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The Transformative Role of Nature – *The Nightingale* by Hans Christian Andersen and *The Lost Soul* by Olga Tokarczuk and Joanna Concejo

Abstract: This text attempts to present the symbolic role of nature in *The Nightingale* by H.Ch. Andersen and *The Lost Soul* by O. Tokarczuk and J. Concejo. Referring to the multi-layer character of the discussed texts, the key functions of nature in exploring the meaning of existence by literary protagonists are emphasized. Interpretation of the works from the perspective of depth psychology indicates that when the ego ceases to function as a controlling instance, a symbol is necessary as a bonding element. And at this stage of life, nature turns out to be the leading psychopompos, participates in the reconstruction of the parabolic road to the lost meaning, transforms the consciousness of the characters, and acts as a therapeutic catharsis opening to metaphysics, leading to the process of individuation.

Keywords: archetype, symbol, fairy tale, nature, depth psychology.

Those who reach for Olga Tokarczuk and Joanna Concejo's book *The Lost Soul* and Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tale *The Nightingale* will not be able to resist the impression that what unites the works is the aspect of searching for the meaning of existence in the eternal beauty of nature, in the consolidation of human being with the beingness of all existence. The displaced image of the Garden of Eden becomes in both texts an expression of the eternal longing for what is lost, vanished, squandered, and what can be described in psychological terms as the search for oneself "through", "towards" and "with" the realm of nature. The thematic view of the image of nature proposed by Northrop Frye, is linked in the present discussion with Carl Gustav Jung's (Frye, 2012) psychological view, (Jung, 1981, 1998, 2010). The human psyche positioning itself towards itself and other beings speaks the language of symbols, as Jung argues, "the world and the experiences it brings about are symbolic, [...] in essence they reflect something hidden deep within the subject himself, in his own

transubjective reality” (Jung, 2013:157). To put it in Jungian terms, man’s vocation is to discover in the depths of the unconscious that infinite state of innocence, imagined in the literary representations of interest to us as an image of uncontaminated, life-giving nature, a longing for a harmonious state of co-existence of all beings. The rhythm of birth and death, the act of circulating in the eternal wheel of cosmic laws, swimming in the Buddhist infinite stream of “mutually contingent events, arising and perishing” (TKU, 2013: 11) is embedded in the cyclicity of the laws of nature. This “pattern of return to death and rebirth” (Frye, 2012 : 179) is present in the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*, which is a primordial, mythos. The book, considered in the light of psychological commentary (Jung, 2013) and related to the literary texts under discussion, leads through liminal situations to finding the meaning of existence in the archetype of the self.

1. TENDER NARRATOR IN THE WORLD OF NATURE

As I pointed out in the book *Domains of Imagination Andersen and Jung* referring to the archetypal view of *Fairy Tales and stories*, the two creators are connected in a special way by the year 1875, which is the date of death of the Danish fairy tale writer, an artist bestowed with special abilities to coexist with psychic reality, and the year of birth of the Swiss psychiatrist, discoverer and researcher of contents inaccessible to direct cognition. The prominent figures are united by a fascination with the sphere of the collective unconscious, in case of Andersen it is an artistic passion expressed in the work, whereas in case of Jung it is subject to scientific cognition, psychological understanding (Miernik, 2015: 5). Following this thread of thought and referring to common places in the lives and works of the two prominent figures, it is worth quoting two statements: the first is Jung’s reflection, while the second is the view of a character from Andersen’s fairy tale *The Snail and the Rose Bush*:

At times I am as if scattered in the landscape and in things: I live in every tree, in the splashing of the waves, in the clouds, in passing animals and in objects. [...] In Bollingen, silence surrounds me; one lives there in modest harmony with nature. Ideas emerge that reach the depths of centuries, therefore anticipating the distant future. Here the anguish of creation wanes; the creative process resembles having fun (Jung, 2019 : 258).

I blossomed with joy [...]. The sun was warming, the air was so fresh, I drank pure dew and intense rain, I breathed, I was alive! I drew strength from the earth, I drew it from the air, I felt happiness, always new, always great, and that’s why I continued to bloom (Andersen, 2006:449).

