Technologizing Cultural Consumption:

The Tales and the Virtual in the East Asian Andersen

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Abstract

Most of Andersen's stories have been translated into Chinese and Japanese for more than 100 years. They are read as children's literature for values and morals that are universal, but hidden in these values and morals are notions of truth, self-identity and individuality that challenge traditional East Asian concepts of selfhood. Andersen represents new values for East Asian modernity. Tracing the reception of Andersen in East Asia, this paper deals with changes in representation, particularly in recent years with the opening of the Shanghai Andersen Cultural Park, the wide circulation of Andersen stories in animation films in Japan, and the technological representations of culture in the digital age. In this paper, Chinese representations of Andersen will be contrasted with the Japanese so as to understand the different receptions of Andersen in the East Asian context. The recent trend of technologizing Andersen will be discussed in relation to cultural consumption and gamification. Since much of the recent development in technologizing Andersen has to do with visual representation, photos will be provided as illustrations.

Introduction

H.C. Andersen has been received in East Asia notably as an author of children's literature. His fairy tales have been translated into Chinese and Japanese and have been made into live-shot films as well as animation films. Andersen's tales are an important component of the school curriculum in China and Japan. Textbooks have Andersen stories as part of children's education. As has been argued by several authors in the book *Hans Christian Andersen in China* (Frandsen, Jian & Jeppesen, 2014), Andersen enjoys immense popularity as a writer of fairy tales for children in China. In Japan, Andersen is noted for Japanese cartoon stories for children, such as the *Andersen Monogatari* which is a very popular anime TV series. In many parts of East Asia, budding writers of children's books "model their style on Andersen's techniques" (Follet, 1991). Fairy tales are of

course not necessarily meant only for children because they carry messages that are of interest and of moral value to adults. In a newspaper report on the Andersen exhibition held in Zhejiang Museum in 2015, there was the following comment:

> Andersen's enlightening fairy tales are not only bedtime stories for Chinese, but also listed as texts in Chinese primary and middle schools. Educators think that noted fairy tales including "The Emperor's New Clothes" and "The Ugly Duckling" can nourish children's minds and cultivate morality (Wu, 2015).

Thanks to the good translation, the name "Andersen" has the similar pronunciation in Chinese and Japanese and sounds like a local name for children that carries the meaning of "peace-child-life." Most of Andersen's tales are well known to children in East Asia. However, there is some variation in popularity among the Andersen tales. "The Emperor's New Clothes" enjoys the best popularity in China, while the "Little Match Girl" is most widely known in Japan. The difference in popularity shows the variation between China and Japan because of cultural differences in the two countries (Li, 2014). These different receptions of Andersen in East Asia occur as a result of the changing social and cultural conditions in the region. The Chinese appreciate the moral lesson of self-deception derived from "The Emperor's New Clothes" because there has been a similar tradition in China since the 1900s, while the Japanese share the feelings of the Little Match Girl because of the cultural memory of sufferings they endured in poor social conditions in the early twentieth century. The Little Match Girl is also taught in the Chinese school curriculum for cultivating the sense of sympathy in children and care for others.

The reception of Andersen in East Asia began in the late nineteenth century first in Japan and then in China with a great emphasis placed on the cultural and educational values of Andersen's tales. These traditions has set the tone for later receptions of Andersen despite changes in social and cultural conditions. The Andersen Theatre has been established in Beijing since 2007, and it performs plays based on Andersen's tales on a regular basis. In Japan, there is the HCA Society which holds scholarly activities. A biography of Andersen in Japanese, *H.C. Andersen: His Unreal Image and Real Image*, was published in 1979 by Tetsuro Suzuki, the founder of HCA Society of Japan. The Society also publishes a journal *Andersen Studies*, which is by far the only scholarly journal on Andersen in Asia. Katsumi Hayano's book, *Hans Christian Andersen's Age*, appeared in 1993. Even today Andersen is much value for his moral lessons for children. Because

of his great influence on China and Japan, Andersen is also a subject of academic study. In Fudan University, there is a Nordic Centre which has held regular activities and conferences on Andersen. The book *Hans Christian Andersen in China* (2014), edited by Johs. Nørregaard Frandsen, Sun Jian and Torben Grøngaard Jeppesen, deserves special merit for its comprehensive study of Andersen as an academic subject. The essays collected in the book are used as references for teaching Andersen and children's literature in university courses. The reception of Andersen is an educational project in China, regardless of what form it has taken or will take.

The East Asian Andersen for Cultural Consumption

Andersen appeals to both adults and children all over the world. It is the adults, such as teachers, parents, museum curators, TV programme hosts, and filmmakers, who project the image of Andersen as a writer of children's literature. The Andersen community in East Asia is a constructed world in both real-life and digitized virtual representations. Both China and Japan have Andersen parks. This shows that Andersen is not to be read only; his tales are to be experienced as part of contemporary life. In this sense, the Chinese and Japanese Andersen parks are East Asian attempts in presenting Andersen as lived experience in localized cultural variations.

One thing that deserves attention is that the Chinese and Japanese Andersen parks have acknowledged their connection with the City Museum of Odense. Hence, the Chinese and Japanese Andersen are meant to be extensions, but also variations, of the Danish Andersen. Together they form an international community that presents a world of fantasy derived from Andersen's tales. It is a cultural community, in which interrelations are reimagined and are based on the universal values of love, sympathy, respect, friendship, trust, truthfulness, equality, humanitarianism, and environmental protection. The East Asian Andersen is part of the international Andersen community, which is not simply a connection with different cultures, but also a world of self-reflection that transcends the limits of national or regional culture.

