

Dual or Single Address? Some Reflections on Hans Christian Andersen's Fairy Tales in Polish Translations

Hanna Dymel-Trzebiatowska

Department of Scandinavian Studies

University of Gdańsk, ul. Wita Stwosza 55, 80 – 995 Gdańsk

Email: filhdt@univ.gda.pl

Abstract The fairy tale is in Poland thought to be exclusively a genre for children but the Danes were inclined to have a slightly different perspective. The tradition of the “Kunstmärchen” made the fairy tale an accepted adult art form in the nineteenth-century Germany and via close links with German Romanticism the genre was also accepted as an adult literature in Denmark. That approach provided a firm foundation for Andersen's acceptance as a serious writer. But at the same time Andersen himself equipped his first edition with the title *Fairy Tales Told for Children*, which put him in the category of children's literature. In other words, as one of the first authors he dared to make use of the dual addressee. In the tales he took up issues of adult life (sexual love, social differences) but still wrote genuine children's literature, using the mode of an enormous appeal to children (humor, straightforwardness). The dual address made the problem of translating Andersen into Polish really complex. Some translators used the German text, others tried their best with the original Danish, some attempted to convert Andersen's consciously negligent narrative style into something more formally correct but the fundamental problem was that the Polish translations up to the year 2005 were made mostly for children, omitting the other parallel addressee: the adult. This article investigates three Polish translations of Andersen's tales in the light of the writer's dual appeal: to children and adults.

Key words Andersen; fairy tales; Polish translations; dual address

For nearly 200 years H. C. Andersen has been the most famous Dane. “The Ugly Duckling”, “The Little Mermaid” and “The Snow White” are cultural universals recognizable all over the world — almost everybody knows them, though perhaps not everybody can name the author. Andersen wrote about two hundred¹ fairy tales which have been translated into nearly all languages, giving way practically only to the Bible's translations. He was a very ambitious writer who tried to break through as a poet, novelist and dramatist but he was rather unsuccessful in these attempts. His genius was proved a bit unexpectedly — in fairy tales which made him the most famous immortal fairy tale writer.

Andersen is perceived by biographers as a man whose life and works are marked

by dichotomies: He is called a product of two cities (Odense and Copenhagen), two worlds (the bottom and the top of society) and two ages (Romanticism and the dawn of Realism). But I think it is justified to add one more dichotomy — in my opinion, Andersen was a discoverer and a master of two addresses: to adults and children.

The first six booklets including Andersen's tales, published in Denmark 1835 – 1841, were entitled *Fairy Tales Told for Children* but in the following ones the reference was omitted — their titles were simply *New Fairy Tales* and *New Fairy Tales and Stories*. The redirecting of the texts to an adult audience was explained by Andersen himself: “One should hear the narrator in the style, the language should therefore be close to the oral presentation; it was told for children but also the older should be able to listen”² (Wulschläger 180). As we hear, the child was an explicit addressee but not the exclusive one, the adult reader was also taken into consideration. It is noteworthy that the first two booklets consisted almost entirely of retellings of folktales, taking up issues directed originally to adults. Although Andersen's stories often deal thematically with sexual matters or social clashes, they seem genuine children's literature. Because of their straightforwardness, humor, logic and language typical of children's games they represent the general mode of narration that still has an enormous appeal to children.

Andersen abandons the romantic idealistic understanding of the child as a pure and fragile being to be protected. His childhood conception is far more modern and closer to contemporary views while his children characters appear as resistant, able to handle stress and conflict, innocent but having large resources when it comes to facing life and death. Andersen doesn't talk down but leads a dialogue with a competent young being and his revolutionary approach will be continued by other great Scandinavian authors of children's fiction, i. e. Astrid Lindgren.

