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E.T.A. Hoffmann and the Hairdresser around 1800

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The following historicizes the figure of the hairdresser in *Die Elixiere des Teufels*, and especially its relation to a pair of popular, recurrent representations in European culture around 1800. The hairdresser is here read as a self-made man, and as a second maker—a genius. Hoffmann made creative use of these two commonplaces. The character as an artisan working without attachment to a family lineage, fixed location or any other regulative structure, such as a guild, and the connection of hairdressing to literature as well as to other arts becomes productive for both Hoffmann's novel and for his poetics more generally.

KEYWORDS: E.T.A. Hoffmann, *Die Elixiere des Teufels*, comparative literature, hairdressers, self-made man, genius

In the preface to *Memoirs of an Old Wig* (1815), the anonymous author laments: 'In 1763 the use of Wigs in general began to decline, in so much that there was a petition from the master Peruke makers, of London and Westminster, to the King, in which they complain of the influx of French hair dressers.'¹ The term *hairdresser* was coined in eighteenth-century England; this character was also called the *coiffeur* and *friseur*, terms that passed through French, English and German vocabularies in the same period. Since the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, wigs had become ever-more popular, passing into fashions of wider social classes until they reached a tipping point. By the time of *Memoirs of an Old Wig*, the wig as an object of social status and fashion had apparently lost its former dignity, falling into a *shoe-black's* bag and narrowly avoiding export to Colonial India. (In a joke in bad taste, the wig would have there replaced the turban, pp. 161–63.) But of course, no change occurs overnight, and the hairdressing craze neither immediately nor totally cast away the *toupet*. As Michael Kwass has pointed out, from the 1760s onwards wigs became simpler, and more individualized: according to François

¹ *Memoirs of an Old Wig* (London: Longman et al., 1815), xiii.

Antoine de Garsault's *Art du perruquier* (1767), the goal was to imitate *la belle nature*.² Dressing hair—or the head—now had to express subjectivity.³ The transition from the eighteenth to nineteenth centuries can be understood, therefore, as a pan-European paradigm shift away from the *perruquier* towards a greater historical significance of the hairdresser; and it is a shift that occurred in parallel to the emergent, governing ideas of modern culture (such as re-conceptualizing our relationship to nature) and concerning the making of modern individuality.

The most complex literary representation of the hairdresser around 1800 is found in E.T.A. Hoffmann's novel, *Die Elixiere des Teufels* (1815–16). The narrator notes that Pietro Belcampo, alias Peter Schönfeld, wears a big wig: 'ein aufgetürmtes gepudertes Toupee, das, wie ich nachher wahrnahm, ganz unvermuteter Weise hinten in einen Titus ausging'.⁴ Belcampo's appearance is in any case ridiculous. Assuming the narrative is set in the present, his tonsorial (and sartorial) anachronism is reminiscent of the British *macaroni*: a male figure who embraced extravagant, even absurd fashion, outlandish wigs and who represented social aspiration in the early 1770s. In short, the macaroni was a self-made man who stood for exaggerated, eccentric individuality.⁵ Belcampo's wig is personal, not off the peg; it is bizarre. There is no suggestion that he made it himself, but he powders it as well as the wigs of professors and school teachers (p. 264). Obviously, Hoffmann's hairdressing character cuts hair, and he can also shave—that is to say, Belcampo is a barber, too. (The barber was severed from the surgeon in the mid-eighteenth century.) Indeed, around 1800 it was often the case that hairdressers were also barbers. In the 1778 novel *Der glücklich gewordne Friseur, welcher durch besondere Begebenheiten auf Reisen zu Wasser und zu Lande zu einem ansehnlichen Vermögen gelangt*, the protagonist makes his fortune as a *Friseur* by learning both hairdressing and barbering—from a *Peruquenmacher* as well as a *Barbier*—and once he establishes enough money and high-society contacts to give up his combined trade, he passes his clients on to a *Perruquier* who assures him that he is also a barber.⁶ Thus hairdressers-cum-barbers also frequently doubled as wigmakers at this time, though the latter role was in decline. In Johann Nestroy's 1840 farce *Der Talisman*, the lead character Titus Feuerfuchs is a *Barbieregeselle*, yet the older and conservative Monsieur Marquis is both a *Friseur* and a *Peruquier*. In Nestroy's *Das Haus der Temperamente* (1837) the main character, Schlankel, is both a *Friseur* and a *Barbier*. Hoffmann's work emerges from this broader cultural context, at a *Schnittstelle* of hairdressing history.

In the following, I historicize *Die Elixiere des Teufels* in relation to a pair of popular, recurrent representations of the European hairdresser around 1800. The hairdresser is here read as a *self-made man*, and as a second maker—a *genius*. Hoffmann, however,

² Michael Kwass, 'Big Hair: A Wig History of Consumption in Eighteenth-Century France', *The American Historical Review*, 111 (2006), 631–59 (652).

³ See also Lynn M. Fester, 'Personal Effects: Wigs and Possessive Individualism in the Long Eighteenth Century', *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 29 (2005), 47–90.

⁴ E.T.A. Hoffmann, *Sämtliche Werke in sechs Bänden*, ed. by Harmut Steinecke and Wulf Segebrecht et al. (Frankfurt/Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1985–2004): II/2: *Die Elixiere des Teufels*. *Werke 1814–1816*, ed. by Hartmut Steinecke et al. (1988), 103.