Comparing China and Japan in terms of the reception of Andersen, one sees many similarities: translations, reading clubs, paper cutting, story-telling activities, school curriculum, scholarly studies, and occasional exhibitions. China has an amateur film entitled *The Mermaid Prequel* (2016), which is an adaptation with a story about how the mermaid saves a village nearly ruined by a sand manufacturing plant. The film is a reflection on the contemporary issue of environmental protection in China. Similarly, Japan also has an animation film, *Ponyo* (2008),

which is inspired by Andersen's Mermaid tale, though the story is not the same. Both China and Japan have film adaptations of Andersen's tales.

Andersen has become part of modern East Asian consciousness, and his morals and values are ingrained in modern East Asian culture. With children growing up in their imagination of the characters and the tales, Andersen has entered the East Asian collective memory and cultural imaginary. The animation films made by Disney, such as the *Little Mermaid* (1989) and *Frozen* (2010), are favourites of Asian children. Today, Andersen is a household name in East Asia. Reading Andersen's stories, though good for learning moral lessons, presents a world that exists mainly in the imagination and does not allow Asian children to have lived experience that can recapture the world of Andersen, which is geographically and temporally distanced from today's life in East Asia. There is the demand for Western culture to be experienced and consumed in today's East Asia. Needless to say, it has become an industry with some commercialization, such as the Andersen hotels in Beijing, Shanghai and Japan. A noted example is the H.C. Andersen International Children Products China Company which was established in Shanghai in 2005, and its products have become name brands popular in the major coastal cities in China.

There is another aspect of the reception, that is, the dissemination of Andersen in various forms of popular culture, such as cultural parks and tourist attractions, especially in the past ten years when new concepts and trends in the use of technology emerge in the reception of Andersen. In such cultural parks, there is an attempt to integrate entertainment with education, especially in different forms of games and children's activities. From the beginning of the late nineteenth century to early 2010, the reception of Andersen in East Asia, mainly China and Japan, focused almost all in scholarly translations and interpretive studies. However, during the last decade, there is a growing trend in technologizing Andersen for cultural consumption, particularly in the use of digital and animation technologies for interactive games. The games are available on the Internet, as well as in the e-zones in cultural parks, in which events of competition that promote team spirit and cooperation are offered. Such games are "edutainment" that combine education with entertainment and are designed to make children the subject of agency in the gaming process.

The reception of Andersen in East Asia presents a case of cultural imaginary, in which Danish culture and cultural products are constructed through story-telling and fun playing. As pointed out in theories of literary reception (Jauss, 1982), an author is interested in new lights in later ages because of changed social and cultural contexts. In the Chinese and Japanese receptions

of Andersen, the change from literary focus in the twentieth century to digital representation in the twenty-first century reflects the rise of digital culture in East Asia that has changed the taste of the younger generation.

The Frankfurt School theory of the culture industry (Adorno & Horkheimer, 2002) was presented with the aim to understand mass culture and its ideological effect. What this theory brings to light is that culture is produced and consumed and is developed in consumer society as an industry. The concept has been expanded recently to study culture in relation to consumer behaviour, social participation, social stratification and class tastes. Many studies have pointed out that class is a determining factor in cultural consumption (Chan & Goldthrope, 2007; Chan, 2010). There is also the view that gender, ethnicity, and social status play an important role in cultural consumption (Katz-Gerro, 1999). Both views of cultural consumption hold true in the case of postsocialist China: taste changes because of the rise of middle class which creates a great demand for an experience of Western high culture and leisure activities. Gender definitely plays a role in the consumption of Andersen as a cultural experience, as many of the visitors to the Andersen Park and the Andersen Museum are women and children.

As a result of the popularization of cartoon films on the TV and on the Internet over the past twenty years, animation films of Andersen's tales have gradually served as supplementary audio-visual materials to the printed texts, as they are used widely in school classrooms. Story telling is also replaced by YouTube video watching and Hollywood film adaptations. However, the tradition of story-telling established by Andersen is still very much respected and advocated because of the interpersonal relationships that it can develop between the story teller and the audience.

For the younger generation of East Asians who grow up in the age of digital communication and are called "netizens" and "digital natives", interactive images and online games are a part of life. Hence, Andersen's tales are digitized into interactive games for children's consumption. Andersen's characters are no longer to be imagined when being told and read, but to be seen in active moving images and to be involved in some degree of participation. Since traditional story telling has taken another form, that is, companionship in playing interactive games, so are Andersen's stories when transformed into interactive games. Co-players serve as companions in exploring the world of Andersen's stories, particularly the water world in *The Little Mermaid* games.

Besides the online games and the Internet videos that are available to the lovers of Andersen's tales, there is the reproduction of the Andersen world in a physical environment—the Andersen Park, one in Shanghai, China and the other in Funabashi, Japan. Both of them serve as sites of cultural consumption, which from a classic sociological perspective can be analyzed as an index to show the social stratification and aesthetic tastes of society (Bourdieu, 1984). In recent studies, cultural consumption is analyzed as a marker of global cultural flow (Chan, 2010). The reception of Andersen in East Asia, particularly in China and Japan, has undergone the stages of educationization and aestheticization, which have now entered a phase demonstrating an East Asian pattern of cultural consumption from commercialization to gamification. Japan is noted for its pioneering use of digital technologies in cultural products and games, especially in anime and animation, which show a close relation with the Japanese manga tradition.

