Sofronieva (Bulgaria). A particularly fine novel from a writer “with migration background,” as another current expression goes, is Emine Sevgi Ozdamar’s (Turkey) Die Brücke vom Goldenen Horn (1998, The Bridge of the Golden Horn).

German Jewish writers are not normally considered under the rubric of literature by foreigners writing in German. This intentional stance of postwar literary scholars is meant to counter, correct, and make amends for the Nazi belief that individuals who themselves or whose ancestors practiced the Jewish faith could not be considered Germans. Today’s literary historians count German Jewish writers as having been an integral part of German literature for centuries. An interesting reflection of this attitude can be seen on the cover of a reference work by one of Germany’s largest publishers, Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, Lexikon deutschsprachiger Schriftstellerinnen (1986, Dictionary of German Women Writers): a photograph of Gertrud Kolmar. Contemporary writers who have taken up issues of German Jewish identity in the novel include Robert Schindel, Barbara Honigmann, and Esther Dischereit. Rafael Seligmann (Tel Aviv) and Maxim Biller (Prague), who both immigrated to Germany with their parents at age ten, are usually also identified as German Jewish writers of the post-Holocaust generation. Of course this returns us to the main point of this section and ultimately of this entry.

SEE ALSO: Translation Theory, Yiddish Novel.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adelson, L. (2005), Turkish Turn in Contemporary German Literature.
Blackall, E.A. (1959), Emergence of German as a Literary Language, 1700–1775.
Brandt, K. (2003), Sentiment und Sentimentalität.
Demetz, P. (1986), After the Fires.
Kontje, T. (1993), German Bildungsroman.
Koopmann, H., ed. (1983), Handbuch des deutschen Romans.
Pascal, R. (1968), German Novel.
Remak, H.H. (1996), Structural Elements of the German Novella from Goethe to Thomas Mann.
Sagarra, E. and P. Skrine (1997), Companion to German Literature.
Schärf, C. (2001), Der Roman im 20 Jh.
Steinecke, H. and F. Wahrenburg, eds. (1999), Romantheorie.
Teraoka, A. (1996), East, West and Others.

Gothic Novel

NANCY ARMSTRONG

Ever since the publication of Horace Walpole’s The Castle of Otranto in 1764, arguably the first gothic novel, readers have considered gothic fiction hostile to the form and function of the novel proper—and why shouldn’t they? A novel like Jane Austen’s Northanger Abbey (1818) makes out-and-out fun of gothic devices and their disregard for the kind of world educated people consider real and normal, while any number of Victorian novels—e.g., Sir Walter Scott’s
Waverley (1814), Charlotte Brontë’s Jane Eyre (1847), Wilkie Collins’s The Woman in White (1860), and virtually all the novels of Charles Dickens—use these same gothic devices to question just how real Realism actually is. We tend to call a work of fiction “gothic” only when its literary devices encourage us to entertain possible alternatives to conventional, everyday reality, whatever that may be. But when novels assure us that such an alternative is artificial or delusional in relation to the world we should consider real, it is a safe bet that the novel will be using gothic conventions to challenge, even update, but ultimately confirm the reigning notions of what distinguishes self from other, subject from object, and life from death—distinctions that have organized so-called “reality” since The Castle of Otranto first appeared. In view of the fact that the literary devices we classify as gothic have proved as durable as the novel itself, it seems only reasonable to consider them essential both to the genre and to its claim to realism.

Hooked as she is on the novels of Ann Radcliffe, the protagonist of Austen’s Northanger Abbey earns her maturity by renouncing the tendency to look for the same thrills in daily life that she experiences in gothic fiction. After humiliating Catherine for considering the abbey owner capable of the same violent disregard for person and property with which Radcliffe’s Montoni regards the hapless Emily St. Aubert (1794, Mysteries of Udolpho), Austen admits that Catherine’s reading has attuned her to the heartless cruelty of the man’s materialism that fiction could not have conveyed in the language of the everyday. General Tilney deserves to be equated with Montoni because of the father’s despotic disregard for the hopes and desires of his dependents. But by putting those desires in the service of his own greed, as Austen’s narrator points out, the General has intensified the very desires he tried to block, convincing us that Catherine and Henry are very much in love. Austen not only ridiculed the gothic excesses of gothic fiction but also used those excesses to create a preference for the everyday.

