

# **Dreams and stories in Hans Christian Andersen: Metanoia as literary resource and community acceptance**

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## **Abstract**

This paper analyzes the motif of the "dream within the dream" or Metanoia as one of the most interesting structural components in the stories of Hans Christian Andersen. For example, the considerations about "The Shadow" (as well as other stories) reveal how, moreover, Metanoia has important repercussions on the aspect of "community acceptance" in the writer's work, without forgetting the role of Metanoia in the light of how stories are constructed through internal references and the duality between reality and dream.

## **Introduction: From Catharsis to Metanoia**

The main argument of the present study lies in the analysis of the literary resource of Metanoia applied to the stories of Hans Christian Andersen. In this way, it is argued that Metanoia occupies the same place in the Danish writer's stories with regard to "community acceptance" as does recourse to Catharsis in classical tragedy. Such is the ultimate goal of this essay: to show how Metanoia organizes different levels of the story as well as themes about the individual, the family and, finally, the community.

Really, the social implication of the spectator in the literary work offers one of its most significant examples in the concept of Catharsis from classical Greek tragedy. According to this notion of Catharsis, the audience's complicity in a plot culminates in a process of personal and social purification that fosters the idea of identity and of belonging to a group. Indeed, Catharsis proceeds, like the Greek tragedy itself in its origins, from a religious ritual (Dodds, 1962, p. 48, 76). It was Aristotle who established his connection with the theatrical genre and its collective or community purpose. The myth of Iphigenia offers one of the most powerful models of imbrication between religion, tragedy and collective intention (Bendlin, 2002).

Once the literary experience in Western cultural history changes from a social experience to an individual or intimate practice, Catharsis remains on a more hidden

plane. In fact, literary creation becomes self-sufficient over time, in such a way that references to the tradition of Literary History, to school models and to the knowledge acquired as a reader predominate. The experience of purification becomes a simulacrum, especially when the stamp of Christianity unfolds the perception that you can possess of the world and of sacred texts that are considered revealed by Divinity. A new concept is needed to replace the idea of Catharsis, especially when literary creation seeks to influence the social environment (Clarkson, 1989).

This concept is known as "Metanoia". Like Catharsis, Metanoia has religious origins. But, in the face of Catharsis, Metanoia does not have a precise conceptual definition, and only in contemporary thought, with the development of Psychology, has it found a space in Literary Studies (Avanessian & Hennig, 2017). What, however, is Metanoia? Literally, it is about the transformation of individual consciousness (Myers, 2011). This definition is transferred to literature basically when the transformation takes place in dreams.

The study of Metanoia focuses on the detection of the expressions dedicated to sleep and dreams in Andersen's stories in which reveries appear in a relevant way and also on the analysis of the meanings of dreams for the interpretation of the story. In order to understand that this is a literary motif, it is necessary to know diachronically the evolution of the concept of Metanoia, from its religious and mythological origins to Jung's psychoanalysis.

Certainly, through a diachronic perception, from a mythological key Metanoia is conceived as a divinity that is opposed to the opportunity or "kairos": it is like a repentance, a remorse, following the figure treated, for example, in the well-known painting "The Calumny of Apelles" by Sandro Botticelli (Antonopoulos, 2002; Agnoletto, 2016).

More specifically, from a Christian key, the concept of Metanoia responds to a transformation of the individual, to his spiritual conversion (Brown, 2000, p. 147-150), with pedagogic implications also (Bertucio, 2016). However, in the face of Catharsis, where purification has a community aspect, Metanoia does not transcend from the individual's own, although it does place it in a social key: it is a matter of seeing itself as another so that others perceive change, and too as a form of autofiction into a literary work or into a dream (Warzecha, 2015).

