

The Abject Life of Things: H. C. Andersen's Sentimentality.<sup>1</sup>

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Andersen's writing is devoted to the thing.<sup>2</sup> Many of the most memorable heroes of his stories — the snowman, the pine tree, the steadfast tin soldier — are just things, and indeed barely even things, since even as commodities they have a nature that is at once deficient and extraordinary. They are not tools or machines, but decorations and toys, existing at the frivolous margins of the world. Their existence is not exhausted by their place within the context of finite human needs and desires, but has something gratuitous about it. In a word, they are useless, either because they belong to an order of play, fantasy, and anthropomorphic projection — the desire to animate the inanimate, to create new life, is precisely that aspect of humankind that transgresses its theological determination as *ens creatum* —, or, like the Christmas tree, they symbolize the giving of gifts as an interruption of secular time. And because they are useless, having no place within the everyday, they cannot be used up by the demands of day-to-day life. The natural death of artificial things is denied them. They are never thrown out, but only away, and it is best to speak of them not as objects, standing in a simple relation to the consciousness of presence or absence, but as abjects, sent to the limits of the world without yet ever quite being eliminated.<sup>3</sup> The pine tree is tossed into the attic, as if to a limbo where all those things (abandoned children's toys, mementos) live on that have neither use nor exchange value and yet still make some claim, however tenuous, on human affection. It is the abjection of the thing, shared also by many of Andersen's more human creations (the little mermaid, the little match girl, the scholar in "The Shadow"), that is one of the most central themes of his writings.

It is not life, but only poetry, that can put these things to rest, consummating what can never be consumed, and redeeming the thing from its own un-death.<sup>4</sup> These poetic funeral rites almost always take the same form — burning, melting, dissolution:

And the servant came and chopped the tree into little pieces; a whole bundle lay there; it flared up brightly under the giant water pot; and it sighed so deeply that its sigh was like a little shot.<sup>5</sup>

The weather became warmer; the snowman became smaller. He didn't say anything, he didn't complain, and that is quite a sign [*det er det rigtige Tegn*]. One morning he fell apart.<sup>6</sup>

A door opened. The wind caught the dancer, and she flew like a sylph right into the oven to the tin soldier, blazed up in a flame and was gone. The tin soldier melted into a clump, and when, the following day, the maid took out the ashes, she found him as a little tin heart. Nothing, however, remained of the dancer but a spangle, and it was burnt coal-black.<sup>7</sup>

It is not only that the thing is finally returned to the natural element from which it came. In the very moment that it returns to nature, it becomes flame, the conventional poetic representation of desire. In this lies the essence of the thing's redemption. It is redeemed by being transformed into what it most essentially is. But if the thing *is* desire, it is only because, in the same measure, it is not this. The snowman desires the oven that he sees within the house, and yet the source of this desire is the poker that holds him up from within — a supplement extraneous to his own being. Desire supervenes on the thing; it accrues to the thing through the magical attraction of the poetic word to what is most opposed to it. Or rather, the thing produces desire, and poetry as the language of desire, *ab nihilo*. Its desire is produced from nothing, having its origin only in a

desire for desire that arises precisely from the thing's coldness, its inanimation. As this desire grows in its power, it turns in remembrance toward its own power, it desires nothing so much as its own negation. As in "The Pine Tree," desire becomes concrete as an elegiac longing for the joyful feeling of oneness with nature that was only possible in the absence of all feeling and desire. The final flaming expiration of the thing, is, as it were, the implosion of desire into itself. The desire for desire, born of nothing, consumes and consummates itself as the desire for its own oblivion.<sup>8</sup>

Thus Andersen's sentimentality, far from restricting desire to a narrow domesticity, brings it to the point of extreme contradiction. His anthropomorphism does not serve to make things like us, to give them human thoughts and feelings and qualities, but rather to estrange desire, and indeed perhaps everything that belongs to the essence of the human, from every possible human context. Only within such a human context, refused by Andersen, could desire appear as something that is naturally given and thus manageable, limited, capable of restraint, control, guidance, and ultimately satisfaction. Or even as something that is ultimately infinite and hopelessly insatiable, and yet is at least able to find in the human world an infinite allegory for its own travails. Estranged from the human world, desire becomes radically groundless, at once impossible and incapable of restriction: not a native part of our world, not even a human desire reaching beyond the human, but a monstrous addendum, resistant to every economy and system of order.<sup>9</sup>

It might be helpful to compare Andersen's sentimentality with Walter Benjamin's concept of melancholy, as presented in his *Origin of the German Mourning-Play*. It is an affect that is not merely an accident of subjectivity, but that expresses an ontological characteristic of the world, or that indeed corresponds to the way in which the world itself is held together and offers itself to

experience and knowledge in a certain historical epoch.

Whereas melancholy is the feeling of the destitution of a creation abandoned by the creator, sentimentality senses the abandonment of the world, and even what we think to be a human world, by the human; it feels that everything in the world is pregnant with a meaning that is no longer accessible, that to even the smallest and most meager things belongs an infinitely distant infinity.<sup>10</sup> This affect is, moreover, intimately though complexly related to the desire for desire consummated in the object thing. For if we feel that we have abandoned the world, it is above all because we have lost our desire; at the same time as the thing has become ablaze with a paradoxical lust, we have become apathetic. We feel that we should somehow love things and be bound to them, but we cannot. The estrangement of desire from a human world and into the realm of things, in other words, leaves us to wonder sadly at the sadness of a world of things that have become infinitely loveable at the moment that we have been deprived of every capacity to love.

This sentimentality, in other words, is the feeling at once of the absolute vulnerability of the thing and of our own cruelty. It might be instructive to compare this sentimentality to the theme of seduction that assumed such tremendous importance with the middle-class tragic drama and fiction of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The cruelty of the seducer is, in the context of these works, above all a cruelty toward the womb of his lover and its promise. It consists in denying the virgin a legitimate motherhood; the ability to give birth to things that would find a place in society, and whose social meaning could be assured. Thus, most often, the love child is either still-born, aborted, or otherwise fated to a quick demise. It would not be hard to read some of Andersen's most poignant and powerful stories as transformations of this motif of seduction. The pine tree is like a maiden on her wedding day — decorated and dressed up in finery and then cruelly

abandoned —, and the little mermaid must witness the wedding of her seducer, to whom, for all her beauty, she could never be anything more than a companion or, at best, a concubine. What is most distressing in these scenarios, however, is the unbridgeable chasm that opens between the sensual woman and the future mother of future children. If the symbol itself promises to raise the sensual beyond itself and make it a vessel for ideal meanings, in Andersen the fulfillment of this promise becomes impossible: sensual love can never become more than what it is; earthly love can never become a vessel for a heavenly love that could still find its place in the world. It remains, in its own suprasensible infinitude, infinitely unfulfilled, and can never redeem itself through its creations. Not surprisingly, the mermaid, refusing to save herself through violence against her lover, is resolved, with the consummation of his love for another, into froth.<sup>11</sup>

