Commodity Gothicism
TRICIA LOOTENS

In its most intense forms, the commodity Gothic represents a sinister variant on what Elaine Freedgood has long termed the "ideas in things." As Freedgood conceives them, those material objects that fill Victorian novels are frightening enough in their own right: for the knowledge that is stockpiled in these things bears on the grisly specifics of conflicts and conquests that a culture can neither regularly acknowledge nor permanently destroy if it is going to be able to count on its own history to know itself and realize a future. (Freedgood 2006: 2)

As the commodity Gothic perceives them, however, such objects go one step further. Not content with containing ideas, they develop, or these ideas tend toward the possibility of wreaking historical vengeance at once through themselves. As the commodity Gothic perceives them, however, such objects go one step further. Not content with containing ideas, they develop, or these ideas tend toward the possibility of wreaking historical vengeance at once through themselves. As the commodity Gothic perceives them, however, such objects go one step further. Not content with containing ideas, they develop, or these ideas tend toward the possibility of wreaking historical vengeance at once through themselves.

As Charlotte Sussman's Consumption Anxieties dramatically demonstrates, the commodity Gothic clearly predates the work of Marx (Sussman 2000: 110-29). Within the early anti-slavery writing that Sussman studies, commodity Gothic fantasies repeatedly give shape to powerful rhetorical invocations of the confluence of commodification with cannibalism and bodily corruption, as would-be consumers of the products of slavery find themselves consuming enslaved bodies instead. Such visions may well attain their most crystallized form within what Timothy Morton has since termed the "blood sugar" topos (Morton 2000: 172-3): that is, the Gothic scenario whereby slave-produced sugar, once stirred into a cup of tea, transforms itself (back) into a bloody, all-too literal embodiment of its own brutal histories of origin.

If Marx's 1867 account of "the Fetishism of Commodities and the Secret Thereof" (Marx 1992: 31) postdates visions of "blood sugar," however, that work remains indispensable to understanding such visions' force, not least as key points of origin for the "post-Romantic Gothic imagination" (Smith 2005: 39). For in Marx's terms, even before blood sugar enters the teacup in the scenario above, that sugar has already undergone transformation into a commodity. Like its counterpart, that now-legendary "plain, homely, bodily form" of a table to which Marx's account of fetishism so famously turns (Marx 1992: 13), such sugar has already undergone a process of abstraction. For by rendering objects commodities — by replacing their use value with exchange value — we put out of sight both "the useful character of the various kinds of labour embodied in them, and the concrete forms of that labour" (Marx 1992: 5). Now reduced to the status of a "mirror" of abstract value (Marx 1992: 24), the sugar has lost something by becoming a commodity. Still, in another sense (from an object's perspective, one might say), it has also taken on new power. For like Marx's legendary table sugar, once commodified, has become "something transcendent" (Marx 1992: 31). It has assumed a "social relation" to "the whole world of commodities"; it has joined the ranks of the human productions that can appear as "independent beings endowed with life," even seeming to "rule" their "producers instead of being ruled by them" (Marx 1992: 24, 32, 35).

Commodity Gothicism may be, however, in many respects, like so much else that is well beyond the end of the nineteen centuries to the nineties, with its gigantic department stores and explosive development of advertising, mid-Victorianism staks clear and immediate claims as a highpoint of the commodity Gothic. Certainly authors of the realist novel, and Dickens in particular, have provided particularly rich resources for investigations, both of the commodity Gothic and commodity fetishism in general (see Freedgood 2006, especially 138-58, and Smith 2005). Still, the invocation of commodities' uncanny, often vengeful half-reversals of fetishization accepts no generic limits (Lootens 2003: 151; Walldey 1981: 46-58); and boundary crossings may be particularly important here. Consider, for example, the mid-century trope of the genteel woman adorning herself in poisoned finery. Wilkie Collins' moonstone, in the novel of that name; the maddening diamond necklace of George Eliot's 1876 Daniel Deronda (Eliot 1995: 358-9); these haunted, haunting objects and others like them may wield an impact whose force resonates, in part, through juxtaposition of even more explicit invocations of commodities as things with vengeful ideas of their own (see Victorian Gothic).

Punch's 1863 cartoon "The Haunted Lady, or 'The Ghost' in the Looking-Glass" offers one example of such invocations. Here directly etacts commodities' refusal "mirror" one another, by depicting a figure who stands frozen, half-turn modiste's glass. What stands reflected before her is not just her rately dressed form; it is the emaci of the needlewoman who seems to while laboring over the ball-gown would-be consumer has just put on (Lootens 2003: 151; Wallkay 1981: 36-54). punches cartoon of 1848, the pattern smock, depicted in close-up, revealingly low going rate for ten hot interspersed with images of dec (Lootens 2003: 151; Wallkay 1981: 36-54). punch's cartoon of 1848, the pattern smock, depicted in close-up, revealingly low going rate for ten hot interspersed with images of dec (Lootens 2003: 151; Wallkay 1981: 36-54). punch's cartoon of 1848, the pattern smock, depicted in close-up, revealingly low going rate for ten hot interspersed with images of dec (Lootens 2003: 151; Wallkay 1981: 36-54). punch's cartoon of 1848, the pattern smock, depicted in close-up, revealingly low going rate for ten hot interspersed with images of dec (Lootens 2003: 151; Wallkay 1981: 36-54).
Commodity Gothicism

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and bodily corruption, as would-be consumers of the products of slavery find themselves consuming enslaved bodies instead. Such visions may well attain their most crystallized form within what Timothy Morton has since termed the "blood sugar topos" (Morton 2000: 172-3): that is, the Gothic scenario whereby slave-produced sugar, once stirred into a cup of tea, transforms itself (back) into a bloody, all-too literal embodiment of its own brutal histories of origin.

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Comico though it may be, Marx's suggestion that a table, once commodified, "evolves out of its wooden brain grotesque ideas, far more wonderful than 'table-turning' ever was," is also thoroughly uncanny (Marx 1992: 31). And indeed, as "critics as diverse as Jacques Derrida, Chris Baldick, and Terry Eagleton," point out this turn to the Gothic seems "central" to Marx's thinking as a whole (Smith 2005: 39). Where Marx's fetishized table merely "stands on its head" (Marx 1992: 31), however, objects in the commodity Gothic mode turn on their consumers. In this, they take the already uncanny process of commodity fetishization one step further, in part by taking it a half step back. What if objects, while retaining the transcendent claims of commodities, attempted to resist, and perhaps avenge, their subjection to abstraction, by laying bare the now-hidden, "grotesque idea" of their own now-occluded material, even corporeal origins? This is the fear that creates blood sugar; and it is a fear that animates commodity Gothicism throughout the nineteenth century and beyond.

