

Introduction

Let us begin by completing the quote from which the title of this symposium is taken. We are at the very beginning of “The Snow Queen” (1845):

Now then! Yet will we begin. When we get to the end we shall know more than we do know since it was a wicked troll! one of the worst, it was the “devil”! One day he was in a really good mood since he had made a mirror in which everything good and beautiful shrank to almost nothing, while things that didn’t function and looked terrible in the first place, now stood out and looked even worse. [...] Those who went to the troll-school – for he kept a school – told everyone, that a miracle had happened: for the first time, it was made possible to see what the world and mankind were really like.¹

For one whose business it is to find patterns and structures in the world we are living in, to make exact descriptions of (or – if you prefer – to mirror) this world, and who sees it as a major task to adjust or even revise our conception of what is “true” and what is not, Hans Christian Andersen’s allegory of the distorting mirror is highly provocative. As we learn when we read on, the mirror breaks and is scattered over the whole world. One of the grains gets stuck inside the heart of little Kay and makes him change utterly. Not only does it bring him from the stage of the innocent child to the rascality of a teenage rebel, it also makes him an exponent of rationality, knowledge and critical thinking – skills I believe everyone reading this book considers essential qualities if not for being human, then at least for our profession. But in “The Snow Queen” these qualities are the devil’s product. They make little Kay forget his prayers in favour of the multiplication table, they make him object to the fairy tales told by the grandmother, and appreciate the symmetry and artificial-

ity of the snow-flake compared to God's own more or less amorphous nature.

If it wasn't because of the anachronism of which we would make ourselves guilty, we could suspect Hans Christian Andersen of making ironic comments on the "troll-school" of formalism and structuralism. As everyone knows structuralist-minded readers and scholars also enjoy symmetries and artificialities – we are searching for general patterns, we question the narratives we meet and we most certainly prefer multiplication tables and arithmetic to prayers.

Therefore: Dear fellow-students of the troll-school – enjoy this book devoted to the fragments of the devil's mirror!

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The papers collected in this book are from a symposium held on August 15th – 17th 2003 at the Center for Narratological Studies, University of Southern Denmark.

The Center for Narratological Studies is an interdisciplinary research center founded early in 2003 with the purpose of studying narrative in different contexts. Among the scholars from the University of Southern Denmark who contribute to research activities at the center, we have people from media studies, studies in information technology, linguistics, pedagogical research and development – and of course a large stock of scholars from literary studies. It was also our ambition to cross the barriers of the institution, and the Center for Narratological Studies is today the heart of a network with partners from all Danish universities, as well as in Scandinavia and Germany, and hosts a national research project concerning point of view- and narrator-conceptualizations, financed by The Danish Research Council for the Humanities over a three year period. (For further information, please visit www.humaniora.sdu.dk/narratologi).

When we began planning our first activities it seemed obvious to start out with the topic of fairy and folk tales. As it is known, the tradition of fairy- and folktales has been of major importance to the development of narratology. Founding works in Russian formalism and French structuralism developed some of their basic models on this material.² Since then a lot has happened in the theoretical framework, and we found it interesting to return to the genre, to reconsider it in the light of modern narratology. Also in our considerations was the

fact that perhaps the greatest Danish author ever, Hans Christian Andersen, had his 200 years' anniversary coming up. And as our contribution to this great event, we decided to take up the challenge that rises from Andersen's tales, when they are considered from the point of view of narratology.

And Andersen's tales are challenging – not only because they are so immensely well written, but also because they keep on questioning the concepts and models that have been developed by narratology. Andersen's narrative strategies are in many ways paradoxical: he is deliberately working on finding a narrational mode somewhere in between orality and writing, and explicitly works with an archetypal form for narrative texts, namely the fairy tale-genre, but does to a large extent not really fit into the form – even though he has gained an enormous reputation as a great storyteller among readers all over the world. And a storyteller he is: the narration is filled with explicit marks of and comments by a teller or narrator telling us a story.

