

Title: Hans Christian Andersen (1869)
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Publication Details: *Creative Spirits of the Nineteenth Century*. Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1923. p1-54.
Source: *Short Story Criticism*. Ed. Thomas Votteler. Vol. 6. Detroit: Gale Research, 1990. From *Literature Resource Center*.
Document Type: Critical essay, Excerpt



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[An esteemed Danish literary critic and biographer, Brandes was the first prominent scholar to write extensively on Andersen. According to Elias Bredsdorff, Brandes was “the first scholar altogether who realised that Andersen’s tales gave him an important and unique place in world literature and who saw that the tales themselves merited serious critical discussion.” In the following excerpt from an essay that is recognized as significant in Andersen scholarship, Brandes favorably assesses Andersen’s tales, admiring in particular his ability to write as a child might think and speak.]

To replace the accepted written language with the free, unrestrained language of familiar conversation, to exchange the more rigid form of expression of grown people for such as a child uses and understands, becomes the true goal of the author as soon as he embraces the resolution to tell nursery stories for children. He has the bold intention to employ oral speech in a printed work, he will not write but speak, and he will gladly write as a school-child writes, if he can thus avoid speaking as a book speaks. The written word is poor and insufficient, the oral has a host of allies in the expression of the mouth that imitates the object to which the discourse relates, in the movement of the hand that describes it, in the length or shortness of the tone of the voice, in its sharp or gentle, grave or droll character, in the entire play of the features, and in the whole bearing. The nearer to a state of nature the being addressed, the greater aids to comprehension are these auxiliaries. Whoever tells a story to a child, involuntarily accompanies the narrative with many gestures and grimaces, for the child sees the story quite as much as it hears it, paying heed, almost in the same way as the dog, rather to the tender or irritated intonation, than to whether the words express friendliness or wrath. Whoever, therefore, addresses himself in writing to a child must have at his command the changeful cadence, the sudden pauses, the descriptive gesticulations, the awe-inspiring mien, the smile which betrays the happy turn of affairs, the jest, the caress, and the appeal to rouse the flagging attention—all these he must endeavor to weave into his diction, and as he cannot directly sing, paint, or dance the occurrences to the child, he must imprison within his prose the song, the picture, and the pantomimic movements, that they may lie there like forces in bonds, and rise up in their might as soon as the book is opened. In the first place, no circumlocution; everything must be spoken fresh from the lips of the narrator, aye, more than spoken, growled, buzzed, and blown as from a trumpet: “There came a soldier marching along the high-road—*one, two! one, two!*” “And the carved trumpeters blew, `Trateratra! there is the little boy! Trateratra!’” — “Listen how it is drumming on the burdock-leaves, `rum-dum-dum! rum-dum-dum!’ said the Father Snail.” At one time he begins, as in “**The Daisy**,” with a “Now you shall hear!” which at once arrests the attention; and again he jests after the fashion of a child: “So the soldier cut the witch’s head off. There she lay!” We can hear the laughter of the child that follows this brief, not very sympathetic, yet extremely clear presentation of the destruction of an imposter. Often he breaks into a sentimental tone, as for instance: “The sun shone on the Flax, and the rainclouds moistened it, and this was just as good for it as it is for little children when they are washed, and afterward get a

kiss from their mother; they became much prettier, and so did the Flax.” That at this passage a pause should be made in the narrative, in order to give the child the kiss mentioned in the text, is something to which every mother will agree, and which seems to be a matter of course; the kiss is really given in the book. This regard for the young reader may be carried still farther, inasmuch as the poet, by virtue of his ready sympathy, so wholly identifies himself with the child and enters so fully into the sphere of its conceptions, into its mode of contemplation, indeed, into the range of its purely bodily vision, that a sentence like the following may readily flow from his pen: “The biggest leaf here in the country is certainly the burdock-leaf. Put one in front of your waist, and it is just like an apron, and if you lay it upon your head, it is almost as good as an umbrella, for it is quite remarkably large.” These are words which a child, and every child, can understand.

Happy, indeed, is Andersen! What author has such a public as he? What is, in comparison, the success of a man of science, especially of one who writes within a limited territory for a public that neither reads nor values him, and who is read by four or five—rivals and opponents! A poet is, generally speaking, more favorably situated; but although it is a piece of good fortune to be read by men, and although it is an enviable lot to know that the leaves of our books are turned by dainty fingers which have employed silken threads as book-marks, nevertheless no one can boast of so fresh and eager a circle of readers as Andersen is sure of finding. His stories are numbered among the books which we have deciphered syllable by syllable, and which we still read to-day. There are some among them whose letters even now, seem to us larger, whose words appear to have more value than all others, because we first made their acquaintance letter by letter and word by word. And what a delight it must have been for Andersen to see in his dreams this swarm of children's faces by the thousands about his lamp, this throng of blooming, rosy-cheeked little curly-pates, as in the clouds of a Catholic altar-piece, flaxen-haired Danish boys, tender English babies, black-eyed Hindoo maidens,—rich and poor, spelling, reading, listening, in all lands, in all tongues, now healthy and merry, weary from sport, now sickly, pale, with transparent skin, after one of the numberless illnesses with which the children of this earth are visited,—and to see them eagerly stretch forth this confusion of white and swarthy little hands after each new leaf that is ready! Such devout believers, such an attentive, such an indefatigable public, none other has. None other either has such a reverend one, for even old age is not so reverend and sacred as childhood.

