Hans Christian Andersen: A Cultural Icon Lost in Translation

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Abstract The article initially points out the paradox that Hans Christian Andersen has become a cultural icon on a global scale based on translations which are often unreliable. The article further argues that this is partly due to the fact that translators in the target languages have most often translated Andersen as a writer predominantly for children, something which Andersen is not. The target language exemplified in the article is English. It is demonstrated how two central translators of Andersen into English, Erik Christian Haugaard and Jean Hersholdt, sanitise Andersen's original texts and iron out difficult formulations and stylistic anomalies. The result is that the thematic depth and complexity of Andersen, as well as his stylistic idiom, is lost in such translations.
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Hans Christian Andersen is a celebrated author of fairy tales across cultures around the globe. However, the way he is perceived varies in different cultural settings. In China, for example, he is viewed as an author whose fairy tales and stories appeal to people of all ages.[1] In the Anglo-Saxon world he is primarily perceived of as a

1 See the contributions of Sun Jian: "The Reception of Hans Christian Andersen on Campus," Ye Rulan: "Hans Christian Andersen in China. An Overview," and Li Hongye: "Chinese Interpretations of Andersen's Fairy Tales" in Nørregaard Frandsen, Johs., Sun Jian and Torben Grøngaard Jeppesen (eds.): *Hans Christian Andersen in China* (Odense: University Press of Southern Denmark, 2014).

writer of fairy tales for children. This latter view is arguably the dominant one of him across the globe. It is also safe to presume that many people will know of him as a writer of such tales without having read any of them. This is because Andersen has become a global cultural icon.[1] His global cultural iconicity is very much due to a couple of films: the movie *Hans Christian Andersen* (1952), where Danny Kaye played the role of Andersen, and the Disney animation of "The Little Mermaid" from 1989. The Disney movie *Frozen* (2013) might also prove to have some impact, but, since it is only loosely based on "The Snow Queen," probably not to the same extent as Disney's *The Little Mermaid*.

Some of Andersen's own fairy tales have also contributed to his global iconicity, though. He did write almost 200 fairy tales and stories (if you include everything which can aspire to such a generic appellation), but his international fame rests upon a surprisingly limited number of these. The iconic stories are "The Little Mermaid" (1837), "The Princess and the Pea" (1835), "The Emperor's New Clothes" (1837), "The Little Match Girl" (1845) and maybe a couple more. Such stories can all be read aloud to — or be read by — children and be understood by them. Thus, the idea that Andersen is a writer of fairy tales for children is supported by the nature of the fairy tales of his which have contributed to his global cultural iconicity.[2] However, Andersen was a very unconventional and experimenting writer of short prose fiction. Most of his prose pieces are in fact not aimed at an audience of children. Moreover, he was a very prolific author who also wrote novels, plays, poems and travelogues. Few people, even in Denmark, are aware of this nowadays.

Andersen's first volumes of tales did (also) address an audience of children. He called them "Fairy Tales Told for Children." But from the very beginning he was acutely aware that his tales would also have to appeal to the adult reader if they were to succeed. Therefore, you could say that he spiced them with humour and puns that only the adult reader (perhaps reading aloud to children) might fully appreciate. Andersen's early (and some later) fairy tales are thus characterized

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1 Andersen is a cultural icon, a figure in the imagination of popular culture, in the same sense as authors like William Shakespeare and Franz Kafka are such icons. People have a distinct idea about authors like Shakespeare and Kafka even if they have not read any of their works. Literary characters can also become cultural icons, something which, paradoxically, severs their connection to their respective makers: Frankenstein (Mary Shelley), Dracula (Bram Stoker) and Tarzan (Edgar Rice Burroughs), for example.