⁵ See Amelia Rauser, 'Hair, Authenticity, and the Self-Made Macaroni', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 38 (2004), 101–17.

⁶ *Der glücklich gewordne Friseur, welcher durch besondere Begebenheiten auf Reisen zu Wasser und zu Lande zu einem ansehnlichen Vermögen gelangt* (Frankfurt and Leipzig, 1778), 6–8 & 105–06.

made creative use of these two cultural commonplaces, for both the novel at hand and in connection to his poetics more generally.

* * *

The protagonist's godmother in Carl Seidel's *Ehrenreich Blunt oder Abentheuer eines Friseurs* (1795) suggests that being a *Friseur* offers many an opportunity 'sich empor zu schwingen'.⁷ Hairdressing was a practice through which a young man could both gain entry into, and rise up within, society. Wigmakers were guild members and production of wigs was state-controlled: in France, the number of wigmakers operating in each town was restricted according to the locality's population, through a system of royal charges.⁸ Hairdressers (and sometimes barbers), by contrast, were not gilded, and they increasingly undertook illicit wig-work.⁹ This situation meant that they were free of regulative structures and responsibility (a gilded wigmaker typically provided aftercare, and cultivated lifelong customer relationships)—albeit all at the price of job insecurity. This socio-legal division also led, I think, to Kant's distinction that whereas we make use of the labouring *Friseur*, the wigmaker is his own master and produces an *opus*. For Kant, the wigmaker is thus not a mere service-provider like the hairdresser, servant, or casual worker; together with the tailor, the *Perückenmacher* is rather an artisan and a citizen of the state. An autonomous subject, no less.¹⁰ Literature of the period, not least Hoffmann, reverses this wigmaker bias.

The independence and itinerant lifestyle of hairdressers in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were usually coupled, in literature anyway, with another reason in addition to freedom from guilds: illegitimate heritage. The title character of the *Der glücklich gewordne Friseur* goes out into the world as a hairdresser because his legal father is convinced that his mother had conceived him with a merchant for whom she had worked as a cook, before she was engaged—although it turns out in the course of the novel that the hairdresser's genetic father is someone else entirely. This figure of the *Friseur* is first contracted to make statesmen of young students, before he rises up society's ranks himself, assuming private pedagogical, legal, financial as well as administrative offices. And in drafting *Der Talisman* Nestroy intended, but in the end did not include, the following line for Titus Feuerfuchs: 'Ich habe einen unbekannten Vater jedoch eine bekannte Mutter gehabt'.¹¹ As it is, Titus emphasizes: 'Ich bin ein Jüngling,

⁷ Carl Seidel, *Ehrenreich Blunt oder das Abentheuer des Friseurs. Eine Kopie nach dem Leben* 2 vols (Weißenfels and Leipzig: Friedrich Severin, 1795), I, 36.

⁸ See Kwass (2006).

⁹ On wigmakers, barbers and guilds, see Mary K. Gayne, 'Illicit Wigmaking in Eighteenth-Century Paris', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 38 (2004), 119–37; Fayçal Falaky: 'From Barber to Coiffeur: Art and Economic Liberalisation in Eighteenth-Century France', *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 36 (2013), 35–48; and Hew Dalrymple, *Information for the Hairdressers in Edinburgh; Against the Incorporation of Barbers* (Edinburgh, 1758). Zedler's *Universal-Lexicon* states that German barbers—in contrast to their Parisian and Dutch colleagues—were examined before being permitted to practice, and retained the function of 'Wund-Aertzte' as well (*Grosses vollständiges Universal-Lexicon aller Wissenschaften und Künste*, 64 vols (Leipzig and Halle: Johann Heinrich Zedler, 1732–1750), III (1733), col. 418; <http://www.zedler-lexikon.de/>, accessed 18.8.2015).

¹⁰ Immanuel Kant, *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. by Königlich Preußische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 29 vols (Berlin: Reimer/de Gruyter, 1900–), VIII: *Abhandlungen nach 1781* (1923), 295.

¹¹ Johann Nestroy, *Sämtliche Werke. Historisch-kritische Ausgabe*, ed. by Jürgen Hain, Johann Hüttner, Walter Obermeier and W. Edgar Yates, 50 vols (Vienna and Munich: Jugend und Volk / Deuticke, 1977–2004), XVII/1: *Der Talisman*, ed. by Jürgen Hain and Peter Haida (Vienna: Jugend und Volk, 1993), 206.

der *Carriere* machen muß, meine Ideen schweiffen in's Höhere' (p. 42). He dons various disguises—wigs—in order to charm his way into the upper echelons of Viennese society, to which he does not belong. And so the 'hairdresser narrative' around 1800 can be situated somewhere between the *Bildungsroman*—Nestroy's Titus admits that 'mein Talent ist noch in einer unentwickelten Bildungsperiode begriffen' (p. 12), yet the characters are typically chancers, or *pícaros*—and the aspirational novels of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Europe in which youngsters leave the provinces for a prosperous future in the city.¹² Hairdresser narratives idealize opportunism rather than an abstract sense of *Bildung* for self-advancement.