With its Crystal Palace, department stores, and explosive development of advertising, mid-Victorianism stakes clear and immediate claims as a highpoint of the commodity Gothic. Certainly authors of the realist novel, and Dickens in particular, have provided particularly rich resources for investigations, both of the commodity Gothic and commodity fetishism in general (see Freedgood 2006, especially 138-58, and Smith 2005). Still, the invocation of commodities' uncanny, often vengeful half-reversals of fetishization accepts no generic limits (Lootens 2003); and boundary crossings may be particularly important here. Consider, for example, the mid-century trope of the genteel woman adorning herself in poisoned finery. Wilkie Collins' moonstone, in the novel of that name; the maddening diamond necklace of George Eliot's (1876) Daniel Deronda (Eliot 1995: 358-9); these haunted, haunting objects and others like them may wield an impact whose force resonates, in part, through juxtaposition with even more explicit invocations of commodities as things with vengeful ideas of their own (see VICTORIANGOTHIC).

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though, Benjamin's point also speaks to the later writer's own fascination with modernity's relations to the collector.

Indeed, as far as students of the Gothic are concerned, Victorian commodity Gothic visions may live, at once sharpened, diffused, and reversed, in the bitter vision of a work like Shirley Jackson's 1948 *The Road through the Wall*. Here, on comfortable suburban Pepper Street, a Mr. Desmond and other “descendants of farmers” are “accustomed to thinking of themselves as owners,” and the objects they own allow them to do so. True:

even the very chair on which Mr. Desmond sat in the evenings belonged to him only on sufferance; it had belonged first to someone who made it, in turn governed by someone who planned it, and Mr. Desmond, although he had not known it, had chosen it because it had been presented to him as completely choosable (Jackson 1969: 128–9).

True, too, that it is “on the same principle” that Mr. Desmond has “a house,” that he has “a street in front of his house.” Still, none of these objects are telling. And thus, Mr. Desmond continues to live “on the patience of all the people who did not kill him.” Eating “the foods they are allowed to buy” and sleeping “at night between sheets made by hands they would never shake,” he and his neighbors remain, apparently unthinkingly, subject to unseen governors: the prices in a distant town, regulated by minds and hungers in a town even farther away, all the possessions which depended on someone in another place, someone who controlled words and paper and ink, who could by the changing of a word on paper influence the very texture of the ground.

With “nothing to say about how soon their houses” will “begin to rot, when the sheets might tear” (Jackson 1969: 128–9), Mr. Desmond and his Pepper Street neighbors will not have much to say, either, when their children begin dying. In this, they might serve to remind us, by reverse example, that in the end, the terrors of the commodity Gothic tend to turn toward the ends of social reform: invocations of horror, here, most often signal commitment to hope (see Jackson, Shirley).

SEE ALSO: Jackson, Shirley; Victorian Gothic.

REFERENCES


FURTHER READING


Contemporary Gothic

LUCIE ARMITT

Summer 2011 saw the launch of the Royal Shakespeare Company’s new production of *Macbeth* (dir. Michael Boyd), with Jonathan Slinger in the title role. *Macbeth* is, of course, a play around which superstition and the sinister accrue like no other, and in this respect Boyd’s production is controversial, abandoning what is arguably its most Gothic ingredient: the three witches on the heath who greet Macbeth in Act I Scene 3 and to whom he returns for evil counsel in Act IV Scene 1. In Boyd’s production these hags, and their culinary experiments with “Eye of newt and toe of frog, I Wool of bat and tongue of dog” (Act IV, Scene 1, 14–15), disappear and are replaced by fearful apparitions of more familiar proportions. So the play opens with three children’s corpses being lowered from the fly loft on wires. As they descend they start to kick and it is only then that the audience recognizes them to be “undead” children, lowered like the half-lwynched. These are Macduff’s “pretty ones” (Act IV, Scene 3, 217), slaughtered by the “butcher and his fiend-like que” (Scene 11, 35), and their presence embodies the slaughter of innocent to haunt. Just as they refuse to “t over, though the production sp opinions (Michael Billington of 2 and Susannah Clapp being amor tors; see Billington 2011; Clapp 2 Spencer (2011) in *The Telegraph* how the changes in production play’s original sense of superstitious

There were many moments when my palms were clammy and my he And when I emerged into the fi interval and heard the bells of Church ringing, it felt like a bless evil. But then it was back to the h heart of darkness.

It is this preponderant fascinati haunted or haunting child that A fies, in *Twentieth-Century Gothic* (key characteristic setting apart th Gothic from its antecedents. I tion that began with Henry James *the Screw* in 1898 (see JAMES, HI which, with its unspoken/unspe and the indeterminate language of guilt that consumes Miles and F
gothic novel, Klosterheim: or, The Masque (1832), which is a wonderful metaphysical muddle of intense dream sequences, Radcliffean device, and thinly disguised autobiographical detail—Landgrave, the villain, for example, tortures students with a set of "tyrannical regulations" from the author's own experience of the Manchester Free Grammar School. De Quincey was out of his comfort zone with an extended narrative, however, and tried to have it excised from his collected works. De Quincey's relationship with the Gothic discourse was, however, rarely so literal. As R. L. Snyder notes, De Quincey's stylistic attraction to the Gothic mode is best explained through his sensitivity to the delicate balance between illusion and reality (1981: 130). This metaphysical insight is most realized in the surreal self-exploration of his autobiographical writing, which De Quincey described as "impassioned prose" (1889: Works: 1, 14). The Confessions follow both the evangelical and Enlightenment forms of revelatory narrative, while anticipating New and Gonzo Journalism. Although the pariah status of the author is implicit, these are not sordid depictions of addiction but meditations on imagination and psychology, with the author's self-awareness, memory, and creativity explored through the analysis of the opium dream. Hypnagogic and hallucinatory passages are epic, sublime, and terrible, and external urban spaces always dark and labyrinthine—De Quincey's London is a lot closer to the rookeries of Reynolds, Dickens, Poe, Baudelaire, and Stevenson than that of his contemporaries. In Gothic terms, it is the psychological dissonance of the addict and the deep narcosis described in "The Pains of Opium" that provide the most influential material, as well as the symbolic experimentation of the author in search of a language of dreams. Much of the psychological urban Gothic of the later nineteenth century would have been unthinkable without De Quincey (see Urban Gothic).

