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«La sensazione di una melanconica positività!»

Valuations of the popular

Hans Christian Andersen in Italy

Anne Klara Bom – Torsten Bøgh-Thomsen

## INTRODUCTION

The Danish author Hans Christian Andersen (1805-1875) was a traveller. In his lifetime, he went abroad more than thirty times, and he travelled all over Europe<sup>1</sup>. Andersen visited Italy seven times from 1833 to 1872, and these travels inspired him significantly in his work. Today, in his prosperity, Hans Christian Andersen is still a traveller, albeit in a different sense. His world famous fairy tales in particular are read and loved across borders and cultures. *The Ugly Duckling*, *The Little Mermaid* and *The Emperor's New Clothes* are tales that many people have come across, probably read aloud by parents at first, and later on school curricula. While the research on Andersen's travels in Italy are comprehensive and, to a certain extent, adequate<sup>2</sup>, and while the reflections of Italy in Andersen's works have also been studied in literary analyses of for example the novel *The Improvisator* and the travelogue *A Poet's Bazar*<sup>3</sup>, his contemporary travels as a cultural icon is still a new field of research. Within this field, Hans Christian Andersen is perceived as an object for cultural analyses, as it is argued that the status as a world famous author is sustained solely because

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<sup>1</sup> *Hans Christian Andersen: Danish Writer and Citizen of the World*, ed. by Sven Hakon Rossel, Rodopi, Amsterdam-Atlanta 1996.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, Paul V. Rubow – Helge Topsøe-Jensen, *H.C. Andersens Romerske Dagbøger*, Gyldendal, København 1947; Helge Topsøe-Jensen, *H.C. Andersens Rom – dagbogsnotater og tegninger*, Gyldendal, København 1979; Hans Edvard Nørregaard-Nielsen, *Jeg saae det Land – H.C. Andersens rejseskitser fra Italien*, Gyldendal, København 1990; Poul Houe, *Going Places: Hans Christian Andersen, the Great European Traveler*, in *Hans Christian Andersen: Danish Writer and Citizen of the World*, cit., p. 123-175.

<sup>3</sup> Hans Edvard Nørregaard-Nielsen, *Jeg saae det Land – H.C. Andersens rejseskitser fra Italien*, cit.; Johan de Mylius, *Livet og skriften: En bog om H.C. Andersen*, Gads Forlag, København 2017, p. 422-455.



Andersen's works are used across borders and supplied with culturally specific meanings and values in the processes where he is passed on to next generations<sup>4</sup>. Cultural studies scholars David Held and Henrietta Moore argue that in cultural studies, valuation processes are of interest, because globalisation in general and neoliberalism in particular have affected an on-going transformation of people's values, aspirations and expectations, and as values govern people's actions and practices, appraisals will tell tales about what they consider as significant and valuable and why<sup>5</sup>. The topic of interest in this paper is how people in contemporary Italy value Hans Christian Andersen as a cultural icon, as Hans Christian Andersen is staged as a potential medium through which new narratives about values can be told. It is offered as a thesis that Andersen functions a mirror: When people in contemporary Italy mirror themselves in the icon, they do so because there is a 'match' between their socially shared values and the content in Andersen's fairy tales, and when they articulate meaning about this match, the mirror reflects their values, aspirations and expectations. Thus, in this study, the cultural icon Hans Christian Andersen is used as a framework for conceptualisation of the links between culture, economy and social well-being following the idea of culture as a 'major force for change in the world' that is 'shaping social, economic and political transformations,' rather than the perception of culture as a potential victim of globalisation<sup>6</sup>. The empirical material for the study consists of 1236 completed surveys comprising respondents from all regions in Italy except two, and two subsequent focus group interviews conducted in Milan and Rome. The analysis show examples of how the Italian respondents use Hans Christian Andersen as a launch pad for considerations of and dialogues about Italian values, ways of life, ideals and self-understandings.

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<sup>4</sup> Anne Klara Bom, *Vores allesammens H.C. Andersen. Diskursteoretiske analyser af kulturfænomenet H.C. Andersen og dets aktuelle betydninger lokalt, nationalt og globalt*, PhD Dissertation, University of Southern Denmark, Odense 2014; Ead., *H.C. Andersen: Et kulturfænomen i teori og praksis*, in *H.C. Andersen i det moderne samfund*, ed. by Anne Klara Bom – Jakob Bøggild – Johs. Nørregaard Frandsen, University Press of Southern Denmark, Odense 2014.

<sup>5</sup> David Held – Henrietta L. Moore, *Cultural Politics in a Global Age: Uncertainty, Solidarity and Innovation*, Oneworld, Oxford 2008.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.



## THE INSTITUTIONALISED AND THE POPULAR HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN

This study can be placed within what has been termed «the third dimension» of Hans Christian Andersen research<sup>7</sup>. Hans Christian Andersen has been a research topic for almost as long as his artistic production has existed. For many years, this research has been two-dimensional: Scholars have either read his texts biographically, regarding the life of the historical person as key to his oeuvre<sup>8</sup>, or they have been interested in Andersen's works in their own right as artistic contributions to world literature that may be read in relation to the time of their production, but somehow exempted from the personal life of their author<sup>9</sup>. Recently, however, a third dimension in Hans Christian Andersen research has emerged where Andersen is perceived as a cultural icon, and thereby as *more* than his biography and work: A cultural icon can be defined as a person (or figure or event) that is repeatedly found valuable enough to be passed on to the next generation. In these valuation processes, the person transforms into a signifier of culture, an icon, when he is used as a representative for individual/collective, local, national, and/or global narratives<sup>10</sup>. Themes within this third dimension of Hans Christian Andersen research have for example focused on media adaptations of Andersen's fairy tales<sup>11</sup>, culturally oriented reception studies<sup>12</sup>, the staging and experience of cultural icons as tourism attractions<sup>13</sup>,

<sup>7</sup> Anne Klara Bom, *Vores allesammens H.C. Andersen*, cit.; Ead., *H.C. Andersen: Et kulturfænomen i teori og praksis*, cit.

<sup>8</sup> *Hans Christian Andersen: Danish Writer and Citizen of the World*, cit.; Paul Binding, *Hans Christian Andersen: European Witness*, Yale University Press, London 2014; Johan de Mylius, *Forvandlingens pris: H.C. Andersen og hans eventyr*, Forlaget Høst, København 2005; Id., *Livet og skriften: En bog om H.C. Andersen*, cit.

<sup>9</sup> See for example J. Bøggild, *Skygger fra 'Skyggen' i H.C. Andersens eventyr og historier*, in *H.C. Andersen i det moderne samfund*, cit., and *H.C. Andersen og det uhyggelige*, ed. by Jakob Bøggild – Anne Grum-Schwensen – Torsten Bøgh Thomsen, University Press of Southern Denmark, Odense 2015.

