

The Irascible Heroine in E.T.A. Hoffmann's Fairy Tale, "Princess Brambilla: A Capriccio in the Style of Jacques Callot"

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Abstract

This socio-linguistic study of a selection of E.T.A. Hoffmann's literary fairy tales, particularly "Princess Brambilla: A capriccio in the style of Jacques Callot" (1820), focuses on his revisioning of contemporary social discourses on gender. Conventionally, these discourses depicted men as dominating and women as subservient, whereas Hoffmann's wide range of fairy-tale characters subverts a strict gender differentiation. The authors' use of a Bakhtinian method to disentangle interdependent narrative strands in this carnivalesque fairy tale reveals its lack of a single patriarchal ideology. By exploring the relationship between "Brambilla"'s unconventional heroine Giacinta-Brambilla, and unheroic hero Giglio-Chiapperi, their argument demonstrates how Giacinta's dominance facilitates Giglio's developing self-knowledge. Through examining differing critical interpretations of Hoffmann's presentation of women, the authors argue that, set against the normative values of his time, "Princess Brambilla" takes a subversive position. In short, Hoffmann's fairy tales, in their historical context, offered a new way to interpret gender.

Keywords: Bakhtin, carnival, fairy tale, heroine, sexual politics

1. Introduction

1.1 Hoffmann and His Cultural Context

E.T.A. Hoffmann (1776-1822) lived through a turbulent period of history in various states and principalities which were eventually to become modern Germany and Poland. During the first two decades of the nineteenth century, a period coterminous with the span of Hoffmann's musical compositions and publications (1803-1822), French invasion, occupation and defeat in 1815, and the establishment of a reactionary German government in the post-Napoleonic period materially affected the lives of thousands of Germans. His whole life was a repeating pattern of progress and extreme setbacks, which sometimes brought him to the point of starvation, as he attempted to carve out his way in the world (Scullion & Treby, 2013b, pp. 142-143). He was a composer, theatre factotum, writer and lawyer, eventually rising briefly to the position of High Court Judge for the Prussian state, before spinal paralysis caused his early death. The stress of a pending libel case arising from one of his satiric fairy tales, "Master Flea" (1822), contributed to the virulence of his final illness. As a remarkable polymath, he is perhaps best remembered for his children's fairy tale, "The Nutcracker" (1816), his novella "The Sandman" (1816), and for his influence on the composers Wagner and Tchaikovsky, and the writers Edgar Allan Poe, Baudelaire and Angela Carter.

1.2 Received Ideas of Gender

Much of Hoffmann's prose fiction subverts the contemporary, socially-approved models of feminine and masculine behaviour (Scullion & Treby, 2013a, pp. 306-307). Therefore, a brief survey of how these behavioural norms developed precedes our argument. In the last quarter of the eighteenth century, contemporary scientific theories, pedagogical reform, and the subsequent rise of conservative German nationalism, all combined to reaffirm, and in some cases re-instate, differentiated norms of behaviour for women and men; for instance, biological determinism, supported by medical, anatomical and anthropological studies, promulgated the infantilization of women. The prevailing scientific, and hence pedagogical, view was that women, being smaller and more delicate than men, were "naturally" intellectually inferior. This powerful scientific discourse coincided

by chance with the increase in the second half of the eighteenth century of small, urban, middle-class families, with women domiciled and men working outside the home (Petschauer, 1986, p. 291). Historical convergence, rather than cause and effect, seems to have reinforced these scientific and social values, concomitant with the exclusion of women from formal education. For example, the University of Berlin, founded in 1810 by Wilhelm Friedrich von Humboldt (1767-1835) and his brother Alexander (1769-1859), was solely for male students. Wilhelm was also instrumental in setting up the German education system, and the titles of his writings, *On Sexual Difference* (Über den Geschlechtsunterschied, 1794); *On the Male and Female Form* (Über Männliche und Weibliche Form, 1795) and *Scheme of Comparative Anthropology* (Plan einer Vergleichenden Anthropologie, 1797) indicate how thoroughly informed he was by contemporary anthropological sciences. Female “education” was mostly confined to didactic material in patriarchal advice manuals, known in England as conduct books (Petschauer, 1986, pp. 271-273). Furthermore, women were generally supposed to be genetically programmed to service and enable the male, and to receive the male procreative imprint (25). Surrounding rhetoric, which described the male as active and the female as passively supportive, fostered social approval of women’s domestic roles within the boundaries of the home. The ideology of separate spheres for women and men, and the aesthetic idealization of Woman as mother and muse followed with ease from these cultural discourses.

1.3 Dissenting Voices within Contemporary Perspectives of Gender

A few radical voices expressed the rights of women to education and citizenship. Pioneering European treatises on women’s education appeared at the end of the eighteenth century, namely: *On Marriage* (Über Die Ehe, 1774, third edition, 1792) and *On the Civic Improvement of Women* (Über Die Bürgerliche Verbesserung der Weiber, 1792) by Theodor Gottlieb von Hippel the elder (1741-1796), the uncle of Hoffmann’s childhood and lifelong friend, Theodor Gottlieb von Hippel the younger (1775-1843); *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792) by Mary Wollstonecraft; and *Declaration of the Rights of Women and the Female Citizen* (Déclaration des Droits de la Femme et de la Citoyenne, 1791) by Olympe de Gouges, who was later guillotined. Courageous German women such as Dorothea Christiane Leporin, Amalia Holst, Christine Dorothea Gürth and Betty Gleim were strong advocates of women’s formal education, the latter founding three schools for young middle-class women in Bremen (Rasch, 1993, pp. 28-29; Gray, 2006, p. 250). The emergence of these radical discourses in European thought at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries foreshadow a paradigm shift in social values. Hoffmann’s work was published at the confluence of these opposing discourses of gender and, necessarily, was shaped by forthcoming social change. This claim is based on the socio-linguistic Bahktinian theory that the novel comprises the “multiple voices of a given culture, people and epoch” (1981, p. 60), and that the discourses of prose fiction are “inseparable from social and ideological struggle”.

1.4 Literary Context

There were many formative literary and artistic pressures on Hoffmann’s writing, in addition to historical factors. In his fairy tales “Princess Brambilla: A capriccio in the style of Jacques Callot” (1820), “Signor Formica” (1821) and “The king’s bride” (1821), Hoffmann weaves together discourses taken from many sources, including earlier fairy tales, fairy-tale plays, opera, carnival, and pictorial art. In early nineteenth-century Europe, the fairy tale assumed considerable literary gravity with the re-emergence of seventeenth-century French, Italian and Arabian fairy tales alongside contemporary examples (Warner, 1995, p. 188; Neilly, 2016). According to Zipes, fairy tales by Wackenroder, Novalis (Friedrich von Hardenberg), Brentano and other German Romantic writers “upset, exposed, devastated, or made to seem ridiculous” the reactionary social values of German states under Napoleonic and post-Napoleonic rule (2002, pp. 101-102). Similarly, there existed an “enormous variety of deviations from what the Brothers Grimm proposed as a norm” for the genre of the fairy tale (Martin, 2011, p. 19). Martin argues that Wieland, Musäus, Naubert and Goethe were amongst those writers who “swerve(d)” from conventional practices, while she describes Hoffmann and Tieck as the most extreme exponents of subversive fairy tales (25). With these critical points as a springboard, we argue that Hoffmann’s reworking of what had gone before challenges stereotypical images of women and men. Readers, therefore, with a knowledge of fairy tales, an acquaintance with the German Romantic period, and some understanding of literary theory, would get the most out of this article.

