Is the Ugly Duckling a Hero? Philosophical Inquiry as an Approach to Hans Christian Andersens Fairy Tales in Danish Primary School Teaching

Anne Klara Bom
The Hans Christian Andersen Centre, University of Southern Denmark Department for the Study of Culture, Campusvej 55, 5230 Odense M, Denmark.
Email: akbom@sdu.dk

Caroline Schaffalitzky
Department for the Study of Culture, University of Southern Denmark
Campusvej 55, 5230 Odense M, Denmark
Email: csm@sdu.dk

Abstract Hans Christian Andersen is a cultural icon, and his fairy tales are famous around the world. But despite the positive ring to this description, his status as a canonized author poses a challenge when he is passed on to new generations of readers. In this article, we show examples of how this challenge reveals itself in Danish primary school teaching where Andersen is an obligatory figure in the subject Danish in which he is frequently framed as a national romantic author of morally unambiguous texts. Taking the current use of "The Ugly Duckling" (1844) in primary school teaching materials as a point of departure, we aim to show Andersen's potential to be presented as an element in primary school teaching that draws on dialogic inquiries rooted in Philosophy with Children. Philosophical inquiries are characterized by an open mindset that incite teachers as well as school children to engage with the rich ethical themes and literary qualities of Andersen's fairy tales. We conclude the article with our own inquiry manual to "The Ugly Duckling" to illustrate a way to overcome the current hegemonic framing of Andersen and reopen his fairy tale for future discussions and interpretations.

Key words Hans Christian Andersen; cultural studies; Philosophy with Children

Authors **Anne Klara Bom**, PhD, is Associate Professor in cultural studies at the Hans Christian Andersen Centre, affiliated with the Department for the Study of

Culture at the University of Southern Denmark. Her research field is cultural studies. In her PhD dissertation she presented Hans Christian Andersen as an analytical object for cultural analysis and since then, she has published extensively on Andersen as a cultural icon, including how he can be approached analytically and methodologically, and how is staged and perceived in contexts of cultural tourism and (inter-)national value systems; **Caroline Schaffalitzky**, PhD, is Associate Professor in philosophy at the Department for the Study of Culture, University of Southern Denmark. She is founder and head of the research project Philosophy in Schools. Her academic profile is strongly rooted within applied philosophy and she has extensive experience with cross-disciplinary research fields. She has published within various areas, including philosophy with children and teaching academic thinking more generally.

Introduction

There are many sides to Hans Christian Andersen. He is a historical person and a world-famous author, but he is also a cultural icon. Across borders, people identify with Andersen, particularly with characters in his fairy tales. What such identifications consist of, however, depends on culturally specific gazes that are shaped by value systems, beliefs and moral views (Bom kulturfænomen). This can lead to reductive uses of Andersen based on simplified perceptions of him as a "communicator of true values" — a perception that misses the potential for existential and ethical reflection embedded in the fairy tales. A similar risk of simplification emerges from the way Andersen is positioned in public opinion. The fairy tales are considered literary world heritage, and as such, they should be regarded as 'cultural commons' in the sense that they must be equally accessible to everyone (Bom commons). According to sociologist Nicolas Rose, however, the existence and sustainability of the cultural commons is threatened by the way communities and political systems 'harness' the commons (Rose 176): They take ownership of them, construct culturally specific 'frozen' versions of them, and, as a result, exclude others from them.

There are many examples of such harnessing processes, both in Denmark and in other countries around the world. Here, we will focus on one specific case, namely examples from primary school teaching in Denmark that are dominated by specific perceptions of the fairy tales. First, we outline the potential of Andersen's fairy tales in moral education and show how examples of traditional learning material used in Danish primary schools in the subject Danish fail to release this potential. Second, we argue that there are reasons to think that the dialogic approach found

in the traditions from Philosophy with Children (PwC) can provide a productive pedagogic framework, if done properly. It is our main argument that Hans Christian Andersen and PwC can be a fruitful match, because the dialogic approach in PwC invites the students to engage in ethical reflections and literary interpretation in a way that can help unfold the potential of the fairy tales. In this way, the use of PwC can help keep Andersen a cultural common and make sure that his work is passed on to the next generations in versions that reflect rather than neglect its inherent complexity and ambiguity.