[It] is only needful to study the imagination of the audience, in order to become acquainted with that of the author. The starting-point for this art is the child's play that makes everything out of everything; in conformity with this, the sportive mood of the artist transforms playthings into natural creations, into supernatural beings, into heroes, and, *vice versa*, uses everything natural and everything supernatural—heroes, sprites, and fairies—for playthings, that is to say, for artistic means which through each artistic combination are remodelled and freshly stamped. The nerve and sinew of the art is the imagination of the child, which invests everything with a soul, and endows everything with personality; thus, a piece of household furniture is as readily animated with life as a plant, a flower as well as a bird or a cat, and the animal in the same manner as the doll, the portrait, the cloud, the sunbeam, the wind, and the seasons. Even the leap-frog, made of the breastbone of a goose, becomes thus for the child a living whole, a thinking being endowed with a will. The prototype of such poesy is the dream of a child, in which the childish conceptions shift more rapidly and with still bolder transformations than in play; therefore, the poet (as in **“Little Ida's Flowers,” “Ole Shut Eye,” “Little Tuk,” “The Elder-Tree Mother”**) likes to seek refuge in dreams as in an arsenal; therefore, it is, when he busies his fancy with childish dreams, such as fill and trouble the mind of childhood, there often come to his wittiest inspirations, as, for instance, when little Hjalmar hears in his dream the lamentation of the crooked letters that had tumbled down in his copy-book: “‘See, this is how you should hold yourselves,’ said the Copy. ‘Look, sloping in this way, with a powerful swing!’ ‘Oh, we should be very glad to do that,’ replied Hjalmar's letters, ‘but we cannot; we are too weakly.’ ‘Then you must take medicine,’ said Ole Shut Eye. ‘Oh no,’ cried they; and they immediately stood up so gracefully that it was beautiful to behold.” This is the way a child dreams, and this is the way a poet depicts to us the dream of a child. The soul of this poetry, however, is neither the dream nor the play; it is a peculiar, ever-childlike, yet at the same time a more than childlike faculty, not only for putting one thing in the place of another (thus, for making constant exchange, or for causing one thing to live in another, thus for animating all things), but also a faculty for being swiftly and readily reminded by one

thing of another, for regaining one thing in another, for generalizing, for moulding an image into a symbol, for exalting a dream into a myth, and through an artistic process, for transforming single fictitious traits into a focus for the whole of life. Such a fancy does not penetrate far into the innermost recesses of things; it occupies itself with trifles; it sees ugly faults, not great ones; it strikes, but not deeply; it wounds, but not dangerously; it flutters around like a winged butterfly from spot to spot, lingering about the most dissimilar places, and, like a wise insect, it spins its delicate web from many starting-points, until it is united in one complete whole. What it produces is neither a picture of the soul nor a direct human representation; but it is a work that with all its artistic perfection was already indicated by the unlovely and confusing arabesques in **"The Foot Journey to Amager."** Now while the nursery story, through its contents, reminds us of the ancient myths (**"The Elder-Tree Mother," "The Snow Queen"**), of the folk-lore tale, on whose foundation it constructs itself at times, of proverbs and fables of antiquity, indeed, sometimes of the parables of the New Testament (the buckwheat is punished as well as the fig-tree); while it is continually united by an idea, it may, so far as its form is concerned, be compared with the fantastic Pompeian decorative paintings, in which peculiarly conventional plants, animated flowers, doves, peacocks, and human forms are entwined together and blend into one another. A form that for any one else would be a circuitous route to the goal, a hindrance and a disguise, becomes for Andersen a mask behind which alone he feels truly free, truly happy and secure. His child-like genius, like the well-known child forms of antiquity, plays with the mask, elicits laughter, awakens delight and terror. Thus the nursery story's mode of expression, which with all its frankness is masked, becomes the natural, indeed, the classic cadence of his voice, that but very rarely becomes overstrained or out of tune. The only disturbing occurrence is that now and then a draught of whey is obtained instead of the pure milk of the nursery story, that the tone occasionally becomes too sentimental and sickly sweet (**"Poor John," "The Poor Bird," "Poor Thumbling"**), which, however, is rarely the case in materials taken from folk-lore tales, as **"The Tinder-Box," "Little Claus and Big Claus,"** etc., where the naïve joviality, freshness, and roughness of the narrative, which announces crimes and murders without the slightest sympathetic or tearful phrase, stand Andersen in good stead, and invest his figures with increased sturdiness. Less classic, on the other hand, is the tone of the lyric effusions interwoven with some of the nursery stories, in which the poet, in a stirring, pathetic prose gives a bird's-eye view of some great period of history (**"The Thorny Path of Honor," "The Swan's Nest"**). In these stories there seems to me to be a certain wild flight of fancy, a certain forced inspiration in the prevailing tone, wholly disproportionate to the not very significant thought of the contents; for thought and diction are like a pair of lovers. Thought may be somewhat larger, somewhat loftier, than diction, even as the man is taller than the woman; in the opposite case there is something unlovely in the relation. With the few exceptions just indicated, the narrative style of Andersen's nursery stories is a model of its kind.

