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## ***DAS UNHEIMLICHE AND WOMEN: THE CASE OF THE TALES OF HOFFMANN<sup>1</sup>***

**Abstract:** This paper analyses Freud's concept of *Das Unheimliche* used to describe a strange proximity between the known and the unknown, whether as something acquainted represents itself with an extraneous shape or as something extraneous discovers an element of intimacy in itself. Freud inaugurated this concept in the text *Das Unheimliche* in 1919 referring to cases in which the subject in relation to objects or events has feelings that range from usual closeness to the point of utter automated perception, when an object or event appears strange. The automatism of repetition is only one of manifestations of *Das Unheimliche*.

Freud wrote this text responding to the text by Ernest Jentsch's "On the Psychology of *Des Unheimlichen*" ("Über die Psychologie des Unheimlichen") from 1906 arguing on the importance and significance of the doll Olympia in Hoffmann's story "The Sandman". The position of Olympia – whether she was seen as alive or as a machine – remained the main issue in late discussions of various authors. Therefore, *Das Unheimliche* and women are very closely related, not only because the concept is based on the female character of Olympia from the story, but also because Freud himself emphasized the *Das Unheimliche* character of the female body.

The paper discusses the relation between *Das Unheimliche* and women, and reconsiders the relation between *Das Unheimliche* aspects of female characters in *The Tales of Hoffmann*. Short stories "The Sandman", "Councillor Krespel" and "A New Year's Eve Adventure" were also chosen by Jules Barbier and Michel Carré for the opera "Tales of Hoffmann" by Jacques Offenbach, in which the leading roles of Stela, Olympia, Antonia and Giulietta are in fact one woman who takes a variety of forms.

**Key words:** *Das Unheimliche*, women, mechanism, E.T.A. Hoffmann, Olympia

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Short Circuits that, as Slavoj Žižek often reminds us in his writings, operates as a wrong connection in a network, actually, is the best metaphor for critical reading: “to take a major classic (text, author, notion), and read it in a short-circuiting way, through the lance of a “minor” author, text, or conceptual apparatus.”<sup>2</sup> Naturally, Žižek understands minor in the key of Deleuzian meaning, not of lower quality or meaning but as marginalized, sidelined from major theoretical or ideological lines. “If the minor reference is well chosen, such a procedure can lead to insights which completely shatter and undermine our common perceptions”.<sup>3</sup>

One of such lateral concepts in art theory and at the same time in psychoanalysis, with the now long tradition of re-reading, is the concept of *Das Unheimliche*. This, according to all authors, marginalized concept, shall be reconsidered here in relation to the role and place of women in it. This comparison has been conducted so far in the radical feminist and deconstructivist theories of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, initially not only because the very concept is based on a female character – the doll Olympia from the story “The Sandman”, but also because Freud, who wrote about it in an essay *Das Unheimliche*, also wrote about the *Das Unheimliche* character of the female body.

Freud’s text which he himself classified in his minor works<sup>4</sup>, and his reading of the female character from Hoffmann’s story “The Sandman” will be re-read in this text in relation to another, less known text by the psychoanalyst Theodor Reik – “The Three Women in a Man’s Life” following the examples of the female characters from Hoffmann’s other stories, those that make up the core of the libretto for the comic opera *The Tales of Hoffmann*. So a short circuit shall be established between two psychoanalysts and their texts – Freud and Reik, having Freud’s text recognised as the main and Reik’s as secondary. Already established connections and relations between Freud and Hoffmann, Offenbach and Hoffmann, as well as between Offenbach and Reik, or their texts, which now form a network of texts, shall offer the *Das Unheimliche* reading of the female characters (Olympia, Antonia and Giulietta) in the opera *The Tales of Hoffmann*.

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<sup>2</sup> Mladen Dolar, *Voice and Nothing More*, The MIT Press, Cambridge, London, 2006, p.vii.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Freud called it that way at the beginning of his text; a less important work deals with a less important concept.

