominated as "The Interpreter."⁶ A movement across the boundaries of language, then, constitutes yet another dimension of transmutation--the alchemic process by means of which the

lowliest substance is apotheosized into the most precious-- or the most noble is degraded to the humblest.

As the Editor of Elixirs informs the reader, it was necessary for him to translate the Old Painter's narrative-- "with great difficulty I succeeded in deciphering it" (p. 251)--despite the inability of the modern language to adequately convey the character of the original:

It was written in medieval Italian, almost in the style of a chronicle, full of aphorisms. In German it sounds strangely dead and dull, but I must give a translation of it in order to make Medardus' story intelligible. (p. 251)

Even Medardus' manuscript is specifically described as being difficult to read "because of his minute and barely legible monastic handwriting" (p. 2) and the Editor particularly emphasizes the importance of the "original" locale and the parchment on which the story appeared as being essential ingredients to a full understanding of the mystery involved in the monk's narrative:

Dearly would I take you, gentle reader, beneath those dark plane-trees where I first read the strange story of Brother Medardus. . . . It is in such surroundings that you would read the story of Medardus, and you might come to consider the monk's strange visions to be more than just the caprice of an inflamed imagination. (p. 1)

Hoffmann's novel, then, translates an experience of the "other" world, though not nearly so well as could be desired. The living mythic realm in which Medardus' narrative

is rooted is only feebly imitated in the printed page which reproduces it. At its most successful moments, translation can mean that inexpressible ur-material from the most sensitive mythic depths can be communicated to an altogether different state of existence; in the hermetic spirit one form of understanding can penetrate and inform a radically different one. At its worst, however, translation is a simple reductive sleight-of-hand which exchanges one platitude for another. The process of translation is a critical concern for the author of The Elixirs, who is constantly juggling a succession of transmutations around his central figure, Medardus. It seems evident that Hoffmann is concerned with opening up the potential of translation rather than limiting or defining it. But since he never offers any clearcut guidelines as to whether the effects of any particular instances of multiplicity are negative or positive (or both) we need to closely examine some examples of this process at work to understand what function it serves in the novel.

The mirror-instant--that sacred, time-transcending moment at which translation from one perceived reality to another entirely different one is effected--can produce comic or tragic communication gaps. Comedy is not a major component of The Elixirs, but since Hoffmann's other works are especially notable for their comic effects, it may be useful to examine more closely the significantly hermetic manner in which a comic interlude intrudes in one instance: the Physician's droll "boxed" narrative of his acquaintance

with Ewson. The latter is a grotesque figure with a confusing national identity. As he explains, "'I, Sir, am an Englishman but I was born and bred in Ireland'" (p. 145); however, we also know that he came to Germany as a "mere youth" and has lived there for twenty-two years (a number which certainly enhances the suggestion of multiple identity). Despite Ewson's cosmopolitan background, he proves surprisingly naive in his devilish difficulties with translation. This is particularly evident in the Physician's account of Ewson's argument with the maid. The chambermaid, who believes Ewson is an atheist, refuses to bring him a wafer to seal his letters because she thinks he wants a holy wafer upon which to commit some sacrilege (both types of wafers are rendered by the word Oblate):

"assuming that he had not pronounced the word properly, [Ewson] at once fetched his English-German dictionary and showed the girl, who could not read a word, what he meant. To make matters worse, he was now speaking entirely in English, which the maid took to be some diabolical trick intended to add to her confusion.'" (p. 148)

It would appear that the mundane act of sealing up a letter has become a holy--or unholy--act of great consequence in the "unlettered" world which the foreigner Ewson now inhabits. The English-Irishman, however, attempts to "prove" his intended meaning by pointing to a yardstick of his own (and the modern) world--a dictionary. Instead of facilitating communication, though, this invocation of authority merely complicates the misunderstanding. In identifying the

classification of words with their inherent meanings, Ewson, like the prince (and the reader who attempts to draw conclusions from geneological charts), has failed to recognise that data is not equivalent to meaning, i.e., that the superficial characteristics of language, art or familial relationships are not necessarily their essence. Imitation, even though it may be within the strict limitations of modern definition, invariably evokes the "ur" or earlier understanding implied by this present "double," just as Medardus' earlier monk-self reappears at the moment when he seems to have re-defined himself. We have already observed similar alignments of past and present in The Monk. Thus, while Ewson's attempt to delineate the separate identities of oblate is empirically legitimate, it is psychologically irrelevant. With Tricksterish facility, Hoffmann leads us to conjecture that there is a relationship between the act of sealing up letters and that of holy communion and that in this alien world Ewson's mundane act is symbolically blasphemous.

Sealing, like definition, implies limitation. Whereas communion expands and amplifies human potential by merging it momentarily with divine infinity, sealing suggests a barrier to this union of unlike entities. The maid and Ewson cannot "meet" across this barrier because Ewson has drawn a symbolic pentagram of Englishness, modern empiricism and language around him that prevents a superstitious representative of the "old" ways from entering his domain. Maids in Hoffmann's text facilitate easy--and often illicit--

entry. The chambermaid, for example, allows Medardus to enter Aurelia's room in the country residence without the Princess' knowledge and it is a maid who leaves Aurelia's letter where Medardus can steal it. But Ewson does not recognize that by his insistence on closure he is as effectively prevented from leaving as the chambermaid is from entering. Although he is constantly intending to leave for a new life, he always comes back again to the same inn. In like manner, he is stuck on the same passage of music night after night, repeating the same errors, it would seem, ad infinitum.

Ewson's desire to seal his letters figuratively evokes Hermes for whom sealing (hermetically) is an irony: that which is sealed begs to be violated. Hermes' image, it should be noted, was often imprinted on keys in antiquity. Thus, we are reminded of the sealed elixirs with their compelling aroma and the first supernatural duplication of the novel in which (apparently) a second key appeared on Medardus' ring after he believed he had safely secreted the original key to the sealed cupboard. Here Ewson's desire to seal his letters so that they could be seen by no one but the intended correspondent results in his own isolation. However, the benefits of an unsealed letter are evidenced in a later passage, reminding us of the unsealed missive concealed in the basket Theodore received from Mother St. Ursula. This time the letter is one written by Aurelia to her aunt, the Abbess, but stolen by Medardus. The letter itself, unlike Ewson's sealed epistles, is revealed to the

reader. It provides a good deal of enlightenment on the relationships between artistic and physical reproduction both within the novel itself and in its relationship to The Monk. Naturally, though, this stolen, illicit form of communion is not without its dangers--a fact particularly evident in the sealing and unsealing of the elixirs given into Medardus' charge which form so prominent a motif in Hoffmann's novel.

I will return shortly to those elixirs, and Aurelia's interesting revelations to the Abbess which are intercepted by Medardus, but first I would like to consider another passage that deals specifically with the problem of translation. The movement from one language to another nearly proves tragic for Medardus shortly after he hears the Physician's tale. The monk, who has been successfully masquerading as the Polish gentleman Herr Leonard von Crczynski, is confronted by a judge who discovers his incomplete mastery of the Polish language. The judge immediately detects the monk's bogus identity in a sample of the accused man's handwriting:

"you are not a Pole. This writing is inaccurate, full of grammatical and orthographical errors. No native Pole would write like this, even if he were far less educated than you are." (p. 184)

Although Medardus' invention of Herr Crczynski may not fully convince the empirical world that he has another identity, his fictional evocation of this character later on in

his dungeon cell is quite adequate to summon up a mirror image that seems to represent the greater implications of Medardus. The false Pole has determined to forge a fictional alibi that will convince the judges of his innocence:

I worked well into the night. As I wrote, my imagination was kindled; everything took on the shape of a polished work of art, and more and more closely-woven became the tissue of lies with which I hoped to veil the truth from the judge's gaze. (p. 186)

Letters here as in other passages exhibit a translating power akin to that of the elixirs. Instead of a useful fiction that will "veil the truth" by sealing it out of sight, Medardus' inspired effort effects a revelation: an innocent, accused self--his double--bursts halfway through the floor beneath his cell.

Translation evidently functions as a basic metaphor in a number of instances of multiplicity in The Elixirs, evoking the dialectical interactions among divergent perspectives and underlining the means by which one perspective merges--or fails to merge--with another. Translation can be indicated by the movement from person to portrait, from portrait to person, from imagination to written form, from one form of dress to another, from one social class identity to another, from one nationality to another, from one state of existence to another or, in ordinary terms, from one language to another. Outward appearances may be deceptive, but as Reinhold suggests to Hermogenes early in the novel, "Believe me, there is a mysterious power in such

external matters" (p. 48). Of course, it is precisely the power of Medardus to be both the monk that he is (whom Reinhold recognizes) and the nobleman whom he has evidently killed (whom Euphemia recognizes) which allows him to gain entrance to Baron F.'s palace in the first place.

Hoffmann's re-imagining of the scene in Lewis' novel in which Ambrosio is coerced into signing the pact with the devil after his imprisonment and torture is especially expressive of the difficulty of assigning a finite meaning to a figure which expresses a multiplicity of archetypal associations. The gamekeeper narrates one version of this scene in which the mad monk in his keeping describes his temptation and fall in a manner similar to Lewis' description of Ambrosio's fall:

"My existence became a series of abominable crimes . . . the prior sentenced me to life-long imprisonment. After I had spent several weeks in a damp, dark cell, I cursed myself and my existence and blasphemed against God and the saints. Then Satan appeared to me in a cloud, promising that if I would turn from Heaven and serve only him, he would release me. Sobbing, I fell to my knees and cried: 'I serve no God. You alone are my master and from your burning coals of fire shine the joys of life!' There was a mighty rush of air, . . as if hurled by some invisible force, I found myself in the monastery courtyard." (pp. 120-1)

In a later chapter, the Old Painter's ambiguous and ironic statements may be rendered as either diabolical or angelic in intent. Since they occur in a passage that in many ways parallels the appearance of the demon in Ambrosio's cell, we

might be perfectly justified in seeing in him a similarly malicious figure though with a more benign and seductive aspect. Medardus, unable, perhaps, to consider the possibility that his visitor is both demon and angel as Pietro implied, seems to feel that he must be either one or the other. Evidently he fails to realize that wherever St. Anthony appears the devil is only a step or two away:

I cried out in desperation:

"O terrible man, away with you! But no, you are no man, you are Satan himself . . . "

"Poor, undiscerning fool. I am not he who seeks to bind you in chains or turn you away from the holy work to which you have been called. Medardus, you poor, blind fool, it was I who appeared to you whenever you balanced recklessly above the open grave of damnation. I warned you but you did not heed me"

He laid his hand upon my head as if in blessing. Wonderful visions appeared to me, and I felt as though I were in the forest by the Holy Linden.

"O mysterious figure!" I cried. "Was it you the whole time? On that unhappy morning in the Capuchin church? In the city? And now?"

"I was always near you to save you from shame and destruction. . . You must achieve your own salvation through the work to which you have been called."

"Alas!" I cried. "Why did you not restrain my arm when I--"

"I was not permitted to," he broke in; "do not ask further. It is foolhardy to try to forestall what the power of Heaven has ordained." (pp. 191-2)

The Old Painter's rhetoric, we can see, is perfectly capable of being construed in more than one way, even the way Robert Wringham described as "perfectly dreadful" when considering the possible implications of Gil-Martin's persuasions. But

the vagueness of the Painter's words seems to evoke the versatility of his power and its inherent separation from concerns of good or evil. The Painter is an image--a ghost, a demon, a saint, an ancestral totem--who appears at the crucial--crossing--points of Medardus' life-pattern as part of the data of that instant of movement from one state to another. Perhaps we can describe him as a Hermetic catalyst in whose presence transition occurs.

One of the dangers of translation seems to be the tendency for the re-interpretation to confine meaning to a pre-ordained set of expectations rather than to allow the potential of the original symbol to send its roots into any fertile soil it may encounter. Strict empirical delineations that "murder to dissect," attempts to use the original material to promote conscious designs, or literal interpretations that do not take into account the wider metaphorical value of the material are all inadequate techniques for the translator. It is essential, then, to recognize that translation for Hoffmann is never simply a matter of the exchange of one word or world for another very much like it, but instead a complex process of duplication and re-definition in which no earlier meanings are lost--only new ones added. Translation is a Hermetic mystery evoking a bewildering multitude of concomitant obligations and dangers for the interpreter. If successful, translation may be able to imitate Hermes' most significant act of transformation: the re-imagining of the mundane turtle's shell into the poet's lyre used by Apollo. We should not forget, however, that

the turtle did not survive the process of transformation. Translation is no amateur's art--at least not when considered as a paradigm for the alchemy of human transformation.

As we have seen, volatility characterizes Hermetic vision. Like Pietro and the Physician, Hermes can penetrate the most carefully-contrived disguise; on a whim he can effect a rescue from a securely-locked prison or conversely turn the offender over to the authorities. Conventional morality has little to do with these turns of fortune, but there is a capricious authorial impulse to open trapdoors under characters' feet so that they may either be freed or caught, allowing the game to continue. It is appropriate, then, that the threat of "the wheel" constantly hangs over the murderer. It would seem that a Tricksterish spirit of experimentation is at work here on the part of both the narrator and the figures surrounding Medardus that suggests some titanic scientist manipulating a few generations of mice in a closed environment. It is an effect not unrelated to that memorable Biblical pairing of God and Satan as they try the limitations of Job's endurance. But Hoffmann's novel is a story of escape as much as of capture, and the devastating pessimism of entrapment in one's destiny (circling round infinitely, perhaps, like Ewson) is constantly counter-balanced by reproductive acts which effectively transcend the original by intensifying its potential through an act of reproductive re-vision.

When we look into a mirror, we tend to see only how we look: we are trapped in a perpetual circle of reflection

and re-reflection. But if that vision could divide itself into several component "children" of the parent-image by reproduction we might have an opportunity to see beyond our initial reflection to a larger self which derives its energy from the dialectical tension between these competing images. And beyond each potential self would be another set of competing and complementary images so that life itself would become--both on the physiological and metaphorical levels--a series of experiments in identity through reproduction. We are left then with this Hermetic paradox: the only way out is the way into and through the image produced.

Reproduction as Paradigm

The role of reproduction as a biological and metaphorical phenomenon is as critical for Hoffmann as it was for Lewis. As we have already seen, Elixirs is itself in several ways a reproduction of its literary progenitor, bearing many of its "father's" features and behaviors, albeit in a more intensified, inbred form. Reproduction (or the impending threat of reproduction) also informs the plot, structure and characterization of the novel, assuming major symbolic significance at every critical juncture of the tale.

Elixirs begins with a semi-miraculous reproductive act reminiscent of medieval stories of the birth of the Virgin Mary to aged, evidently sterile parents:

During the wearisome journey [to the Holy Linden] my mother felt for the first time in the many years of her marriage that she would not remain childless, as my father had always feared. (p. 3)

Significantly, this reproductive act can only be accomplished by the death of the child's father and namesake, "He died, at peace in the knowledge of his salvation, at the moment I was born" (p. 3). The co-incidence of the death of the father and the birth of his child has resounding mythic implications. In addition to firmly establishing the story on the level of saint's legend, it also implies that father and child are spiritually the same and therefore cannot co-exist. Moreover, there is an ominous note of mirror-imaging, for on the mythic as on the physical plane every action has an equal and opposite reaction. Hence the act of birth necessitates a complementary act of death. From the outset of the novel, then, the critical act of "crossing" from one initiatory state to another involves not merely the actions of a single initiate but a complex network of interactions and sympathetic reactions on a variety of different levels. Some of this complexity is reflected in the novel's relationship with its literary forebears while other aspects are evoked in the inter-relations among the various relatives of the novel or between the reader and the text.

Symbolic types of reproduction form the bases of critical events in Medardus' formative years, especially the paintings in the Church in the Edenic Holy Linden executed by his ancestor, the Old Painter. The significance of

artistic reproduction is particularly evoked when several laughing youths interrupt the serene symbolic activities of young Medardus, his childhood double, the Old Painter and Medardus' mother. When their leader offers to sketch this "Holy Family," the Old Painter becomes unexpectedly violent, uttering a curse on their pubescent efforts to reproduce:

"Miserable scoffer! You call yourself an artist, but the flame of faith and love has never burned in your heart. Your works, like you yourself, will remain dead and lifeless. You will despair like an outcast in the wilderness, and perish in your own wretchedness."
(p. 5)

In this scene the reader may be reminded both of Agnes' girlish attempts to sketch the sacred epiphany of the Bleeding Nun, leading to her later imprisonment and wretchedness, or even of Ambrosio's despair in the wilderness after he has failed to recognize the danger of the archetypal figurations set in motion by the attempt to reproduce.

The dangerous qualities of the adult world are further underlined when the youthful Medardus meets the Abbess. As she embraces the child, she, too, leaves an ominous "impression," "[sie] hob mich auf und drückte mich heftig an sich" (p. 13). The word "drucken" is interesting in this context, since it means both a hard squeeze and a copy or reproduction in terms of printing or artistic work: "she lifted me up and pressed me tightly to herself. At that moment I felt a sudden pain in my neck and gave a loud cry" (p. 6). Like a print block, the abbess' diamond crucifix

has reproduced itself in the bloody wound ("die Stelle ganz rot und mit Blut unterlaufen war" [p. 14]) it inflicts on Medardus' neck--a stigma in the shape of a cross. The mark Medardus receives implies a ritual wounding. It suggests the wound Ambrosio received from the centipeder in the garden, indicating his alteration from innocent to initiate, and also reminds us of the bloody sheets that seemed to suggest the consummation of marriage and, of course, bloody acts of reproduction in general. Medardus' ritual wound is a potent initiatory image, related, perhaps, to the rite of circumcision practiced among many societies and indicating quite explicitly a "crossing" of two separate worlds of experience, marked by the symbolic severing of "head" from "body." Both in the Gothic context and in folklore the neck is an extremely critical juncture of the anatomy. Animals and people have been beheaded by severing the neck, hanged by the neck, strangled and slit in the throat in various ritual sacrifices and executions even into the twentieth century.

The mark on the neck further indicates the imposition of servitude or a ritual burden the initiate must bear. In addition, it marks the bearer as a being "set apart" from the others of his group because of his initiatory status in connection with the "other" world of the gods, just as the Wandering Jew is distinguished by a mark on his forehead. Coleridge's Ancient Mariner wears the Albatross around his neck, setting him apart from his fellow voyagers and indicating his participation in a trial-by-ordeal. The German

expression equivalent to the English "have on one's back" is "haben am Halse" (have on one's neck). In fact, this meaning is literally enacted in a later scene, suggesting both the original encounter with the abbess and the wider implications of an embrace between man and woman that wounds the neck. Medardus' attempt to marry Aurelia is thwarted by the sudden appearance of his double being led to the gallows (where he will be hanged by the neck). This double addresses Medardus in his usual double-talk fashion "Bridegroom! Bridegroom!" (p. 226). The bridegroom attempts to stab Aurelia, then flees into the forest after pushing the mad monk out of the executioner's cart to take his place. But in the forest he is mounted by his double in a bizarre parody of a nuptial embrace, "a man sprang out of the bushes and jumped on to my back, clinging to my neck. In vain, I tried to shake him off" (p. 227). Frantically, Medardus tries to knock his assailant against the rocks and trees

at least to wound him so severely that he would be forced to let me go. But he laughed all the more hysterically, and I was the one who received the wounds. I tried to free his hands which were locked together under my chin, but he threatened to choke me. (p. 228)

Medardus, then, the intended bridegroom, is symbolically raped by his double at the very moment when he was to have consummated his own marriage with Aurelia. Is the reader to assume that this burden that Medardus bears "am halse" prevents him from entering into reproductive life except on the metaphysical level? This image is further complicated when

Pietro later reveals that he was the "bride" who "carried" Medardus on his wedding night, adding "I was your room-mate and slept in that bed" (p. 233). Vampires also wound their victims in the neck and these victims then become their servants. Because the initial "witchmark" is imprinted on Medardus by an embrace with a woman, this scene seems to foreshadow the danger of sexual passion--a danger which seems manifestly to indicate that an embrace between man and woman necessarily forces a permanent separation between head and body. In each case the wound is highly significant, suggesting the bloody dangers--both physical and metaphysical--of reproduction.

The cross mark also has other interesting implications in Medardus' fate and the fate of those around him. It is the mark by which Cyrillus identifies him as the former monk of B. when he is in prison. Perhaps it is appropriate that Cyrillus should emphasize the importance of this red mark on the neck in identifying the reprobate monk, for later Cyrillus himself is beheaded--a kind of literal enactment of the ritual which Medardus' stigma signifies in metaphysical terms. In a dream, this mark also appears to Medardus as an apotropaic device:

I pulled out my knife and made to plunge it into my heart, but something made my arm move higher and strike my neck; the blade splintered against the mark of the cross and I was left unscathed. (p. 190)

If we attribute the protective power merely to the Christian force of the cross we are missing an important demonic

dimension of this event: witchmarks--the marks which identified witches and were supposed to have been made by their succubi--were particularly notable for their resistance to injury. Perhaps it is not altogether surprising that Martin Luther cited Prussia (where much of Hoffmann's tale takes place) as populated by demons when we begin to see the evidence for devilishness even in the holiest of places.⁷

Initially Medardus decides to enter the monastery to avoid the imminent threat of sexual reproduction. After accidentally glimpsing "the most beautiful breasts, both in form and complexion, that one could imagine" (p. 15) belonging to the choirmaster's sister, Medardus feels a "sinful lasciviousness" whenever he thinks of her. This representative of the mirror-world of the opposite sex literally throws down the gauntlet, challenging Medardus to enter into sexual behavior when she leaves her glove lying on the chair near him at a social gathering. Her lover "took it and pressed it madly to my lips" (p. 17). But he is observed by the women who giggle over his erotic behavior; Medardus is deeply affected:

An icy tremor pierced my heart, and
blindly I rushed over to the monastery
and into my cell. . . . By [dawn] I was
firmly resolved never to see her again
and to renounce the world altogether.
(p. 17)

Medardus' disastrous confrontation with the threat of physical reproduction hurls him back immediately into the protective seclusion of the monastery, evidently defeated by the

power of feminine charm and his fear of the glove's implications. Later, on Medardus' wedding night, it is in fact, just after Aurelia has drawn on her gloves (suggesting that earlier fearful incident) that Medardus sees his double and escapes after attempting to stab her.

The glove provides a reminder of a significant aspect of Lewis' novel: the disabled hand as symbol of sexual fall. Ambrosio, of course, was bitten by the centipederio in the hand when Matilda persuaded him to pick the rose for her. His disabled hand led directly to his sexual initiation. Later on, another disabled hand, this time attached to the statue of St. Clare, points to the locale of the sexual offender, Agnes. The hand may suggest the possibility of injury to another organ representing power, the phallus, and thereby the possibility that sexual activity leads to death or the symbolic death of castration. The Hindu Goddess, Kali, for example, wears a necklace of human hands indicating her bloody maternal power, a motif that appears to be directly related to mythic material which represents powerful female deities castrating their consorts after they have been made pregnant by them.⁸ With this image of the dangers of sexuality in mind, we can begin to fathom the meaning of the shrivelling of Medardus' left arm when he pours the poison down his sleeve which is offered to him after Cyrillus' beheading. Significantly, he notes the similarity of this corrosive poison to that previously offered him by the witch-woman, Euphemia.

It is likely, at any rate, that even if Medardus does

not recognize the symbolic significance of this glove both as representative of a severed hand and as a common bawdy metaphor for the vagina,⁹ he does remember the dubious results of his own father's attempts to reproduce, which resulted in death at the moment the child was born, as well as the frightening associations of symbolic reproduction expressed by the Old Painter and the incident with the Abbess in his childhood. For the moment, then, Medardus denies the archetypal implications of the glove, retreating to a womb-like sacred precinct. The reproductive act that has been denied on the physical plane, however, soon springs up everywhere around the monk on the metaphysical level, focusing on the "bottled up" contents of the mysterious devil's elixir which Cyrillus gives into his keeping.

The choice of the word "elixir" to describe the contents of the bottle is interesting in several respects. We immediately notice that the word "elixir" seems slightly out of place in connection with the devil, for the elixir has been generally imagined to be the key to life (often a synonym for the Philosopher's stone) and associated with health, longevity and general well-being. Longevity, however, reminds us of immortality, while emphasizing the woes of life imposed as a perpetual burden on the undead like the Bleeding Nun, the Old Painter and the Wandering Jew. Medicines of Hoffmann's era were often termed "elixirs" indicating their positive status, but of course there is always a negative aspect to the notion of patent medicine which suggests the tricks of the quack doctor--indeed a common

motif in literature. The idea of an elixir was also associated with a love potion so that we have a contemporary opera entitled The Elixir of Love by Donizetti (1832). Hence the word "elixiere" or "elixirs" is associated with the product of alchemical endeavors as well as a love potion. Both associations are, of course, relevant in the context of Hoffmann's novel.

While the title of Hoffmann's novel is The Devil's Elixirs, for the figure of the mad-monk they are St. Anthony's elixirs. As he tells Leonardus, "'you yourself know, Saint Anthony, how I drank your accursed potion'" (p. 304). This inversion suggests that for the mirror-world it is St. Anthony, not Satan, who is the tempter. Similarly, when Medardus moves into the mad monk's perspective, as for example, during Aurelia's ordination ceremony, he, too, views the scene from this inverted perspective declaring of the abbess,

"Perhaps she is a saintly abbess, for she was always so austere that the affairs of earth never seemed to touch her. But to me she seems like a heathen priestess, preparing to draw her knife and perform the human sacrifice." (p. 309)

This irony evokes the systolic and diasystolic motions of the Hermetic impulse: if we are convinced that the devil's elixir is only a fine, old wine with imagined diabolical properties, we are likely to find our comfortable conclusions exploded by the intrusion of inexplicable events. If, however, we insist upon its status as an

authentic relic of a saint's temptation, we may be disappointed to discover that it tastes surprisingly like old wine and has no more effect than the exhilaration ordinary wines produce. As in Lewis' successive versions of the appearance--or non-appearance--of Elvira's ghost, then, the reader's expectations are continually undercut and overturned as new perspectives are revealed.