<sup>10</sup> Anne Klara Bom, *Affective Practice in the Icon-City. Ownership, Authenticity and Fictionalization of Urban Space*, in «Academic Quarter», 10 (2015), p. 35-52.

<sup>11</sup> Elisabeth Oxfeldt, *H.C. Andersens eventyr på film*, University Press of Southern Denmark, Odense 2009; Anna Katrina Gutierrez, *Mixed Magic. Global-Local Dialogues in Fairy Tales for Young Readers*, John Benjamins Publishing Company, Amsterdam 2017.

<sup>12</sup> For example Frederike Felcht, *Grenzüberschreitende Geschichten. H.C. Andersens Texte aus globaler Perspektive*, Francke Verlag, Tübingen-Basel 2013, Wenjie Li, *A History of Translation and Interpretation. The Chinese Versions of Hans Christian Andersen's Tales*, University Press of Southern Denmark, Odense 2017.

<sup>13</sup> Anne Klara Bom, *Affective Practice in the Icon-City*, cit.; Ead., *Where Fiction Really Exists: The Staging and Experience of Authenticity in the Literary Icon-City*, in *Deltagelse som transformation i kunst og kultur*, ed. by Anne Klara Bom – Anne Scott Sørensen, special



and on Andersen's cultural significance in countries as China<sup>14</sup>, Russia<sup>15</sup>, and Denmark<sup>16</sup>.

This article takes as its point of departure the idea of Hans Christian Andersen as a «floating signifier»<sup>17</sup>. This concept originally stems from anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss (1987-1950), who defined the floating signifier as representing «an undetermined quantity of signification, in itself void of meaning and thus apt to receive any meaning»<sup>18</sup>. Within cultural studies the concept has been further developed, for example in Stuart Hall's cultural analyses of how broad concepts as power and race work as floating signifiers that can obtain specific meanings and functions dependent on the symbolic and culturally specific meanings added to them in different contexts<sup>19</sup>. Thus, floating signifiers are «subject(s) to the constant process of redefinition and appropriation» where they can transform into «something different in different cultures, in different his-

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issue of «Aktuel Forskning. Litteratur, Kultur og Medier», 85-97 (2015); *Media tourism in Scandinavia*, ed. by Anne Klara Bom, special issue of «Scandinavica», 55 (2016).

<sup>14</sup> Anne Klara Bom, *When Heritage Tourism Goes Glocal – The Little Mermaid in Shanghai*, in «Journal of Heritage Tourism», 7, 4 (2012), p. 341-357; *Hans Christian Andersen in China*, cit.

<sup>15</sup> *Hans Christian Andersen in Russia*, ed. by Mads Sohl Jessen, University Press of Southern Denmark, Odense 2018 (forthcoming).

<sup>16</sup> *H.C. Andersen i det moderne samfund*, cit.; Anne Klara Bom, *H.C. Andersen: Et kulturfænomen i teori og praksis*, cit.; Thomas Marthinsen, *H.C. Andersen og det ubestridtes univers. Forandringer i det doksiske rom innen H.C. Andersen-forskningen og –formidlingen*, Master's thesis, University of Southern Denmark, Odense 2016.

<sup>17</sup> See Anne Klara Bom, *Vores allesammens H.C. Andersen*, cit. Since we consider Andersen as a floating signifier, it is important for us not to impose on the respondents our own distinction between the author as a biographical, historical person, and the authorship in the sense of his works and texts. Therefore, when we refer to 'Andersen' in the following, we use this term in its broadest possible sense. 'Andersen' is in Denmark the common metonymy of Hans Christian Andersen, and in this context, it refers to the author and the authorship – as well as adaptations and stagings of said author and authorship. For example, it is possible for a respondent to claim knowledge of *The Little Mermaid* and thus 'Andersen' because he or she has seen the Disney adaptation of the fairy tale. It is a key point of the cultural studies method that, as researchers, we do not promote a specific definition, understanding or delimitation of our subject, let alone a 'true Andersen', but allow respondents to associate freely and project their understanding into the subject matter. In this case, however, none of the respondents emphasized Andersen's biography to any significant extent, and therefore it is primarily Andersen's authorship that is referred to.

<sup>18</sup> Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Introduction to the Work of Marcel Mauss (Introduction à l'œuvre de Marcel Mauss*, 1950), Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1987, p. 55.

<sup>19</sup> Stuart Hall, *What Is This 'Black' in Black Popular Culture?*, in «Social Justice», 20, 1-2 (1993), p. 104-114; Id., *Race, The Floating Signifier*, Documentary Film prod. by Media Education Foundation, 1997, transcript of the movie can be located on <[http://www.mediaed.org/assets/products/407/transcript\\_407.pdf](http://www.mediaed.org/assets/products/407/transcript_407.pdf)> (accessed 2017 July 5).



torical formations, at different moments of time»<sup>20</sup>. As a floating signifier, the cultural icon Hans Christian Andersen has no meaning or function in itself, as it is supplied with content and significance only in the processes where Andersen is 'matched' with values and convictions in particular cultural contexts.

Implicit in the idea of the floating signifier is the notion that even though a concept is considered as «apt to receive any meaning», people will strive to sediment its meaning in cultural practices and thereby contribute to hegemonic versions of the signifier<sup>21</sup>. An example of situations where this is particularly necessary when it comes to Hans Christian Andersen is for example within any national educational system, where he is on the curriculum, and in national research traditions where the existence of intersubjective perceptions of Andersen can be necessary for any research progress. With few exceptions<sup>22</sup>, the existing analyses of Hans Christian Andersen's cultural significance across borders have their focus on such platforms, and can be considered as different versions of what can be termed the *institutionalised* Hans Christian Andersen: The Andersen who has gained significance as a research object and/or as part of a curriculum in a particular national context. These contributions take form as academic accounts of for example the receptive history of Andersen in different countries, Andersen's meetings with particular countries on his travels, and (mostly literary) analyses of his work.

The institutionalised version of Hans Christian Andersen in Italy has had one dominant trait since his first fairy tales were translated into Italian in the 1860's: Andersen is perceived and presented as an author of children's literature. In her brief overview of the distribution of Hans Christian Andersen in Italy (1993), literary scholar Merete Kjølner presents examples of how different translations of Andersen's fairy tales and books have been received in Italy, and she paints a rather diverse and paradoxical picture of a well selling writer who only on isolated incidents has been acknowledged as more than a writer for children. Kjølner mentions several examples of Italian editions of Andersen's fairy tales that reflect the perception of him as a writer characterized by simplicity<sup>23</sup>,

<sup>20</sup> Stuart Hall, *Race, The Floating Signifier*, transcript, cit., p. 8.

