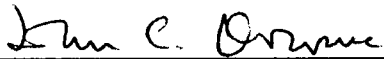


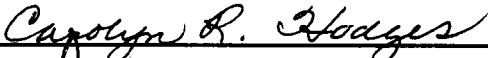
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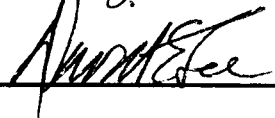
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"A Comparison of Jacques Offenbach's Opera

Les contes d'Hoffmann

with the Life and Tales of

E.T.A. Hoffmann"

A Thesis

Presented for the

Master of Arts

Degree

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Winifred Hirschfield Ilic

August 1992

to my husband, Jovan

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ABSTRACT

This thesis compares the present-day version of the opera *Les contes d'Hoffmann* by Jacques Offenbach with the life and tales of E.T.A. Hoffmann, a comparison which previously had not been done in detail. A comparison of the libretto by Jules Barbier and Michel Carré with Hoffmann's tales reveals that only certain portions of the tales were used and synthesized to develop the plot in the opera. Furthermore, the libretto makes references to other tales besides *Der Sandmann*, *Abenteuer einer Sylvesternacht*, and *Rat Krespel*. Only a few elements of the opera are accurate references to the author E.T.A. Hoffmann's personal life. This thesis discusses the discrepancies between the E.T.A. Hoffmann's tales and the Barbier-Carré libretto, and addresses the reasons for those discrepancies. Finally, this thesis addresses the fact that numerous versions of the opera exist and discusses why. Excluding the Introduction and Conclusion, each chapter deals specifically with each act in the opera. Ultimately, one can conclude that despite the loose adaptations of the tales for the opera and the fact that so many versions of the opera exist, it is the nature of Hoffmann's tales which continue to successfully entertain audiences around the world, however they are adapted.

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Chapter I - Introduction

Up until now, no one has made a thorough comparison of Jacques Offenbach's opera, *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, with E.T.A. Hoffmann's personal life and tales. Indeed, even commentators in opera bulletins seem content to mention only the obvious tales on which the opera is based. Careful examination of the opera libretto reveals that the librettists adapted the material from the three tales *Abenteuer einer Sylvesternacht*, *Der Sandmann*, and *Rat Krespel*, as well as from facts from Hoffmann's personal life, to create an intriguing portrayal, however inaccurate, of Hoffmann and his development as an author. Despite the mostly inaccurate portrait drawn by the librettists, Offenbach's score and the entertaining "tales" about Hoffmann's life were a great success in Paris in 1881, and the opera continues to be performed on stages around the world to this day.

The librettists Jules Barbier and Michel Carré wrote the libretto based on a play they had written, *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, which appeared in 1851. The libretto shows some variations from the original stage play, and numerous subsequent opera productions also vary. The modern productions of *The Tales of Hoffmann* are somewhat removed from the original play and opera. Certain details have undergone significant changes. For example, in the stage play, Hoffmann has already written and published the stories he tells the students about his past love affairs. In the opera, Hoffmann begins to write only after he has reached utter desperation and is beckoned by his muse to devote his life completely to poetry. In another example, Nicklausse's transformation into the Muse by the Epilogue of the opera does not occur in the original play. This comparison will address the differences between tales, the original play and the opera libretto, but primarily the tales and the opera. The question, however, is which version of the libretto to use as a basis of comparison. Examination of the

existing performances and published libretti, as well as the history of the opera reveals that there are indeed many variations among the productions, particularly in reference to the Stella--Nicklausse--Muse roles. They seem to be the only recurring points of variation, but the determination as to the exact purpose of these roles clearly has some bearing on the overall theme of the opera. Should the Muse sing at the beginning of the Prologue, as in some versions? Should Stella be the Muse, as she is in the original play? Should Nicklausse (or Friedrich in the play) be a "guardian angel" who becomes the muse? Should Acts II and III in the opera be reversed as they are in the play? Should all four demonic figures--Lindorf, Coppélius, Dapertutto and Dr. Miracle--be performed by the same baritone? Should all female lovers of Hoffmann--Olympia, Giulietta and Antonia--be performed by the same soprano? Should the servant characters be performed by the same tenor? A number of variations have already been mentioned. The many varied performances seen today, and the lack of agreement among producers as to the sequence or inclusion of acts, roles and performers, as well as the Stella--Muse--Nicklausse issue have an historical basis. *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians* explains:

The fact that the work is not as homogenous as a whole as the best of the operettas may not be altogether Offenbach's fault. At his death he apparently left the work in a complete piano score, but to meet the requirements of the Opéra-Comique, Guiraud [Ernest Guiraud, 1837-1892] not only completed the orchestration but also added recitatives. In addition it was decided to omit the Giulietta act with some of its music redistributed. The work was first published in Guiraud's version, and the loss of the original material in the Opéra-Comique fire of 1887 has made the establishing of an authentic

score impossible ("Jacques Offenbach", 512).

Other noteworthy variations have occurred, due undoubtedly to the unavailability of the original libretto and score. Twelve years after the premiere of the opera the Giulietta scene was brought back, performed, however, before the Antonia act, contrary to the original play and libretto. Mahler's production in Vienna included no Prologue or Epilogue; Hans Gregor revived some previously discarded arias for Coppelius and Dapertutto in his production in Berlin in 1905 (Harewood, 648).

The Earl of Harewood also mentions in his discussion of the opera: "in whatever version the opera is presented, even the more perverse and furthest removed from what we now believe were Offenbach's latest thoughts, *The Tales of Hoffman* keeps its central place in the repertory" (Harewood, 648). In view of the fact that there are so many versions of the opera, I have chosen to compare the presently generally accepted production of the opera (the New York Metropolitan Opera's 1988 version of the opera, conducted by Charles Dutoit) with the original tales on which the opera is based.

Each chapter includes a detailed synopsis of the tale which was adapted for the act being discussed. After the tale is summarized, a synopsis of the act in the opera is given (based on the video of the 1988 New York Metropolitan Opera production and the 1981 Royal Opera production's libretto, and relying on the content and dialogue in the Metropolitan Opera's version where discrepancies between the two versions exist.) Through this process, details that have not been adapted and others which have been included (but not on the basis of the tale) become obvious. Finally, there is a discussion as to the probable reasons why the librettists chose to adapt certain details of the tale and/or biographical information in such a way, why certain material was left out, and for what purpose.

Chapter II - Prologue

The Prologue and the Epilogue provide a very important framework for the opera by bringing cohesion to the three relatively disconnected intervening acts. The three acts are directly based on the tales *Der Sandmann*, *Abenteuer einer Sylvesternacht* and *Rat Krespel*, respectively. (In the original play, the three acts were based on the same tales but with the last two acts in reverse order.) The Prologue establishes the characters and dramatic tension which lingers throughout the three acts and is only resolved in the last moments of the Epilogue. Characters and themes are presented which, in some cases, have been directly adapted from facts about E.T.A. Hoffmann's life and his tale, *Abenteuer einer Sylvesternacht*.

Abenteuer einer Sylvesternacht is broken down into four sections, each section containing a different anecdote concerning the narrator's adventures. The first section, called "Die Geliebte," begins with information about the narrator himself and goes on to describe his associations with Julie. The narrator describes his emotional state during the holiday season and how he is tormented by the powers of the demonic:

Die feindliche Macht rückt mir das, wenn das Jahr sich zu Ende neigt, mit hämischer Schadenfreude unaufhörlich vor. "Siehe," lispelt's mir in die Ohren, "siehe, wieviel Freuden schieden in diesem Jahr von dir, die nie wiederkehren, aber dafür bist du auch klüger geworden und hältst überhaupt nicht viel auf schnöde Lustigkeit, sondern wirst immer mehr ein ernster Mann--gänzlich ohne Freude."

