

Paramyth

The mythological dimensions of
Hans Christian Andersen's Fairy Tales

In her master-thesis Alexia Panagiotidis coined the term »paramyth« by stressing the notion that the translation of »fairy tale« in modern Greek would be »παράμυθος« (paramyth). The indication that there is a hidden, persisting and intriguing relationship between myths and the paramyths of the fairy tale is very fascinating. Maybe it is especially relevant when it comes to the fairy tales of Hans Christian Andersen. At least, one could say that already the exceptional worldwide reception of these fairy tales indicates that they fulfill their function in very different cultural and historical contexts (as myths do).

In looking at the mythological dimensions of Andersen's fairy tales one could first of all discuss in how far it is possible to use the explicit and implicit intertextual references to antique myths (especially Ovid) in his fairy tales in order to establish new readings. Further on, one could use thematic allusions to different forms of metamorphoses (and the corresponding transformations between female/male, living/dead, nature/culture, animal/human) or violent family conflicts in order to illuminate the mythic dimensions of Andersen's texts (which of course are connected to current gender-theoretical, ecocritical or ethical questions). One could also discuss if modern theoretical definitions of myths could be useful to describe structural peculiarities of Andersen's fairy tales. Finally, one could look at the global reception of these fairy tales and different attempts to describe them in relation to myths.

The conference will take place in the rooms **RAI F 041** – Rämistrasse 59 – and **KO2 F 152** in the main building – Rämistrasse 71 – of the University of Zurich:

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International Conference
at the University of Zurich

November 10–12, 2022

Organized by
Klaus Müller-Wille (Zurich)

Program

Thursday, November 10
ROOM RAI-F-041 (Rämistrasse 74)

- 12:45-14:00 *Lunch*
- 14:00-14:30 Klaus Müller-Wille (Zurich)
Paramyth – The Mythological Dimension of Hans Christian Andersen's Fairy Tales. An Introduction
- 14:30-15:15 Ejnar Stig Askgaard (Odense)
Andersen's *Eventyr* as paramythos
- 15:15-16:00 Mads Sohl Jessen (Odense)
»A Comfort that transgresses all Suffering«: A Reading of *The Ugly Duckling*
- 16:00-16:30 *Coffee*
- 16:30-17:15 Holger Berg (Odense)
Periodical Comets between Popular Christian Superstition, Scientific Cataclysmic Fears and New Romantic Myths: A Survey based on the Works of Hans Christian Andersen
- 17:15-18:00 Helena Březinová (Prague)
Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tales in the light of Cassirer's mythical consciousness (*Et Blad fra Himlen, Tante Tandpine* and others)

Friday, November 11
ROOM KO2-F-152 (Rämistrasse 71)

- 09:00-09:45 Ane Grum-Schwensen (Odense)
Morphing Myths: Folktale, Religious Motifs and Legends of Saints in *The Wild Swans*
- 09:45-10:30 Patrizia Huber (Zurich)
Knitting a story: Mythological and poetological allusions in *De vilde svaner* (1838)
- 10:30-11:00 *Coffee*
- 11:00-11:45 Jacob Bøggild (Odense)
New Mythology; Arabesque and Allegory; Circularity and Eschatology; *The Story of the Year*

- 11:45-12:30 Karin Sanders (Berkeley)
Psyche revisited – Anonymity and the Artist
- 12:45-14:00 *Lunch*
- 14:00-14:45 Christian Alenkjær Frandsen (Odense)
The Hidden Reference to the Myth of Artemis and Actaeon in *The Shepherdess and The Chimney Sweep*: An Analysis of Andersen's Creative Use of Mythological Elements in Making the Fairy Tale
- 14:45-15:30 Timon von Mentlen (Zurich)
Chopping Heads and Feathers off: Violent Killings and Body Transformations in Andersen's *Nabofamilierne* and *I Andegaarden*
- 15:30-16:00 *Coffee*
- 16:00-16:45 Kathrine Vig Nielsen (Odense)
»It will bring you great misfortune«. Predestination and freedom of action in *Den lille Havfrue*
- 16:45-17:30 Alexia Panagiotidis (Zurich)
The Crime of Name-Changing in the Persephone Myth and H.C. Andersen's *Tommelise*

Saturday, November 12
ROOM KO2-F-152 (Rämistrasse 71)

- 09:00-09:45 Torsten Bøgh Thomsen (Odense)
»Gud bevares!« – Mythological and Religious Taboos in the Early Translations of Hans Christian Andersen's Fairy Tales
- 09:45-10:30 Lasse Horne Kjældgaard (Odense)
Mythologizing Modernity: Visions of the Future in Hans Christian Andersen's Tales
- 10:30-11:00 *Coffee*
- 11:00-11:45 Jakob Stougaard-Nielsen (London)
Andersen's *Ungdoms-forsøg* as Romantic Shakespeare Myth
- 11:45-12:30 Sara Bruun Jørgensen (Odense)
Hans Christian Andersen: A Myth in North American Popular Culture?
- 12:30-14:00 *Lunch*