

## Seeing Things Anew: Hoffmann's *Don Juan: A Fabulous Incident Which Befell a Travelling Enthusiast* and Gogol's *The Portrait*

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### Abstract

Established criticism argues that the influence of the German fantastic stories of E.T.A. Hoffmann (1776–1822) on Nikolai Gogol's Russian supernatural tales was short-lived. This article disagrees. Gogol (1809–1852) achieved literary success in the late 1830s, when the future course of Russian literature was strongly indebted to late German Romantic literary concepts. We trace the relationship of Hoffmann's short story *Don Juan: a Fabulous Incident which Befell a Travelling Enthusiast* with the early and late versions of Gogol's short story *The Portrait*, showing that Hoffmannesque elements are stronger in the later publication. Our close analysis uses two critical theories: Shlovsky's concept of defamiliarisation, or *ostranienie* (Note 1), and Todorov's theories of the fantastic, the one being apposite on account of its Russian perspective, and the other because of its insights into Gothic literature. We also support our argument by historical and biographical evidence, with the overarching aim of bringing new critical perspectives to the study of the short fiction of Hoffmann and Gogol.

**Keywords:** Hoffmann, Gogol, Shklovsky, Todorov, defamiliarisation, arabesque, fantastic

### 1. Introduction

The relationship between the late German Romantic fiction of E.T.A. Hoffmann (1776–1822) and the fiction of Ukrainian-born Nikolai Gogol (1809–1852) contributed significantly to the development of Russian literature and culture between 1830 and 1850. These two writers commonly use Gothic tropes, often blurring the division between material and supernatural fictional worlds. Their works also share an affinity with the folkloric tradition; conflate the comic and the grotesque; and satirise those in authority. Despite Gogol's persistent use of Gothic images and fantastic events, several critics have drawn attention to a shift towards realism in his later fiction (Belinsky, quoted in Ingham, 1974, pp. 168, 171; Kent, 1984c, p. 252; Proffer, 1982, p. 10, Note 2). We question this interpretation, and so open up a new critical approach. From the 1820s onwards, the popularity of the Gothic novel in Russia grew to such an extent that, soon after their initial publication and the close French translations undertaken by Loève-Weimars between 1829 and 1831, many versions of Hoffmann's stories became readily available to Russian readers. The speed at which these stories and biographical information about Hoffmann spread to Russia at this time also indicates the strength of interest in his work (Ingham, 1974, p. 81, Note 3). The route through which Gogol became acquainted with Hoffmann's fantastic characters, plots and images is detailed below.

### 2. Romantic Legacy

The impact of European Romantic literature on Gogol's work has provided critics with fertile ground (Note 4). Proffer's observation that "comparative studies scrutinise parallels between Gogol's fiction and the prose of the romantics—Maturin and Scott, Tieck and Hoffmann, Janin and Balzac, to name only a few" is consensually true, although we do not align with Proffer's argument that their influence on Gogol's work diminished by the 1830s (Proffer, 1967, pp. 120, 127). There is broad, but not unanimous, critical agreement that Gogol, influenced by the extensive contemporary Russian interest in Western literature, drew on Hoffmann's work at thematic, textual, imagistic and structural levels. Rodzevich and others, for instance, link Hoffmann's tale, *A New Year's Eve Adventure* (1815) to Gogol's *The Nose* (1836), because of a repeated theme of lost shadows, lost reflections and lost noses (Rodzevich, 1917, p. 221; Gorlin, 1935, pp. 79–80; Mann, 1988, pp. 80–81, quoted in Meyer, 2000, p. 2). Furthermore, Meyer links *A New Year's Eve Adventure* on many levels to Gogol's *Nevsky Prospekt* (1835),

arguing that Gogol re-uses Hoffmann's presentation of the double. In addition, with a wry sense of humour, Gogol names the characters of a "tinsmith" and a "high-class boot-maker", Schiller and Hoffmann respectively (Meyer, 2000, p. 13). Krys convincingly relates Gogol's *St John's Eve* (1832) and *A Terrible Vengeance* (1832) to Hoffmann's *The Sandman* (1816) and *Ignaz Denner* (1816) (Krys, 2009, pp. 248, 256). In addition, distinct echoes in Gogol's *Nevsky Prospekt* of Hoffmann's *Princess Brambilla* (1820) demonstrate his familiarity with Hoffmann. Gogol's protagonist, Piskarev, obsessively follows a woman who is not what she appears to be, just as Hoffmann's Giglio Fava follows his visionary Princess (Hoffmann, 1985, Vol. 3, p. 789). In Gogol's *The Overcoat* (1842), the narrator hesitates to name the government department in which his protagonist works because "not so long ago a complaint was lodged by a district police inspector" accusing the author of libel (Kent, 1985b, p. 305). This replicates exactly the circumstances surrounding Hoffmann's satiric fairy tale, *Master Flea* (1822), parts of which were censored because of a court summons accusing him of libelling the Director of the Prussian Military Police (Note 5). Moreover, Gogol's *The Diary of a Madman* (1835) features a dialogue between talking dogs, a device which Cervantes (an acknowledged influence on Hoffmann) and Hoffmann employ in both *Dialogue of the Dogs* (1613) and *Report of the Most Recent Fortunes of the Dog Berganza* (1813). Ingham draws parallels between these talking dogs and Hoffmann's use of the feline narrator in his novel, *The Life and Opinions of Tomcat Murr* (1820–1822) (Ingham, 1974, p. 167). Ingham also notes "a complete parallel" between a scene in Gogol's *The Terrible Hand* (A Fragment, 1832/3) and Hoffmann's last work, *Master Flea*, in which the protagonist sees a woman whom he loves at a brightly lit window (ibid., pp. 166–167). Ingham concludes that "the reading of Hoffmann was something more than a superficial experience for Gogol" (ibid., p. 176). These examples are indicators of a substantial body of critical work, including detractors and refiners, which connects Hoffmann to Gogol.

Gogol knew Hoffmann's *Don Juan* very well. It continued to be translated until the 1840s, when Gogol was working on the later version of his novella *The Portrait*, to which we refer in more detail below. French translations of Hoffmann's story first appeared in the widely circulated *Revue de Paris*, September 1829, and in volume eight of Loève-Weimars' edition of *Contes fantastiques*, in March 1830 (Ingham, 1974, p. 130). V. Praxov's article, *On Hoffmann's Fantastic Stories* (Note 6), published in the liberal magazine *Herald of Europe*, December 1830, also mentions *Don Juan* in the context of the plight of the artist (ibid., p. 80, Note 7). Gogol was a member of Pushkin's literary circle, and Pushkin's drama *The Stone Guest* (1830, revised 1836) may well have been influenced by Hoffmann's *Don Juan* (ibid., p. 130, Note 8). Furthermore, in 1833, a version of *Don Juan* by M. Ivanenko appeared in *The Odessa Herald's* weekly supplement, *Literary Pages* (Note 9). In the same year, the *Moscow Telescope* (Note 10) published a biography of Hoffmann by Xavier Marmier, which also mentions *Don Juan* (ibid., pp. 104, 106). When Hoffmann's work was critically reappraised in Russia in the late 1830s, there was particular interest in his stories about music, including *Don Juan*, two translations of which appeared in relatively quick succession. In 1838, the *Moscow Observer* (Note 11) printed *Don Juan: an Incident which Befell a Travelling Enthusiast* (Note 12), which Ingham notes is a "first-class translation" (ibid., p. 205). In 1840, the second edition of the theatre magazine, *Pantheon of the Russian and All European Theatres*, published *A Performance of Don Juan: An Artistic Fantasy by Hoffmann* (Note 13). Belinsky congratulates the latter magazine for reprinting the story, calling it "an old acquaintance" (quoted in Ingham, ibid., p. 213).

