



On the Shaping of Characters and Classic Images in ETA Hoffman's "Sandman"

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Abstract: ETA Hoffman's short story "Sandman" is widely regarded as a masterpiece of romanticism. Many of the characters in this story are extremely classic and successful, but many of them are also exaggerated and absurd. "Sandman" make a great influence on the literature and popular culture of later generations. The characters are also constantly changing. As part of the research method of tracing the source, we then return to the text itself, analyzing its expression techniques from its lines, and gradually disassembling it to find out how he created such vivid characters through the metaphors he used between the lines and the way he arranged the plot. In this short story, many fantastical characters are created, many of whom are exaggerated and absurd, which has a great influence on traditional and contemporary books of literature. And characters often change in this story as well. Based on the typical images and general plots of the work, this article will deconstruct the work in four paragraphs. Examine how the plot and the typical characters are built.

Keywords: ETA Hoffman, "Sandman", pop culture

1. Introduction

The name Orianna is most commonly used by girls, and it is also a rare surname worldwide. Since the 19th century, it has never entered the top 1000 surnames in the United States. Its etymology is derived from the Latin Oriana, which has the same root as Aurora. The word of this meaning is dawn.

Oriana is a famous character in an e-sports game called Clockwork Demon. Thanks to Riot's popular cultural image, everyone is aware of her background story.

However, this character image does not appear to have been originally created by Riot Games, the production team for League of Legends. It comes from ETA Hoffman's short story "Sandman". The "Sandman" is about 20,000 words in length, and tells a romantic and terrifying story in the style of letters. In the following, I will start from how the article shapes classic images, and discuss the combination of expression techniques in each paragraph of the story line.

2. The general plot of the story

The author E.T.A. Hoffmann is a German romantic writer, lawyer, composer and music critic. He wrote more than 50 short stories and 3 full-length novels in his lifetime. In addition, he is a good composer and painter. His works are mysterious and grotesque. He satirizes and exposes reality with exaggeration. He describes the alienation of interpersonal relationships and free association and inner monologue, exaggeration and absurdity, multi-level structure and other techniques have deep roots in later modernist literature. The characters in his works are also often used as visual characters, such as the Frankenstein "Alchemist" who likes to develop drugs, and the goddess "The Fury of the Storm" who commands superpowers.

But when it comes to shaping the most successful characters, we still have to mention the heroine Orianna in "Sandman". Before understanding the story, we should explain its general structure. Nathanael, the protagonist in "Sandman," has a shadow from childhood: it's said that the Sandman throws sand into the eyes of children who don't sleep until the eyeballs fall off, and the Sandman collects the eyeballs and brings them back to the moon to feed on the child with sharp beaks.

Nathanael is indistinguishable from reality and believes that the lawyer Coppelius, who often visits his father secretly at night, is a sandman and that their alchemy experiments are black magic. The death of his father in an alchemical accident has caused this shadow to settle in Nathaniel's heart. One day, when he was young, Coppola, who looked exactly like Coppelius, knocked on his door to sell him "eyes" (actually glasses).

Nathanael's nightmare returns, and reality and fantasy are once again intertwined. The telescope she bought from Coppola has caused Nathanael to fall in love with Olympia, the daughter of the professor in the house across the street, and to woo her at the ball while leaving her friend Clara behind. But Olympia is really a doll made by the professor and Coppelius. Her mechanics and stiffness are apparent at first glance, and only Nathaniel has a deep relationship with her. During the argument, Coppelius gouges out Olympia's eyes and takes the doll, whereupon Nathaniel goes mad with fear and eventually

falls to his death from the tower.

3. The peep of the subject

The action motive of peeking plays the largest role in furthering the narrative. When Nathaniel was young, he peeked into the alchemy room and learned the truth about the Sandman. When he peeked into Professor Spalanzani's room, he discovered the existence of Olympia. He peeked into the process of Spalanzani and Coppola competing for the body of Olympia. The final illusion, seen with a telescope at the top of the tower. Each glimpse is accompanied by major changes in the outside world, confusing the boundary between the real world and fantasy, and eventually leading to the collapse of the individual.