2 Elements of Andersen's biography have also played a part in the formation of his cultural iconicity, but I will leave out that perspective in the present context.

by "double articulation."[1] One voice in them addresses an audience of children while another one addresses the adult reader. Once Andersen had developed his narrative style according to this double articulation he did more radical experiments with the format of short prose fiction. He realized that he had hit upon a format and a narrative style which gave him unique opportunities to use his talents as a writer and to produce something very unlike the conventional ways of telling stories and writing prose fiction. Thus he dropped the appellation "Fairy Tales Told for Children" for his volumes and adopted other ones like "New Fairy Tales and Stories."

In this paper, I will first characterize what is unique about Andersen's narrative style. Then I will discuss why this element has most often been lost in translation and give some examples of this. My examples will be from translations into English. Some examples will be from some of Andersen's iconic fairy tales which can be read and understood by an audience of children, others will be from tales and stories of a different kind. This is going to illustrate that there is a very huge discrepancy between the Hans Christian Andersen who is a global cultural icon and the Danish author of the same name who transformed the genre of short prose fiction beyond recognition in the 19th century.

Feigned Orality and Childishness as a Poetic Strategy

The first tale in Andersen's first volume of fairy tales "Told for Children" is "The Tinderbox" (1835). Andersen's unique narrative style expresses itself in the very first sentence: "A soldier came marching along the highway: One, Two! One, Two! [or "Left, Right! Left, Right!," my comment]"[2]. This initiation of the tale is truly an *in medias res* one. There is no kind of introduction, no zooming in on the depicted situation. This very much breaks away or deviates from the conventional literary

1 Søren Baggesen points out this in his article "Dobbeltartikulationen i H.C. Andersens eventyr" ["The Double Articulation of H.C. Andersen's Fairy Tales"] in de Mylius, Johan, Aage Jørgensen and Viggo Hjørnager Pedersen (eds.): *Andersen og verden* [*Andersen and the World*]. (Odense: Odense University Press, 1993).

2 All translations into English from Andersen's tales and stories in this article will be my own – except, of course, from instances where I quote other translators. Therefore, I do not refer to any specific editions of these tales and stories.

way of telling or writing a story at Andersen's time.[1] It only takes one sentence to manifest this deviation! Doing away with traditional literary devices like proper introductions and detailed descriptions is an important element of Andersen's revolutionary narrative style. So is his frequent use of onomatopoeias, words imitating sounds ("One, Two! One, Two!"[2] is not strictly speaking an onomatopoeia, but it does to some extent exemplify the device) and modal words. The sentence also illustrates the unconventional syntax of Andersen's style.[3] Such narrative features can all be perceived of as devices which are intended to capture the interest of an audience of children who have no time for proper introductions and detailed descriptions. Numerous critics have pointed out that what characterizes this style of Andersen is its "orality." There is no denying that the style is closer to oral language than the style of traditional literary writing is. But if one, at Andersen's time, had walked around in public and spoken like one of Andersen's narrators one would probably have been arrested and put away in an asylum. One should rather characterize Andersen's narrative style as one of a *feigned orality*. It is a clever (and revolutionary) literary device which Andersen can apply for more than one purpose and not always merely the purpose of capturing the interest of a reader, be he or she a child or an adult. It is even more misleading when Andersen's style has been described as "childish" and conceived of as an expression of the childishness of its source of origin. This view has mostly been abandoned in more recent scholarship on Andersen, fortunately. I shall return to the question of orality and childishness, but first I will discuss a few more examples of beginnings of tales of Andersen which can be conceived of as primarily addressing an audience of children. My first example will be the beginning of "The Little Mermaid":

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1 Early on in his career as an author Andersen wrote the fairy tale "Dödningen" ["The Spectre" or "The Dead Person"] (1830), a 'retelling' of a folk tale from his native island, Funen. He wrote this fairy tale in the conventional 'literary' fashion of his time. In 1835 he rewrote the tale and gave it a new title, "The Travelling Companion." If one compares these two tales one can easily detect how Andersen's narrative style has changed and evolved. One day, one might be able to do this on the basis of proper translations of them into English.

2 Another peculiar aspect of Andersen's style can be observed here, namely his excessive and highly idiosyncratic use of exclamation marks. This is an element which cannot be heard but only *read*.