Für den Sylvester-Abend spart mir der Teufel jedesmal ein ganz besonderes Feststück auf. Er weiß im richtigen Moment, recht furchtbar höhnend, mit der scharfen Kralle in die Brust hineinzufahren und weidet sich an dem Herzblut, das

ihr entquillt. Hülfe findet er überall, sowie gestern der Justizrat ihm wacker zur Hand ging.¹

The *Justizrat* had invited the narrator to a New Year's Eve party. He mysteriously told the narrator that "etwas Köstliches" awaited him in the next room and that he should not be surprised. The narrator discovers Julie, clearly a woman he had once loved, and she behaves coquettishly with him for the duration of the evening. The narrator is somewhat suspicious that the *Justizrat* knew of his affection for Julie, but he becomes so infatuated with her that he forgets all reason and feels only flaming passion for the beautiful woman. As a guest performs on the organ, the narrator's senses become all the more enflamed; Julie speaks with him and casts loving glances at him. At the end of the first anecdote we see the narrator discover that Julie is married to a frog-eyed, spindly-legged man, and in terror and surprise the narrator flees into the cold Berlin night without his hat and coat.

In the second anecdote, the emotionally distraught narrator arrives at the doorstep of the "Thierrnenschen Laden." The burning lights and friendly faces within seem inviting, and the narrator enters in hopes of forgetting his problems. In the tavern he meets the botanist Schlemihl (spelled Schlemil in the opera) and later Schlemihl's friend, General Suwarow. During the course of conversation with these two unusual individuals, the narrator discovers that Suwarow lost his reflection and Schlemihl his shadow. The two men had become companions by sharing similar fates. How these strange occurrences came about is not explained, but the two end up in an argument and

¹ E.T.A. Hoffmann, *Abenteuer einer Sylvesternacht* in *E.T.A. Hoffmanns Sämtliche Werke*, Ed. Carl Georg von Maassen. 2nd ed. (München: Georg Müller, 1912) 342-343.

All subsequent references to Hoffmann's works will be indicated in the text by the title of the tale and the page number. Any other references in the text will be indicated by the authors' names and the page numbers of the works.

Suwarow leaves abruptly, followed by Schlemihl. The narrator realizes he does not have his key, and knowing he cannot return home without it, he decides to spend that night at "Der goldne Adler."

In section three, we see the narrator standing in his room in front of a mirror (which he had to uncover) imagining he sees Julie's reflection smiling back at him. As he calls out her name, he hears another voice in the room cry out "Giulietta!" The narrator sees that Suwarow is also spending the night at the inn and is apparently dreaming of his own love affair. Suwarow wakes and converses briefly with the narrator, but upon not seeing himself in the uncovered mirror, he falls faint in fright and is soon asleep. Finally, the narrator too falls asleep and has a strange dream.

In his dream, the narrator is with the *Justizrat* and Julie, who are trying to give him a beautiful crystal glass out of which blue sparks are flying. Suwarow appears to the narrator and whispers that he should not drink it. Julie asks why he refused the glass and says that she already possesses his reflection. The little man, Suwarow, continuously warns the narrator against taking it. The narrator declines again and Schlemihl appears and says "Das ist Mina, die den Raskal heiratet!" (*Sylvesternacht*, 356) Believing he is being attacked by thousands of little sugar figures, the narrator curses the *Justizrat* and wakes himself up. Convinced the whole experience with Suwarow at the inn was a dream, he falls back asleep. The next morning he finds a story on the table; he had seen Suwarow writing at the table the night before, but had believed it also to be a dream.

Section four is General Suwarow's personal story of his lost reflection. The narrator's dream sequence foreshadows the events that take place in the little man's story. The content of the fourth section applies directly to Act II and parts of Act III in the opera, and therefore it will be discussed later.

The Prologue of the opera includes a significant amount of material from *Sylvesternacht*, although the names and localities are changed. Much material in E.T.A. Hoffmann's tale is not used, and the librettists also included their own details to suit the purpose of the themes of their opera. The characters of the Prologue include Lindorf, Andres, Luther, Hermann and Nathanael, Nicklausse, Stella, the students, and Hoffmann. The setting of the Prologue takes place in Luther's tavern in Nürnberg. E.T.A. Hoffmann's favorite locality was Luther's tavern in Berlin (Schaukal, 240). Lindorf is the first main character to be introduced, and he is clearly established as Hoffmann's mortal and demonic foe. The name Councillor Lindorf reminds one of the character Lindhorst in *Der goldne Topf*, a positive demonic figure. The personality of Lindorf strongly parallels that of the sinister and mocking *Justizrat* in *Sylvesternacht*. As the host of the party, the *Justizrat* invites the narrator to see Julie, knowing full well that she is married and that the narrator's spirit will be crushed upon finding that out. As Lindorf intercepts a letter for Hoffmann, laughs when reference is made to the devil, and carries out verbal sparring sessions with Hoffmann, the audience may see that the demonic figure Lindorf has every intention of intervening in Hoffmann's life to suit his own purposes. This theme is taken directly from *Sylvesternacht*, as is mentioned in the narrator's comments about his New Year's Eve experiences.

In the Prologue Lindorf is portrayed as Hoffmann's rival for the love of Stella, the adored diva who is performing that evening in Mozart's *Don Giovanni* (or *Don Juan*). Stella is playing the role of Doña Anna. In E.T.A. Hoffmann's version of *Don Juan*, Doña Anna is also the object of the narrator's love in his fantasies. By the end of the Prologue, Hoffmann explains that Stella is the culmination of the three great loves in his life. The audience later discovers that the three love affairs were ruined by an ominous, intervening demonic force. By intercepting a letter for Hoffmann and grumbling

disdainfully about the popular poet, Lindorf establishes dramatic tension immediately; in fact, he introduces Hoffmann before the hero even makes his entrance.

Hoffmann's entrance is that of a drunken, disoriented man. His desperate arrival at Luther's tavern is strongly reminiscent of the narrator's desperate arrival at the tavern in Berlin, where he attempts to escape from and drown his emotional suffering over Julie. In the opera, in an attempt to forget his sorrows, Hoffmann performs his "Klein Zach" song, which is based on E.T.A. Hoffmann's famous and quite hilarious *Klein Zaches genannt Zinnober*. The students are so enthralled by the tormented poet that they choose to skip the second act of *Don Juan* to hear Hoffmann's stories of his previous three loves.

Thus, E.T.A. Hoffmann's tale *Sylvesternacht* serves as the thematic basis for the whole opera. Transforming the narrator into Hoffmann and the *Jutizrat* into Lindorf, the librettists use these two as protagonist and antagonist throughout the entire opera. Besides the friends and acquaintances in the tavern, the rest of the characters do not originate in the tale.

Stella, Hoffmann's lover, is added because she brings cohesion to the three acts which follow by embodying in one person Hoffmann's past three love affairs. More significantly, without the creation of Stella, Lindorf would have no relationship to destroy. As the opera progresses, we see that Lindorf's attempts to come between Hoffmann and Stella are in keeping with the reappearing demonic figure's intentions in the past. For this reason it is not altogether clear whether it is Hoffmann's love relationships (more specifically, his unrequited romantic soul) or his constant struggle with a demonic force which is the main theme developed in the opera. The character of Nicklausse, also added by the librettists, may resolve this question by the Epilogue.

