

# Introduction

 <https://doi.org/10.1075/btl.30.01int>

Pages ix–xiv of

**Tales and Translation: The Grimm Tales from Pan-Germanic narratives to shared international fairytales**

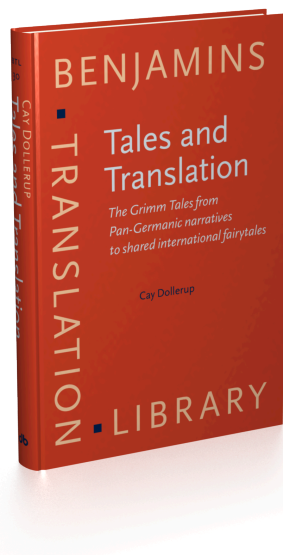
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[Benjamins Translation Library, 30] 1999. xiv, 384 pp.

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## INTRODUCTION

Translation Studies is sometimes characterised as interdisciplinary. This book studies translation as an important factor in intercultural relations and it draws on history, on folklore, on comparative literature and on other fields of study. Accordingly, it will, I hope, appeal to readers interested in our shared international cultural heritage, including scholars from disciplines such as comparative literature, cultural studies, folklore, and national literatures. It considers individual as well as communal and collective efforts to preserve that legacy.

The book focuses primarily on the *Children and household tales* (henceforth *Tales*) collected at the beginning of the nineteenth century by the brothers Grimm in Westphalia, Germany. They command interest because, combined with the *Fairytales* of the Danish writer Hans Christian Andersen, they came to form the core of a new literary genre: the international fairy tale.

It is my thesis that translation was of central importance to this process: translation involves a certain reorientation of texts, and this process of reorientation seems to be particularly obvious in translations of literature, including tales. The Danes were the first to translate the German *Tales*. This is attributable to the close ties between the brothers Grimm and prominent personalities in Danish intellectual life at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Danish translations of the *Tales* throughout the subsequent nearly two hundred years reflect many changes in the Danish receptor culture, in Danish language, history, and national attitudes. The relations of the brothers Grimm with Denmark were not unidirectional, but dialectic, for the influence extended in both directions. Danish encouragement, Danish work in linguistics, and the brothers' knowledge of Norse mythology as mediated from Denmark, played important roles in their work, especially, of course, in linguistics and in their translations of Danish ballads and Norse poetry. Danish linguistics had a direct bearing on their views concerning the origin of tales, including their own. Conversely, the brothers' activities inspired a Dane to undertake the earliest systematic folklore collecting in the world, and the early translations of the German tales into Danish ultimately inspired Hans Christian Andersen to write his fairytales.

At a higher level, it is a tenet of this study as well as of most scholarly endeavour that events do not happen at random: ultimately a systematic approach will yield insights and provide us with at least tentative hypotheses about cause and effect. Many of the so-called problems associated with the Grimm *Tales* are not incomprehensible, once they are put in context. Furthermore, at a higher level, the history of the Grimm *Tales*, in German, in Danish, and in international cultural contexts, illustrates some aspects of translation as cross-cultural communication. Moving from the textual level to questions of publication, the role of translators, and societal forces influencing translation, the present study is the most comprehensive study of translations of one type ever in the context of translation scholarship. It is therefore no surprise that it both supports and weakens some points of current trends in Translation Studies and Theory. This probing is carried out indirectly by a presentation of the facts throughout the book and, since this will be obvious to translation scholars, I have deliberately avoided long discursive deviations, in order not to blur the picture.

Although folkloristic narration has some similarities with translational activity and therefore offers interesting and novel insights into translation, notably, of course, of tales and other children's literature, this book is not a study of folklore. Nor is it an exhaustive discussion of the brothers Grimm in the German context, nor a sweeping reassessment of their contribution to literature and scholarship. The book focuses on the brothers' work on their tales at an intersection between folklore, linguistics and translation, especially in terms of 'reorientations' of tales and their subsequent careers or lives in foreign climes. In this respect, there is a clear connection between the tales Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm took down mostly in homely surroundings in Westphalia, and the tales' impact in present-day international co-prints. In itself it is a topic of considerable complexity. In addition, the distance in history renders many facts that were originally obvious, opaque and hard to understand in today's world. I have therefore chosen to start from scratch and take little for granted. This means that jaded Grimm scholars may find little new in the first three pages, except the accent. This decision is also prompted by the fact that there are many erroneous beliefs about the brothers Grimm: if I am to tell my tale smoothly, its basis must be sound and unambiguous.

The study opens with a discussion of the brothers Grimm and their background. Their relations to Denmark are placed in a historical and cultural context. This leads to a description of 'ideal tales', the brothers' methods of recording, and their assumptions about tales in order to be able to see if their intentions were realised in Danish translations.