[What] is there in plants, in animals, in the child, so attractive to Andersen? He loves the child because his affectionate heart draws him to the little ones, the weak and helpless ones to whom it is allowable to speak with compassion, with tender sympathy, and because when he devotes such sentiments to a hero,—as in *Only a Fiddler*,—he is derided for it, ... but when he dedicates them to a child, he finds the natural resting-place for his mood. It is owing to his genuine democratic feeling for the lowly and neglected that Andersen, himself a child of the people, continually introduces into his nursery stories (as Dickens, in his novels), forms from the poorer classes of society, "simple folk," yet endowed with the true nobility of the soul. As examples of this may be mentioned the washerwoman in **"Little Tuk"** and in **"Good-for-Nothing,"** the old maid in **"From a Window in Vartou,"** the watchman and his wife in **"The Old Street-Lamp,"** the poor apprentice boy in **"Under the Willow-Tree,"** and the poor tutor in **"Everything in its Right Place."** The poor are as defenseless as the child. Furthermore, Andersen loves the child, because he is able to portray it, not so much in the direct psychologic way of the romance,—he is by no means a direct psychologist,—as indirectly, by transporting himself with a bound into the child's world, and he acts as though no other course were possible. Rarely, therefore, has charge been more unjust than that of Kierkegaard when he accused Andersen of being unable to depict children; but when Kierkegaard, who, moreover, as a literary critic combines extraordinary merits with great lacks (especially in point of historic survey), takes occasion, in making this criticism, to remark that in Andersen's romances the child is always described "through another," what he says is true. It is no longer true, however, the moment Andersen, in the nursery story, puts himself in the place of the child and ceases to recognize "another." He seldom introduces the child into his nursery stories as taking part in the action and conversation. He does it most frequently in the charming little

collection *A Picture-Book without Pictures*, where more than anywhere else he permits the child to speak with the entire simplicity of its nature. In such brief, naïve child-utterances as those cited in it there is much pleasure and entertainment. Every one can recall anecdotes of a similar character. I remember once taking a little girl to a place of amusement, in order to hear the Tyrolese Alpine singers. She listened very attentively to their songs. Afterward, when we were walking in the garden in front of the pavilion, we met some of the singers in their costumes. The little maiden clung timidly to me, and asked in astonishment: "Are they allowed to go about free?" Andersen has no equal in the narration of anecdotes of this kind. In his nursery stories we find sundry illustrations of the fact, as in the charming words of the child in "**The Old House**," when it gives the man the pewter soldiers that he might not be "so very, very lonely," and a few kind answers in "**Little Ida's Flowers**." Yet his child forms are comparatively rare. The most noteworthy ones are little Hjalmar, little Tuk, Kay and Gerda, the unhappy, vain Karen in "**The Red Shoes**," a dismal but well-written story, the little girl with the matches and the little girl in "**A Great Sorrow**," finally Ib and Christine, the children in "**Under the Willow-Tree**." Besides these real children there are some ideal ones, the little fairy-like Thumbling and the little wild robber-maiden, undoubtedly Andersen's freshest child creation, the masterly portrayal of whose wild nature forms a most felicitous contrast to the many good, fair-haired and tame children of fiction. We see her before us as she really is, fantastic and true, her and her reindeer, whose neck she "tickles every evening with her sharp knife."