1.5 Hoffmann’s Practice

The Preface to “Brambilla” encapsulates his subversive style. It explicitly acknowledges two influential antecedents, the French engraver Jacques Callot and the Venetian playwright Carlo Gozzi, writer of *Fairy tales for the theatre* (Fiabe teatrali, pp. 1761-1765). Even when very short of money, Hoffmann wrote in a letter to Hitzig “But I must have the Gozzi”, referring to Hitzig’s 1808 edition of these fairy plays (Sahlin, 1977, pp. 154-156).

With similar enthusiasm, he dedicated his first collection of tales and anecdotes to Callot. In *Fantasy pieces in the style of Callot* (Fantasiestücke in Callots Manier, 1814), he praised Callot's engravings for "the magic of (their) exuberant fantasy ... even in his designs taken from life" (Hoffmann, 1993, Vol. 2/1, p. 17). Hoffmann knew Callot's work very well, having often seen Stephan Freiherr von Stengel's collection of eighty or more prints in Bamberg (Lewandowski, 2003, p. 45) and having received eight prints from Callot's *Sfessanian Dances* (Balli di sfessania, 1622) for his birthday on January 24, 1820 from his medical friend, Johann Ferdinand Koreff (Robertson, 2000). The first paragraph of the two paragraphs of "Brambilla"'s Preface contains a warning to readers against taking this tale too seriously, as had been the case with his previous fairy tale, "Little Zaches, acclaimed as Zinnober" (1819), when critics sought historical sources for his characters. However, the second paragraph performs a leap of self-contradiction. Here, with equal insistence, Hoffmann recommends Gozzi's principle, particularly expressed in his last Arabian play "Zeim, king of jinn" (1765) that fantasy needs to be taken seriously. This volte face, or capriccio of the title, illustrates perfectly how discourses contradict each other throughout "Brambilla". The Preface is suggestive of the heteroglossic, that is to say, multi-voiced or multi-discoursed, narrative to come. As Bakhtin argues, "(p)rose consciousness feels cramped when it is confined to only one out of a multitude of heteroglot languages, for one linguistic timbre is inadequate to it" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 324).

1.6 Callot and Gozzi

The term "capriccio" in the full title of "Brambilla" derives from the Italian "capra" meaning wild goat, thus suggesting uncontrolled leaps. With regard to literary narrative, "capriccio" aptly describes this fairy tale's convoluted structure, and was probably influenced by Callot's use of the term, exemplified in his *Capriccios* of various figures (Capricci di varie figure, 1617), a series of loosely linked drawings mixing fantasy and realism and featuring many carnivalesque dancing figures and clowns. Consonant with Hoffmann's eclectic style, "capriccio" is thus thematically appropriate for "Brambilla"'s focus on dance and a Roman Carnival setting. Gozzi's use of spectacular physical transformation into beasts and statues, and into and from the opposite sex in his fairy-tale plays also demonstrably shaped "Brambilla". Its cast of characters, bearing different names and outward forms, repeatedly displays double and even triple versions. This is entirely appropriate to carnival time and gives licence to characters and readers alike to surrender to confusion in identifying who is who. In a direct reference to Gozzi, Giglio Fava, the husband of the principle female protagonist, Giacinta Soardi, acts the role of Taèr, Prince of Nanking, in a performance of Gozzi's "The blue monster" (1764) (Hoffmann, 1985, Vol. 3, p. 776). In Gozzi's plot, Taèr is passionately in love with Dardanè, Princess of Georgia. Before they can marry, they go through many trials, orchestrated by a wicked queen, Gulindi, and by Zeloù, a jinni cursed into the shape of a blue monster. In order to test the prince and princess's love for each other, Zeloù transforms Taèr to look like himself and Dardanè to look like a young man. Significantly, Taèr knows that Dardanè has been metamorphosed, but because of his appearance she thinks Taèr is the monstrous jinni Zeloù. Thus, the prince has more power and knowledge than the princess. In comparison with Taèr, Hoffmann's Giglio has a very muddled understanding of the transformations he undergoes. He is in thrall to three manifestations of the same character-Giacinta Soardi, Princess Brambilla and Queen Mystilis-while Giacinta has a greater understanding of the transformations of Giglio. The difference of perspective favouring the heroine in "Brambilla" is telling. Although Burwick only devotes a few lines to Giacinta, we concur with his critical observation that she is actively involved in a game of make-believe, while Giglio is self-deluded and mentally deranged; in short, "she is playing (the same game) and he is being played" (Burwick, 2014, p. 414). It is true that Gozzi's female characters are invariably strong, for example Gulindi in this play, Cherestani in *The snake woman* (1762), Princess Turandot in *Turandot* (1762) and Tartagliona in *The green bird* (1765) (Bermel & Emery, 1989, pp. 13-17). However, the emphasis is different. Although these characters often threaten male authority, Gozzi's plots finally destroy or re-absorb strong women into the patriarchal order. Contra, Hoffmann's Giacinta cannot be seen as secondary in terms of gender hierarchy. She persistently retains equal status with, and often dominance over Giglio. She is feisty, mercurial and unfeminine according to gender constructions prevalent in early nineteenth-century Europe.

2. Method

2.1 Bakhtinian Methodological Approach

Bakhtin's proposal that the novel has its literary roots in the traditions of medieval saturnalia, forerunner to *commedia dell'arte* and modern carnival, can be fruitfully applied to the genre of long literary fairy tales such as "Brambilla" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 68). Its Roman carnival setting and the interleaving of eight illustrations from Callot's *Sfessanian Dances*, which Hoffmann received for his forty-fourth birthday, are significant. The incongruities of carnival always produce laughter. Saturnalian ridicule, in which everything is grotesquely inverted or doubled, is the principle means by which Giglio is eventually brought to his senses. The influence of