3 Tom Lundskær-Nielsen gives a very good characterization of the narrative style of Andersen's tales and stories in his article "The language of Hans Christian Andersen's Fairy Tales." However, Lundskær-Nielsen describes the syntax of them as "paratactic" (p. 4). This is true in some cases, but not always. Andersen will often, especially in his later work, use elaborate sentence constructions. But these constructions will still be unconventional!

> Far out at sea the water is as blue as the petals of the loveliest cornflower, and as clear as the purest glass, but it is very deep, deeper than any anchor cable can reach, many church towers would have to be put on top of each other in order to reach from the bottom and above the water. Down there the merfolk lives.

In fact, we get more of an introduction here than in the case of "The Tinderbox." The narrator does zoom in on the environment at the bottom of the sea where the merfolk lives. This, arguably, is due to the fact that the story in the beginning takes place in an alien element. The children must be introduced to this element in order to sufficiently awaken their imagination. The passage also makes use of a traditional literary device: comparisons. These comparisons could also be seen as devices which are to assist the imagination of a child. The colour and clarity of the alien element, the water of the sea, is compared to things children will be familiar with: a cornflower and glass. And the huge depth of this element is brought home to an audience of children by means of a (sort of) comparison involving another familiar element, church towers. Furthermore, the sentences of this beginning are arranged in a paratactic order. In short, nothing in this passage contradicts the idea that Andersen is telling the tale in order to capture the interest and imagination of a child.

If we look at the beginning of "The Nightingale" (1843), matters get more complex:

> In China, as you probably know, the Emperor is Chinese and all the people in his company are Chinese too. It is now many years ago, but that is precisely why it is worth it listening to the story, before one forgets it.

This very literal translation captures the anomaly of Andersen's syntax. The second sentence breaks away from the rules of proper syntax. Had such rules been obeyed the sentence would have read something like: 'It is worth it listening to the story, because it happened many years ago, and one could therefore easily forget it'. Andersen's version borders on anacoluthon, the rhetorical term for the breakdown of syntactical logic and order. Would children find Andersen's way of phrasing the sentence more appealing? Viewed as an isolated case it does not seem obvious that they would. However, the tonality of the telling of the tale as a whole might well be more appealing to children than if it had been written in a more conventional way.

Andersen's use of modal words (like "probably" and "precisely") is also apparent here. Such words are certainly a feature of everyday oral language. But anacoluthon is not. This is a good indication that Andersen's narrative style is not just simply "oral."

There is also a brief proper introduction in this beginning. The story takes place in a country which would be highly foreign to most people, and certainly children, at Andersen's time: China. This location is duly specified. The mere idea of a story taking place in such a foreign country would appeal to the imagination of Danish children then — and probably also today. But the specification that the story takes place in China is still remarkably strange. The reader is informed that the emperor of China and the people he is surrounded by are Chinese. Even a small child would know or be able to conclude that! It goes without saying. This piece of information is utterly redundant! In fact, the inclusion or adding of redundant information or redundant clauses is a prominent aspect of Andersen's narrative style. Is this a kind of humorous element which is intended to amuse the adult reader? Well, it is an aspect of Andersen's style which contributes to its peculiar tonality and which children and adults alike might appreciate. But again, it is hardly a feature of everyday oral language. What would happen to you if you walked around in public and informed people that the people of China are Chinese? You would probably get arrested and put away in an asylum….

A number of elements of Andersen's narrative style have now been identified (paratactic syntax (in some cases), onomatopoeias, modal words and the passing on of redundant information). They add up to what you might call Andersen's narrative *persona*. This persona could be named "The narrator for children." This persona is not a naïve and childish device, however. As I have already stated, it is a clever — and mischievous — literary one. This is evident because Andersen can use this device when he is decidedly *not* narrating for children.

