

29. BIENNIAL OF ILLUSTRATIONS BRATISLAVA

MISCELLANY

International Symposium BIB 2023



MINISTRY
OF CULTURE
OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC

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Biennale der Illustrationen Bratislava
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Biennale d'illustrations Bratislava



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Topic: „Fairy Tale Books
(National Identity of Illustration and its
Communication in the International Context)“

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Speech



How can we decipher the national identity of illustrations in an international context?

The International Symposium of the Biennial of Illustration Bratislava signifies one of the most important international forums. It is also the oldest forum mapping and exploring the forms, trends, changes and directions of illustration in books for children and young people in over 100 countries around the world. Since the BIB was founded in 1967, renowned experts from the realm of artistic picture books, theorists, illustrators, publishers, publicists have been meeting in Bratislava every two years to reflect on all interesting aspects and contexts of illustration.

For 56 years already, BIB has been creating a unique theoretical platform of experts for an international permanent and continuous confrontation in this field, particularly when it comes to the cooperation with the national sections of IBBY, but also with other renowned organisations abroad. Each year of this Biennial — we discuss, select and define a different theme, exploring a different interesting, topical aspect of illustration in books for children and young people. This time the theme of the International Symposium BIB 2023 is:

“Fairy Tale Books (National Identity of Illustrations and its Communication in the International Context)”

The strong trend of globalisation, the blurring of national specificities — gets also strongly reflected in contemporary picture books for children and the youth. The unique inimitable colours and flavours of individual national cultures gradually disappear. For commercial reasons, large multinational publishing houses even push illustrators into the so-called “international illustrator style”, making books sell well anywhere in the world — in the North and South, West as well as in the East”. Strong, talented personalities of illustrators have so far resisted globalization ... Therefore, a particularly important issue these days is how readers of picture books can understand, decipher the themes, images and messages in illustrations of fairy-tales, myths, legends and stories so deeply rooted in the cultural history of individual nations.

The theme of the BIB 2023 symposium explored one of the current phenomena of this biennial event in Slovakia's capital. It literally provoked very interesting and stimulating reflections and discussions by and through renowned experts from 15 countries from all over the globe, which can be found in this very miscellany.

It constitutes another stone in the mosaic of knowledge about the contemporary art of illustration in the World. And also, the phenomenon of the BIB and its importance for the history of world illustration of books for children and young people.

PhDr. Zuzana Jarošová
General Commissioner of BIB
Chairwoman of the International BIB-Committee

Art studio Agrafka Ukraine

Once upon a time...
a war came

Art studio Agrafka



Romana Romanyshyn and Andriy Lesiv are book authors, designers and illustrators, members of PEN Ukraine. Both now live and work in Lviv. After graduating from the Lviv National Academy of Arts both co-founded Studio Agrafka, where they collaborate and create

illustrated books for children and adults. Agrafka duo received a number of accolades for their work, among them are Bologna Ragazzi Award (2014, 2015 – mentions, 2018 – winner), Premio Andersen (2019), Plaque and Honorary Mention of the Biennial of Illustration in Bratislava (2017, 2012), NAMI Concours Award (Green Island and Purple Island Awards – 2019, Green Island Award – 2021), Gold (2020) and Silver (2021) of the European Design Awards, Bronze medal and Honorary Appreciation of the Stiftung Buchkunst concours “The best book design from all over the world” (2019 and 2022), Appreciations and Third Winner of Sharjah Children’s Reading Festival (2015, 2016, 2022), Global illustration Award (2016, 2017), White Ravens list (2013, 2014, 2016, 2021) and others.

“Once upon a time...” – almost every fairy tale begins with these words, which symbolize the good old days, when everything was in its place and there was still magic in the world. This opening gives us an idea of the setting, of the characters, it entices us with the story. A fairy tale builds a world. And then suddenly something happens and changes this fictional world, where magic and order reigned, everything turns upside down. But by the end of the fairy tale, everything must fall into place again – the fairy tale world must return to its previous good life and become even better, all underdogs must become leaders, all villains must be punished. This is an ancient principle of a fairy tale, a golden classic. These tales have been read and retold by many generations. But fairy tales must change, as life changes. This genre must be reincarnated and modified, be relevant, because despite digitalization and modern technologies, there is still nothing stronger than a good story. The story, which inspires.

Our formation as artists coincided with the beginning of Russia’s war against Ukraine 10 years ago. The war had a great

impact on us as artists, on our perception of the visual, on the way we work with composition, colors. We felt that we were part of big changes and felt the responsibility that our creativity cannot be completely separated from social life.

And it was then that we created a book for children, or as it is called in Ukraine – “a tale about war”, where we were guided by the genre of fairy tales, parables.

How War changed Rondo



We had never actually planned to create a picture book for children about war, but reality in our country changed things. It all started with the Revolution of Dignity at the end of 2013, then the annexation of Crimea in March 2014 and military conflict in East Ukraine. The war had started.

BIB '23

Thousands of victims and broken lives. At that moment we were all unprepared and vulnerable, but determined. Many of our friends were mobilised for military service.

We couldn't stay calm and we had to react in some way. Often, parents don't know how to explain to their children what war is and why it has come to their homes. We decided to create a picture book which could be the starting point for such a sincere talk between children and their parents about what is going on. As authors, we felt that we should be honest and base the story on our own experience.

First of all, we developed the main characters. Danko is made of glass with a transparent, fragile body. We wanted to show his fragility and sensitivity because it's exactly how we felt at that time, in the face of war. Fabian is a dog made of balloons and Zirka is a bird made of paper. The three main characters are made from such fragile materials. It's easy to hurt them – to destroy their world.

We imagined the city of Rondo to be filled with light, fresh air, culture, happiness, joy and music. But one day, The War comes to the city. No one had expected it, no one knows what to do with it, how to live and move on. For us, it was very important to show how the citizens of Rondo, faced with such a strong and hard reality, don't lose hope and just carry on. They come together and find a bright solution for how to end the war and how to win.

In our book, The War is a character: silent, without face, without feeling. It speaks with the language of force and hate and doesn't understand any other language.

Some details in the illustrations were inspired by reality. For example, the map of Rondo shows how the city landscape changes during the war... In these screenshots from Google Maps, we can see how the real landscape of our country changed in the area of military action. In the following illustration, we can see Danko throwing stones at The War. This was inspired by activity in Maidan, when protesters threw stones at armed forces during the civil protests.

Another example of taking inspiration from reality is the music greenhouse, the main building in the city of Rondo. It was inspired by the real greenhouse in our home city, Lviv.

While working on the illustrations, we explored anti-war posters and graphic design. We drew a lot, prepared graphic elements and then digitised them to finish on the computer.

The colour system of this book is very important. It begins with bright colours, with a lot of light, showing the peaceful life of the city... Then it unexpectedly changes; the colours become darker; the light is turned off. We even placed white text diagonally on dark backgrounds to make the reading process uncomfortable, like war makes our living uncomfortable. And at the end of the book when war is over, the light returns. Light and dark are the main symbols here; the darkness of war is defeated by the light which is produced by the citizens of Rondo. The light is a symbol of education, culture and bright ideas.

We also wanted to be honest with children – not lying to them by saying that after war ends, everything will go back to how it was before. War leaves scars; it changes everyone, physically and mentally. The citizens of Rondo have to live through this painful experience. But they become stronger because of it. How War that Changed Rondo has been published in Ukraine, Slovakia and more than 20 other countries. It received a Special Mention in the BolognaRagazzi Awards 2015 and it was included in the White Ravens list. The book is not about the war in Ukraine; it is about war as a common disease of the world. It tells children how important it is to not be afraid, to be strong, to stay together with your friends and your people, and to keep hope...

Working with the theme of war is not something extraordinary for us, because war unfortunately became a part of our lives, it seeped into almost all corners of our lives. We saw and see it every day, we live through the war with other Ukrainians. We and our publishers are very attentive to our readers and their needs. And since the beginning of the war in 2014, Ukrainian readers have had a huge request to reread their own history, written by Ukrainian authors

Art studio Agrafka

and historians. But these should be books not only with text, but also with illustrations, because we need not only to talk about history, but also to draw and visualize it.

Sheptytsky from A to Z, Franko from A to Z



Sheptytskyi is important not only for Ukrainian history and culture. For his services to the Jewish people during the German occupation of Galicia, he was awarded the title Righteous Among the Nations. Sheptytskyi personally saved hundreds of Jews, most of them children.

The second book in the series, dedicated to one of the most famous Ukrainian writers, poets, philosophers, translators and public and state figures, Ivan Franko. The slogan “Ususus” is applied to the letter U - the popular name of the Ukrainian Sich Riflemen – a Ukrainian military legion created in 1914. Ivan Franko was one of the ideological inspirers of the creation of the Ukrainian army, and his son Petro himself joined the ranks of the riflemen. The illustration shows a collage using real portrait photos of riflemen, riflemen’s military awards, as well as the slogan – Don’t cry and fight!

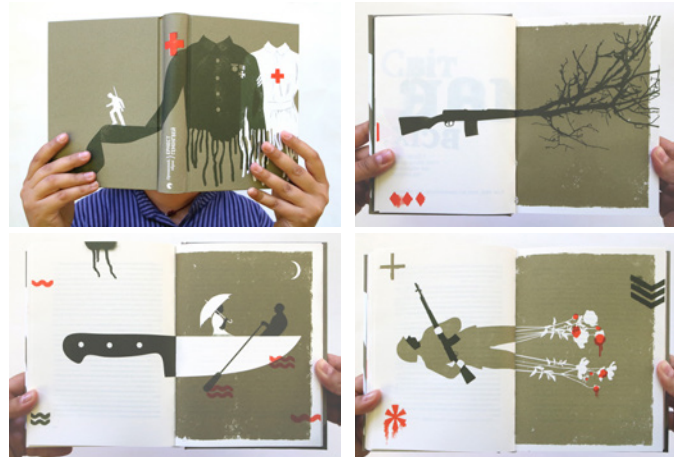
However, our experience of depicting war is not limited to children’s publications. Our young readers grow up and those who read the story of Rondo in 2014 start reading adult literature, classics in a few years. And in Ukraine, we have a very good trend in the popularity of illustrated publications for adults. Especially literary classics.

Ernest Hemingway: A Farewell to Arms

is a non-fiction project for children about famous prominent Ukrainians. We created the first two pilot books in this series, then other artists and authors joined and there are already more than a dozen publications about various important personalities.

The books are built in the form of the Ukrainian alphabet, where one or several facts from the life of an individual are given for each letter.

We needed to work with archival materials about the Second World War, to work with documents and photos. Andrey Sheptytskyi was an extremely important person for the Ukrainian state, culture, and history. He was a metropolitan of the UGCC, a philanthropist, and a public figure. But



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A Farewell to Arms is a very simply written, difficult book about the senselessness of war. Partly autobiographical, because during the First World War, Hem experienced his first strong love and learned the great value of friendship. Illustrating such a book is a challenge.

Ernest Hemingway is one of our favorite authors. His texts are very visual, dense and full of nuances. As artists, we have long dreamed of working on the design of one of his works. So we were very happy when such an opportunity appeared thanks to Stary Lev Publishing House. We ourselves chose the novel *Farewell to Arms* – it is terribly relevant now. The events of the First World War period, described in the novel, can be easily transposed to the events of today: the main messages, problems, emotions – they resonate very much with our modern thoughts, feelings, experiences. This became one of the main keys to our design concept for the Ukrainian publication.

The book cover is an inseparable element of the whole project of the book, in fact – it is a framing of the story. Usually, when we work on a complete graphic development of a text, we approach the design of the cover only at the end, when all or most of the illustrations are ready. It was the same in this case: the cover of *Farewell to Arms* was created last, when more than 30 illustrations were already ready.

At the time of our work on this particular book, the design principle of Hemingway's series at the Old Lion Publishing House was already approved for some time – a dust jacket band with the author's name and the title of the book, which covers about a third of the cover from the bottom, and such a band is present in each edition of Hemingway. Therefore, one of the main tasks for us was to beat this principle. The reader receives a book with this tape, which can be removed if desired, so the cover works on two separate levels – with and without the tape. In our opinion there can be no random things in the design, so if we have an additional design element, it must be 100% justified. We conceived the project in such a way that when the ribbon is in place, the reader sees a certain image on the cover, and when the ribbon is removed, the general image and its meanings change.

One of the main ideas of our *Farewell to Arms* design is the moisture, which distorts the image. This moisture is always present in the text as a through-and-through motif, it manifests itself as rain and fog, as sweat and blood, or eventually as a lake with a boat in the middle of it. Therefore, in the illustrations, this idea of dissolution in water, spreading through and through is present. Of course, it is also on the cover, although it is just hidden under the tape of the dust jacket, invisible at first glance. If we talk about the images on the cover, then we chose two main elements – these are two uniforms: military and medical. We don't see who put them on, these two figures are invisible, we only see their uniforms. And thanks to the superimposition of translucent colors, one creates the impression that before us are spirits, ghosts in the process of disappearing, dissolving into one another. When the tape is removed from the cover, the edges of the uniforms are revealed, spreading in thick drops, mixing with each other and turning into dirty swamp water, which can be seen on the endpaper after turning the cover over.

Another important element of the illustration on the cover is the sleeve of the military uniform – it wraps around the spine of the book and continues on the back of the cover, turning into the road along which the soldier walks, but the sleeve also becomes a mournful black ribbon, as a memory of the fallen. Again, here we use the effect of the cover covering the black road, or the mourning ribbon, and at first we see only the figure of the soldier, and when we open the cover, we see a black strip on which he walks.

While working on these illustrations, we did a lot of preparatory work: we created individual elements, which were later digitized and composed of new images. We drew some elements or used stencils, and then destroyed them by blurring, wiping, in order to achieve the most realistic effect of destruction, fluidity, disappearance.

We sought to make the illustrations visually similar to anti-war posters: laconic, expressive, timeless and not tied to any era. In the preface to the novel, Hemingway declares that this work is anti-war. Although the plot of the novel is about the First World War, the feeling is that it is about the current

Art studio Agrafka

war, ours. The entire visual concept is built on an important quote from the work: "The world breaks everyone, and many become even stronger after the breaks..." It is this "break" that we emphasized in the illustrations – the book's break, the border of the pages is the border of two worlds, it deforms things, as a war with human lives does.

The theme of war is constantly present in modern texts of Ukrainian authors. We have a great phenomenon – the literature of veterans, it is prose, journalism, a lot of poetry.

We work a lot with modern Ukrainian poetry, with texts of very different styles. But there is one thing that unites all these different texts – the feeling of pain and war.

Even in poetry collections about love, a very painful and terrible poem about loss is hidden somewhere between the pages, somewhere between the lines, in the spaces between the words.

Superheroes

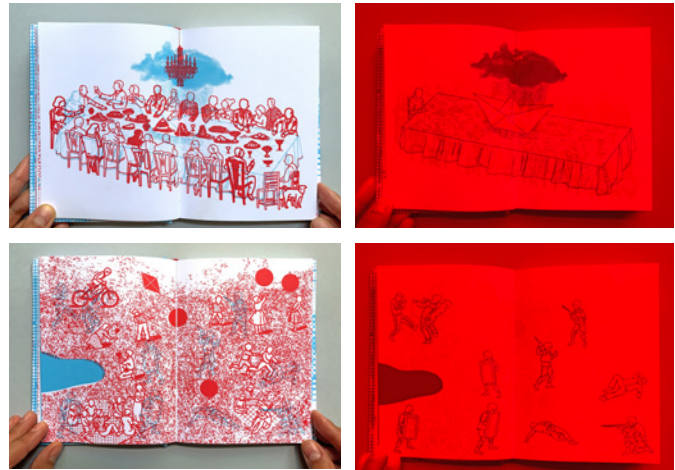


A collection of poetry by the modern poet Olena Huseynova. The author uses popular images of superheroes from popular culture to tell stories about our present. The main conceptual idea of the artistic design of this book is that superheroes are not born, anyone who feels responsible and is ready to do their duty conscientiously and carefully can become one. Superheroes of our present are ordinary people - doctors, workers, rescuers, soldiers.

We explored the visual language of superheroes and transformed it using the iconic confidence pose. We incorporated Ukrainian folklore motives – carpet

ornament, image of Mamai. The illustrations also depict a protester from the Maidan and a Ukrainian soldier in the position of a superhero.

Optics of God



Optics of God – illustrated book of poetry by modern Ukrainian author Mariana Savka. Each illustration is printed with two colors – blue and red. Reader can look at the picture with a naked eye and through the red filter attached to the book, and the image will change.

At a time when reality is increasingly perceived through Instagram filters, when the original image is washed away, distorted, mutated, it becomes difficult to maintain the clarity of vision. The optics of perception have changed, and it is not easy to separate the real from the fake, to see clearly through the visual noise. And what if you could have your own filter through which everything can be seen clearly? The red filter in the book *Optics of God* shows hidden images and symbols, like the photography processing in darkroom's red light. Something new is being revealed. So, as we look through the book using this filter, it is like we are looking through a dark glass at the sun eclipse. Red-blue illustrations where the lines are like vanes. Only the filter cuts off the extra, allows you to look behind the surface and we clearly see another layer.

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In the illustrations for this book we work with the concept of illusion and truth as opposed to it. We explore these two sides of the coin that create one whole – peaceful life and violence, happiness and loneliness, love and hate. We also reveal the biblical subjects and their dualism – life and death, good and evil. And of course, we do not stay out of today – in illustrations optics appear to be civil protests and war. And television, as a symbol of what precisely shapes the optics of the many people. It is difficult to realise that both good and bad deeds can be done by the same people. The optics of God are the ability to see life in two layers at the same time. And only the optics of God allow us to divide this reality into separate colours and look beyond, to see the bigger picture. The book *Optics of God* guides the reader as a pilgrim, a road of trials and self-awareness. And only God knows what lies ahead.

Now we think a lot about our history and what books should be after the war. We need to republish and reread so many wonderful Ukrainian authors of different eras. And now Ukrainian classics are being republished in Ukraine in various formats.

about life in Moscow at the edge of collapse of the USSR. The main character starts his bizarre and frightening journey through the city streets, goes down to the subway, then deeper and deeper to the channels and sewage system and appears in the Kremlin bunker. Illustrations are inspired by famous Botticelli's illustration of *Inferno* from Dante's *Divine Comedy*. Together with the author we explore different layers of imperialistic and autocratic hell.

The Moscoviad



The Moscoviad is a novel by famous Ukrainian writer Yuri Andrukhovych, written in 1993. It is a fictional story

Eitan Eloa
Israel

International
Symposium BIB '23

Eitan Eloa



Eitan Eloa is an illustrator and graphic designer. Graduated with excellence from the Department of Visual Communication in Bezalel and teaches several illustration classes there. Eloa illustrates children's books, graphic novels, editorial illustrations, and specializes in illustrated branding as well. His works

won 'the Israel Museum Award' for Children's Book Illustration, a silver Medal from the American Society of Illustrators, The Israeli Design Award and more.

He has exhibited a variety of works in Israel and abroad, including the Israel Museum, Jerusalem (2017), the Israeli Design Museum, Holon (2019), the Eretz Israel Museum, Tel Aviv (2016), Tel Aviv Illustration Week (2015) and more.

The first project I want to talk about started when I was on a student exchange program in Hamburg in 2013, exactly ten years ago. I took part in the course 'A Picture Book of Tomorrow' led by Professor Brent Mulk Tassel where we were asked to give our interpretation of the question 'What will children's books look like in the future' – we could give our interpretation/response in selection of content or form.

When I started working on the project, the first thing I did was select the text I was going to work with. This stage is always difficult... Maybe because I was living in Germany at the time I chose to work with the stories of the Brothers Grimm – Jacob & William, two brothers who studied the German language & culture. I decided to look for their lesser known stories. Finally I came to story No. 38: *The Wedding of Mrs. Fox* that divides into two parts. In its first part, the story tells about Mr. Fox, the nine-tailed fox, who suspects his wife is unfaithful to him. He decides to investigate the matter. The second part of the tale tells about the life of Mrs. Fox after her husband, the old fox, died. All the animals of the forest begin to show interest in the widow. This part of the story fascinated me immediately. Another detail that

caught my attention was the mention of the fact that Mrs. Fox had a slave who is a cat. I really like animals with fancy tails, especially cats, so I knew this was what I wanted to illustrate.

After the selection of the text I was ready to consider format. My immediate thoughts focus on the essence of a book – a single piece paper. One page.

Another intuition was my desire to combine two formats from the printing world: a book and a poster. My idea was that the story begins when the poster is folded and as the reading progresses, the story literally unfolds. With each piece being read the page opens and unfolds until the poster is fully revealed.

I started to fold papers. Lots of A4 papers. I wanted to reach a fold that gives me a large number of openings – and as many spreads to work with as possible. Another factor that I was looking for in the selected format was an interesting and gradual sequence of folds/openings in the process of transformation of the page into its revelation as a poster. My attempts of folding A4 pages meant that I tried to create a fold on which I would dress the illustrations, when of course, I constantly tried to create interesting connections between the text and openings.

The second step was to divide the text of the story according to the number of openings of the format.



The Wedding of Mrs. Fox poster and the folding lines marked red

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Gradually I found out that when working on a story, I always have to start from a sketch of the complete image of the open poster. This means to start from the end result. The final and biggest image actually dictates the beginning. Working with this format means that the end sets the tone for initial decisions such as the style of the characters and the rhythm of the reading in the other spreads. Since the poster begins to be revealed already in the second opening of the page, I had to make sure that the spreads match each other. Only with a strong internal connection between the spreads, the poster revealed, might work as a whole piece. The process is complicated and meant that I had to constantly go back and forth and make the necessary changes in order for the poster to match and connect the spreads and vice versa.

From a technical point of view, the first step is a general drawing in pencil on a small A4 paper. Then this sketch is transferred into the computer for a “clean” drawing in Photoshop. After that, I drew each character/situation separately. Then all the images were scanned and drawn into Illustrator. The use of vector software is critical in order to design a composition with a large number of elements, since I frequently had to scale down/scale up until I’m satisfied. Also, I had to be as accurate as possible in the connections between the spreads – again this is more convenient in software like Illustrator. The next step is a quick color check in Photoshop, followed by the thorough and final coloring.

I printed the project in silk screen printing, which is an ancient and Sisyphean printing method. Silk screening is a method of color separation. Each color is added into the final picture as a separate layer. In my case three plates (red, yellow, light-blue).

When I returned to study in my fourth year at Bezalel, I decided to develop the project into a series and submit it as my final project. I was very curious and I really wanted to know what the “brothers” of this first poster would look like.

I wanted the final project to be in Hebrew, so I started looking for a Hebrew translation for the story about the fox. A friend referred me to a “treasure” in the National

Library: an A5-sized book with crumbling pages, called *Living Conversations by David Frishman*. In this book I found a translation for *The Wedding of Mrs. Fox*, as well as two new stories that I illustrated as part of the project: *The Tailor in Heaven* and *Ada the Witch*.

Before that I did not know who David Frishman was – for me he was a street leading to a beach named after him in Tel Aviv... Thanks to the project I discovered this prolific author, one of the pioneers of modern Hebrew literature, iconic and important as Tschernichovsky and Bialik. Unlike them Frishman’s works are almost forgotten. In his translation to the Grimm brothers he used a biblical style and it was important to him to translate and cast Hebrew/Jewish content for all his stories. This is how St. Peter from the story *The Tailor in Heaven* became Gabriel the angel, and Mrs. Trude got a Hebrew name – thus becoming Ada the witch.

The conversion of *The Wedding of Mrs. Fox* into Hebrew was mainly a typographical work and adaptation of illustrations to right to left reading.

One of the topics that occupied me at the beginning of the project is how to maintain consistency in the project and make sure the book works well as a series of three stories that connect to each other, that can be read as well as a series of stories. Since the first story I chose had animals as their protagonists (*The Wedding of Mrs. Fox*) I continued to represent the characters of the texts in the other two stories as animal figures, even though neither of them mentions a single animal.

I went through a very interesting process in adapting the characters to animals. For example, I transformed the character of the innocent girl in *Ada the Witch* into an “innocent” sheep. Whereas the curious tailor in the sky was made into an independent looking cat. Another feature of the consistency meant that each poster-story had its own color palette. Each poster story brought different artist challenges and solutions:

Eitan Eloa

The Story of *The Tailor in Heaven* takes place in heaven and angels and God are mentioned in its text. This led me toward the use of references from the Renaissance and Baroque period. I used Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel and other works by Rubens to assist me in describing angels. Other neoclassical works served as inspiration for figures, textures and decorations.

The story *Ada the Witch* tells about a stubborn girl who does not listen to her elders. She is determined to meet Ada even though everyone warns her against it. The text points out that the girl is aware of the rumors about Ada's house... this detail fascinated me and I wondered what could be so special about the witch's house? My solution was to make the witch look like her figure serves as her own house as well. I added some Gothic architecture elements to support the atmosphere of the story.



Ada the Witch poster – first sketch and the final illustration

When working on the stories, I treated all the characters like a cast that I can insert each time in a different story with a different outfit. The roles they received were of course influenced by the chronological order in which the posters were created, that's how I actually strengthened the connection between the three stories. For example, the lovable monkey from the orchestra in *The Wedding of Mrs. Fox* also appears in the role of an angel who is a member of God's entourage in the story of the *Tailor in the Heaven*.

The laundress mentioned in the *Tailor in the Heaven* actually washes the wedding clothes of the fox in the fox's story. The laundress herself plays the role in *Ada the Witch*... etc., etc. – there are many more surprises for those who dig deeper in the three stories.

The second book I want to talk about, in this context of fairy tales retelling, is the first commercial project I undertook when I graduated with a bachelor's degree in illustration from Bezalel Academy of Art and Design. The title of the book is *Six Great Cunning Stories from the World Mythologies* written by Shoham Smith, and was planned to be the third book in the World Mythologies series, after *Six Greatest Heroes* and *Six Greatest Heroines* – each of them illustrated by a different artist.

The first challenge I experienced with the book is how to combine visualization and coloring of different cultures into one book. Even before diving into the core of the challenge, I started with sketches for the more familiar stories – those from Greek mythology. In the sketches there are tests of different techniques and colors, in the end the author and the editor decided together on a direction that is more suitable for the book's target audience: early readers.

In order to connect the different stories and cultures, I chose a limited color palette for the project, thinking that the colors will be reflected in each of the stories, but in different doses, so that it will help both to connect them, but also to set them apart.

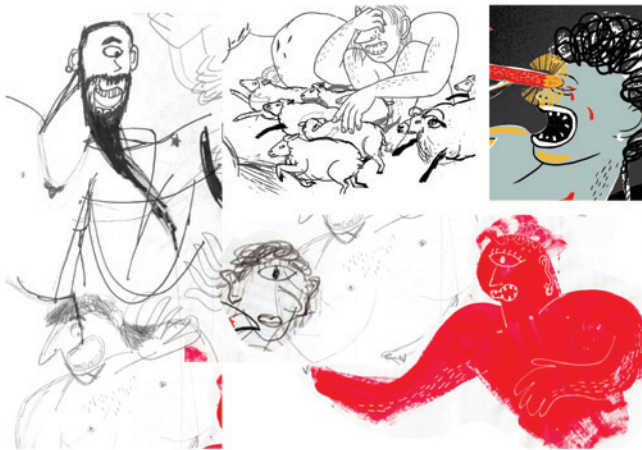
The story of the Trojan horse presented an interesting challenge: is it possible to create an innovative visual interpretation to a story that already received so many visual interpretations? (Cinematic, literary, illustrative, and more.) My solution was to add different details to the story. A few humoristic incidents that might have happened during the process of building the Trojan horse. Small accidents that make the story more funny and lively.

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The Trojan horse. Humorous incidents

Another example of the dilemma we had as a literary team was in the story with the cyclops, which is also very well known and thus almost a cliché. We asked ourselves if it was right to show the moment of the log being stuck in the eye of the Cyclops, which could be very graphic and maybe even too violent for a younger audience. We decided to give up the climactic moment and show only the moment before. In order to lighten the atmosphere even more, I even added some “ballet” movement gestures into the scene.



The Cyclops. Sketches

When I look back on my artistic path and its interface with fairy tales I realized the tales taught me many valuable lessons about both artistic and commercial illustration but mainly as ancient texts their myth and mysterious potential enabled me invent a new format through the limitless freedom they gave me as an artist: an independent interpreter leading the artistic process and its end result “living happily ever after”.

Katerina Dermata
Vassiliki Nika
Greece

“We are all books!” – ICBD
posters travelling from
national to international

Katerina Dermata/Vassiliki Nika



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She has written articles in pedagogical journals, has presented papers at conferences and is the author of books and educational materials. She has been a member of the organizing committee of national and international conferences. She has also been a teacher trainer at the National Book Centre. She is the President of the IBBY Greece and a Pedagogical Society of Greece, member.