Nicklausse, performed by a woman, is Hoffmann's guardian angel, his voice of reason, his protector and advisor who is always a faithful friend. While Hoffmann finds

himself blinded by his amorous desires, Nicklausse always sees danger and attempts to bring Hoffmann out of the situation. Nicklausse's role is developed throughout the opera, but the introduction of his character in the Prologue lends to the dramatic tension and creates a sense of mystery in the ensuing plot. In the original play, the character of Nicklausse was named Friedrich, probably in reference to Erasmus Spikher's friend Friedrich in *Sylvesternacht*.

Thus, the Prologue introduces the tormenting Lindorf and love-stricken Hoffmann as rivals who meet in Luther's tavern and socialize with the students. Stella is neither seen nor heard, but her role is the center point around which Lindorf and Hoffmann argue and compete. The Prologue also introduces the faithful companion, Nicklausse, who is played by a woman (for reasons which are made clear only by the Epilogue). By the end of the Prologue, the audience is in anticipation of Hoffmann's stories about his loves, is wondering why Nicklausse is actually a woman, and, finally, is wondering how effective Lindorf will be in stealing Stella's affections for himself. While the themes for the entire opera are taken from the first two sections of E.T.A. Hoffmann's *Sylvesternacht*, much more material from sections three and four are used in Acts II and III, which will be discussed later.

Chapter III - Act I

Acts I, II, and III show Hoffmann in different love relationships, with each woman epitomizing a certain quality which Hoffmann finds supremely desirable in the given situation. In his feverish attempts to have a love affair with the women, he finds himself obstructed by an individual who represents the diabolical and who takes away all of Hoffmann's chances for a happy love affair. Hoffmann's guardian angel Nicklausse always advises Hoffmann of the foolishness and danger of his pursuits.

The love affair between Olympia (spelled Olimpia in the tale) and Hoffmann in Act I is based on portions of E.T.A. Hoffmann's intriguing tale *Der Sandmann*. There are significantly many more details and issues in the author's tale which do not appear in the operatic adaptation. The tale begins with a series of letter exchanges between Nathanael (the protagonist), Clara (Nathanael's girlfriend), and Lothar (Clara's brother and Nathanael's dearest friend). A narrator interrupts the letter exchanges to explain the rest of the story. The letter exchanges, however, are very effective in that the characters' ideas and perceptions are revealed by their own words. Nathanael's character becomes especially well-developed through his letters, because the reader is able to perceive, from Nathanael's own words, how much he confuses reality with dreams and the supernatural, which ultimately becomes difficult for the reader to discern as well.

The first letter is from Nathanael, a university student, to Clara and Lothar, with an explanation of some recent experiences which have forced him to recall painful memories from his childhood. Nathanael begins by describing typical evenings with his parents when his mother would report that "the Sandman" had come and it was time for bed. Nathanael, convinced that the Sandman was actually some dreadful visitor, asked his mother and nanny who he really was. His mother's explanation about sleepy eyes was

quite unsatisfying for him. However, he seemed to find more palpable the nanny's explanation that the Sandman was a fearsome creature who gouges out children's eyes. When he heard the footsteps of his father's business associate, Coppelius, he was convinced that the frightful man was actually the Sandman. Not only were Nathanael and his siblings frightened by Coppelius' presence, their mother also showed signs of anxiety during his visits.

Nathanael decided to spy on his father and Coppelius to find out exactly what they did together in the evenings. When Coppelius discovered the young boy, he seized him, attempted to singe him with fire and threatened to burn out the boy's eyes. Nathanael's father pleaded with Coppelius to spare the boy. Nathanael explains in his letter that the next thing he was aware of was waking up to the face of his loving mother. We do not ever know if Nathanael dreamt the experience or if he was recovering from it. The former explanation seems reasonable to the reader and also to Clara.

In reality, however, Coppelius did return to Nathanael's home, and his visit ended with a loud explosion and the death of Nathanael's father. Nathanael explains these terrifying events in his letter to Lothar and is convinced that Giuseppe Coppola, the Piedmontese seller of eyeglasses who has visited him, is quite simply Coppelius with a slight name change.

Although the letter is written to Lothar, Nathanael inadvertently addresses it to Clara, who, upon reading the story, explains her interpretation of the situation:

“Gerade heraus will ich es Dir nur gestehen, daß, wie ich meine,
alles Entsetzliche und Schreckliche wovon Du sprichst, nur in
Deinem Inneren vorging, die wahre, wirkliche Außenwelt aber
davon wohl wenig Teil hatte.” (*Sandmann*, 13)

Clara continues to rationalize:

“Sei überzeugt, daß diese fremden Gestalten nichts über dich

vermögen; nur der Glaube an ihre feindliche Gewalt kann sie Dir
in der Tat feindlich machen." (*Sandmann*, 15)

Nathanael finds Clara's reasoning most annoying and writes a letter to her brother and explains that he now realizes that Coppola is not Coppelius, rather that he is the long-time acquaintance and colleague of Spalanzani, Nathanael's physics professor.

The omniscient narrator interrupts these letters and takes on the responsibility of telling the rest of this queer tale. The narrator also happens to mention that he knew Clara, for he could not forget her warm smile. This could be an indication that the narrator is the man Clara ultimately marries. The narrator discusses the interaction between the two lovers--how Nathanael wrote and told tales which Clara once loved, but which also had become so twisted and beyond comprehension that she became extremely frustrated with his preoccupation with the powers of the beyond. After reading one particular poem she responds by suggesting that he throw it away. He reacts fiercely, referring to her as a lifeless automaton--a strangely ironic and foreboding comment. Once Lothar hears of the spat, the two men decide to fight to solve the conflict. Almost immediately they abandon their argument and choose to be the best of friends again.

Nathanael returns to the university, only to find that his apartment has been ravaged by a fire, and he moves across the street from his professor Spalanzani. Coppola comes to Nathanael's door and is eventually able to convince Nathanael to purchase a pair of opera glasses. Nathanael uses them to watch a woman across the street stare blissfully out the window.

Nathanael's friend Siegmund tells him that Spalanzani is having a coming-out party for his daughter, Olympia, and that half the university is invited. At the party Olympia impresses all the guests with her beautiful figure and her impressive singing. No one is more impressed than love-stricken Nathanael. Olympia and Nathanael dance together, hold hands, and carry on a relationship which continues long after their first meeting at

the party. Spalanzani encourages their relationship by dimming the lights when they are together. When Siegmund argues with Nathanael that Olimpia is nothing but a lifeless pretty face who does not even speak, Nathanael asserts that she listens lovingly and that her thoughts are so deep she cannot and need not put them into words.

