

# Introduction to Topic on Hans Christian Andersen and the Fairy Tale

**Jørgen Veisland**

Department of Scandinavian Studies, University of Gdansk  
ul. Wita Stwosza 55, 80 – 952 Gdansk, Poland  
Email: finjv@univ.gda.pl

The thematic issue on the fairy tale consists of eight articles; one on the Cuban fairy tale, one on tales by the Brothers Grimm, one on the Norwegian fairy tale and five on Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tales. The articles are testimony to the fact that the fairy tale is alive and well and that it is the subject of a rich variety of scholarly interpretations. The juxtaposition of articles on Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tales and articles on other tales is deliberate; it serves to show how Andersen's special fairy tale, the so-called "artistic fairy tale," or "art fairy tale" (*Kunsteventyr*) differs from the fairy tale tradition. Andersen's break with tradition may indeed constitute the reason for his appeal to adult readers today.

Barbara Stawicka-Pirecka's article on the Cuban writer Lydia Cabrera shows how the African-Cuban tale has absorbed African beliefs, magic and the marvellous. Dolores Buttry's analysis of tales by the Brothers Grimm examines the motif of loyalty in the tale and refers to Freudian fairy tale interpretations. Gudleiv Bø's article shows how the tales collected by Asbjørnsen and Moe helped build Norwegian national identity. Tom Lundskaer Nielsen's examination of Andersen's language describes the reasons why the author uses informal language constructions and direct speech. Hanna Dymel Trzebiatowska's article on Polish translations of Andersen's fairy tales analyzes Andersen's use of the dual address. Johannes Nørregaard Frandsen examines Andersen's tales, the *Kunstmärchen*, from the perspective of cultural bridge-building in an age of globalization. Anne-Marie Mai's interpretation of "The Dryad" shows how Andersen's story refers to the Paris World Exhibition of 1867 where Andersen felt out of place and estranged. Finally, Jørgen Veisland's interpretation of "*the shadow*" relates the story to fiction by a. o. Bruno Schultz, Paul Auster and Haruki Murakami.

The editors hope that the rich variety of articles on the fairy tale will stimulate further scholarly and readerly interest in the tale in general and in Hans Christian Andersen in particular.