Since its 12th 5-year economic development plan that began in 2012, China has increased its investment in creative and cultural industries, which amounts to 6% of its GDP growth. Numerous cultural parks, theatres, concert halls, opera houses and museums have been built in China, making cultural consumption part of everyday life. In Japan too, cultural consumption is not limited to fashion and food products, but virtual entertainment games in the VR zones, which are abundant in Shinjuku. Like Disneyland, the Andersen parks in China and in Japan are constructed for many purposes combining indigenous Japanese culture with Danish culture for consumption by different age groups and different social stratifications. These parks re-define cultural consumption by elevating it to the status of educational and high-brow aesthetic experience. Recent studies on transnational cultural consumption show patterns of taste that belong to the cultural elites (Rössel & Schroedter, 2015). The change of cultural tastes in East Asia can be seen in the rising demand for global name brands, especially in cultural products, and is particularly obvious in China and Japan. While Chinese tourists are noted for their demand for luxurious products from Paris and London, Printemps has flagship stores in Tokyo and in many Chinese cities that provide the latest products to satisfy the Japanese desire for European tastes. Andersen parks and Andersen souvenirs are part of the rising demand for consumption of Western culture in East Asia.

Utopianism in the Shanghai Andersen Park

Today's China is a postsocialist affluent society, where people have the desire to own anything which exemplifies the best things in the world. A study by Hakuhodo, a marketing company in Japan, reports on the latest scene of cultural consumption in everyday life in China:

> Everyday culture is expanding in all forms in China—homes, fashion, dining, travel, sports, learning—and the new middle class has been particularly avid in adopting it; this phenomenon we have defined and analyzed as the spread of cultural consumption. Cultural consumption among the new middle class is driven by a desire for what we have dubbed Yúlè or "enjoying the finer things in life." Besides consuming the arts in such forms as music, theater, and paintings, more and more Chinese these days are enjoying culture in the broader sense in such forms as food, sports, and Japanese anime, comics, and games (ACG). The market for such things is expanding rapidly. What appears to lie behind that development is this: increasing economic affluence has led to the growth of a new middle class that aspires not just to material prosperity but also to spiritual fulfillment, and people's appetite for cultural consumption is becoming more voracious by the day. ("Enjoying the Finer Things", 2017)

The Shanghai Andersen Cultural Park is an example of China's attempt to transpose Danish culture to China for aesthetic cultural consumption. The Park is also a Chinese attempt in utopianizing the Andersen world and hence it is also called the "Andersen Paradise." China has a long tradition of utopian thought, and in this context the Andersen world serves as a model to satisfy the Chinese desire in which human beings, animals and nature are to be respected as being equal. As the word "paradise" suggests, it is meant to be a utopia for visitors to experience a world of re-created Nordic culture in China. The Park's European architectural design and its colourful exhibits represent the Chinese conception of Danish culture and the Chinese attempt in owning Andersen, making it part of Chinese life and Chinese culture. Things absent or not easy to find in the daily life of today's China, such as respect for nature and for animal rights, are found in the Park in new relationships with human beings that inspire feelings of harmony and spiritual sublimation.

The Park is an 81,000 square-metre cultural site opened in 2017 and an educational facility purposely built for children. The entrance to the Park is architecturally designed in such a way that it looks like a time passage (Fig. 1), separating the park from the outside world in time and in

space. When one enters the Park through this tunnel entrance, one enters into another temporal zone, which is more than one hundred years ago in Andersen's time, and also another spatial zone which is Denmark. The passage is designed in such a way that it gives the experience of being a time and geographical tunnel. Once entered, one goes to a totally different world. It opens up to the future, but it brings one back to the timeless world depicted in Andersen's tales in the nineteenth century. The children who enter the Park will experience a strong sense of being culturally relocated to a fairytale land of Denmark and being detached from the hustle and bustle of the mega cities in China. The visitors will experience a transformational process, which in the Chinese tradition is called "purification of the mind and heart." This "purification" works because the mundane is replaced by exotic and by the cultural otherness of Andersen.

Fig. 1. Entrance to the Shanghai Andersen Cultural Park. Photo by Kwok-kan Tam

The Park uses Andersen's fairy tales as theme elements to create seven different theme districts: "The Tin Soldier Square," "Thumbelina's Adventure," "Star Wishes' Town," "The Emperor's Garden," "Mermaid's Harbour," "Ugly Duckling's Village," and "The Swan Group." Each district has its unique landscape gardening and there are different games and rides for children (Fig. 2). It uses the same principle of design as in a utopian fun park. The centre piece in the Park is the Andersen Museum which was designed by the Odense City Museum, and it allows children to listen to Andersen's tales and see the paper cut art of Andersen.

Fig. 2. The Andersen Fairy Tales Park in Shanghai. Photo by Kwok-kan Tam.

The Shanghai Andersen Cultural Park is architecturally designed like a fairyland, with a three-storey castle (Fig. 3) occupying the central location. Other buildings and streets are meant to visually represent a Danish town. There are also installations of characters, such as the Mermaid (Fig. 4) and the Emperor, from Andersen's tales. The Park gives visitors, children and adults alike, the sense of a dream world. It is a site of sight, a cultural construction of a utopia, colourful and exotic. The colourfulness and the variety of tales are exactly what convey a sense of exoticism and the dream world which cannot be found in real life or anywhere in China.

Fig. 3. Architectural design, Shanghai Andersen Cultural Park. Photo by Kwok-kan Tam.

Fig. 4. The Little Mermaid. Photo by Kwok-kan Tam.

