FairyPlay

Recycling Trash in Hans Christian Andersen's Fairy Tales and Children's Play[i]

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Abstract

Hans Christian Andersen is a cultural icon in the Danish community, and his fairy tales are canonized as treasured Danish cultural heritage. However, situated as they are today in a cross-cultural mix between folklore, booklore and medialore, they may also be analyzed as useful, treasured trash in a play culture where children recycle them in transmitted, transformed and transgressive modes. In these processes, the children perform what will be termed FairyPlay. In this article, I present Hans Christian Andersen as an intimate connoisseur of play culture, a homo ludens, a trash-sculptor and a thingfinder, like Pippi Longstocking and like children in play.

Introduction

This article investigates contemporary functions of Hans Christian (in the following: H.C.) Andersen's fairy tales, situated as they are in a cross-cultural mix between folklore, booklore and medialore, and therefore useful as 'trash' in what I shall name *FairyPlay*. There are significant common characteristics between folk tales, H.C. Andersen's fairy tales, and children engaged in play. Basically, the involved partakers in these kinds of storytelling take as their starting point the question: "What if …", and thereby agree to frame the situation as a fictional world of possibilities you may bring to life by means of narration (Toft, 2012).

As a producer of fairy tales H.C. Andersen stood divided between the folklore mode of storytelling in an oral tradition that he knew well from his own childhood among the poor, and the demand of an artistic mode of expression and originality in written literature or fine arts which he learned as a grown-up participant in the sociability practiced by the emergent bourgeoisie. In a previous work, I argued that his iconic status is due to the successful mix of characteristics from both (Toft, 1992). In this article, I shall go the whole length by arguing that the mix also contains characteristics closely linked to children's play culture. As such his fairy tales build upon the recycling of folklore 'trash', and contemporary children may look for ways to treat his world-famous stories as – precious 'trash'.

This approach is inspired by the realm of understanding in Critical Ethnography (Madison, 2011)[ii] e.g. by placing analytic emphasis on process over product as the critical ethnographer Dwight Conquergood does in his research, resulting in a change in perspective: "… the movement from performance as mimesis to poiesis to kinesis, performance as imitation, construction, dynamism" (Conquergood, 1998, p. 31).

Conquergood's conceptualization helps us understand the functions of fairy tales as mirroring or reflecting mimesis, as marking of meaning, enlightment of poiesis, and finally as intervention of kinesis, in the Aristotelian meaning of motion or change.[iii] You may name these functions *transmission*, *transformation*, and *transgression*. Although the transmitting mode is often seen as traditional, and the transgressive mode as avant-garde, we place the functions as equal and co-operating positions in the pyramid of performance:

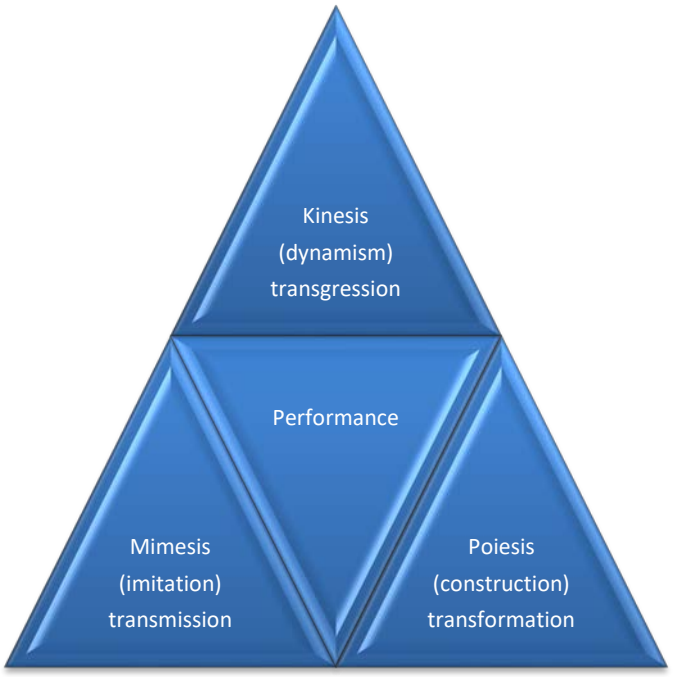

Fig. 1: The pyramid of performance

Telling fairy tales is a performance founded on mimesis, poiesis and kinesis. The telling is situated between production and reproduction, between individual and collective performance, in brief: as *organic recycling of 'trash'*.

The *Homo Ludens* as Thingfinder and Trash-Sculptor

H.C. Andersen could be described as a personification of *homo ludens* (Huizinga, 1955) throughout his life:

> Plays and playthings are an important factor in the rich and motley world of H.C. Andersen. Throughout his life, he kept on playing. He was acquainted with the common kinds of play in folklore. He observed children at play, and as a grown-up he enjoyed playing with children and letting himself be inspired by them (Stybe, 1986, title page, my translation).

As players do, he mingled old rhymes, songs, sayings, and legends with fairy tales, producing his own, personal versions and interpretations (Stybe, 1997). The Swedish modernist poet and writer, Gunnar Ekelöf (1907-68) has also noticed the similarity between aesthetic performance in play culture and in H.C. Andersen's fairy tales. The world is treated as raw material for modelling, and each thing also gets symbolic value: "H.C. Andersen was an excellent trash-sculptor. He could bring life and voice to simple things, and he did not need to weld or solder" (Ekelöf 1998, p. 267, my translation).