Jung spent several months a year alone at the lake in Bollingen. He built and decorated the famous tower, did gardening and simple activities. Deprived of access to electricity, he lit fire and brought water from the well. He considered

erecting the tower, arranging and tending the garden as a psychological activity, referring each stage of the work to the successive progress of inner development. Spiritual growth could only take place and express itself in its fullness through a relationship with the surrounding nature. The time of fascination with nature also took place in Jung's life during his school years, and recalling this stage he confesses:

Plants also interested me [...]. For reasons that were incomprehensible to me, I did not approve of picking and drying them. They were living beings – the meaning of their existence was fulfilled in the fact that they grew and blossomed – a hidden and secret meaning, the meaning of God's thought. They had to be viewed with a certain trepidation, wondered at, wondered in a philosophical manner. And while it was noteworthy all that biology had to say about them, that was not the point. I failed to grasp the point. In what relation, for example, did they stand to the Christian faith or to the negation of the will? This I could not figure out. They were apparently existing in a state of divine innocence, and it was better not to disturb this state (Jung: 2019: 102).

This state of "divine innocence" discovered in the natural world corresponded with the inner life of the future scientist, for whom the discovery of psychological completeness and the completion of the individuation process, was not possible without the presence of the natural world.

In Andersen's depictions of nature, we find an analogous message. The plant and animal world is a part of the cosmos, it is alive, soulful, has its own language, ability to empathize, a huge potential for empathy. Ewa Ogłóza noted that "the names of plants appear in about twenty titles of Andersen's stories (e.g. *Snowdrop*, *The Last Dream of the Old Oak*). Plants are also present in the depicted world, even if they are not mentioned in the title (e.g., *The Snow Queen*, *There Are Differences*), becoming speaking characters. In brief descriptions of flowers or trees, Andersen points out with delight the most important components of their appearance. The described object is, for example, an apple branch, blossoming dandelion and thistle or buckwheat" (Ogłóza, 2020 : 77). Flowers play a special role in Andersen's garden, they express many symbolic and metaphorical functions¹, as the main characters of the fairy tale they often reflect the position of the author – as the rose bush quoted above. Jaroslaw Iwaszkiewicz aptly compared Andersen's work to a rose bush, "which is so often the acting person of his pictures" (Iwaszkiewicz, 2001: 98). It seems that Andersen was able to perceive beauty and depth in what was small and inconspicuous with extraordinary tenderness, he was able to "pierce through the surface of phenomena, to see what lies beneath things – and at the bottom of the flower cup the whole vault of heaven

¹ E. Ogłóza writes about it in her book *Wokół opowieści H. CH. Andersena: o radości czytania* as well as K. P. Morensten in the foreword to *Baśnie i opowieści* translated by B. Sochańska.

can be revealed to us” (Lurker, 1994 : 226). Noticing in oneself this “tender narrator”, mentioned by Tokarczuk in her Nobel speech, allows one to see the world in all its fullness, to show its beauty and nobility, to move towards universal, archetypal meanings:

In this way, a non-religious young woman, my mother, gave me what used to be called a soul, and thus equipped me with the world’s best tender narrator [...]. For she elevated my existence beyond the ordinary materiality of the world and randomness, beyond cause and effect and the laws of probability. She placed it, as it were, outside of time, in the sweet vicinity of eternity. I realized with my childish mind that there was more to me than I had previously imagined (Tokarczuk, 2019).

The story of the “tender narrator” is complemented in *The Lost Soul* with an iconic layer and thus we get an iconotext project, a picturebook dedicated to a young audience². Concejo confessed in a private conversation that the inspiration for the paintings came from the depths of intuition, born in silence and attentiveness to the minutest details of the of everyday life (a notebook brought by her daughter from the attic, potted plants, the surrounding nature)³. The author’s images that deepen the world presented in the text (the context for the narrative), encourage multidimensional perception, to try to find meaning in the beautiful, soothing, benevolent voice of nature.

2. THE WORLD OF NATURE VS AN ARTIFICIAL NIGHTINGALE AND CHECKERED NOTEBOOK

The turning point in the lives of the characters in the works of interest to us is a psychological condition that Jung referred to as loss of soul. In Andersen’s fairy tale, it is expressed in symbolic images: an oriental palace, a nightingale, an artificial bird, illness and miraculous recovery. In Tokarczuk and Concejo’s work, it refers to: the main character’s loss of memory (plot layer), the moment of separation of consciousness from the unconscious realm (iconic layer: the scene with gloves), the gradual recovery of memory by returning to childhood memories and finding oneself in the original sensations. The fusion of spirit and thought, corporeality and metaphysics, finding oneself in the archetype of the self becomes possible through a return to the world of nature, a space without which, as the authors of the works in question argue, personal completeness, happiness and a sense of existence are unattainable. Nature makes it possible to find oneself anew in the configuration of events, and inscribes the universal time that Tokarczuk mentions.