After the Confessions, De Quincey is probably most remembered for his Swiftian treatise "On Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts," which he wrote initially for Blackwood's in 1827 and which he returned to and refined in 1839 and 1854. This was a return to the sensational aspects of the Westmorland Gazette, which reported murder trials alongside the general news. Presented as a connoisseur's lecture, De Quincey gleefully analyzes various horrible murders in the same way that Burke had considered the Sublime and Aristotelian tragedy, the gallows humor and sustained irony masking a genuine interest in the violent and macabre that is present in his letters and journalism. Dark humor, horror, and suspense can also be found in "The English Mail-Coach" stories, published in Blackwood's in 1849.

In Albert Zugsmith's 1962 film version of the Confessions, Vincent Price played "Gilbert De Quincey," a descendant of Thomas who rescues slave girls from the San Francisco Tong Wars with a wise-cracking dwar.

SEE ALSO: Romanticism; Tales of Terror; Urban Gothic.

REFERENCES

FURTHER READING

Degeneration
ANDREW SMITH

In Dracula (1897), Mina Harker declares that "The Count is a criminal and of criminal type, Nordau and Lombroso would so classify him" (Stoker 1996: 342) (see Stoker, Bram). Her conclusion is based upon a description that Jonathan Harker had earlier made in his journal of the Count's physiological attributes. Harker's description, as Leonard Wolf has noted, is a paraphrase of Cesare Lombroso's description of the archetypal criminal in his Criminal Man (1876) (Wolf 1975: 300). The link signifies the Count's inherent degeneracy as it marks out his innate criminality. Mina's reference to Max Nordau, whose Degeneration was first published in 1892 (carrying a dedication to Lombroso), compounds the Count's degeneracy by aligning him with an amoral foppishness (the Count as dissolute aristocrat) that Nordau regarded as a troubling characteristic of the fin de siècle (see Fin-de-Siècle Gothic). Theories of degeneracy thus shape Stoker's novel in particular, but they also provide a more general context that underpins the fin-de-siècle Gothic's engagement with disease, the body, race, and decadence. In order to appreciate this it is important to consider how theories of degeneration elaborated a language of "otherness" that the Gothic could conceptually import within the form's ideological construction of the abnormal.

The roots of a theory of degeneration are to be found in the work of Bénédict Augustin Morel, who published widely on the topic in the 1840s and 1850s in France. He was famous for his work on "Cretinsim" and he attempted to map a theory of heredity that included social diseases and ethical issues such as alcoholism and supposed sexual impurity. Morel thus sought to develop a theory of human behavior that mediated culturally illicit practices and saw their reproduction in biological terms. Daniel Pick has noted that Morel's exploration of degeneration in France should be seen within the political context of, and social dilemmas inaugurated by, the foundation of France's Second Empire in 1848 (1899: 54). Morel's account of the hereditary degenerate was thus part of a national soul-searching that sought to pathologize behaviors and traits that could threaten the health of the nation.

It is thus not accidental that subsequent modeling of degeneration took similar contexts of political upheaval in Italy in the 1870s (Lombroso) and fin-de-siècle Britain (Nordau).

Lombroso's work on criminality upon a notion of atavism in order to the degenerate, delinquent type (p. 126), who needed to be isolated from society. As in Morel, the unda was that various social issues such as race, for example, should be seen as terms, and Lombroso went to great lengths to photograph the faces of criminals (at races such as cars) in order to develop its images of particular types of propensities.

Both Morel and Lombroso saw the atavistic potential lurking within certain physiology, an idea that would culminate in a movement for eugenics. However, Nordau transposed symptomology from a medical or context to an artistic one in order to what he, and other reaction ary commentators, regarded as troubling disciple forms of art. Nordau grouped a range of writers including Ibsen, W. Zola in order to account for what he failure of moral vision in the focus of social and economic conflict (the celebr ation of symbolic forms (Ils dangerous art for art's sake attitude), while Nordau's Degeneration was a received critique of the fin de sièce not without its detractors (includin James and George Bernard Shaw). Book's reliance on an implicit dis atavism (inherited from Lombroso) avides a context for a certain strand fin-de-siècle Gothic.

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It is thus not accidental that subsequent remodelings of degeneration took place in similar contexts of political upheaval, such as Italy in the 1870s (Lombroso) and in fin-de-siècle Britain (Nordau).

Lombroso’s work on criminality depended upon a notion of atavism in order to identify the degenerate, delinquent type (Pick 1989: 126), who needed to be isolated from the rest of society. As in Morel, the understanding was that various social issues such as prostitution, for example, should be seen in physical terms, and Lombroso went to great lengths to photograph the faces of criminals (and parts of faces such as ears) in order to develop composite images of particular types of criminal propensity.

Both Morel and Lombroso saw degeneracy as potentially lurking within certain types of physiology – an idea that would ultimately culminate in a movement for eugenic regulation. However, Nordau transposed the idea of symptomology from a medical or criminal context to an artistic one in order to account for what he, and other reactionary cultural commentators, regarded as troubling fin-de-siècle forms of art. Nordau grouped a disparate range of writers including Ibsen, Wilde, and Zola in order to account for what he saw as a failure of moral vision in the focus on images of social and economic conflict (Zola), the celebration of symbolic forms (Ibsen), and a dangerous art for art’s sake attitude (Wilde). While Nordau’s Degeneration was a popularly received critique of the fin de siècle, it was not without its detractors (including William James and George Bernard Shaw). It is the book’s reliance on an implicit discourse of atavism (inherited from Lombroso) that provides a context for a certain strand of British fin-de-siècle Gothic.

As critics such as David Punter (1996) have noted, the fin-de-siècle Gothic entertains a troubling fear that humanity may relapse into a state of animalistic barbarism. This also means that one cannot (as in Nordau) have too much confidence in the prevailing models of civilization because they may contain within
them the possibility of a reversion to a more primitive state.

A novella such as R. L. Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886) tacitly reworks a discourse of degeneracy (found, for example, in one of Nordau's precursors: Edwin Lankester's *Degeneration: A Chapter in Darwin*, 1880) in order to argue that the ostensibly civilized world of the bourgeois professions (such as medicine and the law) are ghosted by the possibility of a return to a more savage identity (see STEVENSON, ROBERT Louis). However, more radically it could be argued that the novella claims that it is an adherence to middle-class rituals that develops monsters of its own. Henry Rider Haggard explored in depth the relationship between savagery and civilization via a nuanced critique of degeneration in *She* (1887), in which the presence of fallen empires is used as a gloss for contemporary concerns about British empire building (see IMPERIAL GOTHIC). H. G. Wells, who was a trenchant critic of the misuse of Darwin in theories of degeneration (see his critique of Lankester in "Zoological Regression," 1891) also explored the image of threatened empire in *The War of the Worlds* (1898) and the relationship between the human and the nonhuman in *The Island of Dr. Moreau* (1896) (see WELLS, H. G. (HERBERT GEORGE)). These concerns were given an aesthetic twist by Wilde in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891), where the representation of the double life (mapped in *Jekyll and Hyde*) works against the novel's apparent endorsement of Walter Pater's art for art's sake ethos (in which Dorian becomes bad art by trying to cultivate beauty).