But one thing is the narration; another, the narrative considered as the connected and motivated sequence of events. Ever since Andersen published his first novels critics have blamed him for his epic disabilities. Søren Kierkegaard's first book was a harsh reading of Andersen's novel *Only a Fiddler* (1837), in which he criticizes Andersen for not having a philosophy of life and argues that a such is the basic feature for the art of the novel. Without it, there is no unity in the text as it is needed as an "Idea" through which life can be understood backwards³ – that is as the compositional principle that gives a basis for the plot to flow continuously, and a general configuration for the protagonist to act from. And these are exactly the symptoms Kierkegaard finds on Andersen's handicap: the novel is badly structured and the protagonist Christian seems weak and rather unlikely.

The norm, from which Kierkegaard judges Andersen is the norm of the "Bildungsroman", and even though the later critique has left this, there is still a general impression of a certain compositional mess in Andersen's novels.⁴ The same thing has been said about his short-prose. Paul V. Rubow claims that Andersen's weak sense of composition leads him to a "less exciting" method – the "linking of a sequence of smaller stories to a larger fairy tale" (Rubow 1967: 155), that is to say, episodic in its structure. Rubow also mentions "Poultry Meg's Family" (1869), "The Marsh King's Daughter" (1858) and others as examples of this. Others have blamed Andersen for not being able to

invent strong enough plots by himself and letting his imagination run away with him.⁵ Only the tales where he adapts an earlier told story and rewrites it, seem to have a frame strong enough to carry the heavy load of Andersen's descriptions, excurses and embedded narratives. Another thing that has been criticized is his widespread use of the "deus ex machina": when things really get into a gridlock for the goodhearted heroes, an "intervention from above" solves the problems – in "Thumbelina" (1835) it takes the form of a swallow liberating the little girl from the coming marriage to the blind mole and bringing her to a suddenly appearing flower-prince who gives her wings.

Considered from the point of view of the archetext of all narratology, Aristotle's poetics, all these different non-narrative or non-epical aspects seem rather damaging. As is known Aristotle considered *mythos* (that is the plot) the most important aspect of tragedy, and made the perhaps simple, but still the most precise definition of this, when he said that the structure of events (the plot) has to take the form as a whole, and defined the whole as consisting of the interdependent sections of a beginning, a middle and an end.

A beginning is that which does not itself follow necessarily from something else, but after which a further event or process naturally occurs. An end, by contrast is that which itself naturally occurs, whether necessarily or usually, after a preceding event, but need not be followed by anything else. A middle is that which both follows a preceding event and has further consequences. (Aristotle 1995: 55)

To Aristotle the worst thinkable plot structure is therefore the episodic:

Of simple plots and actions, the episodic are worst. By "episodic" I mean a plot in which the episodes follow one another without probability or necessity.

"Probability" and "necessity" are near the opposite characteristics of what we find in Andersen's tales. Here calculability, causality, probability and even possibility is overruled by an extended believe in God's merciful planning of human fate. As is often demonstrated, the

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“narrative” of Andersen’s tales are not a matter of the protagonists gaining experience which in the end will lead them to insights about themselves, and give them a basis from which a step can be taken – and whereby a closure of the sequence of events that we have been following are given. It cannot and should not be doubted, that Andersen operates with “ends” in the Aristotelian sense – they indeed need not be followed by anything else. But one needs to accept a certain modification of the other end of the end, that is to say, of Aristotle’s definition (“An end is that which itself naturally occurs, whether necessarily or usually, after a preceding event, but need not be followed by anything else.”). The naturalness with which the end occurs by necessity or usualness is only natural in the sense that it obeys the (metaphysical) logic Andersen in general follows – that man will be led to happiness by God, if only he stay pure at heart. And it is only necessary insofar that one accepts the mercy of God as a necessity, and usual in the sense that this is a common pattern to Andersen. It seems as if we by this are at the essence of what we consider as Hans Christian Andersen’s challenge to narratology. We hope by this book to deliver at least some answers to this challenge.

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Hans Christian Andersen is not only *among* the most translated authors in world history, he is *the* most translated author ever and can be read in at least 145 languages – and often in several more-or-less authorized versions.

