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Hans Christian Andersen in China

Christoph Harbsmeier

Some writers somehow seem to manage to change the very essence of their reader's lives. The Taoist writer, mystic, and philosopher Zhuangzi(庄子) was and will long remain such a writer, and Hans Christian Andersen (HCA) is of the same sort. The two men have much in common anyway: the poetic celebration of multifarious subjectivities. Zhuangzi's butterfly, the one which a someone thought he was, after which he was wondering whether it was he who had dreamt he was a butterfly or whether it was a butterfly who had dreamt she was he, that butterfly, I say, could easily flutter into HCA's fairy tales—but it would risk to have to become less pretentiously intellectual and analytic of his own condition, except in a humorous, light-hearted mode which in this instance is not that of Zhuangzi. The discourse of the cicadas in Zhuangzi's "Chapter One: On Free Roaming", as they indulgently assert the universality of their paltry perspective, on the other hand, is straight from HCA: or rather—of course—the other way round. Or indeed: does it matter which way around it is? One does not care. There is a cross-civilisational congruence here. A cross-civilisational *Wahlverwandschaft*. There is an intimate harmony of poetic and philosophical sensibilities here between Zhuangzi and HCA. HCA struck a Chinese cord. He continues to strike a Chinese cord. In fact it will turn out that he even struck a traditional Chinese cord when he thought that he invented the Emperor's invisible clothes. But we need to see if we ever get to the end of this lecture to consider the details of that case. (And in order to insure that we get there, I shall not speak of the obviously tempting comparison between HCA and Pu Songling and his *Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio*. For in Pu Songling (蒲松龄) and his *Liaozhai* (《聊斋志异》) there is also this fascinating phenomenon that the Chinese fabulist feels compelled to add a moral after most tales, a moral which is as alien to the spirit of the tale itself as the moralistic interpretations perpetrated on the occasion of HCA's tales.)

Like Zhuangzi, HCA needs to be HEARD. Even as you read him, you must hear the ironies, the delicious ambiguities, the sarcasm: the text must be brought to life through lively intonation. HCA was—and always remained—something of an actor. He always recited his fairy tales to audiences large and small, and he was never uninterested in audience response, as his diaries document so abundantly, almost embarrassingly. HCA's *Tales* are like so many theatre scripts: they live in their performance. So much so, that even in silent reading one must create this drama in one's head in order to begin to do justice—or at least proper injustice! —to the text. In a way, the text is no more than a libretto: it lives through the music of proper oral intonation only. Oral interpretation must

bring out the importance of the unsaid, and the subtle sarcasms, ironies, and the whimsy humorous complexities in what is being said.

The textuality of these texts is oral: *nu skal du høre*, it says, "Now you shall hear," never "Now thou shalt read." If ever there was poetry in prose, HCA's tales are it. And as we shall see, there is much philosophy to boot.

No wonder many translators try so desperately to convey something of that existential delight and enrichment which HCA has given them in their mother tongue. Everyone knows that there is good reason that HCA dropped the addition "told for children" from the title of his fairy tales. These tales are in fact often inappropriate for children (because there is so much adult reflection in them that is far beyond them), and they are equally inappropriate for adults (because they must be read (listened to) in the spirit of poetic jejune, tender open-heartedness of open-minded childhood).

And there we have it: If you do not become like children, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven, the fairyland of the observant empathetic poetic hypersensibility that is more than mere poetic fantasy. HCA hypersensitises those who have ears to hear, hypersensitises one to the poetry of the human experience. (And one might add that Lucian, in the second century AD, was interested not only in the poetry of human existence, but in the poetics of it. This, I think, is where HCA drew the line. (But that is an important separate story.))

THE HCA CRAZE: THE 200TH BIRTHDAY OF HCA

Hans Christian Andersen occupies a unique place in the hearts of the Chinese, not only in their literary minds, their *wen xin*: there is a veritable HCA craze in China, that is, an *Antusheng re* (安徒生热). This became particularly virulent on the occasion of his 200th birthday last year.

Among the HCA enthusiasts, it is not uninteresting to note the 12th General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party, Hu Yaobang (胡耀邦) who is reported to have said: "You must read HCA, because there is philosophy in HCA. Every time I run into trouble in political movements or when I feel I am unjustly treated, the means by which I get through things is because I've read HCA... Through the influence of HCA's fairy tales, in many things, when I can take them easy, I take them easy." This was very strong stuff, in Hu Yaobang's life and times.

In modern China, HCA is not just a famous author or a classic, it is simply a literary must (必读经典), as literary critics agree. A classic that forms people's lives before they are deformed and distorted by ideology.

The new thing after the Cultural Revolution was that quite apart from the children, many adults picked up their old childhood volumes of HCA. Hu Yaobang was one of these.