On this basis, in Nathanael's eyes both Clara and Olympia are symbols (eyes). In Nathanael's eyes, the flesh is nothing but the signifier. Nathanael makes a kind of resistance against the systematic world. After the absence of patriarchy and the disappearance of the mother. Nathanael turns to literature and art and places himself at the edge of it all. That is, an environment full of alchemy technique and terrible fairy tales. This feature is also reflected in the narrative style of the novel, in the form of letters, even in the first person. In the telling, Nathanael still presents himself directly as the other person.

Unconscious oppression is always there. An imposed rule accompanies Nathanael since his birth. The subject wants to get rid of it, but must first adapt. This is a typical suspension of symbolic laws. In a word, it is a kind of rigidifying force and restricting force of ideology. The result is that even after meeting Copelius, every time he remembers, his cheeks are hot and hot blood flows in his veins.

Therefore, Nathanael's career as a novelist is preordained. According to postmodern deconstruction, the separation of body and speech act or writing enables a new form of self-composition. Whatever the possibility, it must involve resistance to the past.

The eye is the medium that connects the observer and the observed. When a person loses his eyes. The object of narcissism and its love will produce alienation. The projected phenomenon is that Nathanael believes that Olympia's eyes are full of vitality, no matter how much his friends dissuade him. In reality, however, they are a pair of lifeless eyes. This leads to the final tragedy - suicide.

This resembles in some ways the king Oedipus, whose fate determines the tragedy of Nathanael and Olympia. The beginning of the fate was the scene when Copelius found him hiding in the closet. At that moment, the function of the eye was alienated, causing the self-construction of the long life path to change from the starting point. Whether it is Clara or Olympia. Whether it is seeing Olympia's posture through a telescope or Clara's fantasy in the mirror in the last castle. Her symptoms derive from the alienation of the eye function at the beginning. This is not only about self-construction, but also about the connection with society, the environment and objects. A good life and a partner with beautiful eyes have become Narcissus' fantasy.

4. The manifestation of Sandman

In general nursery rhymes, there will be a bluffing image to deal with disobedient children. The same is true in German tradition, but in Hoffmann, the image of the sandman as punishment for children who do not sleep well is often used in nursery rhymes. It is figurative, in other words, it is not a concept but a horror character with a specific identity and entity like Santa Claus that can affect reality, so when shaping this image. Sandman is just the shadow of the protagonist's childhood, the embodiment of fear. But the Sandman actually appeared in the story, as if to announce "the real existence you are worried about". Especially in the end, Nathanael was healed by the family's song (Sunday Light), but a tap dance of Sandman during the transition, like a wizard's practice, implies that Nathanael will go crazy and fall from the building again. The character not only enhances the horror that is both real and fantasy, but also carries an extra-plot line from Sigmund Freud's essay.

5. Olympia's sewn eyes

If readers have some understanding of Cthulhu mythology, they should be able to guess why Orianna's eyes are sewn shut. Orianna's prototype, Olympia, exists as a person Nathaniel thinks he likes. Like the protagonist, his life is also determined by fate and he cannot defend himself against everything. So when you find yourself in such a situation, the best reaction is not to look. Do not interact with the outside world. In Cthulhu mythology, when people see the old gods and the old rulers (powers that cannot be resisted), they will go mad. So the best reaction is not to look and close your eyes.

In the context of the new story, Orianna's identity is that of a creator. Therefore, I am more inclined to think that resistance is the first step of creation. Personal autonomy must exist in the failures and victories one can seize, and the decision is in one's own hands. Resistance is another form of creation.

6. Conclusion

The above-mentioned unique creative techniques and unique narrative have completed this short story with great influence. The text that directly appeals to the senses has a strong impact on showing Hoffman's unique inner world, and has influenced many popular later generations. The role of culture, in addition to the "League of Legends" mentioned, there are "Blood Curse", "Dead by Daylight", "Hades" and so on.

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