Hoffmann's *Elixiere des Teufels* is similarly structured around genealogical intrigue, but it surrounds—indeed, imprisons—the protagonist Medardus, the monk whom Belcampo styles. Nothing is said of the hairdresser's heritage; Belcampo simply springs up out of nowhere in the section 'Die Abenteuer der Reise', and then throughout the narrative. He is apparently free of the burden of inheritance, both at the start and at the finish of the novel. Like Medardus at the beginning, Belcampo—as Peter Schönfeld and now Bruder Peter—is admitted to the monastery at the end of the story. But unlike Medardus, Belcampo has nothing of a sinner about him (p. 352). Christine Lehleiter has placed *Die Elixiere des Teufels* in relation to early works in the life sciences on hereditary transmission of corporeal as well as mental qualities: above all, Erasmus Darwin's *Zoonomia* (1794–96), a copy of which was held in Kunz's lending library that Hoffmann used in Bamberg. Accordingly, Hoffmann's achievement is that he builds imagination into this emergent model of biological determinism as a potentially liberating dimension, albeit one that takes a negative turn in Medardus. Lehleiter writes: 'Once we accept development and, therefore, difference between origin and descendant, we also have to acknowledge that the relationship between the original "living filament" and today's forms of life is a virtual, imagined one.'¹³ It is a reference point that is fixed in the way our minds perceive and conceive their relationship to the world. Belcampo's imagination is exuberant and untroubled; hence it is all the more creative. I shall return to this point about creativity, yet it is nevertheless significant to note at this stage another character of the novel, who is introduced in comical terms akin to Belcampo. Ewson wears a 'fuchsrote Perücke' together with two more wigs, and all at the same time (p. 165). He attempts to play the flute, but incompetently (pp. 167–68). (I shall turn to Belcampo's affinity to the arts, including music, later.) Above all, Ewson's foolishness arises because he believes himself to be of English heritage—he *wants* to be an Englishman, 'weil sein Stammbaum in England wurzelt'—and so conforms to national clichés, devouring roast beef, for instance (p. 165). Medardus and Ewson thus restrict their imaginative potential and their creative, life-affirming ability through an assumed hereditary determinism.

Belcampo can be understood as a self-made man from the way in which he re-makes others. The restrictive episodes of Medardus' life are all expressed in terms of a normative hairstyle. His mother, says the first-person narrator, 'verschnitt mein wildverwachs'nes

¹² John Strachan notes that the barber with comic pretensions to intellectual accomplishment was particularly remarkable in the English *picaresque* tradition: *Advertising and Satirical Culture in the Romantic Period* (Cambridge: CUP, 2007), 230.

¹³ Christine Lehleiter, 'On Genealogy: Biology, Religion, and Aesthetics in E.T.A. Hoffmann's *Elixiere des Teufels* (1815–16) and Erasmus Darwin's *Zoonomia* (1794–96)', *The German Quarterly*, 84 (2011), 41–60 (45). See also Lehleiter, *Romanticism, Origins, and the History of Heredity* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2014).

Haar' as a child (p. 18); in the monastery, Medardus wears a tonsure and a beard, and he compares his flight from there to escaping a prison (where, ironically, he will also end up for a while)—an institution that likewise requires its inmates to wear a tonsure (p. 100). However, meeting Belcampo, having his hair cut and allowing himself to be styled individually (the latter task together with Belcampo's tailor accomplice) brings new life into Medardus. Belcampo completes Medardus' 'Charakteristik, wie sie sich aussprechen soll im Leben' (p. 105) through a hair-brained, physiognomic pseudo-analysis that was itself typical for contemporary hairdressing treatises of the time; Medardus' exclaims: 'ich lebe, ja mir ist erst jetzt das Leben neu aufgegangen' (p. 111). An individualized life in the world, it seems, starts with a free-form hairstyle and new clothes.

Moreover, Belcampo acts outside of behaviour norms. His verbosity and theatricality reveal three advantages. First, they ensure that he becomes renowned: as Medardus talks about him to others, all know of Belcampo's 'fantastische Hasenfüßigkeit' already, and laugh about it (p. 117). He may be a fool who hops around, but he is (in)famous—making his own, idiosyncratic way in the world. Second, he is farcical, but he also wants to be taken seriously. Belcampo reasons that his *Hasenfüßigkeit*, as 'ein genialer Friseur', protects him from madness. This is perhaps because Belcampo is more grounded in the trivialities of a refined, everyday life than the headiness of contemporary Idealist philosophy: 'Existiere ich überhaupt nur durch mein eigenes Bewußtsein, so kommt es nur darauf an, daß dies Bewußtsein dem Bewußten die Hanswurstjacke ausziehe, und ich selbst stehe da als solider Gentleman.' (p. 262). And third, in the Italian monastery the *Geistlicher*, who does not understand Belcampo and Medardus speaking German, nevertheless suggests they could make it big in the theatre, as *Buffoni* (pp. 266–67). Belcampo realises that he has thus far not followed his truest calling, and springs off with resolve. This turns out not to be acting, but rather—as we read on the novel's final page—the religious life, which has been hinted at in Belcampo's vocabulary of inspiration all along. The narrative twist provides a counterpoint to Hoffmann's depiction of the Pope, who interprets original sin as biological determinism, as Lehleiter has observed (p. 46). It also recalls a historical relationship between barbers and monks, for the former had once assisted the latter as medical practitioners, since those in religious orders were forbidden by canon law to spill blood. And throughout the book, Belcampo's comedy enables an intimacy to develop between Medardus and himself (even if Medardus complains about him in despair and, at times, disgust), such that Belcampo saves his new friend twice, slips into the informal pronoun of address (p. 262), and takes the blame for events by saying he forgot to remove a curl of anger when previously cutting Medardus' hair—Belcampo is allowed to put the hair right, as he sees it, only because Medardus tolerates him by laughing (pp. 119–21). Belcampo may be silly, so goes the third reason, but through this he shows himself to be selfless also, in a positive, religious sense. Relatedly, and more generally, for Eckhart Goebel Belcampo offers Medardus a consoling, *talking cure* for his disturbed state of mind. If this novel as a whole can be read as psychoanalysis *avant la lettre*, argues Goebel, then Belcampo is the therapist, causing Medardus discomfort, but saving him.¹⁴ The self-made man is here a character who determines his own success, and helps others.