Her research interests are in the fields of pedagogy, communication, and psychology in relation to children, books, and media.

Introduction

Every year, on or around Hans Christian Andersen's birthday, 2 April, International Children's Book Day (ICBD) is celebrated all over the world to inspire the love of reading and to promote the right of children worldwide to have access to good, quality books. The idea of an international celebration of children's books was the idea of Jella Lepman, founder of IBBY, in 1966. In 1967 the first ICBD was established and celebrated. That year Jella Lepman wrote a message to the children of the word "a charming story emphasizing international understanding through children's books" (Loty Petrovits-Andrutsopolou, 2002: p.4). The message "A children's book tree" invited people all over the world to contribute to this international project, which reflects IBBY's aim to bring books and children together.

"IBBY wants as many children as possible to read the same beautiful books so that they understand each other better once they become adults (...) We ask all to ensure that as many people as possible share this first ICBD, all those who love children's books, and then those who do not. Just as if Claudia was right after all, as if there really was a giant, world-spanning children's book tree under whose enormous branches we could all get together..." (Jella Lepman, 1967)

The universal aim of ICBD has reflected also in the message for the 2nd celebration, "Message to Children All Over the World", where the author wrote: "Let the day of the juvenile book be like a sun that shines all over the world making every child happy" (France Bevk, 1968, Yugoslavia). In 1969, the message of the ICBD, written by Astrid Lindgren, was accompanied by a poster created by an unknown illustrator from Sweden.

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ICBD 1969: Message: Astrid Lindgren, Poster design: illustrator unknown (Sweden)

The motto of the text “Friends across the frontiers” underline the universal value of friendship. That first poster depicts four smiling children, coming from different origins as their colour implies, placed in a semicircular scheme, like a half globe or a boat travelling to the world. The poster focuses on the children and the value of friendship, while no book is drawn on it. Three of the children are depicted with no eyes, which maybe relates the poster with the phrases “Imagination is like a searchlight that suddenly lights up the darkness and lets you see” or “Use your imagination”, as Astrid Lindgren wrote.

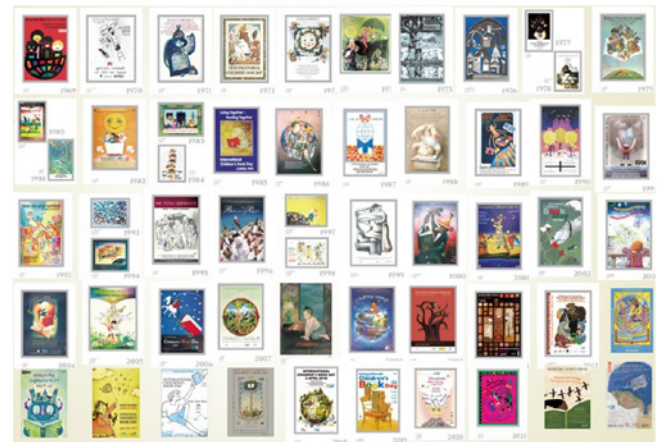
Since that year the material of ICBD consists of a message and a poster distributed around the world through the national sections of IBBY. Each year a different national section has the opportunity to be the sponsor of ICBD, which is decided upon a theme. The sponsor section invites a prominent author from the host country to write a message to the children of the world and a well-known illustrator to design a poster.

ICBD material is used in different ways all over the world. IBBY’s national sections, schools, libraries, and cultural centres organize book reading events and campaigns, workshops, books and illustration competitions, “meet the authors/illustrator” activities, videos, music events, social media challenges, etc.



Activities inspired by the ICBD poster 2023

Till 2023, 57 messages and 55 posters have been created, sponsored by 38 different national sections, while some of them sponsored the ICBD more than one time. ICBD is an international campaign on reading and a great example of how a story/message and visual material/poster travel from national to the international environment, as the theme of BIB 2023 Symposium is.



ICBD posters 1969-2023

Katerina Dermata/Vassiliki Nika

The material of ICBD as a means of intercultural communication

In sign creation, there are two important aspects: what the creators want to communicate, and which is the best form to achieve their aim (Kress, 2000). Social semiotics study meaning within the social context of the production (Hodge & Kress, 1998, Van Leeuwen, 2005). The creation of the ICBD material is a sign-creation process. The context of the ICBD celebration has the following characteristics: 1) there is a clear aim set by IBBY, to communicate the love and joy of reading, 2) the material is addressed to a universal, multicultural and multilingual audience, 3) there is a starting point, a concept, a proposal of a national section, approved by IBBY, on which the poster is based, and 4) the material is distributed around the world and many national sections translate, adapt and spread the message in their own countries.

At the foreword of the book *Children's Literature in a Multicultural World* (2018), ex-president of IBBY Wally De Doncker noted that "Literature is global; that is what IBBY knows for decades. Multiliteracies acknowledge that literacy and literature arise from the multiple languages, cultures and literary heritages of diverse countries around the world" (De Doncker, 2018:xvii). ICBD material can be a chance for the sponsor country to promote its own cultural characteristics on an international level, as a means of international understanding and intercultural interaction. In such a universal campaign, which are the main characteristics of the verbal and visual elements of the material? Do sponsor countries focus more on a national or cultural character or do they combine them with universal elements? Which elements sketch or reveal nationality or (and) inter-nationality in ICBD posters?

Analyzing the mottos of the posters one can distinguish specific words that authors often choose, and which are directly connected with the content of the ICBD as a universal reading promotion campaign. Those words are:

- *Book-books*: the vast majority of the mottos contain

the word "book" (or "books", in plural) as the central theme of the message. Books are presented as paths, steps to climb higher ("Climbing up book by book", message: Renate Welsh, poster design: Maria Blazejovsky, 2002, Austria), as sun or light ("The Book – Sun of Peace", message: Kika Pulcheriou, poster design: Clara Zacharaki-Georgiou, 1982, Cyprus), as a secret ("The Secret is in the Book – The Book is the Secret", message: Hannele Huovi, poster design: Mika Launis, 2000, Finland), or passports to other worlds or to the inner world ("Books are a Passport to the Inner World", message: Bjarne Reuter, poster design: Lillian Brøgger, 1996, Denmark), etc.

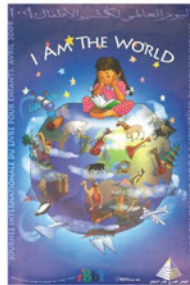


From the left:

- "Climbing up book by book", message: Renate Welsh, poster design: Maria Blazejovsky, 2002, Austria
- "The Book – Sun of Peace, message: Kika Pulcheriou, poster design: Clara Zacharaki-Georgiou, 1982, Cyprus
- "The Secret is in the Book – The Book is the Secret", message: Hannele Huovi, poster design: Mika Launis, 2000, Finland
- "Books are a Passport to the Inner World", message: Bjarne Reuter, poster design: Lillian Brøgger, 1996 Denmark

- *World*: the second most popular word is "world", connected either to "books" to present the books as the ideal place for children ("Books: Paths to many Worlds", message: Monica Hughes, poster design: Ted Harrison 1990, Canada), or accompanying the word "children", to connect the books with children worldwide and to emphasize on the universal aim of the celebration ("Books for All Children in the World", message: Bohumil Riha, poster design: Adolf Zabransky, 1973, Czechoslovakia). In a personal connection with the readers, "world" is connected to the child itself, as the girl on the 2009 ICBD poster says: "I am the world, and the world is me, for through my book I can be whatever I want to be" (message and poster design: Hani D. El-Masri, 2009, Egypt).

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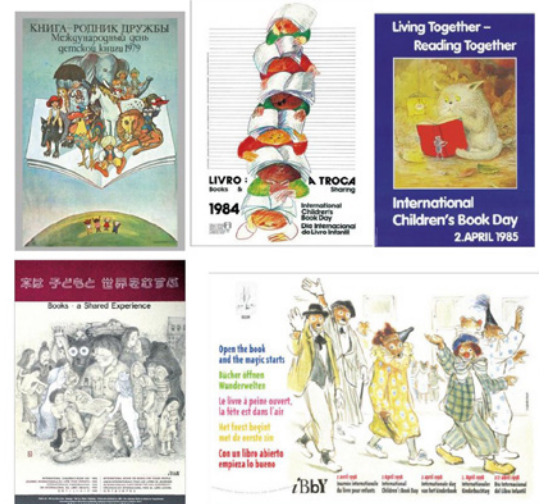
From the left:
 "Books: Paths to many Worlds", message: Monica Hughes,
 poster design: Ted Harrison 1990, Canada
 "Books for all Children in the World", message: Bohumil Riha,
 poster design: Adolf Zabransky, 1973, Czechoslovakia
 "I am the world", message and poster design: Hani D. El-Masri, 2009, Egypt

"A Book is a Kid's Best Friend", message Erica Lillegg,
 poster design: Viera Bombová, 1971, Austria
 "Children, Books, the World", message: Sergei Mikhalkov,
 poster design: Victor Chizhikov, 1987, Soviet Union

- *Children*: the word "children" is used less times than "books" and "world", mainly in the cases that the message is a letter to young readers ("Message to Children All over the World, France Bevk, 1968, Yugoslavia), or in a case that the author asks a direct question to the children ("Children-What does a Book Mean to you?", message: Ela Peroci, poster design: unknown, 1970, Yugoslavia). In other cases, instead of "child/children", the authors chose for the title a specific name of a child to make the message more personal, like the title "Martin and the Books" (message: Erica Lillegg, poster design: Viera Bombova, 1971, Austria), while on that poster there is also a different motto, "A Book is a Kid's Best Friend".

Only one motto combines the words "book", "child" and "world" together. In 1987 the motto of ICBBD was "Children, Books, the World", written by Sergei Mikhalkov and illustrated by Victor Chizhikov (Soviet Union). The poster presents a child, with a head like a globe, reading a book in the middle of a field full of flowers. This choice of the illustrator highlights the universal power of reading. In some mottos "world" or "children" are accompanied by the adverbs "whole" and "all" or with the phrase "all over the world", to underline the global reflection of the IOBD celebration.

Except for the 3 words of the title ICBBD, other words which express universal values, are often used by the creators of the posters as the concept of their message:



(Img 7) "The Book - A source of Friendship", message: Assen Bosser,
 poster design: Assen Stareyshinski, 1979, Bulgaria
 "Books and Sharing", message: Lygia Bojunga, poster
 design: Angela Lago & children, 1984, Brazil
 "Living Together - Reading Together", message: Christine Nostlinger,
 poster design: Erwin Moser, 1985, Austria
 "Books - A shared Experience", message: Shigeo Watanabe,
 poster design: Kaoru Ono, 1995, Japan
 "Open the Book and the Magic Starts", message: Bart Moeyaert,
 poster design: Gabrielle Vincent, 1998, Belgium

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- *Friends/friendship*: the value of friendship and global understanding is portrayed in different occasions and years. In 1979, Assen Bosser (Bulgaria) wrote the motto "The Book – A Source of Friendship". The poster, illustrated by Assen Stareyshinski, depicts an open book, flying like a magic carpet over four children from different countries waving their hands towards it. On the pages of the book animals and worldwide known literary characters, like Pipi Longstocking and Pinocchio, look directly into the reader's eyes.
- Reading as a source of common experience: some messages focus on the action of reading as an interaction and shared experience. The 1984 ICBBD poster "Books and Sharing" (message: Lygia Bojunga, poster design: Angela Lago & children, Brazil) illustrates six children reading their books one over the head of the other, forming a human ladder of children and books. The 1985 ICBBD poster "Living Together – Reading Together", (message: Christine Nostlinger, poster design: Erwin Moser, Austria) shows a cat reading a book while a mouse helps her by holding it. The poster of 1995 "Books – A shared Experience" (message: Shigeo Watanabe, poster design: Kaoru Ono, 1995, Japan), depicts a man reading surrounded by animals and people, most likely characters coming out of books and fairy tales, to share stories.
- A sense of magic or fun: reading is presented as a source of magical atmosphere and pleasure. The motto of 1998, written by Bart Moeyaert "Open the Book and the Magic Starts" (Belgium) emphasizes the magic books offer, where the poster, designed by Gabrielle Vincent depicts a group of circus characters walking in a parade.

Some posters are based on a more recognizable cultural – rather than national- core, easy to identify with the culture of the sponsor country or region. Posters and messages of that approach are often inspired by a local or national myth or a specific tradition, connected with books, knowledge, music, culture, etc.



"Books Are My Magic Eyes", message: Manorama Jafa, poster design: Jagdish Joshi, 2005, India
 "Books enlighten, knowledge delights", message and poster design: Chakrabhand Posayakrit, 2008, Thailand
 "Share the reading experience... READ!", message: J.O.de Graft Hanson, poster design: Therson Boadu, 1989, Ghana
 "Many cultures, one story", message: Marwa Al Agroubi, poster design: Nasim Abaeian, 2015, UAE

The 2005 ICBBD poster designed by Jagdish Joshi (India), shows a child with eyes on his feet, reading, while he is walking. At the centre of the poster, a lady is depicted, described as follows:

"A beautiful lady, wearing a white sari, a halo of light around her head, smiled at him. She sat on a graceful white swan. She held a luminous scroll in one hand and a veena (a musical string instrument) in her other two hands. She stretched her fourth hand towards him and said, 'Son, I am impressed by your thirst for knowledge. I grant you a boon. Tell me, what is it that you desire the most?'" (Manorama Jafa, 2005, India)

As it is mentioned at the end of the message the lady is "Saraswati, the mythological goddess of learning, knowledge, music, and speech. This is an ancient Indian legend about a boy who discovered that knowledge comes through the words that wise men write on palm leaf manuscripts."

The poster of 2008 from Thailand with the motto "Books enlighten; knowledge delights", written and illustrated by Chakrabhand Posayakrit, shows a boy sitting on his knees and reading a book made of palm leaves. As the creator shared in his message "I found inspiration for this painting from Thailand's long recorded traditions, through the telling of stories to children to the learning by reading inscriptions on palm leaves placed on small folding tables exclusively designed

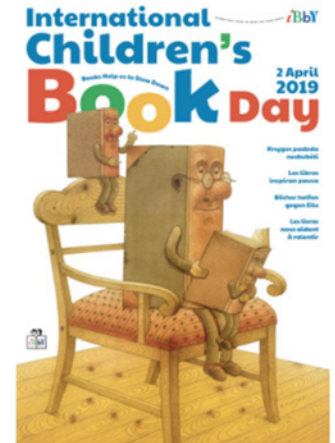
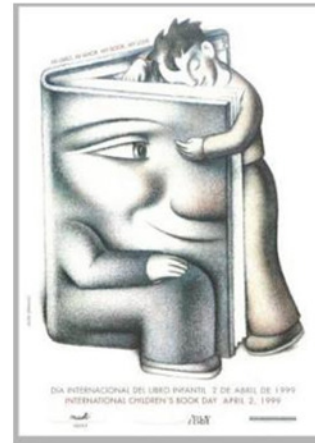
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for the purpose of reading.” (www.ibbyorg//subnavigation/archives/international-childrens-book-day/2008-thailand). The poster created in 1989, by the author J.O.de Graft Hanson and the illustrator Therson Boadu (Ghana) depicts a spider who shares books with people of different colours, as implied by the six hands stretching towards the books. The spider is Ananse, the mythical male spider who features in many traditional African tales. One of the best-known myths is the one in which Ananse tries to collect all the wisdom of the world. In all the above examples cultural or traditional elements connected to the cultural identity of the sponsor country are the stimulus of inspiration. The cultural elements of the sponsor country, as illustrated on the posters, are the choice of the creators which are placed at an international level, travel worldwide and can be a magnificent stimulus for multicultural discussions among young readers.

A combination of clear cultural and at the same time intercultural perspectives is illustrated in 2015 ICBD material. The message “Many cultures, one story” (message: Marwa Al Agroubi, poster design: Nasim Abaeian, 2015, UAE) makes a direct statement of multiculturalism, while the poster shows a girl wearing a more traditional east design outfit. In this case, the dress, and the head accessory work as a semiotic system, which signifies the Eastern culture and Eastern origins of the girl on the poster and the sponsor country as well, while the motto invites readers to think of our common story as humans (one story).

Most of the posters illustrate children, books, fairy tale characters and the globe. Books are usually depicted at the centre of the posters, indicating the message that books are at the centre of interest and “at the centre of attention” (Bang, 2016:76). The poster of 1999, designed by Javier Serrano (Spain) depicts a huge book, with face, arms, and legs – like an alive human being- who smiles at a child. The child embraces the book tenderly, expressing in a visual way the spirit of the motto “My book, my love” (Miguel Angel Fernandez-Pacheco). The book covers almost the whole space as it is the protagonist of ICBD. In another example, the poster of 2019, “Books help us slow down”, written and illustrated by Kęstutis Kasparavičius (Lithuania), one big book is sitting

on a chair reading a book, while a smaller one is placed on the back of the chair behind it. In both examples, the books are depicted as real persons, following the animism of fairy tales, where non-human characters have human characteristics.



“My book, my love”, message: Miguel Angel Fernandez-Pacheco, poster design: Javier Serrano, 1999, Spain
 “Books help us slow down”, message and poster design: Kęstutis Kasparavičius, 2019, Lithuania

In some posters the illustrated characters look directly in the reader's direction, trying to make a connection and emotionally engage the readers (Kress & VanLeewen, 1996). In others, the books are placed in the upper part of the poster, like flying, a spatial choice which implies the ideal and the desired, while in other posters books are placed in the lower zone of the poster, the zone of real and existing, according to visual grammar (Kress & VanLeewen, 1996).

In many posters, some cultural visual elements, direct or implied, can be detected, but the main focus is universal. The most direct visual element which defines the universal travel of ICBD material is the illustration of the world or the globe.

Katerina Dermata/Vassiliki Nika



"The small is big in a book", message: Inese Zandere,
poster design: Reinis Petersons, 2018, Latvia

"Bookjoy around the world", message: Pat Mora,
poster design: Ashley Bryan, 2013, USA

"The World Belong to Readers", message: Katherine Paterson,
poster design: Keiko Narahashi, 1994, USA

"Let No One Steal the Sun", message: Rudo Moric,
poster design Dušan Kállay, 1986, Czechoslovakia

"The destiny of books is written in the stars", message: Ján Uličiňsky,
poster design: Peter Čisárik, 2006, Slovakia

Many posters depict the globe or part of the planet as a sign of the global aim of the celebration. Earth is illustrated big and placed at the centre of the space (message: Inese Zandere, poster design Reinis Petersons, 2018, Latvia), or based on a book (message: Pat Mora, poster design: Ashley Bryan, 2013, USA). In other posters, only a part of the planet is illustrated, while children and books fly around it (message: Katherine Paterson, poster design Keiko Narahashi, 1994, USA). In an indirect way, the world is implied by the use of circular schemes, like the poster of 1986, designed by Dušan Kállay (message Rudo Moric, Czechoslovakia), where a child is sitting among animals and literary characters, watching probably the sun, as the motto "Let No One Steal the Sun", or even by the absence of the earth where books or children fly out of the planet, reaching out the stars (message: Ján Uličiňsky, poster design Peter Čisárik, 2006, Slovakia). The depiction of round schemes provides a sense of security, as "we feel more secure and confronted looking at round shapes and curves (...) Curved shapes embrace us and protect us" (Bang, 2016:89).

"We are all books!" –
The example of Greek
ICBD posters.

ICBD material travels from a national section to an international environment, a travel which evokes challenges of creation, translation and design adaption to other languages and cultures. This procedure of translation and visual adaption is a huge project for all countries and for the creators of the original material as well. Cultures have similarities but also differences which must be respected by the creators. As Vagelis Iliopoulos, the author of 2023 message, said:

"Different cultures, beliefs, and opinions create anxiety if something, that is acceptable for one, it is not for the another. I chose to sail in the safe waters that IBBY founder, Jella Lepman, herself had defined from the beginning: 'Promoting the book so that children of tomorrow can create a world of safety and peace for everybody.' I was very careful not to use something that would offend or provoke or something that could be the reason the message did not reach all recipients. Respect is needed in every culture. After all, peaceful coexistence and mutual respect are needed." (Vagelis Iliopoulos, 2023)

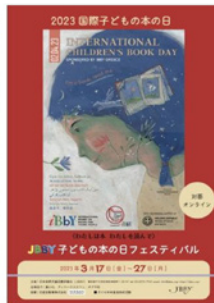
IBBY Greece works on the translation of the message with the valuable contribution of Loty Petrovits-Andrutsopoulou, but also on the visual adaption of the material in the Greek language. For the visual adaption of the poster, the main concern is the adaption of the text elements, such as the title, the motto and the message, from the original language – or from English – to Greek. This challenge is more complex and demanding when the posters contain letters and words as visual elements in their composition. On the poster of 2021 (USA), the motto "The Music of Words", written by Margarita Engle, is depicted on the poster visually as having been written by the hand of the illustrator Roger Melo. For the adaption of the visuals for the Greek version, Roger Melo created for IBBY Greece special visuals, in a Greek style typewritten.

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"The Music of Words", message: Margarita Engle, poster design: Roger Melo, 2021, USA – The English and the Greek version of the poster

Other countries use the English poster as the base of their adaption, and add a kind of frame, where they place all the necessary text elements in their own language. The matter of visual adaption of the poster is an international collaboration between IBBY, the sponsor country and IBBY's national sections.



Greek and Japanese version of 2023 ICBY poster

IBBY Greece was honoured to be the sponsor of the ICBY material three times in its history. Which are the thoughts of the creators about the journey of their posters from national to international? Are there elements, verbal or visual, that capture "Greekness", that is "a cultural understanding of Greek identity" (Skarpelos, 2000)? In which way does the fact that the material of the ICBY addresses many different cultural backgrounds affect their inspiration? According to

the Greek creators, the main focus of the Greek ICBY posters is not to depict the Greek culture, very often connected with history and antiquity, but to give a global perspective.

In 1991 the message "Books-Fire flights in the Dark" was written by Rena Karthaiou and the poster was designed by Vasso Psaraki.



"Books-Fire flights in the Dark", message: Rena Karthaiou, poster design: Vasso Psaraki, 1991, Greece

The poster depicts a child with open hands, trying to catch the book-fire flight around him. Vasso Psaraki, the illustrator of 1991 ICBY poster, focused on the universal travel of the material:

"In my composition, I depicted two things, which capture the universal character of the celebration: the child and the book. Those are not elements of "Greekness". The dark environment of the poster is illuminated by the book. The child's colours change, sweeten, as he is trying to catch the book." (Vasso Psaraki, 2023)

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In 2004, the message “The Light of Books” was written by Angeliki Varella and the poster was designed by Nikolas Andrikopoulos.



“The Light of Books”, message: Angeliki Varella, poster design: Nikolas Andrikopoulos, 2004, Greece

The poster depicts two children flying into the light of an open book, while another book is placed over their heads as a lamp, lighting their reading. The message reflects the global perspective of reading:

“It was with the ‘light’ of the books they had found themselves walking near the Great Wall of China, listening to the ocean song along with the Vikings, living beside the Pyramids in ancient Egypt, going for a sleigh-ride on the frozen lakes together with the Eskimos, participating in the games of ancient Olympia and being crowned with a branch of the wild olive tree (...) They had found a way to become navigators and explorers through their pages. Their ‘light’ helped them to conquer the whole planet, live through different civilizations and eras and admire their great variety. In short, they could experience life in that great world, beyond their little room. They could fly everywhere, travel around and dream.” (Angeliki Varella, 2004)

The illustrator Nikolas Andrikopoulos emphasized on the universal symbolism of the ICBBD celebration and shared his thoughts on the creative procedure:

“The elements of the message are universal, as well as the specific day: ‘WORLD children’s book day’. The book and its reading concern the entire global community. The book illuminates the thoughts and souls of all its users, wherever the earth. And since the theme of the poster in the text written by Aggeliki Varella, in 2004 was, ‘The Light of Books’, I believe, when she was thinking and writing it, she had in mind the children of the whole world. Those who have access to books, as well as those who don’t have books and probably desire them. When I was creating this poster, I was thinking about the children of the whole world and addressing them. This thought was a creative motivation for me. In some topics, such as the posters for the ICBBD, I believe that localities, regionalisms, and ethnicity do not fit. Only universal perceptive. Culture is global. The study only of national or ethnic individual cultural elements is entitled to refer to their local characteristics. But even so, the cross-cultural acquaintance of these different, particularities, styles, and idiosyncrasies of local cultures, makes the subject ‘culture’ global and universal.” (Nikolas Andrikopoulos, 2023).

The material of ICBBD 2023 has more of the sense of Greek culture placed in a universal context. The concept proposed by IBBY Greece was based on classical era values, which have always been a shelter whenever humanity has decided to be “re-baptized” and get off to a new start. The proposal focused on values like understanding, solidarity and tolerance via children and young people’s literature, as an opportunity to direct people’s attention to moral IQ and the value of human existence. The author Vagelis Iliopoulos wrote the message “I am a book, read me!” and the artist-illustrator Photini Stephanidi designed the poster.

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"I am a book, read me!", message: Vagelis Iliopoulos, poster design: Photini Stephanidi, 2023, Greece



"In the poster I designed, the Greek elements came up spontaneously, since they permeate all my visual work, in all periods. The whole design is Greek, from the color of the hair, the wildflowers and the olive branch, the Pegasus, the illustrated book, and even the Byzantine-Hellenic way of rendering light and shadow on the girl's face. I sought for the image to speak Greek in its own way yet be understandable everywhere. A determined, calm look. An almost archaic Greek smile. A child who thinks: 'I will succeed, and I have a lot to tell you since I am an open book.' Along with the above, the main concern was the need to communicate with people worldwide, flying from our small country and embracing this effort by young and old readers just for the joy of communication and giving." (Photini Stephanidi, 2023).

Conclusions

ICBD celebration starts from an international aim: to inspire children to read, to foster a love for children's books across the world and promote children's right to have access to good, quality books. The creation of the material is a project based on a proposal of a national section, an author, and an illustrator, after the approval of IBBY, to become a universal celebration. Even if the posters and messages of April the 2nd may enclose cultural or traditional characteristics, this is illustrated rather in a gentle and discreet way, especially when the messages are inspired by a national or cultural local tradition. The main concern is to achieve a universal perceptive and address the global audience. This procedure evokes national and cultural challenges not only to the sponsor country but also to the national sections that translate and adapt the original material in their own language. The ICBD celebration, one of IBBY's activities worldwide, is a unique international and intercultural project, which brings readers together under a great challenge: to work for bringing books and children together, as IBBY's mission is. After all, as the message of 2023 underlines, "we are all books"!

The poster shows a girl with blue hair, like the sky. There is an open book in her head, and from its pages, the flying horse, Pegasus, is ready to fly away. On the poster a branch of olive tree – a symbol related to ancient Olympic games but also, in modern times, related to peace – and other wildflowers are illustrated. This is a poster that incorporates textual and visual elements of Greek culture but in a very discreet way.

For the 2023 message "I am a book, read me", Vagelis Iliopoulos was inspired by the Greek classical values of democracy, inclusion, and empathy:

"My attempt was the national element to be international. In other words, universal values, such as democracy, which was born in Greece, should be spread worldwide, through the ICBD celebration. Nowadays, where technology has been deified, a turn to classical studies and the values of ancient Greece is the only solution not to lose our humanity. By assigning each year to a different national section the message and the poster, IBBY seeks pluralism, the promotion of different cultures that reinforce the same goal, the promotion and dissemination of the book to children." (Vagelis Iliopoulos, 2023)

Photini Stephanidi, the illustrator of 2023 poster, was inspired by the text of Vagelis Iliopoulos, but also from the Greek nature and civilization which is reflected on her whole work:

Katerina Dermata/Vassiliki Nika

Acknowledgements

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Dermot Flynn
Ireland

Fairy Tale Books
(National Identity
of Illustrations and
its Communication in
the International Context)

Dermot Flynn



Born on the northside of Dublin, Dermot Flynn is an artist, illustrator, and animation designer who works between Ireland and the United Kingdom. He has worked with a diverse base of high profile international clients, including Pentagram, Paramount, Apple, Disney, The New Yorker, The Guardian, Macmillan, Adidas, Vodafone, Vogue, HSBC, Christie's, Harper's Bazaar,

Winkreative, Canongate, Toyota Japan, Oxford University Press, UBS, The Irish Times, Studio AKA, Pernod Ricard, and British Airways. His work has won numerous awards, including the Macmillan Prize for Children's Book Illustration and a Silver Lion at Cannes Advertising Festival. Highlights of his career include illustrations for Mary Portas' report on the state of the British High Street; appearing on TV creating portraits of celebrities in chocolate, toast, and Marmite; being threatened with legal action for creating portraits of celebrities in toothpaste, production designs for a Disney film about a school for fairy godmothers, and illustrating a Christmas poem for Poet Laureate Carol Ann Duffy.