Ethics and Values in Andersen's Fairy Tales

In Denmark, the harnessing of Hans Christian Andersen is explicitly related to his status as a canonical author. Hans Christian Andersen is canonized in different ways. The fairy tale "The Little Mermaid" was for example chosen as one of 107 'unavoidable' works for the Danish Cultural Canon: a collection launched as a common introduction to the Danish cultural heritage in 2006. In addition, Hans Christian Andersen is a part of 'the obligatory common canon for the primary school' in the Danish educational system. This canon is a list of 14 Danish authors that pupils in primary schools must get acquainted with in some way at some point during their education.

In a Danish primary school setting, there are examples of how the canonization has resulted in a framing of Andersen as a typical (national) romantic figure who conveys explicit moral messages in his fairy tales. Recent contributions to Hans Christian Andersen research, however, point to different perceptions of Andersen and thereby also to a different, more democratic and ethically subtle positioning of him and his work. For example, Andersen scholar Torsten Bøgh Thomsen has argued that the fairy tales are never moralising (*Skyggepunkter, mudder og menneskeatomer*): questions about good and evil, right and wrong, always remain open in the fairy tales. His main point is that "Andersen's texts give room for statements and convictions to stay in a tension, an undecidedness, instead of settling in an unequivocal view of the world or art" ("Vi have intet at hovmode os over" 63, our translation).

Thus, Andersen avoids final answers and static morals when in dealings with the conditions of human life, and with this perception of him as a point of departure, it seems fair to argue that the framings of Andersen as a national romantic moralist in Danish educational contexts can be replaced with more dialogic, open-ended approaches to the work. Accordingly, Andersen can be perceived as a communicator of values in the sense that his texts incite people all over the world to conduct con-

temporary reflections on what they find important and why. In this way, Andersen is potential medium through which new narratives about values, morals and beliefs can be told (Bom and Thomsen). In teaching practices, this requires that the fairy tales are used as cases for the practising of moral and philosophical reasoning. As we will argue in this article, this use of Andersen and his fairy tales will also make it easier to include him in other primary school subjects than Danish.

But what does it mean to think of Andersen as a communicator of values? First, it is important to define the word "value" in a constructive way. In a Western context, the general expansion of capitalism through language has resulted in an instrumentalization and economisation of values, as the concept both in theory and practice is linked to thoughts on what is "valuable." This discursive construction of values can ultimately make people perceive themselves as marginalised and excluded from the communities they feel like they should belong to (Bom and Bøggild), and thus, a more democratic and including approach to values is pivotal. This goes for classroom teaching as well. It has been suggested that a possible scholarly response to this is to connect the concept of value to something other than economy (Bom and Thomsen). Within such a framework, "values" can be defined as 'guiding principles in life' that affect our perceptions of attitudes, beliefs, norms, and traits (Schwartz 16).

To perceive Hans Christian Andersen as a communicator of values, however, is in no way to position him as someone who communicates explicit, absolute values or morals. This would amount to what cultural studies scholar John Hartley has categorized as a premodern perception of the author as divine: "a text meant what its (divine) producer said it did. All that remained for readers to do was to work out what the author 'meant'" (Hartley 132). Hartley argues that the ways in which we ascribe meaning to values has changed significantly over time and that the contemporary perception of how meaning is communicated through texts has drifted from the author to the "other end of the value chain": Today, the reader/audience — mass democracy — are the ones who have the power to convey meaning and add values to texts (ibid.), and thus, texts do not merely mean what they say they do. This is particularly important in the context of education. Hartley puts it this way:

> in contemporary times, truth has multiplied and fragmented, just as power has. In these days of difference, diversity and diaspora, truth has become inclusive, plentiful. It is revealed by plebiscite. Education is no longer purposed for the literate mass workforce only, but for universal learning services available on a commercial, customized 'borderless' basis to anyone, anywhere, of any age. (135)

In line with Hartley, we believe that a perception of Andersen's fairy tales as mediums through which values can be discussed, contested, re-worked and adjusted, would correspond well with the content of the fairy tales. In this way, emphasis would be on our present-day reflections on moral values, beliefs and practices and that Andersen's work invites his readers all over the world to ask questions such as: What do *I* see as the central argument here — and why do I see it this way? Do other people see it the same way I do? Why/why not? We believe that the democratic traits of PwC can be a fruitful approach to such an educational approach to Andersen, and that it could even help to sustain Andersen's fairy tales as cultural commons: As something that should be equally accessible to everyone, just as education itself.

