

**The hollow, the world: theatricality and resistance against suffering<sup>1</sup> /**

***O oco, o mundo: teatralidade e resistência ao sofrimento***

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**ABSTRACT**

This article is about *The Ophelia's shadow theatre* (2000), by Michael Ende. It aims to discuss the concept of theatricality as a creative movement that provides the protagonist the resistance to suffering. As a dialogue of, fundamentally, the concepts of transitional space and creative impulse, by D.W. Winnicott (1975), such as ritornelization, by the schizoanalysis, and the discussions about theatricality, registered by Sarrazac in *A invenção da teatralidade* (2013), we observe the corpus as a kind of manifest in defence of the pain and of feeling the pain as an experience of recreation of living from the ruin. Firstly, we bring some reflections, in dialogue with Michael Ende's work, about art and creative playing as mechanisms to build a space of stability and maturation. Thus, we rely especially in Antonio Candido's, Todorov's, Michèle Petit's and Winnicott's works. After, we bring a reading proposition that comes from the elements of theatrical composition that are present in the corpus, aiming to comprehend the relation between them, the effects of theatricality, the concept of transitional field, by Winnicott, and the movement of resistance against suffering realized by the protagonist.

**KEYWORDS:** Creative impulse; Transitional field; Theatricality; Michael Ende.

**RESUMO**

*Em torno do livro infantil O teatro de sombras de Ofélia (2000), de Michael Ende, nesse artigo pensamos o conceito de teatralidade como um movimento de criação por meio do qual a protagonista pode resistir ao sofrimento. Pondo em diálogo, fundamentalmente, os conceitos de espaço transicional e impulso criativo, de D.W. Winnicott (1975), ritornelização, da esquizoanálise, e as discussões sobre teatralidade registradas por Sarrazac em A invenção da teatralidade (2013), observamos o corpus como espécie de manifesto em defesa da dor e do sentir a dor como experiência de recriação da vivência a partir da ruína. Inicialmente trazemos reflexões, em diálogo com a obra de Michael Ende, a respeito da arte e do brincar criativo como mecanismos de construção de um espaço de estabilidade e amadurecimento. Para tanto, nos baseamos especialmente nos trabalhos de Antonio Candido, Tzvetan Todorov, Michèle Petit e Donald Woods Winnicott. Posteriormente trazemos uma proposição de leitura a partir de elementos da composição teatral que se destacam no corpus, buscando compreender a relação entre eles, o efeito de teatralidade, o conceito de espaço transicional de Winnicott e um movimento de resistência ao sofrimento realizado pela protagonista.*

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Impulso criativo; Espaço transicional; Teatralidade; Michael Ende.

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<sup>1</sup> All the quotes from Ende's, Petit's, Guattari's, Januário & Tafuri's, Zumthor's, Finter's and Graña's works were translated by Henrique Furtado de Melo from the Brazilian Portuguese versions. All the rest of this article was translated by Mayara Carrobrez.

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## 1 So we don't lose the thread of the skein

Michael Ende (1929-1995), the German well-known author of *The Neverending Story*<sup>2</sup> (*A História Sem Fim*, 1993), is one of the most important authors of the 20th century. His writings are always full of fantasy and express a desire to turn pain into art.

In *The Neverending Story* (1993), Bastian gets involved in the book he's reading. He follows his instincts in an invented world, almost getting lost in its harmony. When he leaves the narrative behind, it persists in his reality. He sews art and life and keeps his ears attentive to the invented world, which blows him with its weak voice, it speaks of poetry, so as not to lose the thread of the skein.

Germano, from *The long road to Santa Cruz*<sup>3</sup>, (*O longo caminho até Santa Cruz*, ENDE; KEHN, 1992) finds the passing of time in the book, the hopeless pursuit that brought him nowhere. Furthermore, he finds out in his father's voice that the brave man carried an important and secret message, even though there was no one to tell it. Germano realizes that he also had a secret message, the unnamed Thing, inexpressible, which explains the long way, apparently useless.