The task of translation is not easy and always rests on decisions which to some degree betray the original. Nonetheless, readers with knowledge of Danish and Danish versions of Andersen’s tales tend to feel this betrayal having the size of a mutiny when they become acquainted with translations (especially older, but not exclusively) of Andersen. Seen from a school-master’s point of view, Andersen’s style is alarming! Interjections, incoherence in tense, etc. – aspects any teacher would try to correct, but which, seen from an aesthetic point of view, is indispensable since it is these that make Andersen’s telling significant. The translators though, have for the most part taken the stand of the school-master and “corrected” his language. Whether these changes are based on a feeling of grammatical superiority by the translator, or a concern for the child reader, or the fact that An-

dersen is writing in the fairy tale genre, which in its original version is oral, and therefore open to variations, shall not be decided here. Let us just express our gratitude towards the revisions and new translations the anniversary has inspired. The world deserves to know the “real” Andersen too.

On the other hand it seems like only scholarly readers really care for this violation of Andersen’s signature. Readers all over the world have enjoyed his stories and given him the status of one of the most read authors ever, not knowing that – at least to a hard-line Andersenian – it is not the “real” Andersen they are praising but an “improved” or “diluted” version.

Considering how we should deal with this problem at the symposium and in this book where some of the contributors do not have any knowledge of Danish, we decided to make a virtue out of necessity and let everyone make their own choice regarding which version to use. The purpose of our studies here is to add aspects to an international discussion of both Andersen and narratology – and since there is a great variety of “Andersen’s” in an international context, we decided to let those who showed up in, so to say.

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The task of the symposium was a double obligation on both the theory of narrative and the tales of Hans Christian Andersen. Our hope was that on the one hand, the models and conceptions of modern narratology could open up new readings of Andersen’s tales, and on the other that Andersen’s often highly complex use of an old tradition (the tradition of the fairy-tale) would throw new light on narratology.

As the articles in this volume reveal, this double binding proved to be most fruitful: Andersen is a challenge to narratology and provokes reconsideration of many of the basic features the theory is build upon. And narratology is an excellent way to challenge and question the usual understanding we have of his work.

Considered from the point of view of narratology, all basic topics are presented and discussed. Special attention is paid to the two main-subjects of the theory – namely *narration* (narrator and view-point) by Ansgar Nünning, Jørgen Holmgaard, Gorm Larsen, Marianne Wolff Lundholt, Lars-Åke Skalin and Per Krogh Hansen, and *sequence* (the order of narrative) by Johan de Mylius, Jacob Bøggild

and Marion Gymnich. But *genre* (Jørgen Dines Johansen), *metafiction* (Greger Andersson), *ethics* (Vera Nünning) and *intertextuality* (Henrik Lassen) are also used as entry points to the works of Hans Christian Andersen.

Ansgar Nünning (Giessen) presents Andersen's tales with a model for narrational functions, based on the six functions of language in Jakobson's well-known communication model. Ansgar Nünning distinguishes four different functions – a technical (the narrator constitutes the fictional world), an analytical (the narrator comments on this world directly), a synthetic (the narrator generalizes indirectly on behalf of this world) and a function oriented towards the act of narration (utterances of the narrator relating to the level of discourse) – and shows how the fairy tales of Hans Christian Andersen in many ways make a challenge to this standard theory, both because of the many metanarrative comments and the special constitution of the narrated worlds in the stories. As Ansgar Nünning argues, the theories of narration that are used in textual analysis are to a very high extent derived from the extensive tradition of realist and modernist novels. The fairy tales – whether in their traditional oral variation or as the *art märchen* of Hans Christian Andersen – do not really fit into this model, and Ansgar Nünning underscores the necessity for a “Narratology of the Fairy Tale” which supplies the theories of the fabula-level made by V. Propp and others, with considerations on the level of discourse and narration.

Jørgen Holmgaard (Aalborg) presents a diachronic survey of the different forms and functions of narrators and focalizers in Andersen's tales. By examining a large corpus of texts, Jørgen Holmgaard shows how a remarkable shift in Andersen's narrational technique takes place around 1850. The early tales are basically told in a straight forward manner and are much closer to the oral tradition than the later tales where a too formalistic point of view runs into a large number of paradoxes, instabilities and logical contradictions – aspects which, on the other hand, are among the great values of Andersen's narrational style.

