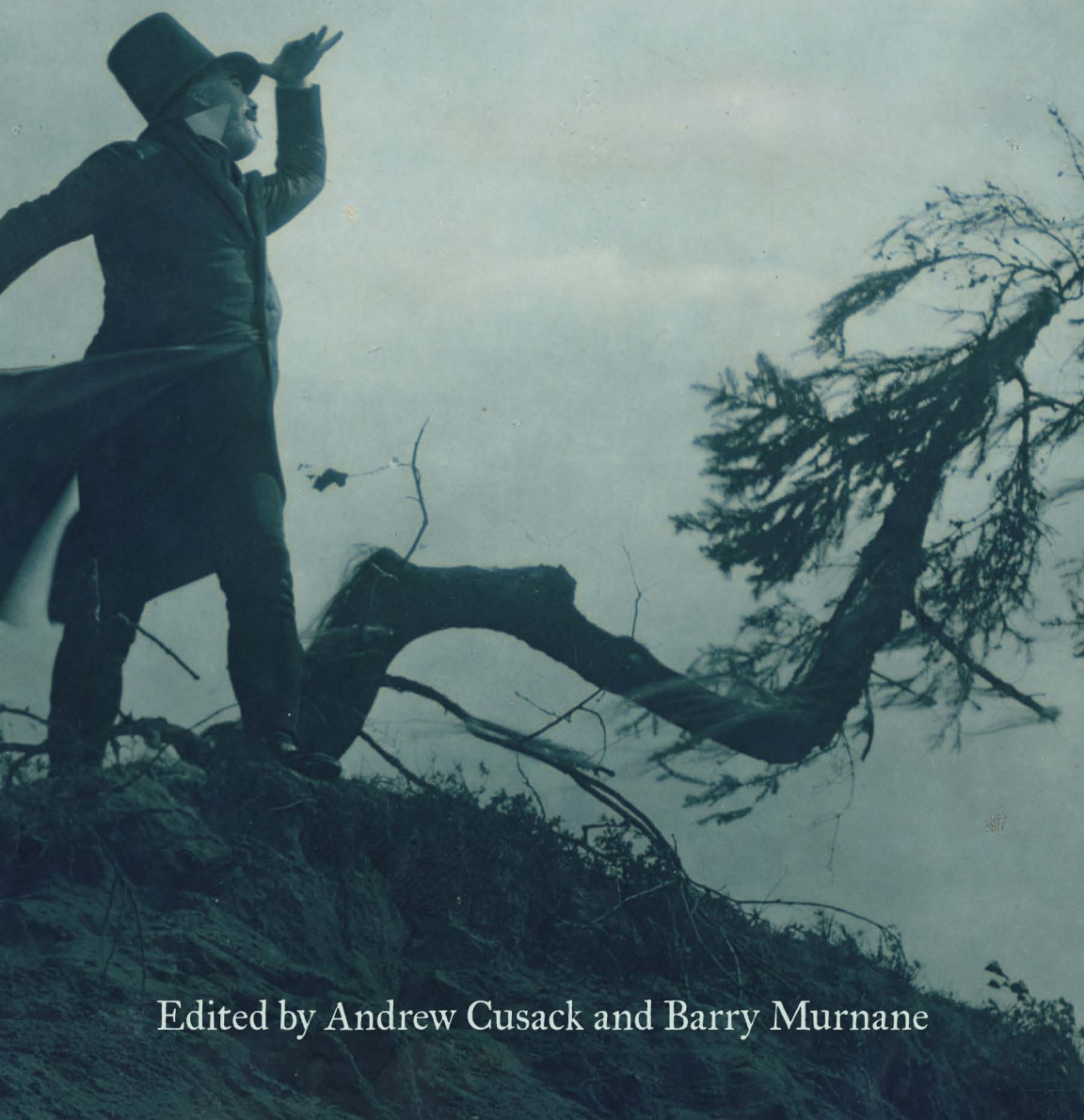


Popular Revenants

The German Gothic
and Its International Reception,
1800–2000



Edited by Andrew Cusack and Barry Murnane

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Studies in German Literature, Linguistics, and Culture

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Contents

Acknowledgments	vii
Introduction <i>Andrew Cusack</i>	1
1: Haunting (Literary) History: An Introduction to German Gothic <i>Barry Murnane</i>	10
2: “The echo of the question, as if it had merely resounded in a tomb”: The Dark Anthropology of the <i>Schauerroman</i> in Schiller’s <i>Der Geisterseher</i> <i>Jürgen Barkhoff</i>	44
3: Blaming the Other: English Translations of Benedikte Naubert’s <i>Hermann von Unna</i> (1788/1794) <i>Silke Arnold-de Simone</i>	60
4: Scott, Hoffmann, and the Persistence of the Gothic <i>Victor Sage</i>	76
5: Cultural Transfer in the <i>Dublin University Magazine</i> : James Clarence Mangan and the German Gothic <i>Andrew Cusack</i>	87
6: In the Maelstrom of Interpretation: Reshaping Terror and Horror between 1798 and 1838 — Gleich, Hoffmann, Poe <i>Mario Grizelj</i>	105
7: Popular Ghosts: Heinrich Heine on German <i>Geistesgeschichte</i> as Gothic Novel <i>Jörg Kreienbrock</i>	123
8: The Spirit World of Art and Robert Schumann’s Gothic Novel Project: The Impact of Gothic Literature on Schumann’s Writings <i>Monika Schmitz-Emans</i>	144

9: About Face: E. T. A. Hoffmann, Weimar Film, and the Technological Afterlife of Gothic Physiognomy <i>Andrew Webber</i>	161
10: Of Rats, Wolves, and Men: The Pied Piper as Gothic Revenant and Provenant in Wilhelm Raabe's <i>Die Hämelschen Kinder</i> <i>Peter Arnds</i>	181
11: The Lady in White or the Laws of the Ghost in Theodor Fontane's <i>Vor dem Sturm</i> <i>Matthias Bickenbach</i>	200
12: On Golems and Ghosts: Prague as a Site of Gothic Modernism <i>Barry Murnane</i>	222
13: "Ein Gespenst geht um": Christa Wolf, Irina Liebmann, and the Post-Wall Gothic <i>Catherine Smale</i>	242
Works Cited	259
Notes on the Contributors	289
Index	295

Acknowledgments

WITH TWO EXCEPTIONS, the essays collected in this book have evolved from papers presented at the symposium “Popular Revenants” held at Trinity College Dublin on 4–5 September 2009. The essays by Jürgen Barkhoff and Silke Arnold-de Simine, which were first published in our German-language anthology *Populäre Erscheinungen* (2011), appear here for the first time in English translation.

The editors wish to acknowledge the Trinity Long Room Hub, whose Research Initiative Funds were a source of vital financial support for the symposium, allowing us to cover most of the travel and accommodation costs of visiting scholars. We extend our thanks also to the other bodies participating in the Research Initiative Funds: the Irish Higher Education Authority, the Irish National Development Plan 2008–13, and the Structural Funds of the European Union. A financial grant from the School of Languages, Literatures, and Cultural Studies of Trinity College Dublin covered the cost of publishing this book. We thank Dr. Sarah Smyth, head of school, for this material aid and for welcoming the symposium participants to Dublin. Jacqueline Sharpe, school administrator, smoothed the path of our grant application. Eva Mühlhause, executive officer at the Long Room Hub, provided administrative support to the symposium. Marion Dalvai contributed to the cordial atmosphere of two September days in Dublin, and gave generously of her time to help compile the index. At Camden House, Jim Walker provided a steady hand and an unfailing supply of editorial advice as the conference papers gradually became a collection of essays. He was professionally assisted by Ryan Peterson (managing editor) and Mary Fahnestock-Thomas (copy editor). On behalf of all our contributors we thank them, and the two anonymous readers whose informed commentary helped shape this book.