Often described as 'A Nation of Storytellers,' Ireland is unique for its vast and almost unquantifiable body of myth, tradition and folklore, which has remained largely untouched and apart from the tradition and narratives of Ancient Greece and Rome. Geographical separation meant that Ireland largely avoided being invaded and thus this material has remained largely intact up until the present day, depicting the remains of a unique and individual west European civilisation.

In his book *Saga and Myth in Ancient Ireland*, Gerard Murphy describes it thus: '...the lover of literature, having exhausted the possibilities of the maturer literatures of other countries, finds in Irish storytelling something to delight him from the youth of the world, before the heart had been trained to bow before the head or the imagination to be troubled by logic and reality...'

Myths and legends of Ireland are grouped into 'Cycles'. The Mythological Cycle consists of tales about the Tuatha De Danann, a god-like race who were among the first invaders of the island of Ireland. Works in this cycle include *Leabhair Gabála Eireann* (The Book of Conquests of Ireland), *Cath Maighe Tuired* (the Battle of Moytura) and *The Children of Lir*.

The Ulster Cycle is a series of legends about Cuchulain and the epic *Táin Bó Cuailgne* (the Cattle Raid of Cooley), while the Fianna Cycle tells of the exploits of the hero Fionn MacCumhail and his warrior band Na Fianna. There is also the *Kings Cycle*, a collection of stories and narratives about historical and semi-historical rulers of Ireland, and the origination of dynasties and clans. Originally passed down orally, many of the stories were written down in the early medieval era by Christian scribes, who modified and Christianised them to some extent.

Irish folklore continued alongside this written tradition; a rich collection of traditional stories, legends, beliefs, customs, and practices that have been passed down orally through generations in Ireland. Encompassing a wide range of subjects, including mythology, folktales, superstitions, and folk customs, it associates various practices, superstitions and customs with attracting luck, warding off evil spirits and avoiding misfortune. Folklore was (and in some cases, still is) used to explain anything in daily life that is not immediately apparent or understandable to logic or the human eye, or that is not measurable, or verifiable.

Folklore is deeply rooted in its cultural and historical heritage of Ireland, and has played a significant role in shaping the country's identity. Central to Irish folklore is the belief in the Otherworld, and its denizens and fairies, often called the Good People, 'The Shining Ones' or in Gaelic, 'The Sídh', who exist unseen and unknown alongside modern life. The interplay between this and the human and natural world is a recurring theme; many stories are centred around natural landmarks, such as hills, lakes, and ancient sites, which are often believed to be inhabited by mythical invisible beings such as fairies, banshees and leprechauns. These are commonly believed to be descendants of the original Tuatha De Danann, who were forced into hiding

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underground by the invading tribes of Ireland, where, in the form of the fairies, they inhabited (and continue to inhabit?) a discrete time-space continuum. This phenomenon may have informed Irish author C.S. Lewis's creation of Narnia for his popular series of children's books, which includes *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* (1950). To this day, a belief persists that the fairies move between their realm and ours via the aforementioned landscape portals, such as sacred rocks and copses.

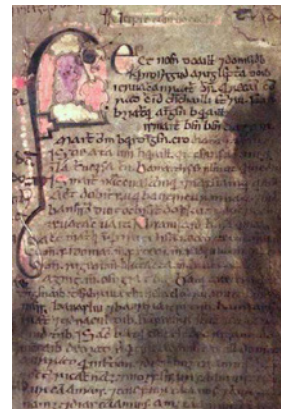
In her wonderful and gripping book, *The Burning of Bridget Cleary*, Angela Bourke gives a wonderful and extensive description and definition of Fairy lore, from which the following excerpts are taken:

'Fairies are not human, but they resemble humans and live lives, parallel to theirs, with some significant differences; they keep cows and sell them at fairs, they enjoy whiskey and music; they like gold, milk and tobacco, but hate iron fire salt and the Christian religion; and any combination of these mainstays of Irish rural culture serves to guard against them. Sometimes it is said that there are no women among the fairies, in any case, they steal children and young women and occasionally young men and leave withered, cantankerous changelings in their place. They can bring disease and crops, animals and humans, but by and large if treated with neighbourly consideration, they mind their own business and even reward favours.'

'Fairies belong to the margins and so can serve as a reference points and metaphors for all that is marginal in human life. Their underground existence allows them to stand for the unconscious; for the secret, for the unspeakable, and their constant eavesdropping explains the need sometimes to speak in riddles, or to avoid discussion of certain topics. Unconstrained by work and poverty, or by the demands of landlords, police or clergy, the fairies of Irish legend inhabit a world that is sensuously colourful, musical and carefree and as writers from Yeats to Irish language poet Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill have observed, legends about them, richly reflect the imaginative, emotional, and erotic dimensions of human life.

Essentially then, fairy and folklore represented and explain everything in Irish life that is hidden, undefinable or unknowable, and that cannot be immediately known, contained or defined. With the establishment of the Irish Folklore Commission in 1935, and the subsequent locating of its archives and research in University College Dublin, Irish folklore has continued to be celebrated and appreciated, both within Ireland and around the world. It provides a window into the cultural, social, and spiritual beliefs of the Irish people, fostering a sense of identity, pride, and connection to the past.

Given the hidden nebulous nature of both the origins of Irish fairy tales and folklore, as well as its subject matter, it seems only natural that as these stories and beliefs began to be recorded, visual depictions and representational imaginative imagery began to emerge as well; beginning in medieval illuminated manuscripts and continuously evolving down various historical episodes and art movements down through the centuries to the present day. The words 'Illuminate' and 'Illustrate' both mean 'to cast light on'. During the early medieval period (5th - 6th century), Irish myths and legends were primarily disseminated and transmitted through oral tradition. However, with the arrival of Christianity in Ireland and the establishment of monasteries, these tales and stories started to be recorded in illuminated manuscripts, which clearly show the influence of their Celtic origins - both their aesthetics and surroundings.



Folio 53, the Book of Leinster



Christ Enthroned, the Book of Kells

Dermot Flynn

One of the most significant examples is the *Book of Kells*, a lavishly decorated manuscript that includes intricate illustrations of biblical scenes alongside depictions of pagan and Celtic motifs. The manuscript's intricate interlacing patterns and stylized animal forms which reflect a unique fusion of Christian and pagan Celtic artistic traditions.

With the English conquest of Ireland, almost every aspect of native Gaelic culture faced suppression, and Irish mythological illustrations became less prominent. However there was some interest in the subject of Irish tradition and folklore; one such example was Thomas Crofton Croker, an Irish antiquary and publisher of *Fairy Legends and Traditions of the South of Ireland*, collected over a period of several years during a series of field trips to southern Ireland. Croker is often viewed as having a condescending and patronising attitude to Irish folklore and culture, indeed he was even criticised by WB Yeats for his comic distortions of Irish tradition. Below is one engraving by Daniel Maclise from his writings; *The Dullahan* – 'The Headless Horseman' of Irish fairytale, from which the Celtic origins and influence are noticeably absent. (Maclise, funnily enough, was born in County Cork, and spent most of his life living and working in London).



The Dullahan, Daniel Maclise, *Fairy Legends and Traditions of the South of Ireland*, Croker

During the late 19th and early 20th century, there was a significant resurgence of interest in Irish mythology and a cultural renaissance known as the Celtic Revival, which manifested itself in a variety of movements and trends in art and literature. Artists and writers drew upon the traditions of Gaelic literature, folklore and mythology, and Celtic art and art motifs. The movement was complex and multi-faceted, and the most prominent incarnation of it was the Irish Literary Revival. Spearheaded by individuals such as W.B. Yeats, Lady Gregory and AE Russell, the Literary Revival stimulated a new interest, appreciation and demand for publishing traditional Irish literature and poetry.



The Little Mermaid, Harry Clarke, Hans Andersen's Fairy Tales
The Elf Hill, Harry Clarke, Hans Andersen's Fairy Tales



With this, came numerous opportunities for illustrators to collaborate with Irish authors and publishing houses in reinterpreting and reimagining its myths and legends. This culminated in a flowering of Irish visual and illustrative culture the influence of which as felt not just in Ireland and Britain, but also in mainland Europe.

One such Irish artist was Harry Clarke. Born into a family of stained glass makers, it is for this he is most well-known; but he also gained considerable acclaim for his book illustration work. Clarke is often described as the Irish Beardsley, and his work ranges from the delicately beautiful to the horrifyingly

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grotesque. Here are two examples of his book illustration work created for a volume of Hans Andersen's Fairy Tales. Both show the influence and inclusion of Celtic motifs and imagery. In *The Little Mermaid*, the sharp slant of the mermaid in the front provides a dynamic counterbalance to the symmetrical Celtic knot inspired sea witch in the background, a direct referral back to the plasticity of Celtic illuminated manuscripts. The Celtic influence can also be seen in the delicate patterning on the elegant kaftans worn by the she-elves in his illustration for *The Elf Hill*.



Chi-Ro, Book of Kells



Wild, shy and monstrous creatures..., Arthur Rackham;
Irish Fairytales by James Stephens

The far reaching influence of the Celtic Revival was by no means confined to Ireland. The famous British illustrator Arthur Rackham created a series of images for James Stephens' *Irish Fairytales*. This example, *Wild and shy and monstrous creatures* clearly shows how meticulously he did his research, and his sensitive referral back to the symbolism and patterning as detailed in ancient Irish Manuscripts. At first glance the page with its coiling animals, trees and branches and Celtic spirals is decidedly similar to that of the Chi Rho page in the *Book of Kells*.



Another artist who was very focused on Ireland's mythology as a subject and source of creative inspiration was John Duncan (1866–1945), who created a number of large scale paintings based on old Irish legends.

Here are two representations of the Sidhe by him – the light fairies – *The Fairy Host* and the dark fairies – *The Fomor*. These are richly detailed works executed in the difficult and painstaking medium of egg tempera, deliberately mimicking the styles and techniques of the creators of the Irish illuminated manuscripts. *The Fairy Host* – is a very conventional portrait of the 'supernatural nobility' which bows to the work of Paolo Uccello with some echoes of the unicorn tapestry, but it is with the *Fomor*, that he really comes into his own. Duncan portrays a ragtag misbegotten band of misfits and grotesques, akin to the unemployed denizens of an old-style carnival freakshow.

Contemporary Era (20th century – present):

During the early part of the 20th century Prominent figures such as W.B. Yeats, Lady Augusta Gregory, and Douglas Hyde

Dermot Flynn

played crucial roles in collecting, translating, and popularizing Irish myths and legends, continuing to popularise them. W.B.Yeats himself made an extensive collection of Irish folktales and beliefs which is still in print to the present day, and which was illustrated by both notable and obscure Irish graphic artists and illustrators; including his acclaimed painter brother, Jack B.Yeats, who explored Irish mythological themes in his own work. One such piece; *A Race in Hy-Brasil*, shows an everyday sporting scene in *Hy-Brasil*, the fabled Isles of the Blest, also known as *Tir na nÓg*.



A Race in Hy-Brasil, Jack B.Yeats

Irish myths and legends are a particular part of the Irish psyche and have been at the forefront of Irish culture. There have been a number of collaborations with publishers and artists in creating works based on Irish myths and fairytales, and beyond public art commissions, the works have featured on initiative and platforms central to the running and identity of the state.



Figures from *Táin Bó Cúailnge* continue to resonate in Irish culture. • Left: Image of Medb, Queen of Connacht (Ireland's western province), on the one-punt note — the Irish equivalent of the dollar bill — that was produced between 1976 and 1993. • Center: Based on a statue, image of the dying Cú Chulainn on a special-edition 10-shilling coin, issued in 1966 to mark the fiftieth anniversary of Ireland's Easter Rising. On Cú Chulainn's shoulder is the Morrigan or war deity in the form of a crow. • Right: Image titled *The Bull of Cuailgne*, created by the Irish illustrator Louis Le Brocquy for Thomas Kinsella's *The Táin*, a 1969 translation of *Táin Bó Cúailnge*. In the epic, Cú Chulainn becomes the principal defender of Ulster (Ireland's northern province) as Medb and her coalition army stage an invasion, seeking possession of the renowned stud bull that dwells on the hilly Cooley peninsula.

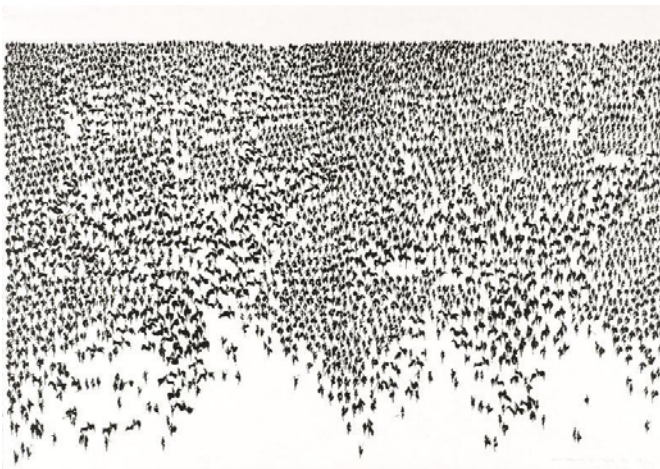
The *Táin* is the great mythological epic of Ireland, akin to the *Iliad* in Greece and the *Kalevala* in Finland. Above is a portrait of Maeve, Queen of Connacht, which featured on the Irish one-punt note; beside it is a design for a 10-shilling coin featuring the death of Cuchulainn – a relief version of the statue that stands in the main hall of the GPO on O'Connell Street.



The Táin: The Morrigan, 1969, Louis LeBrocquy

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In 1967, the Dolmen Press commissioned Irish illustrator and artist Louis le Brocqy to create a series of illustrations for the poet Thomas Kinsella's retelling of the great Irish epic, the *Táin Bó Cuailgne*. The Dolmen Edition of the saga was to give, in Kinsella's words, the first "living version of the story", a version true to its blunt and brutal Gaelic character. Over the course of six months Le Brocqy did a series of about several hundred calligraphic brush paintings, of which he retained 133. In the artist's own words: 'Any graphic accompaniment to a story which owes its existence to the memory and concern of a people over some twelve hundred years, should decently be as impersonal as possible. The illustrations of early Celtic manuscripts express not personality but temperament...

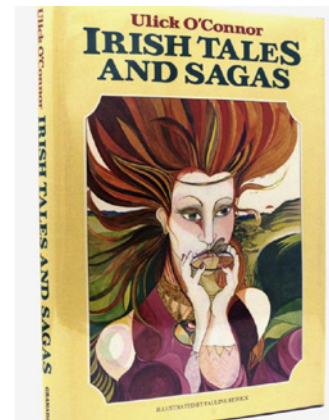


The Táin: Army massing, 1969, Louis LeBrocqy

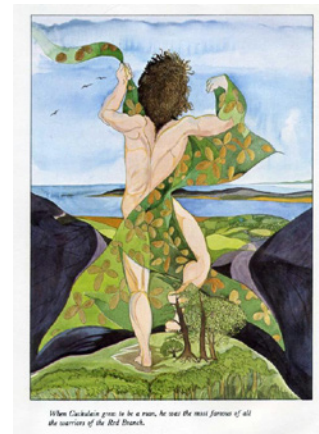
... If these images – these marks in printer's ink – form an extension to Thomas Kinsella's *Táin*, they are a humble one. It is as shadows are thrown by the text that they derive their substance.'

Another such collaboration was *Irish Tales and Sagas* by the writer historian and critic Ulick O'Connor, which was illustrated by the Kerry-based artist Pauline Bewick. Bewick's work, and are immediately recognisable for their flowing, lyrical

linework, and their sensuality and the celebration of the female form, as well as their lovingly detailing of the flora, fauna and beautiful landscapes around her home in southern Kerry. Here are two examples; the birth of Cuchulain – the 'Irish Achilles', where we see his mother Dechtire swallowing the god Lugh in the form of a fly who has landed in her goblet of wine; and also our first introduction to him as the greatest Irish warrior ever known. Bewick's fresh and youthful approach is a perfect match for the elegance and warmth of O'Connor's writing – both were a dramatic departure from the language and iconography previously used, depicting a new Celtic aesthetic.



Irish Tales & Sagas – Dechtire, Cuchulain's Mother – Pauline Bewick



Irish Tales & Sagas – Cuchulain; the Warrior King – Pauline Bewick

Dermot Flynn

The beauty and lyricism of the Irish landscape are also central to this warm sensual depiction of Irish legend and mythology.

The images were so successful that they found their way into other visual applications, such as these series of phone cards for Telecom Eireann.



Telecom Eireann phone cards; Pauline Bewick (Illustrations from Ulick O'Connor's Irish Tales and Sagas)

Jim Fitzpatrick is a Dublin-based artist. He has created album artwork for artists such as Thin Lizzy and Sinead O'Connor, who is best known for his elaborately detailed work based on Irish legends; particularly scenes from the Irish Mythological Cycle such as the Battle of Moytura, and his series of Celtic goddesses. His work has been sold as a series of folios, and he has published two major illustrated accounts; *The Book of Conquests* and *The Silver Arm*. A retrospective volume of his work was published in 1986 entitled *Erinsaga* which details his development and progression as an artist, as well as his working process and inspiration. He has referred to the work of Harry Clarke and the Czech graphic artist Alphonse Mucha (Another artist also influenced by the Celtic revival). Fitzpatrick is also famous for the iconic image of Che Guevara which he painted when he met Guevara in Kilkee in 1960, whilst Guevara was visiting Ireland to trace his Irish heritage.

Fitzpatrick's work has a much more comic-book, sci-fi aesthetic, which nods to advertising work of the 1980's, with hard edges, strong bold lines and airbrushing; however in recent years his work has become softer and more painterly. Below is the cover illustration of *The Silver Arm* showing the victory of King Nuada over the Fomor on the battlefield of Moytura, showing his incredibly detailed graphic approach. Fitzpatrick does not use any digital techniques, preferring to work on artboard with pen and ink, and then applying transparent layers of watercolour and gouache to add highlights and luminosity. Give this unforgiving nature of this technique he amount of precision and detail is quite extraordinary. His work has changed and developed, and like Bewick it has begun to feature Irish nature; landscape, flora and fauna.



Cover image of *The Silver Arm*, Jim Fitzpatrick

Fitzpatrick also collaborated with Michael Scott on the cover of his novelisation and retelling of *The Children of Lir*. Scott is a very successful and prolific author and screenwriter, who is also known for his *Irish Folk and Fairytales* series; three volumes of old Irish legends and folktales which he has retold in an exciting and filmic way.

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Cover of *The Children of Lir* by Michael Scott; Jim Fitzpatrick, 1980

Fitzpatrick's *Lir* cover shows the moment where the unfortunate children are transformed into swans by their jealous stepmother; you can see the softer, more painterly style as opposed to that of *The Silver Arm* and also some interesting elements from Scott's text; Lir is the Lord of the Sea; if you look closely you can see that the children have greenish skin and hair and webbed hands.

Outside of Ireland, during the 1970's illustrators Alan Lee and Brian Froud published *Faeries*; an illustrated encyclopedia of the creatures of the folklore and legends of the British Isles. Both Lee and Froud have gone on to have lucrative and big profile careers as illustrators and conceptual designers for film; Froud for his work with puppeteer Jim Henson on films such as *The Dark Crystal* and *Labyrinth*, and Lee for the *Lord of the Rings* series. *Faeries* was a huge success; showcasing the illustration in a sketchbook format with handwritten text and notes.



Pooka from *Faeries* by Alan Lee and Brian Froud



Each Uisce (Water Horse) from *Faeries* by Alan Lee and Brian Froud



Oscar Wilde: *Stories for Children* by P.J. Lynch (left to right)
Cover, *The Remarkable Rocket* and *The Happy Prince*

Dermot Flynn



The Children of Lir and Balor of the Evil Eye from *Names Upon the Harp* by P.J. Lynch

In recent years, there has been a renewed interest in Irish mythology and folklore, and illustrators continue to bring these stories to life through digital media, comics, graphic novels, children's books and animated films. The fusion of traditional and modern techniques has resulted in a vibrant and evolving visual representation of Irish myth, legends, and folklore, ensuring that these stories remain alive and accessible to audiences around the world.

Irish folklore and myth has both a light and darkness to it; by and large this is accepted and celebrated, even for quite young audiences. PJ Lynch is world renowned for his beautiful and skilfully executed illustrations which have included a number of volumes of fairy tales; most notably *The Names upon the Harp* a collection of old Irish legends, and an illustrated collection of Oscar Wilde's fairy tales; which are completely unique for the beauty and lyricism of their writing, and also for their complete lack of happy endings; as a rule his stories for children are sad and cruel.

There is still a focus on traditional art forms, such as the Púca sculpture created by artist Aidan Harte. The Púca, or Pooka, is a mischievous Irish goblin who can take a variety of forms; be it an eagle, a swaybacked pony, a bull, a goat, or a horse. Harte's sculpture was originally intended as a piece of public art for the town of Ennistymon in County Clare; but was rejected by numerous figures in the town's council, amongst them a parish priest, for being 'too sinister'. The sculpture was eventually rehoused in the Michael Cusack Centre in the Burren. Its interesting to still see in this day and age the tension between the Irish Catholic and traditional folkloric beliefs!



The Pooka – cast bronze sculpture and its creator Aidan Harte

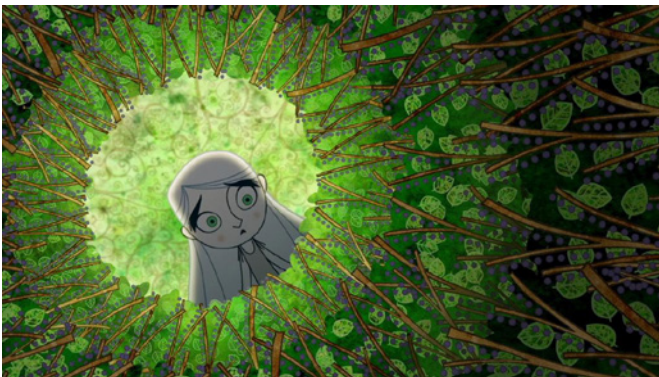
The canon of Irish folklore and myth has also been catered to for younger readers and consumers. One of the first to do was the illustrator Niamh Sharkey; who came to prominence in the late 1990's with several collections of Irish legends which she rewrote and illustrated herself; *Irish Legends for the Very Young*, and *Tales from Old Ireland* where she collaborated with the writer Malachy Doyle. The black and white illustrations have a scratchy kooky style which is an exciting departure and treatment of these old Irish stories. Sharkey is also notable for her collaborations with Irish animation studio Brown Bag Films; on shows such as the *Hugglewugs*, *Henry Hugglemonster* and *Eureka!*

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Irish Legends for the Very Young, cover and interior illustrations: Niamh Sharkey

The Irish animation industry continues to boom – for various reasons – most notably a combination of dynamic and exciting storytelling and a championing of artistry and creativity in visual and production design. Another studio, Kilkenny-based Cartoon Saloon, has gone from strength to strength; five times nominate for an Academy Award, as well as winning Golden Globes, Baftas and Emmys. Their work is notable in that it celebrates conventional 2D animation and traditional drawing and painting techniques, whilst combining it with cutting edge technology. They are extremely prolific and have created a vast body of work encompassing films and animated series; three of their project which show the deep influence of Irish folklore and myth, and also the unique character and strength of Irish illustration, are *The Secret of Kells* (2009), *The Song of the Sea* (2014), and *Wolfwalkers* (2020).



The Secret of Kells (2009), production still



The Song of the Sea (2014), production still



Cartoon Saloon film posters: The Secret of Kells, Song of the Sea, and Wolfwalkers

With *The Secret of Kells* we have come full circle; the film's plot centres around the creation of the *Book of Kells*, 'the book that turns darkness into light'. A great deal of time was spent on world building and the look and feel of the environment and backgrounds; incorporating the Celtic spirals and the motifs of the *Book of Kells* in as natural and organic a way as possible. Celtic motifs were also incorporated into the production design for *Song of the Sea* and *Wolfwalkers*, both as a decorative element in backgrounds and settings, and as a decorative element adding meaning and significance to the film's narrative.

Dermot Flynn

There continues to be a growing interest in Ireland's mythical past, with increased academic research, tourism centered around ancient sites, and cultural festivals celebrating Irish folklore. Interest in Irish storytelling, is as keen as ever, particularly throughout the Irish diaspora; folklore and ancient stories continue to be celebrated and appreciated, both within Ireland and around the world. They provide a window into the cultural, social, and spiritual beliefs of the Irish people, fostering a sense of identity, pride, and connection to the past. Efforts are made to preserve and promote the stories, ensuring that future generations can appreciate their rich heritage.

Ireland's artists and illustrators continue to bring these stories to life through digital media, comics, graphic novels, children's books and animated films; fusing of traditional and modern techniques has resulted in a vibrant and evolving visual representation of Irish myth, legends, and folklore, ensuring that these stories remain alive, vibrant and accessible to audiences around the world.

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Renáta Fučíková
Czech Republic

The tradition of a fairy tale
in Czech illustration

Renáta Fučíková



Renáta Fučíková graduated from the University of Arts and Design in Prague, Studio of Illustration and Applied Graphics. She is the Head of the Studio of Didactic Illustration at the Faculty of Design and Art of Ladislav Sutnar in Pilsen. For her many years of illustration work, she has won numerous awards – Grand Prix International Biennale of illustration Zagreb

2018, White Raven Munich Award, is a 3-time winner of the Magnesia litera literary prize and a 12-time winner of the Golden Ribbon Award. She is a member of IBBY and artistic director of the international symposium of Jiří Trnka.

Illustrated sets of fairy tales are a traditional treasure trove of Czech domestic book collections. Most Czech readers have at least one such classic gem in their bookcase. In the Czech book environment, the golden fairy-tale period was the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, in which the national aspect was still emphasized, but Czech literature and fine art at that time were already responding to current European artistic movements. Probably the most famous illustrator of that time was the autodidact Artuš Scheiner, whose illustrations accompanied the famous collection of Czech national fairy tales written by Božena Němcová in the middle of the 19th century. Scheiner's artistic expression does not exhibit many elements of Czech folk art, but rather reflects the period trends of art-nouveau (or "secese" in Czech). Readers of all ages loved Scheiner's illustrations and still do. They are filled with atmosphere, colours and details. At that time, narrative scenes replaced current films and video games. The children must have been completely captivated and absorbed by them.

From interwar fairy-tale publications, I would mention another classic collection written by Karel Jaromír Erben. It was illustrated by the symbolist and mystic Jan Konůpek.

The decadence of the turn of the century still resonates in his work. His concept of the fairy-tale world is less decorative and could have been frightening to the child recipient. Fairy tales become a kind of a refuge for readers. Happy endings and classic plots of traditional fairy tales tend to comfort people who are tormented by fear or humiliation. Another highlight of Czech fairy-tale illustration was thus the time of Hitler's occupation, and also the beginning of the rigid Stalinist communist dictatorship. It was then that books arose, which have been edited multiple times and can still be found in most home bookcases. The illustrator of the set of oriental fairy tales "Caravan" by Wilhelm Hauff was Jiří Trnka.

At the same time, he created iconic illustrations for the fairy-tale narrative "Broučci" (Beetles) by Jan Karafiát. Trnka equipped fairy tales with a gentle atmosphere, the darkness of a deep forest, the mysterious glow of stars, teeming with characters. His characters have typical folk clothes, his villages look needy, but nevertheless nice.

At the peak of the communist dictatorship, another consoling fairy-tale set was published – the stories of Hans Christian Andersen. In it, illustrator Cyril Bouda depicted in detail both the Danish realities and the style of clothing and housing of Andersen's Europe. Bouda's figures are in motion, with fluttering hair, ribbons and cloaks. The horizons are far away, and the sea is wild. Cyril Bouda created in accordance with the requirements of the style called socialist realism. The dictatorship forced illustrators not to surprise readers of simple working-class origin. Everything was supposed to be comprehensible and clearly legible. Bouda complied with the dictate, and yet managed to let a mysterious light atmosphere into the illustrations. And it was that element that the reader of the book with his illustrations would never forget.

The mood in Czech society changed at the end of 1950s, because the harsh political dictate ended. Artists — along with illustrators — began to experiment. One of the first attempts to illustrate stories differently was the book *Strom pohádek* (The Tree of Fairy

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Tales), created by Stanislav Kolíbal. He worked with colourful surfaces, the book was printed in direct colours, which gave it an unforgettable character. The same period includes the birth of the unique style of Květa Pacovská. The play of bold and saturated colours, surfaces combined with delicate lines and thoughtful typography made her work famous all over the world. The third significant fairy-tale illustrator of this period – i.e., 1960s – was Zdeněk Seydl. He was more of a graphic designer, but his unmistakable graphic expression accompanied collections of poetry for children as well as a book of stories and fairy tales from the musical environment.