Our particular, and new, contribution to the comparative study of Gogol and Hoffmann stems from how Gogol has absorbed and developed the writing style of Hoffmann's story, *Don Juan* (1812), in his novella, *The Portrait* (1835 and 1842) (Hereafter, for economy, they will be referred to as *The Portrait (1)* and *(2)*). The new angle aims to prove that Hoffmann's influence on Gogol's work not only endures into the 1840s, but strengthens. In comparing the relationship between these works, we, firstly, reprise the Romantic critical argument concerning arabesques, originally described by Goethe, and then developed by Friedrich Schlegel (see below); secondly, we apply the Russian critical theory, developed by Viktor Shklovsky (1893–1984), of *ostranienie*, often translated as defamiliarisation; and thirdly, we use the structuralist categories of the fantastic, identified by Tzvetan Todorov (1939–2017). These critical approaches all illuminate the nature of the fantastic, and how readers perceive it. Shklovsky describes how the process of automatism deadens our experiences of the world, whereas art defamiliarises our surroundings and assumptions, thus remaking things and ideas. As Berlina argues: "[W]hile the Romantics only sought to actualise the beauty of the world, Shklovsky sees art also as a way to make its horrors felt" (Berlina, 2015, p. 151). Shklovsky himself makes this very point in "Form and Material in Art" where he argues that "[P]erhaps all the horror (which is little felt) of our days, the Entente, the war, Russia, can be explained by our lack of feeling for the world, by the absence of extensive art" (Shklovsky, 2007, p. 4). Todorov's theories of the uncanny, the fantastic and the marvellous are particularly useful critical concepts for understanding eerie or nightmarish Gothic effects, both Hoffmannesque and Gogolian. All of these insights inform our comparison and interpretation of *Don Juan* and the *Portraits*.

## 2.1 Arabesques

The work of both Hoffmann and Gogol is shaped by German Romantic aesthetic theories, in particular the device of the arabesque, which Gogol developed into a writing technique which abruptly shifts from one discourse to another. We define a Romantic arabesque in order to reveal how Gogol developed it. This device is best encapsulated in the poetic theories of critic and philosopher Friedrich Schlegel (1772–1829), the Romantic writer and philosopher who first coined the epithet “romantic” (Schlegel, 1796–1801, Atheneum frag. 116, p. 182). Schlegel posits that “arabesques ... together with confessions ... are the only romantic natural products of our age” (Gespräch über die Poesie, p. 337). He explores the concept of the arabesque in all the arts—painting, music and literature—and expands its meaning beyond the ancient practice of using a recursive frame for merely decorative purposes. Expressing his theories predominantly in numbered fragments, he uses arabesques instead of logical, sequential argument. Romantic works, he states, do not prioritise a centre over a frame, or a frame over a centre, but rather weave apparently random elements in “artistically ordered entanglement” involving convolutions and digressions. (Atheneum frag. 311, p. 218). A further Romantic characteristic which Schlegel identifies as particular to the arabesque, is the ironic placement of the serious and the playful (alles Scherz und alles Ernst) side by side without explicit connection (Lyceum frag. 108, p. 160). The effect of the arabesque is “to suspend the progress and the laws of reasonably thinking rationality and to place us in the beautiful confusion of fancy, in the original chaos of human nature” (Gespräch über die Poesie, p. 319). The reader, viewer or listener, therefore, must imagine the dialectic between different elements, creating order and meaning out of what initially appears knotted and confused (Note 14). These few strands of Schlegelian aesthetics illustrate the critical hinterland which typifies Romantic style, and shapes the thinking of Hoffmann and, in turn, Gogol. Whereas Hoffmann knew these ideas through reading contemporary texts, Gogol absorbed them via cultural transmission, migration of ideas and texts, and translations from German into French and Russian. Pertinently, Schlegel’s phrase “to suspend the progress and laws” of rational thinking resonates with Shklovsky’s theories of defamiliarisation and their application to Gogol’s work, more of which below.

Hoffmann, an obsessive bibliophile as well as a writer, makes many references to Schlegel’s work in his own fiction, and even read him while confined to bed with fever (Note 15). Rotermund cogently argues that the arabesque is a prevalent pattern throughout Hoffmann’s writing, analysing its use in the two novels, *The Devil’s Elixirs* (Die Elixiere des Teufels, 1815–1816) and *Tomcat Murr* (Lebens-Ansichten des Katers Murr, 1819–1821). The Preface of the former novel announces that “what seemed formless will become clear and precise” as the reader comes to recognise the text “grow(ing) into a glorious plant and spread(ing) forth in a thousand tendrils” (Hoffmann, Vol. 2/2, 1988, p. 12). The latter novel comprises a double, interwoven text. One part is an autobiography narrated by Tomcat Murr himself, and the other is a biography of the protagonist, Johannes Kreisler, written, fictionally speaking, on the reverse side of the page. The full title of the novel—*The Life and Opinions of The Tomcat Murr, Together With a Fragmentary Biography of Kapellmeister Johannes Kreisler on Random Sheets of Waste Paper*—explicitly displays its arabesque composition (Rotermund, 1998, p. 58, Note 16). Furthermore, Hoffmann’s own pen-and-ink designs for the covers of the two volumes of the unfinished novel all use an arabesque border, featuring grotesque figures and curling vine leaves (Clason, 1992, pp. 501–502). Quoting Schlegel’s word “arbitrariness”, Rotermund observes that “the Hoffmannesque variant of the romantic arabesque style forces the reader himself to piece together the latent coherence (of *Tomcat Murr*) to destroy the ‘arbitrariness’ bit by bit”, thus making coherence out of apparent chaos (ibid., p. 69, Note 17). Like Rotermund, Stanley widely explores the use of the arabesque in music, literature and the arts (Note 18). She points out that Hoffman, in his shorter musical stories *Ritter Gluck* (1814) and *Don Juan*, features structural arabesques with “an unexpected spiral from reality to a fantasy level of consciousness”. The sudden shift from one mode to the other is “dynamic rather than narrative”, presenting the reader with a “puzzling arabesque turn” which prompts active questioning of how the stories should be interpreted (Stanley, 1985, p. 418).

Shifting abruptly from one discourse to another is prevalent in much of Hoffmann’s work, as seen in his first collection of tales, *Fantasy Pieces in the Style of Callot* (*Fantasiestücke in Callots Manier*, 1814–1815). This collection, known as *Kreisleriana*, is interspersed with anecdotes, fragments, capriccios (Note 19) and reviews, and contains *Don Juan*. Embedding of stories within stories is also a common arabesque technique, as found in Hoffmann’s *A New Year’s Eve Adventure*. The organisation of Hoffmann’s story collection, *The Serapion Brothers* (*Die Serapions-Brüder*, 1819–1821), like *Fantasy Pieces*, is also arabesque. Here, the brothers tell their stories to each other and then discuss them. The form of the arabesque features in the dynamic relationship between the tales and their discursive frame, and also within the stories. While debating the success of each tale, the fictional brother, Lothar, synthesises the brothers’ main principles of Serapiontic writing as follows: Lothar (and indirectly Hoffmann himself) proposes that the writer should examine very carefully what he (sic) sees in

material nature and what he feels in spirit, allowing all the forms, colours, light and shade of his inner perceptions to inspire what he writes. The resulting text should blend these inner and outer worlds, and so bring a refreshing (erquicklich) transformation to the writing, which the reader may then experience vicariously (Hoffmann, vol. 4, 2001, p. 69). Hoffmann's fiction, on narrative and structural levels, repeatedly critiques automatic and philistine responses to the world and to art. His use of narrative arabesques, ubiquitous in all Romantic literature, consistently requires the reader to recalibrate his/her interpretation, resulting in fresh perceptions. Thus, Shklovsky's critical theory of making the reader "see things anew" (Shklovsky, 1991, p. 5) is expeditious when applied to Hoffmann's writing practice, which constantly surprises the passive reader, more of which to follow.