Andersen and the characters in his tales are presented in an exotic environment as the Park attempts to recreate Danish culture as much as possible in its original. Visiting the Shanghai Andersen Cultural Park provides children with the experience to immerse themselves in the plots they have learned from the tales. They can re-imagine themselves as being part of the tales and thus share the values and morals Andersen's tales convey. It is an identity building experience. For the lack of real-life experience in Denmark, Chinese children may find it difficult to imagine themselves being part of the Andersen tales when they hear or read the tales. However, once they are in the

Park, they will have the feeling of “dreams come true.” This experience requires a different dimension of imagination because it is an extension of reading experience to real-life encounters.

The Andersen Cultural Park is a cultural site which is made possible by the sight experience that it provides to the visitors. Sight-seeing is site-seeing. The sight experience consists of the park landscape with a river (Fig. 5) that runs through the park and provides the context to visualize Thumbelina, the Little Mermaid, the Emperor and other stories. As water is a major metaphor in Andersen’s fairytale world, it is through the river and the water landscape in the Park, which connects the seven tales represented by the seven districts, that children are able to exercise their imagination about the Andersen community in which animals, human beings and nature co-exist in harmony with each other.

Fig. 5. River connecting the tale districts in the Park. Photo by Kwok-kan Tam.

The architectural design with Western-style streets and buildings constructs a world of colourful experience. Sight-seeing in the Park is to make the experience of the site part of the viewer’s subjective experience. The expression “eye-opener” works in the way that the viewer’s experience is transformed after seeing the site and experiencing the cultural exoticism. Through the exotic landscape, the viewers situate themselves in the world of Andersen’s tales which are rendered as sites of culture with morals that promote values universal and basic to humanity. A strong sense of Occidentalism is exhibited in the Shanghai Andersen Cultural Paradise, in which exoticism

works with Occidentalism to create a Danish paradise in Chinese imagination. Hakuhodo's report concludes about Chinese cultural consumption as follows:

> Our research on these trends has led us to conclude that the many sei-katsu-sha driving cultural consumption of late have an underlying desire to become their own unique person by developing their interests, and to enjoy the leeway (yú) to take pleasure (lè) in experiencing culture and expanding their emotional and intellectual horizons. We have combined those two Chinese words into a neologism, Yúlè to describe what they seek: enjoyment of the finer things in life. ("Enjoying the Finer Things", 2017)

The Park is geographically located in China, but the visitors are supposed to feel that it is a place in Denmark. It is the sight of Danish-style buildings and landscape that creates the illusion. By visiting the Park, Chinese children feel that they have visited Denmark and get exactly the same feeling of being a tourist in an exotic culture. The Park serves as a site for cultural tourism, education and entertainment, and more importantly as a Chinese-owned facility to satisfy the desire for consumption of elitist culture.

Exoticism in the Japanese Andersen Park

Similar to the reception in China, Andersen is also a household name in Japan. The HCA Society of Japan was founded in 1980. Most of Andersen's fairy tales and two biographies have been translated into Japanese. There are restaurants and bakeries named after Andersen. There is an Andersen Village, even Andersen Temple and Andersen Academy. The same phenomenon of cultural consumption can be found in the Japanese reception of Andersen, in which commercialism is to a large extent culturalized and moralized, and vice versa. Being an icon of elitist culture, Andersen enjoys high prestige in Japanese society. Andersen is represented in Japan as a cultural product, hidden in which is the Japanization of Danish culture. The consumption of Western culture in Japan, similar to many foreign products, is also a matter of identity negotiation, though being commercialized:

> There are many studies which link the commercialization of the Japanese side of the 'foreign'–'local' scheme to the issue of cultural identity. These focus on topics such as domestic tourism and the *Furusato* movement…, local food products…, and traditional arts and crafts….

> Obviously, different commodities call for different types of cultural branding: marketing a product as traditional will involve appeals to the indigenous culture, while commodities that have a foreign background will invite exploiting foreign associations. (Grinshpun, 2014, p. 347)

The Funabashi H.C. Andersen Park is a cultural site established in the Chiba prefecture in the year 1968. Funabashi is a sister city of Odense. The Andersen Park has an area of 36.7 hectares and is built on a hill. It comprises three zones, the "Children's Kingdom," the "Fairy Tale Hill," and an art museum for children (Fig. 6). The "Fairy Tale Hill" is a reproduction of the countryside landscape of Denmark in the 1800s when Andersen was born. In the Park, Andersen symbols or installations are few, except for the statue and a few sculptures. However, the Park is intended not to focus on one or two things about Andersen. The statue and sculptures of Andersen are placed in different places in the Park. In fact, what is most interesting about the Park is its landscape, which is Western or Danish, but also have the quietude of a Japanese garden.

Fig. 6. A guide map of the Funabashi H.C. Andersen Park. Photo by Kwok-kan Tam.

Fig. 7. The Windmill. Photo by Kwok-kan Tam.