<sup>21</sup> Ernesto Laclau, *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time*, Verso, London 1990, p. 40.

<sup>22</sup> Anne Klara Bom, *H.C. Andersens rette sted? Fra verdensomspændende fejring til Kejsersens Nye Klæder*, in *Stedsvandring. Analyser af stedets betydning i kunst, kultur og medier*, ed. by Malene Breunig – Søren Frank – Hjørdis Kortbek – Sten Pulz Moslund, University Press of Southern Denmark, Odense 2013, p. 99-118; Ead., *Vores allesammens H.C. Andersen*, cit.

<sup>23</sup> Merete Kjølner, *Et italiensk Andersen-potpourri*, in *Andersen og Verden: Indlæg fra den første internationale H.C. Andersen-konference 25.-31. August 1991*, ed. by Johan



a perception further emphasised by the fact that these editions are in a «frequently modified and strongly reduced form, sometimes reduced to almost just captions»<sup>24</sup>. One of the isolated incidents mentioned by Kjøller where Andersen is presented as more than a teller of children's tales is the 1954 translation of 107 fairy tales from Danish into Italian made by the Italian Hans Christian Andersen scholars Alda Castagnoli Manghi and Marcella Rinaldi. Kjøller calls the edition «epochal», as the translations were loyal to the original choices of words and tones<sup>25</sup>. Another example occurred in 2010, when the Danish/Italian literary scholar Anna Maria Segala edited the first research anthology on Andersen, *Fiaba e modernità*<sup>26</sup>. The anthology had as its aim to detach Hans Christian Andersen from the typically romantic perceptions of him and his work and render the modern elements in the fairy tales and the authorship as a whole visible.

The central aim of this paper, however, is to shed light on the Italian version of the *popular* Hans Christian Andersen: The Andersen whose figure and legacy is supplied with meaning and value by Italians as an object of popular culture. Following cultural studies researcher Lawrence Grossberg it is argued that the appraisal of Hans Christian Andersen on an institutional level can only exist if Andersen is considered as valuable on the popular level. Grossberg has defined popular culture as «cultural practices and formations whose primary effects are affective»<sup>27</sup>, and argued that even though the power of popular culture is frequently overlooked or underestimated by intellectuals, the affective dimension in people's engagement with the popular holds a great potential:

for the vast majority of people in advanced capitalist societies, this is the primary space where affective relationships are articulated. It is here that people seek to actively construct their own identities, partly because there seems to be no other space available<sup>28</sup>.

Cultural studies co-founder Stuart Hall has defined culture as «sites of struggle», where individuals struggle to obtain hegemony with their

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de Mylius – Aage Jørgensen – Viggo Hjørnager Pedersen, University Press of Southern Denmark, Odense 1993, p. 353-361, here p. 354.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 353.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 354.

<sup>26</sup> Anna Maria Segala, *Fiaba e modernità in Hans Christian Andersen*, Bulzoni Editore, Roma 2010.

<sup>27</sup> Lawrence Grossberg, *We Gotta Get out of the Place: Popular Conservatism and Postmodern Culture*, Routledge, New York-London 1992, p. 398.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 85.



meanings; meanings that can always be re-and de-articulated<sup>29</sup>. Furthermore, Hall has suggested that culture is conjured up and systematically organized in representational systems of «shared meanings»<sup>30</sup>: «[...] we give things meaning by how we *represent* them – the words we use about them, the stories we tell about them, the images of them we produce, the emotions we associate with them, the ways we classify and conceptualize them, the values we place on them»<sup>31</sup>. In her analyses of Hans Christian Andersen's content and function as a cultural phenomenon in Denmark, cultural studies scholar Anne Klara Bom has shown how Danes use Andersen as a reference point and framework when they articulate discursive meaning about their senses of belonging and their positions as citizens in local, national and global contexts. Her analyses can be seen as examples of how the popular Hans Christian Andersen generates highly affective meaning-making when he is made topical as a medium for representational practices<sup>32</sup>. In line with Bom, the analysis in this paper emphasises that the representational practices that were identified in the empirical material are perceived as founded on emotions and ideologically rooted conceptions – not facts. Therefore, these actions of representation are analytically perceived as *affective practice*, a term coined by social psychologist Margaret Wetherell: «Affective practice focuses on the emotional as it appears in social life and tries to follow what participants do»<sup>33</sup>. The analytical aim with this concept is to integrate the affective in the discursive because «affect is about sense as well as sensibility. It is practical, communicative and organized»<sup>34</sup>. By use of *affective practice* as a sensitising analytical concept<sup>35</sup>, affect and discourse are considered

<sup>29</sup> Stuart Hall, *Notes on Deconstructing the Popular*, in *People's History and Socialist Theory*, ed. by R. Samuel, Routledge, London 1981, p. 227-240, here p. 233.

<sup>30</sup> Stuart Hall, *Representation. Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, Sage, London 1997, p. 2.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>32</sup> Anne Klara Blom, *When Heritage Tourism Goes Glocal – The Little Mermaid in Shanghai*, cit.; Ead., *H.C. Andersens rette sted?*, cit.; Ead., *Vores allesammens H.C. Andersen*, cit.; Ead., *H.C. Andersen: Et kulturfænomen i teori og praksis*, cit.; Ead., *Affective Practice in the Icon-City*, cit.

<sup>33</sup> Margaret Wetherell, *Affect and Emotion. A New Social Science Understanding*, Sage, London 2012, p. 4.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>35</sup> Nico Carpentier, *Deploying Discourse Theory. An Introduction to Discourse Theory and Discourse Theoretical Analysis*, in *Media and Communication Studies Interventions and Intersections*, ed. by Nico Carpentier – Ilija Trivundza – Pille Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt – Ebba Sundin – Tobias Olsson – Richard Kilborn – Hannu Nieminen – Bart Cammaerts, Tartu University Press, Tartu 2010, p. 251-265, here p. 259; Nico Carpentier – Benjamin De Cleen, *Bringing Discourse Theory into Media Studies*, in «Journal of Language and Politics», 6, 2 (2007), p. 265-293, here p. 273.



as two sides of the same coin, where the affective is a powerful element that embraces and intensifies feelings in discursive practice<sup>36</sup>, and the discursive is the realm that very frequently makes affect powerful<sup>37</sup>. Thus, in this paper, the analysis is centred on how ordinary Italians' affective meaning-making about Hans Christian Andersen reflects their self-understandings, life ways, and available versions of reality or *interpretative repertoires*, as Wetherell has termed it with social psychologist Jonathan Potter<sup>38</sup>: When people represent themselves and add meaning to cultural phenomena, situations and events, they use the discursive resources available to them to construct versions of reality. The interpretative repertoire, thus, is what is considered as true for one person, as it consists of this person's unique collection of discursive resources. It is expressed through «broadly discernible clusters of terms, descriptions and figures of speech often assembled around metaphors or vivid images»<sup>39</sup>. Furthermore, the content of interpretative repertoires is often socially accepted by many<sup>40</sup>. In line with Hall, it can be argued that the interpretative repertoire is the resources available for representational practices, and in this sense, the concept can be used to approach people as carriers and users of societal discourses, simultaneously<sup>41</sup>.