Moreover, in Andersen, the perspective on the scene of seduction changes. The bourgeois tragedy typically regards seduction from the point of view of the sympathetic audience. This sympathy is not one emotion among many, but refers to the entire order of affects that are always at once active passivity and passive activity. The sympathetic emotions arise from a blurring of the boundary between passivity and activity, and thus they overcome, or rather undermine, the gulf between the victor and vanquished at the very moment that it threatens to become absolute. The sympathetic audience witnesses the scene of seduction, and even if more partial to the seduced, refuses to take sides absolutely, since it cannot fail to recognize that each party shares in the other's crime; that the seducer was himself seduced by the violence of a transient passion, and the seduced was not simply raped, but also pursued her desire. Sympathetic emotions, in this way, are necessarily convivial and social. For indeed, as Adam Smith argues in *The Theory of the Moral Sentiments*, the social, graceful, just, and proper passions — the passions consistent with propriety — are precisely those which, to a very high degree, facilitate the process of

sympathy.<sup>12</sup> They foster fellow feeling by affirming the infinite tangle of emotions that join human beings together into a community. Or in other words: they are the feelings of the bystander, of the third-party witness who, experiencing himself only in the third person and not in the singularity of his selfhood, can leap with an easy grace into every human perspective.

Sentimentality, conceived radically, forbids the viewpoint of the third person as rigorously as a sympathetic poetry affirms and develops it. No mediation is possible between the impossible desire of the thing and a gaze that is cold and apathetic to the point of cruelty; each is condensed into the purity of an affect that is no longer capable of understanding. The mermaid's prince is as inhuman in his obliviousness to her suffering as the mermaid is inhuman in a suffering that no one could ever understand. At the very moment when the mermaid refuses to save herself through the murder of her lover, she performs a moral calculus that a human ethics can barely hope to comprehend.

Schiller's *On Naïve and Sentimental Poetry* rejects the more sensualistic and empirical poetics of the Enlightenment, and points toward this more radical conception of sentimentality. The central experience of poetry is no longer the human encounter with human suffering, but rather the encounter of art and nature, *Kunst* and *Natur*. Nature, "the voluntary existence [*Dasein*], the subsistence of things through themselves, existence following their own inalterable laws" is precisely what we, in becoming civilized — in achieving a willful dominance over sensual immediacy — have lost: it is "our lost childhood, which always remains the dearest thing for us."<sup>13</sup> Whereas the naïve poet allows nature to appear in all its childlike simplicity, the sentimental poet "reflects over the impression that the objects make on him" and in turn relates his representation of the object to this reflection and the stirring emotion into which he is transported and in turn transports his reader. In neither case can one speak of a sympathetic

relation of the artist or audience to the object. Sympathy is necessarily a relation of fellow feeling, of social union — it cannot leap, let alone leap gracefully, across the ontological divide that separates nature from artifice and will. The suffering of sentimentality, while occasioned by the object, is precisely what could never belong to the object itself; if there is still a place for sympathy, it could only be in the relation of the reader to the elegiac author and his elegiac subjects.

Yet if nature, for Schiller, is the lost paradise, it is also a paradise to which, at the end of history, we will return: “We were nature like these things, and our culture should lead us back, on the path of reason and freedom, to nature.”<sup>14</sup> Thus Schiller subordinates sentimentality to a historical dialectics that promises, as the highest accomplishment of the culture of freedom and reason, a higher unity with the original immediacy of the object.

This suggests the limits of Schiller’s notion of sentimentality. What it cannot comprehend is precisely that aspect of the object that resists all classification as the ground or basis of the subject, and which can never be redeemed through and saved in the subject’s gaze but only through annihilation. His sentimentality juxtaposes the sensual with the rational, and yet both belong to the same logic of the soul, which is ultimately a logic of drive and desire. His nature is merely the alienated sensual immediacy of the subject; it is only opposed to the subject in a certain moment of history. Moreover, Schiller does not so much transcend the poetics of sympathy as render it irrelevant. Because we moderns all suffer to various degrees the same longing for lost nature, because all art reduces itself to one affect, there is no need for sympathy as a graceful communication of passions. Instead, what is necessary is a universal cultivation, refinement, and development of this one affect — in other words, an *aesthetic education* that, however noble the vision of social harmony for which it strives, however deep its wish to

preserve the diversity of the sensual realm against the tyranny of the will, nevertheless cannot but regard all human beings, as its potential “pupils,” in an abstract universality. Or in other words: the perspective of the third person, of the bystander, becomes even more entrenched and absolute.

If the classicism of Schiller and Goethe sought a poetic form that could integrate the more extreme forms of desire with the objective cohesion and order of work and world, a later generation of German authors would instead have the infinite passions of the soul develop without restraint. Kleist’s characters, and above all his Penthesilea and Kätchen, mirror images of one another, exemplify the unworldly singularity of a soul whose passions retreat from every horizon of empathy.<sup>15</sup> It is not that the love of Penthesilea is purely active and of Kätchen purely passive, but rather that in each case, though in opposite ways, the drama of active and passive desire that belongs to all erotic love, and indeed to each lover’s soul, is not muted and blunted through a comfortable confusion of the two poles, but instead reaches the extremity and purity of its contradictory movements. Other writings of the so-called romantic period, fragmentary and unfinished, reveal the ongoing spectacle of an infinite desire that seeks its own infinitude and yet finds only the finitude of things. But this more strictly romantic poetry, like the works of Kleist, while (at least potentially) absolutely unsympathetic, remains a poetics of the desire of the soul, and not of the desire for the soul. The soul is always there to be lost.