¹⁴ Eckhart Goebel, 'Literatur und Frisur. Zur Belcampo-Figur in E.T.A. Hoffmanns Roman *Die Elixiere des Teufels*', in: Daniel Müller Nielaba, Yves Schumacher und Christoph Steier (eds.): *Figur – Figura – Figuration: E.T.A. Hoffmann* (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 2011), 89–100.

The hairdresser as a humorous character repeatedly pops up in literature of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.¹⁵ He (or she) is often represented as an eccentric physical outsider in some respect. In Wezel's *Herrmann und Ulrike* (1780), for example, the *Friseur* chats away as Belcampo does, and he cries out his answers loudly, which do not respond to the questions asked. The hairdresser is fat and deaf.¹⁶ In Dickens' *David Copperfield* (1849–50), Miss Mowcher, too, is disabled: she is described as a dwarf. Through Mowcher's theatricality and hairdressing activity, she gains meaningful entry into society, though she is otherwise excluded—and like Belcampo, she also reappears towards the end of the novel, rescuing justice. Above all, however, Miss Mowcher wins favour because she is entertaining, having to stand on a table to inspect heads, 'as if it were a stage'.¹⁷ Belcampo, meanwhile, is small, thin and odd—not least because he is effeminate. One of his best friends and colleagues is called Damon, a play on the man's name and the idea of a guiding spirit or, as is so often the case in Hoffmann's poetics, an alter ego, who in this instance is a tailor. This *Kostümkünstler* is described as the very opposite of his *Haarkünstler* companion: tall, strong, refined and no-nonsense. As he tells his gossipy counterpart to shut up—'Schönfeld! Du bist heute wieder einmal recht im Zuge tolles Zeug zu schwatzen'—Belcampo gets offended and springs out of the door, screeching 'So werd' ich prostituiert von meinen besten Freunden!' (pp. 109–10). The extent to which Belcampo is a self-made man because he may be a homosexual Other, and therefore might have had to make his own way in society through hairdressing—as an alternative to the theatre—is an open research question. (In 1662, one of the earliest plays about a *coiffeur*, we should note, portrayed the provincial barber-turned-celebrity Charlemagne as a handsome, homoerotic eunuch).¹⁸ What matters for the plot of *Die Elixiere des Teufels* is instead that the flamboyant Belcampo—like Miss Mowcher—uses his outsider personality to his advantage, in contrast to those whose subjectivity is instead constituted by their (phantasmic) family tree.

* * *

If Belcampo represents the self-made man around 1800, he does so primarily because he is a second maker—not a craftsman, but an artist. A genius, even. In *Die Elixiere des Teufels*, Medardus and his alter ego, Viktorin, are united by 'das geniale Verhältnis' (p. 91); yet the word genius and its derivatives are mainly reserved for Belcampo and his tailoring companion, Damon. Furthermore, Belcampo presents hairdressing as an artistic and *professional* talent: he is 'Künstler und Fantast von Profession' (p. 120). His self-designation as a *Haarkünstler* is common to other hairdressing novels of the era, such as *Der glücklich gewordne Friseur* (p. 64). The *Barbier* of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre* speaks of having learned 'die edle Kunst' of shaving.¹⁹ Jakob von Falke points out in *Costüm und Mode in ästhetisch-kritischer Schilderung* (1878) that the late eighteenth century was an age in which: 'Das Frisieren wurde eine Kunst, welche dem Friseur Rang und Namen eines akademischen Künstlers verschaffte. Man begnügte sich

¹⁵ See Don Herzog, 'The Trouble with Hairdressers', *Representations*, 53 (1996), 21–43.

¹⁶ Johann Karl Wezel, *Gesamtausgabe*, ed. by Klaus Manger, 8 vols (Heidelberg: Mattes, 1997–), III: *Herrmann und Ulrike*, ed. by Bernd Auerochs (1997), 204–05.

¹⁷ Charles Dickens, *David Copperfield*, ed. by Jeremy Tambling (London: Penguin, 2004), 339.

¹⁸ See Falaky, (2013) p. 39.