In this papers' analysis of the popular Hans Christian Andersen in Italy, the cultural formations that emerged from the respondents' representational practices are conceptualised as *affective alliances*, a term coined by Grossberg in his works on how people engage with popular culture<sup>42</sup>. Grossberg defines affective alliances as «an organisation of concrete material practices and events, cultural forms and social experience which both opens up and structures the space of our affective investments in the world»<sup>43</sup>. He further argues that these affective investments hold a great potential for empowerment, because affect defines a «condition of possibility for any political intervention»<sup>44</sup>. In line with this, it is offered as a thesis that if a cultural icon as Hans Christian An-

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<sup>36</sup> Margaret Wetherell, *Affect and Emotion. A New Social Science Understanding*, cit., p. 7

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>38</sup> Margaret Wetherell – Jonathan Potter, *Mapping the Language of Racism*, Columbia University Press, New York 1992.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 90.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 91f.; Anne Klara Bom, *Diskursanalytisk metode*, Samfundslitteratur, Frederiksberg 2015, p. 45f.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46.

<sup>42</sup> Lawrence Grossberg, *We Gotta Get out of the Place*, cit.; Id., *Dancing in spite of Myself. Essays on Popular Culture*, Duke University Press, Durham-London 1997.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 160-161.



dersen is perceived and analysed as a product of popular culture, the affective investments in his legacy and the alliances that emerge in the representational practices and valuation processes around him can generate new knowledge about what is considered as valuable and why, in a globalised world where 'value' is a buzzword on the rise, occurring both in regressive political discourses (back to the traditional values!) and in neo-liberal discourses (let's create societal value!).

#### THE VALUE OF CULTURAL ICONS

Before these affective investments and valuation processes can be analysed, it is necessary to consider how values can be conceptualised in connection to the cultural icon Hans Christian Andersen. The person Hans Christian Andersen cannot be approached as a communicator of values, because he died in 1875. Possible values reflected in his writings will manifest themselves as a consequence of our own culturally specific gazes. It is equally difficult to approach the author Andersen as a communicator of values, as this would implicate readings concerned with his intentions with the fairy tales, and results from such analyses would also be conjectures<sup>45</sup>. What is possible, however, is to examine what is at stake when the cultural icon Hans Christian Andersen is invested with meaning as a communicator of values, as such analyses focus on the people who engage in these cultural processes. From time to time, Hans Christian Andersen researchers have argued that the reason why Andersen is important in so many different cultures is because his works possess some kind of «universal value»<sup>46</sup>. As tempting as it can be to present such statements, they will always be postulates, because it is impossible to verify them. Furthermore, within cultural studies it appears much more intriguing to ask a question like: What is at stake when people from different cultural contexts add meaning to Hans Christian Andersen as a communicator of values, and how do they express themselves in these valuation processes?

In his famous theory of basic human values, social psychologist and cross-cultural scholar, Shalom Schwartz, argues that some values are

<sup>45</sup> Andersen did publish a lengthy commentary on his fairy tales, but these only describe the inspirations and processes concerning their production. Tellingly, Andersen never explained the meanings of his fairy tales neither in his letters nor in his diaries or biographies.

<sup>46</sup> See for example Johs. Nørregaard Frandsen, *The Writer of Tales: Hans Christian Andersen as a Cultural Bridge-Builder*, in «Forum for World Literature Studies», 3, 2 (2011), p. 204-210; Ye Rulan, *Hans Christian Andersen in China. An Overview*, in *Hans Christian Andersen in China*, ed. by Johs. Nørregaard Frandsen – Sun Jian – Torben Grøngaard Jeppesen, University Press of Southern Denmark, Odense 2014, p. 75-93.



likely to be universal, because they «are grounded in one or more of three universal requirements of human existence with which they help to cope»<sup>47</sup>. According to Schwartz, the universal requirements of human existence are «needs of individuals as biological organisms, requisites of coordinated social interaction, and survival and welfare needs of groups», and as individuals cannot cope with these requirements alone, they need values:

Rather, people must articulate appropriate goals to cope with them, communicate with others about them, and gain cooperation in their pursuit. Values are the socially desirable concepts used to represent these goals mentally and the vocabulary used to express them in social interaction<sup>48</sup>.

Following Schwartz, analyses of valuation processes must take place on an empirical level where it is possible to examine how people talk about values in practice. Thus, as the pragmatist philosopher Fabian Muniesa has argued, the notion ‘value’ must be replaced with ‘valuation’ in analytical practice, and attention must be paid to valuation as an *action*, «something that happens to something»<sup>49</sup>, in communicative processes. According to Schwartz, it is important to distinguish values from related concepts as attitudes, beliefs, norms, and traits, in such examinations. He argues that values, as «guiding principles in life»<sup>50</sup>, affect the perceptions of the other concepts in different ways. Attitudes, defined by Schwartz as «evaluations of objects as good or bad, desirable or undesirable» are based on values: «If we value stimulation highly and attribute little importance to security values, for example, we are likely to have a positive attitude toward bungee jumping», as he puts it<sup>51</sup>. Beliefs, on the other hand, are defined as «ideas about how true it is that things are related in particular ways», and whereas attitudes are sorted in good or bad, beliefs «vary in how certain we are that they are true». Norms, Schwartz argues, are «standards or rules that tell members of a group or a society how they should behave», and in practice, values affect «whether we accept or reject particular norms»<sup>52</sup>. When

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<sup>47</sup> Shalom H. Schwartz, *An Overview of the Schwartz Theory of Basic Values*, in «Online Readings in Psychology and Culture», 2, 1 (2012), p. 1-20, here p. 4.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> Fabian Muniesa, *A Flank Movement in the Understanding of Valuation*, in «Sociological Review», 59, 2 (2011), p. 24-38, here p. 26.

<sup>50</sup> Shalom H. Schwarz, *An Overview of the Schwartz Theory of Basic Values*, cit., p. 16.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*



it comes to traits, Schwartz points attention to potential incongruities between traits and values, as traits can refer to values, but it would be fallible to assume that they always do so: «[...] a person may behave obediently yet not value obedience and behave foolishly yet value wisdom highly»<sup>53</sup>, as Schwartz argues. In this paper, values are defined in continuation of Schwartz and Muniesa as guiding principles in life that can be examined through the performative actions of valuation expressed in affective practices that involve articulations of attitudes, beliefs, norms, and/or traits.

#### RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The empirical material was collected in two interconnected phases. Firstly, a survey with questions about general knowledge of Hans Christian Andersen was constructed and translated into Italian<sup>54</sup>. The survey was chosen as a method to approach the field. Other methods at this stage would have been difficult to activate as it is a challenge for Danish scholars to approach a population in another country. In order to get the survey distributed as widely as possible, contact was established with a Danish/Italian gatekeeper who is an employee at the department of VisitDenmark, the primary Danish tourist organisation, in Milan. She distributed the survey via social media to VisitDenmark's followers in Italy. This target group, of course, represents a methodological challenge, as it can be presumed that Italians who follow VisitDenmark on social media must know something about Denmark in advance. Furthermore, it can also be presumed that if a survey about Hans Christian Andersen is completed, the respondents know him in advance. However, these challenges were seen as advantages in this study, where the main focus was to examine the already existing ideas and values that emerge when Italians add meaning to Hans Christian Andersen as a cultural icon. 1759 Italian respondents engaged with the survey, and 1236 completed it. Geographically, all Italian regions except for Valle d'Aosta and Molise were represented among the respondents.

The analytical purpose with the survey was to obtain a sense of the Italian perception of Hans Christian Andersen. Therefore, the questions were as follows:

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<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16-17.

<sup>54</sup> We would like to thank our colleague, centre administrator Anya Aarenstrup for making the layout for the survey and transforming its results into the figures and tables used this article.



■ Where did you first get introduced to Hans Christian Andersen?

- At home
- In elementary school
- In upper secondary school
- At the university
- Other

■ In your opinion, what are the three most famous Hans Christian Andersen fairy tales in Italy?

- 1: \_\_\_\_\_
- 2: \_\_\_\_\_
- 3: \_\_\_\_\_
- Comment (free text)

■ Which three fairy tales by Hans Christian Andersen do you personally prefer?

- 1: \_\_\_\_\_
- 2: \_\_\_\_\_
- 3: \_\_\_\_\_
- Comment (free text)

■ What emotions do you associate with Hans Christian Andersen and his universe?

- (free text) \_\_\_\_\_

Figure 1

The surveys were the first stage in the study. At the second stage, two focus group interviews were conducted in Milan and Rome on October 4th and 7th 2016. In the survey, the respondents were encouraged to write their contact information if they wanted to participate in the focus group interviews. In Milan, 10 respondents participated, and the focus group interview in Rome had 6 participants. The focus group interviews were semi-structured, and lasted approximately two hours. The questions in the interview guide were inspired both by the collected survey responses and by the main focus of the study.

1. What Italian artists, authors or poets would you categorise Hans Christian Andersen with?
2. How was your first experience with Andersen?
3. The majority of the survey respondents replied that they were introduced to Hans Christian Andersen in their childhood.
  - When did you first become acquainted with Andersen, and how was this experience?
4. In the surveys, our respondents mention many different fairy tales when asked about the most famous Andersen fairy tales in Italy. This could point to the fact that he is relatively known here.
  - Why do you think that is?
  - What values and norms do you see represented in Andersen's fairy tales?
  - How do these values and norms, in your opinion, correspond with Italian values and norms?
4. The survey replies reflect a tendency to mention the serious, dark and melancholic fairy tales of Andersen as particularly significant.
  - Do you recognize this pattern, and why do you think these fairy tales are preferred by many Italians?
5. Alongside these preferences, Andersen is also mentioned as a producer of "good narratives for children." Is there, in your opinion, a link between the darker fairy tales and the idea that they are good for children?
6. Other frequently mentioned affects/sensations related to Andersen that are mentioned in the surveys are magic, fantasy and realism. What do you associate with these sensations?

Figure 2



In our research, Andersen is situated as an object for cultural studies analyses and the specific contexts he is situated in are perceived as multiple, dynamic and contradictory. Thus, it was not expected to find *the* Italian Hans Christian Andersen, understood as one specific, logical, coherent Italian narrative about Andersen and his work. In line with the idea of interpretative repertoires, it was instead expected that many different versions of Andersen would appear, and that a fragmentary, complex and probably self-contradictory image of an Italian Hans Christian Andersen would emerge from these versions of reality. Thus, as neither Hans Christian Andersen, his work nor Italian culture are perceived as static or hegemonic, the interplay and fields of negotiation between these three elements were the general analytical focus.

#### THE POPULAR HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN IN ITALY

The surveys were chosen as an approach to create an overview and obtain access to potential participants in the focus group interviews. In the surveys it was clear, that a significant part of the respondents first became acquainted with Hans Christian Andersen in either their home or in elementary school.

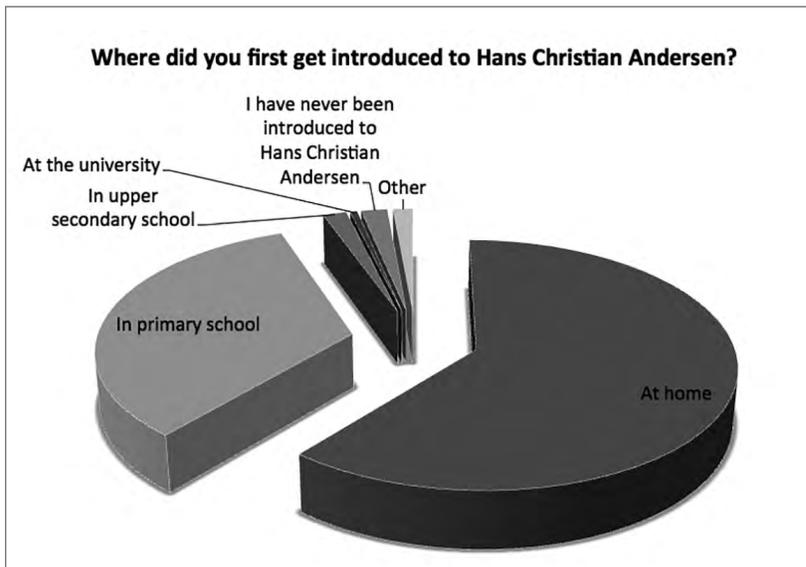


Table 2



In the answers to the questions that were concerned with the respondents' knowledge of Andersen's fairy tales, many different fairy tales were mentioned, but six fairy tales were pointed out as both the fairy tales presumed by the respondents to be the most popular in Italy, and as personal favourites: *The little Mermaid*, *The Ugly Duckling*, *The Princess on the Pea*, *The Little Match Girl*, *The Emperor's New Clothes*, and *The Steadfast Tin Soldier*.

In order to gather inspiration for questions to ask in the focus group interviews, the respondents were also asked what emotions they associated with Hans Christian Andersen and his universe.