## 2.2 Gogol's Debt to Romantic Aesthetics

Gogol was well aware of the Romantic inheritance of arabesquing narrative structures (Jenness, 1995, pp. 4–5), but develops his own distinctive techniques to prevent the reader from falling into the apathy of an automatic response. In 1835, Gogol published a collection of essays on history and aesthetics, together with three stories, *Diary of a Madman*, *Nevsky Prospekt* and *The Portrait (I)*, all under the title *Arabesques*. In her essay "The Landscape of Arabesques", Fusso points out that the "original integrity" of Gogol's critical pieces, ordered in dynamic relationship with the fiction, illustrates exactly his understanding of the arabesque (Fusso, quoted in Jenness, 1995, p. 57). Later commercial practice was to publish the stories separately, thus losing the inter-relationship between these pieces. Jenness continues Fusso's argument by commenting that, alongside many other Romantic features, Gogol's use of arabesques, which "protrude beyond the ordinarily expected frame of things", reveals his understanding of this central principle of Romantic writing (Jenness, 1995, p. 59). She describes the historical context in which Gogol became immersed in Romantic German literature and aesthetics as a process which began at school, developed through private reading and discussion with coteries of educated and cultured people, and continued through attendance at weekly literary gatherings given by his friend, the poet Zhukovsky, during the first half of the 1830s (Note 20). Naturally, as he developed his own individual style, Gogol became a master, rather than a disciple, of Romantic critical theory and practice.

In the first essay of *Arabesques*, "Sculpture, Painting and Music", Gogol describes "three wonderful sisters" which God has given to humanity: Greek sculpture, painting and music (Tulloch, 1982, p. 25). These testify to Gogol's interest in the arts as a whole and the degree to which he absorbed the Romantic artistic practice. Not only does the essay prompt the reader to imaginatively fill the unarticulated gaps between this essay and the stories in the same volume, thus creating a possible coherence of meaning, it also employs arabesque images. The first sister, Sculpture, originates from "a world entwined with bunches of grapes and olive vines ... spinning in an elegant dance to the sounds of the timpanis", which are images that typify sinuous arabesque design (ibid.). Likewise, the second sister, Painting, is "beautiful like autumn in its rich adornment flashing through the window sash, entwined with vines" (ibid, p. 26). Painting also "combines the sensual with the spiritual" (ibid., p. 27), a juxtaposition of opposites or "rapid alternation" of contradictions, which is a recurrent feature of the arabesque in all the arts (Stanley, 1985, p. 406). Gogol particularly describes the uplifting effects of the third sister, Music, as much needed in nineteenth-century Russia at a time when "a whole tempting chain of refined, luxurious inventions is bursting upon us with ever-increasing power to deaden and weaken our feelings" (ibid., p. 28). As Gogol figuratively puts it, music plays on the listener as if he is a keyboard which "trembles" in response to the sound, and thus awakens his soul (ibid., p. 27). This concept has much in common with the Romantic aesthetics which anticipate the imaginative engagement of active recipients.

The critical theory laid out in *Arabesques* serves as a pattern for the convoluted structures of Gogol's *Diary of a Madman*, *Nevsky Prospekt* and both versions of *The Portrait*. All of these stories reveal his appropriation of the Romantic arabesque. Replicating the cursive and recursive growth of vine tendrils, these narratives are non-linear. The suggestive title, *Diary of a Madman*, prepares the reader for an unreliable narrator, Aksenty Ivanovich Poprishchin. This clerk of mediocre grade in the Civil Service, much occupied with sharpening quills, unwittingly makes apparent his delusions of grandeur, which grow in absurdity until he dies believing he is the King of Spain. His voice is sustained throughout, even to the extent of recording the contents of letters he believes to be written by two dogs. One dog refers to him as resembling "a turtle in a bag", which he dismisses as the result of jealousy, thereby revealing his neurotic solipsism (Kent, 1985b, p. 250). The shape of Poprishchin's narrative is chronological, but at every point the reader, reading athwart the text in arabesque fashion, is imagining the true state of affairs. The lack of an objective voice within the narrative frame carries more weight of meaning than the frame. Its linear shape is therefore distorted by the reader's own interpretation. The structure of *Nevsky Prospekt* is different, but also features arabesques. It begins with the narrator stating "There is nothing finer than Nevsky Prospekt", followed by a lively description of this central thoroughfare in St

Petersburg (Kent, 1985b, p. 207). It ends with an equally detailed description, concluding that “everything breathes deception ... the devil himself lights the street lamps to show everything in false colors” (ibid., p. 238). The central section entails two related stories of Piskarev, an artist, and Pirogov, a lieutenant, who both fall foul of adventures initiated in Nevsky Prospekt. This prompts the reader to reassess retrospectively the narrator’s claims of the opening section. Similarly, both versions of *The Portrait* require the reader to make connections, when no explicit connections are given, between their second and first parts. The second part in both versions predates the events of the first, thus performing an arabesque leap backwards in narrative time. This forces the reader to reinterpret the first part. The resonance between the arabesques of Part I and Part 2 enhances, through reader response, the depth of meaning of the entire story.

### 3. Defamiliarisation and Shklovsky’s Critical Relevance to Hoffmann and Gogol

As a modern Russian formalist, Shklovsky emphasises the variable meanings associated with single words, groups of words, and the effect of linguistic contexts, rather than exploring the artist’s inner perceptions, which was Hoffmann’s major Romantic preoccupation in *The Serapion Brothers* collection, and elsewhere. However, with regard to his writing practice rather than his themes, Shklovsky explicitly refers to Hoffmann’s prolonging of uncertainty and the transformation of the familiar into the unfamiliar (Shklovsky, 1991, pp. 156, 201). In Hoffmann’s work this transformation frequently produces uncanny Gothic effects, when the reader cannot be certain whether what is presented is real or fantastic, material or otherworldly, physical or spectral. Freud’s essay on *The Uncanny* (1919) posits Hoffmann’s work as masterly in this respect (Note 21). Shklovsky, on the other hand, commends writing which revitalises readers’ perceptions of their immediate material world, resulting in their engagement with literary texts which may have many different effects besides the Gothic. He argues that defamiliarisation “brings about a semantic dislocation” of a particular word, “snatch(ing) it out of the sequence in which it is usually found and transfer(ring) it with the aid of the word (the trope) to another meaning sequence”, and hence presenting something arresting and new (Shklovsky, 2007, p. 4). He points out that semantic dislocation in Russian literature is a hallmark of “Dostoevsky, Rozanov, Andrei Bely, Zamyatin”, and significantly (in translation) of “*The Serapion Brothers*” (ibid.). We will argue that, as well as *The Serapion Brothers*, Hoffmann’s *Don Juan* precisely illustrates Shklovskian defamiliarising semantic dislocation. *Don Juan* is based on Mozart’s opera, *Don Giovanni*, in which Donna Anna is one of the victims of the protagonist, the rake Don Giovanni. Throughout *Don Juan*, Hoffmann uses the word-phrase, “Donna Anna”, in different semantic contexts. Each time, the word-phrase is invigorated with different nuances of meaning, or, using formalist critical terminology, this repeated signifier is loaded with several signifieds. We will analyse this device in more detail below in terms of the arabesque and defamiliarisation; our key point is that the different contexts in which “Donna Anna” is repeated awaken the attention of the reader.