It is, however, *Dracula* that explicitly explores the concern that the middle-class professional habitors within him the possibility of a degenerative decline. Much of this concern is focused through the figure of the recently qualified solicitor, Jonathan Harker, who is required to transform himself from bourgeois pen pusher to heroic man of action. This also makes clear, as do the other texts mentioned here, how much such concerns are imbricated with a discourse of masculinity.

Theories of degeneration provide a very useful way in which to explore the fin-de-siècle Gothic because those theories employ a language of otherness and are shaped by fears of regression that are so readily embraced by the Gothic. The Gothic of the period, like *Jekyll and Hyde* and *Dracula*, tacitly asserts that models of civilization are not quite so safe or secure after all.

SEE ALSO: Anti-Semitism; Disability; Fin-de-Siècle Gothic; Imperial Gothic; Race; Stevenson, Robert Louis; Stoker, Bram; Wells, H. G. (Herbert George).

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FURTHER READING

**Dickens, Charles**

MICHAEL HOLLINGTON

Charles Dickens (1812–70) shot to fame in the 1830s, and as he did he effected decisive and lasting change in the history of Gothic fiction. Essentially, he fastened on to a Romantic paradox enunciated at its simplest and clearest in Byron's *Don Juan*: that "truth is stranger than fiction" (Byron 1902: 541) (see BYRON, GEORGE GORDON, SIXTH BARON). In the context of Gothic, this implied that the true sphere of terror lay not in remote times and Catholic places but in the here and now of contemporary urban society (see URBAN GOTHIC). The emerging techniques of flâneurial realist writing and reportage — focused upon the physiological signs of human appearance, with the supposedly disinterested passer-by engaging in a fashionable new activity of detecting urban mysteries and observing and interpreting what he saw in the streets of great cities — gave birth to a new version of Gothic that came to maturity in the Victorian period, in the work of Dickens and Wilkie Collins above all (see COLLINS, WILKIE).

Dickens had nevertheless begun as a pretty average consumer of fairly standard Gothic or sub-Gothic reading matter. As a boy in the 1820s, he regularly imbibed terror from such weekly sources as *The Portfolio of Entertaining and Instructive Varieties in History and The Ter"ific Register: A Record of Crimes, Judgments, Provisions and Calamities*. We may pick out the word "Providences" from the latter title to highlight a fundamental ambivalence in its pages, which betray a transparently hypocritical agenda, not unfamiliar before or since in such publications, for simultaneously indulging in and deploiring sensation. *The Terific Register* offered a rather monotonous catalogue of grisly crimes while attempting at all times to maintain high moral ground by insisting that murder will always out, in consequence of a "providential" unseen divinity punishing. "The Dog of Montargis" of French folklore is a representative exhibit from The Terific Register that obviously left its mark on Dickens. In medieval times, his owner having been murdered in his presence, this dog is supposed to have betrayed such regular signs of aggression toward the perpetrator that he was eventually licensed to take part in a trial by combat in which he fought so ferociously that the villain was compelled to crime (see CRIME). The dog Lior der Rigaud and attacking him was said to have betrayed such regular signs of aggression toward the perpetrator that he was eventually licensed to take part in a trial by combat in which he fought so ferociously that the villain was compelled to crime (see CRIME). The dog Lior der Rigaud and attacking him was said to have betrayed such regular signs of aggression toward the perpetrator that he was eventually licensed to take part in a trial by combat in which he fought so ferociously that the villain was compelled to crime (see CRIME). The dog Lior der Rigaud and attacking him was said to have betrayed such regular signs of aggression toward the perpetrator that he was eventually licensed to take part in a trial by combat in which he fought so ferociously...
The depth of Dostoevsky’s psychological peregrinations may owe much to his distinctly eclectic biography. Born in Moscow in 1821, the third of six children, he lost his mother to tuberculosis when he was 16. His alcoholic father, a doctor at Mariinsky Hospital for the poor, retired to a country estate and died mysteriously, possibly murdered by his serfs. An epileptic from childhood, Dostoevsky had seizures throughout his life. If these misfortunes were not enough to haunt him, in 1849 he was exiled as a member of the Petrashevsky circle, who were seen as a threat in the wake of the European Revolutions. Sentenced to death, he endured a mock execution by firing squad, imprisonment in Omsk, and conscription into the Siberian Regiment in Semipalatinsk. There he married his first wife in 1857, to see her die of tuberculosis in 1864. That same year the disease killed his brother. He then most celebrated novel, Crime and Punishment (1866), in direst poverty due to a blinding illness and the need to look after his father’s family. All his work, not least The Idiot (1867), draws on the perilous extremes of his own life and experience. A second marriage brought respite in later years, despite the loss of two children in infancy. He died in 1881 from hemorrhaging related to epilepsy, complicated by epileptic seizures.

Dostoevsky’s darkly comic early writing des The Double (1846), where Mr Golyadkin discovers a Mr Golyadkin junior who looks like him. A depiction of mental downfelt from within, the story takes the theme of the doppelganger into deeper realms of psychology than contemporary convention usually allowed (see DOUBLES). “The Landlady” (1847) is about a dreamer who falls in love with a wealthy beauty best described as an epileptic parasite. Rejection returns him to seclusion. “The Uncle” (1848) is about a man driven to suicide by a gambling binge. “The Woman of the People” (1862) is an account of the nightmare of incarceration. Notes from Underground (1864) is a semiautobiographical monologue by a man who has retreated from society. Crime and Punishment resurrects the metaphor of premature burial. The leading protagonist, Dostoevsky’s own dark side, is Rodion Raskolnikov, a native of St. Petersburg who leaves his coffin-like room to murder, returns delirious, and finally seeks spiritual salvation by denouncing that prostitute Sonya Marmeladov who read the story of Lazarus. Following Dostoevsky’s dramatization of the Christian ideal of the character of Prince Mishkin in The Idiot (1868), he produced other novels, such as Devils (1872), in which Stavrogin is another possibly demonic being. The novel’s epigraph is from the story in St. Luke’s Gospel of Jesus sending devils into a herd of swine. Where in Crime and Punishment such characters as Razumikhin, Marmeladov, and Svidrigailov seem like alternative selves accompanying Raskolnikov toward either damnation or redemption, in his final novel, The Karamazov Brothers (1879–80), Ivan Karamazov converses with the Devil, who may be a manifestation of Ivan’s darker self. Meanwhile, his epileptic half-brother Smerdyakov, who commits patricide supposedly at Ivan’s behest, is another doppelganger.