Danish translations of the Grimm stories are then identified by means of the Danish national bibliography, catalogues, and personal research. This registration is used to illustrate the broad impact of the translations of the Grimm stories, and, above all, to provide evidence for the subsequent discussion: readers can readily check my information.

We then move on to an in-depth analysis of the way the tales were introduced in Danish, their impact, the factors affecting their form (including orthographical changes), the promotion of the stories by translators and publishers, the impact and longevity of the tales, and related questions. There is an analysis of the way translators have dealt with the tales and especially those layers in the tales which are transformed or retained in translations. This leads to a scrutiny of the factors in the tales that make for 'popularity' and for an identification of the tales central to the Danish Grimm Canon. Attention then focuses on the introduction and impact of illustrations, today in the form of international coprints which are now the most important carriers of the Grimm tales, as well as of Hans Christian Andersen's *Fairytales*: it was because Andersen and Grimm were translated, first into each other's languages and subsequently into other European languages, that readers decided that their stories were the same type of literature. Translators responded by offering more of the same kind and the fusion of the German and the Danish genres created and consolidated a new literary genre: the international fairy-tale, which, today, exists in an international, rather than any national, culture. It has won global acclaim and its central stories are instantly recognised by readers. It was disseminated and formed in translation, and to this day, Andersen and Grimm are, respectively, the most translated Danish and German writers, ranking second only to Shakespeare. This genre sprang from a close mutual relationship between Denmark and

Germany in terms of cultural present and linguistic past. For the last feature, I use the old-fashioned word ‘Pan-Germanic’ to stress that the relationship between Germany and Denmark was previously another than it is today when Germany is powerful and Denmark insignificant.

Translation having been central to the creation of the fairytale genre, the study ends with a discussion of the implications for Translation Studies.

I am *describing* a state of affairs which I find intriguing, fascinating, and sometimes alien to my own way of thinking. I do not intend to condemn, or point a finger at scholars, at librarians who are the educated curators of the bibliographical heritage, and at publishers, translators, and editors who pass on tales which have little to do with the stories the Grimms penned. In the present study, I have not the slightest intention of rapping others over the knuckles for misprints, mistakes, or other errors: it is only in exceptional cases, where misapprehensions may be carried on or where there is conflicting evidence, that I cite sources.

Little prior work has been directly useful to me. My references are scarce, but duly acknowledged in the footnotes. In a text heavily burdened by internal reference to the webs of tales woven by Wilhelm Grimm (and me), excursive footnotes would not be conducive to fluent reading. I have used, with caution, the fine studies on the Grimm heritage by Ludwig Denecke, Gunild Ginschel, Heinz Rölleke and others, but wish to stress that this is an independent study, which discusses the brothers’ relationship with Denmark, and the Danish translations of their tales, both topics being pertinent to Translation Studies.

Turning to Translation Studies as such, a field in which I have been active for more than a quarter of century, I can see that the approach I applied from the beginning of my research career has now crystallised and defined itself as a specific branch, Descriptive Translation Studies. Since my work on this book was started (around 1980) before this branch was really established, it will be readily understood that I owe no great debt to it. I am not in agreement on all points, but, on the other hand, it is obvious that this is the branch to which I relate most easily, for which reason most references are to Descriptive Translation Studies, notably as expounded by Gideon Toury in 1995.

In this book I shall not attempt to gather up all loose ends, but shall rather cut them short by a reference, or even, in some instances, by qualified guesses: there will inevitably be areas one fails to cover in any study. Given the need to keep track of an enormous amount of minutiae, I have often taken recourse to a brief repetition instead of cross-references (which are also used). It has proved impossible to be consistent everywhere. I offer no apology for this. For those inclined to cavil, the present book will, I am sure, provide a happy hunting ground. Uniformity would indeed be a bore, but, in more cases than one, inconsistencies are due to the fact that consistency would lead to ambiguity.

I dedicate this book to my children, Karen and Peter, who, many years ago, received Carl Ewald’s *Complete Grimm* for Christmas and consequently craved for and therefore listened attentively to my readings and retellings of all the Grimm *Tales*. Their pertinent,

unscholarly, and untutored response (re)opened my eyes to the marvels the Grimm *Tales* unfold to children all over the world.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are numerous people to whom I must extend my thanks, and I cannot possibly list everybody. My greatest thanks go to Iven Reventlow and Carsten Rosenberg Hansen, with whom I have been in close scholarly communion for more than a quarter of a century; the concept of the 'ideal tale' sprang from that cooperation in 1981-1982. I am indebted to the late Bengt Holbek for fruitful discussions over a ten-year period, to Marion Fewell, Henrik Gottlieb, Gisela Jensen, and Viggo Hjørnager Pedersen for encouragement and comment, and, in particular to Jennifer Draskau, Silvana Orel, and Gideon Toury for incisive, constructive, and, at the same time friendly criticism.

