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Ideal, Conflict, Destruction

Lovers' Dreams in the 18th, 19th and 20th Centuries (Wieland's *Don Sylvio*, Hoffmann's *Elixiere*, Bachmann's *Malina*)

This essay looks at novels from three different centuries – Christoph Martin Wieland's *Don Sylvio de Rosalva* (1764), E.T.A. Hoffmann's *The Devil's Elixirs* (1815/16) and Ingeborg Bachmann's *Malina* (1971) – each of which poses challenges to the notions of love and subjectivity of their day, with dreams having a pivotal function in this challenge. I examine how the lovers' dreams map their respective historically different relationships to the world, themselves and their beloved, as well as their diverse notions of love. Furthermore, I will explore how the presentation of dreams in these three novels reveals both hidden continuities as well as ruptures in the literary tradition of dream presentation.

1. Wieland's *Don Sylvio de Rosalva*

The full German title of Wieland's novel, *Der Sieg der Natur über die Schwärmerey, oder Die Abentheuer des Don Sylvio von Rosalva: Eine Geschichte worinn alles Wunderbare natürlich zugeht* (Nature triumphant over Fancy, or the Adventures of Don Sylvio de Rosalva: A History in which every marvellous Event occurs naturally; 1764),¹ aligns the novel on the one hand with Jean-Jacques Rousseau's philosophical stance of privileging nature over culture. It takes part in the

¹ Christoph Martin Wieland, *Der Sieg der Natur über die Schwärmerey, oder die Abentheuer des Don Sylvio von Rosalva: Eine Geschichte worinn alles Wunderbare natürlich zugeht*. Ed. by Klaus Manger and Jan Philipp Reemtsma (*Werke: Historisch-kritische Ausgabe*, vol. 7.1). Berlin: de Gruyter 2009, 1–338; henceforth quoted as DS. The English translation, by an anonymous translator, replaces the noun ›nature‹ in the German title with the term ›reason‹: *Reason Triumphant over Fancy: Exemplified in the Singular Adventures of Don Sylvio de Rosalva: A History in which every Marvellous Event Occurs Naturally*. 3 vols. London: J. Wilkie, S. Leacroft and C. Heydinger 1773; henceforth quoted as DSe with numbers of volume and page.

Enlightenment project of critically examining deformations brought about by ill-conceived notions of culture and testing them against the natural powers of reason.² On the other hand, the genre designation ›adventure novel‹ suggests to the reader the thrill of events far removed from everyday life. It harks back to the tradition of the picaresque novel and its notion of learning by experience. The reader is thus led to expect a novel in which didacticism³ takes unusually entertaining forms, and which balances the exuberant with common sense, thus also participating in the critique of narrow-minded, desiccated forms of Enlightenment.

Prior to the main plot of the novel developing, Wieland's Don Sylvio has undergone a literary education in three stages. His basic education by the local vicar is rudimentary: Don Sylvio acquires just enough Latin to understand Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. His further education by his aunt Mencia, based on the heroic novels by Mademoiselle de Scudery (1607–1701), aims to fill him with (outdated) ideals of chivalry. These suffice to impress a village audience, but not to satisfy his own hunger to fill the emptiness of his existence as an idle rich boy in the provinces. He tries to still this hunger by ›educating‹ himself via the fairy-tales of Baroness d'Aulnoy (1650/51–1705) and Charles Perrault (1628–1703). The result of this frothy literary diet –

² For the Enlightenment debate on ›Schwärmerei‹ (enthusiasm) cf. the following two essays by Manfred Engel, »Die Rehabilitation des Schwärmers: Theorie und Darstellung des Schwärmens in Spätaufklärung und früher Goethezeit«. In: Hans-Jürgen Schings (ed.), *Der ganze Mensch: Anthropologie und Literatur im 18. Jahrhundert*. Stuttgart: Metzler 1994, 469–498; id., »Das ›Wahre‹, das ›Gute‹ und die ›Zauberlaterne der begeisterten Phantasie‹: Legitimationsprobleme der Vernunft in der spätaufklärerischen Schwärmerdebatte. In: *German Life and Letters* 62 (2009), 53–66.

³ Cf. the analysis of Wieland's construction of the narrator–reader relationship in the tradition of Cervantes, Fielding and Sterne by Charlotte C. Prather, »C.M. Wieland's Narrators, Heroes and Readers«. In: *The Germanic Review* 45 (1980), 64–73. Cf. also the narratological analyses of Wieland's novel by Lieselotte Kurth-Voigt, *Perspectives and Points of View: The Early Works of Wieland and Their Background*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP 1974, 115–135; Richard G. Rogan, »The Reader in Wieland's *Die Abenteuer des Don Sylvio von Rosalva*«. In: *German Studies Review* 4.2 (1981), 177–193; Christiane Seiler, »Die Rolle des Lesers in Wielands *Don Sylvio* und *Agathon*«. In: *Lessing Yearbook* 9 (1977), 152–165.

consumed here, in a reversal of gender stereotypes, by a naïve boy – is the protagonist's inability to distinguish truth from error, the marvellous from the natural, imagination from fact. He is presented as the literary successor of Don Quixote, as an »unsettled Brain« (DSe I, 13)⁴ or a flawed, though noble, subject.

It is this intellectual vertigo which the novel explores with humour and imagination, portraying Don Sylvio's short-circuiting from fairy-tales to wishful thinking, from daydreams to night-time dreams, from night-time dreams to the mis-mapping of reality according to his dreams (cf. DS 27 f.).⁵ The novel revolves around Sylvio's pursuit of a blue butterfly (cf. DS 45), which Sylvio insists is a transformed princess, identical to the person whose miniature portrait he found while pursuing the butterfly, and whom he is destined to love and liberate. Sylvio tells his servant Pedrillo:

I threw up a bed for myself, and *Pimpimp* [Sylvio's dog] went asleep by my side, while I lay awake, musing upon my present situation. The moon-light at length shone so very fine, that it induced me to get out, and take a little turn in the alley before the grotto.

I had not been long walking, when all on a sudden, I was struck with a burst of light, that instantly seemed to gild the trees and bushes on all sides. I looked up very attentively at this phenomenon, which appeared to be a globe of fire, and to move in a higher sphere than the Moon itself. At length it insensibly descended toward the place where I stood. You cannot conceive, *Pedrillo*, the joy which this apparition gave me.

⁴ »schwindlichtes Gehirn« (DS 15).

⁵ For an analysis of the different levels of imagination and reality in *Don Sylvio* see John McCarthy, *Fantasy and Reality: An Epistemological Approach to Wieland*. Frankfurt/M., Bern: Lang 1974, 43–70. Cf. also discussions of the place of the novel in literary history, ranging from claims for Wieland's modernity by Wolfgang Kayser, »Die Anfänge des modernen Romans im 18. Jahrhundert und seine heutige Krise«. In: *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* 28 (1954), 417–446, here 425; to the more nuanced approach by Wolfgang Preisendanz, »Die Auseinandersetzung mit dem Nachahmungsprinzip in Deutschland und die besondere Rolle der Romane Wielands (*Don Sylvio, Agathon*)«. In: Hans Robert Jauß (ed.), *Nachahmung und Illusion*. Munich: Eidos 1964, 72–95; and the examination of the novel's complex relationship to the philosophy and aesthetics of Enlightenment by Peter J. Brenner, »Kritische Form: Zur Dialektik der Aufklärung in Wielands Roman *Don Sylvio von Rosalva*«. In: *Jahrbuch der deutschen Schillergesellschaft* 20 (1976), 162–183. For an approach via Luhmann cf. Andreas Seidler, *Der Reiz der Lektüre: Wielands »Don Sylvio« und die Autonomisierung der Literatur*. Heidelberg: Winter 2008.

[...] The Globe of Fire, which continually increased in size as it came nearer, burst at length with a prodigious noise, a little over my head; and instead of it, I beheld a lady of wonderful beauty seated on a chariot made of Carbuncles, drawn by two winged Serpents of flame colour: Around her fluttered upon a thin Silver Cloud, a multitude of *Salamanders*, in the shape of little Boys, winged, and of a supernatural beauty. Their hair appeared like *Titan*'s curling beams; their wings were flames; their bodies whiter than the snow in sunshine; their foreheads and cheeks more radiant than the splendours of *Aurora*. [...]

Don *Sylvio*, she began, I am the Fairy *Radiante*, whose Life thou didst preserve in the day when thou beheldest me, under the shape of a little Green Frog; – that Life, on which, (however despicable it might then appear,) depended the glories wherein thou now survey'st me. Thou know'st that in every hundred years, we are necessitated to assume, for the space of eight days together, the figure of some bird or other animal; [...]. hapless Don *Sylvio*! the Blue Butterfly caught by thee this morning was thy Princess! She saw thee, in the grove, and instantly she loved thee, [...].

[...] be assured, that whenever thou findest thyself in distress, my succour shall not be implored in vain.

At these words, The Fairy, her Chariot, and the *Salamanders* disappeared; while I, finding myself greatly fatigued, fell into that profound Slumber, out of which I don't think I should have waked till this time, had not you come to rouse me (DSe I, 58–67).⁶

⁶ »Ich machte mir ein Lager, und Pimpimp schlief neben mir ein, während, daß ich den Gedanken nachhieng, die meine Umstände mit sich brachten. Der Mond schien so anmuthig, daß er mich zu einem Spatziergang unter den Bäumen, die vor der Grotte stunden, einzuladen schien./ Ich war nicht lange auf und nieder gegangen, so sah ich einen plötzlichen Glanz, der die Bäume und Gesträuche weit umher vergöldete. Ich stutzte auf, und erblickte eine feurige Kugel in der Luft, die weit höher als der Mond zu schweben schien, und sich langsam gegen den Ort, wo ich stund, herab senkte. Du kannst dir nicht vorstellen, Pedrillo, wie groß die Freude war, die ich über diesen Anblick empfand./ [...] Die feurige Kugel, die im Annähern immer grösser wurde, zersprang nah über mir mit einem grossen Knall, und an ihrer statt sah ich eine wunderschöne Dame auf einem Wagen von Carfunkeln, der von zween feuerfarben geflügelten Schlangen gezogen wurde. Um sie her flatterten auf einer kleinen silbernen Wolke eine Menge Salamander, in Gestalt kleiner geflügelten Knaben von überirrdischer Schönheit; ihre Haare schienen gekräuselte Sonnenstralen, ihre Flügel Feuerflammen, ihr Leib weisser als der Schnee im Sonnenschein, und die Farbe der Morgenröthe schimmerte um ihre Stirn und auf ihren Wangen. [...]/ Don *Sylvio*, sagte sie zu mir, ich bin die Fee *Radiante*, welcher du neulich in der Gestalt eines kleinen Frosches ein Leben gerettet hast, von welchem so verächtlich es schien, dasjenige abhieng, worinn du mich jetzt siehest. Du weißt, daß wir alle hundert Jahre acht Tage lang die Gestalt irgend eines Vogels oder Thiers annehmen müssen, [...]. Unglücklicher Don *Sylvio*! der blaue Sommer-Vogel, den du diesen Morgen fiengest, war deine Princeßin; sie sah dich im

The novel suggests an illicit merging of reality and dreams in the protagonist's mind in a variety of ways: (1) In the quotation above, Sylvio's tale of his encounter with a fiery globe and a fairy is framed by sleep. By having Sylvio's dog fall asleep at the beginning of this alleged encounter, and Sylvio himself at the end of it, the framing device suggests to the reader that the border between waking and dreaming may have been different to the one the protagonist-narrator himself perceived. (2) Sylvio's account does not display the incoherence of a genuine night-time dream; rather, it is marked as dream-like by his borrowing from familiar fairy-tales the elements of supernatural occurrences, such as the fairy's arrival from the sky, and fantastic creatures like winged serpents and salamanders as benign servants. (3) For Sylvio, the main part of his experience, which he believes is taking place in waking life, functions as a »message dream«:⁷ The fairy announces the identity of disparate things, namely of herself and the frog which Sylvio recently rescued on the one hand, and of the blue butterfly he pursued and the portrait of a lady he found on the other hand. In his own mind, their common identity (which he had already assumed prior to the fairy's announcement by drawing support for his own wishes from his fairy-tale ›education‹) is thus apparently authorized by a higher being, and the fairy's words need no further interpretation.