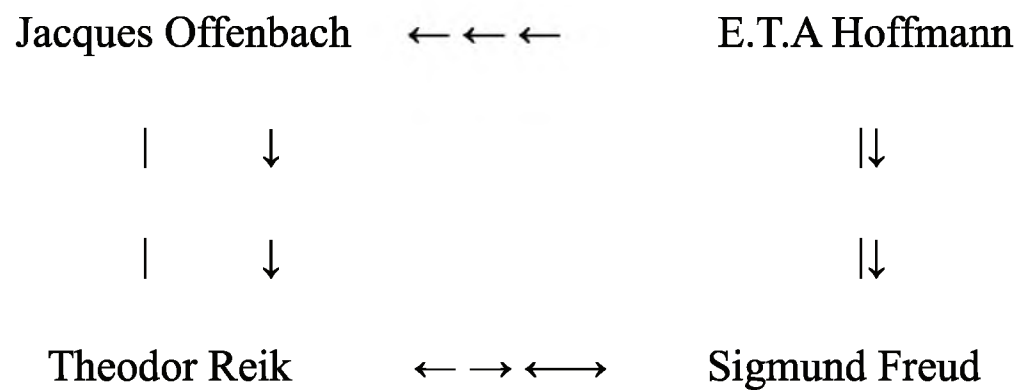


Diagram: Authors' Influences

### Fathers, sons and three women in their lives

In many myths, as well as in literature, there are stories about the “three women (in a man’s life)” and their different roles: from “Cinderella” (three daughters), over the Greek myth “The Judgement of Paris” (Athena, Hera and Aphrodite) to Shakespeare’s “King Lear” (Goneril, Reagan and Cordelia). Theodor Reik wrote in 1949 the article “Three women in a man’s life” about three women from Offenbach’s *The Tales of Hoffmann*.<sup>5</sup>

Theodor Reik (1888, Vienna – 1969, New York) was a Viennese psychoanalyst, one of the first students of Freud to remain faithful to his professional principles and theories till the end of his life, unlike many other of Freud’s followers and colleagues. Since Theodore lost his father when he was eighteen, Freud had become a father figure. At the beginning of his career, Reik was a secretary of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society, and after leaving for the United States in 1948, he became a founder of the National Psychological Association for Psychoanalysis in New York.

Together with his wife, Reik collaborated with Freud on the text *Das Unheimliche* published in 1919 and carried out large preparatory research for this article.<sup>6</sup> In 1923, he published a study “The Strange One God and God’s Own” (“Der eigene Gott und der Fremde”) that never became widely known nor significant in psychoanalytic circles. This work of his is one of the first and probably the most important application of the concept *Das Unheimliche* in the psy-

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<sup>5</sup> Theodor Reik, “The Three Women in a Man’s Life“ in: William Phillips,(ed.) *Art and Psychoanalysis*, American Book – Stratford Press, New York, 1957, p. 152.

<sup>6</sup> In his text *Das Unheimliche* Freud thanks him: “I owe Dr. Theodore Reik for the following parts (...)”, i.e. for the collection of various meanings of the researched concept, in: Sigmund Freud, *The Uncanny*. [cited 2006 Jul 22]. Available from: <http://web.mit.edu/allanmc/www/freud1.pdf>, p.221.

choanalytical approach to the study of religion. However, Freud never brought up nor referred to this work by Reik anywhere, as might have been expected at least in the works “Civilization and its Discontents” (“Das Unbehagen in der Kultur”) from 1930, and “Moses and Monotheism” (“Der Mann Moses und die monotheistische Religion”) from 1939, particularly bearing in mind that Reik had researched the relation between *Das Unheimliche* and ritual circumcision among Jews.

In the article “The Three Women in a Man’s Life” from 1949, Theodor Reik wrote about memories of his father’s testimony about the fire in the Vienna Ringtheater in 1881 at the first performance of *The Tales of Hoffmann* opera, which were common in theatres at that time, when his father saved himself by jumping through the window of the theatre. Many linked this catastrophe to the author of the opera, believing that Jacques Offenbach was a “jettatore”, an evil wizard and that his “evil eye” had caused the fire, while young Theodore only saw the similarity with his father in Offenbach’s photo. It was not until 1901 when the opera was performed again in Vienna, that the thirteen year old Theodor attended the event with his sister.