Lars-Åke Skalin (Örebro) uses the narrational mode of Andersen to suggest a reformulation of the standard narratology's concept of the narrator. By way of a critical discussion of the standard theory's attempt towards generality (that is analytical concepts which can deal with narratives in all genres and media) Lars-Åke Skalin claims that

literary narratives need a distinct vocabulary to account for the different relations between presenter and receiver, and he suggests a distinction between three different narrative or literary games, namely *fictio*, *fabula* and *relatio*. *Fictio* establishes a “non-contact” between narrator and addressee by withdrawing the narrator as a mediator from the text and distributing the narrative to the acting agents. This form of narrative can therefore be considered “narratorless”, since all instructions of the receiver are on an extrafictional level. In the game of *relatio* the case is nearly the direct opposite: Here the contact and interaction between narrator and addressee is explicit and the defining element of the mode. In that sense *relatio* means information-contact: the narrator points at fact after fact to help the addressee get a correct picture of what really happened. *Fabula*, Skalin’s third form, is like *relatio* insofar as it also rests on an explicit telling *about* the events (that is a visible narrational situation), and Skalin describes *fabula* as story-contact: the storyteller helps the audience understand – the offered piece of aesthetic pleasure – correctly. In the performance of both *relatio* and *fabula* the instruction of the receiver is actualised in the performer’s contact with the receiver. With the help of this distinction Lars-Åke Skalin analyses Hans Christian Andersen’s story-telling-mode and pays attention to the fact that in many translations of Andersen’s tales into English, his large stock of interjections and exclamations (which are characteristic to the *relatio/fabula* modes) are reduced – as if the translators wanted to make *fictio* out of his *relatio*.

Per Krogh Hansen (Kolding) also focuses on Andersen’s narrational mode, when he follows the complexity of Andersen’s double narratee – that is the explicit child narratee and the implicit adult narratee – by asking the question what understanding of the child Andersen has. Per Krogh Hansen argues that the child in Andersen’s conception is a highly competent being, and that the subtitle “Told for Children” in the first collections of tales, is intended on the narrative competence, Andersen again and again is giving his child-characters.

Gorm Larsen (Copenhagen) brings up the same complexity but argues – to say – the other way around. In Gorm Larsen’s perspective, Andersen’s tales, despite the author’s own subheading for the first collection – “Fairy Tales told for children” – are not at all told for children. Gorm Larsen shows how the often-made claim that Andersen’s tales have a double addressee (a child and an adult) is highly prob-

lematic. Instead, we are to consider the child-listener as a part of the fictional world, created through the narration. By developing a systematic account of the different levels of the enunciation in Andersen's narrational mode, Gorm Larsen shows different aspects of the intrafictional positionality of the child in tales such as "A Great Grief" and "The Naughty Boy".

Marianne Wolff Lundholt (Kolding) demonstrates the usefulness of "appraisal theory" in a survey of the subjective and evaluative structures of the tales. By comparing "Little Tiny or Thumbelina" and "The Gardener and the Manor" on a linguistic level Marianne Wolff Lundholt shows how different subject-structures can be identified and related to deeper thematical levels of the stories.

Greger Andersson (Örebro) directs his focus to the large spectre of meta-fictional remarks one inevitably finds in Andersen's tales. After an opening discussion of the distinction between "metafiction" and "metanarrative" suggested in studies by for example Ansgar Nünning, Greger Andersson gives a systematic and thorough survey of the different types of metafictional and -narrative comments we find in Andersen's tales. Greger Andersson discusses their function both as devices (to get the story going and underscore that it is the story of the events and not the events as such that are in focus) and poetics (discussing the status of the story and the storytelling in general), and adds further important perspectives to the issue of Andersen's narrational mode being that of the storyteller's as suggested by Lars-Åke Skalin.

Marion Gymnich (Giessen) brings in Possible World Theory and demonstrates how the works of Marie-Laure Ryan can give other (and important) insights into the organization and development of the plot-structures in fairy tales, than those that were suggested by V. Propp's functional system. From the point of view of Possible World Theory, the structure and development of the plot is to be considered as tensions within the modal system of the textual world (the textual universe), from which a number of possibilities are derived. The plot is established as a matter of forces and conflicts between these different worlds (knowledge-, obligation- and wish-worlds), and Gymnich shows how this functions in a tale such as "The Snow Queen" (1845) among others.