However, both the fictional narratee of Sylvio's message dream, his servant Pedrillo, and the heterodiegetic narrator of the frame narrative, into which Sylvio's tale is embedded, offer different perspectives to the one the intradiegetic narrator gives. Soundly enough, Pedrillo has enough common sense to interpret the fanciful story not as fact, but fiction, namely as a dream. But the limitations of his common sense are soon comically revealed when he takes reality too literally:

Walde, und liebte dich so bald sie dich sah; [...] sey versichert, daß du meinen Beystand, wo er nöthig seyn wird, nie vergeblich anrufen sollst./ Mit diesen Worten verschwand die Fee, der Wagen, und die Salamander. Ich befand mich so abgemattet, daß ich in einen tiefen Schlaf fiel, und ich schlief vielleicht noch, wenn du mich nicht aufgeweckt hättest« (DS 36–39).

⁷ Cf. the classification of dream patterns in Manfred Engel, »Towards a Poetics of Dream Narration (with examples by Homer, Aelius Aristides, Jean Paul, Heine and Trakl)«. In: Bernard Dieterle/Manfred Engel (ed.), *Writing the Dream / Écrire le Rêve*. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann 2017, 19–44, here 29–31.

He cannot distinguish between reality and its mere representation in a portrait. Furthermore, he cannot point out the flaws in Sylvio's reasoning when the latter jumps from the spatial proximity between the portrait and the butterfly to claiming their secret identity, linked by magical metamorphosis. The novel delights the reader by portraying obvious errors in both Sylvio's and Pedrillo's reasoning, and invites him or her to correct these.

But the heterodiegetic narrator also intervenes – though under the self-deprecating chapter heading »Unimportant thoughts of the author«⁸ – in order to provide a corrective to both Don Sylvio's and Pedrillo's perspectives. He posits that there are two kinds of reality: things that really exist outside of us, and things that only exist in our minds:

The former exist, though we do not know that they exist; the latter exist only so far, as we imagine them to exist. These things have no reality in themselves; but with him who takes them for real, they have the same effect, as if they were so; and without depriving men, by this means, of a good share of that high opinion they entertain of themselves, we may assert, that these matters are the main springs of most of the actions of mankind, that they are the fountain either of our happiness or of our misery; the source of our most detestable vices, or of our most shining virtues (DSe I, 78).⁹

While taking subjective truths seriously, and allowing even for positive effects deriving from them, the heterodiegetic narrator insists on the need to differentiate between objective and subjective truth. Don Sylvio, however, does not only mistake what he has read in fairy-tales and what he dreams for fact; he goes so far as to reject sensory reality and to impose on it his wilful dream logic of metamorphoses and fate decreed by higher powers. Thus Sylvio relegates Pedrillo's factually accurate report of having seen a woman who resembles the miniature portrait (cf. DS 158) to a mere dream, because Sylvio is convinced

⁸ »Unmaßgebliche Gedanken des Autors« (DS 44) – which the 18th-century English translation renders, minus the irony of the original, as »The Author's Reflections« (DSe I, 76).

⁹ »Die erstern sind, wenn wir gleich nicht wissen, daß sie sind; die andre sind nur, in so fern wir uns einbilden, daß sie seyen. Sie sind für sich selbst nichts, aber sie machen auf denjenigen, der sie für wirklich hält, die nemliche Wirkung, als ob sie etwas wären; und ohne daß die Menschen sich deßwegen weniger dünken, sind sie die Triebfedern der meisten Handlungen des menschlichen Geschlechts, die Quelle unsrer Glückseligkeit und unsers Elends, unsrer schändlichsten Laster und unsrer glänzendesten Tugenden« (DS 44 f.).

that the princess cannot stop being a butterfly until *he* has found and liberated her. While his servant embodies the sober, yet banal and intellectually limited, belief in the evidence his eyes provide him with, Sylvio's allegedly higher dream logic is delightfully debunked as a series of bogus conclusions from unsound premises. Making Don Sylvio's errors the object of the reader's amusement, the novel exemplifies the author's conviction that books »instruct and correct their readers so much the more successfully, as they seem to be intended merely for amusement« (DSe II, 84).¹⁰ The direct representation of a positive model, by contrast, is dismissed as »that insipid species of morality, that systematical jumble of mis-shapen whimsical ideas« (DSe II, 85).¹¹

Accordingly, the reader is presented with comical depictions of Don Sylvio's errors by contrasting Sylvio's fairy-tale dreams with mundane reality; for example, the hero wakes up from his dream of embracing his ethereal princess into the reality of actually clasping to his chest the fat dairy maid from whom a stench of garlic emanates (cf. DS 29). On another occasion Sylvio strangles a hostile green dwarf in his dreams, only to wake up to holding his loyal servant Pedrillo in his grip (cf. DS 99–102). Nevertheless, the novel conceives of the naïve and over-enthusiastic protagonist as capable of rational insight. After the interlude of »A Combat between Love for the Picture and Love for the Original« (DSe II, 135),¹² he learns to understand and reconcile the relationship between the princess of his dreams and the real woman he encounters.

The novel rewards him with marriage to the beautiful woman, who turns out, however, to be not the woman depicted in the portrait, but her grand-daughter. And rather than embodying the ethereal beauty of the butterfly which Sylvio thought she had metamorphosed from, she is quite down to earth: The teenage widow of a septuagenarian whom she had married for his money. Thus his female partner is far from innocent, pure, virginal, fairy-tale-like. But in spite of her greater experience, rationality and savvyness, even her scheming, she is still

¹⁰ »mit desto besserm Erfolg unterrichten und bessern, da sie bloß zu belustigen scheinen« (DS 172).

¹¹ »dieses längst ausgedroschne moralische Stroh« (DS 172).

¹² »Streit zwischen der Liebe zum Bilde und der Liebe zum Original« (DS 196).

deemed to be a suitable partner for the dreamy, naïve and innocent 17-year-old boy.

In this reversal of the typical 18th-century associations of innocence and dreaminess with femininity, and of rational insight and experience with masculinity, Wieland depicts the relationship between desire and reason, dream and reality, with more complexity than the Enlightenment's trajectory towards perfection is often credited with. A balance between intellectual clarity and emotional maturity, striving for the ideal and yet accepting human limitations, between distance and human warmth, irony and enthusiasm, is the precondition for successfully uniting dream and reality in *Don Sylvio*, overcoming the hero's poor education and flawed subjectivity, and making love and marriage (even in triple form!) the achievable aim of the comic novel. As Peter J. Brenner argues, this gives the impression that what is achieved in fiction also applies to the real world.¹³ It thus accounts for the sense of optimism in Wieland's novel – even though the irony of the text makes a distance between the real world and fiction palpable again and invites further questioning of the text.

2. Hoffmann's *Elixirs of the Devil*

At first sight, dreams in Hoffmann's *Elixirs*¹⁴ seem to embody the exact opposite of the dreams in Wieland's *Don Sylvio*.¹⁵ Where the latter

¹³ Cf. P. Brenner (note 5), 178: »Wenn das Erzählte als Besonderes eines in der Wirklichkeit gültigen Allgemeinen dargestellt wird, dann wird dadurch eine Identität von literarischer Fiktion und Wirklichkeit nahegelegt; es wird damit der Eindruck erweckt, das in der epischen Welt Geleistete sei auch in der realen gültig; der Absolutheitsanspruch aufklärerischen Denkens wird mithin nicht als Postulat vom Roman der Wirklichkeit entgegengehalten, sondern als bereits in dieser realisierbar vorgestellt« (»When the narrated world is presented as the specific case of something which is generally valid in reality, then an identity of literary fiction and reality is suggested; thus the impression is created that what is achieved in the epic world is also valid in the real world; therefore the novel does not set the absolute claims of Enlightenment thinking up against reality, but conceives them as something that can already be achieved within it«; trans. by the author).

¹⁴ E.T.A. Hoffmann, *Die Elixire des Teufels*. Ed. by Hartmut Steinecke and Gerhard Allroggen (*Sämtliche Werke*. 6 vols. Ed. by Wulf Segebrecht, Hartmut

are associated with fairies, noble desires, summer and lightness in the genre of comedy, the former are frequently linked to the devil, forbidden desires, nightmares and darkness in the Gothic genre. While the trajectory of Wieland's novel towards insight, balance and happy marriage embodies the values of Enlightenment in a sophisticated and complex narrative, Hoffmann's novel enacts a repetition compulsion across generations. It concentrates on exploring the tension between sexual desire and the desire for transcendence, and it features murder, rape and incest.¹⁶ Rather than depicting dreams of excessive idealism

Steinecke et al., vol. II.2). Frankfurt/M.: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag 1988, 9–352; henceforth quoted as EdT. The English translation by an anonymous contemporary translator can be found online: *The Devil's Elixir: From the German of E.T.A. Hoffmann*. 2 vols. Edinburgh: William Blackwood, London: T. Cadell 1824 and 1829, <https://archive.org/details/devilselixirfrom01hoffuoft> (22.8.17); henceforth quoted as EdTe. Although the German title has the noun ›elixir‹ in the plural, this translation uses the singular.