[Sympathy] with child-nature led to sympathy with the animal which is doubly a child, and to sympathy with the plants, the clouds, the winds, which are doubly nature. What attracts Andersen to the impersonal being is the impersonal element in his own nature, what leads him to the wholly unconscious is merely the direct consequence of his sympathy. The child, young though it may be, is born old; each child is a whole generation older than its father, a civilization of ages has stamped its inherited impress on the little four-year-old child of the metropolis. How many conflicts, how many endeavors, how many sorrows have refined the countenance of such a child, making the features sensitive and precocious! It is different with animals. Look at the swan, the hen, the cat! They eat, sleep, live, and dream undisturbed, as in ages gone by. The child already begins to display evil instincts. We, who are seeking what is unconscious, what is naïve, are glad to descend the ladder that leads to the regions where there is no more guilt, no more crime, where responsibility, repentance, restless striving and passion cease, where nothing of an evil nature exists except through a substitution of which we are but partially conscious, and which therefore, robs our sympathy of half its sting. An author like Andersen, who has so great a repugnance to beholding what is cruel and coarse in its nakedness, who is so deeply impressed by anything of the kind that he dare not relate it, but recoils a hundred times in his works from some wanton or outrageous deed with the maidenly expression, "We cannot bear to think of it!" Such an author feels content and at home in a world where everything that appears like egotism, violence, coarseness, vileness, and persecution, can only be called so in a figurative way. It is highly characteristic that almost all the animals which appear in Andersen's nursery stories are tame animals, domestic animals. This is, in the first place, a symptom of the same gentle and idyllic tendency which results in making almost all Andersen's children so well-behaved. It is, furthermore, a proof of his fidelity to nature, in consequence of which he is so reluctant to describe anything, with which he is not thoroughly familiar. It is finally an interesting phenomenon with reference to the use he makes of the animals, for domestic animals are no longer the pure product of nature; they remind us, through ideal association, of much that is human; and, moreover, through long intercourse with humanity and long education they have acquired something human, which in a high degree supports and furthers the effort to personify them. These cats and hens, these ducks and turkeys, these storks and swans, these mice and that unmentionable insect "with maiden's blood in its body," offer many props to the nursery story. They hold direct intercourse with human beings; all that they lack is articulate speech, and there are human beings with articulate speech who are unworthy of it, and do not deserve their speech. Let us, therefore, give the animals the power of speech, and harbor them in our midst.

On the almost exclusive limitation to the domestic animal, a double characteristic of this nursery story depends. First of all, the significant result that Andersen's animals, whatever else they may be, are never beastly, never brutal. Their sole faults are that they are stupid, shallow, and old-fogyish. Andersen does not depict the animal in the human being, but the human in the animal. In the second place, there is a certain freshness of tone about

them, a certain fulness of feeling, certain strong and bold, enthusiastic, and vigorous outbursts which are never found in the quarters of the domestic animal. Many beautiful, many humorous and entertaining things are spoken of in these stories, but a companion piece to the fable of the wolf and the dog—the wolf who observed the traces of the chain on the neck of the dog and preferred his own freedom to the protection afforded the house dog—will not be found in them. The wild nightingale, in whom poetry is personified, is a tame and loyal bird. “I have seen tears in the Emperor's eyes; that is the real treasure to me,” it says. “An emperor's tears have a peculiar power!” Take even the swan, that noble, royal bird in the masterly story, **“The Ugly Duckling,”** which for the sake of its cat and its hen alone cannot be sufficiently admired,—how does it end? Alas! as a domestic animal. This is one of the points where it becomes difficult to pardon the great author. O poet! we feel tempted to exclaim, since it was in your power to grasp such a thought, to conceive and execute such a poem, how could you, with your inspiration, your pride, have the heart to permit the swan to end thus! Let him die if needs must be! That would be tragic and great. Let him spread his wings and impetuously soar through the air, rejoicing in his beauty and his strength! let him sink down on the bosom of some solitary and beautiful forest lake! That is free and delightful. Anything would be better than this conclusion: “Into the garden came little children, who threw bread and corn into the water. And they ran to their father and mother, and bread and cake were thrown into the water; and they all said, ‘The new one is the most beautiful of all! so young and handsome!’ and the old swans bowed their heads before him.” Let them bow, but let us not forget that there is something which is worth more than the recognition of all the old swans and geese and ducks, worth more than receiving bread-crumbs and cake as a garden bird,—the power of silently gliding over the waters, and free flight!

Andersen prefers the bird to the four-footed animal. More birds than mammals find place with him; for the bird is gentler than the four-footed beast, is nearer to the plant. The nightingale is his emblem, the swan his ideal, the stork his declared favorite. It is natural that the stork, that remarkable bird which brings children into the world,—the stork, that droll, long-legged, wandering, beloved, yearningly expected and joyfully greeted bird, should become his idolized symbol and frontispiece.

Yet plants are preferred by him to birds. Of all organic beings, plants are those which appear most frequently in the nursery story. For in the vegetable world alone are peace and harmony found to reign. Plants, too, resemble a child, but a child who is perpetually asleep. There is no unrest in this domain, no action, no sorrow, and no care. Here life is a calm, regular growth, and death but a painless fading away. Here the easily excited, lively poetic sympathy suffers less than anywhere else. Here there is nothing to jar and assail the delicate nerves of the poet. Here he is at home; here he paints his Arabian Nights' Entertainments beneath a burdock leaf. Every grade of emotion may be experienced in the realm of plants,—melancholy at the sight of the felled trunk, fulness of strength at the sight of the swelling buds, anxiety at the fragrance of the strong jasmine. Many thoughts may flit through our brain as we follow the history of the development of the flax, or the brief honor of the fir-tree on Christmas evening; but we feel as absolutely free as though we were dealing with comedy, for the image is so fleeting that it vanishes the moment we attempt to render it permanent. Sympathy and agitation gently touch our minds, but they do not ruffle us, they neither rouse nor oppress us. ... Nowhere has the poet with greater delicacy invested plants with speech than in **“The Fir-Tree,”** **“Little Ida's Flowers,”** and in **“The Snow Queen.”** In the last named story, every flower tells its own tale. Let us listen to what the Tiger-lily says: “Hearest thou not the drum? Bum! bum! those are the only two tones. Always bum! bum! Hark to the plaintive song of the old woman! to the call of the priests! The Hindoo woman in her long robe stands upon the funeral pile; the flames rise around her and her dead husband, but the Hindoo woman thinks on the living one in the surrounding circle; on him whose eyes burn hotter than the flames; on him, the fire of whose eyes pierces her heart more than the flames which soon will burn her body to ashes. Can the heart's flame die in the flame of the funeral pile?”—“I do not understand that at all,” said little Gerda.—“That is my story,” said the Tiger-lily.