The time for normalization has come, in which many exceptional creators took refuge in children's literature. One of them was Eva Bednářová. She illustrated poetically and dreamily using sawn coloured surfaces in *Čínské pohádky* (Chinese Fairy Tales) or modern authorial fairy tales by Czech actress Olga Scheinpflugová, partner of the famous writer Karel Čapek. On the contrary, illustrator Markéta Prachatická, whose real name is Kolíbalová – the daughter of illustrator Stanislav Kolíbal, about whom I have already spoken, invited the child reader to the world of straight and dense lines. Although her illustrations to Andersen or Grimm fairy tales are built on a network of straight lines, her world has tenderness and a kind of sadness in itself. The third, very gentle illustrator from the end of the totalitarian period is a slightly younger artist František Skála. One of his first books was *Rootabaga Stories* by the American writer Carl Sandberg. The extraordinary illustrations became a promise of Skála's later artistic development, which culminated in an award at the Venice Biennale. However, Skála did not neglect the book illustration, his pictures with a mystical atmosphere accompanied the fairy tales of Karol Šiktanec under the title *O dobré a zlé moci* (About Good and Evil Power).

Liberty came to Central Europe along with the freedom of the market. Finally, we were allowed to get books illustrated by Czech artists, which were kept secret to us by the communist regime. The reason for the secrecy was the authors' emigration to the West.

Finally, we could flip through books by Peter Sis or Jindra Čapek. After some time, Čapek returned to the Czech Republic from emigration and to this day, he devotes himself mainly to illustrations of fairy tales, especially those from the Middle East. Few people know how to lay colours as thoughtfully as Jindra Čapek.

In the current publishing policy of Czech publishing houses, small stories from the present, fantasy or non-fiction literature take precedence over fairy-tale collections. That is why we tried to illustrate classic fairy tales from all over the world with our students. I lead the Studio of Didactic Illustration at the Faculty of Design and Art of Ladislav Sutnar, in which we focus mainly on the genre of non-fiction. Nevertheless, we made an attempt to enter the world of pure fiction. I also used my own experience in illustrating classic fairy tales – Andersen, Wilde, Grimm and folk tales from China. I have prepared a set of more than a hundred ethnic fairy tales from all over the world for my students. In addition, a number of author's fairy tales. The students created illustrations for them but were also given the task of mapping the traditions of the country. I wanted them to literally immerse themselves in the depicted world. Thus, a diverse collection was created, in which they used different techniques and various approaches. For example, the Irish story from the heathland plunged into the darkness of dense temperas.

The Japanese fairy tale spoke with a distinctive ink drawing completed on a computer. The Arabic and, next to it, the Jewish story decomposed into ornaments covering colourful tiles. The authors of the illustrations respected religious prohibition not to depict any living creatures. The Inuit story was thunderous, merely in black and white colour of the woodcut. The stories from the exotic Pacific were lapidary, created from prints or sprayed over stencils.

Renáta Fučíková



Dominik Tyl: Fairy tale about a man in a snake's body
(drawing, spraying using stencil, computer), 2022

One of Jan Werich's Czech authorial fairy tales was actually a long anecdote, so the young illustrator conceived it in the same spirit.

Another Czech author's fairy tale by Ludovít Aškenazy, written in 1960s, has a civil character – and therefore the student illustrated it in a very civil manner.

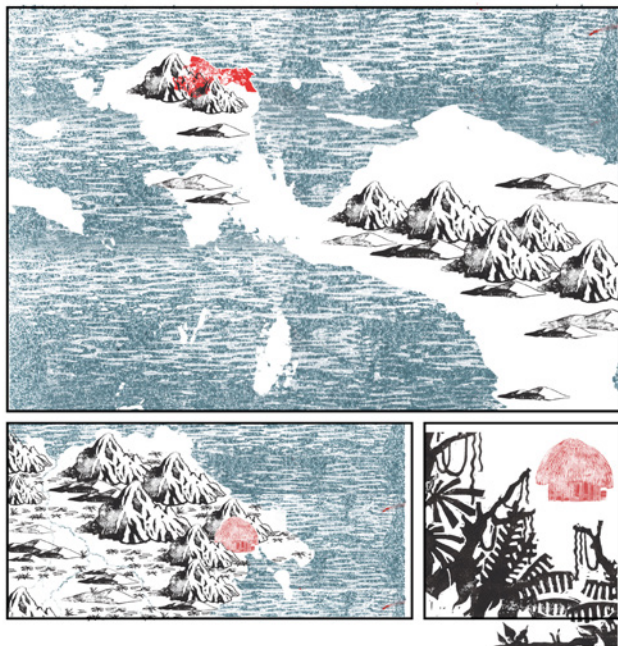


Barbora Přihodová: Ludvík Aškenazy Crazy Fairy Tales
(drawing, collage, computer), 2022

On the contrary, the poetic Czech national fairy tale about the bird Ohnivák and the fox Ryška has received a poetic treatment.

The most poetic of the illustrations – for the German fairy tale about Rumpelstiltskin – became the central motif of the International Jiří Trnka Symposium, which took place at our faculty last autumn.

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Noemi Jirásková: Rumpelstiltskin (collage, computer), 2022

Its theme were namely fairy tales. Namely “All the colours of a fairy tale”. We invited world-famous illustrators – Japanese illustrator Iku Dekune and Portuguese artist André Letria to the faculty. The invitation was also accepted by representatives of BIBIANA in Bratislava and Biennial of Illustrations Bratislava. The Dean of the faculty presented both artists and BIBIANA with the historically first ever Jiří Trnka Prize.

In addition to these guests, prominent Czech illustrators Jindra Čapek, Aneta Holasová and Filip Pošivač also presented fairy-tale themes. Lectures, workshops and presentations took place over three days.

Extensive work on the fairy-tale theme was fruitful. I was pleased that some students also chose fairy tales for their bachelor theses.

In her book *České pohádky* (Czech Fairy Tales), Anna Marie Kohutová created large areas of background, which she sprinkled with small, stylized characters. They are looking for a way through a foreign environment, and we can watch it as a kind of a computer game.

Markéta Ondroušková transposed the classic Cinderella into ancient China. It came out of the fact that Chinese girls deformed their feet to have them as small as possible. A gentle ink painting transports us to a world between pagodas and misty mountains.

The most successful fairy-tale student book is *Praštěné pohádky* (Crazy Fairy Tales) by Ľudovít Aškenazy. Stories about postage stamps or about a light bulb are funny and civil and were written in 1960s. The student Barbora Příhodová soaked up their atmosphere and simultaneously with the text she told her own story full of humorous details.

We spent many months with fairy tales at the faculty. Those narratives are still alive and still a source of inspiration. I believe that our young illustrators will be given the opportunity to work on them and publish them, so that one day they can join their famous predecessors.

Hyesook Kang
Republic of Korea

Korean Folk Tales
and Picture Books:
Focusing on the case
of the Korean picture book
artist group “Vacance”

Hyesook Kang



Hyesook Kang is a Picture Book Artist and illustrator. She received her MFA in Digital Content Design from Kookmin University in 2005. While researching Visual-Storytelling, she began her career as a picture books author in 2006. The first picture book is *Where Is My Tail?*, was translated as *Bébé lézard, bébé bizarre* in France, and was awarded the Prix P'tits Mômes in Geneva, Switzerland in 2011. To date, she

has illustrated about 30 children's books and published nearly 20 picture books that she wrote and illustrated herself.

She loves to draw pictures that reveal unique characters and Korean folk paintings and traditional colors. In 2019, she started the 'Vacance Project' a group of picture book artists, and is enjoying the creation of picture books based on folk tales and folk materials. She conducts workshops to teach children storytelling techniques based on picture books, and was invited by WIPO (World Intellectual Property Organization) to teach a coaching program for future children's book authors in the Kingdom of Bhutan in 2023.

I am a picture book artist based in Seoul, South Korea. I found out through KBBY that this year's BIB 2023 International Symposium topic is "Fairy Tale Books" and was interested.



Where Is My Tail? © Hyesook Kang, 2006



Becoming the Worst Monster in the World © Hyesook Kang, 2015

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Tigers' Party © Hyesook Kang, 2022

Ever since my first picture book 꼬리야? 꼬리야! [Where Is My Tail?] in 2006, I have been illustrating various children's books. Moreover, I have created over 20 picture books as an author and illustrator. I mainly work in Korea but some of my books have been translated in several languages such as French, German, and Mandarin Chinese.

My greatest topic of interest when creating picture books is folk tales. Korea is home to various traditional literature such as fairy tales, fables, legends, and folk tales. Korean folk tales are especially notable in that nature, animals, humans, and supernatural beings come together to tell a simple yet captivating story.

The following is a picture book based on traditional customs and folk tales about seasons.



The Sun In A Chariot © Hyesook Kang, 2009

수레를 탄 해 [The Sun In A Chariot] is a picture book with a compiled story that adapts multiple customs and folk tales passed down about the 12 months and 24 solar terms in a one-year cycle. I depicted 12 circles in a mandala style illustration to portray the cyclic nature of seasons.



Images of The Sun In A Chariot © Hyesook Kang, 2009

Hyesook Kang

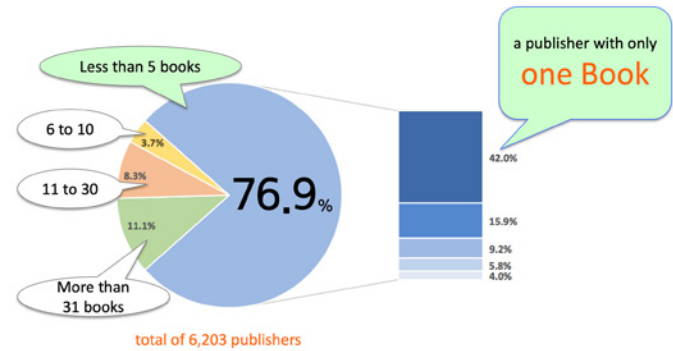
In this image, the “events” and “characters” of the story are illustrated on a background of various patterns that symbolize seasons. While the narrative is connected in a single plot, each page visually depicts one solar term in mandala style, enabling the reader to feel time as they flip through each page like a calendar.

I am not the only one interested in the topic of folk tales. Since 2017, I have been properly creating folk tale picture books through the Korean picture book artist group “Vacance Project”. This is a project-based group of Korean picture book artists to freely produce books as if enjoying a vacation and is consisted of 15 authors with diverse backgrounds. The following are its members: Hyesook Kang (sukuland.com), Yu Kim (@yu.kiim), In Kyung Noh (@inkyungnoh), Mae (@terrapinisland), Hyun Seo, Yun Kyung So (@soyunkyoung), Dong Jun Shin, O Sori, Tac O (@_5tac_), Myung Ae Lee (@myungaelee), Suzy Lee, Jin Ho Jung, O Zo (@crow_zoo_illustration), Eunyoung Cho (@chocasso.v), and Seongmin Han.



‘Vacance Project’ Picture Books ©Vacance, 2020

We hold annual meetings to create books based on the topic of folk tales and have published approximately 70 picture books thus far in the form of independent publications. Such activities are made possible through the activated Korean publishing market.



Amount of books published by publisher
(When: First half of 2022 / Source: Publishing Policy Research Team of KPIPA)

Statistically speaking, out of the 6000 publishing companies in Korea, approximately 77% publish less than 5 books a year. 42% of them only publish a single book in a year. The presence of printing houses, book fairs, and bookstores is what makes such small-scale publications sustainable.



‘Vacance Project’ members and activities ©Vacance, 2020

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The following are picture books by “Vacance Project” that embody visual storytelling through various printing methods based on this infrastructure.



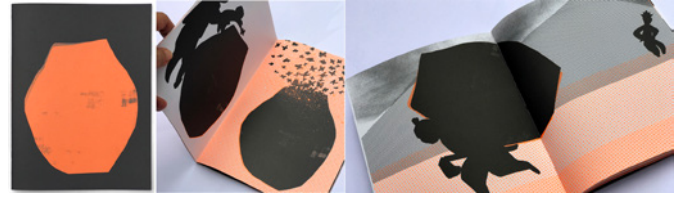
The Tiger and the Rabbit © In Kyung Noh 2019

- 1) A picture book that turns the protagonists and subject of the folk tale The Rabbit and the Tiger into patterns



Mr. Rabbit Goes to the Palace under the Sea © Hyun Seo, 2019

- 2) A picture book that designs a folk tale about an underwater kingdom into a modern vacation package product



The Magic Jar © Suzy Lee, 2019

- 3) A wordless picture book constituted of a plot of events that roll out in a magic pot

Picture book production is possible solely through experimental and novel graphics, without having to alter the plotline of the original folk tales.

Alternatively, the story can be adapted by compartmentalizing its structure into event-place-character and making modifications to each component. The following are examples of this method.



Akohak-Dongja © Hyesook Kang, 2022

Hyesook Kang

- New interpretations of *CHARACTER*

The Buddhist folk tale about a dogged little bonze (악착동자 in Korean) was adapted into an eponymous picture book by reinterpreting a character. “Kkokdu” is a doll that appears in traditional Korean customs, guiding the dead’s road to the underworld. As it is difficult to find similar dolls of significance in other cultures, it was developed into a character to create the story. The utilized color schemes are also based on old Korean coloring.



Tigers' Party © Hyesook Kang, 2022

- Reconstructing *EVENT*

호랑이 생일날이렸다 [Tiger's Birthday Party] is a picture book that adapts a compilation of nine folk tales wherein tigers appear. Each story has different events and backgrounds, but they share a common factor in that the protagonist is a tiger. The nine plots were chronologically weaved in the form of brother tigers having a conversation at a birthday party.



This Is Nolto's House © Hyesook Kang, 2019

- Variation of the *PLACE*

This picture book is based on the Korean folk tale *Heungbu and Nolbu*. The actions of Nolbu — the villain of the story and the protagonist’s older brother — were graphically illustrated, and its background was reshaped into the structure of a board game. By doing so, we enabled the audience to interact with the story through a dice game.



What's inside the Bag? © Vacance Project, 2020

Finally, this book is a compilation of protagonists, humans, animals, non-living and supernatural beings that often appear in Korean folk tales. Nine illustrators of “Vacance Project” have essentially come together to collaboratively create a folk tale picture dictionary.



Images of What's inside the Bag? © Vacance Project, 2020

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A total of 49 story subjects were depicted through various styles of illustrations. As this book provides the characters, each reader can imagine their own story based on them. This picture book holds the power to recreate folk tales rather than fossilizing them in the past.

Fairy tales and folk tales will continue to serve as the topic of picture books I produce. One advantage of old tales is that their plotlines are familiar and well-recognized within the correspondent cultural sphere, enabling the reader to easily understand the story even after transformation. I aspire to create picture books that take new attempts by assimilating the rich symbols, diverse codes, and captivating subjects that folk tales encompass.

Anna Kérchy
Hungary

Climbing the tree
that leads to the sky:
Re-imagining Old and New
Hungarian Wondertales

Anna Kérchy



Dr habil. Anna Kérchy is Associate Professor in English Literature at the University of Szeged, Hungary where she is also the founding director of the Children's and YA Literatures and Cultures Research Centre. Her research interests include Victorian and postmodern fantastic imagination, fairy tales, gender/body studies, feminist literary theory, posthumanism as well as the transmedial, material,

and corporeal narratological dimensions of children's/YA literature. Her publications include the monographs *Alice in Transmedia Wonderland* (2016), *Body-Texts in the Novels of Angela Carter* (2008) and *Essays on Feminist Aesthetics, Narratology, and Body Studies* (in Hungarian, 2018). She (co)edited eleven essay collections including *Postmodern Reinterpretations of Fairy Tales* (2011), *Exploring the Cultural History of Continental European Freak Shows* (with Andrea Zittlau, Cambridge Scholars, 2012), *Feminist Interventions into Intermedial Studies* (a special issue for EJES with Catriona McAra, 2017), *Posthumanism in Fantastic Fiction* (Americana, 2018) *The Fairy-Tale Vanguard* (Cambridge Scholars, with Stijn Praet, 2019), *Transmediating and Translating Children's Literature* (Palgrave Macmillan, with Björn Sundmark, 2020), *Sounds Victorian* (for CVE, with Béatrice Laurent, 2021), and the forthcoming *Jabberwocky Companion* (with Björn Sundmark and Kit Kelen), and *Alice in Interlingual and Intersemiotic Translation* (with Riitta Oittinen et al).

The animated series *Hungarian folktales* produced by Pannónia Film Studios and broadcast on Hungarian National Television between 1977 and 2011 remained for long the most emblematic and popular visualisation of the Hungarian folkloric heritage's precious oral storytelling tradition. The series was directed by Marcell Jankovics, a legendary illustrator, author, cultural historian, iconographer, who also animated other classics of the Hungarian literary canon, including the hun origin legend, *Song about the Golden Stag* about the discovery of the Hungarian homeland and

the founding of the nation; as well as the pagan folk myth, *Son of a White Mare* about a horse goddess' human son who descends into the Underworld to save princesses from dragons and reclaim his ancestors' lost kingdom; and János Petőfi's fairy tale about the incredible adventures of *John the Valiant*, a poor shepherd turned king of Fairyland. The 100 episodes of the animates series featured a variety of different genres: animal fables, wonder tales, fairy tales, trickster stories, cunning nonsense anti-tales, and legends about the Righteous King Matthias. This colourful corpus illustrates the stunning diversity of the Hungarian folk fantasy tradition, and earned in 2015 the label Hungarikum devoted to the most prestigious products and performances representative of the Hungarian cultural heritage, including Matyó embroidery, the Busó carnival, the Kalocsa paprika, and the Kodály method.



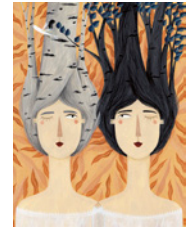
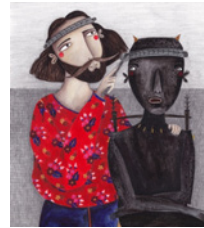
However, the series' real feat was the intermedial transition by which the makers adopted the aesthetics of Hungarian folk art into animation format. The symbolical imagery – the sun-crowned youngest son, the singing doves, and the seven-headed dragons – conveyed the timeless truths, mythical narrative structures, and mischievous humour of the folktale tradition defined by a relentlessly optimistic hope for a social justice where the good are rewarded and the bad are paid their due punishment. But most importantly each episodes' visuals paid homage to the Hungarian geographical area where

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the adapted tale originated from: the traditional folk-art motifs of the székely, palóc, matyó, kalotaszegi region featured on the clothing worn, the objects used, and the spaces inhabited by the fictional characters. Through a visual hybridisation, these folk motifs were combined with iconic imagery from Hungarian cultural history: miniatures from medieval illuminated codices of King Matthias' royal library, or 19th century woodcarvings of shepherds from the Balaton region, as recorded in Dezső Malonyai's famous ethnographical anthology, *The Art of the Hungarian Nation*. This visual authenticity lived up to the authentic folk music soundtrack by folk band Kaláka and the genuine ethnographic research of the folk tale collections providing the script of the animations.

The lengthy introduction is necessary, because the *Hungarian Folk Tales* animation series – also adapted into a television tie-in book collection with stills from the animation – influenced many generations' expectations concerning how a folk/fairy-tale should look and sound like. Jankovics' heritage has been simultaneously paid an homage to and subversively challenged in the visuals of many contemporary editions devoted to the retelling of classic tales in volumes still available on the current Hungarian children's book market today.

For example, in *Miért nem tudnak a fák járni?* (*Why can't the trees walk?*) a collection of Transylvanian Roma folktales (the fifth in Gutenberg publishing house's multi-volumed regional folk tale collection series, awarded with the Beautiful Hungarian Book prize) Andrea Kürti's illustrations depict her characters in traditional Roma folk garments. The meticulously reproduced fabric designs, flowing skirts and colourful headware – by an illustrator initially trained as a fashion designer – are not only eye-pleasing on the dark-skinned figures, but also shed light on the absence of ethnic minorities from the cast of the protagonists of the canonised Hungarian folk-tale corpus white-washed throughout its mainstream visualisation. (Kürti's colourfully detailed illustrations also decorate diasporic folktale literature of Szekler, Armenian, Sachsen people in volumes published in the same series.)



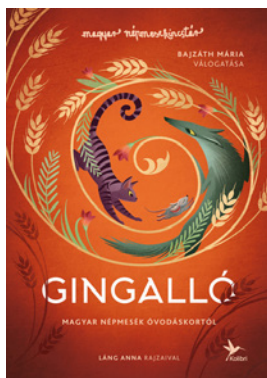
The animation series *Cigánymesék* (*Gipsy tales*) based on Magda Szécsi's tales grounded in Roma mythology, Teréz Orsós' paintings, and Parno Graszt's music – all authentic artists of the Roma cultural scenes – produced by Kecskemét Film Studios (2014-) also revives the rich Roma folk heritage while training social sensitivities.



Mária Bajzáth's large-scale, eight-volumed, ongoing anthology project *Magyar Népmesekincstár* (*Hungarian Folktale Treasury*) (issued by Kolibri publishing house since 2014 and awarded with several prizes including the Beautiful Hungarian Book Award and the HUBBY prize for the best children's book) pursues the pedagogical programme initiated by the Jankovics folk-tale animation series. With a subtle intermedial reference, the typeface of the books' label – in a font that looks like a schoolchild's handwriting – even recalls the cartoons' legendary opening credits. Bajzáth's collections share the rich Hungarian folkloric heritage – tales, rhymes, songs, and games – with the aim to nurture national identity, collective belonging, emotional intelligence, and aesthetic sense. Each collection is carefully customised to the psychological needs of different age groups who

Anna Kérchy

constitute the target audience of the individual volumes. The illustrations (by a different artist, and with a different coloured cover for each volume, as if echoing Andrew Lang's classic *Coloured Fairy Books* anthology) also comply with the criteria of accessibility, and appeal to the visual literacy of the intended readership. Bajzát's compilations highlight the precious edutainment potential of tales which can help children to create meaningful bonds with their environments, their embodied selves and their fellow living beings.



Folktale Treasury's two volumes (*Pont, pont, vesszőcske* [Dot, dot, comma] and *Itt vagyok, ragyogok!* [Here I am, shining so bright!]) – the titles refer to a drawing game and a nursery rhyme respectively – address the youngest pre-readers (infants between the ages 0-4 and even babies in different stages of foetal development to whom pregnant mothers are encouraged to read out loud). They contain very

simple, short folk texts about easily relatable basic topics of human existence such as birth, life and passing; the human body; eating and drinking; family, friends, and foes; animals and natural elements. These texts use rhythm, rhyming, repetition, sensorially stimulating onomatopoeia, synesthesia and visual imagery to initiate into the pleasures of poetic play by foregrounding the preverbal, sonoric, musical qualities of language. They foster intergenerational bonding by inviting tactile performances, corporeal contacts between teller and listener, and urge the ludic, interactive, kinetic involvement of child audiences within the somatic signification process. Obviously, images play a prominent role in these volumes. Illustrators Eszter Schall (Vol.1) and Andrea Kúrti (Vol.2) translated this enchanting linguistic economy into a compact visual style abundant in easily recognisable, relatable imagery: simple vegetal patterns of the Hungarian flora, rudimentarily reproduced body parts (pig snouts, human hands, mouse tails), archetypal symbolism (stork, seed, sun, tree of life), and even childish doodles lurking on page margins.

Succeeding volumes in the series, like *Gingalló* (Tintinnabulation) a collection targeting kindergarteners illustrated by Anna Láng or *Járom az új váramat* (I walk in my new castle) and *Én, senki, segítség* (Me, nobody, help) collections for schoolchildren illustrated by Cecília Simonyi and Krisztina Marosi raise more challenging topics (philosophical speculations about the meaning of earthly existence, ethical dilemmas about truth-telling and lying, social values like solidarity with the community, the responsibility of good work, the respect of the elderly, and the universal human right for freedom and justice). These messages are communicated in more sophisticated verbal narrative forms (characterised by the hybridisation of folk tales, songs, rhymes, proverbs, riddles and tongue-twisters) which are complemented by more complex visual imagery (Simonyi's collages, shadows, maps, and Láng's double spread tableaux depicting country life scenes including visualisations of proverbs in Brueghelian details, and Marosi's zoom-like close-up of image-fragments metonymically marking the whole picture.)

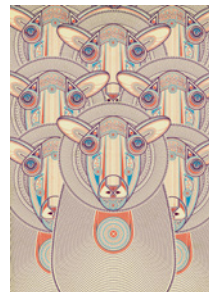
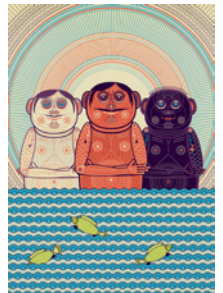
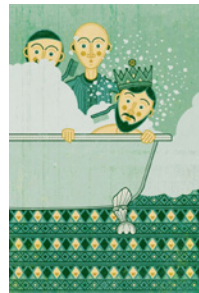
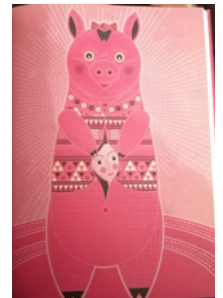
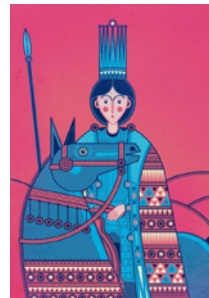
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purposes: *Ribizli a világ végén* (Gooseberry at the End of the World) retells old Hungarian folk tales in modern language updated for a postmillennial readership (the volume earned Zalka the Children's Author of the Year Award in 2020), *A kalóz királylány* (The Pirate Princess) introduces to the colourful diversity of the international folk/fairy-tale corpus, and *A varjúherceg* (The Raven Prince) presents unfamiliar versions of well-known tales to familiarise Hungarian readers with boy-Cinderellas and three little elves taking the place of three little pigs. Zalka's tales feature figures who break stereotypes and challenge normative expectations: brave girls, compassionate boys, kind monsters, undefinable shapeshifters – all embodied on László Herbszt's stunning illustrations.

Bajzáth's first volume ends with an appendix that explains the pedagogical uses of the folk-tale therapy she developed. The programme's interesting insights include how the circular plot structure of the formulaic folk/fairy tale mirrors the symmetrical spiral patterns in nature – found in nautilus shells, aloe plants, chameleon tails, tornados, and galaxies among others. This circular pattern recurs in many nursery rhymes' kinetic actions, tales' plot structure and on the series' cover images too – and hence becomes a symbol of teaching ancient wisdom through the apparently simple means of archaic form. As its most important feat, *Folktale Treasury* series reveals how tales may offer children guidance, in non-didactic ways, to find their own magic-gates to the storyworld (a first step towards becoming avid readers), to seek out their own truths, and by gaining imaginative agency to make sense of our increasingly incomprehensible, unpredictable realities.

Another noteworthy contemporary folk/fairy-tale collection series on the current Hungarian children's book market is marked by the name of Virág Csenge Zalka, Hungary's first international storyteller. who travels the world, sharing Hungarian folktales with her audiences (in English, Spanish and Hungarian), and takes all the stories she learns back home to Hungary. Her three volumes published by Móra publishing house serve different



Anna Kérchy

Herbszt's figures surrounded by geometrical patterns, abstract motifs, and monochrome landscapes – precise lines in graphics evocative of logos and poster designs – express both how our lived realities are embraced by the spiritual powers of a storytelling tradition that ties otherworldly realms with mundane realities. They also show how magical motifs integrated within popular cultural imagery may serve as instruments of re-enchantment which activate a politics of wonder that wakes us from the slumber of mindless consumption, of images emptied of their meaning, and helps us to see the world a-new. Herbszt's illustrations also decorate collections of Roma folktales (*A bűvös puska*, *The Magic Gun*, 2015), Jewish folklore (*A rabbi és az oroszlán*, *The Rabbi and the Lion*, 2018), and postmodern retellings which speculate about the aftermath of happily ever afters from the perspective of classic tales' male protagonists (*Ők is boldogan éltek? A férfi változat*. *Did they live happily ever after? The male perspective*, 2019).

A Fairytale for Everyone (*Meseország Mindenkié*, the original title translates into *Fairyland Belongs to Everyone*) is perhaps the most controversial item on the contemporary Hungarian children's book market. It was criticised by conservative government (who made the publisher place a disclaimer on the bookcover warning readers of behaviours inconsistent with traditional gender roles, and a right-wing female politician even destroyed the book publicly with a paper shredder in the name of child protection. Yet the first print-run sold out within a week, the book gained national fandom, raised international attention and acquired the status of the most widely translated Hungarian children's book.