In all his work, Dostoevsky is preoccupied with evil, suicide, sin, violence, and sexual perversion. While the impoverished and oppressed are invariably at its heart, he is as interested in mental depravity as physical, and his characters represent the furthest reaches of human potential. His primary subject matter and style is psychological realism, and his work is at its most Gothic where he explores the mind’s most extreme states and darkest recesses. In part, his writing has influenced such figures as Nietzsche, Freud, and numerous novelists, from the murky modernist, Franz Kafka, to the even more overtly postmodernist, Joyce Carol Oates. But few writers can compete with Dostoevsky’s ability to give such depth to the genre.

Se ALSO: Doubles; European Gothic; Oates; Joyce Carol; Poe, Edgar Allan; Psychological Thrillers; Radcliffe, Ann; Russian Gothic.

REFERENCES


would exploit the dualisms of Protestant Paradise Lost (1667, 1674), doubling the figures of God and Satan accordingly. Doubles seem also to have been the particular provenance of Shakespearean comedy, particularly as witnessed in the systematic coupling and uncoupling, the pointed comparison and contrast of lovers, siblings, spaces, genders, and sexualities in such plays as A Midsummer Night's Dream (1600), Twelfth Night (1601, 1623), and As You Like It (1599, 1623).

And yet, as most studies of the literary double assert, it is only with the rise of Romanticism in Europe during the latter half of the eighteenth century that the trope would come into its own (see Romanticism). The particular form that the double would assume during this period, together with the specific textual functions that it would come to fulfill, render the literary double a decidedly—though by no means exclusively—Gothic affair. With hindsight, it is easy to see that Horace Walpole's The Castle of Otranto (1764) unwittingly rendered the nascent Gothic aesthetic a rich and fertile seed-bed for the double in his expressed intentions to yoke together in his tale not only the antithetical forces of the modern novel and the ancient romance, but also the crucial differences in dramatic mode (comedy and tragedy, laughter and sublimity) and their attendant relations to class (the lofty status of the nobility, the humble deportment of the servants) (see Walpole, Horace). Doubling the formal strictures of fact with the unrestrained imaginings of fancy, Otranto also includes in its preoccupations with turpitude and illegitimacy, both political and familial, mirror-images of their opposite: romantic love in place of incestuous embrace, ideal fathers in place of paternal tyranny. A similar scheme of doubling occurs throughout the Gothic romances of Ann Radcliffe during the 1790s (see Radcliffe, Ann), in which a range of bourgeois values pertaining to property and place, morality and marriage are eventually set in place only once their opposites or mirrored "negatives" have been explored and found wanting. However, it is arguably only with the publication of William Godwin's Caleb Williams (1796) that the double assures some of the features that the trope, in its most characteristic forms, would come to display in British Gothic fiction of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (see Godwin, William). In this text, the political tensions addressed in Godwin's earlier treatise Enquiry Concerning Political Justice (1793) are given fictional realization in the suspicious, mutually antagonistic relationship between the eponymous Caleb and his employer, Mr. Falkland. Albeit not to the same extent as in subsequent Gothic fictions, it soon becomes clear that Caleb and Falkland are doubles of one another, with the former, as William Hazlitt pointed out in The Spirit of the Age (1825), serving as the externalized conscience for the latter's systematic abuse of aristocratic power. Moreover, Falkland himself is doubled in the novel with another one of his adversaries, Barnabas Tyrrel, as well as with Gine's, his spv. The pursuer rapidly becomes the pursued, and the roles of master and slave continuously change place: like many pairs of later Gothic doubles, Caleb and Falkland are mutually locked into a complex dynamic of shifting power relations. In a rapid reversal of fortunes at the end of the novel, each character comes to acknowledge his own culpability, while acknowledging the virtues of his adversary. Matthew Lewis' preoccupation with religious hypocrisy and double standards in The Monk (1796) would do much to galvanize the trope of the double in Gothic fiction of the Romantic period (see Lewis, Matthew). In this romance, the doubling identifiable between two separate characters in earlier Gothic fictions is reworked in the figure of one individual, Father Ambrosio, the monk of the novel's title. Split and divided between a public self of religious piety, authority, and respect, on the one hand, and a private self of blasphemy and illicit passion, on the other, Ambrosio pursues his path of base desiring beyond the eyes of all but the novel's readers. The eventual exposure of his turpitude, however, brings about his death, and from this moment onwards in the history of the Gothic aesthetic, an intimate relationship between doubling and death, splitting and mortality is set firmly in place.