Although Shklovsky’s critical theories overlap with particular elements of Romantic aesthetics, they take their own course. Both Hoffmann’s and Shklovsky’s artistic principles value the creativity of the writer, composer or artist and his (sic) ability to heighten the receiver’s perceptions by making the ordinary into something transcendent or extra-ordinary. In the formalist schema of sender>message>receiver, namely artist>artefact>reader or viewer or listener, the Romantic, Hoffmann, is more preoccupied with the process of creativity in the sender/artist than Shklovsky, who focuses more on the message/artefact and the receiver. Shklovsky maintains that, once the “message” is in the domain of receivers, it accrues meanings from its linguistic and social context. To illustrate this point, he quotes Tolstoy who ironically comments: “If the critics now understand me and are able to declare in their feuilletons what it was that I had really meant to say, then I congratulate them and assure them, if I maybe so bold, that they know a lot more about it than I do” (quoted in Shklovsky, 1991, pp. 45–46). Furthermore, while Shklovsky values the power of defamiliarisation to awaken the reader, viewer or listener’s perceptions, he values the response to the artefact as a means of metaphysical transcendence above the ordinary much less than Hoffmann. At the core of his theories, Shklovsky wishes art “to make a stone feel stony”, so that readers not only recognise the referent of the word “stone”, but also see the stone in its full materiality (ibid., p. 6). The experience of the stone should be felt as a re-experience of what it is, not as a bridge to Romantic sublimity, or solely as a figurative or allegorical literary vehicle. The function of art, he argues, is to prevent human beings from becoming automata, living their lives almost unconsciously. His credo stresses that the transformative function of art is to “shake up the subject ... extricate a thing from the cluster of associations in which it is bound ... turn over the object as one would turn a log over the fire” (ibid., p. 61).

Shklovsky’s theories of prose focus on all literary devices which impede the reader’s attention, prolong the process of understanding, and hence “transform” what is habitually recognised into what is seen anew (ibid., p. 62). Habit, he argues, “eats away at things, at clothes, at furniture, at our wives and at our fear of war” (p. 5). He

maintains that “(b)y use of figures of speech and any other device, he (the writer) brings about semantic shift. He wrests the concept from the semantic cluster in which it is embedded and reassigns it with the help of the word (figure of speech) to another semantic cluster” (ibid.). Such devices include imagery, metaphor, simile, repetition, tautology, euphemism, hyperbole, parallelism, digression, and any kind of plot construction which postpones a denouement, such as framing, embedding and loosely linked or non-chronological story-telling. New perspectives can also be achieved by thwarting genre expectations, or by telling a story from an unusual point of view (ibid., pp. 7, 20–21). These aesthetic techniques are wide-ranging, yet have in common the function of deviating from the familiar, thus prompting the reader to see things differently.

Copious examples from contemporary and past authors who succeed in destroying the human tendency towards automatised are given. Pertinently, Shklovsky offers two illustrations of defamiliarisation used by Gogol. The first, in a scene of lust and flirtation, is from *Christmas Eve* (1832). Osip Nikiforovich casts his eye over Solokha’s body, asking three times “What’s that you have there?”, to which she replies, “my arm”, “my neck” and “my necklace on my neck” (ibid., p. 10). These words are comic euphemisms for her breasts, which are never referred to directly. This part of her anatomy is defamiliarised for the reader by lack of the referential signifier and the couple’s conscious misnaming. The second example refers to “the constancy with which (Gogol) employs two synonymous expressions in succession ... even though this does not necessarily contribute to greater clarity or precision of thought,” for instance, in the phrases: “passages have *become weaker and lost their strength*”, and “do not *hurry*, do not *hasten*” (ibid., p. 23) (Shklovsky’s italics). The defamiliarisation lies in the prolonging of the reader’s engagement with the concepts of diminution and deceleration which the prose imitates. As well as providing examples of defamiliarisation within sentences and paragraphs, Shklovsky also explores how defamiliarisation results from larger narrative structures, the arrangement of which impedes plot development, while at the same time putting in doubt the reader’s interpretation. His selection of texts is wide-ranging and comprehensive. On account of their use of literary figures of speech or their individual choices with regard to narrative structures, he praises among others Tolstoy, Cervantes, Vasily Rozanov, Sherlock Holmes and Charles Dickens. For instance, he explores extensively the digressive structures of Laurence Sterne’s novel, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* (1759–1767), illustrating this with Sterne’s diagram of the five back-looping lines which ironically illustrate the halting progress of the plots in the five volumes of his novel (ibid., p. 169; Sterne, 2009, pp. 379–380). With these critical theories in mind, we will analyse how the smaller semantic units and the larger narrative structures of Hoffmann’s *Don Juan* and Gogol’s *The Portrait* (2) produce the effects of defamiliarisation.

### 3.1 Hoffmann’s *Don Juan*

As indicated above, Hoffmann’s *Don Juan* features “arabesque turn(s)” that are “dynamic rather than narrative” with sudden shifts from one mode of writing to another. The effect of these shifts is to “puzzle” the reader (Stanley, 1985, p. 418). The first shift is immediately apparent when Hoffmann’s narrator, the Travelling Enthusiast of the title, describes his response to a performance of Mozart’s opera, *Don Giovanni*. Through the juxtaposition of two languages, lines from the libretto of the opera in Italian are repeatedly threaded through the German story. This textual device is sustained, although only commented on once when the narrator remarks initially that he unexpectedly hears a performance in Italian in a German town. Readers who know the opera are likely to place these libretto lines in their musical context, probably mentally associating them with a singing voice, which would open up possible meanings beyond the author’s words. Even if readers do not know the opera or the Italian language, they would notice as unusual the entanglement of a foreign language within the German text. Naturally, the narrative repeats the word-phrases “Don Juan”, the villain of the plot, and “Donna Anna”, one of his victims. Meanings associated with “Don Juan” remain consistent throughout, encapsulating the opera’s protagonist as a libertine who is sent to hell by dark forces. With “something Mephistotelean” about him, he is a Faustian figure who brings about his own downfall (Schafer, 1975, p. 64). The phrase, “Donna Anna”, on the other hand, shifts in meaning when used in different semantic clusters, as the prose swerves in arabesques from one context to another. These meanings stem from the various responses of the narrator and the theatre audience to Donna Anna. She is one of Don Juan’s seduced women whose father he had murdered; she is the diva who plays this part in the opera; she is a spectral presence who erupts into the material surroundings of the narrator’s theatre box overlooking the auditorium and stage. Yet another perspective comes from members of the audience who pontificate on the actress’s performance. Applying Shklovsky’s critical insights anachronistically to Hoffmann’s work, it is clear that Hoffmann uses language in such a way as to keep the reader alert to cross-connections and differing interpretations of Donna Anna.

As Röder argues, Hoffmann structures *Don Juan* on “a number of different levels of reality”, producing thereby “a complex web of different perspectives” (Röder, 2003, pp. 129, 133). The story comprises several arabesque

narrative frames within which more arabesques twist and turn, using many kinds of discourses, registers and modes of writing throughout its three loosely organised sections. In the opening section, the narrator describes his situation as he wakes up in a hotel room to hear instruments tuning up for the overture of Mozart's opera, *Don Giovanni*. In a dialogue with his valet, he learns that Theatre Box 23 is attached to his room and the evening performance is about to begin. Thus far, the details anchor the story in a recognisable world of an early nineteenth-century German theatre and are authentically informed by Hoffmann's experience as a music reviewer for the musical journal, AMZ (Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung).

A change of tone, when the narrator's ecstatic response to the performance comes to the fore, heralds the fabulous incident of the title. Donna Anna, while performing on the stage, simultaneously appears as an apparition in his theatre box and converses with him. The theatre box is a liminal space between the hotel room and the theatre auditorium, and as such, is an apt location for a Gothic haunting and an eruption of the fantastic into the familiar. During both of the narrator's visits to the box, all elements of the uncanny arise: rustling, fragrant wafts, and small vibrations in the air which stir distant curtains. These disturbances bear out Royle's argument that the uncanny involves other senses than sight (Royle, 2003, p. 46). During the narrator's first visit, completely enthralled by the passion and drama of the opera, he becomes aware of the scent, sound and warm breath of someone behind him. Eventually turning, he sees Donna Anna, whose performance he has just been watching on stage. Her sweet words cause "pound(ing) in my pulse and vibrat(ing) in my every fibre" (Schafer, 1975, p. 66). In Gothic terms, she is a doppelgänger, existing on two levels of reality, and is later revealed as a revenant (Note 22). Despite Donna Anna only speaking Tuscan and the traveller only German, they converse and share a oneness of spirit through the medium of music. While she speaks, it becomes clear that the travelling narrator is himself a composer. She professes that: "– your soul revealed itself to me in song. I have sung you, for I am your melodies" and she shares "the wonderful romantic realm where tones are infused with sublime magic". Before vanishing from the box, she puts her hand to her heart as if in sudden pain, uttering the words "Unhappy Anna, your darkest moment is upon you", which analeptically can be seen as a clue to her imminent death. The narrator then watches her sing again on stage. He feels "enveloped by a soft warm breath; its intoxicating spirit passed over me and I trembled with bliss" (ibid., p. 67). This anticipates Schklovsky's description in his critical essay, "Arabesques", where he refers to the effect of music that makes the listener tremble, a concept that he undoubtedly inherited from Romantic writings. However, Hoffmann's presentation of this sensuous response to music gives fuller attention to the inner spiritual experience of the composer and the performer than a Shklovskian interpretation would, and adds an erotic charge to the couple's sublime encounter. Leaving the box after the finale "in the most exalted state of mind I had ever experienced" (ibid., p. 68), the narrator is jolted back to reality by the banal comments of his fellow diners, who are insensitive to Donna Anna's seduction and the murder of her father. Typically, one of them remarks that the actress playing the part of Donna Anna should have taken more care with her dishevelled appearance.