Thus, we will argue that a more dialogic oriented framing and use of Andersen has the potential to thaw frozen framings of his work and make it accessible for contemporary existential and ethical reflections on what *we* perceive as good and evil, right and wrong, instead of a blind positioning of Andersen as an authority who tells us — or even dictates — what to do and how to live our lives. In the following section, we look further into how Andersen is presented in contemporary Danish primary school teaching.

"The Ugly Duckling" as Common Sense

Hans Christian Andersen's status as a central figure in Danish culture and heritage is a challenge when it comes to reading and interpreting the fairy tales in primary schools: The literary Hans Christian Andersen research began when his works were first published, and as a result, specific interpretations of the most popular fairy tales are now almost perceived as common sense.

An obvious example of this is "The Ugly Duckling" from 1844 (Andersen). Almost immediately after its publication, the fairy tale was equipped with a biographically oriented interpretation that became hegemonic in Denmark. This interpretation can be summed up with author Georg Brandes' statement that the story about the misunderstood duckling that turns out to be a beautiful swan is the "quintessence of its author's entire being" (Bredsdorff 113-114). Among several others, Andersen scholar Johan de Mylius has contributed significantly to this discourse by pointing out the fairy tale as the one in which Andersen's private mythology was given "eternal expression" (12). In the frequently used learning material for the school subject Danish, *Vild med Dansk* (*Crazy about Danish*), the perception of a close link between the author and his fiction is reflected in two interconnected ways: The fairy tale is positioned in its time, romanticism, and the person Andersen is

placed in close relation to the content of the story. Let us turn to some examples.

In *Vild med Dansk*, "The Ugly Duckling" is mentioned in a section about romantic art. First, the spiritual values of romanticism, "the good, the beautiful and the true" are mentioned alongside the romantic focus on how ideas and truths are reflected in the real world. Then, "The Ugly Duckling" is chosen as the illustrative example:

> "You probably know Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tale The Ugly Duckling. It is a real romantic fairy tale where the truth is revealed in the end: The haunted duckling turns out to be a beautiful swan. There is no evil in the duckling, it swallows its defeats and it refrains from taking revenge. The moral of the fairy tale is that everyone will become what they were created to be." (*Vild med Dansk 7* 217-218, our translation)

This exemplifies the staged connection between Andersen's fairy tale and romanticism and the result is a closed reading that leads to a statement about the *moral* of the fairy tale. The idea that there is an explicit moral in the story establishes a close connection to Hans Christian Andersen as a communicator of this moral to his readers. This connection is even more clear in another example from the same learning material. In a chapter about film adaptations of books and narrative forms, "The Ugly Duckling" is chosen to illustrate what a "commentary" is:

> "The narrator comments on the plot and the persons and accentuates the moral. Famous is for example the ending of Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tale The Ugly Duckling where the narrator states in the end: 'Being born in a duck yard does not matter, if only you are hatched from a swan's egg.'" (*Vild med Dansk 8* 113, our translation)

Again, the fairy tale used as an example of a story with an unequivocal moral, and here, it is even stated that this moral is directly communicated from the author to the readers. This however, as we mentioned in the introduction, reflects a rather simplified and reductive perception of the content in Andersen's fairy tales, because it does not consider the characteristic narrative forms, techniques and stylistic features in his work. Andersen scholar Jacob Bøggild and curator at the Hans Christian Andersen Museum in Odense, Henrik Lübker, have studied Andersen's methods and identify what they see as dominating traits in his writing and here, his use of romantic irony is accentuated:

> "The term refers to the shattering of the illusion that occurs when a story comments on itself. With Andersen this often happens with an emphasis on the fairy tale's truth status, which has the effect that the reader starts to doubt, whether the narrator and thus what is told can be trusted." (Bøggild and Lübker)

The way "The Ugly Duckling" is presented in the two examples mentioned does not take romantic irony into account. The fixed interpretations are presented as final answers which do not invite to further questions. But surely the statement "Being born in a duck yard does not matter, if only you are hatched from a swan's egg"[1] provokes the reader to ask whether it is really the case that it doesn't matter. To reflect on this question, consider the passages that encircle this stock phrase. Just before the duckling sees its own reflection in the water, it swims towards the swans and prepares to die: "'Kill me!'" said the poor creature, and he bowed his head down over the water to wait for death." As part of the common sense interpretation of the fairy tale, we all know that the swans do not kill the duckling but welcome it because he has turned out to be one of them. Arguably, this cannot mean that the duckling instantly forgets the horrible experiences that were the consequence of "being born in a duck yard." The lines that follow exemplifies this: "He felt quite glad that he had come through so much trouble and misfortune, for now he had a fuller understanding of his own good fortune, and of beauty when he met with it." Here, the duckling's past is presented as the one thing that *does* matter: as the one thing that enables the duckling to *understand* its place in the world. This way of playing with the position of the narrator is a recurring technique in Andersen's writings (Bøggild and Lübker), and it has as a result that the reader is constantly made aware that the perspective she hears the story from is pivotal to her understanding of it.

So, Andersen reminds the reader that the narrative is a narrative. Another way of doing this, Bøggild and Lübker argue, is when Andersen repeats the title of the fairy tale in the very last sentence. Among others, "The Ugly Duckling" is one example of this, as the very last sentence in the fairy tale is this thought from the duckling itself: "I never dreamed there could be so much happiness, when I was the ugly duckling." Thus, it is too simple to state that Andersen's fairy tales just *say* something specific. They contain performative strategies that are valuable and relevant in educational contexts. Bøggild and Lübker sum up the performativity of the

1 All translations are Jean Hersholt's published on the homepage of the Hans Christian Andersen Center.

texts in this way:

> (t)here is an interaction between being in the text, being immersed in its universe and being outside of it, where we become aware of the text's way of making itself visible. Thus, a textual duality occurs that counteracts any attempt to finish the text with a final, meaningful moral lesson. What we get instead are questions that revolve around ways of being in the world and what it really means to be in the world. Questions, which the texts very seldom answer, but which the reader has to process independently - without a list of results, and therefore at his or her own expense and risk. (Bøggild and Lübker)

The strict positioning of Andersen as a representative for the national romantic artists in Denmark, has closed and excluding readings of his fairy tales as a result (see also Thomsen and Bom, this issue). And the fact that he is usually presented in the school subject Danish has resulted in a lack of teaching material in other primary school subjects. We have shown some examples of how Hans Christian Andersen is framed as a canonized example of romanticism and a communicator of moral messages in learning materials for the subject Danish, and thus, there is a gap to be mended between the content of the texts and the potentials they have to produce new questions rather than provide old answers. In the following section of this article, we will present the approach Philosophy with Children as a possible solution to this challenge.

A New Approach Inspired by Philosophy with Children

In his exposition of "The Ugly Duckling" as an expression of Andersen's private mythology, de Mylius points to one exception to the hegemonic discourse on the fairy tale. In a letter to Andersen shortly after the publication of the fairy tale, poet and scholar Carsten Hauch described it as a "universal statement about one of the basic terms of life" and he wrote: "The story about the cat and the chicken who consider themselves as belonging to the best part of the world and who despise everything that cannot purr or lay eggs repeats itself every day on earth" (Hauch in De Mylius 63-64). In this reading, Hauch does not mention Andersen's own biography, and the remark about how the story repeats itself every day shows that it resonates with ordinary human life. This reading places the interpretative responsibility with the reader who will therefore need interpretative and argumentative skills. Hauch's interpretation invites the reader to ask questions concerned with "ways of being in the world and what it really means to be in the world," as Bøggild and Lübker put it.