¹⁵ On the topic of dreams in E.T.A. Hoffmann, cf. Manfred Engel, ›Kulturgeschichte/n? Ein Modellentwurf am Beispiel der Kultur- und Literaturgeschichte des Traums‹. In: *KulturPoetik* 10 (2010), 153–176; Gerhard Lauer, ›Hoffmanns Träume: Über den Wahrheitsanspruch erzählter Träume‹. In: Peter-André Alt/Christiane Leiteritz (ed.), *Traum-Diskurse der Romantik*. Berlin, New York: de Gruyter 2005, 129–147; Marc Klesse, ›Oszillationsfiguren: Zu einer Poetik des Traums in E.T.A. Hoffmanns *Die Bergwerke zu Falun*‹. In: *E.T.A. Hoffmann-Jahrbuch* 18 (2010), 25–41; Ricarda Schmidt, ›Karnevaleske Mesallianzen oder der Autor als Bauchredner der Sprache? Eine Analyse Bachtinscher Ansätze für die Interpretation des Traumes in Hoffmanns *Die Abenteuer der Sylvester-Nacht* im Lichte malerischer Intertexte‹. In: Sheila Dickson/Mark Ward (ed.), *Romantic Dreams*. Glasgow: University of Glasgow French and German Publications 1998, 77–97; Monika Schmitz-Emans, ›Natuurspekulation als ›Vorwand‹ poetischer Gestaltung: Über das Verhältnis E.T.A. Hoffmanns zu den Lehren G.H. Schuberts‹. In: *Mitteilungen der E.T.A. Hoffmann-Gesellschaft* 34 (1988), 67–83; Inge Stegmann, *Deutung und Funktion des Traumes bei E.T.A. Hoffmann*. DPhil thesis Universität Bonn 1973; id., ›Die Wirklichkeit des Traumes bei E.T.A. Hoffmann‹. In: *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie* 95 (1976) Sonderheft, 64–93.

¹⁶ For analyses of the subjectivity explored in this novel see the different perspectives developed in the last few decades, ranging from psychological and/or narratological analyses of the divided self and its trajectory towards regaining cohesion to claims in line with Lacan that this division is portrayed as insurmountable. Cf. Karin Cramer, ›Bewußtseinspaltung in E.T.A. Hoffmanns Roman *Die Elixier des Teufels*‹. In: *Mitteilungen der E.T.A. Hoffmann-Gesellschaft* 16 (1970), 8–18; Horst S. Daemrlich, *The Shattered Self: E.T.A. Hoffmann's*

which are comically subjected to the test of reality, the most memorable and innovative dreams in *Elixirs* function as an expression of the repressed part of the self, the dark side of nature with which Romanticism was fascinated. Many dreams in *Elixirs* act out forbidden impulses or revive memories of guilty deeds in such a lively way that they frighten the dreamer – and the reader.

Particularly haunting are Medardus's dreams in the forest warden's house (cf. EdT 128 f.) and in prison (cf. EdT 200 f. and 212 f.). On his ninth night in prison Medardus recalls a dream with all the hallmarks of Gothic horror, including a dark prison cell, eerie sounds and voices, an apparently supernatural double, and torture:

I distinctly heard on the ground directly under me a light, but very audible knocking, which was repeated at measured intervals. I listened attentively. The noise was continued, as if with the determination to attract attention, and occasionally I could distinguish a strange sound of laughter, that also seemed to come out of the earth.

[...] At last I heard a low, stammering, hoarse voice syllabically pronounce my name – »Me-dar-dus! – Me-dar-dus!« [...]

Now, methought I recognised the voice as one I had known before, but it was then not so broken and so stammering. Nay, with a chill shivering of horror, I almost began to think there was something in the accents that I now heard, resembling the tones of my own voice, and involuntarily, as if I wished to try whether this were really so, I stammered in imitation, »Me-dar-dus! – Me-dar-dus!«

Hereupon the laughter was renewed, but it now sounded scornful and malicious. – »Broth-er, – Broth-er,« said the voice, »do you know me again? –

Tragic Vision. Detroit: Wayne State UP 1973; Walter Hinderer, »Die poetische Psychoanalyse in E.T.A. Hoffmanns Roman *Die Elixiere des Teufels*«. In: Gerhard Neumann (ed.), »*Hoffmanneske Geschichte*«: *Zu einer Literaturwissenschaft als Kulturwissenschaft*. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann 2005, 43–76; James M. McGlathery, »Demon Love: E.T.A. Hoffmann's *Elixiere des Teufels*«. In: *Colloquia Germanica* 12 (1979), 61–76; Johannes Harnischfeger, »Das Geheimnis der Identität: Zu E.T.A. Hoffmanns *Die Elixiere des Teufels*«. In: *Mitteilungen der E.T.A. Hoffmann-Gesellschaft* 36 (1990), 1–13; Wolfgang Nehring, »Gothic Novel und Schauerroman: Tradition und Innovation in Hoffmanns *Die Elixiere des Teufels*«. In: *E.T.A. Hoffmann-Jahrbuch* 1 (1992–93), 36–47; Dietrich Raff, *Ich-Bewußtsein und Wirklichkeitsauffassung bei E.T.A. Hoffmann: Eine Untersuchung der »Elixiere des Teufels« und des »Kater Murr«*. Rottweil: Emmanuel 1971; Ricarda Schmidt, »Narrative Strukturen romantischer Subjektivität in E.T.A. Hoffmanns *Die Elixiere des Teufels* und *Der Sandmann*«. In: *Germanisch-Romanische Monatsschrift* 49 (1999), 143–160.

Open the door – the-the door! – We shall go hence to the wood – to the wood!« (EdTe II, 35 f.).¹⁷

Hereafter, upon a sign received from the Dominican, the executioner stripped me naked, and tied my wrists together behind my back. How he placed me afterwards, I know not, but I heard the creaking of screws and pulleys, and felt how my stretched joints cracked, and were ready to break asunder. In the agony of superhuman torture, I screamed loudly and awoke.

The pain in my hands and feet continued as if I had been really on the rack, but this proceeded from the heavy chains which I still carried; yet, besides this, I found a strange pressure on my eye-lids, which, for some time, I was unable to lift up. At last it seemed as if a weight were taken from my forehead, and I was able to raise myself on my couch.

Here my nightly visions once more stepped forth into reality, and I felt an ice-cold shivering through my veins. Motionless like a statue, with his arms folded, the monk – the Dominican – whom I had seen in my dream stood there [...] (EdTe II, 62).¹⁸

In Medardus's prison dreams, his past self and his deeds are clearly recognizable as sources: He seems not only to hear his double, but also the death cries of people he had murdered or thought he had murdered (cf. EdT 201), and his guilty conscience anticipates a punishment he never receives in real life: torture. This most frightening

¹⁷ »Da vernahm ich deutlich unter mir ein leises, abgemessenes Klopfen. Ich horchte auf, das Klopfen dauerte fort, und dazwischen lachte es seltsamlich aus dem Boden hervor! [...] Endlich rief es leise, leise, aber wie mit häßlicher, heiserer, stammelnder Stimme hinter einander fort: Me-dar-dus! Me-dar-dus! [...] Jetzt tönte die Stimme dunkel in meinem Innern wie bekannt; ich hatte sie schon sonst gehört, doch nicht, wie mich es dünkte, so abgebrochen und so stammelnd. Ja mit Entsetzen glaubte ich, meinen eignen Sprachton zu vernehmen. Unwillkürlich, als wollte ich versuchen, ob es dem so sei, stammelte ich nach: Me-dar-dus . . . Me-dar-dus! Da lachte es wieder, aber höhnisch und grimmig, und rief: Brü-der-lein . . . Brü-der-lein, hast . . . du, du mi-mich erkannt . . . erkannt? . . . ma-mach auf . . . wir wo-wollen in den Wa-Wald . . . in den Wald!« (EdT 201 f.).

¹⁸ »Auf den Wink des Dominikaners zogen mich die Henkersknechte nackt aus, schnürten mir beide Arme über den Rücken zusammen, und hinaufgewunden fühlte ich, wie die ausgedehnten Gelenke knackend zerbröckeln wollten. In heillosem, wütendem Schmerz schrie ich laut auf, und erwachte. Der Schmerz an den Händen und Füßen dauerte fort, er rührte von den schweren Ketten her, die ich trug, doch empfand ich noch außerdem einen Druck über den Augen, die ich nicht aufzuschlagen vermochte. Endlich war es, als würde plötzlich eine Last mir von der Stirn genommen, ich richtete mich schnell empor, ein Dominikanermönch stand vor meinem Strohlager. Mein Traum trat in das Leben, eiskalt rieselte es mir durch die Adern« (EdT 213).

dream section is subsequently familiarized by showing that it was caused by realistic sensory stimuli, namely the painful sensation of his chains. Yet, the subsequent appearance of the Dominican monk in his waking life reasserts the eeriness of the dream by apparently suspending the rational way of understanding the dream that has just been offered. Thus the dreams oscillate between the psychologically explicable and the supernatural.

In a state of repentance in Rome, Medardus's sins haunt him in dreams with imagery of frightening metamorphoses:

Heads, with well-known features, came crawling about me on scarecrow legs, which grew out of their own ears. Strange winged monsters, too, which I knew not, and could not name, came floating through the air. Among these were ravens, and other birds, with human faces. But at last, these gave place to the Bishop's choir-master, at Königswald, with his sister. The latter wheeled herself about in a wild and furious *walz*, to which her brother supplied the music; but he kept all the while strumming on his own breast, which had become a violin.

Belcampo, whom I recognized, although he wore a hateful lizard's head, and sat upon a disgusting winged serpent, came driving up towards me. He wanted to comb my beard with a red-hot iron comb; but could not succeed in his attempt (EdTe II, 184).¹⁹

These fantastic dream images of composite forms of human and animal and of human and mechanical parts, are reminiscent of paintings by Hieronymus Bosch, and thus tap into culturally available sources of the Christian depiction of purgatory which envisages punishment for sins by depriving the body of its physical integrity. Moreover, the disgusting winged worm in Medardus's dream constitutes the dark flip side of Don Sylvio's dream of delightful winged serpents and salamanders in the service of a good fairy.

And yet, dreams in *Elixirs* are more complex and heterogeneous than the prominence of their Gothic tone and their violent and frightening manifestations of repressed desire and guilt seem to suggest.

¹⁹ »Köpfe krochen mit Heuschreckenbeinen, die ihnen an die Ohren gewachsen, umher und lachten mich hämisch an – seltsames Geflügel – Raben mit Menschengesichtern rauschten in der Luft – Ich erkannte den Konzertmeister aus B. mit seiner Schwester, die drehte sich in wildem Walzer, und der Bruder spielte dazu auf, aber auf der eigenen Brust streichend, die zur Geige worden. – Belcampo, mit einem häßlichen Eidechsen Gesicht, auf einem ekelhaften geflügelten Wurm sitzend, fuhr auf mich ein, er wollte meinen Bart kämmen, mit eisernem glühendem Kamm – aber es gelang ihm nicht« (EdT 270).

They are also linked more closely to Wieland than many readers may have been aware of. Like Wieland, Hoffmann explores the threshold between dream and reality at the moment of waking up. But instead of offering a comical contrast to facilitate the separation of the two different realms for the reader, as Wieland does, Hoffmann deliberately blurs the boundaries between the two states of consciousness with the effect of magnifying the overpowering emotional experience of the repressed. Repeatedly, Medardus comments that his dream steps forth into reality (cf. EdTe II, 62), and on waking, he sees in real life what he has just dreamt of.²⁰

At the times of his forest and prison dreams Medardus has shed his monk's habit and assumed a lay identity. But his nightmares eerily confront him with his own repressed past, epitomized by the dialogue with his double. The fact that he sees this phantom in his monk's habit both in his forest dream as well as on waking from it reinforces the defamiliarization strategies of the dream. But it simultaneously anticipates his later realization that he has a double in real life: Thus the double functions not only as an intra-psychic dream phenomenon, but also as the external reality of a half-brother who embodies living proof of their father's sinful life.