Andersen seems to put trust in what Torben Weinreich calls today encyclopedic and rhetorical competences (Weinreich 81 – 85). The first means that the implied reader must have knowledge of the world — from social norms to various types of active knowledge; the latter stands for a knowledge of literary devices and conventions. Andersen cares for neither reading nor convention competences, that is a degree of reading skills or a knowledge how to read and where to buy a book. He admitted that his tales were to be read to children, which he himself did quite often. But at the same time, his high expectations of the rhetorical and encyclopedic competences implicate an appeal to an adult loud reader: Read to children and explain to them all that is unclear. Andersen was a very ambitious author who wanted to achieve as broad audience as possible — directly proportional to his hunger of success. This is presumably why he adopted a child's viewpoint partly because he wished to publish stories both for children and adults. Andersen stated it openly (Wulschläger 17) and hereby realized — according to Barbara Wall's typology — dual address. Wall's analyses of the relation narrator-narratee in children's literature resulted in a model constituted by three modes: *single address* — exclusively to children, *double address* — when an adult narrative voice is replaced by a voice concerned with child readers and dual address when narrators use single address, double address or a fusion of the two speaking respectively to single, double or dual audiences (Wall 9).

As Andersen himself said his fairy tales contained something for “the older” — their name *Eventyr* seemed to function as a kind of cover: The straightforward text contained a subtext which commented on the adult world ironically, sarcastically and bitterly. The fashionable genre of fairy tale let the writer avoid censorship and express freely thoughts and experiences from his painful way to glory. But in Poland Andersen used to be categorized as a representative of children's literature. Here, like i. e. in Great Britain, fairy tales have been thought to be a genre for children. The tradition of *Kunstmärchen*, accepted as adult art in Germany and Denmark, was never a similar part of our literary scene — the Polish seemed to be blind to the clear dual address of the narrator's voice in Andersen's tales. That approach had a direct reflection in translation strategies applied for years. I'll demonstrate this thesis by considering a few chosen Polish translations: Witold Zechenter's (1948), Stefania Beylin's (1956) and the latest one by Bogusława Sochańska (2005)³. The first two collections are translated via French and German, which must have affected the final product. The last, by Sochańska, crowns the Polish celebrations of the bicentenary of Andersen's birth and is the first full Polish translation directly from Danish. This is a collection closest to the source language text, showing “the real Andersen”, different from the one we got used to.

To reflect fundamental changes in addresses of these translations I have chosen a few representative examples from different tales. Let's start with “The Tinderbox”, a story about a brave soldier, three wonderful magic dogs granting wishes and a folk-tale-like ending in form of a happy marriage. In the final scene the soldier asks the dogs to let him off the hook: “Hjelp mig nu, at jeg ikke bliver hængt! sagde Soldaten, og saa foer Hundene ind paa Dommerne og hele Raadet, tog en ved Benene og en ved Næsen og kastede dem mange Favne op i Veiret, saa de faldt ned og sloges reent i Stykker” (Help me now so that I won't be hanged! said the soldier, and so the four dogs jumped onto the judges and all the council, took one by the legs and the other by the nose and threw them up many times, until they came down and broke into pieces.)⁴. Sochańska keeps close to the original's structure and sense: “Pomóście, niech mnie nie wieszają! — zawołał żołnierz, a psy skoczyły na sędziów i na całą radę, złapały jednego za nogi, drugiego zaś za nos i rzuciły nimi wiele razy w górę, a spadli i roztrzaskali się na kawałki” (244). Beylin retains the meaning and the aspect of breaking the noble people while Zechenter alters it into: “— Hej, pieseczki! — zawołał żołnierz. — Nie pozwólcie na to, by mnie powieszono! Wtedy psy rzuciły się na sędziów i zaczęły ich podrzucać, jednego za głowę, drugiego za nogi, wysoko w górę i zrobiło się takie zamieszanie, jakiego dotąd nie było” (— Hello, little dogs! — cried the soldier. — Don't let them hang me! Then the dogs jumped onto the judges and started to throw them high up, one by his head, one by his legs, and it was such chaos as never before.) (100). At the beginning of that passage the translation adds the childish invocation to the dogs in a diminutive, at the end — it reduces the aspect of breaking into pieces.