The Funabashi H.C. Andersen Park is a green park, as well as a fun park with a large playground for children. Its iconic view is a windmill (Fig. 7) on the topic of the "Fairy Tale Hill," which gives a sight of exoticism. Visitors in this part of the Park feel that they are in Denmark because of the European landscape, the architecture and the installations, such as the Little Mermaid (Fig. 8). The Danish houses in miniature (Fig. 9), together with the windmill and the Little Mermaid installation, form a picture of exoticism. However, the visitors who have seen images of the Mermaid in Denmark will discover that the Japanese one is presented in the style of Japanese comics. This performance is the most obvious in the Japanization of a Danish icon. As a reproduction of the Danish landscape in the 1800s, the Park brings the visitors to a place removed from the busy life in Tokyo, giving them a taste of Danish culture and exoticism. The experience of exoticism involves a complex process of identity negotiation, as some anthropologists have argued:

> Everyday commodities provide multiple axes around which these negotiations on identity take place. In Japan, mundane substances like food and the way it is presented, ordinary places like department stores and amusement parks play a significant role in shaping not only our consumer experiences but also the way we experience culture. Culture is more often than not a function of otherness; as we shall see, exploiting culture in marketing often implies appealing to its foreignness or strangeness. The issue of imagination is crucial in this context, as both the "foreign" and the "Japanese" emerge as subjective products of negotiation on identity, rather than objective cultural entities. (Grinshpun, 2014, p. 346)

The Japanization of the mermaid makes it easier for the Japanese visitors to imagine it and identify with it. However, the landscape is more Danish than Japanese, as the traditional pavilions are absent in the Park and they are replaced by the wooden Danish houses (Figure 9).

Fig. 8. The Little Mermaid. Photo by Kwok-kan Tam.

Fig. 9. Danish houses in miniature. Photo by Kwok-kan Tam.

A comparison between the Shanghai Andersen Cultural Park and the Funabashi H.C. Andersen Park will yield insights into how the Chinese and the Japanese are different in their reception and presentation of Andersen. For the Chinese Park, it is a world of created experience with exoticism for consumption by children. The major attractions are games that are designed based on themes in Andersen's tales. However, the Japanese Park is more indigenized in its presentation of Andersen. The landscape is constructed in the style of a traditional Japanese garden which brings a sense of Zen silence for the contemplative visitors who are not children, but adults. On the style of the Japanese garden in Funabashi H.C. Andersen Park, the Japanese architect Akira Suzuki has the following observation: "This has moved creativity away from the folly, as an object of contemplation, scale-less and position-less on the landscape's horizon and solitary in the mind" (Suzuki, 2015). While the "Children's Kingdom" is nicknamed "Naughtiness Zone" which is to make children crazy by indulging them in physical game activities, the "Fairy Tale Hill" and the pond below is a place for visitors to indulge themselves in contemplative thinking in an environment removed from city life. On the whole, the Park has two sides of character: activities and quietude.

Fig. 10. A pond below the bridge. Photo by Kwok-kan Tam.

Fig. 11. Iron bridge seen from below. Photo by Kwok-kan Tam.

In terms of landscape, the pond (Fig. 10) below the “Fairy Tale Hill” and the iron bridge (Fig. 11) above it form a pair of contrast. While the pond is in Japanese style, the bridge is in Western style. The bridge is the “Bridge of Love” connecting the two high grounds in the Park. In this part of the

Park, there is an obvious mixture of the Japanese and the Danish landscape, symbolized by the connecting bridge. The aesthetics of a Japanese garden is shown here in its simplicity, naturalness and minimalism so that the visitors become one with the environment.

East Asian Gamification of Andersen

The Andersen Museum in the Shanghai Andersen Park is a two-storey building with exhibits that showcase a chronology of major events in Andersen's life, his achievements as a fairytale writer, his paper cuts, and Chinese translations and adaptations of Andersen's tales. The first thing that visitors see is a white marble stature of Andersen telling his stories to children (Fig. 12). For children visitors, the statute appeals to children's sense of identification with Andersen as a figure who speaks to them and is in a close relation with them.

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Fig. 12. Statue of H. C. Andersen showing his storey telling. Photo by Kwok-kan Tam.

What follows after the statute of Andersen is the paper cuts exhibition (Fig. 13). In this section, children are excited to see the paper cuts, which are animated by the shadows and lights and seem to speak to them in the children's language. Paper cuts are animated images from Andersen's tales that look like live characters. The museum is a secluded world that brings the visitors back to Andersen's world in the nineteenth-century Denmark. It achieves an estrangement effect in a black box environment, where the visitors are confronted with a distant world of unfamiliar but shared experience. In the museum, there is a section that exhibits early Chinese translations of Andersen's tales (Fig. 14) and Chinese writers' praises of Andersen. Visitors to the museum will see Andersen as a writer and an artist who has a vision to re-present the world with new morals that transcend human limitations. The world in Andersen's tales is a utopia and a dream, but it is possible if human beings identify with Andersen's values of love, friendship, respect and equality. This is the

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Fig. 13. Andersen's paper cuts in the museum. Photo by Kwok-kan Tam.