Jørgen Dines Johansen (Odense) presents a detailed reading of "The Dryad" (1868) with special focus on both its weak sense of plot,

its relation to “The Little Mermaid” and the genre-complexities the tale contains by subscribing to different genres like the fairy tale and the news coverage among others. Jørgen Dines Johansen argues that the tale is an emblematic illustration of Hans Christian Andersen’s ambivalent relation to modernity and discusses how this tale is overdetermined in both structural, thematic, stylistic and intentional aspects. In conclusion, Dines Johansen claims that the hybridization of genres in “The Dryad” is not very successful, but read in the context of Andersen’s other works, however, it becomes interesting as a testimony to the interplay between a recurrence of certain themes and motives throughout his writings, and an effort to break new ground.

Johan de Mylius (Odense) makes a survey of the plot-structures in Andersen’s tales and shows how a basic effort to dissolve the plot (and the story in general) in favour of an orientation towards the moment (considered as an opposition to time) and towards imagery, poetry and music is to be found. Like many other scholars in this book, Johan de Mylius also makes comparisons between the Danish original and translations into English, here “The Wind Tells about Valdemar Daae and his Daughters” and “The Bishop of Børglum and his Kinsmen”. De Mylius shows how the poetical mode of Andersen’s original is transformed into a more regular narrative mode in translation and thereby loses perhaps the most significant element of his telling, namely the fundamental rejection of conventional plot- and narrative-structure.

Jakob Bøggild (Århus) also focuses on sequentiality in a close reading of “The Snow Queen”. By way of Peter Brooks’s conceptualization of narrative and plot as an act of desire and repetition, Bøggild shows in details how this tale is constructed on these features. By pointing out how both the dynamics of the arabesque and the abstraction of the allegory are structuring principles for “The Snow Queen”, Bøggild gives a thorough account of the complexities the reader meets in the tale and shows how “narrative” is not only a “mean” but the “topic” for Gerda’s quest for Kay.

Vera Nünning (Giessen) encounters another challenge raised by Andersen’s tales, when she focuses on them from an ethical point of view. Based on the fact that Andersen’s tales to a large extent are used as a “didactical tool” for children, Vera Nünning discusses various strategies for making moral judgements in narrative (for example sen-

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tentious summary, moral generalisations, heroic characteristics of the protagonist, etc.) and relates them to Andersen's tales. Special attention is paid to "Little Claus and Big Claus" (1836) – a tale which fits poorly with the moralistic imperative with which literature for children often is met.

The topos of "the dying child" is a recurring figure in several of Andersen's stories – and in a large stock of his contemporary literature. Henrik Lassen (Kolding) follows the footprints of "The Little Match-Seller" in mid-19th Century American literature. Henrik Lassen traces the little girl up to present-day internet-texts, and considers the status of sentimentalism which is an important characteristic of these stories. Where readers of literature, to a high degree meet sentimentalism with anticipation, the critique – generally speaking – rejects it, and Henrik Lassen makes it clear that there is a challenge hidden here to be taken up by the theory of narrative. Lassen's own suggestion is that it is necessary to include the general cultural context of the story, as well as the more specific context involving Andersen's creation of the story and the various factors which may have influenced the author directly. The general context is often ignored in the analysis of Andersen's work, but it is unavoidable if we are to focus on his stories as narratives, Lassen claims – and proves through his reading.

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We would like to take the opportunity to express our gratitude to some of the people and institutions involved in the planning and realization of both the symposium behind this book and the book itself.

First of all, we would like to thank Lars Seeberg and the Hans Christian Andersen Foundation 2005 for the financial generosity we have received. We hope and believe our contribution to the worldwide celebration of Hans Christian Andersen will help expand our understanding of his work.

Professor Anne-Marie Mai deserves a warm "Thank you" for helping to get things going in the beginning, and for making a major contribution to the establishment of our research-center.