From a purely commercial point of view, it is not an exaggeration to say that HCA's fairy tales started off a major book industry.

There is even an experimental kindergarten in Peking in which all education is based on HCA.

HCA became so much of a household word that even Chinese character input systems automatically write the correct characters as long as one types the Pinyin spelling An Tusheng. (The mythical Greek fabulist Aesop (伊索) does not qualify, I am afraid, for the time being, although Aesop continues to be popular alongside HCA, owing to his clear moralistic final lines. Over one hundred books under his name are on sale at the Commercial Press. None of them translated from the Greek and the Latin of the original, as far as I know.)

HCA figures on many Chinese stamps, and I know exactly how proud he would feel about this, because I have myself always kept a copy of the one stamp on which I am myself barely visible, but clearly present. HCA remained intensely sensitive about his public effect even after he had become almost embarrassingly famous.

It has been claimed by a specialist in comparative literature, Che Jinshan (车槿山:北京大学比较文学与比较文化研究所教授), that HCA's fairy tales are the living proof that profound, deep-level cross-cultural exchange is indeed possible.

For what is transported here in HCA is more than prudential wisdom and moral rectitude. It is a new poetic and philosophical sensibility, a new spiritual horizon that is opened up for children, but especially for adults who are still able "to become like children" and who still have ears for the philosophical poetry of HCA.

Peking University professor and literary critic Zhang Yiwu(张颐武:20 世纪 60 年代出生于北京,现为北京大学中文系教授、博士生导师,知名文学评论家) takes a less conventional perspective, and puts his finger on it, the crux: "HCA is hypersensitive to life. He helps us to discover that in fact life contains so many elusive subtle and fragile things." Hypersensitive to life-that was the expression one needed.

Professor Zhang shrinks back from HCA's autobiographic tragic poetic recognition: the recognition that what is so elusive and fragile in life is the very basis of one's all-

important emotional and philosophical orientation in that life.

The famous literary critic Zhou Siyuan (周思源:浙江杭州市人,现任北京语言大学汉语学院教授、博士生导师,中国红楼梦学会常务理事,《红楼梦学刊》编委,中国中外传记文学研究会理事) said: "In HCA's works there is a feeling for the tragedy of life, and of sympathy with humankind, his works are permeated by a kind of spirit of humanism."

"HCA opened up for China an education in loving sensibility for people and things" (《安徒生:为中国人开启"爱的教育"》) runs a headline in newspaper campaign on the web on the occasion of his 200th birthday. "Using fairy tales", it is said, "he gave human warmth to the human condition."

HCA does not just entertain or titillate, he informs and transforms lives. As the only foreigner, he has entered the very core of what it is to feel Chinese: he has entered the very process of acculturation in China, if we are to believe the rhetoric of 200th-anniversary celebrations.

The most distinguished Chinese specialists in comparative literature Che Jinshan concurs: HCA "is not just a great literary artist, but in fact there has never been a foreign writer who like him seamlessly entered the culture of the Chinese language so as to have a profound impact on the very formation of the spiritual makeup of the Chinese nation."

By comparison, Shakespeare pales into *Feinschmecker* insignificance, and even Norway's Yibusheng (Ibsen) scratches no more than the surface of urban high-brow theatre-going or pro-Western intellectual Chinese culture.

That is why in China we find poetry like this poem in prose by Zhang Xiaofeng(张晓风), which could never be parallelled in Denmark for its undiluted and untrammelled, boundless enthusiasm:

如果有人5岁了,还没有倾听过安徒生,那么他的童年少了一段温馨;
如果有人15岁了,还没有阅读过安徒生,那么他的少年少了一道银灿;
如果有人25岁了,还没有细味过安徒生,那么他的青年少了一片辉碧;
如果有人35岁了,还没有了解过安徒生,那么他的壮年少了一种丰饶;
如果有人45岁了,还没有思索过安徒生,那么他的中年少了一点沉郁;
如果有人55岁了,还没有复习过安徒生,那么他的晚年少了一份悠远。

If at 5 one still has not heard Antusheng, then in one's childhood one has missed out on some warmth;

If at 15 one still has not read Antusheng, then in one's youth one has missed out on some brilliance;

If at 25 one still has not found the subtle taste for Antusheng, then in early adulthood one has missed out on something refreshingly limpid green;

If at 35 one still has not understood Antusheng, then in one's adulthood one has missed out on something profoundly enriching;

If at 45 one still has not thought through Antusheng, then in one's middle years one has been missed out on something gloomy;

If at 55 one has not rehearsed one's Antusheng, then in one's later years has missed out on a wider perspective.