If romantic poetry dissolves the sympathetic gaze of the third person through the incomparable pathos of the soul, Andersen dissolves the soul into the non-coincidence and difference between a gaze and the thing that it beholds. No longer gathered back into and organized through subjectivity, this gaze lacks all self-reflection and is mocking rather than ironic. It neither sympathizes with its object, nor finds in it an expression of its own infinitude. In turn

cruel and sentimental, it regards the thing either as an abject nothing or as a mystery. The allegory at the beginning of “The Snow Queen” suggests the cruelty of a demonic gaze that has insinuated itself into all creation. The demons’ mirror, which makes everything appear ugly and ridiculous, shatters when they try to hold it up to God, and its shards are scattered throughout the earth.<sup>16</sup> In this Cabbalic image, as in Baudelaire’s essay on laughter, mockery is a reflex of the fall. Here, however, the two sides of the gaze, betrayal and redemption, are kept separate in the figures of Kai and Gerda. This allows for the coherence, and optimism, of a soteriological narrative, but also might make it seem as though the demons’ mirror represents only the coldness of the modern scientific worldview, and has nothing to do with the warmth and imagination of poetry. A more rigorous, and also disturbing, account of the gaze appears in “The Shadow.” It will be useful to consider this work in more detail, and indeed by comparing it with that other and earlier shadow-story, Adelbert von Chamisso’s *Peter Schlemihl’s Remarkable Story*. By observing the conceptual transformation of the seemingly arch-Romantic motif of the shadow, it will be possible, above all, to gain a better sense for the decisive difference between the romantic and the sentimental.<sup>17</sup>

The plot of Adelbert von Chamisso’s novella, reduced to its basic contours, is as simple as it is strange. Peter Schlemihl, a nondescript young man, appears at a rich man’s party with nothing but a letter of introduction. An obsequious grey man approaches him and tempts him into a fateful bargain: the young man will relinquish his shadow in exchange for infinite wealth. If the bag that he is given represents the abstract exchange value of money — the grey man himself possesses a cornucopia from which he withdraws exotic commodities in answer to the *Gesellschaft’s* whims —, the shadow is the necessary condition of all social recognition, respectability, honor, and decent standing. The terms of the exchange are thus as ghastly as they are exact: in exchange for a potentially infinite mastery over things *qua* exchange value and people *qua* labor power, Peter

Schlemihl must forgo precisely that which, insubstantial as it is, can never be a mere commodity, since it not only eludes every logic of substitution — no amount of wealth can either replace the shadow or compensate for its loss — but indeed represents the absolute singularity of the individual as a recognized member of a human community. No longer able to appear among his fellow humans in the light of day, he withdraws into a room surrounded by his heaped-up treasures and a retinue of servants. As he waits, not yet without hope, for the promised return of the grey man, he falls in love with the beautiful and innocent Mina. This love is betrayed by his own servant, who reveals Peter's secret, and, just as Mina is about to be married off to his betrayer, the devil returns and, forcing Peter Schlemihl to witness her impending nuptials, offers him a second exchange: his shadow for his soul. This Schlemihl refuses, even though it would allow him to marry his beloved. Having lost his love and all hope for worldly happiness, he abandons both his wealth and its source, and enters into a second exile. With his last few coins, he purchases, without knowing it at the time, magical seven-league boots and thus begins a new life as an adventurer and natural scientist.

If nothing can truly replace the lost shadow, nevertheless Schlemihl consoles himself with the thought that nature in its totality, the rich garden of the earth, could serve as a substitute for the loss of the human society into which he had first so meekly sought entry. ("Excluded through early guilt from human society, I was pointed to nature, which I always loved, as a substitute; the earth was given to me as an abundant garden; study become the direction and force of my life; science become its goal.")<sup>18</sup> Faithful to the fragmentary form of the romantic work, the novella ends as uncertainly as it begins. It could not be otherwise, since Schlemihl's new destiny is, after all, the infinite task of natural science.

With remarkable precision, Adelbert von Chamisso exposes the fate of the soul whose

infinite desire makes it an exile from the finite and substantial world of human society. The soul could only satisfy both its infinite and finite desires, could only have both infinite possessions and the finite human form that alone could grant them meaning, at the price of itself. If it is not to lose itself, it must choose, and, as the site of an infinite desire that is no longer contained in and expressed through the finite forms of social life, it cannot but choose wrongly. Yet this soul necessarily remains a mystery to itself: it cannot ever know what it really means — the mechanisms of salvation belong to a realm and an economy of exchanges to which it has no access. There can be no divine science, no knowledge of God, and even ethical conduct becomes impossible. Peter Schlemihl, after all, must sacrifice his beloved to save his soul. The only possibility that remains is to sublimate its infinite desire into a pure curiosity. The soul must no longer seek power over things, but only a disinterested and wholly natural knowledge.

Andersen's "The Shadow" shares with *Peter Schlemihl* the conceit of its name, but almost everything else has changed.<sup>19</sup> There is no devil, no soul, no bargains and exchanges. And though scarcely a dozen pages long, it is written with such precision and density of thought that it is perhaps more difficult than Chamisso's novella to encapsulate in a few words.<sup>20</sup>

The protagonist is a foreigner "who came from the cold places [*var kommen fra de kolde*]."<sup>21</sup> He is not an aimless wanderer filled with vague and irresolute longing, but a scholar (*en lærd Mand*).<sup>22</sup> His desires are not endless and insatiable, but objective and absolute: a Platonic and purely philosophical love of wisdom, of the ideal. If he left his home to live on the shores of the Mediterranean, it is not perhaps from mere *Wanderlust*, but because this south, the south of the northern European's dreams, offers the promise of a more full, more vital existence, in which the surface of things is saturated with the ideal. Here "the sun can really burn [*der kan rigtignok Solen brænde*]."<sup>23</sup> Everything, even the stars, are brighter, clearer. Death itself is more

lively: even the funeral procession appears as a sign of life. It is likewise this desire to take in life in its substance, rather than any lust or idle curiosity, that leads him, in a passing whim, to encourage his own shadow to venture into the mysteriously still and empty house opposite his own where he had just glimpsed the passing shape of a beautiful maiden. The moment in which the scholar loses his shadow is described with a haunting obliqueness, as if what happened was barely anything, since witnessed by no one. For indeed, at the very moment when the shadow assumes the task of the scholar's gaze, his gaze, now detached from his person, is invisible to every other gaze, including his own. The structure of self-reflection, the reflection of the gaze back upon itself, has been interrupted.