From a rhetorical perspective, Metanoia means "regret" (Cuddon, 1991). In Psychology, it responds to the process of learning from error (Clarkson, 1989); in Jung's

Psychoanalysis, Metanoia is defined as an adaptive rebirth of the mind (Jung, 1991). The concept of resilience is not far away. And, finally, the notion could be applied to fairy-tales and Andersen stories (Bettelheim, 1976; Brun, 1992).

The mere utterance of words like redemption, conversion, repentance, rebirth, etcetera, reveals fundamental themes of Andersen's aesthetics, also in its religious aspect. From Jung's definition, Metanoia is a resource for the reconstruction of the mind after an extreme circumstance. For their part, Bettelheim and Brun act as a link between psychoanalysis or psychotherapy and literary interpretation. In fact, although without expressly mentioning Metanoia, both authors rely on the sources of "fairy tales" to offer interpretative clues relating to the perception and performance of the individual in his social insertion or, in other words, in his "community acceptance". It is Northrop Frye who postulates the cultural keys underlying Metanoia as concept.

Frye defines Metanoia with these words: "as a form of vision, *metanoia* reverses our usual conceptions of time and space"; thus Frye offers the possibility of other forms of perception (Frye, 1982, p. 130). But, of course, it is from Jungian theory that the connection between Metanoia and dream is established, especially in the possibility of sleep within dream. Moreover, it is a psychic structure that *grosso modo* supports one of the definitions of literature as a calculation of possibilities on the mental perception of reality (Fike, 2014). In this sense, Bourdieu defines as "oracle effect" the context in which Metanoia becomes operational (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 211), and oracles also belong to dreams. Consequently, Metanoia can be submitted as a literary resource referring to the theme of dream, and more specifically based on a psychological perception of the possibility of integrating sleep within the dream with the awareness that one is dreaming – and it does this not only in literature, but also in cinema, in the films by, for example, Ingmar Bergman (Tovar, 2004). Then, Metanoia constitutes the literary theme of the "dream within the dream".

Hans Christian Andersen reflects in his literary production innovative contributions that have made him a referent of Western and Universal Literature, in addition to his own Children's Literature (Tatar, 2007). The motif of the "dream within the dream" affects three possible spheres: the individual, the family and, finally, the social, although all of them are connected by the presence of death. Metanoia offers, therefore, three developments: the self-knowledge, the acceptance of reality (above all in relation to the maternal love) and the capacity for sacrifice in its communitarian aspect (hence its identification with catharsis). The present analysis proceeds to consider

different stories by Hans Christian Andersen in which the Danish writer resorts to the fact of sleeping. The intention of the study is to verify how the different levels of sleep coexist: mainly, a first level, of an oniric nature, and a second level with a more realistic purpose although within the dream (hence its purifying sense).

In this regard, the analysis of the thematic resource of Metanoia or "dream within dream" allows us to understand also the existence an interesting metaliterary structure within the tales of Hans Christian Andersen: the story, the dream within the story and the dream within the dream *per se*. The third part returns the internal verisimilitude of the narrated to the plan of the story. Why? Because this is how the cathartic character of Metanoia manifests itself.

The "dream within the dream" presents, then, two relevant positions: that of the dream against reality, and that of a second dream, which in turn conceives the first dream as its opposite, in such a way that, from the dreamlike, it becomes again the sensitive world. Hence its purifying and learning capacity for the future. At the same time, the place of the first dream can come occupied by the fantasy, the second dream being the one that returns the story again to a more plausible environment. In short, the first dream is oniric, the second, metareferential, in the sense of recovering reality (even the reality of death).

In the concluding chapter, this perspective is thus applied to an explanation of the story "The Shadow", where the role of the intellectual (and the writer) implies his sacrifice for the good of the community.