Introduction

Andrew Cusack

POPULAR REVENANTS IS THE FIRST BOOK in English dedicated solely to the German gothic to be published in over thirty years. It is intended to introduce new research for students and researchers in German studies and English studies alike. Many readers will have encountered the term *Schauerroman* (shudder novel) or article-length discussions of German influences on gothic writers, but it is our view that they have not been well served by existing writing on the subject, much of which is outdated, piecemeal, or not well grounded in German studies. Readers looking for information in English on the *Schauerroman* or German gothic have had to rely either on Hadley's 1978 monograph *The Undiscovered Genre* or on brief articles such as those found in the *Handbook of the Gothic*, edited by Marie Mulvey-Roberts, or in Avril Horner's *European Gothic*.¹ While this deficit has been partly redressed by Daniel Hall's *French and German Gothic Fiction in the Late Eighteenth Century* (2005), there is a clear need for a single book dedicated to the afterlife of the German gothic beyond 1800 — one that attends to the gothic as a literary mode “forged in the crucible of translation” and capable of infiltrating other discourses and media.²

The term “gothic” is partly the product of the debate about a set of popular writings in the 1790s and partly a critical construction used to encompass a wide range of generically related cultural phenomena extending down to the present day.³ The gothic is a transgressive mode in literature, and nowhere is this more evident than in the way these fictions cross national borders, often illicitly, as plagiarized texts or as pseudo-translations of a nonexistent source. The publication in Britain of Heinrich Zschokke's novel *Abaellino, der große Bandit* (The Bravo of Venice, 1794) illustrates the complexity of this border-crossing. Matthew Lewis wanted to bring his translation to the London stage but was beaten to it by two other versions of *Abaellino*, one of which, masquerading as an original work, was in fact an adaptation of a French stage-adaptation of Zschokke's novel. As the zigzag track of Zschokke's novel from Germany via France to England shows, the gothic transgressed not only prevailing aesthetic standards but also settled assumptions about the originality and authenticity of the literary text.

If we accept Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto: A Gothic Romance* (1764) as the first gothic novel, then the origins of the gothic undoubtedly lie in England. However, following a backlash against German writing in the 1790s, the gothic was energetically represented by British critics not as a homegrown innovation, but as a pernicious "German" influence. This "othering" of the gothic persisted well into the nineteenth century. In 1839 Matthew Lewis's biographer claimed Goethe's *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* (1774) as the inspiration for Walpole's *Otranto*, although Walpole's novel had appeared a decade before Goethe's work!⁴ In the heyday of the gothic novel, the 1790s, the many in circulation, far from having clearly identifiable national roots, were "the result of a furious process of translation and cultural exchange dominated by ideological motivations, readings, and misrepresentations that challenge attempts to draw distinct borders between national literatures."⁵

The idea of a gothic literature resulted from a critical discourse in 1790s Britain that located the origins of the gothic firmly in Germany. Thus gothic, at the moment of its first use to refer to a class of fictions with certain motifs and aesthetic properties in common, was already German gothic if only by attribution. Indeed, the labels "German" and "gothic" were competing terms for a species of popular fictions in the 1790s as evidenced by the frequent use of such designations as "A German Tale." For readers these labels indicated the thrillingly foreign; for organs of the conservative government such as the *Anti-Jacobin* they represented an indecent and politically suspect class of fictions that were dangerously popular. From these contemporary usages we take our warrant for the construction "German gothic" — a term apparently first used by Michael Hadley — to emphasize the part played by German writing in constituting a species of border-crossing popular fictions referred to in Germany as *Ritter-, Räuber- und Schauerromantik*, and in Britain as the gothic. We do so on the grounds that it is a more open and inclusive term than the label *Schauerroman*, and one that better reflects the interculturality and intermediality that characterized these fictions.

A central question is how the gothic has functioned as a site of cultural transfer throughout the nineteenth century and beyond. Of interest is not merely the importation of themes and motifs from the sphere of German popular literature into other national spheres, but also their reimportation and transfer into other discourses and media. Under what conditions have such acts of cultural transfer taken place? Have processes of this kind at the level of popular literature been more representative of an emerging "world literature" than of an exchange between apparently clearly delimited national literatures?

Despite the central position of German writing in the alchemical processes of translation and appropriation across European linguistic and political frontiers around 1800, German studies has widely ignored the

Schauerroman as an object of serious study. In 1977 Jörg Schönert complained that German research has tended to project “diese [angloamerikanischen und französischen] Zusammenhänge auf Entwicklungen in der deutschen Literatur” (these Anglo-American and French contexts onto developments in German literature) and called on future studies to reappraise such confusions in the future.⁶ German studies has begun to redress these imbalances in recent years and has undertaken research in the specifically *German* socio-historical, aesthetic, and intellectual contexts of individual German writers and novels. Barry Murnane’s introductory essay continues this work by providing a comprehensive survey of research on the German gothic and tracing a line of descent from the *Schauerroman* via realism and twentieth-century modernism to the gothic productions of post-Wall German writing.

This book attempts to achieve a better balance between the German and non-German contexts of the *Schauerroman* and its successors by pursuing three main aims. First, we seek to discover what specifically *German* literary and intellectual contexts were influential in the formative phase of German gothic.⁷ The *Schauerroman* is not quite the site of counter-Enlightenment “diablerie” and violence that Devendra Varma believed it to be,⁸ but rather is firmly rooted in a dominant strand of late Enlightenment medico-psychological discourse known in Germany as “Anthropologie,” a context well known to the readers of Schiller’s *Der Geisterseher*.⁹ As Stefan Andriopoulos has shown, the claim in the preamble written by the fictional Graf von O** that his story was a contribution to the history of the deception and confusion of the human spirit alludes to Johann Christoph Adelung’s widely-read study *Geschichte der menschlichen Nartheit* (A History of Human Foolishness), just as the debates on ghosts in the novel draw on Kant’s metaphysical essay “Träume eines Geistersehers” (Dreams of a Ghost-Seer).¹⁰ Because of the importance of anthropology as a discursive context for the German gothic, we decided to reproduce Jürgen Barkhoff’s essay on Schiller’s *Geisterseher* (first published in *Populäre Erscheinungen*) here in English translation.¹¹ The original genre of the German gothic was the *Schauerroman*, whose very name betrays its affinity with anthropology by referring to the physical sensation of shuddering. Like anthropological discourse, the *Schauerroman* is preoccupied with what Barkhoff calls the “problematic unity of body and soul,” powerful affects, sense impressions, and disturbing aporias in self-knowledge and in the knowledge of others. Indeed, the aesthetic category of the sublime, the mixed feeling of “delightful horror” routinely invoked as the signature trait of the gothic, is itself predicated on the mind-body dualism with which Enlightenment anthropology grappled.¹²

Second, we examine the international reception of German gothic in the period following the appearance in the 1790s of the *Schauerroman* in Germany in order to assess, from a Germanist perspective, how

these processes of cultural transfer have provided a profitable source for other national literatures. We open this discussion with Silke Arnold-de Simine's essay, which — like Jürgen Barkhoff's — appeared first in German in *Populäre Erscheinungen*.¹³ Again the decision to provide an English translation was motivated by the clarification the essay provides of the situation around 1800, and Arnold-de Simine also discusses the career of Benedikte Naubert's *Hermann von Unna* in Britain. Cultural transfer always involves processes of semantic recontextualization and refunctionalizing, however, as can be seen in the acts of reconfiguration surrounding E. T. A. Hoffmann's tales in France.¹⁴ As Victor Sage argues here, the French creation of what is commonly known as the *conte fantastique* as a by-product of reading Hoffmann points towards a further focus of this volume, namely an analysis of the recycling of German texts for local purposes, as is the case, for example, in Andrew Cusack's reading of the *Dublin University Magazine* in the 1830s and 1840s. Finally, careful analysis of such reconfigurations can also show how this international reception has been responsible for contemporary critical models of German gothic, leading to misconceptions and misrepresentations that have proven to be extremely long-lasting.¹⁵ This afterlife of German gothic fiction in a transnational literary and critical context is one central meaning of "Popular Revenants" in the title of this collection.