In the surveys it became clear, that a majority of the respondents (61%) had been introduced to Hans Christian Andersen in their childhood, and for this reason, the first questions in the focus group interviews were aimed at elaborations of the experiences with these first meetings with Andersen. In the dialogues, the respondents articulated their versions of the institutionalised Hans Christian Andersen in Italy: as solely a children's book author, and the respondents positioned themselves

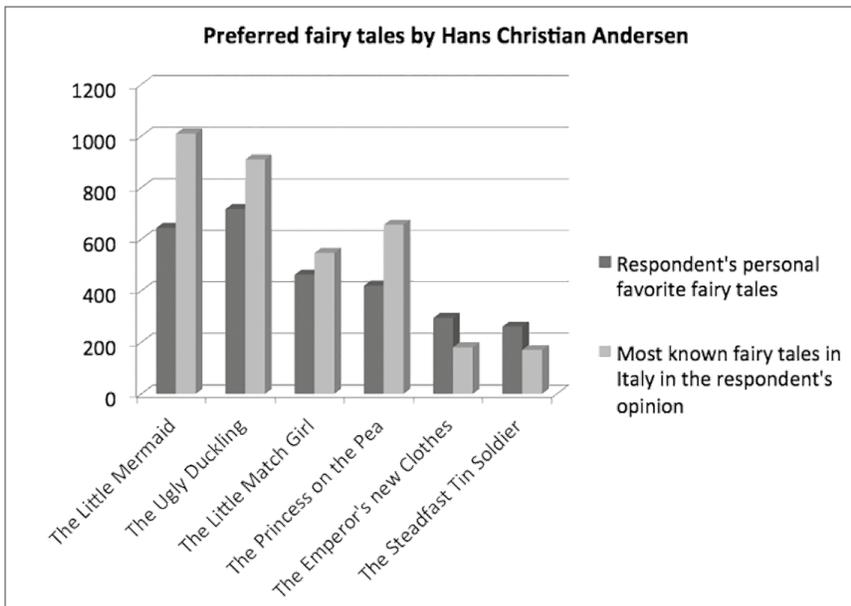


Table 3

as representatives of all Italians when they described a lack of knowledge in relation to both Andersen's biography and works other than the fairy tales. One of the respondents stated: «I think that for us in Italy [...].



We don't have knowledge in Hans Christian Andersen about poetry, about writing that's why for us it's just fairy tales», and another phrased it like this: «In general for the Italians, Hans Christian Andersen is the fantastic world of children. For myself too». These articulations reflect that Andersen is connected to children in the respondents' interpretative repertoires, and the respondents clearly felt that they were articulating a hegemonic discourse on Andersen in Italy, as they did not talk on behalf of themselves alone, but positioned themselves as parts of a national community as they referred to «us in Italy» and «in general for the Italians». A third respondent phrased his viewpoint like this:

I know almost nothing about all the writing of Hans Christian Andersen for theatres and plays and so on and I am afraid this is the situation, the everyday situation in Italy, we know him as a story maker for children and we limit it to that, honestly.

When people all over the world mirror themselves in Hans Christian Andersen as a cultural icon, however, they do so because there is a 'match' between their socially shared values and the content in Andersen's fairy tales. When the respondents were asked what values they could identify in the fairy tales, many of them mentioned that the stories contain some kind of 'universal' appeal. One respondent said: «[...] when I read this story for the very first time I was maybe 8, 7 years old, I thought it could be in Italy [...] not something so far away from my country», and another respondent also accentuated the general appeal to children across borders in the tales:

one of the motifs that I don't think is only for the Italian children but children in general, that the motive why children like Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tales is because they have – they talk about some kind of magic that lets you think you can do everything. The magic is not the witch on the hill that throw a curse, it's okay I'm a mermaid, I have a tail, I want legs, I can have legs, I have to do something in return, I have to work to have something and so on.

This articulation initiated a valuation process among the respondents where it became clear that the belief that 'anything is possible' was closely linked to another belief: That everything comes with a price. A respondent phrased it like this: «the stories of Hans Christian Andersen give hope and also magic atmosphere, magical ideas to children. So you can do whatever you want but you have to work for everything». To this statement, a woman added: «To work or find their way», and the first respondent replied: «Find their way. Yes. Nothing is free». Another respondent related these two beliefs to an Italian context, when she said:



«I think that in Italy there is this idea that we have to work to achieve something». Following Schwartz' argument about beliefs as «ideas about how true it is that things are related in particular ways»<sup>55</sup>, it can be argued that the respondent in this articulation makes the belief 'more true' when she relates it to contemporary Italian culture. In the representational practice that took place at this point in the focus group interview, it became clear that these beliefs were founded in the socially shared value, the 'guiding principle', in Italy that life does not necessarily come with a happy ending. Here, the popular Hans Christian Andersen proved to be an important supplement to the institutionalised Andersen, because the 'writer for children' was articulated not as entertainment alone, but as a communicator of values that were considered as important to pass on to children in relations between mothers/grandmothers and children. Another respondent phrased it like this:

Hans Christian Andersen is one of the best writers for children, but sometimes the end of his novels are very sad and not all mother or grandmother [...] prefer to tell to the children because the ending is very sad. This is what I understood from this time I was interested in Hans Christian Andersen but his stories is very real so I think that babies to learn not only the good end but also in a very sweet way also the other ending.

Thus, the respondents articulated the view that Andersen's fairy tales can be used when adults try to educate their children into being good citizens. Consequently, adults are positioned as mediators between the original text and the child, and in this position, the fairy tale can be adjusted in adequate ways. This can be seen as a popular version of the institutionalised handling of Andersen in Italy where the fairy tales, as Kjølner described it, were made more 'accessible' by editors and illustrators<sup>56</sup>. But in the relation between Italian adults and children, the adjusting level was characterised by an affective and educative dimension where the respondents connected the handling to considerations of how values can be passed on to the next generation: «The fairy tales of Hans Christian Andersen in particular communicates in the life when you have a target you will reach it if you want. If you are strong-minded to reach», as a respondent argued. In line with Schwartz<sup>57</sup> it can be argued that this respondent accentuates strong-mindedness as a trait that refer to values identified in Andersen's fairy tales. When asked why they considered the

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<sup>55</sup> Shalom H. Schwartz, *An Overview of the Schwartz Theory of Basic Values*, cit., p. 16.

<sup>56</sup> See Merete Kjølner, *Et italiensk Andersen-potpourri*, cit.