We would also like to thank those who helped with the practical arrangements in relation to the symposium: our secretary Irma

Dyhrmann who is always there for us and whose skills to make things go gently and smoothly cannot be praised enough, and our student helpers Ane Rønn Poulsen and Anja Viberg who took care of all practical work before and during the conference with a professionalism that deserves (and received!) standing applause.

Gitte Jæger Lock has compiled the index for this volume and deserves warm thanks here.

Last, and not least, we would like to thank all the contributors. We are grateful that they cared (and dared) to meet the challenge of Andersen's tales.

Notes

1. H.C. Andersen: "Sneedronningen. Et eventyr i syv historier" in Andersen 2001: 217f. Our translation.
2. See for example Propp 1968; Greimas 1966. For elaboration and critical examination of these models, see Lüthi 1947. Also Maranda and Maranda 1971a and 1971b should be mentioned for their application of Levi-Strauss myth-analysis, later being developed and exemplified by Holbek 1987.
3. Søren Kierkegaard: *Af en endnu Levendes papirer* in Kierkegaard 1962: 35ff.
4. We will not cease to mention that there also are good oppositional viewpoints to this critique – as for example Johan de Mylius' dissertation on the novels (Mylius 1981).
5. For example W.A. Berendsohn in *Fantasi og Virkelighed i H.C. Andersens Eventyr og Historier* (1955). Here according to Kofoed 1967.

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JOHS. NØRREGAARD FRANDSEN

Opening Address from the Symposium

15th August 2003

Dear guests, dear visiting lecturers from home and abroad, dear colleagues

In the fairy tale “The Shepherdess and the Sweep” (1845) by Hans Christian Andersen the two in love want to escape from the petty-bourgeois room and – most of all – they want to escape from the “GedebukkebeensOverOgUnderGeneralkrigsKommandeer-Sergeant”, “Major-general-field-sergeant-commander-Billy-goat’s-legs” – who – as we all know – wants to marry “The Shepherdess” and to put her into the cupboard.

The two in love pass through the chimney and get up on the roof.

“It looks very dark,” said she; still she went in with him through the stove and through the pipe, where it was as dark as pitch.

“Now we are in the chimney,” said he; “and look, there is a beautiful star shining above it.” It was a real star shining down upon them as if it would show them the way. So they clambered, and crept on, and a frightful steep place it was; but the chimney-sweep helped her and supported her, till they got higher and higher. He showed her the best places on which to set her little china foot, so at last they reached the top of the chimney, and sat themselves down, for they were very tired, as may be supposed. The sky, with all its stars, was over their heads, and below were the roofs of the town.

Well, they get to the top but it is difficult to get there, and they realize that it isn’t that easy to be among the stars either. That’s how it is

in fairy tales, that's how it is in the real world. The obstacles are heavy, and the opponents are strong when we reach for the stars.

The Institute for Literature, Media and Cultural Studies as well as the Faculty of Humanities have succeeded in establishing the Center for Narratological Studies. Establishing this has turned out to be successful thanks to competent colleagues such as Per Krogh Hansen – and he has been the head Chimney sweep. He has dared to take responsibility, as well as Anne-Marie Mai, who has been a most charming Shepherdess.

The Center for Narratological Studies opens today with its first public event. It is a very great pleasure to open this symposium arranged by Per Krogh Hansen and Marianne Wolff Lundholdt – it will represent a fruitful garden in the middle of the Institute for Literature, Media and Cultural Studies. This new centre will have the opportunity to enter into a fruitful cooperation with our already known and well-esteemed fields of studies and research, among these especially the Hans Christian Andersen Center which also is represented here today by Dr. Phil. Johan de Mylius.

The center will be situated here in Kolding, but it will work together with all units of the institute, as well as with other units of the University of Southern Denmark. Mainly, the center is going to survive by raising money from external funds. We hope that this will be possible, so that the Shepherdess and the Chimney sweep will not have to make the sad journey back in the chimney! This symposium is kindly sponsored by Hans Christian Andersen 2005. Thank you very much! When professional ambitions can be encouraged in this way and by such a fruitful cooperation as with Lars Seeberg, we will definitely reach the stars. And when we get to the end we shall know more than we do now!

Welcome to everybody!

Good luck to the Center for Narratological Studies!