One of Andersen's most gruesome tales is the story "The Shadow." It is about a learned man who loses his shadow when visiting a southern country. Later on, his former shadow contacts him. They keep up some kind of relation. Finally, the Shadow persuades the learned man to travel with him as his companion – playing the role of his shadow (since the Shadow, of course, has not got such a thing). The story ends with the execution of the learned man when he attempts to revolt against this arrangement. The story begins in this way:

In the hot countries, the sun can certainly burn! People get as brown as

> mahogany. Yes, in the hottest countries they are burnt to negroes[1], but it was after all only to the hot countries a learned man had come from the cold ones; there he believed he could run around like he did at home, well he soon had to give up that idea.

There are modal words in abundance in this passage: "certainly," "Yes," "after all," "well." The syntax is also somewhat strange. And information is passed one which is again utterly redundant. The general adult reader at the time of Andersen might not have travelled extensively. But such a reader would very well know that people in the countries of southern Europe have got darker skin than themselves and that people living in Africa have got skin which is darker still.

In other words, the aforementioned narrative or literary persona of Andersen's, "the narrator for children," is at work in this passage. The tonality of this persona is unmistakeable. But if this is a kind of humorous device, the humour involved is of a sinister character indeed. This gruesome story is certainly not intended for children at all. Only an adult reader will have any chance of perceiving what the story is about. Children will most likely find the story far too abstract (the learned man is an author who writes about what is true, good and beautiful, poetry is personified, etcetera) and therefore boring. So why is this story narrated by the aforementioned persona? My answer to this question will be that the story is narrated by this persona in order to achieve a certain — and mischievous — effect. This effect is *unheimlich* indeed. The adult reader (who has to swallow the offense that he or she is informed about something he or she knows full well) initially perceives that he or she is about to read a story by the familiar "narrator for children," only to realize that the story he or she is reading in no way corresponds to the familiarity associated with this narrator. Moreover, the story, such as it addresses its addressee, repeatedly and deliberately situates the reader in the position of the gullible and distracted learned man. Keeping company with Andersen's (shadowy) narrative persona is keeping dangerous company indeed in this case!

This is an excellent example of how sophisticated a writer Andersen really is. He can manipulate modes of narrating and generic conventions ("The Shadow plays on the conventions and structures of the folk tale in subtle — and highly disturbing — ways) like few other writers. Andersen, it appears, realized that he had developed a kind of narrative persona which he could use in order to achieve effects of an unprecedented and extremely ingenuous kind. He saw that he had hit upon a

1 I apologize for this politically incorrect translation but in this case the task of the translator is to translate as literally as possible.

formula of almost unlimited potential. This means that Andersen first of all makes *strategic use* of his insight into the nature of the consciousness of the child. As Klaus P. Mortensen has brilliantly put it in his article "Fortællerens skygge" ["The Shadow of the Narrator"]:

> The *childlike* in the thematic universe of *H.C. Andersen* at a first glance seems to derive from a consciousness which identifies itself with the candour and spontaneity of the child. This is the view of the bulk of the scholarship on Andersen which, as regards this, is much more naïve than its subject. It is not as simple as that. The narrating consciousness is not in unison with the consciousness of the child. It uses it as a *cover*. It makes use of its insight into its nature." (p. 21, my translation, Mortensen's italics)

Mogens Davidsen has also put it very well by means of the title of an excellent article of his: "Childishness as Poetic Strategy."[1] This title says it all.

That Andersen is operating at such a level of sophistication has gone more or less unnoticed outside a narrow circle of scholars such as Mortensen and Davidsen (this circle has certainly grown wider in recent years, but it is still confined within the academic world). Even the Danish cultural icon "H.C. Andersen" (as Andersen is referred to in Denmark) is an author of an entirely different kind. So is the international one, as I have already pointed out. Still, the Danish audience will always have the opportunity to read Andersen in his native language, even if Andersen's original prose is no longer immediately accessible to all modern Danish readers. When it comes to an international audience the situation differs a lot. Andersen's distinct narrative style – his narrative persona which is such an integral part of his sophistication — has more or less been entirely lost in translation. I shall now discuss the reasons for this and render some significant examples.