One day, when Nathanael is planning to propose to Olimpia, he hears loud noises coming from Spalanzani's apartment. Upon entering he hears Spalanzani and Coppola shouting at one another, Spalanzani complaining that Coppola tried to steal his best automaton:

Ein Stampfen--ein Klirren--ein Stoßen--Schlagen gegen die Tür,
dazwischen Flüche und Verwünschungen: Laß los--laß los--
Infamer--Verruchter!--Darum Leib und Leben daran gesetzt?--
ha ha ha ha!--so haben wir nicht gewettet--ich hab' die Augen
gemacht--ich das Räderwerk--dummer Teufel mit deinem
Räderwerk--verfluchter Hund von einfältigem Uhrmacher-- fort
mit dir--Satan--halt--Peipendreher--teuflische Bestie--halt--fort
--laß los! (*Sandmann*, 37)

When Nathanael appears, he sees that the woman he loved was only a doll, now dismembered. The irate Spalanzani throws Olimpia's eyes (which were made by Coppola) at Nathanael. Nathanael flies into a rage, and fortunately Siegmund prevents Nathanael from killing Spalanzani. The old physicist is taken to a madhouse, later to be released and required to leave town to avoid criminal charges. Coppola disappears as well.

The narrator explains that Nathanael awakens to the face of Clara, Lothar and his mother. (He had explained earlier that Clara and Lothar, children of distant relations, were orphaned shortly after the death of Nathanael's father and came under the care of Nathanael's mother). Again, it is not clear if the events just described were purely

Nathanael's dreams or projected fears, or if they actually happened. In any case, Nathanael is happy to discover that he did not really lose Clara, and the two make plans to marry and move to an inherited estate with the rest of their family. However, dream again overlaps with reality while Nathanael and Clara are standing atop an observatory tower. Nathanael discovers spectacles in his pocket and sees Coppola (Coppelius) walking around below. This moment brings madness and death to the protagonist when he leaps from the tower. The story ends describing Clara's happy life; she was ultimately better off without Nathanael.

The events in Act I of Offenbach's opera take place in Spalanzani's home in Paris and revolve primarily around the Spalanzani-Coppelius business relationship and the Hoffmann-Olympia love relationship. Spalanzani, the inventor/scientist, is afraid that Coppelius will want his share in the profit on the Olympia project, for he lost money with his banker Elias and hopes to earn it back through his new invention. Cochenille, his stuttering servant, announces the comings and goings of guests. One such guest is Hoffmann, who discovers to his delight that Spalanzani has a beautiful daughter, Olympia. When Coppelius arrives unexpectedly, he gives Hoffmann spectacles which make the doll Olympia appear real. Meanwhile, Spalanzani and Coppelius discuss the earnings for the Olympia project, and Spalanzani gives Coppelius three ducats as his fair share in the earnings. The audience is keenly aware of the continuing tension between the two scientists.

Hoffmann foolishly pursues Olympia the automaton. Olympia, although inanimate, is perceived by Hoffmann as physically beautiful, musically gifted, and displaying a most complacent personality. Her stilted movements and inability to communicate go unnoticed by Hoffmann because he is wearing magic spectacles through which the automaton appears real. These magical spectacles are furnished to Hoffmann by Coppelius, the intervening demonic figure in this act. Coppelius does not destroy an

already established love affair, rather he prods Hoffmann on in his amorous endeavor to win Olympia, knowing full well that Hoffmann's attempts will leave him alone and humiliated.

Spalanzani happens to be hosting a "coming-out" party for his "daughter" that very day. When the doll is presented, all the guests and Hoffmann marvel at her perfect features and musical performance. Hoffmann is particularly entranced by her "charms" and Nicklausse warns him that he should not become so infatuated. Dancing with Olympia in emotional ecstasy, Hoffmann disregards the advice and finds himself in a passionate frenzy which causes him to fall faint. Coppélius discovers that Spalanzani has significantly shortchanged him by giving him three ducats. Furious, Coppélius destroys Olympia, and her limbs end up being tossed among the guests, who laugh at Hoffmann. In his despair and humiliation, Hoffmann falls faint again.

In the opera, the demonic aspect of Coppélius is made clear by the Prologue, when Lindorf boasts, "Mais j'ai de l'esprit comme un diable, comme un diable! Mes yeux lancent des éclairs, j'ai dans tout le physique un aspect satanique. . ." (Barbier, 17). Since the roles of the various characters are performed by the same singer, the identity of the demonic character becomes clearer. Because of the information provided in the Prologue, it was not necessary for the opera to include the background information and certain details from the original source, *Der Sandmann*. While the content of the tale is only partially used for the operatic adaptation, the main theme of the story is basically the same: that the unquenchable desire for passion in the romantic soul of Nathanael (in the story) or Hoffmann (in the opera) is bound to lead to complete disillusionment and humiliation.

In the tale this theme is developed through the inclusion of the "sardonic" character Clara, who does not appear in the opera. She is perhaps not included in the opera in order to keep the focus on one love affair per act. Her personality also has nothing to do with

music or passionate love. However, showing Hoffmann as forsaking a woman of reason and integrity for a woman of utter complacency would not detract from the opera. In fact, it would emphasize that Hoffmann's desires and behavior lead him away from reason and possibly true love. Yet again, in the opera, it is not Hoffmann's own desires which destroy his relationships, rather the constant intrusion of a demonic force which is intent on preventing the poet from knowing happiness. In this Act, the demonic force does not destroy a relationship Hoffmann already had, but rather encourages Hoffmann to pursue a relationship which can never exist. This theme of demonic intervention (from *Sylvesternacht*) was presented in the Prologue. Nathanael also believes it is the intervention of a supernatural force which could destroy his relationship with Clara.

Other background information not included in the opera is the mysterious story of the Sandmann from Nathanael's childhood. Of course, there is not enough time to include the historical background of Nathanael's childhood fears, nor is this information necessary to make the adaptation of the Olimpia sequence comprehensible to the audience, since we expect a demonic force to be involved in Hoffmann's love affairs. In the tale the narrator does not unequivocally state whether or not Coppélius is truly demonic or simply perceived as such by Nathanael, the troubled child, and/or Nathanael, the young romantic thinker. This is accomplished by the reasonable explanations for Nathanael's irrational thoughts and fears, given by Clara and her brother, Lothar. In the opera, the audience need not decide whether Hoffmann's behavior and attitudes reflect his childhood fears or not. The question of events happening in the imagination or in reality is not relevant to the opera plot.

One may surmise that the musical aspect of Olimpia's character made her an ideal character to include in the operatic adaptation. Not only is Hoffmann enchanted by her singing, but he also inevitably loses her because she is not even human. By pursuing a

lifeless automaton, Hoffmann reveals his desire to find the most physically beautiful woman who also happens to epitomize complacency.

The opera differs from the original text in that it is an adaptation of only part of E.T.A. Hoffmann's tale. The many elements concerning Nathanael's childhood experiences and relationship with Clara are not necessary to include because the portion dealing with Olimpia fits the operatic themes sufficiently. The opera also differs in that many details are added to aid in cohesion to the librettists' own story and the operatic traditions of the period. For example, a servant role is added to every act, providing comic relief and another useful vocal part. The character of Elias the banker is only mentioned in order to set up a conflict between Coppélius and Spalanzani. The opera also includes the character of Nicklausse, a significant character in the opera, but with no origins in the tale. Siegmund tries to dissuade Nathanael from pursuing Olimpia, but does not play the role of a "guardian angel" *per se*.

Nicklausse is presented clearly in the Prologue as a loyal and witty friend who has apparently been Hoffmann's companion for some time. In Act I we see Nicklausse's protective behavior and warning against Hoffmann's love affair with Olimpia. He even tries to stop the whirling and twirling couple, only to be thrust forcefully aside onto the couch. It is the all-knowing and protective nature of Nicklausse which gives subtle indications as to Nicklausse's actual identity, revealed only in the last moments of the Epilogue.