Published by Labrisz, an association of lesbian, bisexual, and trans women, the anthology retells fairy-tales, myths and children's classics to represent characters from marginalised minority groups – queer, transgender, asexual, Roma, poor, and disabled protagonists – in an empowering, positive light. The volume subverts the normative ideological scripts (heterosexist, classist, racist, ableist, lookist messages) commonly associated with the “happily ever after” of patriarchally canonised wondertale corpus and its Disneyfied adaptations. For example, Snowwhite becomes Leafitterbrown, persecuted by her father the King who gains evil advice from his magic shaving mirror until she hides in the cottage of the seven weaver maidens (instead of the seven dwarfs) whom she helps with traditional masculine chores such as wood chopping and hunting. In a creative crossover fusion of Bambi and Pinocchio, the good deeds of a little doe are rewarded by the Spring Fairy whose gift of flowers branches for antlers allow her (turned into him) to pass as a stag. The collection challenges debilitating patterns of subordination to prevent social injustice by spreading a lesson of inclusivity, diversity, and empathy. This is a heterogeneous, and highly uneven book: tales authored both by professionals and amateurs differ in quality; classic fairy-tale topoi are fused with postmodern pastiche,



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and popular cultural references (a Roma boy-Cinderella arrives to the ball with a Limousine and wins the heart of the prince at a Karaoke contest); idyllic themes (a blissful royal wedding of two princes) are mixed with serious topics (parental neglect, domestic violence, substance abuse).

This unevenness is compensated for by Lilla Bölec's vividly colourful illustrations which visually embrace diversity by featuring a wide-range of shades from the colour palette. The bright figurative imagery reiterates the traditional iconography of children's picturebooks and guides back the heterogeneous content to small readers' attention. The images play a significant role in the storytelling process. Instead of simply repeating the contents of the verbal narrative they complement it with vital details. The visuals make explicit the characters' disability or minority position resulting in their marginalised status – Thumbelina's chocolate dark skin and diminutive stature, the smart little rabbit's three ears, the prince's queer love are lovingly represented in the illustrations, and urge the light-hearted acceptance of all sorts of differences.

A fine example for the diversification of the Hungarian book market, the revamping of the wonder tale tradition, and a delightful case for the postmodern destabilisation of truths, relativisation of perspectives and enchantment by word-magic complemented by visual puns dream-like surrealist imagery is *Mese a mindenről, a semmiről és más furcsa mesék* (Tales about Everything, Nothing and Other Odd Stories) authored by Gyula Tóth and illustrated by Norbert Nagy. The book reminds of avant-garde playwright Eugene Ionesco's absurd tales: the metaphysical anxiety caused by the unpredictable strangeness of being is compensated by language games revealing the inadequacies of verbal communication and the nonsensical potential for the emptying or proliferation of meanings.



In a unique harmony of word and image, Nagy's illustrations provide perfect visual encapsulations of the tale's philosophical speculations. The tale about Nothing – that allows youngsters to enact an anarchic rebellion against the order of things that locates children at the bottom of social hierarchies – is illustrated by a gorilla brooding in a meadow of bubbles and dandelions. The tale about Everything introduces us to an alternate universe of infinite parallel realities where everything – past, present, future, here and there, in and out, hot and cold, all temporal and spatial dimensions, and all opposites – coexist all at once. On the accompanying illustration we see the weird combination of a dystopic and Edenic landscape in a carnivalesque chaos featuring an excavator driven by a Boschian red bird, abandoned buildings in socialist realist architectural style, a giant pigeon pecking by the side of a descending UFO and a broken bunny head statue reminiscent of the opening scene of the movie *Planet of the Apes*. In the tale about Anything,

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everything imaginable can come true (your pillow can talk and ask you what you wish to dream of; the more you eat the bigger your slice of bread becomes; babies sing to each other in their mothers' bellies...), and these amazing possibilities stupefy the implied-reader child protagonist to such an extent that he rather decides to go to bed and fall asleep than face this strange reality. The illustration is a variation on the image for the previous tale, with an upside-down ice-cream cone melting on the roof of the pre-fab buildings, a whale flying by the strawberry bush, and a huge red toad thoughtfully contemplating us through a haze of soap bubbles blown by a black cat.

This eyeing of the reader is present in the verbal narrative's dialogic form that amuses child readers by addressing them curious dilemmas at the end of each chapter: "What else do you think was part of this Nothing?", "What is impossible yet possible?", "What do daddies dream about?", and most importantly, "How would *you* continue the tale?" These questions open up space for further conversations and pave the way for intergenerational fun and new stories – new wondertales and new anti-tales alike – to be told together.

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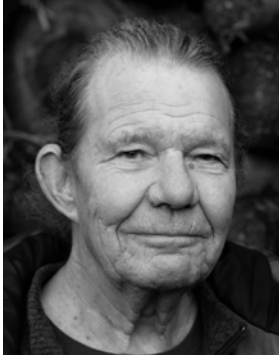
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Steffen Larsen
Denmark

From Fairy Tale
to Digitale

Steffen Larsen



Steffen Larsen has been a critic of children's literature in Denmark for several decades. He has been writing for several newspapers and also contributes to several books and magazines. He gives many lectures for librarians and teachers about new books. In 2005 Steffen Larsen was a member of the international BIB jury. He has written and translated several books.

His latest book will be a hard-core wake-up call to young people in Denmark who do not read any more: *Read or die* is the working title of the book which contains a list of all kind of books – from picture books to ya-books – you must know before you grow up. To be published in the Autumn.

I come from a country that owes – so to say – a bit of the cake when it comes to fairy tales. His name is Andersen. Hans Christian Andersen (1805–1875). You know him.



Hans Christian Andersen – the earliest photo of our national icon (1859). But not the last. He loved to have his photo taken.

And his fairy tales has been widely illustrated among Danish artists. Worldwide. And also here in Slovakia.

According to the fairy tales legend people in Denmark are poorly dressed, they live in clay and half-timbered houses with straw on the top on which the Storch sit in its majesty.



This is how we Danes like to picture ourselves. Poor but proud. Illustration by Svend Otto S. to *The Ugly Duckling*.

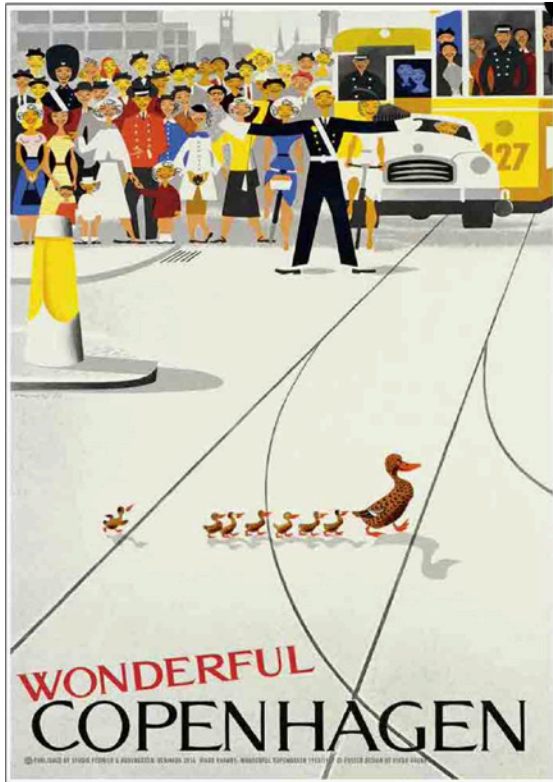
The Storch is our national bird – so to speak – we sing about the Storch, we paint it, but we don't see it anymore. So we had to choose the swan instead.

Is it like that in our illustrated versions of the fairy tales, that we show what is not valid any longer? Not really. Some of the best of our illustrators stick to a classic viewpoint. You know both of them. They have been kind of battling each other as to who could show the nicest garden, kindest mother, most romantic tower, the cow or perhaps even an ugly duckling. And they were

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both awarded the Hans Christian Andersen Award. Ib Spang Olsen (1921–2012) and Svend Otto S. (1916–1996). Very equal. And yet from different corners. Does this mean there is more than one “language” in the Land of Nostalgia? Probably.

But first you must see the ultimate selfie of the Danish national character. Here it is.



A poster inviting tourists to Wonderful Copenhagen.

A tourist poster urging people to visit Copenhagen. And you can observe what a nice nation we are when a duck mother wishes to cross the street with her children. Notice the ugly one stumbling behind. Traffic stops. And we smile. We do that every day.

So here is, ladies and gentlemen, a presentation of different looks on some fairy tales from Mr. Andersen. Follow how they try to adapt to a modern international language of pictures. I can even whisper you might meet the Queen of Denmark in the end.

I could go back and talk about the early giants like Lorenz Frølich who was the first and probably most important 19th century illustrator to Hans Christian Andersen. Lorenz Frølich was only 17 years of age, when he drew the little mermaid in 1837.

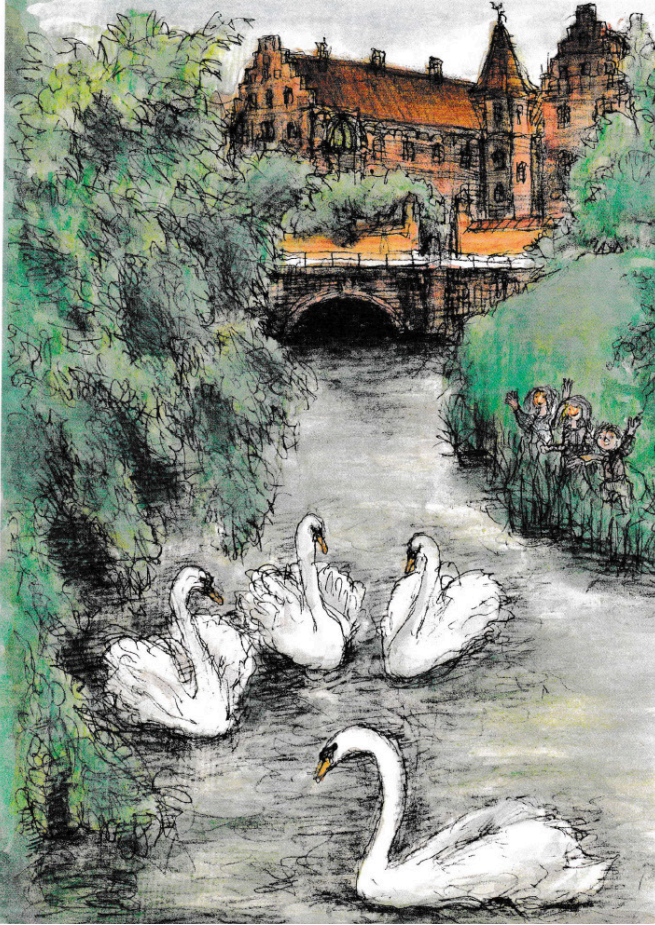


An early illustration for *The Little Mermaid* by early chief illustrator of Andersen Lorenz Frølich. He was only 17 years of age when he did it.

He was followed by Vilhelm Pedersen and Fritz Syberg. But it is a bit more interesting to see what a modern generation can do with the stuff in times that has no technical limit. Or almost no limit.

And what is more significant than to start off with *The Ugly Duckling* from 1844. This fairy tale is often considered to be a comment to Andersen's own life story. Which indeed it is. The author for the first (and only) time “illustrated” his own story in paper clipping of which he was a master. And it goes through several phases when being illustrated. From pastoral harmony by Ib Spang Olsen in a Danish manor environment as we like to see it, followed by Svend Otto S. emphasizing the bad vibes in the hen farm, where the little duckling is severely bullied followed by another nostalgic look at the happy hardship for small farmers finishing with a stroke of freedom in the air up till today where everything is possible.

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Ib Spang Olsens version of the idyl of pastoral life.

Here is Helle Vibeke Jensens sweet and gentle composition.



Helle Vibeke Jensens version of life among ducklings.

Followed by some illustrated rap-music by Inger Binger Hansen. And finally hello and goodbye by a Pole living in Sweden: Andrzej Ploski, who knows what it is all about: self-promotion by Mr. Andersen himself.
(A foreigner can tell things you cannot do as a Dane.)

The nostalgia though went on for many years, until – in the late nineteenfifties – our well known cobra painter Asger Jorn got enough. He bought at a flea market a romantic rural painting and “modified” it. He called the result “The Disturbing Duckling”.

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Our well known cobra painter Asger Jorn got enough of sentimentalism and made his own version of ducklings and dummies.

And it is one of the most popular works in his museum in the town of Silkeborg in Jutland. It opens up for discussions like the one we have here today. This painting was vandalized by an angry visitor last year – whichh shows the power of the impact of pictures.

(The Hans Christian Andersen museum in Odense on the island of Fyn – very worthy of a visit! – arranges workshops for children. Here is one example.)

I still have a feeling though that no matter how many new ideas the illustrators get, they will have to concentrate on rural Denmark and hard times in the case of *The Ugly Duckling*.

“Modification” or modernization. Let’s take another example. *The Snow Queen*. It is straight to the right leg, as we say in football, because it is more international/Nordic than Danish. Up high north in Scandinavia. With plenty of dark forests, rocks and snow all over. But whenever I see a new illustrated version I always look for the (almost) balcony scene, where the two children speak over the washing clothes from one window to the other in harmony. It gives

a feeling of how deep it will go later on. As the fairy tale itself is as deep as the Marianer Trench (= 11.034 meters) it deserves counterplay. And here is where the Queen of Denmark comes in. Her découpages are brilliantly soft fantasy. They were made for a movie about the Snow Queen.



Queen Margrethe of Denmark is an artist herself.

But look at another foreigner Angela Barrett, she promises real tears, and so do Lars Gabel but Helle Vibeke Jensen again promises a clearheaded version of true love.

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Looking for the final scene where the two children falls in love again it is still a matter of tears versus “clears”. The harder you cry the harder the comeback. Our Queen jumps stylishly to the conclusion. That: “roses grow in the valley / and there you can meet Jesus the child”. But both the beforementioned Angela Barrett and another beforementioned – Svend Otto S. – goes deep into the psychological aspect of this fairy tale. Whereas Otto Dickmeiss is homegrown in a religious context.



Otto Dickmeiss takes the closing scene from The Snow Queen to his heart.

The Snow Queen must be the hardest but also the most rewarding of Andersens fairy tales to illustrate.

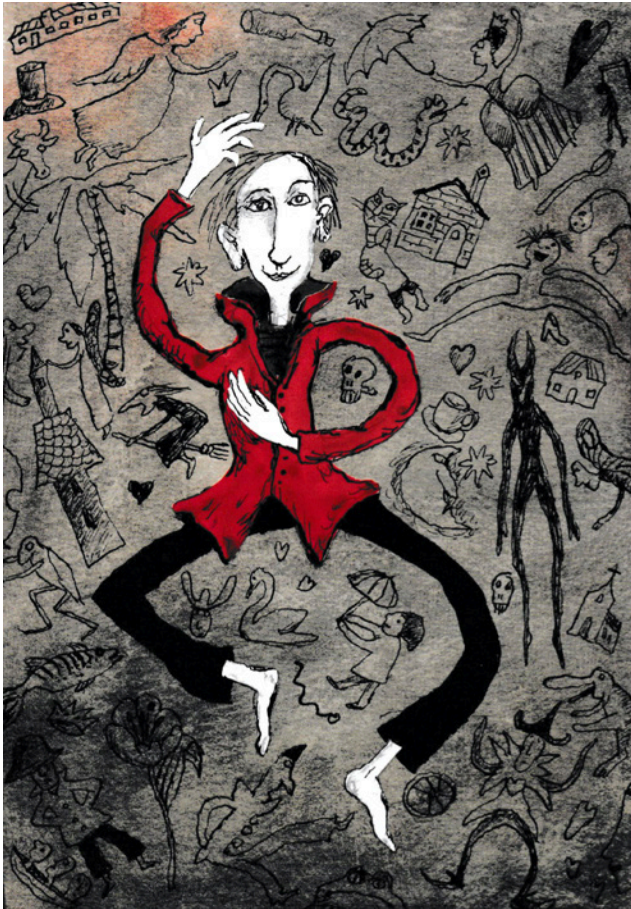
And without comparison: I found this picture in a Slovak book containing dozens of Andersen stories illustrated by my beloved artists Kamila Štanclová and Dušan Kállay. Take a look at this picture and try a guess. What is the name of the fairy tale? (Right! The Flax. In Slovak: Lan.)



Kamila Štanclová follows the lifeloving Flax-plant to its very end.

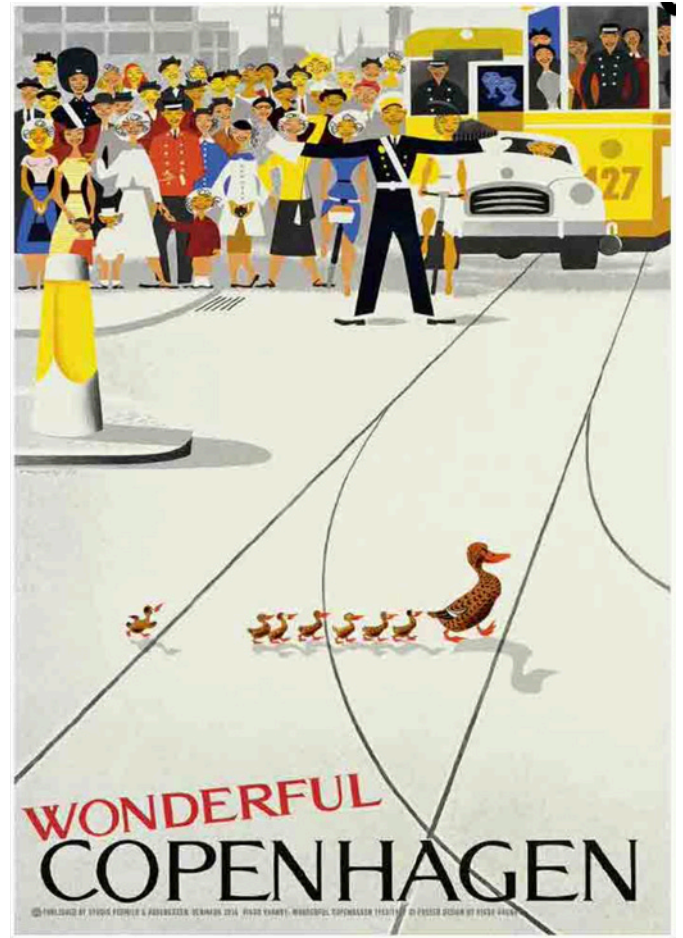
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Last but not least I will tell you about our uncrowned Queen of illustration (together with Dorte Karrebæk who unfortunately does not illustrate Andersen), but Lilian Brøgger – Golden apple in Bratislava 2005 – has made her version of the poet and his time in the 2001 book *The Poor Boy from Odense* which has received mountains of acclaim. This is a once-in-a-lifetime-book. And let me finish with her interpretation of the bignosed, hypersensitive, irritating and genius-like person. This is a modern version, free of old-school expectations. Lilian Brøgger goes all the way. Heading for the international context.



Lilian Brøgger pictures Hans Christian Andersen as a happy dancer. He would have liked it!

Thank you. But I can assure you, that this is still how we are in Denmark. Proud and simple and fond of animals.



Jelena Pavićević
Serbia

Fairy Tale Books (National
Identity of Illustration
and its Communication in
the International Context)

Jelena Pavićević



Jelena Pavićević has a master of theory of arts and media at University of arts in Belgrade (interdisciplinary studies) and is currently on PhD in the same field. She is working as a curator since 2018 (Gallery of Belgrade Youth Centar from 2018 to 2021 and freelance curator from 2018 to present). Since 2018 she created five collective exhibition concepts and since 2019 did curatorial projects and forewords for the catalog for

twelve different artists. In 2021 in UK Parobrod she authored and moderated the debate cycle "The phenomenon of rock and roll culture: from ideology to practice". She has been part of numerous public speeches and symposiums in institutions, considering arts in general (music and visual arts), such as Belgrade Youth Center, UK Parobrod, Museum of applied arts, and others. Participated in organization of Belgrade Jazz festival and Belgrade Documentary and Short Film Festival (Martovski festival) from 2018 to present. For the 55th May exhibition she worked as the main curator and program manager. Winner of the Award for Art Criticism of the magazine Likovni život (art reviews: Aleksandar Zograf "The Trail of Small Discoveries", Nadežda Kirčanski "Ništa Spec 1.0", group project "Art as Rock'n'Roll-Rock'n'Roll as Art", diSTRUCTURA "Locus Suspectus"), Belgrade, 2018.

Interpretation of fairy tales and representation of personal/ collective imagination becomes possible only if we regard this phenomenon through the spectrum of humanistic sciences. By no means should we embrace the idea that fairy tales are solely a phantasy, escapist in purpose, because in that way the qualities of its content and its structure are being downgraded and reduced to the field of unarticulated imagination. Thus, we have to bear in mind that folk traditions are much more comprehensive and complex than a simple analysis focusing solely on the narrative would show, since they rely on the entire identity of a particular nation within which they are conceived. Through sociological, anthropological,

psychological, and philosophical principles it is possible to get a more comprehensive understanding of a national identity with its stories that, in time they were created, incorporated an array of elements tied to common experiences, the spirit of the people and its realization in a verbal content. In this way the knowledge is acquired about a particular culture, religion, history and consequences of numerous = events that brought about a story that had encoded elements of the past.

Depending on the moment in time in which Serbian folk fairy tales came into being, we can approach them interdisciplinary form today's perspective. Likewise we can establish relations between local and international content – which is the aim of this essay – which leads us to a better understanding of the essence of fantasy and its presence in the prose works in question.

Bearing in mind that fairy tales are the oldest form of oral literature originated as oral storytelling in times when people could not write them down, we realize that fairy tales had reinvented themselves countless times, relying on myths and free creative thought, while their interpretations shifted in different moments in time. The essential importance of fairy tales remains in terms of geographical categorization of space, time and structure. Regarding the narrative complexity of fairy tales, symbolic interpretation appeared over time and the whole was characterized by a set of different elements.

Before we begin the interpretation of fairy tales with a special attention paid to their content, we have to briefly touch upon the term "myth" and differences which readers usually don't recognize. Myths are stories that tell about gods and other god-like creatures which served people as role models. The models that stood the test of time help many survive, and over time they transformed into moral norms. On the other side, an Austrian psychologist Bruno Bettelheim in his book *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales* described a fairy tale as an artistic form in which every situation is simplified, and characters are clearly outlined. Details are taken away if they are not of great importance, so characters are rather typified and not exceptional.

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The main difference between a myth and a fairy tale is the following: a story is fiction and myth is reality. In other words, myth animates everything and strives to discover magic in all human practices. A fairy tale tells a story from the vantage point of an individual, while a myth considers events on a large scale. For example, about the origin of the Earth and the sky, about cultic ancestors and devastating natural catastrophes. A fairy tale teaches one to act in a given situation, and myth tells about the structure of the entire world. Only fairy tale can be considered art. Myth is not fully adhering to art, its interests lie entirely in reality. Fairy tales, unlike myths, can have an author.

The axis of a fairy tale is the distinction between good and evil. The evil is commonplace in all fairy tales, alongside with the good, but evil loses in its struggle with the good, because pedagogic approach to forming a narrative is aimed at educating children and helping them understand the adult world. For that reason the polarities are clear cut to precisely represent the differences children can notice. Spotting out the content and leaning the characteristic relationship of good and evil works successfully only because a fairy tale is a work of art and as such close to the children's imagination.

Fairy tale can have different themes – social, religious, and every day like but fictional. However, all layers of a fairy tale are in a perfect alignment. They exist in a commonly accepted framework, the action is developed in sequences each of which has a perfect order of things. In effect a fairy tale is not confusing, but rather clarifying as to the image of the world surrounding us.

A nineteenth century Serbian philologist Vuk Karadžić was the first person to change the form of fairy tales which represented a part of oral tradition before literacy became common among certain people. Karadžić considered the written form as the only relevant document about narrated time.

The meaning of the Serbian folk fairy tale can be split into, according to Lakićević, (p.6) “universal meaning and imaginative meaning” – universal meaning is the message of a fairy tale and the imaginative meaning is the permissible

imaginative art. The highest artistic achievement of a folk fairy tale lies in establishing a connection between a universal parable and wondrous beauty which results in a rounded up content. In a fairy tale one expressed a need for exploration into his own being, the relationship of nature and man, and demystifying of human existence. Looking at the world from their own perspective, anthropocentrism is unavoidable framework of this type of literature, giants and dragons are represented as huge dimorphic forms of existence upon the earth, and earth is represented on a minute scale. In many Serbian folk/tales a hero is set on a quest of something or somebody taken away from him (a wife, a sister), roaming the world on foot and that returning to the point he set off from. The non-linear movement of the hero shows willingness to achieve something unachievable, to overpower somebody stronger than oneself and conquer natural phenomena that overcome typical human strength. The question is whether human controlling tendencies managed to reach the limits of a direct struggle of man with nature, which is, by the end of the narrative, overpowered in different way.

This kind of traveling through space made by a hero reminds of Biblical scenes in which Moses leads the Jewish people through the desert, after successfully freeing them from the Egyptian slavery. Traveling of the people through the desert is in *The Second Book of Moses* lasted for 40 years, and was followed by the new revelations of God's laws. The reader is given insight into what was Moses told when addressed by God, and is also informed about the way the people later found out the words of God. This allows us to understand how readers are introduced to the content in two ways – indirect and direct. On the other hand, in the fairy tales the way hero learns the methods he uses to defeat the enemy is also revealed at the moment the event is taking place, so there is no mystification or subsequent knowledge of the techniques used, which is typical of modern literature or film. Understanding the enemy as a phenomenon opposing man's aspiration to obtain what he wants (or what should belong to him in some way), raises the question in what way the embodiment of the denial to the realization of one's desire should be represented. Further on in the text we will analyze characters in fairy tales, their symbolism and simulacrum.

Jelena Pavićević

Symbolism in Fairy Tales: The Link between Reality and Fantasy

In his quest of something lost, in some fairy tales it happens that the hero enters the underworld, in order to narratively visit all potential places where the clue may be hiding. According to Jung (Carl Jung), the term “underworld” refers to the subconscious – therefore, the hero is looking in his subconscious for ways and knowledge that would help him translate his experiences into consciously informed further action. This act “awakens” the spirit inside the one, that is, the totality of all phenomena of rational thought or intellect, including will, memory, imagination, relative power, and striving motivated by ideals. The hero becomes obsessed with the object he is searching for through these fields, and this obsession can also be taken for an “evil spirit”, due to its nature of rashness and the emotional corpus of all solid elements (love, hate, anger). Thus, the protagonist becomes the antagonist in certain moments and vice versa.

Typically, In Serbian folk tales the youngest son of the emperor is almost always stronger, more skilled and braver than his older brothers; while almost always the emperor has three sons. Whenever an unpleasant situation occurs, the eldest and the middle son try to solve the problem, but they never succeed. The youngest son (and the most stubborn) manages to overcome all adversity and achieve success. The symbolism of the “youngest” is actually interpreted as impotence, protection, weakness, mercy, which is overturned through folk tales and, contrasted, shows it reverse..

On the other hand, the symbolism of the number 3, which features in fairy tales often, can be interpreted in different ways: as a characteristic of masculinity (triangle upwards), femininity (triangle downwards), triad – constant creation of the novelty: a new beginning, but also a characteristic of evil, unlike the quadrilateral, which according to Jung represents the “female” number in its entirety. As such, three is incomplete, while four is complete. By its very nature,

a triangle can be formed from a quadrilateral, if a square or a rectangle is split by a diagonal, but a triangle can never be formed into a quadrilateral. This way of looking at geometric shapes leads to the conclusion that once divided the whole cannot be pieced back together, so the symbol of evil in fairy tales while changing forms from the beginning to the end, is taken back to the beginning again, and the protagonist (actually) becomes the antagonist after the committed acts.

In the field of psychological experience, where it is known that three of the four functions of consciousness (thinking, feelings, sensations and intuition) can differentiate and become conscious, while the fourth remains connected to the matrix – the unconscious, and is known as an inferior function. The unconscious, the fourth function, comes and goes at will, so it fails to transcend to the level of the conscious and controlled.