The poetry of the imaginary tale can be more philosophically and spiritually uplifting

than mere philosophic prose. Yuan Yin (苑茵), wife of the greatest of China's HCA translators, whom I fondly remember both in their splendid traditional quad in central Peking (四合院), and later in their beautiful flat, puts her finger on a significant basic human point: "In this society which is so full of commercialism, people need a return to humaneness and to moral values, and HCA contributes this purification of the mind and this raising to a higher level, this '升华'." She could have said this "spiritual and aesthetic horizon" (境界), for this is how HCA enters into Chinese lives: he broadens the spiritual horizon (for which he sorely lacked the Chinese word *jingjie* (境界). His tales have this peculiar "aesthetic and semantic depth" (意境), for which the ancient Greeks had the helpless word *hupsos* (height, higher literary dimension, or the "sublime"). There is no word for *shenyun* in any European a know of.

HCA was so integrated into Chinese children's literature that many children never noticed that he was other than Chinese. As the *Dream of the Red Chamber* or to use the translation by my revered teacher David Hawkes *Story of the Stone* specialist Zhou Siyuan puts it: "People may not know that he is Danish, or where Denmark is, but they are thoroughly familiar with his tales."

Indeed, during the thirties he was standard fare in the English curriculum. As the comparative literature specialist Yue Daiyun (乐黛云:1931 年 1 月生于贵州,北京大学现代文学和比较文学教授、博士生导师) reports: "the Little Girl with the Matches" lights matches of hope: And it is through this wonderful HCA tale that she came to love ENGLISH. That is quite a fairy tale.

HCA AS PHILOSOPHER

A Danish newspaper declared Ye Junjian's translation of HCA the best in the world because the translator understood that HCA was a poet, a democratist, a philosopher. And what La Fontaine claims for his hero Aesop in his *Life of Aesop the Phrygian* is so true, so true for HCA: "Quant à Ésope il me semble qu'on le devait mettre au nombre des sages dont la Grèce s'est vantée, lui qui enseignait la véritable sagesse, et qui l'enseignait avec bien plus d'art que ceux qui en donnent des définitions et des règles." ("It seems to me that Aesop should be counted among the sages of which Greece was speaking so proudly, Aesop who taught veritable wisdom and who taught with much more skill than those who give definitions and rules.")

There is poetic spirituality in abundance in HCA, but HCA adds to this ethereal generic poetic philosophy, something that was quite alien to La Fontaine as well as to Phaedrus and Aesop: that all-important realist touch, that fascination even for technology, modernity and progress.

Dare I add, that when things got really serious, philosophically I mean, not only Jesus was fond of parables at crucial points, but also the dramatizing philosopher Plato made Socrates himself wax narrative and poetic, and, remarkably, while he banned Homer from his ideal republic, La Fontaine recounts over-enthusiastically that Plato was full of praise

for Aesop, and he continues selfishly: "la vérité a toujours parlé par paraboles". ("The truth has always spoken in parables.") —So, there we are.

The fact is, in any case, that according to Plato's — *Phaidon* 60a Socrates himself does the effort to put Aesop's tales into verse...

That essential link between poetic imaginary tales and philosophy is an ancient one. La Fontaine goes on to explain: "Il (Plato) souhaite que les enfants sucent ces fables avec le lait; il recommande aux nourrices de les leur apprendre: car on ne saurait s'accoutumer de trop bonne heure à la sagesse et à la vertu." ("Plato wants the children to suck these fables in with their mother's milk, and he recommends wet-nurses to teach them to their little ones: for it is never to early to get used to wisdom and virtue."(ed. Livres de Poche p. 40))As a tool of moral education, Aesop certainly remains popular in China, and in his case very little filtering had to be done in the process of translating Aesop directly or indirectly from Attic Greek. Now HIS wisdom DOES seem to go seamlessly into Chinese culture.

Aesop's *Fables* express a kind of philosophy that travels more easily across generations, across languages and even across civilisations than HCA's.

THE TRANSFORMATION OF HCA INTO ANTUSHENG

Introduced and enthusiastically promoted to the Chinese public by Lu Xun's learned brother Zhou Zuoren (周作人) from 1908 onwards, HCA was decisively promoted by towering literary figures such as Zheng Zhenduo (郑振铎) and Zhao Jingshen (赵景深) as well as the great scholar Liu Bannong (刘半农).

Ye Junjian (叶君健), my long-time friend, was the man who did more than anyone else to introduce HCA to the Chinese people. His complete translation of *HCA's Fairy Tales* continues to dominate the market even today. He was a highly communicative writer, and having joined Lao She in England to study English literature in Cambridge, he spent some considerable time in Denmark, on the very mellow island of Funen (福恩岛，安徒生的故乡). That was HCA's home, and indeed mine for many happy years. In fact I looked up the family with whom Ye Junjian stayed, who even in the seventies had most fond memories of the man. It is often said that he was the first to translate HCA directly from Danish, but it has to be emphasised that in doing so he was making extensive use of a very pleasant Danish informant for his task.