The "middle" section of the story features the narrator's letter to his friend, Theodore, whom he addresses several times by name. Significantly, Hoffmann, whose middle name is Theodore, uses Theodore to represent himself in the later story collection *The Serapion Brothers*. This device invites a composite idea of the author, the friend, the narrator, and Donna Anna, all united in music. Indeed, the narrator claims in his letter that "Only a poet understands a poet; only a romantic soul can pass through the portals of romanticism" (ibid., p. 69). Unable to sleep, the narrator revisits the theatre box at midnight, bearing candles and writing materials. The change of location from a mundane hotel room to a gloomy Gothic space is instantly signalled by the waiter's look of surprise as he delivers the narrator a glass of punch. Left alone in the glimmering light, the narrator feels that Theodore had called his name, and his own utterance of "Donna Anna" sets eddies of sound echoing in the empty space before him, "arous(ing) the spirits of the instruments in the orchestra pit." His body is once again "shuddering" at the faint musical vibration and re-experience of Donna Anna's presence (ibid., p. 69). The style of the letter then segues into the language of a lengthy musical review, analysing the characters and melodrama of the opera. In the last "swerve", or arabesque, of this section, the narrator records that the clock strikes two. The breath and the scent of Donna Anna again steal over him and the strings of the grand piano vibrate as he believes he hears an "ethereal orchestra" and "Anna's voice" (ibid., p. 72). It is a thoroughly transcendent experience.

The short Epilogue after this epistolary "middle" section, completely changes direction, generic form, and mood, thus refreshing the reader's perceptions, in this respect fulfilling Shklovsky's theory of disturbing a passive reader. It also follows exactly Schlegel's arabesque principle of placing side by side the playful and the serious. Shaped by Schlegel's Romantic principle, several of Hoffmann's fictional characters, such as Nathanael in *The Sandman*, Antonia in *Rat Krespel* and Serapion, patron saint of the Serapion Brothers, either die or go mad

because their Romantic experience is sublime in the extreme, to the complete exclusion of the comic. Donna Anna is similarly affected. The Epilogue is printed in the format of a play-script, and so is visually striking after the continuous prose narrative which preceded it. The mood is comic, shifting to tragi-comic. Three hotel guests, presented as comic grotesques named CLEVER MAN, MULATTO-FACE and INSIGNIFICANT MAN, are speaking at the lunch table with the narrator, identified as MYSELF (ibid., p. 73). This final arabesque echoes the narrator's earlier account of the banal responses of audience members to the opera the previous evening. Apart from the play-script's satiric function of exposing philistinism, the last line of the dialogue, and of the story, is integral to understanding the spectral nature of Donna Anna's presence. The CLEVER MAN, even though ironically presented, is in possession of two key pieces of information: that the diva playing Donna Anna had lain unconscious during the intermission before the second act, and had died at two o'clock that morning, both events coinciding exactly with the narrator's occupation of the theatre box. Therefore, at the very end of the story, the reader sees these events in a new light. Shklovsky could justifiably have used this as one of his many examples of defamiliarisation. Even though a state of uncertainty still surrounds Donna Anna's two uncanny visitations, the reader perceives that these can no longer be dismissed as figments of the traveller's imagination.

The liminal place of Theatre Box 23 embodies the hesitation inherent in Todorov's critical theory of "the fantastic". At this juncture, we turn to his theories because of their efficacy in gauging the degree of Hoffmannesque Gothic qualities in the earlier and later versions of Gogol's *The Portrait*. This expedites our argument that the Gothic is strengthened, rather than diminished, in Gogol's later work. Todorov's theory defines the category of the fantastic as incorporating hesitation between the supernatural and the natural, and he refines the concept to include other gradations of the genre of the fantastic. They are: "the uncanny" in which the supernatural is explained; "the marvellous" in which the supernatural is accepted as normal; and two interim gradations, the "fantastic-uncanny" in which the fantastic is maintained throughout, but is resolved at the very end by a natural explanation; and the "fantastic-marvellous" in which the fantastic is maintained throughout, but is resolved at the very end by a supernatural explanation (Todorov, 1973, pp. 25–26). Fantastic literary texts may hover at various points on this cline, without reaching a realistic explanation (uncanny) or becoming unequivocally part of the supernatural (marvellous). *Don Juan* would fulfil the category of the fantastic-uncanny if CLEVERMAN'S information amounted to a complete explanation. However, the information does not explain the synchronicity of the spectral events, and has to be interpreted alongside the narrator's testimony about the timing and nature of his visits to the box. Together, these two elements sustain ambivalence, and hence also sustain the presence of the fantastic and strengthen the story's Gothic effects. In a similar way, Gogol uses the ambivalence of the uncanny to some extent in *The Portrait (1)* and develops its use more strongly in *The Portrait (2)*.

### 3.2 Gogol's *The Portrait*

Basom's reading of Todorov's gradations of the genre of the fantastic shows how Gogol's two versions of *The Portrait* are at variance with each other. After judicious comparisons, she concludes that *The Portrait (1)* can be categorised as the fantastic-marvellous throughout, but resolving in favour of the marvellous. Her reasoning is that the old man with evil eyes in the portrait is explicitly identified as the Antichrist and imbued with the supernatural force of the devil in version one (Basom, 1994, p. 431). By contrast, she maintains that *The Portrait (2)*, Gogol's maturer work, "reflects the hesitation of the fantastic between natural (psychological) and supernatural (demonic) interpretation of events", and that, therefore, the story ends in the realm of the fantastic (ibid., pp. 424, 428). Her comparative tracking of the two versions has convinced us that the later version displays more fantastic elements than the earlier version. We argue that this renders *The Portrait (2)* more Gothic than *The Portrait (1)*, thus giving it stronger genre-related similarities to Hoffmann's fantastic Gothic tale, *Don Juan*. In addition, the effects of the fantastic in *The Portrait (2)* exemplify Shklovsky's theory of defamiliarisation because the story never reaches any teleological certainty. Even though the genre of the fantastic is not included in Shklovsky's numerous examples of defamiliarising literary devices or genres, the fantastic patently has a defamiliarising effect on the reader. In *The Portrait (2)* particularly, Gogol's use of the fantastic is intensive, forcing the reader throughout, as Shklovsky would express it: "to extricate a thing from the cluster of associations in which it is bound (and) turn over the object as one would turn a log over the fire" (Shklovsky, 1990, p. 61). This analytical observation has not hitherto been expressed about Gogol's *The Portrait (2)*.