Baš Čelik, illustrator Marko Kovačević

One of the most famous Serbian folk tales is certainly *Baš Čelik*. In this fairy tale, the king has three sons and three daughters, so on his deathbed he told his sons to have their sisters married to the ones that are first to pass by. Since the older sons disobeyed, the younger one did as his father ordered, and gave all three sisters for unknown displays. Throughout the narrative of the fairy tale, it turns out they are an eagle, a falcon and a dragon. So here we have three times the number three, which makes up nine, but nine

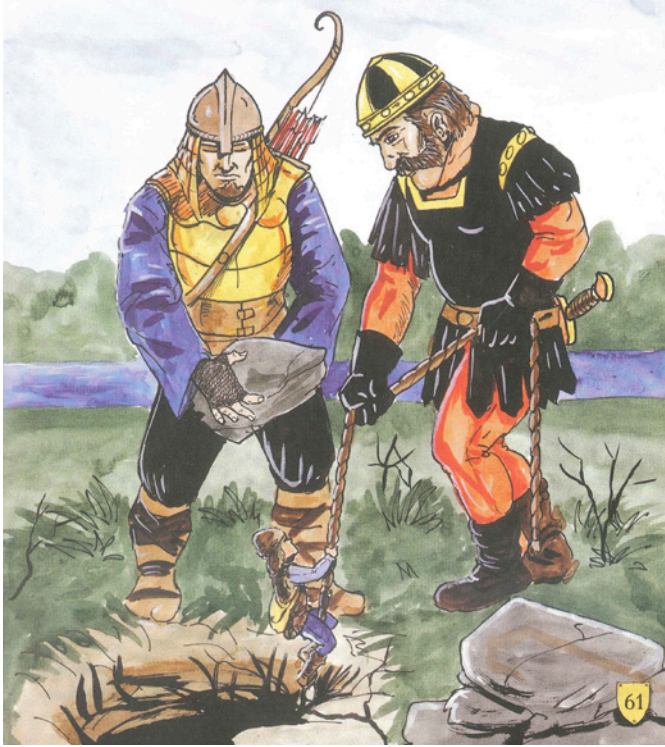
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giants also appear in the fairy tale. Nine is another typical number for Serbian folk tales (*The Golden Apple and Nine Peacocks*, *The Child with Nine Candles*). The number nine is a product of three multiplied by itself (3x3) or three added thrice – three plus three plus three (3+3+3). According to the interpretation of the French writers J. Chevalier and A. Gheerbrant, who created the *Dictionary of Symbols*, we conclude that the number nine symbolizes Dante's nine circles of hell, then the time in which a new (new life) is formed, but also the characteristic of a man. The number nine in the story *Baš Čelik* shapes the narrative structure, because the eponymous antagonist is the embodiment of the Devil, who is difficult to reach and almost impossible to overcome. However, when the youngest son and the three sons-in-law unite, we get the number four, which succeeds in defeating the evil. In the case of this fairy tale, it is possible to form a fraction of a quadrilateral, through a reversible formulation of the process in which the number three becomes four. After the end of the fight, the sons-in-law return to their wives, the king's son with his wife to his brothers, so the number three is again formed in three parts (three brothers, three wives, three sons-in-law and three sisters). By adding 4x3 (or multiplying) we arrive at the number 12, which can be found in the local as well as in the international fairy tales. The number twelve signifies the combination of four spatial worlds and three sacred time. In the Bible, there is also multiple symbolism of the number 12 (Heavenly Jerusalem) – 12 doors, 12 apostles, 12 foundations, 12 sons of Jacob (Israel) who are the ancestors of the twelve tribes of the Hebrew people (*Book of Moses – Genesis*). Relying on this, Jesus chooses 12 followers, which indicates the intention to choose a new people in God's name (interpretation according to St. Matthew). This number also indicates time – 12 months that mark one year, within which are 4 seasons that last for 3 months each. Regarded through simple mathematical functions, fairy tales are easily recognized as a kind of scheme, which was built up over the years of storytelling. Certainly, fairy tales had the potential of being redefined, completed and adapted to the times (transmitted "from generation to generation") while they existed as verbal statements only. We imply that in interpreting memory and forgetting, which alternate cyclically, the stories

are also on the borderline between the original version and its simulacrum; namely, oral traditions can never be a reliable element that serves as information about the past, but as a draft of an idea on a given topic. The moment when the fairy tale became a written text, which was due to Vuk Karadžić during the Enlightenment, it lost the possibility of redefinition, and from a free form it turned into a concrete and indisputable fact of the past.

In Serbian folk tales, men are mostly Subjects, while women are mostly Objects for the other. We concluded this from the previous paragraph where we have described how the youngest son goes in search of his lost sister/wife. However, certain fairy tales do not exclude the existence of Jungian anime and animus. While in international fairy tales a female figure, mostly a stepmother, is the embodiment of evil carrying all the "masculine" characteristics, such as strength, power, will, a dominant figure, she is rarely highlighted with all her potential in Serbian fairy tales. In the story *Ćela*, the main male character is ugly, bald and poor, but capable of making the most beautiful garden in the kingdom. When the emperor's daughter saw his garden, she wanted to marry him, even though the emperor stood against it. Through further narration, Bald Spot becomes an extremely beautiful man proving that beauty comes from within, but also that it is a matter of personal perception. The symbolism of this fairy tale is that Bald Spot has pronounced characteristics of anima, because a woman is characterized by almost surreal physical beauty, while the king's daughter inscribed in herself the animus, a male characteristic that falls in love with the beauty of the protagonists work, but later with the very Object of male existence. The most beautiful garden in the kingdom can also be interpreted as The Garden of Eden, which would be akin to the biblical tradition again. A similar narrative appears in the fairy tale *Biberče*, where the smallest man in the world, the size of a peppercorn, becomes a beautiful young man after his brave endeavors.

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Biberšte, illustrator Marko Kovačević

The most famous examples of the metamorphosis of ugliness into beauty, i.e. of anima, are the fairy tales *Beauty and the Beast* and *The Princess and the Frog*. The story of the *Swan Princess* pertaining to the world fairy tales offers contrast to abovementioned examples. Quite opposite to the non-anesthetized male figures, the swan symbolizes purity, innocence, light, glitter, the being belonging to the water and the earth, and at the same time, according to the Celtic mythology, also a being from “the other world”. Although the swan, if male, offers other interpretations, the female gender issues are determined by a multitude of characteristics and as such are being subject to the patriarchal concepts of the interpretation of humanity. All Serbian folk fairy tales are the product of the people’s culture, based on pagan customs, but also on the traditional values concerning the division between male and female entities.

Nowadays, the interpretation of characters from folk fairy tales could move into the field of gender studies, and as such, condemn the positioning of such a narrative in today’s time. Certainly, before loading a new political context, one must take into account the *Zeitgeist*, which is an indispensable element in the interpretation of all records from the past.

The Comparison of Serbian Folk Tales and International Blockbusters

Given the fact that German, English, Persian, Canadian and French fairy tales comprise the basis for the upbringing of millennials in Serbia, rather than local fairy tales, we must learn about intercultural contents and ask ourselves if there is a connection between the folklore of different nations. The link between Serbian and World culture is certainly found in the fairy tale of *Cinderella*. Originally a fairy tale that is part of many world folklores, and which is considered a fairy tale of Greek origin, first recorded by the Greek historian Strabo around the first century BC in his encyclopedia *Geography*, it was only in hints a fairy tale (re)interpreted in different ways through the centuries. In a redefined edition, it was published for the first time in the book *Pentamerone* (1634) by the Italian writer Giambattista Baof. However, this fairy tale about a slave girl in the old era, had become a fairy tale about a “modern” slave to her stepmother in the Serbian tradition, and the narrative itself has incorporated many national elements of the Serbian folklore. In the local version, the girl’s real name was Marah (which in the Bible means the Marah river, from which the people of Israel could not drink because the water was too bitter; meaning “bitterness”), and instead of a fairy who made all her wishes come true (which is characteristic of the Disney animated fairy tale), there was her mother who, because the girl’s spindle fell into the pit, turned into a cow. An old man with a white beard (whom we will discuss later) warned Mara and her friends about the possible outcome, but the girls, out of curiosity, approached the pit and the most beautiful one fell in. Since the mother turned into a cow, the father married another woman who brought

along her daughter. As is well known, the stepmother tortured Mara and, with the help of her daughter, mockingly called her Cinderella because of the heavy tasks she assigned to her. The cow helped Cinderella with the chores her stepmother imposed on her, and when the stepmother found out, she slaughtered the cow and they ate its meat. Cinderella, as her mother instructed her, buried the bones at the place where in times of need she always came across beautiful dresses and animals that helped her. Instead of a ball, she met the prince in a church, and instead of a glass shoe that fitted her foot only, she wore slippers. The ending similar in both fairy tales – Cinderella married the prince and they lived happily ever after. But what do these characters symbolize?



Cinderella, illustrator Marko Kovačević

Mother, according to Bettelheim (Bettelheim, 1989, p. 82), is a protector, but in fairy tales she can easily assume the role of stepmother, in the primary sense. So, the role left by the mother is taken over by the stepmother, who is her exact opposite. This allusion refers to the two sides of the female personality reflected in the role of mother – she has her ideal characteristics, but also negative ones, which the child cannot rationally perceive. Thus comes the escapism offered by fairy tales, where a protective fairy appears in the capacity of a mother, which the girl is lacking. In this way, the fairy tale provides the child an imaginary protector who

is always there to help when injustice occurs, but also to protect against potential traumas that can cause a series of personality disorders in real life. The child's fragile psyche is not complete and experiential, so it tends to resort to the field of fantasy, i.e. the idealization of the family. At this moment, the child's dominant sense of intuition (the fifth, uncontrolled element of human ability according to Jung) prompts them to conceive that although they understand that the fairy tale offers unrealistic content, it does not, by its very nature, have to be untrue. Thus, the fairy tale is aimed at enabling the child to confront reality in an indirect way while growing up. In this analysis lies the answer to the question why Serbian Cinderella is not as popular as Disney's. The too direct context and shocking twist in the story is not as suitable for a child, because it offers only a part of the elements of an ideal idealization of life, which is not enough to overcome the protection a child necessitates at an early age.

The old man with a white beard from the beginning of the fairy tale about Mara, according to Jung, almost always symbolizes wisdom, maturity and the subconscious. Although in some fairy tales a character presented in this way is evil (Merlin the Wizard), in many others he (or a dwarf man) is a representation that appears at the moment when the hero needs him the most. In the fairy tale *Cinderella*, he only warns of the consequences, which refers to the *First Book of Moses on Genesis*, and since he is not obeyed, the punishment (flood) ensues. Cinderella certainly experiences punishment for disobedience, but redeems herself by good deeds, as well as, by visiting church. After all that, Mara is rewarded and freed from the evil that was inflicted on her. In the Serbian version, you can see the religious transformation of the people in that period, while Walt Disney's version does not refer to the real elements, but places the whole story in the field of complete fantasy.

The appearance of death is also typical of Serbian fairy tales. Death is one of the central motifs of the fairy tale phenomenon, and a fairy tale can also be a metaphor for death. Every birth and struggle leads to the death of one of the characters, but if we return to the question of the triad, which is the basis for the narrative construction of the majority of national fairy

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tales, it symbolizes birth, life and death. This is how a perfect order is established where ideal discipline reigns. This relationship is recognized in the fairy tale *Usud*. The hero of the fairy tale is unhappy, he goes in quest of Usud, and on the way he meets various characters who have questions for Usud, because nothing is going well for them. When he arrived at Usud's, the hero asked him about his fate, but also about the fate of all the characters he encountered. Usud described as generous, munificent, and merciful is an allusion to the wise old man with a white beard, who gives him advice on how to establish perfect order in a society. Thus, the hero succeeded in helping the characters from the fairy tale improve their own situations and lives. Although death is mentioned in two places in the fairy tale – the wish worded by the host that his parents die of old age and the river's wish to be replete with life. Thus, the dynamic layer of the fairy tale represents the hero's journey into the world – the world of darkness, and the obstacles represent episodes of the fairy tale, so depending on its length, it can be divided into three or more episodes.



Usud, illustrator Marko Kovačević

As in other fairy tales, personification features in Serbian folk tales – animals that speak or have human characteristics. The most famous story is about the fox outsmarting the wolf. This type of fairy tale refers to the power relations in nature, and it is similar to the little man defeating the giant

in the English story *Jack and the Beanstalk*. In the narrative units of this kind, the message refers to the appreciation of wisdom that is superior to physical strength, which helps children to understand that emancipation is the way to create a new system in the real world and time.

Many Serbian and Yugoslav fairy tales were illustrated by the artist Desa Kerečki-Mustur. A collection of her works was published in the book *Fairy Tales of the Peoples of Yugoslavia* in 1977.

Also an important book of illustrated fairy tales is the triptych *Fairy Tales of the People of the World* (1977), which was collected and illustrated by the famous Serbian painter Milić Stanković, better known as Milić od Mačva. His illustrations are atmospherically reminiscent of the paintings of Hieronymus Bosch, while surreal elements resemble the works of Salvador Dali. The combination of these elements makes Milić's illustrations colored with tones that are in constant polyphony – they can be deep and eerie, at the same time being high and scattered. With such a crossing, the illustrator manages to establish a balance between the anguish that fairy tales are imbued with, but also to indicate a certain end to the battle between good and evil.

The text acquires a new dimension through the illustration of its content: characters are objectified, space acquires form, and time a visual identity. This establishes a multimedia communication between the reader and the book: In fact, with this type of statement, the reader at times switches to the role of an observer of a visual work of art, who evaluates its importance, and shortly afterwards returns to the text. Animated films and series are created out the need to combine these art forms into one plane, and the reader is replaced by the narrator or narrators, who present the fairy tale in a redefined form through the dramaturgical unfolding.

Combining Fairy Tales – Permitted Reinterpretation in the Animated Series “Clementine”

Given that from the above we understood fairy tales as folk traditions that are prone to redefinition over time by their very nature, the written editions can be seen as a feature of the national folklore in which they were created and as such are imbibed the culture of the people by which they were created. But the question remains as to what happens if already well-known editions are redefined using another medium?

The French animated series *Clémentine*, created by Bruno-René Huchez, directed by René Borg and Jean Cubaud and written by Olivier Massart and Gilles Taurand, which was created in co-production with the production company IDDH, premiered in 1985. The main theme of the animated series is the (internal) struggle of the girl Clementine, who was left paralyzed after the plane crash. In order to try and help her walk again, her family travels around the world with her in search of a cure. In each episode, Clementina travels through different countries, gets to know their cultures, while reading their fairy tales before going to sleep, and redefining them afterwards in her dreams. As in all fairy tales, there is a struggle between good and evil – the protector Chimera, and the flame Malmoth, who tries to take her to the world of darkness. Finding herself in a series of fairy tales, the heroine fights against enemies, who are the servants of an evil spirit, and who, as such, do not exist in the original fairy tales. Thus, for example, in Italy she meets Pinocchio, but also the historical figure Leonardo da Vinci; she meets Oliver Twist in England; Hunsel and Gretel in Germany; she meets Tutankhamun in Egypt; Aladdin in Africa; Nils Holgersson in Sweden etc. The whole consisting of fairy tales comprises the first season of the series, which has a total of 25 episodes, while in the second season the action is transferred from fantasy to the real world.

The fairy tales in the series also serve as a kind of pedagogical tradition – they teach about the origins and folklore of different peoples. Although new elements have been written into them, the main heroes do not depart substantively from the characteristics presented in the original stories. However, the original text in this case represents the metatext, which serves as the newly defined content. As such, this collection of fairy tales directly confronts the viewer with the horrors on earth, which is also typical of Serbian folk tales. This kind of content is disabled in Disney’s animated films, which are intended to have a more accessible pedagogical approach to children’s psyche and reality.

If we were to ask ourselves about the difference in the presentation of illustrated content and the animated content, we would conclude that the illustration leaves the observer/child room for further fictional construction of the visual identity of the event, while in the case of animation the visual flow of the action is comprehensive. The question remains, which will be unraveled over time, whether it suffices the human mind to experience the content as a whole through the text and the accompanying illustration, or is it keeping with the spirit of time to treat the comprehensiveness as the only possibility for understanding the world that surrounds us?

Cybelle Saffa Brazil

Let me tell you a story
about translation
and fairy tales in Brazil

Cybelle Saffa

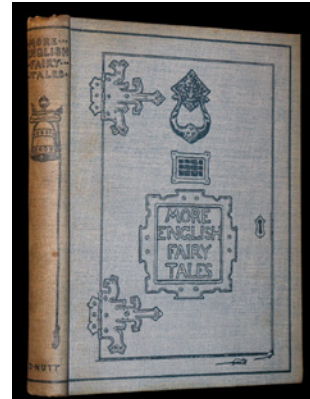


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Fairy tales have crossed centuries with a manifold of rewritings and retranslations to suit a wide range of readerships, and their illustrations likewise. Together, verbal and nonverbal communicate their national identity.

Traditional fairy tales can be found in many versions and are in turn interpreted in varied ways to suit specific sociocultural concerns (Bacchilega 2013: 3). So, due to this changeability, writers and illustrators have given their contributions to what they understand a fairy tale should be like. In Brazil, the illustrations from fairy tale rewritings and retranslations also go through translation processes to meet the sociocultural idea of childhood, that is, to comply with what society accepts as good for children. As an example, the front cover of the first edition of *English Fairy Tales* (Jacobs 1890) could not be retrieved, but its second volume *More English Fairy Tales* (Jacobs 1894), by the same publishing house (David Nutt), has no character representation. By association, I can understand that the first volume followed the same design parameters.



1st edition of More English Fairy Tales



Illustration from the frontispiece

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Therefore, the first illustration of the first edition appears only on the frontispiece; the same pattern is repeated with the editions that follow. The illustration depicts an evil character who is ready to attack the knight who is defending the lady hiding behind him. Important to notice that they are almost the same height, are holding swords, and are indoors, possibly in a castle.

When we move some years in time, the illustration from the frontispiece is translated by Persiano da Fonseca (Fonseca, 1944) and brought to the front cover of the first Brazilian translation published by Vecchi publishing house in 1944.

Following the Barthian visual semiotics, when we read illustrations we should cater for the layering of meaning, with the first representing denotation – what and who – and the second one is in charge of connotation. On these grounds, the first layer brings the characters outdoors to a castle (in the background). The knight, holding a sword, and the lady are taller than the evil character who does not have any weapons. The connotation layer concerns the representation of power; in comparison, the translated illustration changed drastically from the illustration of the source text to convey the message that there is nothing to fear.



Os mais belos contos de fadas ingleses, scan.

Important to point out that the source and target texts are both children's books and the editors are getting a message across to these readers. In the source illustration, the depiction of the good guys at the bottom of the illustration and the demon at the top connotes fear and power respectively (Van Leeuwen, 2021). On the target, on the contrary, there is a change in the representation of power due to the religious constraints prevailing at the time of publication, when the church exerted great influence on the moral conduct of Brazilian society. As a consequence, evil beings should be on the weak side of any story for children, who must only fear these characters if they badly behaved. All in all, there is a moral message to deliver in the connotation layer.

Iconic characters

In Brazil, an English fairy tale character called *Mr Miacca*, was culturally absorbed into *Tio Miaca*¹. Known in Brazil as *o velho do saco*²; an old man that carries a large bag for kidnapping naughty children. It is an old urban legend that has travelled for generations and is currently losing its power.

The source illustration portrays *Mr Miacca* sitting on a sofa, holding an axe, and creepily looking down at Tommy Grimes who is hiding under this same sofa fearing to be served as supper to this ogre. There is a crucial difference between the representation of this character: in the source illustration he is an ogre and in the target one he is an old man.



Source illustration of Mr Miacca (1890)

¹ Uncle Miaca.

² The old man and his bag.

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Target illustration of tio Miaca (1944)

Both characters enjoy dining on naughty children who disobey their parents. *Mr Miacca* likes to have them boiled and chopped into pieces (the axe conveys this message); *tio Miaca* also enjoys boiling them in soup but has no weapon represented in the illustration.

Important to highlight that on the connotation layer, we have an ogre who likes to dine on human meat and a human old man who enjoys human flesh boiled. In the second instance, there is cannibalism implied. And the connotation of fear is present in both scenarios, a characteristic of cautionary fairy tales, whose intention is to warn the readers of the dangers of misbehaving.

Fairy tale rewritings

Fairy tale rewritings have incorporated many interpretations from the traditional fairy tales keeping the bond with them and preventing them from growing old, shortening the temporal distance between the older tales (Joosen 2011: 12) and the contemporary ones. There is often some kind of dialogue with the traditional fairy tales. The bond with them might be the reason why their readers are so familiar with the characters that rewriters so often incorporate into their tales, in like

manner are encouraged to leave out some actions from the main plot of their rewritings to cope with cultural traditions.

In Adam Gidwitz's fairy tale rewriting *In a Glass Grimly* (Gidwitz, 2012), he brings together characters from traditional fairy tales and revives the grotesque from the early days of those stories. He justifies his creative way of writing by saying that

two hundred years ago, in Germany, the Brothers Grimm first wrote down that version of Cinderella in which the stepsisters slice off pieces of their feet and get their eyes pecked out. In England, a man named Joseph Jacobs collected tales like Jack the Giant Killer, which is about a boy named Jack goes around murdering giants in the most gruesome and grotesque ways imaginable. And there was this guy called Hans Christian Andersen, who lived in Denmark and wrote fairy tales filled with sadness and humiliation and loneliness. Even Mother Goose's rhymes could get pretty dark—after all, Jack and Jill go up a hill, and then Jack falls down and breaks his head open (GIDWITZ, 2012; 14).

Gidwitz mentions fairy tale writers from the past centuries to provide evidence for the presence of violent events in fairy tales as well as to emphasize that violence is an inherent aspect of the genre. The author highlights that readers are still going to find violence and gory descriptions in many of the pages of his books despite all the censorship they have been under through the centuries. Despite all the verbal characterization of violence, the nonverbal seems to go opposite directions. This violence assumes a preposterous connotation with some touches of ridicule (Twitcheil, 1989). This preposterous violence refers to a kind of violence that is so exaggerated that readers know full well that what they are reading is make-believe.

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Although the verbal is permeated by preposterous violence, the nonverbal does the opposite, except for the cover of the first volume of the trilogy that puts Gretel holding an axe and Hansel looking suspicious but scared in the foreground.



Cover of the first volume (Gidwitz, 2010), Cover of the second volume (Gidwitz, 2012), Cover of the third volume (Gidwitz, 2013)

The illustrations of the three rewritings portray symbolic representations of traditional fairy tale elements, such as giants, dragons, royalty, mystery and adventure, all present in the denotative layer. Although we might know the traditional fairy tale, in fairy tale rewritings characters and plots merge to make a whole new story, such as *In a Glass Grimmly* (Gidwitz, 2012), rewriting of *Jack and the Beanstalk*. These rewritings adapt the plots in a way that they correspond to the poetics and ideology of their time (Hermans, 2009). Therefore, the concept of fairy tale rewriting is built on rewriting as manipulation with the introduction of new concepts, genres, and devices (Lefevere, 2016).

Different from the source illustrations on the front cover, the target representations portray the shadows of the characters together with the story elements that characterize their sources in traditional fairy tales. Important to highlight that the characters have no gaze, that is, there is no interaction with the viewer even. And the message of the violent plots is not present in the book covers of the fairy tale rewriting translation. There is a purification of the preposterous violence of the plot.



Um conto sombrio dos Grimm (Abreu, 2016), Outro conto sombrio dos Grimm³ (Abreu, 2016)

Although the illustrations of the characters are flat and with very few details, the reader can still anticipate what the story is going to be about. There is a low level of modality represented by the predominance of the colour black in contrast with light blue in the first volume and orange in the second volume. The illustrations are not decontextualized but are drawn on a plain and unmodulated background, in muddy darkness with the loss of visual detail in depiction and distance from the reader (Van Leeuwen & Kress, 2021; 156-157).

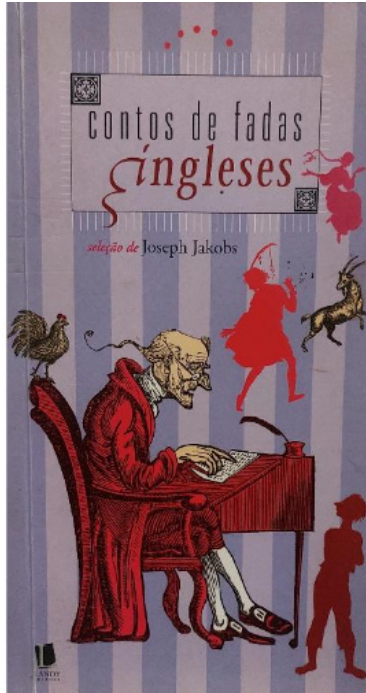
In the realm of adults

The second working definition I propose is fairy tale retranslation. In the translation field for adults, a need for retranslation might be a result of an expression of conflict (Mathijseen 2007; 10), but the meaning of retranslation I adopt here does not convey the idea that the previous translations are incomplete (Berman 1990) or that it tends to reduce the otherness of a literary work to better integrate it into a different culture (Bensimon 1990, p. ix). I adopt the definition of retranslation as a new version of a fictional work [...] that comes with varying statuses and values attached to it (Alvstad & Rosa, 2015). The retranslations analysed

³The third volume of the trilogy has not yet been translated into Brazilian Portuguese.

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reflect precisely those characteristics and add a change in readership to some of them: from children to adults and back to children. This process of readership change seems to come and go throughout history. Nevertheless, some level of purification is still prominent in the book covers of the fairy tale retranslations for adult readers as represented in the cover of *Contos de fadas ingleses* (Jacobs, Lohbauer 2002).



Contos de fadas ingleses, front cover

An aspect that is relevant to the analysis of this cover is the reduced representation of detail and connection between elements. There is a change in the depiction of the character, this edition brings the writer to the foreground and not the child characters as in the editions for children. The connotation layer places the writer far from the reader through the absence of gaze at the reader. In like manner, there is no trace of preposterous violence.

Both working definitions were a result of my readings in a volunteering work at a Children's Library, *Barca dos Livros*⁴ in the city of Florianópolis where I had the opportunity to closely observe the Brazilian publications of Translated Children's Literature from various publishing houses specialised in children's books. In this library, as a member of their research group, I have been in contact with the current national and translated production of literature for children.

This research group is responsible for reviewing and appraising children's and young adults' literature published in Brazil. The analysis is part of the book selection process for the annual book awards from FNLIJ (*Fundação Nacional do Livro Infantil e Juvenil*), the Brazilian section for iBBY. The receives early book production from Brazilian publishing houses and sometimes from independent authors. The aim is to read, carry out a thorough analysis and finally select the books which stand out according to some pre-established criteria and that will compose the final list for the FNLIJ award.

Conclusion

This experience has provided me with reliable and substantial evidence for a possible change in the production of fairy tale rewritings and fairy tale retranslations; a change that concerns a revival of the violence once present in the source texts. The violence that was once purified in the Brazilian translations of the 40s and that is now brought back with touches of bloodthirsty violence and slapstick humour – preposterous violence.

FNLIJ, the Brazilian section of the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY⁵), was created in 1968 and its mission is to give children the opportunity to have access to books with high literary and artistic standards (IBBY 2019). FNLIJ is the only Brazilian children's books award to include a category for Translated Children's Literature.

⁴ A Children's Literature community library situated in the city of Florianópolis, Santa Catarina, Brazil.

⁵ International Board on Books for Young People

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FNLIJ awards a prize to the books that meet the criteria of (i) the originality of the text; (ii) the originality of the illustrations; (iii) artistic and competent use of language and style; (iv) quality of translations, considering the concept of the book as an object, which includes the editorial and graphic design.

After years of thorough research at Barca dos Livros, I have seen an open door for the analysis of the violence once purified in Brazilian translated books for children which is now coming back as Preposterous violence in fairy tale Rewritings. Authors have more freedom to bring back traditional fairy tales through rewritings and retranslations which are more suitable for the needs of modern readers (Susan-Sarajeva, 2003; 2).

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Fengxia Tan
China

Representation
of National Identity
in Contemporary Chinese
Fairy Tale Picturebooks

Fengxia Tan



Fengxia TAN (Ph.D.) is a professor in the School of Literature at Nanjing Normal University, China. She is an executive director of the Center for Contemporary Children's and YA Literature. Her research focuses on children's literature including picture books and children's films. She is the author of *Marginal Poetic Pursuit: Writing on Childhood in*

Chinese Modern Literature, *Carving Childhood: A History of Chinese Children's Films*, *Coordinate and Value: Study on Chinese and Western Children's Literature* and other books as well as many articles and chapters. She also published novels and collections of essays and translated English children's books into Chinese. She was a visiting scholar /fellow at University of Cambridge, The International Youth Library in Munich, Macquarie University, and Illinois State University. She is a jury member for the 2024 Hans Christian Andersen Award and other important awards for children's literature or picture books in China.