Lost in Translation

I will discuss translations into English and offer some examples from such translations. As I have mentioned, the idea about Andersen as an author varies across cultures. Therefore, the approach of translators from different cultures might also vary. Still, I believe that English translations are exemplary to some extent, not least because of the huge global impact of Anglo-Saxon (and not least American)

1 In de Mylius, Jørgen, Aage Jørgensen and Viggo Hjørnager Pedersen (eds.). *Hans Christian Andersen. Between Children's Literature and Adult Literature* (Odense: University Press of Southern Denmark, 2007).

culture.

If a translator believes that he or she is going to translate an author who writes for children, and therefore targets an audience of children, this might have immediate consequences. The translator might think that he or she has got more of a license to translate "freely" than if he or she was to translate adult literature. And the translator will be very careful about translating in a way so that children will be able to immediately understand the translation. As regards the translation of Andersen, this has very much been the case in Anglo-Saxon culture where the predominant idea about Andersen, as mentioned, is that he is writing for children. Thus, the tendency of Anglo-Saxon translators has been to iron out those anomalies of Andersen's narrative style I have hitherto pointed out.[1]

As a consequence, Andersen's peculiar syntax has been normalized. The number of modal words has been reduced. Andersen's excessive use of exclamation marks has been omitted. Images which are rooted in Andersen's own cultural context has been replaced by images of the translator's own making which he or she believed would be more accessible to a target audience of children from his or her own culture. And apparent redundancy has been left out. Moreover, you do find violent scenes in some of Andersen's tales and stories (like you do in folk tales). Motifs of a sexual character as well as some sexual innuendo can also be found (like you can find in some folk tales). Tales and stories which contain violent scenes or sexually charged motifs, or some kind of sexual innuendo, have therefore been sanitised by translators in order to make them more suitable for a target audience of children. W. Glyn Jones notices this in his article "Hvad *har* de dog gjort ved Andersen. En historie til skræk og advarsel" ["What *have* they done to Andersen. A story as an awful warning"], while pointing out that Andersen:

> (…) is absolutely unique in his language and imagery. One can safely claim that the world has never seen a writer of fairy tales who compares to him. To attempt to recreate his magic in another language is at any rate almost impossible. But the challenge can be met, and has been attempted to be met, by reliable translators in the 19th as well as the 20th century, sometimes with adequate results. But many translations have been bad, either because of

1 It must be pointed out that the challenge of the translator in the case of Andersen is at any rate a daunting one. To preserve the tonality of his idiosyncratic style is a huge challenge in itself. In addition to this the way he often plays on the idioms of the everyday language of his time might be lost on even the modern Danish reader. Moreover, quite a few of his puns are simply untranslatable.

> incompetent translators or in order not to offend the prudish souls of the time. (79, my translation)

Johan de Mylius is even blunter when he, in his article "Ordspil i H.C. Andersens eventyr" ["Puns in the fairy tales of H.C. Andersen"] states that:

> The examples [such ones just rendered by de Mylius, my comment] do not need any further comments. They illustrate how often an effect in the original Danish text of Andersen is lost in translation. Often one has to ask oneself: Is it the same Andersen that we know? Is it the poet [a conventional way of referring to Andersen in Denmark (like referring to Shakespeare as "The bard"), it does not mean "lyric poet," my comment] or his shadow which has risen to world fame? (35)

I will now give some examples of my own which will illustrate what translators into English *have* done to Andersen. My examples will be from two prominent and influential translators who have both translated almost all of Andersen's fairy tales and stories: Erik Christian Haugaard and Jean Hersholt. The latter is the one whose translations into English are accessible via the webpage of the Hans Christian Andersen Center.