At the beginning<sup>7</sup> and at the end<sup>8</sup> of his large text, Reik wrote about a melody (it turned out that it was the one from *The Tales of Hoffmann*), which haunted him for days before he accidentally saw Offenbach’s biography in the library and noticed strange coincidences between his life and that of Jacques Offenbach (which he writes about): at the moment when he wrote the text he was sixty-one years old and was just about to complete his large work, afraid that he would die before finishing it, just as Offenbach who did not live to see the performance of his opera *The Tales of Hoffmann*, or Antonia from Hoffmann’s story “Councillor Krespel” who died before completing her song. He did not specify which part or book he referred to, but it was most probably his psychoanalytical biography “Fragments of a Great Confession” published in 1949 (when he also wrote “The

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<sup>7</sup> “There is an unknown melody that has been haunting me now for several days. It appears sometimes very clearly and sometimes only the first bars are heard by the inner ear as a faint echo. It came like an unannounced guest one has once known, but whose name one has forgotten. Its repeated emergence irks me now and I try to turn it away as if the unrecognized guest had stayed too long and has become wearisome. If I but knew what that tune is! I am searching in vain in my memory. I must have heard it long, long ago. Where was it?”. Theodor Reik “The Three Women in a Man’s Life“ in: William Phillips (ed.), *Art and Psychoanalysis*, American Book – Stratford Press, New York, 1957, p.151.

<sup>8</sup> I now remember when the melody that haunted me for several days first emerged. It was a week ago on my way back from the Public Library. I had looked up something there. Before leaving I had seen on a desk a book which was a biography of Jacques Offenbach.” Ibid. p.164.



Three Women in a Man's Life") in which he described events in his life, inner conflicts and their impact and significance for the events in his life and profession.

Identified with Offenbach, Reik found similarities with private moments. At one point, in his sixties, Reik explored the parallel between his life and the life of Jacques Offenbach: both were born into Jewish, middle-class families, Reik seventy years after Offenbach.

Reik mentioned these coincidences deliberately: he wrote about Offenbach as a composer, whereas, in fact, it was the librettist whose selection of Hoffmann's stories that made up the content of *The Tales of Hoffmann* and on the basis of which he established the thesis of "three women in a man's life"; it was the narrative, not the music that he was interested in, in Hoffmann's stories, and about which he wrote in "The Three Women in a Man's Life". He started from Offenbach's opera, but he was concerned with the script-writer and his choice of three stories.

On the other hand, as it was later proved, Freud started from Hoffmann's stories although, in fact, he was responding to Jentsch and discussed with him the origins of the *Das Unheimliche* feeling. He began with an analysis of "The Sandman" finding arguments to explain the concept he was writing about (and which he considered as minor in the body of psychoanalytic concepts) through his more significant concept – the castration complex: acknowledging its importance by another text and through another concept.<sup>9</sup>

### ***Das Unheimliche* in theory**

Freud's text *Das Unheimliche* is not the first in theory that deals with the concept of the same name, but it is certainly the most important and in this context the most referential for the history of the development of this concept in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Since it was written by Freud in 1919, today we can speak about almost a hundred years in the life and fluctuations of this concept in theory; sometimes very present and ongoing, and sometimes almost non-existent, as undercurrents, the concept of *Das Unheimliche*<sup>10</sup> persists on the theoretical scene, linking itself very often with other theoretical ideas.

Freud identified *Das Unheimliche* as an aesthetic feature often associated with the appearance of the unknown and fear, considering it as a fundamentally

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<sup>9</sup> The analysis of little Hans about which he wrote in the study "Little Hans" was essential for Freud's discovery of the complex of castration.