Elixirs also adopts from *Don Sylvio* the motif of a painting with which the viewer falls in love and which subsequently dominates their dreams. In *Elixirs*, this motif itself is doubled into a mythical and a psychological version. At the time of Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519), the painter Francesco, the father of the whole sinful clan, falls in love, Pygmalion-like, with his own painting of St Rosalia in which he has sinfully mixed the sacred with the sexually alluring. Subsequently, he has a relationship with a woman who resembles his painting, but she turns out to be the devil, and their offspring perpetuate the parents' sins (cf. EdT 283). Several generations later, both Medardus's and Aurelie's desire is shaped by portraits. Medardus believes that, although he did not see her face, the woman who confesses her love for him in his confession box looks like the portrait of St Rosalia that hangs in the church in which he serves (which, it turns out, is the very portrait his ancestor painted – one of several identical objects circulat-

²⁰ »der grauenhafte Traum trat ins Leben« (EdT 129), »Mein Traum trat in das Leben« (EdT 213).

ing among the generations in the novel). The blue eyes in his ancestor's portrait dominate his dreams and motivate him to leave his monastic order in pursuit of her likeness in the outside world. As in Wieland's *Don Sylvio*, the colour blue marks the dreamer's longing, but in Hoffmann's novel there is of course also an allusion to Heinrich von Ofterdingen's dream of the blue eyes of Mathilde. However, rather than promising personal fulfilment, as in Novalis's work, the blue eyes of St Rosalia in *Elixirs* embody the conflict between sexual allure and transcendental longing which the Renaissance painter deliberately put into this portrait. Aurelie (who lives at the beginning of the 19th century) closely resembles the portrait of that Renaissance St Rosalia.

Aurelie's own desire is also awakened by a portrait. Hoffmann's novel extends the psychological roots of Aurelie's desire deep into her childhood. She maps her brother's claim that their mother is communicating with the devil to her own observation of her mother secretly adoring a man's portrait. It is this very portrait she saw as a child which inspires her dreams:

one night the half-forgotten image of the unknown appeared before me, in colours so vivid and lively, that he was no longer a dead phantom on canvass, but a corporeal and living being, who gazed on me with an aspect of kindness and compassion.

»Alas!« cried I, »must I then die? What is it by which I am thus unspeakably tormented?« – »Thou lovest me, Aurelia,« said the vision, »and this is the cause of thy present illness and distraction. But canst thou dissolve the vows of one already devoted to heaven?« To my astonishment, I now perceived that the unknown wore the robes of a monk (EdTe II, 121).²¹

This dream simultaneously expresses Aurelie's unconscious desire, rooted in her past (namely her fascination with her mother's fixation on a portrait), and prophesies the future: that the man she will love is tied by religious vows. The portrait turns out to be of Medardus's father, and Medardus appears to be his living image. Thus for all three

²¹ »Ich weiß selbst nicht wie es kam, urplötzlich erschien mir das vergessene Bild jenes unbekanntes Mannes so lebhaft, daß es mir war, als stehe es vor mir, Blicke des Mitleids auf mich gerichtet. ›Ach! – soll ich denn sterben? – was ist es, das mich so unaussprechlich quält?‹ So rief ich dem Traumbilde entgegen, da lächelte der Unbekannte und antwortete: Du liebst mich, Aurelie; das ist deine Qual, aber kannst du die Gelübde des Gottgeweihten brechen? – Zu meinem Erstaunen wurde ich nun gewahr, daß der Unbekannte das Ordenskleid der Capuziner trug« (EdT 241).

dreaming lovers (Don Sylvio, Medardus and Aurelie) there is a generation gap between the person presented in the portrait the dreamer falls in love with and the embodied object of desire they pursue in the plot of the novels. This generation gap marks the shared assumption in the Enlightenment and in Romanticism that the process of falling in love is characterized by imagination and projection on the part of the dreamer, rather than knowledge of the object of desire. Aurelie's love, like that of Medardus, but unlike that of Don Sylvio, is tainted by religious notions of sin which contribute to the formation of a repressed unconscious.

In both cases the protagonists' infatuation with the person in the portrait is further mediated by literature: fairy tales for Don Sylvio, Matthew Gregory Lewis's Gothic horror novel *The Monk* (1796) for Aurelie. Both Wieland and Hoffmann thus explore how imagination, art and fiction constitute desire, which in turn is expressed in dreams. The different nature of Aurelie's desire from that of Don Sylvio, characterized, as hers is, by taboo, anxiety and attempts at repression, is reinforced by the lurid novel she reads. Education via literature is again found wanting! As Aurelie's account below shows, literature fosters the sinful obsession which penetrates her dreams:

I thought of the monk in the novel, and I was overcome by a strange presentiment that the beloved and feared dream image might be that Medardus. The thought was terrible, I didn't know why? and my condition became indeed more embarrassing and disturbing than I was able to bear. I was swimming in a sea of presentiments and dreams. But in vain did I try to banish the image of the monk from my inner self; unhappy child, I could not resist the sinful love for the man dedicated to God.²²

²² Trans. by Sheila Dickson; the anonymous translator of the English version of 1829 does not give a full translation of Aurelie's letter, but switches from translation to merely a summary, for he claims that her »letter is very long, and contains recapitulation, in a diffuse rambling style, of events that are already known to the reader« (EdTe II, 124). The passage given above is omitted from his translation. German original: »Ich dachte an den Mönch im Roman und es überfiel mich eine seltsame Ahnung, daß das geliebte und gefürchtete Traumbild jener Medardus sein könnte. Der Gedanke war mir schrecklich, selbst wußte ich nicht, warum? und mein Zustand wurde in der Tat peinlicher und verstörter, als ich es zu ertragen vermochte. Ich schwamm in einem Meer von Ahnungen und Träumen. Aber vergebens suchte ich das Bild des Mönchs aus meinem Innern zu verbannen; ich unglückliches Kind konnte nicht widerstehen der sündigen Liebe zu dem Gottgeweihten« (EdT 242).

The abstraction in Aurelie's dream narratives is notable, especially when compared to the much more concrete dreams of Medardus or Sylvio. Aurelie's dream quoted above conveys mainly a sense of longing, restlessness and guilt. Yet beyond the image of the monk, her dream contains neither images nor actions. During the night before Aurelie decides to unburden her guilty conscience by confession (to the object of her illicit love), she is particularly haunted by her own dreams:

It was an agonizing, terrible night I had to endure. Horrible, wicked images, such as I had never seen, never thought, were flitting all around me, but then, in the midst of it all, the monk stood, offering me his hand as if to rescue me, and cried: Only say that you love me, and you will be free of all suffering. Then I felt compelled to say: Yes, Medardus, I love you! – and gone were all the spectres of hell! Finally I got up, dressed and went to the church at the monastery.²³

Aurelie's »wicked images« seem to allude to sexual desires, but these are not named, described or embodied in this dream. They are merely implied by her moral condemnation of her dream images: horrible, wicked, spectres of hell. Hers is thus a heavily self-censored dream narrative. Nevertheless, Aurelie here becomes the subject of the gaze of desire and the dream, while in Wieland's *Don Sylvio* the woman is merely the traditional object of the male gaze and of male dreams (although, as I have shown above, Wieland does subvert other aspects of gender stereotypes).

Elixirs explores, for both genders, the division within the individual between transcendental ideal and earthly desires and ambition (including the inability to decide which of two goals is the right one; cf. EdT 266). The relationship between dreams and reality takes on a nightmarish aspect, with dreams functioning as the repressed part of the self, giving voice to forbidden impulses or guilty memories. For Aurelie, her desires remain entirely in the realm of the imaginary and

²³ Trans. by Sheila Dickson. This passage is also omitted in the 1829 translation. German original: »Es war eine qualvolle, entsetzliche Nacht, die ich zu überstehen hatte. Abscheuliche, freveliche Bilder, wie ich sie nie gesehen, nie gedacht, umgaukelten mich, aber dann mitten drunter stand der Mönch da, mir die Hand wie zur Rettung bietend und rief: Sprich es nur aus, daß du mich liebst, und frei bist du aller Not. Da mußst' ich unwillkürlich rufen: Ja Medardus, ich liebe dich! – und verschwunden waren die Geister der Hölle! Endlich stand ich auf, kleidete mich an, und ging nach der Klosterkirche« (EdT 243).

her dreams, and even her dream narratives never convey any concrete dream actions. Unsurprisingly, she dies saint-like. For Medardus, however, the conflict between opposing tendencies in himself results in a zigzag course between crime on the one hand, and guilt, remorse and atonement on the other.

However, as I have already indicated with regard to Aurelie's dream quoted above, the dream also has a prophetic function in *Elixirs*, in line with Gotthilf Heinrich Schubert's natural philosophy, much admired by Hoffmann.²⁴ The most prominent of the prophetic dreams is that of Medardus's ultimate redemption by Aurelie (cf. EdT 313–316) while still in Rome:

My only refuge was in prayer; and I heard, in a strange manner, the audible effect of my own voice. Now it gradually triumphed over the renewed knocking and stammering of the spectre; but at last all was confused and lost in the hum of ten thousand voices, as when the air is filled with myriads of insects. Anon this humming changed to articulate lamentations as before, and methought I was again wrapt in the dark cloud; but suddenly there came over it a gleam of the most exquisite morning red. Through the dark vapours descended a tall and dignified form, on whose bosom a cross shone with dazzling effulgence. The features were those of St Rosalia!

The lamentations were now turned to an exulting hymn of praise; and from afar I beheld the landscape again blooming in the luxuriance of spring. Only my own voice was now heard, lamenting – »Shall I then alone, of all these rejoicing inhabitants of earth, be given a prey to everlasting torments?« – Then a change came over that beautiful phantom. Its awe-striking dignity was transformed into mild grace and beneficence, and a sweet smile was diffused over her features.

»Aurelia!« cried I aloud, and with that name I at last in reality awoke, and saw the clear morning light beaming into my cell (EdTe II, 261 f.).²⁵

²⁴ Cf. Gotthilf Heinrich Schubert, *Die Symbolik des Traumes* [1814]. Bamberg: Carl Friedrich Kunz 2nd edn 1821, 23; Schubert attributes prophetic abilities both to dream and poetry. Cf. also Gotthilf Heinrich Schubert, *Ansichten von der Nachtseite der Naturwissenschaft*. Karben: Petra Wald 1997 [Repr. of the first edn Dresden: Arnold 1808], 356; here Schubert emphasizes the increased feeling for commonality in the subjects of magnetic sleep (»jenes geschärfte Gemeingefühl«).