And as we have seen, according to the Chinese Internet, Danish paper declared Ye Junjian's Chinese translation "the best in the world because the translator understood that HCA was a philosopher, a poet, and a democratist."

In 1995, the diplomat scholar and specialist in Nordic mythology Lin Hua (林桦) published a careful and passionately-felt new version of the fairy tales, after a seven-year diplomatic stint in Denmark, to be followed by a more complete translation in 2006. Whereas Ye Junjian still had a predominantly moralistic vision of HCA, he wanted the tales to be instructive and delectable, Lin Hua put great weight on an

aspect of HCA's work which might seem inconsistent with fairy tales but which is essential to his success: the autobiographic element. He has even gone so far as to move "The Ugly Duckling" to the beginning of the collection to draw attention to this fact that HCA expresses HIMSELF, the tragedies and farces in his OWN life, through the medium of his tales.

Lin Hua fully understands how HCA's tales are written with his life's blood when he quotes HCA's famous little speech to a young author, towards the end of his life: "I have paid a heavy price for these tales of mine. ... For the sake of the tales I have disregarded my own happiness."

In his famous doctoral thesis of 1907, the literary critic Hans Brix emphasised the importance of identifying the autobiographic episodes which occasioned many tales, by reference to the diaries. And Bo Grønbech, in his wonderfully philosophical and readable doctoral thesis on HCA defended in May 1945, which it has been a great pleasure to re-sample for this paper, emphasised the underlying psychodynamics in the composition of HCA's tales as well as the irony and the (good) humour that pervade these tales.

In 2006 another version was translated from English, jointly by the professional translator and writer of children's books Ren Rongrong and Shi Qin'e.

The Commercial Press in Hong Kong offers well over one hundred editions of various kinds of the works of HCA. (For a detailed bibliographic survey of the reception of HCA in China see Christoph Harbsmeier, "H. C. Andersen in China," in *Anderseniana* 1978/9, pp. 84—111.)

SHAKESPEARE GOES TO PARIS AND HCA GOES TO PEKING: THE VAGARIES, TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS OF TRANSLATION

But here comes the crux: how seamlessly CAN and DOES HCA actually enter China as Antusheng. Would HCA recognise Antusheng at all? Was HCA really an author who transcends differences between states, as the 200th birthday rhetoric has it: "an author without any country's characteristics."

Some time ago Barbara Cassin has edited her wonderful *Dictionnaire des intraduisibles*. This focusses on the immense wealth of important conceptualisations which are untranslatable from one European language to another. Those untranslatables between widely different languages like Danish and Chinese are surely even greater in number than within the European context that Cassin considers. And when translation is not from the original but from one translation to a third language, then the meaning-loss in the transfer is inevitably going to be even more significant. This needs to be explored.

Translation is inscribing something alien into a new cultural context. Translating involves a double filtering: what one cannot conveniently express is filtered out, and what the author should not have said or even intended , for moral or aesthetic reasons, is filtered out. Shakespeare's ubiquitous sexual double-entendres have traditionally been cut out in France until modern times, for both reasons at the same time. What the author "surely"

would have thought and should have said is even filtered **in**. What the author does not openly share of one's own cultural presuppositions is (often surreptitiously) "filtered into" the translation.

In a multi-cultural environment, sensitive souls take on different personalities in different languages. I remember that 20 years ago, I started a lecture in Paris using English, but by what I would call characteristic popular French demand I was made to switch to French: I ended up delivering a much simplified lecture, but in particular, a very French lecture, not the English one. Gestures **as well as** content was changed radically. I am not simply myself in French or in Chinese. Personas as well as works of literature are profoundly transformed when moved into different languages.

My wife proposed several times to divorce, as it were (long before we even got married!), because she could not stand the Oxonian English version of myself. She has never come back to the proposal for 35 years ever since I have learnt to speak Danish to her. But, as time went on, imperceptibly, I think I have become more and more myself **in Danish**. Also in literature, similar cultural osmoses occur, and I believe that more and more of HCA is gradually filtering into Antusheng.