Yet a step farther, and the fancy of the poet appropriates all inanimate objects, colonizes and annexes everything, large and small, an old house and an old clothes-press (**“The Shepherdess and the Chimney Sweep”**), the top and the ball, the darning needle and the false collar, and the great dough men with bitter almonds for their hearts.

After it has grasped the physiognomy of the inanimate, his fancy identifies itself with the formless all, sails with the moon across the sky, whistles and tells stories like the wind, looks on the snow, on sleep, night, death, and the dream as persons.

The most marked trait in Andersen's mode of viewing life, is that which gives the ascendancy to the heart, and this trait is genuinely Danish. Full of feeling itself, this method of contemplation takes every opportunity to exalt the beauty and significance of the emotions. It overleaps the will (the whole destiny of the Flax, in the story of its life, comes from without), does combat with the critique of the pure reason as with something pernicious, the work of the Devil, the witch's mirror, replaces pedantic science with the most admirable and witty side-thrusts (**"The Bell," "A Leaf From the Sky"**), describes the senses as a tempter, or passes them over as unmentionable things, pursues and denounces hardheartedness, glorifies and commends goodness of heart, violently dethrones coarseness and narrowness, exalts innocence and decorum, and thus "puts everything in its right place." The key-note of its earnestness is the ethic-religious feeling coupled with the hatred felt by geniality for narrowness, and its humorous satire is capricious, calm, in thorough harmony with the idyllic spirit of the poet. Its satire has only the sting of a gnat, but it stings in the tenderest places.

The romance is a species of poetic creation which demands of the mind that would accomplish anything remarkable in it, not only imagination and sentiment, but the keen understanding, and the cool, calm power of observation of the man of the world; that is the reason why it is not altogether suited to Andersen, although it is not wholly remote from his talent. In the entire scenery, the background of nature, the picturesque effect of the costumes, he is successful; but where psychological insight is concerned, traces of his weakness may be detected. He will take part for and against his characters; his men are not manly enough, his women not sufficiently feminine. I know no poet whose mind is more devoid of sexual distinctions, whose talent is less of a nature to betray a defined sex, than Andersen's. Therefore his strength lies in portraying children, in whom the conscious sense of sex is not yet prominent. The whole secret lies in the fact that he is exclusively what he is,—not a man of learning, not a thinker, not a standard-bearer, not a champion, as many of our great writers have been, but simply a poet. A poet is a man who is at the same time a woman. Andersen sees most forcibly in man and in woman that which is elementary, that which is common to humanity, rather than that which is peculiar and interesting. I have not forgotten how well he has described the deep feeling of a mother in **"The Story of a Mother,"** or how tenderly he has told the story of the spiritual life of a woman in **"The Little Sea-Maid."** I simply recognize the fact that what he has represented is not the complicated spiritual conditions of life and of romance, but the element of life; he rings changes on single, pure tones, which amid the confused harmonies and disharmonies of life, appear neither so pure nor so distinct as in his books. Upon entering into the service of the nursery story all sentiments undergo a process of simplification, purification, and transformation. The character of man is farthest removed from the comprehension of the poet of childhood, and I can only recall a single passage in his stories in which a delicate psychological characteristic of a feminine soul may be encountered, and even this appears so innocently that we feel inclined to ask if it did not write itself. It occurs in the story of the new porcelain figures, **"The Shepherdess and the Chimney-Sweep."**

A more profound, more mercilessly true, more self-evident analysis of a certain kind of feminine enthusiasm and its energy when it undertakes to act boldly without regard to consequences, and without looking backwards, can be found, I think, in the works of no other Danish writer. What delicacy of presentation: the momentary resolute enthusiasm, the heroic conquering of the first horror, the endurance, bravery, firmness, until the moment which requires courage, when the firmness is shattered, and the yearning for the little table under the looking-glass is awakened. Many a voluminous romance would have been exalted by such a page, and we find in it a compensation for the fact that Andersen is no master in the province of the romance.