Third, most of the following essays trace revenants of the gothic in time, rather than geographical space, by providing for the first time an account in English of the afterlife of the German gothic beyond the 1820s and romanticism as it has returned in other literary genres and infiltrated other media (music and film) and discourses (philosophy). We regard gothic writing as a literary mode that accompanies processes of modern social organization and identity formation, mirroring and distorting them and offering a potential means of negotiating and criticizing modernity. In this book we seek to establish the extent to which this potential continues to be realized beyond the first flourishing of the gothic at the midpoint of the *Sattelzeit* (threshold period of modernity) around 1800.¹⁶ Although research on Anglo-American gothic has firmly established a continuous line of gothic writing to the present day, such a direct line of descent has yet to be traced in the case of the German *Schauerroman*. Traditional accounts have seen the gothic novel disappear into late- and post-romantic fantastic literature, although the reappearance of such motifs as the double, the specter, and the revenant, as well as the themes of intrigue and the monstrous in realist and modernist texts, seems to call such a clean break into question. In addition, the post-1820 reception of German gothic writing in Britain and France seems to point to an almost spectral afterlife in other national contexts.

A central question is how the gothic has operated as a site of cultural transfer throughout the nineteenth century and beyond. Of interest

here is not merely the importation of themes and motifs from the sphere of German popular literature into other national spheres, but also their reimportation, their transfer into other discourses and media, and their modifications over time. Mario Grizelj is interested in the capacity of the gothic mode to reinvent itself. His interrogation of the gothic at three stages in the first half of the nineteenth century indicates a successive reshaping of terror and horror (the basic psychological elements of the gothic) in which the changing role of media is implicated, initially by complicating interpretation and ultimately by making it impossible.

In her reconstruction of Robert Schumann's early literary career, Monika Schmitz-Emans shows how the composer met the challenge of writing about the new romantic music by mobilizing gothic techniques and style in a poetic mode of criticism. Her paper opens the way for a reappraisal of Schumann as a true romantic artist in the mold of E. T. A. Hoffmann who was simultaneously active in the fields of literary and musical composition and criticism. The writings of Heinrich Heine, an enthusiastic reader of Hoffmann, were even more fundamentally shaped by the gothic mode as Jörg Kreienbrock demonstrates in the case of Heine's history of philosophy in Germany. Here the transfer was not merely one of motifs; rather, the whole history was patterned so as to conform with a gothic trope of uncanny repetition.

While histories of French, English, and American literature point to an almost uninterrupted presence of the gothic throughout the nineteenth century, there has been a general consensus among Germanists that the lifespan of the *Schauerroman* ended with romanticism. After all, the exaggerations of the *Schauerromantik* (dark romanticism) seem diametrically opposed to German realism, with its sober program of empiricism and interest in the social sphere. Recently, however, there has been a considerable overhaul of critical concepts of realism as commentators have begun to delve deeper into the cracks in the veneer of its mimetic constructions of reality.¹⁷ Recent work on Wilhelm Raabe, Theodor Storm, and Theodor Fontane in particular has shown significant intertextual links to earlier forms of gothic fiction.¹⁸ Matthias Bickenbach's essay, while in no way questioning Theodor Fontane's programmatic commitment to realism, demonstrates the ways in which Fontane mobilized and recontextualized the ghost story, bracketing and historicizing it as a favored fictional mode of the Prussian aristocracy that cast an oblique light on the collective psychology of that class. In his essay Peter Arnds shows how another paragon of German realism, Wilhelm Raabe, responded to the historicism of his time by unearthing mythical rather than historical materials: the legend of the Children (or the Pied Piper) of Hamelin. The medieval setting and the capacity to induce a *frisson* of delighted horror in the reader marks these materials as gothic. In Raabe's hands the Hamelin legend became part of a cultural criticism that gothicized history, emplot-

ting it in terms of recurring persecution and violence and eschewing Whiggish notions of progress.

Barry Murnane pursues David Punter's question as to where we might locate the gothic with respect to modernism via a close reading of the topography of Prague in Meyrink's *Der Golem* and Paul Leppin's *Severins Gang in die Finsternis* (*The Road to Darkness*), revealing that gothic patterns and structures, far from being merely archived in these texts, are actually germane to their poetics. This involves rethinking the separation between mass culture and the high culture to which modernist works are usually assigned in order to discover a gothicized modernist poetics.

Continuing his earlier work on the doppelgänger, Andrew Webber focuses on the return of the gothic in the *Biedermeierzeit* and in the Weimar Republic. His decision to select the writings of E. T. A. Hoffmann as the *locus classicus* for the situational motifs of technology and fragmentation underlines the vital importance of Hoffmann as an innovator and mediator of the gothic whose influence has been felt throughout the nineteenth century and beyond, a significance attested to by Hoffmann's presence in the essays of Sage and Grizelj. At the heart of Webber's argument is the claim that physiognomy fulfils "a key function in the representational regime of the gothic." Accordingly, Hoffmann's writing of physiognomy as a configuration of the corporeal and the spatial provides the script for the unsettling intermingling of personal and architectural physiognomies in expressionist cinema.

Webber's and Murnane's essays shift the historical frame to analyze instances of the gothic in early twentieth-century modernism and in expressionist cinema. Catherine Smale rounds the volume out by providing an exemplary reading of Christa Wolf and Irina Liebmann, two writers whose approach to the eruption of sedimented German history following the *Wende* has been accompanied by a recourse to the gothic that is both material, involving the borrowing of motifs and tropes, and "spectralized" to the extent that the gothic is marginally present in the form of stylistic devices inviting readings that run counter to the surface narrative. It was not possible in this book to apply this approach to such writers as Heiner Müller and Elfriede Jelinek, but Smale's contribution — together with Murnane's remarks on modernism — address issues of intertextuality and spectrality in a way that should inform future accounts of German writing in the gothic mode in the twentieth-century.¹⁹

Finally, the editors would like to mention two papers given at the *Popular Revenants* symposium in Dublin (4–5 September 2009) that it was not possible to include here. Katrin Schumacher (Halle) considered the gendered and mediatized body in her contribution, "Science and Fiction over Her Dead Body," and Clemens Ruthner (Dublin) opened a discussion on the intersection between the discourse on vampirism and the constitution of the gothic. We eagerly anticipate the publication of

these papers elsewhere. Together with the work in the present book, they promise to open up new directions in which to pursue the myriad revariants of the German gothic.

Notes

¹ Michael Hadley, *The Undiscovered Genre: A Search for the German Gothic Novel* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1978). See the articles “Schauerroman,” by Marie Mulvey-Roberts, and “German Gothic,” by Hans-Ulrich Mohr, in *The Handbook of the Gothic*, ed. Marie Mulvey-Roberts, 2nd ed. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 232–33 and 298–303 respectively; and also Avril Horner, ed., *European Gothic: A Spirited Exchange 1760–1960* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 2002).

² Quoted from Terry Hale, “Translation in Distress: Cultural Misappropriation and the Construction of the Gothic,” in Horner, *European Gothic*, 23.

³ Barry Murnane, “Importing Home-Grown Horrors? The English Reception of the Schauerroman and Schiller’s *Geisterseher*,” *Angermion: Yearbook for Anglo-German Literary Criticism, Intellectual History and Cultural Transfers / Jahrbuch für britisch-deutsche Kulturbeziehungen* 1 (2008): 60.

⁴ [Margaret Baron-Wilson], *The Life and Correspondence of M. G. Lewis: With Many Pieces in Prose, Never before Published* (London: Colburn, 1839), 171–72.

⁵ Murnane, “Importing Home-Grown Horrors?,” 53.

⁶ Jörg Schönert, “Schauriges Behagen und distanzierter Schrecken: Zur Situation von Schauerroman und Schauererzählung im literarischen Leben der Biedermeierzeit,” in *Literatur in der sozialen Bewegung*, ed. Alberto Martino (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1977), 32n14.

⁷ See the German-language book *Populäre Erscheinungen: Der deutsche Schauerroman um 1800*, ed. Barry Murnane and Andrew Cusack (Munich, Paderborn: Fink, 2011), in which we have addressed this formative phase of the German gothic in more detail than is possible here, where the essays by Jürgen Barkhoff, Silke Arnold-de Simine and Victor Sage are intended to provide an introduction to current research in this area.

⁸ Devendra P. Varma, *Gothic Flame: Being a History of the Gothic Novel in England — Its Origins, Efflorescence, Disintegration, and Residuary Influences*, 4th ed. (London: Russel & Russel, 1987), 197.