To hear Hor's voice, from *The Mirror in the Mirror*<sup>4</sup> (*O espelho no espelho*, ENDE, 1984), it is necessary to “maintain the balance at the narrow border between the sleep and the wakefulness – or to float, like the ones for whom up means the same thing as down” (ENDE, 1984, p. 8). “*To flee does not make sense. There is no escape. What happens here happens everywhere. Happens always. The ones who flee, end up into the trap*” (ENDE, 1984, p. 179, italics in the original). Therefore, art appears in Ende's work: not as escape, not as a lie that insists on keeping us imprisoned in a dream that takes us out of life; in his writings we see an insistent pursuit:

One day we noticed that there was a missing word. No one had stolen it, nor have we forgotten it. It was just not there anymore. But without it we could not keep staging, because nothing had any sense anymore. It was the word by which everything relates to everything. Do you understand, beautiful ma'am? Since then we are traveling trying to find it back (ENDE, 1984, p. 44).

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<sup>2</sup> *Die Unendliche Geschichte* in the original German version.

<sup>3</sup> *Der lange Weg nach Santa Cruz* in the original German version.

<sup>4</sup> *Der Spiegel im Spiegel* in the original German version.

Something unnamed runs through Ende's work. Something that sounds like a weak voice, whispering the speeches of the great poets, so that we don't lose the thread of the skein. To remind us of the (un)certainty of the existence of the missing word, though no one has stolen it, nor have we forgotten it.

This essay will focus on *Ophelia's Shadow Theatre*<sup>5</sup> (*O Teatro de Sombras de Ofélia*, ENDE; HECHELMANN, 2000). The Ende's literary work, as a whole, brings in itself a kind of pain's manifesto, turning pain into art. The children's book in focus tells the story of a lady who does not escape the pains of the world through delirium, but finds in art a reason to face them.

First, we will demonstrate how Ophelia welcomes her suffering and discovers a way of organize her own world. In the shadows, she realizes that it is possible to bear turning the suffering into art. We shall see in the second section of this article, how elements related to theatre appear in the work and how theatricality relates to the search for a way to withstand adversity. Thus, we understand *Ophelia's Shadow Theatre* as a book that shows the reasons why theatre exists

## **2 A desert at rest**

Ophelia was an old lady, her voice was very low. She worked as a prompter in the theatre of a small town: "she used to whisper the lines for the actors' roles, so that they don't lose the thread" (ENDE; HECHELMANN, 2000, p. 8). Time passed and people preferred to go to larger cities with big theatres and famous artists; moreover, also came the television and the cinema, closing, for the last time, the curtains of the theatre where Ophelia worked (ENDE; HECHELMANN, 2000).

Henceforth, the protagonist finds shadows without owner. The first shadow is called by Naughtyshadow, No one wants her, just like the Lonelydeath, Nevermore, Holloweight, ... "there are shadows lost all over the world", "no one cares about them", but they have heard that there is a person who welcomes them, who accepts to own them (ENDE; HECHELMANN, 2000, p. 13).

Ophelia accumulates the shadows in her bedroom, they were always disputing the best places in the intimate space of the old lady. She could not sleep because of the

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<sup>5</sup> *Ophelias Schattentheater* in the original German version.

shadows and its pain, when Ophelia lost her sleep, she recited to the shadows “the great words of the poets, that she knew by heart” (ENDE; HECHELMANN, 2000, p.13).

In the course of time, the shadows began to stage through the night, being supported by Ophelia's low voice, who whispered the phrases that the shadows forgot. “Literature is the awakened dream of civilizations (...) Just as it is not possible to have psychic balance without the dream during sleep, perhaps there is no social balance without literature<sup>6</sup>” (CANDIDO, 1995, p. 242-243). In this regard, the protagonist of Ende brings in the pains rejected by the world, and turns them into art, just as the artist collects the shadows and shapes them, similar to what Candido refers to as “power of the organized word<sup>7</sup>” (CANDIDO, 1995, p. 245).