At a seminar on H.C. Andersen, the Danish researcher, Jette Lundbo Levy comprehends the modern artist as a creator, but also as a *'thingfinder'* (Levy, 1998, p. 259), who finds things – trash - stuff - and puts the findings together in order to set off a meaning, which the thing seems loaded with already, or to create a new meaning. Much in the same way a child at play acts as a "Thing-Finder", the nickname for Pippi Longstocking, the well-known Astrid Lindgren-figure (Lindgren, 2002), who in many ways treats the world as raw material for producers of play culture, or as such stuff that dreams are made on.

Levy refers to the playing street boys in 'The Darning-Needle:' "One day some street boys were grubbing in the gutter, looking for coins and things of that sort. It was filthy work, but they were having a wonderful time." Also, she could have mentioned the street boys in 'The Steadfast Tin Soldier': "They made a boat out of newspaper, put the tin soldier in the middle of it, and away he went down the gutter with the two young rapscallions running beside him and clapping their hands." The boys grab a thing – a darning-needle or a tin soldier and put it together with another thing – an eggshell or a newspaper – creating new and complex meaning. According to Levy, the street boys are trash-sculptors, collage-makers creating magic moments, and their combinations transgress ordinary meanings of things and of life. Levy summarizes the characteristics of H.C. Andersen's object tales:

> At first things catch your eye and then they are taken into hands, by which their fragile nature and their fracture surface and defects are uncovered. Also as a narration their transformation from fragment into part of a new whole depends upon the hand that combines sensitivity for the materials with that vital imagination of the street boys. (Levy 1998, p. 267, my translation)

The player, narrator and author H.C. Andersen uses the eyes, hands and imagination of the street boys in producing his booklore fairy tales and combines them with the reflexivity of the adult author, thereby bringing them from the framing 'situational play' to the framing 'autonomous literature'. We shall relate Levy's findings not only to his object tales, but to his fairy tales as such. For example, to the description of what happened to the queen-puppet during the performance at a puppet theatre in "The Travelling Companion":

> But just as the queen rose and swept across the stage - heaven only knows what possessed the big bulldog to do it - as the fat butcher was not holding him, the dog made a jump right on to the stage, snatched up the queen by her slender waist, and crunched her until she cracked in pieces. It was quite tragic! The poor showman was badly frightened, and quite upset about the queen; for she was his prettiest little puppet, and the ugly bulldog had bitten off her head.

The travelling companion manages to bring the puppet to life – whole and healthy along with the other puppets, so everyone is happy: "The coachman danced with the cook, and the waiter with the chambermaid. All the guests joined the dance, and the shovel and tongs did too, but these fell down as soon as they took their first step." Puppets are fragile and may have their fracture surface uncovered. But the vital and life-giving capacity linked to the travelling companion spreads joy; only things lacking the vital imagination of the observers such as tongs and fire-shovels must fail and remain meaningless things.

Another example is 'The Tinder Box', the story of a naughty and uninhibited soldier, who provides an enormous amount of money, luxury, and stolen kisses, but at the height of his power is about to be hanged – and – whoops – calls upon the three dogs, who destroy almost every mighty person in the established order:

> Those dogs took the judges and all the council, some by the leg and some by the nose, and tossed them so high that they came down broken to bits.

> "Don't!" cried the King, but the biggest dog took him and the Queen too, and tossed them up after the others.

The soldier in this fairy tale resembles a play-boy, who constructs a tower built of toy bricks. He picks the elements and stacks them higher and higher, more and more complex, curious to investigate the fine line between failure and success. Also - whoops – he enjoys just as much to destroy a tower – whether built by himself or by others.

H.C. Andersen's descriptions of boys' playing with trash-elements are part of another Danish author's remembrance, namely Louis Jensen, nominated for the Nordic Council's prize for best children's and youth literature in 2014. He describes boys' play in *Elefanterne holdt hver gang med Tarzan. En bog om drenge* (The Elephants always Favoured Tarzan. A book about Boys). One of his stories bears the title *Affald* (*Trash*). I translate a piece of it:

> Also, at the back in the most distant and small merchant's house there was an open box made of cement filled with iron trash. Spokes, bicycle wheels and iron bars. There were shiny pieces of metal that looked like silver, and metal that looked like gold, (…) There were many places in the town where there was trash left by the grown-ups. There was the rubbish dump, and burned matches, and cigarette butts in the gutter. One of the boys picked them up and exchanged them for even more. He opened them, straightened the paper and made new cigarettes of the paper from a newspaper and the smolder. New Kings (Jensen, 2014, pp. 26-27, my translation).

Much inspired by H.C. Andersen's aesthetic mode of storytelling, Louis Jensen treats his predecessor's collected works as a recycling depot.

So, in this article, we do not investigate the fairy tales as autonomous 'copyright' literature or art. Instead we treat them as 'trash' or raw material for what I name FairyPlay, that is: the making use of fairy tales in Danish children's play culture of today. Before we frame the fairy tales inside children's culture in more detail, we summarize the cogwheels for FairyPlay using H.C. Andersen as an example:

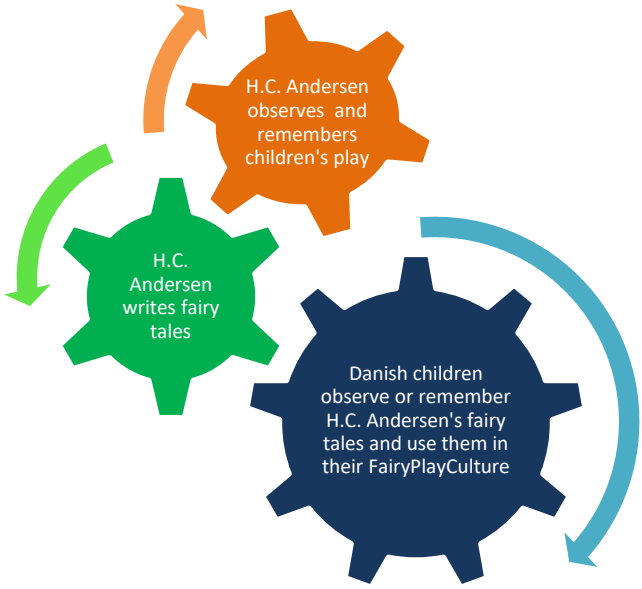

Fig. 2: Cogwheels for FairyPlay.