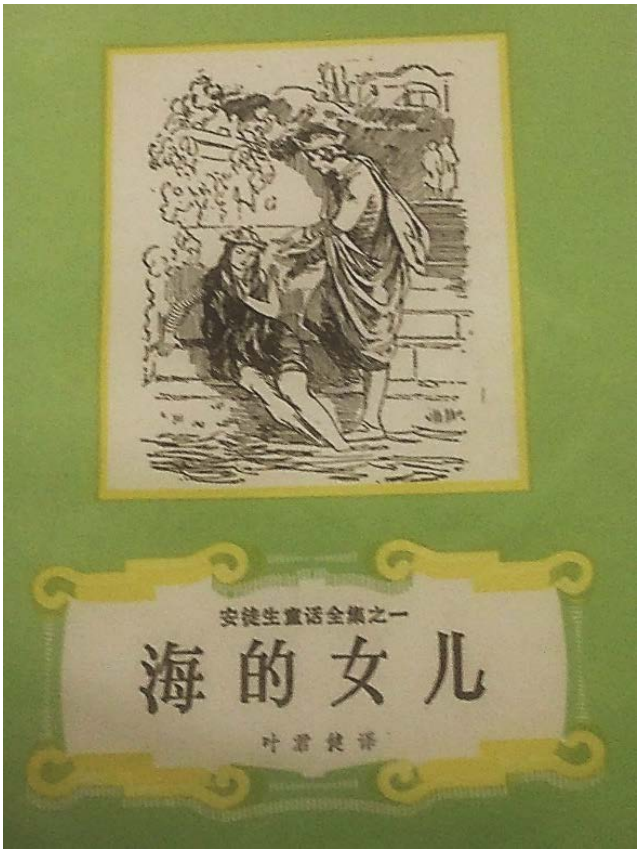

Fig. 14. “The Little Mermaid” in Chinese. Photo by Kwok-kan Tam.

The Shanghai Andersen Cultural Park is a carefully designed dream world that aims at identity building for China’s new generation. This dream world provides a physical space for the real and the virtual to meet so that what is real and what is virtual do not distinguish, and together they form a new dimension of experience. The exoticism in the Park serves two purposes: one is to appreciate Andersen in a Danish context and environment; the other is to globalize the younger generation so that they are culturally broadened in their vision of the world. After visiting the Park, they will know ”Antusheng” is Andersen, a Danish author, though he has a name that can be pronounced in Chinese.

The Shanghai Andersen Cultural Park offers a journey of visual experience and interactive participation, where children learn while they play. At the entrance of the Andersen Museum, there is an animated portrait in which Andersen blinks his eyes and talks (Fig. 15) as if he were a living person welcoming visitors to the museum. The use of digital technology in animating the portrait brings Andersen to life. “The livng Andersen” lives not just in his ever-fascinating tales, but also

in a technology enhanced image that greets the visitors. The interactive digital representation brings Andersen live and culturally friendly to children who grow up in the digital age.

Besides the animated portrait of Andersen, there are digital games for children and adults to play in the Castle. These games are based on scenes taken from Andersen's tales. The most popular among the interactive digital games is "The Little Mermaid" (Fig. 16), where children learn the relationship between human beings and sea animals and understand that water is the source of life. The awareness of environment protection is thus enhanced. In the game, the player will take the perspective of the mermaid and take an active role in navigating the sea, and hence will undergo the process of identification.

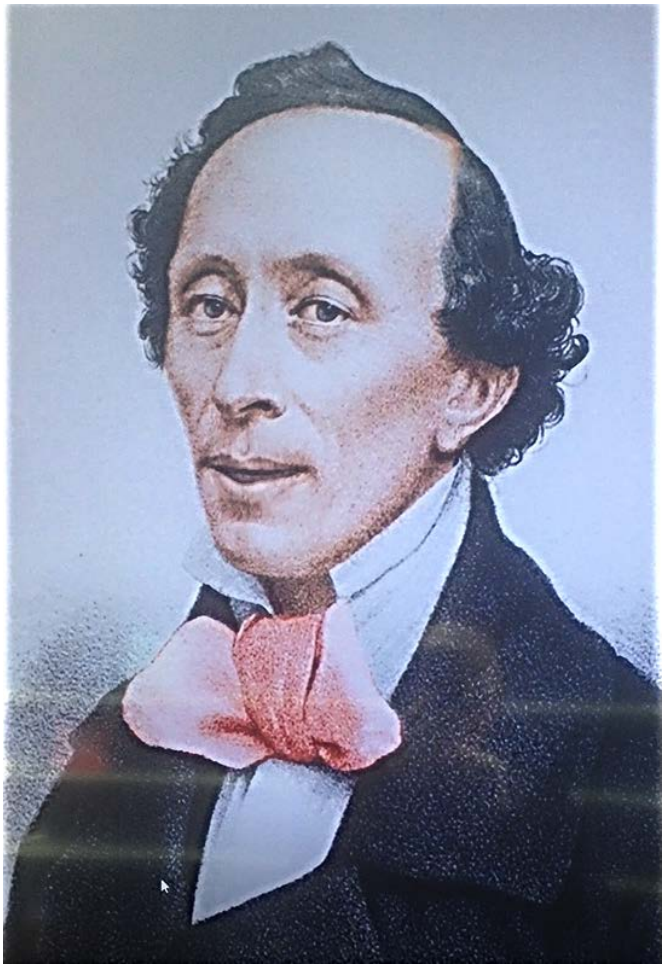

Fig. 15. An animated portait of Andersen that blinks his eyes and talks. Photo copyright Kwok-kan Tam.

Fig. 16. The big screen in “The Little Mermaid” interactive game. Photo by Kwok-kan Tam.