### **Dreams as fairytales: The individual perspective**

According to Andersen's literary aesthetics, a story can be presented as the gateway to the awareness that one is dreaming of. Two passages state it explicitly: In "The Elf Mound" ("Elverhøi") Andersen offers the vision of a fantastic world in which elves and small animals with the ability to speak organize a party. Human beings remain on the sidelines, unless they are able to speak in dreams. In other words, unless they accept the fantasy world of storytelling, something that is only possible through a process of Metanoia, by inserting the idea of "talking in dreams" within the fantasy: "Who is being invited?" the night raven asked. 'Oh, everybody may come to the big ball - even ordinary mortals if they talk in their sleep or can do anything else that we can do.'"

Consequently, in a clearly legendary (upon elves) and fabulous environment (with the presence of talking animals) the need for sleep is mentioned as a liberating motor for

humans to accept the fantasy of the story. In this way, from the perspective of Metanoia, a fantastic story becomes plausible, since one of the requirements of the story is to insert dream clues, such as, in the case of “The Elf Mound”, the fact of speaking in dreams, like a sleepwalker. On the second level, the ability to speak returns reality within the dream, because human beings are defined by the use of language.

Also in “The Snow Queen” (“Snedronnigen”), in the second episode, the identification of a fairy tale and a dream is complete: “‘I am talking about my story, my own dream,’ the trumpet flower replied,” an expression that is put, in addition, as in “The Elf Mound”, in the mouth of a fantastic character, and, for that reason, her dream takes structurally the level of the Metanoia, that’s to say, the level of dream within the dream. In other words, fantasy becomes credible when the story adds a new level of illusion, in accordance with the two levels of sleep demanded by Metanoia. Dream and tale appear fully identified in “The Snow Queen” as well: “But every flower stood in the sun, and dreamed its own fairy tale, or its story. Though Gerda listened to many, many of them, not one of the flowers knew anything about Kay.” Even for Gerda, Kay's adventures are defined as a dream and a tale.

In “Ole Lukoie” (“Ole Lukøje”), a boy receives a visit from an elf who helps him to sleep every night for a week. On the first night, the elf makes the child dream of schoolwork that can be solved on its own. The appearance of the elf constitutes the first level of sleep, and the description of how notebooks and pencils are organized the second level. This level is corroborated *ex contrario* at the moment of awakening and discovering that everything followed as it was, as punishment for the child's disbelief, or for his idleness and carelessness (as a lesson of reality in front of the second level of sleep).

The schema is repeated with variants on the following nights. However, in the last two dreams, the elf is shown as a Greco-Roman mythological divinity, Hypnos, and as his sister Thanatos, although this idea of death is conceived with a positive sense. The transcendent aspect of the Andersenian proposal is that the content of the dream is shown as something alien to the person, to the protagonist. Consequently, the experiences of the young protagonist are given on two levels: the level of the legend or myth (the elf, the Greco-Roman deities) and the level of the story that makes each night unique.

From the perspective of Metanoia, there are two fantastic planes that give logic to the process of the story: the appearance of the mythological goblin or god that brings the dream and the fact that events happen inside the dreams. Certainly, there are two ethical

lessons in the background that concern recourse to Metanoia: respectively, the need for personal will to do schoolwork and the individual acceptance of death.

Like in “Ole Lukoie”, the plot of “The Galoshes of Fortune” (“Lykkens Kalosker”) is supported as a series of intertwined stories. However, the protagonist is not unique, as it happens with the boy Hjalmar in the fairy tale of the elf of childhood dreams, but multiple and corresponds to different characters, whose personality changes as they put on the pair of magical clogs. The self-consciousness of the act of dreaming is essential in a tale composed of stories set as nightmares (since clogs provoke the perception of being someone unhappy who discovers ways of life different from their own), when passing the galoshes from owner to owner, with special emphasis on poets and clerks:

"This is most amusing," he said. "In the daytime I sit in the police office, surrounded by the most matter-of-fact legal papers, but by night I can dream that I'm a lark flying about in the Frederiksberg Garden. What fine material this would make for a popular comedy."