<sup>10</sup> The concept remained in the German original in the text, and for reasons see: Mariela Cvetić, *Das Unheimliche. Psihoanalitičke i kulturalne teorije prostora*, Orion art, Arhitektonski fakultet, Beograd, 2011, section: *Lingvistika i (kvazi) naučni termin: o neprevodivom*.

enigmatic, subjective experience. At the beginning of his text he performed a lexical analysis and cited counterparts to this German term in other languages. Freud distinguished three main ways in which *Das Unheimliche* is manifested: the return of the repressed (the familiar that suddenly becomes strange (*Das Unheimliche*)), the appearance of the doppelganger (dualism, separation, reflection, repetition, copy; duplication, division, replacement of the self) and the third: the strange, mechanical repetition of word assemblies, symptoms and/or events.

Freud wrote *Das Unheimliche* by discussing with Ernst Jentsch<sup>11</sup>, that is, with his article “Über die Psychologie des Unheimlichen”<sup>12</sup> the origin of the *Das Unheimliche* emotion on the case of Hoffmann’s story “The Sandman”. They both agreed in principle that *Das Unheimliche* is a specific form of fear related to various phenomena in real life, and also to art, but the one thing they disagreed about is the source (origin) of the feeling. For both of them (Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph) Schelling’s definition for *Das Unheimliche* “is the name for everything that ought to have remained ... hidden and secret and has become visible”<sup>13</sup> was one of the primary ones. In his text, Jentsch offers a rational argument that *Das Unheimliche* is related to the intellectual insecurity of the subject regarding the foreign and unknown:

In storytelling, one of the most reliable artistic devices for producing uncanny effects easily is to leave the reader in uncertainty as to whether he has a human person or rather an automaton before him in the case of a particular character. This is done in such a way that the uncertainty does not appear directly at the focal point of his attention, so that he is not given the occasion to investigate and clarify the matter straight away; for the particular emotional effect, as we said, would hereby be quickly dissipated. In his works of fantasy, E.T. A. Hoffmann repeatedly made use of this psychological artifice with success.<sup>14</sup>

Freud rejected this definition as “intellectual impropriety”, as insufficient for the theoretical explanation of the concept.<sup>15</sup> He searched for the cause of *Das Unheimliche* beyond its simple equivalence with the strange and the unknown, and found it in psychoanalytic practice marked as the fear of damage or the total loss of the eyes (vision); in other words in the castration complex. For him, the issue of Olympia the doll is irrelevant to the other, more important ones, above

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<sup>11</sup> Ernst Jentsch (1867–1919), German psychiatrist.

<sup>12</sup> Text was wrote by Ernst Jentsch in 1906.

<sup>13</sup> Sigmund Freud, *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> Ernst Jentsch, *On the Psihopatology of the Uncanny*. [cited 2006 Jul 22]. Available from: <http://www.imageandnarrative.be/uncanny>, p.13.

<sup>15</sup> Many authors such as Nicholas Royle and Helene Coxous find this reluctance in Freud’s own essay.

all the Sandman and, in relation to him, with the idea of the theft of the eyes, which he connected to the castration complex.<sup>16</sup> The conflict between father and son, or the castration complex and its relation to vision, being seen, Freud saw as a central problem in *Das Unheimliche*, while Olympia the doll was seen as a materialization of Nathaniel's female behavior towards the father at an early age.

This essay of Freud's is the main text in the development of post-Freudian theories of fiction, reading and writing and it was elaborated in numerous texts by Derrida, Cixous, and Sarah Kofman<sup>17</sup>. The feminist deconstructive reading of Freud's essay performed by Hélène Cixous in the text "Fiction and its Phantoms: A Reading of Freud's *Das Unheimliche* stands as a model at the beginning of the process of numerous readings of Freud's text. This reading is feminist – because Freud, according to Cixous, diminishes the importance of Olympia the doll in Hoffmann's text and thus does not see the role and place of women in the castration complex<sup>18</sup> – and deconstructive – because Cixous reads Freud's essay as another fiction, not as a given psychoanalytic text. According to Cixous, Freud analyzes *Das Unheimliche* in fiction (in Hoffmann's story "The Sandman") and, at the same time, he creates a fiction out of his text, the same way he makes himself a writer of fiction out of himself as a writer, because "Freud wants to see himself as a writer, he sees the writer in himself and he is in the relation to the writer, the same relation as *Das Unheimliche* to *Das Heimliche*."<sup>19</sup>