The interactive games are designed in such a way that a child has to play together with an adult, supposedly a parent. They are humanizing activities for collaboration and sharing of experience. As a BBC report states about the Shanghai Andersen Cultural Park, “Children will be educated through playing in the theme park” (“China to open Andersen Theme Park”, 2006). The gamification of Andersen shows not only that morals in Andersen’s tales can be fun, but also how childhood is conceived in Chinese education in which playing is emphasized. Playing is participation, in which the players become an active agent in self building and identity construction. The players will learn to master not simply the skills of the games, but also the concepts embedded in the processes. Through the processes, the players will be involved in “gameful thinking” (David, 2016). A study of gamification in childhood development makes the following comment about digital culture:

> With the advent of video games, games have returned in full force as a cultural product, with more people in North America consuming video games than movies and music. In point of fact, 58% of Americans play video games, 45% of gamers are women, and 58% of parents play video games with their kids as a way to socialize with them. Games are part of the cultural landscape, and they aren’t going anywhere. (David, 2016)

Games are part of human culture and have a long history. It is human instinct to play games, and they are also the origin of sports. A sense of cooperation with other players and competition with oneself is developed in playing games. In the digital age, games are ways to expand the players' perception of life and of the world because many of the digital games make use of Internet technology that connects different cultures and different geographical locations. Geographically far from each other and culturally different, Denmark and China are linked through Andersen, now in ever new ways by means of digital culture. From the perspective of the children, playing games requires creative thinking, active participation and interpretive skills, all of which are conducive to the expansion of the self beyond a person's sphere of experience. Learning foreign culture makes children global in their mindset. As can be seen in the Park, gamification has been playing an increasingly important role in Chinese life today. It has been announced that another Andersen Park will be built in Qingdao, expected to be completed in 2020, in which more advanced technology, for example VR games, will be used for cultural consumption.

Andersen in the East Asian Digital Mediation

Looking forward to the future in childhood education, gamification is inevitable as it has become merged with digital technologies in animation. In the Chinese gamification of Andersen, there are gains as well as losses. The gains are that children feel closer to Andersen when Andersen and the characters in his tales are enlivened and can interact with them. When children play in the games, they play in the roles of the characters, become identified with them and unknowingly accept their values, such as the sense of environmental protection. The losses are that children may take the virtual as the real and forget the original, that is, to take the animated characters as the real characters in Andersen's tales and ignore that the real Andersen has much more to offer.

Other than the parks and exhibitions, which are physical displays and gamifications of H. C. Andersen's tales, the major means by which Andersen is circulated and consumed in East Asia today is via digital media. As Addis has argued, cultural consumption, when taken in the form of an interactive event, is more conducive to subjectivity formation:

> The interpretation of consumption as an interactive event between a subject and an object allows an innovative interpretation of cultural consumption. In this sense, the consumption of art and culture is interactive and therefore experiential. The holistic vision of experience cannot be related

> to an elite vision of art and culture, founded exclusively on educational assumptions. The concept of experience, in fact, is based on the involvement of the individual, and in the case of art and culture it refers as much to his education as to his entertainment. The consumption of art and culture may therefore be interpreted as a form of edutainment, as the specific objective of such activity, education or entertainment, is totally forgotten and the individual is enjoying himself and learning at the same time. The experiential interpretation applied to edutainment highlights the interaction between the subject and the object, in particular owing to the distinctive features of the object. The object of the edutainment experience, unlike the subject, is different from any other form of consumption: a message has replaced the object in the general interactive scheme, and this message has both an educational and an entertaining content (Addis, 1999, p. 730).

Most of Andersen's tales are available in video format on the Internet or in DVD, and they are dubbed in the Chinese and Japanese languages for consumption by children. Most of the videos are provided by Pingu, Cartoon Movies or Gingerbread, and they are available in YouTube. In terms of story lines, there is little variation in the tales though being delivered in different languages. Children can watch the same story in different languages, and hence available on the Internet is a world of Andersen in multiple languages (Fig. 17, 18).

Fig. 17. Andersen's tales in Chinese-language video and animation films. Photo by Kwok-kan Tam.