... and the stranger raised himself up and the shadow over on the neighbor's balcony also raised itself up; and the stranger turned himself around and the shadow also turned itself around; indeed if anyone had really been paying attention, he would have seen that the shadow entered the half-open balcony door of the neighbor at the very moment that the stranger entered his room and let the long curtain fall down after him.<sup>24</sup>

There is nothing tragic in this loss: no volition or guilt, and only a trace of temptation. The scholar barely suffers from the loss of his shadow; a new shadow begins to grow back in less than a week. It is merely a parting of ways, and, moreover, seems almost natural. What leads the shadow astray is only the desire for the symbol, for the sensuous fulfillment of the ideal.<sup>25</sup> This desire — Andersen's appropriation of Platonic motifs is rigorous and precise — does not belong to the essence of philosophy, but is its shadowlike supplement, even if philosophy, to be sure, can never

do without shadows. And while such desire also belonged to the young scholar, it leaves him when his shadow leaves. Thus, soon after his shadow has gone away, he returns to his home in the north. Here he settles down for good, writing books about “those things in the world that are true, that are good, and that are beautiful.”<sup>26</sup> Or in other words: the scholar is a philosopher, cut from the same cloth as Plato.

Years later, the shadow visits the scholar/philosopher. Draped in gold chains and the finest clothing, it has assumed a human form. It even wishes to get married, and thus, before it will begin to tell its own story, the philosopher must swear never to reveal the secret of its origins. Inside the house, the shadow reveals, lived poetry:

“Then I found myself in the anteroom,” the shadow said. “You remained sitting and looked over towards there. There was no light; there was a kind of twilight, but the doors stood open one after the other in a long row of rooms and halls; and it was illuminated there; I would have been killed by the light if I had come in all the way to the virgin, but I was sensible; I gave myself time, as one must do.”<sup>27</sup>

The image, of course, evokes Plato’s cave. Yet there are crucial differences. Already in the *Republic*, the torch within the cave shares in the power of the sun, and thus the appearance of a second, interior, and seemingly superfluous source of light adds a certain ambiguity. Here, however, the light within the cave is as powerful as the sun itself, or at least powerful enough to kill a shadow. Poetry is thus not merely a shadowy world of imitations of imitations, nor is it simply the power of the symbol and of beauty as the sensual manifestation of the ideal. Rather, the light of poetry differs from the light of the sun in that it is productive rather than merely

illuminating. It is the pure productive power of the imagination that, in the dark chamber of the mind, produces a reality all its own.<sup>28</sup> This power raises everything beyond itself. As the shadow explains: “If you had come over there, you would not have remained [*blevet*] a man, but that is what I became [*blev*]. And at the same time I became acquainted with my innermost, inborn nature: the affinity that I have with poetry [*Poesien*]. Indeed, when I used to live with you, I did not think about this, but you know that whenever the sun rose and set I became wonderfully large.”<sup>29</sup> The kinship of which the shadow speaks is its versatility and imitative virtuosity, and, above all, the ability to be anywhere and everywhere, and reach into the hidden recesses of all things. The shadow becomes rich through blackmail, by seeing “what nobody knows but everyone would like to know, and that is his neighbor’s wickedness.”<sup>30</sup> Yet what the shadow, despite this kinship, cannot bestow on itself, what only poetry can grant, is life itself, or rather the semblance of life, as indeed it is just such a semblance of life that Andersen’s poetry bestows on the smallest and least of things, and even that most absolutely, and literally, abject of things: the shadow. But at the same time as the power of poetry gives a false life to mere things, it also grants to human beings a genuine divinity. The scholar-philosopher, had he truly beheld, and not merely glimpsed, poetry, would have become more than a philosopher, more than a mere seeker of wisdom, since he would have possessed wisdom at its source.

One begins to sense, if one can trust for even a moment the words of a shadow, a terrible logic at work: there is perhaps no other sun, no other source of knowledge and being, than the imagination, and yet the scholar can never hope to reach this but through the mediation of his own shadow. Yet at the very instant at which the shadow would undertake this task, it is released unto its own laws, it becomes an almost free agent, bound to the scholar only by the secret of its origins. It no longer seeks the divine truth of the goodness of things, but only a gossip, not so

much false as idle, about human evil. Or in a word: if the scholar sought, without even knowing, poetry as the source of the power of the symbol, what his shadow finds is only the shadow of an allegory. “‘A word, a shadow [Et Ord en Skygge]’: the shadow remarked, for it could not speak otherwise.”<sup>31</sup> The scholar in turn must renounce all hope of the symbol; at most he can catch a glimpse. But this means that he must himself seek the truth through his own detour, the detour of a precritical philosophy that, forgetting all of Kant’s and Fichte’s insights, projects the truth outside the subject, outside the imagination, indeed outside of every radically self-productive and absolute principle, and objectifies it as a Platonic idea. But this is almost the same as renouncing the truth altogether.

It is as if Andersen had returned to the very moment when literature and philosophy were about to join in a marriage that would produce so many romantic children, to the very scene of these fateful nuptials, and, revealing their secrets before all who were gathered, forced the lovers to separate and pursue their separate destinies. The scholar-become-philosopher is ever more of an anachronism. The things that are dear to him — all that is true and beautiful and good — are hardly original things to write about, indeed they became *passé* with the passing of the Enlightenment. Thus it is not surprising that his books no longer sell, that indeed “what he told about the true and the good and the beautiful was for most like roses before a cow.”<sup>32</sup> The shadow, in contrast, is, in every way, a man of its age: even its most romantic, most absolute desire, its wish to be human, is nothing else than conventional: “The world is fundamentally evil: I would not wish to be human if people did not assume that being human meant something.”<sup>33</sup> Indeed, it is not the scholar but the shadow who plays the role of Peter Schlemihl; who desires wealth and marriage with the beautiful girl, and who is itself troubled, when it tries to appear in society, by its own lack of a shadow.

When the shadow visits the scholar a second time, the scholar has become quite poor. They should go on a trip together, it suggests, so that he might learn something of the world. He at first refuses, but when afterward he becomes seriously ill, he agrees to accompany the shadow to a health resort. Thus he becomes his shadow's shadow.

At the resort, the shadow meets a princess, there to be cured of "seeing too clearly." She falls in love with it, and finally, not without the scholar's help, agrees to be its wife. "My good friend," the shadow begins, explaining the situation to the scholar:

now I have become as happy and powerful as one can be: now I also want to do something special for you! you should always live with me in the castle, travel with me in the royal wagon and earn a hundred thousand dollars a year; but you must let yourself be called a shadow by anyone and everyone; you must not say that you have ever been a human being, and once a year, when I sit on the balcony in the sunshine and let myself be seen, you must lie down at my feet, just as a shadow should! For I should tell you, I'm marrying the princess, and the wedding is supposed to be held this evening.<sup>34</sup>

The philosopher threatens to betray the shadow and reveal its fraud, and the shadow in turn reports to the princess the sad turn of events.