¹⁹ FA I/10, p. 661.

aber nicht mit den bloßen Haargebäuden: es mußte auch eine Idee dabei sein.²⁰ Fayçal Falaky has convincingly proposed that the French *coiffeur* in the eighteenth century appropriated artistic pretension and especially the term genius as a commercial strategy; in doing so, hairdressers ‘freed themselves of the social and economic restrictions imposed by guilds and were able to enjoy the freedoms and mobility of a laissez-faire economy’.²¹ This observation holds true for hairdressers’ self-understanding across Europe; and John Strachan makes the broader claim that advertising in the Romantic age—not least with respect to hair oils and hairdressing—associated itself with key literary concepts of the period.²²

One celebrity example from France emerges from a copy of *Journal des Dames*, dated 18 February 1799. The passage tells the anecdote of a famous hairdresser called Léonard, but who also went by the alias of Henry. People said that he was an artist, comparing him to the painter; but in the end he lost his sanity and claimed to be the ‘le premier homme de la France’.²³ The hairdresser as *Doppelgänger*—and apparently with a foreign name—is striking when read over against Peter Schönfeld and Pietro Belcampo, who is described as crazy by his sidekick, Damon. And Belcampo says of himself: ‘Meine Fantasie irrt in dem wunderbaren Lockenbau, in dem künstlichen Gefüge’ (p. 104). The Léonard of *Journal des Dames* is likely to have been Léonard-Alexis Autié of nationwide renown and rumour in France: namely, the favourite hairdresser of Marie Antoinette’s (who was also served by Léonard’s two brothers); the founder of the first French theatre for Italian opera that was open across all seasons; and co-founder of a Parisian hairdressing academy. Léonard had previously co-edited a *Journal des Dames* from 1774, though the first issue of the above periodical, of the same title, appears to have been launched in 1797. These claims about Autié’s life and professional activities originate in his posthumous autobiography of 1838, *Souvenirs de Léonard, coiffeur de la reine Marie-Antoinette*, the authenticity of which is highly dubious. Nevertheless, ‘his’ sorts of claims to hairdressing fame and artistry, even genius as narrated in the cultural sphere, had spread throughout late-eighteenth century Europe; they were so widespread that they were made by others about him, as well as already and increasingly about hairdressers generally. William Barker’s *A Treatise on the Principles of Hair-Dressing* (1784) promotes the hairdresser of women’s styles over the sculptor and the painter, because his medium moves; and it declares that the hairdresser must have genius and taste—following, not altering nature. In German-speaking lands, the *Journal der Moden*, inaugurated in 1786, claimed of national fashions: ‘Genie, Caprice und Zufall sind meistens ihre Schöpfer’.²⁴

Our default assumption might be that whereas trend-setting and commercially savvy hairstylists embraced the title of genius, intellectual and literary authors such as Hoffmann must have objected. Indeed, Jochen Schmidt concludes that in *Elixiere des Teufels* Hoffmann makes the claim, using comedy, that genius should not come cheaply: ‘Nicht wie die früheren Kritiker und Parodisten wendet er [Hoffmann] sich gegen die

²⁰ Jakob von Falke, *Costüm und Mode in ästhetisch-kritischer Schilderung* (Vienna: Carl Gerold’s Sohn, 1878), 151.

²¹ Falaky (2013), p. 35.

²² See *Advertising and Satirical Culture in the Romantic Period*, especially pp. 204–52.

²³ *Journal des Dames*, (18.2.1799), 246–47.

²⁴ Friedrich Justus Bertuch and Georg Melchior Kraus, ‘Einleitung’, *Journal der Moden*, 1 (1786), 29.

genialischen Überzogenheiten, sondern gegen das billig zu habende Klischee'.²⁵ On the contrary, I contend that hairdressing as evidence of genius is productive for Hoffmann's poetics—through both its connection to literature as well as to other arts.

That the hairdresser became a literary character around 1800 is not unique to the period, but the fact that he became a self-reflexive, reading literary character is, indeed, novel. The first of two barbers in Cervantes' *Don Quixote* (1605–15), the protagonist's friend, gleefully and unquestioningly burns works of chivalrous literature, following religious instruction. By contrast, Hoffmann's Belcampo has, in the words of Damon, become 'halb verrückt' through his voracious consumption of books (p. 110). Belcampo assesses whether Medardus is suited to styles that encompass literary movements, genres or discourses, such as those of the sublime, the idyll or the naïve; he proposes a stylistic synthesis, since he will 'in der Glut, Form und Gestalt bildend, den wunderbaren antik-romantischen Bau ätherischer Locken und Löckchen beginnen.' And Belcampo suggests hair models for Medardus which include the literary greats Virgil and Giovanni Boccaccio, alongside imposing statesmen such as Charlemagne and Gustav Adolf of Sweden, for instance (pp. 105–06). This shift to a literate—and literary—hairdresser has to do with an expanding commercial literary market, and is perhaps best explained by invoking Brentano's *Godwi* (1800–01): 'Der Friseur sagt einem auch, was am stärksten gelesen wird, denn er sieht das immer, wenn er die Leute frisirt, wo er recht schöne Stellen den Leuten über die Schulter weg aus dem Buche liest, und auswendig lernt.'²⁶ In an unfinished fragment, probably planned as a novel and published posthumously, Hoffmann sketches a character who has his hair powdered and cut every day, discusses *Poesie* and can hold his own at 'literarisch-ästhetische Tees.' This figure of *Neueste Schicksale eines abenteuerlichen Mannes* is an explicit continuation of Ludwig Tieck's protagonist in *Leben des berühmten Kaisers Abraham Tonelli* (1798).²⁷ What's more, hairdressing in the long eighteenth century was not only a backdrop to literary discourse, but also to philosophizing. Jacobi recalled what became the famous *Pantheismusstreit* of the century and of German letters as having begun during his morning hairstyling session; Lessing had sat down at a table nearby.²⁸