If the last time the stage curtains closed brought quarrelsome shadows to Ophelia's life, it is in these shadows, in the form of actors, that the old lady finds a theatre rest, in its absence. The shadowed emptiness of the theatre is not so empty: and with the great words of the poets she contours the shadows. The emptiness becomes the stage, and the stage is really emptiness:

[...] one should never address any of the questions pertaining to theatrical aesthetics without having first faced the stage itself, even if only mentally. Prior to developing critical thinking about theater, it is necessary to take note, once more, of the fact that this confined, flat area, in spite of its being destined to become the pedestal of an entire world, appears absolutely deserted when not in use (SARRAZAC; MAGNAT, 2002, p. 57).

The stage is a dead, empty space, but it is precisely because of emptiness that it is possible to create new worlds in it. The stage then becomes full of possibilities, precisely because of its emptiness.

Quoting Todorov:

En figurant un objet, un événement, un caractère, l'écrivain n'assène pas une thèse, mais incite le lecteur à la formuler: il propose plutôt qu'il n'impose, il laisse donc son lecteur libre et en même temps l'incite à devenir plus actif (TODOROV, 2007, p. 74).

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<sup>6</sup> A literatura é o sonho acordado das civilizações. (...) Assim como não é possível haver equilíbrio psíquico sem o sonho durante o sono, talvez não haja equilíbrio social sem a literatura (CANDIDO, 1995, p. 242-243).

<sup>7</sup> força da palavra organizada” (CANDIDO, 1995, p. 245).

Thus, Ophelia is a spectator and reader of the theatrical plays with which she had contact, recreating the texts in a theatre of the shadows. This way, on the one hand, we see a lady who finds in the words of the great poets a way of dealing with her own shadows; on the other, she is the artist, or the Thing behind art which fills, with more hollowness, the hollowness of the stage, whose very low voice surrounds the life and convinces our shadows that they, all of them, can have their places in our rooms, without nightly fights.

Michele Petit, an anthropologist researcher at the Laboratory of Social Dynamics and Space Recomposition of the National Centre for Scientific Research of France, coordinates an international program on "reading in crisis spaces" including situations of war, forced migration and similar issues. One of the testimonies that Michèle Petit collects, throughout her research on the (trans)formative potential of literature and its essentiality to the maintenance of human psychosocial balance, demonstrates what was mentioned:

I remind one day when I found myself in a completely pathological nervousness state. I ran to the library looking for the poem "Le Moulin", by Verhareren. It calmed me down in the same instant. After that, I came back to it many times, it puts away all the madness, all instability, I know that it is there, like the pill in the left drawer. It makes me feel good because of the rhythm, maybe also an image, but overall the rhythm. What is impressive is that in that day I went directly to that book, and in it, to that poem, so there was, in me, something that already knew, and I was not aware of that (PETIT, 2009, p. 61).

Winnicott (1991), in pointing out the correspondences between the child's creative plays and the creative act throughout the life, affirms that: "It is in playing and only in playing that the individual child or adult is able to be creative and to use the whole personality, and it is only in being creative that the individual discovers the self" (WINNICOTT, 1991, p. 54).

Winnicott's discovery of the self, therefore, is related to the movement of the creative impulse, something that is present whenever anyone is healthily directed to something or proposes to do or construct something.

Returning to Todorov's words (2007), the writer (and the artist), in shaping an object - doing, art - proposes, incites, organizes a game, puts the reader in motion, an

impulse that makes from reading and writing, a creation. This is how the hollow of art fills precisely through the holes that the game proposes. And it is with this play of art (in a broad sense, of creation) that the individual says "me". And it says "me" because it says "m(in)e."

Ophelia seems to find phrases she knows by heart in the plays, something very similar to what the author of the testimony collected by Petit finds in the poem of Verhaeren.