One travels to the Middle Ages, to the moon, to a theatre, to Italy, to writing plays, to contemplation of the world as a bird; but the protagonists also find the dream of death. In this way, “The Galoshes of Fortune” is the most varied *a priori* tale for showing dreams.

Apart from the irony about the fulfilment of secret yearnings of the human heart, the key to “The Galoshes of Fortune” from the perspective of Metanoia occurs when such experiences are perceived as such a dream, as can be discovered in the following passage:

"I had a bad dream," he said. "Strangely enough, I fancied I was the lieutenant, and I didn't like it a bit. I missed my wife and our youngsters, who almost smother me with their kisses."

He sat down and fell to nodding again, unable to get the dream out of his head. The galoshes were still on his feet when he watched a star fall in the sky.

That is to say, the passage is a commentary on the character of the dream within the dream itself. However, the possibility of sleeping within the dream had shown a direct evidence: "I must be asleep and dreaming. It's marvelous to be able to dream so naturally, and yet to know all along that this is a dream."

But the most extreme consequence of dreaming within the dream is the dream of death (another form of dreaming, as Thanatos). However, in the last story of “The Galoshes of Fortune”, where this situation is appreciated, it is possible to return from

death precisely because it has occurred in dreams and not in reality. So it occurs with the character of the divinity student:

"Traveling," said the student, "would be all very well if one had no body. Oh, if only the body could rest while the spirit flies on without it. Wherever I go, there is some lack that I feel in my heart. There is always something better than the present that I desire. Yes, something better – the best of all, but what is it, and where shall I find it? Down deep in my heart, I know what I want. I want to reach a happy goal, the happiest goal of all." As soon as the words were said, he found himself back in his home. Long white curtains draped the windows, and in the middle of the floor a black coffin stood. In this he lay, sleeping the quiet sleep of death. His wish was fulfilled – his body was at rest, and his spirit was free to travel. (...) Then the sleep of death was ended, and the student awakened to life again.

In "The Galoshes of Fortune" the theme of the dream within the dream becomes a key structural element of the narrative (*i.e.* Metanoia) without which the different fantastic journeys of the protagonists, who learn an individual moral lesson, would not be possible. In this regard, in the story "The Rose Elf" ("Rosenalfen") Andersen summons once again one of the main themes of his aesthetics about the treatment of the sleep: the treatment of death (as discovered also in "Ole Lukoie" with the appearance of the mythological divinity of Thanatos). Thus, in "The Rose Elf", the real crime is discovered in his reconstruction during the dream, although, as proof of the Metanoia, a dry leaf will be discovered that testifies under which tree the corpse is buried –the allusion to reality is what makes the current story different from the inserts in "The Galoshes of Fortune"–. In a second dream, the protagonist dreams of her reunion with the loved one who was murdered, and she will die in the dream frame to be able to fulfil it:

Now the little elf crept quietly out of the withered leaf, slipped into the ear of the sleeping girl, and told her, as in a dream, the dreadful story of the murder. He described the spot in the woods where her brother had killed her sweetheart, and the place under the linden tree where the body was buried, and then whispered, "And so that you may not think this all a dream, you will find a withered leaf of the tree on your bedspread!" And when she awoke she found the leaf.

While the young woman sleeps, the first dream is represented to her as an elf; in the second dream, however, feelings of calm are intertwined, and in such sensations death itself is met: “Then she dreamed so sweetly, and while she dreamed her life passed gently away. She died a quiet death and was in Heaven with her beloved.”

Therefore, in “The Rose Elf”, Metanoia acquires two orientations: on the one hand, it makes fantasy possible, since the elf is presented within the dream; and, on the other hand, within the dream, the dream of death is understood, also as a recurrent theme in Andersen.

In short, from Metanoia as an individual perspective, the protagonists progress from the condition of witness to the condition of actor; that’s to say, they progress from a passive attitude in the dreams towards an active curiosity. Finally, it is the dream itself that allows to reconstruct reality (the assassination) from the plane of the tale (the voice of the elf).