Our interpretation, informed by Basom's analysis, does not align with the arguments of several major critics. We apply Todorov's critical theories of the fantastic to substantiate our claim that Hoffmann's influence on Gogol endured well into the 1840s. We maintain that Hoffmann's use of Gothic in *Don Juan* has a large, critical overlap with Todorov's gradations of the fantastic and the uncanny. As shown below, if both versions of Gogol's *The*



*Portrait* are interpreted through Todorov's variations of the fantastic, then the later publication is more Hoffmannesque. Thus, we disagree with the contemporary Russian critic, Belinsky, who, writing in *Molva*, a supplement to *The Moscow Telescope*, in 1835, describes version one of *The Portrait* as "absolutely worthless" because the atmosphere is *too* Hoffmannesque (cited in Ingham, 1974, p. 168). Furthermore, we also disagree with Ingham, who maintains that in the later 1842 version, "the supernatural was reduced in importance, and thereby the Hoffmannesque details to a large extent were eliminated" (ibid.). Although we align with Kent's overview of Gogol's fiction that "the influence of Hoffmann was all-pervasive" (Kent, 1985a, p. 16), we disagree with Kent's comment that "the final version (of *The Portrait*), for the most part, is less blatantly fantastic; it is infused with realistic elements" (Kent, 1985c, p. 252). Kent gives several examples of realism (Note 23), but we contend that these highlight, by means of contrast, numerous events in *The Portrait (2)* which are never rationally explained. Proffer argues that "the 1835 *Arabesques* version of *The Portrait*" displays the influence of many Romantic authors, including Hoffmann, while "Romantic, fantastic elements are precisely the ones Gogol excised from the 1842 version, the result being one of his most "realistic works" (Proffer, 1982, p. 10). Again, as a counter-argument to Proffer, we see the realistic elements of *The Portrait (2)* as strengthening the effect of the fantastic. We argue that *The Portrait (2)* is more fantastic, and therefore more Gothic, than the first.

It is expedient to begin with three elements which the two versions of *The Portrait* have in common. Firstly, both have an overarching narrative structure of two Parts, with the second Part containing an embedded story that loops back, in true arabesque fashion, to an earlier period of time. Part II of both versions follows Part I without a smooth transition or explicit connections. In both cases, Part II begins in the narrative's present, a relatively short period of time after Part I, in an auction room where the portrait with the menacing eyes, the driving agent of the plot of Part I, has attracted much attention. A young man in his thirties recognises the portrait and offers to describe its provenance to the people gathering round it. This embedded history of the portrait jumps back more than half a century. The analeptic narrative structure gives the reader a new perspective from which to reinterpret Part I, thereby neatly exemplifying Schklovsky's device of defamiliarisation. Rereading the whole text of either version, necessarily produces new meanings. Secondly, as far as the setting is concerned, both versions of *The Portrait* are realistic in their rendering of rooms, buildings, inhabitants and the general geography of St Petersburg.

Thirdly, in terms of plot, the earlier and later versions of *The Portrait* share three similar events. First, in Part I, a catalytic encounter changes the lives of the protagonists, the painters, Chertkov (1) and Chartkov (2). An emaciated old man, portrayed with menacing eyes and draped in an eastern garment, steps out of and returns into the wooden picture frame that holds his portrait. This eckphrastic Gothic episode is equally horrifying in both stories. The interchange between the old man and the petrified artist differs, but in both cases, Chertkov and Chartkov are tempted into a luxurious life, and in neither case, at this point, can the temptation be definitively interpreted as a dream. The next day, the landlord and a police officer arrive to effect eviction for non-payment of rent. The officer picks up the portrait, inadvertently clicking a secret cavity in the frame, from which gold coins tumble. Both protagonists succumb to avarice, adopting the extravagant lifestyle of a society portrait painter and following a path of decline towards madness and death. The second development of the plot common to the two versions concerns the painter of the portrait. Horrified by the evil effects of his work, and driven to achieve self-purification, its painter becomes a monk. He eventually grows saintly enough to paint an icon of the Virgin Mary (1) or many holy paintings (2). Through painting them, the artist-monk heals his contaminated soul, which illustrates the religiosity that Gogol adds as part of his individual style to his inheritance from Romanticism. Furthermore, as Fusso points out regarding the "original integrity" of Gogol's *Arabesques* (Note 24), *The Portrait (1)* has discernible connections with its introductory essay, where Gogol describes "Sculpture, Painting and Music ... the three wonderful sisters" sent by "the Creator", to prevent human lives becoming "a desert" (Tulloch, 1982, p. 25). The artist-monk of *The Portrait (1)* comes to resemble "a saint staring out from a canvas on which an artist's hand has drawn him for the people at prayer" (ibid., p. 93). His holy painting of the Virgin is the antithesis of the portrait with evil eyes, and the artist-monk is moved by a divine power to tell his son how to destroy the latter. By contrast, the holy paintings in *The Portrait (2)* only manage to some degree to irrigate Gogol's "desert" of human experience, but do not wipe out the continuing destructive influence of the evil portrait. Thirdly, the plot of both stories takes the son of the artist-monk to an auction room where the evil portrait is displayed. Here the similarity of the two versions of *Portrait* ceases. Gogol's handling of the ending in relation to realism, and to Todorov's gradations of the fantastic, is distinctly different in what happens to the portrait of the old man, more of which below.

Why then, in our view, is the 1842 revision of *The Portrait* more Hoffmannesque than the version of 1835? The

first episode referred to above, though equally petrifying in both, creates more uncertainty in the second version. In version one, Chertkov is not asleep. Standing in his studio-cum-bedroom, his eyes are drawn to the portrait which has unaccountably appeared there. Terrified by it, he lies on his bed and tries to sleep. The old man with the evil eyes steps out of the frame, walks to the bed and addresses him. His Mephistophelian speech tempts the Faustian Chertkov to give up his poverty-stricken life as an artist in favour of producing popular hack work which will sell (*ibid.*, pp. 63–64). Chertkov watches the old man return to the frame, then agitatedly paces his room, falsely convincing himself that his imagination is playing tricks. Only then does he sleep. Significantly, Chertkov's name is connected with the Russian word for devil, which, for a native reader of Russian fiction, would predispose Chertkov to co-operate with devilish forces. This episode is one of many supernatural events in *The Portrait (1)*, which gradually shift it out of the hesitancy of Todorov's fantastic into the confirmed supernatural. As Basom argues: "the hesitation of the true fantastic is sustained, however thinly, for most of the story, but resolved in favour of the marvellous at the end" (Basom, 1994, p. 430, Note 25).

In the equivalent episode in *The Portrait (2)*, there is much more doubt as to the nature of Chartkov's experience. Here, the evil portrait has been brought to Chartkov's studio; its arrival is explicable. His response parallels Chertkov's. He sees in the glaring eyes an unnatural life "that might have lit up the face of a corpse" (Kent, 1985c, p. 261). Sitting immovably in the corner of the room, Chartkov watches the old man step from the frame, silently empty a bag of gold coins onto the floor, replace them in the bag and return to the frame. Then, apparently, Chartkov wakes up from dreaming he is sitting in his room, which, if verified, would give a realistic, psychological explanation, thus producing the effect of the uncanny. However, this experience becomes part of a second dream from which, with a shriek, he wakes up again and asks himself whether he is dreaming that he is waking up. Waking later, he cannot decide whether his experience was a dream, or delirium, or an encounter with an apparition. Chartkov never arrives at a completely satisfactory explanation of the solidly real gold coins left behind (*ibid.*, pp. 264, 268). The reader cannot decide either, so, in Todorov's terms, the scene belongs to the ambiguous category of the fantastic. Realistic events in Part I of *The Portrait (2)*, which surround this terrifying episode, prompt questions about what is and is not realistically possible. More differences of emphasis between the early and late *Portrait's* can be seen when, in version one, a mother arrives out of nowhere on Chertkov's doorstep, wishing to have her daughter's portrait painted, whereas, in version two, the woman arrives as a result of an advertisement placed by Chartkov. So Part I of version two uses some realistic explanations to contrast with later developments when Part II builds up an atmosphere far more Gothic than Part II of version one. The earlier version slowly and incrementally foregrounds supernatural forces as driving events, whereas in the later version, the plot development is neither decisively in the direction of total supernaturalism nor of complete realism. In this respect, *The Portrait (2)* resembles the uncertainty surrounding the visitation of Donna Anna to the travelling enthusiast in Hoffmann's *Don Juan*, which also sits uneasily between the uncanny and the marvellous, which are Todorov's diametrically opposite variants of the fantastic. Further proof of this claim follows.