A. Shakespeare's "dirty mind"

Consider in particular, by way of comparison, Shakespeare in Chinese, whose "all the world's a stage," HCA developed and generalised with such consummate, almost maniacal, poetic inventiveness. For Shakespeare only thought of the human stage, whereas for HCA all creatures and all things, no matter small and insignificant, become actors in that cosmic farce of conflicting and contrasting subjectivities of which human life is only a small part. There is, I feel, a "direct line" from Shakespeare to HCA in more ways than one. Now, Eric Partridge's 223 small pages entitled *Shakespeare's Bawdy* (London: Routledge, Kegan and Paul, 1968) pointed out in a highly readable manner that Shakespeare's plays were replete with covert obscenities **in addition to the wonderfully overt ones**. Frankie Rubinstein, *A Dictionary of Shakespeare's Sexual Puns and Their Significance* (London: MacMillan Press, 1989) has elaborated on Shakespeare's foul language and his pervasively dirty mind on 372 tightly printed pages, and Gordon Williams, *A Dictionary of Sexual in Shakespeare and Stuart Literature* (London: Athlone Press, 1994) provides the embedding context for Shakespeare's dirty mind in three volumes of altogether 1616 pages.

There is no question that Voltaire was right when he found Shakespeare's plays indecent and—to use William Clinton's phrase—"inappropriate" for the French scene. French translations of Shakespeare for the stage had to be rewritings and expurgated adaptations, and they remained so until the early twentieth century: There is no room, in "decent" tragedy, for vulgar obscenities. But Shakespeare was a genius, of course, but since he had desperately bad taste and a very dirty mind indeed he could never compete with a Racine or a Corneille on the classical Paris theatre scene.

When one reports this story of Shakespeare going to Paris to Chinese Shakespeare-lovers, one meets with disdainful disbelief: the greatest of poets CANNOT have had a

distinctly dirty mind. This would be culturally ungrammatical. Chinese translations of the bard are apparently sufficiently expurgated to make him inoffensive to the Chinese public. And in any case: How COULD the world's greatest artist have had a dirty mind? Shakespeare is not just translated but transposed into an innocent key.

Translation often also involves yet another, third effect: adding what the author should have said if he had been in his right mind or if he had tried to be logical and transparent. This is not the occasion for me to tell the tale of how Monsieur Daci saved Hamlet from death in his play, and how he was hugely successful in rewriting Shakespeare's plays to reduce them to the dramatic logic and format of the classical French theatre. (This story is beautifully told in John Pemble, *Shakespeare Goes to Paris: How the Bard Conquered Frances*, London: Hambledon and London, 2005.) What becomes painfully obvious in Daci, I suggest, is very much inherent in cross-cultural translation in general. At various levels, translation obviously must remain adaptation, and Mao Zedong, acutely aware of the problems here involved, argued in vain for uncompromising hard literacy in translation when he personally supported the great Chinese poet Lu Xun's slogan "宁信而不顺", which I take the liberty to translate freely as "be faithful to the original even at the cost of awkwardness."

"The Little Mermaid" comes to be summarised as "telling men to sacrifice everything, selflessly, for love", or so it was announced on the radio on the occasion of his birthday! And from "The Ugly Duckling" they must learn, like the ugly duckling, not to fear the hardships and the adversitities of life.

Here, Antusheng is received and then conceived as a moralist, his tales are taken as wonderful poetic vehicles for a supremely banal moral messages.

In point of fact, very few of HCA's tales simply serve to convey a moral. Where an apparent moral is expressed, there often is that crucial and elusive humorous touch of IRONY that pervades his work, and which in Danish is given the elusive name *lune*. You never QUITE know where you have HCA.

B. HCA'S Humour and Irony

Humoren var egentlig saltet i mine eventyr.

"When all is said and done, it is the humour that was the real salt in my fairy tales," H. C. Andersen wrote in his diary June 4, 1875. Actually, this is how it goes, in its context: "Visit at the sculpturer Saaby whom I told on the spot, very clearly, that I was dissatisfied with his statue of me, that neither he nor any of the other sculpturers understood me, *at de ikke havde set mig laese*, that I did not suffer anyone behind my back at that stage, that I did not have children on my back, on my lap, or in my arms, that my tales were as much for adults as for children, that these kids only understood the *staffage*, and that it was first as adults that they understood the whole thing. That the naïve things were only a part of my tales, and that humour was ultimately the salt in them." ("Smukt varmt Sommerveir. Tog 111/2 en Vogn, kjørte ud af Vesterport og ind af Øster. Solen brændte, jeg blev saa søvnig paa Farimagsveien at jeg faldt isøvn. — Besøg hjemme af Billedhuggeren Saaby, som jeg denne Gang sagde klart og tydeligt at jeg var utilfreds med

hans Statue af mig, at hverken han eller nogen [af] Billedhuggerne kjendte mig, havde ikke seet mig løse, at jeg ingen taalte da bag ved mig og ikke havde Børn paa Ryggen, paa Skjødet eller i Skrøvet; at mine Eventyr vare ligesaa meget for de Ældre som for Børnene, disse forstode kun Stafagen og som modne Folk saae og fornam de først det Hele. At det Naive var kun een Deel af mine Eventyr, at Humoret var egentligt Saltet i dem...")