And it is in contact with these works, putting the voices of the plays in the mouths and bodies of the shadows, that Ophelia puts a little of herself in the works just as Verhaeren's poem becomes something of the author of the testimony, a mirror to behold. Something that stabilizes the chaos, contours the feeling with organized word - to return to the ideas of Candido (1995) and Todorov (2007). And, to circumvent that which is in the world is a way of re-creating itself in it, setting in motion the creative impulse, therefore, stabilizing.

Bachelard (1961) about miniatures:

Je suis plus à mon aise dans les mondes de la miniature. Ce sont pour moi des mondes dominés. En les vivant je sens partir de mon être rêvant des ondes mondificatrices. L'énormité du monde n'est plus pour moi que le brouillage des ondes mondificatrices. La miniature sincèrement vécue me détache du monde ambiant, elle m'aide à résister à la dissolution de l'ambiance. (BACHELARD, 1961, p. 188)

Miniaturize, experience a place densified by the fictional, a space that is not only internal, neither only outer, a "transitional field" (WINNICOTT, 1991). Regarding this concept, Michèle Petit describes:

The object, the story before the night sleep, the small melody, symbolizes the union between beings that, from this point on, are distinct beings, and reestablish a continuity. Enable the anguish to be surpassed, and after the absence. This would be the first rite of passage that would, after, enable all the posterior passages, because in the same where the separation takes place, it is opened the symbolization field, the games field, and after the art and the culture (PETIT, 2009, p. 85).

In this field, quoted by Petit, the transitional field of Winnicott, in which it is possible to play art, it is established the possibility of experiencing something that

otherwise would not be possible, and in this experience takes hold of these imagined miniatures that, although they are, paradoxically, so great as imagined, fit in that space, between an inside and an outside.

In the narrative, Ophelia is emotionally shaken by the closure of the theatre and the sudden changes in her life. Her room, at the same time as a concrete space and material extension of her intimacy, embraces a sort of creative nucleus of Ophelia, which Winnicott (1991) refers as the original self. It is in this place, both inside and outside Ophelia, that the dissolution of the environment, the loss of references, manifests itself in the form of fights among the shadows. The voices and bodies of the shadows become so intense that they stifle Ophelia's creative self.

On the choked creative potential, with Winnicott, we believe that: “The creativity that concerns me here is a universal. It belongs to being alive” (WINNICOTT, 1991, p. 67). Thus,

Assuming reasonable brain capacity, enough intelligence to enable the individual to become a person living and taking part in the life of the community, everything that happens is creative except in so far as the individual is ill, or is hampered by ongoing environmental factors which stifle his creative processes. (WINNICOTT, 1991, p. 68)

In this case of suffocation, comes into action what Winnicott (1991; 2012) calls false-self. It is noted that it is not a question of establishing or seeking frontiers between what is in fact the subject and what comes from a reaction to external stimuli, because essentialist discussions are not the focus here. The idea of false-self is that of a reactive shell that is part of the subject, protecting the creative kernel. In a transposition of terms into schizoanalysis, the creative self can be understood, as Winnicott's psychoanalyst and commentator Roberto B. Graña (2017, 66) points out, as a molecular self (of the order of desire, creation, revolution, singularity, explosion), while the false self would be equated to a molar aspect (from the field of structuring, stratification, cutting, rule, reaction, standardization).

By this way, the way Ophelia is suffocated by the shadows appears (in the inner space of the self-room) as a reflection or reaction of her helplessness. The shadows invade the space, fill with the fights, and the low voice of Ophelia almost disappears

In another example told by Petit, a teacher responsible for a class of students evacuated from danger zones during World War II reports that these students had "stone

eyes". Between moments of aggression and apathy, one day, seeking to overcome the barriers that children have built around themselves, Mira Rothenberg, this teacher, tells them about the Indians of America:

‘I’ve told them how those men to whom the country belonged became refugees in their own land, from which they were deprived. I found a book of poems from the indians that talked about the land that they loved, the animals they lived with, their strength, their love, their anger, their proud. And their freedom. The children reacted. *Something* has touched them. The Indians might feel for America the same way they feel for their countries of origin. So we became Indians. We took of the furniture from the class. We installed tents and painted a river on the floor. We built canoes and life-sized animals of *papier-mâché*. [...] The children started to get rid of their shells. We lived in the tents. We ate there. They didn’t want to go back to their houses anymore (PETIT, 2009, p. 69-70).