The overriding narrative structure of both versions of *The Portrait* is supported by smaller lexical units which also maintain, to different degrees, the uncertainty and hesitation which constitute Todorov's category of the fantastic, and draw on Hoffmann's presentation of spine-chilling Gothic moments, such as are present in *Don Juan*. Gogol's hallmark device of the repetition of particular words and word-phrases, illustrated above in *Christmas Eve*, is instrumental in prolonging the reader's efforts to understand a literary text (Shklovsky, 1991, pp. 10, 23). This defamiliarising technique enhances what Jackson describes as "the gap between signifier and signified", an identifying feature of the fantastic, which "dramatises the impossibility of arriving at a definitive meaning, or absolute 'reality'". Pertinently, she refers to "the unnameable", "the nameless things" and the "thingless names" of horror fiction, and fantasy fiction in general (Jackson, 1981, p. 41). In both versions of Gogol's *The Portrait*, for example, at the moment of the first eckphrastic disturbance, the old man in the portrait is repeatedly, and to the point of apparent redundancy, named "the old man" (Tulloch, 1982, pp. 62–64; Kent, 1985c, pp. 262–263). A marked repetition of the word "eyes" also occurs throughout both versions. Reference to eyes is apt for Gothic tales which generically concern what might or might not be visible. Here, Gogol's supposed tautology, analysed earlier, is clearly intentional repetition foregrounding particular words that are semantically ambivalent. One difference between *The Portrait (1)* and *The Portrait (2)*, however, is that the old man in the earlier version is named as the usurer, Petromikhali (Tulloch, 1982, p. 84), so the reader knows to whom the eyes belong. Subsequently, Petromikhali is named as the Antichrist, who frequently steps out of the frame of his picture, and uses it to move about in time and space, thwarting all attempts to destroy him. Several characters bear names in version one who do not have names in version two: for instance, the monk's son is called Leo, and the father takes on the name of Father Gregory. Furthermore, the repetition of the protagonist's name, Chertkov, is necessary for the plot, but also produces, through accumulated association with the Russian

word for devil, a suggestion of demonic power that is lacking in Chartkov's name in version two. In *The Portrait (1)*, the powers of the supernatural, in this case heavenly good versus hellish evil, are named as Christ and Antichrist, so the story loses the nightmarish element of Gothic hauntings, and moves in the direction of a moral fable. Lack of names increases the Gothic uncertainty of *The Portrait (2)*.

Certainty of interpretation gradually strengthens in Part II of *The Portrait (1)*. After the artist-monk, Father Gregory, has informed his son, Leo, that the usurer, Petromikhali, is the Antichrist, the monk pleads with his son to tell the portrait's story after a pre-ordained number of years in order to destroy its power. This destiny is fulfilled when the son recognises the painting in an auction house, surrounded by a crowd which is attracted by the portrait's strange eyes. They listen to the son's story with wrapt attention, then turn to see that the portrait's eyes have lost all their "strangely lifelike quality which had so struck them at first" (Tulloch, 1982, p. 97). Next, the onlookers perceive the painting fading away into a vague outline of a landscape. They wander off, puzzled as to whether they had ever seen a menacing portrait. Its metamorphosis from portrait to landscape in the last paragraph entails a diminution of the power of the Antichrist, who had been using the frame as a conduit into the world. A greater Christian power prevails, thus fulfilling Todorov's category of the marvellous.

In comparison, uncertainty of interpretation increases in Part II of *The Portrait (2)*. Before his death, the artist-monk tells his surviving son: "I cannot grasp what that terrible being was whose portrait I painted. It was surely some manifestation of something diabolical". The operative word is "surely". Though unsure, he is sure enough to add: "If you find it, I beg you, destroy it at any cost" (Kent, 1985c, pp. 302–303). The son's narration to the attentive, gathered crowd in the auction room is much longer than in version one. It is in fact so prolonged, that, as Basom points out, there is a suggestion that some kind of unnatural, uncanny control keeps the crowd transfixed while the portrait disappears. When the onlookers turn to the painting, it is not there. The word "stolen" is heard in the crowd, but no one has seen a thief. We concur with Basom that theft is an unlikely, though not impossible, explanation, and align with her argument that, as a whole, Part II of the later version renders it almost impossible to accept a natural explanation of theft (Basom, 1994, pp. 430–431). Hoffmannesque uncertainties abound. Whether the cause is supernatural or natural, the portrait is on the move again to wreak further havoc.

Other details differentiate the earlier and later versions of *The Portrait*, bolstering our claim that Hoffmann's influence on Gogol does not diminish between 1835 and 1842. Rather, Hoffmann's blend of transcendent and grotesque Gothic, which Schlegel characterised as the ironic placement side by side of the serious and the playful (alles Scherz und alles Ernst) (Note 26), underlies Gogol's distinctive style of religious, eschatological and grotesque macabre. Both artist-monks of the two *Portrait*'s are punished by the cruel deaths of members of their family, but, in the second version, only one of Chartkov's sons survives, and the suffering caused by the old man's visitations is much more widespread. The old man leaps out of his frame and apparently causes the deaths of many characters, some of whom are described in extended biographical detail. This accumulation of eckphrastic horror may be explained either through the natural result of the psychological projections of many affected characters, reinforced by rumour, or through the implication that evil powers have destroyed their lives by using the moving portrait as a conduit for evil. Basom comments: "the two readings vie for prominence and the reader is left hesitating between the uncanny and the marvellous." Consequently, the ambiguity of the ending of *The Portrait (2)* fulfils Todorov's main criterion of the fantastic (ibid., pp. 430–431). Even if stolen, the portrait is not destroyed nor transformed into a landscape. Consequently, the 1842 version of *The Portrait* carries a greater weight of Gothic motifs than the earlier publication of 1835. So, Hoffmann's influence persists and shapes a darker, idiosyncratically Gogolian Gothic style. Furthermore, seen from the perspective of Schklovskian defamiliarisation, the fantastic Gothic effects, present to varying degrees in *Don Juan* and both *Portrait*'s, enforce prolonged analytical engagement, while the first version of *The Portrait* finally resolves into a moral fable of good and evil. In the case of *Don Juan* and *The Portrait (2)*, the reader is forever mentally resequencing initial interpretations as the stories spiral forward, never reaching a definitive knotting together of loose narrative ends.

#### 4. Conclusions

Within the overarching context of the influence of German Romanticism on Russian literature from the late 1830s onwards, Gogol's fiction has patently been affected by Romantic theory and practice. Our comparison of the stories in question shows how these theories, and Hoffmann's work in particular, have influenced the thematic, imagistic, textual and structural features of Gogol's work. Both writers portray the fantastic erupting into and destabilising the real and familiar world. We have established that, by using the Romantic device of the arabesque in their presentation of the Gothic, the uncanny and the fantastic, both Hoffmann and Gogol present their readers with liminal interpretive choices which hover between the realistic and the fantastic. In this respect,

we have shown that Todorov's theories reveal the second of Gogol's two versions of *The Portrait* as more fantastic, and therefore more Gothic, than the first. Moreover, we have demonstrated that Gogol's individual style gravitates in the direction of a darker and more horrific Gothic than Hoffmann's, and that the use of Gothic tropes sustains rather than dissipates in Gogol's later work, a critical argument which diverges from established critics, such as Belinsky, Ingham, Kent and Proffer. By focusing on *Don Juan* and *The Portrait*, our article has brought to light the advantages of applying Shklovsky's concept of defamiliarisation, or *ostranienie*, to the reading of texts. Shklovsky argues for engagement with convoluted, digressive structures, changes of discourse, and semantic ambivalence in any literary text, whereas Todorov's approach determines the degree of uncanniness in a text, and hence its ambiguity. Shklovsky, like Todorov, provides a critical tool for the reader to see things anew. This confirms Berlina's general observation quoted above that "[w]hile the Romantics only sought to actualise the beauty of the world, Shklovsky sees art also as a way to make its horrors felt" (Berlina, 2015, p. 151). Thus, both Todorov and Shklovsky enrich and extend interpretive possibilities for the reader. The effect of applying their critical theories to the stories in question is to re-envision Hoffmann and Gogol's use of the fantastic as creative and powerful, and hence to contribute to critical debate on the work of these authors and, in the long run, to extend their reputations and visibility for new generations of readers.