This scene of punishment depicts the persons who break into bits like porcelain, which can be seen as make-believe from the perspective of the child and as a variant of romantic irony, seen from the adult perspective. Zechenter's version interprets

away a vital moment and evidently turns to the child. He seems to have judged the scene as too drastic and thus improper to be conveyed to an innocent child. The translator's implied reader is much less competent compared with the author's intentionality. I understand the term *translator's implied reader* in the light of Ritta Oittinen's dialogic translation theory. For Oittinen, when a translator translates for the child, she or he also reads, writes and discusses with her or his present and former self. She or he also discusses with her or his audience, the listening and reading child. Translators simply bring a concept of child and childhood into their work (Oittinen 30).

In "The Nightingale" we encounter another example where the majesty of royalty is protected by a translator. The Emperor, in the desire of possessing the marvellous bird, threatens his courtiers with corporal punishment as follows: "Jeg vil høre Nattegalen! den skal være her i Aften! den har min høieste Naade! og kommer den ikke, da skal hele Hoffet dunkes paa Maven, naar det har spiiist Aftensmad". (I want to hear this nightingale! he must be here this evening. He has my high imperial favor! And if he doesn't come, I will have the whole court patted in the stomach, when it has had supper.) In Sochańska's translation we can read: "Chcę posłuchać tego słowika i rozkazuję, by był tu dziś wieczorem! Okazuję mu jemu moją najjaśniejszą łaskę! A jeśli nie przyleci, to cały dwór każe wyębnić po brzuchach, i to po kolacji". (I want to listen to that nightingale and I order him to be here tonight! He has my royal favor! And if he doesn't fly here, I will order to drum in the stomachs of the whole court, directly after supper!) (221). A reader with some sense of humor may easily imagine the scene of drumming in the stomachs of, supposedly quite obese courtiers, whose fat round stomachs resemble just drums. The threat in Zechenter's translation looks different: "Musi tu przyść, gdyż chcę go łaskawie obdarzyć! A jeżeli się nie zjawi, to ty i inni moi leniwi dworzanie dostaniecie zaraz po kolacji po sporej porcji różg" (73). The courtiers are to "get a portion of flogging" in case they don't return with the precious little singer. Beylin, in turn, proposes in this scene: "A jeżeli się nie zjawi, każe moim ludziom deptać po brzuchach wszystkich dworzan, i to zaraz po kolacji" (And if he doesn't appear, I will order my people to tread on the stomachs of all the courtiers, soon after the dinner.) (143)

As we can see, the character of the ruler in Zechenter's translation is distorted — he appears as cruel, not funny and in consequence his threat leaves the dimension of make-believe. The emperor's words undergo manipulation: the punishment suggested by him in the source text is supposedly thought — by the translators or editors — not to fit the royal majesty. The Danish verb *dunke* expresses the idea of *patting* or *tapping*, that combined with *stomachs directly after dinner* contributes to the humor Andersen was famous for. It is a loss that some translations deprived him of it.

Humor also colors Andersen's attitude to human faults and weaknesses that are ridiculed by him in a funny mild way. In "The Nightingale" vanity is illustrated as liking for long sophisticated titles that the Emperor distributes quite generously. One day an artificial substitute of the real bird advances to "Høikeiserlig Natbord-Sanger, i Rang Nummer eet" (the Emperor's Night-Table-Singer, in Rank *Number One*). Sochańska's title is an exact copy and goes "tytuł cesarskiego Spiewaka nocnego stolika, w randze numer 1" (227). Zechenter reduces the honor to "tytuł cesarskiegoś

piewaka pierwszego stopnia” (the title of the emperor's singer of the first degree) (80) while Beylin substitutes *night table* with a *bedroom* which results in “śpiewak cesarskiej sypialni” (the singer of the emperor's bedroom) (147).

But the translators' interferences concern not only an unrecognized humor or scenes of implicit death, as was the case in the final scene of “The Tinderbox”. They often alter in the sphere of good manners and decency. Apparently in their mind characters in children's fiction must serve as examples to follow, thus all references to their sexuality should be ignored. These interferences prove that Göte Klingberg's observation about purification of children's literature is correct. Purification is a popular issue that often accompanies translation of children's books: “Its aim is to get the target text in correspondence with the supposed set of values of its readers — or rather in correspondence with the supposed set of values of those who feel themselves responsible for the upbringing of the intended readers: parents, teachers, librarians, critics.” (Klingberg 58) The Swedish scholar distinguished a few thematic fields that are usually purified, i. e. touches of the erotic, bad manners in children, erring adults.