Folklore, Booklore, Medialore

The constituents of FairyPlay are described also in the following figures, focusing on the conceptual framework for *lore*, that is, in this article, the accumulation and mode of performing narrations such as (fairy) tales, nursery rhymes, and sayings. As Hasan El-Shamy, researcher at Indiana University states, the telling of stories "is fundamentally a process, rather than an event." (El-Shamy, 1990, p. 63). During this never-ending process: "No one is lore-free. Thus, an item of lore (e.g., the tale titled "The Taming of the Shrew") may be born by Shakespeare (or another member of the culture elite), by a Hollywood scriptwriter or popular-song speculator, or by an African hunter, horticulturist, or university professor (El-Shamy, 2005, p. 237).

We shall distinguish between three types of lore: folklore, booklore, and medialore. Seen in a linear perspective, the terms represent a continuum in *time*:

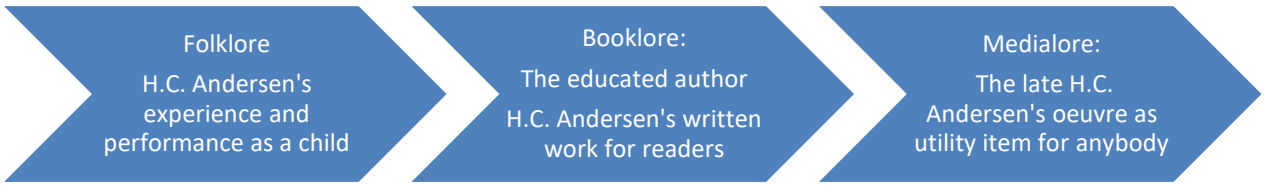

Fig. 3: Folklore, booklore, medialore in a linear perspective.

H.C. Andersen experienced and practiced the oral and bodily performed folklore during his childhood; also, his father would read the *Arabian Nights* and other tales to his son (Holbek, 1990, p. 167), and as he grew up, he became a reader; subsequently he produced the written and readable booklore as a fiction writer; and finally, after his death, his oeuvre is integrated in all sorts of medialore produced and used by others in present-day society.

Nevertheless, the terms folklore, booklore, and medialore just as well represent a contemporary perspective, because all three types of lore can be found both separate and mixed in our modern times:

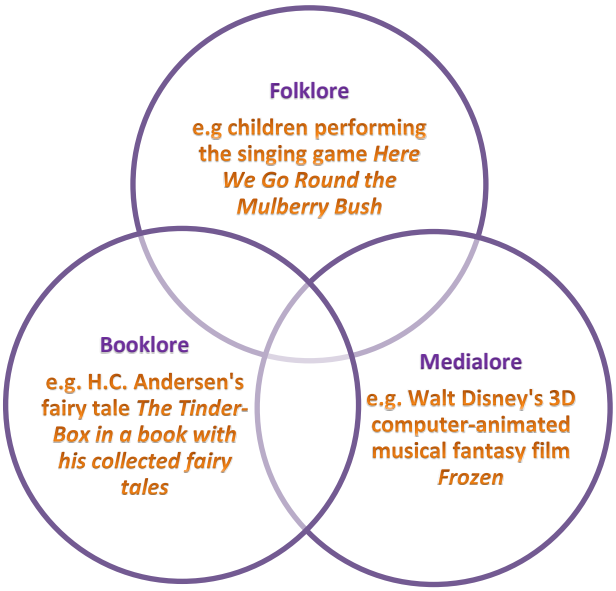

Fig. 4: Folklore, booklore, medialore in a contemporary perspective.

In the overlapping between these three types, we observe a simultaneity that accommodates the potentiality for performing infinite variations of FairyPlay. The telling emerges out of following a plurality of telling tracks, and therefore appears to be fragmentary, incoherent, esoteric. In the following figure we have combined the constituents of figure no. 2, 3, and 4 to show the complexity of FairyPlay:

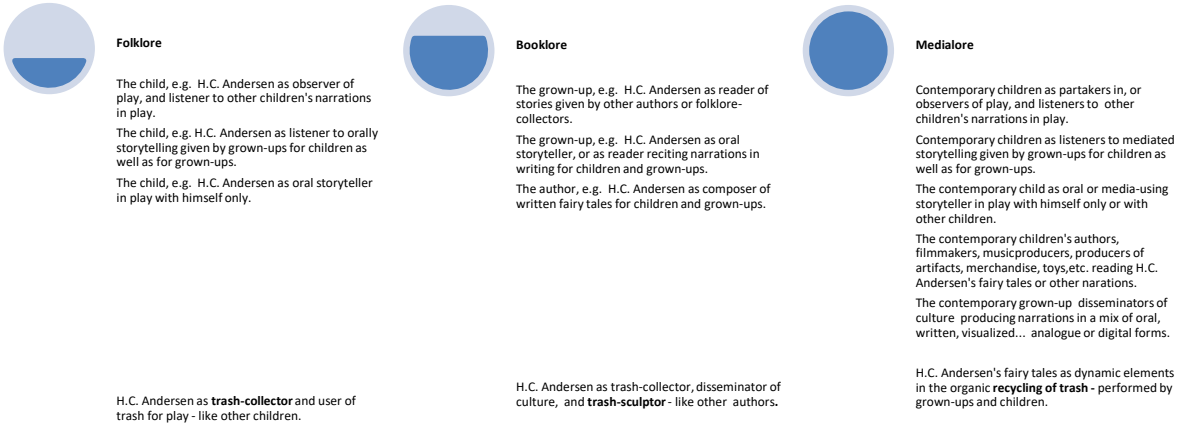

Fig. 5: Constituents of FairyPlay.