The main function of the elixirs seems, however, to be in relation to the peculiar multiplication, particularly of Medardus, which occurs throughout the text, but most notably after the elixirs are given into his care. In order to understand the way in which Hoffmann uses reproduction to evoke a variety of mythic, physiological and historical states, we need to look closely at the role of this St. Anthony, who supposedly received the bottle of elixirs from the devil. The name of Anthony underlines an interesting incongruity which forms a portion of the underlying mythic assumptions in the stories of both Ambrosio and Medardus: not just one but two Anthonys are invoked in the tales of these aberrant, eloquent monks tempted by devils.

Both Medardus and Ambrosio are particularly noted for their extraordinary eloquence which makes them such popular preachers that the churches are hard pressed to find space for the huge congregations that flock to hear them. In addition to their associations with Hermes, the clever orator, these traits relate most clearly to the medieval St. Anthony of Padua, a pilgrim and preacher who died at the convent of the Poor Clares in Arcella in 1231. An

eighteenth-century writer of this saint's life describes the occasion upon which Anthony first preached during an ordination ceremony when the scheduled speaker failed to appear:

as no one was capable of filling [the speaker's place] St. Antony, who was present, was told to come forward and speak whatever the Holy Ghost should put into his mouth. Very diffidently he obeyed; but once he had begun, he delivered an address which amazed all who heard it by its eloquence, its fervour, and the learning it displayed.¹⁰

After this, Antony's preaching gained an enormous following. As our saint's-life historian explains, "often the churches could not hold the congregations [which came to hear him preach]."¹¹ Clearly the characters of both Medardus and Ambrosio exemplify the miraculous oratorical skills of St. Anthony of Padua in their ability to charm their audiences. Anthony is also summoned up in Medardus' constant travels from one place to another, for St. Anthony is described as "travelling ceaselessly,"¹² almost like a saintly counterpart of the Wandering Jew-like painter who plays such a strong mythic role in Hoffmann's novel.

But when we look at the mythic contexts of the stories of Ambrosio and Medardus, we notice another, even more obvious attribute of these eloquent monks: their association with the devil. This aspect reflects an earlier St. Anthony. Brother Cyrillus tells Medardus a little of this saint's history when he hands him the keys to the chest containing the elixir:

"[Saint Anthony] went into the wilderness and submitted to the most rigorous discipline of penance and devotion. Satan pursued him and often came into his presence with the intention of disturbing his pious meditations.

"On one occasion Saint Anthony noticed a dark figure creeping up on him in the twilight. As the figure came closer he saw to his surprise that bottles were sticking out of the holes in the tattered cloak that the figure was wearing. It was Satan." (p. 23)

Cyrillus goes on to explain that the devil carried so many bottles, as he told St. Anthony because "'Among so many elixirs [the person who meets him] will always find one that suits his palate. He drains the bottle, and surrenders himself to me and my kingdom'" (p. 23). When Satan left, a few of these bottles of elixirs remained on the grass. St. Anthony hid them in his cave for fear someone would drink them; and the monastery eventually fell heir to this bottle.

This material about St. Anthony obviously reflects the legendary story of St. Anthony of Egypt who was, from his lifetime onward, particularly associated with diabolical temptation. The third-century St. Anthony was a desert-dwelling hermit whom tradition credits with resisting a multitude of diabolical temptations from devils in various guises. Not surprisingly, one of the most significant temptations was to lust--the temptation to which Matilda and Aurelia and later Antonia and Aurelia--subject their respective monks. St. Athanasius describes this portion of Anthony's trial: "The wretched devil even dared to masquerade as a woman by night and to impersonate such in every

ossible way, merely in order to deceive Antony."¹³ Like most devils, Anthony's Satan is an expert shape-shifter and illusionist. Constantly beset by diabolical forces in his wilderness retreat, Anthony once saw in a vision "the whole earth covered so thick with snares that it seemed scarce possible to set down a foot without being entrapped."¹⁴ Indeed the trial of a would-be monk in a world full of traps crawling with demonic forces on every side seems a particularly appropos image for Hoffmann's subject.

There are other associations, too, which make St. Anthony an appropriate focal point for these double visions of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. The Egyptian St. Anthony is particularly associated with the disease of epidemic proportions, St. Anthony's Fire, which broke out across Europe about the time the saint's relics were brought there. St. Anthony's fire has particularly significant symptoms in light both of the traditional role of St. Anthony and later literary interpretations of it. The disease arises from the ingestion of ergot, a fungus inhabiting rye grains. This fungus is the source of a drug familiar to the twentieth century as LSD--a source of confusing quasi-religious visions and a variety of hallucinogenic effects. The hallucinations associated with eating ergot must certainly have persuaded medieval people that the devil was beseiging them--perhaps, like St. Anthony--to try their faith.

There is much, too, in the Anthony legend which suggests the trials of Job in the contest between Satan and God, intimating some of the ambiguity Hoffmann emphasizes

between the identities of Good and Evil. Hoffmann's Medardus flagellates himself and Butler explains how Anthony was frightened and harassed by Satan:

[the devil] so grievously beat [St. Anthony] that he lay almost dead, and in this condition was found by his friend. When he began to come to himself Antony cried out to God, 'Where wast thou, my Lord and Master? Why wast thou not here from the beginning of this conflict to render me assistance?' A voice answered, "Antony, I was here the whole time; I stood by thee and beheld thy combat; and because thou hast manfully withstood thy enemies, I will always protect thee, and will render thy name famous throughout the earth."¹⁵

Hence this legend also relates to the Romantic interest in the long-suffering Job, a figure inspiring literature from Blake to Jung and particularly relevant to an essential Romantic question about God's apparent collusion with the devil.

Perhaps because of the outbreaks of St. Anthony's Fire, medieval artists were particularly fond of picturing Anthony's Temptation, usually in a great panoramic vision of inverted, grotesque and diabolical figures surrounding the serene saint. The saint generally occupies no more than a small part of the picture, the remainder being dedicated to some quite amazing exercises in imaginative beings, many of which display the traditional diabolical attributes of faces in the place of genitals and/or anus, human and animal anatomy combined, or female and male sexual characteristics on the same body. Just such a vision appears to Medardus

himself shortly after he confesses his sins to the prior of the monastery in Italy:

There was a confused rustling and whispering; people I had known before appeared, madly distorted; heads crawled about with grasshoppers' legs growing out of their ears, and leering at me obscenely; strange birds, ravens with human heads, were beating their wings overhead. I saw the choirmaster from B. and his sister, who was wildly dancing a waltz while her brother accompanied her by playing on his breast, which had become a fiddle. . . . The chaos became madder and madder, the figures more and more weird, from the smallest ant dancing with human feet to the elongated skeleton of a horse with glittering eyes, its skin a saddle-cloth on which was sitting a knight with a shining owl's-head; his armor was a mug with the bottom knocked out, his helmet a funnel turned upside down. The jests of hell were being played upon earth. . . . Then the rabble dispersed and the figure of a woman appeared. . . . Aurelia.

. . . . In lustful frenzy I threw my arms round her. . . . but there was a burning pain against my breast, coarse bristles plucked at my eyes, and Satan screeched with delight. (pp. 245-6)

One artist who drew heavily upon this medieval tradition of grotesque vision was the seventeenth-century painter Jacques Callot, whose drawings are the basis for one of Hoffmann's tales, "Princess Brambilla" (1820). In fact, Hoffmann's four-volume collection of tales (1814-1815) is entitled Fantasiestuck in Callots Manier. Hoffmann would have been familiar with Callot's renditions of "The Temptation of St. Anthony" which were in the Bamberg collection; it is generally assumed, too, that the monastery referred to by Medardus as "B." is that of Bamberg. The Editor's

Preface suggests the mystical quality of the artistic visions which may have included Callot's *Temptation*, "The air throbs with the mystic thrill of the wonderful legends which the paintings portray, and willingly you believe that everything is really happening before your eyes" (p. 1). Callot's version of the *Temptation* (Figure 1), like those of his predecessors, seems to depict a world in which the familiar is metamorphosed into the unfamiliar--a parody of God's creation is echoed in this prolific diabolical anti-creation which seems rooted more in the imagery of dream and hallucination than in ordinary experience. The distorted unreal reality and internalized vision of artists like Callot, undoubtedly familiar to Hoffmann, is thus re-interpreted--or translated--into the medium of the novel, thereby engendering a further multiplicity in the reproduction of the original experience. Thus Hoffmann's images of multiplicity are both direct descendents of the original St. Anthony legend and diabolical doubles of it: the duplicity of the experience of St. Anthony in Hoffmann's novel dovetails into the complexity of St. Anthony and his double, the devil, as well as the difficulty of St. Anthony and his double, St. Anthony. If this complexity is confusing to readers, it must also have been confusing to Medieval and later Catholics who no doubt had difficulty distinguishing an Anthony with an eloquent devil from an eloquent Anthony who wandered ceaselessly like the damned.

Before leaving the subject of saints, we need to look briefly at the legends from which the names of Medardus and

Figure 1: Callot's Temptation of St. Anthony

Rosalia are derived. Medardus, a medieval saint, has an interesting relationship with Rosalia in a traditional rite in his native town of Salency:

Annually on the feast of St. Medard the maiden who has been judged to be the most exemplary in the district is escorted by twelve boys and twelve girls to the church where she is crowned with roses.¹⁶

Two other traits of this medieval saint seem relevant in connection with Hoffmann's treatment of the material in Elixirs: Medardus is sometimes "represented with St. Gildard, who is erroneously described as his twin brother"¹⁷ and the saint was "depicted in the middle ages laughing inanely with his mouth wide open."¹⁸ Both these latter traits forcibly remind us of Medardus' insane double, Count Viktor.

Rosalia, a rather obscure and early saint, is chiefly noted for paradigmatic virginity and her long-term residence in a cave. In these traits she is scarcely like Hoffmann's Aurelia, who, though a virgin, is no austere hermitess. There is, however, a cave associated with the preservation of the child of the sorceress/Venus figure in the Old Painter's narrative, which may relate to this legend and certainly makes an interesting connection between Virgin and Venus--both of whom traditionally give birth without the apparent aid of a normal male consort. We do know that Rosalia's saint day, September 4, is the date of Aurelia's death, and, a year later, Medardus' death.

We can see, then, that the saint's legends which must have been familiar to Hoffmann¹⁹ were tightly integrated into the context of Elixirs, though never in a literal, allegorical manner. Thus, when Medardus equates himself with St. Anthony or the Old Pilgrim in the Holy Linden with Joseph and the marvellous boy with Jesus (p. 26), we know that he has succumbed already to the temptation the tutor will offer in reducing the possible dimensions of a miraculous experience to a one-to-one equation.

Medardus is clearly identified with St. Anthony at several points in the narrative, but most particularly when he cries out after seeing the figure behind the pillar, "'I AM ST. ANTHONY!'" (p. 29). This is an interesting incident in its ambiguous relationship with its predecessor The Monk. Hiding behind a similar column, Lorenzo saw "a man wrapped up in his cloak" (The Monk, p. 29) leave a letter for Agnes. This incident in which a spectator accidentally intrudes on a mystery in which he is intrinsically involved sets the stage for the rest of the events in Lewis' novel, closely knitting together the destinies of all the main characters. In Hoffmann's tale, the appearance of the spectator "wearing a purple cloak over his shoulders in a strange, foreign fashion, his arms folded inside it" (p. 28), also suggests the intrusion of a spectator and the promise of a revelation. Symbolically, a cloak suggests a veil and typically introduces an inhabitant of a different realm of existence or mirror-world. The dead are often pictured as returning from the grave veiled, shrouded or cloaked to suggest both their

apartness from the realm which they are visiting and their mysterious other-worldly knowledge. The stranger's "foreign" manner further underlines this juxtaposition of worlds, just as the foreign manner of the Wandering Jew in The Monk identifies him as a denizen of a different level of existence, "'By his accent He is supposed to be a Foreigner, but of what Country nobody can tell'" (The Monk, p. 167). A multiplicity of different images are thus generated by this enigmatic cloaked figure. While on one hand he represents the evidently-benign Old Painter, Medardus apparently sees in him a diabolical impersonator:

[I] fortified myself with fervant prayers to fight the tempter who had appeared to me even on consecrated ground, taking upon himself in brazen scorn the form of the devout painter from the Holy Linden. (p. 29)

Presumably Medardus in identifying himself as Anthony must take the painter for the devil. Later on, though, the painter is equated with St. Anthony.

The implications of Hoffmann's deliberate (and often frustrating) ambiguity in contexts like this seem to have a direct relation to his emphasis on the tendency of mythic figures to change places with characters and each other without any apparent reason. More frighteningly, these figures can also possess the spectator of the drama who has believed himself safely exempt from their influence. Hence, Lorenzo, who started out with idle curiosity found himself the star of the show. Here, too, the watcher behind the

pillar is in several senses the progenitor of the events whether we see him (as Medardus thinks) as the devil or (as Medardus' double thinks) St. Anthony or (as the reader may later believe) the Old Painter who is the ancestor of Medardus and has, like the Wandering Jew or Bleeding Nun, remained in the realm of the living long after he should have departed. And we may even want to see him as Hoffmann himself keeping editorial watch over his creations at the critical junctures of their lives. Certainly in many senses this puzzling figure performs explanatory functions ordinarily associated with editors and narrators and his Hermetic volatility is in some sense accounted for by his various stages of repulsion and attraction to his creations. And, of course, as unseen spectators, we, too, are the devils that hound Medardus, the doubles that understand his hidden motives and the watchers who unexpectedly find ourselves caught up in an enactment of our own secret drama.

Perhaps the most crucial scene in Elixirs occurs just after Medardus leaves the shelter of the monastery (letting himself, like the elixirs, out of the bottle). Fortified by the devil's elixirs, Medardus moves out into a fallen wilderness unlike the Edenic Holy Linden of his infancy:

I found myself standing on the edge of a fearful precipice. A rushing stream, whose thunderous roar I had heard in the distance, plunged between two rocky pinnacles into the gorge below.

Only a few feet from the torrent, on a ledge of rock protruding over the ravine, lay a young man in uniform . . . he seemed to be asleep and gradually

falling further and further over the edge.

I moved towards him. As I was about to catch hold of him to stop him from falling, I shouted:

"Wake up, for God's sake! Wake up!"

As soon as I touched him, he awoke from his slumber, but in the same instant he lost his balance and hurtled down into the gorge, his shattered limbs cracking as they were hurled from rock to rock. (p. 45)

This scene seems very close to the final scene in The Monk where Ambrosio is hurled into the Sierra Morenas by the devil who has likewise "awakened" him as to the mythic meanings of his actions. Here, then, Medardus acts as the devil who hurls the unfortunate sleeper into the abyss of another existence as a monk. Lewis suggested in his novel that Ambrosio was born for the military, to be a noble leader of men, not a humble monk; Medardus here gets the opportunity to experiment with life as a nobleman while remaining a monk, for Victor had intended to disguise himself as a monk in order to carry on his affair with Euphemia. Medardus, Count Victor, and a third figure, Hermogenes, who has recently traded his military goals for monastic ones, all appear in the successive scenes at Euphemia's home in a confusing array that suggests the prolific diabolical profusion of St. Anthony's Temptation. But who is the Saint and who are the devils?

I have elaborated on the earlier portion of The Elixirs at length because I believe that in many respects the introductory portion of Medardus' story serves as a paradigm for the transformations and metamorphoses that characterize the

remainder of the novel. The richness and depth of Hoffmann's procreative imagination demonstrated in his handling of the St. Anthony material or his apparent borrowings from The Monk continue to characterize the later scenes and the earlier material constantly sets the stage for recurrence and repetition. Let us then consider how Hoffmann's treatment of one set of reproductive images permeates the text of the novel from its outset to its ending. Gothic images breach expected boundaries with amazing facility, evoking the art and literature, as well as the mentality, of ostensibly-remote times and places. Pictures that step out of their frames effectively underline the metaphorical sympathy between the literal frame and the "frame of mind." Hence when Hoffmann shows us the crowd in the church shouting

"A miracle! A miracle! . . . Do you see the old man in the purple cloak? He stepped out of the picture above the altar! We saw it with our own eyes!"
(p. 313)

he simultaneously reproduces images of art-come-to-life from Lewis' Monk and its ancestor The Castle of Otranto in which an ancestral figure similarly exits its frame at a critical juncture of the plot. He also reproduces the "prior" mentality associated in Romantic fiction with peasants, mobs and other representatives of an earlier, myth-based mentality. In addition, he reproduces the seminal scene at the church when Medardus proclaimed that he was St. Anthony.

Why should a picture step out of its frame? Perhaps because its frame is too small to contain the content the

image expresses. The image in the frame, like the image in the mirror, can never be completely isolated from the prototype which gave birth to it. And just as humankind becomes conscious of itself through reflection, so the reflected image serves to define what is human. In this sense every picture--whether a painting, a portrait drawn in literature, or the image produced by Pietro's art--transcends the merely two-dimensional to "cross" into the third dimension of an inferred correspondence between spectator and image or reader and text. Hoffmann constantly undercuts the impulse to limit and define art, suggesting on both the literal and metaphorical planes what Pietro tells Medardus about art:

"Art is not so much the Art about which people are always talking as all that actually emerges from what people call Art" (pp. 88-9)

Thus, when the Old Painter tries to paint an icon of a saint to order, what "emerges" is Venus, a Pagan whore, as she is understood by his society. Later on, the painter attacks the boys' juvenile attempts to reproduce, implying that they are unaware of the dangers they are inviting. Ultimately his own frightful amour with his diabolical mistress leads him to promote the obliteration of sexual reproduction in his descendents. Ostensibly, this is due to their incestuous attractions for each other. But we also know that it is the only way the Painter can cease his wanderings, for he has been told by a (presumably) heavenly voice that he must prolong his existence "so long as his stem continues to

multiply in sin and wickedness'" (p. 260). Indeed, Medardus accomplishes this goal for him by being instrumental in the death or cloistering of every descendent of the Painter's union with Venus.

Sexual reproduction in Medardus' life--despite his physical attraction to Aurelia--is eventually sublimated to the imaginary and, finally, the literary level. While it is evident that in every marriage a virgin is sacrificed to the "knife" when consummation takes place, so that the girl may give way to the expectant mother, in Medardus' story at least, this scene suggests the sacrifice of the sexually-reproductive Medardus for the sake of the symbolically-reproductive Medardus, who writes literature. Perhaps this is the reason that the Capuchin is only able to free his id-double from the stones "waist-high." By his alliance with the limiting powers of heaven, Medardus is forced to separate and segregate the lower faculties that the energetic-but-inarticulate double seems to embody. This paradoxical sacrifice of the "lower" self is suggested in a symbolic vision.

While Medardus is recovering from the effects of the poison he has poured into his sleeve after Cyrillus' beheading, he has a significant dream of his own martyrdom that hints at the ultimate reproductive implications of his experience:

[I] imagined myself stabbed to the heart. . . . I was lying alone in the garden of the monastery at B. Instead of blood, a repulsive, colourless fluid

poured from the gaping wound, and a voice said: 'Is that the blood of a martyr? Let me purify this foul water and colour it, so that the fire which has conquered light may crown the hero!' It was I who spoke these words, but with the feeling that I had parted company with my dead self came the realisation that I was the disembodied Spirit of my personality, appearing as a red glow in the sky. I soared upwards to the glittering mountain-peaks and sought to enter my castle-home, but lightning rent the vault of heaven, and I fell back. (pp. 286-7)

This vision is first of all strongly reminiscent of the initial "fall" scene in Lewis' Monk in which Ambrosio, lying ill after being bitten by the centipeder, is seduced by Matilda. The out-of-the-body sequence in Hoffmann's tale likewise evokes Ambrosio's final flight above the Sierra Morenas and his literal fall to death. The conflict between fire and light, then, seems to conjure up the traditional antipathy between the fire of hell (and sexual passion) and the light of heaven (and the reflective thought and meditation proper to monastic life). Thus, the "foul water," which is evidently equated with the body and hell might be construed as seminal fluid. The red glow, which is separated from the body and appears to be necessary to produce blood of the proper color for a martyr, however, is unable to find its home in heaven apart from the body. The spirit's lofty aspirations, like those of Ambrosio and the mythic Icarus, lead only to a devastating fall. The split-off body reproaches Medardus' spiritual self, "'Blind, foolish Spirit! There is no conflict between light

and fire, for light is the ordeal by fire and will be accomplished through the blood which you are seeking to poison" (p. 287). The "blood" which the body seems to refer to, however, is the repulsive fluid Medardus has rejected, not the disembodied spiritual glow he would like to achieve. As a matter of fact, Medardus' rejection of fire for light (or his embracing of red blood over foul water) seems arbitrary and ironic, since we generally consider light and fire concomitant entities. In fact, the existence of light presupposes the existence of fire, just as the existence of a reflection presupposes an original. This relationship has posed some difficult theological quandaries, since the fire of hell suggests a great deal of accompanying light yet hell is largely pictured as a dark place. Heaven, on the other hand, can hardly be hot enough to be as bright as it seems traditionally to have been pictured. Can heaven be a reflection of hellish fire? Here the paradoxical separation of light and fire, spirit and semen, heaven and hell underlines the irony of their intrinsic interdependence.

As Medardus' spiritual self falls, his double materializes, coaxing "Come with me, Little Brother Medardus . . . come with me!" (p. 287) and Medardus moves from the "upper" to the "lower" perspective. The heavenly vision of the Holy Linden with "neither the buzzing of flies or the chirruping of crickets" (p. 4) is inverted: a sound arises "as if swarms of poisonous insects had been stirred by the south wind and were attacking the flowering grain" (p. 288). But Medardus knows that the dream will "soothe and heal my

bleeding wound" (p. 288). Momentarily, Aurelia appears to confirm "It is not the fire that has conquered, for there is no conflict between light and fire. Fire is the Word, which transfigures the sinful" (p. 288).

As the vision recedes, Medardus, with his usual polarizing self-confidence, proclaims, "Now I knew the temptation of the Devil" (p. 288). The reader, however, can scarcely guess what Medardus has learned, unless it is that the Word construed as writing literature--with its resonance of the Hermetic logos--will be the means by which Medardus literally re-collects his disparate selves.

Reproduction of Time and Space

Critics who have dealt with Hoffmann's material tend to make far too many assumptions about the continuity of Medardus' identity. Since the material is set up in what appears to be a linear narrative, it is certainly natural that a reader should expect continuity. However, such a concept is, I believe, severely undercut by the content of the narrative itself, particularly after the incident in which Victor falls from the cliff. In order to observe more closely the pitfalls of any assumption of usual linear progression in this narrative, let us digress for a moment to consider Hoffmann's handling of time in the novel. This may give us some sense of an over-all pattern of the relationships he describes.

Keppler in his study of the double includes an

enlightening chapter on the relationship between peculiarities in the movement of time and the doppelganger phenomenon.²⁰ His observations, however, seem relevant only to those situations in which a doppelganger evidently represents the primary self at a different stage of existence, some incidences of which we have already observed in The Elixirs; he does not mention Hoffmann's particular temporal inconsistencies. Therefore, it will be essential in this discussion of time to suggest some of the further repercussions of time "out of joint" as Hoffmann presents it.

The Monk includes a number of characters who are in a sense exempted from time--whether because they are imprisoned, unconscious or ill or because some (presumably) Divine command has prolonged their earthly existence when they should have been buried. As we have seen, the juxtaposition of the mythic, circular time of the past, poetry and the Catholic religion with modern linear, progressive notions seems to be a significant underlying cause of the conflicts of understanding in that novel. Again, Hoffmann crystallizes a tendency already present in the genre, by locating the time-discrepancies in the structure of the novel itself, a tendency that James Hogg and many later writers would exploit effectively in connection with the doubling motif. We can notice this "time warp" particularly in the dates Hoffmann gives for certain incidents and relationships. The Old Painter was supposed to have been a pupil of Leonardo, who died in 1519, yet he is the great-great grandfather of Medardus, who died three centuries later--certainly some

time before the date of the novel's publication. Moreover, Aurelia explains in her letter that she saw Lewis' novel The Monk in German translation on her brother's table, the reading of which led her to wonder whether her lover was also an evil and lustful monk. The first German translation of this novel was in 1797; the date of Medardus' death is recorded as 17-- , giving only two years for the events occurring between Medardus' sojourn at Euphemia's house and his death--one year of which was the year after Aurelia's death during which this manuscript was composed--not nearly enough time for these incidents to have happened, it would seem.²¹

In another instance, if we are to identify Count Viktor with the mad monk whom the gamekeeper found wandering in the forest, we must notice that two years have passed since Medardus precipitated the Count's fall off the cliff. But it scarcely seems possible that so much time as this has intervened and if the dates of 1797 and 17-- are to be taken literally, it is impossible. Can these discrepancies be merely flaws in the novel, "ill-advised" as Hewett-Thayer pronounces? Or do they suggest another mode of reckoning time or perhaps the collapsing and duplicating of time in keeping with the alternations of several beings with one identity and one being with several identities we have seen throughout our examination of Hoffmann's technique?

It is certainly possible at some points to see events recurring in such a way that time seems to have taken a different route than usual. For example, when the monk

Medardus meets Hermogenes he is just about to discard his monk-self for his man-of-the-world self. Hermogenes has just discarded his man-of-the-world self for his monk self. The gamekeeper who cares for the mad monk explains that incidents very much like those at Euphemia's house took place at his lodge, with the young hired man Franz interrupting the monk's attempt to rape his daughter much as Hermogenes interrupted Medardus' attempt to ravish Aurelia. These incidents in turn hearken back to Ambrosio's attempts to rape Antonia and Raymond's sojourn in the house of the robbers in the forest, collapsing the material of the two novels as well as the internal time of Elixirs.

Another instance of ambiguous time involves the incidents toward the end of each volume of Hoffmann's novel in which Aurelia is stabbed or supposed to have been stabbed. The second of these incidents, which takes place at Aurelia's ordination is certainly parallel to--perhaps even a reproduction of--the first. It would even be possible to say that the second version was simply a description of the events that took place from a different point of view.

Concerns of time and space are always very near to one another so that it is often difficult to say whether the text is actually dealing with a time or a space discrepancy. For example, we could say that Medardus' father's death at the time of his birth indicated an inability for both to exist at the same time or the same place. In Elixirs there is constant confusion over space--confusion rather like that in a dream in which we can be several places and people at

the same time. This rampant visionary quality has even led Horst Daemmerich to theorize:

It is quite possible that the visions of love, incest and salvation as well as the hallucinations of alter egos, crime and atonement are projections of Medardus' tortured mind, while he remains immured in his cell.²²

Of course, this is perfectly possible, but not an especially important concern for Hoffmann. If we relegate Medardus' vision to "only" a dream, we have failed to deal meaningfully with its interlocking images of time and space: why, we need to ask, should time and space be so distorted in a dream? And why should Hoffmann go to such pains to evoke this distortion?