To begin with Haugaard, he is in several cases not even able to translate a title of one of Andersen's tales with a satisfying result. This is really a testimony to his grave inadequacy. For example, "Thumbelina" (1835) in his version becomes "Inchelina." But "Thumbelina" of course associates to the folklore motif which in Anglo-Saxon culture is known as "Tom Thumb." The original Danish title "Tommelise" associates to the equivalent motif of Danish folklore culture "Tommeliden." This association is completely lost in the case of Haugaard's "Inchelina."

"The Galoshes of Fortune" (1838) in Haugaard's version becomes "The Magic Galoshes." This story is very much about what can be considered to be a good fortune and how one's ideas about what a good fortune for oneself would be can turn out to be absolutely aberrant when put to the test. This connection between the title and the main theme of the tale is completely lost in Haugaard's translation.

"Ole Lukoie" (1841) in Haugaard's version becomes "The Sandman." It is not an easy title to translate. The original Danish title is "Ole Lukøie." It can be understood as 'Ole [a Danish proper name] Close-eye'. It refers to the main character who makes children go to sleep, i.e. closes their eyes. He is (you could say

a sanitised) version of the folklore figure of the Sandman. But Haugaard's solution is terrible. There already exists a classic horror tale by E.T.A. Hoffmann entitled "The Sandman" and it can now be confused with Andersen's story.

Haugaard does not fare any better when translating the beginning of "The Flying Trunk" (1839). This passage of the Danish original text can be translated as follows:

> There once was a merchant, he was so rich that he could pave the entire street and almost a small alley as well with silver coins; but he did not, he knew how to spend his money otherwise, if he gave out a penny, he got a pound in return; such a merchant he was — and then he died.[my translation]

Here is Haugaard's attempt to translate the passage:

> Once there was a merchant who was so rich that he could easily have paved a whole street with silver coins and still have had enough left over to pave a little alley as well. But he didn't do anything so foolish, he made better use of his money than that. He didn't give out a copper coin without getting a silver one in return; that's how good a merchant he was, but he couldn't live for ever. (145)

Andersen's almost staccato-like rhythm in this passage is made mellower by Haugaard, which results in his version being considerably longer. The cheeky redundancy of "and almost a small alley as well" is changed and incorporated into a more logical sentence. And Andersen's abrupt "— and then he died," which is almost like slap in the face of the reader who thinks this will be a tale about the merchant, is replaced by the ever so stale "but he couldn't live for ever." A magnificent example of the kind of sanitation which has been done to Andersen! I will rest my case on Haugaard and turn to Hersholt. His case is in many ways graver still, even if he usually gets the title of a tale right.

My first example of Hersholt's inadequacies will be the opening lines of "The Snow Queen." Andersen's original goes like this:

> Right then! now we begin. When we get to the end of the story we will know more than we do now, for it was an evil ogre [or troll, my comment]; it was one of the very worst, it was 'the Devil' [Andersen here uses a colloquial way of referring to the Devil which is untranslatable, my comment].

There is absolutely no logical coherence between "we will know more than we do now" and "for it was an evil ogre." This is an instance of anacoluthon proper. And the identification of a figure from pagan folklore, an ogre (or a troll), and the Christian idea of the Devil seems strange indeed. But "The Snow Queen" is indeed a grand quest fairy tale while it is also a Christian allegory.[1] The tale thus mixes the motif of the cyclical rhythm of nature (celebrated in paganism) and the motif of the eschatological Christian idea of salvation. All of this is indicated by the mixing of the motifs of an ogre and of the Devil in this brief opening of the tale. Furthermore, the anacoluthon kind of splinters the logic of the second sentence, while the tale is about the effects of the shards or splinters of the Devil's mirror. So, this is Andersen at his sophisticated best. The two opening lines constitute a striking masterstroke which encapsulates all of the thematic weight and depth of the tale as a whole. Let us consider Hersholt's rendition of these lines:

> Now then! We will begin. When the story is done you shall know a great deal more than you do know.
> He was a terribly bad hobgoblin, a goblin of the very wickedest sort and, in fact, he was the devil himself.