<sup>57</sup> Shalom H. Schwartz, *An Overview of the Schwartz Theory of Basic Values*, cit., p. 16-17.



fairy tales as sad *and* good stories for children simultaneously, the respondents used the current refugee situation in Europe as an example. A respondent stated that «it's good stories for the children at the moment because of the new migration», and another elaborated this point by adding: «[...] for the globalisation problems and issues. To have a – to know the difficulties in their lives and to reach new targets». Here, in line with Held and Moore, values are articulated as governing actions and practices<sup>58</sup>, as Hans Christian Andersen is staged as an edifying voice from which children can draw parallels to images and situations they are confronted with in their contemporary everyday lives. Here, the trait of strong-mindedness is closely attached to the idea of being a good citizen in a globalised world. The need for such edifying voices was further accentuated when another respondent added:

So there is always something positive to learn [...], you learn that things can change [...] from a bad situation to a good situation. This is so important, especially for this generation, because they are completely, I don't know, disoriented.

A similar perception of Hans Christian Andersen as some kind of mentor when it comes to life ways is also present in China. Cultural researcher Ye Rulan has stated, that Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tales are «considered as life-long companions for Chinese readers»<sup>59</sup>, and the Chinese fairy tale writer Yan Wenjing has described his reasons for having Andersen as a source of inspiration like this: «What he guides people to experience is not just a fantastic world. His stories lead us to something that we are familiar with in our life, but not within reach»<sup>60</sup>. Even though the Chinese and Italian perceptions of Andersen appear to be similar, the Italian respondents did not link their perception to the idea that Andersen's fairy tales contain something of «universal human nature», as Ye Rulan has argued<sup>61</sup>. Instead, their representational practice remained nationally oriented as they appraised his contribution to the communication of this particular value, because it is considered important for Italians. For example, a respondent stated: «[...] So you can do whatever you want but you have to work for everything», and another added: «In particular in this point of view was of the generation before me, my mother, my grandmother work, work, work and after the war was

<sup>58</sup> David Held – Henrietta L. Moore, *Cultural Politics in a Global Age*, cit., p. 6.

<sup>59</sup> Ye Rulan, *Hans Christian Andersen in Chiana. An Overview*, cit., p. 87.

<sup>60</sup> Wenjing Yan, *Postscript to 'Nannan and the Beard Uncle'*, in *A Collection of Yan Wenjing's Fables and Fairy Tales*, The People's Literature Press, Beijing 1941, p. 323.

<sup>61</sup> Ye Rulan, *Hans Christian Andersen in China. An Overview*, cit., p. 86.



over». To this, a third respondent pointed at what he thought of as the historical context for these ideals:

Yes it's part of the history, I mean in the 50's, the 60's, we had the economic boom –blooming of economics in Italy and even poor people coming from difficulties working and trying to do their best were able to get in a better situation, improve the situation.

A respondent explained how she perceived that agency as connected to the feelings of the characters in the fairy tales:

it's not always that good or that easy so you can have a moment of sadness, a moment of difficult but you can *do* something. [...] It's not just the story and the fight and the victory but it's also the sadness.

Quite oppositely, entrepreneurial scholars Robert Smith and Helle Neergaard have argued that the sinister morals in Andersen's fairy tales have affected the Danish entrepreneurial culture negatively, because the young Danish entrepreneurs, as a consequence of their upbringing with Andersen's fairy tales, lack faith in their own abilities to obtain their goals<sup>62</sup>. This potentially negative effect of Andersen's fairy tales was not represented among the Italian respondents, but they did reflect further on whether or not the significance of individual effort is actually presented in the fairy tales. One respondent stated:

I was reflecting more about what people said about working hard to achieve some goals in life. That's good, a good thing, a good idea but I think in Hans Christian Andersen's case there is another aspect that is something can change in your life. The change is possible not only if you work but because it can happen independently of your work – or not. It's the world of possibility.

In this articulation, the idea of Andersen as the communicator of the liberal value 'the world is your oyster' is rejected for the benefit of the doctrine 'anything, good or bad, can change'. Another respondent emphasised the concept 'change' as unavoidable in the values he had taken with him from the fairy tales:

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<sup>62</sup> Robert Smith – Helle Neergaard, *Reading the Fairy Tales of Hans Christian Andersen and the Novels of Horatio Alger as Proto-Entrepreneurial Narrative*, in «The Bridge: Journal of the Danish American Heritage Society», 30, 2 (2007), p. 35-47; Id., *Re-writing the Danish American Dream? An Enquiry into Danish Enterprise Culture and Danish Attitudes toward Entrepreneurship*, in «The Bridge: Journal of the Danish American Heritage Society», 31, 1 (2008), p. 41-64.



First of all is the message I think of Hans Christian Andersen is to change in order to be accepted by the society. I think that the match seller has to die in order to find a place into the life. The duck has to change in order to be accepted by his family and the tin soldier has to be soldier in order to – to find love, something like this, and this is I think the real Hans Christian Andersen was uncomfortable with life I think. This is the real message but the other one is that anyway there must – something must change in order to be accomplished.

This articulation is just one example of many where the respondents expressed perceptions of ambivalence in Andersen's fairy tales: «Anything is possible, but everything comes with a price» and «the world is your oyster, but it can suddenly change for no apparent reason».

Another possible paradox already appeared in the surveys, where several respondents coined Andersen's fairy tales as «good stories for children» that they associated with happy memories from their childhood, but at the same time, they frequently mentioned the most sad and serious fairy tales in their articulations about these happy memories. In one of the surveys, a respondent stated that he considered Andersen's fairy tales as communicating «la sensazione di una melanconica positività!». During the focus group interviews it became clear, that this affective version of Andersen was not perceived as paradoxical for the respondents. Quite oppositely, the elaborations of the affective practice were articulated as a close link between Italian cultural values and the love for melancholy. One respondent stated: «I'm talking about [...] in Italy, we are very melancholic. We are very melancholic people [...]», and: «Melancholy is – we are the country of melodrama so it's not necessarily something negative». Instead, it became clear that the respondents' interpretative repertoires contained the idea that a socially shared value in Italy is the perception that there are always two sides of a story. One respondent phrased it like this: «I believe that Italians are somehow a romantic people and those features fit very well with the romantics' principal ideas. So happiness and sourness, even if they are one opposite to the other, but they stay together», and another elaborated further on this point by stating:

I think Italy is a country full of contrasts. From the nature to the people, South and North are so different, and there are so many different things and that relates also to sensations that we feel. We're not direct, straight as German people. I studied German so I've seen that difference a lot, and so we also like high and lows of the stories as well. Hans Christian Andersen can relate to that because we are like that more or less. We just don't see that straight path and go like in that direction so it's in ourselves to yeah to enjoy both extremes I can say.



