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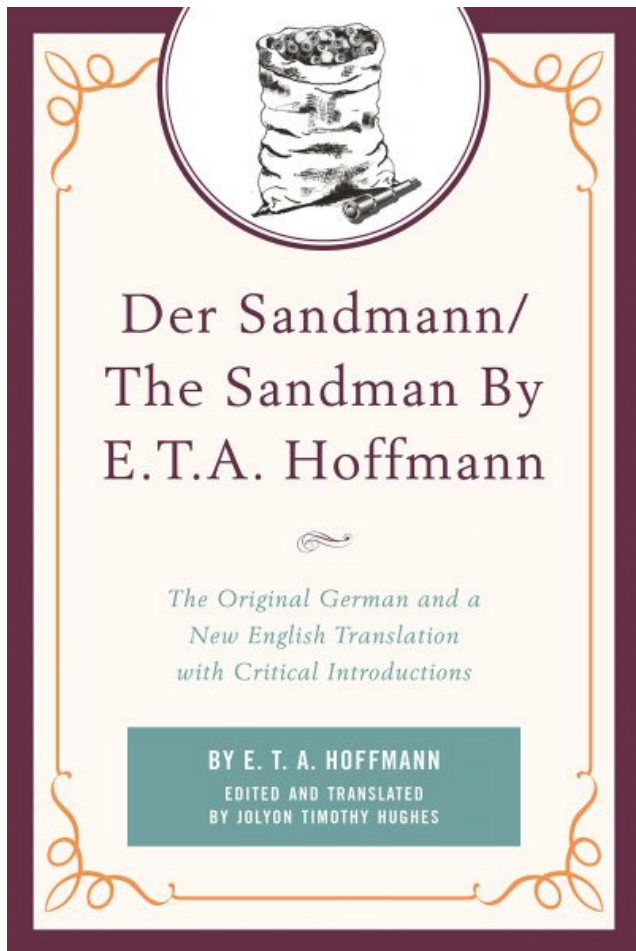
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[Der Sandmann / The Sandman](#)

February 4, 2020



Dr. Jolyon T. Hughes, Ph.D. has recently published a new translation of E.T.A. Hoffmann's *Der Sandmann* (The Sandman) in a bilingual edition that offers the reader and introduction to the Author's life as well as to the classification, themes, and characterization of the novella:

Ernst Theodor Amadeus (originally Ernst Theodor Wilhelm) Hoffmann is considered one of the fathers of German Gothic Horror. He wrote one of the first German horror novels, *Die Elixiere des Teufels* (The Devil's Elixirs), and he also wrote the story to which Tchaikovsky composed the *Nutcracker Suite*. *The Sandman* is a story that is unique in its perspective, which depends on which of the main characters' viewpoints one believes. If one follows the interpretation of the romantic, Nathanael, then there is a mad man after him (from a childhood trauma related to the Sandman). If one believes the viewpoint of Clara, the rational one, it is all in his mind and pure fantasy. Written in 1816/17, the topic of the automaton is also a question of what is real and what is merely perceived to be real, which is at the root of the uncanny, as described by Freud, among others. Blurring the lines between mechanical and human is a very contemporary issue with virtual assistants and AI's whose voices are indistinguishable from humans. This narrative is over 200 years old still and has many interesting and prescient questions at its core that modern audiences will find interesting and engaging.

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