Until now, we have put analytic emphasis on process over product; we have seen H.C. Andersen's fairy tales as a representation of the pyramid of performance; we have presented H.C. Andersen as a homo ludens, a trash-sculptor, and a thingfinder, thereby equating him with children in play; we have outlined the cogwheels for FairyPlay; and we have used the lore-perspective – the accumulation and mode of performing narrations – to summarize our framing of FairyPlay. In the following, we add the perspectives of power and potentiality.

In the never-ending process of recycling trash, we find the human need for balancing between freedom and control. You demand the freedom to model trash as you like it, but also you negotiate ways of regulation or control of trash-use to share the action with other participants. We relate this perspective to the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben's seeing children's play as central to the deactivation of power: "one day, humanity will play with law just as children play with disused objects, not in order to restore them to their canonical use but to free them from it for good" (Agamben, 2005, p. 64).

Children may play with concrete results of the types of lore and overlapping lore-constellations as 'disused objects', as trash fit for moulding, for sculpturing. In FairyPlay you have no absolute rules, you negotiate and renegotiate in the situation. The players may or may not actualize the mode of potentiality to transgress canonical use. Agamben's theory of the human (Agamben, 1999) as a being endowed with potentiality-to-be-or-do (or (im)potentiality-to-not-be-or-not-do) allows us to see play as a *framing* (Bateson, 2000) of potentiality/impotentiality, and you may observe children activating the potentiality-to-practice transgression, or instead observe them activating the potentiality-to-not-do. As figure no. 1, The pyramid of performance, shows, actual

performance may be the realization (or the not-realization) of mimesis, poiesis, and kinesis respectively. The potentiality of play is a potentiality, which may or may not practice actual play in an already defined manner. You are free to play, but also free not to play. This is the core of play. There is no 'canonical use' of H.C. Andersen's fairy tales – or of tales as such.

This means that HC. Andersen's fairy tales are treated like any fairy tale known today - at least in a Danish context. Seeking the perspective of the child to understand how children use and produce culture in their every-day life, we do not find it fruitful to distinguish between fairy tales said to be originated from oral, literary or other mediated forms respectively (Toft, 2012). As made clear by researchers in remixology, the use of remix, mash-ups, and trash are basic doings in the folk art of the future (Gunkel, 2016).

Folklore of the future: trash, remix, and mash-ups

It has been our claim that the term *trash* may be used as an appropriate metaphor for H.C. Andersen's fairy tales, knowing full well that such a term may be repulsive for all lovers of H.C. Andersen's oeuvre. However, we wish to stress the ecological and cultural geographical distinctive features of fairy tales. They are, like play culture, "at once completely local and extremely global" (Mouritsen, 2002, p. 25); they are actualized and performed in variable situations. You may recycle, reuse versions, fragments, elements, themes as you wish for. There is an old saying or proverb: *One man's trash is another man's treasure*. Or, put the other way around: *One man's treasure is another man's trash*. Meaning: children, as well as grown-ups, treat some narrations, heard, read or filmed, as 'treasures', others as 'trash'; sometimes the same narration may be treated as sacrosanct treasure in one situation, as tip-trash in another.

By using the word trash, you could mean something which is in a crumbled or broken condition like the darning-needle or the one-legged tin soldier mentioned above, but also a narration split up or destroyed into bits and pieces, some of which you can reuse in collage, cut-up, mash-up, assemblage, and so forth, others you may just throw on your dust-heap. Here *compilation* and *blending* are the keywords, recombining them to concepts as *remix* and *mash-up*. *Parody* through mash-up of various well-known figures or formula is a popular mode, and often you will find that the recycling is carried out so heavily that the appropriation, reconfiguration, and re-contextualizing of the elements makes it almost impossible to determine the sources or the question of copyright.

However, this mode of creating new narrations is not only the folklore of the future, but also the folklore of the past, also the mode of creating booklore before copyright became a serious issue.

Inger Simonsen, Danish researcher in the history of children's literature, brings a quotation from Morten Hallager, Danish schoolmaster, printer, and author, who in the year 1798 presents his most recent compilation of narrations designed for children:

I find pieces of Choffin in Sultzer and Gedicke, of Campe in Berquin's and Salzmann's works, just as in Campe I find pieces I have read before in other works; but now so splendidly rewritten according to their own purpose, that you almost forget having read them before. As for the translation, I have not exactly always complied with my authors; but sometimes by some authors I added and deducted; in that I thought it to be consistent with my aim, namely to amuse, benefit, and delight children (Simonsen, 1966, p. 20, my translation). Simonsen concludes: "As for the oldest children's literature, the truth of the matter is that the material is communal property; it is borrowed, imitated, rewritten. The patterns are given ..." (Simonsen 1966, 20, my translation).

In remixes, you reinterpret a single work of art, e.g. 'The Snow Queen,' whereas mash-ups sample multiple works, e.g. 'Aladdin and the Magic Lamp,' The Bible, and 'Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush.' The samplers may use tiny slices or bigger scraps and fragments of already made works in their process. (Gunkel, 2016, p. 17). Intertextuality in its many variable forms is understood as everyman's right to copy. All art can be transformed into folk art, as well as all folk art can be transformed into fine arts.