Thus, at the end of Act I we have learned how Hoffmann was capable of carrying on a love relationship with an automaton, which was only possible when he wore the magic spectacles given to him by Coppélius. We have seen how the demonic figure could encourage him to pursue a love that existed only in his mind, and we have seen how Nicklausse tried to prevent Hoffmann from bringing unwanted pain and humiliation upon himself. A defeated Hoffmann brings Act I to its close.

Chapter IV - Act II

Act II shows Hoffmann in a love affair with a completely different type of woman than Olympia. Giulietta is an Italian courtesan who is known to enflame the passions of men. The relationship between Hoffmann and Giulietta is based on the fourth anecdote from *Sylvesternacht*: "Die Geschichte vom verlornen Spiegelbilde."

In Chapter One it was explained that the narrator in *Sylvesternacht* had ended up one New Year's Eve at the same inn as General Suwarow. The next morning the narrator discovered lying on the table a story written by Erasmus Spikher ("General Suwarow") which relates how he lost his reflection.

Erasmus Spikher wants to fulfill his lifelong dream to visit Italy, and so he says good-bye to his wife and child and makes his journey to the south. In Florence his friend Friedrich introduces him to a certain company of friends by inviting him to a party. Erasmus arrives, amazed by the beautiful and exquisitely dressed women. People ask him why he is not escorting a woman, and when he explains that he is not interested, they tell him that Giulietta will change his mind. Giulietta arrives at the party and Erasmus finds her as astonishingly beautiful as he had been told. He is instantly taken by her charms, and they share a night of romance. During the course of the evening, Giulietta sings love songs with a remarkably clear, crystal voice, which enchants Erasmus all the more.

When the party is over, she points out to Erasmus where she lives and goes home with a servant. Erasmus is on his way home when he encounters along the way the *Wunderdoktor*, Signor Dapertutto (*Sylvesternacht*, 362). Dapertutto makes mocking remarks about Erasmus' clothing and warns that Erasmus should not go to Giulietta's house. The narrator of the story says that Erasmus hurried home, but the following

paragraph begins by noting how warmly Giulietta greeted Erasmus when he appeared at the door. Although she is very friendly and charming to Erasmus, she never expresses love for him verbally. Erasmus believes he senses her love for him.

Some time later Erasmus meets with Friedrich, who reminds the lovesick Erasmus that he comes from Germany and is a married man. He warns Erasmus of the danger of the new company he has found with Giulietta and her friends. Friedrich comments that these people have some power over Erasmus and that he has noticed a change in him. Erasmus is ashamed of his behavior, and they both decide to return to Germany.

On their way home to get prepared to leave, Dapertutto stops Erasmus and tells him not to hurry because Giulietta needs him. Friedrich mentions Ciarlatano, another of Giulietta's lovers whom Friedrich strongly dislikes. Erasmus is enraged by the news of another man and hears Giulietta's voice from a nearby balcony saying, "Did you not think of me?" Erasmus runs to the house and Friedrich leaves disappointed, knowing that Erasmus can no longer be saved.

Erasmus is again infatuated with the beautiful Giulietta and they find themselves together in the company of other acquaintances. When Ciarlatano sees Erasmus, he is enraged and threatens him. Erasmus responds by grabbing the dagger out of Ciarlatano's belt and killing him. Erasmus is dragged away immediately from the scene and loses awareness of his surroundings. When he comes to, he finds himself in a trunk at Giulietta's house, and she warns him that she cannot always hide him and that he is no longer safe in Italy. Distraught at the thought of leaving Giulietta, he begs to be hers forever. As the two are standing in front of a mirror, she whispers that he should give her his reflection, so that she will have him forever with her. Erasmus cries out:

"Muß ich denn fort von dir?--muß ich fort, so soll mein

Spiegelbild dein bleiben ewig and immerdar. Keine Macht--der

Teufel soll es dir nicht entreißen, bis du mich selbst hast mit

Seele und Leibe" (*Sylvesternacht*, 365).

He kisses her passionately and when he returns his eyes to the mirror, he sees that his reflection is gone, and he runs wildly out of her house.

As he is hurrying along he is overtaken by a carriage and a man begins speaking to him in German:

". . .Giuliettchen hat schon das ihrige getan und mir Sie empfohlen.

Sie sind auch ein recht lieber junger Mann, und inklinieren

erstaunlich zu angenehmen Späßen, wie sie uns, mir und

Giuliettchen, sehr behagen" (*Sylvesternacht*, 366).

He goes on to comment mockingly on how skillfully Erasmus killed Ciarlatano.

Erasmus says that he regrets his deed, and the man asks him if he regrets meeting Giulietta. When Erasmus expresses his desire to be with her, the man explains that he can protect Erasmus from the danger of avengers and the authorities by changing his appearance so that no one will recognize him. He says he will take his reflection.

Erasmus replies that he had already given it to Giulietta. Erasmus finally notices that the man with whom he is speaking is Dapertutto. He jumps out of the carriage and flees to his friend Friedrich, to whom he explains everything except the story about his reflection. Friedrich helps Erasmus to collect his belongings and leave Florence during the night.

Erasmus has many adventures on his trip back to Germany, as he frequently frightens people who notice that he has no reflection. However, Erasmus finally returns to his happy home and in time forgets Giulietta. One day, as he is playing with his son, little Rasmus, the boy discovers that his father has no reflection. When his wife discovers the truth, she faints. When she regains consciousness, she demands that he leave. He runs out of the house and finds himself in a park where he sees Giulietta and

Dapertutto. In an instant Erasmus is enflamed with passion for Giulietta, and Dapertutto tells him that it is possible for him to have her. If Erasmus will let his wife and child drink an almond-flavored potion, they will both die peacefully and will be out of Erasmus' life, and he will be free to be with Giulietta.

Erasmus returns home with a vial of the potion. His wife denies that he is even her husband, and his son asks him why he has no reflection. The boy's bird drinks some of the potion from the vial and dies immediately. Erasmus is enraged and throws the vial out the window. The child runs away in terror, and, dejected, Erasmus spends the rest of the day and night fantasizing about Giulietta. She finally becomes real, and he begs that she take his life and soul and give him back his reflection. He says that he cannot go on this way and that he would rather die. She explains that as long as his wedding vows still hold, they cannot be together. She orders him to write the following:

"I gebe meinem guten Freunde Dapertutto Macht über meine
Frau und über mein Kind, daß er mit ihnen schalte and walte
nach Willkür, und löse das Band, das mich bindet, weil ich fortan
mit meinem Leibe und mit meiner unsterblichen Seele
angehören will der Giulietta, die ich mir zu Weibe erkoren, und
der ich mich noch durch ein besonderes Gelübde auf immerdar
verbinden werde." (*Sylvesternacht*, 373)

Just as Erasmus is being forced to etch these words in blood, his wife appears to him and urges him not to write it. Erasmus throws the paper and pen far from him, and sparks begin to fly from Giulietta. He demands that Giulietta leave, and both she and Dapertutto finally do.

Later, Erasmus speaks with his wife, who is no longer irate but simply and kindly informs him that she knows about the whole incident in Italy, and because he is such a hopeless fool, she will never take him back unless he gets his reflection back. Erasmus

says good-bye to his child and leaves his home. He becomes a wanderer and meets up with Schlemihl, who has lost his shadow. They spend the rest of their days suffering in their plights together.