In *Die Elixiere des Teufels*, however, 'literary' hairdressing—including barbering—assumes an argumentative function fused with classical Horatian poetics, and in alignment with Shandyeian humour. In Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* (1759–67), the protagonist contends that 'the conceits of a rough-bearded man, are seven years more terse and juvenile for one single operation; and if they did not run a risk of being quite shaved away, might be carried up by continual shavings, to the highest pitch of sublimity—How

²⁵ Jochen Schmidt, *Die Geschichte des Genie-Gedankens in der deutschen Literatur, Philosophie und Politik. 1750–1945*, 2 vols (Heidelberg: Winter, 2004), II: *Von der Romantik bis zum Ende des Dritten Reichs*, p. 3. Tom Wohlfarth's 'Genie in der Kunst des Lebens' *Geschichte eines Goetheschen Gedankens* (Hannover: Wehrhahn, 2015) nuances the mature Goethe's idea of genius as an art of living that can be learned yet is privileged; it is a form of egalitarian elitism. If Hoffmann is indeed satirizing (Goethean) genius in the way Schmidt assumes, then it might well be this variant on the concept.

²⁶ Clemens Brentano, *Sämtliche Werke und Briefe, Historisch-kritische Ausgabe*, ed. by Jürgen Behrens et al., 38 vols (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1975–), XVI: *Prosa 1. Godwi oder das steinerne Bild der Mutter*, ed. by Werner Bellmann (1978), p. 120.

²⁷ Hoffmann, VI: *Späte Prosa* [...] (2004), 510.

²⁸ Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi, *Über die Lehre des Spinoza in Briefen an Herrn Moses Mendelssohn* (Breslau: Gottl. Löwe, 1785), 13.

Homer could write with so long a beard, I don't know.²⁹ Sterne's joke appropriates one of the most influential texts on early-eighteenth century poetics, and one that was now going out of fashion in favour of Longinus' fragments on the sublime: Horace's *Ars Poetica*. Horace writes that the Greek philosopher Democritus had privileged natural talent, or *ingenium*, over *ars*, accomplished skill; he had thereby unleashed an organic poetic frenzy that apparently led to men experiencing an excess of black bile, having unkempt hair in need of a barber's scissors, and adopting an unshaven look.³⁰ Whereas for Horace's satire, then, beard growth symbolised a genius and creativity that, contrary to Greek thought, needed continual improvement, in Sterne's day the contemporary trend for clean-shaven men had to be reconciled with their pretensions for literary composition. Shaving is thus likened to Horatian literary editing and fine-tuning. The seven years Sterne suggests Greek poets did not shave for is a satirical twist on Horace's advice that poetry should be put in a drawer for seven years in order to mature (p. 389). An exchange about Medardus' beard in *Die Elixiere des Teufels* is similarly satirical. Hoffmann inverts the satire of Democritus in *Ars Poetica* inasmuch as he reverses the joke through Belcampo: Horace mocks poets who emphasise *ingenium* at the expense of *ars* by claiming that they avoid Licinius the barber, and that they do not shave. Hoffmann is implicitly referring to these lines in Belcampo's mocking response to Medardus' wish to be clean shaven, for he laments: 'goldene Zeit, als noch Bart und Haupthaar in Einer Lockenfülle sich zum Schmuck des Mannes ergoß, und die süße Sorge eines Künstlers war' (p. 107). Belcampo persuades Medardus to sport a *Backenbart* instead, and duly creates his *Meisterstück*. Hoffmann re-writes satire in the tradition of the Golden Age of classical literature in part because Horace's ancient text was a major, but also hackneyed source for modern poetics by 1800.

Around 1800, *Genie* denoted a superior natural talent, and is synonymous in *Die Elixiere des Teufels* with a term that etymologically once meant a guiding spirit: Belcampo also declares that his chance customer, Medardus, should admire the *Genius* in him. Belcampo's creative power is specific (though it turns out to be synthetic); and it is limited to his professional activity. Damon admits that Pietro is foolish, yet says that he is 'sonst ein gutmütiger Mensch und in seinem Metier geschickt, weshalb ich ihn leiden mag, denn leistet man recht viel wenigstens in einer Sache, so kann man sonst wohl etwas wenig über die Schnur hauen' (p. 110). But by practising one activity of genius, Belcampo actually practices at least two: shaving as well as hairdressing. In addition, Belcampo evokes not only literariness, but also related performing and visual arts. He prances around Medardus, and both his Italian name and his German alias Peter Schönfeld are, as Lucia Ruprecht has pointed out, satirical translations of the name of the ballet-master at the court of Louis XIV: Pierre Beauchamp.³¹ Belcampo has an *athletische Stellung*, is sprightly, nimble-footed, hops and walks on tip-toe in free-form. By contrast, he criticizes Medardus' gait as forced (pp. 105–06). Moreover, Belcampo is

²⁹ Laurence Sterne, *The Florida Edition of the Works of Laurence Sterne*, ed. by W. G. Day, Melvyn New, Joan New and Peter de Voogd, 8 vols (Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1978–2008), II: *Tristram Shandy*, ed. by Melvyn and Joan New (1978), 763–64.

³⁰ Horace, *Satires. Epistles. The Art of Poetry*, ed. and trans. by H. Rushton Fairclough (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926), v. 275.