"Imagine, my shadow's gone crazy. He believes that he is a human being and that I — just imagine — am his shadow!"

"That's terrible," the princess said, "But he's locked up?"

“He is! I’m afraid he may never recover.”

“Poor shadow!” said the princess, “he is most unfortunate; it would truly be a good deed to free him of the little bit of life that he has, and when I really think about it, I believe that it is necessary that he be done away with quietly!”

“This is really tough!” said the shadow, “for he was a faithful servant!” and then he made a sound resembling a sigh.

“You are a noble character!” the princess said.

In the afternoon the entire city was illuminated and the canons went off: bum! — And the soldiers presented their arms. That was a wedding! The princess and the shadow stepped onto the balcony to let themselves be seen and receive a “hurrah.” The scholar heard nothing of all this, for they had already taken his life.<sup>35</sup>

Released, once and for all, from the philosopher with his enlightenment and his conscience, the shadow, the exemplary romantic and bourgeois, is free to enter into an alliance, so much more lucrative and useful, with the power of the state. And this marriage, like all of its kind, announces itself first with barbarism, then with pomp and fanfare.

In *Peter Schlemihl*, the shadow stood for one thing: for the singularity of the individual as a function of social recognition. In Andersen, who is truer both to the Platonic allegory and the nature of allegory itself, the shadow represents almost everything. Or rather: it represents representation itself, though in its negative rather than positive aspect. If the light within the chambers of poetry is the imagination as the creative source of beings, and if the sun is the divine light that at once produces and illuminates the things of the world, the shadow is the negative image of the thing, the bare outline or schema that can be discerned through the absence of light.

The shadow, in other words, is the faculty of criticism; the power to discern and differentiate, to recognize things as things above all through their difference from other things, through negative characteristics. Andersen's story might thus seem to come down to this: philosophy can only approach the positive dimension of representation, the creative power of the imagination, through the negative, through criticism. Yet the moment it sets criticism to this task, criticism develops a life and power of its own. Philosophy is thus fundamentally impossible: it cannot do without criticism, and yet it also cannot do with it. It has no choice but to retreat into a Platonism that is anachronistic, sensualistic, impure, and even dishonest, since, after all, the philosopher writes about the true, the good, and beautiful not because these things are themselves most true and real, but only because they are dearest to him. Perhaps philosophy could still be more forceful, more vigorous, more suspicious and worldly-wise; perhaps it could insist that the shadow pay its debt to him. But this would only bide time, postpone the inevitable. What it cannot do, however — what it must forbid itself — is every sort of alliance with the shadow. Forbidden, in other words, is every attempt to yoke philosophy to poetic criticism, or in other words, every form of esoteric romanticism. Philosophy, it seems, has no choice but to die. The best it can do is choose a martyr's death.

It is not, however, only the philosophical project of German romanticism that “The Shadow” calls into question, but Platonism as such. The philosopher who dies a martyr's death is, first of all, the Platonic philosopher. At the center of “The Shadow,” a story of transformations, are two principal transformations that stand in a chiasmic relation to one another. On the one hand, the shadow becomes human: the critical gaze frees itself from the scholar. It becomes disembodied even as at the same time it takes on a new substance and life, gaining riches and power and prestige: everything but its own genuine shadow. On the other hand, the scholar

becomes a shadow and less than a shadow. His own substance and life waste away, and eventually, already reduced to serving as the shadow of his shadow, he is put to death. These two transformations are both opposite and complementary — the shadow could only become king with the death of the scholar —, yet they also share a similar, indeed identical tendency. The separation of the shadow means not only that the gaze (what we might, not altogether facetiously, call critical theory) becomes detached from the pure *vita contemplativa* of the scholar, but that both the gaze and contemplation cease to be gathered together and organized through the soul. Or we might even say that it is precisely because the scholar no longer has a soul, indeed that he is no longer constituted as a subject — that soul and subjectivity have exhausted their useful lives as a literary and philosophical trope — that the gaze and the scholar must part. In other words: at the same time as the gaze heads off toward infinity, dissolving into an endless curiosity about the things of the world, no longer restrained by the reflexivity of the subject or bound to measure its own meager and conditional findings against an absolute that it senses in consciousness but cannot grasp, contemplation would cease to be able to feel, experience, and enjoy itself as the rapture of the pleasure in the divine, since it would no longer take place in the soul. This is not to say that contemplation of the divine has become impossible, but only that it is no longer possible for us: that it can no longer belong to us, but only to *it*. And it is just such a pure but joyless contemplation that inhabits Andersen's abject things. Their very stillness is thoughtfulness: "The pine tree stood entirely still and deep in thought"<sup>36</sup> Life itself, in turn, and even to the smallest degree (the poker inside the snowman, the growth of the pine tree), is unsettling. "'Tomorrow I will not shake,' it thought. 'I will truly enjoy myself in all my glory...'"<sup>37</sup> The theoretico-critical gaze and contemplation each holds the other back: if the latter, as already observed, keeps the former from dissolving into the infinite labyrinth of things, the former prevents the latter from

losing itself in its own depths and collapsing into an unspeakable purity of experience. If contemplation makes sure that the things that the discerning gaze encounters are not merely things, but also refer back to the form, the ideal, the subject — to that which is *in itself*, or even to *Being* —, the gaze is always there to interrupt the purity of contemplation and insure that contemplation always relates to itself only through the mediation of an objectification and alienation. In both instances, this is to say, desire intervenes at the decisive moment. If the things of the world become desirable to the gaze in the promise of something more than they are, contemplation could desire itself only as what it does not yet possess. The soul, in turn, is able to mediate between the gaze and contemplation and gather them together into a single system only because it is not only the seat of desire, but is itself, in essence, nothing else than desire. The first, yet unsurpassed, account of this is found in Plato's notion of *eros*. If, in Andersen's poetry, the soul has itself become impossible, and is no longer able to mediate between and organize the gaze and contemplation, it is not because we no longer can have the objective knowledge of the soul, nor is it because the faith in the immortality of the soul has been shattered. Something stranger and more subtle is at work: desire has itself become impossible. The soul, or rather that X formerly known as the soul and now sometimes called the subject, no longer encounters itself as desire, as longing, as passion. Possible is only the desire for desire — not desire itself.

The other of Andersen's stories of which we have spoken — only "The Snow Queen" is a possible exception — begin with the end of the soul, with the sentimental juxtaposition of the desire of desire (the trace of desire that survives its death) and the abject thing. "The Shadow" is unique in that, through its two chiasmic transformations, it presents a radical change in perspective. The beginning, to be sure, is a rather straightforward invocation of Platonic *eros*: the scholar seeks the sun, but cannot behold it directly, so he instead turns toward the beautiful thing.