Or, in Anneleen Masschelein's words: "If Hoffmann is Freud's duplicate, then the duplicate of *Das Unheimliche* is a fiction"<sup>20</sup>. Olympia the doll is pushed into a footnote, marginalized, and Cixous called this footnote (where Freud stored Olympia, i.e. comments about her) the "typographical metaphor for repression".<sup>21</sup>

Essentially, Freud's reading of Jentsch's text intends to humiliate and debase the text-object, especially to downplay the doll-robot Olympia for the understanding of

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<sup>16</sup> Mariela Cvetić, Ibid. p. 63.

<sup>17</sup> In the article "The Double is/and the Devil. The Uncannines of *The Sandman (Der Sandmann)*" in "Freud and Fiction" Sarah Kofman reads Freud's essay and Hoffman's story focusing on the theme of doubles.

<sup>18</sup> Castration complex is a complex in the center of which is a phantasm of castration as an answer to the child's riddle of anatomical differences between sexes.

<sup>19</sup> Helene Cixous, "Fiction and Its Phantoms: A Reading of Freud's *Das Unheimliche* (The 'uncanny')", Sigmund Freud, James Strachey, Hélène Cixous; Robert Dennomé, *New Literary History*, Vol. 7, No. 3, Thinking in the Arts, Sciences, and Literature. (Spring, 1976), pp. 525–548 and 619–645.

<sup>20</sup> Anneleen Masschelein, *The Unconcept. The Freudian Uncanny in Late-Twentieth-Century*, Sunny Press, New York, 2011, p. 120.

<sup>21</sup> Helene Cixous, Ibid, p. 537.

*Das Unheimliche*; finally, it shows that Freud did not think about the role of women in the fear of castration and tries to reduce, or eliminate, the place and importance of women in this process. According to Freud's reading, Olympia denies life, strength and autonomy – all symbolized by the eye, the phallus. Therefore, leaving aside Olympia, Freud fails to see the social importance of castration.<sup>22</sup>

According to another feminist reading of Freud's essay, by Jean-Marie Todd<sup>23</sup>, Freud ignored two motives: the central figure of woman in many examples given, and the subject of seeing and being seen, provided in the third part of the essay, towards the end, the example of female genitalia looking *Das Unheimliche* to many men. According to Todd, the woman's genitals are *Das Unheimliche* precisely because they confirm what man tried to deny – the reality of castration, proving at the same time that Freud himself denied a lot in examples provided in the essay.

### ***The Tales of Hoffmann* and Hoffmann tells: Olympia, Antonia and Giulietta**

The French librettists Jules Barbier and Michel Carré wrote the piece *The Tales of Hoffmann* (or *Fantastic Tales of Hoffmann – Les contes d'Hoffmann fantastiques*), which was first performed in 1851, in the theatre "Odeon" in Paris. Some time later, Barbier adapted the libretto for this piece to the music of composer Hector Salomon. Afterward, Solomon concede this piece to Offenbach who turned it onto the fantastic opera *The Tales of Hoffmann*, which was first performed in his home in 1879, and publicly at the Opéra-Comique in Paris in 1881, though not entirely.

In the historical context, the libretto emerged in an atmosphere of post revolution (the February Revolution) in France, in 1848, but the performance took place when the movement of Symbolism was growing. Symbolist artists established what would become the most pervasive themes in Symbolist art: love, fear, anguish, death, sexual awakening. Woman became the symbol for the expression of these universal emotions, appearing alternately as virgins and femmes fatales. These two mythical female types became staples of Symbolist imagery, appearing frequently in both visual and literary arts from the 1880s onward.

The libretto for *The Tales of Hoffmann* is a post-romantic portrait of a romantic artist created on the basis of the elements of Hoffmann's scary stories, with the difference that in this text Hoffmann the writer is the main hero to

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<sup>22</sup> Mariela Cvetiæ, Ibid. p. 83.