While Medardus is at the gamekeeper's house, an incident occurs which demonstrates the significant "crossing" of time and space, as if a special door had been momentarily opened. Medardus, while hunting with the gamekeeper, does not even shoot in the correct direction but brings down two birds. It would appear that we are dealing with a synchronic event which behaves outside the ordinary rules of temporal and spatial continuity and cannot be contained by them. Here, time and space fit together symbolically as the hand fits the glove. Medardus, however, flees from this apparent meshing of cosmic gears, fearing, it would seem, the loss of free will. In The Elixirs, however, it is not the loss of choice that entraps, but rather the insistence upon alignment with one component of an interlocking system

over another. Perhaps Medardus would like to be able to tip one domino without disturbing the others upon which it depends. The spatial arrangement of the narrative itself, though, constantly undercuts such expectations by drawing ever-widening circles of reverberation.

In my previous chapter I suggested the boxed structure of narratives like that of Marguerite, whose tale is told inside Raymond's which is in turn inside the Editor's, had a tendency to create time-confusion. Here an internalized boxing structure has the same effect of infinite regression as Euphemia confides to Medardus that she has "the power to step outside [herself] and view [herself] from without . . . Is there anything greater than to control life from within life itself?" (p. 66). Medardus immediately realizes that she is in fact completely at his mercy, since he is not really the person she thinks he is. And the author and reader in turn share this power to effectively stand outside and see the events, believing, no doubt, that they, too, have complete power over their respective decisions to write or to read.

The convergence of presumably separate times and spaces is likewise evoked by the spatial relations between the Old Painter's manuscript and Medardus,' which is wrapped up in it both literally and metaphorically. These are further enfolded in the Editor's explanation. Moreover, when the prior places the manuscript in Medardus' hands he explains that "all the confused scribblings which it contains only seemed to me to be fanciful sketches and did not become

intelligible until you, my dear Brother Medardus, had made your confession to me'" (p. 249). In presenting these materials to the reader, however, the Editor promises to make Medardus' story intelligible. Once more we are reminded of the incestuous sympathy between images which opens infinitely-regressing doors into and through one version to another, complementary one.

At the conclusion of Hoffmann's first volume, the identities of the mad monk and Medardus mingle confusingly in the scene in which the naked monk rides his counterpart. A further confusion of time/space identity is put forward in the second volume where Pietro indicates that it was he who carried Medardus to the madhouse: "'It cost me no little effort to carry you'" (p. 238). Later on, he describes Medardus' condition at the time of their arrival at the madhouse. The description seems to correspond with Medardus' description of the mad monk who hung about his neck:

"your head drooped limply on your breast, and when anyone tried to make you stand erect, you wobbled about like a badly-made skittle. Your speech, too, was most pitiful; you became confoundedly monosyllabic and said, in your more enlightened moments: 'Hoo, hoo!' and 'Me--Me'" (p. 239).

In another, much later, incident, Medardus is witness to Cyrillus' beheading and is given poison to drink which he believes is the same sort Euphemia offered him. Thus, this incident seems parallel to the earlier incident in which Medardus killed the monk Hermogenes with a knife and again

avoided poisoning by exchanging cups with the poisoner.

The clock gives each minute its allotted sixty seconds whether it is the night before our execution or the night before Christmas; neither fiction nor thought does this. Hence the move from a tale told by an external narrator to a novel with an autobiographical pretense emphasizes the shift to a mental clock which merges, distorts, and re-arranges the actors and events of physical space and time. Perhaps it also suggests that the way in which the events of ordinary time are re-envisioned relates mental time more closely to mythic time as it is understood in folklore and superstitious tales so that the symbolic meaning of an event overrides the considerations of the amount of space or time it occupies. Thus, the major hallmarks of life's passages--birth, circumcision, marriage/ordination, parenthood and death--which actually occupy only minute spans of time within one's total existence would assume major importance in the scheme of life or the scheme of fiction. In mythic time, they would be seen as concomitant rhythms: birth necessitates death as death necessitates birth--neither is the superior position; in linear time they would simply represent a movement from the lowest to highest development of the individual like that suggested on the species level in Darwin's theory of evolution.

Spatial ambiguity may similarly be understood in terms of its reference point. The traditional Seven Directions of Space, i.e., zenith, nadir, north, south, east, west and here, can be described in either relative (mythic) or

absolute (empirical) terms. These designations would correspond to the Medieval distinction between a geocentric and a heliocentric conception of the earth's importance in the solar system. If Medardus, as our point-of-reference for the majority of the tale, constitutes "here," then the figures revolving around this "hub" may be defined as "above", "below", "left," "right," "before" or "behind" variously, depending upon the central figure's current orientation. If, on the other hand, we define space in absolute terms, Medardus' presence in any particular place will have no bearing on the relative positions of these other "planets." It is evident from this scheme that Hoffmann's presentation of spatial data leans heavily toward a relative, mythic space which evokes the various symbolic connotations of positions (left/sinister; up/heaven; down/hell, etc.) depending upon the vantage point of "here" rather than presenting finite and absolute places separate from one another by definition.

Each of the novelists I consider has made significant efforts to provide a mode of temporal and spatial structure which transcends the most typical contemporary linear structures of both scientific and literary contexts. In doing so, each evokes what might be called sacred or mythic time as opposed to goal-oriented linear time. Sacred time, like ritual, revolves in perpetual cycles, while linear time, as I have suggested, presupposes a progression from one point to another and often is prejudiced in favor of a superiority of vantage point for the later position along the line of

time. These authors associate mythic time and space with the traditional folklore and knowledge typical of "ghosts" from the past, figures associated with insanity or poetry and outmoded religious and art forms. Such figures seem to circle back as naturally as the successive seasons, demanding that their perspectives receive due tribute but making no explicit statements about the superiority of one's present experience or state of being over any other past or present mode of existence. It is this circling motion which we can say is in fact most typical of the Hermes who is a god of commerce and associated with the rises and falls of the wheel of fortune. Pietro, who, as I have suggested, embodies the Hermetic force quite distinctly in this novel, defends the lack of linear progression in his own quasi-philosophic style. In the madhouse, Medardus describes his companion in terms that remind us of the whirling Gypsy Prophetess who accurately foretold Antonia's fate:

"There is often a profound meaning underlying your drolleries, but you deck out everything with such lurid images that a genuine thought portrayed in natural colours appears ridiculous, like a robe draped with motley rags. You are like a drunkard who cannot walk straight but staggers from side to side; your sense of direction is crooked."

"What is direction, reverend Capuchin?" [Pietro] said softly. . . . "Direction presupposes a goal from which we take our bearings. Are you certain of your goal, dear Brother? Do you not fear that you may sometimes have overindulged your taste for alcoholic liquor in the inn, so that, like a steeplejack who feels dizzy, you see two goals without knowing which is the right one?" (pp. 240-1)

Indeed, Medardus is constantly confused about his goals, sometimes wanting to assume the ordinary life of a gentleman wed to Aurelia, sometimes gloating over the paradox of a mad monk possessing and murdering this incarnate saint like his predecessor, Ambrosio. The Old Painter, too, enigmatically evokes the notion of a goal without explaining his meaning. When he visits Medardus in his prison cell, he predicts "'Medardus, you will arrive at your goal--tomorrow!'" Medardus thinks the Painter means he approves of the monk's plan to kill himself and asks "'When shall I see you again?'" The Painter replies "'When you reach your goal!'" and Medardus asks "'You mean tomorrow?'" (p. 192). But the painter has vanished. Evidently the Painter's understanding of the term "goal" differs from Medardus', for when Medardus is released from prison on the next day he does not see the Painter, who only re-appears at the end of the novel when Aurelia is martyred at the altar. Medardus does see his mad-monk double, however, on the next day, but it is certainly not obvious whether we are to understand that the doubles are interchangeable, as Pietro suggested in identifying the Old Painter's possible names, or separate entities, as Medardus has led us to believe.

The merging and splitting of character and episode in Hoffmann's novel can certainly be correlated with an expanded notion of time and space. If two times or two spaces were to momentarily overlap, we would have a character with separate identities who appeared to be a unity. However, the moment that the times (or spaces) returned to their

usual orientations, the character would appear to split. The point--an important one I think for Hoffmann and Hogg in particular--is that enormous effort must be exerted to main-
tain the illusion of unity, not to split the experience of the psyche into its ordinarily disparate portions. Boxing of narratives, overlapping and deliberate confusion of identities of characters, unaccountable time lapses (either shorter or longer than we would expect) and synchronicity or repetition of events all contribute to the suggestion of constant entropy only maintaining the semblance of unity and linear progression by a huge expenditure of effort which is easily nullified. No longer does the story have a neat Aristotelian beginning, middle and end, because it is no longer possible to maintain the fiction of purpose, direction and goal in a world of self-conscious refraction whose unity is only maintained by the most steady and concerted effort of the observer. In the blink of an eye it can all dissolve into a madhouse or a hallucination like St. Anthony's vision. Instead, narrative is a narr's tale of fantasy and illusion. As Pietro confides:

"And whether you know it or not, Medardus, I am myself the Folly that is always pursuing you in order to assist your power of reason. And whether you realize it or not, you will only find salvation in Folly, for your much-vaunted reason is an utterly worthless thing and cannot sustain itself; it stumbles backwards and forwards like a frail child and has to enter into a partnership with Folly, which then helps it along because it knows how to find the right way home--to the madhouse."
(p. 234)

The apparent continuity of the central character, Me-dardus, classifying and explaining experiences for the readers insofar as it is possible for each image to maintain a pristine identity, is undoubtedly the most notable unifying feature of this novel. This artificial classification system, which resembles the nomenclature common to most sciences (particularly in the early nineteenth century) has several advantages for preserving the illusion of a continuous identity: 1) the isolation of each image from others within its matrix diminishes the fearful chaos and entrophy they suggest by reducing the shifting figurations to an orderly, manageable procession of "dangerous" and "friendly" forces, 2) the terrific effort required to sustain the tension between previously-classified images such as Pietro, the Old Painter, Count Viktor, Euphemia and Aurelia (which might otherwise collapse and transmute into each other as they would in a dream) serves to reinforce the notion of a unified time-space identity, since the "I" becomes that function which maintains this mental apartheid--Pietro's "pettifogging toll-keeper" (p. 239) and 3) the implicit designation of each component as "devil," "saint," "fool" etc. supports unified identity because it is inherent in the notion of perceiving a single identity that the perceiver must likewise be a unified entity him/herself. But Pietro, as spokesperson for Folly, attacks the limitations of this central point-of-view as self-destructive and inadequate for life or literature:

"Reason is nothing but an inefficient charge d' affaires who never troubles about what goes on outside his sphere and makes the troops drill on the barrack-square out of boredom; as a result, they are incapable of firing a single decent shot when the enemy attacks. But Folly, the true Queen, enters in triumph with trumpets and drums, followed by jubilant crowds. The serfs rise from the corners to which Reason had banished them, and will no longer stand up or sit down at the chamberlain's behest. Looking down his list, this worthy says: 'Look, Folly has knocked my best pupils off their balance; in fact, they have all become unbalanced.' That's a play on words, Brother Medardus; and a play on words is a hot curling-iron in the hand of Folly, which uses it to shape its thoughts." (pp. 234-5)

Did Pietro "really" carry Medardus? Or did Medardus "really" carry Viktor? If at this point, we still feel compelled to ask, we will probably go on like Medardus vainly trying to flagellate our multiple selves into submission to some hypothetical "real" self--a process no more rewarding, it would seem, than Ewson's nightly flute-playing exercises. Puns, like Pietro's, on the other hand, open metaphorical doors to alternate modes of understanding and divergent perspectives ordinarily segregated from reason's "barrack-square." The huge leaps in logic required by a movement from one word to another or from one artistic perspective to another are entirely beyond the scope of definition and classification, yet their creative audacity seems both to support and defy the razor-edge of reason.

The knife of reason is certainly suggested in the appearance of a double each time Medardus uses--or

contemplates using--his fatal ancestral weapon. Upon stabbing Hermogenes, he sees his mad-monk self appear; in prison he uses the knife handed up from below to literally make his double appear; when he considers suicide, the Old Painter appears by his side; when he stabs himself, believing he has stabbed Aurelia, his naked double mounts him and when he contemplates murdering Aurelia at the end of the novel, his monk-self appears to do the deed for him. It seems evident that Medardus' doubles, like the Bleeding Nun, are present at all times, though they only seem to physically materialize as separate individuals at certain mythically meaningful moments that symbolize their artificial segregation. Very explicit segregation occurs when, for example, Medardus' attempt to "awaken" Viktor to his dangerously borderline state causes him to fall into the gorge. Similarly, in the gamekeeper's house, the monk who has been locked up breaks loose and finds his way into Medardus' room in the night to suggest the necessity in Medardus' mind of a combat between his component selves from which a victor will ultimately emerge:

"you must come with me," it said. "Let us climb on to the roof beneath the weathercock, which is playing a merry tune for the owl's wedding. Up there we will fight with each other, and the one who pushes the other over will become king and be able to drink blood." (p. 111)

Medardus' propensity for delineation and naming is evident in his response to the mad monk's challenge: "I screamed:

'You are not me, you are the Devil!'--and clawed at the face of the menacing spectre. But my fingers went through his eyes as if they were empty cavities, and the figure burst into strident laughter" (p. 111). Medardus wakes from this dream to discover that his monk-double has actually materialized beside his bed, implying the possibility of an infinite regression of layers of identity, each enfolding within it another. As Medardus awakens, the clock strikes three, reminding us, too, of the manner in which Antonia learned of her imminent sacrifice from Elvira's ghost: another echo from the past. Whenever Medardus hopes to delineate his identity, he finds other identities breaking through at the most inopportune moments. Thus his double breaks down the door and enters while he is speaking with the physician after his release from prison (though no one but Medardus observes this) and his double appears at the very moment preceding his marriage to Aurelia to remind him that union with one component figure invokes other--less desirable--ones.

There seems, then, in Hoffmann's view, to be an inverse relationship between mimetic accuracy of time-space continuity (at least in terms of our usual criteria of such indices of movement) and translation. Evidently the temporal and spatial categories which we impose upon experience effectively arrange our component selves into a hierarchical arrangement of "master" self and "servant" selves. To our "I" master-self, these latter are either rebellious angels like Satan or angels-in-good-standing like St. Anthony. But

deprived of the benefits of nomenclature and classification, these underling angels may have difficulty distinguishing whether the master is an intolerable and sophistic tyrant like the Pope (and like Pietro's David who slays Goliath after a lengthy disputation proving why it ought to be done) or a benevolent, but rather misguided overseer like the Prince. They may even believe that there is in fact no difference between the "master" and themselves and attempt to overthrow his power by presenting themselves in such a chaotic and confusing array of multiplicity that the master is hard put to know where to cut and, like Medardus, in stabbing at Aurelia only stabs himself.

Daemmerich contends "[Medardus'] encounters in the search for self-realization prove to be illusory; he ultimately remains caged."²³ Can we likewise denominate Medardus a miserable failure? The notion of failure would seem itself to pose a possible heroic and triumphant progression over dangerous forces to ultimate unity. However, such a notion seems inconsistent with the circling motion of Hoffmann's vision. Medardus, as a child of reason and empiricism, is the perennial fool of the Tarot's first enigma, gazing at the stars while failing to note that he is stepping over the edge of a cliff. He cannot see all his selves at once because the very faculty that enables him to see at all only permits him to focus on one at a time. Is this an unfortunate or pessimistic state? Or does it only suggest that awareness itself is unaware and requires an infinite regression of observers to adequately evoke its potential?

To some extent, I believe, these observers are provided by the complicated dance of character, reader, author and textual ancestors Hoffmann sets in motion.

The herms that mark out Hermes' precincts are very much to the point in this realm of delineated and transmuted identity. They suggest that Hermes' relationship to boundaries and to limitations is, as usual, ambiguous. He certainly recognizes the significance of boundaries, whether these are the lines between different countries, different modes of expression or different beings. He likewise is aware of the significance of separate times whether in the historical sense or in the individual's movement from one stage of his/her life identity to the next. But it is Hermes' function (as it seems to be Hoffmann's) to encourage us to draw circles and lines of demarcation so that we may enmesh ourselves in our own handiwork. Thus, like Christ, he is described with the word logos. For his transmutability mimics the subtle processes of translating the thoughts in our minds into the words we speak and then into a written language which finds its way back into the thought process, perhaps by way of speech. In essence, through Hermes, spirit becomes matter and matter spirit just as they do in the mystery of communion. The spectrum of words--from literal meanings to metaphors and puns of the most outrageous sort--becomes the medium by which we are initiated into our finiteness and our infinity. Perhaps, then, through Hermes' mediation we can recognize the limitations of our time/space perspective by our insistence on retaining

these modes of perception to try to comprehend a narrative that flagrantly and whimsically violates them.

CHAPTER FOUR
VERSION AND INVERSION: HOGG'S CONFESSIONS

Introduction

Although I have not put any exceptional emphasis upon individual biographies, it might be useful to notice that each of the three writers with whom I am concerned has in some sense become identified more closely than is usual with his literary work--each has become a figure in literature as well as a literary figure. Lewis has been commonly referred to as "Monk" Lewis since his novel's publication. Hoffmann, while not specifically identified with the Elixirs over his other works, appeared as a double of himself in Jacques Offenbach's 1881 opera, Les Comptes D' Hoffmann (The Tales of Hoffmann), an effect which emphasizes the framing device of a story-teller within the story. James Hogg--perhaps the most "devilish" of these three--made regular appearances in Blackwood's Magazine as the rustic Et-trick Shepherd (the name by which he was known in his poetic career). Published from 1822 to the early 1830's, the initial "Noctes Ambrosianae" were written by John Wilson (as "Christopher North") in collaboration with Hogg, though later Wilson took full control. Hogg also wrote parodies of his own work in his Poetic Mirror and created doubles of

himself and his work in the Confessions. In fact, criticism has even generated a doppelganger for this ubiquitous author:

The Confessions makes Hogg's other fiction look so amateurish that George Saintsbury decided Lockhart must have helped. This notion, seconded by Andrew Lang, was indignantly countered by Hogg's daughter [But] when Earle Welby revived The Confessions in 1924, he assured his readers that the Lockhart-debt could 'hardly be disputed.'

Although modern critics see little reason to uphold these claims of dual authorship², it is worth noting that Hogg's Hermetic text continued to generate a doubling impulse in his readers long after his lifetime. In the more remote past, critics might have said that a work of such astonishing complexity could only have been accomplished with the help of the devil; moderns have substituted the more mundane figure of Lockhart.

Whether intentionally or not, then, each writer has become a participant in his own drama--an interesting pattern if we are to consider the ambiguous and duplicit nature of these dramas which seek to draw reader as well as character into an endlessly reflecting and re-reflecting house of mirrors. Evidently, the potent charge of the regressing mirror-images in these novels is neither contained by the margins nor de-fused when the book covers are closed. Instead, the mirror-images reverberate endlessly through later generations of readers and critics raising the same doubts about identity in the spectators as in the characters.

Illuminators of medieval manuscripts often personified their pages by including a literal head, pair of feet, right and left hand in the appropriate margin on each sheet. In similar fashion Hogg (and to a lesser extent his predecessors) looms behind each page as an elusive authorial identity informing and forming his text. In effect, the text has created the author as much as the author his text and the repulsions and attractions of critics are only ongoing extensions of this dialectic between creator and creation. With this paradigm in mind, then, it would seem appropriate to look briefly at the manner in which James Hogg, the historical figure, reflects the Hermetic multiplicity of his best-known novel.

Hermes is the god of shepherds and borderlines; James Hogg was both a shepherd by profession and an inhabitant of several borderlines, physical and metaphysical. Like the god's herms, Hogg marked the meeting place of times and traditions in his life and work. He dwelt on the border between two worlds as well as on that between England and Scotland and his life (1770-1835) was nearly evenly divided between two centuries. He was, on one hand, the direct heir to countless centuries of ballad tradition. On the other hand, he was a modern man who desired above all to emulate the urbane, subdued, and reasonable Romanticism of his renowned neighbor, Sir Walter Scott. Like his mother, a major contributor of ballads for Scott's *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, Hogg recognised that the age of the oral tradition was passing with the fossilization of its material

in these compendiums of scholarly research. In a sense, Scott's gentlemanly translations of oral tradition were as distant from their originals as Ewson's dictionary definitions of "Oblate"--and as little to the point as far as the bearers of the old tradition were concerned. As Hogg's mother told Scott when he recorded her version of "Auld Maitland," "Ballads were made for singin' an no for readin' but ye hae broken the charm noo, an they'll never be sung mair."³ Despite his deep admiration for them, Scott's translations of traditional ballads into morocco-bound monuments of nineteenth-century knowledge demonstrates a primary Romantic paradox: the object of Romantic admiration could only be appreciated after it was functionally dead to society and deprived of that organic spontaneity that made it so interesting in the first place. The ballads of tradition, like the haunted ruins of abbeys, fascinated both Scott and Lewis, but chiefly because of the life that they had presumably once contained--a life only accessible to modern literary archaeologists in the most fragmentary way:

On looking around, we found some fragments of clothes, some teeth, and part of a pocket-book, which had not been returned into the grave when the body had been last raised, for it had been twice raised before this, but only from the loins upward. (p. 225)

Hoffmann also set up his novel to reflect a bygone mentality--a way of seeing things no longer available to modern humanity but still lamented by those who recognized in it an ability to express psychic content not available to

a perspective based upon empirical delineations. Indeed, the ability to systematically analyze and classify human artifacts (whether the words of "ancient" ballads or the bonnet of a Scots mummy a hundred years old) in terms of historical time, geographic space and physical causality was likewise symptomatic of a mindset no longer capable of producing them. Insects (if we could ask them) would probably display little enthusiasm for the subtleties of entymology; it seems equally likely that the bearers of oral tradition--like Hogg's mother--would exhibit slight patience with the scientific classification and historical consciousness inherent in Romanticism that sometimes converted taxonomy into taxidermy.

Despite our romantic tendencies, few of us would really want to be transported into the time periods which we have admired from afar. It seems axiomatic that in order for one to yearn for a bygone time, one must be permanently (and securely) separated from it in all but psychic time and space. Yet James Hogg's perspective was almost unique (apart, perhaps from the plowman-poet he greatly admired, Robert Burns) in that he alone of the Romantics was a direct heir to the folk tradition, detached from it by neither urban environs, middle-class values nor education. From this liminal position on the brink of the modern world, Hogg was able to compose fantasy material about the supernatural almost as naively as a Medieval balladeer, while his sympathy with the empirical world-view of the Enlightenment enabled him to discourse prosaically in a treatise on the

diseases of sheep⁴ and to devise merciless parodies of the Romantic supernaturalism of Coleridge in his Poetic Mirror (1816).⁵ In this light it does not seem surprising that Hogg was so readily able to conceive of himself as more than one person at the same time. Indeed it is difficult for most of us to imagine that two such contradictory spirits could amicably inhabit the same frame. Perhaps it was only possible within the context of Hogg's unique time and place. But that conjecture itself derives from an empirical tendency to account for his strange duplicity. If we were to attempt to explain his duplicity in mythic terms, we would, perhaps, say that he had a spiritual twin--a devil who walked beside him wherever he went and enabled him to surpass the usual limitations of human vision.

We have seen that critical reaction to The Monk at the time of its publication was predominantly negative. In fact, even the authors of these texts seem to have had mixed feelings about the quality of their novels: Lewis apologized for the unintentional offensiveness of The Monk, while both Hogg and Hoffmann seem to have under-rated the importance of their respective achievements in Confessions and Elixirs.⁶ Hoffmann's reviews were mixed, but as Daemmerich notes, "Undoubtedly [Hoffmann's] tales called forth not only great admiration but also deep aversion."⁷ The reaction to James Hogg's Confessions, however, was almost entirely negative. It was scarcely reviewed at all, but the few reviewers who noticed it attacked it, describing it as "uncouth" and "extraordinary trash" among other epithets.

Even though the novel has received a great deal of belated critical acclaim in the twentieth century, critics still feel compelled to express certain reservations. In his Introduction to the novel, for example, Robert M. Adams refers to Hogg's "uneven and imperfect list of books" and emphasizes that Hogg was "perfectly frank about acknowledging that much of his writing was careless and slipshod."⁸ I believe, however, that it is quite impossible to effectively separate James Hogg from his novel, for the simple reason that Hogg himself figures in the novel as a significant (if minor) character--or perhaps two or three characters. We need to consider both him and his novel as sympathetic entities. We cannot lament our lack of objectivity when confronted with the data presented by Hogg's novel or Hogg's rendition of his relationship to it. Both are of a piece or wrapped up in one another like the suicide's cloth samples. Any statements Hogg made about his relationship to the novel must almost be counted as part of the experience of the novel. When Sir Walter Scott attacked Hogg's version of history in The Confessions, saying "it is a distorted, a prejudiced and untrue picture of the Royal party," Hogg reportedly replied, "It is a devilish deal truer than yours though."⁹ Of course, we cannot determine from this cryptic statement whether Hogg simply meant that his was the more authentic of the two or that he was enacting the role of devil's advocate in creating a diabolical inversion of Scott's historical truth. Indeed, in Hogg's deliberate devilishness we are reminded of the sublime

ambiguity of Blake's Proverbs of Hell: fantasy has merged so strongly with personal identity that they are virtually inseparable.

On occasion James Hogg boldly reconstructs empirical truth into mythic truth. So, for example, he seems to have been convinced that he was born on the same date as his illustrious countryman, Robert Burns, (January 25, 1770) while the parrish registers list an entirely different date (early December, 1770).¹⁰ Yet it is undoubtedly mythically appropriate that the shepherd author of The Confessions should share a common date of genesis with his double the plowman author of "Holy Willie's Prayer." But the metamorphosis functions in both directions for the versatile Hogg. He was equally capable of reconstructing mythic material according to empirical perspectives, as, for example, in his letter to Blackwood's quoted in the novel. Here Hogg presents a scientifically-precise analysis of the material evidence disinterred from the suicide's grave which differs strikingly in several respects from the data presented from Robert's point-of-view in the manuscript as well as our expectations about the contents of the suicide's grave. The empirical perspective presents all it can know of such disturbing tales of the supernatural as Robert's, underscoring the author's amazing ability to mimic a variety of modes.

