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WAS A NEW POLISH TRANSLATION OF HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN'S FAIRY TALES AND STORIES NECESSARY?

Abstract: A positive answer to the above question seems obvious after a critical analysis of the reception of Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tales and stories in Poland in the second part of the 19th century and in the first part of the 20th century. On the one hand, over a hundred years ago the writer was classified as an author of children's literature due to intended or unintended misinterpretations of his prose. This classification was then inherited by next generations of readers and translators. On the other hand, numerous translatory mistakes depleted Andersen's unique style. This article demonstrates how Andersen's narration was changed to traditional literary style, especially when it came to dialogues; how humour and irony were overlooked, misunderstood or judged improper for children; how translators miscomprehended Danish grammar and vocabulary; and how little attention was paid to the coherence of the text. The article compares the complete edition of 167 fairy tales and stories translated from Danish (Sochańska 2006) and the complete edition of 155 fairy tales and stories translated from German (Beylin and Iwaszkiewicz 1956), which has enjoyed a canonical status. The comparison not only indicates the difficulties in translating Andersen; it also demonstrates how his prose could be restored to its original shape and how it could again address both young and adult readers.

Keywords: adaptation, proper names, titles, translation series

When the first of my articles on Andersen's fairy tales was published in the Polish literary periodical *Odra* in 2005, one of the eminent translators responded with aversion to my critical comments on the translation by Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz, "A translator should not criticise other translators." The implication, I assumed then, was that a new translation should stand on its own merits, and criticism of the older translation should be prompted

by it and expressed by third parties. Yet several years have passed now and no such criticism has emerged; there are still people who express their marked preference for the canonical translation. It is more understandable in the case of common readers who are driven by sentiment, but it is less justifiable when such views are expressed by persons creatively involved in literature.

It took me three years to find a publisher for a new translation of Andersen's fairy tales and stories. The main hindrance was publishers' conviction that a new version was not necessary, since "we can boast the best foreign rendition of Andersen's fairy tales." Someone once wrote so, nobody knows why, and the opinion lives on. As does the adjective "canonical."

I have discussed elsewhere how translations have depleted the reception of Andersen's work (cf. Bibliography); here I shall attempt to prove my theses with the help of more extensive material, referring back to the original. The choice of examples was challenging due to their sheer number – dozens of sheets with quotations. Why did I compile them at all? After the first encounters with publishers, I started to make comparative analyses of selected fairy tales. I divided errors and inaccuracies in the canonical translation into categories. Then, while working on my translation, which took several years, I was constantly approached by Maria Bosacka, an excellent editor working for the Media Rodzina publishing house, who, acting in good faith, pointed out differences between the translations in order to prevent me from making mistakes. While that kind of confrontation was undoubtedly valuable for both of us, it was often so shocking that eventually I decided to record the differences. The comparisons listed below are a perfect illustration of the difficulty involved in translating Andersen's works. I hope they will prove how important it is for the translator to precisely render the intricacies of the writer's workshop in order to convey the spirit of his prose and match his artistic achievement.

On Andersen's prose

Andersen's characteristic style has been extensively discussed. Translators, too, have voiced their opinions, but in most cases their renditions did not reflect their awareness of the writer's literary merit and his deviations from the literary norm. As a proper Romantic, Andersen was fascinated by the fairy world and by the child theme. He sought the causes of evil in the pro-

cess of losing childhood innocence and sensitivity while growing up. He was less interested in the child as a recipient of literature. He began to treat his work for children seriously only when he realised how popular his early fairy tales, published from 1835, had become.

Andersen's tales introduced a new genre to the world literature: the literary fairy tale. It had earlier been practised by E.T.A. Hoffmann and Chamisso, and Andersen was familiar with their works, but he gave a new form to his type of fairy tale. Not only did he present the world from the child's perspective, not only did he give life to objects whose physical features he used in order to describe the human being in a nuanced rather than schematic way (which was typical of traditional folk tales), but he also spoke in a language rarely seen in literature: everyday speech, present particularly in his dialogues. Reading his works today, we no longer realise the importance of his proposal for the language of literature in general. The child's perspective and a subjectivist approach to the child have long since become the norm in children's literature.

Yet the writer did not expect that his first fairy tales would be so widely perceived as works solely for children. It was his ambition to appeal to the adult reader – to enter into a dialogue with the adult reader. He once wrote in his journal, "I said (...) that my tales were just as much for grownups as for children, who only understood the story and did not comprehend and take in the whole work until they were mature" (1975: vol. X, 458).¹

Andersen was pigeonholed as a children's writer everywhere where poor translations were published, and these prevailed. It was not to his favour that literature was then widely used as a didactic tool. On the one hand, his texts delighted readers with their captivating poetry, and on the other, they abounded in references and forms considered unsuitable for children, so they were corrected, edited, extended, polished, or abridged to suit immediate educational needs. These changes removed the deliberate ambiguity of his works, the message to adults, which was often expressed through allusion, humour or irony, although some of these losses may have been caused by a failure to understand these very instances of allusion, humour or irony. Having been a learner of Danish for thirty years, I have often had to check if I properly understood ambiguity, implied meanings or allusions so oblique that one has to wonder whether they were meant not to be understood by children. To unravel these nuances, one must have a good

¹ An entry on 4 June 1875.

command of the language, which translators lacked in the old days. Passion and love for Andersen's work – and perhaps at times even impudence – could not replace solid craftsmanship.

Traditionally, the Polish reception of Andersen's work focuses on his reflection on the passage of time – or, to put it bluntly, on death – and on sacrifice for the sake of others. What passes unnoticed is situational humour and ironic allusions to adults, criticised by the writer for their stupidity, insincerity, superiority, slavish adherence to social conventions and lack of independent thought – for how can you teach children to criticise their elders? Andersen's sense of humour is often very subtle and difficult to grasp, and it is his humour that ordinary Danish readers appreciate most. His most enchanting feature is the ability to juggle moods: from gravity and poetic reflection to playfulness, as in *The Elf Hill*, where the floor was washed with moonshine and two will-o'-the-wisps came jumping in, one quicker than the other, so one arrived first (2006: vol. 1, 341). What passes unnoticed is cheerfulness, play, delight with the world and the juxtaposition of romanticism and pragmatism. The erotic aspects of love are disguised. Religious references are overlooked (I was fortunate to have access to an annotated Danish edition, so it was relatively easy for me to render numerous quotations and references to the Bible that escaped the previous translators).

Andersen's varied and rich style urges the translator to seek appropriate devices: where exquisite poetic narration reigns, it is necessary to provide rhythm that determines the poetic character of the text, and where the story is lively and abounds in digressions and interjections – as oral tales usually do – it is essential to retain a rhythm typical of an oral tale, which is sometimes broken. Andersen himself wrote on fairy tales, "In style one ought to hear the narrator; that's why the language should be close to oral narration" (1868: vol. 27, 186; trans. Bogusława Sochańska).² In some places the language is indeed colloquial, but it does not mean that this prose is easy. Paradoxically, it is where the writer transforms the language into an oral narrative that challenge increases for both the translator and the reader. Andersen once wrote in his journal, "They said it was only now that they could really understand my tales (...) it is only when you hear me read that my tales can be seen in the proper light" (1975: 186; trans. Bogusława Sochańska).³ This passage is noteworthy: Andersen's close familiarity with

² See also: Wullschläger (2000: 180).

³ An entry on 26 January 1866. See also: Wullschläger (2000: 185).

theatres in many European cities (he was an avid theatregoer and author of plays and vaudevilles) as well as his sense of situation and dialogue must have contributed to the unique form of his fairy tales and stories.

On the reception of Andersen's works in Poland

I discuss the reception of this writer in Poland in detail in a three-volume edition of *Baśnie i opowieści* (Fairy Tales and Stories; Sochańska 2006: vol. 3, 453–491). As in other countries, towards the end of the 19th century Andersen's fairy tales were primarily meant for the child addressee, since the market was flooded with translations by Cecylia Niewiadomska, marketed by the Gebethner and Wolff publishing house. The translation by Cecylia Niewiadomska (which comprises over twenty fairy tales), rightly described in the first editions as a reworking, is characterised by extensive “didacticisation” – the translator not only took the liberty to make omissions as well as to introduce distortions and embellishments, but also added blatantly didactic footnotes, which are at odds with the spirit of Andersen's prose. Regrettably, almost all bookshops stock copies of that translation, with bad graphic design and printed on inferior paper, publications which discourage children from reading. Yet these editions are thoughtlessly purchased by libraries due to their competitive price.

At the turn of the 20th century, when many new translations came out, the popularity of Andersen as a children's writer peaked. Not only were his works categorised as fairy tales for children but all fairy tales for children were identified with his name. A certain E. Korotyńska “composed,” as the title page puts it, a set of eight stories, mostly German folk tales published by the Brothers Grimm (but also K.W. Wójcicki's fairy tale of the glass mountain) and titled the book *Baśnie Andersena* (Fairy Tales by Andersen), even though the collection does not contain a single text by this writer.

Interest in Andersen revived in the 1930s, when the generation brought up on translations from the turn of the century was artistically active. In 1931 the hitherto most extensive collection of one hundred and forty *Baśnie* (Fairy Tales) translated from German by Stefania Beylin was published. The translation was an important attempt to do justice to the writer. Andersen's works are not reworked into simple children's stories, there are no notes, and infrequent omissions may be due to the German translation. Stefania Beylin's version was followed by two selections: by Marceli

Tarnowski and Adam Przemski, and a translation by Maria Glotz, endorsed by Edmund Jezierski, and illustrated by Halina Krüger. In 1946 two other collections were published in new translations by Witold Zechenter and Czesław Kędzierski, respectively, both bearing a characteristic title: *Bajki* (Fables). Kędzierski's version shows a total misunderstanding of Andersen's style, while Zechenter's is a step back in comparison with Beylin's translation, in terms of its faithfulness: it is very arbitrary and omits whole passages deemed "unsuitable" for children. It seems that, once the translators formed their opinion on Andersen in their childhood, their reception of his works prevented them from breaking out of the conventional approach. This idea is attested in Zechenter's introduction:

Sitting down to my work to prepare anew, to translate and process Andersen's texts, so full of poetry, I found myself in the world of memories of the time when I was becoming acquainted with the captivating beauty of his work. I had a sense of childhood (...) and I heard my mother's voice. (...) I would like to imbue my work with all that warmth, which came back to me with the finest fairy tales in the world, and I would like little listeners and readers to feel what I once felt on entering Andersen's enchanted world (1946: 1; trans. A.M.O.).