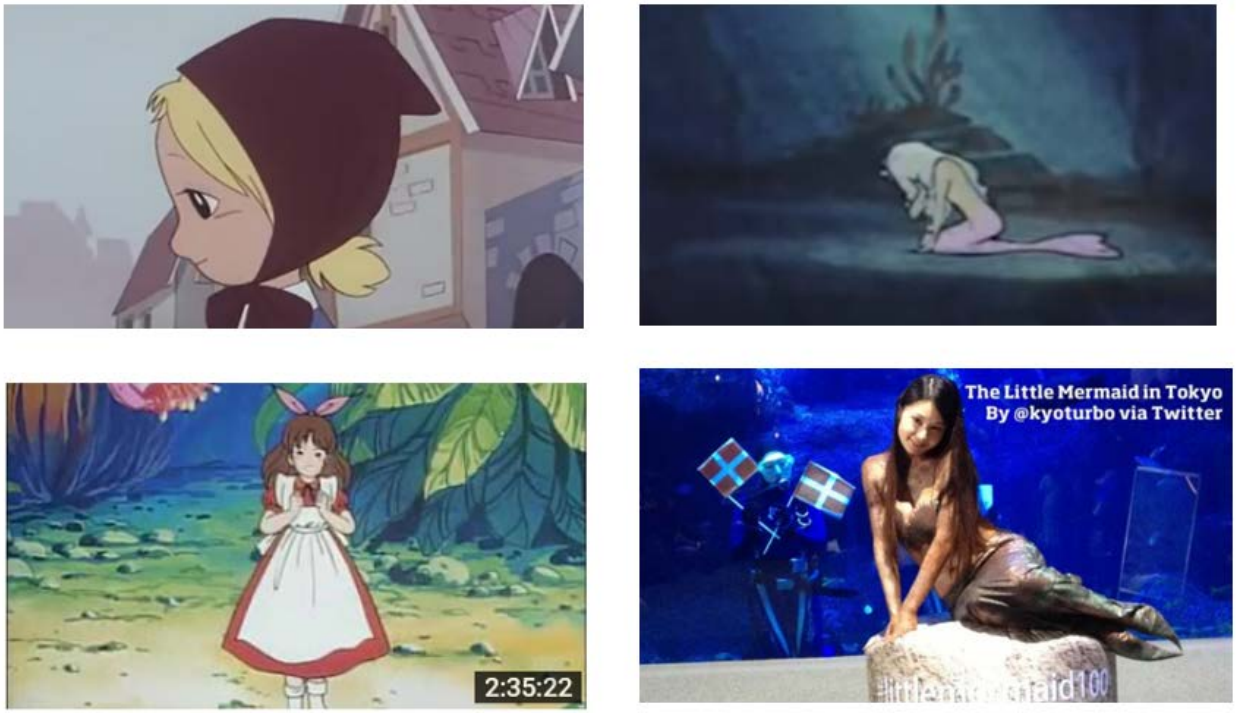

Fig. 18. Andersen's tales in Japanese-language animation films. Photo by Kwok-kan Tam.

A comparison of the Chinese- and Japanese-language videos will show that Andersen's tales are sometimes adapted from the same sources, only that they are dubbed in different languages. The characters are Indian people if the source is from India. Besides, China and Japan have their own versions of Andersen's tales in video format. For children who have access to the Internet, they can choose international videos or local videos of Andersen's tales. The availability of both international and local sources means that children are exposed to an international environment in their contact with Andersen. Though the representation of race, costume and manners and values may vary and may have different emphases, the international sources follow the same plots as in the original Andersen tales. Children who watch the videos will have similar experiences of Andersen's tales.

In terms of local productions, Japan takes the lead in animation films of Andersen because China has few productions of animation films. Japan's anime and animation films are part of a huge industry that has a large market and is much more mature and advanced than China's. Japanese anime and animations are unique and distinctly different from international animation. The colour tone, the narration and the thematic emphasis are characteristic of Japanese culture. For example, "The Little Match Girl" is the most popular Andersen tale in Japan because, first,

the animation film has excellent artistic features and the characters are beautifully drawn; and second, because of her sufferings the girl has won the hearts of many Japanese, for whom poverty and hardships in life are to be sympathized with. In China, the most popular Andersen tale is “The Emperor’s New Clothes” because the tale is a mockery of self-deception and lack of self-knowledge and it has relevance in contemporary politics.

Conclusion: The East Asian Living Andersen

Digital representation of Andersen brings more possibilities for imagination and role playing, and hence fantasy. It is a technological trend in East Asia that is going to revolutionize our perception of the world. Enabled by the use of new technologies, such as VR & AR, interactive games have developed new capabilities that allow the players’ roles to be fantasized. Traditional texts can appear in new animated forms to enhance their visual sensibility, and in this way reading is complemented by watching and playing (Fig. 19).

Fig. 19. Andersen’s tales are available in hand-held devices.
https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.kompan.storybook&hl=en_US

Apart from producing new art forms, technology also connects across cultures. An example can be found in the use of an Andersen app that was launched in 2011:

> Since January [to September 2011], Danish children and their parents have downloaded Denmark's first children's books for iPad approx. 70,000 times, and more than a third pay to have access to additional fairytales. This success has become an incentive for Egmont to launch internationally in China, Turkey, England, Germany, Japan, Norway and Finland.
>
> "The consumers' message is clear. They are willing to pay for good media products for the newest platforms, and the great traditional stories still have the ability to attract children. We saw this as a learning experience that could enlighten us on children's behaviour when using their parents' tablet PC's as well as the parents' willingness to pay for the app […]. Because of these results we have now decided to launch internationally," says Mikkel Weider, digital director at Egmont Digital.
>
> As a new feature the H. C. Andersen app includes four new fairytale cartoons, e.g. *The Little Mermaid* and *The Steadfast Tin Soldier*, on top of the eight digital books. Furthermore, the user-friendliness has been improved significantly based on feedback from the users […].
>
> The eight books and four cartoons are available for iPad, iPhone and iPod Touch. ("H. C. Andersen App Ready for International Launch", 2011)

User friendly educational devices are a feature of gamification and are gaining wider usage in the classroom or at home all over the world. Andersen is living in the digital age and has got new faces. He is animated, talks, smiles and is living among the children in East Asia. Gamification of Andersen's tales has contributed to a new phase of reception in East Asia, especially in the form of edutainment that integrates education with entertainment and is able to lead to a new experiential imagination of the Andersen world:

> On the other hand, the consumer does not passively absorb the message, but actively contributes to the creation of the edutainment experience by his subjective responses, which vary both in time and space. The message contribution (the entertainment and education content) and the consumer's contribution (his subjective responses) together give rise to the individual's edutainment experience. Such interpretation highlights the active roles played by the subject and the object at the moment of consumption, as both bring different and fundamental contributions to the complex experience of the consumer: the individual's activity is expressed by his subjective interpretation of the object, while the activity of the latter is expressed by its contribution to the experience in terms of content. (Addis, 1999, p. 730)

The digital games in the Shanghai Andersen park and the paper cutting games in the Funabashi Andersen Park are meant to develop a sense of agency among children who play the games, no matter how the form of game has changed over time. Such games are a form of edutainment that enhances participation and subjectivity involvement. Seen in this light, the digital media in Andersen's tales play a role in reproducing the cultural content. The active participation of the subject also gives it a role in content creation and turn experience into subjectivity formation. For example, children who play the Little Mermaid game in the Shanghai Andersen Park (Figure 16) are able to see the water world from the perspective of the mermaid and are able to identify with the Chinese constructed mermaid in its advocacy for environmental protection.

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