Demonstrably under the influence of Lewis, E. T. A. Hoffmann's first novel, The Devil's Elixirs (1814), at once consolidated earlier fictional representations of the double, as well as setting in place many of the characteristics upon which subsequent manifestations of the trope would come to rely (see Hoffmann, E.T.A. (Ernst Theodor Amadeus)). Consequently, the text is habitually regarded as a seminal work in the development of the literary double, be it in Britain, Europe, America or further afield. Hoffmann would continue to exploit the fictional possibilities of the double in such fictions as "The Story of the Lost Reflection," "The Doubles," and "The Sandman." Throughout the novel, Monk Medardus is doubled with Count Viktorin, his identical alter ego and half-brother through the paternal line; predictably, visual misrecognitions and confusions of identity, both fortuitous and unfortunate, abound. As both an agent of supernatural import and a psychological projection of the disavowed aspects of Medardus' own psyche, Count Viktorin, like Ambrosio's secret self in The Monk, facilitates the double's negotiation of lust, pride, and other compromising pleasures. While the influence of The Devil's Elixirs on subsequent manifestations of the double in British Gothic fiction during the period cannot be overstated, it is also important to acknowledge the extent to which Hoffmann himself was the child of his literary milieu. Doubles, in fact, had featured significantly in the earlier work of the major German Romantics in the last few decades of the eighteenth century: Schiller would effect the doubling of the brothers Franz and Karl Moor in Die Räuber (1781), while Goethe would undertake a careful doubling of Faust and Mephistopheles in the first part of Faust (1808). Other examples of doubles in German literature of the period include Wieland's Private History of Pere, the Philosopher (1791), and Chamisso's Peter Schlemihls Geschichtë (1814), in which the former sells his shadow to the devil, replenishing a considerable portion oflost soul. The double also featured in selected works by such other German Romantic period as Rainer and Tieck. But it was probably Richter's novels Siebenbürgen (1796-1800) that Hoffmann encountered influential treatment of the double in literature of his day. Indeed, the Richter not only upon Hoffmann writers and critics from the nineteenth through to the present day, is att mobile use of the term Doppeld, double-goer), first used an attires in Siebenbürgen, as a means presenting and critically describing nonliterary manifestations of the double. Recasting the ever-shifting po between the pursuer and the pursued father's Caleb Williams, Mary Shelley's Frankenstein (1818, 1831) would completely distinguish between the self avowed other by figuring the creature's monstrous externalization of the creator's own psyche (see St. Wollstonecraft). Acting out in the scripts of Victor's own repre monster, Victor soon realizes, vampire, my own spirit let loose fro (Shelley 1992: 78). With Frankenstein's tracity of the double to the Gothic been assured. Picking up on the Faust of earlier treatments of the literary Irish Protestant clergyman Ch. Maturin would fashion an ex of Gothic doubling between the tempter and his various victims the Wanderer (1820). The influence of Jean Paul and Hoffmann upon the classic British literature was assured by the example of R. P. Gillies' English tr. Hoffmann's The Devil's Elixirs in 182 ing to Hoffmann together with
Recasting the ever-shifting power relations in *The Wanderer* (1820). The influence of both ancestry of R. P. Gillies' English translation of *Gothic doubling* between a supernatural tempter and his various victims in Melmoth the Wanderer (1820) and Karl Moor in Die Räuber (1781), while Goethe would undertake a careful doubling of Faust and Mephistopheles in the first part of Faust (1808). Other examples of doubles in German literature of the period include Wieland's *Private History of Peregrinus Proteus* (1791), and Adalbert von Chamisso's *Peter Schlemihls wundersame Geschichte* (1814), in which the titular character sells his shadow to the devil, but in so doing relinquishes a considerable portion of his own soul. The double also featured prominently in selected works by such other German writers of the Romantic period as Raimund, Heine, and Tieck. But it was probably in Jean Paul Richter's novels *Siebenkäs* (1796–7) and Titan (1800) that Hoffmann encountered the most influential treatment of the double in the literature of his day. Indeed, the influence of Richter not only upon Hoffmann, but upon writers and critics from the nineteenth century through to the present day, is attested by the continued use of the term *Doppelgänger* (literally "double-goer"), first used and glossed in a footnote in *Siebenkäs* as a means of both representing and critically describing literary and nonliterary manifestations of the double.

Recasting the ever-shifting power relations between the pursuer and the pursued in her father's Caleb Williams, Mary Shelley, in *Frankenstein* (1818, 1831) would confound any simple distinction between the self and its disavowed other by figuring the Creature as the monstrous externalization of aspects of its creator's own psyche (see Shelley, Mary Wollstonecraft). Acting out, in some senses, the scripts of Victor's own repressed desires, the monster, Victor soon realizes, is "my own vampire, my own spirit let loose from the grave" (Shelley 1992: 78). With *Frankenstein*, the centrality of the double to the Gothic mode had been assured. Picking up on the Faustian echoes of earlier treatments of the literary double, the Irish Protestant clergyman Charles Robert Maturin would fashion an extended tale of Gothic doubling between a supernatural tempter and his various victims in *Mehnath the Wunderer* (1820). The influence of both Jean Paul and Hoffmann upon the development of British literature was assured by the appearance of R. P. Gillies' English translation of Hoffmann's *The Devil's Elixir* in 1824. Responding to Hoffmann together with such other
contemporary accounts of psychological duality as The Confession of Nicol Muschett of Boghall (reprinted 1818) and Life of David Hoggard, James Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd, anonymously published The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner in Edinburgh in 1824 (see HOGG, James). As in Hoffmann, the doubling that occurs here is between two half-brothers, Robert Wringhim and George Colwan, themselves doubles for their variously assumed paternal figures, as well as through Wringhim and the demonic Gil-Martin, a thinly disguised satanic tempter; in both fictions, the double is, at once, an agent of supernatural power and the embodiment of disavowed aspects of the host's self. In Hogg's Gothic fiction, double begets double, en abyme, as Gil-Martin begins to assume features of both brothers. Hogg's thematic treatment of doubles is matched by the formal construction of the narrative: the story told by an editor is retold by Wringhim, the justified sinner, in the second part of the text, both versions serving to constitute a "double vision" of the events therein described. Hogg would also return to a formal and thematic treatment of the double in the story "Strange Letter of a Lunatic" (1830).

The transmission of the double across the Atlantic to America was largely the work of Charles Brockden Brown, who, under the influence of writers such as William Godwin, would figure versions of the Gothic double in texts such as Wieland: Or, the Transformation, An American Tale (1798) and Edgar Huntty: Or, Memoirs of a Sleepwalker (1799). In accordance with Godwinian precedents, both texts stage the ongoing antagonisms bound up in the dialectic of master and slave, while neither charges its particular rendition of the double with supernatural portent. The best-known practitioner of Gothic doubles in nineteenth-century American fiction is undoubtedly Edgar Allan Poe, most famously in his short story "William Wilson" (1839), but also in the doubling of Lady Rowena Trevanion with Ligeia in the story of that name (1838), and the complex, death-inducing relationship between a painting and its subject in "The Oval Portrait" (1842). The particular inflection given the Gothic double in Poe's "William Wilson" is highly significant, for, in place of the forms of moral turpitude figured in the doubles of numerous earlier texts, the identical double in this story, rendered singular only through his barely audible whisper, is the host-subject's morally better self, a voice of rectitude and conscience. Nonetheless, the havoc he wreaks is no less deadly than in other examples, as Wilson, finally confronting his double before a mirror, presages in the glass his own death. Albeit not always in a distinctly Gothic vein, doubles would feature in Russian literature of the 1830s and 1840s, particularly in such stories as Gogol as "The Nose" (1836) and "The Overcoat" (1843), and most famously in Dostoevsky's humorous treatment of duplicity in his novel The Double of 1846.