Hogg's skill at metamorphosing convincingly into several widely different personas is certainly akin to the ability of Gil-Martin to mimic in appearance those about

whom he is thinking and thus discern their innermost thoughts. Hogg specifically identified this trait as his own in an earlier essay for The Spy where he wrote:

I am now become an observer so accurate that by contemplating a person's features minutely, modelling my own after the same manner as nearly as possible, I can ascertain the compass of their minds and thoughts.¹¹

It is quite evident, then, that the Hermetic facility of Gil-Martin can be identified with the authorial facility of imitation and reproduction of a variety of different perspectives and states-of-mind. In fact, it is often quite obvious to the reader that Hogg appears in the guise of this ironic devil, winking as confidentially as his creation to suggest that the reader and author are conspiring to bring about the downfall of the pathetic and appalling hero.

Because of Hogg's mercurial shiftiness it is necessary that the critic recognise that statements he might have made either about the novel or in the novel are by their very nature bound to be double- or triple-edged. If we search for a direct correspondence between objective fact and Hogg's re-imagination of it, we are simply succumbing to the same temptation as Robert by clinging relentlessly to one line of reasoning to the virtual exclusion of others. If we trust entirely to our guide to rescue us from the intricacies of his text, we are likely to find ourselves firmly enmeshed in his spider's web or turned over to the authorities for the violations we have committed under his presumed

auspices. There is no friendly authorial compassion in Gil-Martin's domain as there is in the Editor's treatment of George; there is only a cold, heartless, even sadistic impulse to vicariously break every boundary of society and honor in the name of God as if to demonstrate the boundless capacity for evil in this inverted Job. If the first narrative has strong comic elements despite the tragic demise of the young hero, the second emphasises a more brutal impulse of comedy that sends the hero down to absolute death and damnation as part of a ritual game. Robert, the sacrifice in this ritual, has failed to answer the questions requisite to achieve the self-awareness essential for survival; in the end he is hanged by the rope of his own weaving albeit of the flimsiest sort.

In many ways Hogg's work does uniquely combine the folk tradition with the scientific empiricism of his age. In other ways, however, it underscores the innate repulsion between these two differing Weltanschauungen. In the character of the Ettrick Shepherd at the Thirlestane Fair, Hogg expresses a boorish contempt for gentlemen's scientific curiosity; in the character of the Editor he embraces the empirical tenets so enthusiastically that he seems to ignore the major questions raised by the text in favor of trivial details about broad bonnets and Drummond's fate. Hogg poses the delicate, impressionistic interlacings of the "fairie web" against the more severe analytical world of endlessly multiplied distinctions like Rabina's "12 ways" or voluminous taxonomies like those of nineteenth-century science,

giving now one, now the other, his support, but never taking a firm stand at either pole. Of course, his ambiguity is itself symptomatic of the direction in which he often leaned: a viewpoint typically Romantic in its emphasis upon the relativity of experience to the experiencer. While the Enlightenment's world-view tended to enforce a binary system upon the accuracy of its data (decreeing that a statement of fact must be either true or untrue regardless of the point-of-view from which it was seen), the mythic Weltanschauung demanded a truth-of-vision based upon the observer's nature so that a statement must be an authentic outgrowth of character, regardless of what others might have observed about the events described. For the mythic perspective, the internal experience (and the outward expression of that experience) were foremost; for the empirical viewpoint the data of the event insofar as it could be isolated and abstracted from the particular biases of character was paramount. In straddling the line between empirical and mythic viewpoints, then, Hogg gives us something of each, but emphasizes the manner in which each perceiver views his/her own "truth." For example, when George, who presumably has had some scientific education, sees the earth-bound rainbow near Arthur's Seat, he immediately perceives "the cause of the phenomenon" according to the scientific terms of the refraction of the sun's rays on the mist. The Editor then reinforces this empirical explanation by stressing its superiority over other ways in which the phenomenon might have been viewed by the uneducated:

That was a scene that would have entranced the man of science with delight, but which the uninitiated and sordid man would have regarded less than the mole rearing up his hill in silence and in darkness. (p. 38)

The Editor's condescending attitude toward the common people, however, seems contradicted by his admission that the terrestrial rainbow "cannot be better delineated than by the name given of it by the shepherd boys, 'The little wee ghost of the rainbow'" (p. 38). Moreover, George, who has had the Editor's sympathies from the beginning does not react with detached scientific curiosity either to the "fairie web" of dew on his hat or to the subsequent apparition. In the first case, he responds with a species of awe and reverence scarcely in keeping with the Editor's removed analytical attitude, but of which the Editor obviously approves. Perhaps, like many Romantic empiricists, the Editor tends to idealize the naive perception or perhaps he views George's respect as evidence of an aesthetic sensibility superior to that of ordinary "moles." At any rate, the Editor seems confused about whether to apotheosize or condemn naive perception of this type but does maintain a kind of smug superiority to it. This attitude emerges a little later as the Editor dilates at length on the marvels of "the controller of Nature" who "causeth the mole, from his secret path of darkness, to throw up the gem, the gold, and the precious ore" (p. 52). The Editor does not explain whether this "ore" is valuable in itself or chiefly in its capacity as fuel for the consumption of empirical furnaces. The

reader, however, is left with the distinct feeling that Hogg is the "controller" of the Editor here, manipulating him into absurdity as neatly and ironically as Gil-Martin manipulates Robert. In essence, the Editorial mole throws up rhetorical gems, suggesting something of the same effect of infinite regress of controllers that we have seen in Hoffmann's novel.

George's reaction to the apparition is likewise devoid of scientific detachment and more appropriate to those "uninitiated and sordid" beings who are later personated by the Ettrick Shepherd himself:

George conceived it to be a spirit. He could conceive it to be nothing else; and he took it for some horrid demon by which he was haunted, that had assumed the features of his brother in every lineament. (pp. 39-40)

The Editor, like Lewis' narrator, does not comment upon George's apparent inability to maintain the appropriate semblance of scientific aloofness. Despite science, it takes a good deal of persuasion on the part of George's friend, Adam Gordon, to convince him that the phenomenon at Arthur's Seat was indeed in the course of nature and not a supernatural visitation. The narrator intrudes to moralize upon the virtues of science when it is convenient and the action in the story is consistent with empirical thought; when supernatural events occur, he moves back behind the curtain. Perhaps, like Robert, he suffers "memory lapses" about these embarrassing moments.

Hogg's elusive informing presence flits constantly from one voice to another like the fluctuations in Gil-Martin's appearance, scarcely giving the reader a moment to digest a particular mode before pushing relentlessly into a polarized or parodied version of the material. Like Hoffmann's metamorphosing personas, Hogg's voices are characterized above all by their constant fluctuations, as fleeting as one's image reflected in a stream. Much of the immediacy of Hogg's vision--its genuine epiphany of conflicting perspectives with their paradoxical juxtapositions of humor, tragedy, absurdity, cynicism and naivet   seems to stem from the author's almost terrifying nearness to his originals. But he is at the same time shockingly close to us. And it is this perpetual dialogue between modes which renders Hogg such an able adept and guide in the Hermetic mystery.

The borderlines which dramatize conjunctions of mirror-images are omnipresent in Hogg's Confessions, too. Sometimes these boundaries emphasize the separation of entities so obviously polarized as to appear incapable of ever meeting on common ground. In this category we have particularly the elder George Colwan and his wife, Rabina Orde, as well as their two sons, the younger George and Robert Wringham. After their initial attempt at compatibility, the fun-loving old Tory and his young, Puritanical wife quickly discover that their union is "a conjunction anything but agreeable to the parties contracting" (p. 3). Since neither party makes any appreciable compromise to the principles of the other, it is evident that, as George puts it, this marriage is

"like reading the Bible and the jest-book, verse about, and would render the life of a man a medley of absurdity and confusion" (p. 6). The wife leaves her husband, but her "reputed" father locks her in a tower "five stories high," indulging her propensity to isolation but "she was at a great loss for one to dispute with about religious tenets" (p. 11); so eventually this unlikely fairytale princess returns to her spouse. Still, George and Rabina never agree on anything except that they should remain apart:

The upper, or third, story of the old mansion-house was awarded to the lady for her residence. She had a separate door, a separate stair, a separate garden, and walks that in no instance intersected the laird's; so that one would have thought the separation complete. (p. 12)

Of course, the Editor's language in the latter sentence suggests that although the separation seems absolute, it is not. The attraction/repulsion principle, always so remarkable with mirror images, is quickly brought into play as the two sons of Rabina, representing the contrary poles of the initial unsuccessful marriage-of-contraries, are drawn fatalistically into each other's presence without either young man being quite sure how it is possible for them to meet so frequently. George claims that often his movements are random with no specific goal, as for example when his friend invites him to go to the church to see a girl. Robert claims that his diabolical friend keeps him informed of George's whereabouts and urges him to follow. However this may be possible, the meetings do occur with increasing

frequency in both the Editor's and Robert's narratives. As the conjunctions of the two brothers (initially described as almost completely opposite in personality, appearance and inclination) continue, the sharpness of the distinctions begins to blur. As in the Oriental Yin-Yang symbol, the mirror images cling together, each bearing within it the seed of its opposite. At times, in both narratives, the seemingly separate identities merge and metamorphose into each other as confusingly as do those of the main participants in Medardus' narrative. For example, the Editor informs us "the report had spread over the city that a young gentleman had been slain," by which we are to assume that George is dead, presumably at the hand of his antithetical brother; Bell Calvert seconds this information by describing to her mirror-image Arabella Logan the very circumstances of George's murder by Robert. Yet later both Arabellas see a man walking amicably with Robert who looks exactly like George. Robert, too, tells us he confuses his own identity with that of his brother while he is ill:

over the singular delusion that I was two persons my reasoning faculties had no power. The most perverse part of it was that I rarely conceived myself to be any of the two persons. I thought for the most part that my companion was one of them, and my brother the other; and I found that, to be obliged to speak and answer in the character of another man, was a most awkward business at the long run. (p. 140)

Later Robert claims he has killed his brother with the assistance of his questionable companion, but when he

awakens from a presumably prolonged revelry as the new laird of the Colwan estate he meets his diabolical friend who "bore the figure, air, and features of my late brother, I thought, exactly" (p. 170). So although George's apparent death seems to separate the brothers even more permanently than their parents' separate living arrangements, it by no means does so. Robert, much like Medardus, is caught up in constant mutations of identity. Sometimes he is subject to lengthy memory lapses during which he seems to behave much as his brother might at his worst--drinking, carousing and ruining a young lady of the neighborhood--and sometimes he appears in his usual Puritanical guise side-by-side with a friend bearing George's features.

The dialectical tension between the opposing images is further underlined by the emphasis Hogg places on the constant pregnant distance between doubles, whether the pair is George and Robert or Robert and Gil-Martin, in each of the narratives. A rhythm of sympathy and antipathy between paired images also marks the relationship between Arabella Logan, the elder George's mistress, and Arabella Calvert, her underworld counterpart. Images of separation and violation of imposed boundaries are invoked in the breaking of the locks on Arabella Logan's door by her counterpart, the latter's expulsion from Bell Calvert's cell and her subsequent refusal to condemn her double despite the latter's non-cooperative attitude. The rather elaborate ritual of denial and refusal in the courtroom scene where mistress and maid refuse to swear to their property later leads to a kind

of intimacy and conspiratorial closeness on the part of the two women. A motif of alternating separation and attraction is the predominant rhythm of this dance of images with the women's separate intimacy further underlined when they crouch "a small distance from each other" (p. 81) in the bushes to spy on Robert and Gil-Martin. Robert attacks Mrs. Logan but fails to see her counterpart, who swiftly comes to her aid. Thus this negative space, like the spaces between the letters of the text, seems to play as critical a role in the drama as the positive figures of individual characters.

This interdependent separateness of images is further highlighted by the structural separation of the two narratives into the Editor's and Robert's versions. While each rendering is indeed different from the other, the two overlap, intermingle and converge at some points while they take entirely different routes in other instances. For example, in the Editor's narrative Mrs. Calvert tells Arabella Logan "I am almost certain [Gil-Martin] was using every persuasion to induce [Robert] to make away with his mother; and I likewise conceive that I heard the incendiary give his consent!" (p. 83). In Robert's narrative, however, we hear that he has been "in a profound and feverish sleep" (p. 168) and has slept for at least the six months since his old servant died. Gil-Martin, Robert relates, re-appears after this sleep claiming he "was forced . . . from [Robert's] side for a season" due to his "crimes and extravagances" (p. 172). Gil-Martin further explains that Robert is "accused of having made away with [his] mother privately" (p.

173). Somewhat later, Robert relates the incident in which Gil-Martin "left me to the mercy of two viragos who had very nigh taken my life" (p. 186). Although the two versions of the events agree specifically in several details, they diverge appreciably in point of time, for Gil-Martin could hardly have been engaged in persuading Robert to matricide if the latter had already done the deed. We cannot easily "justify" these disparate accounts. Nor can we readily reconcile the Editor's contention that the mother was never found ("his mother also was lost" [p. 85]) with Robert's account of Samuel Scrape urging him to flee since the bodies of his mother and mistress were being borne toward the house and Robert's testimony that shortly after he left Dalcastle he saw a party approaching bearing two bodies "decently covered with white sheets" (p. 189)--evidently the corpses of his mother and mistress. We can speculate that Robert is lying about some of the events or simply confused about time as his state of mind seems to indicate. We can even wonder whether Bell Calvert (whom the devil winked at so confidently) told the truth or whether the Editor might have received the wrong information from a tradition corrupted by the intervening century. But no one explanation conveniently accounts for all the discrepancies (or even all the similarities) without raising more questions than it answers.

In like manner, the descriptions of the three graves at the end of the novel underscore the various permutations of attracting/repulsing images. On one hand, as Michael York

Mason has demonstrated in his analysis of this section,¹² the data we are given undoubtedly describes three separate graves with three different inhabitants whose garb and features differ significantly from one another. Yet their conjunction in the novel along with a vague patchwork of minute descriptive detail and a great deal of emphasis upon the burying and unearthing of different portions of the suicide's mummy suggests a sympathy among the three as well as a distinction. As in the syzygy of George and Robert and Gil-Martin we find ourselves confronted with an empirical truth of three different, evidently unrelated graves, but simultaneously with a mythic truth of three graves and three mummies exemplifying a trinity as mysterious and inpenetrable in its separate inclusiveness as the Trinity of Christian doctrine.

Indeed, with all the considerable store of tricksterish facility at his command, Hogg constantly refuses to play the authorial game according to its established rules or provides apparent rules which he later whimsically violates. Thus he offers his readers no secure information about the way in which they ought to regard evidently-supernatural events such as the re-appearance of the younger George Colwan after his death in both Editor's and Robert's narratives. The Editor, on the other hand, gives us a great deal of guidance about the way in which we should regard the contrasting Colwan brothers, casting them much in the light of Tom Jones and his hypocritical brother Blifil. Of course, this Editor is himself a biased Tory with obvious

prejudices who glosses over or ignores some fairly crucial material. Critics have made much of this "discovery" that the Editor is not without his prejudices, but ultimately this observation is no more profound than the more obvious impression that Robert, too, has his biases. We are reminded of Robert's ironic condemnation of the fairness of the trial of the innocent preacher: "If once a man is prejudiced on one side, he will swear anything in support of such prejudice" (p. 129).

Hogg's ability to identify with a bluff Tory of antiquarian tastes (possessing, no doubt, some of the traits of Hogg's friend, Sir Walter Scott) was undoubtedly countered by his sympathy with his ancestors' and predecessors' direct, often-fanatic involvement with topics which polite nineteenth-century gentlemen only knew of second-hand through their scholarly research. Lewis Simpson notes that Hogg was certainly familiar with the history of a Reverend Thomas Boston, minister at Ettrick from 1707 to 1732 who, along with one James Hog of Carnock, was accused of holding antinomian opinions similar to those espoused by Robert Wringham.¹³ It is by no means far-fetched, then, to suggest that a man as obsessed by mirror-images as our James Hogg would attempt to come to terms with his spiritual ancestor by justifying his own views with those of the antinomian Hog. No doubt these sudden shifts from one set of ground rules to another are in part responsible for the unappreciative reception Hogg's contemporaries gave him. Just as Robert Wringham interrupts his brother's youthful heroics

at tennis--in Kiely's term engendering "an unstated challenge to the conventional roles of spectator and player"¹⁴--Hogg devilishly interferes in his own game, leaving each spectator to devise his/her own explanation according to his/her viewpoint. Or, perhaps, the viewer must simply recognise that no one perspective is adequate to the task of resolving a true mystery. As Kiely reminds us:

A "mystery," for Hogg, is not a challenge for a solution; that only means it will be deprived of its essence and converted into the terms of a different reality.¹⁵

Like Lewis and Hoffmann, then, Hogg does not permit any one narrative voice to dominate over the others, but teases his readers with a smorgasbord of incompatible versions of his tale.

Hogg is above all a master of mystery, extraordinarily proficient at casting shadows of himself in such a way that he seems to constantly shift his ground from one Hogg to another, rendering it ultimately impossible to keep track of his transformations. And the effect of these continual metamorphoses is to move the reader from one perspective to another so rapidly that he/she also becomes unsure whether this point-of-view or that one most accurately represents his/her "real" view. Hogg uses these identity shifts most masterfully in The Confessions where we see him parading first in the guise of Editor, later quoting somewhat inaccurately from an actual letter he wrote in the previous year to Blackwood's, and then appearing as the no-nonsense

shepherd (like the Ettrick Shepherd of the "Noctes," unconcerned with the whims of gentlemen antiquarians. This enigmatic authorial personality even disappears momentarily behind a ruse of anonymity when he originally relegates the authorship of The Confessions on his title page to "a gentleman from Glasgow," and in a later passage calls up his own shade to bear witness against his credibility: "'But God knows! Hogg has imposed as ingenious lies on the public ere now'" (p. 222). Elusive and omnipresent as the fairies and the wills-o-the-wisp he so often evoked, Hogg's presence in every sense informs his text, tempting the reader to become hopelessly entangled in its chaotic visions. Unquestionably, Hogg is one of the slipperiest of literary figures, both as guide and as participant in the mysteries he creates, evoking the most Hermetic spirit of the romantic period.

Justification

Every gentleman brought in exclaimed against the treatment he had received, in most bitter terms, blaming a mob set on him and his friends by the adverse party . . . until at length they began to perceive that they were examining gentlemen of both parties, and that they had been doing so from the beginning, almost alternately, so equally had the prisoners been taken from both parties. (pp. 29-30)

As we have seen, Hoffmann repeatedly raises disturbing questions about the continuity of the self and its usual

points-of-reference, time and space, suggesting that the refracting components of what we ordinarily deem the self bear within them paradoxical antipathies and attractions which by their very nature cannot be subdued into a harmonious whole. "Home" as Pietro says, is indeed the madhouse. With his chaos of alternating perspectives, James Hogg builds still further on this irony, not so much to regret the loss of a presumed original idyllic harmony, as some critics want to suggest,¹⁶ but rather to explore the inherent resistance of psychic components to any artificial "justification" to the needs of the others or any enforced unity. Justification is unquestionably a key concept in Hogg's novel, as the title indicates. But because it is a complex concept insofar as literature is concerned, perhaps it will benefit from a little amplification.

The notion of justification was one of the cornerstones of the Protestant Revolution. Religious justification may be described as the means by which a person passes "from a state of damnation due to sin to a state of grace."¹⁷ The manner of adjusting the human perspective to that of God so that the sinner miraculously becomes righteous has always been a difficult theological problem. In fact, Martin Luther's major quarrel with the Catholic church stemmed from the question of whether the justification of the sinner was to be accomplished by good works together with faith (as the church contended) or by faith alone (as Luther argued). The central Protestant duality is aptly expressed by this excerpt from the Catholic Encyclopedia of 1913:

In the Protestant system . . . remission of sin is no real forgiveness, no blotting out of guilt. Sin is merely cloaked and concealed by the imputed merits of Christ . . . whilst in reality it continues undercover its miserable existence till the hour of death. Thus there exist in man side by side, two hostile brothers, as it were--the one just and the other unjust; the one a saint, the other a sinner; the one a child of God, the other a slave of Satan--and this without any prospect of a conciliation between the two.¹⁸

Luther referred to this marriage of contraries as "an ill-matched couple, who are continually complaining of one another, and what one will do, the other will not."¹⁹ By its emphasis on the distance between the lost sinner (who seemed to be capable of doing almost nothing in his own interest) and a gracious God attainable only by the faith which He himself bestowed, the Protestant ideology constantly juxtaposed opposites and in doing so prompted consideration of those critical points at which one antithetical system made contact with the other and the means by which contact was accomplished. The theological method is strongly reminiscent of the techniques of juxtaposing opposites that occur in all three of our authors. It is of considerable significance in their forerunners as well.

Milton ostensibly wrote Paradise Lost to "justify the ways of God to men." Presumably, this does not mean that he intended to absolve God of guilt in man's fall, since man could scarcely accuse his Maker of wrongdoing, no matter how arbitrary His behavior was. Instead, we need to understand the concept of justification in terms of alignment or

adjustment of one perspective with another. Hence, Milton would adjust the earthly perspective to the spiritual, heavenly one so that human perception could momentarily encompass the breadth of the divine scheme. Interestingly enough, in Milton's vision--as in Lewis' and Hoffmann's--several successive "versions" of the initial transgression and "fall" are required by way of testimony in order to ultimately arrive at "justification." In Milton's scheme Satan, his fellow devils, several angels, God, Christ, Adam, Eve and the narrator all contribute variants of the "fall" story. Milton's epic of justification also moves freely and Hermetically through time and space, encompassing the vast scope of creation as well as its past and future to finish with an ironic union of contraries as Adam and Eve, excluded from Paradise, "hand and hand, with wandering steps and slow, / Through Eden took their solitary way" (Book 12, 648-9). Justification, then, would not necessarily heroically resolve conflict by allowing one perspective to triumph over all the others; instead it would unfold a panorama of contrasting perspectives, each of which reconstructs or re-envisions the events anew as it emerges. Each new figure justifies the overall configuration to agree with its particular point-of-view as each new figuration eclipses some others and reveals still further ones.

The idea of justification has additional significance. For example, in Scotland "to justify" could mean to "bring to justice," i.e., to execute. Hence a man who was hanged would be said to be "justified." Since the Scottish

meaning of the word encompasses the antithetical irony of vindicate/execute, it is further significant that in the novel the Editor tells his readers:

I altered the title to A Self-justified Sinner, but my booksellers did not approve of it; and there being a curse pronounced by the writer on him that should dare to alter or amend, I have let it stand as it is. (p. 228-9)

In fact, Robert Wringham (presumably the sinner to whom the title refers) does "justify" himself both in terms of writing a public vindication of his behavior and in terms of performing his own execution. His written justification, too, reflects a double-edged understanding of the term, for while Robert apparently believes that his confession will vindicate his behavior in the eyes of his auditors, the document itself tends to lead the reader to agree with John Barnet's judgment that "it would not much astonish him if [Robert] brought [himself] to the gallows" (p. 92).

Justification may well be devil's work in more than one respect. It is certainly relevant that the use of the word "justification" in connection with the printer's art seems to act quite naturally in a metaphorical capacity here, for Robert works for a time assisting a printer and either he or the devil in his likeness has actually printed the manuscript found in the suicide's grave. Presumably anyone familiar with the printer's trade would be versed in the art of justification of printed lines as, for example, they are arranged on this page. For a printer, "to justify" means

to arrange a combination of letters and the spaces between them to coincide in every instance to a pre-determined spatial limitation. Hence, in each line, the material printed must be arbitrarily confined within a pre-ordained scheme without regard for the value of the printed material relative to the human meaning it is intended to express: a "the" is as valuable as a curse or a cry for help, provided it take up a similar proportion of the page. There is certainly some relationship, then, between the printer's art of justification and Robert's unilateral mode of thinking, which only permits him to view other people as absolutely predestined to salvation or damnation, i.e., to being either a space or a letter--a black mark or an undefiled white space. As Kiely remarks, "For Robert, language becomes a closed system which imposes on life rather than a loose organization of signs which shift, fuse, and alter meaning according to circumstance."²⁰

In the context of printing and the devil, Martin Luther's well-known act of throwing the ink-pot at his infernal adversary summons up another interesting conjunction of writing and hell that reminds us of the constant diabolical attentions St. Anthony received. There is certainly a suggestion, at any rate, that the devil is as likely to be attracted by written and printed forms of reproduction as by sexual manifestations of it. In fact, books are frequently associated with the revelation of real or apparent guilt in Hogg's scheme: Arabella Logan and the elder George Colwan are discovered sharing the same book when Rev. Wringhim

comes to remonstrate with them; Robert draws the schoolmaster in "ludicrous situations" in M'Gill's book in order to effect his expulsion from school; and when Robert first encounters Gil-Martin, the latter is reading a book--his "Bible"--which strongly affects Robert, "a sensation resembling a stroke of electricity came over me, on first casting my eyes on that mysterious book" (p. 113). Of course, Robert's manuscript of justification which forms the central narrative of the novel is also the revelation of his guilt. Can it be further argued that the reader's particular guilt of prior assumption is likewise revealed by the nature of his/her conjunction with the text?

In discussing time discrepancies in Hogg's novel, Adams concludes with the remark, "reconcile it who can."²¹ Since he has already referred to Hogg's disregard for temporal continuity as "untidy," we can guess that he believes the novel would have been improved if these problems with time had been resolved. George, too, seems to believe that a heroic resolution of conflict is both possible and desirable as we see in his numerous good-natured attempts to win over his brother. But in light of George's fate it would appear that his solution is inadequate. Both Robert and the elusive authorial presence continue to insist stubbornly on the psychic significance of an antithetical impulse toward isolation and separateness. Perhaps George is "cut off" himself because he views the multiplicity around him as some benign force like the "fairie web" on his hat and fails to recognize the validity of an impulse which rejects and

opposes every principle in which he believes. Theologically, we could say that he denies the reality of evil. Psychologically, he represses the knowledge that he himself possesses any of the impulses displayed by Robert. But the forces antithetical to reconciliation loom so large in this novel that the critic who requires consistency and unity would seem to undervalue the major portion of the text and to misunderstand one of the most insistent themes characteristic of the doppelganger motif.