Wherever recycling of trash is performed, it is hard to uphold the principle of copyright. According to Gunkel recycling is a way of undermining our understanding of concepts such as originality, innovation and paternity. Consumers become creators or prosumers – partakers in recycling processes and performing the folk art of the future. (Gunkel, 2016, X-XVIII). In this perspective, children in FairyPlay practice pre- and postmodern dissemination of culture.

The Complex Concept of Culture

The postmodern concept of culture is a complex mixture (Toft, 2016). On the one hand, we may see culture as something to *have,* and if you have enough, you are a cultivated and educated man. For example, you then know the Danish literary canon where H.C. Andersen's 'The Little Mermaid' occurs. The Danish Ministry of Culture has also delivered a canon for children's culture, where the first Danish trash-playground (skrammellegeplads)[iv] occurs together with *Lego* building blocks, and the comic *Donald Duck & Co.*, but H.C. Andersen's fairy tales do not. Instead all primary and secondary school students will be presented with H.C. Andersen as one of the 15 most important Danish fiction writers in the history of literature. In this context, H.C. Andersen's fairy tales are

great works of literature, they are national treasures, and their author is an icon you may be examined on.

On the other hand, we may see culture as something we are born to be part of, and throughout our everyday life *are in.* We share common habits, traditions and fairy tales, we choose between different ways of expressing ourselves aesthetically thereby showing with whom we share taste and lifestyle. For example, if you are born as Dane, you meet H.C. Andersen everywhere: you may live at H.C. Andersen-road, enjoy a H.C. Andersen-ice, wear a sweater with the little mermaid-print, and be singing his song of the Danish country 'Denmark, My Native Land' or you listen to the version sung by a modern Danish band named Outlandish. Or you may fall asleep with your IPad showing the Walt Disney animated film, 'Frozen,' with 'The Snow Queen' as source material, or you may … In this context H.C. Andersen's fairy tales are integrated in the commercial consumer culture filled with merchandise.

Others may see the concept of culture as a concept of our creation of social relations and aesthetic meaning in a participatory culture. We *do* or *perform* culture, and by doing so we learn and gain competences, and we reflect upon our skills and craftsmanship. Seen in this pragmatic context, H.C. Andersen's fairy tales are what we practice and perform them to be, and it is the performance that is the agenda. We reflect, not upon his work, but *how his work works* e.g. in film industry or in children's play culture as performed in day care institutions. We *have* culture, we *are in* culture, we *can* culture, and we *do* culture. We all are disseminators of culture. To summarize we use the following figure (Toft, 2016):

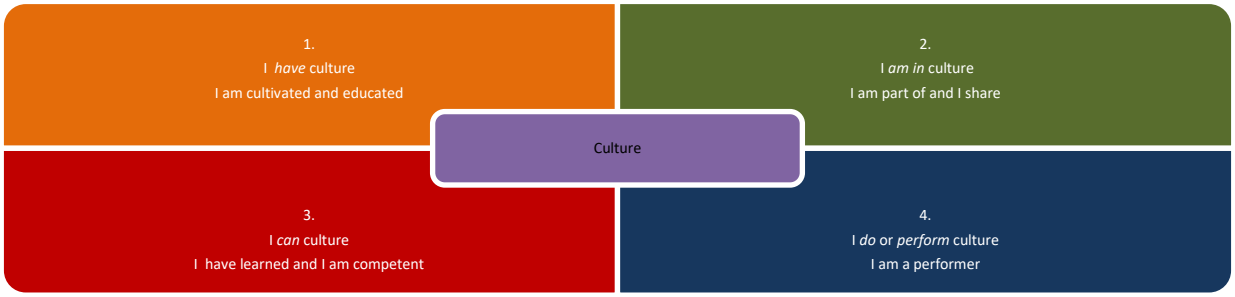

Fig. 6: Four contexts for culture.

In the following we focus primarily on culture seen in the 4th context of children's performance. We use the distinction between culture performed for, with and by children. H.C. Andersen performed culture *for* children by writing literary fairy tales, Danish artists, pedagogues and teachers perform culture in cooperation *with* children by using his literary fairy tales in a diverse range of projects.

Fairy tales are performed *by* children inside their play culture. However, you should remember that in practice for, with, and by are not that distinguishable.

Culture Performed for, with and by Children

Child Culture is a concept aimed to grasp those phenomena of the world that we interpret as related to use of media and play among children consistent with Danish play theorist, Flemming Mouritsen's framing and dividing this child culture into three categories: culture performed for, with, and by children. Culture performed by children he also categorizes as children's culture or "*play culture"* (Toft & Knudsen, 2016, vol. 2, p. 219-37). The category 'culture for children' encompasses productions created by grown-ups for children. The child is objectified as a receiver of completed aesthetic expressions, and often the products are adapted according to age, skills and motivation, as we know from the many different versions of H.C. Andersen's fairy tales, e.g. the original written version, the Walt Disney film version, and the pedagogical adapted LIX-guided textbook-version of 'The Little Mermaid'. Also, *for* children, the Danish playground company, Kompan, builds a H.C. Andersen-playground in Odense combining analogue and digital folklore, booklore, and medialore elements (Kompan), the Danish Lego Foundation sells a range of H.C. Andersen toy-fairy tales, LEGO Belville products, and Disney-versions as LEGO Little Princess,[v] and The Danish Books & Magic company presents 'The Little Mermaid' as Augmented Reality combining physical book and digital app, blending booklore and medialore, classic storytelling and mobile technology (Books and Magic).

The category *culture with children* describes projects concerning communication of culture and often initiated and publicly funded by e. g. The Ministry of Culture, The Ministry of Education, local authorities, institutions, organizations or corporate sponsorship, involving artists, teachers, pedagogues in steering committees and working groups. Such projects focus on co-operation and co-construction, and the children are both subjectified as co-producers and objectified as co-receivers. They may take part in a competition designed and arranged by HCA Festivals in Odense, another nationwide drawing and writing competition with crown princess Mary as protector, a local dramatizing of 'Clumsy Hans' in a class or day care institution … Later I shall briefly describe some of the findings in my research on projects with children.