In April 2011, I attended The Child and The Book, an international conference on "Picturebooks of the new millennium" held at the University of Oslo. Interestingly, most of the participants chose to focus on national identity in the 21st-century picturebooks. The special fruit of this conference is a selected collection *Looking Out and Looking In: National Identity in Picturebooks of the New Millennium*, edited by Ase Marie Ommundsen (professor at the University of Oslo) and published in Norway in 2013. In the Introduction, the editor raised an interesting question, "Why does the understanding of nation and nationality still guide people's thinking despite the assertion that we are living in a globalized world?"¹ She then answered with Margaret Meek's viewpoint, "Meek stresses that we have to emphasize the part children's literature plays in the development of children's understanding of both belonging (being 'one of us') and differentiation (being 'other'). Children's literature is important in the process of creating and preserving national identity. This is especially clear in children's literature produced in nation-building phases."²

I expanded this idea in my chapter "Breakout or Bondage: The Way of Nationalization of Chinese Native Picturebooks" which discussed the path toward nationalization to give young children "a China to remember". The appeal "Creating China's picturebooks" resulted from a cultural responsibility as well as national cultural confidence. The nationalization of Chinese picturebooks refers to both cultural content and the traditional style of painting in picturebooks, full of Chinese cultural spirits and aesthetic flavor to construct a "Chinese style" in the minds of both native and international readers. After analyzing the achievements in Chinese nationalized picturebooks, I pointed out a few dilemmas, e.g., how to deal with the tension between culture and childishness, between tradition and modernity, etc.³ Recently, we can see more progresses and improvements in the Chinese picturebooks with national characteristics.

Chinese picturebooks have strived to develop by exploring various national subject materials and creatively adopting traditional painting techniques. In terms of the content, it presents Chinese cultural features with Chinese landscape, geography, history, customs, classical or folk literature materials, etc.; in terms of the artistic expressions, it draws from traditional Chinese art (such as ink, paper-cut, mural, shadow, New Year pictures, wood carving, clay and facial makeup, etc.), and carry on the inheritance and innovation of the visual language of media, color, composition and techniques (especially freehand style). As Chen Hui says, "The representation of Chinese culture in pictures is not only from the surface to the inside but also from the inside out. It is not only the scene, object, and image, but also the emotional appeal and charm of inheritance and aesthetics."⁴ It should be noted that in addition to the obvious surface manifestation of nationalization, the pursuit of nationalization is more inherently intriguing in the abstract level of philosophy implication, national psychological manner, modes of thinking, cultural spirit (e.g. beliefs and cherished values), style and temperament contained in the story.

^{1,2} Ase Marie Ommundsen. ed. *Looking Out and Looking In: National Identity in Picturebooks of the New Millennium*, Oslo: Novus Press, 2013:7.

³ Fengxia Tan. "Breakout or Bondage: The Way of Nationalization of Chinese Native Picturebooks," Ase Marie Ommundsen. Ed., *Looking Out and Looking In: National Identity in Picturebooks of the New Millennium*, Oslo: Novus Press, 2013:85.

⁴ Chen Hui. *Theory and Practice of Chinese Picturebooks*. Changsha: Hunan Children's and Juvenile Publishing House, 2020:37.(陈晖：《中国图画书创作的理论与实践》，湖南少年儿童出版社，2020:37.)

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Chinese picturebooks with a distinguished national style have been prosperous since the beginning of the 21st century. Some important awards specifically built for Chinese original picturebooks, such as Feng Zikai Medal (2009-), Xin Yi Award (2010-), and Era [Shi Dai] Prize (2016-) have propelled the fast development of Chinese picturebooks, especially in the vast exploration of Chinese storytelling and national or ethnic aesthetics. Moreover, many Chinese picturebooks with this style won international awards. As far as BIB award-winning Chinese picturebooks are concerned, all of them had prominent national traits and personalities as well. The earliest successful example is Cai Gao's *A fox spirit in a desolate garden*, which won Golden Apple BIB in 1993. The other Golden Apple BIB award-winning books from China are: Zhang Shimin's *Chinese Fables III* (《中国寓言三》, 1995); British Chinese illustrator Rong Yu's *Yun duo yi yang de ba ge* (*Free as A Cloud*, 《云朵一样的八哥》, 2013); Huang Bingchun (Hei Mi)'s *Bian Zi* (《辫子》, 2015); Zhu Chengliang's *Bie rang tai yang diao xia lai* [Don't let the sun fall] (《别让太阳掉下来》, 2019); Zhang Chao's *The Story of Grandma Sunflower* and *Poetry and Painting Collection* (《雪英奶奶的故事》和《余光中诗画集》, 2021). This year, ten Chinese illustrators' works were selected for the 2023 BIB exhibition and their themes are about Chinese landscapes, cities, history, folktales, etc. Although these books come from different generations, the common trait is their stories and expressions are rooted in China culture, society and art conveying Chinese spirit and artistic charm no matter in the realistic stories or fantasy.

As to the fairy tales within national identity in picturebooks mentioned above, there are mainly two kinds: one is original and the other is adapted from folktales. This paper will dwell on the latter rather than the former because the latter has much more national characteristics from the manifestation to the inner implication.

First, I will briefly introduce the original fairy tale books related to BIB which mostly focus on anthropomorphic animal stories. *Free as A Cloud* is very popular and has been published in Asian and European countries. Yu Rong, a British Chinese illustrator, has formed her personal style by combing Chinese paper-cutting with Western sketching. Zhu Chengliang's

Don't Let the Sun Fall which was published in French, adopts animal images from regional folk toys and borrowed colors and shapes from traditional Chinese lacquerware techniques.

In the animal fairy tale illustrated by Wang Zumin, the styles of *One Inch Light* and *Deng deng Deng* are quite different. The former depicts a group of cats as the character images, taking black and white as the main colors to contrast the different lifestyles on and below the ground, which conveys philosophical thoughts in concise sketching. The latter tells an interesting story of passing a request one by one. It adopts bright colors to shape the images of various animals and vividly expresses their individual personalities and mentality of conveying words. The environment of the houses and the clothes of the characters have regional traits (Illustration 1). In particular, the minds of many animals in dealing with interpersonal relations show the intrinsic national temperament, that is unwilling or ashamed to upset others or destroy the harmony. Additionally, the illustrator consciously creates a sense of humor which is often lacking in Chinese books.



Illustration 1

The fairy tales adapted from folklore also have fresh quality in the representation of old stories. As a kind of fairy tale, folklore is passed down from generation to generation as cultural heritage and is a rich resource for picturebooks to

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further explore and reinforce the national identity. One way to manifest the obvious national identity is to deploy stories of ethnic minorities. The recent representations of minority cultures have brought richness to Chinese picturebooks. This choice is based on the ideology of ethnic equality as well as the aesthetic pursuit of diversification and novelty. Here I choose two books as main cases to discuss: one is *Feather Coat of Hundred Birds* by Cai Gao, the first Chinese winner of Golden Apple BIB and an illustrator nominee for 2024 HCAA; the other is Wang Xiaoxiao's *The Secret of Long-haired Girl*.

Cai says that she likes folktales that are very funny and alive and suggests digging them deep and innovating with modern eyes. She is good at bringing strong visual shock with her unique colors and composition. In her first well-known work *A fox spirit in a desolate garden*, she uses positive red and negative black as two large blocks of colors to form a strong contrast, reflecting a kind of traditional aesthetics of folk colors. Moreover, she creatively changed the Chinese boy's eye's black color to blue in some scenes to indicate a child's insight into hidden evil. Her another fantastic picture book, *Feather Coat of Hundred Birds*, is based on a folktale from the minority Miao. In Cai's mind, this story not only shows the characteristics of Miao culture, but also is full of passion for life and creativity. Therefore, she chooses bright and rich colors to show dress patterns and the local architecture of Miao. Even the paintings of the landscape are colorful and textured in the style of Miao ethnic dress (Illustration 2). The heroin of this tale is A-cai, whose name implies appreciation and embrace of colorful life. She walks down from a beautiful painting and becomes a virtuous and capable Miao woman in daily life. She has a magical ability to transform a cut-out bird into a real one with a blow of breath. Her paper-cutting and weaving skills are exactly the skills that Miao women are good at.

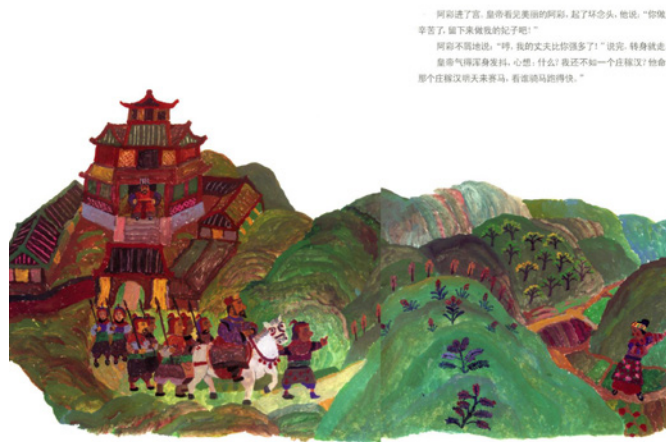


Illustration 2

The biggest feature of this fairy tale book is the specific colorful illustrations to highlight vigorous ethnic characteristics. The scenes of hundreds of kinds of birds A-cai cuts and a coat she weaves with feathers are magnificent, in which the surging colors and patterns show the beauty and inner power of the character's spirit and the folk art (Illustration 3, 4).



Illustration 3



Illustration 4

Furthermore, the splendid illustrations also imply the worship of women which somehow contains the modern feminism. In the face of the emperor's oppression, A-cai firmly fought against the greedy hegemony. She blew away the emperor wrapped in feather coat that she wove, which implies women's wisdom and strength. In the climax, A-cai's confident eyes face the readers. In the theory of visual

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grammar, this is the manner of “contact” which can bring an “interaction” between the character and readers and fully transmit the character’s emotional power to the readers.

Wang Xiaoxiao’s *The Secret of Long-haired Girl* is adapted from *Long-haired Girl*, a folktale of the Dong ethnic minority in the Guangxi Province of China. The new title highlights the “secret” and brings a different emphasis on the theme and style from other earlier versions. This adaptation omits the usual happy ending of the folktale: the old tree god helps the heroin survive, which reflects a moral reward. In this modern fairy tale, the image of the long-haired girl and the geographical environment roughly represent the characteristics of the region and minority. Instead of showing all characters and whole plots of the folklore, it pays more attention to the inner world of heroin, vividly rendering her contradiction and entanglement, depicting her tough struggle and brave decision to tell the secret to save people. The representation of her emotional process is exquisitely restrained in a poetic way.

The long-haired girl and the Mountain Monster are the two main characters in this book, and their relationship is somewhat ambiguous. The Monster is depicted as an ape with a mythical “Third Eye” on its forehead, resembling a character in a Chinese legend. It threatens the long-haired girl that it will take away her most precious thing if she tells the secret of the spring in the mountain to the people who are suffering from the drought. However, after she finally reveals the secret, the Monster doesn’t actually punish her; instead, it becomes powerless, eventually disappears and only takes away her broken hair as punishment. The ape-like monster in this fairy tale carries multiple meanings. Firstly, it symbolizes the guardian of nature, protecting the spring from human exploitation and destruction. Secondly, it implies the secrets in human hearts.¹ The illustrations represent the sophistication of how to deal with a “secret”. Therefore, the new version turns the moral torture in the original folklore into a more general domain of psychological and emotional experiences as well as an ecological theme.



Illustration 5



Illustration 6

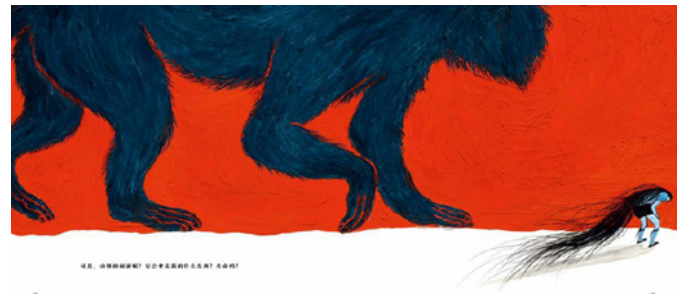


Illustration 7



Illustration 8

¹In the book’s afterword, Tian Xiaogeng, the planner of this picturebook, explains the representation and significance of the captivating image of “secrets”: “Secrets can be as vast as a mountain or a sea, or as delicate as a strand of hair. In this picturebook, the long-haired girl’s secret takes the form of a blue Mountain Monster, which is massive and full of spirituality, just like the nurturing nature that reveals its majesty while always carrying and soothing us. And the moment such a huge secret is revealed is like strands of hair being severed, flying away with the wind.”

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Illustration 9

The illustrator establishes a connection between the two characters through the blue color which symbolizes water, mystery and melancholy. In terms of their physical appearance, the stark contrast between the massive body and dark shadows of the monster and the small size of the girl creates a sense of heavy pressure or weakness. As the girl's inner strength grows, her image in the illustrations gradually becomes larger, highlighting her transition from hesitation to bravery. The illustrator doesn't provide detailed facial features through meticulous brushwork but rather uses impressive and even exaggerated images to convey emotions (Illustration 6, 7, 9). This slightly abstract approach brings ambiguous and multiple interpretations to the artwork.

Compared to the folklore passed down from generation, this adapted fairy tale incorporates modern elements: emotional sensibility, psychological depth, ecological significance, and feminist undertones. The illustrator ingeniously uses an image of vibrant natural scenery that the girl sees through the third eye of the mountain monster to convey the ecological message of protecting nature (Illustration 5). However, if we perceive the mountain monster as an oppressive figure in the circumstance, then the girl plays the role of a savior in this drought disaster. She fearlessly confronts the threat, willing to sacrifice herself to rescue the people and benefit the community, highlighting the resilience of women.

The colors of the picture book are mainly cool-toned blues. Throughout the development of the story, there is a powerful contrast created by consecutive panels

featuring red and black (respectively representing drought and the mountain monster, Illustration 7) or red and gray (respectively representing drought and people's suffering, Illustration 8). This strong visual impact drives the girl's decisions and actions. The predominant tone throughout the rest of the book is blue with some variations as the story unfolds. The first and last illustrations in the book echo each other in terms of structure. At the end, the place where the monster slept has a pool of blue water, and there is a blue and revitalized natural environment outside the cave where once was grey. This signifies the goodwill of the people who obtained the mountain spring to live in harmony with the land. Thus, the image of the girl blending with nature also signifies that she is a fighter for a happy life.

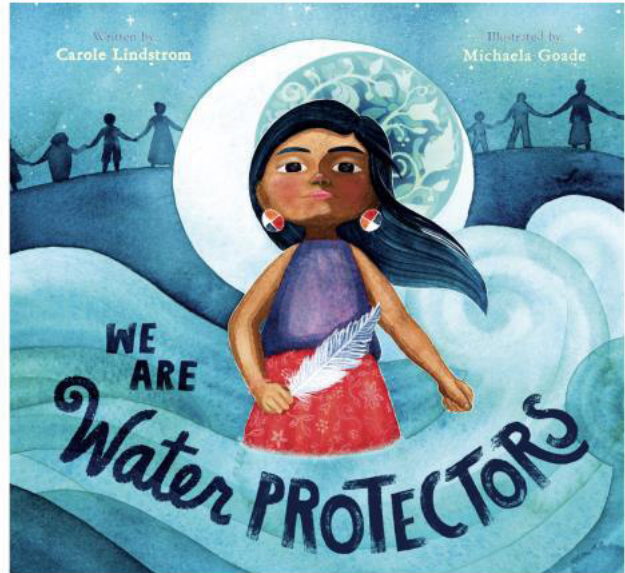


Illustration 10

We can see the similarity of representations of national identity by comparing the *Secret of Long-haired Girl* with *We Are Water Protectors*, a picture book from the USA about protecting water by indigenous Americans, which is also a story of a fight, featuring a Native American girl as the protagonist (Illustration 10). The portrayal of a massive

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and hideous black snake represents the metaphorical contamination by oil pipelines and profit-driven industrial civilization. The text is written by a Native American Ojibwe author. In the tradition of this indigenous tribe, women are the guardians of water. The illustrator also reflects the outward appearance (using traditional attire and decorative patterns of plants inspired by the ethnic culture, Illustration 11, 12) and the inner brave spirit of the tribe. This book also extensively uses a blue color palette to portray pure water and employs dynamic close-up shots to highlight the girl's awakening and her courageous spirit of resistance.



Illustration 11

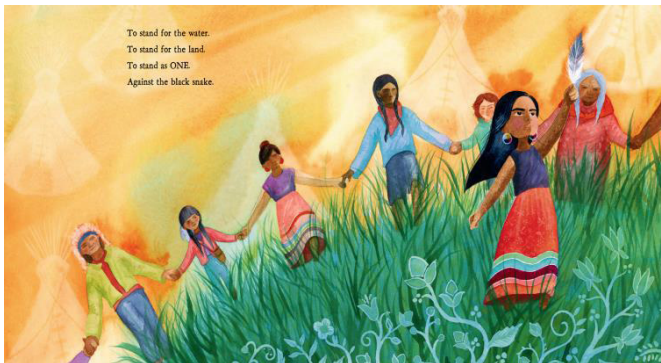


Illustration 12

In terms of illustrations, both books employ elements of fantasy and metaphorical rhetoric, showcasing a rich ethnic ambiance and a poetic pursuit. However, *The Secret of the Long-Haired Girl* seems to be more abstract and “Xie Yi” (the expressive manner in China ink painting). Its use of a single-color palette creates a sense of abstraction, distancing itself from the readers and provoking their contemplation. These two picturebooks are rooted in cultural stories but hold universal significance with global and human concerns (to preserve the ecological Earth and build a “Community with a shared future for mankind”). They have the potential to evoke rational and emotional resonance within readers.¹

To sum up, this paper explores the representation of national identity in the Chinese picturebooks from a macro perspective and especially focuses on fairy tales about minority stories to discuss the productive way of conveying national identity. Adopting ethnic fairy tales is a wonderful way to explore ethnic heritage, create cultural memories and build cultural identities. This path is explored extensively and excellently by famous Chinese American illustrator Ed Young, whose picturebooks stand out in the field of children's literature in the USA and the world. Among them, Chinese folktales are an important source of subject matter, such as *Lon Po Po: A Red-Riding Hood Story from China* (1989). Young does not simply reproduce them but combines the cultural spirits and artistic techniques of the East and the West to represent them with the pursuit of symbiotic esthetics. It provides a successful experience for the innovation of picturebooks in the era of globalization, e.g., how to activate and take advantage of local or ethnic cultural resources and how to transform tradition into modernity.

¹The picturebook is a multimodal text, and one theoretical framework that can be used to analyze multimodal texts is visual grammar. It analyzes the collaborative effects of different modes from a semiotic perspective, including interpersonal meaning, ideational meaning, and textual meaning. The relationship between text and image often involves complementarity, which can be classified into three dimensions: enhancement, divergence, and polyphony. The illustrations in these works primarily serve to enhance the textual content, and the reader's understanding tends to converge with the textual direction. Both of these works focus on constructing the “interpersonal meaning system”, which is based on whether there is eye contact between the characters in the image and the reader.

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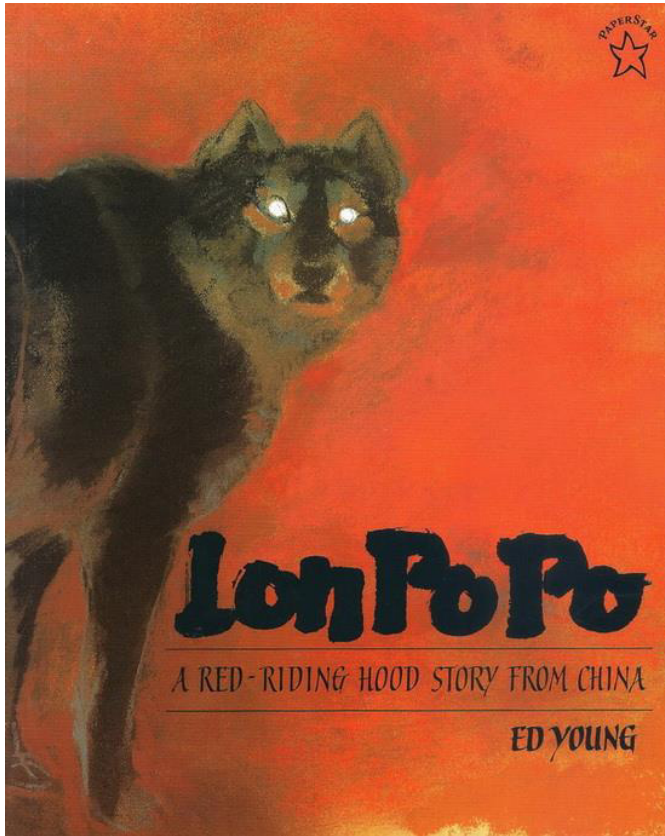


Illustration 13

I argue that the pursuit of nationalization is not absolutely to separate us from others. Sometimes, it is a strategy to help construct national subjectivity in case it is replaced or immersed by globalization. Representing unique minority fairy tales means the respect and appreciating of the minority. Besides, this national style is also beneficial to bring more equality, inclusiveness, and aesthetic diversity to the world. Another related important view is that national identity is a multifaceted, dynamic, and evolving concept. In fact, nationalization is not an enclosed way. Advocating nationalization does not mean promoting conservative attitudes. Openness is necessary for any culture that hopes to grow vigorously. In addition to representation of their own national culture and art, native creators should also absorb, integrate and recreate the successful experience and pioneer techniques of the worldwide excellent picturebooks. For example, in recent years, the increasing international cooperation in picturebooks is usually the cooperation between Chinese writers and foreign illustrators. This kind of picturebook often shows distinctive features of international integration. One pivotal factor is that foreign illustrators should have a deep understanding of the national culture of the text story, and strive for a unique, proper, and perfect combination of two cultures and aesthetics. Amazingly, good children's literature itself owns children's universal feelings and aesthetic flavors, which makes an indeed "fairy tale" enjoyed by people transcending the boundaries of nations and times.

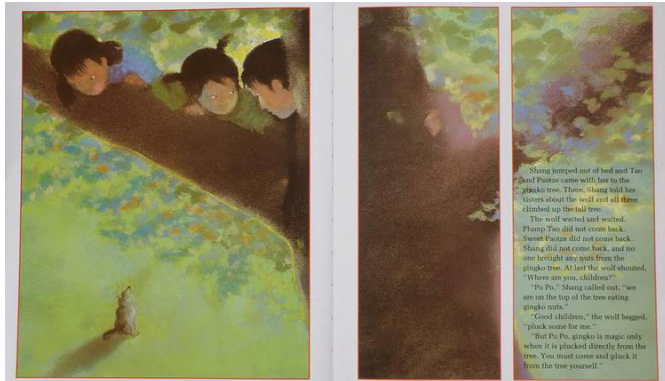


Illustration 14

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TOTO! je galéria Slovakia

What do we look at
when we read the fairy
tale of Snow White?
(a reflection about stories
and illustrations)

TOTO! je galéria



TOTO! je galéria is a gallery in Moskovská 29 in Bratislava, where we have been exhibiting illustrations since 2014 – pictures that we remember from books which we used to read as children, as well as with our own children. However, we often do not even know the illustrators who painted them: after all, who would think of looking for a name written in

small print somewhere at the end of a book which has never been taught at school. For this very reason, we often oversee how amazing the Slovak illustration tradition is. However, we are trying to change it. The three of us: Mária Rojko, Miloš Kopták and Ida Želinská – are convinced that these works deserve to be hanging in the galleries. And that it is important to speak about the context in which they came to life.

What do we look at when we read the fairy tale of Snow White? (a reflection about stories and illustrations)

with the use of texts by Peter Uličný,
Ľubica Kepštová and Veronika Kolejáková

Reading together – the big and the small ones – is so... close. Snuggled together, looking at pages with letters and pictures, going silent and listening to each other. It does not matter where we are: whether there are children and dogs running around on a park bench or around us, whether we are at home on the sofa, or even on a train.

It just works.

When we read aloud, sometimes we speed up, sometimes we slow down our voice. And each of the characters in a story sounds different: muttering or chirping, tricky or even as if they were barking. From time to time, we stop and point with our finger at the picture on the page: “Look, look!”

That moment then becomes stuck somewhere in our minds and turns into a memory.

After all, we keep talking about it for many years to come: “Remember how Mommy would read to us every night and sing some lines?” Or: “Listen, I recalled yesterday how Daddy changed the endings of fairy tales and completely drove us crazy with those unlikely twists!”

Even so, little is heard about how important those “moments” with books are. How they co-create one’s own identity as well as the group one, how they influence culture in the society, unify language and symbolism.



•
“Dear children: surely you adore,
the sight of pretty white snow.
This is how our story begins.
So let us dive right in!”*

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When TOTO! je galéria was only starting (still under the name ASIL Gallery in 2010), we wrote that we did not even know the illustrators who had created these amazing books, often unlike authors of the texts: after all, who would think of looking for a name in small prints somewhere at the end of the book. Therefore, we began to uncover their works, exhibit them, put them into context in their time, talk about them.

Looking back today, we can see ten years, dozens of exhibitions, hundreds of works and hundreds of gallery visitors, dozens of articles in the media behind us.

In fact, it took quite a long time to get done, to learn how to look at those works not only as a trace, as an artifact, but really, as a “piece of art” – just as powerful, intense as a painting or sculpture that can be displayed in a gallery.

Many turned up their noses at the illustrations saying: “After all, it’s such smaller, rather applied kind of art. Paper? Anilines, markers, wax sticks, pencils? Phew.”

We know. It’s like dancing in a limited space. With predefined rules on how a book is supposed to look like. Whether the pictures for the stories should be large, full-page, half-page or just little dots, whether colourful or black and white...

It is very tempting to look down on this genre. At the same time, book illustrations are often the first piece of art we encounter as children. We are connecting the dots, finding out the logic of things and storylines.

As Mária Rojko has once said: “We often forget the details of those stories, but the pictures dwell in our heads.”

•

“Snow White was not sad anymore.
She exclaimed to them: ‘Dear friends!
Thanks to you, I am no longer afraid in the forest.
Not even that I could get lost somewhere.’ ”

Illustration is hardly taught at all.



Not even in literature classes, hardly ever in arts, and certainly not in history. Whereas it would be so interesting to learn “how” (and not only with what techniques, but also in what contexts) those illustrations were created! After all, it is possible to find out in which books the first Slovak illustrations appeared and who published them. And later, to learn how and why experimentation with the form began (even in children’s books) in the 1960s. Which visual artists were not allowed to exhibit their works in the 1970s, but (as Robert Brun once said) found “refuge” in the creation of illustrations? Why did the book market almost collapse in the 1990s and many almost finished books with illustrations remained unpublished? Where can the originals of all those amazing works be found today?

For this reason, it is no wonder that when we say the name Jana Kiselová-Siteková, many will put on an expression of: “Well, I seem to have heard that name, but I’m drawing a blank!”

TOTO! je galéria



Jana Kiselová-Siteková graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in 1977 at the Department of Book Graphics and Illustration of Vincent Hložník. She has illustrated more than 40 books for children and adults. For her illustration work, she has won many awards in both the Czech Republic and Slovakia. She is a holder of both the BIB Plaque and the Golden Apple and in 1996, she was entered on the IBBY Honour List for illustrations of Ondrej Sliacki's book *Adam and Eve*.

Lubica Kepštová has written about her work: "We all come bearing clues to where we come from... When we are looking at a child who has just been born, a flower that has opened up to our world for a moment, or a spring full of freedom and purity, we feel that they really come to us from paradise, where everything is in perfect balance and harmony. When we are born in the right place – even childhood is a paradise to which we always like to return.

They are suddenly reminded when we add: "Don't you remember?" And we will list some of her books. *Miško a Muško na severnom póle* (Miško and Muško at the North Pole) by Tomiko Inui, *Ronja the Robber's Daughter* by Astrid Lindgren, *Nepokoj* (Restlessness) and *Hodiny* (Clock) by Maša Haľamová, or *Little Thumbelina* by Hans Christian Andersen, also *Píšťalkár* (The Piper) by Erik Jakub Groch and *Anjeličku, môj strážničku* (My Guardian Angel) by Milan Rúfus and *One Thousand and One Nights*, and *Mamička* (Mummy) by Jaroslav Seifert.

"Aha, her!"

So, let us try to speak about her more.

•

"The deer knows one secret place.

A little cottage by the woods.

It is tiny and hidden to sight.

That's where you're going to hide soon!"

Even when our world is shattered and we reassemble it – we make a mosaic out of precious shards and create something that resembles, at least from a distance, paradise lost. And then we carry our imaginary island in our hearts, and in times of discomfort we hide in its bizarre mysterious corners. Jana Kiselová-Siteková has been gifted not only with a nice childhood, but also a huge talent – to repaint the world. She is not merely its restorer, she creates it all anew. As if she would be remembering the paradise from which we emerged a long time ago. She sees worlds we no longer remember. Its landscapes, plants, animals and people are full of gentle details that we do not perceive in reality. Even the colours and subtle structures of the images are woven from unknown mysterious threads... as if they were brought by the wind from distant airy lands, from a castle over the sea hanging on a silk string. Her inner world is inhabited by angels. Through her images, they enter our presence – children's angels, guardian angels and our daily helpers. She approaches her precious gift with respect and responsibility. Every touch on canvas or paper has its place, its meaning, and its soul. Her pictures are in a way a kind of peculiar artistic Esperanto that the whole world understands."