The dream is presented as a physical reality (the act of sleeping) but also creative in the act of imagining solutions and solving enigmas from fantasy. However, in the examples presented, Andersen has not yet transferred the experience of the dream within the dream to more transcendent motives, although in some stories like “The Rose Elf” they are announced.

### **Dream and family environment: The acceptance of death**

The theme of death that closed the tales “Ole Lukoie”, “The Galoshes of Fortune” and “The Rose Elf” from an individual point of view (as a mythological knowledge, as a metaliterary experience and as an interpretation of reality thanks to singular processes of the use of Metanoia) becomes the central motif in other stories such as “Golden Treasure” (“Guldskat”) and “The Story of a Mother” (“Historien om en moder”), in which the acceptance of death goes beyond the personal sphere.

Two are the dreams that “Golden Treasure” offers, and they happen when the young protagonist, a drum musician aspiring to be a violinist, finds himself in the war. The father dreams about a triumphant return; the mother about the fact that he has died. The truth is that the boy does not die; it will be the father who dies and the mother who attends the social triumph of the protagonist. There is a kind of projection of the dreams: both are fulfilled, but in different timeframes and with different protagonists. The Young man's sentimental failure offers another reading of the story: only before the mother, who

dreams about death (and not before the beloved young woman), the paternal dream can be fulfilled.

From the perspective of Metanoia, the dream within the dream happens, in an exceptional way, in two different characters: the father dreams of triumph, the mother of death. The Metanoia anticipates how the reality will be inverse: it will be the father who dies and the mother who attends the social triumph, even though, intimately, the young man has failed.

On a different order of things, in the story “The Angel” (“Engelen”) Andersen offers another perspective in front of “The Rose Elf” by establishing the figures of dead children as links in a chain that allows to understand the belonging to a universal family once they become celestial beings after their death. Once again, like “The Rose Elf”, the wilted flower becomes the mark of the reality of the dream, at the same time that it is also given as a vehicle of communication between the child and the angel (as if the angel were the role of the elf in the first level of the dream in “The Rose Elf”). The second dream, the deep sleep that leads to death, constitutes the revelation of the angel's identity: “The flower wove itself into his dreams; for him it flowered; it spread its fragrance, and cheered his eyes, and toward it he turned his face for a last look when his Heavenly Father called him. (...)”

From the treatment of Metanoia, it is a dream that allows for recognition among equal beings (both angels), while a second dream involves the revelation of how dead children are transformed into angels, as if it were a religious truth.

Otherwise, in the story “Under the Willow Tree” (“Under piletræet”) the death operates as an acceptance of loss to some extent related with the key of “The Rose Elf”. But, as a step before death, the acceptance is individual: the boy who fears the water presents himself as brave because his young girl friend has dreamed that he was a sailor. But the boy also fears that his love for the girl will not be reciprocated and, within the context of the tale, his story will resemble that of two decorative separate figures on a cake. In the end, after a trip through Central Europe and Italy, back to his origins, he also dies in a terminal sleep, as in “The Rose Elf”: “‘That was the most wonderful hour of my life!’ he cried. ‘And it was just a dream. Oh, God, let me dream again!’ Then he closed his eyes once more and dreamed again.”

Metanoia is conceived in “Under the Willow Tree” as the acceptance of death that manifests itself within the dream: the child's fear of water represents the fear of death

(first dream). For its part, the final dream implies the acceptance of the first dream and, consequently, the real or natural acceptance of death.

### **The social fabric as an objective: from the acceptance to the commitment**

The Danish evocation that characterizes the story of “Under the Willow Tree” culminates in the story entitled “Holger Danske”. This tale has, at first, a key to political reading: a reading about nationalist vindication through the figure of a national hero who has his roots in medieval legends. There are, however, two dreams that arise: Holger's and Denmark's own, taking their place in history in the dreams of the child to whom the national myths are told.