Andersen somewhere remarks, that he has made attempts in pretty much every radiation of the nursery story. This remark is striking and good. His nursery stories form a complete whole, a web with manifold radiations, that seems to address the beholder in the words of the spider's web in *Aladdin*, "See how the threads can become

entwined in the

delicate net!" If it will not seem too much like bringing the dust of the schoolroom into the parlor, I should like to call the reader's attention to a celebrated scientific work in Adolf Zeising's *Asthetic Investigations*, in which can be found a complete series of asthetic contrasts, in all their different phases (the beautiful, the comic, the tragic, the humorous, the touching, etc.), arranged in one great star, just as Andersen has planned in respect to his nursery stories.

The form of fancy and the method of narration in the nursery story admit the treatment of the most heterogeneous materials in the most varied tones. Within its province may be found sublime narratives, as "**The Bell**"; profound and wise stories, as "**The Shadow**"; fantastically bizarre, as "**The Elfin Mound**"; merry, almost wanton ones, as "**The Swineherd**," or "**The Leap Frog**"; humorous ones, as "**The Princess on the Pea**," "**Good Humor**," "**The False Collar**," "**The Lovers**"; also stories with a tinge of melancholy, as "**The Constant Tin Soldier**"; deeply pathetic poetic creations, as "**The Story of a Mother**"; oppressively dismal, as "**The Red Shoes**"; touching fancies, as "**The Little Sea-Maid**"; and those of mingled dignity and playfulness, as "**The Snow Queen**." Here we encounter an anecdote like "**A Great Sorrow**," which resembles a smile through tears, and an inspiration like "**The Muse of the Coming Age**," in which we feel the pinion strokes of history, the heart-throbs and pulse-beats of the active, stirring life of the present, as violent as in a fever, and yet as healthy as in a happy moment of enthusiastic inspiration. In short, we find everything that lies between the epigram and the hymn.

Is there, then, a boundary line which limits the nursery story, a law which binds it? If so, where does it lie? The law of the nursery story lies in the nature of the nursery story, and its nature is dependent on that of poetry. If, at the first moment, it would seem that nothing is prohibited a species of poetic creation which can permit a princess to feel a pea through twenty mattresses and twenty eider-down beds, it is but a semblance. The nursery story, which unites unbridled freedom of invention with the restraint its central idea impresses upon it, must steer between two rocks: between the luxuriance of style that lacks ideas, and dry allegory; it must strike the medium course between too great fulness and too great meagreness. This, Andersen most frequently succeeds in doing, and yet not always. Those of his stories that are based on materials derived from folk-lore, as "**The Flying Trunk**," or those that may be classed with the fairy-tale proper, as "**Thumbling**," do not attract grown people as they do children, because the story in such instances conceals no thought. In his "**Garden of Paradise**" everything preceding the entrance to the garden is masterly, but the Fairy of Paradise herself seems to me to be invested with little, if any, beauty or charm. The opposite extreme is when we see the barren intention, the dry precept, through the web of poetic creation; this fault, as might be expected in our reflecting and conscious age, is one of more frequent occurrence. We feel it keenly because the nursery story is the realm of the unconscious. Not only are unconscious beings and objects the leaders of speech in it, but what triumphs and is glorified in the nursery story is this very element of unconsciousness. And the nursery story is right; for the unconscious element is our capital and the source of our strength. The reason why the travelling companion could receive aid from the dead man, was because he had entirely forgotten that he had formerly helped this same dead man, and even simple Hans gains the princess and half the kingdom, because with all his folly he is so exceedingly naïve. Even stupidity has its genial side and its good luck; with the poor intermediate beings, the Nureddin natures alone, the nursery story knows not what to do.

Let us consider some instances of sins against the unconscious. In the beautiful story of "**The Snow Queen**" a most disturbing influence is exercised by the scene where the Snow Queen requests little Kay to make figures with the ice puzzle for the understanding, and he is unable to represent the word "Eternity." There is also clumsy and unpoetic bluntness in "**The Neighboring Families**" whenever the sparrow's family mention the rose by the abstract, and for a sparrow rather unnatural, term, "the beautiful." It would have been understood, without this hint, that the roses were the representatives of the beautiful in the narrative, and in encountering this abstract word in the nursery story we recoil as though we had come into contact with a slimy frog.

This tendency to allegory in narratives for children appears most frequently, as might be expected, in the form of instruction and moralizing; in some of the nursery stories, as in "**The Buckwheat**," the pedagogic element plays an exaggerated rôle. In others, as "**The Flax**," we feel too strongly at the conclusion—as in Jean Paul—the tendency to exhibit, in season and out of season, the doctrine of immortality. Toward the end of the latter story a few little, somewhat "insipid beings" are created who announce that the song is never done. In some cases finally the tendency is more personal. A whole series of stories ("**The Duckling**," "**The Nightingale**," "**The Neighboring Families**," "**The Daisy**," "**The Snail and The Rose-Tree**," "**Pen and Inkstand**," "**The Old Street Lamp**") allude to the poet's life and the poet's lot, and in single cases we see traces—a rare exception with Andersen—of invention being dragged in forcibly in order to bring out the tendency. What sense and what conformity to nature is there, for instance, in the fact that the street lamp can only let others see the beautiful and symbolic sights that had been interwoven with its experience when it is provided with an ordinary light? It is quite incomprehensible until we conceive it to be an allegory on a poet's supposed need of prosperity in order to accomplish anything. "And so genius must run after cupboard lore!" wrote Kierkegaard on the occasion of the appearance of *Only a Fiddler*. Still more infelicitous is the scene where the street lamp, in its melted-down condition, in its other life, finds its way to a poet and thus fulfils its destiny. So strongly as this the tendency has rarely shown itself.