In mid-nineteenth-century Britain, the double appears to have fallen somewhat out of literary vogue. However, it would resurface, albeit in considerably less intense a form, in Charlotte Brontë's treatment of the relationship between Bertha Mason and Jane Eyre in her 1847 novel of that name, while Emily Brontë would consistently double names, appearances, identities, and actions in Wuthering Heights (1847). Other significant examples of the double in mid-Victorian fiction, and examples not always steeped in the Gothic aesthetic's characteristic responses of horror and terror, include Wilkie Collins' The Woman in White (1859–60), Armadale (1864–6), as well as Pip and Magwitch in Dickens' Great Expectations (1861). Given the significance of doubling to earlier Gothic modes, it is unsurprising to acknowledge that the Gothic renaissance of the Victorian fin de siècle brought with it at least two major contributions to the fiction of doubleness. Inspired by the real-life account of double-dealing in the life of Edinburgh's Dewon Brodie, Robert Louis Stevenson published The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde in 1886 (see STEVENSON, ROBERT LOUIS). While reinvigorating the fictional double of his fellow Scotsman Hogg of six decades before, Stevenson in Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde also brought the trope to bear upon some of the quasiscientific discourses of his day, including evolutionary theory and its corollary, degeneration; the criminology of writers such as Cesare Lombroso; and the nascent science of sexology. Into this already heady mix, the resonances of a curiously split and divided authorial biography inevitably found their way. The respectable Dr. Jekyll encounters, through his dependence upon a Hoffmannesque elixir, a beast-like double of monstrous proportions, entering with him, like so many of his fictional precursors, into a carefully choreographed dance of hide and seek, persecution and paranoia. Divested of its relations to the supernatural, the alter ego in Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde is the product of contemporary science, the beast-like vessels of humankind's animal origins, the queer impulsion of man's polymorphous perverse sexuality.

Four years later, Oscar Wilde would put the Gothic double to similar use in his exploration of the divided psyche in The Picture of Dorian Gray (1891). Self-consciously referring back not only to the doubling effects of the portrait in the Gothic fictions of Radcliffe, Lewis, and his kinsman Maturin, but also to Poe's treatment of similar concerns in "The Oval Portrait," Wilde in Dorian Gray parallels the hedonistic pursuits of his title character with a series of horrid changes inflicted upon a veiled and carefully concealed portrait. In an enactment of the philosophy of Wildean aestheticism, art, the novel suggests, facilitates the indulgences of a double life, a life of beauty, stimulation, and indulgence, and one not entirely removed from that being pursued concurrently by Wilde himself. As in Stevenson, though, the vanquishing of time and moral consequence that the double life in Dorian Gray apparently affords is only temporary, and in a hideous reversal of fortune, the double, though once the guarantor of Dorian's narcissism, becomes the agent of death. Albeit not to the same sensational Gothic effects, Wilde would continue to explore the theme of the double life in such texts as The Importance of Being Earnest (1895) and "The Fisherman and His Soul" (1891).

Though Andrew J. Webber's study, pelgânger (1996), is primarily concerned to exemplify examples from German literature, what it identifies as the character of the double might fruitfully be a Gothic doubles in the British and American traditions of the nineteenth century (Webber 1996: 3–5). For as the fiction of Dostoevsky and Wilde so clearly demons Gothic double, though not without its counterparts, is primarily a visual phenomenon. Articulating a post-Carriean split mind and the body, the literary is intimately inscribed in the nineteenth-century discourse of sexuality (Rog 15; Webber 1996: 12). Bearing testament ever-shifting relationship between the alter ego, the self and its di-aspect, the double is intimately within the power-dynamics of slavery. For Robert Alter, this makes the fundamentally violent and aggressive I start (Alter 1986: 190). Irrevocably doubles that have come before, the double is intertextual by its very nature. The Picture of Dorian Gray itself all earlier works, so more recent Gothic doubles undertaken in such texts as Will Self's (2002) and Oliver Parker's Dorian Gray rework, with varying degrees of fidelity. As its highly allusive indicates, the double itself is bound up in the maddening dynamics of return and regenesis. And although it is usually gendered as masculine or feminine, the Gothic double bears the capacity to thicken distinctions between the sexes into a monolith in its seemingly less ambiguous forms in the fiction of Djuna Barnes, Du Maurier, and Angela Carter.

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MADDENING DYNAMICS OF RETURN AND REPETITION (2002) and Oliver Parker's Dorian Gray (2009) indicates, the double itself is bound up in the rework, with varying degrees of fidelity, the Wildean original. As its highly allusive nature double is intertextual by its very nature: just as doubles that have come before, the Gothic double is bound up in the connotations of a curiously split and divided authorial biography inevitably found their way. The respectable Dr. Jekyll encounters, through his dependence upon a Hemonesque elixir, a beast-like double of monstrous proportions, entering with him, like so many of his fictional precursors, into a carefully choreographed dance of hide and seek, persecution and paranoia. Divested of its relations to the supernatural, the alter ego in Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde is the product of contemporary science, the beast-like vestiges of humanity's animal origins, the queer impulsion of man's polymorphously perverse sexuality.

Four years later, Oscar Wilde would put the Gothic double to similar use in his exploration of the divided psyche in The Picture of Dorian Gray (1891). Self-consciously referring back not only to the doubling effects of the portrait in the Gothic fictions of Radcliffe, Lewis, and his kinsman Maturin, but also to Poe's treatment of similar concerns in "The Oval Portrait," Wilde in Dorian Gray parallels the hedonistic pursuits of his title character with a series of horrid changes inflicted upon a veiled and carefully concealed portrait. In an enactment of the philosophy of Wildean aestheticism, art, the novel suggests, facilitates the indulgences of a double life, a life of beauty, stimulation, and indulgence, and one not entirely removed from that being pursued concurrently by Wilde himself. As in Stevenson, though, the vanishing of time and moral consequence that the double life in Dorian Gray apparently affords is only temporary, and in a hideous reversal of fortune, the double, though once the guarantor of Dorian's narcissism, becomes the agent of death. Albeit not to the same sensational Gothic effects, Wilde would continue to explore the theme of the double life in such texts as The Importance of Being Earnest (1895) and "The Fisherman and His Soul" (1891). Though Andrew J. Webber's study, The Doppeleganger (1996), is primarily concerned with examples from German literature, much of what it identifies as the characteristic traits of the double might fruitfully be applied to Gothic doubles in the British and American traditions from the nineteenth century onwards (Webber 1996: 3–5). For as the fictions of Stevenson and Wilde so clearly demonstrate, the Gothic double, though not without its auditory counterparts, is primarily a visual phenomenon. Articulating a post-Cartesian split between the mind and the body, the literary double is intimately inscribed in the nineteenth-century discursive invention of sexuality (Rogers 1970: 15; Webber 1996: 12). Bearing testament to the ever-shifting relationship between the ego and the alter ego, the self and its disavowed aspects, the double is intimately inscribed within the power-dynamics of master and slave. For Robert Alter, this makes the double fundamentally violent and aggressive from the start (Alter 1986: 1190). Invariably alluding to doubles that have come before, the Gothic double is intertextual by its very nature; just as The Picture of Dorian Gray itself alludes to earlier works, so more recent Gothic doublings undertaken in such texts as Wil Self's Dorian (2002) and Oliver Parker's Dorian Gray (2009) rework, with varying degrees of fidelity, the Wildean original. As its highly allusive nature indicates, the double itself is bound up in the maddening dynamics of return and repetition. And although it is usually gendered as male, the Gothic double bears the capacity to throw the distinctions between the sexes into disarray, even in its seemingly less ambiguous feminine forms in the fiction of Djuna Barnes, Daphne Du Maurier, and Angela Carter.