The opera adapts a portion of this tale into the story of Hoffmann, omitting a considerable amount of material and adding other details which slightly change the tale. In the opera, Act II takes place in Venice as opposed to Florence. Perhaps the romantic reputation of Venice with its gondolas and singing gondoliers seemed to be a more effective locale for an operatic production. The scene begins with Giulietta dressed in beautiful flowing robes, singing the praises of love and passion. Hoffmann joins in the singing, and Schlemil, Giulietta's lover, expresses his disdain for the poet. A footman reports that gambling will begin and they all leave to play cards. As soon as Dapertutto is alone, he displays a large diamond which he will use to entice Giulietta into his services. She enters and, being reminded of the fate of Schlemil, she is easily persuaded to help Dapertutto gain Hoffmann's reflection.

Dapertutto leaves and Giulietta convinces Hoffmann of her love for him and asks him to give her something she can remember him by. He grants her his reflection. Schlemil, seeing them together, is encouraged by Pittichinaccio to kill Hoffmann. Dapertutto provides Hoffmann with a mirror to see how pale he has become. Nicklausse warns Hoffmann that he should leave Venice as soon as possible, but Hoffmann does not want to leave Giulietta and, therefore, refuses. Giulietta signals to Hoffmann that he should come to her room and Hoffmann demands the key from Schlemil. Enraged, Schlemil challenges Hoffmann to a duel. Hoffmann kills Schlemil and takes the key, only to discover that Giulietta has left with Pittichinaccio on a gondola. The two laugh mockingly at the humiliated and heartbroken Hoffmann.

The opera clearly revises the original tale by assigning to Hoffmann the role of Erasmus. Erasmus was not a drunken bachelor, rather a married man whose passions

consumed him while he was away from his wife. Dapertutto and Giulietta in the tale seem to be two different manifestations of the demonic, whereas in the opera, Dapertutto is the only demonic figure, and he uses the mortal Giulietta for his purposes. As was clear in the Prologue and in Act I, the demonic figure's only purpose is to disrupt the poet's life and leave him alone and humiliated.

In the tale Giulietta's lover is Ciarlatano, whereas in the opera her jealous lover is Schlemil. In the tale Schlemihl commiserates with Erasmus (or general Suwarow) because they both share similar fates. Using Schlemil as Giulietta's lover is effective, however, because it gives her character the reputation of working for the devil by manipulating men. In the tale Erasmus killed Ciarlatano with the latter's own dagger; in the opera, Hoffmann and Schlemil duel with swords.

Nicklausse's protective behavior in the opera is parallel to Friedrich's in the tale. Nicklausse in the opera is, however, more than a faithful friend. Even in the tale, Friedrich loses hope that Erasmus will ever come to his senses. Nicklausse continually urges Hoffmann to flee the dangerous situation. In some versions he also sings the "Barcarolle" duet with Giulietta at the opening of the act, giving some indication as to the his actual identity.

Clearly, the tale is too long to adapt every detail for the opera, but as the librettists did not include much information from the tale, there is somewhat of a difference in themes between the tale and Act II. The tale focuses on the total destruction of Erasmus' character. Ultimately he must deny his wife and child; he must break his most solemn vows and sacrifice his family in order to have a complete relationship with Giulietta. Although he does not choose to sacrifice his wife and child, he is forced to live with the consequences of his earlier choices. Erasmus' fate is decided by his unbridled passions as well as by direct intervention of demonic forces.

In the opera Hoffmann is a drunken bachelor who becomes the plaything of Giulietta, the courtesan, who also happens to willingly submit her services to the devil. Act II focuses more on Dapertutto's schemes to have Hoffmann's reflection, so that he can destroy Hoffmann's happiness. This is also in keeping with the theme of the Prologue: that the role of the devil is to be a constant nuisance and threat in Hoffmann's life.

Chapter V - Act III

In Act III Hoffmann is in love with Antonia (spelled Antonie in the original tale), who is endowed with a unusually beautiful voice and who is also very gentle in nature. The original tale, *Rat Krespel*, is the basis for this act, yet a comparison of the tale and the operatic adaptation shows that the librettists altered, once more, the original plot and characters quite significantly to fit them into their plot.

Rat Krespel is narrated in the first person by a young student-musician who begins the tale by describing the strange antics of the protagonist, Rat Krespel (spelled Crespel in the opera). As a lawyer and diplomat Krespel had successfully helped a prince obtain a sizable territory, and the prince wished to express his gratitude by allowing Krespel to build the house of his dreams. Krespel hired his construction workers and ordered that four walls be built until he told them to stop building. After they had built four very high walls, he decided where the windows and doors should be placed. His unusual taste and approach to architecture left his neighbors very curious about him. Upon completion of the house, Krespel hosted a party, intended for his workers, but which other neighbors attended. The dinner party became a ball later that evening.

The narrator has the opportunity to meet Rat Krespel at the home of a mutual friend, a professor. At the small social gathering the narrator observes how the professor and his family are quite amused and not the least bit offended by Krespel, who appears clumsy and harsh. The professor's niece, charmed by Krespel's tricks, inquires about Antonie, which immediately changes Krespel's good mood into a sour one:

Krespel schnitt ein Gesicht, als wenn jemand in eine bittere Pomeranze beißt, und dabei aussehen will, als wenn er Süßes genossen; aber bald verzog sich dies

Gesicht zur graulichen Maske, aus der recht bitterer, grimmiger, ja, wie es mir schien, recht teuflischer Hohn herauslachte. (*Rat Krespel*, 8)

The professor immediately changes the subject to violins. Krespel seems to recover somewhat from his terrible reaction, but he leaves the professor's house soon thereafter. The narrator questions the professor about the mysterious Rat Krespel, and the professor explains that Krespel is a master violin builder. Krespel constantly buys new violins which he plays only once, dissects, and never plays again. The professor continues to explain that before Krespel lived in their area, he lived with a young woman on a different street. Neighbors were curious about him, and though he seemed rude, they discovered that he was actually quite likable. The neighbors noticed that he left and returned after a few months. One night after his return, they heard beautiful singing coming from his house--particularly that of a woman's voice. Suddenly, the music stopped and they heard the shouting of men's voices, a fight, and a woman crying. One man left, and afterwards, everything appeared to return to normal. The professor explains that no one yet knows what the relationship is between Krespel and the young woman, Antonie, but most believe that he dominates and controls her strictly.

The narrator's curiosity is piqued and he schemes to get to Krespel's house to meet Antonie. In the two or three times that he met Krespel, he received an invitation from the man to visit his home and see the violin collection. The narrator chooses to take advantage of the offer.

While at Krespel's house, the narrator does not get the opportunity to see Antonie. However, he discovers that Krespel has one particular violin which he chooses not to dissect, for he believes it has its own inner nature, and he plays it for Antonie. When the narrator requests that Krespel perform something on the violin, Krespel declines and urges the narrator to leave. Krespel gives him a piece of a string from a famous violin as a keepsake.

During the narrator's next visit to Krespel's house he does meet Antonie and quickly discovers how remarkably beautiful she is. He acknowledges that he would not spend so much time at Krespel's if it were not for Antonie, because Krespel's antics become quite tiresome. One night, as Krespel works on a violin and makes a great discovery about its unique construction, the narrator ends up at the piano, requesting that Antonie sing. Krespel is infuriated and demands that the narrator leave and never return. The narrator tells his experiences to the professor, who chuckles and explains that Krespel is not insane, as the narrator believes.