Thus, even though there exists a hegemonic and institutionalised discourse on Hans Christian Andersen as a children's book author in Italy, both the surveys and the dialogues during the focus group interviews reflected representational practices where the respondents mirrored themselves in Andersen as a cultural icon, and the mirror reflected a more nuanced and complex Italian perception of Hans Christian Andersen as a communicator of educational advices for children that, according to the respondents, were adaptable with Italian culture if adults make the effort to adjust the punchlines accordingly. The ways in which the respondents articulated meaning about Andersen revealed an affective practice where the contrasted and ambivalent punchlines in the fairy tales were connected to what was described as Italian's love for melancholy, «la sensazione di una melanconica positività».

## CONCLUSION

As a contribution to the third dimension in Hans Christian Andersen research where Andersen is perceived as a cultural icon and thereby as an object for analysis within cultural studies, this paper has suggested that two discursive constructions of the icon exist side by side: The institutionalised and the popular Hans Christian Andersen. Following the notion that the institutionalised Andersen can only be found meaningful if he is considered as valuable enough to be passed on to the next generation on the popular level, the topic of interest in this paper was to examine how the affective meaning-making about Andersen by ordinary Italians reflected such valuation processes, and how the respondents' self-understandings, ways of life and ideals were integrated in these valuation processes. Following a definition of values as guiding principles in life that can be examined through the performative actions of valuation expressed in affective practices that involve articulations of attitudes, beliefs, norms, and/or traits<sup>63</sup>, the analysis showed how the mirrored image of Hans Christian Andersen for the Italians reflected a mix of guiding principles where they on one side accentuated how the fairy tales convey that «anything is possible», referring for the respondents to the liberal idea that «the world is your oyster», an on the other side they emphasised the notion that «everything comes with a price» and that even if you take responsibility and try to reach your life goals, things can suddenly change for no apparent reason. These perceptions of Hans Christian Andersen as a communicator of values that are «very applicable», as one respondent

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<sup>63</sup> See Fabian Muniesa, *A Flank Movement in the Understanding of Valuation*, cit.; Shalom H. Schwartz, *An Overview of the Schwartz Theory of Basic Values*, cit.



put it, to Italian cultural values, contradicts the Italian institutionalised discourse on Andersen where he is mainly associated with «simplicity» and «a writer for children». Thus, there exists at field of tension between the discursive construction of the cultural icon Hans Christian Andersen on the institutional and the popular level. This was further exemplified when the valuation processes were concerned with the complexity of the fairy tales, in which the respondents accentuated how Andersen's sad endings can be used in educational situations between adults and children, where the adults can use the fairy tales as a launch pad when they tell children «in a very sweet way» that life is not always happiness and victory. Here, the Hans Christian Andersen that is «almost reduced to captions» as Kjølner has stated<sup>64</sup>, is replaced by a version that incites the Italian readers to pass the values they consider as important on to their children. Such processes requires affective investment in Hans Christian Andersen, and, as Grossberg argues, such affective investments hold the potential for people to construct identities on their own without the capitalist system as the only generator of values<sup>65</sup>.

To locate such spaces of affective investments and meaning-making among ordinary people appears as an important challenge for cultural studies practitioners of today. Cultural studies scholar Joanna Zylińska argues that post-9/11 global politics have been dominated by a moral rhetoric<sup>66</sup>, spanning from the 'good' and the 'evil' in the war on terror to everyday practices of governmentality regarding the bodies, genders, sexualities, and (dis-)abilities of others. In addition, consumerism contributes to a new system of values where money can buy things, symbols, ways of life and identities. The result of an institutional level where values are framed by a mix of neo-liberalism and populism, argues Zylińska, is 'morality without ethics,' and in order to solve this, Zylińska points to the analytical framework of cultural studies as the platform from which a proper, ethical response from the left can be articulated. By defining ethics as «secondary reflections on moral values, beliefs and practices»<sup>67</sup>, she asks for a reaction that takes form as a «response to the forms of alterity which have traditionally been marginalised in, or excluded from, our dominant structures of representation and political participation»<sup>68</sup>.

<sup>64</sup> Merete Kjølner, *Et italiensk Andersen-potpourri*, cit.

<sup>65</sup> Lawrence Grossberg, *We Gotta Get out of the Place*, cit., p. 85

<sup>66</sup> Joanna Zylińska, *Cultural Studies and Ethics*, in *New Cultural Studies. Adventures in Theory*, ed. by Clare Birchall – Gary Hall, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh 2006.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 76.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 82.



In his critique of Thatcherism, *The Hard Road to Renewal*<sup>69</sup>, Stuart Hall shows how «disparate elements, such as popular opinions, prejudices, and deeply held moral values»<sup>70</sup> were rearticulated by the government, the result being a joined force of capitalism and democratic populism that created «the strongest possible counter to the values and beliefs of the late 1960s, to the left-wing radicalism which developed through the 1970s, and which included new social movements and gay rights»<sup>71</sup>. Since Thatcherism, this joined force of capitalism and populism has expanded further. As Marita Sturken puts it: «[...] capitalism is always reinventing itself. The power of capitalism as a global force has always been in its capacity as a system to adapt, incorporate, and expand»<sup>72</sup>. Capitalist expansions are made through language, and one of the results today is that the concept 'value' and what is framed as valuable is communicated rather foggily when the fear of an «erosion of values»<sup>73</sup> stands side by side with institutional articulations of economic value as the only desirable and valuable form of the concept. This economisation and instrumentalisation of values can ultimately expand the field of people who perceive themselves as marginalised and excluded from political participation to comprise ordinary people trying to live their everyday lives in a globalised world of morality without ethics. A possible response from cultural studies practitioners to these developments, we suggest, is to connect the concept of value to something other than economy and look further into how and why people invest themselves affectively in the world: If values govern actions and practices, as Held and Moore has argued, maybe a research focus on de- and re-articulations of values can be fruitful within cultural studies in the future. One way of doing this was presented in this article, where the institutionalised and canonical cultural icon Hans Christian Andersen was replaced with Andersen as a product of popular culture. With this shift, the question is not whether or not respondents understand canonical literature, but how they understand it, and – even more importantly – how and why they relate to it.

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<sup>69</sup> Stuart Hall, *The Hard Road to Renewal: Thatcherism and the Crisis of the Left*, Verso, London 1988.

<sup>70</sup> Here from Joanna Zilynska, *Cultural Studies and Ethics*, cit., p. 80.

<sup>71</sup> Here from Angela McRobbie, *The Uses of Cultural Studies*, Sage, London-Thousand Oaks-New Delhi 2005, p. 25.

<sup>72</sup> Marita Sturken, *Foreword*, in *Commodity Activism: Cultural Resistance in Neoliberal Times*, ed. by Roopali Mukherjee – Sarah Banet-Weiser, New York University Press, New York 2012, p. IX-XI, here p. XI.

<sup>73</sup> David Held – Henrietta L. Moore, *Cultural Politics in a Global Age*, cit., p. 1.