Gozzi's plots is also apparent here in the trials which both protagonists undergo. An accumulation of literary criticism, though not necessarily based on Bakhtinian theory, has argued that his development is brought about through the processes of carnival (Burwick, 2014, pp. 414-415; Schlutz, 2011, pp. 415-422; Meldrum Brown, 2006, p. 95; Ruprecht, 2006, pp. 74-95; Robertson, 2000; Slessarev, 1970, pp. 147-160; Raraty, 1964, pp. 58-61). The female protagonist, Giacinta, also undergoes a journey towards self-understanding through carnival, but she has received far less critical attention. Schlutz's argument that "while we catch glimpses of Giacinta, who, it is clear, undergoes her own process of metamorphosis, the focus of the narrative is on Giglio" is a typical one (Schlutz, 2011, p. 418). Although our article examines Hoffmann's revisioning of gender in general, we pay particular attention to Giacinta and the feminine as a new offering to interpretations of "Brambilla". Furthermore, using Bakhtinian theory, we focus on carnival in the stylistic as well as the thematic sense, namely, in terms of its convoluted, capriccio-like structure, and its literal description of a Roman carnival. Bakhtin maintains that the collapsing of hierarchies of authority during carnival time gives licence to the populace to ridicule those in power, and to make fools of self and others (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 68). He extends this concept to the effects of prose fiction that combines many discourses and voices, a structure which he terms heteroglossia (Note 1). "Brambilla"'s many discourses, including fairy tale, myth, story-telling, embedded stories, dialogue, play-script, theatre performance and realist descriptions of the city of Rome, together with the Callot illustrations and Gozzi-like plots, all constitute what Bakhtin defines as a carnivalized, heteroglossic text (Bakhtin, 1981). "Brambilla" is, therefore, a carnivalesque fairy tale in both style and theme. Through style and theme it challenges contemporary, socially-approved models of feminine behaviour, which Giacinta does not assent to. We propose that "Brambilla", because of its heteroglossia, has the capacity to call into question the authority of a unitary, authoritarian patriarchal discourse.

2.2 Functions of Fairy Tales

Zipes's argument that oral folk tales and their later transformation into literary fairy tales are socially and historically engaged underpins our examination of "Brambilla". Zipes describes Hoffmann's handling of literary fairy tales as "highly innovative, sophisticated, and provocative(ly) countercultural", and places him in a range of writers including Ludwig Tieck, Adalbert Chamisso, Charles Dickens, Hans Christian Andersen, George MacDonald, Lewis Carroll and Oscar Wilde (Zipes, 2012; Zipes, 2002, pp. 75-103). One of Zipes's criteria for radical fairy tales is that:

The aesthetic arrangement and structure of the tales (fairy tales in general) were derived from the way the narrator or narrators perceived the possibility for resolution of social conflicts and contradictions or felt change was necessary (Zipes, 2012, p. 7).

Putting aside the critical problem of intentionality (for it can never be absolutely proved what Hoffmann consciously intended, nor whether he is equivalent to his narrators), "Brambilla" certainly mediates its historical context because its language is inscribed with the discourses of its own time. Therefore, given the historical context of differentiated spheres for women and men and the infantilization of women, it is clear that some social "change was necessary" and would slowly emerge in history. Haase also advocates "situate(ing) the fairy tale's treatment of gender in relation to the dynamics of history and the shifting boundaries of society, culture, and nation". We follow his principle of "... discern(ing) the ideological ambiguities and textual complexities in texts that paradoxically both reject and rely on the fairy tale's power to define gender" (Haase, 2004). Our emphasis is on cultural values of gender in relation to Hoffmann's lively use of fairy-tale motifs and other discourses in "Signor Formica" (1821), "The king's bride" (1821) and "Brambilla" (1820). Using the socio-historical, linguistic and literary approaches of Bakhtin, Zipes and Haase, our aim is to show that these tales engage with contemporary sexual politics and subvert socially-approved models of feminine and masculine behaviour.

2.3 Relevant Scholarship

Critical disagreement about Hoffmann's work is commonplace, arising undoubtedly from his use of dialogue, digression and convoluted narrative structures, which inevitably lead to indeterminacy of meaning. Using a psycho-linguistic approach, Cixous argues that Hoffmann's "The Sandman" is a perfect example of "*écriture féminine*" (Cixous, 1973, p. 534), while Schmidt firmly disagrees, placing it within the male/masculine literary canon (Schmidt, 1988, pp. 38-39). On the other hand, as far as Hoffmann's thematic preoccupations are concerned, Schmidt deduces that "in accordance with the gender norms of his time" he increased the range and subtlety of feminine stereotypes and "extended the gender boundaries of his age", an argument with which we thoroughly concur (Schmidt, 2005, p. 64). Pre-feminist and feminist criticism often imputes misogyny to Hoffmann. For instance, Von Matt argues that Hoffmann's male artist is a Pygmalion-figure whose creative practice is to project onto his external muse and to transform her into a subjective image (Von Matt, 1971, pp.

64-69). Asche maintains that the role of women in Hoffmann's texts, as in most Romantic literature, is to reflect the writer's inner thoughts. In this literary field, according to Asche, the woman, to be completely womanly, must sacrifice herself to inspire the male artist (Asche, 1985, pp. 63-64). Hadlock also maintains that Hoffmann depicts the role of women as predominantly servants to male poetic and musical enterprises. She conflates Hoffmann with his fictional character Kapellmeister (choirmaster) Kreisler by quoting his remarks about "ladies' small talk", and then deducing that "with a few token exceptions ... Hoffmann excludes 'the ladies' from his new brotherhoods of Romanticism, except as muses, phantoms and lost love-objects ... for their fragile bodies are unable to endure the demands that music places on them" (Hadlock, 2000, p. 538). In short, she attributes to Hoffmann the conventional views of his day by equating the author with chauvinist male characters. Without attributing chauvinism to Hoffmann, Tatar makes a more cogent argument about the "electrifying charm" of Hoffmann's muses which literally "sparks the imagination of poets" (Tatar, 1978, p. 127). However, we align closely with Mattli's argument that, within the historical context of systemic, early nineteenth-century European divisions between women and men in the biological sciences, law, medicine, philosophy and the arts, Hoffmann writes against the grain. Mattli maintains that he calls into question whether women need to be "instrumentalized" (made into an instrument, function, or conduit) for the sake of good art (Mattli, 2003, pp. 143-144). We will show that, in the case of Giacinta in "Brambilla", she is patently a player, not an instrument. Dickson describes Hoffmann's narrative form, which works as "a series of reinterpretations, not a progression", as congruent with the German Romantic belief in literature as a process of infinite becoming, with many discourses qualifying each other, and narrators, characters and readers alike constantly searching for meaning (Dickson, 1994, p. 60). We concur and apply her argument to "Brambilla" and other tales which have no stable, unitary position on the contemporary ideology of women as the weaker, lesser sex.