The category 'culture by children – play culture' describes children as subjects designing, sending and receiving their own aesthetic expressions framed as play. They organize time, place and themes, they choose modes of expressions. They play: singing, telling stories, acting, dancing,

jumping, whispering, combining analogue and digital media, filming, drawing, taking photos … Play is a mental space of *potentiality* (Agamben, 1999), where players are enabled to give arbitrary signs any amount of aesthetically significance as long as the situation is framed 'play'. While doing so, players can shift between acting as bearers of rule-based and ritualized tradition or promotors of ungovernable and revolutionary avant-garde.

So, children need to practice play and keep themselves in readiness, i.e. pick up know-how of rituals, patterns of bodily moves, gestures, rhymes, songs, sayings, legends, fairy tales, formula, schemata, scripts and other aesthetic techniques. Mouritsen terms a player's performance: "spontaneity rehearsed to the core*" (*Toft & Knudsen, 2016, vol. 2, p. 226, my translation). In other words, actual play is grounded on a huge, common cultural storage disposable for the actual users. In this cultural set of shelves, H.C. Andersen's fairy tales are muddled, mingled, mixed with a lot of other stuff or trash in a disorderly manner. The following examples show how children use fairy tales – for FairyPlay.

A mash-up of two goats, a snow queen, and an executor

Often pedagogues, teachers and consultants will design and arrange a project to avoid disorderly chaos. In my research, I often observe a conflict between doing culture for, with and by children, which the following example illustrates. It is retrieved from a government-backed project designed for improving pupils' subject knowledge, involving Danish state school pupils from Class 5-7 (Toft, 2008). With the purpose to create illustrated books with real-life stories from the history of their local market town, the pupils could use digital figures such as the priest, the farmer, the executioner, the housemaid, the grocer, and the beggar, and they could place the chosen figures in different sceneries such as the village pond, the church, the schoolyard, and the grocery shop. Also, the children could transfer figures and scenes to an online chat-program. Here they might create dialogues between the figures typed in screen bubbles. Figures or avatars steered by pupils from one class could chat with figures steered by pupils from other classes in the project.

The teachers were taken completely by surprise as they observed how the children quick as lightning looked deeper into the digital portal, examined entry points to other school-projects with other figures, scenes, storyboards etc., and opened one of those, earmarked work with H.C. Andersen's fairy tales with figures such as the ugly duckling, the white swan, the brave tin soldier, Numskull Jack and the snow queen. Curious and experimental as they were, one pupil after the other transferred the scenery from the village pond in their market town in the Middle Ages to their

chat-program and there chose not only the executioner or the housemaid, but also e.g. five white swans, a goat from *Numskull Jack*, and yet another swan, and yet another swan - and a snow queen. Imagine the contents of the dialogues typed in screen bubbles all over, e.g. when a snow queen and a brave tin soldier declare that they do not know what is going on in their fairytale project while a goat types to a shopkeeper that 'he' has nothing to do with the crazy swan-dialogues in the history project. The subject teachers would categorize fairy tale-swans, -goats, and -snow queens as confusing trash in the predefined historical context they wanted the children to concentrate on, but the children quickly categorized the same figures as treasures for making parody in diverse play projects. The figures were designed for remix inside pedagogical pre-defined projects, instead the children used them for mash-ups in new-defined play projects of their own.

The teachers learned that children spontaneously examine the world around them, and bring all sorts of stuff: trash, fragments, bits and pieces together. For them, the digital portal was an exciting warehouse giving them easy access to act as trash sculptors, playmakers, storytellers, and they had no marked distinction between storyboards for H.C. Andersen's fairy tales and storyboards for realistic representation.

The children played with the potentiality of the project both physically, technologically, mentally and aesthetically. The teachers might have let themselves be inspired by Gianni Rodari, winner of the Hans Christian Andersen Award 1970, and author of *The Grammar of Fantasy. An Introduction to the Art of Inventing Stories*. To describe the values in experimenting with and reflecting on the inertia of combining elements of different fictional worlds, Rodari formulated the questions: "What would happen if?", and "What could happen then?" (Rodari, 1996), which stimulate what he terms as the binomium "fantasy and logic", a mode of realization. These questions could also be defined as the essential questions asked in children's play culture – and in the head of a storyteller like H.C. Andersen.

By tossing a salad of figures, actions, and dialogues from diverse fictional and historical contexts children may examine both the potential possibilities and the logical limitations of the world, e.g. how many goats can communicate in different ways with the same executioner across boundaries without a breakdown? Mouritsen summarizes the characteristics of H.C. Andersen's fairy tales: "At the same time, they are consistently reflexive and 'naively' playfully, aesthetically performed" (Toft & Knudsen, 2016, vol. 2, p. 215, my translation). This mode of reflexivity integrated in aesthetical performance also goes for children's mode of play, as we shall see in the next example.

Little Mermaids, Hub Caps, Diamonds, and Star fish

In 2014, I did my research on a project supported by the Danish *Kulturprinsen* ("The prince of culture"), an experimental development center for culture with children and young people. In this project, pedagogues and artists emptied an ordinary room in two kindergartens, and then took the eldest children on outings to collect trash, e.g. pieces of broken glass from a bus shelter, ornamental hub caps lost by passing cars, a dead starfish with a rotten smell, bottle caps … The artists built a room for play and storytelling by combining these elements of trash into separate parts of the room. They made an indoor variation of a playground made of trash (Toft, 2014). For instance, you could look at the broken pieces of glass through a tiny port hole in the wall, and see how a spotlight turned this trash into sparkling diamonds; the dented hub caps spun around like UFOs in the ceiling; a vase modelled like a flower-girl became a metaphoric Miss Spring placed at a shrine, and you had to crawl through a tube to visit her.