**WHAT IS GOTHIC FORM?**

Of all the formal features that demand we read a novel as a work of gothic fiction, there is nothing like decrepit architecture—if not a castle, then a monastery, or ancient country house—to transport readers to a space at once liminal and archaic from which the average person could not emerge entirely unchanged. Dracula’s castle in Bram Stoker’s novel (1897) is one of the most over-the-top examples of such architecture. Jonathan Harker recounts the approach—past people making the sign of the cross, through a pack of howling wolves, and by sinister blue flames illuminating evil spirits at large in the surrounding woods—that brings him to “a vast ruined castle, from whose tall black windows came no ray of light, and whose broken battlements showed a jagged line against the moonlit sky” (chap. 1). But, Austen reminds us, not every example of ruinous architecture serves the purpose of a gothic castle. Nor, as Stoker proves, can gothic phenomena be confined to medieval architecture in disrepair; the same spell that reigns over Dracula’s castle can as easily infiltrate a hospital, a respectable English home, or even a ship at sea (see space). Indeed, wherever the vampire puts down a coffin-full of original Transylvanian soil, he retains the power to escape the confines of body and mind and bleed into others, human as well as animal, sweeping away all distinctions among them. In this respect, the gothic novel resembles its best-known villain, Dracula himself, in that both create a world within the so-called real world, a second world that overturns
realism’s grammar of person, place, and thing.

Within a gothic framework, objects acquire a mind of their own that they do not have in the modern workaday world—as when, for example, a large helmet descends out of nowhere to crush the heir of Otranto—and subjects become susceptible to dreams, hallucinations, and occult forms of knowledge beyond the reach of normal consciousness. If protagonists from Ann Radcliffe’s Emily St. Aubert to Stoker’s Mina Harker are any indication, the whole point of collapsing objects into subjects is to convert everything within the gothic framework into extensions of a single will intent on further extending its dominion. The sense that the world we know is progressively falling under some kind of spell is the work of a narrative that moves contiguously from one person or thing to another, much like the eponymous Indian diamond in Wilkie Collins’s *The Moonstone* (1868). Such a plot characteristically branches into many plots so as to spin a web of connections very much at odds with the everyday relationships among people and between them and their things. The result is a pervasive feeling of paranoia.

To think of a character as either a particular type of individual or a unique variation on such a type is to understand character as a coin of the social realm. But in order to “grow” into something different, for better or for worse, a character must have a metonymic susceptibility to link up with new things and people and incorporate some of their qualities (see figurative). By virtue of this principle, Charlotte Brontë gives Jane Eyre new attributes each time Jane moves to a new location, abandoning old connections for new ones. The Jane of Thornfield Hall is consequently very different from the Jane of Moor House or of Lowood School. To be the memorable character that she is, however, Jane must maintain continuity among these various selves. Thus Brontë has her narrator cut a path through the web of associations to connect one Jane to another and attach them to a single body. In emphasizing the metonymic side of character, gothic novels necessarily obscure this path and put their protagonists’ identity at risk. Matthew “Monk” Lewis’s Ambrosio (1795, *The Monk*) and Charlotte Dacre’s Victoria (1806, *Zafloya, or The Moor*) experience a transformation similar to that which Dracula’s victims undergo, a transformation that severs their metaphoric connection via the body to an original identity.

While it is true that supernatural factors seem responsible for the extravagantly antisocial transformations of character one usually encounters in gothic fiction, it is also true that supernaturalism serves as a cover for alternatives to the normative forms of identity originating in the modern family. In Walpole’s novel, a supernatural giant acts as the agent of the family to restore the castle to its rightful heir. In doing so, however, the appearance of the giant whips the members of the castle community into a frenzy, sends them circulating through secret tunnels and running roughshod over family protocols and hierarchies to create an organism which would, if rendered graphically, look much more like a circulatory system or network than a family tree. Such wholesale disruption of the old community has to happen before new relationships based on human differences and bonds of sympathy can form. For what Walpole calls a restoration of the family line turns out to be a transformation of the family structure. If we think of Dracula’s ability to jump categories from man to woman and from human to animal as nothing more than a formal device that serves to call such boundaries into question, then it is not difficult to see Stoker’s novel as an exaggerated version of the same event. Even as he brushes off this
event as “supernatural” in his conclusion, Stoker leaves us in a world that differs significantly from the world that existed prior to the vampire’s intervention: future generations have vampire blood in their veins and will be part vampire. When everyday reality resumes, as it does in most of these novels, human beings are in some way different than they were.