<sup>23</sup> Todd, Jane Marie, *The Veiled Woman in Freud's Das Unheimliche*, available at: [http://faculty-web.at.northwestern.edu/german/uncanny/Todd\\_Veiled%20woman%20in%20Freud.pdf](http://faculty-web.at.northwestern.edu/german/uncanny/Todd_Veiled%20woman%20in%20Freud.pdf) (accessed 6. 05. 2005).



whom all the described stories happened. To Offenbach, Hoffmann personified the generation of German romantics whom he admired.

The episodic structure, recurring characters, and resemblances among the three plots remind us that our unfinished business, 'the repressed', returns. Just as a life story is inevitably more and less than the sum of its episodes, the interior tales and their framing narrative, with its ambiguous conclusion, add up to more and less than a whole opera. As Hoffmann's mistress is really 'trois maitresses ... trio charmant d'enchanteresses', so this opera comprises three operas in miniature: three related works with characters in common, three variations on basic themes.<sup>24</sup>

The libretto consists of a prologue, three acts and an epilogue. In the prologue, Hoffmann comes with his friend Nicklaus into Luther's tavern, which is connected to the theatre in Nuremberg in which Mozart's *Don Giovanni*<sup>25</sup> is being performed. Lindorf, a city council member in Nuremberg is also in the tavern, who likes the singer Stella, but Stella likes Hoffmann. In the next three acts, Hoffmann entertains the whole tavern by singing about his three big and, as expected unfortunate, loves: Olympia, Giulietta and Antonia (doll, courtesan and singer). The first act is based on Hoffmann's story "The Sandman". Hoffmann (the actor in the libretto, not the writer) now talks about his love for Olympia, not Nathaniel's (as in the story).

Olympia is a mechanical doll, the daughter of two fathers, Spalanzani and Coppélius, and she has no mother. Coppélius, an optometrist, has sold special spectacles to Hoffmann so that he can see Olympia, who he falls in love with, as even prettier, but with them he cannot see that she is just a doll. Spalanzani organizes a party in order to present Olympia, in which she sings an aria, occasionally stopping, while Spalanzani winds her up to continue. Hoffmann thinks Olympia is also in love with him, until he falls over and breaks the spectacles. At the same time, Coppélius appears and tears Olympia apart in retaliation against Spalanzani. At that moment, Hoffmann realizes he was in love with a doll.

The second act is the story of Antonia based on the story "Counsellor Krespel". Antonia is the daughter of the Munich City Councillor Krespel who is suffering from a mysterious illness and has an amazing voice inherited from her mother. Because of her illness even singing can be life threatening to her. Hoffmann and she see each other and sing together.

Dr. Mirakel is treating Antonia, despite opposition from her father, who believes that the doctor is responsible for the death of her mother. It is from Dr.

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<sup>24</sup> Heather Hadlock, *Mad Loves: Women and Music in Offenbach's "Les Contes d'Hoffmann"*, Princeton University Press, 2000, p. 15.

<sup>25</sup> Hoffman has the same story with the same name – *Don Giovanni*.

Mirakel that Hoffmann learns that Antonia must not sing. Dr. Mirakel orders Antonia to sing while using magic to conjure up a vision of Antonia's mother, and causes her death.

The third act is based on the story "A New Year's Eve Adventure". Hoffmann is now in Venice, and in love with the courtesan Giulietta. He believes that this love is mutual, but it turns out that Giulietta is a collector of souls, helped by the wizard Dapertutto, and only wants to overpower Hoffmann by stealing his reflection in the mirror. Hoffmann surrenders his reflection, but she abandons him anyway. Nicklaus comes to save his friend, and Giulietta drinks poison by mistake and drops dead in Hoffmann's arms. Finally, in the epilogue, having told all these stories Hoffmann has become drunk and falls asleep, so Stella when sees him like this, also leaves him. Hoffmann remains without any of his loves.