3. Results

3.1 *Signor Formica*

Taking a broad view, Giacinta Soardi is not the only headstrong female character in Hoffmann's fictional picture-gallery which ranges over muses, viragos, vamps, vampires and women who resist, collude with, or capitulate to the patriarchal régimes of early nineteenth-century Europe. His male characters are also just as varied, including artists, benevolent controllers, Bluebeards, mesmerizers and weak or mad men. Even-handed mockery prevents either sex being idealized (Scullion & Treby, 2013a, p. 301). For instance, in "Signor Formica" (1821), Hoffmann ridicules a carnivalesque trio of male rogues: Signor Pasquale Capuzzi, a lascivious uncle who has locked up his niece, Marianna, and intends to marry her; Signor Splendiano Accoramboni, a charlatan of a doctor, and Pitichinaccio, a dwarf dressed as a lady's maid who attends Marianna. All three are depicted with grotesque bodies and dress. They closely resemble Callot's engravings of *commedia* figures, incorporating respectively a pantaloone, a clown and a dwarf, the latter probably influenced by his series of pot-bellied dwarfs called Gobbi (Kahan, 1976, pp. 92-94). As they process through Rome escorting Marianna to the theatre, onlookers ask whether they are maskers left over from the carnival (Hoffmann, 2001, Vol. 4, p. 346). Like Celionati in "Brambilla", Signor Salvator Rosa is an impresario in "Signor Formica". He orchestrates the humiliation of this trio of rogues through farcical tricks and ambushes. Marianna, the female protagonist, is as spirited as Giacinta. She kicks and punches her attendant dwarf, and intuits without explanation that she must play the role of gentle maiden in order to be rescued from her uncle by Salvator Rosa and her suitor, Antonio. More subtly than through carnival antics, male prejudice is exposed in Salvator Rosa's response to Marianna. He finds her quick-witted understanding of her rescuers unusual in a woman, and warns her suitor that she will cause him trouble once they are married (Hoffmann, 2001, Vol. 4, pp. 990-991). These common features between "Brambilla" and "Signor Formica", confirm that Hoffmann's tales habitually critique contemporary socially-approved models of gendered behaviour.

3.2 *The King's Bride and Other Fairy Tales*

Published in the same year as "Formica" and one year later than "Brambilla", "The king's bride" ironizes fairy-tale marriage. This tale would be completely at home in the modern film, *Shrek*, and its sequels. The rather ample, spade-wielding anti-heroine, Ännchen, is so obsessed with growing vegetables that she is completely deceived by the gnome, Daucus Carota the First, King of the Vegetables. There is even irony in the use of the diminutive term "chen" for Fräulein Anna von Zabelthau's name, because Ännchen's girth is far from little. Tricked into a betrothal to the gnome King, she believes in all his magic illusions of fertile vegetable fields, and begins to change into a gnome herself. Her former fiancé, anti-hero Amandus, is equally mocked for writing doggerel verse and long-winded prose in pompous academic style (Hoffmann, 2001, Vol. 4, pp. 1143-1144). Both characters constitute a parody of a handsome royal couple. The final jest of this fairy tale is played out when Amandus's drivelling poetry upsets the gnome king's stomach so much that he shrivels up into a tiny

carrot and slips back into the earth. Ännchen can finally remove her royal engagement ring which was magically fixed on her finger, slip it over the carrot, and resume her human form. The sexual innuendo that runs throughout the tale is grotesquely funny. The tale ends with a modest wedding between the human couple, the antithesis of a fairy-tale ending, but with a nod to the genre in the phrase “They led a fortunate and happy married life” (Hoffmann, 2001, Vol. 4, p. 1197). Hoffmann’s first fairy tale, “The golden pot: A modern fairy tale” (1814) and his fairy-tale opera *Undine* (1816) are beyond the scope of this article; however, the female protagonists of these works, Serpentina and Undine respectively, also exert influence over their male counterparts, using other-worldly powers to achieve their desires (Scullion & Treby, 2016, pp. 76-79). These examples from “Signor Formica”, “The king’s bride”, “The golden pot” and the fairy-tale opera *Undine* give a flavour of Hoffmann’s sexual politics and indicate his literary preoccupation with a range of different kinds of women and men.

3.3 Revisioning of Gender in “Princess Brambilla: A Capriccio in the Style of Jacques Callot”

3.3.1 Giacinta as Powerful Heroine

A princess in a conventional fairy tale is customarily rewarded at the end of her adventures with a prince who rescues her, a royal wedding and an unqualified happy ending. By contrast, the princess and prince at the end of “Brambilla” are actors modestly celebrating their one-year-old marriage. From the beginning, Giacinta Soardi confidently and knowingly plays the role of Princess Brambilla. By contrast, her “prince”, Giglio Fava, labours intermittently under the delusion that he truly is Prince Cornelio Chiapperi. The master-of-ceremonies and trickster supreme, Celionati, organizes trials which the couple and their doubles must endure, but Giacinta determines to a large degree her own rise in social, professional and marital status, while Giglio is often rendered confused and abject. The plot comprises an oneiric journey in which confusion intensifies as these two lovers and their counterparts dream and daydream. Locations on the way are the Pistoia Palace, “the abode of fairy-tale beings”, where the laws of everyday existence are suspended when the carnival procession enters; the mythical world of Urdurland, in which they imaginatively participate, and the *commedia dell’arte* theatre where they act (Hoffmann, 1985, Vol. 3, p. 782). A journey there and back again is a staple plot of the fairy tale. In his seminal work, *Morphology of the Folktale*, Vladimir Propp identifies thirty-one “Functions” of a generic fairy tale of which: I, IX, XI, XIX, XX and XXIII refer particularly to the hero’s journey and return, having resolved an initiating lack or misfortune (Propp, 1968, pp. 25-65). It is significant in “Brambilla” that Giacinta, not Giglio, initiates the journey. Furthermore, the journey takes place within the unheroic streets of Rome, with Giacinta and Giglio never travelling far from, and repeatedly returning to, the domestic sphere. Vitt-Maucher judiciously argues that the conventional folk-tale plot of a journey from lack to wish-fulfilment is given a radical twist in Hoffmann’s literary fairy tale, because “the fulfilment in it does not rely on the removal of the lack, but on a conscious, positive interpretation of the apparent lack”. She continues that the protagonists learn to identify their true selves during a dynamic journey from psychological sickness to health by means of crosswise thinking and an ever-turning pattern of doubling, collision and retreat (Vitt-Maucher, 1989, p. 107; Scullion’s translation). We concur with Vitt-Maucher that Giacinta and Giglio’s self-fulfilment grows from the gradual enhancement of their perceptions and hence their ability to recognize their own creativity. Although this was never lacking from the outset, they did not initially see its potential for growth. As an extension to Propp and Vitt-Maucher, we would argue that in this dreamlike journey, both “heroine” and “hero” make the journey, and Giacinta is always level with and often ahead of her male counterpart.