There is an overwritten of space, the children and the teacher build a territory in the tents, over the river on the floor. The lost land, resonant in children's memory, which highlights an incorporeal territory under construction.

Just as children build a new floor to step on, feeling the pain because it is impossible to go back, Ophelia, surrounded by shadows, after the loss of a referential universe, relocates her pain and projects them into a theatrical space (as well as the children's village). This creative movement of Ophelia will be the trigger of the reflections drawn in the next topic. From the loss, it is possible to elaborate something new, it is possible to create from the shrapnel, a mosaic. Guattari gives an example that helps us to understand:

She was a singer that I was supporting in psychotherapy and that, with the death of her mother, suddenly loses part of her vocal range, which condemned her to a brutal stop on her professional activities. [...] Of course, this woman, after that, started many new activities, new contacts, and established a new relationship. All of that after radically relocate the constellation of her Universes. There was, then, the loss of consistency of an existential assembly, the opening of new fields of possibilities. This sort of relocating is followed by a kind of vertigo: the vertigo of possibility of a new world, a vertigo comparable to the state that comes with the action of leaning on the window (GUATTARI, 1992, p. 83).

In this dizzying movement, dramatic text and dramatic show as (re)creation of a territory from the collapse of a previous one: “When the vertigo of abolition



agglomerate in it the set of systems of abolition of the other existential territories, *that's the creation of a world from the end of the world* (GUATTARI, 1992, p. 84, our italics). It is about this creative potential that we are going to discuss, Paying attention how *Ophelia's Shadow Theatre* (ENDE; HECHELMANN, 2000), as a literary work, presents to the reader possibilities of relation with the theatre field and theatricality as mechanisms of, in Winnicottian expression, *holding*.

Januário and Tafuri (2011), in an article on Winnicott's concepts, say: “If the *holding* is found, these anguish feelings may become experiences” (JANUÁRIO; TAFURI, 2011, p. 262). And they go on: “in this case, the disintegration may be experienced as a resting, a repose.” (JANUÁRIO; TAFURI, 2011, p. 263). This *holding* (WINNICOTT, 1991; 2012, GRANÃ, 2017) refers to a good environment, which facilitates healthy development of the subject. In our reading, the work of Michael Ende presents theatrical art as a power of *holding* through which the protagonist can recover creative experience, producing something like the miniatures of which Bachelard (1961) speaks, the miniatures susceptible of domination, of the creation of a safe space, densified by the fictional one, by the creation.

### **3 I create because there is a hollow**

Ophelia resists through a specific genre of art. How do elements related to the composition of a show or dramatic text relate to the process through which the old lady is passing by? And how do these elements emerge in the narrative? There is the discussion about the construction of another space (or densification of this one) where it is possible to experience the world and to produce a sensation of taking control over the real - this Thing, of which we have been speaking, that drips between our fingers. This process of domination, can function as a form to withstand frustrations, disintegration, and to build a stable, sustaining intimate space. But where does that other space come from? Zumthor brings an interesting example to reflect on theatricality in relation to what we have been discussing so far:

The necessary condition for the emergency of a performance theatricality is the recognition, by the listener-spectator, of another space; the perception of a spatial alterity marking the text. This

implies some rupture on the “real” ambience, a fissure from which, rightly, comes this alterity (ZUMTHOR, 2007, p. 41).

[...]

So, this way, we talk about a performative hearing. This performance situation ‘[...] creates the virtual space of the other: the transitional field about which Winnicott talks. This is saying that the theatricality has no mandatory physical manifestations. It has qualitative properties that would enable it to be delimited definitely. It is not an empirical datum, it is a *staging of the subject*, relating to the world and their imaginary’ (FÉRAL apud ZUMTHOR, 2007, p. 42).