Two years later, as the narrator is passing through the town of H***, he hears a choir in the distance and discovers that the music is for a funeral service. When he realizes that Antonie is dead, he is convinced that Rat Krespel has committed a serious crime and decides to go to Krespel's home. Krespel is dressed strangely, girded with a violin bow as if it were a sword, which he had broken in two after the funeral. The narrator is convinced Krespel is insane and demands to hear the truth about Krespel and Antonie. The narrator then reveals what Krespel told him.

Twenty years earlier, Krespel's love for violins had brought him to Venice where he met Angela, a prima donna. The two fell in love and married, but kept their marriage a secret, because she did not want to take his name or have her reputation changed in any way. Charming as she was to her audiences, Krespel grew weary of her whimsical and demanding personality (which Krespel believed was so typical of such divas). All of Krespel's acquaintances told him that he should be thankful to have the chance to put up with her.

One day while he was playing his violin, she was distracting him with her flirtatious wiles and he accidentally hit her with his arm and bow. She grabbed the bow and broke it, which prompted him to pick her up and throw her out the window. He returned to Germany without ever knowing what happened to her, only to find out ten

months later that Angela had given birth to a baby girl and had also become very gentle in her demeanor. In a letter she urged him to return to Venice, but he feared that his presence would trigger her past behavior. Thus, they maintained an exchange of love letters. Eventually she travelled to the town of F*** in Germany, where she captured the hearts of the German audiences. She also reported to Krespel that their lovely daughter Antonie was developing into quite the singer. Antonie eventually became of marrying age and was engaged to a fine young musician and composer. However, the night before Antonie was to be wed, Krespel received word from a Dr. R*** that Angela died of a terrible cold. Krespel had to go to F*** to take custody of his daughter.

In F*** he discovered that Antonie had all the finest qualities of her mother, minus the problematic ones. When he heard her singing, he was amazed by her voice, but he also noticed red spots develop on her cheeks, and he feared what the spots might mean. Dr. R*** reported that the singing could lead to death, for she had a lung problem which actually gave her the beautiful voice, but which would also cause premature death if she continued to sing.

Krespel explained the situation to his daughter, saying that she could choose a short life with worldly pleasures, or she could give him lifelong happiness, which he never knew before, if she would only promise never to sing again. Krespel brought Antonie back to H***. Her lover, B***, soon followed, and while B*** was playing the piano and Antonie was singing, the red spots developed. Finding Antonie on the floor, convinced she was dead, Krespel sent B*** away, blaming him for her death. Antonie recovered from the incident, but Krespel insisted on keeping her away from the public so that no one could encourage her to sing. Thus, they led a very private life.

One night, while he was sleeping, Krespel heard B*** playing the piano and Antonie singing a song B*** had composed for her. Krespel was both enthralled by the

music and anguished by the thought of Antonia singing. He saw Antonie and B*** embracing, and yet the music continued. Krespel fainted and upon regaining consciousness, he was frightened by his dream and decided to check on Antonie:

Sie lag mit geschlossenen Augen, mit holdselig lächelndem Blick, die Hände fromm gefaltet, auf dem Sofa, als schliefe sie und träume von Himmelswonnen und Freudigkeit. Sie war aber tot. (*Rat Krespel*, 30)

Act III of the *Tales of Hoffmann* takes place in Munich and opens with Antonia accompanying herself as she sings about her lost love. She explains to her father that her mother is reborn in her every time she sings. Crespel reminds her that she cannot sing anymore. The "rebirth" of the mother in her seems to parallel the power of the violin in the tale. Just as Antonia's mother (in the opera) is reborn in her when she sings, in the tale Antonia feels she sings through her father's violin.

Crespel reveals that he has to come to Munich to get away from Antonia's lover, Hoffmann. This detail in the opera is similar to the original tale, although the actual locations are not the same. The mostly-deaf servant Franz (a servant role appears in every act) agrees not to let anyone in the house. He provides comic relief as he sings about his aspirations to be a good singer and dancer. Hoffmann sneaks in and asks Franz to fetch Antonia. She appears and they confess their love and desire to be married the following day. Hoffmann eventually admits he is somewhat jealous of her love for music. She asks that he not forbid her to sing the way her father has. Hoffmann does not understand why she should not sing, but upon hearing her father coming, he hides, saying that he must find out about this mystery surrounding Antonia. At this moment, Hoffmann parallels the narrator in the original tale more than B***, Antonia's lover, for the narrator, too, was driven to find out the strange story behind Antonia and her father. Crespel enters, convinced that he hears Hoffmann and expresses his personal wish that Hoffmann, go to the devil.

Shortly thereafter, Dr. Miracle, the demonic figure, makes his entrance. The character of "Dr. Miracle" does not exist in *Rat Krespel*, rather it comes from the fourth anecdote in *Sylvesternacht*. Signor Dapertutto is referred to as the *Wunderdokter*, and there he tries to give Erasmus' wife and child a potion, as Dr. Miracle actually does give Antonia. In fact, the doctor in *Rat Krespel* is a thoroughly benign figure. This adaptation of the *Wunderdokter* from *Sylvesternacht* was necessary because there is no demonic figure in *Rat Krespel* at all.

Dr. Miracle asks to see Antonia, to which Crespel responds (in some versions), "Si tu fais un pas, je te jette par la fenêtre." (Barbier, 50) This idea is taken, of course, out of context from the tale, in which Krespel throws Angela out the window. In the opera Hoffmann and Crespel both are seized with fear about what Dr. Miracle may do to Antonia. Crespel observes as Dr. Miracle directs an invisible being to sit down. Dr. Miracle asks how old the being is, and he hears her answer that she is twenty (Antonia's age of twenty in the opera corresponds to her age in the tale). Crespel and Hoffmann are terrified by the actions of Miracle and the ghost. Dr. Miracle forces the ghost to sing and Antonia's voice is heard. Finally, Dr. Miracle watches the ghost leave the room, and he tries to convince Crespel that he can help save Antonia's life with his potions. Crespel accuses Dr. Miracle of being a murderer (implying that he killed Crespel's wife) and demands that he leave.

Crespel and Dr. Miracle leave and Hoffmann and Antonia return together. Understanding the dreadful situation, Hoffmann begs Antonia to forget her dreams of glory and success as a singer and to give up singing altogether. This notion, that Antonia is torn between glory and success on one hand and her father and Hoffmann on the other, is not based on the original tale. At no time does Antonie mention the success she could have as a singer. She simply regrets having to give up music which she so loves. In fact, her dilemma in the tale is whether she should give up her singing for her

father's happiness or continue singing with her lover, B***. In the tale she chooses to stop singing for Krespel. In the opera Hoffmann convinces her to give up singing so that they can be together. Hoffmann leaves, and Dr. Miracle appears, tempting her with the glory she has chosen to forfeit. He convinces Antonia that Hoffmann only loves her for her beauty and that he will eventually carry on an affair with another woman. Antonia is confused and turns to her mother's life-size portrait for guidance. In the tale there is no mention of a portrait of Angela, nor is there any indication that a supernatural relationship exists between the mother and daughter. Dr. Miracle conjures up the mother, and she beckons Antonia to keep singing. Antonia sings while Dr. Miracle accompanies her on the violin. Antonia finally collapses and Dr. Miracle breaks his violin in triumph (much as Krespel breaks his bow when Antonia dies). Crespel enters the room to find his daughter on the floor. She utters a few last words about love and dies. Hoffmann enters and is accused by Crespel of killing Antonia. Nicklausse prevents Crespel from attacking Hoffmann. Dr. Miracle mysteriously appears and confirms that Antonia is dead.