² *The Lost Soul*, published in 2017 by Format Publishing House, has been ranked among the top 100 picturebooks in the world for 3 consecutive editions.

³ Agnieszka Miernik’s telephone conversation with Joanna Concejo conducted on 01.10.2020 on the genesis of the work “*The Lost Soul*”.

In the fairy tale *The Nightingale*, an oriental ornament plays an important psychological function, allowing to express the peculiarity of the inner world. The reader embarks on a kind of journey to the East, deep into the unknown land, towards the unconscious areas with which the Easterners have a special relationship (Miernik, 2015 : 164). The attitude of the Eastern man is oriented towards spiritual work, towards cultivating a relationship with nature, and non-living parts of the ecosystem, which is expressed most fully by the philosophy of Tao, manifested in the unity of “the laws of all things and the totality of being, [...] in the impersonal order of nature” (Slósarska, 1994:19). Tao, which is “the hidden treasury of all things” (Lao Tzu, 2016:141), arises if beings complement each other and achieve unity; it is born from the union of opposites, from the ability to contemplate (the correlation between feeling and thinking). Purity, tranquility, mystical power, fertility, mastery over the world are made present in the achieved integration (Lao Tzu, 2016 : 93).

Inner fullness is also manifested in the Taoist principle of constructing a Chinese landscape. Looking at Andersen’s landscape, we notice correlations with the principle of feng shui: the fairy tale landscape is built by configurations: castle (center), flowers (garden), trees (forest), wind (symbolized by bells on flowers), water (sea) (Miernik, 2015:163). This is because the Tao manifests itself in nature through eight basic components: sky, earth, wind (tree), thunder, fire (sun, lightning), lake, mist (water, cloud), mountain (boulders, stones) (Slósarska, 1994: 19). The image of nature is complemented by the singing of a nightingale. The bird’s music foreshadows the mystery of transformation and the new face of existence, as expressed in the scene in which the emperor, hearing a nightingale for the first time, experiences a state of catharsis.

Unfortunately, he fails to fully trust nature and halts personal development – he ties the nightingale’s legs, locks it in a cage and allows it to go out for a walk “twice a day and once at night” (Andersen, 2006 : 270). Beauty is put under control, the creative content symbolized by the bird and its singing has been blocked, placed in old paradigms of thinking and feeling. Internal stagnation is expressed by the stage of fascination with the artificial nightingale. It can be inferred that the protagonist fell into a trap set by the Japanese emperor, whose gift was a mechanical nightingale. Thus, the Japanese emperor would represent that side of the protagonist’s personality that is resistant to change, responsible for stagnation and does not want development. An artificial mechanism made of gold and adorned with expensive stones, reproducing schematic sounds is at odds with the laws of Taoist play, does not lead to the path of self-improvement, and because of its predictability and finiteness is the opposite of transcendence. A mechanical toy is only a poor substitute for the spiritual experiences accompanying great art, and half-heartedly satisfies aesthetic needs. In the above attitude we can find parallels with the behavior

of modern man, susceptible to ideological and consumerist manipulations imposed by corporations dominating the world.

Mass culture that promotes unlimited materialism, kitsch and trash, appeals to the lowest emotions, disregards spiritual needs, and completely loses the idea of order of the art of living based on the ethical dimension (Dudek, 2019 : 17). Jung warned in his works and statements against the consequences of leading a makeshift existence. The thinker argued that turning to materialism, looking for signposts only outside, without directing attention to archetypal images, results in neuroses and depression. Leading a predictable existence may seem easier and better on the surface, after all, as the maestro of Andersen's fairy tale argues, "when it comes to a living nightingale, it is impossible to predict what it will sing, while with the artificial one everything is predetermined. It will be this way and no other. Everything can be explained, you can take it apart and show the thought of man: how the waltzes are arranged, how they play, how one follows the other" (Andersen, 2006 : 271). In a strictly planned, concretized world, there is no room for creativity, spontaneity, surprise, doubt, one must fit into the printed lines of a school's checkered notebook. This is exactly how the protagonist of *The Lost Soul* lived, as the narrator informs us, "he moved along the smooth page of a math notebook, a page covered with even and ubiquitous grids" (Tokarczuk, Concejo, 2017)⁴. The continuation of a superficial, monotonous existence away from the inner voice caused a morbid condition. John lost his memory, woke up one day in a hotel room in a foreign city and forgot who he was.