With regard to the first dream, from the perspective of Metanoia the authenticity of the dream is certified in the text:

He sleeps and dreams, and in his dreams he sees all that happens here in Denmark. Every Christmas Eve one of God's angels comes to him and tells him that what he had dreamed is true; he may sleep again, for no real peril threatens Denmark.

The second dream applies to the child himself who pays attention to national myths:

But the little boy in bed saw plainly the ancient Kronborg by the Öresund and the real Holger Danske who was sitting deep below, with his beard growing through the marble table, dreaming of all that happens above. Holger Danske dreamed, too, of the humble little room where the wood carver sat at supper, and in his sleep he nodded and said, "Aye, remember me, you people of Denmark!"

After all, the truth of the dream is imposed on the truth of history, projected into the future of Denmark. The fact is that the importance of the certainty of the dream is given in its repercussion on reality (and on history too), as has already been seen in previous similar passages.

From the perspective of Metanoia, at the level of the children's story in “Holger Danske” the young learn about a legendary past that is transformed into history (that is, into historical truth) in the second dream.

The topic of death appears structurally inverted in the story entitled “The Travelling Companion” (“Reisekammeraten”). The tale begins with a realistic story and ends with a fairy-tale fantasy. Death appears, fundamentally, in the beginning of the

narration and remains at the end in the background of the story, showing in exchange a reward proper to a fairy tale and showing too the discovery of the identity of the person who gives the tale its title.

The story appears to evolve on itself: it opens realistically, with a man who dreams while watching over his dead father's body and culminates in a fantastic way, with the traditional reward of a fairy tale. In some way, the protagonist's loneliness at the death of his father is what allows him to conquer his own space as a kingdom. Between the two extremes, two reiterations: that of a new funeral of a corpse and that of the help given to an elderly woman whose leg has been broken. The realistic tone is maintained, although it is impregnated with literary motifs that are characteristic of the novel: the couple who walk, the funeral of a corpse, the use of a balm, the encounter with the old woman, the puppeteer's puppets, and so on. After the animation of the toys, the tale enters a fantastic and mythological world: the flight to the grotto of the sorcerer, the three enigmas, the head of the sorcerer, the transformation of the swan's colour, etcetera, all contribute to the unreal setting of the story, with different literary references.

The deep meaning of the text is centred on the reward that the protagonist receives for carrying out the pious act of the funeral and the burial of a dead. It is during a funeral that he dreams of the princess; it is with the help of his companion, grateful for having protected his corpse, when he expresses to her during dreams the resolve of the enigmas with which to defeat the fierce princess:

Then he had a strange dream. He saw the sun and the moon bow down to him. He saw his father well again and strong, and heard him laughing as he always laughed when he was happy. A beautiful girl, with a crown of gold on her lovely long hair, stretched out her hand to John, and his father said, "See what a bride you have won. She is the loveliest girl in the world." Then he awoke, and all these fine things were gone.

“The Travelling Companion” therefore produces a striking process that moves from the real to the fantasy, as an inverse example to the usual *Metanoia* (that moves from the fantastic to the real). However, the object of the story is clearly metaliterary, so that, after all, the dream within the dream is presented as fulfilment (the protagonist has a dream about the princess whom he will marry within the fairy tale).

In this way, Metanoia acquires not so much a prophetic sense as a value as social recognition. In other words: by protecting the corpses for complying with a social norm, the character becomes a guardian like Holger in the homonymous story.

### **Metanoia as a Structural Resource of Stories**

Although a chronological analysis would be necessary – about the whole of Andersen's work and perceiving his literary aesthetics as a totality –, it is possible to appreciate uniform and singular treatments at the same time, as can be seen when contrasting Andersen's texts with those of the famous Grimm brothers, to give a very significant example. Really, in the texts of the Grimm brothers the dream is presented as an enchantment. According to such treatments and apart from the physical act of sleeping, dream in Andersen is a resource that goes beyond the theme of their association as fantasy during the act of sleeping. Consequently, in the process of constructing the texts, the dream is revealed as yet another tool in the writer's hands to verify the levels at which it is possible to understand the story.