As Stevenson and Wilde's use of contemporary theories on evolution, criminology, and sexology suggest, fictional representations of the double are inseparable from the broader cultural discourses on subjectivity with which they are contemporary. In Europe, scientists and psychiatric researchers of the early
nineteenth century variously came to postulate the existence of a dark, unknown self that lurked at the margins of rationality. Franz Mesmer's theory of animal magnetism had probed beyond the limits of consciousness in suggesting that human behavior was governed by a complex and involuntary flow of psychic and corporeal energies; G. H. Schubert's popularization of Mesmer's theories, together with his notion of the "shadow self," was extremely influential among German writers of the Romantic period (see German Gothic). The nineteenth-century science of hypnotism, itself the offspring of the work of Mesmer and Schubert, did much to formalize the existence of a second self existing, in secret, at the limits of conscious identity. As Andrew J. Webber has pointed out, the literary double, particularly in German literature of the nineteenth century, invariably had its nonliterary scientific and philosophical underpinnings: Kant's philosophical doublings were given fictional treatment in the work of Kleist; Fichte's theories were fictionally explored by Jean Paul; and G. H. Schubert's account of duality given literary form in the work of E. T. A. Hoffmann (Webber 1996). As Victor Sage has argued, the double in nineteenth-century British Gothic literature is inseparable from the theological pursuits of Protestantism in both its Anglican and Dissenting forms: notions of the internalized conscience inscribed within the Protestant subject a secret, internal self (Sage, 1988). Indeed, philosophical and scientific accounts of the fundamental duality of the human spirit proliferated throughout the nineteenth century, figuring most prominently in the work of Thomas Carlyle, Friedrich Schlegel, Max Dessoir, and Frederic Myers. In almost all instances, doubles in nineteenth-century Gothic fiction are cultural responses to a sense of the human subject in crisis. Discursively, in fact, the foundations of what, following the rise of psychoanalysis, would become known as the unconscious had been in place since at least the final decades of the eighteenth century; consequently, with Freud, the double, while never losing its literary and artistic manifestations, exits the realm of art and becomes one of the dominant tropes of twentieth-century psychology. With its topographical discovery of the unconscious, Freudian psychoanalysis drew upon, and consolidated, the figurative of psychological duplicity in the work of his nineteenth-century literary and scientific forebears; post-Freudian reworkings of classical psychoanalysis in the work of Carl Jung and Jacques Lacan replicated Freud's doubling of the conscious and unconscious mind with the self and the "shadow self," the subject and his or her mirrored ego respectively. R. D. Laing would lend further psychological import to the double in his account of human psychopathology in The Divided Self in 1960.

Given its centrality to psychoanalysis, it is perhaps unsurprising to note that the double has itself become the object of much psychoanalytic attention in literary and cultural criticism of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries; indeed, the movement of the double from literature into psychotherapy from the late nineteenth century onwards has been followed by a shift toward a self-reflexive enquiry as to how the double, whatever its cultural form, might be read, conceptualized, and interpreted. Otto Rank's psychoanalytic study of doubling, initially in Der Doppelgänger in 1914 and amplified in a more extensive study of 1925, was crucial in this respect: for Rank, the double was as much literary as it was anthropological and psychological. Citing many of the well-known fictional treatments of doubles mentioned above, Rank's study proceeds to discuss the sociological antecedents of doubling, as well as its implications for conceptualizing the relationship between authors and their texts: ever since Freud, classical psychoanalysis has tended to perceive the literary work as the dark, repressed double of the authorial psyche. What becomes particularly important in Rank's account is the range of contradictory meanings between which most manifestations of the double are said to shuttle: though often constructed according to the impulses of primary narcissism—by this logic, the double seems to secure the persistence of the self through the workings of replication and multiplication—it also bears with it the ghastly potential to serve as the harbinger of mortality: "originally created as a wish-defense against a dreaded external destruction, he reappears in superstition as the messenger of death" (Rank 1971: 86). Freud would draw extensively upon Rank's account of the contradictory significations of the double in his essay "The Uncanny" of 1919: while reiterating the oscillation between narcissism and death, the double, as epitomized for Freud in the fiction of Hoffmann, is a prime agent of uncanniness, a particularly disturbing compound of the forces of familiarity and strangeness, self and other; consequently, the Freudian uncanny has served as the primary theoretical lens for reading doubles in fiction, particularly in Gothic fictions of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Though not without the psychoanalytic leanings of earlier studies, Ralph Tymms' Doubles in Literary Psychology (1949) was a particularly exhaustive account of doubles in literature well beyond the well-known examples in the German Romantic canon. In addition to their reappearance in the postmodern fictional and filmic reworkings of earlier Gothic texts, doubles also feature strongly within the theoretical endeavors of contemporary culture, not only in Jacques Derrida's notion of "double-writing," but also in Steven Bruhm's queering of narcissism in Reflecting Narcissus: A Queer Aesthetic (2001) and in the Anglo-American femininities of Debra Walker King in Body Politics and the Fictional Double (2000). In these and other writers, the double has become the site of political struggle. Even so, the double's Gothic potential continues to be exploited by contemporary writers of fiction, with the trope, restored to its horrific and terrific effects, figuring prominently in such texts as Stephen King's The Dark Half (1989), Chuck Palahniuk's Fight Club (1996), Carlos Ruiz Zafón's The Shadow of the Wind (2004), and Audrey Niffenegger's Her Fearful Symmetry (2009).

SEE ALSO: German Gothic; Godwin, William; Hoffmann, E. T. A. (Ernst Theodor Amadeus)

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FURTHER READING

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SEE ALSO: German Gothic; Godwin, William; Hoffmann, E. T. A. (Ernst Theodor Amadeus); Hogg, James; Lewis, Matthew; Radcliffe, Ann; Romanticism; Shelley, Mary Wollstonecraft; Stevenson, Robert Louis; Walpole, Horace.

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