There are certain kinds of humour which, like French Bordeaux red wine, are notorious for not really travelling very well: Bordeaux sells well everywhere but is manifestly at its best before it has gone to New Zealand. HCA's text comes with a way of reading it, a *dufa* (读法), and it is the subtle play of that *dufa* which cannot come across in translation—and is indeed only subtly adumbrated in the printed text, unsubtly black and white, dead on the page. Quite unlike what HCA tried to bring out, when he read out his tales, deliberately singing a song that he hoped his little children listeners would come to see the point of in much, much later years. After they had lost their splendid innocence of expectation.

But there is more. Local genre-expectations play an important part: folk-tales must not be suffused with self-humour, sarcasm, and irony. Subtle double-bottomed (*underfundig*, 深妙, 奥妙) humorous and ironic orality is of the very essence in HCA's style, and very little of all that can ever come across in translations into English, let alone into Chinese.

I know it is irritating to be told that things are beyond one. But here is an example that is not in fact beyond the reach of those of us who lack the sense for that Funen variety of Danish which is so different from the dominant Copenhagen variety:

On New Year's Eve 1835 HCA wrote to a lady friend Henriette Hanck in the little town of Odense: "I am now beginning to write children's tales, for, you see, I must go and get coming generations on my side." ("Nu begynder jeg paa nogle 'Børneeventyr', jeg vil se at vinde de kommende slaegter maa De vide.") He was, of course, joking, but he succeeded to an astonishing degree—and extent.

HCA wrote fairy tales, and he added a curiously redundant phrase "fortalt for boern" ("told for children") as if that was not self-evident, for fairy tales. (The message is for adults, but the story is told for children.) Here again, his addition has to be taken with a pinch of salt, for very many of his tales are not at all "told for children", quite unsuitable for children, manifestly. They are told for those who are willing to listen to them "like children" in the literary spirit of the New Testament, to enter this ethereal poetic universe where everything is alive and respected for a subjectivity all of its own, where nearly everything seems to acquire a complex subjectivity and psychology of its own. If you do not become like children, you will not enter this ethereal and very philosophical kingdom of Poetry.

HCA decided to drop the addition very soon after he put it in. HCA's addition "told for children" always had to be taken with a pinch of salt, like most other things in HCA's fairy tales, and indeed in life.

There is cold irony and sarcasm which we know from Voltaire and from the famous Chinese writer Lu Xun (鲁迅), and there is this kind of elusive, warm, self-distancing and

playful poetic self-irony which plays this crucial part in HCA. You never know where you have him, as an author expressing his opinion, much less as a moralist preaching any moral maxims. Like Plato, and like Zhuangzi at his best, HCA remains behind the stage in his fairy tales, and he never speaks in his own voice. What he appears to say always needs to be taken with that elusive pinch of salt. (Not a spoonful of salt: he is not ironic in the sense that he means the opposite of what he says.) This is part and parcel of HCA's pervasive humorous touch, *lune*, which is so manifest throughout to sensible souls who have had the good fortune of intimate familiarity with the mellow island of Funen, but which disappears already in all English versions of HCA that I have seen, how much more in Chinese translations from the English.

Styles of irony, no matter whether of the cold or the warm variety, vary remarkably from one country to the other. Norway, for example, has long been a kind of colony of Sweden and under the stong cultural influence particularly from Denmark, but attitudes towards irony continue to vary diametrically between Norway and Denmark. It is disconcertingly endemic in Denmark, and needs to be used with overexplicit care in Norway. Indeed it preferably needs to be signalled unambiguously if used at all. The mild humorous variety of persistant humorous irony in HCA, the *lune* of HCA's home, the mellow provincial island of Funen, is again something quite different from the self-distancing sharp-witted ironic sarcasm typical of the capital Copenhagen. All these styles of irony travel badly across language barriers and dialectal barriers, not to speak about the barriers that separate profoundly different civilisations. They have to do with the literary tonality in which sentences are to be taken, the way things are meant, rather than with the meanings of words and sentences. They are the subject matter of philosophical comparative rhetoric to which I have devoted much of my private life.

For HCA the fairy tale became a medium for the cultivation of reflexive philosophical and poetic hyper-sensibility which passed, most of the time, well above the heads of children, as truly good children's literature should do, something for which *Winnie the Pooh* will remain a living proof, and of which *Alice in Wonderland* has been studied in great detail by the great linguist and philosopher of language Y. R. Chao as an experiment exploring the limits of translatability. (See《阿丽思漫游奇境记》,赵元任译, Shanghai 1922, second edition 1923, many reprints)

"The Ugly Duckling" is the story of a swan who is out of context and therefore in trouble everywhere, particularly because he thinks he is only a duck. And the tale has a real subtly ironic punch-line when he recognises himself as a swan among swans: "Never mind that you are brought up in a duck-pond, as long as you are born from a swan's egg."