The shock effect of the anacoluthon has been ironed out completely by Hersholt and the inserted "in fact" softens the disturbing mixing of a pagan folklore motif with a Christian one. This is translation at its very worst! It seems obvious that Hersholt had no idea whatsoever about the thematic depth of the tale as he was translating it.

"The Red Shoes" arguably is one of Andersen's most disturbing tales. The violence of the motif of the chopping off of the main character's feet is difficult to stomach and the condemnation of the vanity of the same character appears to be unbearably strict. A careful reading of the tale will alert one to the fact that it is far more complex, but I have not got the time or space carry out such a reading in this context. However, red and white are the two dominant colours in the story. Red is the colour of the shoes, of course, and can be associated with vanity, sexuality and sin. White is the colour of an angel who appears first in a punishing version and then in a merciful one. Both colours are mentioned in the description of the beard of an old soldier who plays an important part in the story:

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1 As regards this, see my article "Arabesque and Allegory in H.C. Andersen's 'The Snow Queen'" in Hansen, Per Krogh and Marianne Wolff Lundholt (eds.). *When We Get to the End... Towards a Narratology of Hans Christian Andersen* (Odense: University Press of Southern Denmark, 2005).

> It was lovely sunny weather; *Karen* and the old Lady went along the path through the corn; a little dust was in the air.
> At the church door stood an old Soldier with a crutch and with a strange long beard, it was more red than white, for it was red."

Again, we are confronted with a case of redundancy and seeming anacoluthon. It seems totally needless and illogical to say that a beard is more red than white when it is (in fact!) red. But as mentioned, these are the two dominant colours of the story which respectively point to sin and sexuality and to Christian punishment and mercy. The old soldier is an ambiguous kind of moral authority in the story. So, he can be associated with the colour white, especially with the punishing aspect of Christian morality. But he remains at the church door. He does not enter the church. He remains a demonic and perhaps pagan figure. Therefore, the remark that his beard is "more red than white, for it was red" does make sense. It signals that the soldier, in spite of being some sort of moral authority, at the end of the day remains firmly within the 'red territory' of the story. Again, once must grasp the thematics and imagery of the story as a whole to make sense of apparent nonsense. This is Hersholt's translation of the passage:

> It was a fair, sunny day. Karen and the old lady took the path through the cornfield, where it was rather dusty. At the church door they met an old soldier, who stood with a crutch and wore a long, curious beard. It was more reddish than white. In fact it was quite red.

Once more, Hersholt inserts an "in fact" which softens the paradoxical nature of Andersen's original formulation. He cannot rid his translation completely of the apparent redundancy of the original text, but he surely does whatever he can to do so. Once more, one can safely conclude that he has no idea whatsoever about the thematic depth of the tale in question and the careful artistic composition of its imagery. I will rest my case on Hersholt too.

As mentioned, I have rendered some examples from two prominent and influential translators of Andersen into English. Permit me to repeat myself: Haugaard has translated the only (more or less) complete volume of Andersen's fairy tales and stories on the market; Hersholt's translations are the ones accessible via the website of the Hans Christian Andersen Center. As I have shown, both sanitise and iron out whenever they feel they have to do so. This fact not only

makes their translations flat. It obscures the true qualities of the translated texts and obstructs the reader's possibilities of fathoming the thematic depth and careful artistic composition of them. This is, according to experts in the field like W. Glyn Jones, Johan de Mylius and Viggo Hjørnager Pedersen,[1] what has been done to Andersen by his translators in general. Andersen scholars are therefore still faced with an immense task if the global cultural icon "Hans Christian Andersen" shall be made to more adequately resemble the impish and astonishingly gifted writer of fairy tales and stories (and novels, plays, travelogues and poems) who was born in Odense in Denmark in 1805.

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1 Who has written a whole book on the subject: *Ugly Ducklings? Studies in the English Translations of Hans Christian Andersen's Fairy Tales and Stories* (Odense: University Press of Southern Denmark, 2004).