In his introduction to the 1956 edition Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz also referred to his childhood:

To many people all over the world, his literary output is the dearest childhood memory (...). No wonder that also to me the earliest recollection from my long-gone Ukrainian childhood is a book of Andersen's fables, a modest Warsaw edition. (...) What joy it was to rediscover – as my childhood land – wild swans and Egyptian-babbling storks in the little mermaid's homeland (1956: 5–6; trans. A.M.O.).

Although these statements are still meaningful and comprehensible to the modern reader, they are striking in their sentimentality, which is more or less distinctive of the translation style elaborated by the generation of translators whose renditions are discussed here.

Despite the fact that Stefania Beylin strove to be faithful to the original (not speaking Danish, she consulted a Warsaw University lecturer), she did not escape mistakes and misinterpretations present in the German translation. Clearly, Stanisław Sawicki, who was regarded as an expert on the Danish language at the time, could not free himself from the commonly accepted approach to Andersen's works, and moreover, did not have sufficient linguistic competence in Danish. Stefania Beylin was perhaps the

first to have noticed the importance of realism in Andersen's fairy tales and stories and grasped the essence of his prose. Many of her comments in the introduction to the six-volume edition are extremely penetrating, including Andersen's characterisation based on the tale *Bzowa Babuleńka* (Grannie Elderberry), "In this case mother represents the world of adults, of reason and prose. The little boy represents the world of poetry – he can see what clear-headed people cannot perceive. (...) Between children and adults there is a third person, an adult belonging to the world of children" (Beylinówna 1931: VI; trans. A.M.O.). The translator also aptly comments on the style of the fairy tales, "They give the impression of impromptu oral narratives. The author tried to retain the simplicity of everyday language, avoiding literary influences" (Beylinówna 1931: VI; trans. A.M.O.). And yet she was not able to break out of the established conventions of literary Polish, particularly in dialogues, "Naive style and language make us measure Andersen's fairy tales, as it were, by a different yardstick than a literary work" (Beylinówna 1931: X; trans. A.M.O.). This sentence seems to confirm that Stefania Beylin shared the misconception of Andersen as a "storyteller for children."

Another example illustrates Stefania Beylin's departure from the original and subsequent attempts to return to it. Regrettably, these attempts were not altogether successful, and the reason was her adherence to the prevalent approach to literature for children and its didactic function. Hence, in the original of *The Ugly Duckling* the hen, wanting to rebuke the rebellious duckling, asks it if it can lay eggs, which to her proves wisdom and maturity. On hearing the duckling's negative answer, she replies decidedly and bluntly, *Ja, vil du saa holde Din Mund!* (Andersen 2003: vol. 1, 288). The author of an anonymous translation of 1892 wrote: *Racz więc, z łaski swojej, trzymać język w dziobie!* (Pray keep your tongue in your beak, if you please!; 252).⁴ In 1924 Janina Colonna-Walewska proposed: *A zatem bądź tak dobry stulić buzię* (Then be so kind as to close your mouth; 56). In the 1956 edition Beylin has: *A więc przynajmniej stul buzię* (Then at least close your mouth; vol. 1, 293). My translation renders the retort as *No to zamknij dziób!* (Then shut your beak!; vol. 1, 284).

In an attempt to follow the original faithfully, not only the form but also the content of the texts was adapted to the role that fairy tales were supposed to perform in children's upbringing. Many adults must have experi-

⁴ Unless otherwise indicated, all quotations from Andersen's fairy tales, including titles, have been translated from Polish into English by Anna Miroslawska-Olszewska.

enced ethic dilemmas related, for example, to *The Tinderbox*. Maria Glotz gave moral sanction to the soldier's killing of the witch: *odciął jej głowę – miała za swoje!* (he cut off her head – as she deserved!; Andersen 1900: vol. 1, 313).⁵ This version was retained by Beylin: *odciął jej głowę. Miała za swoje!* (he cut off her head. As she deserved!; Andersen 1956: vol. 1, 20), while Młodnicka, who veered slightly from the original but kept its spirit, wrote: *ściął jej głowę, która się potoczyła po gościńcu* (he cut off her head, which rolled down the road; Andersen 1923: 81). The witch is as innocent as a lamb; what is more, she offers the soldier a chance to become rich so why should he punish her? *The Tinderbox*, a reworking of a folk tale that Andersen heard in his childhood, has defended itself as an apotheosis of vitality and is widely known. Another reworking of a folk tale, *Little Klaus and Big Klaus*, has not.

Andersen's unlimited imagination and the fairy tale quality of his world was not fully comprehended and accepted, and it was frequently adapted to the perception of an average reader with an average imagination. Some ideas, often bordering on the absurd, transcending logic and impossible to interpret in rational terms, taken from the world of the child's fancy, seemed overly "illogical," for example the inconceivable *kobberslot* (copper castle) in *The Tinderbox* was altered to a more realistic copper-roof palace (Andersen 1956: vol. 1, 20). Humorous, allusive or satirical passages were also adapted to the child reader's capacities. In *The Snow Queen*, where Andersen writes ironically: *Geheimeraader og Excellenser gik paa bare Fødder og bare Guldfade; man kunde nok blive høitidelig!* (court counsellors and excellencies walked barefoot carrying gold platters; it was easy to get into a solemn mood; Andersen 2006: vol. 1, 317), Niewiadomska settled for the statement: *ogromna sala pełna była dworzan, urzędników i dygnitarzy* (the giant room was full of courtiers, clerks and dignitaries; Andersen 1929: 25). Stefania Beylin may have repeated a mistake made by the German translator, from which she was not prevented by Stanisław Sawicki: *radcy i ministrowie chodzili boso i roznosili złote półmiski; nastrój był uroczysty* (court counsellors and ministers walked barefoot and served gold platters; the atmosphere was solemn; Andersen 1956: vol. 1, 327).

⁵ My translation reads: *Więc uciął jej głowę. I wiedźma leżała na ziemi* (So he cut off her head. And the witch lay on the ground; vol. 1, 79). In the original: *Saa huggede Soldaten Hovedet af hende. Der laae hun!* (Andersen 2003: vol. 1, 81).

Out of concern for the young reader, references to sexuality or eroticism were disguised (*The Snow Man*, *The Shirt Collar*, *The Farm-Yard Cock and the Weather-Cock*, *The Old Bachelor's Nightcap*, etc.), just like any other content deemed improper and anti-didactic. In *What Old Johanne Told* the fact that the hero is drunk was covered up: *Pewnego jesienno-go wieczoru podczas deszczu i wiatru szedł **strudzony** zabloconą drogą wiodącą z karczmy do domu* (One autumn evening in rain and wind he was going, **fatigued**, along the muddy road **leading from the public-house** to his home; Andersen 1956: vol. 3, 320). Such manipulations are possible because Andersen makes a discreet hint, *Pewnego jesiennego wieczoru szedł z **trudem** w deszczu i wichurze błotnistą drogą z karczmy do domu* (One autumn evening he was **trudging** in rain and wind along the muddy road **from the public-house** to his home; 2006: vol. 3, 385)⁶. Surprisingly enough, similar devices were used even by Iwaszkiewicz, although he wrote, “the author himself, and critics too, deluded themselves that these were fairy tales for children” (1956: 11).

When translating the allusive and humorous prose, abounding in word-play, translators sometimes find it impossible to render the original content. The translator then has to give up, explaining to the reader what really goes on in the text in a footnote. But there may occur an opportunity to compensate for such losses, particularly as regards humour, by using a phrase or expression that does not actually exist in the original but corresponds to its spirit. That is what I did when I translated the goblin's cry in *The Steadfast Tin Soldier* as *Żołnierzu! Trzymaj oczy na wodzy!* (Soldier! Keep your eyes on a short rein!; Andersen 2006: vol. 1, 185).⁷ It is an extremely rare stroke of luck that the Polish language itself offers such an opportunity. In *The Snow Man* the narrator thus tells how the snowman fell in love with the stove: *der kom over ham Noget, han ikke kjendte, men som alle Mennesker kjende, naar de ikke ere Sneemænd – ogarnęło go uczucie, którego sam nie potrafił sobie wytłumaczyć, naszło go coś, czego nie znał, ale co znają wszyscy ludzie, jeśli nie są **bałwanami*** (he was seized with a feeling he could not explain to himself, he felt like something he did not know but which all people know if they are not snowmen; Andersen 2006: vol. 2, 374). Let me quote Beylin for comparison: *ogarnęło go coś takiego, czego*

⁶ *En Efteraarsaften kom han, i Regn og Blæst, besværligt den sølede Vei fra Kroen til sit Huus* (Andersen 2003: vol. 3, 318).

⁷ Originally, “*Tinsoldat!*” *sagde Trolde*n, “*vil Du holde dine Øine hos Dig selv!*” (Andersen 2003: vol. 1, 189).

nie znał, ale co znają wszyscy ludzie, o ile nie są *bałwanami ze śniegu* (he was seized by something he did not know but which all people know as long as they are not snowmen; Andersen 1956: vol. 3, 43). *Bałwan ze śniegu* denotes a snowman, while *bałwan* has a double meaning: it connotes a fool, thus using this Polish word adds humour, which is, without the translator's merit, a perfect rendition of Andersen's sense of humour. It is more difficult to compensate for inevitable losses when the writer expresses himself in a way that does not conform to the literary norm. A Dane would then comment, "well, that's Andersen all over, he plays with the language, I can't explain it logically." The translator cannot afford such language games because the reader would then say, "the translator cannot write in Polish."

Working on a new translation of a well-known text is always quite risky and involves many dilemmas. The language should be updated, but it is also important to appreciate the previous translators' right decisions and the things that have become part of the traditional reception of the text. First and foremost, however, the translator needs to be faithful to the original and, within the context of existing tradition, to make sometimes dramatic decisions. Such choices tend to be particularly difficult when the translator is faced with phrases fixed in the readers' minds, such as the famous "The King is naked!" in *The Emperor's New Clothes*. The same refers to proper names, especially characters' names, and titles. The confrontation with the traditional reception of a literary work is perhaps one of the major problems.