If there is a moral in HCA's tales, it was expressed by Lucian (ca. 120—ca. 180) (ed. Loeb, vol. 1, p. 114) in the phrase *kata to phusei kalon zēn* (to live by what is inherently beautiful) —NOT by wealth, power, success, gluttony of experience and every other kind. It is to live by the quiet inherent and exhilarating poetry in things all about you. And, curiously, when you do this, you are not quite OF THIS WORLD. HCA transports you, transports you to this ethereal realm of aesthetic as well as moral hypersensibility. Unlike Lucian, HCA does not talk about what he is doing, he DOES it. In Wittgenstein's

spirit he SHOWS and does not aim to EXPLAIN **away.**

In the second century AD the writer Lucian, in whose comic dramatic vision of the universe beds bear spoken witness against their incumbents, and where lamps comment on what they have shed light on, he asks leave of the reader and explains he must not be taken seriously, and that he will refuse to give a moral (***epimuthion***) to his tale, and then he goes on to give away the secret of what he is doing: "Just look and see in what way I'm like what is in the tale (*kath' ho ti tōi mutōi eoika*)!" (ed. Loeb, vol. 1 p. 58) Unlike Lucian, HCA perhaps rarely explicitly thinks this way. But he writes this way. Partly in the spirit of the great morally elusive writer, humorist, and philosopher Lucian who seemed to be able to get under the skin of everyone and everything, seeing things from every point of view without sticking to any point of view. On the other hand, there is much, much more poetic, romantic, as well as autobiographic *engagement* in HCA. What profoundly links Lucian and HCA is a kind of *raptus poeticus* in prose, and that same protestation that is always implicit in HCA: *ouk alogōs mainomai*, which I permit myself to translate as follows: "I may be raving, but not illogically."(Loeb, vol. 1, p. 104)

Life as a farce of conflicting subjectivities, conflicting subjectivities even of animals, plants, artefacts and lifeless things, is inspired by Shakespeare but more profoundly by Lucian. HCA tells this Freudian underlying tale so well that his audience naturally begins to construe their own lives poetically by "inscribing" their own personal subjective narrative into HCA's tales. Just as Zeus, in Lucian's divine dialogue *Zeus Ranting* begins by inscribing himself into a classical tragedy, in his desperation over the fact that he may not even turn out to be, ultimately more than a mere name.

In many devious ways, this underlying humorous and poetic philosophy increasingly come across in translation: more Antusheng translations are increasingly sensitive to—and even curious about—HCA.

What I am proposing is a specific little contribution to the study of the spirit of modern China. We need a detailed philosophically inspired investigation into the nature of the transformation of HCA into Antusheng, the sinicisation or sinification of HCA. Where are the conceptual resistances, the rhetorical resistances, the cultural resistances, the philosophical resistances, and the significant differences in sensibility, the culture clash of literary tastes...

In other words, what I think we should like to have is a cultural history of the basic dynamics in the Chinese cultural appropriation—and rejection! —of HCA.

The case of HCA is unique, because it is not just polite rhetoric but simply true that no other foreign writer has had anything like HCA's formative influence starting from pre-literary childhood, neither from the East nor from the West. The literary influence of someone like Selma Lagerlöf, Strindberg or Ibsen, the philosophical influence of someone like Kierkegaard, the artistic influence of Munch, the musical influence of Sibelius and Grieg: all these are significant Nordic factors in modern Chinese cultural life. But none of these Nordic artists enter the Chinese mind during this formative early-childhood stage where the very parameters of adult mentality are established. Even the Germanic fairy tales of the brothers Grimm fade into comparative insignificance by comparison, I am afraid. It

is at this fundamental level that HCA's transformation into Antusheng deserves careful detailed philological attention, not just in the context of the history of cultural relations between Scandinavia and China, but in the the much deeper context of the study of the ways of thinking and feeling in modern China.

One is tempted to tell the story of HCA's transformation into Antusheng in the style of one of his own fairy tales, or more precisely in the style of Lucian's humorous analytic dialogues. How people on the other side of the globe wax enthusiastic every time these poetically maniacal tales seem to come near to saying something that resonates **non-trivially** in their Chinese aesthetic and moral world. One would have come full circle and entered HCA's intellectual world properly. But this is for another lecture.