²⁵ »Es geschah, daß ich mein Gebet, nur im Innern gedacht, laut und vernehmlich hörte, wie es Herr wurde über das Klopfen und Kichern und unheimliche Geschwätz des furchtbaren Doppelgängers, aber zuletzt sich verlor in ein seltsames Summen, wie wenn der Südwind Schwärme feindlicher Insekten geweckt hat, die giftige Saugrüssel ansetzen an die blühende Saat. Zu jener trostlosen Klage der Menschen wurde das Summen, und meine Seele frug, ist

Many aspects of the original dream as given in footnote 25 are omitted in the 1829 translation quoted above, particularly the metamorphosis from the Christ figure into a rose, then into a woman, and finally into Aurelie – the translation presents these four aspects all as pertaining to St Rosalia/Aurelie, thus reducing the complexity and omitting the religious dimension of the dream. Furthermore, the equation of the colour red with the blood of Christ and with grace is omitted, as well as the rose's comment on the struggle between light and fire.

A rose (symbolizing St Rosalia) seems to be speaking the consoling words: »It is not fire which was victorious, there is no struggle between light and fire. – Fire is the word illuminating the sinner«. ²⁶ Thus Medardus's dream can be read as a prophetic symbolic dream which prefigures the road to redemption the protagonist still has to find, via the death of the beloved: the end to the conflict between the desire for transcendence (light) and the desire for passion (fire). ²⁷

das nicht der weissagende Traum, der sich auf deine blutende Wunde heilend und tröstend legen will? – In dem Augenblicke brach der Purpurschimmer des Abendrots durch den düstern farblosen Nebel, aber in ihm erhob sich eine hohe Gestalt. – Es war Christus, aus jeder seiner Wunden perlte ein Tropfen Bluts und wiedergegeben war der Erde das Rot, und der Menschen Jammer wurde ein jauchzender Hymnus, denn das Rot war die Gnade des Herrn die über ihnen aufgegangen! Nur Medardus Blut floß noch farblos aus der Wunde, und er flehte inbrünstig: Soll auf der ganzen weiten Erde *ich, ich* allein nur trostlos der ewigen Qual der Verdammten preisgegeben bleiben? da regte es sich in den Büschen – eine Rose, von himmlischer Glut hoch gefärbt, streckte ihr Haupt empor und schaute den Medardus an mit englisch mildem Lächeln, und süßer Duft umfing ihn, und der Duft war das wunderbare Leuchten des reinsten Frühlingsäthers. »Nicht das Feuer hat gesiegt, kein Kampf zwischen Licht und Feuer. – Feuer ist das Wort, das den Sündigen erleuchtet.« Es war, als hätte die Rose diese Worte gesprochen, aber die Rose war ein holdes Frauenbild. – In weißem Gewande, Rosen in das dunkle Haar geflochten, trat sie mir entgegen. – Aurelie, schrie ich auf, aus dem Traume erwachend; ein wunderbarer Rosengeruch erfüllte die Zelle und für Täuschung meiner aufgeregten Sinne muß' ich es wohl halten, als ich deutlich Aureliens Gestalt wahrzunehmen glaubte, wie sie mich mit ernsten Blicken anschaute und dann in den Strahlen des Morgens, die in die Zelle fielen, zu verduften schien« (EdT 315 f.).

²⁶ Trans. by Sheila Dickson; »Nicht das Feuer hat gesiegt, kein Kampf zwischen Licht und Feuer. – Feuer ist das Wort, das den Sündigen erleuchtet« (EdT 316).

²⁷ Cf. related ideas in G.H. Schubert, *Symbolik* (note 24). Schubert uses similar metaphors for divine revelations: »the story of a restoration and return of man to his original purpose, the story of a great struggle of light against darkness and the

These two different functions of dreams in *Elixirs* (embodying repressed desire/guilt and prophetic vision and redemption) point to the novel's roots in the transcendental idealism of Romanticism, as well as to its exploration of the power of the unconscious, which was to become so dominant in Modernism. Medardus's prophetic dream as well as Aurelie's death as a martyr embody Schubert's Romantic assumption that spirituality, not sensuality, is the ultimate aim of natural human development²⁸ – an assumption which Hoffmann himself modifies in later dream narratives in which he explores the need for a balance between the spiritual/aspirational and the sensual/realistic.²⁹

3. Bachmann's *Malina*

In contrast to the prominence of male dreamers in Wieland's and Hoffmann's works, in Bachmann's *Malina*³⁰ it is only the female nar-

ultimate victory of truth over lies« (»die Geschichte einer Wiederherstellung und Wiederbringung des Menschen, zu seiner ursprünglichen Bestimmung, die Geschichte eines großen Kampfes des Lichts mit der Finsterniß und des endlichen Sieges der Wahrheit über die Lüge«, 45; all trans. from Schubert are by the author). Furthermore, Schubert perceives metamorphosis as »a consoling symbol of death, as rebirth into an original more perfect existence, as an awakening in line with a higher ideal« (»ein tröstendes Sinnbild des Todes, als Wiedergeburt zu einem ursprünglichen, vollkommneren Dasein, als Erwachen nach einem höheren Vorbilde«, 86).

²⁸ Cf. G.H. Schubert's *Symbolik* (note 24): »the path to the original realm of our mind requires loneliness and the shedding of everything sensual. After all it would appear that not the sensual human being and the satisfaction of his sensual needs have been the main focus of nature's creation, but the spiritual human being and his education« (»der Weg zu der ursprünglichen Region unseres Gemüths, gehet durch Abgeschiedenheit und Entblößung von allem Sinnlichen. Überhaupt scheint nach allem nicht der sinnliche Mensch, und die Befriedigung seines sinnlichen Bedürfnisses, sondern der geistige und seine Ausbildung, Hauptaugenmerk der schaffenden Natur gewesen zu sein«, 34).

²⁹ Cf. Ricarda Schmidt, »Lovers' Dreams – the Path to Heaven or Hell: The Janus-Face of Dreams and their Discursive Context in E.T.A. Hoffmann's *Das Gelübde* and *Prinzessin Brambilla*«. In: Bernard Dieterle/Manfred Engel (ed.), *Theorizing the Dream / Savoirs et théories du rêve*. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann 2018, 249–269.

³⁰ Ingeborg Bachmann, *Malina: Roman*. Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp 1971; henceforth quoted as M. Ingeborg Bachmann, *Malina: A Novel*. Trans. by Philip Boehm,

rator-protagonist who dreams. This change reflects the growing awareness in the 20th century of the gendered nature of subjectivity and the conscious attempt to stop assuming that the human condition is embodied primarily or generically in the male.

The 35 dreams in *Malina* are bunched in the middle chapter of the novel. They are thus sharply divorced from the situations which give rise to them in the life of the dreamer, though close reading does reveal occasional distorted references to the protagonist's relationship with Ivan narrated in chapter 1. This structure supports a non-realist dream aesthetic which increases the oneiric effect of this chapter by isolating the dreams structurally from the surrounding non-oneiric narrative.

Unlike the dreams in *Don Sylvio* and *Elixirs*, the dreams in *Malina* do not convey either idealistic or forbidden desires of the dreamer or any hope for redemption. They exclusively depict the dreamer in the position of victim of violence directed towards her by a father figure. This makes them appear like post-traumatic nightmares, and the reader (and the dreamer) will have to discover which event might be re-enacted in these dreams. The violence against the dreamer ranges from personal and intimate domestic instances (including incest) to allusions to collective historical traumata, namely the gassing of concentration camp victims in the Holocaust. Thus, these dreams seem to surpass the individual psychology and experience of the dreamer. The dichotomy between the father as perpetrator in all dreams and the daughter as his victim suggests the intention to explore the situation of women in patriarchal society, as indicated in the repeated references to »the cemetery of the murdered daughters« (Me 114, also 130).³¹

The dreams are agonizing to the dreamer, as they are to Aurelie, but provide plenty of the concrete details which Aurelie's dreams lack. The protagonist-narrator's desire for a utopian fulfilment in love, depicted in chapter 1 and entitled »Happy with Ivan« (»Glücklich mit Ivan«), echoes, especially in the inserted legend of the Princess of Kagan, aspects of *Heinrich von Ofterdingen's* notion of love as the embodiment of the golden age in which personal, literary and social de-

with an afterword by Mark Anderson. Teaneck: Homes and Meier 1990; henceforth quoted as Me.

³¹ »Friedhof der ermordeten Töchter« (M 182, also 207).

sires all come to fruition. Yet, in contrast to Novalis, Bachmann's first chapter simultaneously and ironically also reveals the absence of fulfilment in what the first-person narrator presents as plenitude. It thus marks her love as delusional (e.g. when the narrator's allegedly fulfilled love consists of her sitting by the telephone waiting for a call from Ivan and her treating the telephone like a religious site at which she worships).

The dreams in the middle chapter of the novel serve to further undermine her alleged happiness in chapter 1. Gudrun Kohn-Wächter sees their mythic horror also as the counterpart to the hoped-for salvation in the utopian Kagran narrative.³² The dreams make the protagonist confront the impossibility of the fulfilment of her desire, and make her explore the division of the self (which Hoffmann's *Elixirs* had thematized in terms of the split between transcendental and sensual desires) in terms of the feminine and the masculine aspects of herself.

It was recognized early on that the violent father figure of the dreams is a composite figure, but interpretations have varied with regard to identifying its components and evaluating the insights provided by the dreams. According to Ellen Summerfield, the father figure is a grotesque distortion of the narrator's personal father, of patriarchy (social fathers) and of God (spiritual father).³³ Robert Steiger sees the father figure in the dreams as the personification of the narrator's negative experiences with Ivan, of all dark experiences and bitter feelings acquired over a lifetime by the protagonist-narrator, of forms of public collective violence, and of violence per se, including the dreamer's own negativity and aggression.³⁴ There is, however, also the more narrow position of reading the dream chapter as an expression of an »in-

³² Cf. Gudrun Kohn-Wächter, *Das Verschwinden in der Wand: Destruktive Moderne und Widerspruch eines weiblichen Ich in Ingeborg Bachmanns Roman »Malina«*. Stuttgart: Metzler 1992, 102. Cf. also Britta Herrmann, »Malina«. In: Monika Albrecht/Dirk Göttsche (ed.), *Bachmann-Handbuch: Leben – Werk – Wirkung*. Stuttgart: Metzler 2002, 130–144, especially on narratological problems and the aggressiveness of all the male figures in the novel 134–136.

³³ Cf. Ellen Summerfield, *Ingeborg Bachmann: Die Auflösung der Figur in ihrem Roman »Malina«*. Bonn: Bouvier 1976, 24.