If, however, in the end the shadow has truly become human, then we must suppose that it is the shadow himself who gives the scholar life only to take it away. In this change of perspective the very nature of the literary work is called into question: that the shadow has been given life, that a shadowy poetry has given life to its own shadows, means nothing less than that the protagonist of the work, and thus the perspective from which it is to be understood, has changed midway. It is not a question of shifting sympathies, not a merely accidental shift, but something much more penetrating: nothing less is at stake, in the confrontation of scholar and shadow, than the very nature of words, of language, and if the story outlives the scholar, than this means that we cannot read it, in the end, as the scholar would read his own story. Just as the martyr's death of Socrates meant that the philosopher could no longer avoid writing, however aware he was of its danger, so the death of the scholar, the philosopher who only still reads and writes and speaks to no one but his shadow, requires philosophy to commit itself almost, yet not absolutely, without reserve and reservation (think how essential to the destiny of philosophy were its first scruples about writing) to the order of shadows. The death of the scholar-philosopher is the death of philosophy, of thinking, in a certain of its historical guises. With it, the torch of thinking passes from the scholar-thinker to the shadow-thinker. We must not forget, after all, that the shadow remains the shadow of the scholar, that his destiny, even with the scholar dead, remains the destiny of the scholar. Or rather: just as an oral Socratic mode of "doing philosophy" maintained its hold on writing through the figure of the martyred Socrates and his own reservations about writing, so too the scholar, with his final, indeed his only, act of moral assertion, is able to save into the realm of pure shadows his own calling, the calling and destiny of thinking; the responsibility to all that is true, good, and beautiful. What is forbidden, however, is the attempt to achieve a synthesis of literature (*qua* critical theory) and philosophy. The former cannot be subordinated to the latter, and the latter

must not subordinate itself to the former, and nor can they be equals. The scholar asks if they can use the informal terms of address; the shadow agrees to only half this request.

Although the scholar of Andersen's story necessarily appears as a figure for philosophy as such, one should not be too quick to conflate the philosopher with philosophy. It is not philosophy, after all, but the scholar-philosopher who dies. And this would not be the first time that the philosopher suffered a martyr's death. Yet the martyr's death of the philosopher is always, at the same time, the birth of a philosophical literature. Here, however, the philosopher who dies is a philosopher who, the mirror image of Socrates, only writes, and never seems to speak to anyone but his shadow. What is perhaps inaugurated through his martyrdom, then, is a different kind of philosophical literature — namely, Andersen's own.

But isn't it going too far to compare to Plato the genial master of a modest and minor genre whose greatest works have long since been canonized, though not without certain reservations, into the ghetto of children's literature? But perhaps writing for children is not necessarily the lowliest, and least important, of literary activities. Did not Plato insist, in the *Phaedrus* and his *Seventh Letter*, that philosophers should never write seriously, that writing should always be a game?<sup>38</sup> Nor did he fail to recognize the importance of the proper education of the child as a preparation for philosophy. Perhaps, indeed, the most philosophical writing must always, in a sense, be written for children. It is clear, at least, that the philosopher does not write first of all for those who are already wise, or even for those who are already philosophers — at least not if his writing serves not to convey a certain particularly difficult and rigorous doctrine, but a habit and manner of thinking. He writes for those who are not yet philosophers, who are not yet wise, and who have not yet even been set aflame with the desire for wisdom; who are like children, ignorant of their ignorance. Thus the most ideal readership for the philosophical writer

consists in those who are closest to children; whose true ignorance has not yet hardened into the semblance and pretense of knowledge. This is not the easiest, but the hardest task for philosophy. Perhaps Socrates recognized this when he realized, in the days after his trial, that the dream he often had in the past telling him to work at making music (*mousikēn poiei kai ergazou*) should not be interpreted figuratively, as though philosophy were the greatest kind of music, but literally, and thus took up the task of versifying Aesop's fables.<sup>39</sup> Perhaps a truly *positive* philosophical writing could only be a children's literature. All other forms of philosophical writing — if not merely treatises, compendiums of things that can be learned — can only be negative in intention; they can only aim at the established prejudices and idols that inhabit the mind. They cannot impart to thinking a new habit, a new opening toward a new truth.

Critical, above all, is to understand what it might mean for an adult to write *for*, and not merely *to* or *at*, children. It cannot mean what we mean by education: bringing the child into the world of adults, providing them with an ideal of adult behavior; an exemplary model of adult heroism. Andersen's "The Snow Queen" provides a perfect figure for education in this sense that we must reject: Kai, whose vision has already been infected by a sliver from the demon's mirror and who now can only see things in the in-innocence of judgment, attaches himself to the carriage of the Snow Queen, and is dragged off to the far north. Education is seduction, and if the child can be so easily seduced by the adult into "growing up," it is because it has already seduced itself with the idea of adulthood, because it has already grown to disdain an innocence that it possesses without being able to enjoy. Sitting alone in a frozen lake in the center of the Snow Queen's palace, Kai plays the Game of Reason, trying to piece together fragments of ice so as to form a word — "eternity" — that he cannot remember. His is the task of redemption: he must redeem the world from its fragmentation, restoring it to its innocence. This is the greatest heroism of the adult

world, and precisely because, for the adult, it is absolutely impossible.

Nor, however, could writing for children mean gratifying the idealized image that the adult has of the child. If the adult seduces the child with the dream of adulthood, the child likewise seduces the adult with the fantastic image of a wildness, an innocence of impulse and desire, and here too it is really the seduced who seduces himself. To write for children is neither to bring the child into the world of adults, nor to drag the adult back into the neverland of a fantasized childhood while gratifying the child with the suspension of every rule and restraint and the delusion of magical powers. Writing for children means writing not to their weakness and passivity and malleability, but to their strength, and indeed a strength that only children can possess. A writing that is truly for children must be written for a heroism of which adults are incapable. This heroism is to grow up as children; to become more open, more responsible, more thoughtful and mindful — innocent in a sense no longer moral but epistemic.