3.3.2 Giacinta Continues to Assert Herself

The opening paragraphs of “Brambilla” describe Giacinta and her aged companion, Beatrice, seated in a work room surrounded by carnival costumes. A skilful seamstress and milliner, Giacinta is trimming a red satin gown for a rich customer. The scene appears to be set for a conventional fairy tale about the lowly, virtuous and oppressed rising from rags to riches (Booker, 2004, p. 52). However, Giacinta is prickly and outspoken. When Beatrice says that tomorrow they will be able to enjoy the carnival in Rome, using their costumes from the previous year, she tartly replies “Do be quiet, old woman” (Hoffmann, 1985, Vol. 3, p. 771). Discontented with making gorgeous costumes and accessories for others, she tries on the red dress and an exquisite little hat. She feels “as though invisible spirits stood with her” (Hoffmann, 1985, Vol. 3, p. 774). As Beatrice remarks, the transformation, enhanced by evening candlelight, gives her the appearance of a fairy princess. At this point, there are intimations that “Brambilla” might develop into a Cinderella tale-type, one of the oldest and most recycled fairy tales in the world, first written down about AD 850-60 (Warner, 1995, p. 202). Then the magic effect of this scene is undercut when Giglio bursts in, full of his own self-importance and desperate to relate a dream he has had of a princess who loves him. He passionately loves this princess and must find her. Giacinta, decisively putting aside her own daydreaming, tells him not to be an idiot, gives him a box round the ears, and sends him packing. Her jealousy is transparent and her silencing of Giglio prevents him from saying that the princess in his

dream was wearing a red satin dress. This significant detail, offered by the narrator, hints at a mysterious connection between Giglio's dream princess, Giacinta, and Princess Brambilla. The dreamlike atmosphere is comprehensively undone when the narrator draws attention to Giacinta's *smorfia*, the quality of sulkiness particularly prevalent in young Italian girls which supposedly makes them a challenge to their suitors (Hoffmann, 1985, Vol. 3, pp. 779-780). Like Marianna and Ännchen (3.1 and 3.2), Giacinta in her various manifestations confounds approved notions of feminine fragility, modesty, passivity and sweetness (1.2).

3.3.3 Giacinta and Giglio Begin Their Carnival Adventures

The narrative of Giacinta and Giglio's passage through their carnival adventures now begins, enhanced by Callot's engravings. Hoffmann commissioned Carl Friedrich Thiele to re-engage them with the background figures removed, the image reversed, and the prominent phalluses of the clowns and pantaloons left unetched, in order to fit the less earthy mood of "Brambilla". The re-engravings serve, as Schlutz succinctly argues, as "visual nuclei in an extended act of *ekphrasis*" (Schlutz, 2011, p. 418). The first one, accompanying the first day of Rome's carnival, depicts two pantaloons standing either side of a large wicker demi-john. The narrator names one figure Giglio, the other Pantaloon, and describes the next event following on from the picture. From the demi-john rises a vapour and from within the vapour emerges the face and torso of Princess Brambilla. The vision then vanishes as a crowd of jostling revellers surrounds Giglio, and a voice booms in his ears, "You chicken-hearted fop in sky-blue and pink, how can you pretend to be Prince Cornelio (Chappieri)?" (Hoffmann, 1985, Vol. 3, p. 789). Giglio's brief sighting of Princess Brambilla is typical of many humiliating encounters with her. Her billowing forth from a bottle resembles the appearance of an Arabian jinni. However, in the lore of *A thousand and one nights*, this would be very unusual. In Ouyang's notes on five different kinds of jinn and six different kinds of lesser jinn, or demons, only one, a demon called a Ghool, is a jinniyah (female jinni) (Ouyang, 2014, p. 42). The fairy-tale elements of "Brambilla", therefore, lean towards empowering the female, and at this early stage mysteriously align Giacinta with Princess Brambilla.

3.3.4 The Carnival Reaches Its Height in a Frenetic Dance

At the height of the Roman carnival, madness prevails on all sides. The fifth engraving depicts Brambilla-Giacinta dancing frenetically with Prince Chiapperi-Giglio, the first swinging a tambourine and the second a wooden slapstick sword like those used by *commedia* clowns. They spin and swirl so fast that they keep their equilibrium. The harmony of the dance is enacted in a switch from narrative prose to play-script, with a dramatic cast of HE, SHE, TAMBOURINE and SWORD. The speech of the tambourine and the sword follows *A thousand and one nights*' tradition of "attributing latent animate sentience to objects and matter" (Warner, 2012, p. 42). Each participant in the dance, tambourine and sword included, is given an unmediated voice, thus temporarily apportioning them equal authority. So Brambilla-Giacinta's voice carries as much weight as her male partner's, and prevents Giglio from taking centre stage. While on the move, she takes over, declaring: "What happens to thinking, anyway, when reason is pulled along in the whirlpools of wild delight ... See how I circle round you and slip away from you, just when you think you're about to catch me and hold me tight! And again! And again!" (Hoffmann, 1985, Vol. 3, pp. 870-871). Both dancers speak simultaneously in the final throes of the dance: "Alas! The whirling, twirling, swirling abyss-seizes us-down we go!" The dance movements are also consonant with the term "capriccio", which literally means the leap of a goat, in the supplementary title of "Brambilla".

3.3.5 The Significance of the Dance

Identifying the *tarantella* in their "catching and escaping" movements, Ruprecht argues that the dance has the same "aerial quality" as the accompanying myth of Urdurland, which Hoffmann weaves in and out of the Giacinta-Giglio story. She reads the "dance-speech" as a "physical rendering of the two concepts of 'thought' and 'intuition'", which are explored and celebrated in the myth. Developing connections between abstract and concrete language, she insightfully links what is inscribed in the "dance-speech" to the theories of German Romanticist, Friedrich Schlegel. In brief, he argues that the relationship between word and meaning is never stable, but "hovers" (*schweben*) between ironic possibilities of meaning (Schlegel, 1967, p. 182), what Ruprecht describes as an "endless dance of self-reflexive signifiers" (Ruprecht, 2006, pp. 83-85). We would add that, on a simpler level of characterization in "Brambilla", the aerial dance reaffirms that Giacinta is a successful flirt, leading Giglio a merry dance. Hoffmann's change from prose to script revisits his earlier failed experiment at writing script in his incomplete fairy-tale play, *Princess Blandina* (1815). Similarities of form typical of *commedia dell'arte* occur in both *Blandina* and "Brambilla", but, in the intervening five years between writing them, Hoffmann has thematically strengthened the dominance of the female protagonist in the latter. In an appended note to the single completed Act of *Princess Blandina*, Hoffmann reveals his plan that the male

protagonist, Amandus, would posthumously fly through the air transformed into a singing swan and heroically save the princess from the devil (Raraty, 1964, p. 28). By contrast, Giacinta takes the lead in all her encounters with Giglio and is decisively in charge of their marriage. In later pairings, Giacinta, in the role of Princess Brambilla, and Giglio, in the role of Prince Chiapperi, swap dance partners diagonally, or believe they do so, thus producing four variations of couples before the marriage celebration at the end. These manoeuvres are reminiscent of Shakespeare's *A midsummer night's dream*, which Hoffmann knew very well (Hoffmann, 1993, Vol. 2/1, pp. 81-82). By contrast with Shakespeare's festive comedy, the development of "Brambilla" 's dreamlike plot reinforces the idea of the autonomous female.