⁹ The reviewer in the *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek* commented, “Man würde sich aber sehr irren, wenn man den Eindruck, den die Erzählung macht, bloß von der Erweckung der Neugierde, bloß von der genannten Erwartung herleiten wollte.” Instead, it is asserted, the true aim of the fragment is the rational explanation of supposed “dunkle[] Wirkungen” of the story. See “Der Geisterseher: Eine Geschichte aus den Memoiren des Grafen von O. . . von Friedrich Schiller. Leipzig, bey Götschen. 1789. 338 Seiten in 8°,” *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek* 109, no. 1 (1792): 148. The *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek* and many other German Enlightenment periodicals may be viewed online at <http://www.ub.uni-bielefeld.de/diglib/aufklaerung/suche.htm>.

¹⁰ Stefan Andriopoulos, "Occult Conspiracies: Spirits and Secret Societies in Schiller's *Ghost Seer*," *New German Critique* (Special Issue: *Dark Powers: Conspiracy in History and Literature*, ed. Eva Horn and Anson Rabinbach) 103 (2008): 65–81.

¹¹ Jürgen Barkhoff, "'Als ob man in eine Gruft gerufen hätte': Zur schwarzen Anthropologie des Schauerromans Schillers *Geisterseher*," in Murnane and Cusack, *Populäre Erscheinungen*, 25–38.

¹² See Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, 5th ed. (London: Dodsley, 1767), 129.

¹³ Silke Arnold-de Simine, "'Lost in translation?': Die englische Übersetzung von Benedikte Nauberts *Herrmann von Unna*," in Murnane and Cusack, *Populäre Erscheinungen*, 121–33.

¹⁴ See Michel Espagne, "Jenseits der Komparatistik: Zur Methode der Erforschung von Kulturtransfers," in *Europäische Kulturzeitschriften als Medien transnationaler und transdisziplinärer Wahrnehmung*, ed. Ulrich Mölk (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006), 3–32.

¹⁵ See Barry Murnane, "Importing Home-Grown Horrors? The English Reception of the Schauerroman and Schiller's *Der Geisterseher*," *Angermission: Yearbook for Anglo-German Literary Criticism, Intellectual History and Cultural Transfers/Jahrbuch für britisch-deutsche Kulturbeziehungen* 1 (2008): 51–82.

¹⁶ The intellectual historian Reinhart Koselleck postulates the existence of a "Sattelzeit" (threshold period) stretching approximately from 1750 to 1850, during which the political vocabulary of our time was constituted by shifts in the meanings of key terms (*Grundbegriffe*). This process was reflected in a democratization of political discourse and accompanied by a revolution in reading habits from the "intensive" reading of a few texts, such as the Bible, to the "extensive" reading of large numbers of texts, including periodicals and novels. See Reinhart Koselleck, "Einleitung," in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland*, ed. Otto Brunner, Werner Conze, and Reinhart Koselleck, 8 vols. (Stuttgart: Klett Verlag, 1972–97), 1:xv–xvi. On the change from "intensive" to "extensive" reading habits see Rolf Engelsing, *Zur Sozialgeschichte deutscher Mittel- und Unterschichten* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1973), 112–54, especially 121–22. I discuss this context further in "Der Räuberroman: Versuch einer Standortbestimmung in der deutsch-britischen Leseökonomie um 1800," in Murnane and Cusack, *Populäre Erscheinungen*, 193–209.

¹⁷ Roland Barthes's landmark essay "The Reality Effect" has prompted a reconsideration in German Studies of the naivety of the program of mimesis in realism; see Roland Barthes, "The Reality Effect," in *The Rustle of Language*, tr. Richard Howard (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), 141–48. See for example Gerhard Plumpe, *Epochen moderner Literatur: Ein systemtheoretischer Entwurf* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1995), 105–37; Claus-Michael Ort, *Zeichen und Zeit: Probleme des Realismus* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1998); and Gregor Reichelt, *Fantastik im Realismus: Literarische und gesellschaftliche Einbildungskraft bei Keller, Storm und Fontane* (Stuttgart, Weimar: Metzler, 2001).

¹⁸ On Raabe see for example Julia Bertschik, *Maulwurfsarchäologie: Zum Verhältnis von Geschichte und Anthropologie in Wilhelm Raabes historischen Erzähltexten* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1995). On Storm see Volker Hoffmann,

“Theodor Storm: *Der Schimmelreiter* — Eine Teufelspaktgeschichte als realistische Lebensgeschichte,” in *Erzählungen und Novellen des 19. Jahrhunderts*, 2 vols. (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1997), 333–70, and Andreas Blödorn, “Storms ‘Schimmelreiter’: Vom Erzählen erzählen,” *Der Deutschunterricht* 57, no. 2 (2005): 8–17. There has been considerable work carried out on Fontane’s late novel *Effi Briest* in this tradition; see for example Frances M. Subiotto, “The Ghost in ‘Effi Briest,’” *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 21, no. 2 (1985): 137–50; Konrad Ehlich, “Die Fremde als Spuk: Fontane,” in *Jahrbuch Deutsch als Fremdsprache* 24 (1998): 83–96; and Judith Ryan, “The Chinese Ghost: Colonialism and Subaltern Speech in Fontane’s ‘Effi Briest,’” in *History and Literature: Essays in Honor of Karl S. Guthke*, ed. William Collins Donahue and Scott Denham (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2000), 367–84.

¹⁹ While goth popular culture should perhaps also have been addressed as an instance of the gothic in contemporary culture, we felt that it was important to establish a solid profile of gothic “revenants” within Germanist literary studies before beginning to analyze such broader cultural forms and issues in German gothic discourse.

I: Haunting (Literary) History: An Introduction to German Gothic

Barry Murnane

It is with an equal portion of surprise and alarm that we witness in this country, a glaring depravity of taste, as displayed in the extreme eagerness for foreign productions, and a systematic design to extend the depravity by regular importation of exotic poison from the envenomed crucibles of the literary and political alchemists of the new German school.

— John Boening, ed., *The Reception of Classical German Literature in England, 1760–1860*¹

AS A LITERATURE FIXATED ON uncanny disruptions to a seemingly stable order, it is more than ironic that the German *Schauerroman* has itself been widely ignored, perhaps even suppressed, by literary historians over the years. From the outset German literature occupied something of a privileged, albeit vilified position within the transnational framework of the gothic on the emerging literary market around 1800. For earliest critics in Britain such as Jane Austen or the *Anti-Jacobin*, gothic fiction was synonymous with an image of Germany as the depraved site of necromancy, secret societies, and wanton violence. When Austen completed *Northanger Abbey* in 1798, her parody of gothic novels contained not only Karl Friedrich Kahlert's *The Necromancer* and Karl Grosse's *Horrid Mysteries* (original titles: *Der Geisterbanner* and *Der Genius*), her list of "horrid novels" extended to English works obviously hoping to profit from the German influx: Francis Lathom's supposed "German Story Founded on Incidents of Real Life" *The Midnight Bell* and Eliza Parsons's "German Story" *Castle of Wolfenbach* and her "German Tale" *The Mysterious Warning*.² That the *Anti-Jacobin*, the in-house satirical journal of English Tories in the 1790s, should focus on the "depravity" of German writing in particular only goes to underline the importance of the German *Schauerroman* in this formative period.