Of the three tales, *Rat Krespel* seems to have been the most difficult to adapt to the operatic plot. Besides the fact that characters are changed, added, and/or left out, the theme of the original tale is altered. Interestingly, the course of events in Act III is also thematically different from that of Acts I and II in the opera.

First of all, as was mentioned before, Antonie did not have a dilemma as to whether she should lead a life of fame and glory as opposed to silence and long life. The dilemma in the opera in Act III is also not Hoffmann's dilemma. Hoffmann is not tempted by the demonic power; in fact, he, unlike Antonia's lover in the tale, requests that Antonia give up singing. Unlike the pattern of the first two acts, the demonic intervention is not coupled with an act of passion by Hoffmann, which leaves him humiliated and hurt. Rather, Hoffmann becomes a scapegoat for a crime he did not

commit. Secondly, the demonic intervention in this act had to be effected by characters that do not occur in the tale. This was accomplished by the addition of Dr. Miracle and the apparition of Angela. In this way, Act III maintains the supernatural and demonic elements found in the previous two acts. Thirdly, *Rat Krespel* is more about a father and daughter and their supernatural connection through music. The tale focuses far more on the idiosyncratic character of Krespel himself. His character is not at all developed in the opera, where he is simply a father who loves his daughter. Finally, the character of Nicklausse parallels no one in the tale. His presence is necessary, however, as he continues to play the role of guardian angel.

Chapter VI - Epilogue

In Acts I, II, and III, we have seen Hoffmann carry on love affairs with three different types of women, each epitomizing a particular quality: complacency, passion, and purity, respectively. In each affair Hoffmann's relationships are destroyed by a demonic figure and Hoffmann ends up humiliated or heartbroken. The demonic figure uses direct control over Hoffmann and direct control of his lovers to accomplish his goals.

The Epilogue concludes the opera by showing how Hoffmann is transformed from a love-sick man to a poet, inspired by his muse who was formerly Nicklausse. The scene is a return to Luther's tavern, where a drunken Hoffmann concludes the narration of his love affairs. The tavern proprietor announces the success of Stella's performance. Nicklausse reiterates that Stella is the culmination of three women, and Hoffmann becomes hostile and suggests that they all drown their feelings in the divine madness of alcohol. The students are willing to join Hoffmann in his drunkenness, and Hoffmann ends up on the floor, with only Lindorf left with him in the tavern. Stella appears and asks if Hoffmann is asleep. Lindorf explains to Stella, as he escorts her out of the tavern, that Hoffmann is completely drunk. When Hoffmann raises his head, he hears and sees the vision of his muse, Nicklausse, transformed. The muse beckons Hoffmann to give up fleeting earthly relationships and dedicate himself solely to his art.

The events that take place in the Epilogue are not based on a Hoffmann tale. The librettists assert in the Epilogue that it was Hoffmann's disastrous love affairs which drove him to commit his life solely to his art. The librettists further imply that these love experiences which drove Hoffmann to become a poet became the raw material for the three tales, *Sylvesternacht*, *Der Sandmann* and, *Rat Krespel*. Another implication in

the opera is that Hoffmann's stories of love affairs were true, whereas the tales he wrote after the three romances were embellished versions of his experiences and he changed them to suit his own literary purposes.

There is no clear indication in E.T.A. Hoffmann's biographies that he experienced such love affairs as are described in the tales. However, the content of the Epilogue is not completely without a biographical basis. Hoffmann critics noted a change in Hoffmann's writing career after a young music student, Julie Marc, whom Hoffmann taught and adored, became engaged to marry another man. Critic Kenneth Negus explains:

In summing up the reasons for Hoffmann's transformation from musician to writer--a complex subject indeed--one should first consider the suffering that his role as musician caused him, and lack of motivation for continuing in it. There was also his unfortunate love for his vocal pupil, Julie Marc. In addition to the obvious problems associated with a married man's love for a girl just entering womanhood, Hoffmann had to witness her being practically sold into a marriage of convenience with a man whose vileness seems beyond question. The necessity for a separation from her meant the loss of the person to whom his music was dedicated, and with whom he shared it in performances. This act of renunciation apparently caused the crystallization of an inward image that needed a more visible representation than music could possibly offer The transition from music to poetry was further encouraged when Hoffmann left Bamberg for his short but critical period in Leipzig and Dresden. In fact, the experiences here were such that it is

scarcely an exaggeration to say that Hoffmann was driven to poetry. The Julie crisis was only the beginning of this process (Negus, 48-49).

The Epilogue completes the opera by showing Hoffmann's transformation into a dedicated poet. But other thematic elements in the opera (not in the tales) are also resolved, namely Nicklausse's metamorphosis into Hoffmann's Muse. In the original play, the same performer plays Stella and the Muse. In the version being discussed here, Nicklausse turns into the Muse. This change is logical, since Nicklausse is clearly a woman and plays the role of the "guardian angel" throughout the opera. Furthermore, the "supernatural" aspect of a character having an omniscient perspective--and in this case changing into the Muse--is plausible in the context of Hoffmann's works, as many of his works do involve the intervention of omniscient supernatural forces in the every day world.

The role of the "demonic" in this opera is also in keeping with Hoffmann's style. The end of the opera does not leave the protagonist in a moral dilemma, faced with great temptation. Rather, the opera depicts Hoffmann as a man whom the devil sought out. The "demonic" does not destroy Hoffmann, but as the real author himself wrote in *Abenteuer einer Sylvesternacht*, "Für den Sylvesterabend spart mir der Teufel jedesmal ein ganz besonderes Feststück auf . . . Hülfe findet er überall" (*Sylvesternacht*, 343). The demonic seeks Hoffmann out and hopes only to make his life miserable. In the Epilogue, the desperate poet dedicates himself to the service of his Muse, and perhaps by doing so, removes himself from the grasp of the demonic.

Chapter VII - Conclusion

Jacques Offenbach's opera *Les contes d'Hoffmann* was successful in 1881 in Paris at the *Opéra-Comique* and still is today because the music was popular and because the "Hoffmannesque" adaptation of E.T.A. Hoffmann's life and tales is equally appealing. The librettists were able to create a "fantastic" story concerning the famed romantic author's life and works by combining the supernatural elements in Hoffmann's stories with supernatural events in the Prologue and Epilogue, fictitious though they are. This supernatural intervention is accomplished mainly through the characters of Lindorf, Nicklausse, and the Muse.

One may ask the question, what quality of the opera allows it to maintain such widespread popularity? The flexibility of the libretto is possible because the whole plot is essentially a linking of disconnected tales through two characters and the central theme: Hoffmann's pursuit of love affairs which are doomed to fail because of unavoidable demonic intervention. The separate tales on which the opera was based are extremely entertaining in and of themselves. The task of the librettists was to develop a plausible combination and adaptation of these tales (although with significant editing) that could portray the real E.T.A. Hoffmann's life. Clearly, the tales inspired a score which is also responsible for the widespread popularity. *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians* claims: "The appeal of the individual numbers of *Les contes d'Hoffmann* and the fantastic nature of the story kept the work in the international opera repertory" ("Jacques Offenbach", 512) Surely variations of the present day production will continue to evolve, but the unique content, based on Hoffmann's fantastic tales and personal life may be the real reason audiences will continue to enjoy the opera, however it is performed.

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