3.3.6 Giacinta Commands the Dialogue

Sporadic returns to Giacinta's home during carnival time reveal her relationship with Giglio through dialogue. She is a mistress of verbal mockery and antagonism. When Giglio capers about her room, having thrown himself inadvertently on her sewing needle, she laughs at him, calling him ill-mannered and impetuous (Hoffmann, 1985, Vol. 3, p. 843). In agony, he professes his love for her in a speech from one of his acting roles and performs a mock-suicide with a stage-dagger. When he forgets lines, Giacinta knows them by rote and ridicules him by prompting. Both characters are aware they have slipped into dialogue from a play-script, but it is she who calls a halt to the verbal nonsense. She deflates his ego by telling him "You gave an excellent performance, Giglio dear. But now I think it's time to sit down for supper" (Hoffmann, 1985, Vol. 3, p. 847). There is no doubt who commands the dialogue in this farcical parody of a tragic scene. Giacinta is irascible throughout, quite unlike a conventionally sweet, long-suffering heroine swept off her feet by a handsome prince.

3.3.7 Callot's Engravings

Callot's engravings inserted into Hoffmann's text reinforce the verbal fencing between the couple. By virtue of re-contextualization, the engravings come to illustrate the lovers' quarrels. Engraving seven shows a female dancer with one hand on hip and the other on the pantaloons' arm. In the accompanying dialogue, the woman speaks in the role of Princess Brambilla, making encouraging advances to her Prince Chiapperi. The deluded Giglio, vainly believing he is Prince Chiapperi, and wary of being duped again by a coquette, does not believe her advances. Infuriated, she flounces off, accusing him of being an illusion (Hoffmann, 1985, Vol. 3, p. 899). The next day Prince Chiapperi, alias Giglio, is inconsolable, threatening to run himself through with his wooden sword for having lost his fair princess. She reappears in the carnival crowd and he prostrates himself before her. Engraving eight shows him on his knees, cap in hand, while she thrusts a slipper into his face. This mirrors his posture in the earlier domestic episode above when he flung himself at Giacinta's feet while she was sewing, and rammed his finger on her needle. The narrative describes how he kisses Brambilla's velvet slipper three times, and swears his undying love. This reconciliation prompts their magical transportation to the Pistoia Palace for a splendid celebration of their betrothal (Hoffmann, 1985, Vol. 3, pp. 902-903). The setting inside the palace metamorphoses into the mythical world of Urdurland. Without explanation, or even likelihood, the fairy celebration then morphs into a scene after midnight when crowds stream out of the theatres and Beatrice awaits the homeward return of Giacinta and Giglio to celebrate their first wedding anniversary. Even though sudden leaps in place and time in the last chapter remain a mystery, these capriccios display the logic of a dream. While the iconography of kissing the slipper replicates Callot's engraving of carnival dancers, the narrative context transforms its meaning into a variant of the Cinderella tale-type, which features the slipper as a love object. This fairy-tale motif varies from a slipper of gold in the Chinese "Cinderella", gold again in the Grimms' version (Zipes, 2001, p. 471) and cork, red velvet with pearls, or glass in other variations (Zipes, 2001, p. 448). The slipper motif is significant; it is always small, feminine, costly and beyond the means of country-folk and workers. Moreover, it is in the possession of the prince. In Hoffmann's variation, Giacinta-Brambilla stands triumphantly over the obese Giglio-Chiapperi, thrusting it into his face.

3.4 *The Fairy-Tale Realm of Urdurland Embedded within Rome and Its Carnival*

3.4.1 Fairy-Tale Motifs in the Myth of Urdurland

The mythical world of Urdurland is a fairy-tale realm in "Brambilla" which outdoes the topsy-turvy antics of the Roman carnival and the fairy extravaganzas in the Pistoia Palace. Based on an Icelandic myth, the fountain of Urdar has dried up because of its philistine citizens and rulers. Embedded within the naturalistic love-and-marriage plot of "Brambilla", the myth has a dynamic relationship with the city of Rome. Its magical transformations mirror the carnival by focusing on changing perceptions, and echo the journey to self-recognition undertaken by Giacinta and Giglio. The two protagonists enter and exit these different worlds with ease, eventually returning home at the end. Even though "Brambilla" is a literary fairy tale, doubling, repetition and loose connections between its locations operate like oral story-telling devices which allow a

listener, in this case a reader, to revisit important narrative elements several times. Through variations of the same themes in “Brambilla”, it gradually becomes clear that Celionati is not only a master-of-ceremonies for the carnival, but also Prince Bastianello of the Pistoia Palace, and both Magus Hermod and the magician Ruffiamonte in Urdurland. The multiple narrative layers of “Brambilla” give Hoffmann the scope to ironize fairy tale conventions. For example, Celionati as Magus Hermod listens to the story of how King Ophioch, Queen Liris and the citizens of Urdurland have lost their ability to see reflections in the lake and fountain. This signifies their ailing political and psychological state; so turgid have they become that the lake dries up into a swamp. The King and Queen fall into a magic sleep, during which the king’s arm is tied with a pulley and grotesquely lifted up now and then to wave his sceptre, so to deceive the populace (Hoffmann, 1985, Vol. 3, p. 859). A variation of the motif of a royal birth occurs when Celionati tells another parodic fairy tale to his friends in the Caffè Greco. He relates Georg Christoph Lichtenberg’s satiric anecdote about a queen who gives birth to Siamese twins joined at the buttocks, which makes the tailoring of trousers, the making of a throne and the holding of a sceptre difficult (Hoffmann, 1985, Vol. 3, pp. 894-895). These parallel stories interrogate generic plots which bring about royal weddings and happiness ever after. “Brambilla” offers alternative endings to conventional fairy-tale closure.

3.4.2 Connections between Mythical Urdurland and the Real World of Rome

Princess Brambilla in Urdurland is yet another iteration of Giacinta, even more powerful than her other manifestations as seamstress, carnival reveller, dancer, and actress in the *commedia* theatre. However, the relationship between Princess Brambilla and Urdurland is unclear until the final marriage celebration. Celionati introduces the tale of Ophioch and Lyris, king and queen of Urdurland, by telling his audience and the reader that, although it may appear to be a false trail, the myth will in fact lead to the narrative “kernel” of “Brambilla” (Hoffmann, 1985, Vol. 3, p. 816). The story begins conventionally with the motif of a fairy king and queen who long for a princess. Ophioch and Lyris are granted a beautiful baby daughter, but a battle between Typhon, a shape-shifting demon, and Magus Hermod swerves the narrative away from a traditional fairy tale. The true Magus Hermod, a quasi-fairy-godmother, undermines Typhon’s evil intentions by causing the king and queen’s offspring, Princess Mystilis, to be “born” in the petals of a lily which grows out of the Urdurland swamp. The king and queen fall asleep for a year, during which time she is made regent. However, she speaks a language that no one can understand. Typhon, a variation of a wicked fairy, disguises himself as the Magus and curses the princess. He transforms her into a tiny china doll and places her inside a box where she sleeps for many years (Hoffmann, 1985, Vol. 3, p. 863). The escape of women from different kinds of boxes-ideological, metaphoric and literal-is a recurring preoccupation of Hoffmann’s fiction, which we have examined more fully elsewhere (Scullion & Treby, 2013a, pp. 299-300, pp. 306-307). The princess’s unique, but impenetrable language has an affinity with a prevalent theme in the outer story of Giacinta and Giglio’s oneiric journey. From their early attempts to define and so understand themselves, they eventually become highly articulate, creative artists in the theatre. Their acquired facility with language, an important transformation, runs in tandem with the princess’s awakening, rise from her box, and subsequent transformation into Queen Mystilis.