Some delicate “touches of the erotic” that were partly purified, occur in the above mentioned tale, “The Tinderbox”. The soldier wants one of the dogs to bring him the princess and his wish is immediately granted: “Hunden var strax ude af Døren, og før Soldaten tænkte paa det, saae han ham igjen med Prindsessen, hun sad og sov paa Hundens Ryg og var saa deilig, at enhver kunde see, det var en virkelig Prindsesse; Soldaten kunde slet ikke lade være, han maatte kysse hende, for det var en rigtig Soldat.” (The dog was soon out of the door, and before the soldier could think about it, he saw the dog again with the princess, she was asleep on his back and was so pretty that everyone could see she was a real princess; the soldier couldn't keep from kissing her, because it was a real soldier.) Bogusława Sochańska is once again the most faithful: “I pies był już za drzwiami, a nim żołnierz zdążył pomyśleć, znów go zobaczył — z królowną. Siedziała na grzbiecie psa i spała; była przesłiczna, każdy by się domyślił, że to prawdziwa królowna. Żołnierz nie mógł się powstrzymać, musiał ją pocałować, był przecież prawdziwym Żołnierzem” (240). At this point Zechenter introduces a little correction: “Spała ona mocno, a rzeczywiście była tak piękna, że żołnierz uklęknął przed nią i pocałował jej rączkę.” (She slept so deeply, and she was really so beautiful that the soldier knelt down and kissed her little hand.) (97). The original is enriched with a respectful act of kneeling down in front of the princess and her hand as the place kissed by the soldier. Nothing about “real soldiers who kiss beautiful women”. At this stage of the original fairy tale the soldier is rather a bit comical antihero, not a figure for identification, which is evidently repaired by the translator. This happens also at other places where the “offending” passages or motifs are removed or twisted until they become vehicles of a proper message, vehicles of adaptation into a pure children's fiction directed to an innocent implied addressee.

Another example when the Polish translation is made more clear-cut and decent comes from the beginning part of the shortest tale by Andersen — “The Princess on the Pea” where the first sentence goes: “Der var engang en Prinds; han vilde have

sig en Prindsesse, men det skulde være en rigtig Prindsesse.” (Once upon a time there was a prince; he wanted to have a princess, but it should be a true princess). The discussed translations render the beginning as follows: “Był sobie raz ksiąźę, który chciał pojąć za żonę księźniczkę, ale musiała to być prawdziwa księźniczka” (Once there was a prince, who wanted to marry a princess, but it had to be a true princess) (Sochańska 284), “Był sobie pewnego razu ksiąźę, który chciał ożenić się z księźniczką, ale musiała to być prawdziwa księźniczka” (Once upon a time there was a prince, who wanted to marry a princess, but it had to be a true princess) (Beylin 13) and “Pewien królewicz postanowił się ożenić, ale tylko z najprawdziwszą królową” (Some prince decided to marry, but only to the truest princess.) (Zechenter 38). All the versions introduce the word marry or add the concept of wife. Andersen didn't use the aspect of getting married at this point. Though paragraph 9 of the tale says openly that the prince took the princess as his wife, there is a certain ambiguity in the source text, appealing to an adult, that was interpreted away in the target text.