Equivalent to the idea of social recognition about death, a paradigmatic story such as the classic “The Snow Queen” offers not only an important situation in this respect of sleep within the dream, but in relation to the transcendence that Andersen gives to death: this transcendence is represented in “The Snow Queen” by the frozen heart of Kay's character, in whose search Gerda partakes. As has already been pointed out in the second episode, the character claims the untransferable condition of his story, of his experiences: “I am talking about my story, my own dream,” the trumpet flower replied.” In the fourth episode, a more elaborate proposal is produced from the perspective of Metanoia, as dreams of platonic inspiration are shown, like projected shadows:

“Those are only dreams,” said the crow. “They come to take the thoughts of their royal masters off to the chase. That's just as well, for it will give you a good opportunity to see them while they sleep. But I trust that, when you rise to high position and power, you will show a grateful heart.”

Gerda's meeting with the sleeping princes in the company of talkative crows shows an environment completely similar to the one established in relation to “The Travelling Companion” and also similar to “The Elf Mound”. However, the recognition of dreams through the shapes of shadows and the invitation they make Gerda to continue the search

for Kay allows to give them a metaliterary character, marked by the mentioned platonic inspiration from the “allegory of the cave” (Ferrari, 2007).

In this way, Metanoia is conceived as a way of transcending the mere literary topic: on the one hand, it allows to see the spectacle of life as a witness. This witness can become a detective who solves a mystery by discovering the presence of motives about reality in the act of sleeping.

Secondly, Metanoia allows to assume reality through the lesson taught from sleep, however painful the lesson may be.

Thirdly, the dream within dream provides a social key: from threat and death Andersen draws a lesson in moral behaviour: respect for the dead and the honours they deserve are rewarded, beyond the consideration of death as an evil in itself.

In this latter respect, the community acceptance of death appears as a kind of storytelling for psychologists and therapists against a fear that is religiously and philosophically inspired. In this way, it is in the idea of community that Andersen finds justification for individual peace around death.

According to Andersen's description, beyond the terrific tradition of shadows (present also in another specific Andersen story), dreams are presented as dark silhouettes that seek to capture thoughts and make them visible; that is, they are defined as an express form of Metanoia. At the same time, the ultimate goal of dreams is to deserve gratitude, synonymous in the context of “community acceptance”. The image is very powerful: dreams – and, by extension, stories or tales – reveal the hidden meaning of thoughts, and consequently the intervention they make on reality. This is one of the keys to the perception of dreams in Andersen himself, when he replicates the textual model in his hobby for paper cuttings, in which emptiness generates figures similar to those of shadows (Brust, 1994).

In this context, although dreams about shadows seem to possess a threatening character, in reality, they are presented in “The Snow Queen” as a thematic resource and show behavioural patterns to offer a sense – through their projection as Metanoia – for the meaning of human actions vis-à-vis society.

In other words, the Metanoia in “The Snow Queen” enables Andersen to carry out a political interpretation of fantastic events. However, it is in the story “The Shadow” (“Skyggen”) that the socially committed reading advocated by Odense's writer is best appreciated.

**Conclusion: An interpretation of *The Shadow* from the perspective of the Metanoia**

Effectively, the dreamlike character of Andersen's most enigmatic horror tale, "The Shadow", reveals the transcendence of the formal resource of the Metanoia. The protagonist, feverish and hallucinated in a warm country, thinks he sees his shadow reflected in the rooms in front of his apartment. The shadow will end up becoming independent of him and living the social recognition that the principal character longed for when he was supplanted by his own shadow. Reality dies in exchange for simulation. The same goes for the slumbering king in "The Snow Queen".

