

Title: Narrative Framing and the Russian Fantastic Tale
Author: Jonathan Perkins, University of Kansas

Although Pushkin's "The Queen of Spades" and Gogol's "Portrait" have received abundant scholarly attention as Russian fantastic tales par excellence, both are atypical in their use of a heterodiegetic third-person narrator. The majority of fantastic tales employ a first-person character-narrator whose depiction of events is, by nature of personal involvement, less objective and complete. These narrators are often so unreliable that they subvert the reader's ability to interpret events, creating uncertainty and turning the fantastic tale into a game of wits between author and reader. To complicate this game of narrative misdirection, this character-narrator may also be introduced by a fictional "publisher" (e.g. Pushkin's I.P. Belkin, Gogol's Ruddy Panko, Odoevsky's B. Bezglasnyi) or may introduce other intradiegetic (and hypodiegetic) character-narrators, each with their own narrative idiosyncrasies. In these fantastic tales the narrative structure is clearly foregrounded, focusing the reader's attention as much on the presentation of the events as on its narrative content. Through an examination of Mikhail Zagoskin's *A Night on the Khopyor* (*Vecher na Khopre*, 1834) and pertinent comparisons from other fantastic tales, this paper will show that the key to understanding the fantastic tale as a genre lies in examining the tale's narrative voices and the frames in which they are found.