It all begins and ends with the title

The Danish *Tommelise* once was *Calinka* (Little Inch Girl, H.F. Lewestam 1859), *Calóweczka* (Little One-Inch Girlie, Anon. trans. 1892), *Paluszka* (Little Finger Girl, Młodnicka 1892), *Malutka* (Little One, Anon. Trans. 1898), *Dziecię elfów* (Elfin Child, Niewiadomska 1899), *Calineczka* (Thumbelina, Rygiel 1909), *Kruszynka* (Little Moppet, Przemski 1938), *Palusia* (Little Finger Girlie, Tarnowski 1938) and *Odrobinka* (Little Whit Girl, Zechenter 1946). I had no doubt that in 1931 Stefania Beylin was right in her choice of Rygiel's *Calineczka*, while Rygiel himself used Lewestam's idea, although the decision was extremely risky for Beylin, since the Polish market had been flooded with thousands of copies of the Ge-

bethner and Wolff brochure edition with the translation by Cecylia Niewiadomska, lingering till today, in which the heroine is called Elfin Child for no apparent reason (I elaborate on elves later on). I, too, chose *Calineczka*. I also copied Stefania Beylin's other pertinent choice: *Bzowa babuleńka* (Granny Elderberry; following Janina Mortkowiczowa 1929) and those of her titles which rendered the original appropriately. It is notable, by the way, that *Keiserens nye Klæder*, quite simple to render in translation, was translated as *Nowe szaty cesarza* (The Emperor's New Clothes) only by Stefania Beylin. Before her the fairy tale had had as many as thirteen different titles in Polish translations.

Some titles were not challenging at all (eg. *The Princess and the Pea*, *Little Klaus and Big Klaus*, *The Ugly Duckling*). It was relatively easy for me to part with *Czerwone trzewiczki* (The Red Bootees, Maria Glotz 1900) and change them to *Czerwone buciki* (The Little Red Shoes). This was how the author of the first translation, Niewiadomska (1899), rendered *De røde Skoe*, but I chose *buciki* because it was necessary to update the language, especially since Andersen's *sko* is still used in the original meaning of "shoes"; the translation differs from the original only in the form of the noun because the original is not diminutive. A risky change was to replace the title *Dzielny ołowiany żołnierz* (The Steadfast Lead Soldier, Beylin) with *Dzielny cynowy żołnierzyk* (The Steadfast Little Tin Soldier; there is no diminutive in the original, either; I have been criticised for the "little soldier," but I believe that the equivalent of the Danish name of the *tinsoldat* toy is a little tin soldier). Stefania Beylin's choice (1956) was also risky because the majority of translations that preceded hers had the tin soldier (including her own rendition of 1931).

Stefania Beylin translated many titles erroneously. One of the most glaring examples is her rendition of *Sommergjækken* as *Pierwiosnek* (primrose). The fairy tale is quite well-known, it is sometimes read in schools; the majority of people know what primroses look like. Yet I have never come across any criticism of Beylin's translation. In fact *sommergjæk* is not the primrose but the snowdrop. The translator's decision is surprising, especially because the text explicitly explains which plant is meant: *krople dotknęły cebulkę kwiatową (...) i wykiełkowała pod śniegiem białozielonym pączkiem na zielonej łodyżce i wąskimi, grubymi liśćmi (...) aż całkiem się otworzył, biały jak śnieg i ozdobiony zielonymi prążkami* (drops touched the flower bulb (...) and it sprouted under snow with a white and green bud on a delicate green stalk with narrow thick leaves (...) until it opened

up completely, as white as snow and adorned with green stripes; Andersen 2006: vol. 3, 129).

I had a genuine problem, however, with *Stokrotka* (The Daisy). As a keen gardener, I found it impossible to believe that Andersen could thus write about a daisy: *Nie myślała wcale o tym, że żaden człowiek nie widzi jej w tej trawie, i że jest biednym, pogardzanym kwiatkiem* (She never thought that no human could see her in the grass, and that she was a poor, despised little flower; Andersen 2006: vol. 1, 180). The text implies that it is a variety of the plant commonly known as the dog chamomile. A dictionary search proved that *Gaaseurt* – mayweed – is a folk name not of the daisy but of the dog chamomile, popularly called the chamomile. The name *gaaseurt* has long ceased to be used in Danish and nowadays no one knows which plant it refers to. Because the first translation into German featured the word “daisy,” this was the equivalent used in other translations, including the English and Polish; it became so established in the popular consciousness as an equivalent of the mayweed that even the Danish edition of fairy tales and stories, on which the Polish edition was based, erroneously explained the name as the Latin *Bellis* (daisy) instead of *Anthemis* (chamomile). It is noteworthy that dictionary definitions differed, and to settle the matter I had to look up Danish and Polish professional reference books. Having hesitated for a long time, I finally decided to retain the daisy, not because it is deeply embedded in tradition but because the chamomile would be inconvenient in the translation due to its masculine gender (Andersen’s flower is in love with a lark). I still have my doubts concerning the decision...

Another challenging task was to decode the meaning of *Springfyrene* (a compound made up of *springe* – “spring, jump” and *fyrene* – “fellows”). Contemporary Danish dictionaries do not list this entry. After a long search, I found out that in the mid-19th century this term was a humorous reference to young men who courted ladies, trying to make an eligible match. Hence I decided to render it as *Amanci* (The Beaux). From my point of view, Beylin’s title, *Skoczki* (The Jumpers), is unintelligible. A similar example is the title *Szybkobiegacze* (Fastrunners, introduced by Anonymous Translator in 1892), a literal translation of the original word *Hurtigløberne*, a compound of *hurtig* – *szybki* (fast) and *løberne* – *biegacze* (runners), which I rendered as *Biegacze* (Runners). And although I could not but be captivated by *Bzowa babuleńka* (old use: Granny Elderberry), in case of *Babunia* (Nan; as Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz entitled the fairy tale *Bedstemor*), which is equally

pleasant to the ear, I decided to update it. The majority of children use *babcia* (grandma), so I decided to use it as well, similarly to Beylin's 1931 rendition (in the 1956 edition it was replaced with Iwaszkiewicz's version).

In folklore Alf of *Rosen-Alfen* (which I rendered as *Alf z kwiatu róży* – Alf of the Rose Flower) is a benevolent spirit who dwells in flowers. Beylin, nevertheless, classifies him as an elf (*Elf różany* – Rose Elf; he had been turned into an elf by Maria Glotz, 1900). The belief that Nordic elves were benevolent creatures used to be a widespread misconception; in fact, elves are unfriendly to people, they lure humans into dancing deep in the forest, and usually no good comes out of it. The elves are human-sized, so neither their nature nor size corresponds to the character or stature of a flower spirit.

Beylin's translation of *Hvad hele Familien sagde* as *Co powiedziała cała rodzina* (What the Whole Family Said) shows one of the systemic problems involved in translating from Danish – the perfective and imperfective aspects. Danes sense them instinctively, whereas the translator is sometimes helpless. In this case the content of the tale leaves no doubt – the title ought to retain the imperfective aspect: *Co mówiła cała rodzina* (What the Whole Family Were Saying). Another difficulty for the translator from Danish is caused by nominal case forms, which are the same in plural and singular. Since the verb does not help because there is no inflection for persons or numbers, Beylin's translations contain quite a lot of mistakes. The title of *Der er Forskjel* should read *Są różnice* (There Are Differences), not *Jest różnica* (There Is a Difference). The content of the tale dispels any doubts. Similarly, *Bispen paa Børglum og hans Frænde* means "The Bishop of Børglum and His Relative", and not "The Bishop of Børglum and His Relatives" – this time it would have sufficed to look the word up in a dictionary because the noun has a plural form.

One of the most challenging tasks was to translate the title of a bold story, teeming with humour, *Hvad Fatter gjør, det er altid det Rigtige* (literally: What the Father Does Is Always Right). It is telling that ever since the first 1862 translation, each of the ten Polish translations has had a different title. Nothing can be held against Stefania Beylin's choice (*Stary ma zawsze słuszność* – The Old Man Is Always Right), but her choice seems to be a little dated nowadays. In this case I departed from my principle of the maximum faithfulness combined with discrete updating of the language and I updated it more visibly: *Ojciec wie najlepiej* (Father Knows Best).

I will mention several other titles that I found particularly challenging when I discuss other translation problems further on.

Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz

Due to the fact that the translation by Stefania Beylin, who transferred into Polish one hundred and forty-nine tales, and Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz, who translated six tales, is customarily referred to as the Iwaszkiewicz translation (because of his position as a distinguished writer), I will point out the phenomena I mentioned above, illustrating them by two tales translated by Iwaszkiewicz. I will also refer critically to my own translation. Here are sentences from *Historien om en Moder* (Andersen 2003: vol. 1, 443) together with their translations: first by Iwaszkiewicz (*Opowiadanie o matce* – A Story about a Mother; Andersen 1956: vol. 2, 37–38), then by myself (*Opowieść o matce* – A Tale about a Mother; Andersen 2006: vol. 1, 439):

Da bankede det paa Døren og der kom en fattig, gammel Mand **svøbt ligesom i et stort hestedækken, for det varmer, og det trængte han til**, det var jo kold vinter; Alting udenfor laa med Iis og Sne, og Vinden blæste saa det skar i Ansigtet.

Aż tu ktoś puka do drzwi; przyszedł ubogi staruszek, **okryty końską derką, aby się ogrzać**, bo była surowa zima. Wszystko na dworze pokryte było lodem i śniegiem, a wiatr dął mocno i szczypał w policzki.

Then suddenly someone knocks on the door; a poor old man came, **covered with a horse blanket, to get warm** because it was harsh winter. Everything outside was covered in ice and snow, and the wind was blowing hard and stinging cheeks (trans. A.M.O.).

Nagle ktoś zapukał do drzwi i wszedł biedny, stary człowiek **omotany w coś, co przypominało wielką końską derkę; derka grzeje, a tego właśnie potrzebował**, bo zima była mroźna, wszystko wokół pokrywał śnieg i lód, a wiatr smagał i zaciął w twarz.

Suddenly someone knocked on the door and in came a poor, old man **wrapped up in something that resembled a huge horse blanket; such a blanket gives warmth, and this was just what he needed** because the winter was frosty, everything around was covered in snow and ice, and the wind was lashing and whipping across the face (trans. A.M.O.).

And here is my translation before editing:

Nagle zapukał ktoś do drzwi, i wszedł biedny stary człowiek, zamotany w **coś, jakby wielką końską derkę, bo derka grzeje, a tego właśnie potrzebował**, była przecież mroźna zima, wszystko wokół pokrywał śnieg i lód, a wiatr sma-gał, że aż cięło w twarz.