³¹ Lucia Ruprecht, *Dances of the Self in Heinrich von Kleist, E.T.A. Hoffmann and Heinrich Heine* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), p. 72.

compared to the ‘Regimentspfeifer und Hornisten Giacomo Punto, Jakob Stich’ (p. 104), an actual musician called Johann Stich with an Italian alias (1746–1801), as George C. Schoolfield first established.³² Furthermore, as Nicola Kaminski has recognized, Peter Schönfeld is modelled on the painter Johann Heinrich Schönfeld, who lived from 1609 to 1682 or ‘83, and was known in Italy as Belcampo.³³

Alongside dance, music and painting,³⁴ there is also an obvious relationship between Belcampo’s performativity and the world of the stage, perhaps opera also. A hairdresser and wigmaker appears in Hoffmann’s *Seltsame Leiden eines Theaterdirektors* (1819) as well. In 1801, Ludwig Thiele wrote a new take on, or *Gegenstück* to, Paul Scarron’s *Roman Comique* of 1651–57, which is about a set of travelling players. The new twist on the tale is entitled *Launige Abentheuer und theatralische Wanderungen eines Soufleurs, Theater-Schneiders und Friseurs*, and each of the title’s three characters is referred to as a *Genie* and a *Künstler*. Each writes letters to a theatre director offering him their services, vastly overstating their skills; and the hairdresser, Theodor Waizenschwein, is the most comical and bombastic of them all. He promotes himself as an artistic, even fictional character—assuring his prospective employer: ‘Sie sollen besser rasiert werden von mir, als vom Barbier von Seville’.³⁵ Like Belcampo, Waizenschwein is an itinerant worker; like Belcampo, he includes beards in his repertoire (although he does so willingly); and like Belcampo, he has a high opinion of himself. The painter is the mutual friend of the prompter, tailor and hairdresser, delivering their letters and recognizing their limitations. In the end, only the prompter’s story is told at length, because it is finally conceded that all the characters’ experiences are interchangeable. In *Die Elixiere des Teufels*, however, it is Belcampo who subsumes other artisans or skilled practitioners into his profession.

The role of the *Friseur* in contemporary opera is not explicitly alluded to in Hoffmann’s figure, but the name Pietro Belcampo is not too far removed from, if not a direct translation of, Pierre Beaumarchais, author of the popular plays *Le Barbier de Séville* (1775) and *La Folle Journée, ou Le Mariage de Figaro* (1778). The former was made into an opera by Paisiello in 1782 and then by Rossini again in 1816—the year in which the second part of *Die Elixiere des Teufels* was published. *Figaro* became an opera by Mozart in 1786, with an Italian libretto. More generally, such operas led to something of a traditional hairdresser figure in opera (that includes works by Peter Cornelius and Richard Strauss) as well as to satire on that tradition, as in later farces like Nestroy’s *Haus der Temperamente*, in which Schlankel, the *Barbier* and *Friseur*, is obsessed with ensuring he is a ‘handelnde Person’.³⁶

Hoffmann therefore synthesized multiple empirical characters and works from the art world as eclectic influences for one literary character, in step with the hairdresser’s popularity as a character of the public sphere or celebrity culture, of opera, as well as

³² George C. Schoolfield, ‘Peter Schönfeld and Johann Stich’, *Modern Language Notes*, 67 (1952), 465–68.

³³ Nicola Kaminski, *Kreuz-Gänge. Romanexperimente der deutschen Romantik* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2001), 345–62. Kaminski offers one of the most intricate readings of Belcampo and his contribution to the structure and plot of Hoffmann’s novel to date.

³⁴ Julia Saviello notes the link between theories of painting and hairdressing in the 1820s in opening her article on hair and lines in the 15th and 16th centuries: ‘Haarkunst als Linienspiel im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert’, in: Marzia Faietti and Gerhard Wolf (eds.), *Linea II. Giochi, metamorfosi, seduzioni della linea* (Florence: Giunti, 2012), 52–73.

³⁵ Ludwig Thiele, *Launige Abentheuer und theatralische Wanderungen eines Soufleurs, Theater-Schneiders und Friseurs. Ein Gegenstück zu Scarrons komischen Roman. Aus dem Französischen frei übersetzt* (Breslau: August Schall, 1801), 40.

³⁶ Nestroy, XIII: *Das Haus der Temperamente*, ed. by W. E. Yates (Vienna/Munich: Jugend und Volk, 1981), 32.

in literature. Hoffmann's artistic and discursive, hairdressing synthesis, however, cannot be classed as a truly original idea if we consider popular journalistic texts of the late eighteenth century. One example is a German translation from 1778 of a satirical essay in praise of the *Damen-Friseur*, originally published in French and which then appeared in the *Litteratur- und Theater-Zeitung*. It thematizes the hairdresser as a genius and compares him to the sculptor and painter as three types of artist. Whereas all three professions necessitate skill, or *Geschicklichkeit*, the hairdresser 'hat ein besonderes erfindrisches und verbindendes Genie nöthig, das ihm nur allein gegeben ist'.³⁷ Significantly, in Hoffmann's novel there is a painter who is not explicitly credited with genius; and Belcampo objects to Medardus' reference to precisely a presumed *Geschicklichkeit* of his hairdressing. Hairdressing is apparently not a skill, let alone a *Gewerbe*, but instead a higher art form that penetrates the artist's whole self: 'Pietro Belcampo, den die Kunst, die heilige, durchdringt' (p. 104). The essay in its German version reasons that the hairdresser must be well schooled in physiognomy, and asserts that the hairdresser has genius because he must be able to both subordinate himself to fashion and rise above it in his mastery of individual adaptations of a general trend, alterations which must nevertheless be admired by the public. In *Die Elixiere des Teufels*, Hoffmann appears to satirize such logic. When Belcampo is asked to shave the protagonist's beard, he comments that there are those who would refuse and attempt to save a style of facial hair that apparently transcends time. But he, Belcampo, announces to himself: 'Ha, Pietro! zeige, welcher Geist dir einwohnt, ja, was du für die Kunst zu unternehmen bereit bist, indem du herabsteigst zum unleidlichen Geschäft der Bartkratzer.' (p. 108). He thereby lowers himself to trimming a beard because—not in spite—of his art.