WHAT DOES GOTHIC FICTION DO?

To address this question, one must begin in the eighteenth century with Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto*. In his “Preface to the Second Edition” (1765), Walpole claims to be following an earlier tradition of writing where “witnesses to the most stupendous phenomena, never lose sight of their human character” (10). Although this claim presupposes that inner lives are historically constant, the novel itself locks up stormy passions characteristic of early modern literature in a monastery and consigns these passions to the past, along with Manfred, the prince of Otranto and his wife Hippolyta. From the carnage emerge two solitary individuals who have learned to respect each other’s difference and to share that solitude. Radcliffe’s *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and *The Italian* (1797) use gothic devices to much the same effect, putting their protagonists through trials where the integrity of mind and body hangs in the balance and survives. In these cases, paranormal events that wipe out the differences essential to individuality ultimately produce individuals with minds of their own, minds that can govern even such emotions as terror that seem to bubble up though the body to transform the mind. From 1794 to 1818, the span of Austen’s career, gothic devices coalesced to form an extremely popular though somewhat disreputable subgenre of the novel.

It can be no coincidence that Austen’s self-enclosed social worlds with their carefully differentiated protagonists were produced at the same time as Dacre’s *Zafloia* (1806) and William Beckford’s *Vathek* (1797). Featuring libertine protagonists who circulate through various households, make connections promiscuously, and internalize attributes of foreign locations and dangerous liaisons, these protagonists lack the very qualities that situate individuals within the social categories of *race*, *class*, and *gender*—even within humanity itself. Reading Austen in relation to her gothic contemporaries, we might see gothic placelessness as a threat that adds an edge to her protagonists’ desires. In developing its characteristically tangled network of relations, according to Franco Moretti’s *Atlas of the European Novel 1800–1900* (1998), the gothic novel creates a geographically and culturally larger and more heterogeneous world than the snug homes and familiar countryside that model everyday experience in domestic fiction. Like its signature feature, the castle, gothic novels immerse us in an artificial world where individuals hardly matter, an experience from which we can return to a world where individuals certainly do. Victorian fiction marks the end of this symbiotic relationship between realism and gothic fiction.

In Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* (1816), the monstrous embodiment of undifferentiated humanity escapes the castle and roams the countryside to pose a threat to humanity in general. The novel begins in the apartment where Victor Frankenstein articulates the parts of an indeterminate number of human beings as a single body and then brings that body to life. The liberal society exemplified by the Frankenstein family understands humanity as a community of irreplaceable individuals. In creating Frankenstein’s monster, Shelley reimagined humanity, living and dead, as parts of a single composite
body in which individuals count little if at all. Once she created it, her monster could not be contained even within the novel itself. Although the remorseful Frankenstein refuses to provide the monster with a female companion that might perpetuate his kind down through the generations, in conceptual as well as imaginative terms, the damage had been done. During the age of realism, gothic conventions made their presence felt within mainstream novels—in Simon Legree’s plantation in the American South (Harriet Beecher Stowe, 1852, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*) and Benito Cereno’s circum-Atlantic trading vessel (Herman Melville, 1856, *Benito Cereno*), no less than in the festering tenements of Dickens’s London.

Although the outpouring of gothic fiction, strictly defined, peaked in the early decades of the nineteenth century, gothic tropes escaped their former generic containment and became an essential component of those Victorian novels aptly characterized by Henry James as “large loose baggy monsters.” Unleashed on the plane of everyday experience, gothic devices not only turn the household, schoolroom, and factory into prisons, torture chambers, and crypts. They also turn even the most self-disciplined individual into an indistinguishable part of the mass. Esther Summerson of Dickens’s *Bleak House* (1853) is no different in this respect from Stoker’s Lucy Westenra or Oscar Wilde’s Dorian Gray. Like the great works of Victorian realism, some of the most memorable examples of the late nineteenth-century Romance revival—Robert Louis Stevenson’s *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886), H. Rider Haggard’s *She* (1887), Wilde’s *Dorian Gray* (1891), and Stoker’s *Dracula* (1897)—feature protagonists who are caught up in and redefined by biological connections that override their every claim to individual autonomy, agency, and cultural distinction. At such moments, the gothic does its work by instigating fear of our own inability to think, feel, behave, and act as individuals apart from the mass. At the height of its imperial enterprise, in other words, England began to imagine itself as a nation of individuals on the defense against the very populations Great Britain had incorporated.