The illusory makeshift existence of the Chinese emperor also crumbled. The artificial nightingale mechanism broke down and no one in the state could fix it. The emperor fell so ill that he could die. Both protagonists experience a disease process, which is a clear sign that their mental structures have become disordered and require "putting together", the help of a specialist. Chinese doctors proved helpless in the face of their emperor's illness, and his death was basically expected across the country. Tokarczuk's protagonist seems to have more luck. He meets an old and wise doctor, who apparently remains faithful to the Hippocratic principle, saying that there is healing power in nature itself, "dormant benevolent, healing powers, healing power (*vis medicatrix naturae*)" (Szczekilk, 2008: 79). The doctor recommends a kind of psychotherapy: "you must find a place of your own, sit there quietly and wait for your soul"⁵ (Tokarczuk, Concejo, 2017).

⁴ *The Lost Soul* is a book conceived in the format of an old notebook with missing pages (incomplete page numbering).

⁵ Zenon Waldemar Dudek, a Jungian physician and psychiatrist, points out that the modern pharmaceutical industry offers only a rich array of drugs in the process of returning the patient to the original state of consciousness: "the most severe disorders and conditions requiring chronic care are attractive, because they generate the greatest material

3. BAR-DO – DYING AND BECOMING

Stuck in a state of “waiting”, the protagonists find themselves in an intermediate situation, between health and illness, life and death. It can be hypothesized that they are in a position resembling bar-do (that which is between two, in-between) “it concerns a person who is parting with this life, and has not yet entered a new form of existence” (TKU, 2013 : 9). According to the recommendations of the Tibetan Book of the Dead, the first and most important task to be performed by anyone passing to the other side is the rejection of consciousness, for a mind polluted by earthly experiences will not allow one to recognize the truth, and will delay the process of liberation from samsara. The frightened and confused consciousness will begin to produce “hallucinations,” “angry, terrible and frightening visions” (TKU, 1984 : 12). From a psychological point of view, the nightmarish figures appearing in bar-do are “essentially projections of the subject’s mind and symbolize various powers, contaminations and subconscious inclinations of that mind.” (TKU, 1984 : 5). A displaced image of the above process is found in Andersen’s fairy tale, in a plot event depicting visions of impending death: “The poor emperor breathed with difficulty, as if something were sitting on his chest; he opened his eyes and saw that it was death sitting on his chest in his own golden crown on her head⁶, in one hand she held the emperor’s golden saber, in the other his magnificent banner, and strange heads looked out from the folds of the veil, some disgusting, others kind and gentle” (Andersen, 2011 : 273).

The Emperor finds himself in a state of profound abandonment, experiencing the stage of the “dark night of the soul,” overwhelmed by fear and panic he desperately calls for help like a dying person who, without the instruction and invocations of the Guide, is doomed to repeat the manifestation of wrathful deities and will never achieve liberation (TKU, 2013 :74). Ursula Wirtz notes that people in a state of trauma experience a state of death in their lifetime, feel dead, believe that they have lost their souls, that they have fallen “into the deepest and darkest regions of being, where one is forced to reevaluate basic assumptions about life and death” (Wirtz, 2021 : 154).

The protagonist of Tokarczuk’s story also had to face the above challenge. The reader learns that one day he no longer had “anything to breathe” and felt that “there was no one anymore inside his body” (Tokarczuk, Concejo, 2017). The rationality that had been built up for years and not connected to the inner

benefits. In this model, the impact of the environment, prevention and psychological support in the early stages of disorders are ignored, and exceptional and difficult cases are relegated to the field of rehabilitation. Developmental and preventive thinking is not supported by the biological model, which suggests a deterministic attitude” (Dudek, 2019 :18).

⁶ Here we find a displaced image of the fear of Yama, the Lord of Death (TKU,1984 : 10).

world finally disintegrated, the thin thread of self-deception and self-justification could no longer keep him alive. John experienced an inner death only to realize that it was worse than the outer one. Jung writes about this experience in the Red Book: “That night the knowledge of death came to me. I entered the inner death and saw that the outer dying was better than the inner death. And I decided to die on the outside and live on the inside. I turned around and looked for the place of inner life” (Jung, 2019 : 34). On the path of life, John just reached that moment when the ego alone is no longer enough, ceases to be the guiding instance and disintegrates. It is time for a paradigm shift, perhaps this is the stage when the intellect must be abandoned in favor of the heart, and as Jung argues, “the knowledge of the heart cannot be found in any book and cannot be received from any teacher” it grows from within, “like green grain from black soil” (Jung, 2019 : 134). And it is only in the complementarity of heart and reason, thinking and feeling, that life can be ordered and given meaning.