The first duty of the nursery story is to be poetic, its second to preserve the marvellous element. Therefore, it is first of all necessary that the order of the legendary world be sacred to it. What in the language of legendary lore is regarded as a fixed rule, must be respected by the nursery story, however unimportant it may be in relation to the laws and rules of the real world. Thus it is quite inappropriate for the nursery story, as in Andersen's "**The Dryad**," to part its heroine from her tree, to let her make a symbolic journey to Paris, to go to the "bal Mabille," etc., for it is not more impossible for all the kings of the earth to place the smallest leaf on a nettle than it is for legendary lore to tear a dryad away from its tree. But in the second place, it lies in the nature of the nursery story form that its outline can frame nothing that, in order to obtain its poetic rights, requires a profound psychological description, an earnest development, such as would be adapted either to the nature of the drama or the romance. A woman like Marie Grubbe, a sketch of whose interesting life Andersen gives us in the story of "**Chicken-Grethe**," is too much of a character for it to be possible for the author of the nursery story to describe or interpret; when he attempts to do so, we feel a disproportion between the object and the form. There is less occasion, however, to marvel at these few blemishes than at the fact that they so very rarely occur. I have only called attention to them because it is interesting to become acquainted with the boundary lines by observing how they have been overstepped, and because it seemed to me more important to ascertain how the Pegasus of the nursery story, notwithstanding all its freedom to race and fly through the circle, has its firm tether in the centre.

[Andersen] has the genuine gift for creating supernatural beings, in modern times so rare. How deeply symbolical and how natural it is, for instance, that the little sea-maid, when her fish-tail shrivelled up and became "the prettiest pair of white feet a little girl could have," should feel as though she were treading on pointed needles and sharp knives at every step she took! How many poor women tread on sharp knives at every step they take, in order to be near him whom they love, and are yet far from being the most unhappy of women!

What a splendidly drawn band is that multitude of sprites in "**The Snow Queen**," what a superb symbol the witches' mirror, and how thoroughly the author has comprehended this queen herself, who, sitting in the midst of the desert snow field, had imbibed all its cold beauty! This woman is to a certain degree related to Night, one of Andersen's peculiarly characteristic creations. It is not Thorwaldsen's mild, sleep-bringing night, not Carstens' venerable, motherly night; it is black, gloomy, sleepless, and awful night. "Out in the snow sat a woman in long black garments, and she said, 'Death has been with you in your room; I saw him hasten away with your child; he strides faster than the wind, and never brings back what he has taken away.' 'Only tell me which way he has gone,' said the mother. 'Tell me the way, and I will find him.' 'I know him,' said the woman in the black garments; 'but before I tell you, you must sing me all the songs that you have sung to your child. I love those songs; I have heard them before. I am Night, and I saw your tears when you sang them.' 'I will sing them all, all!' said the mother. 'But do not detain me, that I may overtake him, and find my child.' But Night sat dumb and still. Then the

mother wrung her hands, and sang, and wept. And there were many songs, but yet more tears." Then the mother journeys onward, weeps out her eyes in order that for this price she may be borne to the opposite shore, and in the great hot-house of Death gives her long black hair to an old gray-haired woman in exchange for the old woman's white hair.

We meet with a countless multitude of fanciful creations, little elf-like divinities, such as Ole Shut-Eye (the sandman), or the goblins with the red caps, and the northern dryad, the Elder-Tree Mother. We feel Andersen's strength when we compare it with the weakness of the contemporary Danish poets in this respect.