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## Notes

Note 1. Translator, Benjamin Sher, comments that "Shklovsky speaks of *ostraniene* as a process or act that endows an object or image with 'strangeness' by 'removing' it" from its familiar context. This noun and the verb *ostranit* are neologisms, coined by Shklovsky himself. Sher prefers the translations "estrangement" and "to estrange" to "defamiliarisation" and "to defamiliarise" which are used by Lemon and Ries in *Russian Formalist Criticism* (1925). See Shklovsky, 1991, pp. 18–19.

Note 2. Vassarion G. Belinsky (1811–1848) was an extremely influential critic and thinker, whose articles on Russian literature and contemporary writers helped to expedite the acceptance of Western literary ideas in Russia. His attitude towards Hoffmann's use of the fantastic was ambivalent. He described it as "a sickness of the spirit, an illusory life", yet also "one of the most important and profound elements of the human spirit" (Ingham, 1974,

pp. 224, 231).

Note 3. For example, V. Praxov's article "On Hoffmann's Fantastic Stories" (O fantastičeskix povestjax Gofmanna), which appeared in the liberal magazine *Herald of Europe* (Vestnik Evropy) in December 1830, was one of three translated articles on Hoffmann published in Russia in 1829–1830. It is a Russian translation of a review by the French critic, Philarète Chasles, of Loève-Weimars' *Contes Fantastiques* (Fantastic Stories, 1829–1830), first printed in *Journal des Débats* (Journal of Debates) in Paris in May 1830.

Note 4. See Stender-Petersen, "Gogol und die deutsche Romantik" (Gogol and German Romanticism, 1922); Gorlin, "Hoffmann en Russie" (Hoffmann in Russia, 1933) and *N.V. Gogol und E.T.A. Hoffmann* (1935); Passage, *Dostoevski the Adapter* (1954) and *The Russian Hoffmannists* (1963); Driessen, *Gogol as a Short-Story Writer: A Study of his Technique of Composition* (1965); Setchkarov, *Gogol: His Life and Works* (1965); Proffer, "Gogol's Definition of Romanticism" (1967); Erlich, *Gogol*, (1969); Karlinsky, *The Sexual Labyrinth of Nikolai Gogol's World* (1976); Montandon, "Une Source peu connue de la *Perspective Nevsky* de Gogol" (A little-known source for Gogol's *Nevsky Prospekt*, 1976); Tulloch, "Translator's Introduction: The Stories of *Arabesques*" (1982); Mann, *Poetica Gogolia* (1988); Fusso and Meyer (Eds.), *Essays on Gogol: Logos and the Russian Word* (1992); Jenness, *Gogol's Aesthetics Compared to Major Elements of German Romanticism* (1995). Significantly, in his 1935 article "Hoffmann en Russie", Gorlin argues that "de tous les écrivains allemands c'est incontestablement Hoffmann qui a exercé l'influence la plus profonde sur la littérature russe" (of all the German writers, it was indisputably Hoffmann who exercised the most profound influence on Russian literature). See Ingham, 1974, p. 9.

Note 5. Privy Councillor von Kamptz, Director of the Prussian Military Police, recognised that Hoffmann had lampooned him in the character of Councillor Knarrpanti in *Master Flea*. Hoffmann, suffering from spinal paralysis, died before the case came to court. See Authors, 2013, pp. 133–134.

Note 6. In Russian *O fantastičeskix povestjax Gofmana*. See also endnote 3, above.

Note 7. In Russian *Vestnik Evropy*.

Note 8. Pushkin may well have "received French translations" of Hoffmann's *Don Juan* just before he wrote his version of the story (Ingham, 1974, p. 130).

Note 9. In Russian, the *Odesskij vestnik, Literaturnye listki*.

Note 10. In Russian, the *Moscow Teleskop*.

Note 11. In Russian, the *Moskovskij nabljudatel*, 1938, vol. 16, pp. 546–564. See Ingham, 1974, p. 204.

Note 12. The complete title, *Don Juan: A Fabulous Incident which Befell a Travelling Enthusiast*, is taken from Schafer's 1975 translation. In Russian, *Don Žuan; proisšestvie, slučivšeesja s putešestvujuščim èntuzijastom*.

Note 13. The Russian title of the Don Juan story printed in the theatre magazine, *Panteon russkogo i vsej evropejskix teatrov*, is *Predstavlenie Don-Zuana: Artističeskaja fantazija Gofmana*.

Note 14. See also Atheneum frag. 389. "... aus denen man die Disorganisation lernen könnte, oder wo die Konfusion ordentlich konstruiert und symmetrisch ist." (... one could learn from the disorganisation, or learn from where the confusion is symmetrical and constructed in an orderly way, Schlegel, 1967, p. 238).

Note 15. See diary entry for January 12<sup>th</sup>, 1811: "Samstag. 12. 1. Miserable night – worse morning ... crawled into bed – read a lot of Schlegel's dramatic reader – I want to draw the most important definition out of the work." (Miserable Nacht – Schlechter Vormittag ... ins Bett gekrochen – viel in Schlegels dramatischen Vorles gelesen, Hoffmann, vol. 1, 2003, p. 378).

Note 16. The full title of Hoffmann's *Tomcat Murr* is a homage to Sterne and consciously echoes the title of Sterne's novel *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* (1759–1767).

Note 17. Schlegel repeatedly refers to arbitrariness and that which is apparently arbitrary (die Willkür, willkürlich). See Schlegel, 1985, pp. 182, 217 and 238, Atheneum frags. 116; 305 and 389.

Note 18. Stanley explores the arabesque in visual, musical, dance and narrative terms, characterising it as a device which features "entanglements of leaves and blossoms", "the verbal art of playfulness and seriousness", "swiftly shifting scenes" (Stanley, 1985, p. 404) and "sudden grotesque images that immediately spin one into another realm" (ibid., p. 406).

Note 19. Hoffmann uses the term "capriccio" to mean a whimsical piece, featuring pranks and capers, see full title of his story *Princess Brambilla: A Capriccio after Jacques Callot* (1820).

Note 20. Jenness also gives due attention to the influence on Gogol of Wackenroder and Tieck, see Jenness, 1995, p. 20.

Note 21. Accompanying a detailed analysis of Hoffmann's tale, *The Sandman* (Der Sandmann, 1816) and his novel, *The Devil's Elixirs* (Die Elixire des Teufels, 1816), Freud argues that "Hoffmann is the unrivalled master of the uncanny in literature." See Freud, 1919, pp. 233–238.

Note 22. We have written at length about the female musical uncanny elsewhere. See Authors in Purves, 2014, pp. 173–188.

Note 23. One example of realism is that Gogol knew of an Indian money-lender in St. Petersburg, whom he used as a model for the old man, see Kent, 1985c, p. 252.

Note 24. See Fusso, quoted in Jenness, 1995, p. 57.

Note 25. In Todorov's terms, many fantastic-marvellous events, which finally resolve into the marvellous at the end, accumulate throughout both Parts of *Portrait (I)*. A few examples from Basom's comprehensive list include: the portrait materialises without explanation, seeming to have a life of its own; a lady arrives unsummoned at Chertkov's studio, to have her daughter's portrait painted; and, at the very end, the portrait metamorphoses into a landscape. See Basom, 1994, p. 427.

Note 26. See Schlegel, 1967, p. 160, Lyceum frag. 108.

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