

Symbolism behind the phantom of the opera

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Throughout the story and the original novel, the symbolic use of mirrors abound. I think much deeper it's dealt with in the original book by Gaston Leroux, and somewhat alluded to in different terms in the movie.

Nevertheless, let's take a look at the reflection in the mirror and see what's there. What is a mirror? Basically, it's just a smooth shiny surface that forms an image by reflection. When we gaze into a mirror, our reflection returns to us, and we see ourselves through our own eyes.

What reflection we see in our own mind can either be reality or distortion. Psychiatry research has actually termed a body image distortion disorder for those who look in the mirror and see themselves as something they are not. The image reflected in the mirror can have a profound effect upon us. Christine is faced with the mirror in her dressing room. The mirror calls to her to explore the depths of the Phantom and the one who has forged her inner self through his music. Through the mirror he calls to her, and bids her to look at her own image in the mirror. " Look at your face in the mirror.

I am there inside! " What she discovers in the mirror is the reflection of the Phantom, who has become part of her, dwelling inside her mind, and now bids her into his world to know him as he truly is. She succumbs and in a trance like state follows him through the mirror to his domain. In the book, the Phantom's torture chamber is a room of mirrors representing the true torture of his own life, which is the reflection of himself and the agony he feels. In the movie, we see all the mirrors are hidden and covered, until Christine removes his mask and uncovers his true appearance.

In reaction, he pulls down the coverings over the mirror that reveal the ugliness and agony of his soul. Yet, the mirrors have deeper meanings

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behind them. As humans, we are visually driven and attracted toward outward beauty, which we highly value in others and in ourselves. We often fail to understand that who we are as human beings goes far beyond our outward appearance. Beauty is also an inward quality. In astonishment the Phantom hears Christine say, " This haunted face holds no horror for me now.

It's in your soul that the true distortion lies. " How often have you looked in the reflection of the mirror and found displeasure in what you saw? I dare say most of us have. It's the mirror to our souls, our self-image, and our self-worth. It can either torture us or please us. However, your image as a human being goes far beyond the reflection of the mirror; it goes to the depth of your soul, which is eternal. Your body will waste away in the grave, but your soul and its essence will continue throughout eternity.

Would it not be a better to focus on that which is eternal within us, rather than that which is temporal and wasting away? Go to a mirror and tell me what you see. Let the reflection come back into your eyes through the window of your soul. If you see some distortion within, perhaps it's time to acknowledge it, pick up the candlestick, break the mirrors before you as the Phantom did, and leave the ugliness of your distorted soul behind and walk through to a new life. May the one who created us in His own image, open all our eyes to see the message of true beauty.