In the same spirit Zechenter tones down an expressive and a bit seductive dance in “The Steadfast Tin Soldier”. Andersen himself was keen on dancing and depicted this scene dynamically, with respect to detail: “Den lille Jomfru strakte begge sine Arme ud, for hun var en Dandserinde, og saa løftede hun sit ene Been saa høit i Veiret, at Tinsoldaten slet ikke kunde finde det og troede, at hun kun havde eet Been ligesom han.” (The little lady held out both her arms, as she was a ballet dancer, and one leg was lifted so high that the tin soldier couldn't see it at all, and he supposed she had only one leg, as he did.) Sochańska keeps close to his version: “Panienska rozkładała ramiona, bo była tancerką, a jedną nogę unosiła tak wysoko w górę, że cynowy żołnierz w ogóle jej nie dostrzegał i myślał, że panienska ma tak jak on, tylko jedna nogę” (133). The same little lady is distorted in the after-war, Zechenter's version into a motionless, static, colorless figure: “Stała na jednej nóżce z wysoko wyciągniętymi rączkami, bo przecież była tancerką” (She stood on one leg, with high stretched hands because she was a dancer.) (41).

Unexpectedly Zechenter doesn't find nudity as something children should be protected from. In “The Emperor's New Clothes” he underlines this aspect recurrently though it seems not to be in accordance with the author's intentionality. Let us have a look at the fragment when the translator emphasizes the emperor's awkward situation: “Saa gik Keiseren i Processionen under den deilige Thronhimmel og alle Mennesker paa Gaden og i Vinduerne sagde: Gud hvor Keiserens nye Klæder ere mageløse!” (So the Emperor went in procession under his splendid canopy and all people in the streets and in the windows said, “Oh, how fine are the Emperor's new clothes!”) Zechenter's rendering goes: “I oto kroczył cesarz przez ulice swej stolicy, a ludzie, stłoczeni na schodach i w oknach i na balkonach widzieli golasa pośrodku strojnego wspaniałego orszaku, ale wszyscy głośno chwalili szaty.” (Here was strutting the emperor along the streets of his capital city and crowded people on stairs and windows and balconies saw the naked person in the middle of a magnificent ornate procession and all of them admired his clothes loudly.) (36) I disregard some strange additions but want to focus on the word golasa (the naked person) that represents very informal

Polish style. The writer's intention appears clear: People looked at the emperor and admired his clothes. Andersen keeps suspension, suggests ambiguity in this scene when not saying explicitly that the people saw the naked ruler. The reader may guess here that hypocrisy might have blinded the crowded subjects so that they could see the emperor's fine new clothes. The truth is to be revealed a little later and the translator destroys the meticulously built narration. Talking to the child, the incompetent addressee who must be informed about everything in plain language, he neglects the original ambiguous implied meanings and consequently neglects the other reader: the adult.

When finally the emperor's shameful condition is uncovered by the innocent child, we can read: "Men han har jo ikke noget paa, sagde et lille Barn." ("But he hasn't got anything on, a little child said".) "Przecież on nie ma na sobie ubrania, powiedziało małe dziecko" (251), Sochańska very faithfully translates; "Psecieś on jest golutki!" (He is naked, isn't he?) (36), Zechenter translates, imitating a little child's lisping voice, which was not included in the source-language text. This example is an illustration of a broadly applied usage of diminutives while turning to children. Andersen doesn't use diminutives and generally Danish is poor of them. However many translators can't resist the temptation and apply them abundantly and often redundantly in Polish, replacing originally neutral words with their sweeter and more infantile counterparts. Bogusława Sochańska breaks with this strategy. In the above cited fragment of "The Steadfast Tin Soldier" the little dancer has *ramiona* (*arms*) and *nogi* (*legs*), when Beylin's dancer has *ręce* (*arms*) and *nóżkę* (*a little leg*) and Zechenter's little heroine is equipped with both *rączki* (*little arms*) and *nóżki* (*little legs*). This is a general practice which is particularly striking in the sorrowful fairy tale "The Little Match Girl" where translators made use of two extremely different variants of the word *grandma*. Let's have a look at the fragment: "Nu dør der Een! sagde den Lille, for gamle Mormoer, som var den eneste, der havde været god mod hende, men nu var død, havde sagt: naar en Stjerne falder, gaaer der en Sjæl op til Gud." ("Now someone is dying," said the little girl, for her old grandma, who was the only person who was good to her, and who was now dead, had said: when a star falls down a soul goes up to God.) "— Ktoś umiera! — powiedziała dziewczynka, bo babka, która jedna była dla niej dobra, ale już umarła, mawiała, że kiedy spada gwiazda, to jakaś dusza idzie do nieba" (216) goes Sochańska's almost word-for-word rendition, while in Witold Zechenter's text we can hear an absolutely different tone: "— Babunia mówiła, że wtedy ktoś umiera, gdy gwiazdka spada — przypomniała sobie dziewczynka i usłyszała cichutki, stary głos ukochanej babuni" (Granny used to say that somebody dies when a little star falls down — the girl remembered it and she heard a very quiet, old voice of her beloved granny.) (27) The diminutive *babunia* (*granny*) and its opposite *babka* (*grandmother*) are good representatives of the broader assumptions of these two translations. It's evident that the citation filled with lexical choices like *babunia* (*granny*), *gwiazdka* (*a little star*), *cichutki* (*very quiet*), *ukochana* (*beloved*) — builds a warm family atmosphere compensating the girl's hopeless position, because the implied addressee — the child — must be protected. Sochańska as usual seems to have both addresses in mind.