³⁴ Cf. Robert Steiger, »Malina«: *Versuch einer Interpretation des Romans von Ingeborg Bachmann*. Heidelberg: Winter 1978, 190–199.

cest trauma [which] produces a debased sense of self that predisposes the I-narrator to repeat victimisation, as in her relationship with Ivan«. ³⁵ Christine Steinhoff argues that the dreams have an enlightening function about the latent state of war in both the individual and institutional sphere. ³⁶

While many critics value the dreams as providing feminist insight into patriarchal structures, it is worth also exploring their limitations. Verena Timmerer-Maier compares Bachmann's dream images to the so-called black paintings by Francisco Goya, especially the lost dog (*El Perro Semihundido*; fig. 1), which the narrator explicitly evokes in a dialogue with Malina (cf. M 348). ³⁷ Goya shows the viewer the dog's subjective perspective of expecting rescue from its master and at the same time the objective perspective of the impossibility of its fulfilment by placing the head of a tiny dog, looking upwards, at the bottom of a huge canvas depicting an abyss. The image is at the same time concrete (the realistic head of the dog) and abstract (the abyss lacks any natural specification). It evokes sympathy for the generic loyalty of dogs and simultaneously makes the lack of fulfilment of the dog's expectations applicable to the human condition. Timmerer-Maier points out that in Bachmann's intermedial transformation of Goya's aesthetics, the simultaneity of abstract and concrete presentation and its evocation of universality in Goya changes to a historically- and gender-specific presentation in *Malina*. The relationship of absolute omnipotence and complete lack of power between father and narrator in the dream chapter of *Malina* appears to be, according to Timmerer-Maier, »both extreme and too reductive« to function »as a general paradigm for the relationship between man and woman«. ³⁸

³⁵ Audrone B. Willeke, »Father Wants to Tear Out My Tongue«: Daughters Confront Incestuous Fathers in Postwar German Literature«. In: *German Life and Letters* 55:1 (2002), 100-116; here 110.

³⁶ Cf. Christine Steinhoff, *Ingeborg Bachmanns Poetologie des Traumes*. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann 2008, 199-201.

³⁷ Cf. Verena Timmerer-Maier, *Wohnen in »Goyas letztem Raum«: Eine intermediale Poetik des Entsetzens: Die Zitierung von Goyas »Pinturas Negras« in Ingeborg Bachmanns Roman »Malina«*. PhD thesis University of Exeter 2012, 68-140.

³⁸ »Literarische Bilder wie diese [the father as the woman-eating crocodile] erzeugen durch das Spannungsverhältnis zwischen dem Individuell-Konkreten

Furthermore, there appear to be irreconcilable tensions between different parts of the novel. The brutality of the violence inflicted on the feminine subject in the dream chapter and the very last sentence of the novel («It was murder») seem to confirm the victim–perpetrator dichotomy. Yet, the first chapter has questioned this dichotomy through its ironic presentation of the narrator’s complete submission to Ivan. The questions of the narrator’s masculine alter ego Malina in the interludes of the dreams, which function as a rudimentary dream analysis, also point to the need to analyse the dream presentation further, and not simply to take the dream images as revelations of a higher truth.³⁹

For the interpretation of the novel as a whole, two possible ways of looking at the relationship between the narrator and the social sphere, which is only conveyed via the distortions of the dreams, seem to offer themselves. Does the feminine subject in chapter 1 represent a positive notion of femininity, and does the dream chapter reveal femininity as repressed/murdered in patriarchy? Or does chapter 1 show a form of femininity constructed by patriarchy while the dream chapter helps to reveal it as self-destructive, necessitating its rejection by another part of the self, the masculine alter ego Malina? The first of these alternatives tends to neglect the irony in the first chapter, the distortions of the dreams as well as the fractured self which comes to the fore in the discussion of the dreams between the feminine subject and her masculine alter ego. The second alternative cannot accommodate the moral judgement contained in the last sentence of the novel: for if Malina’s assuming the place of the feminine subject is evaluated as

und dem Sozialen und Abstrakten jedoch insofern eine Schieflage, als das Verhältnis von absoluter Allmacht und völliger Ohnmacht in der Beziehung zwischen der Ich-Erzählerin zum ›Vater‹ als ein allgemeingültiges Paradigma für das Verhältnis zwischen Mann und Frau als überzogen und zugleich als zu reduziert erscheint«; *ibid.*, 225.

³⁹ Cf. Carol Anne Costabile-Heming, and Vasiliki Karandrikas, »Experimenting with Androgyny: *Malina* and Ingeborg Bachmann’s Jungian Search for Utopia«. In: *Mosaic: A Journal for the Interdisciplinary Study of Literature* 30:3 (1997), 75-87. Costabile-Heming/Karandrikas argue that the integration of the positions of the narrator and Malina constitutes the (failed) utopian aim of the novel, and that the characterizations of the two parts rests on traditional assumptions of what is masculine and feminine.

murder, then the feminine subject appears as a victim of patriarchy and its stakeholders within the novel (of her other masculine half, of her father and of Ivan). Her murder positions the feminine subject as morally superior or at least as a nostalgic loss within the harshness of the modern world, rather than criticizing her as self-destructive.

Stephanie Bird insightfully reveals the shortcomings contained in privileging the immediacy of experience which characterizes Bachmann's narrator and negatively contrasting it with Malina's attitude of distancing analysis. Identifying this polarity with female and male subject positions, Bird argues convincingly, results in destruction and oppression.⁴⁰ However, Bird's attempt to try and solve the problems this narrative strategy entails by separating them into those at authorial and at diegetic level, I find less convincing. Evaluating this dualistic narrative strategy as a reflection of the author's politics and blind spots, precludes, in my view, the claim that a critical response to the narrator's perspective is invited by the very structure of the text; rather, it is the response of a resisting reader. In fact, I will argue below that the changes Bachmann made to her authentic dream notes when integrating them into *Malina* have the effect of strengthening the impression of the narrator as victim and re-enforcing the reader's identification with the narrator.

The recent publication of Bachmann's authentic dream notes and letters from the time of working on her project »Ways of Dying« (*Todesarten*) provides some interesting further clues about the enigmatic dream chapter in *Malina*.⁴¹ On the one hand, »*Male oscuro*« reveals that many dreams in the novel *Malina* are based on authentic dreams which Bachmann apparently had after her separation from Max Frisch. On the other hand, there are small, but significant, changes made to the way the authentic dreams are inserted in the novel.

⁴⁰ Cf. Stephanie Bird, *Women Writers and National Identity: Bachmann, Duden, Özdamar*. Cambridge: CUP 2003, 92.

⁴¹ Cf. Ingeborg Bachmann, »*Male oscuro*«: *Aufzeichnungen aus der Zeit der Krankheit: Traumnotate, Briefe, Brief- und Redeentwürfe*. Ed. by Isolde Schiffermüller and Gabriella Pelloni (*Werke und Briefe: Salzburger Bachmann Edition*. Ed. by Hans Höller and Irene Füßl, vol. 1). Munich, Berlin, Zurich: Piper; Berlin: Suhrkamp 2017; henceforth quoted as MO; all translations from this text are by the author.

In the authentic dreams, Frisch appears at times as himself, at times as the dreamer's father (though »looking different and younger« than her real father, MO 21).⁴² Bachmann explicitly draws attention to the fact that the dream-father appears in situations she recognizes as referring to Max Frisch (MO 21), or she comments when Max Frisch appears as himself in her dream, rather than as her father (MO 34). In the literary transformations of the dreams in the published novel, all references to Max Frisch are deleted. Furthermore, in *Malina* the dreamer's father takes the place not only of Frisch (cf. the corresponding dreams in MO 34 and M 206, and MO 40 and M 197), but also of other people who were explicitly or implicitly named in Bachmann's authentic dream notes. Thus the actor Hansjörg Felmy, who, by mere coincidence, features as an exploitative and coercive film director in Bachmann's authentic dream (cf. MO 46 f. and M 207–209), and also, intriguingly, even Bachmann herself (cf. MO 40 and M 195–197), are replaced by the violent father figure in *Malina*. This results in making the dreams more coherent to the writer and reader of the novel, i.e. enacting a kind of rationalization on them, not during dreaming, but during writing. In »*Male oscuro*«, Bachmann notes the following dream:

In the opera (The Young Lord) I am to take over the female lead role. The artistic director announces it, and I arrive at the opera house at the last minute, desperate and very nervous, because there isn't a textbook to be had anywhere, and I get as far as two phrases (that is, with regard to the music, not the words, I don't know the role.) A lot of toing and froing, I ask around what my second sentence in the duet is (with »Wilhelm«), – something with »who were to help me...« (The subjunctive strikes me in particular on waking up, but also in the dream). There are a lot of people on stage, the singer who sings young Wilhelm consults with us. I find out that only his voice is to be heard properly in the duet, because I have no musical training. I'm only to sing because it's attractive for the audience if I perform in the opera myself (MO 40).⁴³

⁴² »anders und jünger aussehend« (MO 21).

⁴³ »In der Oper (Der junge Lord) soll ich auch die weibliche Hauptrolle übernehmen. Der Intendant kündigt es an, und ich komme in letzter Minute in das Opernhaus, verzweifelt und sehr aufgeregt, weil nirgends ein Textbuch zu bekommen ist und ich komm zwei Einsätze weit, (d.h. wohl die Musik, aber nicht die Worte, ich kann die Rolle nicht.) Großes Hin und Her, ich frage herum, wie der zweite Satz von mir im Duett heißt (mit »Wilhelm«), – irgendwas mit: »wer hülf! mir...« (Das ü fällt mir beim Aufwachen besonders auf, aber auch im Traum). Auf der Bühne sind viele Menschen, der Sänger, der den jungen Wilhelm singt, berät sich mit uns. Ich erfahre, daß eigentlich im Duett nur seine

The Young Lord is an opera by Hans Werner Henze, first performed in 1965. The fact that Bachmann herself wrote the libretto for this opera can be deduced from the title given, but is not mentioned explicitly in the manifest dream text. On the contrary, the manifest dream content almost comically disguises Bachmann's authorship. It reverses her real familiarity with the words of that opera by stressing that the dreamer cannot get hold of a textbook and that she knows the music, but not the words. *Malina* goes much further than Bachmann's authentic dream in eliminating the dreamer's own creative input. For the title of the opera, which implicitly identifies Bachmann as the author of the libretto, is omitted in the novel, and her father alone is presented as the opera's creator (cf. M 195–197). Since the dream in *Malina* leaves out both the opera's title and the name of the singer with whom the female subject is to perform a duet, some significant characteristics of the way the dream relates to Bachmann's own creative input into Henze's opera are rendered completely invisible, while they can be inferred from the authentic dream text.

It is particularly striking that the authentic dream clearly reverses the gender of the mute role in the opera concerned. For Bachmann created not only one mute *male* protagonist, Sir Edgar, for *Der junge Lord*, but also seven other minor mute male roles.⁴⁴ The dream, by contrast, imposes silence on the opera performance of the female dreamer. It would appear that, by this reversal, the manifest dream content disguises the latent dream content, namely Bachmann's own creative aggression.

Furthermore, her dream also switches the gender of the operatic victim. According to Bachmann's libretto (based on a story by Wilhelm Hauff, which in turn shows traces of E.T.A. Hoffmann's *Nachricht von einem gebildeten jungen Mann* and *Klein Zaches*), it is not the mute protagonist who is the victim in this opera. Rather, the lyrical tenor Wilhelm, with whom the dreamer is to perform voicelessly, is

Stimme richtig zu hören ist, weil ich ja keine Ausbildung habe. Ich soll nur singen, weil das attraktiv für das Publikum ist, wenn ich in dem Stück selber auftrete« (MO 40).