My thanks extend to the staff of the Royal Library of Copenhagen for procuring the books I needed and for friendly assistance. I am grateful to the publishing houses that have tendered information on the marketing of the Grimm *Tales*, and to everybody else who has helped me in my enquiries. I (and, I am sure, my readers) are grateful to the Department of English, University of Copenhagen, for financial backing for proof-reading.

The illustrations have been made in close cooperation with Lars Beierholm. Most pictures have been photographed by Messrs Mann Nielsen of the Arnamagnæan Institute, University of Copenhagen. Most portraits were readily procured by Mr John M. Christensen of 'Billedsamlingen' at the Royal Library, Copenhagen, and were photographed at the Royal Library.

The pictures have been chosen for exemplification and the quality in the reproduction does not do justice to the craftsmanship that went into them. I hope this will be understood by all readers. In particular I wish to thank the eminent Danish illustrator, Svend Otto S. and his heir, Kristin Wiborg, for their generous permission to reproduce some of his grand illustrations.

## ABBREVIATIONS AND SPECIAL TERMS

Anon.	= Anonymous
Anthology	= a collection comprising Grimm tales <i>and</i> material from other sources
bd	= bound, hardbound, leatherbound
BLC	= <i>British Library Catalogue</i>
Brdr.	= Brødrene, i.e. the brothers Grimm
cf.	= compare; information from
cm	= centimetre. 1 cm = 0.4 inch
Collection	= a collection (claiming to) contain only Grimm tales
<i>Complete Edition</i>	= only used for the <i>Grosse Ausgabe</i> which Wilhelm Grimm saw to the press (1812/1815, 1819, 1837, 1840, 1843, 1850, 1857).
<i>Complete Grimm</i>	= only used for translations into other languages which are uncritical (volume 1 or 2 or both (in Denmark: 'Lindencrone', Daugaard, Carl Ewald, and Villy Sørensen))
ctd	= continued
DB	= <i>Dansk Bogfortegnelse</i> or <i>Biblioteca Danica</i> . The Danish national bibliography
Dkr	= Danish kroner (1 krone = 100 øre). Also sometimes abbreviated DKK
Ed/ed	= editor, edition
<i>Edition</i>	= spelled with a capital 'E' it always refers to authorial German Editions.

fn.	= footnote
GV	= <i>Gesamtverzeichnis</i> . The German national bibliography
ISBN	= International Standard Book Number. [Denmark has '87'].
KHM	= <i>Kinder- und Hausmärchen</i> . In order to avoid complete chaos, scholars refer to specific Grimm tales by the numbers they were given by Wilhelm Grimm in the <i>Complete Edition</i> of 1857, the seventh and last one he saw to the press. There is, however, some disagreement about the way in which to tackle tales that were omitted or changed radically between 1812 and 1857. I follow Rölleke (rpt 1857).
kilometre	= 0.62 mile
NUC	= <i>National Union Catalog</i>
orig.	= originally
p.	= page (used in cross reference and for clarity)
pb	= paperbound, clothbound
pp	= pages
'Preface'	= One of the forewords in the German <i>Complete Editions</i> . All <i>Editions</i> after 1819 reprinted the 'Prefaces' of previous <i>Editions</i> : this makes for confusion.
q.v.	= for further details, see
recto	= right hand page
rev.	= revised
RL	= the institution and staff at the Royal Library, Copenhagen
RLC	= the Catalogues at the Royal Library, Copenhagen
rpt	= reprint, reprinted
ULC	= the catalogues at the (now defunct) University Library, Copenhagen
verso	= left hand page
vol.	= volume
x	= in measurements: 'by'

## QUOTATIONS

Many texts quoted in this study are in German or Danish. In order to make for a smooth reading, I give an English translation and sometimes cite more of the 'original text' in the source language for the benefit of multilingual readers. I dispense with the German originals in the appendix for reasons of space. Idiomatic English usage gets the better of a closer but awkward translation.

Quotations from the writings of Jacob Grimm are particularly difficult, since he used an orthography of his own. Following Weishaupt's lead (p. 237), I render his words the way they are given in the source quoted.

English and American usage on this point is inconsistent. In the present work I have chosen to do as follows: The punctuation inside quotation marks is normally that of the original text. Punctuation outside the quotation marks is mine. Parentheses which are added to section are punctuated outside the 'end/unquote'.

... indicates a cut.

[...] is a clarification inserted by me.

References to pages are usually without a [p.] except when a misunderstanding might arise.

.../... = new line or paragraph. ...//... = new page

I have tried to use "... " for originals and '...' for translations, but the overriding concern being with clarity, this usage is not entirely consistent.

All original emphases, no matter whether spaced, in bold, or italics, are uniformly rendered in italics. Italic type which I have inserted for emphasis is duly noted.



*'The house in the forest' (illustration: Svend Otto S., 1970)*