Certainly, the story of "The Shadow" is polysemic and presents motives that can be analyzed from multiple perspectives (such as the theme of terror, the figure of the double, the platonic idea of shadow, the curse of knowledge, the geography of Andersenian space between cold and warm countries, etcetera). Among these perspectives can also be counted sociological ones: the economic triumph and the appreciation of an entelequia, as Odense's writer does in other stories that denounce the ambivalence of triumph and failure, the ambivalence of prejudice and reality. But what is really striking from the story of "The Shadow" derives from the perspective of the dream within the dream; that is, from the perspective of Metanoia.

In this way, the discovery of the enigmatic maiden of the lonely house takes place in the dream, defined as a spell, with which begins the nightmare. But this maiden is discovered by the "half asleep" shadow when the dark silhouette enters the house (or, also, as a symbolic *adumbratio*) (Jung, 1988, p. 75). In other words, on the first level of sleep, the sage finds a maiden whose identity he tries to discover by sending her shadow as a vanguard. The shadow will discover her identity, but in a moment of dream; that's to say, revelation is produced by a Metanoia: it is no longer about a young woman, but about the platonic idea of Poetry as absolute beauty, as absolute knowledge.

"Poetry!" the scholar cried. "Yes, to be sure she often lives as a hermit in the large cities. Poetry! Yes, I saw her myself, for one brief moment, but my eyes were heavy with sleep. She stood on the balcony, as radiant as the northern lights. Tell me! Tell me! You were on the balcony. You went through the doorway, and then -"

Since the shadow belongs to the dream world (in fact, Shadow acquires protagonism in the first dream) it cannot die – neither of the characters who dream of his death in "The

Galoshes of Fortune” die. But, perhaps because he hasn’t social recognition, the human being who falls fulminated by the knowledge acquired is the sage himself.

Indeed, it can be said that the maiden who opens the tale will reappear in the form of social triumph (the princess whose wedding with the shadow is the culmination of the aspirations of the entelequia, as it happens in “The Travelling Companion”). It is a success that causes the death of the sage, turned into a shadow of his own shadow. Why is that? Social acceptance seems in Andersen to be a clash between desire and reality; and its power is only indirectly perceptible, in the dream within the dream; or, in other words, in the "*eventyr*" as a vehicle of personal transformation. Absolute knowledge is presented as an aspiration; or, perhaps, as a mission that provides a self-analysis about the relations between the individual and society. In this respect, the story “The Emperor’s New Clothes” (“Kejserens nye klæder”) is not far from this duality and can be read in opposition key between imagination and reality.

There is another important mention of dream within the dream in “The Shadow”: it is in the moment when the protagonist interrogates in the shade about the children who tell their dreams in the mansion of Poetry, that’s to say, in the mansion of the enigmatic Maiden: “But what did you see? Did the gods of old march through the halls? Did the old heroes fight there? Did fair children play there and tell their dreams?” The wise man’s will seems to be to interpret the second dream: certainly, that’s the lesson of Metanoia. Really, according to Frye, Metanoia implies “detaching oneself from one’s primary community” and becoming attached to a cultural community (Frye, 1982, p. 130), as the Andersenian sage does.

Thus, in his first level, the scholar can imagine an alternative or fantastic world as a dream; in the second level, in the level of the Metanoia itself, the scholar can find into this alternative reality a new form of understanding existence, although this form could cause his own death. In “The Shadow”, Andersen has developed a reverie that brings into it a realistic resolution but also a form of education for community. In short, the social role of the scholars, then, is to interpret reality through dream, even at the expense of his own sacrifice.

“The Shadow” recapitulates the meaning of the "dream within the dream" in Andersen, from individual initiative, the assumption of destiny and the acceptance of social sacrifice: when the writer writes he exposes dreams which, in turn, generate metaliterary readings. After all, Metanoia is presented as a metaliterary resource (that’s to say, of the “literature within literature”).

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