3.4.3 Sexual Politics Critiqued in the Urdur Myth

In the exotic finale of the Urdur myth, the kingdom returns to a luxuriant state of nature. Through the intervention of Magus Hermod, water wells up again when a magic stone, a *Karfunkel* brought from Atlantis, is dropped into the swamp. The people of Urdurland stand poised by the lake, on the brink of shedding their philistine tendencies. Prince Bastianello of the Pistoia Palace, Magus Hermod and the magician Ruffiamonte, all doubles of Celionati, yet all individually present like a hall of distorting mirrors, preside over the ceremony of looking into the lake. Music, singing and story-reading contribute to a liturgy of magic transformation. Prince Bastianello and a composite figure named Magus Ruffiamonte mount ostriches and swim to an island in the lake where, from inside the calyx of a lotus flower (sic), they remove the tiny box containing the inert china doll that is Mystilis. At this climactic point, Giacinta-Princess Brambilla and Giglio-Prince Chiapperi awake from a trance-like state and look at their inverted reflections in the lake. Their rapture and laughter at knowing themselves for the first time trigger the culminating spectacle of Queen Mystilis rising effulgently from the box, metamorphosed into a magnificent queen. Released from magic sleep, she is a “divine female figure” who grows “taller and taller until her head tower(s) into the blue of the sky, while her feet (are) seen taking root in the depths of the lake” (Hoffmann, 1985, Vol. 3, p. 906). She billows forth like a male jinni, mirroring the rising of the visionary figure from the demi-john in the first chapter, and thus loosely marking off with strong female force the beginning and end of the fairy episodes. The crowd rejoices and a thousand voices sing her praise in a great crescendo as their surroundings transform themselves into a spectacular carnival ball in the Palace. It is the laughter of the human couple, Giacinta and Giglio, who have progressed towards intuitive wisdom through

constructive magical thinking that awakens Princess Mystilis from her cursed sleep. The end of the myth of Urdurland critiques contemporary sexual politics. In keeping with surrounding narrative strands, Queen Mystilis is entirely in the ascendant without a male consort. She rises unaccompanied by a counterpart king and is later named as Princess Brambilla.

3.5 Return Home

3.5.1 Giacinta and Giglio Return to Rome

The last change of setting, as Urdurland and the Pestoia Palace recede, brings Giacinta and Giglio back to the streets of Rome. The change coincides with the theatres emptying out after midnight (Hoffmann, 1985, Vol. 3, p. 907). In all three locations, Urdurland, the palace and the theatre, the magic comes undone with an abrupt change of place and time. The demise of and return from a magical realm is a common generic feature of fairy tales, recurrent in many examples which Hoffmann had read, for instance, Tieck's fairy tale, "The Elves" (1811), which describes a timeless elfish kingdom which Marie, the protagonist, and her daughter Elfriede can enter, but which disappears once Marie reveals its secret presence to her husband (Tieck, 1828, unpaginated). Similarly, in "Eckbert the fair" (1796), Eckbert's wife, Bertha, tells the tale of her return from a magic wood where time moves at a different pace from the real world (Tieck, 1828, unpaginated). Both tales come from Tieck's collection *Phantasmus* (1817), which Hoffmann describes as "magnificent" (Sahlin, 1977, p. 300). In "Brambilla", after Urdurland dissipates and the theatres close, it is a short walk home to the wedding anniversary gathering. Impresario Celionati, as an important guest, declaims that there is no need to understand the repeated transitions from myth to carnival to theatre, but in a teasing capriccio, he makes it clear that Queen Mystilis "is the true Brambilla" (Hoffmann, 1985, Vol. 3, p. 911). All three versions of Giacinta, as Princess Brambilla, Queen Mystilis or her domestic self, resonate with strong female agency. Throughout "Brambilla", Celionati provides tests and opportunities for both Giacinta-Brambilla and Giglio-Chiapperi to progress towards self-understanding and self-healing, but it is notable that the husband struggles more than his wife to get to know himself. He feels ridiculed and duped, suspecting that "all the events which he had taken for the wilful teasing of magical powers might be nothing more than a farcical comedy" (Hoffmann, 1985, Vol. 3, p. 799). By contrast, Giacinta and her equivalent manifestations, by taking magic seriously, are instigators of change.

3.5.2 Giacinta and Giglio Achieve Self-Knowledge

By the end, both wife and husband have become highly successful *commedia* actors, capable of improvising for half an hour or more and making their audiences laugh. In this respect, we completely align with Mattli's cogent interpretation that they have thrown off their imaginary doubles and become "absolutely symmetrical" as "absolutely equal and accredited artists" of the theatre (Mattli, 2003, p. 127; Scullion's translation). However, Giacinta is proactive in her quest to surmount her lowly social status, while Giglio is driven from behind and tossed from one humiliation to the next. She actively collaborates with Celionati who, as a kind of fairy godfather, has orchestrated the carnival and the magical revels in the Pistoia Palace. During their wedding anniversary gathering, he announces that the purpose of the carnival trickery and the theatrical extravaganza was to bring Giacinta and Giglio to self-knowledge, and to allow Giacinta to "knock some sense into that bold fellow who has fittingly become your husband" (Hoffmann, 1985, Vol. 3, p. 910). She uses these adventures to establish herself in a new career and to help Giglio mature out of his arrogance and self-absorption.

3.5.3 Beatrice

Lastly, the importance of the aged Beatrice, Giacinta's companion, needs to be acknowledged. She plays a structural and practical role throughout "Brambilla". She puts food and wine on the table and commentates with wisdom on the daydreaming of both Giacinta and Giglio. Before the carnival, when reading a storybook that Giglio had once read to them, which narrated his dream of a beautiful daydreaming girl, she snaps the book shut and points out to Giacinta that both she and her erstwhile sweetheart, Giglio, indulge too much in "building castles in the air" (Hoffmann, 1985, Vol. 3, p. 885). She points out that if Prince Chiapperi were truly a prince, he would come to their humble home and claim her as his bride (Hoffmann, 1985, Vol. 3, p. 880). Her discourse keeps "Brambilla" grounded in the material world of Rome, while other story-tellers emphasize magic narratives. She provides links for the theme of dreaming and can be placed in the fairy-tale tradition of yarn-spinning old wives. Dreaming and daydreaming in "Brambilla" enable the young couple to transcend momentarily the hardships and struggles of their everyday lives as a successful seamstress and failing tragic actor. This brings to mind Bloch's interpretation of the utopian effect of all good fairy tales which provides an "anticipatory illusion" (Vor-schein) for characters and readers alike (Bloch, 1989, pp. 146-148). The couple daydream about hoped-for possibilities, which might or might not materialize exactly as dreamed. Such yearning, Bloch argues, is creative and efficacious. It is certainly the case that releasing the power of their imagination eventually brings Giacinta

and Giglio to professional and marital fulfilment, although not to a conventional fairy-tale ending. In “Brambilla”, the wedding of a princess and prince as closure of a fairy tale is modified to a domestic party in celebration of married life.