Despite the central position of German writing in the gothic "alchemy" around 1800, Germanists have widely ignored the *Schauerroman* as an object of serious study. A first milestone was Johann Wilhelm Appell's account of the German "Ritter-, Räuber- und Schauerromantik" published

in 1859, which castigated the popular mode of the gothic — and in particular its ongoing influence in French literature — rather than offering a meaningful analysis of these various forms of novels. Following renewed interest in the *Schauerroman* around 1900 in fiction and in academic discourse, most notably evidenced by Freud's essay on the uncanny and culminating in Otto Rommel's landmark essay "Rationalistische Dämonie" (Rationalistic Demonism), Hansjörg Garte developed a so-called morphological definition of the *Schauerroman* as a distinct genre in his *Kunstform Schauerroman* of 1935.³ This generic account of German gothic writing is by no means unproblematic, not least because it is based almost entirely on English works, seemingly in the belief that the German *Schauerroman* was merely derivative of its English counterpart; this has not, however, prevented contemporary accounts from adopting Garte's model almost wholesale without any meaningful criticism. Wolfgang Trautwein's study *Erlesene Angst*, for example, was implicitly based on Garte's English model of the gothic novel and extended to include Wolfgang Iser's reader-response theory to account for the affect of fear during reading, focusing almost entirely on Charles Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer*.⁴

Following Jörg Schönert's complaint about the blind transfer of non-German conditions onto German writing already discussed in the introduction to this volume, German studies has barely redressed this imbalance.⁵ Hans von Trotha's *Angenehme Empfindungen* reveals this more than most: his groundbreaking study of Enlightenment discourses of delightful horror in Germany, which — unusually for the German context — deals with the *Schauerroman* in a serious manner without treating it simply as *Trivilliteratur* or "pulp" fiction, is developed mainly from accounts of the landscape garden and is strongly influenced by recent British debates surrounding Horace Walpole.⁶

A problem facing scholars of German gothic writing, then, is the fact that our established concepts of what constitutes a *Schauerroman* are generally derived from Anglo-American research into the English gothic novel. Within existing scholarship the *Schauerroman* is referred to simply as the equivalent of the "gothic novel," hence we have come to consider it as being negatively associated with a school of the gothic novel following Matthew Lewis that celebrates tasteless violence, brutality, and the supernatural. When English critics refer to Germanic "shudder novels," they most often do so in order to describe a particularly brutal direction of the gothic novel for which Lewis's *The Monk* is the best-known example. Devendra P. Varma's comments can be considered exemplary in this regard: "shadows of death and the supernatural, phantoms of terrors of the invisible world, and cold-blooded brutalities fill the pages of the *Schauerromantik* with specters of horror."⁷ For Varma the "blame" for the gothic is quite clear: "magic and diablerie were ideas native to the

soil of Germany.” These are opinions that have continued to influence the Anglo-American understanding of German gothic until now;⁸ more importantly, they have also exerted an influence over academic studies of the *Schauerroman* as a result of the transfer of terminology and concepts from Gothic Studies into the German context. As stated in the introduction to this volume, the need to identify the specifically *German* contexts of gothic points out the need to advance our understanding of popular German writing beyond these established stereotypes.

Contrary to these traditional English accounts of German gothic as an anti-Enlightenment mix of diabolism and necromancy, the predominant focus in German works on the psychological uncertainty pertaining to the uncanny actually points toward their position *within* German late-Enlightenment discourse.⁹ These texts emerge as further developments of the core components of Germany’s sentimental discourse (affective poetics, dangers of rapturous imagination) and the storm and stress movement (medieval settings, the criminal as noble outsider). The two key themes of early German gothic (insofar as they are to be found in most of its variants), the secret society and necromancy, also help correct this view. German readers of Friedrich Schiller’s *Geisterseher* (The Ghost-Seer, 1785–88), would have understood the claim in the preamble written by the fictional Graf von O** that his story would help understand how the Prince’s intellect (and by association that of all men) could be fooled by the side-show-style necromancy performed by the secret society in the novel, despite his obviously rationalizing intellect as part of the medico-philosophical discourse of the 1770s and 1780s known as *Anthropologie* (anthropology).¹⁰ This is underlined by the anthropological terminology of *Schauer*, implying an affective poetics of shocking or shuddering that draws deliberately on discussions of the mind/body-dualism, the shudder being understood as a bodily manifestation of mental/nervous horror.

Because they focus on areas of social life and individual motivation that remained unaccounted for in earlier, more optimistic Enlightenment accounts of personality and reality, these works actually take on an important role in anthropology’s “self-Enlightenment” of the Enlightenment. They take on the status of fictional media for real epistemological problems, namely the sense that the powers of reason are limited in assessing human intentions and social interaction. German gothic persistently rejected the last remnants of optimism and self-assuredness that the late Enlightenment still associated with reason, rationality, and philosophy. This derangement of the supposedly solid enlightened subject remains at the heart of German writing in the gothic mode to the present day, hence the *Schauerroman* looks backward toward the Enlightenment and forward toward modernity’s interrogation of subjectivity and a poetics based

on the productive powers of imagination. In what sense, though, is it possible, or indeed sensible, to talk of German “gothic” writing?

German *Gothic* and *German Gothic*

First, it is important to point out that the use of “gothic” in this volume is *not* meant to colonize Germanic writing with a concept developed in the context of Anglo-American writing in the same way that previous accounts of the *Ritter-, Räuber- und Schauerromane* have done either explicitly or implicitly. For instance, in contradistinction to the unifying and homogenizing tendencies of gothic as a term, German distinguishes between different forms of sensational and affect-driven fiction — the *Ritter-, Räuber- und Schauerromane*, or novels of chivalry, banditry, and “shuddering” (as Appell noted in 1856). Indeed it is significant that the first use of the term *Schauerroman* (viewed traditionally and unproblematically as the companion term to the English “gothic novel”) seems to have occurred in relation to an English novel and not to a homegrown product at all.¹¹ This is not to suggest that these various generic terms are themselves unproblematic, however. Closer scrutiny has shown how these seemingly solid borders are in fact blurred by common motifs, plots, and preoccupations.¹² Thus Michael Hadley’s misleadingly self-explanatory term for this field of popular literature as a “Gothic mix” — misleading because writers, critics, and readers around 1800 hardly ever used the term gothic, or “gotisch,” to describe German works — seems to be appropriate after all, if only because it acknowledges a continuity extending between these various forms for which Hadley struggled to find the correct critical terminology.¹³

While some commentators have urged caution in effectively lumping together the “job lot” of *Ritter-, Räuber- und Schauerromane* under any one term, pointing out for example that “chivalry” and “banditry” are clearly based on their leading protagonists and hence historically more accurate, Müller-Dyes’s comments do hold up on closer inspection.¹⁴ For instance the secret tribunals central to the plots of *Ritterromane* since Benedikte Naubert’s *Hermann of Unna* (German 1788, English 1794) follow similar patterns and fulfill similar functions to the secret societies in *Schauerromane* such as Friedrich Schiller’s *The Ghost-Seer* (German 1787–89, English 1795,) and Karl Grosse’s *Horrid Mysteries* (German 1791–94, English 1796); the same is also true of Christian August Vulpius’s *Rinaldo Rinaldini* (1799), which features several political intrigues and secret societies. Although the various forms of novels differ in their levels of fantastic or mimetic verisimilitude, what does seem to unite them is their fascination with the extraordinary, forbidden, execrated — in short, a fascination with the abject as that which the Enlightenment declared impossible or unsanctioned (whether ghosts or murder, despotic rule or

criminals outside the law).¹⁵ This fascination lies behind a basic poetological model of sensation, or *frisson*,¹⁶ at the core of all three different forms that occurs when readers are confronted with all that is considered Other to the reasonable, enlightened mind and social order.¹⁷

The most appropriate German term to describe this range of texts seems to be what Clemens Ruthner has called “Schauerphantastik,” an inclusive neologism that accounts for a heterogeneous body of works from the outright fantastic and supernatural to realistic depictions of violence, the socially unacceptable, and monstrous sexuality.¹⁸ Ironically, this is precisely the sense in which Gothic Studies has defined its object of study in recent years, employing the term gothic in a pragmatic sense as a form of cultural shorthand for a variety of different manifestations. This wide-ranging and pragmatic sense familiar from English studies, may prove to be more useful in avoiding linguistic confusion in the long term, given the transnational and comparative approach necessary to researching the gothic as a formation around 1800 and after. To speak of German gothic is not to replace the existing framework of theories of the fantastic and existing socio-historical accounts of popular German literature since the 1780s however; where German readers see the term, they may wish to mentally substitute/supplement it with the term “Schauerphantastik.”