⁴⁴ Cf. Ingeborg Bachmann, *Der junge Lord*. In: id., *Werke*. 4 vols. Vol. 1: *Gedichte, Hörspiele, Libretti, Übersetzungen*. Ed. by Christine Koschel, Inge von Weidenbaum and Clemens Münster. Munich, Zurich: Piper 1982, 375–436.

the victim of his beloved's fickleness. In Bachmann's libretto, Luise (soprano) falls for the attractions of the title figure, the Young Lord (a high (character) tenor), and betrays her faithful lover Wilhelm – to a monkey, as it turns out. Thus, Bachmann's authentic dream still reveals a quite different latent dream content from the manifest dream content by the reversal of the muting and victimization she as the creator of the libretto imposed on different male protagonists, and by the oneiric concentration of these features on the female dreamer herself. The changes made to this dream in *Malina* eliminate all these traces of feminine creativity, aggression and dream reversals which the links to aspects of reality in the authentic dream still allowed to be recognizable as the latent dream content. What remains in the published version is the contrast between the violence of the father and the victimization of the daughter, which extends a personal experience into the social sphere.

The fact that the father figure in her dreams is associated with extreme violence and that her mother and sister feature so prominently in her dreams was originally puzzling to Bachmann herself. She notes down her surprise in »*Male oscuro*«:

When I reflect on the dreams, most of which you do not know because they occurred before »our« time, one thing does strike me. First, in almost all dreams M.F. is the main protagonist, always interchanged with the father (except for the last dream), or the father, interchanged with M.F., so that it ends up as incest dreams and the revulsion towards that. That's the one group. The second thing I understand very little of: in most dreams my family play a dominant role, for example, very early on, in the dramatic anxiety dreams| when I feared F. would leave me.| my sister was present, [also| almost always my mother. And even if they only have a marginal role here and there, it is nevertheless striking. For I have, even if I turn my life over a hundred times and scrutinize it, only a normal relationship with this family. [...] I don't know what this nice family has to do with my dreams. I never dream of a man I like, never of professional conflicts which I'm having all the time. O Saint Freud. This can't be true. I was a very ordinary child, with a normal development, in a normal family. Please understand me: I admire Freud, but I've never been quite able to accept this pre-classicism, I can't accept that this life before one's actual own personal life has to play such an enormous role later on. And I'm not alone in this, science does also provide its own corrections (MO 44 f.).⁴⁵

⁴⁵ »Wenn ich zurückdenke an die Träume, von denen Sie die meisten nicht kennen, weil sie vor ›unserer‹ Zeit waren, dann fällt mir doch eines auf. Einmal ist in fast allen Träumen M.F. die Hauptperson, immer mit dem Vater verwechselt (bis auf

But in spite of her reservations about Freud's theory of the child's development in the Oedipal triangle, to which she is alluding here,⁴⁶ ultimately, Bachmann chooses in *Malina* to reinforce the identification of violence with the patriarchal principle by the creation of the father figure set against a victimized daughter. She even risked that the apparent incest was read as the author's autobiographical truth. As an example of the dichotomy between victim and perpetrator, I quote the following dream:

My father descends from the heavy downpour of colours, he says sardonically: Go on, just go ahead! And I cover my mouth, from which all my teeth have fallen out, they lie in front of me like two mounds of marble blocks, insurmountable.

I can't say anything, since I have to escape my father and get over the marble wall, but in another language I say: Ne! Ne! and in many languages: No! No! Non! Non! Nyet! Nyet! No! Ném! Ném! Nein! For in our language, too, I can only say no, I can't find any other word in any language. [...] But to stop me from crying out my no, my father drives his short, firm, hard fingers into my eyes, I am blinded, but I must go on. It's unbearable. I have to smile, since my father is reaching for my tongue and wants to pull it out to stop any-

den letzten Traum), oder der Vater, mit M.F. verwechselt, sodaß es auf Inzestträume hinausläuft und den Horror davor. Das ist eine Gruppe. Das andre, was ich wenig verstehe: in den meisten Träumen spielt meine Familie eine dominierende Rolle, zum Beispiel war schon ganz früh, in den dramatischen Angstträumen [als ich fürchtete, F. würde mich verlassen.] meine Schwester anwesend, [auch] fast immer meine Mutter. Und auch wenn sie hie und da nur Statistenrollen hatten, so fällt das doch auf. Denn ich habe doch, auch wenn ich mein Leben hundertmal umwende und dran deutle, nur eine normale Beziehung zu dieser Familie. [...] Ich weiß nicht, was diese nette Familie zu schaffen hat in meinen Träumen. Ich träume nie von einem Mann, den ich gern habe, nie von Berufskonflikten, die ich immerzu habe. O heiliger Freud. Das darf doch nicht wahr sein. Ich war ein ganz gewöhnliches Kind, mit einer normalen Entwicklung, in einer normalen Familie. Verstehen Sie mich. Ich bewundere Freud, aber ich habe diese Vorklassik nie ganz akzeptieren können, ich kann nicht einsehen, daß dieses Leben vor dem eigentlichen persönlichen Leben später eine so enorme Rolle spielen soll. Und da steh ich ja nicht allein da, die Wissenschaft bringt doch auch ihre Korrekturen an« (MO 44 f.); M.F. or F. refers to Max Frisch.

⁴⁶ For a discussion of psychoanalysis in Bachmann's work, cf. Christine Kanz, »Psychologie, Psychoanalyse und Psychiatrie in Bachmanns Werk«. In: Albrecht/Göttsche (note 32), 223–236. Cf. also C. Steinhoff (note 36), 212–215. Steinhoff argues convincingly that *Malina* draws on Freud with regard to dream mechanisms like condensation, displacement and reversal, but on Jung with regard to the trans-individual and trans-historical significance of dreams.

one here from hearing my no, despite the fact that there's no one to hear me, but before he can tear my tongue out something horrible happens, a huge blue splotch runs into my mouth, so that I can no longer utter a sound. My blue, my glorious blue, where the peacocks walk, my blue of the distance, my blue fortune on the horizon! The blue reaches deeper, down into my throat, and my father is now helping and tears my heart and entrails out of my body, but I can still walk, first I reach some slushy ice before arriving at the permanent ice, and an echo sounds within me: Isn't there anybody left, isn't there anybody left here, in this whole world, isn't there anybody and among brothers isn't there one who is worth something, and among brothers! (Me 115).⁴⁷

Here the daughter's creativity, her ability to perceive and to express herself, is brutally curtailed by the loss of her teeth (incidentally a symbol of castration in Freudian dream analysis), by her father robbing her of eyesight, heart and entrails. Her father's destructiveness is even supported by the daughter's own creativity embodied in the colour blue, so prominent in the German literary tradition, turning against her and suffocating her in the form of a blotch entering her body.

Both hidden commonalities as well as striking differences in the aesthetics of the three novels discussed in this essay can in fact be exemplified in the use of the colour blue in dreams. While blue is part of

⁴⁷ »Mein Vater kommt aus den schweren Farbgüssen nieder, er sagt höhnisch: Geh weiter, geh nur weiter! Und ich halte mir die Hand vor den Mund, aus dem alle Zähne gefallen sind, die liegen unübersteigbar, zwei Rundungen aus Marmorblöcken, vor mir./ Ich kann ja nichts sagen, weil ich weg von meinem Vater und über die Marmormauer muß, aber in einer anderen Sprache sage ich: Ne! Ne! Und in vielen Sprachen: No! No! Non! Non! Njet! Njet! No! Ném! Ném! Nein! Denn auch in unserer Sprache kann ich nur nein sagen, sonst finde ich kein Wort mehr in einer Sprache. [...] Aber damit ich aufhöre, mein Nein zu rufen, fährt mir mein Vater mit den Fingern, seinen kurzen festen harten Fingern in die Augen, ich bin blind geworden, aber ich muß weitergehen. Es ist nicht auszuhalten. Ich lächle also, weil mein Vater nach meiner Zunge langt und sie mir ausreißen will, damit auch hier niemand mein Nein hört, obwohl niemand mich hört, doch eh er mir die Zunge ausreißt, geschieht das Entsetzliche, ein blauer riesiger Klecks fährt mir in den Mund, damit ich keinen Laut mehr hervorbringen kann. Mein Blau, mein herrliches Blau, in dem die Pfauen spazieren, und mein Blau der Fernen, mein blauer Zufall am Horizont! Das Blau greift tiefer in mich hinein, in meinen Hals, und mein Vater hilft jetzt nach und reißt mir mein Herz und meine Gedärme aus dem Leib, aber ich kann noch gehen, ich komme ins erste matschige Eis, bevor ich ins ewige Eis komme, und in mir hallt es: Ist denn kein Mensch mehr, ist hier kein Mensch mehr, auf dieser ganzen Welt, ist da kein Mensch und unter Brüdern, ist einer denn nichts wert, und unter Brüdern!« (M 183 f.).

the symbolic code of desire in each of these novels, different manifestations of blue embody both variations in the objects of desire as well as in the aesthetic formation of the novels and the dreams within them. The eponymous protagonist in *Don Sylvio* pursues a blue butterfly which he perceives as the metamorphosis of the princess he dreams of, and eventually manages to transfer his desires to a real woman who resembles his dream woman, once he overcomes his tendency to project his dreams as prophecies onto the real world. The dark blue eyes of a woman who looks like a portrait of St Rosalia in *Elixirs* (cf. EdT 52) awaken the sexually transgressive desires of the monk Medardus, and, pursued by her image, he embarks on a life of crime, only to be plagued by his deeds in frightening nightmares until eventually he dreams of his redemption. In *Malina*, the feminine subject has a series of nightmares in which her father seeks to annihilate her. In the nightmare quoted above, an abstract splash of her beloved colour blue engulfs the dreamer and renders her mute even before her father can tear her tongue out to silence her forever. Thus the subject's very own desires, emphasized by the possessive pronoun in relation to the beloved blue colour, the colour of Romantic longing (Bachmann here quotes from her own poem *An die Sonne*)⁴⁸ seem to be turning against her and destroying her.

Defamiliarization techniques like the fluidity, instability and incomprehensibility of the dream world are most prominent in Bachmann's novel. The dreams shock by their use of imagery reminiscent of the Holocaust («the biggest gas chamber in the world, and in it I am alone» (Me 114),⁴⁹ and shock doubly for using it to describe what eventually transpires to be an intra-personal conflict, rather than historical social reality. The latter seems to merely feed the imagination of the dreamer. This also applies to Alexandra Kurman's discovery

⁴⁸ Ingeborg Bachmann, »An die Sonne«. In: Bachmann (note 44), 136 f.: «An die Sonne// Schönes Blau, in dem die Pfauen spazieren und sich verneigen,/ Blau der Fernen, der Zonen des Glücks mit den Wetterern für mein Gefühl,/ Blauer Zufall am Horizont! Und meine begeisterten Augen/ Weiten sich wieder und blinken und brennen sich wund.» (137; »To the Sun// Glorious blue, in which peacocks walk and bow,/ Blue of the distance, of the zones of happiness with the weather for my emotions,/ Blue fortune on the horizon! And my enchanted eyes/ Widen again and blink and burn themselves sore«; trans. by the author).