Suddenly someone knocked at the door, and in came a poor old man, **wrapped up in something like a huge horse blanket because such a blanket gives warmth, and this was just what he needed**, after all it was a frosty winter, everything around was covered in snow and ice, and the wind was lashing so that it cut across the face (trans. A.M.O.).

Today I would not give in to editorial changes as my original translation was more faithful to the original and closer to spoken language, and the final passage exuded dramatic tension. Iwaszkiewicz's translation is a reworking of the original and omits a device that is important in Andersen's style: interjection. If the writer had wished so, he would have written ordinarily: *to get warm*. Yet after the semicolon Andersen interjects: *such a blanket makes you warm and this was just what he needed*. A question occurs: so what that a translation reads well if it depletes the original text?

The following passage reads:

Og da den gamle Mand rystede af kulde, og det lille Barn sov et Øjeblik, **gik oderen hen** og satte Øl i en lille Potte i Kakkellovnen, **at det kunne varmes til ham**; og den gamle Mand **sad og vuggede**, og Moderen satte sig paa Stolen tæt ved ham, saa paa sit syge Barn, der trak saa dybt Vejret, og løftede den lille Haand.

A ponieważ starzec drżał z chłodu, a dziecko zdrzemnęło się na chwilę, matka **wyszła**, aby wstawić do pieca garnuszek z piwem; **chciała, by człowiek mógł się ogrzać**; stary **siedział w izbie, kołysząc kołyskę**, a matka usiadła na krześle tuż obok; spoglądała na chore dziecko, które tak ciężko oddychało i poruszało rączyną.

And because the old man was trembling with cold, and the child was dozing off, the mother **went out** to put a small pot of beer into the stove; **she wanted the man to get warm**; the old fellow **was sitting in the room, rocking the cradle**, and the mother sat down in a chair right next to it; she was looking at the sick child, who was breathing so heavily and moving its little arm (trans. A.M.O.).

Ponieważ trząsł się z zimna, a dziecko na chwilę zasnęło, matka **poszła** wsta-wić do pieca garnuszek piwa, żeby mu je zagrać. Starzec kiwał się na krześle,

matka usiadła na stołku blisko niego i patrzyła na swoje chore dziecko, które ciężko oddychało i unosiło rączkę.

Because he was trembling with cold, and the child fell asleep for a moment, the mother **went** to put a small pot of beer into the stove **to heat it up for him**. **The old fellow was rocking in his chair**, the mother sat down on a stool next to him and was looking at her sick child, who was breathing heavily and lifting its little arm (trans. A.M.O.).

A combination of two verbs, which is characteristic of the Danish language, *sad og vuggede*, literally *he was sitting and rocking*, when the first only emphasises the activity in progress expressed by the other, is a dangerous trap – the first verb should be omitted in translation. Here the translator put the other verb in the participle form but there is yet another misunderstanding: the verb *vugge*, when it is not followed by an object, means “sway” or “rock;” in the original there is no cradle. Since I came across it in one of the German translations, I believe that Jarosław Iwazskiewicz did not translate directly from Danish, but referred to a German translation or another one (early English translations were also done through German).

And here is the next sentence:

“Tror Du ikke nok, **at jeg beholder ham**?” sagde hun, “vor Herre vil ikke tage ham fra mig!”

– Jak myślisz, **czy ono umrze**? – powiedziała kobieta. – Chyba Bóg nie zechce mi go zabrać?

“What do you think, **will it die**?” asked the woman. “Surely God will not wish to take it away from me?” (trans. A.M.O.)

– Prawda, że **zostanie ze mną**? – spytała. – Nasz Pan mi go nie zabierze...

“**He will stay with me**, won’t he?” she asked. “Our Lord will not take him away from me...” (trans. A.M.O.)

The mother in fact asks if her son will die, but she uses understatement, and the author’s intention should be respected, especially since there is psychological truth behind the avoidance of the word *die*. And further:

“**Hvad er det!**” sagde hun og saae til alle Sider; men den gamle Mand var borte og hendes lille Barn var borte, han havde taget det med sig; og henne i Krogen **snurrede og snurrede** det gamle Uhr, det store Blylod løb lige ned til Gulvet, **bum!** og saa stod ogsaa Uhret stille.

– **Cóż to znaczy?** – powiedziała i obejrzała się na wszystkie strony. Ale starca nie było i dziecka nie było w pokoju. Zabrał je z sobą! A w kącie stary zegar **brzęczał i brzęczał**, wielki ołowiany ciężar osunął się aż na podłogę i zegar nagle stanął.

“**What does it mean?**” she said and looked round. But the old man was not there and the child was not in the room. He had taken it away with himself! And in the corner the old clock **droned and droned**, the big lead weight slipped down onto the floor and the clock suddenly stopped (trans. A.M.O.).

– **Co to?** – powiedziała i rozejrzała się dokoła, ale starego człowieka już nie było i nie było też jej dzieciątka. Starzec zabrał je z sobą. W kącie pokoju **zazgrzytał** wiekowy zegar, ołowiane wahadło zsunęło się w dół ku podłodze, **bum!** I zegar stanął.

“**What was that?**” she said and looked round, but the old man was not there anymore and neither was there her little baby. The old man had taken it away with himself. In the corner of the room the ancient clock **grated**, the big lead pendulum slipped down to the floor, **boom!** And the clock stopped (trans. A.M.O.).

Today I would not go against Andersen, as Iwaszkiewicz also did, and I would not put the statement *Starzec zabrał je z sobą* (The old man had taken it away with himself) as a separate sentence. I would put it in the previous sentence, separated by a comma. I would also go back to the imperfective form of the verb *sunąć* (slip), which was replaced with the perfective form at the editing stage and thus a sense of dread present in the original was toned down. In Iwaszkiewicz's rendition the sentence does not exude any sense of dread due to its omission of the interjection (*bum!* – boom!), so typical of Andersen, and the use of the verb *brzęczał* (droned). My choice of *zazgrzytał* (grated) introduces some dramatic tension, but it does not exactly correspond to the kind of sound made by the unwinding rope on which the weight is hanging – and regrettably, it is only now that I am aware that the weight is not entirely synonymous with the pendulum, although it performed the same function and was in the same place in the clock.

Because there is no ambiguity, humour or irony in *Opowieść o matce* (The Story of a Mother), the text was not significantly depleted by the departure from the original. It was not so in the case of *Motyl* (The Butterfly). The introduction to the three-volume edition of 1956 suggests that Iwaszkiewicz treated Andersen's “fables” as tales for adults. Yet in his rendition of *The Butterfly* it is easy to trace a pattern repeated in previous translations – escape from humour, irony and “impropriety” of the

original text for the child reader. *The Butterfly* is a typical text intended for both children and adults. The fairy tale humorously tells about (the butterfly's/man's) inability, or perhaps subconscious unwillingness, to choose a partner for life:

Det var i det tidlige Foraar; der var fuldt op af Sommergække og Crocus. “De ere meget nette!” sagde Sommerfuglen, “**nydelige smaa Confirmander! men noget ferske**” (Andersen 2003: vol. 2, 434).

Było to wczesną wiosną. Pełno było wszędzie śnieżyczek i krokusów. – Ach, jakież to ładne – powiedział motyl – **wyglądają tak miło jak dzieci w strojach do pierwszej komunii; ale jeszcze za małe są dla mnie** (Andersen 1956: vol. 3, 117).

It was early spring. There were plenty of snowdrops and crocuses everywhere. “Oh, how pretty it is,” said the butterfly, “**they look like as nice as children in their first communion outfits; but they are too small for me yet**” (trans. A.M.O.).

Było to wczesną wiosną, kwitło mnóstwo przebiśniegów i krokusów. – Jakie ładniutki – powiedział. – **Małe, słodkie konfirmandki. Ale trochę niedojrzałe** (Andersen 2006: vol. 2, 434).

It was early spring, plenty of snowdrops and crocuses were in bloom. “How pretty” he said. “**Sweet little confirmation girls. But a bit unripe**” (trans. A.M.O.).

While in Catholic church holy communion is received at the age of eight, in the Lutheran tradition confirmation is received by fourteen-year-olds, i.e. girls who are beginning to be attractive to men, although they may seem not ripe enough to them (the adjective *fersk* means “without scent, colour, taste”). The expression “too small” definitely does not fit here, but it exonerates the text from any suspicion of an erotic allusion – hence the translator’s decision.

The text finishes with a humorous remark on matrimony made by the butterfly after he has been pinned to the board:

“Nu sidder jeg ogsaa paa Stilk ligesom Blomsterne!” sagde Sommerfuglen; “ganske behageligt er det dog ikke! **det er nok som at være gift, man sidder fast!**” og saa trøstede han sig dermed (Andersen 2003: vol. 2, 435).

– Teraz siedzę na łodydze zupełnie jak kwiat – powiedział motyl – wprawdzie całkiem wygodne to nie jest. **Ale to zupełnie tak, jakbym się ożenił. Jestem mocno osadzony** – i to była jego pociecha (Andersen 1956: vol. 3, 118).

“Now I am sitting on a stalk just like a flower,” said the butterfly, “though it’s not quite so comfortable. **But it’s just as if I got married. I am firmly settled,**” and that was his consolation (trans. A.M.O.).

– Teraz jestem unieruchomiony jak te kwiaty – powiedział. – Bardzo miłe to to nie jest. **Tak musi się czuć, kto żonaty – unieruchomiony!** – I tym się pocieszył (Andersen 2006: vol. 2, 435).

“Now I am immobilised just like these flowers,” he said. “It’s not quite so nice. **That’s how one must feel once married – immobilised!**” And he consoled himself with that (trans. A.M.O.).

The verb *sidde fast* means “to be fixed to something, to be stuck in something, being unable to break free.” My choice resulted from the message of the tale: the butterfly symbolises the freedom of movement, the very reason for its existence is ceaseless motion, and the core of its personality is changeability (one is tempted to add: playing the field⁸). Although Andersen, subversively as usual, adds another sentence to introduce ambiguity, and perhaps not to defy the social consensus, *I tym się pocieszył* (And he consoled himself with that), it does not change much. The use of the verb *sidde fast* relativises the importance of matrimony and implies bondage. In this light the expression *mocno osadzony* (firmly settled), which evaluates the marital status positively, is a complete misunderstanding, deprives the tale of its double meaning and lessens its humour. And yet there was nothing to fear – children do not understand the message anyway; to them, the tale is just a story of a butterfly who was looking for a flower.