Everyone has heard of a "printer's devil," usually a boy apprenticed to the printing trade. In fact, Robert is employed as assistant to the printer much as a printer's devil would be. A great deal of literary tradition associates the printer's art with the devil--a tradition no doubt beginning when the first appearance of printed matter threatened the continuation of the oral tradition. As we can see, this attitude evidently continued long after printing had severely undermined the supremacy of the balladeer as storyteller. In William Blake's Marriage of Heaven and Hell there is a similar conjunction of the printing process and hell. The section of this work entitled "A Memorable Fancy" begins "I was in a Printing house in Hell & saw the method in which knowledge is transmitted from generation to generation."²² Blake's image suggests something of the resounding reproductive repercussions of the printer's art: just as each successive generation of humankind is stamped with the more or less unalterable species characteristics, so is each successive generation of printed human knowledge

stamped with the characteristic perspectives and limitations which represent its particular pact with the devil. Written matter--and even more obviously printed matter--is in a sense fixed and inviolable, no longer open to the organic personalisation of the mythic tradition but become a thing-in-itself apart from human interference. Hence every writer qua writer must function as an infernal advocate. Consequently, Robert specifically prohibits alteration to his manuscript and text. Hogg, of course, in the guise of Editor, is tricksterish enough to try to violate this taboo by changing the title, but because the Editor himself represents a very specific point-of-view, this alteration is not permitted.

The novel, like Lewis', has an interesting feature in its preliminary material. Bound into the novel is a facsimile of the original manuscript from which the present work is supposed to be derived. Presumably this manuscript page in an old-fashioned hand supposed to be a fragment of the original manuscript found in the suicide's grave validates the Editor's claim to historical accuracy. The inclusion of this manuscript page adds a further dimension to the complex duplicity of Hogg's novel. First of all, the bound-in copy of handwritten text differs in punctuation from the text as published. In the second place, we need to keep in mind that the facsimile is itself a copy--a printed copy--of a supposed original manuscript. Thus it has been translated from the hand-written to the printed medium. The suggestion by critics that this enigmatic hand-written page is supposed

to demonstrate the unreliability of traditional sources, however, does not go nearly far enough toward explaining what it contains. Is this fac-simile a double-hoofed devil or is it the real thing and the copy in the printed text before us a diabolical double? Or are they both forgeries or both real? Robert's text, fixed forever in his time and place, is yet subject to subtle alteration, for the fac-simile Hogg provides does not match the printed text. Perhaps we can see similarities between this copy and the "old, false, and forged grant" (p. 164) Robert unearths to ruin Mrs. Keeler and her daughter. Although fake, its effects are real. Thus while printing is the metaphor par excellence for uncontrollable multiplication of "inviolable" material, there is also a suggestion that the oral and written traditions can commingle more amicably than we had, perhaps, supposed.

Furthermore, in Hogg's text there is the suggestion that the "traditionary" narrative may even have been derived from Robert's manuscript and the unusual circumstances of its production and destruction:

the numerous distorted traditions, etc. which remain of that event may be attributable to the work having been printed and burnt, and of course, the story known to all the printers, with their families and gossips. (p. 229)

This circular effect of a story derived from itself yet materially different underlines the Hermetic paradox of reproduction as an unbreakable circle that nonetheless can

produce heirs of an altogether different cast than the original.

Whether the story reached successive generations through this means, through the Editor's efforts, through oral tradition or through the present manuscript's dissemination, the devilishness of the printer's art is inherent in the very medium by which the author expresses his content. And, of course, the oral tradition remains: twentieth-century critics have in a real sense disinterred Hogg's largely neglected manuscript to speculate endlessly on its meaning almost as if it were the suicide's manuscript. As Barbara Bloedé reminds us,

It occasionally happens that a work, almost unknown during its author's lifetime, receives universal recognition within a few years after his death; it is much rarer for that recognition to be withheld for a hundred years. Yet such was the fate of James Hogg's masterpiece.²³

And such, too, was the fate of Robert's text. Hence the "undead" manuscript continues to live in constantly-multiplied editions and versions despite the prohibition on alteration. The reader is constantly thrown into doubt about his/her "real" position in relation to the novel until the very notion of reality, endlessly refracted, seems irrelevant, a circumstance notably akin to Robert's despair over the multiplicity of his sins. Robert's pamphlet was "wrapped so close together, and so damp, rotten, and yellow that it seemed one solid piece" (p. 227); the separate versions

of Hogg's text cling closely together, too, so that they appear to be of one reconcilable fabric. But the appearance of solidity is illusive in this patchwork of mis-matched detail.

Ultimately Hogg's novel itself does not justify. Like the lines of the manuscript fac-simile, the segments of the text respond to internal rather than to external concerns, leaving the reader to justify the inconsistency with his/her expectation in whatever way it is possible. The author's multiple modes bring to mind Robert's plethora of pockets, evoking in turn Hoffmann's image of the devil who appeared to St. Anthony with his pockets full of elixirs suited to the taste of every potential victim.

Translation and Inversion

"I will overturn, overturn, overturn it;
and it shall be no more, until he come,
whose right it is, and I will give it
him" Ezekial 21:27 (p. 181).

Many Gothic and Romantic novelists insisted on providing their readers with a rational solution to evidently-supernatural matters. As Kiely remarks,

When a story is told twice in a novel by Radcliffe or Clara Reeve, it is first told, whether or not the first person is employed, as if through the eyes of a terrified, confused, and highly excitable heroine and, only at the end retold "as it really was" by a sensible, all-knowing narrator or a wise family friend.²⁴

An immediate on-the-scene emotional response is later adjusted to the expectations of modern empirical perspectives by focusing expressly on the apparent causal components which engendered the initial reaction in the perceiver while denigrating the significance of the data provided by the original response itself. Hence the reader's attention is effectively diverted away from the psychic data of the excited person's behavior toward the physical data of its evident material cause. Both Lewis and Hoffmann, however, while making certain references to this formula produce variants which ultimately resist the transfer of attention to external objects, preserving the emphasis upon the experiential dimension and consequently reinstating the mystery itself as the central concern of the drama. When Lewis presented his three versions of Elvira's supernatural visit to Antonia, the reader might well have expected that the third account would "clear up" the misunderstandings of Antonia's highly-excited state engendered by her reading choice and of the landlady's superstitious babble engendered by her upbringing and expectations. But although the monk found only a frightened old woman behind the bed curtains, the reader was by no means convinced that Donna Flora was responsible for the visions of Dame Jacintha or Antonia. Each vision, instead, maintained its own set of ground rules derived from the nature of the observer rather than the event itself. And significantly the narrator made no attempt to arrange them hierarchically to suggest which of them might have been the most valid expression of human

experience. In like manner, while Hoffmann's inclusion of the Old Painter's narrative would seem to offer a solution to the foregoing text from the point-of-view of a quasi-omniscient person, as we have seen, it offered almost none. In effect, the information provided about the causal ur-sprungs of Medardus' bizarre adventures seemed as tangential and extraneous to the experiences recounted by the monk as Hogg's Editor's discussion of highland bonnet styles.

It is all the more interesting to note, then, that while Hogg employs the narrative type utilized by his Gothic predecessors which includes the account rendered by a detached and presumably reliable narrator and a highly excited interested party, his method of presentation in terms both of structure and content leaves the reader wondering who to believe or whether to believe anyone. In the first place, as several commentators have noticed, Hogg's novel reverses the usual pattern of irrational account followed by rational explanation in offering the Editor's "traditional" account before the fanatic's text. Furthermore, Hogg completes the inversion of his novel's structure by including at the end a set of comments, empirical observations and explanations about the text's origins which ought, by usual Romantic standards, to be at the beginning. Sir Walter Scott, for example, frequently constructed fairly elaborate fictional introductory explanations for the manuscript's genesis--often detailing the circumstances of the discovery of the text in some romantic concealed spot, from whence the editor rescued it to present to the public. This "discovery"

technique, of course, was employed by Walpole in the introduction to The Castle of Otranto, presumably to enhance its acceptability but also to focus on the experience of epiphany so central to the Gothic imagination. True to his Hermetic form, however, the Ettrick Shepherd gives us the preliminaries at the end of the novel, and in such a confusing and disjointed array as to encourage the reader to perceive of all such causal explanations as more lame and fragmentary afterthoughts than intrinsic functions of empirical truth.

The inversion of structure in Hogg's novel is no doubt inter-related with a variety of other inversions which the author effects on a more minor scale. One of the most striking instances of inversion involves reader expectation, a tendency we have already seen very much in evidence in Lewis' and Hoffmann's works. As Elizabeth W. Harries explains,

[Hogg's] novel demands that we contemplate two incompatible versions of the same sequence of events simultaneously without insisting on a third version that mediates between them or rounds out the gaps in the circle. In placing these narratives side by side, Hogg is challenging our comfortable assumption that this kind of juxtaposition will be illuminating, that it will make it possible to construct a coherent reading of two narratives that are incoherent in themselves.²⁵

The most obvious effect of the author's deliberate refusal to "play the game" according to the assumed rules is a

heightened self-awareness on the part of the reader. Similarly Robert's refusal to remain only a spectator or only a player of the game forces George to be constantly aware of his movements. But collisions nonetheless occur and these are subject to radical reconstructions reversing the Editor's bias to implicate George and absolve Robert.

Because self-awareness is such a crucial concern within the context of the doubling impulse in literature, let us examine its implications for the reader a little further. By analogy we can look at our usual behavior when driving an extended distance on a freeway. As long as the expected monotonous routine is not interrupted, we can be mentally immersed in a number of other concerns: listening to the radio, chatting with a companion, thinking over a difficult problem, or even all these at once. Our body operates the car mechanically without any caretaking on the part of our conscious mind--almost as though the effort were as involuntary as breathing or metabolism. However, let something out-of-the-ordinary occur (particularly something likely to be dangerous such as a sudden stop by the driver ahead) and our body abruptly shifts control over to the conscious mind optimising our chances of safely dealing with this "non-standard" situation. Perhaps we are similarly prevented from being lulled into a dreamy state of met expectations by our Hermetic author. If so, we can assert that the Hermetic function of inversion seems constantly at work behind-the-scenes as well as onstage to force us into awareness of what we are presently doing despite our

inclination to avoid this sometimes-painful effort. Looking into mirrors is certainly far more often an unpleasant than a pleasant experience. In fact, we generally do not exert ourselves to look into mirrors unless we have reason to believe something is wrong with our appearance. And what is wrong with appearances is precisely Hogg's theme so that our reflections in his mirror may be grotesquely altered though still faintly recognizable or almost identical except for some small flaw. In either case the tiniest clues are crucial and without full consciousness of the intricate twists and turns of the text we will quickly find ourselves in Robert's unenviable position in the web, wanting only to "be at the light," but finding ourselves being pounded into oblivion by the merciless weaver.

The reader, it would seem, desires the luxury of a straightforward narrative with no inordinate amount of sorting out to do. As an 1824 critic affirms:

to preserve that unity which is essential to the production of a pleasurable impression on the reader, one of two obvious courses must be consistently adhered to. The phantoms of that superstition must either have a real, external being; or they must exist solely in the diseased imagination of the supposed writer.²⁶

The critic goes on to lament that Hogg does not "adhere" to either course consistently. Similarly George asks Robert to "tell me plainly" why he follows him. The Editor, too, want to "be at the light" and to forward this purpose he makes a great deal of effort to give a careful analysis of names,

dates, artifacts, and observable behavior on the part of his characters. In keeping with the Editor's fondness for clarity, his hero George is constantly depicted as honest, forthright, and outgoing. George seems to have nothing to hide; indeed when he sees his reflection in the scene at Arthur's Seat "he perceived nothing but a halo of glory round a point of cloud that was whiter and purer than the rest" (p. 44). Yet this impulse to the clear, no-nonsense revelations of daylight and scientific scrutiny is undercut, interrupted, and inverted constantly by the machinations of a darker, more chaotic germinative force that appears to oppose every pretense to purity. Ironically, this force is represented chiefly by Robert who fancies himself purer than those around him. But it is also evident in more positive voices like those of John Barnet and Bessy Gillies who refuse to be exact about anything. And, of course, this same impulse is constantly at work in the labyrinthine design of the text itself and the machinations of its elusive, omnipresent shepherd.

The acute intensification of self-conscious focus requisite for maximum self-awareness in moments of urgency is clearly too painful and difficult an effort to be prolonged indefinitely. We observe it stretched to its limits in the most elaborate boxed narratives such as Robert's rendition of Samuel Scrape's account of the wives of the clachan's tale of the devil's sermon to the people of Auchtermuchty. Here it is even more critical than usual for the reader to pay careful attention to the intricate interweaving of

language, character and theme if he/she is to safely thread through this textual labyrinth about the interpretation of texts. However, self-awareness repeatedly attenuated by these regressive steps can lead to another kind of complacency: relativism with its accompanying introverted thrust which denies the power of action in the world or even the possibility of escaping from the encompassing prison of Self infinitely multiplied. Thus the complementary motion from heightened self-awareness to inattention is likewise characteristic of Hermetic facility. Hermes both leads the dead to the underworld and returns Persephone to the land of the living. Consequently, we find that the character most representative of this tricksterish force, Gil-Martin, is the most predictable of all. His appearance, his behavior, his ironic wit--almost everything about him is a literary cliché based upon the traditional attributes of this pre-eminent fiend. And Gil-Martin constantly persuades Robert to interact with the world in complete contradiction to Robert's relativistic notions about absolute predestination. Thus, as we have observed in Medardus' manuscript, the impulse to the serene monastic isolation of self-awareness is continually mirrored by a maniac instinct for the strongest proofs of being able to make an impact on others: rape and murder.

Hogg orchestrates a highly unpredictable medley. Only the arch-felon and the arch-fiend seem to know with certainty; even Robert has his doubts. For everyone other than these two, like is an ill mark and scarcely to be relied

upon for making predictions about what will occur next. The predictability so valuable to scientific validation is toppled by a chaotic undercurrent suggesting that the apparent repeatability of an experience or an experiment can never be wholly relied upon. We may instead be dealing with a diabolical likeness in substance wholly different from the original. Indeed, the disparate descriptions of the suicide's grave seem to affirm such a possibility. This Hermetic "uncertainty principle," then, functions within and outside the novel like so many precipices opening suddenly before us: it effectively shakes our confidence in involuntary routine, forcing enhanced attention to every detail that might serve as a clue to an overall understanding of the viewer's position in relation to the textual landscape.

In Hogg's scheme, the notion of translation is closely akin to that of inversion and promotes some of the same sudden shifts and turns of text we have already noted. Like Lewis and Hoffmann, Hogg uses movements between different languages to evoke the confrontation of mirror-worlds. His alternate reproductions of the Scottish dialect, the quasi-Biblical rhetoric of the Covenanters, the Enlightenment perspective of modern man and the ironic, double-edged ambiguities of Gil-Martin in turn have the effect of disorienting the reader and making him/her constantly aware of multiple perspectives. Perhaps, then, it is not an altogether careless attitude that prompts the author to present in Robert's narrative of Samuel Scrape's tale of the devil and the pious

people of Auchtermuchty a shift in the middle of Scrape's story from Scottish dialect to modern English and then a return to dialect at the end. To complicate matters even more, the passage spoken by the "corby craws" immediately preceding the shift into modern English specifically invokes Shakespeare:

"Come all to church tomorrow, and I'll let you hear how I'll gull the saints of Auchtermuchty. In the meantime, there is a feast on the Sidlaw hills tonight, below the hill of Macbeth--Mount, Diabolus, and fly" (p. 181).

In fact, Scrape's tale itself deals with language and the importance of being able to easily shift perspectives. Its hero, Robin Ruthven, "'had been in the hands o' the fairies when he was young, an' o' kinds o' spirits were visible to his een, an' their language as familiar to him as his ain mother tongue '"(p. 180). Robin's Hermetic flexibility in moving between languages enables him to discover that the popular preacher has a pair of cloven hoofs. Had he taken the crow's speech for mere meaningless squawks he would not have been able to out-trick the Master Trickster. Robin is resourceful, recognizing that, as Kiely suggests, "to adopt one system or one vocabulary . . . is to ignore or annihilate the others."²⁷

Examples of Hermetic translations are so frequent in Hogg's text that only a few can be discussed here. One of the most interesting of his slippery word-amplifications relates to Robert and George's surname, Colwan or Cowan. As

I have already suggested, the name "cowan" referred to a person not yet initiated into the rites of Freemasonry. It is also obviously evocative of "coward," a word which accurately describes Robert's behavior at almost every critical turn of the narrative, but can scarcely be applied to the manly George. Brave behavior implies the sacrifice of self for others, or for the greater good; both the notion of cowardice and the concept of an uninitiated person suggest self-serving behavior based on the preservation of the individual even at the cost of the group or species. Robert has, in fact, severed himself from nearly all wordly relationships. As the weaver puts it:

"That waratch that the Deil has taen the possession o,' an' eggit him on to kill baith his father an' his mother, his only brother an' his sweetheart." (p. 192)

Evidently, the name "cowan" is more strictly applicable to Robert than to George (who is a Colwan) for several reasons. First of all, as we have seen, Robert says that he is not a Colwan when he confronts George; George likewise denies that Robert is a Colwan. Second, Robert identifies himself during his stay at the weaver's house as "Cowan," a name which immediately alarms the head of the household as but one letter different from that of the notorious murderer. Finally, the suicide's grave is known as Cowan's-Croft, even though, when we last hear from the sinner, he is calling himself Elliot. We do know, however that he has vowed to put his "real" name on his manuscript: "I determined with

myself that I would not put the Border name of Elliot, which I had assumed, to the work" (p. 201), but the manuscript as printed only includes the highly ambiguous "WRITTEN BY HIMSELF" in the place of the author's name. Like The Confessions, then, this portion of it seems to resist certainty by deliberately embedding itself in mystery. One final meaning common in Hogg's day for the word "cowan" (no doubt it was from his usage that the term was adopted to Freemasonry) is particularly appropriate in this context: a "cowan" was a builder of stone walls.

It would appear, then, that Robert serves as a force representing the resistance to translation, movement, or communion: in effect, Robert would seem to enforce segregation and compartmentalisation of separate entities much as scientific classification did and much in the way that his mother and the Rev. Wringhim attempted to maximize dissonance in their religious rhetoric. This is not strictly so, however, for in many ways Robert's behavior is so constantly disruptive of everyone else's lives that we can hardly see him as a force for order. At least according to his narrative he is continually moving others from one state of being to another like a Hermetic agent of fortune: he brings shame upon several honorable people, commits several murders, disrupts the households of others and probably gets Mrs. Keeler's daughter pregnant. Unlike George, whom we see as an outsider viewing the "fairie web" of interaction or playing orderly games, Robert is firmly caught up in it and constantly demonstrating to everyone he meets that he is a

force for chaos and change--not order and isolation. Is it possible, then, that the "l" in George's name is a wall which Robert's lacks? At any rate, the stance of detached "scientific" aloofness maintained by the Editor would seem to be severely undercut by Robert's failure to maintain his predestined purity in the hands of Gil-Martin despite his considerable rhetorical skills. Robert's notion of the world is one in which neither choice nor change is possible: one is predestined to either heaven or hell from birth. It is a rigidly monistic system in which there is only one reality which is unalterable. Gil-Martin, however, in pushing this notion to its ad absurdum extreme in his gullible adept, demonstrates that the extremes do, in fact, meet and absolute monism is identical with absolute chaos.

Excursions into Time, Space and Causality

There can be little doubt that time is strangely askew in Hogg's Confessions as it was in Hoffmann's Elixirs, though not necessarily the result of "a little untidiness" as Adams suggests.²⁸ There are peculiarities in time both within the Editor's and Robert's narratives that seem only vaguely explained by the usual excuses of authorial carelessness, the unreliability of traditional sources upon which the Editor supposedly drew or even Robert's presumed psychiatric disorder. If we notice, though, that these time lapses follow much the same pattern as those of Hoffmann, it will be reasonable to suggest that they are symptomatic of

the mythic mode within which Hogg is working. Perhaps the most obvious distortion of expected linear time occurs in the arrangements of different parts of the text. For example, a page from Robert's manuscript opens the text where it is considerably out of order in terms of the time of the material which immediately follows it--it is at once much earlier than the time in which the Editor himself was writing and details events which evidently occurred much later in the story. This difficulty is complicated by the use of the Editor's later narrative before Robert's contemporary narrative, finishing with a return to present time. In all, the pattern reminds us of Hoffmann's deliberately ambiguous temporal frame.

One of the most interesting problems with time in Hogg's text concerns Robert's birthdate. According to the Editor, George Colwan marries Rabina Orde after he succeeds to Dalcastle in 1687. Later, we learn that Robert, the second son is seventeen in March, 1704, when he meets his elder brother, George, for the first time. Not surprisingly, this ambiguity of date reinforces similar ambiguities of identity between George and Robert which occur throughout the novel. Are they spiritual twins or the same being? In this context it is interesting to remember the ambivalence Hogg himself displayed toward his own birthdate. Perhaps there is at work here a kind of Hermetic scorn for the limitations and finiteness implied by precise dating together with a certain fascination with the human need for such guideposts.

A similar discrepancy in dating occurs in relation to the parliament session in Edinburgh. Hogg dates it at 1704, but as John Carey points out, the session upon which it was presumably modelled took place in 1703.²⁹ Robert's narrative involves a number of other confusions and discrepancies in time, including those points at which he loses track of whole blocks of time and does things altogether inconsistent with his puritanical precepts. There are further dissonances between Robert's version and that of the narrator as we have seen in the case of the incident in which he is attacked by the two women.

Hogg's alter ego, the Ettrick Shepherd, displays no interest in the Editor's quest for "hundred year auld banes," possibly because the mythic mode does not emphasize the distinctions between past and present, but rather the cyclical continuity of time. The Editor's analyses, on the other hand, focus specifically upon the differences between the disparate eras:

The breeches were a sort of striped plaiding, which I never saw worn, but which our guide assured us was very common in the country once, though, from the old clothes which he had seen remaining of it, he judged that it could not be less than 200 years since it was in fashion. (p. 226)

The Editor clearly considers correct dating to be essential as we see in his introduction, "I find that, in the year 1687, George Colwan succeeded his uncle of the same name, in the lands of Dalchastel and Balgreennan" (p. 3). On

the other hand, Hogg's persona in his letter to Blackwood's which seems at first glance akin in spirit to the Editor, allows a good deal more temporal ambiguity:

A nephew of that Mr. Anderson's . . . says that . . . it is one hundred and five years next month (that is September, 1823) But sundry other people . . . pretend that it is six or seven years more. (p. 220)

The hearsay evidence is adequate for Hogg's needs; he whimsically concludes, "Whichever way it may be, it was about that period some way: of that there is no doubt" (p. 220).

Classification according to spatial criteria is equally compelling for Hogg's Editor, who is forever pigeon-holing his data:

It is neither a broad bonnet nor a Border bonnet; for there is an open behind, for tying, which no genuine Border bonnet I am told ever had. It seems to have been a Highland bonnet, worn in a flat way like a scone on the crown, such as is sometimes seen in the West of Scotland. (p. 226-7)

Spatial relations are just as ambiguous as temporal ones in Hogg's constantly inverting worlds. Thus Mrs. Calvert sees Drummond leaving in one direction and at the same time approaching from the other. The location of the grave is variously explained, suggesting that there are two or three different graves with different inhabitants. Hogg's letter affirms that according to traditional sources the suicide was buried at "the top of Cowan's-Croft, at the very point where the Duke of Buccleuch's land, the laird of

Drummelzier's and Lord Napier's meet'" (pp. 219-220). Seeking the gravesite, however, the Editor asks in a shepherd's cot whether Hogg's description is correct and is told:

there was hardly a bit o't correct, for the grave was not on the hill of Cowan's-Croft nor yet on the point where the three lairds' lands met, but on the top of a hill called the Faw-Law, where there was no land that was not the Duke of Buccleuch's within a quarter of a mile. (p. 224)

Spatially inconsistent, too, are the nature and size of George's wounds which the surgeons claim were made by a claymore like Drummond's while Bell Calvert and Robert say that the weapon used in the murder was a rapier.³⁰

Causal mechanisms also rarely function in any straightforward way for this elusive author. The mob who riot in Edinburgh blame each other for starting the fracas; Rabina blames George and George Rabina for their incompatibility; Robert blames George for indulging in a "heathenish" sport while George blames Robert for interrupting his game; George accuses Robert of following him, but Robert says it was Gil-Martin who told him where to seek out his brother. Moreover, while in several cases Robert claims to be the perpetrator of various nefarious deeds including the dismissal of Old Barnet, the expulsion and disgrace of M'Gil, the murder of Rev. Blanchard and the execution of another person for the deed, there is no confirmation that any of these deeds was ever enacted. Even in the case of George's death, the

testimony is anything but conclusive and seems to have been accomplished with a weapon Robert did not carry.

After a brief analysis of the syntax of Robert's opening remarks in his narrative, Harries concludes that "Wring-him's sense of causality . . . is askew."³¹ I would rather argue that Hogg's entire text refuses to understand causality in a consistent manner, a technique which significantly undermines causal explanation per se. Like time and space, causality depends upon a human internal ordering system which adjusts external events to accord with current expectations. Hence, the particular patterns that are selected depend largely upon the assumptions of the observer. We might say, then, that Robert committed murder because of his moral turpitude, because he was mentally ill, because the devil tempted him, because he had a faulty home environment, or because he was predestined by God to do so. Although all of these can be cited as possible causes for Robert's behavior, they stem from several different world-views so that while it might be feasible to accomodate more than one of them as sources of his behavior, it is nearly impossible to accept all at once. Causality, like characterization, is effectively fractured into a multiplicity of causes, forcing the reader either to choose one causal route at the expense of major portions of the text or to question the conclusiveness of causally-based explanation itself.