⁴⁹ »die größte Gaskammer der Welt, und ich bin allein darin« (M 182).

that »the word *malina* was the name given by Ashkenazi Jews to secret hiding places during World War II«.⁵⁰

Eight dialogues between the feminine subject and her masculine alter ego Malina, which are interspersed with the dreams, offer some pointers in the interpretation of these almost unbearably cruel dreams. They draw attention to classical Freudian elements of dream analysis (displacement, projection, condensation) and embody Bachmann's concept of »history within the subject«: intermedial allusions to poetry, novels, music, philosophy, history and psychoanalysis evoke a nightmarish kaleidoscope of the world, seen through the dreams of a feminine subject and focussed apparently on familial love, in particular on a destructive love between father and daughter. But there is also aggression by the masculine alter ego Malina against the feminine subject. Thus, the violent father figure of the dreams as well as the dominant and sometimes bullying Malina in the reflections on the dreams serve to make the dreamer appear as the passive victim of masculine violence.

The dreams afford insight into both the external ubiquity and the internalization of destructiveness, and they result in an ambiguous outcome. The survival of the dreaming subject's masculine alter ego Malina, alongside the murder of the feminine subject, challenges the reader to make sense of dreams which map historical forms of violence onto a psychical reality. The dreams in *Malina* serve to educate the protagonist to overcome her delusions that love is a force able to overcome the ills of the world, but do not put anything positive in its place.

Bachmann uses neo-Gothic imagery to explore emotions, yet at the same time drives forward the rational component and the goal of distinguishing subjective from objective things of the world, a necessity Wieland had already posited in *Don Sylvio*. This rational component is embodied above all in the dream analysis which takes place in a cryptic dialogue of the feminine subject with her masculine alter ego:

Malina: Just keep calm. It's nothing. But will you finally tell me who your father is?

⁵⁰ Alexandra Kurman, »What Is Malina? Decoding Ingeborg Bachmann's Poetics of Secrecy«. In: *Women in German Yearbook* 32 (2016), 76-94; here 80.

- Me: (and I'm crying bitterly) Am I really here. Are you really standing there!
- Malina: Good God why are you always saying »my father«?
- Me: It's good you remind me. But let me think about it a long time. Cover me up. Who could my father be? Do you know for example who your father is?
- Malina: Let's just drop it.
- Me: Let's say I have an inkling. Don't you have any?
- Malina: Are you trying to get out of it, trying to be clever?
- Me: Maybe. I'd also like to dupe you for once. Tell me one thing. How did you realize that my father is not my father? (Me 116 f.).⁵¹

Despite the prominence of the father figure in the subject's dreams, this dream analysis hints at the fact that the novel's dreams are situated beyond the personal and autobiographical, that they show the subject's conception of the father, that is, her internalization of patriarchal structures. And while the protagonist appears to achieve the desired insight, it remains enigmatic to the reader, although the title of the chapter on dreams gives a vital clue. On the face of it, the title of the middle chapter of the novel, alluding to Carol Reed's famous post-war film *The Third Man* (1949), may be referring to »the betrayal by a loved authority figure, in this instance a father figure whom the Ich refers to as ›mein Vater«.⁵² However, on a deeper level, it could also be argued that the film's revelation that the apparent victim in a murder case turns out to have been a perpetrator, hints at the daughter's complicity in her victimization. Thus the insight that the third man is not the father, that is, that the father in the dreams is not what he seems, is suggested, rather than concretely embodied. And insight does not achieve healing (as for Don Sylvio) or the belief in union beyond death (as for Medardus). The last sentence of the novel is: »It was murder«.

⁵¹ »Malina: Bleib ganz ruhig. Es ist nichts. Aber sag mir endlich: Wer ist dein Vater?/ Ich: (und ich weine bitterlich) Bin ich wirklich hier. Bist du wirklich da!/ Malina: Herrgott, warum sagst du immer »mein Vater«?/ Ich: Gut, daß du mich erinnerst. Laß mich aber lang nachdenken. Deck mich zu. Wer könnte mein Vater sein? Weißt du, zum Beispiel, wer dein Vater ist?/ Malina: Lassen wir das./ Ich: Sagen wir, ich mache mir da eine Vorstellung. Machst du dir denn keine?/ Malina: Willst du ausweichen, willst du schlau sein?/ Ich: Vielleicht. Ich möchte auch dich einmal hinters Licht führen. Sag mir eines. Warum bist du draufgekommen, daß mein Vater nicht mein Vater ist« (M 186).

⁵² Katya Krylova, *Walking Through History: Topography and Identity in the Works of Ingeborg Bachmann and Thomas Bernhard*. Oxford: Peter Lang 2013, 163.

4. Conclusion

To summarize: In Wieland's and Hoffmann's novels the idiosyncrasies of education, literature and images contribute to producing the individual's dreams and conflicts. In Bachmann's novel the dreams function as the starting point for new insights and for a realignment of the psychology of the writing subject.

Wieland's and Hoffmann's novels are more closely related in terms of narrative structure and motifs than might be expected, given their different tones and trajectories. Hoffmann builds on, and develops considerably further, Wieland's multi-layered structure. Starting with the fiction that the texts are editions of manuscripts which have gone through several hands, including translation from a foreign language, both novels have a number of contrasting intra-diegetic narrators and inserted comments by the editor/author. Hoffmann intensifies Wieland's concentration on his protagonist's mistakes, rather than presenting him as a positive model to the reader.

Elixirs also adopts from *Don Sylvio* the motif of the conflictual relationship between the portrait of a woman and the real woman, i.e. the conflict between imagination and reality, or, in the terms of the novel, the conflict between love for the image and love for the original.⁵³ From Wieland's depiction of a discrepancy between dream and reality in the image/real woman motif (which is eventually corrected with the help of reason, emotional maturity and generosity), Hoffmann develops the motif into an obsession. There are reminiscences of the blue butterfly which Sylvio pursues, when Medardus identifies the blue-eyed painting of St Rosalia with the woman whose face he could not see in his confessional. But he projects the imagined face of the anonymous confessor onto everything around him with such intensity that the roles of hunter and prey are reversed: He feels himself being pursued by her image.⁵⁴

⁵³ »A Combat between Love for the Picture and Love for the Original« (DSe II, 135; »Streit zwischen der Liebe zum Bilde und der Liebe zum Original«, DS 220, as the heading of book 5, chapter 8).

⁵⁴ »Von ihrem Bilde verfolgt« (EdT 52).

Furthermore, in both Wieland and Hoffmann a generational difference is eventually revealed between the person portrayed in the portrait and the real person with whom the protagonist falls in love, thus evoking a discrepancy between the dream image and reality.

The liveliness of Don Sylvio's dream images is attributed to the same cause put forward by later Enlightenment thinkers like Kant and Reil to account for the strong impression dreams make on us: The weakness of external stimuli during sleep at night allows dreams to appear particularly luminous: »the vivacity of the ideas which presented themselves to him, was so much more increased by night as those ideas themselves were less weakened by any external sensation; they only wanted one more degree to make them felt, as if they were real« (DSe I, 79 f.).⁵⁵

⁵⁵ »Die Lebhaftigkeit der Bilder, die sich ihm darstellten, nahm mit der Nacht desto mehr zu, je weniger sie von äussern Empfindungen geschwächt wurde; es brauchte nur noch einen Grad, um sie selbst zu einer Art von Empfindungen zu machen« (DS 45). Cf. also Immanuel Kant, »Versuch über die Krankheiten des Kopfes (1764)«. In: id., *Sämmtliche Werke: In chronologischer Reihenfolge*. Ed. by Gustav Hartenstein. Vol. 2. Leipzig: Leopold Voss 1867, 211–225, and Johann Christian Reil, *Rhapsodien über die Anwendung der psychischen Curmethode auf Geisteszerrüttungen*. Halle: Curtische Buchhandlung 1803, 92: »Der Traum ist Produkt eines partiellen Wachens des Nervensystems. [...] Entweder die Phantasie wacht allein, oder einzelne Sinnorgane, das Bewegungsvermögen u.s.w. wachen mit. Daher der Unterschied zwischen Traum, Schlafreden, Nachtwandeln. Das Selbstbewußtseyn wankt in seinen sämmtlichen Verhältnissen. Die Phantasie ebbet und fluthet in sich selbst, kein Eindruck der Sinne zügelt sie mehr. Der Träumer hat gar keine Vorstellung seiner Objektivität, und sein Subject denkt er sich falsch. Er hält seine Gesichte für reale Objekte [...] Er hält weder die wirkliche Zeit noch den wahren Ort fest, ist bald in der Vorzeit bald in der Zukunft; unter Todten und Lebendigen; durchfliegt Parasangen [old Persian unit of distance] des Raums in einem Augenblick, und hüpfet von einem Welttheil in einen andern über. Die Intensität der Kräfte ist in dem Maaße gestiegen als ihre Extensität beschränkt ist. Die Bilder der Phantasie haben die Stärke der Sinnesanschauungen. Ihr Colorit ist grell. Die Scenen sind wie vom Tageslicht erleuchtet, wenn Tagesscenen geträumt werden« (»The dream is the product of a state of partial wakefulness of the nervous system. [...] Either the imagination alone is awake, or individual sense organs, the ability to move etc. are also awake. Thus the difference between dream, talking in one's sleep, sleep walking. All facets of self-consciousness are in flux. The imagination ebbs and flows within itself, no impression from the senses reins it in any longer. The dreamer has no idea of his

I have outlined stages in the development of literary dreams from the Enlightenment via Romanticism to Modernism predicated on the exploration of different notions of subjective truths in relation to objective truths. In *Don Sylvio* Wieland separates the subjective from the objective things of the world with humour, wit, irony, compassion and open eyes for imperfection. The dreams characterize the dreamer, but the happy ending is dependent on the protagonist's ability to stop mistaking his dreams for prophesies. Hoffmann's *Elixirs* explore self-division and compulsion repeatedly withstanding rationality and insight, but still aim for transcendent and redeeming love. Dreams function both as characterizations of the protagonists' unconscious and as marking a prophetic role which the novel's trajectory eventually fulfils. Bachmann in *Malina* focuses on the internalization of public destructiveness. While on the face of it, the dreams in *Malina* appear to be highly concrete anxiety nightmares in which family story and the historical German past merge, they are in fact exploring psychoanalytical notions of subjectivity and philosophical questions about ways of writing. Arguably, the »father« of the dreams embodies aspects of the dreamer herself as the personification of her internalization of social structures and the impossibility of even imagining a harmonious balance.⁵⁶

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objectivity, and he conceives his subject incorrectly. He takes his visions for real objects [...] He fixes neither on real time nor on actual place, one minute he is far back in the past and then he is in the future; among the dead and the living; he flies through vast space in an instant, and hops over from one part of the world to another. The intensity of his powers has increased in proportion to the restriction of their extension. The images of fantasy have the force of sensuous perception. Their colouring is garish. The scenes are illuminated as if lit by daylight when daytime scenes are being dreamt«).

⁵⁶ I would like to thank Sheila Dickson most warmly for very helpful comments on this essay.

*Fig. 1: Francisco de Goya (1746–1828), »Perro semihundido« (c. 1819–23).
Left: Photo of the original wall-painting in Goya's house La Quinta del Sordo by Jean Laurent (1874). Right: Mural transferred to canvas (131x79 cm; Museo del Prado).*