Once we focus on the gothic element in what is usually regarded as Victorian realism, the continuities between a novel by Dickens and such prime examples of Modernism as Joseph Conrad’s *The Heart of Darkness* (1902), James Joyce’s *Ulysses* (1922), or Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925) suddenly leap off the page. Encounters with the dead and/or demonic in all three novels serve as the black hole of human potential around which their multiple plots twist and turn, as these novels struggle to translate what Conrad’s Marlowe calls “the horror, the horror” into the socially comprehensible forms befitting the plot of a novel. The form of some—though by no means all—fiction changes noticeably during the early twentieth century as modernists join Freud in reestablishing the traditional enlightenment distinction between subject and object on which modern individualism depends (see Psychoanalytic). His famous essay on “The Uncanny” (1925) draws on literature to show that gothic phenomena haunt the mature individual in much the same way that gothic plots and figures haunt literary realism. The formal innovations associated with modernism can all be understood as the grand but futile twentieth-century endeavor to contain within a single envelope of consciousness the metonymic propensity of the individual to become almost anything he or she can imagine. In attempting to shore up individual autonomy, these techniques acknowledge that individualism itself has already been called into question.

Nor is it possible to overstate the importance of gothic tropes in a contemporary
popular culture rife with animated architecture, teenage vampires, the alternative genealogies exposed in DNA, and dead and dismembered bodies that come to life in forms presaging the end of humanity as we know it. These forms dramatize the ease with which individual selfhood and agency are biologically co-opted to work against the qualities that supposedly distinguish us from what is not human, but their popularity has done nothing to make the most innovative contemporary novelists avoid them. In the late 1970s, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari called attention to a tendency peculiar, they claimed, to “minor literatures,” the tendency to work metonymically across categories. Their case in point: Gregor Samsa, the narrator of The Metamorphosis (1915), whom Franz Kafka presented as always in between and on his way to becoming something other than human. This concept of “minor literature” can easily be extended from Kafka’s German Jewish fable to products of global Anglophone culture. Deleuze and Guattari themselves suggest that African American fiction works by similar rules; Toni Morrison’s Beloved (1987) would seem to support their claim. This is especially true of contemporary fiction, where we can see National traditions of the novel giving way to a host of “minor literatures.” A novel like Nuruddin Farah’s Links (2003) features a protagonist who discovers that what he calls his “personality” is not up to the task of containing an identity stretched across the Atlantic and connected at points to alternative “roads” that would open rather than close what Deleuze and Guattari call the “parenthesis” of being.

Written from a retrospective position invoking a novel like Brontë’s Jane Eyre, Kazuo Ishiguro’s Never Let Me Go (2005) begins in a British boarding school for orphans. These children turn out to be human beings deliberately cloned from bodies that do not count and raised for the sole purpose of “donating” body parts for those of us who need transplants. In such a world, individuality is clearly an illusion—nothing more than a bubble of consciousness crafted by a monstrous bureaucracy to keep us in our places—whether we inhabit bodies like those of Ishiguro’s clones, i.e., bodies that don’t count as individual bodies, or whether we are composed not so seamlessly of others. Never Let Me Go is only one of many indications that realism and gothic have changed places in today’s serious fiction, and gothic has acquired realism’s purchase on the real.

SEE ALSO: Adaptation/Appropriation, Bildungsroman/Künstlerroman, Definitions of the Novel, Ideology, Science Fiction/Fantasy.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Armstrong, N. (2005), How Novels Think.
Botting, F. (1996), Gothic.
Clark, K. (1962), Gothic Revival.
Deleuze, G. and F. Guattari (1986), Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature.
Smith, R.J. (1987), Gothic Bequest.

Graphic Novel

JARED GARDNER

The graphic novel is a book-length narrative utilizing sequential images and text. Beyond that simple definition, however, few commonalities can be presumed about the