The artists used the strategy of Pippi Longstocking who was hiding small trash elements around Tommy and Annika to be found as treasures. In this room, surrounded by discarded, broken, forgotten things, the children would play for hours inventing their own fantasy stories and fairy tales containing a diverse range of formulas, functions and improvisations. In a section the children named 'the mermaid room', especially the girls would play Disney-inspired little H.C. Andersen-mermaids decorating their home and sea garden with shells, and the boys ravaged like pirates in another section fashioned like a ship, fighting amongst each other, stealing or hiding an old treasure chest with coins of 'gold', and 'jewellery'. The 'mermaids' could quick as lightning turn into 'police' or 'thieves', and the 'pirates' could act as inoffensive Sea Kings who lovingly nursed the sea princesses, or they could turn into mermaids themselves. Or completely different stories could be performed… No Rodari or pedagogue was needed to help here. The children made innumerable and often seamless shifts between performance founded on mimesis, poiesis and kinesis as described above in figure no. 1. These shifts were based partly on the allegorical character of the room, partly on the situational mood of the participants and their individual capacity in use of aesthetic codes, magic formulas, and other modes of mimic, gestic, and oral narration. The recycling of e.g. "The Little Mermaid" was carried out so apparently fragmented and incoherent that it was a conjecture for me as researcher to decide whether a specific line or act belonged to this fairy tale or to another context. But that was my problem, not the playing children's. For each sudden shift, they sensuously understood one another quite well. If not, they rapidly reflected on

how the other players re-acted; they *reflected-in-action*, and they sometimes made a stop and *reflected-on-action* (Schön, 1983).

Pedagogues and parents may be given a huge fright and suspend a play situation, when they hear preschool children whoop: "I'll cut off your head!", inspired by the soldier from 'The Tinder Box.' Grown-ups may tend to taboo specific elements or entire fairy tales, e.g. 'The Little Mermaid' because some children are frightened by the sufferings of the mermaid. But grown-ups had better look for the ways in which children manage to adapt a spectrum of horrors and sorrows through playing them out in transformative or transgressive modes of action than give a fright and taboo such elements of horrors and sorrows. Up till now we have analyzed children's FairyPlay in kindergarten and primary school. The last example relates to an organized leisure activity.

Hack Your Heritage: Robot Fairy Tales

The leisure activities in the Danish organization named Coding Pirates are directed to children with an interest in play, programming, robots, and digital technologies. In 2017, sponsored by the Danish Ministry of Culture, volunteers from the Aarhus-department visited London to join the "Imagine"-festival. In their workshop, "Hack Your Heritage: Robot Fairy Tales" (Hack a Heritage, 2017), British children aged 7-12 would program robots to enact selected H.C. Andersen fairy tales. The hacker-approach, the playful and experimental use of technology, the mix of digital and analogue materials, and the focus on storytelling in groups appealed to them (Noergaard & Paaskesen, 2016). The children had a mash-up of raw materials for making remixes at their disposal, combined with expensive technology, especially Ozobots, Quirkbots, Lego WeDo, and LittleBits. Trash & Technology you may name the constellation. They made paper drawings, they cut out sceneries, castles, caves, and figures using pasteboard or by means of Geomac. They modelled robots to animate the brave tin soldier, Numskull Jack, the ugly duckling, the fearless soldier with his tinder box. The recycling of trash went on both literally and literary. Straws and string, feathers and matches, cardboard cylinders and legobricks, stickers, scissors, felt tips, tape, plastic beakers, old soft toys, faded toy figures.

During intense teamwork, children along with volunteers from Coding Pirates remixed, de- and reconstructed, the selected fairy tales. On one table, you would see e.g. the tin-soldier-ozobot-with blue-lightning move along sceneries until he reached the red-fire-scenery, where his blue-lightning turned into flashing red. On another you would see robot-Clumsy Hans approaching the princess made of a plastic beaker with holes cut out. One of her 'hands' is a pressure sensor, and

when Clumsy Hans shakes this ‘hand’, she suddenly brightens, produces a sound – and butterflies circulate around her ‘head’.

Organizer of the workshop, researcher at Aarhus University, Rikke Toft Noergaard, also runs this workshop with Danish coding-pirates-children, but over a longer period. The Danish children therefore become better experienced with the use of robots, also, they are more familiar with H.C. Andersen’s fairy tales than the British. So, they are more capable of de- and reconstructing a fairy tale as burlesque while balancing between rule-bound and free-form storytelling. For example, they let Donald Trump appear in a lot of different roles, e.g. as a young princess or an old woman. Much in the spirit of fairy tales, you might say. One never can be sure, whether a young princess or an old woman is a heroine or the opposite, until you have confronted yourself with them. H.C. Andersen himself knew how to strip emperors, kings and frauds to the skin.

FairyPlay: Carnivalesque and Neo-Avant-Garde (or rather not)

The three examples given in this article illustrate FairyPlay brought to life by children in kindergarten, primary school and organized leisure activity. They show how H.C. Andersen’s fairy tales are recycled by children in a spirit of laughter and a playful aesthetic mode of expression. We now point to the Russian philosopher and literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin, and define FairyPlay as *carnivalesque* (Bakhtin, 1984). In his studies Bakhtin underlines the contrast between the hierarchic order of normality and the carnivalesque turning upside down of this order, the breach of taboos, and suspension of rules for everyday life – during a short, well defined break – an interlude.