This example shows that it is possible to read Andersen's stories without getting trapped in frozen interpretations. But such examples are rare in learning materials and educational contexts more generally. One reason for this is probably that both primary school teachers and pupils are already acquainted with the most popular fairy tales before the actual learning situation takes place, and so, it is a challenge to be open to alternative interpretations of the stories. However, as Bøggild and Lübker argue, the fairy tales invite their readers to ask questions, and we suggest that this (together with the rich ethical content) makes the fairy tales very suitable as stimuli in philosophical inquiries with children. In this section we offer at brief outline of what Philosophy with Children (PwC) is to show why philosophical inquiries could offer an approach that can help avoid the problems seen in more traditional teaching settings.

The first PwC programs were established in US in the 1970's and 1980's by the American philosophers Matthew Lipmann (Lipman et al. 1980) and Gareth Mathews (Matthews 1980). In Europe, the German philosopher Ekkehard Martens has worked with PwC since the 1970's (Jørgensen 2010, Martens 1979). Internationally, PwC has since become a recognized field of research and practice, and has been employed in schools, not only in the US, but also in countries across Latin America and Europe, especially Norway and the UK, as well as in South Africa, Japan, and Australia (UNESCO 2007). In Denmark, PwC was introduced in the 1980's (Jespersen 1988) and some teachers and teachers' colleges have worked theoretically and practically with the approach.

Philosophical inquiries are the core activities of PwC. They are open, structured group discussions of abstract, but engaging subjects such as: Can a robot be a person? What is time? Can a criminal act be brave? The students offer ideas and discuss questions in pairs (or small groups) and in general discussions in the class. A trained facilitator helps keep the discussion relevant and respectful, without taking part or adding content (Schaffalitzky). Philosophical inquiries are different from traditional teacher-centered teaching because they are explicitly dialogic. In fact, philosophical enquiries have been used to provide a framework for interventions in research on dialogic teaching (e.g. Reznitskaya and Glina).

There are a variety of traditions and programs within PwC, but they share some common traits. Inquiries typically begin with a stimulus such as a story, pictures, ideas, or objects well-suited to bring out questions and discussion. After the stimulus has been presented, the discussion begins with a question (posed by the facilitator or participants in the dialogue). It is important that the question is what the British philosopher Peter Worley has called "conceptually open" ("Open thinking,

closed questioning: two kinds of open and closed question" 19). This means that the question must be so that it is not clear what the truth of the matter is (or whether there even *is* a truth of the matter). This is an important rule of the dialogue because it makes it less likely that teacher steers the dialogue towards a specific answer. The main responsibility of the teacher is to facilitate the discussion and encourage the students to articulate their thoughts, to provide reasons for their views, and to engage in peer discussion. The teacher makes sure that everyone is invited to speak, and that the discussion stays on the topic, but he or she must refrain from asking leading questions and from giving any kind of correctness feedback or indication of his or her own opinion (see, for instance, *The If Machine* for a comprehensive description of facilitation techniques).

We suggest that teachers can replace (or at least supplement) traditional, teacher-centered approaches to Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tales with philosophical inquiries as outlined here. In fact, we think that this approach is very much on par with Andersen's view of the child as a powerful agent: Children who can and dare to reveal nudeness of Emperor's are not to be steered by fixed interpretations and static moral views that stem from common sense readings of the fairy tales. Rather, the children should be offered the opportunity to engage in philosophical dialogues that are not defined by goals in terms of underlying morals or final answers.

A Caveat: Not Quite As Easy As It Sounds

Some may object that our suggestion is not as novel as we present it here because several teaching manuals in Philosophy with Children already contain suggestions to uses of Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tales as stimuli for philosophical enquiries with children. However, a closer look at some of these inquiry manuals shows that either they fall victim to the above-mentioned problems identified in traditional teaching materials, or they are only superficially concerned with Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tales and thereby fail to engage with the moral and literary qualities of the stories (Schaffalitzky and Bom, forthcoming). In this section, we will provide two examples of teaching manuals to illustrate why a dialogic approach is more difficult than it may appear at first. Both teaching manuals use the story of "The Ugly Duckling" as a stimulus.