This libretto (and the three female characters) is now the text according to which Theodor Reik establishes his thesis in the article "The Three Women in a Man's Life", just as Freud wrote his text according to one of Hoffmann's stories ("The Sandman" and the character of Olympia). Hoffmann the writer in the libretto is now Hoffmann the leading (male) protagonist, telling the stories of Hoffmann the writer. The story occurs inside the story and the libretto acquires a *mise-en-abyme* structure. The *Das Unheimliche* effect of doubling once again functions taking on a dual role (writer–hero), and also as another (double) reading of Freud's identification with the writer, which is manifested now in the libretto through a literal transition of functions: Freud the psychoanalyst in his text wants to see himself as a writer, while in *The Tales of Hoffmann* the writer 'returns' into the story by becoming an actor. And more than that: the writer – the hero Hoffmann takes the form of a (female) Scheherazadian storyteller, by talking about three women (Olympia, Antonia and Giulietta), and also about three men (Coppélius, Dapertutto and Dr. Mirakel) and their view of the women.

In every one of his attachments, the young Hoffmann met an antagonist variously called Coppelius, Dapertutto and Dr. Mirakel. This secret opponent was out to defeat the poet; he turned the beloved against Hoffmann or destroyed her. In the beginning, we see Hoffmann infatuated or in love. We see him broken in spirit, in misery and despair, at the end. The easily inflamed passion of the young man meets an antagonistic power, self-deceiving and self-harming, which causes him to fail. That which makes him luckless and miserable is conceived as outside forces. But is it not rather some agent within himself emerging from dark subterranean depths? The sinister figures, who blind him about Olympia, who cause Giulietta to jilt him, and to bring death and destruction to Antonia, are personifications only of a foiling power which is an unconscious part of Hoffmann himself. This hidden factor which frustrates him each time in the end, is operative already in his choices of his love objects. As if led by a malicious destiny, as if thwarted by a demon, he falls in love each time with a

woman who is unsuitable: Olympia, a lifeless automaton, Giulietta, a vixen, and Antonia, doomed from the beginning.<sup>26</sup>

According to Theodor Reik's rationalist argumentation those "three women in a man's life" are "the child-woman, the siren, and the artist, or a woman who oscillates between wanting to be a wife or to follow a career. Olympia, Giulietta, and Antonia would then represent three types whom every young man meets and finds attractive in different ways, appealing as they do to the playful, the sensual, and the affectionate part in him."<sup>27</sup> Olympia represents the mother, as the first object of love of a little boy, Giulietta, the mature woman loved and wanted by a grown man, and Antonia, the figure of death as the last figure of the woman that appears to an old man.

"The three female figures appear to us now in a new light: Olympia as the representative of the mother, the object of the love of the helpless and dependent little boy; Giulietta as the desired mistress of the grown man, Antonia as the personification of death which the old man is approaching".<sup>28</sup>

While writing the article "The Three Women in a Man's Life" thirty years after Freud's essay *Das Unheimliche*, Reik did not explicitly talk about the concept of *Das Unheimliche* but only about the female characters in the libretto and their "function in a man's life". The relation between *Das Unheimliche* as a concept and women is established by Freud's text, regardless of Freud denying the role of Olympia in the story in the story "The Sandman". Olympia is the example of a mechanism – the automat of the Enlightenment; she is *Das Unheimliche* because her status is unclear to the listener (of the opera) and the reader (of the story): what at first seems like a living being, eventually turns out to be a machine. Furthermore, Giulietta is a collector of souls, a courtesan, and, as a woman is *Das Unheimliche* (at the same time near and far, known and unknown). Finally, Antonia, the doppelganger of her dead mother, is the manifestation of *Das Unheimliche*, heralding death.

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<sup>26</sup> Theodor Reik, "The Three Women in a Man's Life" in: Phillips, William, *Art and Psychoanalysis*, American Book – Stratford Press, New York, 1957, p. 155

<sup>27</sup> Theodor Reik, *Ibid.*, p. 157.

<sup>28</sup> Theodor Reik, *Ibid.*, pp 159–160.