We agree with Zumthor about theatricality connecting intimately with the viewer's gaze, just as Helga Finter points out in relation to Brecht, Artaud and Stein:

The street scenes, reported by Artaud, Stein and Brecht, become theatre with the presence of the spectator: their gaze transforms it into theatre by the existence, on the one hand, of a pre-existent theatre and, on the other hand, of an imaginary theatre that semiotizes it; as a gaze represented by a narrator, Brecht exhibits it. The theatricality of everyday can only be recognized like this by a gaze that is able to decode it within a theatrical paradigm of representation. Wasn't Artaud talking about ‘ballet’ to describe a police blitz? (FINTER, 2003, p. 7).

Nevertheless, both, the dramatic text and the spectacle, are constructed from specific elements that contribute in the production of a strangeness effect that cracks *praxis*, inserting another environment, like the tooth of a loom, where the spectators (and the actors, etc.) twist their looks, their times and memories, weaving incorporeal territories, deepening the body in that other space.

When she was dumped from the room where she lived, Ophelia walks to exhaustion, then falls asleep. The shadows decide to do something to help her, so when they arrive until a village, they begin to stage what they learned from her. A sheet is placed between the spectators and the shadows: a cutout, a fissure in space, the fabric highlights another environment, such as a window (or mirror) where the spectators look (and see themselves). This aspect, added to the work with the body of the actor, represented in the book by the capacity of the shadows to transform “ into kings and jesters, noble maidens and flaming steeds, into warlocks and flowers, as required” (ENDE; HECHELMANN, 2000, p. 22-23), present two elements that, seem to us fundamental in the construction of theatricality: the *crack in práxis* that breaks the

automatism and attracts the Being of the spectator to a window that absorbs it; and the relationship between bodies and their possibilities of being .

With respect to the crack in the praxis, Deleuze and Guattari (GUATTARI, 1992; DELEUZE; GUATTARI, 1997) bring, in the concept of ritornelo, an interesting contribution. Ritornelos are like little songs that a child repeats in the dark, maintaining a fragile circle of floor made of sound beneath their feet, contouring a territory where they can feel at home. As the child grows up and sees the same wall every day, hears the same song of birds in the same window, smells the same aroma of coffee in the morning; these repetitions function as an existential refrain, and it is through this refrain that the child can say what it is to be at home. But this child will one day leave, walk the unknown street, alone, then the child needs other refrains, sometimes incorporeal ones, the child needs to continue singing, keeping the floor made of sound underfoot, seeking other rhythms (DELEUZE; GUATTARI, 1997, 116-117).

The ritornelos are fragments that stand out from the content, by an isolation function similar to what happens to music, whose composition becomes a relief in the background silence, and what happens to the chorus of this song, which becomes a relief in the music as a whole. The ritornellization acts as spaces where several temporal lines are coiled, provoking the crystallization of:

existential assemblages, that they incarnate and singularize. The simplest cases of ritornelos for delimitation of existential territories may be found in the ethology of numerous species of birds whose specified sequences of songs serve to seduce a sexual partner, to ward off intruders, to warn about the coming of predators... It is about, each time, defining a well delimited functional space. In the archaic societies, it is from rhythms, from songs, dances, masks, marks on the body, on the ground, on totems, with rituals and by mythical references that other collective existential territories are circumscribed (GUATTARI, 1992, p. 27).

Therefore, the sheet that covers the shadows of Ophelia acts as an element in the composition of an outline of the spectacle, highlighting it, as a refrain, of concrete space. Sarrazac (2002) points to a kind of destiny of the theatre: the more the scene fills, the more empty it becomes, and “It’s is precisely this emptiness – this non-representativeness that the stage seems bound to exhibit to the audience” (SARRAZAC; MAGNAT, 2002, p. 57).