4. Conclusions

4.1 Recapitulation of Bakhtinian Critical Method

Bakhtin’s theories provide a useful critical tool for describing the linguistic and structural effects of “Brambilla” in relation to dominant ideologies of gender in early nineteenth-century Europe. His analysis of prose fiction shows how this genre mediates or, in Bakhtinian terminology, “voices” existing ideologies. Moreover, he maintains that by using multiple discourses, prose fiction opens up a new perspective on what has gone before:

The novelistic hybrid is an artistically organized system for bringing different languages in contact with one another, a system having as its goal the illumination of one language by means of another, the carving-out of a living image of another language (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 361).

An account of multiple discourses, or what Holquist’s translation of Bakhtin’s Russian text terms “languages”, in relation to matters of gender, is given above. These “languages”, which converge, diverge and sometimes overlap, suggest a new way of interpreting gender in its historical context.

4.2 Application of Bakhtinian Critical Method

In “Brambilla”, Hoffmann uses a discursive structure which interweaves, in heteroglossic fashion, the following strands: fairy tale and myth; story-telling and the embedded story; dialogue and play-script; theatre performance; *commedia dell’arte*; carnival; saturnalia; the capriccio; realist descriptions of the city of Rome, together with material from Callot and Gozzi. These strands, of course, are not discrete, but merge into each other in many variations that interrogate gender. Bakhtin uses the metaphor of an orchestra to represent the merging function of the dialogical voices here enumerated (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 430). Some artificial separation, however, is necessary for analysis. Firstly, Hoffmann’s reworking of the Cinderella tale-type emphasizes the dominance of Giacinta. The Arabian influence also shapes motifs to do with female jinniyahs. It is apparent that Hoffmann knew the stories of *A thousand and one nights* through secondary sources such as Wieland’s fairy-tale collection entitled *Dschinnistan, or selected fairy tales and ghost stories* (Dschinnistan, oder Auserlesene Feen-und Geistermärchen, 1786-1789), and Gozzi’s fairy plays, many of which display eastern origins. Hoffmann also assimilated knowledge of oriental motifs through Mozart’s *The magic flute* (1791), whose plot was based on a fairy story by Wieland. The trials of Giacinta and Giglio not only resemble those of Tamino and Pamina in Mozart’s opera, which Hoffman saw many times and played in (Sahlin, 1977, pp. 146-256), but also owe much to Gozzi’s fairy plays. Secondly, myth and digressive story-telling are prominent in “Brambilla” and, importantly, the conclusion of the embedded Urdurland myth presents a dominant female. Thirdly, domestic and theatrical dialogue between Giacinta and Giglio is threaded through the whole of “Brambilla”, whether in mythic, realist or carnival mode. In every example Giacinta is equal or dominant. This is consonant with Hoffmann’s tendency to ironize heroines and heroes, as in his parodic fairy tales “Signor Formica” and “The king’s bride”. Fourthly, the discursive elements of *commedia dell’arte*, carnival, saturnalia and capriccio are so interdependent that they are almost impossible to disentangle, just as Bakhtin theorizes. The plots and themes of “Brambilla” are supported by the whirling extravaganza of a literal Roman carnival, during which Giacinta, doubling as Brambilla, plays a major part. Stylistically, the fairy tale is carnivalesque in the spiralling forward of its multi-voiced narratives. This multiplicity of discourses “illuminate(s) ... one language by means of another”. The “carving-out of a living image of another language” destabilizes a single, dominant discourse of male supremacy.

4.3 Application of Zipes and Haase’s Critical Approach

The arguments and evidence accumulated in 4.2 support Zipes and Haase’s socio-historical critical approach to the genre of the fairy tale. We have applied their critical principles to show how “Brambilla”, “Signor Formica” and “The king’s bride” not only engage with contemporary sexual politics, but anticipate social change with regard to gender. In the particular historical context of early nineteenth-century Europe, we concur with Zipes who “consider(s) Hoffmann one of the greatest writers of literary fairy tales in the world” (Note 2). Following Haase’s principle of “discerning the ideological ambiguities and textual complexities in texts that paradoxically both reject and rely on the fairy tale’s power to define gender”, we have shown how Hoffmann’s three fairy tales subvert socially-approved models of feminine and masculine behaviour.

4.4 Conclusion

The three fairy tales examined above give a flavour of the sexual politics of Hoffmann's work and indicate his literary preoccupation with a range of different kinds of women. Like Marianna and Ännchen, Giacinta is unconventional and irascible. In the trials that Hoffmann imposes on her and Giglio, both characters are ironized and their foolish utterances are subjected to mockery at different times. However, through dialogue, they make progress towards a greater understanding of themselves, which results in both of them becoming *commedia* actors. Hoffmann's revisioning of gender is particularly exemplified at the height of the Roman carnival, when, in conventional terms, the male dancer would be expected to take the lead. Instead, Giglio becomes a partner in the dance, subject to Giacinta-Brambilla's forceful voice and movements. Patently, Gozzi's work has influenced "Brambilla" in Hoffmann's presentation of Giacinta's strident masculinized character. However, her parity of status with Giglio at the end differs from the plots of Gozzi's fairy plays whose female characters are finally re-absorbed into the prevailing patriarchy. Whether she appears in mythical Urdurland, the chaotic carnival, the theatre, or the everyday world of Rome, Giacinta is always vocal and complex. Significantly, her doubles, Princess Brambilla and Princess Mystilis, as well as Beatrice, are never lost for words. Their development emphasizes the power and importance of conversation and story-telling. Giacinta is also an embodiment of the capriccio, a recurring literary motif in the narrative. Without doubt, her verbal ingenuity and energetic dancing, together with her mercurial nature and her physical and emotional impulsiveness, fulfil the musical and kinetic requirements of a capriccio. Expressed through dance, Giacinta's continued resistance to assigned feminine roles throughout "Brambilla" is also in keeping with the pictorial capriccios of Callot's interpolated engravings. Through our re-examination of her as a composite figure in this carnivalesque fairy tale, we have redressed her undeserved lack of critical attention.

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Notes

Note 1. Bakhtin's definition of heteroglossia: "When heteroglossia enters the novel it becomes subject to an artistic reworking. The social and historical voices populating language, all its words and all its forms, which provide language with its particular concrete conceptualizations, are organized in the novel into a structured stylistic system that expresses the differentiated socio-ideological position of the author amid the heteroglossia of his epoch" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 300).

Note 2. Personal email from Jack Zipes, July 21, 2016.

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