I am not arguing for a direct influence of the above essay, or indeed the aforementioned texts, on the composition of *Die Elixiere des Teufels*. Rather, Hoffmann made use of commonplace cultural material that enjoyed wide circulation around 1800. What's more, these ideas are *embodied* in Belcampo. Peter Schönfeld compels himself to believe, 'daß du bist, sondern ich bin eigentlich *du*, heiße Belcampo und bin eine geniale Idee, und wenn du das nicht glaubst, so stoße ich dich nieder mit einem spitzigen haarscharfen Gedanken' (p. 121). He is an idea as a character. I am proposing, then, that we ascribe a combinatorial power to Belcampo, the very concept of a hairdressing 'verbindendes Genie' that was proclaimed in late eighteenth-century culture more broadly, and emerges implicitly from this novel. However, Hoffmann appropriates this idea-cum-character not in a general, or re-iterative, way, but for his own poetics specifically. His artwork is a *Gesamtkunstwerk* before the term was coined, and amusingly so. As Hilda Meldrum Brown, among others, has formulated the issue, 'the postulation of what became known as the total work of art ("Gesamtkunstwerk") had been an important clarion call to Romantic artists before Wagner's day and throughout the nineteenth century [...] The same applies to the phenomenon of synaesthesia—the artificial mingling of sense impressions'.³⁸ Hairdressing, I suggest, has a similar synthesizing function in *Elixiere des Teufels* (just as it has a therapeutic function, expressed physically before the formulation of psychoanalysis, as Goebel suggests).

³⁷ 'Lob der Kunst des Damen-Friseurs (Aus Linguets Annalen übersetzt)', *Litteratur- und Theater-Zeitung* III (17.1.1778), 33–38. (35).

³⁸ Hilda Meldrum Brown, *E.T.A. Hoffmann and the Serapiontic Principle: Critique and Creativity* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2006), 12–13.

My overarching idea is helpful for our understanding of the novel because the two major concerns of *Die Elixiere des Teufels* can be combined in one, multifaceted figure: the multiplicities of subjectivity on the one hand (a subjectivity, that is to say, which constructs itself and society surrounding it through opportunity, chance encounters, and an ability to turn situations to our advantage), and of artistry on the other. The self-made man—made possible by the Enlightenment—and the second maker, the aestheticized ideal of European Romanticism, are both embodied in the hairdresser. And so Pietro Belcampo can be understood more as characterizing culture, especially culture around 1800, as well as Hoffmann's poetics than as a unifying philosophical and poetological principle. Conflicting dimensions of subjectivity and competing types of artistic practice are resolved by 'die Ironie des Lebens' that is said at the novel's close to inhere in Peter Schönfeld, Pietro Belcampo, Bruder Peter (p. 352). Whereas irony was a formal operation that expresses life for the Early German Romantics, Hegel and others, for Hoffmann irony is given life.

* * *

Although a multi-talented hairdresser across art forms became popular in early nineteenth-century Europe, and finds further literary expression in Balzac's *coiffeur* Monsieur Marius of *Les comédiens sans le savoir* (1846), for example, it is only in Hoffmann's novel that the hairdresser assumes structural significance and intellectual importance. *Die Elixiere des Teufels* re-casts the two commonplaces of the hairdresser as a self-made man and a second maker, or genius, as inter-connected. Belcampo has become a self-made man, we infer, primarily because of his creativity; but his creativity can be such only because it shares the same starting point as the self-made hairdresser in popular literary representation around 1800. That is to say, he operates without attachment to a family lineage or a fixed location (or any other regulative structure, such as a guild). The creative fantasy or ability in which our subjectivity unfolds is freely formed, not in relation to genealogy (Medardus) or wilful national identity (Ewson). The hairdresser is a man of his own making, of the world, and of art. Presented to the public in 1815–16, Pietro Belcampo embodies the historical, cultural discourses on hairdressing at the end of the eighteenth century, and stands for a new conception of the aesthetic, good-humoured yet reasonable individual at the beginning of the nineteenth. However, we should not hurry to (over)interpret a social or ethical programme in Hoffmann's conception of the hairdresser. For I must acknowledge that this positive potential is also undercut. Belcampo is, after all, a comic figure—although one point of the novel overall is precisely that the truth can lie within a joke; ironically, reason can inhere within nonsense humour. But my reading of *Die Elixiere des Teufels* certainly reveals a poetological programme. For Hoffmann, hairdressing as a practice is significant for the literary fusion of life and art, art and craft, and all art forms. The *Haarkünstler* is characterized by social and aesthetic synthesis that can give rise to a new multimedial idea of eclectic subjective and, as such, artistic autonomy.

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Notes on contributor

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