However, this dichotomous time management or enforcement of rules for ‘play’and ‘work’ do not provide a contemporary picture of FairyPlay as practiced by Danish children in the institutional settings for their performance. Neither in kindergarten, primary school nor the organized leisure activities do children only ‘work’ while attending ‘classes’, and ‘play’ only when allowed to during playtime or breaks. When participating in projects together with grown-ups, the children tend to carry out that aesthetic and experimental mode of narrative performance, which we name play, regardless of what grown-ups have prearranged or wished for. So, we should see the carnivalesque not as characterizing an *inter*-ludic (Lat. *ludere:* to play), but rather as one *intra*-ludic out of several other possible modes of performing FairyPlay.

Also, we might point to the Italian novelist and semiologist Umberto Eco, who in his “diario minimo” (minimal diaries) described the neo-avant-garde project, namely to deconstruct the literary

construction, to abolish the marked distinction between everyday language and art language by spinning them around and into each other in new, often comic and grotesque aesthetic modes (Eco, 1995). Children in FairyPlay often use exactly this strategy (the transgressive mode, as shown in figure no. 1), because it is useful for their play project: what matters in play is not just learning something by heart, not just transmitting or telling what you were told; you need to adapt the story to the play situation and its participants here and now. You play in order to play well, therefore you must be willing to change from epic to episodic storytelling in a split second. FairyPlay is a notion of performance.

H.C. Andersen was a neo-avant-garde of his time, when he created his fairy tales by combining trash and treasure, the oral and the literary language, mixing the timbre of voice, intonation and idiomatic speech from a folklore storyteller with a booklore style. He uses a clear child perspective when he addresses the readers of his time. He designs his allegorical sceneries both schematized and detailed: we go under water level with the little mermaid, in the air with the wild swans, at the rich people's castle, in the poor people's shanty, in the frozen land of the snow queen … you are fascinated by the picture, and you may proceed with the drawing, but you may also design new variations and add your own details.

Conclusion

In this article, we have presented H.C. Andersen as a homo ludens, a trash-sculptor and a thing-finder, like Pippi Longstocking and like children in play, and we investigated his fairy tales as a cross-cultural mix between folklore, booklore and medialore. We illustrated their usefulness as "trash" in a play culture where children recycle them into FairyPlay, and we exemplified how children pick up fairy tales, or fragments of fairy tales, from a context of folklore, booklore and medialore, and how they make them functional as raw materials for play-production by muddling, mingling and (re)mixing their formulas with other fictional materials and adjusting them to the play context through improvisations.

H.C. Andersen became a world-famous author due to his talent for transforming and transgressing his own childhood experiences into art, into booklore. His fairy tales have their narrative background in folklore, and they are aesthetically adapted to booklore by the author and they are reconstructed in innumerable ways in medialore, forming parts of a never-ending trash-and-treasure recycling process. We demonstrated our comprehension through figures showing the pyramid of performance, the cogwheels for FairyPlay, folklore, booklore, medialore in a linear, and

a contemporary perspective, the constituents of FairyPlay, and the four contexts of culture. The figures illustrate how contemporary use of H.C. Andersen's fairy tales in play and medialore helps them to live on not just as cultural heritage, but also as fantastic folklore of the future.

The geologist and social scientist, Marcos Buser opens his book, *Rubbish Theory: The Heritage of Toxic Waste*, with the following statement:

> What we call heritage is the result of what we wish to retain or reperform – whether it be tangible or intangible, and whether it be ideas, memories, things or practices. The act of retaining, in its turn, usually leads to handing down heritage to the next generation. In this way, a cross-generational continuity comes into being (…) This is an example of Heracleitus' *panta rhei* – everything is in flux (Buser, 2015, p. 5).

Panta rhei – Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tales are in flux, as trash and treasure, as rubbish retained and reperformed. Concurrently they represent the *transient*, the *durable* and the *rubbish*, as defined in *Rubbish Theory: The Creation and Destruction of Value* (Thompson, 2017). They are transient: here today, gone tomorrow, they are durable: a joy forever, and they are rubbish: possible raw materials for new creative and aesthetic modes of expression – known as play.

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[ii] C.f. "Critical researchers begin from the premise that all cultural life is in constant tension between control and resistance. This tension is reflected in behavior, interaction rituals, normative systems, and social structure, all of which are visible in in the rules, communicative systems, and artifacts that comprise a given culture." (Thomas 2003: 48)

[iii] Aristotle linked his concept of kinesis or motion to his notions of actuality and potentiality, which I shall later relate to Giorgio Agamben's concept.

[iv] The purpose of a trash-playground is to support children's creative abilities through making hideouts of bricks and boards using saws, hammers, shovels, and nails, and play with provided trash, e.g. old cars and cardboard boxes. The first was made in Copenhagen during World War II by landscape architect C. Th. Sørensen. In this article, we see trash-playgrounds as integrating our play-perspective. Also, you may visit contemporary playgrounds made of trash in order to raise children's awareness about environmental degradation, e.g. Ruganzu Bruno / Eco Art Uganda, an artist using aesthetic artistic expression just like H.C. Andersen did (TEDCity 2.0).

[v] 2005 they made this range for girls aged 5-10, e.g. *The Little Mermaid*, *The Snow queen*, *The Tinder Box* (Lego Belville) or the Disney classics-Little Princess range with e.g. Ariel's dolphin-carriage (Lego Ariel). The modularity of LEGO® bricks goes well with the modularity of fairy tales within folklore matrix. Today Lego present a culture of interiors, sceneries, sets and set-ups like Lego Friends. They focus upon the 'building' of interaction between children – often parts and bricks of a set vanish, but the children just combine with other elements of 'trash' from other playware contexts integrating them into the set by means of narration.