The first example is an inquiry manual from Teaching Children Philosophy — a prominent organization within the field of Philosophy with Children. The manual consists of three sections: Summary, Guidelines for Philosophical Discussion, and Questions for Philosophical Discussion. A striking feature of the manual is that it contains many examples of pre-framing. In the Guidelines section, it is stated that

"even humans are mean" to the ugly duckling, and that:

> While some forms of discrimination may be unintentional, the form that it takes in the story, as is the case with the schoolyard bully, is conscious and intentional. Discrimination is a form of prejudice, which includes feelings of hostility, antipathy, or indifference, as well as belief in the inferior morals, intellect, or skills of the targeted person or group of people. The story lays out a case of persistent, aggressive prejudice in a way that makes the harm of such discrimination very clear. (Teaching Children Philosophy)

Both passages suggest specific (and contestable) rigid interpretations of Andersen's view on humans and animals and on his portrayal of the animals in the story. In addition to this, the questions that the inquiry manual is built around, are arguably more leading or factual than conceptually open:

> 1. Why did the other animals call the Ugly Duckling ugly? What did they mean when they called him ugly? Does looking different make someone ugly?
>
> 2. Why would someone tease/bully/make fun of people who look different from them?
>
> 3. Is there any situation in which it is acceptable to judge someone by their appearance? (Beauty pageant, fashion contest, job interview...) What makes these different from the case of the Ugly Duckling? (Teaching Children Philosophy)

This example, we suggest, support our claim that the influence of being a cultural icon should not be underestimated. If highly skilled and experienced writers of philosophical inquiry manuals fall prey to it, it is no wonder that traditional teaching can struggle with receptions of the tales that are frozen by canonization and moralization.

The second example of an inquiry manual for "The Ugly Duckling" is published by Center for Philosophy for Children, a leading organization in the field, both in terms of research and practice. The manual consists of a very brief plot summary (four lines) and the following Discussion Questions:

> Was the "ugly duckling" really ugly? If so, what made him ugly? Did he stop being ugly at the end of the story?
>
> What does ugly mean?

Would the "ugly duckling" still be ugly if someone thought he was beautiful?

What is beauty?

How do we decide what is beautiful and what is not?

If you're ugly, are you always ugly, and if you're beautiful, are you always beautiful?

Are the following things beautiful?

-a sunrise

-The Mona Lisa

-a smile

-a song

-a feeling

-a thought

-a painting

If the ugly duckling believed he was beautiful, would that make him more likely to be seen as beautiful?

What does it mean to have "inner beauty?"

Can someone be a terrible person and still be beautiful? An extraordinarily wonderful person and be ugly? (Center for Philosophy for Children)

Some of these questions are arguably also somewhat leading or moralizing, but a more prominent feature of the manual is that the questions are only concerned with the story to a very limited degree. There are interesting philosophical questions, but they are detached from the story and therefore not helpful to the ambition of engaging with the ideas in Andersen's text. Where the first example shows what happens when the hegemonic interpretations of the cultural icon are so powerful that they leave no room for literary and philosophical engagement with the story, the second example shows that a complete detachment from literary interpretation reduces the fairy tale to at launch pad for an abstract discussion unconcerned with the content of the story: it could just as well have used "Beauty and the Beast" or a reality television show about "extreme makeovers" of persons that are judged to be ugly as its starting point.

Recommendations for Dialogic Approaches to Andersen's Fairy Tales

The two philosophical inquiry manuals illustrate the point that future manuals on the fairy tales must balance two concerns: First, the manuals must seek to engage with the actual literary content of the fairy tales if the inquiry is to be more than

an opportunity to discuss abstract philosophical topics. Second, they must avoid the obstacles relating to the staging of cultural heritage, the canonization, and the positioning of Andersen as an obvious example of moral education. In short, we recommend that future manuals must have few and conceptually open philosophical questions that steer clear of biographical information and literary schemes. This is crucial to overcome the tendency seen in traditional teaching materials to reproduce fixed readings and reception. Closed, biographical and literary questions may be very relevant for other purposes, but not in a philosophical inquiry.