Family Portraits: Hogg's Reproduction of his Predecessors

Reproduction on the symbolic level opens Hogg's novel with the "Fac-Simile" of the Sinner's manuscript; reproduction on the physical level is immediately evoked in the Editor's narrative by the representation of the scene of George and Rabina's wedding-night. And in both these portions of the text, the reader is also confronted with the rhythm of apartheid and consummation which constitutes a major locus of the doppelganger mystery. Robert's narrative, too, opens with the elevated, quasi-Biblical rhetorical style of the saint's confession, but quickly exalts its central figure so far beyond the bounds of modesty that at times it reads like a megalomaniac parody of "a voice crying in the wilderness." Parody is sometimes uppermost, as when we gasp at Robert's absurd self-confidence and ridiculous pastiche of logic or Reverend Wringhim's audacious account of his struggle with God,

"I have indeed fought a hard fight, but have been repulsed . . . although I cited [The Almighty's] words against him, and endeavored to hold him at his promise, he hath so many turnings in the supremacy of his power, that I have been rejected. (p. 91)

At other times, though, Robert's fate seems to approach real tragedy. Thus the reader is alternately distanced from and collapsed into the informing intelligence of the manuscript.

The Confessions was not the first work Hogg wrote about a lecherous hypocritical religious person. In fact, a monk

who bears some strong resemblances to Lewis' Ambrosio is borne aloft and dropped into the pit of hell by a lady witch in "The Gude Greye Katt," Hogg's interesting parody of his own work in his parody anthology, The Poetic Mirror, or The Living Bards of Britain. The genesis of this "anthology" says much about Hogg's ability to identify with those on whom his thoughts turned, for when several of the most famous poets of his day (including Scott, Byron, and Coleridge) refused to contribute to an anthology he would edit, he simply wrote their poems himself, including his own poem among them. Like much of Hogg's other work, this poem is written in dialect and certainly does grotesquely reflect the poet's own comic and rustic style, as well as his faith in the fairie realm. Seated next to the witch at dinner, the lecherous Bishop famous for his witch-hunting finds his dinner-partner transformed into a diabolical "katt:"

The Byschope turnit him runde aboute
 To se quhat he mocht se,
 Scho strak ane clawe in ilken lug,
 And throu the rofe did flee.

.....
 The braide ful mone wase up the lyft,
 The nycte was lyke ane daye,
 As the greate Byschope tuke his jante
 Up throu the milkye-waye;

.....
 The katt scho helde him by the lugis
 Atour the ausum hole,
 And och the drede that he was in
 Wase mayre than man could thole;
 He cryit, O Pussie, hald your grip,
 O hald and dinna spare;
 O drap me in the yerd or se,
 But dinna drap me there.

But scho was ane doure and deidlye katt,
 And scho saide with lychtsum ayre,
 You kno heuin is ane blissit plece,

And all the prestis gang there.

Och sweete, sweete Pussye, hald your gryp,
Spaire nouthar cleke nor clawe.
Is euir that lyke heuin aboue,
In quhich am lyke to fa'?

And ay scho hang him by the lugis
Aboue the ausum den,
Till he fande the gryp rive slowly out,
Sore was he quakyng then!

Down went the Byschope, down lyke leide,
Into the hollow nychte,
His goune was flapyng in the ayre,
Quhan he wase out of sychte.³²

This scene is unquestionably reminiscent of the ending of Lewis' novel in which the licentious monk is airborne by a demon who explains that Matilda was sent to secure his damnation. It also reminds us forcibly of Robert's description of his torture by demons, a passage which is reproduced in the fac-simile:

I was even hung by the locks over a yawning chasm, to which I could perceive no bottom, and then--not till then, did I repeat the tremendous prayer! (p. 216)

Here the lovely lady whom the witch-hunting Bishop wants to "try all alone," unexpectedly transforms herself into an airborne cat, dropping him like the Monk into a deserved hell. Somewhere between a benevolent demon and a guardian angel, the cat-woman later restores her former master's lost children to him. In this parody of his own work, Hogg evidently has no patience with the rational witch-hunting world and sympathizes completely with the imaginative efforts of Fairie. But then, we have to remember that this is a

parody--at least on one level. As is usual with Hogg's ambiguous work, we can never be quite certain whether his authorial persona is that of the pious, moralizing shepherd (which some critics see in his work) or the taunting, duplicit double-talk of a deliberate devil like Gil-Martin, who tempts his trusting but naive victims into forbidden territory then uncovers their shameful excesses for everyone to see. Of course, The Poetic Mirror, like any other mirror can only allow the viewer to see the way he/she looks, so the reverberating ambiguity of solemn sermonizer and straightfaced liar underscores the prior assumptions of the critic which determine his/her point-of-view: as in The Confessions the ball is tossed relentlessly and frustratingly back into our court like some bad penny we had wanted to pass off for the real thing.

Hogg was certainly acquainted with both Lewis' and Hoffmann's essays into the mythic realm. He published The Confessions in the same month (June, 1824) during which his publisher Blackwood brought out an English translation of Hoffmann's Elixirs by Hogg's friend, R. P. Gillies³³ and there seems to be little doubt that he had Hoffmann's novel at least partly in mind when he wrote The Confessions.³⁴ As we shall see, there are many points at which Hogg's vision seems to merge with or re-envision those of Hoffmann or Lewis. But certainly Hogg's evocation of the mentality of a prior time was conditioned by a closer psychic proximity to that time and paradoxically a greater urge to escape

from it than had motivated the more urbane visions of Lewis and Hoffmann.

The two major portions of Hogg's novel seem to be related more or less in the manner that Hoffmann's novel is related to Lewis' Monk. As Eggenschwiller explains, "in the second part [of The Confessions] Robert, himself, contains the basic conflicts represented previously by several characters."³⁵ Likewise, the several characters in Lewis' drama suggest the compensatory mechanisms of psychic images projected outward onto several different significant actors while the single but diffracted central character in Hoffmann's text suggests an internalized version of a similar phenomenon. We might say that the first is an extraverted, the second an introverted, novel. Similarly, Hogg's extraverted narrative is followed by an introverted one.

Hogg resists the urge to duplicate his predecessors' visions while quite specifically mirroring them in several places. We have already considered Hogg's earlier use of the aberrant religious tempted by a demonic figure, a device by this time commonplace in fiction. But significantly, Hogg did not chose a monk for his central figure but rather a type of religious character closer to his own time and place and likewise more extravagantly representative of the impulse toward fanaticism than any of his predecessors' monks.

Hogg's novel picks up on a slightly different slant the theme of Lewis' and Hoffmann's: a young man dedicated practically from infancy to strict religious principles falls in

with an apparently diabolical force just at the moment when he believes he has achieved the most important triumph of his religious life. He is then tempted into a series of increasingly heinous crimes--particularly murder--ending in his death. Ambrosio, Count Viktor and Robert all sign infernal pacts. For both Hoffmann and Hogg it is also significant that the misguided man of religion writes out his story before his death. Each author's protagonist is especially noted for his St. Anthony-esque oratorical powers and skill in intellectual pursuits. In fact, these very skills seem to attract the attention of a diabolical force with even greater powers of persuasion. Finally, each of these orators has a "blind spot" in that he is unaware of some very basic knowledge about human nature.

Like both Ambrosio and Medardus, Robert is technically fatherless but while the fathers of these two die shortly after the sons' births, Robert's father (whichever one he may be) does not. The Editor leaves the issue of Robert's paternity ambiguously open in considering the relationship of Robert and George: "A brother he certainly was, in the eye of the law, and it is more than probable that he was his brother in reality" (p. 18). And like Agnes in The Monk, all three boys are dedicated to religion by their relatives almost from birth and raised in an exclusive environment where the spiritual life is stressed; all are physically sequestered from the segment of the world which they come to regard as sinful. For Ambrosio and Medardus, the fallen world is represented by the larger world outside the

monastery where people obey "natural" rather than God-given laws; for Robert the sinning part of the world is represented by his father's portion of the house and embodied in the person of his "natural" brother, George. Ironically, of course, it is Robert who appears the "natural" in terms of his gullibility at the hands of Gil-Martin--a naïveté reminiscent of Ambrosio's credulity in Matilda's presence.

All three neophytes are also uncommonly well adapted to success in the religious life since they have exceptional intellectual and rhetorical powers. Evoking the Biblical scene of Christ speaking with the elders in the temple, Robert boasts of his superior powers of disputation:

I missed no opportunity of perfecting myself particularly in all the minute points of theology in which my reverend father and mother took great delight; but at length I acquired so much skill that I astonished my teachers, and made them gaze at one another. (p. 90)

Here we are reminded of the vanity of both Ambrosio and Medardus. But while the monks' mentors seem relatively benevolent, Robert's teachers instill in the boy the necessity of directing the power of religion against one's enemies much as Lewis' Prioress hopes to use her religious power for personal gain. Thus from the beginning we see Robert utilizing all his native abilities to justify acts of vengeance leading to personal advancement. Robert, it seems, is unable to see anything in terms of the broader relations between human beings, such as those expressed in the Golden Rule. Again and again, Robert justifies his conduct with

highly amusing rationalizations:

Upon the whole, I think I had not then broken, that is, absolutely broken, above four out of the ten commandments; but, for all that, I had more sense than to regard either my good works, or my evil deeds, as in the smallest degree influencing the eternal decrees of God concerning me, either with regard to my acceptance or reprobation. (pp. 103-4).

In Hogg's novel Robert's fiendish friend, Gil-Martin, is unquestionably the supreme master of rhetorical persuasion, invariably overwhelming Robert with his mastery of the dis-
sective logical tools Robert himself has been taught to value most. Like Matilda, he appeals to his victim's self-love and confidence in his ability to recognize deceit if confronted with it in order to effect his downfall. Caught neatly in the net of his own presumptions about the absolute nature of truth, Robert explains his consequent inability to defend himself against Gil-Martin's logical subtleties:

my adherent, with all the suavity imaginable, was sure to carry his point. I sometimes fumed, and sometimes shed tears at being obliged to yield to proposals against which I had at first felt every reasoning power of my soul rise in opposition; but for all that he never failed in carrying conviction along with him in effect, for he either forced me to acquiesce in his measures, and assent to the truth of his propositions, or he put me so completely down that I had not a word left to advance against them. (p. 116)

The distinctions of language are not mere conveniences of speech for Robert. Instead the delineations stated in

logical terms are so absolute that he can literally "cut people off" (or rationalize doing so) on their authority. For Robert the word becomes the Word--not an approximation to ideological content but a Ding-an-sich. Thus he counters the tennis game by adopting literally one of the players' own epithets:

"That's a d----d fine blow, George!" On which the intruder took up the word, as characteristic of the competitors, and repeated it every stroke that was given. (p. 22)

As we have seen, though, the person who insists upon the supremacy of one point-of-view necessarily encourages the reader to see the absurdity of his/her inflexibility. Thus Bessy Gillies reminds us of Hoffmann's maid in the "Oblate" incident as she relates her conversation with her mistress upon discovering that the house had been broken into:

"'Bessy, my woman,' quo she 'we are baith ruined and undone creatures. 'The deil a bit,' quo I; 'that I deny positively. H'mh! To speak o' a lass o' my age being ruined and undone! I never had muckle except what was within a good jerkin, an' let the thief ruin me there wha can.'" (p. 61)

Albeit unconsciously, Bessy, like her namesake R. P. Gillies who translated The Elixirs, deftly effects a metamorphosis of meaning in equating one set of words with another very different in connotation but similar in appearance.

If the rigid interpretation of words destroys Robert, it is also instrumental in George's demise for, as the

Editor tells us, his argument with Drummond stems from a disagreement over the precise meaning of words:

[The altercation] was perfectly casual, and no one . . . could ever tell what it was about, if not about the misunderstanding of some word or term that the one had uttered. (p. 48)

Circumlocutions and relative truths seem in Hogg's scheme much more significant than facts that appear to be indisputable. Hogg places a great deal of emphasis indeed upon the unreliability of witnesses not only in the contradictory versions of stories given, but also in particular instances. For example, the value of personal testimony is severely undermined when Bell Calvert and Arabella, spotting from the window of their lodgings Robert Wringham accompanied by a young man bearing George Colwan's features, fall into a stunned silence. The landlady happens to enter at this moment, and "seeing the state of her lodgers, she caught the infection, and fell into the same rigid and statue-like appearance" (p. 76). Miss Logan and Mrs. Calvert then begin to exclaim "'It is he!'" The landlady, still "infected," chimes in with "'Yes, yes, it is he!'" (p. 77), even though she has not the least idea of whom the women are speaking. Indeed there seems to be something diabolical in the ability to be certain about anything or anyone. Gil-Martin, as Robert describes him, seems to know every individual's personality even more thoroughly than the person himself does. Bell Calvert's male accomplice also is known for his abilities at positive identification: "'it is

well known that this same man--this wretch of whom I speak, never mistook one man for another in his life'" (p. 73).

Later the authorities agree to rely on this same "wretch's" testimony as to whether the new Laird of Dalcastle is in fact the murderer of George Colwan, "his discrimination being so well known as to be proverbial all over the land, they determined secretly to be ruled by his report" (p. 84). If we can believe Bell Calvert's assertions, however, this wretch is almost devoid of human qualities. If so, can we regard his ability to identify people so accurately--an ability presumably based on his prowess at distinguishing--as a diabolical trait? It seems that skill in identifying faces accurately or in determining the characteristic attributes of broad bonnets as opposed to border bonnets does not endow the possessor with any innate humanness. Along these lines we see Rev. Wringhim's demand for an analytical explanation countered by old Barnet's wholistic, intuitive summation:

"Now I should like to know, even from the mouth of a misbeliever, what part of my conduct warrants such a conclusion."

"Nae particular pairt, sir; I draw a' my conclusions frae the haill o' a man's character, an' I'm no that aften far wrang." (p. 95)

If we are to consider Barnet's formula in relation to any of the novels we have examined, it will be evident that analysis of any particular part of the novel as paradigmatic of the whole is inadequate. But ironically in the Hermetic mode we cannot accept John's estimation as formulaic either

in this case for it is, after all, only a small part of the whole novel.

Hogg reproduces some of his predecessors' ambiguous treatments of physical reproduction. Ambrosio, Medardus and Robert have all shunned women for a large portion of their lives. In fact, they pride themselves on their virginity nearly as much as their oratorical skills. As Robert boasts:

the mention of such a thing as amours with any woman existng, to me, is really so absurd, so far from my principles, so from the purity of nature and frame to which I was born and consecrated, that I hold it as an insult, and regard it with contempt. (p. 161)

However, despite their touted purity, each of these men of religion attempts the violation of a beautiful, innocent woman and is later associated with her murder--a murder which he desires to accomplish: Ambrosio rapes and murders Antonia; Medardus attempts to rape or seduce Aurelia and his double murders her at the very moment he believes he has overcome his own desire to do so and Robert seduces and murders Mrs. Keeler's daughter. The conjunction of sexuality and religion is not merely ironic or circumstantial, for in each novel there are specific links between sexual penetration and communion, whether in the more innocent manner of George or Lorenzo's visits to church to spy on pretty girls or in the diabolical use of religion to attempt seduction as it is employed by Ambrosio, Matilda, Medardus and Reverend Wringhim. Of course, Gil-Martin's relationship

with Robert is not demonstrably sexual, but it could certainly be designated as seduction.

Moreover, in each of these novels sexual reproduction is specifically linked with heredity--a link that reminds us of the sexual nature of Adam and Eve's fall and its consequent curse on reproductive processes: Ambrosio is captivated by his sister who evidently reminds him of his mother; Raymond's long-dead relative, the Bleeding Nun, takes the place of his bride when he attempts to elope with Agnes; Medardus lusts after his sister who is, like him, the product of intense inbreeding and Robert suddenly exhibits sexual behavior after he inherits Dalcastle. Both Ambrosio and Robert also murder their mothers in close association with their sexual lusts. In fact, Ambrosio, Medardus and Robert are all instrumental in doing away with their entire families.

It is notable, too, that although each of these sexual acts may stem from the instinctual drive to reproduce, in almost no instance in these novels does reproduction on the physiological plane succeed. Obviously Antonia and Mrs. Keeler's daughter produce no offspring; Agnes, who is seduced in the convent, loses her infant quickly after its birth. Even Rabina's two sons apparently do not live long enough to reproduce themselves. It is worth noting in this context that one of the primary functions of the church--whether Catholic or Protestant--is to preside over the rituals of human reproduction by sanctifying and circumscribing the conditions under which it may take place and

securing the infant's appropriate position in society. We have seen that the notion of consummation is symbolically linked with that of murder at the altar since the pure virgin must in marriage give way to the violated potential mother. Self-sufficiency, it would seem, neither needs to nor can reproduce. This point has an interesting relationship with the theological problem of God's need to produce human beings, who are, after all, not perfect like the deity. This problem is explored to some extent in both the Biblical Book of Job and Percy Shelley's Prometheus Unbound. It is also closely related to the question of how evil (particularly Satan or the Protestant depraved sinner) can be derived from God, the greatest good, a problem certainly close to the central concerns of our present texts. I will take up these considerations further in my conclusion in relation to the Hermetic mode, but for the present it may be useful to consider briefly the manner in which each of our protagonists cements self-sufficiency in a manner generally equated with the diabolical.

A sense of powerlessness and impotency deriving from the metaphysical impossibility of ever moving outside the self seems to inform characters like Robert and Medardus. We see this particularly in Robert's horror over the number of sins he must necessarily commit daily. However, when he learns that he can do no wrong since he is predestined to salvation, he becomes, in a real sense, God, i.e., whatever he does is right by virtue of the fact that he has done it. But if everything he does is right (or wrong for that

matter) then there can never be any choice in any situation--he can only do what he in fact does. This regressive problem of divine circularity suggests that the divine needs a more or less imperfect mirror in order to recognize its various aspects which it cannot see so long as it is complete and self-sufficient. Only by means of the reproductions in the mirror will it be able to see its own conflicts and choices. One of the mirrors of God would be Satan, his comic parody; another would be man, his tragic inversion.

In identifying completely with the divine, then, our protagonists are caught between the desire to prove their ability to change things--to make a real impact on the world--and their desire to retain their masturbatory self-sufficiency. Hence, the dialectic between rape/murder and isolation. They affirm their self-sufficiency, too, by cutting themselves off from their heredity literally--cutting their own umbilical cords to affirm the eternal NOW in contrast to the infinite succession of hereditary generations. And certainly suicide becomes the ultimate divine parody, for the suicide usurps power over his own being from God. The most absolute affirmation of reproductive self-sufficiency is self-creation, followed by self-destruction. But on another plane it is merely childish hubris to believe that one is doing by choice what was predestined all along by one's nature.

Each time a character in any of these novels displays undue certainty about his/her situation, that confidence is

immediately shaken by an intrusion from another realm which suggests the possibility that the present categorization only functions on one level and omits the broader repercussions of the statement at other levels. Thus when Lewis' Agnes poked fun at the Bleeding Nun tale and presumed to parody it as a means to personal gain, she (and Raymond) quickly discovered that the apparently old-fashioned, superstitious mode of perception was still a significant force in their lives. In like manner, George Colwan, "king" of the game, is concentrating all his effort on his mock competition at tennis when he is suddenly confronted by a darker sort of opponent representing the wider implications of the "game," who challenges him to a completely different understanding of competition:

[Robert] seemed determined to maintain his right to his place as an onlooker, as well as any of those engaged in the game, and, if they had tried him at an argument, he would have carried his point; or perhaps he wished to quarrel with this spark of his jealousy and aversion, and draw the attention of the gay crowd to himself by these means; for, like his guardian, he knew no other pleasure but what consisted in opposition. (p. 21)

George's mock combat, like Agnes' personation of the Bleeding Nun summons up a formidable double of the more innocent original. These doubles, it would seem, predictably appear when the protagonist feels most confident in his/her own sphere. Thus George, seated at the pinnacle of Arthur's Seat early in the morning succumbs to over-confidence:

"'Here,' thought he, 'I can converse with nature without disturbance, and without being intruded on by any appalling or obnoxious visitor'" (p. 39) Of course, this thought is no sooner expressed than George is confronted by the most frightening double of his experience: the apparition of his brother. Does George feel safe from being intruded on because he is up high--metaphorically closer to heaven? If so, we have already seen in Hogg's "Gude Greye Katt" how easily heaven and hell can be interchanged. It is certainly worth noting that every mountain height also suggests a very steep descent nearby. As we have already seen, a similar imagery of juxtaposed contraries informs the ending of Lewis' novel. George's uncomfortable confrontation with "nature" is also reminiscent of the critical scene in Hoffmann's novel in which Medardus accidentally precipitates Count Viktor's fall from the cliff of Devil's Gorge. In each instance a darker aspect of the protagonist's heritage materializes at a moment when he seems supremely self-confident and secure. Nor do Ambrosio, Raymond, Medardus, George or Robert recognize their own intrinsic affiliation with their terrifying and unpleasant counterparts. George explicitly (and publicly) denies his relationship with Robert, "'My mother's son you may be--but not a Colwan! Mercy be about us, Sir! Is this the crazy minister's son from Glasgow?'" (p. 23). It would seem that whenever actors in these fictions believe they have succeeded in isolating the sources of evil from those of good so that the ostensible evil may be eliminated, they realize too late that the

desirable elements are necessarily destroyed along with the undesirable. In fact, any attempt to harness empirical and analytical delineations to moral judgements is likely to lead either to disaster or absurdity; in this novel it generates both at the once.

Reproducing Scenes

Like Hogg's major characters, the scenes of his novel tend to reproduce themselves by interbreeding with their parent scenes, leaving the reader in sore difficulty regarding the relationships between the various events and their time sequence, much as we are hard put in Hoffmann's novel to untangle the myriad of hereditary entanglements constituting Medardus' ancestry. One example of a proliferating scene involves repetitive events from both Editor's and Robert's narrative reverberating with a play between guilt and innocence. We have already glanced briefly at the scene in which Mrs. Calvert and Miss Logan attack Robert from behind the brushwood after he discovers them. In Robert's narrative this scene is evoked in several different episodes. In the first echo, Robert and Gil-Martin crouch behind a similar thicket to murder Rev. Blanchard. When Gil-Martin's initial shot does not take effect, the Reverend discovers that assassins are lurking in the brush. As in the scene with the two women, Gil-Martin is responsible for the discovery of the hidden assailant. As Robert watches the Reverend approaching, he reminds us of Hoffmann's Medardus

approaching the sleeping Count Viktor and likewise of Gil-Martin's easy ascendancy over his victim:

Never was there such a picture of human inadvertancy! a man approaching step by step to the one that was to hurl him out of one existence into another with as much ease and indifference as the ox goeth to the stall. (p. 127).

In Robert's portrait of his unaware victim and in his sympathy with the "horrid" fate of the innocent journeyman preacher who was condemned for the murder of Rev. Blanchard, we are reminded of Robert himself. Robert firmly believes in the absolute and decisive supremacy of logic. Hence he is completely at the mercy of Gil-Martin's superior argumentative skills. Despite his often intense awareness of his duplicity ("my heart was greatly cheered by this remark; and I sighed very deeply" [p. 94]), Robert is so naive about his "friend," whom he believes to be Czar Peter of Russia, that in this respect he really is as innocent as the sacrificial beast, "[Gil-Martin] dragged me away with as much ease as I had been a lamb" (p. 125). At once paralleling and inverting the original scene, Gil-Martin smoothly induces Robert to confess his extensive guilt before the women and then sets his "innocent" victim upon Miss Logan in order to sacrifice him to the women's torments.

And Robert's innocence is also reminiscent of George's innocence, particularly as we see it in the scene at Arthur's Seat where Robert--once more crouching down in ambush--is literally about to "hurl him out of one existence

into another." Evidently George is innocent inasmuch as he believes implicitly in the goodness of human nature. Interestingly enough (and certainly in character) Robert's chief concern in hesitating to murder his brother is the fear that he himself will be thrown over the edge. Of course, he is literally "overthrown" by George when the latter flees from the apparent monster in the mist over the cliff. Similarly, Robert is brought "backover" by the "two harpies" who tackle him among the brushwood, pulling his hair, throttling him and finally binding him with their garters. Each scene of ambush, then, would seem to effect a Hermetic inter-penetration of guilt and innocence.

In a final evocation of the "brushwood" episode, toward the end of his narrative Robert is accosted by demonic forces while sleeping in a barn loft:

I was both stunned and lamed on the knee; but terror prevailing, I got up and tried to escape. It was out of my power; for there were divisions and cross divisions in the house, and mad horses smashing everything before them, so that I knew not so much as on what side of the house the door was. . . . At length, I was seized by the throat and hair of the head, and dragged away, I wist not whither. (pp. 204-5)

An alternate exploration of the dialectic between attracting and repulsing entities is provided by the narrative of the relationship between Arabella Calvert and Arabella Logan. We notice that Bell Calvert apparently first comes to Arabella Logan's attention when her name is mentioned as an eyewitness in the investigation of George's death. However,

Arabella is unable to locate her until Bell breaks into her house and steals some of her clothing and silver plate. Several characteristics of Bell Calvert are strongly suggestive of Robert. Not only is she a criminal who "has been made a tool, or the dupe, of an infernal set" (p. 63), but she also has some antipathy for the elder George Colwan. When Arabella asks her "Did you know my late master?", Bell replies, "Ay, that I did, and never for any good," (p. 56). Finally, there is a curious and highly ambiguous sympathy between her and the inhabitant of the suicide's grave: Bell was supposed to have stolen silver from Arabella's house and the suicide was said to have robbed his master of "a silver knife and fork." The identification of clothing which forms such an important part of Bessy Gillies' denial of knowledge that any of the items she sees belong to her mistress also seems intimately related with the Editor's careful descriptions of clothing in the suicide's grave. The suicide, however, goes to his grave retaining the stolen items (the Editor says a silver knife was found in his possession) while Bell returns Arabella's possessions.