Here are further examples of problems with understanding Andersen’s humour and other features of his style, and the Danish language in general. Henceforth, I will only quote the translation by Stefania Beylin and my own, always in that order (including titles), preceding quotations with the original text. I refer to Beylin’s complete edition of *Baśnie* (Fairy Tales; PIW, Warszawa 1956), and to my own version *Baśnie i opowieści* (Fairy Tales and Stories; Media Rodzina, Poznań 2006).

⁸ The Polish equivalent, *frunąć z kwiatka na kwiatek*, means literally “to fly from one flower to another” (translator’s note).

Humour

A humorous element resulting from wordplay is often lost due to literal translation. In the tale *Dejlig! (Cudowna – Wonderful / Piękna! – Beautiful)* the sculptor tells about Rome:

“Der er en stor Plads; midt paa den staar en **Obelisk**, som er fire tusind Aar gammel! – En **Organist!**” udbød Fruen, hun havde aldrig før hørt Ordet Obelisk (2003: vol. 2, 297).

Wjeżdża się na wielki plac; pośrodku stoi **obelisk**, który ma cztery tysiące lat. – Aha, **organista!** – zawołała dama, która nigdy nie słyszała słowa „obelisk” (1956: vol. 2, 399).

You come into a huge square; in the middle stands an **obelisk**, which is four thousand years old.

“Ah, an **organist!**” exclaimed the lady, who had never heard the word *obelisk* (trans. A.M.O.).

Jest tam duży plac z liczącym cztery tysiące lat **obeliskiem!** – Z **torfowiskiem!** – wykrzyknęła dama, która nigdy przedtem nie słyszała słowa „obelisk” (2006: vol. 2, 297).

There is a big square with a four-thousand-year-old **obelisk!** – “With a **peat bog!**” exclaimed the lady, who had never heard the word *obelisk* (trans. A.M.O. – the literal translation does not show that the words in bold rhyme on purpose).

In the fairy tale *I Andegaarden (Na podwórku – In the Farmyard/ Na kaczym podwórku – In the Duck Farmyard)* the irony present in the cock’s lines, aimed at the sparrow, and – in the last sentence – expressing the cock’s arrogance, is lost.

“De er en virkelig Sangfugl!” sagde han, “og **De gjør ud af Deres lille Stemme Alt, hvad der kan gøres af saadan en lille Stemme. Men noget mere Lokomotiv maa man have, at det kan høres, at man er af Hankjønnet** (2003: vol. 2, 378).

– Jesteś prawdziwym śpiewakiem! – powiedział. – **Potrąfisz wydobyć wszystko, co tylko można, z tak małego głosiku. Ale przydałoby się coś z lokomotywy, żeby ludzie słyszeli, że jesteś mężczyzną** (1956: vol. 3, 48).

„You are a genuine singer!” he said. “**You can release with your little voice anything that can be released with so little a voice. But something of a lo-**

comotive would be welcome, so that people could hear that you are a man” (trans. A.M.O.).

– Jest pan prawdziwym śpiewakiem – powiedział. – **Wydobywa pan ze swojego głosiku wszystko, co z takiego głosiku można wydobyć. Ale trzeba mieć w sobie trochę więcej pary, wtedy słycać, że się jest mężczyzną** (2006: vol. 2, 378).

„You are a genuine singer, sir” he said. “**You release with your little voice anything that can be released with such a little voice. But one must have inside more steam, then one can be heard to be a man**” (trans. A.M.O.).

Andersen's situational humour also loses some of its colour, for instance in the story *Moster* (*Ciotka / Ciotka* – Aunt). Originally amusing and dynamic, the description is pale in translation. Perhaps it was considered improper to ridicule an aunt, an adult person after all? Here is the scene in the theatre box after someone shouted “Fire!”:

Moster følte sig i Angesten saa ung og let; hun vilde springe ned, fik ogsaa det ene Been over Rækværket, det andet fra Bænken; der sad hun til Hest, **vel draperet**, med sit blommede Skjørt, med et langt Been heelt svævende ude, et Been med **en uhyre Kanestøvle; det var et Syn at see!** og da det blev seet, blev ogsaa Moster hørt, og frelst for at **brænde inde**, for Theatret brændte ikke (2003: vol. 3, 136).

czuła się podniecona strachem, taka młoda i lekka, chciała przeskoczyć, przełożyła jedną nogę przez balustradę, drugą nogę postawiła na ławce. Siedziała jak na koniu, **w swej ślicznej sukni** w kwiaty, z jedną nogą przełożoną przez balustradę, nogą w ogromnym, futrzanym bucie; **był to widok niezwykle**. Spozrzegli ją, usłyszeli jej wołanie **i uratowali od ognia, gdyż teatr wcale się nie palił** (1956: vol. 3, 236).

she felt excited by her fear, so young and light, she wanted to jump over, she put one leg over the banister, and placed the other on the bench. She was seated as if on horseback, **in her lovely floral dress**, with one leg over the banister, the leg in the enormous fur boot; **it was an unusual sight**. They noticed her, heard her call **and saved her from fire because the theatre was not on fire at all** (trans. A.M.O.).

ogarnięta strachem ciotka poczuła się młoda i lekka; chciała skoczyć; przełożyła już przez balustradę jedną nogę, drugą uniosła nad ławką i siedziała tak jak na koniu, **dobrze udrapowana** w swojej spódnicy w kwiaty, długa noga kołysała się na zewnątrz w gigantycznym bucie do sanny; **to był widok!**

Gdy to spostrzeżono, zaraz ją usłyszano i uratowano od spłonięcia – **w duszy**, bo teatr wcale się nie palił (2006: vol. 3, 136).

in her fear the aunt felt so young and light; she wanted to jump; she had already put one leg over the banister, she lifted the other over the bench and was sitting as if on horseback, **well-draped** in her lovely floral skirt, one long leg dangling outside in the enormous boot for sledging; **what a sight it was!** When it was noticed, she was heard and saved from burning – **in her spirit**, because the theatre was not on fire at all (trans. A.M.O.).

Irony

A typical example of how Andersen “addressed” the adult reader is the juxtaposition of the pragmatic and the romantic attitudes in *Thumbelina*. The former is symbolised by the mouse and the mole, while the latter represents an artistic disposition. Beylin does not perceive irony in the mouse’s remark over the frozen swallow:

“Hvad har Fuglen for al sit Quivit, naar Vinteren kommer? Den maa sulte og fryse; **men det skal vel ogsaa være saa stort!**” (2003: vol. 1, 115)

Co przyjdzie ptaszкови z jego świergotu, gdy nadchodzi zima? Musi głodować i marznąć. **Jednak jest w tym coś wzniosłego** (1956: vol. 1, 57).

What will a little bird get out of its chirping when winter comes? It must starve and freeze. **And yet there is something noble in it** (trans. A.M.O.).

Co ma ptak za całe to swoje ciwit, ciwit, kiedy przychodzi zima? Musi marznąć i głodować; **ale to przecież takie wzniosłe!** (2006: vol. 1, 113)

What does a little bird get for its tweet, tweet when winter comes? It must freeze and starve; **but isn’t that noble!** (trans. A.M.O.)

Very frequently, irony is lost due to incomprehension. Here is an example from the fairy tale *De Vises Steen* (*Kamień mądrości / Kamień mądrości* – The Stone of Wisdom):

Fanden veed nok, hvorledes han skal tage de Folk! Han **tog Poeten med Rógelse, saa at han blev reent henne i det** (2003: vol. 2, 365).

Diabeł wie, jak się zabierać do ludzi. **Otumanil poetę kadzidłem, tak że ten stracił zupełnie głowę** (1956: vol. 2, 221).

Devil knows how to get at people. **He intoxicated the poet with incense so the poet completely lost his head** (trans. A.M.O.).

Diabeł dobrze wie, jak się zabierać do ludzi. **Tak okadzał poetę, że aż mu zaszumiało w głowie** (2006: vol. 2, 365).

Devil knows well how to get at people. **He incensed the poet so much that it turned his head** (trans. A.M.O.).

Dialogues

It is extraordinary how contemporary Andersen's dialogues sound even though they were written well over a hundred years ago. Artificiality of their Polish renditions is all the more surprising, since they were written only fifty years ago. Here are some examples (errors are also highlighted):

Hvad gamle Johanne fortalte (*Co opowiedziała stara Joanna* – What Old Joanna Told / *Opowieść starej Joanny* – Old Joanna's Tale):

“Rasmus!” sagde Moderen. “**Er det Dig jeg seer! – hvor seer Du sølle ud!**” (2003: vol. 3, 318)

– Rasmus! – zawołała matka – **czyż to ciebie widzę? Jakże nędznie wyglądasz!** (1956: vol. 3, 384)

“Rasmus!” – mother exclaimed, “**is that you I can see? How miserable you look!**” (trans. A.M.O.).

– Rasmus! – zawołała matka. – **To ty? Jak nędznie wyglądasz!** (2006: vol. 3, 320)

“Rasmus!” – mother exclaimed. “**Is that you? How miserable you look!**” (trans. A.M.O. the register of the first Polish version is heightened, whereas the second is more colloquial).

Den store Søslinge (*Wielki wąż morski* / *Wielki wąż morski* – The Great Sea Serpent):

“**Vil Du svare eller vil Du knækkes?**” spurgte den **glubende** Hai, og alle de andre store Fisk spurgte om det Samme: “Vil Du svare eller vil Du knækkes?” (2003: vol. 3, 352)

– **Czy odpowiesz mi, czy też chcesz, abym cię przegryzł?** – spytał ciekawy rekin i wszystkie inne duże ryby pytały o to samo: **Czy odpowiesz mi, czy też chcesz, abyśmy cię przegryzły?** (1956: vol. 3, 352)

“**Will you answer me, or do you want me to bite you in half?**” asked the **curious** shark and all the other big fish asked about the same, “**Will you answer me, or do you want us to bite you in half?**” (trans. A.M.O.)

– **Odpowiesz, czy mam cię przegryźć?** – spytał żarłoczny rekin, i wszystkie pozostałe duże ryby powtórzyły za nim: – **Odpowiesz, czy mamy cię przegryźć?** (2006: vol. 3, 295)

“**Will you answer, or shall I bite you in half?**” asked the **voracious** shark, and all the other big fish repeated after him, “**Will you answer, or shall we bite you in half?**” (trans. A.M.O.)