If Kai is the figure of everything that education is and writing for children must never be, his childhood friend Gerda shows us the heroism of the child. The heroism of the child is also to redeem, but in innocence and not in corruption. If the adult always tries, and must always fail, to become a child *again*, the child redeems the world by growing into the world as a child. In the end, Gerda also finds Kai; she comes to the same point as him, she has also grown up. But her meandering, errant path took her through the natural world that, in her faithfulness, she received as it is:

The roses on the roof looked in at the open window, and their two little stools were still out there. Kay and Gerda sat down on them, and held each other by the hand. Both of them had forgotten the icy, empty splendor of the Snow

Queen's palace as completely as if it were some bad dream. Grandmother sat in God's good sunshine, reading to them from her Bible:

“Except ye become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.”

Kay and Gerda looked into each other's eyes, and at last they understood the meaning of their old hymn:

“Where roses bloom so sweetly in the vale,  
There shall you find the Christ Child, without fail.”

And they sat there, grown-up, but children still — children at heart. And it was summer, warm, glorious summer.<sup>40</sup>

These words suggest both the promise, and the limits, of Andersen's writing for children. Writing for children cultivates a capacity for experience, for an openness to things, that no longer depends on gathering different gazes and desires back into the coherence of a world. Yet if it abandons the need to gather back into a unity, to “save” or “redeem” the phenomena by grounding them in ideality, it does not abandon a logic of redemption as such. Rather, the redemption of things becomes simply a matter of letting them appear; an experience freed of all insistence on coherence or unity becomes redemptive as such. Andersen, in this sense, does not break with the eidetic/visual logic at the heart of Western metaphysics. Rather, he releases it from fidelity to a standard that it could never live up to, yet from which it gained its critical rigor: from the need for, and possibility of, a moment of critique internal to itself. In *The Culture of Redemption*, Leo Bersani challenges the “redemptive aesthetics” that, misconceiving of art as philosophy, considers art as a correction of life. This redemptive aesthetics, ultimately the creation of the “theoretical

man” who, Nietzsche would argue, “first appeared in the West in the person of Socrates,” not only negates the possibility of philosophy and truth, but also art and life. For:

Art, as Plato rightly saw, cannot have the unity, the identity, the stability of truth; it does not belong to the world of perfectly intelligible ideas. A redemptive aesthetic based on the negation of life (in Nietzschean terms, on a nihilism that invents a “true world” as an alternative to an inferior and depreciated world of mere appearance) must also negate art.<sup>41</sup>

In Andersen, we might say, the idea of redemption is redeemed from its own critical force. There is no longer the need to redeem experience, no need to save the phenomena, since the experience of the world in its rich variety of forms is already redemptive. All that is needed, in effect, is not to see too clearly; not to see, and think, critically.

From Socrates to Kant, Kierkegaard, Heidegger, and Freud, critical conscience has been conceived above all in terms of the inner voice. This helps suggest the ambiguous status of the aural in Andersen, which, while in no way absent from his stories, nevertheless seems for the most part to have been repressed in favor of the visual. It would not be wrong to say, on the one hand, that Andersen's scholar-philosopher retains the power of vision and eidetic intuition at the price of being no longer able to listen. At the same time, however, the aural, above all as a capacity to *listen to things*, announces itself in all its force as an interruption, confined to the limits of his narratives, of a logic of sentimentality, and of redemption, whose catastrophic implications for truth, art, and life he already senses. The little mermaid must sacrifice her voice to gain legs, ascend

above the sea, and woo the prince to gain his love and an eternal soul: silence is not so much the original condition of soulless things, but the price that they must pay to become eligible for redemption. And if, as a dancer, the mermaid nevertheless responds in her body to music, she remains herself, like all *things*, only seen and not heard.

It is telling, then, that in the last scene of “The Shadow,” cited above, the aural overtakes the visual. Not only do canons announce the marriage of the shadow to the princess, but they appear before the people to receive a “hurrah” — as if only the noise of the crowd could affirm the shadow's existence and power and the truth of their union. This last moment in the narrative, however, outlives the scholar: he “heard nothing of all this, for they had already taken his life.” Indeed, we might say that the narrative, which up till this point had shadowed the experiences of the scholar, outlives itself, and an order of life and thought beyond redemption becomes possible.

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## NOTES

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1 I would like to thank the anonymous reviewer at *Angelaki* for his or her very helpful comments.

2 The Danish word *tingseventyr* or “a thing-tale,” the conventional name for the genre that Andersen founded of the art-tale told from the perspective of an inanimate object, is formed from the compound of *ting* (“thing,” but also “matter” or “business”) and *eventyr* (“adventure” and “affair,” but also “fairy tale”). Adventure implies a subject that is active in an emphatic, exemplary fashion — venturing forth into new realms and dangerous situations. The thing, however, is precisely that which lacks agency. This gives a sense for what is at stake in the *tingseventyr*: not an anthropomorphism of inanimate objects, or even a parable for the reification of modern life, but an inherently paradoxical, and profoundly strange, attempt to expose the thing itself to the adventure of experience.

3 Brigid Gaffikin, in “Material Witnesses,” also stresses the uselessness of the things in Andersen’s *tingseventyr*, although, in the stories she chooses to focus on, this uselessness is rather a question of obsolescence. Gaffikin, who rightly rejects every reading of the *tingseventyr* that reduces the thing to a mere representation of something else, relates the animation of the thing to the problems of nostalgia and memory. The thing comes to a reconciliation with its material conditions through a “personal” narrative of its own past. In this way, the object is ultimately able to survive beyond its own death through the retention of memories. For another reading of Andersen’s *tingseventyr*, see Polonca Kovač, “Die lebendige Welt der leblosen Gegenstände.”

4 It is, of course, not only in his *tingseventyr* that Andersen is preoccupied with the moment of death, but also in many of his other most well-known stories — “Psyche,” “The Little Match Girl,”

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“The Story of a Mother,” and the “Ice Maiden,” to name a few. Because of Andersen’s own rather obsessive fear of death — he had a terrible fear of being buried alive, and is said to sleep with a note reading “Only apparently dead!” —, together with his own explicitly stated belief in the eternity of the soul, there is a strong temptation among critics to interpret these endings as affirmations of the afterlife. Jacob Bøggild (“Ruinous Reflections”), above all with his subtle and precise readings of “Psyche,” provides an instructive antidote to such readings, if also a rather different interpretation of the “ruinous” dimension of Andersen than that which I present in this paper. As Bøggild argues, even “Psyche,” which seems to concern nothing so much as the survival of the soul after death, is fraught with an essential ambiguity: is it the soul itself that will obtain immortality, or the work of the same name?