THE CHINESE (EMPEROR'S) NEW CLOTHES

What belongs here, at the end, is the discovery, which we all owe to my very old Buddhologist friend Eric Zürcher, namely that HCA's idea of invisible clothes proudly worn is in fact attested in China a very long time before HCA was born. I have always thought this idea was characteristically HCA's own, indeed rather typical of him, one of those translatable things eagerly taken over abroad. As the journalists Liu Jiang (刘江) and Liu Yang (刘洋) put it on the Xinhua News Agency web-page: "This idea has peeled away the cultural foreignness and has become a commonplace in daily speech."Well, it was in fact anticipated in China in the biography of the famous monk Kumārajīva who died around 400 AD, in the *Biographies of Eminent Monks* no. 2059 of the Taishō Tripitaka. Here is this story, in the original and in my tentative translation:

龟兹王为造金师子座。	The king of Qiuci built a golden-lion-seat for Kumārajīva,
以大秦锦褥铺之。	and he padded the seat with cotton padding from the Near West,
令什升而说法。	and he ordered Kumārajīva to get up on the seat and to preach the Law.
什曰。	Kumārajīva said:
家师犹未悟大乘	"My master still does not understand the Great Vehicle,
欲躬往仰化。	and I wish to go out to convert him respectfully.
不得停此。	It is not right for me to remain here."
俄而大师盘头达多不远而至。	All of a sudden it turned out the Grand Master Daduo had not minded the distance and had arrived at Qiuci.
王曰。	The king said:
大师何能远顾。	"How is it that you are able to make such a distant visit?"
达多曰。	Daduo said:
一闻弟子所悟非常。	"Firstly, I heard that my disciple had made unusual progress,
二闻大王弘赞佛道。	and secondly I heard that your great majesty showers great praise on the Way of the Buddha.
故冒涉艰危	Therefore I braved difficulties and dangers
远奔神国。	and from afar hastened towards your divine state."

什得师至
欣遂本怀。
为说德女问经。

多明因缘空假。

昔与师俱所不信。
故先说也。
师谓什曰。
汝于大乘
见何异相
而欲尚之。

什曰。
大乘深净
明有法皆空。
小乘偏局
多诸漏失。
师曰：
汝说一切皆空甚可畏也。
安舍有法而爱空乎。
如昔
狂人令绩师绩线
极令细好。
绩师加意
细若微尘。
狂人犹恨其粗。
绩师大怒
乃指空示曰。
此是细缕。
狂人曰。
何以不见。
师曰。
此缕极细。
我工之良匠犹且不见。
况他人耶。
狂人大喜
以付织师。
师亦效焉
皆蒙上赏

而实无物。
汝之空法亦由此也。
什乃连类而陈之。

When Kumārajīva got to know that his Master had arrived,
he was delighted that he was able to realize his original plan.
He expounded [v. l. + for the sake of his master] the *De nü wen jing*,
which extensively illustrates [the principles of] conditioned production, emptiness, and conventional existence.
These were all things that he had not believed in with the master.
So he made a start explaining these things.
The Master addressed Kumārajīva as follows:
"When it comes to the Great Vehicle,
what different and new aspects have you caught sight of,
so that you want to convert to the Great Vehicle from our orthodox faith?"
Kumārajīva said:
"The Great Vehicle is profound and pure."
And he explained how everything that has properties is empty,
how the Small Vehicle was one-sided,
and how it missed out on many things.
The Master said:
"When you say that everything is empty, this is scaring indeed!
How can one reject what has properties and love what is empty?
It is like once upon a time
a fool ordered a tailor to sew a silk garment,
and he ordered it to be made thin in the extreme.
The tailor paid attention to this,
and it became as thin as fine dust.
Still, the fool was still unsatisfied because the thing was too coarse.
The tailor got very angry,
and he pointed into the thin air and said:
'But this is the fine gauze.'
The fool said:
'How come I do not see it?'
The artisan said:
'This gauze is extremely fine,
even the capable specialists among my works can't see it.
How should others be able to!'
The fool was overjoyed,
and he paid the tailor.
The artisan did as the fool did,
and they all took on the 'thin gauze', and much appreciated its delicacy,
but in fact there was nothing.
These empty properties of yours are also like this!"
Kumārajīva then expounded it (viz. the principle of the emptiness) by gathering similar things (i. e., apologues such as the one told by his master).

往复苦至经一月余日。	Only after he had made great efforts, again and again, for more than one month,
方乃信服。	[his master] was finally convinced.
师叹曰。	The master sighed and said:
师不能达反启其志。	"I still do not understand and you have opened the right meaning for me.
验于今矣。	This saying has been proved right now.
于是礼什为师。	Then he treated Kumārajīva politely as his master,
言:和上是我大乘师。	saying: "The *upādhyāya* is my master in the Great Vehicle;
我是和上小乘师矣。	I am the *upādhyāya's* master in the Small Vehicle!"

Bornons ici cette carrière,
les longues ouvrages me font peur.
Loin d'épuiser une matière,
on n'en doit prendre que la fleur.
(La Fontaine 6, Epilogue)

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