Metalsvinet (Świnia z brązu / Świnia z brązu – The Bronze Pig):

Han (...) kyssede dets blanke Tryne, og satte sig paa dets Ryg; “**du velsignede Dyr,**” sagde han, “hvor jeg har længtes efter Dig!” (2003: vol. 3, 22)

[chłopczyk] pocałował jej **gładki** ryj i usiadł na jej grzbiecie. – **Drogie zwierzę** – szepnęła – **jak bardzo tęskniłem się za tobą!** (1956: vol. 1, 222)

[the little boy] kissed its smooth snout and sat on its back. “**Dear animal,**” he whispered. “**How much I have missed you!**” (trans. A.M.O.)

[chłopczyk] pocałował jej **błyszczący** ryj i usadowił się na jej grzbiecie. – Ty kochana świnko! – powiedział. – **Jak ja za tobą tęskniłem!** (2006: vol. 3, 22)

[the little boy] kissed its **shiny** snout and sat on its back. “**You dear piggy!**” he said. “**How I have missed you!**” (trans. A.M.O.)

Here I took the liberty to interpret the text and chose *świnka* (piggy) instead of *zwierzę* (animal) but it is in keeping with the objective psychological truth, with the psychological truth of the text and, finally, with the spirit of Andersen’s language.

The psychological truth, by which I mean adjustment of the speech to the characters who speak, is an immanent feature of this writer’s prose. And yet in Beylin’s translation all characters speak the same polished literary idiom. Let us listen to a six-year-old girl from the story of *Ib og lille Christie* (*Ib i Krystyna* – *Ib and Krystyna* / *Ib i mała Christina*– *Ib and Little Christina*):

“**Saa vil jeg ogsaa havde den!**” sagde Christine, og lille Ib gav hende ogsaa den anden (2003: vol. 2, 129).

– **Chcę go mieć także!** – powiedziała Krystyna i mały Ib dał jej drugi orzech (1956: vol. 2, 174).

“**I want it as well!**” said Krystyna and little Ib gave her a second nut (trans. A.M.O.).

– **Ten też chcę!** – zawołała Christina, więc mały Ib dał jej i ten orzech (2006: vol. 2, 129).

“I want **this one too!**” exclaimed Christina, so little Ib gave her that nut, too (trans. A.M.O.).

And here is how Ib, a simple boy in his teens, expresses himself:

“**Du er blevet ligesom en fin Dame! og jeg seer saa pjsket ud! hvor jeg har tænkt paa Dig, Christine! og paa gamle Tider!**” (2003: vol. 2, 130)

– **Stalaś się zupełnie wytworną panią, a ja wyglądam tak śmiesznie. Jakże wiele myślałem o tobie,** Krystynko, i o tych dawnych czasach! (1956: vol. 2, 176)

“**You have become quite an elegant lady, and I look so comical. How much I have thought about you,** Krystynka, and of the old times!” (trans. A.M.O.)

– **Wyglądasz jak dama! A ze mnie taki obdartus! Ile ja o tobie myślałem,** Christino, i o dawnych czasach! (2006: vol. 2, 130)

“**You look like a lady! And I am such a scruff! How much I have thought about you,** Christina, and of the old times!” (trans. A.M.O. – this version is more colloquial).

It is presumably justifiable to claim that such a radical change of the style and tone of Andersen's dialogues was supposed to teach the child reader the art of elocution.

Manipulation

In Beylin's translation, adaptation of the content to the child recipient is rather discreet on the whole. But it is not the case in the translation of *Sneemanden* (*Bałwan ze śniegu* – The Man Made of Snow / Śniegowy bałwan – The Snowman), in which allusions to the snowman's erotic infatuation with the stove are hushed up:

“jeg maa helde mig op til **hende**, om jeg ogsaa skal knuse Vinduet!” (...) saa slog Luen ud (...) “Jeg holder det ikke ud!” sagde han. “Hvor det klæder **hende** at række Tungen ud!” (2003: vol. 2, 375)

muszę się **do niego** przytulić, nawet gdybym miał stłuc szybę w oknie (...) buchał jasny płomień (...) – Nie wytrzymam – powiedział bałwan – jak **mu** do twarzy z tym wyciągniętym językiem (1956: vol. 3, 44).

I must cuddle up **to him**, even if I were to break the pane in the window (...) the bright flame was blazing (...) “I cannot bear it,” said the snowman, “this outstretched tongue becomes **him**” (trans. A.M.O.).

muszę się **do niej** przytulić, choćbym miał nawet wybić szybę! (...) płomień buchał na zewnątrz (...) – Nie wytrzymam tego! – Jak **ona** pięknie wygląda, gdy wyciąga język! (2006: vol. 2, 375)

I must cuddle up **to her**, even if I were to break the glass! (...) the bright flame was blazing outside (...) “I cannot bear it! – How lovely **she** looks when she sticks out her tongue” (trans. A.M.O.).

An example of the omission of an unwelcome passage from the story *Deilig! (Cudowna – Wonderful / Piękna! – Beautiful)* shows the translator’s attempts to protect the child reader from the writer’s frivolousness and, perhaps mainly, from depicting adults in a negative light:

Alfred græd og Moderen græd og de gik begge i sorte Klæder, **Mama klædte Sort især**, og hun gik længst i Sort, bar længst Sorg (2003: vol. 2, 301–302).

Alfred płakał, matka płakała i oboje chodzili ubrani na czarno. [ominięcie] Mama nosiła dłużej czarne suknie, dłużej chodziła w żałobie (1956: vol. 2, 405).

Alfred cried, his mother cried and they both walked dressed in black. [omission] Mother wore black dresses for a longer time, she wore mourning clothes longer (trans. A.M.O.).

Alfred płakał i matka płakała, oboje nosili żałobę, **mamusi w czerni było nadzwyczaj do twarzy** i ona nosiła ją dłużej, dłużej nosiła też ból (2006: vol. 2, 302).

Alfred cried and his mother cried, they both wore mourning clothes, **black suited mum indeed** and she wore it longer, she wore her pain longer, too (trans. A.M.O.).

Logic

Due to difficulties in understanding the text, Beylin sometimes changes the logic of the text. It happens, for instance, in *Sneedronningen* (*Królowa Śniegu* / *Królowa Śniegu* – The Snow Queen):

Nordlysene **blussede saa nøiagtigt, at man kunde tælle sig til, naar de vare paa det Høieste, og naar de vare paa det Laveste** (2003: vol. 1, 327).

Zorza północna **palila się tak równomiernie, że można było według jej światła oznaczyć, kiedy znajdowała się na najwyższym punkcie, a kiedy na najniższym** (1956: vol. 1, 341).

Northern lights were **burning so evenly that it was possible to mark by their light when they were at their highest point, and when at their lowest** (trans. A.M.O.).

Zorze polarne **rozblyskaly z taką regularnością, że można się było doliczyć, kiedy będą świecić najjaśniej, a kiedy najślabiej** (2006: vol. 1, 322).

Northern lights **lit up so regularly that it was possible to count when they would shine the brightest, and when the weakest** (trans. A.M.O.).

Coherence

There is a major difference in the sense of the last sentence of *De smaa grønne* (*Zielone istotki* – Little Green Creatures/ *Zielone maleństwa* – Little Green Things), depending on whether it reads *nie można* (it is not possible) or *nie ma się odwagi* (one does not dare). It is a striking example of carelessness as regards dialogue coherence. The loss is all the greater since the dialogue comprises the punchline of the tale:

“Ja **nu** kan hun fortælle bedre end jeg om – jeg siger ikke Navnet! – de smaa Grønne.”

“**Bladeluus!**” sagde Eventyrmo’er. “Man skal nævne enhver Ting ved sit rette Navn, og **tør man det ikke** i Almindelighed, saa skal man kunne det i Eventyret” (2003: vol. 3, 151).

Teraz ona [baśń] może opowiadać lepiej ode mnie o tych (nie chcę wymówić ich imienia) małych, zielonych istotkach. – **Kwiatowe weszki!** – powiedziała

baśniowa babuleńka. – Należy każdą rzecz nazywać po imieniu, a jeśli **nie można** tego uczynić w zwykłym życiu, uczynimy to przynajmniej w baśni! (1956: vol. 3, 182)

Now it [the fairy tale] can tell better than me about those (I do not want to utter their name) little, green creatures. “**Flower lice!**” said the fairy tale granny. “Each thing should be called by its name, and if **it cannot** be done in real life, let’s do so at least in a fairy tale!” (trans. A.M.O.)

O, ona [baśń] lepiej niż ja potrafi opowiedzieć o – nie wypowiem ich nazwy – o tych zielonych maleństwach. – **O mszycach!** – powiedziała babcinka z baśni. – Trzeba wszystko nazywać po imieniu, a jeśli się **nie ma odwagi** robić tego w życiu, to **trzeba umieć** to robić w baśni! (2006: vol. 3, 151)

Oh, it [the fairy tale] can tell better than me about – I will not utter their name – about those little green things. “**About plant lice!**” said the nanny from the fairy tale. “You ought to call everything by its name, and if you **don’t dare** to do that in life, you **should be able to** do that in a fairy tale!” (trans. A.M.O.)

Surely, no comments are necessary but there is a noteworthy mistake in the translation of the Danish word *nu*, which is often used only for emphasis and should not feature in translation as “now,” meaning *at this moment*, which frequently happens in Beylin’s version.

In the fairy tale *De Vises Steen* (*Kamień mądrości / Kamień mądrości* – The Stone of Wisdom) an important message is lost due to lack of coherence. The wise man says that after we die, we will go to heaven:

“**Derop!**” gjentog den Vise og saae mod Sol og Stjerner. “**Derop!**” og han saae fra Jordens runde Kugle, at **Oppe** og Nede var Eet og det Samme, eftersom man stod paa den svævende Kugle (2003: vol. 2, 358).

„Tam **wysoko**”, powtarzał mędrzec i patrzył na słońce i gwiazdy. „Tam **wysoko**”. I widział z okrągłej kuli ziemskiej, że **góra** i dół to jedno i to samo, **zależnie od tego, gdzie się stoi** na wirującej kuli (1956: vol. 2, 213).

“High **up**,” the wise man repeated and looked at the sun and stars. “High **up**.” And he saw from the round globe that **up** and down were one and the same, **depending on where you stand** on the spinning globe” (trans. A.M.O.).