5 Andersen, *Eventyr 2*: 48. All translations from Danish and German, unless noted, are my own.

6 Andersen 4: 105.

7 Andersen 1: 124.

8 The concept of desire in this essay is not developed through a direct engagement with psychoanalysis, though without doubt many points of contact exist. The discussion of these points of contact, however, fall beyond the scope of the present work.

9 I would also suggest considering, in this regard, Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*. Here too the most sentimental desire becomes monstrous. There is also, of course, much in the life of Andersen that resonates with this preoccupation with a desire that can find no outlet in the world.

10 Cf. Walter Benjamin, *Werke* 1.1: 318.

11 Secondary literature has devoted much attention to the enigmatic relation between the “sensual” and the “suprasensual” dimensions of “The Little Mermaid.” Is the mermaid seeking love or an immortal soul? Fulfillment in this world or the next? It is easy to read this curious

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overdetermination of the plot as a symptom of confusion in Andersen's worldview — here one might recall the young Kierkegaard's scathing attack on Andersen's novel *Only a Fiddler* — if not in his own desires, just as it is easy to privilege one aspect over the other through a one-sided reading. Yet, historically speaking at least, there is nothing mysterious in this conjunction and confusion even if, philosophically speaking, it remains mysterious. One might even say that the genre of the novel, from the beginning, is inseparable from such confusion and overdetermination. Where "The Little Mermaid" differs from the tradition of the novel is above all in refusing an integration that, first posited in all its novel strangeness, became, with the maturation of the novel in the 19th century, little more than a mere convention and rule of good taste. In just this way, Andersen could be said to reach backward to Goethe's *Elective Affinities* and forward to Kafka's "The Hunger Artist." The little mermaid cannot have it all: she must choose. Indeed: what at first seems like a confusion of two levels that do not seem to belong together is, in fact, a rigorous critique of this confusion. But, of course, the site of this confusion, the locus of the promise of the integration of the sensual and the spiritual — the curious *cornucopia* into which the novel has always stuffed mankind's contradictory desires —, is the immortal soul. It is precisely because she lacks a soul that the mermaid can be neither sexual nor spiritual, but exists precisely as the desire for both sexual and spiritual desire. This suggests the danger of reading "The Little Mermaid," following Baggesen's Christian Existentialist interpretation, as a tale of salvation. Having an immortal soul is not salvation itself, but merely the prerequisite of salvation. It is likewise on these grounds that I would resist claiming that Andersen posits "conjugal and sexual love between man and woman" as "a precondition for access to the kingdom of heaven" (Johansen, "The Merciless Tragedy of Desire" 208). Andersen, one could even say, does not so much establish, as dissolve, "a continuity between the earthly and the sacred." (208) This also

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suggests how we might approach the ending, which has struck so many readers as incongruous and problematic. Johansen, for example, speaks of the mermaid's final religious reparation as "unconvincing and sentimental." Annelies van Hees, in her essay "The Little Mermaid," sums up such an attitude toward the ending when she writes: "It is neither original nor deeply felt, and therefore many have tried to reinterpret the ending to make it acceptable." (264) Granting, as suggested earlier, that Andersen sought not to reconcile, but to dis-integrate, the earthly and the heavenly, then the ending of "The Little Mermaid" would seem all the more problematic. Yet the ending does not grant to the mermaid a soul as an actuality. There is no "reparation," no restoration of what is lost. Rather, the mermaid only becomes, all the more absolutely, what she already was: not a soul, not a union of flesh and spirit, but desire for desire. It is not for nothing, moreover, that, as a "daughter of the air," the mermaid's fate rests not on her desire or will, nor on her ability to hold on to an ecstatic vision, but rather on what she overhears. The space of the air, which connects the ocean and land without mediating between them, is the space of literature — or what is left of literature when the soul has left it: which is to say, gossip, hearsay, words passed on and on without coming to rest in an interpretation that would give them an acceptable place between the heavens and earth.

12 Smith 58.

13 Schiller 12: 162-2.

14 Schiller 163.

15 Thus Max Kommerell, in his incomparable essay on Kleist, writes: "Kleists Personen sind Rätsel und aus dieser ursprünglichen Eigenschaft der Person ergibt sich alles neu: Exposition, Ver- und Entwicklung, Bezug der Menschen aufeinander in Verstehen und Nichtverstehen, Schicksal als Deuten, Gedeutet werden und Selbstdeutung, Dialog, Monolog, Bühnenanweisung,

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Gebärde und Symbol!” (245)

16 Andersen 2: 49-50.

17 By juxtaposing the romantic with the sentimental, I in no way wish to question the modernism of Andersen, but rather only to stress that what is most original in his fairy tales is not simply transitional in value, not simply a proto-modernism, but represents a different path, even if one to which, to be sure, others return.

18 von Chamisso 110.

19 Indeed, the problem of imitation is inscribed, in a rather humorous way, into the text.

Regarding the scholar’s discovery of his loss, Andersen writes: “What annoyed him most was not so much the loss of his shadow, but the knowledge that there was already a story about a man without a shadow. All the people at home knew that story. If he went back and told them his story they would say he was just imitating the old one. He did not care to be called unoriginal, so he decided to say nothing about it, which was the most sensible thing to do.” (2: 131; trans. Hersholt)

20 For a very brief summary and classification of the history of critical interpretations of “The Shadow,” see Inger Lise Jensen, “Why Are There So Many Interpretations of H.C. Andersen’s ‘The Shadow’?”

21 Andersen 2: 129.

22 Andersen 2: 129.

23 Andersen 2: 129.

24 Andersen 2: 131.

25 Nathaniel Kramer, in “H.C. Andersen’s ‘Tante Tandpine’ and the Crisis of Representation,” suggests that Andersen follows Friedrich Schlegel in developing a poetics of the fragment, ultimately in response to the Kantian “crisis of representation,” which posited the impossibility of

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an adequate representation of the ideas of reason.

26 Andersen 2: 132.

27 Andersen 2: 134.

28 Meyer Abrams, in *The Mirror and Lamp*, argues that German and English Romanticism, following Kant, would conceive of the imagination as an active power, likened to a lamp, rather a merely passive mirrorer of reality.

29 Andersen 2: 134-5.

30 Andersen 2: 135. Trans. Hersholt, some modifications.

31 Andersen 2: 133.

32 Andersen 2: 136.

33 Andersen 2: 135.

34 Andersen 2: 139.

35 Andersen 2: 139-40.

36 Andersen 2: 45.

37 Andersen 2: 45.

38 Plato 276 d; 344 c-d.

39 Plato 60 e - 61 a.

40 Andersen 2: 76. Trans. Hersholt.

41 Bersani 2.