4. „NOBLE SON, LISTEN CAREFULLY!”⁷

The protagonists in the works of interest have found themselves in a liminal (transitional) situation, which is inherent in the initiation structure of the instructions of the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*. According to the Book’s protocol, at the bar-do moment, there should be a Guru, a brother in Drahmā, or ultimately someone able to recite well, watching by the adept’s side. Liberation is accomplished by listening to the advice in the Book. In his psychological commentary on the Book, Jung writes about it as follows:

And indeed, the instructions contained in Bar-do T’os-grol are meant to remind the deceased of the experience of his Guru’s initiation and teachings, for in essence the instruction is nothing more or less than the initiation of the deceased into the life of the bar-do, just as the initiation of a living person is a preparation for the journey to the Other Side. [...] In the case of living people, however, the “That Side” is not the afterworld, but a change of mind set and point of view, “the other side in the psychological sense” (Jung, 2013 : 148).

Jung’s view that the Book, although written for the dead, nevertheless concerns life, is shared by translator Francesca Fremantle. In her words, the book teaches how to fulfill one’s vocation, and reminds us of how to act during our lifetime (TKU, 1984 : 1). And if we read the fate of the literary characters in the context of the Book, in the aspect of leaving the state of death and transitioning to new forms of existence, we will notice that the role of conducting and commenting has been assumed by nature. It is nature that instructs about lightness and meaning, shows how to achieve liberation, speaks of beauty and patience, and

⁷ (TKU, 2013 : 55).

restores the memory of existence. The protagonists of the works under discussion overcome separation, pain and inner death thanks to the presence of a fellow-feeling nature. Gradually, a process of return to the disregarded, suppressed and forgotten elements of being, lost meanings and senses takes place in their lives.

The protagonist of *The Lost Soul*, following the advice of an old doctor, takes refuge in the province, locks himself in a deserted house and undergoes a process of therapy. And this is where the narrative gets suspended and the story is filled mainly with Concejo's iconic design. The illustrator focuses her attention on her attempts to find the lost soul, and the space of expectation is filled with an essential character – nature. Saturated with an atmosphere of contemplation, the paintings direct the viewer's attention to the beauty of nature, the delicacy of floral ornaments, colorful flowers. Even the glazed door, behind which John's silhouette is drawn, is engraved with plants. Subsequent views present John's figure in a state of inner silence, tranquility, meditation. The protagonist, who faces the window and is now shown with his back to the reader, is accompanied by potted plants and simple everyday objects (also decorated with plant motifs). One of the plants grows directly from the table, another from the window sill, expressing man's special relationship with an intelligent, compassionate and ready to serve nature. For wood carries the germ of rebirth and participates in the dao of heaven, earth and man. The plant growing out of the wooden table and window introduces the Buddhist attitude of Ch'an unification, the idea of unity "in contemplation, achieved by the way of rejecting sensory impressions and quieting the mind" (Slósarska, 1994 : 19). Concejo's protagonist, if he wants to find his soul and achieve enlightenment, should reject sensory impressions and quiet the mind, for as the ancient wisdom argues, "do not listen with your ears, do not listen with your brain, listen with your spirit" (Slósarska, 1994 : 19). The process of tuning into the order of nature is particularly expressed by a plant with "heart-shaped" leaves reminding a nasturtium. Originally, it stands on a television whose screen displays a frame of a couple in love in a kiss of rapture. In subsequent shots, the plant appears accompanied by John holding it on his lap. The nasturtium obscuring the protagonist's silhouette seems to abide in union with the hero. John and the plant form a whole, a community of experience, a kind of mandala, a prefiguration of Totality.

John, awaiting the return of his soul in the company of plants, is visited by forest and domestic animals: deer, hare (rabbit) and cat – and each of the animals present carries deep symbolism. The deer, as the Buddha's animal and an expression of his teachings, pictures the soul itself, wisdom, asceticism, aspiration of the spirit. Rabbits and hares, on the other hand, bring the gift of alertness and attentive listening. The cat as a guide can prompt the search for inner powers and life purpose, help overcome fears and problems, and provide inner

healing (Miernik, 2021 : 32). The aforementioned animals fit, according to archaic notions, into the circle of power animals. They appear “when a person loses power,” and a shaman or shamanic advisor embarks on a spiritual journey to bring the power animal and restore strength to the lost one: “power animals are simply a source of vitality. They come to us because we seek them, and their intentions are always good, never bad. They are there to help us” (Baghratian 2018 : 149). They bestow qualities necessary for the journey into ourselves.