In a new inquiry manual for "The Ugly Duckling" (Schaffalitzky and Bom) we have suggested how to conduct a philosophical inquiry around the fairy tale in a way that accommodates the two concerns mentioned above. The manual includes both questions for the fairy tale in its entirety and for specific passages. These are suggested questions for the story:

1. Is the duckling the same in the beginning of the story as in the end?
2. Is the duckling the hero of the story?
3. Is the duckling a praiseworthy creature?

For the passage about the duckling's meeting with the hen and the cat, we suggest that the passage is read aloud (ending with "Believe me, I tell you this for your own good. I say unpleasant truths, but that's the only way you can know who your friends are. Be sure now that you lay some eggs. See to it that you learn to purr or to make sparks about the cat and the hen in the house.") The questions we suggest are:

1. Is the hen telling the truth?
2. Would the story be different if retold from the point of view of the cat?

This last question links to suggested activities such as inviting the students to act out the story playing the different characters with masks, re-writing the fairy tale in other genres (for instance, in that of a "duck tabloid"), and telling the story with pictures that doesn't match the hegemonic interpretations (for instance, a *really* ugly duckling without any likability). Questions and activities as these would provide an opportunity for the teacher and students to explore Andersen's work through inquiries involving literary interpretations and philosophical discussions about identity, personality, change, social perception, the meaning of life and many other themes. And if this can be achieved with "The Ugly Duckling," a next step could be to write similar teaching materials for other fairy tales on the curricula. Supplementing

teaching practices with these manuals would mean that the ambivalence, ethics and multi-layeredness of the fairy tales could become an integral part of the dialogues between teacher and pupils in primary schools.

Conclusion

Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tales are a cultural common, and as such, it is an ethical responsibility to ensure that they remain equally accessible to readers across borders, value systems, ideological convictions, genders and ages. A significant threat to sustaining the common is communities' harnessing of them, and we have presented examples of how this takes place in learning material for Danish primary schools: The canonization of Andersen means that he is presented in the subject Danish as a typical national romantic author who communicates morally unambiguous messages through his fairy tales.

By use of the "The Ugly Duckling" as our case, we have argued that the hegemonic framing of Andersen will overlook both the literary qualities of the fairy tales and the great potential they have for present-day ethical reflections on the conditions of human life. Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tales are always complex and ambiguous and as such they have great potential in any educational context. They can incite teachers and pupils to engage in open and including dialogues and ask new questions instead of repeating old answers. For these reasons, we have argued that techniques from the tradition of philosophical inquiries from Philosophy with Children (PwC) may hold the key to move beyond fixed readings and teaching practices.

An important feature of philosophical inquiries is that the teacher facilitates the discussion instead of steering it and providing content. It must be noted, however, that inquiry manuals to "The Ugly Duckling" (written by leading organizations in the field) can fall victim to challenges similar to those seen in learning materials. Consequently, we have presented our own PwC manual to "The Ugly Duckling" to show that it is, in fact, possible to avoid the problems of both frozen readings of Andersen and detached philosophical use of the fairy tales. In conclusion, we suggest that this path is worth investigating further to help keep Andersen's complex work relevant and alive to future generations.

Works Cited

Ammitzbøll, Lise et al. *Vild med Dansk 7*. Gyldendal, 2008.

—. *Vild med Dansk 8*. Gyldendal, 2009.

Andersen, Hans Christian. *Den grimme* ælling/*The Ugly Duckling*. Trans. Jean Hersholt. 1843. Accessible at: http://www.andersen.sdu.dk/vaerk/hersholt/TheUglyDuckling_e.html.

Accessed 16 November 2018.

Bom, Anne Klara. "H.C. Andersen — et kulturfænomen i teori og praksis." *H.C. Andersen i det moderne samfund*. Eds. Anne Klara Bom, Jacob Bøggild & Johs. Nørregaard Frandsen, UP of Southern Denmark, 2014. 185-206.

—. "Hans Christian Andersen between community and commons. The Ugly Duckling and The Fir Tree revisited." *Hans Christian Andersen and Community*. Eds. Anne Klara Bom, Jacob Bøggild & Johs. Nørregaard Frandsen, University Press of Southern Denmark, 2019 (forthcoming).