– **W górę** – powtarzał mędrzec i patrzył w słońce i gwiazdy. – **W górę**. Ale z okrągłej kuli ziemskiej widział, że **góra** i dół to jedno i to samo, **bo stoimy** na wirującej kuli (2006: vol. 2, 358).

“Up,” the wise man repeated and looked at the sun and stars. “Up.” But from the round globe he saw that **up** and down were one and the same **because we stand** on the spinning globe” (trans. A.M.O.).

And all that grammar!

The above example clearly illustrates difficulties in understanding the text, which stem from poor knowledge of Danish grammar rules. This time it concerns adverbs expressing movement or a static situation. They do not have equivalents in Polish and should not be translated but, since they can be associated with adverbs of place, they were guessed at and translated wrongly. A sentence from the story *Ib og lille Christie* (*Ib i Krystyna – Ib and Krystyna / Ib i mala Christina – Ib and Little Christina*) comprises another example of conjectural translation – here a difficult preposition is not understood:

Ib havde endnu aldrig været **ovre** paa Seishede, aldrig **prammet igjennem Søerne ad Gudena**a (2003: vol. 2, 127).

Ib nie był jeszcze nigdy **wysoko na** wrzosowisku, **nie jeździł jeszcze nigdy po jeziorach aż do rzeki Guden** (1956: vol. 2, 171).

Ib had never been so **high up on** the moor yet, **he had never travelled around the lakes as far as the Guden river** (trans. A.M.O.).

Ib nigdy jeszcze nie był **na** wrzosowisku Seishede, **nigdy nie płynął tratwą po rzeczce Gudena**a, **od jeziora do jeziora** (2006: vol. 2, 127).

Ib had never been **on** the Seishede moor yet, **he had never been rafting on the Guden river, from lake to lake** (trans. A.M.O.).

I have already mentioned the trap of double verbs, a construction that is used to emphasise an activity in progress; in such cases only the second verb should be translated in the imperfective aspect. Here is an example from a fairy tale that is a true mine of Andersen's humour: *Det er ganske vist!* (*Pewna wiadomość – Certain News / To pewna wiadomość!* – It is Certain News!):

Der er een af Hønsene, som i den Grad har glemte, hvad der skikker sig en Høne, at hun **sidder og piller alle** Fjedrene af sig og lader Hanen see paa det! (2003: vol. 2, 43)

Jest tam jedna kura, która do tego stopnia zapomniała, co przystoi kwoce, że **siedzi i wyskubuje sobie wszystkie** pióra i tak się prezentuje kogutowi (1956: vol. 2, 92).

There is one hen there who forgot what becomes a mother hen to such a degree that she **sits and plucks out all** her feathers, and thus presents herself to the cock (trans. A.M.O.).

Jedna z kur do tego stopnia zapomniała, co przystoi kurze, że na oczach koguta **wyskubuje sobie pióra!** (2006: vol. 2, 43)

One of the hens forgot what becomes a hen to such a degree that before the cock **she plucks out her feathers!**" (trans. A.M.O.).

This example illustrates another systemic problem: the necessity to sense when the pronoun *alle* (all/everybody) need not be translated in conjunction with a noun. If rendered in translation, it often affects fluency of the text and if omitted, the sense of the text remains unchanged.

A similar difficulty is involved in rendering the adjective "own," which should be omitted in quite a few cases. In the translation of *En Historie (Opowiadanie – A Story / Pewna historia – A Certain Story)* the misunderstanding of the verb *slikke* has a humorous consequence:

og i Gaarden vare alle Ællingerne ude og Katten med, han **slikkede** rigtignok Solskin, **slikkede** den af sin **egen** Pote (2003: vol. 3, 40)

Wszystkie młode kaczątka były na podwórzu i kot z nimi razem, kot **ssał** po prostu słoneczne światło, **wysysał** je ze swojej **własnej** łapy (1956: vol. 2, 55)

All young ducklings were in the farmyard and the cat was with them, the cat simply **sucked** sunlight, **sucked it out** of his **own** paw (trans. A.M.O.).

na podwórko wyszły kaczuszki, a razem z nimi kot, wprost **zlizywał** słońce, **zlizywał** je ze swojej łapy (2006: vol. 2, 40)

the ducklings came out into the farmyard, and the cat with them, he literally **licked off** the sunlight, **licked it off** his paw (trans. A.M.O.).

Diminutives, Treacly Expressions

I have already mentioned frequent problems in the canonical translation, resulting from a poor command of Danish. One of them, affecting the re-

ception of Andersen's works, is literal translation of the adjective *lille* – "little," which in many cases should be omitted. In Danish adjectives do not have diminutive forms and that sense is expressed by means of *lille*. Sometimes this adjective is used to render warm feelings and then it must be translated appropriately. The following examples come from *Tommelise* (*Calineczka* / *Calineczka* – Thumbelina):

"Farvel du smukke **lille** fugl!" (...) „Tak skal Du have, Du nydelige **lille** Barn!" sagde den syge Svale (2003: vol. 1, 116).

– Żegnaj, śliczny **mały ptaku!** – Dziękuję ci, moje śliczne, **małe dziecko!** – powiedziała chora jaskółka (1956: vol. 1, 57, 58).

"Farewell, lovely **little bird!** (...)" "Thank you, my lovely **little child!**" said the sick swallow (trans. A.M.O.).

– Żegnaj, śliczny **ptaszku!** (...) – Dziękuję ci, kochane, **dobre dziecko!** – powiedziała chora jaskółka (2006: vol. 1, 114).

"Farewell, lovely **birdie!** (...)" "Thank you, dear **good child!**" said the sick swallow (trans. A.M.O.).

A major problem occurs when the translator uses a diminutive to render a noun and retains the adjective "little," which happens in *I Andegaarden* (*Na podwórku* – In the Farmyard / *Na kaczym podwórku* – In the Duck Farmyard): *I litowała się nad **małym ptaszkiem*** (And she pitied the **little birdie**; 1956: vol. 3, 47). Obviously, the form is correct but frequent coexistence of a double diminutive makes the text treacly.

It was a challenge for me to translate the titles *Den Lille Havfrue* (*Mała syrena* – The Little Mermaid / *Mała syrenka* – The Little Mermaid⁹) and *Ib og lille Christine* (*Ib i Krystynka* – Ib and Little Krystynka¹⁰ / *Ib i mała Christina* – Ib and Little Christina). In the first case my decision was based on the widespread use of the form *Mała syrenka* (The Little Mermaid), like the film¹¹. In addition, I was worried that the title *Syrenka* (The Mermaid¹²) might be associated with a certain car make.¹³ As to the other fairy tale – it

⁹ The noun in this rendering is in a diminutive form (translator's note).

¹⁰ The girl's name is in a diminutive form (translator's note).

¹¹ The title of the film *The Little Mermaid* was translated into Polish as *Mała syrenka*, with a double diminutive (translator's note).

¹² In this version the noun is in the diminutive (translator's note).

¹³ *Syrena* was a popular car make produced in Poland between 1957–1983. It was commonly referred to as *Syrenka*, which is a diminutive of *Syrena* (translator's note).

concerns many other works in which the hero's name is preceded with the adjective *lille*. I decided not to polonise names but to bring them closer to Polish in a discreet way for the sake of declination, and hence I have Christina instead of Christine (one exception from this rule is the name of the heroine of *Opowieść starej Joanny* – Old Joanna's Tale; here "Johanna" instead of the Danish "Johanne" seemed artificial). As a result of my choice, though, I had to render *lille* in my translation because it is difficult to put foreign names in diminutive forms.

Style Again

Here are some examples showing how narration was changed, through subtle "corrections," from the oral discourse to the traditional literary style:

Reisekammeraten (*Towarzysz podróży* / *Towarzysz podróży* – The Travel Companion)

Verten fortalte dem, at Kongen **var saadan en god Mand** (2006: vol. 1, 130).

Gospodarz opowiadał im, że król **jest bardzo dobrym człowiekiem** (1956: vol. 1, 76).

The host told them that the king **was a very good man** (trans. A.M.O.).

Gospodarz opowiadał im, że król **to taki dobry człowiek** (2006: vol. 1, 127).

The host told them that the king **is such a good man** (trans. A.M.O.).

Tolv med Posten (*Dwunastu podróżnych* / *Dwunastu podróżnych* – The Twelve Travellers)

Aftenerne tilbragte han med at **skære Skoiter, han vidste** at om ikke mange Uger havde man Brug for det **fornøielige** Skotoi (2003: vol. 2, 343)

wieczory spędzał na **wyrobianiu drewniaków do łyżew, gdyż wiedział**, że za parę tygodni będzie ten rodzaj obuwia bardzo poszukiwany (1956: vol. 3, 24)

he spent evenings **making clogs for skates because he knew** that in a few weeks this kind of footwear would be very much in demand (trans. A.M.O.).

spędzał wieczory, **strugając łyżwy, wiedział**, że za kilka tygodni będzie zapotrzebowanie na te radosne dodatki do obuwia (2006: vol. 2, 343)

he spent evenings **carving skates**, **he knew** that in a few weeks that there would be demand for these merry additions to footwear (trans. A.M.O.).

This passage also illustrates “credence lending” to the text – apparently, the translators were not aware that people used to skate on wooden skates and they may have feared that the adjective *radosny* (merry) could not refer to a thing.

Another device frequently employed by the authors of the canonical text was turning coordinate clauses into subordinate clauses, which is a major sin against Andersen. In my rendition I resorted to such changes only when it was impossible to find another way out of a difficult situation. To bring narration as close to the spoken language as possible, I also avoided words such as *gdyż* (since, for), *rzekł* ([he] spake), *iż* (lit. that), *bowiem* (lit. for, since) or even *lecz* (yet), which I used only when characters were speaking in high register. As regards equivalents of these words, there is virtually no difference between Andersen's and contemporary Danish, or literary and colloquial Danish. Therefore, the translator must be fully aware of the character of the writer's narration to fine-tune the Polish rendition.

Playing with Language

Andersen used plenty of devices to make his tales more attractive, for instance he loved rhymes. It is no easy matter for the translator but a solution may usually be found (see for example *Wzgórze Elfów* – The Elf Hill). I tried to preserve Andersen's wordplay – often, obviously, at the cost of semantic faithfulness, for example in *Pengegrisen* (*Skarbonka / Skarbonka* – The Money Box):

Stue-Uhret talte om **Politik – tik – tik!** (2003: vol. 2, 114)

Potem zegar wygłosił przemówienie **o polityce: – Tik, tak!** (1956: vol. 2, 168)

Then the clock made a speech **about politics: “Tick, tock!”** (trans. A.M.O.).