In Andersen’s fairy tale, the role of the instructor is taken over by a forgotten and rejected nightingale. It appears to cleanse from sadness, lead out of emptiness, terror, loneliness, helplessness, “dissolve” all the negative aspects of the psyche. The song of the bird brings joy, restores a sense of beauty, order: “Thank you! Thank you! – exclaimed the emperor. – You heavenly bird, I know you. I banished you from the empire, and yet you drove all those evil spirits from my bed and death from my heart with your singing!” (Andersen, 2006 : 274). Writing about the healing power of art, Aristotle argued that “some people, under the influence of melodies that put the soul in a state of rapture, find solace as if they had taken a medicine or a palliative,” for “music heals by spiritual purification” (Szczeklik, 2008 : 84). Thus, catharsis as a natural psychological and biological process is accomplished by finding oneself in the order of nature, a reminder of the lost truth that “man is a microcosm made of the same elements as the macrocosm, or universe” (Szczeklik, 2008 : 18). This regularity is the basis of all health, and that is why we must remember that “genetic constellations are of celestial provenance, so perhaps learning about them will restore the lost connection with heaven, show the way back, restore the lost harmony” (Szczeklik, 2008 : 28). Andersen’s nightingale, as a link between heaven and earth, seems to transcend the three-dimensional world of everyday life and move us into extraordinary states of consciousness (Carpa, 2019 : 186). And that is why, enchanted by his new recognition of himself and the world, the emperor asks the bird: “Stay with me forever.” Experiencing the non-intellectual state of oneness of all things, attunement to the Cosmos remaining in a state of unification, brings the protagonist inner balance, restores simple joy.

In Tokarczuk’s book, the experience of unity is expressed by a lush, floral garden that reaches almost to the sky. Man and nature remain in a state of joyful symbiosis. In cultural imagery, flowers have been chosen to represent the self, spiritual intelligence (especially the lotus flower and the rose). Spiritual intelligence is the inner ability to know the essence of being, it is “unifying thinking” that unites different areas of the psyche, gives a sense of meaning. As a result, it leads to a fuller understanding of ourselves, to “reformulate our experiences or put them in a new context” (Zohar, Marshall, 2001: 74). Equipped with the above predispositions, a person undoubtedly possesses a deep connection to the soul. In Concejo’s illustrations, the soul is imagined as a child, and interestingly we find parallels to Jung’s Red Book, which is a record of the

author's visions and dreams in the face of a mid-life crisis. In a conversation with his soul, Jung confessed: "I wandered for many years, so long that I forgot that I possessed a soul. Where have you been all this time? What other worlds were hiding you and giving you space? [...]. Who are you, a child? My dreams depicted you as a child, as a girl" (Jung, 2019 : 132).

The psychological process, described by Jung a century ago, has found a continuation (as a displaced thematic image) in the literary work of Polish authors, and points to the universality of the issue, to the work of the artist who persistently collects all the crumbs, trying to glue the universe of the whole back together from them" (Tokarczuk, 2020: 280).

SUMMARY

In Andersen's *The Nightingale* and *The Lost Soul* by Tokarczuk and Concejo, nature acts as a guide – a psychopompos, participates in the reconstruction of the parabolic path to the lost meaning. It is co-present on the path of transformation and spiritual growth, proves to be an indispensable element introducing the path of contemplation and realization of inner needs. Selfless beauty, this "good for free" (Kulmowa, 2018: 34), is the most effective remedy, and if only the seeker of fulfillment opens himself to cooperation, he can change his consciousness. Embarking on the path of coexistence with nature gives knowledge of the spiritual relationship of all things to each other (more geometrico). It makes the Universe a living being, concerned about man. It seems that nature is able to wait patiently for a "touch", and when the encounter occurs it bestows its catharsis. A return to the scattered Eden is a necessary condition for settling into oneself and the world, a guarantee of meaning and happiness. In light of the above readings, there seems to be a timeless reflection coming from the philosophical thought of Omraam M. Aivanhov that all nature is intelligent, and if man denies that he is surrounded by intelligent beings then he denies life, begins to experience blindness and condemns himself to a slow death. Nature turns out to be the buckle that binds fate together, shows who we are without it, and who we can be by uniting with it.

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