This patterning of reproduced incidents and images demonstrates some of the complexities of Hogg's tightly woven text which extend even to fairly minute detail. We note, for example, that Arabella Logan insists that Robert's mother is responsible for the murder of George, though the text gives us no other reason to think so; similarly, in Robert's narrative, M'Gill's mother is specifically blamed

for the lad's academic and physical superiority to Robert: "I was . . . well aware that the devilish powers of his mother would finally prevail" (p. 102). The rivalry between Robert and M'Gill parallels Robert's struggle with the superior intellect of Gil-Martin. It also is closely related to the competition between George and Robert with George being designated "king" in the game of tennis and Robert describing himself as "king" in the school after M'Gill's dismissal. Robert says that in his fight with M'Gill "[the latter] at length went so far as first to kick me, and then strike me on the face" (p. 102). The Editor says in the tennis episode that Robert, after being overthrown by George, "made a spurn at him with his foot" and that George in retaliation "struck the assailant with his racket, . . . so that his mouth and nose gushed out blood" (p. 23). In another instance, when George grabs Robert's face at Arthur's Seat, "he seized him by the mouth and nose so strenuously with his left hand that he sank his fingers into his cheeks" (p. 41). Later, in Hogg's letter to Blackwood's we hear that "one of the lads gripped the face of the corpse with his finger and thumb, and the cheeks felt quite soft and fleshy, but the dimples remained and did not spring out again" (p. 221). The force of this impression, like the impact of the printing press, leaves its mark reproduced on the face of the protagonist as it does on every page of Hogg's text.

Mediating Mirrors

Boundary violations are a constant preoccupation for Hogg as they were for Lewis and Hoffmann. Like those of his predecessors, Hogg's inter-penetrating modes are also marked by intoxication (literally poisoning, equating it with Ambrosio's centipede-bite and Medardus' poisoning incidents), clothing changes and wounds--all typical metaphors utilized in rites de passage which effect movement from one realm to another, whether among primitives or moderns. The riot in Edinburgh is precipitated by a bout of drinking as is George's decision to remove to the brothel which results in his death. Ordinary wine seems to have much the same effect on Robert that Medardus achieved from imbibing the mysterious elixirs. The "double vision" of the drunkard which Pietro evoked suggests what modern psychologists have observed about intoxication: the drug does not alter the intrinsic attributes of the personality, but simply allows those aspects which have been eclipsed by others or repressed to surface. Hence drinking becomes a technique for achieving communion with one's self and the wider implications of one's species affiliation.

Clothing has played a similar role both in drama (like that of Shakespeare) and rituals where participants dress in the characteristic garb of the opposite sex or of gods, goddesses, or totem animals, presumably in order to invoke the divergent aspects of themselves which these beings represent. Hence a man who dresses in the costume of a woman

learns to deal with his own feminine nature. Adam and Eve gave the first outward sign of their change of state by dressing in fig leaves. We have also seen that clothing served as a metaphor for the justification of the sinner in Protestant theology--a kind of symbolic inversion of the primary transgression. In these novels we see clothing performing the analogous function of facilitating movement from one sphere to another and through such movement the reader (if not the character) is able to glimpse the wider repercussions of such imitative reproductions. Agnes is able to pass through the closed gates of her house by virtue of her imitation of the Bleeding Nun's dress; Medardus' monastic robe gets him admitted to Baron F.'s house because it is both a disguise and his real costume; later his adoption of gentleman's attire admits him to royal circles and allows him to escape from authorities and when Robert wakes from his forgotten revels, he finds himself uncomfortably costumed in "gaudy and glaring" garb such as George might have worn instead of his usual Puritanical suit of black. All these suggest that a change of clothes does indeed effect much more significant metamorphoses. The power inherent in garments is further underlined when Gil-Martin exchanges clothing with Robert so that the latter can escape, affirming, "'There is a virtue in this garb, and, instead of offering to detain you, they shall pay you obeisance'" (p. 188). Though the Editor is likewise convinced of the importance of clothing (as we see by his careful delineations), he does not seem aware of its metamorphic function, but

instead meticulously describes its particular attributes. Yet the three different descriptions of the suicide's clothing he includes give the reader much the same opportunity for movement between modes as do other instances of garment-switching. Like Ambrosio's silver branch, the inversion of garb allows safe movement through dangerous straits, but at the same time imposes a burden of fractured identity which makes re-collection (both literally and metaphorically) difficult.

Hogg's penetrations, like those of his predecessors, are likewise characterized by symbolic wounds to the protagonists which do not kill. Ambrosio was bitten by the centipeder; Medardus was wounded by the abbess' crucifix and later stabbed himself and lost the use of his arm to a corrosive poison. Robert, too, is wounded by his confrontations with his double, bleeding copiously from the nose on two occasions and claiming, at least, that his brother's intentions were murderous. Significantly, though, the wounds these characters impose or wish to impose upon others--sexual violation and murder--effect physical metamorphoses from one realm to another in their victims. The presence of these protagonists' stigmata, then, suggests immunity from the transformations they themselves effect. Thus Gil-Martin grants Robert immunity from murder and protects him from the demons as well as securing his escape from Dalcastel by means of an exchange of clothing. The Wandering Jew was supposed to have borne a mark upon his forehead indicating him as the sole exception to the

cyclical metamorphoses of natural law; the bloody Cain-marks of Ambrosio, Medardus and Robert likewise affirm that they are in some sense exempted from the hereditary rites of passage of their species. In this context the prolonged Tantalus-like death scene of Ambrosio and the year of penance during which Medardus writes out his tale after Aurelia's death seem symbolically akin to Robert's suicide by hanging. All three relate to the mythic motif of "in-betweenness" or limbo characterized by suspension between heaven and earth. We are reminded of a number of other suspended mythic figures--notably Christ, who hung wounded between heaven and earth, or Odin, who hung on the World-Ash, and, of course, the arch-Romantic figure of the suffering Prometheus whose ritual function was brilliantly explored by Shelley in Prometheus Unbound. The wounded, then, are beings set apart and like Hermes they mediate between opposing realms.

Interestingly enough, each of the texts that we have considered is specifically compared to the "undead"--those like Agnes who have been buried while still alive or those ghosts from the past who continue to walk long after they should have gone to another state of existence. In both cases these are figures caught in limbo between one world and another, belonging strictly to neither. Texts, too, are half-buried or half-unearthed. We have already looked at Lewis' prediction of the "Gothic" fate of his novel, untimely burial. His work also includes a number of disinterred literary fragments from the past which seem relevant

to present events. In Hoffmann's novel *Medardus*' text is exhumed from the monastery library at B. where both it and its composer (as well as the catalytic elixirs) were interred apart from the world of the living. The Old Painter's narrative lies similarly dormant in another monastery, only becoming intelligible when Medardus appears. Robert's enigmatic still-born manuscript is unearthed from the grave of a curiously vital-looking hundred-year-old corpse. All these instances of textual zombies suggest the equation of written medium with spiritual medium: the text serves as a mirror and spirit-guide to the other world as much as the Bleeding Nun, the Wandering Jew, the Scots Mummy or any other restless spirit suspended in time itself, but able to facilitate Hermetic translation.

CHAPTER FIVE

TELESCOPING PATTERNS OF THE PSYCHE

The best test of authenticity concerning our disciplines of exploring the imaginal is that the habitual ego senses itself at a loss and is unable to identify with the images. They must be alien even while familiar, strangers even if lovers, uncanny although we rely on them.

Introduction

In these three novels we have examined distinctive patterns of character, narrative technique, plot, reader involvement, language paradigms and experiential structuring mechanisms. We have also explored the inter-relations among individual texts and their literary forebears. Each of these novels of mirror-images seems particularly preoccupied with the Hermetic milieu of ironic proximity. This concept is variously expressed by the Monk's unquenchable thirst alongside the stream; Lorenzo's attempts to reach his nearby but "buried" sister; Raymond's unintentional courtship of the Bleeding Nun; Medardus' and Robert's intermittent alternations between collapsing and splitting identity with other figures; and each text's self-conscious wooings and rejections of audiences. The texts, too, proximate events as if

we were present at them, encouraging the reader to participate in this proximation by anticipating the course of the narrative, much as a scientist would make predictions about the outcome of an experiment based upon his/her familiarity with previous--and presumably analogous--events. Initially presenting their visions under the auspices of narrators who appear fully self-confident of their ability to orchestrate the materials at hand, our Hermetic authors induce their readers to assume a similarly confident posture, trusting their authorial maestros to conduct a pleasantly diverting concert, evoking the quaint simplicity of a time and place firmly distanced from the superior understanding of the present. But if we had expected to sit back securely detached in the audience, politely responding at the appropriate junctures, we soon find ourselves unaccountably moved on-stage with neither script nor score to assist us. Meanwhile we realize that our erstwhile guides have deserted us when we are most in need of directions, sometimes abandoning us to flounder like Robert in the weaver's web and at other times teasing us with seemingly critical information that thwarts our strongest efforts to use it or, again, patiently and minutely explaining the most tangential information as if it were our most crucial concern. The reader is refused what he/she most desires and given--in abundance--what is least desired.

Cleaving: A Paradigm

As readers we may come to suspect that our narrative guides speak with forked tongues, though the elusive nature of the text's guiding principles make it exceedingly difficult to point to a particular instance of ambiguity as positive proof of diabolical behavior on the author's part. As John Barnet counsels, we need to draw our conclusions from the "haill" of a man's (or text's) character, but this is very difficult indeed. We see Robert, too, struggling to distinguish a precise indicator of Gil-Martin's devilishness:

I was even so weak as, the next time I met with him, to look steadfastly at his foot, to see if it was not cloven into two hoofs. It was the foot of a gentleman in every respect, so far as appearances went, but the form of his counsels was somewhat equivocal, and, if not double, they were amazingly crooked.
(Confessions, p. 185)

Though literature frequently presents the devil as a gentleman, Robert does not seem able to conceive how a gentleman can also be the devil. Like Ewson, he confuses what he means with absolute meaning. Though the concepts of "devil" and "gentleman" may not be literally equivalent, on the metaphorical level these two "opposites" are linked together as one: like the devil's hoof, they cleave. The word cleave itself, in fact, embodies a relevant paradox: it can signify either to cling together (as in a nuptial embrace) or to split apart (as with the stroke of a sacrificial axe).

Although this modern word derives its antithetical denotations from two different root words (the Old English clifian and cleofan), this information by no means negates the circumstance that these contradictory meanings cling together in sound and appearance while they spring apart into two separate definitions in the empirical delineations of the dictionary. The word itself cleaves.² The devil's cloven hoofs beneath his preacher's garb, the chasm of Devil's Gorge, even Antonia's captivating "cleavage" all suggest the mystery of unity-in-multiplicity expressed by the proximate images of these novels. We need, then, to consider how it is that these authors move us (or refuse to move us when we desire it) between different levels of understanding and what the purpose of these moves might be.

If we have read Gothic and Romantic novels before, we have little difficulty recognizing that a character who expresses certainty about what he/she wants, i.e., makes a conscious choice, is often confronted with its opposite. Robert's unwished-for meeting with Gil-Martin summons up George's encounter with Robert in similar straits as Robert asserts "just at the narrowest part of the glen, whom should I meet full in the face but the very being in all the universe of God I would the most gladly have shunned," (p. 206). Arabella Logan searches in vain for Arabella Calvert whom she earnestly wishes to find. But it is only when Miss Logan is asked to identify several items stolen by the latter from her house, that she is able to meet her double exclaiming (in inflated language that seems pointedly to

compare the desire for knowledge with erotic desire) "Well, of all the world you are the woman whom I have longed and travailed the most to see. But you were invisible; a being to be heard of, not seen," (p. 57). These inversions of desire are in turn reminiscent of similar effects on the erotic level as, for example, when Ambrosio feels disgust for Antonia after he has raped her or when Medardus flees from the choirmaster's sister with whom he is in love. Desire--the movement toward something in order to merge with it--is countered by disgust--the movement away from something in order to impede any possible merger. This dance of paired images summons up the critical juncture of the mirror which turns to cold, hard glass when we try to become one with an attractive image of ourselves but at other times reflects back an image so appallingly out-of-tune with our expectations that we want to avoid mirrors altogether in the future.

Inversions of desire like these are evidently inherent to the structure we have noticed in this type of fiction. However, when the reader has to undergo frustrations and disappointments similar to those of the characters instead of observing from a safe vantage point, he/she may feel unfairly used by the author. Indeed many critics, both modern and contemporary, have seemed to feel they were maltreated as readers, particularly by Lewis and Hogg. We desire explanation and understanding; instead we are forced into frustration byways and disappointing cul-de-sacs much like the characters in the tales who express specific

desires. As Robert interferes in George's game, so the text interferes with the game in which the reader expects to take part. Like the Elder George's mistress, we are robbed of our inheritance (which in the case of the reader suggests past experience as the basis for predicting the future course of the novel's events). But such a robbery turns out to be benign for Arabella Logan, who remains symbolically "in-between" by refusing to swear to her belongings. Significantly, these are later returned to her, with the addition of a valuable ally in the form of the thief herself. After Hermes stole Apollo's cattle he gave Apollo the tortoise-shell lyre. Perhaps readers, too, should not be overly-covetous about their "rights" until they have seen what the thief has to offer.

Another related manifestation of proximity occurs when the conscious designs of characters suddenly invoke larger-scale manifestations of the original which they are imitating. This is most obvious when the Bleeding Nun takes the place of Agnes; the real monk, Medardus, replaces Count Viktor who intends to imitate one, and Robert's over confidence in his absolute salvation conjures up the original over-confident challenger of God, the devil. Ambrosio's thirst, at first denied, is then met with a torrent of water that destroys him. Scenes can also have this effect so that the secure and orderly garden of the monastery with its delicate fountain and beautiful temptress seems a feeble imitation of the closing scene of The Monk with its encompassing mountains and rushing waters presided over by a

vengeful demon. We are reminded that the "little wee ghost of the rainbow" is, after all, the reflection of some gigantic spectrum arcing between heaven and earth. But, like George and Euphemia, we tend to fancy ourselves outside this "fairie web" of connectedness and somehow exempt from those devastating effects on characters which arise, evidently, from a false sense of security. Yet our own presumption about what the text "should" do is mocked and mirrored endlessly by the intricacies of the text itself, implying that the novel, too, is a larger and more threatening amplification of our assumptions about the comfortable and rational relationship between fiction and its audience.

Affirmations and Denials of Distance

An empirical perspective which firmly separates spectator from spectacle does not seem to accord with a mythic perspective in which seer and sight are of a piece. In effect, ironic self-awareness as we see it, for example, in Gil-Martin and Lewis' narrator cannot be possible without the premise of empiricism--the premise, that is, that there can be a real separation between experiencer and experience. The locus of this separation in literature is the text, which both invites total participation by the reader on the imaginative level (like the reader's involvement in Antonia's vision of her mother's ghost after both reader and character have been reading suitable material to set the stage for such an appearance) and forbids meaningful

interaction beyond the effort involved in turning the pages by reflecting our assumptions back upon us (as in our frustrated perusal of the Old Painter's involved geneology). When we are truly pulled into the story like Robert in the web, we are concerned only with our physical and emotional reactions to the situation at hand and have no leisure to contemplate how ludicrous we may look from another angle. On the other hand, polarization between perceiver and perception, as provided, for example, by our authors' conscientious historicizing, forces us back into self-awareness by allowing us sufficient distance from the phenomenon (or text) to see some of the possible inter-relationships between the different portions of the "fairie web" in a more panoramic vision. Our presumed aloofness, moreover, persuades us that, acting as impartial judges, we can accurately discern the nature of these relations and reproduce them artificially by imitation as indeed authors of fiction try to do. Hence Lorenzo, like Robert, intrudes in a ritual of which he does not approve and re-aligns the roles of spectator and player. He introduces his own "production"³ of Mother St. Ursula's tale into the midnight procession in honor of St. Clare for the populace of Madrid, re-casting the apparently-devout prioress in the role of wicked witch and inducing the other spectators likewise to violate the framing "stage." Later he transforms the sacred statue of St. Clare into a mechanical device for concealing misbehaving nuns out of sight and through this means leads soldiers into the forbidden precincts of the convent. While

we cannot say that Lorenzo "caused" the destruction of the convent and the murder of Antonia, his proximity to these events certainly suggests more than a casual co-incidence.

A similar set of bifurcations seems to inform Medardus' tale: when he opts for one polarized style of existence, something else is destroyed--most obviously Aurelia. Matilda at first reconstructed Ambrosio from a completely closed being entombed in the monastery to one capable of interaction with the world. The demon at the end of the novel who bears Ambrosio out of the Inquisition cell also re-constructs the monk's story, completing the circle by closing it again, when he informs the Monk that he has not affirmed his heroic uniqueness at all but has only been killing and inbreeding like a common brute.

Medardus, coming upon Count Viktor asleep at the edge of Devil's Gorge, assumes that the latter will fall if he does not awaken him. But when he shouts "Awake," and touches his double, the latter disappears over the edge, only to reappear as a mad monk. Medardus' previous desire to "expose" the saintly Aurelia as the polluted, destined bride of an aberrant monk seems even more intimately connected with her murder by his double at the altar, though, again, assigning causality can be tricky here. And the reader (if not the perpetrator) has little doubt that Robert himself is responsible for the murder of his mistress. Significantly, though, neither Lorenzo, Medardus nor Robert has any sense that he himself committed the murder. Each is aware only of a loss.

Characters in these novels often tend to function on a literal level that effectively eclipses a significant segment of meaning, believing that the categories they themselves impose upon the world are absolute definitions of the phenomena's essence rather than simply convenient ordering mechanisms for human perceptions. Because demonic language, words and outward appearance seem like those of the mundane world, they take it for granted that the rules of their own world are likewise applicable in the demonic realm. Thus Robert succumbs to Gil-Martin, George is perplexed beyond measure by Robert's failure to obey the rules of his games, Ambrosio is stunned by the demon's literal keeping of his promise and Medardus cannot understand why his heavenly thoughts precipitate a demonic reflection. Each does not recognize the limited scope of his own assumptions about the finite qualities of language, logic and other empirical categories such as time, space and causality as determinants of the perceived world. Nor can any of our protagonists see that while poles seem irreconcilably separate, there is an over-arching relatedness in all polarity whether that of the earth or the language we speak.

We notice, then, that self-awareness seems to hide something or even apparently to destroy it: that which enables us to see also blinds us. In effect, the moment a person becomes aware, part of what was previously the self is lost. It would appear impossible to actually be aware of all the aspects usually associated with the self at the same time since awareness requires an intensity of focus

which necessarily eclipses certain aspects of identity while it spotlights others. Thus Euphemia's ability to get outside herself in awareness is ironically undercut by her naiveté in response to Medardus's superior knowledge. Once set in motion any series of empirical removals is infinite, since self awareness cannot be aware of itself and so must each time take another step backward in order to re-define its multiplicity to include the perceiver as part of the data of perception. Empiricism at its furthest extreme postulates a world without perceptions--only objects of perception themselves unaware while relativism (akin to the mythic mode) postulates a world of maya--illusion--in which there are no objects of perception, only awarenesses of perceptions. Ultimately les extrêmes se touchent, for it hardly matters whether everything is awareness or object of awareness if in fact there is only one thing. Is there then any way out after all? Or does Hermes merely demonstrate to humankind that we are hopelessly trapped in a web of our own weaving with no hope for escape?

When Hermes stole Apollo's cattle, he evaded discovery by leaving backward footprints implying that he went in the opposite direction. In like manner inversion tricks us into seeing the limitations of the ways in which we see. Inversion also suggests that the constellations below the horizon will periodically re-appear, replacing the ascendant stars. These novels show us both mythic and empirical foolishness and both mythic and empirical insights, demonstrating that the mythic view is not superior to the empirical or vice

versa, but each is contingent upon--and complementary to--the other. However, since the construction of hierarchies itself seems endemic to the empirical point of view, these hierarchies need to be inverted in order to demonstrate their relativity. We still have a hierarchy, of course, because we cannot escape our mode of perception. But in a world turned upside down or backwards like a mirror-reflection we are able to see the extent to which we insist upon the "rightness" of particular forms even when they are unsuited to our needs. In effect, inversion demonstrates that empiricism, too, is mythic and instinctual and by no means aloof from the kind of absurdity into which Jacintha launches. Hence Matilda and Gil-Martin appear in the guise of everyday people rather than monsters like Jacintha's ghost or the demons who flock round Robert toward the end of his narrative because such appearances are consistent with the mythic assumptions of the empirical mode and not because that is their absolute and inalterable form. In themselves our demons seem equally at home in the shape of polite ladies and gentlemen or fire-breathing monsters. They appear cooperatively in the shape accorded them by the assumptions of their victims.

Hermetic Initiation

I have described the Hermetic experience as initia-
tory. We often think of initiation as the acquisition of truth by a hitherto unenlightened neophyte. Although sudden

enlightenment may certainly occur, within the context of these three novels this is not the most critical content of the initiatory mystery. While the notion of truth-acquisition would suggest regular, orderly procession from a "lower" to a "higher" level of knowledge, with some lofty final goal (perhaps much along the lines of popular conceptions of Darwinian evolution theory), none of these authors is content with such a linear concept. Indeed, the belief that he has attained superior knowledge leading to mastery over the evidently-baser instincts precipitates every one of our protagonists into tragedy. To maintain our perspective, we need to keep in mind another of the denotations of initiation: to begin. Becoming initiated does not just mean arriving at a long-sought-after goal; it also means gradually beginning to see in an entirely unaccustomed way, like a helpless infant who knows nothing of the world. Hence, the baptised person is said to be "reborn" and initiates are frequently taught they have a new, spiritual "god" father who replaces the old, biological father, i.e., the mortal twin with an earthly father is, on another plane, the immortal twin with a spiritual father. In shifting the perspective 180°, the old "truths" become symbolic of new "truths." Forsaking the conventional to merge with the alien, a person re-produces him/herself in a new but familiar form. Later on, these recent revelations, too, will give way to other formulations. The Janus-faced ritual demands at once volatility and stability, rejecting the neophyte who cannot recognize the inadequacy of a puer attitude in a senex, yet

mandating that the old learn to retrieve the childlike perspective.

Snakes

When Hermes Psychopomps leads the initiate out of one realm of existence into another, he bears the caduceus in his hand, a wand entwined with a pair of serpents supposed to be Rhea and Zeus, mother and son divinities who transformed themselves into snakes to mate. A bite from a centipede (which Ambrosio calls a serpent) in the monastery garden sets in motion Ambrosio's initiation into sexuality and his eventual fall; we are reminded that the devil appeared in Eden as a serpent. We have already noticed the facility with which diabolical figures like Gil-Martin and Matilda shift their shapes to suit the occasion. We have also seen the ways in which characters' clothing changes (or even the Editor's shifts from one account of the suicide's garments to another, dissimilar one) open previously-sealed doors of perception, though these Hermetic transmutations also seem to simultaneously impose closure of another order. The metamorphoses accompanying the changes of garb remind us of the manner in which snakes shed their outgrown skins, dividing themselves into two snakes--the old, hollow snake (whose empty skin remains behind, looking deceptively like a still-living snake) and the new, reborn snake. The mystery of the emergence of the new snake from inside the old snake is, in fact, a common metaphor for re-birth and renewal

associated with initiatory rites throughout the world.⁴

The serpent's dual re-production of itself stands in contrast to ordinary physical reproduction in which the smaller and more innocent child is born out of the older and more experienced parent. In this instance, the younger (or previous) snake is cast off to reveal the larger and older snake who is also, paradoxically, young. And unlike the child who is physically born only once, the snake is born again and again, with each new skin being in its turn shed. This mystery of the old-born-out-of-the young (reminiscent of Wordsworth's "the child is father to the man") inverts ordinary concepts of both time and causality and parallels the spatial ambiguity of the boxed-narrative so common in Gothic and Romantic novels where successive layers are shed to reveal the recent-yet-ancient figures beneath. But while the old form may be shed as no longer fitting the new snake, the essence of the old snake is absorbed into the new one: only its outward garment is cast off. Along these lines we might say that when this old form persists, glittering deceptively in the sunlight like the shiny scales of the living snake it may decoy us into the false assumption that we know where the snake really is and can easily avoid its bite. But the skin is, after all, only a place where something has once been--like Hermes' hollowed-out turtle shell. In this image we can see all the zombies hitherto invoked: the suicide's mummy with its life-like appearance, the spectral Bleeding Nun, the ghostly Painter, Gil-Martin's array of assumed identities, the architecture and costume of

outdated religion, as well as dusty and moldy old manuscripts and paintings which seem as if they ought to be meaningful, but whose contents remain curiously inaccessible. Indeed, our texts repeatedly assert that whenever a person thinks he/she has securely snared this elusive energy, it immediately molts into another shape, leaving one more empty skin. As Otto suggests, "it is Hermes' nature not to belong to any locality nor to possess any permanent abode; always he is on the road between here and yonder."⁵

It was said in antiquity that a person could not die until Hermes severed the cord that joined soul to body. In the capacity of midwife to the soul, Hermes would officiate over the transition into the spirit world, teaching the infant soul to let go of its bodily womb. Until Hermes performed this task, however, the labor would be incomplete, with the old way of seeing still restricting the new. Where it was once a perfect fit, the snake's skin would now tighten like a strait jacket, preventing further growth and suffocating what it once protected. Hermes' Cesearean operation, though dangerous, would amend this unfruitful pregnancy.

I have mentioned the belief that souls could become trapped in mirrors when they were crossing over, remaining there as ghosts when they ought to have permanently changed their state of existence. Indeed much of the work of conjurers and magicians (like the Wandering Jew) in every society has been to assist these "in-between" souls to shed their material identity in order to assume a shape

consistent with their proper sphere. Are we to see in these half-dead, half-living forms the continued attachment to an outgrown and useless skin like Agnes' mad clinging to the corpse of her convent-conceived infant? Perhaps we need to give up claim to our goods like Arabella or destroy our presumed beloved like Lorenzo in order to move into a newer, more appropriate shape.

Indeed there is in the Hermetic mode a certain callousness--a sadistic, destructive impulse which demands the severing of the umbilicus that connects us with the old forms, the past, the world of mother and childhood and the sentimental longing for Eden or Medieval England, even if the inexperienced infant dies in the process. We are reminded of Hermes' laughter when he discovered the tortoise in which he saw (with his over-arching divine vision) a potential lyre.⁶ If we refuse to re-envision our alliance with the past, we, too, will be the object of divine scorn and laughter, tumbled mercilessly along at the behest of some cosmic force that cares nothing for our petty heroics, much as we imagine our ancestors to have been subject to the forces of nature. In Hermetic vision the dearest and most precious substances are relentlessly destroyed while we are forced to embrace the most common and foul. Hence Lewis destroys Ambrosio and Antonia to reveal Virginia by means of the unrecognizably corrupted Agnes. Medardus, too, embraces the mad array of his alter-egos in their fictional re-creation. And Hogg destroys the sunny, good-natured George to force his readers into an identity with his

appalling religious fanatic.