Bom, Anne Klara & Torsten Bøgh Thomsen. "'La sensazione di una melanconica positività!' Valuations of the Popular Hans Christian Andersen." *Studi Germanici*, no. 12 (2017): 195-216.

Bom, Anne Klara & Jacob Bøggild. "Hans Christian Andersen and Community: An introduction." *Hans Christian Andersen and Community*, Eds. Anne Klara Bom, Jacob Bøggild & Johs. Nørregaard Frandsen, UP of Southern Denmark, 2019 (forthcoming).

Bredsdorff, Elias. *Hans Christian Andersen. A biography*. 1975.

Bøggild, Jacob & Henrik Lübker. "Hans Christian Andersen's method." *HCA Education — Stories*. Eds. Jens Thodberg Bertelsen & Johs. Nørregaard Frandsen. Systime, 2019 (forthcoming).

Center for Philosophy for Children, "The Ugly Duckling." University of Washington, n.d. Accessible at: https://depts.washington.edu/nwcenter/questionslibrary/ugly-duckling/. Accessed 7 November 2018.

Hartley, John. "The 'value chain of meaning' and the new economy." *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, vol. 7, issue 1(2004): 129-141.

Jespersen, Per. *Filosofi Med Børn*. Kroghs Forlag A/S, 1988.

Jørgensen, Henrik Vestergaard. *Filosofi Med Børn - Teoretisk grundlag og religionsdidaktisk Potentiale*. Det Teologiske Fakultet, 2010.

Lipman, Matthew et al. *Philosophy in the Classroom*. Temple UP, 1980.

Martens, Ekkehard. *Dialogisch-Pragmatische Philosophiedidaktik*. Herman Schroedel Verlag KG, 1979.

Matthews, Gareth B. *Philosophy & the Young Child*. Harvard UP, 1980.

de Mylius, Johan. *Forvandlingens Pris. H.C. Andersen og hans eventyr*. Høst & Søn, 2005.

Reznitskaya, Alina & Monica Glina. "Comparing Student Experiences with Story Discussions in Dialogic Versus Traditional Settings." *The Journal of Educational Research*, vol. 106, issue 1(2013): 49-63.

Rose, Nikolas. *Powers of freedom: Re-framing political thought*. Cambridge UP, 1999.

Schaffalitzky, Caroline. "Why Philosophy? Aims of Philosophy with Children and Aims of Academic Philosophy." *SATS: Northern European Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 14, issue 2 (2013): 176-186.

Schaffalitzky, Caroline & Anne Klara Bom. "The ugly duckling." University of Southern Denmark, n.d. Accessible at: https://www.sdu.dk/da/om_sdu/institutter_centre/ikv/forskning/forskningsprojekter/filosofi+i+skolen/
projekter/hca+og+filosofisk+dialog. Accessed 20 February 2019.

Schwartz, Shalom H. "An Overview of the Schwartz Theory of Basic Values." *Online Readings in Psychology and Culture*, vol. 2, issue 1(2012): 1-20.

Teaching Children Philosophy. Accessible at: https://www.teachingchildrenphilosophy.org/BookModule/TheUglyDuckling. Accessed 20 February 2019.

Thomsen, Torsten Bøgh. *Skyggepunkter, mudder og menneske-atomer — natur og materialitet i H.C. Andersens forfatterskab*. PhD Dissertation. University of Southern Denmark, 2017.

Thomsen, Torsten Bøgh. "Vi have intet at hovmode os over: Den anti-antropocentriske Andersen." *Passage*, vol. 32, issue 77 (2017): 49-65.

UNESCO. *Philosophy - a School of Freedom: Teaching Philosophy and Learning to Philosophize: Status and Prospects.* United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNESCO, 2007.

Worley, Peter. *The If Machine. Philosophical Enquiry in the Classroom*. Bloomsbury, 2011.

—. Peter. "Open thinking, closed questioning: two kinds of open and closed question." *Journal of Philosophy in Schools*, vol. 2, issue 2 (2015): 17-29.