What, then, is German gothic? The *Ritter-, Räuber- und Schauerromane* that make up German gothic fiction emerged in the 1780s from the affective poetological models of sentimentalism and the focus in the *Sturm und Drang* on outsiders and exceptional states. Traceable back to the earliest phases of the *Sturm und Drang* around Goethe, Herder, Lenz, and the group of poets known as the *Göttinger Hainbund* (Göttingen Grove Group), a renewed interest in gothic architecture, the Middle Ages, and its art and literature can be identified as a key impetus in the formation of the *Schauerroman*. Writing in his essay “Von deutscher Baukunst” (1773, On German Architecture), Goethe prioritized gothic architecture as a harmonious and natural expression of the German soul in which its individual parts are united (“aus dessen Seele die Teile, in ein ewiges Ganze zusammenwachsen, hervortreten”).¹⁹ This architecture is furthermore thoroughly organic and primordial — he speaks metaphorically of “Blumen, Blüten, Blätter, auch wohl dürres Gras and Moos” (96; flowers, blossoms, leaves, but also dry grass and moss). Yet more importantly, the gothic functions as an imaginary cultural mode serving to form a German collective identity in opposition to “Frenchified” classicism and its rules and order: “Hat nicht der seinem Grab entsteigende Genius der Alten den deinen gefesselt, Welscher!” (96; has genius of the ancients not arisen from the grave to capture yours, Frenchman!), asks Goethe.

This position was by no means isolated: in his essay “Shakespear,” published alongside Goethe’s text in the same collection, *Von deutscher Art und Kunst*, in 1773, Herder rejected the classicism of French literature, which

he declared a “Letternkultur” with “Regelvorrath” (letter-culture with a set of rules),²⁰ and longed for a homegrown drama that would return to the “Ritterzeiten in unserer Sprache, unserm so weit abgearteten Vaterlande” (90; to the chivalric age in our language, in our so degenerate fatherland) in order to help create German identity (“uns Deutschen herzustellen”; 65). What emerges from this rhetoric is tellingly enough Goethe’s *Götz von Berlichingen mit der eisernen Hand* (*Götz von Berlichingen with the Iron Hand*, 1774), set in the Middle Ages at the collapse of the German Holy Roman Empire (which it repeatedly laments) and concluding in a nationalist rant demanding a return to organic German culture.²¹ It features *Götz* as a well-meaning rebel, Weislingen and Adelheid as Machiavellian schemers who murder and poison (and are themselves murdered and poisoned), a bloody and uncontrolled peasant revolution, and finally the *Femgericht*, or secret tribunal, which became a constant in later German historical gothic narratives.

Gottfried August Bürger’s ballad “Lenore” (1774; Lenora) may be identified as one subsequent attempt to return to what Herder termed the “Hoheit, Unschuld, Einfalt” (nobility, innocence, simplicity) of “organic” cultural production.²² Bürger resurrected the lyrical register of medieval and early Reformation church hymns and introduced a highly developed dialogic structure drawing on the vernacular language of the rural German; indeed the main source of “Lenore” was a Low German story in the oral tradition. As the dramatic closing stanzas highlight, in revisiting this tradition Bürger also accessed a culture that had by no means fulfilled Moses Mendelssohn’s decree that belief in ghosts, vampires, and other forms of the supernatural should be eliminated. Where the Berlin *philosophe* wrote, “Man helle die Gegend auf, so verschwinden die Gespenster” (if one spreads light over the country, the ghosts disappear), Bürger appealed to a culture of superstition that was more *natural* precisely *because of* its belief in ghosts: “Ha sieh! Ha sieh! im Augenblick/Huhu! ein gräßlich Wunder!/Des Reiters Koller, Stück für Stück,/Fiel ab wie mürber Zunder . . . Zum nackten Schädel ward sein Kopf;/Sein Körper zum Gerippe,/Mit Stundenglas und Hippe” (Ah look! Ah look! In a moment/Huhu! an awful wonder!/The rider’s coat, bit by bit/Fell off like brittle cinders . . . His head turned into a naked skull;/His body turned into a rackabones/With hourglass and bill hook).²³ Through onomatopoeia, repetition, and alliteration Bürger’s text quite obviously sought to create a sensual equivalent of the visceral shock of meeting a revenant.

What these examples suggest is that the gothic and the Middle Ages were Foucauldian heterotopias allowing an expression of very modern problems in German-speaking states. The Middle Ages and German gothic became imaginary spaces that were consciously produced and relied on medial distribution to create a German cultural paradigm. In Goethe’s *Götz* as in Bürger’s “Lenore” it becomes clear that these texts

were not “genuine” bandit or ghost narratives in the sense that Bürger claimed; rather their formal structure and intertextual, thematic “borrowings” reveal them as transitional texts between “genuine” *ante*-modern superstition and gothic *frisson*.

While it is important to stress the relevance of this new-found interest in the supernatural, the uncanny, the Middle Ages, and the outsider figure in the *Sturm und Drang*, there is very little clear evidence of a direct genealogical link between Goethe, for example, and gothic texts of the 1790s such as Karl F. Kahlert’s *Geisterbanner* or Benedikte Naubert’s historical novels. Goethe’s role in the formation of German gothic has been exaggerated somewhat, particularly in previous Anglo-American accounts.²⁴ Holger Dainat has shown in some detail how literary critics around 1800 consciously created the myth of a “degeneration” from the canonical Goethe to the *Ritter-, Räuber- und Schauerromane* of the 1790s and early 1800s in order to create a basic canon of German writing and thus dismiss more popular forms such as the gothic novel as worthless pulp.²⁵ Rather than assuming a conscious creation of a “gothic mix” of stories of ghosts, chivalry, and secret societies traceable to Goethe as Hadley once did, it is more helpful to consider German gothic as emerging in a broader discourse in which historical thought and writing began to be formed toward the end of the Enlightenment and that resulted in a new-found interest in all that could be considered different, exciting, titillating, or sensational about pre-Enlightenment culture.²⁶ As shown by such collections as Veit Weber’s *Sagen der Vorzeit* (Tales of Yore, 1787–98), this titillation could also include visceral depictions of bodily violence and unsanctioned forms of sexual lust within Enlightenment discourse, so this historical tenor also led directly to the more formulaic, populist, and serialized “pulp” fiction of Joseph Alois Gleich or Ignaz Ferdinand Arnold, as evidenced by Gleich’s historical novel *Friedrich von Udenheim oder Handlungen des Vehmgerichts: Eine Geschichte des zehnten Jahrhunderts* (Friedrich of Udenheim or the Acts of the Secret Tribunal: A Story from the Tenth Century, 1793).

Identifying the genesis of the *Schauerphantastik* in this Enlightenment historical discourse points toward an important dimension of German gothic not previously emphasized in English publications, namely its position within a specifically German form of late-Enlightenment thinking that has been the subject of major studies in the last twenty years and united by the moniker “anthropology discourse.”²⁷ Gothic deals (thematically) *in* and works (aesthetically) *through* fear and forms of superstition that enlightened readers are supposed to have long since overcome. Christian Begemann has identified this paradox at the core of the *Schauerroman*’s affect-based poetics in particular, and the eighteenth century in general, insofar as the Enlightenment’s aim of controlling an individual’s fear of nature actually produced new and different forms of “internal” (that is, psychological) fears:

Die Aufklärung hat, das ist richtig, im Bereich der äußeren Natur zahlreiche Befürchtungen gegenstandslos gemacht. . . . Es lässt sich detailliert nachweisen, daß dieselben Entwicklungen, aufgrund deren Naturfurcht sich zerstreut, die Entstehung von Angst ermöglichen oder bewirken.²⁸

[It is true, the Enlightenment did indeed render countless fears of the natural world baseless. . . . But it can also be determined in detail that the same developments that did away with the fear of nature led to the genesis of anxiety/trepidation.]

Precisely because it employed an affective poetics drawing on the double movement of fighting fear while also consciously provoking dread in the reader, and because it also portrayed such affects of fear on a thematic level, gothic writing came to be seen as something of an anomaly in late-Enlightenment thinking. For contemporary critics the enjoyment provided by such sensational narratives was barely explicable, because this “Lust an der Angst,” or delightful horror, among an enlightened readership was no longer conceivable in terms of the established Horatian poetological model of *prodesse aut delectare*. So it is possible to view German gothic as occupying something of a threshold position in German writing. While its affective poetics patently draws on late-Enlightenment discourses of sensibility and superstition, its — thoroughly popular — appeal to irrational fears and emotions no longer simply served the didactic purposes of Enlightenment writing and pointed instead toward the romantic questioning of these principles around 1800.