Zegar pokojowy interesowała **polityka -tyka-tyka...** (2006: vol. 2, 114)

The room clock was interested in **politics-ticks-ticks...** (trans. A.M.O.).

Andersen's other favourite device was onomatopoeia, which he used especially in works with bird protagonists. The translator then has a chance to

show his/her skill and finds genuine pleasure in searching for Polish equivalents. Examples would fill a separate text. In *Rodzina Greta z kurnika* (Hen-house Greta's Family) there are not only such expressions, but also a sevenfold repetition of the phrase *Raager; Krager og Alliker – wrony, kawki i gawrony* (crows, jackdaws and rooks; in my translation, due to the melody of the phrase, birds are named in a different order than in the original). The repetition, as well as ominous comments made by the swarms of birds, are an important structural element in this extraordinary tale. However, in Beylin's translation there are jackdaws, raven, crows and magpies – in various arrays. It deprives the text of a sense of dread – and of its poetic mood:

“**Herfra! herfra!**” skreg de store sorte Fugle og fløi, men kom igjen næste Dag, for her vare de hjemme (2003: vol. 3, 232).

– **Precz! Precz!** – krzyczały wielkie, czarne ptaki i uciekały; ale na drugi dzień wracały znowu, gdyż były tu u siebie w domu (1956: vol. 3, 287).

“**Away! Away!**” cried big, black birds and flew away; but the next day they came back again because they were at home (trans. A.M.O.).

– **Zdrrrada! Zdrrrada!** – krzyczały wielkie, czarne ptaki i odlatywały, ale nazajutrz znowu wracały, bo tu był ich dom (2006: vol. 3, 234).

“**Trrreachery! Trrreachery!**” cried big, black birds and flew away, but the next day they came back again because it was their home (trans. A.M.O.).

The birds, which have been safe in the garden and are surprised by the fact that children take their eggs away from their nests, actually cry “we’re flying away!” but I could not find a word or expression that would correspond exactly to Andersen’s *herfra!* That is why I decided to do the same as the author, i.e. look for a word matching the context, which would sound similar to the cry of the birds in the original story.

Likewise, in *Nabofamilierne* (*Sąsiedzi / Sąsiedzi* – The Neighbours), on seeing a strangely painted bird, the crow cries (in literal translation): *Skąd?Skąd?* (Where from?), and then the sparrows continue (in free translation) *Co za jeden!* (Who’s that!) or *Coś podobnego!* (Imagine that!):

“**Hvorfra! hvorfra!**” skreg Kragen (...) og altid kom der flere Fugle til, smaa og store. “**See’ken en! See’ken en!**” skreg de Allesammen! (2003: vol. 1, 397)

– **Z jakiego kraju? Jakiego kraju?** – wołała wrona (...) zbierało się coraz więcej ptaków, dużych i małych (...) – **Patrz no! Patrz no!** – wołały (1956: vol. 1, 422).

“**From what country? What country?**” cried the crow (...) more and more birds, big and small, were gathering (...) “**Look at that! Look at that!**” they cried (trans. A.M.O.).

– **Pokrraka, pokrraka!** – krzyczała wrona (...) ciągle jeszcze przybywało ptaków, małych i dużych (...) – **Co-za-świr!** Ćwir, ćwir! – zawołały (2006: vol. 1, 393).

“**Frreak, frreak!**” cried the crow (...) more and more birds, big and small, were gathering (...) “**What-a-jerk! Chirp, chirp!**” they cried (trans. A.M.O.).

In the story *Gartneren og Herskabet* (Ogrodnik i jego chlebodawcy – The Gardener and His Employers¹⁴ / *Ogrodnik i jaśniepaństwo* – The Gardener and Masters¹⁵) crows and rooks cry *Hołota!* (Riff raff!) in reply to being shot at:

saa det krillede i Fuglenes Rygrad, saa at hver Fugl fløi op derved i Forskrækelse og skreg: “**Rak! Rak!**” (2003: vol. 3, 297)

i dreszcz przechodził przez całą gromadę, i każdy ptak, ulatując przerażony w górę, wołał: „**Kra, kra!**” (1956: vol. 3, 357)

and a shiver went through the flock, and each terrified bird cried, flying up, “**Caw, caw!**” (trans. A.M.O.).

że aż ciarki przenikały ptasie kręgosłupy, i przerażone stado wzbijało się w górę, krzycząc: „**Drrrab! Drrrab!**” (2006: vol. 3, 299)

so much that shivers went down the birds' spines, and the terrified flock soared upwards, crying “**Rrrascal! Rrrascal!**” (trans. A.M.O.).

And finally, here is a slightly different example from *Sneemanden* (*Bahwan ze śniegu* – The Man Made of Snow / *Śniegowy bałwan* – The Snowman):

“Men hvad forestille de her?” spurgte Sneemanden. “**Kjærrrrrr-restefolk!**” sagde Lænkehunden (2003: vol. 2, 373).

– Ale co oni tu robią? – spytał bałwan. – **Zakochana para** – powiedział podwórzowy pies (1956: vol. 3, 42).

¹⁴ In Polish *chlebodawcy* sounds dated. It can be literally translated as “breadgivers” (translator’s note).

¹⁵ In Polish *jaśniepaństwo* may sound ironic (translator’s note).

“But what are they doing here?” asked the snowman. “**A couple in love,**” said the watchdog (trans. A.M.O.).

– Ale jakie oni tu grają rolę? – spytał bałwan. – **Narzrzrzrzeczonych!** – warknął pies łańcuchowy (2006: vol. 2, 373).

“But what roles are they playing here?” asked the snow man. “**The be-rrrothed!**” snarled the dog on the chain (trans. A.M.O.).

Semantics

The authors of the canonical translation did not care to analyse the meaning of each word. Some words often reappear in mistaken senses, for example *gård* as *dwór* (manor house) instead of *zagroda* (homestead); *hæk* as *żywopłot* (hedge) instead of *krzew* (bush); *klar* as *przezroczysty* (transparent) instead of *jasny, czysty* (clear); *fornem* as *wytworny* (elegant, refined) instead of other possible meanings; similarly *ligge*, because this verb does not always mean *leżeć* (lie) (e.g. in *The Ugly Duckling: myśliwi leżeli naokoło bagna* – the hunters were lying around the bog, instead of *byli rozstawieni* – they were positioned). There is not enough space to quote the numerous, often amusing, examples but there is one I shall mention concerning the expression *at læse en bøn* – *odmówić modlitwę* (say a prayer; here it is a psalm), from the story *Hvad gamle Johanne fortalte* (the verb *læse* means *czytać* – read):

Og Johanne **læste Psalmen**, men ikke op af en Bog, hun havde ingen, hun **kunde den udenad** (2003: vol. 3, 320).

Joanna **przeczytała mu psalm, a właściwie nie czytała go**, bo nie miała książki, **tylko mówiła z pamięci** (1956: vol. 3, 387).

Joanna **read the psalm to him, or actually she did not read it** because she did not have the book **but spoke from memory** (trans. A.M.O.).

I Joanna **odmówiła modlitwę, ale nie czytała z modlitewnika**, nie miała modlitewnika; **znała modlitwę na pamięć** (2006: vol. 3, 322).

And Joanna **said the prayer, but she was not reading from a prayer book**, she did not have a prayer book; **she knew the prayer by heart** (trans. A.M.O.).

Untranslatability

And finally, let me discuss an example representing problems with untranslatability, which in Andersen's case result mainly from wordplay. Here it is a toy, contemporary to the author, probably made of springy goose skull bones, which Stefania Beylin called *żabka* (little frog) and I named *gąsior* (gander). The toy was one of the suitors for the princess's hand, and the one who would spring the highest would marry the princess – a thing only possible in Andersen's world:

Springfyrene (Skoczki – Jumpers / Amanci – The Beaux)

Da sagde Kongen: “Det høieste Spring er at springe op til min Datter, for det er det Fine af det, men Sligt hører der Hoved til at falde paa og Springgassen har viist at den har Hoved. **Den har Been i Panden!**” (2003: vol. 1, 355)

Wtedy król powiedział: – **Najwyżej skakać to znaczy doskoczyć do mojej córki, na tym polega delikatność uczuć**, ale po to, żeby wpaść na ten pomysł, trzeba mieć głowę na karku, i żabka dowiodła, że ją ma. **Po prostu ma nogi w głowie!** (1956: vol. 1, 388)

Then the king said, “**To jump the highest means to jump up to my daughter, that is the delicacy of feeling**, but in order to come up with this idea you need to have your head screwed on right, and the little frog has proved he has it. **He just has his legs in his head!**” (trans. A.M.O.).

Wtedy król oznajmił: – **Najlepszy skok, to skok na kolana mojej córki**, jest w tym **finezja**, ale żeby na coś takiego wpaść, trzeba mieć głowę na karku, i gąsior pokazał, że ma. **Ma głowę na karku!** (2006: vol. 1, 351)

Then the king announced, “**The best jump is a jump onto my daughter's lap**, there is **finesse** in it, but to come up with this idea you need to have your head screwed on right, and the gander has proved he has it. **He just has his head screwed on right!**” (trans. A.M.O.).

Beylin translated the latter sentence literally – and the literal rendition failed.

Literal translation

I believe the examples quoted above show that the numerous mistakes present in the canonical Andersen translation are caused by literal renditions and a poor command of Danish, both in the German translator's case and in Professor Sawicki's. This article cannot discuss all types of mistakes, such as omission of articles where they should have been translated, and a lack of care for the dynamics. The examples I have given show how "verbose" Beylin's translation is.

To conclude, let me say a few words about linguistic competence. As a Danish philologist who has spent thirty years learning Danish in daily professional contacts, including fifteen years of teaching at the Department of Scandinavian Studies at the Adam Mickiewicz University, a five-year stay in Denmark and long practice as a translator, I could not complete this translation without consulting a person who feels the "age," music, colours and shades of meaning to a degree that I, a non-native speaker of Danish, will probably never fully achieve.

I would like to believe that my translation will convince the readers how different the Andersen they remember from childhood is from the original. I also hope that my rendition of his fairy tales will help Polish researchers to re-evaluate the reception of this extraordinary writer.

trans. Anna Mirosławska-Olszewska

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