This emptiness seems to be exactly what allows the construction of theatricality: if I play with dolls in a miniature city, toys are like drains where meanings are exhausted; I always have to invent other names, other cities, other stories, over objects – and this is the game: to create. As the sheet shows the emptiness of the space, the shadows-actors appear as empty bodies: and then I create because there is emptiness, which contains, in its hollowness, the germ of possibility.

Besides being a window to find another space, the extended sheet, where the shadows are projected, acts, to Ophelia, also as a mirror – empty surface on which I project or meet myself. About it, we use the concept of mirror, worked by Graña (2017), starting from the works of Winnicott and Lacan. There is a relation between the stage of the mirror, of subjective development, and the recognition of self as a unit. It is in the movement of seeing oneself in the reflections, that we constitute a consciousness of unity, as opposed to a shattering (GRAÑA, 2017, 77), the dissolution of the environment of which Bachelard discuss (1961).

The extended sheet acts as a stage for Ophelia's shadows, a mirror for her pains, just as a play can work for a spectator. A way of organizing bodies over a bounded space, under a skin, and thus, be able to withstand dissolution and helplessness, build sustenance from the movement of the creative impulse through a sheet that is at the same time, an outside and an inside, a transitional field. Thus, Ophelia, by her immersion in the world of theatre, finds a way to overcome adversities using art, but specific elements of theatrical composition. In this sense, we can understand Ophelia's Shadow Theatre (ENDE; HECHELMANN, 2000) as a book that points to a reflection about the reason for making art, and, specifically, theatre. The old lady, seeing herself surrounded by anguish, finds, just like Bastian, in *The Neverending Story* (ENDE, 1993), the hollow that contains a universe:

— They are not capable of telling stories anymore. They've forgotten how to speak. Therefore, I created this game for them. So that they can pass the time, as you can see. And it's really simple. Come to think of it, we have to agree that, in the end, all the stories in the world are made up only of twenty-six letters. The letters are always the same, the only thing that changes is the combination of them. With the letters the words come up, with words the phrases, with the phrases the chapters and with the chapters the stories. Look what came up!  
Bastian read :

HGIKLOPFMWEYVXQ

YXCVBNMASDFGHJKLOA  
QWERTZUIOPU (...)

— Yes, guffawed Argax, it is almost always like this. But when one plays this game without stopping for so much time, for years, sometimes some words come up by chance. They might be not so much significant, but they are words. For example, “yellow spinach” or “brush-sausage” or “neck-painter”. However, if one continues to play this game for hundreds, thousands, hundreds of thousands of years, it is likely that sometime, by chance, one gets a poem. And if one plays it for the eternity, then all the poems and stories and stories about the stories, and even this story where we are in, talking, will come up. That’s logical, don’t you think? (ENDE, 1993, p. 321).

## Final Considerations

In this article, we investigate how the children's book *Ophelia's Shadow Theatre* (2000) by Michael Ende and Friedrich Hechelmann provokes reflections about art and, specifically, theatre as resistance to adversity

At first, it was analysed how art and the act of playing creatively can work in the construction of another space, which can be mastered and then constitute a stability, just as a dream stabilizes the sleep (Candido, 1995; Todorov, 2007; Petit, 2009; Winnicott, 1991; 2012; Bachelard, 1961).

Secondly, we try to focus on two elements of theatrical composition that stand out in the *corpus*, with the intention of understanding the role of these elements in the construction of the theatrical effect, where the spectator/reader/actor/etc. experiences movement of the creative impulse, because the feeling of self gets changed in a process of humanization.

The two theatrical elements analysed were the sheet separating the shadow-actors, and their ability to modify their bodies. The schizoanalytic concept of ritornelo brings important contribution in the understanding of the process of construction of a territory from the spatial highlight of an attractor element over which the spectator projects themselves. In addition to this concept, we also work, fundamentally, with the concepts of creative impulse and transitional space, by Winnicott, seeking to highlight in the work a possible reading, establishing a dialogue between these aspects and the concept of theatricality

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