Gothic as Modernity’s Black Box

The predominant focus in German works on the psychological uncertainty pertaining to the uncanny thus points toward their position within the dominant anthropological paradigm of Germany’s late-Enlightenment aesthetics and philosophy. Schiller’s *Geisterseher*, generally considered to be the prototype of the *Schauerroman* (even if this traditional view ignores more popular, less highbrow authors writing contemporaneously with Schiller such as Benedikte Naubert), draws most obviously on these debates in that the unfinished novel documents the fallibility of a Prince to the opaque plot of the Armenian, a mysterious figure seemingly supported by a secret society aiming to overthrow Protestant rule in the Prince’s homeland. That these works emerged from a field of popular journals fixated on instances of the occult and secret societies merely underlines these widespread social fears.²⁹ In an age of paranoia, secret tribunals, and secret societies across continental Europe — including the Freemasons and the Order of Illuminati operating throughout Germany — it is easy to see how the German gothic did not so much run against the grain of Enlightened thinking as

it provided a form of mimetic representation of real fears and issues at the heart of German society in the 1780s and 1790s and attempted — in an admittedly extravagant form — to visualize and make manifest the complex structures of social organization, communication, and inter-subjective interactions of a culture on the brink of modernity that appeared increasingly opaque, incomprehensible, and threatening.

As previously discussed, the term *Schauerroman* shows how German gothic was part of late-Enlightenment anthropological and aesthetic traditions. The basis of this dimension of affective poetics was the concept that a reader can experience a form of pleasure through fearfulness. This “angenehmes Grauen” — delightful horror, to use the aesthetic code-word of the Enlightenment — has been accounted for in two separate ways: first, as a “compensatory” and second as a “re-assurance” function of the *frisson* of *Schauer*. The compensation thesis views the ghosts, mysteries, and superstition of the gothic novel with Richard Alewyn as an anti-Enlightened, fictional compensation for a perceived disenchantment of the world in the course of rationalization and secularization.³⁰ The second model has been most convincingly argued by Hans von Trotha in recent years and views gothic writing as a — albeit extreme — form of canonized affective techniques that serve as a literary medium to articulate and cope with the inexplicable, awe inspiring, and infinite nature of the sublime. This key term of eighteenth-century aesthetics — the sublime — refers to the uncontrollability and immensity of the natural world, and the Enlightenment, according to the accounts of Trotha and Carsten Zelle, sought to cope with it by modeling this immensity and its concomitant horrific experience “im Modus des Scheins” (in the mode of illusion).³¹ The aesthetic discourse and the literary depiction of the sublime therefore, is “der zitierte und im Zitat überwundenen Schreck vor der Natur” (the cited and thus overcome fear of nature),³² and the depiction “schrecklicher Ereignisse in der Kunst ist in besonderem Maße angenehm, da der Rezipient von allen schmerzlichen Empfindungen, die in der Wirklichkeit solchen Ereignissen verbunden wären, entlastet ist und er daher nur das ‘reine Vergnügen’ der Affekterregung kostet” (of awful events in art is particularly enjoyable as the beholder/reader is relieved of any of the painful experiences in these events that he would in reality suffer and so only registers the ‘pure joy’ of the affective experience).³³ If the (super)-natural horrors can be rationally explained or if the violence, wild landscapes, and labyrinthine dungeons in these novels can be identified as providing a reassuring effect for the readers, then the *frisson* of the *Schauerroman* can hardly be considered a form of counter-Enlightenment fiction anymore, as Alewyn once thought. Instead it appears to be a medium in which rationally thinking readers can engage in a form of self-fashioning by which they portray themselves as having overcome the archaic fear of the sublime and can now enjoy such titillating pleasures.³⁴

Identifying German gothic in terms of Enlightenment culture and theory raises the question as to the fate of the *Schauerroman* after the 1790s. Hans von Trotha, for example, has claimed that German gothic ceased to exist altogether following the 1790s,³⁵ but that viewpoint ignores the fact that for many readers German gothic is synonymous with E. T. A. Hoffmann's "dark romanticism." When one identifies German gothic writing as occupying a position on the threshold between the Enlightenment and romanticism, namely as a medium for negotiating the contingency and opacity of society on the brink of modernity, then the one-sidedness of such historical accounts becomes apparent. Indeed a continuity in themes and preoccupations links romantic authors directly with earlier gothic writing, even if the formal presentation of these themes becomes more complex. As Andrew Smith has shown from the perspective of British gothic writing, one of the prime examples of romanticism adapting original gothic is its nascent medico-psychological discourse drawing on gothic tropes of supernaturalism and the uncanny to develop the concept of the unconscious.³⁶ In Germany such lines of continuation have been shown in romantic anthropology, with writers such as Gotthilf Heinrich Schubert uniting the uncanny with a ghostly model of the unconscious under the title *Ansichten von der Nachtseite der Naturwissenschaft* (Views of the Dark Side of the Natural Sciences, 1808).³⁷

As important as this scientific discourse was, there were more obvious literary lines of transmission and tradition suggesting a persistence of the gothic following 1800 as evident in the works of E. T. A. Hoffmann such as *Die Elixiere des Teufels* (The Devil's Elixirs) and *Nachtstücke* (Night Pieces), particularly "Das öde Haus" (The Deserted House) and "Die Räuber" (The Bandits). While Hoffmann shared the thematic preoccupation with the unconscious, psychological uncertainty, and the supernatural with gothic texts of the 1790s, his fiction seems far more openly self-reflective in its creation of suspense narratives. "Das öde Haus," for example, reflects on the changing patterns of the marvelous ("das Wunderliche," meaning the fantastical, versus "das Wunderbare," or marvelous) as a source of irritation, or *frisson*, throughout.³⁸ Meanwhile Medardus, the main protagonist in *Die Elixiere des Teufels*, talks about having read Matthew Lewis's *The Monk*, quite blatantly citing the affective poetics of the earlier gothic novel in order to provoke a specifically gothic response of titillation and foreboding.

As Monika Schmitz-Emans has shown, "Die Räuber" is a particularly fruitful instance of such dissemination through repetition and citation in that the fictional characters are actually aware of their status as literary quotations themselves. Derived from Schiller's storm and stress play *Die Räuber* and Hoffmann's own *Prinzessin Brambilla* (Princess Brambilla), the text uses earlier instances of gothic narratives to motivate a new story inasmuch as the fictional characters from earlier texts

experience themselves as strangely spectral presences in the fictional reality of Hoffmann's later text.³⁹

It is precisely because of such forms of transmission and adaptation that the title of the present volume speaks of "popular revenants." While "revenant" refers most obviously to the ghosts and the undead presences in the texts themselves, the transition from the late Enlightenment to romanticism seen in Hoffmann suggests that the ghosts of earlier texts return in intertextual references or generic allusions even after 1800. Thus earlier texts themselves seem to attain the presence of revenants, being cited and summoned as ghostly presences in complex self-referential patterns that point toward a new stage in the history of the gothic. Thus romantic gothic revolved around the suggestive polyvalence of the word "cite": derived from the Latin "citatus," "to cite" can mean either "to quote" or "to evoke." Gothic writing seems to do away with the either/or of quote/evocation and suggests, rather, that narrative discourse — especially intertextual forms of discourse — are themselves always already haunted spectral forms. "[O]ne cannot speak of generations of skulls or spirits except on the condition of language," writes Jacques Derrida in *Specters of Marx*, suggesting that literature is itself a "hauntological" form perched uneasily between presence and absence: "one touches there on what one does not touch . . . feels there, what one does not feel."⁴⁰ This instance of spectrality is central to romanticism, which evoked through citation the popular revenants of earlier texts whose popularity arose primarily through their revenants on a content level. Romantic gothic is — to employ a term common in romantic aesthetic theory — a form of "exponential" gothic, the specific productivity of which lies precisely in the imaginative re-reading (or reversion) of earlier gothic texts.⁴¹

Tieck occupied a key position in this transition because his novels — for example *William Lovell* — drew heavily on earlier psychological themes of epistemological unreliability and derangement, a derangement that is mirrored in his reception of earlier German gothic novels. In a letter to his friend Wackenroder documenting an evening spent reading Carl Grosse's *Der Genius*, Tieck called the late-Enlightenment security of delightful horror into question by seeming to go mad:

Nach zwei Uhr war das Buch geendigt. Eine kleine Pause, worinn ich nichts sprechen, nichts denken konnte, alle Scenen wiederholten sich vor meinen Augen . . . als plötzlich — noch schaudre ich wenn ich daran denke, noch kann ich die Möglichkeit nicht begreifen — . . . schwarze Nacht und grause Todtenstille, gräßliche Felsen ernst und furchtbar [aufstiegen], jeder liebliche Ton wie verweht, Schrecken mich [umflog], Schauer die gräßlichsten bliesen mich an, alles war um mich lebendig, Schatten jagten sich schrecklich um mich herum, mein Zimmer war als flöge es mit mir in eine fürchterliche

schwarze Unendlichkeit hin. . . . Ich war auf einige Sekunden hin wirklich *wahnsinnig*. . . . Sobald ich die Augen zumachte, war mir als schwämme ich auf einem Strom, als löste sich mein Kopf ab und schwämme rückwärts, der Körper vorwärts, eine Empfindung die ich sonst noch nie gehabt habe, wenn ich die Augen aufmachte, war mir, als läge ich in einem weiten Todtengewölbe, drei Särge nebeneinander, ich sehe deutl. die weissen schimmernden Gebeine, alles dehnte sich in eine fürchterliche Länge, alle meine Glieder waren mir selbst fremd geworden und ich erschreck wenn ich mit der Hand nach meinem Gesichte faßte.⁴²

[Just after two in the morning I finished reading the book. A short break in which I could not speak, think, in which all the scenes replayed themselves before my eyes . . . when suddenly — I still shudder when I recall it, I still cannot understand the feasibility of it — . . . darkest night and deathly silence, cliffs most frightful [rose up] in earnest and abominably, fear surrounded me as if all sweet sounds were dispersed, the most horrible shudder froze my skin, everything around me was alive, shadows chased ghastly shadows all around me, it seemed as though my room flew with me inside into a dreadful, black eternity. . . . For several moments I was really *insane*. . . . As soon as I closed my eyes it seemed to me as if I were swimming in a stream, as if my head had been removed and swam backwards while my body moved forwards, a feeling such as I had never had before; when I opened the eyes it seemed to me as if I was lying in a crypt with three coffins beside each other, I see clearly the white, gleaming bones, everything extended to an awful length, all my limbs had become estranged and I was horrified when I tried to touch my face with my hand.]

In this account of reading, the moment of affect management in “rationalized demonism” is considered to be anything other than compensatory or reassuring; reading in fact seems to produce literary phantoms of the imagination.⁴³ In the act of reading Tieck seems to combine everything that enlightened poetics had marginalized as improbable, tasteless, and abnormal in one fell swoop; hence this early romantic response to the *Schauerroman* represents a heightened form of those most provocative elements of earlier discourses on the sublime, because it doubles the central Enlightenment categories of imagination, fear, horror, superstition, and the marvelous in an actual experience of reading — the act of reading itself becomes an instance of the sublime, namely the sublimity of the individual’s powers of imagination. The epistemological uncertainties that had fed into the late-Enlightenment novel were repeated and their reassuring character was called into question. Tieck’s letter here seems to mark a point of transition into romanticism, for it tested Enlightenment epistemes for their value and adaptability in the changed aesthetic and

intellectual conditions as society moved toward modern paradigms of creating, distributing, and consuming cultural products.

Meanwhile, Tieck's shorter texts such as *Der Runenberg* (Rune Mountain) and *Der blonde Eckbert* (Blond Eckbert) developed similar processes of de-centering the individual consciousness as a signature motif of German romanticism. In these stories Tieck created a quintessentially German form of the gothic, which developed a conflict between the bourgeois quotidian and an alternative, marvelous world that is initially experienced as a shocking dissociation of the protagonist's psyche. Although one should note the important differences between the often anonymous or serially produced popular novels of the 1780s and 1790s such as those written by Ignaz Ferdinand Arnold and Tieck's philosophically and aesthetically complex romantic texts, there is in fact a strong case for identifying a continuity between "low" and "high" works of fiction. For example, close analysis of Tieck's involvement in the "pulp" novel *Die eiserne Maske* (The Iron Mask), written by his schoolteacher Rambach under the pseudonym Ottokar Sturm, reveals numerous similarities in form and content. In the "Ryno" chapter contributed by Tieck, the dissociation of subjectivity and related spectrality familiar from his more obviously "canonical" novels and writings is already present.

Such a derangement of the supposedly solid enlightened subject remained at the heart of German romantic writing in the gothic mode — as illustrated in Hoffmann's novels and novellas such as *Die Elixiere des Teufels* and "Der Sandmann" (The Sandman). The horror in *Die Elixiere des Teufels*, an influential text for the development of the literary double, revolves around questioning under what conditions the subject can consider itself as being a coherent and "solid" individual at all. The monk Medardus experiences a corporeal, passion-driven side to his personality that unravels any semblance of decency he has.⁴⁴ This horrific dichotomy in Medardus's personality is heightened through Hoffmann's complex narrational structure, making it impossible to determine whether or not Medardus's double is a marvelous figure or merely his half-brother, Viktorin. This heightened reflexivity of the romantic gothic — Hoffmann's figures are at times even aware of their fictional status and intertextual predecessors — coupled with the introduction of complex narrative structures as the medium of moving the reader to a state of *Schauer*, is one of the central romantic innovations in German gothic.

The gothic novel of the so-called *Schauerromantik* moves, then, from the more obvious and gory threat of corporeal violence, supernatural activities, and visceral disgust manifested in novels of the 1790s toward a more complex questioning of the conditions under which the human subject is even able to think of itself as a coherent subject at all. Tieck, Schubert, Jean Paul, and the anonymous author of *Die Nachtwachen des Bonaventura* (The Night-Watches of Bonaventura) were fascinated by the

question of how the “Ich” is actually able to say “ich” at all. In focusing, for example, on the irrational sides of the subject usually excluded from the ideal of modern subjectivity as a rationally thinking and functioning individual — emotional affect, passion and fear, religious belief and superstition, etc. — romantic gothic novels exposed those uncertainties inherent to the discourses of delightful horror, the sublime, and secret societies in the 1790s as voids hidden behind the optimistic rhetoric of the Enlightenment. They suggested that Enlightenment rhetoric ultimately provided an inadequate basis for organizing social life.⁴⁵ Perhaps it makes sense to view the gothic novel around 1800 as a black box containing those difficulties being negotiated by a society thrust headlong into the capitalist, bureaucratic, and industrial conditions of modernity; by this logic, the discourse of “Lust an der Angst” in the Enlightenment was no more than a Trojan horse leading to a challenging of Enlightenment principles through the forms of the *Schauerromantik*.

A Post-Romantic Shadow of Modernity: Popular Revenants as a Literary Mode

If one can identify a continuous tradition from roughly 1785 until around 1820, albeit with major reevaluations and redevelopments around 1800 and in romanticism, the years around 1830 do seem to have marked a watershed in German gothic production. Unlike French, English, and American literature, in which there was an almost continuous interest in the gothic throughout the nineteenth century, there has been a consensus that the afterlife of the *Schauerroman* either ended with romanticism or mutated into an increasingly uninspired and uninspiring repetitive form of popular fiction ignorant of and ignored by dominant aesthetic discourses. In the form of the popular *Nachtstück*, German gothic became a marginalized, sub-cultural peculiarity, a dead-end of formulaic and sensationalist works of little importance.⁴⁶ It was only in discourses on decadence, science, and modernization at the next turn of the century, around 1900 — in the works of authors such as Hanns Heinz Ewers, Gustav Meyrink, Alfred Kubin, Karl Hans Strobl, and others — that an almost antiquarian resurgence of the unsettling and fantastic narrative forms of this *Schauerroman* was noticeable. This resurgence seems to have been more of an aberration — an aberration that might last well into the twentieth century and Weimar cinema, but an aberration no less. This raises the question: what happened between, say, 1820 and 1890? Does German gothic *revenir*? And if so, under what conditions?

Traditional accounts see the earlier gothic novel disappearing into late- and post-romantic fantastic literature, although the re-appearance of such motifs as the double, the specter, and the revenant, and themes of