One story I have reserved until the end; I will now search for it, for it is, as it were, the crown of Andersen's work. It is the story of "**The Bell**," in which the poet of naïveté and nature has reached the pinnacle of his poetic muse. We have seen his talent for describing in a natural way that which is superhuman, and that which is below the human. In this story he stands face to face with nature herself. It treats of the invisible bell which the children, who had just been confirmed, went out into the wood to seek—young people in whose breasts yearning for the invisible, alluring, and wondrous voices of nature was still fresh. The king of the country had "vowed that he who could discover whence the sounds proceeded should have the title of 'Universal Bell-ringer,' even if it were not really a bell. Many persons now went to the wood, for the sake of getting the place, but one only returned with a sort of explanation; for nobody went far enough; that one not farther than the others. However, he said that the sound proceeded from a very large owl, in a hollow tree; a sort of learned owl, that continually knocked its head against the branches. ... So now he got the place of 'Universal Bellringer,' and wrote yearly a short treatise 'on the Owl'; but everybody was just as wise as before." The children who had been confirmed go out this year also, and "they hold each other by the hand; for, as yet, they had none of them any high office." But soon they begin to grow weary, one by one, and some of them return to town, one for one reason, another on another pretext. An entire class of them linger by a small bell in an idyllic little house, without considering, as the few constant ones, that so small a bell could not possibly cause so enticing a play of tones, but that it must give "very different tones from those that could move a human breast in such a manner"; and with the small hope, their small yearning, they betake themselves to rest near their small discovery, the small bell, the small idyllic joy. I fancy the reader must have met some of these children after they were grown up. Finally but two remain, a king's son and a poor little boy in wooden shoes, and "with so short a jacket that one could see what long wrists he had." On the way they parted; for one wished to seek the bell on the right, the other on the left. The king's son sought the bell in the road that lay "on the side where the heart is placed"; the poor boy sought it in the opposite direction. We follow the king's son, and we read admiringly of the mystic splendor with which the poet has invested the region, in altering and exchanging the natural coloring of the flowers. "But on he went, without being disheartened, deeper and deeper into the wood, where the most wonderful flowers were growing. There stood white lilies with blood-red stamens; sky-blue tulips, which shone as they moved in the winds; and the apple-trees, the apples of which looked exactly like large soap-bubbles: so only think how the trees must have sparkled in the sunshine!" The sun goes down; the king's son begins to fear that he will be surprised by night; he climbs upon a rock in order to see the sun once more before it disappears in the horizon.

Genius is the wealthy king's son, its attentive follower the poor boy; but art and science, although they may have parted on their way, meet in their enthusiasm, and their devotion to the divine, universal soul of nature.

Source Citation (MLA 7th Edition)

Brandes, Georg. "Hans Christian Andersen (1869)." Trans. Rasmus B. Anderson. *Creative Spirits of the Nineteenth Century*. Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1923. 1-54. Rpt. in *Short Story Criticism*. Ed. Thomas Votteler. Vol. 6. Detroit: Gale Research, 1990. *Literature Resource Center*. Web. 6 Dec. 2013.

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Gale Document Number: GALE|H1420000217

The famous Danish author, Hans Christian Andersen was best known for his fairy tales, "The Snow Queen" and "The Little Mermaid" etc. Read on to know more about the childhood, profile, timeline and career of the writer. Danish author Hans Christian Andersen is one of the few writers whose work spans the two distinct literary periods, "Romanticism" and "Realism". His work admired all around the world has been translated into 125 languages. During his lifetime, he was experienced extreme poverty and obscurity, as well as great wealth and fame. It was, in part, the unique, multi-dimensional perspective he acquired as the result of these varied experiences that destined his work to become classics. Hans Christian Andersen's writing career was a diverse one. Hans Christian Andersen was born in Odense (info2) on April 2, 1805 (info3) in a one-room house (now Hans Christian Andersen Museum) in Hans Jensens StrÅde 43- 45 and lived here a short time from 1805 -1807. In 1807 Hans Christian and the family moved to another house, Hans Christian Andersen Childhood Home, in MunkemÅllestrÅde 3-5 in Odense, where he lived from 1807-1819. H.C. Andersen Information. H.C. Andersen Information " Alt om eventyrdigteren hans eventyr, familie, rejser, biografi, romaner, tegninger, papirklip, billedbÅger og meget mere! Hans Christian Andersen was a Danish author best known for writing children's stories including 'The Little Mermaid' and 'The Ugly Duckling.' Who Was Hans Christian Andersen? Hans Christian Andersen achieved worldwide fame for writing innovative and influential fairy tales. Many of his stories, including "The Ugly Duckling" and "The Princess and the Pea," remain classics of the genre. Early Life. Andersen was born on April 2, 1805, in Odense, Denmark. Hans Andersen Sr. died in 1816, leaving his son and a wife, Anne Marie. While the Andersen family w 1869 During the summer Hans Christian Andersen stayed at BasnÅs, with the Melchior family at Rolighed and with the family Henriques at PetershÅj near Klampenborg. On 25 August Hans Christian Andersen moved to d'Angleterre facing Kgs. Nytorv on the second floor. 1870 During the trip to Algiers of the Melchior family, Hans Christian Andersen accepted their offer of moving into their flat at HÅjbroplads 21, second floor. Hans Christian Andersen was and is something special, full of contradictions, nuances and facets. Throughout his life, the poet devoted his enormous talent to a crucial task; to understand oneself and what it means to be human. His life and art make the world a richer, deeper and more wonderful place. A larger-than-life and complex personality. Multiartist. Hans Christian Andersen was not just a writer. He was also a paper cutter, an illustrator, a singer and a flower arranger. He was multi-talented with a special eye for the potential offered by materials. Almost everything he touched turned