Apart from diminutives Zechenter introduces another alternation on the level of language: He often doubles epithets and uses superlatives. In “The Princess on the Pea” Andersen uses the word *rigtig* (*true*) many times referring to the title character. This seems deliberate as redundancy and repetition are general features of oral narration that Andersen transferred into literature. For example, when the princess proved to be real we read that “Saa kunde de see, at det var en rigtig Prindsesse, da hun gjennem de tyve Matrasser og de tyve Ædderduuns Dynner havde mærket Ærten.” (In this way they could see that she was a true princess, now that she had felt one pea through twenty mattresses and twenty feather beds.) This short matter-of-fact description is rendered as considerably longer one by surprisingly talkative Zechenter: “Wtedy przekonali się wszyscy, że była prawdziwą, najprawdziwszą królową. Taką bowiem delikatną skórę mogła mieć tylko prawdziwa, najprawdziwsza królowa, skoro wyczuła przez dwadzieścia materaców i dwadzieścia pierzynek z puchu jedno, jedyne ziarnko grochu” (Then all of them realized that she was the true, the truest princess. Because only the true, the truest princess could have such a delicate skin when she felt one little pea through twenty mattresses and twenty little feather beds.) (38) The addition from the translator is significant and results among others from doubling the epithets — the positive plus its superlative — which mark the text with affection and the infantile tone.

To sum up, the older Polish translations of H. C. Andersen’s fairy tales had children as the prime target group, which resulted from a general approach to the genre as reserved exclusively for the younger audience. Witold Zechenter’s translation from 1948 underwent numerous simplifications and omissions of offending passages including motifs of death, cruelty or sexuality. The writer’s belief in children’s competences was neglected as well as his conscious dual address. Zechenter didn’t conceal that he marked Andersen works with his personal tone. The implied reader of his translation was highly marked by the child image from his own childhood. The translator writes about it explicitly in the preface to his translation: “I’d like to permeate my work with that warmth that suddenly returned to me with the world’s most beautiful tales, I’d like my little listeners and readers to feel what I used to feel while entering Andersen’s magic world [...] I retranslated the tales, here and there changing some fragments or accents to bind the tale more strictly with the emotional reality of contemporary children” (Zechenter 5). In Poland Andersen has been stereotyped as a children’s writer for long and the nearest years will show if Bogusława Sochańska’s new translation from Danish is able to change it.

Notes

1. Andersen himself called his 156 texts “eventyr og historier”. Scholars add more tales to this collection which amounts to over 200 titles.
2. My translation into English.
3. Some of the tales translated by Beylin were already published in 1931. The Zechenter’s first edition appeared in 1946 but I use the same version from 1948. Sochańska’s translation came out first in 2005 (Brzozowska 1970).

4. This is my translation that tries to retain both the syntax and the vocabulary of the ST. It has no artistic ambitions and was made only for the sake of that analysis. The source texts in this article come from the website of Arkiv for Dansk Litteratur: <www.andersen.adl.dk>

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