Since innocence is in effect the "blank page" upon which the initiatory experience is imprinted, Hermes (for whom everyone is in some sense a tabula rasa) encourages closure in order to violate it. For it is the closed, sterile sanctum of the womb which must be opened in order for reproduction to occur. Thus we, the readers, are induced to accept at face value an Editor's or narrator's smug superiority, feeling, no doubt, that we, too, are sophisticated and worldly-wise. Overlooking the limitations of our position, we are induced to believe that our discernment is thoroughly reliable. As Robin Ruthven's Hermetic "corby craws" confide, "'we must catch them, and catch them with their own bait, too'" (p. 181). Too late we discover that we have been taken with our own bait: our petty sophistication is only a pitiful imitation of a greater awareness. Hermes may be a shepherd, but he also takes his trusting sheep to market; at the end of his novel, Hogg, the shepherd, has already sold his "paulies." Like Ambrosio in the final pages of The Monk, then, we have become the butt of some titanic joke we scarcely understand. We, too, are gullible virgins in the hands of a cosmic con-man who has tricked us into corruption. In this way, the author demonstrates that what appears to be absolute and carefully-distanced empirical objectivity from one perspective is no more than childish naivete from another.

Like Gil-Martin, the writer is able to slip from one guise to another to re-produce mode after mode, version

after version, of the same material in successive re-envisionings, each of which moves from one point of view to another, slightly different, one. These shadings remind us of the mystery embodied in the spectrum as opposed to the polarization of black and white. Hermes whom Jung calls a "many-hued and wily God" ⁷ has a mythic counterpart in Iris, the female messenger of the divinities, who is the rainbow, an arc between two different realms which subtly moves from one color to a different one in indefinably small steps, yet does not get caught up in a Zeno's paradox of infinite regression which would never allow any change to take place. Literally as well as metaphysically, it is Iris who allows vision by opening and shutting the lens of the eye to admit light or to prevent the admission of too much light. The subtle adjustment mechanism suggests the writer who can never write exactly the same thing twice, but in larger terms is always saying the same things over and over again. The frustrations of the mirror image throw the viewer back upon him/her self, but revision allows us to begin to see the limitations of each viewpoint by means of their juxtapositions.

Each of the novels we have considered takes a different course, but above all each uses empirical insights to transcend empiricism. All three juxtapose accurate observation of dream and fantasy images (much as modern psychologists carefully record every detail of a dream or myth) with observations of everyday social behavior. Lewis' Monk constantly juxtaposes evident polarities like poetry and prose,

ordinary and exotic characters, the urgent immediacy of dream and detached, empirical observation or fulfilled reader expectation and disappointed reader expectation. By presenting these apparently-conflicting world-views we have termed mythic and empirical, he demonstrates that both views do, indeed exist side-by-side in his world and both are equally observable by the scientist. The reader may, however, by these juxtapositions consider the possible relatedness of mutually exclusive linguistic categories or points-of-view which we assume are likewise inherently antithetical. Even his novel's ending is polarized into two different conclusions that we might term mimetic and mythic. The ending describing Lorenzo's movement from attachment to the dead (like Agnes' attachment to her child's corpse) toward a union with Virginia is optimistic, suggesting that, though gradual and painful, it is possible to reconstruct the mythic aspect of human relationships in modern terms. The ending involving the Monk's fate, however, is darker and far more pessimistic. The sources of imaginative nourishment for the monk are either inaccessible or overwhelming. Helpless as an infant at his mother's breast (and reminding us of the little bird at Antonia's breast in *Matilda's* mirror) Ambrosio lies among the mountains just out of reach of the water he craves until he is swept away by a torrent.

Unlike Lewis, Hoffmann does not emphasize polarization, but rather constantly allows figures with different--but not necessarily antithetical characteristics--to molt and melt into each other, also implying the relativity of definition

to definer and undercutting any notion of an absolute, external polarization. Medardus, however, continues to believe in the absolute existence of good and evil as external realities, constantly embracing one or another of the identities around him as his "true" one. Yet Hoffmann's more or less fixed array of characters, together with the closed, circular structure of his novel in which the second volume reverses the motion of the first, evokes the Oriental notion that change and choice are but diabolical illusions to be overcome. The major temptation, it would seem, is the belief that the apparent separation between spectator and spectacle exempts the spectator from involuntary participation. But the isolated St. Anthony, by his belief in the absolute security of his position, effectively switches places with the devil, imprisoning himself apart from the world to which he actually belongs. Perhaps the devil can produce a more convincing image of God than God Himself. Medardus grasps at the shed-off form of a dualistic world as he grasps at the cast-off glove of the choirmaster's sister; and the knowing figures around him are as derisive about his behavior (though perhaps just as fond of him) as his mistress. It would seem that he finds his salvation in the acceptance of the procession of alternate identities by fictionally re-enacting them (and recording them just as they appeared almost as a scientist would record data) after the death of Aurelia. Hoffmann's translations are never absolute: proximity means that each new image is always pregnant with a further one.

Hogg presents both polarized and blended images, echoing the techniques employed by both his predecessors. He begins by giving us something of a black-and-white contrast between George and Robert in the Editor's account. This effect, however, is muted by the tale of the "good" and "bad" Arabellas whose initial differences become increasingly accomodated. Robert's own account of his adventures also serves to undercut the Editor's polarities, for whether or not we feel his behavior is justified by the circumstances of his upbringing, we do feel a certain amount of sympathy for his naiveté in the hands of Gil-Martin and his horror when pursued by demons after he flees Dalcastel. And, finally, all semblance of polarity breaks down (though the transitions are never as smooth as those of Hoffmann) in the unfathomable sequence of antithetical and overlapping material in the Editor's account of the suicide's grave.

These authors suggest that it is primarily through the discernment of polarities--and the hierarchical, often morally-based, arrangement of these polarities--that we are able to envision ourselves as observers capable of initiating changes in our circumstances by choosing one alternative over another. Without the belief in this ability to act in what appears to be our own best interests, we must resign ourselves to being no more capable of meaningful and intelligent influence on our environment than an eyeless worm--or Hogg's Editor's mole. Obviously, the opposites we discern may be arbitrary in terms of universal truth, but our empirical attitude requires the supportive but shaky

stilts of dualism to maintain its ostensibly superior position. If, however, we insist upon clinging to our stilts when we are being tumbled upside-down, we may fall much farther and find it considerably more difficult to re-orient ourselves to the unaccustomed earth than it would have been had we remained with both feet on the ground. For all that, we need not refuse to rise above the world as spectator, but we must be prepared for a great deal more discomfort if we insist upon doing so.

Our authors affirm that it is characteristically human to believe that through self-awareness we can move outside the constraints of our heredity and environment to exert a degree of control over our circumstances. This ability seems to separate us from the animal and physical world of blind chance and pre-destined fate. We would not be fully human if we did not believe in it. On the other hand, if the control we were able to exert was absolute, we would be gods, not human beings. We are indeed in-between beings.

Like Medardus, the empirical mindset fears the loss of individuality and freedom of choice implied by the converging of two disparate beings as mirror images. In effect, the existence of an absolutely identical Other would imply that individuality was impossible. Perhaps this is why actual twins differentiate themselves greatly in dress, hairstyle and behavior if they have been raised together. As scientists we want very much to have our theories fit so closely with the data that our results seem absolutely conclusive for all time. But while we search for a more or

less perfect fit between theory and data we are very intimidated by fit that seems to be imposed upon us forcing us into pre-ordained patterns, for example, by instinctual behavior (especially that related to sexuality), by jokes that make us appear gullible or naive or even by the discovery that our theories are by no means original and were written in similar terms two years or two thousand years before we were born. These latter fits are the type Medardus flees when he opts for the monastic life or fears when he finds his random shot has brought down two fowl. They suggest that individual will is completely beside the point and that things happen only because of what a person is and not because of what he/she does. Hence closure is both the absolute assertion of our will upon the data of the outside world and the final proof that we cannot affect that world by our actions but only insofar as we are one with it.

AFTERWORD

Often psychology and literature mix no better than oil and water. The dedicated psychologist may impose the outlines of psychological theory upon the work of literature, praising the material when the likenesses are congruent, deprecating the material if there are obvious discrepancies between the two images; conversely, the critic who wishes to retain the pristine vision of the author may hunt about for a psychology that will accomodate it perfectly. But we have seen that especially within these novels, like is indeed an ill mark and perfect fit cannot be relied upon to predicate the expected results.

I began this study intending to justify the novels I examined with psychological percepts with which I was familiar. I thought that I had discovered in these works trends comparable to the formulations of modern psychology and that by simply illustrating their convergence I could, in effect, illuminate the novels by means of an interpretive overlay. As I worked with the material in the novels, however, I discovered (much to my frequent frustration), that the authors' techniques forced me back upon my critical assumptions time after time, urging me to re-imagine and re-discover my thesis by means of approximation of the materials with which I was working. My own work has been a mirror and re-writing

of the authors' works, like but unlike theirs in that it reflected some portions of the novels, ignored others, over-emphasized some and under-emphasized still others. In essence, like the authors, I, too, became enmeshed in process rather than product. In its own way, then, this text is a diabolical double of the three others it considers, for I have tried to evoke that process of reaction and involvement that happens somewhere between reader and novel, author and text, as well as to outline its various manifestations. This paradigm is neither a key to reading the text nor a solution to numerous textual riddles; it simply uses empirical observations and metaphorical amplifications to suggest some of the limitations inherent in our assumptions about what the critical faculty essential to empirical insight can do and what it cannot. Like Robert, we cannot get free from the weaver's web "without doing [the weaver] a great injury" and injuring ourselves as well, but perhaps if we direct our energies toward re-tracing the process which got us tangled in the web in the first place through reflection we can see that we have been in league with the spider all along in precipitating our own entrapment.

NOTES

Chapter One

¹E. T. A. Hoffman, The Devil's Elixirs, trans. Ronald Taylor (London: John Calder, 1963), p. 2. All English quotations from this edition.

²J. E. Cirlot, A Dictionary of Symbols, trans. by Jack Sage (New York: Philosophical Library, 1962), p. 290, mentions several relationships between spiders and the moon.

³Matthew G. Lewis, The Monk: A Romance, ed. Howard Anderson (London: Oxford University Press, 1973). All quotations from this edition.

⁴James Hogg, The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner, ed. and intro. by John Carey (London: Oxford University Press, 1969). Hereafter referred to as Confessions. All quotations from this edition.

⁵Michael York Mason, "The Three Burials in Hogg's Justified Sinner," Studies in Scottish Literature, 13 (1976), 17.

⁶E. T. A. Hoffmann, Die Elixiere des Teufel, Vol. II, E. T. A. Hoffmann Werke in Fünf Bänden, ed. Gisela Spiekerkötter (Frankfurt: Stauffacher Verlag, 1965), p. 55. All quotations in German from this edition.

⁷Ralph Tymms, Doubles in Literary Psychology (Cambridge, England: Bowes & Bowes, 1949), p. 34n. refers to this incident.

⁸Donald Ward, The Divine Twins: An Indo-European Myth in Germanic Tradition, Vol. XIX, Folklore Studies: (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), p. 3.

⁹Károlyi Kérenyi, Zeus and Hera, trans. Cristopher Holme (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), p. 53ff discusses the significance of incestuous relationships as important mythic aspect of deities.

¹⁰Otto Rank, "The Double as Immortal Self" in Beyond Psychology (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1958), pp. 62-101 best expresses this psychoanalyst's point of view.

¹¹Robert Rogers, A Psychoanalytic Study of the Double in Literature (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1970).

¹²Ibid, p.33.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴C.F. Keppler, The Literature of the Second Self (Tucson, Arizona: University of Arizona Press, 1972).

¹⁵Ibid, p. x.

¹⁶Ibid, pp. 192-3.

¹⁷Ibid, p. 192.

¹⁸Albert J. Guerard, "Concepts of the Double," Stories of the Double (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1967), pp. 1-2.

¹⁹Keppler, p. 2.

²⁰Ibid, p. 3.

²¹James Hillman, Revisioning Psychology (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), p. x.

²²Hillman, "Pothos," Loose Ends: Primary Papers in Archetypal Psychology (Zurich: Spring Publications, 1975), p. 60.

²³William G. Doty, "Hermes Heteronymous Appellations," Facing the Gods, ed. James Hillman (University of Dallas: Spring Publications, 1980), p. 128, lists some interesting appellations of Hermes from antiquity including: prophEtEs (prophet, herald, interpreter), kEryx (messenger, herald), Hermaneus (interpreter) and logos (word). Also see Walter Otto, The Homeric Gods: The Spiritual Significance of Greek Religion, trans. Moses Hadas (New York: Pantheon Books, 1954), p. 114ff.

²⁴Hillman, The Dream and the Underworld (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), p. 180.

²⁵Homeric Hymn to Hermes, quo. in Mark P. O. Morford and Robert J. Lenardon, Classical Mythology (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1971), pp. 169-181.

²⁶Károly Kerényi, Hermes, Guide of Souls: The Mythologem of the Masculine Source of Life, trans. Murray Stein (Zurich: Spring Publications, 1976), p. 24.

²⁷C. G. Jung, "The Spiritus Mercurius," in Alchemical Works, Vol XIII, The Collected Works of C. G. Jung,

Bollingen Series XX, trans. R. F. C. Hull (Princeton University Press, 1969), pp. 193-250.

²⁸Mythographers tend to favor one Hermes over another, arguing, for example, that the crude, phallic Hermes is the product of an early (and presumably inferior) religious development, while the elegant anthropomorphic forms of the God represent a more highly developed Hermes. In fact, both types of images existed side by side in the same times and places and it would be grossly unfair to this many-named deity to accord him only one identity. As Otto suggests, p. 124,

there can be no purpose in differentiating between earlier and later qualities [of Hermes] and in seeking for some lines of development to connect one with the other. . . . if a single trait actually did come to the fore later than others, it still remains the same basic meaning which has found new expression.

²⁹Barbara Royle Bloedé, "James Hogg's Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner," Etudes Anglaises, 26 (1973), 185, explains that Greek Theos, Latin deus, German Teufel, Latin duo, and English two are similarly rooted in a primeval D V from which the Sanskrit div and dyu derive.

³⁰La Table d'Emeraude, "an ancient Hermetic text," quo. in Grillot De Givry, Witchcraft, Magic and Alchemy, trans. J. Courtenay Locke (New York: Bonanza Books), pp. 240.

³¹C. A. Burland, Myths of Life and Death (London: Macmillan London Ltd., 1974), p. 74.

³²Ibid, p. 75.

Chapter Two

¹It should be noted that several of the motifs developed in the following section are further amplified in later chapters. Since these motifs are central concerns of more than one novel and can best be considered by comparison, I have postponed them for later examination. In the present chapter and the two that follow, my aim is to look closely at the actual material in each work to see what critical problems it generates and what internal solutions the text itself offers to these problems. Hence, I will not, at this point, stray too far from the textual arena.

²Tobias Mathias, The Pursuits of Literature quo. in Montague Summers, The Gothic Quest, A History of the Gothic Novel, 1938, rpt. (New York: Russell & Russell, Inc., 1964), p. 217.

³Montague Summers discusses the prevalence of similarly abbreviated Bibles in Lewis' day, p. 218.

⁴George Daniel, quo in Summers, p. 220.

⁵Robert Kiely, The Romantic Novel in England (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1972), pp. 1-2.

⁶Ibid, p. 26.

⁷Summers, p. 221.

⁸Peter Grudin, "The Monk: Matilda and the Rhetoric of Deceit," Journal of Narrative Technique, 5 (1975), 142.

⁹Mathias, quo. Summers, p. 218.

¹⁰Horace Walpole, The Castle of Otranto, a Gothic Story, ed. and intro. W. S. Lewis (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982).

¹¹Kiely, p. 5.

¹²Walpole, Epilogue to The Mysterious Mother, quo. in Alice S. Brandenburg, "The Theme of The Mysterious Mother," Modern Language Quarterly, 10 (1949), 469.

¹³Summers, p. 209.

¹⁴Kiely, p. 108.

¹⁵Ibid, p. 107.

¹⁶William Blake, The Marriage of Heaven and Hell 1825-1827, fac. ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 78.

¹⁷Grudin's article persuasively points out that Matilda's rhetoric and behavior stem from a long literary tradition of succubus-temptations.

¹⁸De Givry, pp. 180-182.

¹⁹Sir Walter Scott in his Ministrelsy of the Scottish Border (1810) includes Tamlin, a ballad which outlines an elaborate ritual for freeing sexual passion from its mythic dangers. In this ballad, Janet, a young noblewoman who is in the habit of riding out alone to old, sacred spots, meets a "wee, wee man / A bit aboon her knee," by whom she becomes

pregnant. When her parents demand that she produce a father for her child, she returns to this nether world "little man" and learns that he is actually her childhood playmate, a squire stolen by the fairies as a child. Tamlin rather likes the fairy life, but since he is afraid that he may be paid as "the tithe to hell," he gives Janet specific instructions as to how she can free him from his other-worldly state. First, she must go to Miles Cross on Halloween Night "when Fairie folk do ride" and "Betwixt the hours of twelve and one." Presumably, this is the only time and place when the upper and nether realms are properly aligned to allow the sort of "crossover" Hermes facilitates. Since the fairy-folk are shape-shifters, she must recognize Tamlin by a token: he will not be wearing one glove, suggesting his "in-between" state. When she sees him, she should snatch him from his horse, dip him into "a stand of milk and then a stand of water." She must hold fast, for the fairies will change him into the likeness of an asp, an adder, a "red-hot goad of iron" and other unpleasant things to try to get her to let go. Her trial-by-ordeal will be over, though, when they turn him into "a mother-naked man," i.e., the forms of the Other World will momentarily exactly reproduce the forms of this world. At once, she must throw her mantle over him and so claim for her world the "bairnie's father." The instructions related in this ballad (which are repeated as Janet follows them) seem to correspond in mythic terms with the more mimetic version of winning one's love away from the Other World expressed in Lewis' tale.

Chapter Three

¹Harvey W. Hewett-Thayer, Hoffman: Author of the Tales (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1948), p. 261, says "The division of the novel into two volumes may be ignored as quite without significance; it was an accidental result of composition and publication."

²James Hillman, The Myth of Analysis: Three Essays in Archetypal Psychology (New York: Harper & Row, 1972) p. 176ff discusses this aspect of mystery religions.

³Hewett-Thayer, p. 259-60.

⁴Sigmund Freud, "The Uncanny" in Vol. XVII of The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1955), p. 234.

⁵Hewett-Thayer, p. 262, explains,

The novel was, to be sure, written at a time when the so-called fate-drama was signally flourishing. In the early

years of the Romantic Period the idea of fate had been explored by Tieck in Karl von Berneck and then had been given the authority of Schiller's great reputation in Die Braut von Messina. The immense popularity of Zacharias Werner's Der vierundzwanzigste Februar . . . did much to establish the contemporary concept of the fate-tragedy as a specific and important genre. The then prevailing popularity of the type and Hoffmann's personal acquaintance with Werner have led some critics to under-score heavily the fate element in Die Elixiere and interpret it as in essence a novel of fate corresponding to the contemporary drama of fate.

⁶See n23 Chapter 1.

⁷Martin Luther, Colloquia "Prussia is full of demons," quo. in Harry E. Wedeck, Treasury of Witchcraft (New York: Philosophical Library, 1971), p. 108.

⁸Kali's necklace of hands and its implications for psychological development are discussed in Erich Neumann, The Great Mother (Princeton University Press, 1955), p. 152ff.

⁹An empty glove was often used in wedding bouquets to indicate the virginity of the bride.

¹⁰Butler's Lives of the Saints, 1779-80, Vol. II, ed. and revised Herbert Thurston and Donald Attwater (New York: P.J. Kennedy and Sons, 1956), p. 535.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²The Saints: A Concise Biographical Dictionary, ed. John Coulson (New York: Hawthorn Books, Inc., 1958), p. 53.

¹³St. Athanasius, The Life of St. Anthony, trans. and annotated by Robert T. Meyer (Westminister, Maryland: n. p., 1950), p. 23.

¹⁴Butler's Lives, I, p. 106.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 104.

¹⁶Ibid, II, p. 502.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Hoffmann, who was married to a Roman Catholic, wrote much of the first portion of The Elixirs while living in the Catholic city of Bamberg.

²⁰Keppler's chapter "The Second Self in Time" is useful in this context; however, he does not discuss Hoffmann's novel as an example of this phenomenon nor does he go much beyond considerations of different selves representing different times in the primary self's life.

²¹Hewett-Thayer mentions the conflict between the date of Medardus' death and the date of the publication of the first German translation of The Monk; he also discusses the apparent inaccuracy of the geneological material in terms of time between the death of Leonardo da Vinci and the death of Medardus, p. 261n. He considers both to be flaws in Hoffmann's narrative.

²²Horst Daemmerich, The Shattered Self: E. T. A. Hoffmann's Tragic Vision (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1973), p. 104.

²⁵Daemmerich, p. 107.

²⁶Doty, p. 128.

Chapter Four

¹John Carey, Introduction, James Hogg, The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner (Oxford University Press, 1981), p. xii-xiii.

²Carey, p. xiii, for example, says, "The best antidote to Saintsbury's theory is Lockhart's own novels."

³James Hogg, The Domestic Manners and Private Life of Sir Walter Scott (Stirling: E. Mackay, 1909), p. 40.

⁴The lengthy title of James Hogg's work on sheep diseases is The Shepherd's Guide: Being a Practical Treatise on the Diseases of Sheep, Their Causes, and the Best Means of Preventing Them; with observations on the most suitable farm-stocking for the various climates of this country (Edinburgh: J. Ballantyne and Co., 1807).

⁵A brief excerpt from The Poetic Mirror will suggest the style of Hogg's parody "Isabelle:"

If thou knew'st all, poor tail-less whelp,
Well might'st thou tremble, growl, and yelp;
But thou know'st nothing hast no part,
(Simple and stupid as thou art)
Save gratitude and truth of heart.

But they are coming by this way
 That have been dead for a year and a day;
 Without challenge, without change,
 They shall have their full revenge!

 There are two from the grave
 That I fain would save;
 Full hard is the weird
 For the young and the brave!
 Perchance they are rapt in vision sweet,
 While the passing breezes kiss their feet;
 and they are dreaming of joy and love!--
 Well, let them go--there's room above. (p. 145)

⁶In a letter to Kunz (Berlin, March 18, 1818) Hoffmann says "Es ist mir damit so ergangen wie mit dem ersten Bande der Elixiere des Teufels, den ich nicht hätte drucken lassen sollen." Another friend of Hoffmann's, Hitzig, wrote in 1823, just after Hoffmann's death, "the whole work was one upon which Hoffmann himself placed no value." (quo. Hewett-Thayer, p. 273). Hogg, who often bragged about his literary exploits scarcely mentions the Confessions in his autobiography, giving it little more than a page in which he laments that he received no real payment for it, but makes no relevant comment on the novel itself.

⁷Horst Daemmerich, p. 24.

⁸Robert M. Adams, Introduction, Hogg, The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner (London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1970), p. ix.

⁹Quoted in Kiely p. 209.

¹⁰Edith C. Batho, The Ettrick Shepherd, 1927, rpt. (New York: Greenwood Press, 1969) lists these dates.

¹¹Hogg, The Spy, 1, No. 1 (1810), quoted in Bloede, p. 176.

¹²Mason, 15-23, does a fine job of demonstrating the discrepancies in the descriptions of the locale and contents of the suicide's grave.

¹³Lewis Simpson, James Hogg: A Critical Study, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1962), p. 173.

¹⁴Kiely, p. 217.

¹⁵Ibid, p. 213.

¹⁶David Eggenschwiler, "James Hogg's Confessions and the Fall Into Division," Studies in Scottish Literature, 9 (1971), 26, for example, contends that Hogg's novel "explores better than any other novel of its time one of the

central problems of English Romanticism, the disharmony in the self that causes disharmony in society and in the whole of natural creation."

¹⁷Taylor, Maurice "The Conflicting Doctrines of the Scottish Reformation," in Essays on the Scottish Reformation 1513-1625, ed. David McRoberts, (Glasgow: Burns, 1962), p. 245.

¹⁸Joseph Pohle, "Justification," Vol. VIII, The Catholic Encyclopedia (New York: The Gilmary Society, 1913), p. 575.

¹⁹Martin Luther "Commentary on Peter and Jude" in A Compend of Luther's Theology, ed. Hugh T. Kerr (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1966), p. 114.

²⁰Kiely, p. 225.

²¹Adams, p. xiii.

²²Blake.

²³Bloedé, 174.

²⁴Kiely, p. 214

²⁵Elizabeth W. Harries, Duplication and Duplicity: James Hogg's Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner," Wordsworth Circle, 10 (1980), 194.

²⁶Carey, p. 257, quotes this review in its entirety from the Westminster Review, October, 1824..

²⁷Kiely, p. 218.

²⁸Adams, p. xiii.

²⁹Carey, p. xiv.

³⁰Ibid, p. xiv-xv.

³¹Harries, 190.

³²Poetic Mirror.

³³Carey, p. xxii, mentions this relationship.

³⁴Carey, xxiif, discusses some additional parallels between Elixirs and Confessions.

³⁵Eggenschwiler, 33.

Chapter Five

¹James Hillmann, Revisioning Psychology (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), p. 41.

²Freud discusses the ambiguity of words like "cleave" in "The Antithetical Meaning of Primal Words," vol. XI, Standard Edition, p. 155ff.

³Robin Lyndenberg, "Ghostly Rhetoric: Ambivalence in M. G. Lewis' The Monk," Ariel: A Review of International English Literature, 10 (1979), 75 ff. refers to the narrative "productions" of Lorenzo and other characters in The Monk.

⁴See, for example, Erich Neumann, The Origins and History of Consciousness (Princeton University Press, 1954) Chapter 1.

⁵Otto, p. 117.

⁶Kerényi, Hermes, p. 26, notes that the infant Hermes laughed when he saw the tortoise that would become his musical instrument, quoting the proverb, "Best it is to bide at home, since danger is abroad." Evidently, when one "leaves home," one becomes fair game for Hermes who is always on the road.

⁷Jung, "Spiritus Mercurius," p. 193.

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