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Over the years, her works are becoming more and more delicate, there are more and more floods of meadow flowers, and more and more stories emerge from under the main plot, hidden in details; the lines become more and more subtle, the world is as if in a haze, the saturation of colours gives way to airiness.

The form has also settled – she paints her illustrations exclusively on bleached, starched canvas.

We rarely realize what a “hard job” it is. Bent for hours, without the opportunity to find a “comfortable” position. The space is laid out in filigree dimensions, so that everything is connected with everything else, it must be filled centimetre by centimetre.

•

“What a lovely and cozy place!
But sleep began to overwhelm her.
So she curled up in duvets.
After all, the morning will come much later.”

First editorial act of TOTO! je galleria – *The Story of Snow White* – was created as a tribute to the illustrator. Jana Kiselová-Siteková once told us what her “illustration dream” was: “I once got this book about Snow White for Christmas,” and pulled out a thin bundle with a colourful cover. “And then I read it many times. Alone, as well as with my daughter. I knew it by heart.”

We wanted to make that dream come true for her.
And we wanted to do it without compromise.

And therefore, we gradually put together the resources – both financial and human – so that she could create freely, not fighting against time, and create a book that would back her mastery with a strong story.

For the same very reason, the preparation took more than five years. Through brushstrokes, characters and atmosphere were born.



Just look at the heroes and heroines of that story.

It's not just “her” – Snow White. Around her, in short rhymes, you get to know many other heroes and heroines, not unlike those you have already met in your life.

The mother who dreamed of having a baby girl one day. She vanished far too quickly, but she managed to give Snow White a sense of closeness, warmth, love, and she carried what she learned from her along the whole story. Or that unfortunate father, of whom we will say: “What a coward!” After all, instead of helping his daughter when she was struggling and grieving, he let her be tormented and tried by an envious mother.

Each and every one of us occasionally encounters a “mirror”, which at first flatters, adulates and whispers: “You are the most beautiful!”, and then it hurts: “You are not what you used to be!” But we will also come across dwarves, that laughing lot who will, wordlessly, when necessary, replace the family that has stopped working and will take care, without any reward, of a completely unknown little girl.

Because that is how great stories for the little ones – fairy tales – are created.

TOTO! je galéria



Through them, we learn to think about the world that surrounds us. We try to decipher the lessons learnt behind them and teach these useful survival tactics: to make sure that “every cloud has a silver lining”, that “there is remedy to our mistakes” or that “confidence is not enough”. And that the good ones, if they stay vigilant, can fight against much stronger enemies. That the most important thing in the world is to have friends with whom we can share our everyday life, all our sorrows and joys.

•

“We will share everything with you!”
Says another with his eyes glowing like pearls.
“You will give us a smile every day for that,
the most precious treasure in this world!”

Illustrations are part of national treasure.

Even with all their imperfections – fine, subtle background, weak fixation, often full of press notes.

In order to be able to look at them today, someone had to collect them. To create collections, fit them into understandable systems, give them logic. There was a perception that it was the work of state and city galleries that would buy everything of value at the right time, and that would then rest, closed off from the world, in the darkness of depositories, until something was occasionally exhibited. But that is not the case.

Exceptional works are often found in private collections. Only distrust, disrespect and pride prevent those collections, at least occasionally, from coming together like a puzzle and show... of course, never the whole picture, but a high-quality cutout of the history. Because, as art historian Eva Trojanová says: “Art history is topography.” It is necessary to look for and connect not only familiar pieces, but also solitaires, silent creation in the background, leave the cities, dust off names... We wanted and still want to show how Slovak illustration was created, how it changed over time and especially who were the people – the artists who moved it to a unique level. So that you could say to yourselves at this exhibition many times: “Wow! I know that! How beautiful! I have once read this! It didn’t even occur to me to explore how this was created! I have read it too!”

•

Those characters from fairy tales are around us. They are our near and dear ones, as well as strangers. And sometimes... Sometimes they are us.

We read about them, look at pictures in books, growing up along the way. Everywhere we experience something, and different things happen to us, and suddenly we catch ourselves behaving exactly like heroes and heroines from fairy tales.

So read the story of Snow White.
And above all, do it together.
The big and the small ones.

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* from the forthcoming book *Príbeh o Snehulienke*
(The Fairy Tale of Snow White) by Jana Kiselová-Siteková
and Peter Uličný (TOTO! – kultúrne ihrisko, 2023)

Published illustrations:

Book: The Fairy Tale of Snow White
Creation of the artwork: 2017 – 2021
Publisher: Peter Uličný, TOTO! je galéria, 1st edition January – February 2024
Technique: gouache, India ink, canvas
From collection: TOTO! je galéria (THIS! is the Gallery)

Vendi Vernić
Croatia

Telling a Story, Creating
a World: Influence of Ivana
Brlić-Mažuranić's Fairy Tales
on Croatian Illustration

Vendi Vernić



Vendi Vernić is a freelance illustrator and visual artist based in Zagreb, Croatia. She is a winner of BIB Plaque (2023), IX International Award for Illustration Bologna Children's Book Fair – Fundación SM (2018), and she has received several other awards for her illustration work, among them two "Ptičica" awards for children's illustration (2022 and

2021), "Ovca u kutiji" award for the best Croatian picturebook (2021), "Grigor Vitez" award for children's illustration in Croatia (2020), and award at Mors Illustration Festival in Moscow (2017). Her work has been shown in numerous group exhibitions, and solo shows in Zagreb, Varaždin, Ljubljana, Seoul, Bologna, Moscow, and Tokyo. Vendi Vernić has so far illustrated 11 published books for children and young adults.

Introduction

Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić is the central figure of the Croatian literature for children and one of the most important and internationally recognized Croatian writers. Her stories have been published and reprinted in numerous editions and translations for over a century, plenty of them accompanied by exceptional illustrations. A comprehensive overview would be a challenging project, both due to the sheer number of publications, and the lack of systematic information on the history of Croatian illustration, therefore this text will focus on a selection of illustrators whose work proved to be a formative part of international recognition of Brlić-Mažuranić's tales. Additionally, I will offer an insight into my approach to illustrating one of her lesser-known stories, *The Menagerie*. The main objective is to present how Brlić-Mažuranić's tales were a catalyst that helped to shape not only Croatian children's literature but also illustration, and highlight what makes them internationally recognizable and timeless.

Tales and images that encompass the world

The work and life of *Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić (1874–1938)* have been thoroughly researched, yet it seems there is always more to discover. Her stories share that elusive quality and continue to offer something new with each reading. However, there is no need to mythologize the person (nor her opus), as there is enough wonder in the pure perceptiveness, eloquence, kindness, and talent she cultivated and successfully poured into her literary work. Brlić-Mažuranić herself was confident but humble when reflecting on her writing, aware of both privileges, like growing up in a respected family of intellectuals and writers, and societal constrictions that shaped her life.



The Brave Adventures of Hlapitch (1921),
Croatian Tales of Long Ago (1924, 1926)

Croatian Tales of Long Ago (Priče iz davnina) and *The Brave Adventures of Hlapitch (Čudnovate zgode šegrta Hlapića)* are Brlić-Mažuranić's two most famous books, both heralded as classics of Croatian literature for children. Her literary opus is rich in variety and content, but what made the mentioned works so outstanding is the successful cohesion of the author's imagination, mythological structure, and tradition of national fairy tales. *Croatian Tales of Long Ago* is a collection of stories that have often been misinterpreted as retellings of national myths and tales, even though they are original works of Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić. That confusion witnesses her genius as a narrator who understood the essence of her culture and anonymous literary heritage so well she could build upon it. The mythological level is universal, with established narrative

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patterns and symbolism masterfully weaved into the fabric of individualized literary expression. Writer Antun Gustav Matoš was immediately impressed with her writing, noting how *the world of Brlić-Mažuranić's stories is not merely imagined but created*. Fantasy and realism harmoniously complement each other with a feeling of inner vitality and credibility, allowing the reader to gaze upon that world with the wonder of a child, even if their childhood has long passed.

The authenticity and imagination of Brlić-Mažuranić's stories inspired generations of Croatian illustrators, thus being a significant factor in forming the notion of children's literature and illustration.

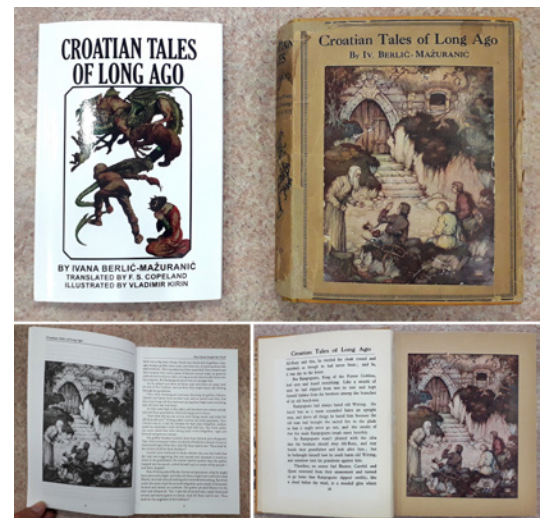
The Brave Adventures of Hlapitch (1913) is a novel that brought her wider recognition and high praise. Brlić-Mažuranić's disappointment with original illustrations by Nast Rojc led to the second edition (1921) being published with only a cover illustration by Vladimir Kirin. That illustration impressed Brlić-Mažuranić enough to ask him to make new illustrations for *Croatian Tales of Long Ago*, as she also disliked previous artwork made by Petar Orlić.

Croatian Tales of Long Ago were first published in 1916 to universal acclaim. Thanks to the efforts of her brother Želimir Mažuranić, an English translation with illustrations by Kirin was published by Allen & Unwin LTD in 1924. The illustrations were also subsequently used in the third Croatian edition (Matica hrvatska, 1926).

Once again, the reception was exceedingly positive, and translations to many European languages followed, crowned with four nominations for Nobel Prize. In 1937 Brlić-Mažuranić became the first woman accepted as a Corresponding Member of the Yugoslav Academy of Sciences and Arts.



Croatian Tales of Long Ago – Vladimir Kirin's illustrations



Croatian Tales of Long Ago – comparison of English editions (Sandycroft, 2017, and Allen & Unwin, 1924)

Vendi Vernić

Vladimir Kirin (1894–1963) is perhaps the most notable illustrator of Brlić-Mažuranić's tales. Their collaboration has spanned decades, starting with the mentioned cover, and even years after her death, Kirin was again entrusted by Ivana's son Ivo Brlić with illustrating the new edition. Many European publishers came to see *Kirin's artwork as an integral part of Croatian Tales of Long Ago*, which led to illustrations being kept in numerous translations, mainly in the 1920s–30s (Swedish, Danish, Russian, Slovak, Ukrainian, German), but even as recent as 2010 (Japanese). Brlić-Mažuranić and literary reviews highly lauded his work, pointing-out vibrant colors, attention to detail, a skillful combination of fantastical and realistic, and how well it corresponds with the text.

Several later Croatian editions also continued to use Kirin's artwork, but often with some adjustments, e. g. only black and white reproductions, reduced number of images, or combined two sets of his illustrations. It can be argued that the essence of what made the original editions so attractive and authentic was somewhat lost to such changes. Even Kirin's later illustrations, which he (re)made in 1956/7 for the new picture book edition, paled in comparison to the originality of his earlier artwork. It can be concluded that the first collaboration between Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić and Vladimir Kirin was one of those rare occurrences of *perfect understanding between two authors*, resulting in a work of timeless quality.

Despite being the book that brought together Brlić-Mažuranić and Kirin, *The Brave Adventures of Hlapitch* waited for a new illustrated edition until 1941. Unlike *Croatian Tales of Long Ago*, these illustrations usually weren't kept in translations of the novel. Czech translation (1930) with artwork by Czech illustrator Josef Lada was highly regarded by Brlić-Mažuranić, who even considered his and Kirin's work to be the only truly successful visual interpretations of her stories.

Cvijeta Job (1924–2013) is another prominent Croatian illustrator who created memorable illustrations for *Croatian Tales from Long Ago*. She admired the literary genius of Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić, approaching her creative work with attention to detail and narrative richness. Job illustrated a series of

picture books (1962–1970) containing single stories from *Croatian Tales from Long Ago*, published by Mladost in Croatia. Slovenian, Slovak, and German translations soon followed. Job received many accolades for her work on these books, including the Honorable mention at the Biennial of Illustrations Bratislava for *Stribor's Forest* (*Šuma Striborova*) in 1967. The same year it was selected among the 20 most beautiful books in the world at Bologna Children's Book Fair, where she also exhibited original illustrations for *Fisherman Plunk and His Wife* (*Ribar Palunko*).



Cvijeta Job – illustrated picture books (Croatian edition and German translations)



Cvijeta Job – illustrations from picture books

Cvijeta Job considered *illustrating children's books as no different from other artwork*, noting the genuineness and consistency of her visual language. While Kirin's and Job's illustrations of Brlić-Mažuranić's stories remain the most iconic, it would be hard to find a Croatian illustrator who had not faced the challenge of illustrating them, as displayed in the exhibition *Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić's Watermark*, part of the presentation of Croatia as a Guest of Honour at Bologna Children's Book Fair in 2015.

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In the spirit of Job's statement, I would like to present a selection of illustrators which I find interesting for the integrity of artistic expressions and the broader context of their work.

Albert Kinert (1919–1987) is primarily known as a painter and graphic artist, but illustration work makes a significant part of his opus. Kinert illustrated *Croatian Tales from Long Ago* (Novo pokoljenje, 1950), also published in Slovenian translation, and two picture book editions of tales *Reygoch* (*Regoč*) and *Bridesman Sun and Bride Bridekins* (*Sunce djever i Neva Nevičica*), with the latter also published in Italian translation by Mladost. From 1959 to 1998, *Croatian Tales of Long Ago* were published by Mladost in the iconic *Vjeverica* edition series, first with Kirin's illustrations, and after 1971 illustrated by *Danica Rusjan* (1926–2022), one of the most productive Croatian illustrators for children. She is also cited as the illustrator of the Lithuanian translation (1975), but no other information about the edition is available. *Josip Vaništa* (1924–2018), one of the founders of the avant-garde art group Gorgona, also had a lasting collaboration with Mladost as an illustrator. Vaništa approached illustration with the same sensibility he practiced in his other artwork, evident in drawings for *The Brave Adventures of Hlapitch* (1970). *Svetlan Junaković* (1961) is the most internationally acclaimed Croatian illustrator who also works in the fields of sculpture and painting. He has received numerous awards for illustration work and was a two-time finalist of the Hans Christian Andersen Award. Junaković illustrated a selection of stories from *Croatian Tales of Long Ago* in the edition of ABC Naklada in 1999.



Illustrations by A. Kinert, D. Rusjan, J. Vaništa, S. Junaković



Croatian Tales of Long Ago – book covers of various translations (the 1920s–30s)

It is curious to observe how rare new translations of Brlić-Mažuranić's works became after the 1980s. The turn of the century saw rising interest in *new ways of adapting the source material*, resulting in internationally released projects like the animated film *Lapitch the Little Shoemaker* (1997, Croatia film) and the interactive animated adaptation of *Croatian Tales of Long Ago* (2002–06, producer Helena Bulaja). Another approach to the presentation of cultural heritage is Ivana's House of Fairy Tales, an interactive multimedia visitors center that opened in 2013 in her birth town Ogulin. A team of designers and illustrators collaborated on creating a permanent exhibition and visual identity. The center also offers access to a virtual Fairy Tale Database and an online library on its website.

Zagreb City Libraries' Digital collections portal, established in 2007, provides online access to the digital and digitized material deposited at the Zagreb City Libraries' repository. It contains archival scans of 15 of Brlić-Mažuranić's books, including the first edition of *Croatian Tales of Long Ago* and original translations to English, Danish, Czech, Swedish,

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Slovak, Russian, Ukrainian, and German, as well as the 1913 edition of *The Brave Adventures of Hlapitch*, and its Czech translation. The project's mission is *to preserve the literary heritage and increase its visibility*, as anyone can browse and (re)discover these valuable materials.

La casa de fieras – Illustrating Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić

As a winner of the IX International Award for Illustration Bologna Children's Book Fair – Fundación SM in 2018 I was given an opportunity to make a picture book for Spanish-based publisher Ediciones SM. The editor encouraged me to pick a Croatian tale, with the idea of *presenting cultural heritage to an international audience*, and we chose one of Brlić-Mažuranić's lesser-known stories for children – *The Menagerie* (*Menažerija*). The plot revolves around five brothers and sisters who decide to mask their pets into exotic beasts and build a make-pretend menagerie. *The Menagerie* is one of the short stories directly inspired by Brlić-Mažuranić's children and daily life, so I wanted to create authentic illustration work based on some biographical details but rooted in a personal approach to the tale.

The picture book was published as *La casa de fieras* in 2019, and presented at Bologna Children's Book Fair, accompanied by an exhibition of original illustrations. The exhibition later traveled to Japan, South Korea, and China, and illustrations were selected for the Golden Pinwheel exhibition in Shanghai.

It was extraordinary to have my first picture book published in a foreign language and presented internationally, though it remains unpublished in Croatia. I find it significant for Brlić-Mažuranić's literary work to have a chance to reach readers around the world, and I am humbled and happy if my illustrations played even a small part in introducing her to new audiences.



Vendi Vernić – illustration for *The Menagerie* / *La casa de fieras*



Vendi Vernić – *La casa de fieras* and exhibition at BCBF 2019

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Ivo Janoušek
Czech Republic

3+ Gallery Český Krumlov:
International collection
of illustrations for children
fairy-tale collection
in a fairy-tale town

Ivo Janoušek



Ivo Janoušek is a curator of the monastery complex in Český Krumlov (3+ Gallery, Monastery Museum), art historian, pianist and politician. From 2018 to 2022, he served as Deputy Mayor for Culture, Heritage Care and UNESCO Management in Český Krumlov. He studied art history at the universities of České Budějovice and Brno. As a curator, he has participated in the following exhibitions: *Regional Exhibition South Bohemia – Upper Austria*,

200 years of the Hořice Passion Play and is the initiator and co-author of the 3+ Gallery and the Monastery Museum projects. Currently, thanks to the Collection of Illustrations for Children, he is devoted, among other things, to the field of children's book illustration. He has been cooperating with museums and galleries in the Czech Republic and abroad for a long time.

Český Krumlov, a treasure trove of history and art, has been writing its story for more than 700 years. Each century has imprinted itself on its shape in a unique way. The result is a picturesque town, a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage site, with a magical atmosphere and countless cultural events. Český Krumlov is a small in size but large in importance. Set in the valley of the Vltava River at the foot of the Blanský les area, the beauty and grandeur of the majestic castle and chateau stand out. The unique atmosphere of the town and the extensive complex of sights have made Český Krumlov one of the most visited tourist destinations in the Czech Republic. The historic centre of the town offers over 300 listed buildings, and you can still admire the craft and artistic sensibility of the medieval builders. The preserved original appearance and decoration of the Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque architecture is fascinating. The second largest castle and chateau complex in the Czech Republic, the Gothic St. Vitus Cathedral or the unique complex of three monasteries cannot be missed.



3+ Gallery, complex of three monasteries
(the former medieval monastery of the Clarissa nuns)

However, the town does not only dwell in history, but has become an important centre of culture and art. It offers a wide variety of cultural and artistic events year-round, from exhibitions of contemporary artists to vocal performances by well-known singers, theatre performances on a revolving auditorium, historical parades to special night tours in the streets or on rafts from the river. The magical municipality also contains several artistic treasures: the oldest Baroque theatre in the world, the Art Nouveau Seidel photo studio and the new international collection of children's illustrations.

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3+ Gallery, exhibition spaces for the presentation of collections, author or thematic exhibitions

In 2020, the town of Český Krumlov had a rare opportunity to acquire an exceptional collection of children's book illustrations compiled by Otakar Božejovský von Rawenoff during his time at Bohem Press. This children's book publishing house was founded by Otakar Božejovský together with illustrator Štěpán Zavřel in Zurich, Switzerland in 1973. From the beginning, the publishing house has focused primarily on the high artistic level of children's books, the quality of illustrations and text. It often approached young artists from different parts of Europe, with quality being the only criterion for selection. Most of the illustrators who have worked for Bohem Press have become internationally renowned artists. Original illustrations from children's books have been exhibited independently in famous museums, libraries and galleries around the world. The publishing house has also established Le Immagini della Fantasia, a summer international exhibition of illustrations in Sarmede, northern Italy, with courses for young illustrators, which has taken place for forty successful years. Many of the approximately three hundred titles of children's books published in millions of copies and translated into more than sixty languages have won major awards, such as several prizes at the International Children's Book Fair in Bologna.



Otokar Božejovský von Rawenoff – publisher and collector

The collection of children's illustrations by Otakar Božejovský, winner of the Golden Lion of Venice for cultural merit, comprises almost 600 original illustrations by 30 illustrators from 16 European countries. It is currently one of the largest international collections of children's book illustration in Europe, and the coherence and excellence of the illustrations is almost unmatched in the world. What adds to its uniqueness is the inspiring life story of two Czech emigrants who have made millions of children around the world happy with their

Ivo Janoušek

books. Since 2007, when he sold the publishing house Bohem Press, Otakar Božejovský has been looking for a suitably representative location for his collection. He wished to create the only and unique exhibition space of its kind in Europe, accessible to the public, and especially children. Eventually, the specific requirements of the collector for the storage and presentation of his life's work in the form of a playful international museum were fulfilled in Český Krumlov.



3+ Gallery, creative studio in the hall

The town of Český Krumlov has prepared a project with the working title Art Centre for Children for a part of the complex of three monasteries (the former medieval monastery of the Clarissa nuns) in the years 2020–2021. The town's main objective was to find a suitable long-term sustainable cultural infill for the part of the monasteries that had undergone a successful and award-winning heritage restoration between 2010 and 2015 with a contribution of more than 320m CZK from the European Union funds. In 2021, the council approved the Art Centre for Children project, including the gradual purchase of the illustration collection. In order to fulfil the entire plan, a playful museum with unique exhibition spaces for the presentation of European children's book illustration, studios, a depository and other spaces was created in 2022 on the premises of the monasteries, which received the official name 3+ Gallery as a new cultural institution.

3+ Gallery

The main mission of the 3+ Gallery in the area of the monasteries in Český Krumlov is to become a place of fantasy and a space of imagination developing the ideas of children and adults through the presentation of top illustrations from children's books and at the same time, to become a place of playful education for children and an inspiring meeting place for illustrators from all over the world. 3+ Gallery supports children's relationship to visual arts, literature and culture in general through permanent exhibitions, regular author or thematic exhibitions, workshops, accompanying and school programs. Simultaneously, it presents the art for children by the most important European illustrators of the 20th and 21st centuries to domestic and foreign visitors to Český Krumlov. The basis of the entire project is the linking of a unique collection of illustrations for children presented in the unique exhibition space of the former convent of the Clarissa nuns in the middle of the historic UNESCO World Heritage Site. With its clear thematic focus on international exhibitions of illustrations for children, the 3+ Gallery defines itself in relation to other Czech institutions that either focus on contemporary artistic creation, the presentation of book illustration as a whole, or have a much broader spectrum of exhibition and professional activities. 3+ Gallery has a clear vision from the ground up, narrowly programmed to only specialize in art for children, whereas the main theme is primarily children's book illustration. With this clear attitude, the gallery can gain a firm position in the structure of Czech and European cultural institutions in the future.

Currently, 3+ Gallery has established international cooperation with similarly focused institutions in Europe, such as BIBIANA in Bratislava, Fondazione Štěpán Zavřel in Sarmede, Italy, and Musée Tomi Ungerer in Strasbourg. At the turn of 2023–2024, the 3+ Gallery will house an international children's library of several thousand copies, which the gallery will receive as a gift from Anne Elisabeth Suter, an internationally renowned expert on world literature for children and promoter of European children's books on the American continent. The international library, which will be open to the public in the future, together

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with the collection of illustrations for children, will become the basis for the new 3+ Gallery. The partner of the 3+ Gallery is High School of Art and Design of St. Agnes of Bohemia, and the main sponsors are the delivery company Zásilkovna and the framing company Larson-Juhl.



3+ Gallery, safe room for the collection of illustrations for children

Collection of illustrations for children

The collection of original illustrations of children's books was compiled by Otakar Božejovský during his time at the Bohem Press publishing house. The collection is an impressive cross-section of the artwork entering children's books and represents the period from the 1980s to the early 21st century in the European space. The collection consists of almost 600 original art illustrations by 30 illustrators from the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, Austria, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Croatia, France, Spain, Great Britain, Belgium and other European countries. For the Czech cultural milieu, the collection is interesting mainly for its international overlap, which is connected with two Czech emigrants who connected illustrators and writers from various European countries through art for children and children's books. An interesting feature of the collection is the fact that parts of this art collection have been presented at numerous international exhibitions around the world. For example, at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, at the Centre Pompidou in Paris, under the auspices of a Spanish Infanta at the Museo di Arte Contemporáneo in Madrid, or of the Empress of Japan at The Itabashi Ward Museum of Art in Tokyo. The gradually expanding collection of illustrations was the heart of Otakar Božejovský's publishing house, which was primarily focused on the artistic value of its books. Among the most important Czech artists represented in the collection are Štěpán Zavřel, Jindra Čapek and Vlasta Baránková. The foreign illustrators represented are among others, Józef Wilkoń, Jan Lenica (Poland), Sita Jucker (Switzerland), David McKee (Great Britain), Linda Wolfgruber (Austria), Svjetlan Junaković (Croatia), Emilio Urberuaga, Arcadio Lobato (Spain), Gianni de Conno (Italy), Marie-José Sacré (Belgium), Eric Battut (France) and Stasys Eidrigevicius (Lithuania). The authors in the collection are overwhelmingly European. The collection is thus a unique encyclopaedia of European children's book illustration of the last decades. For the Czech Republic, and especially for Czech history of the 20th century, the collection of original illustrations for children is of undeniable cultural and historical

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importance. Due to the totalitarian regime in the former Czechoslovakia, the two main actors of the Bohem Press publishing house, the publisher and initiator of international exhibitions Otakar Božejovský and the world-famous illustrator Štěpán Zavřel, decided to emigrate and left a significant artistic mark on the world with their work.



Illustration from the collection – Štěpán Zavřel (Czech Republic/Italy)



Illustration from the collection – Erio Battut (France)



Illustration from the collection – Linda Wolfsgruber (Italy/Austria)



Illustration from the collection – Stasys Eidrigevicius (Lithuania/Poland)

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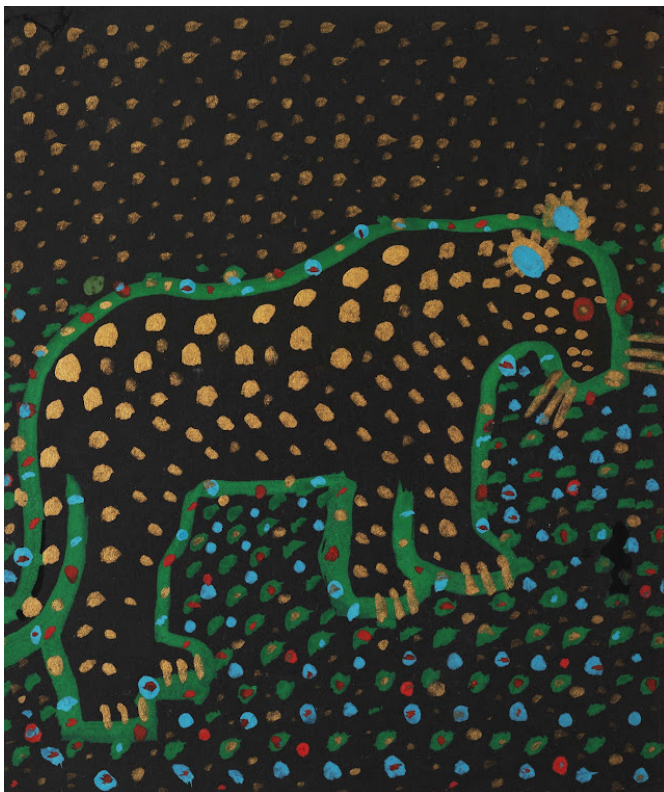


Illustration from the collection – Józef Wilkoń (Poland)

The international collection of children's illustrations has been stored in the monastery complex in Český Krumlov since the beginning of 2022. After the complete cataloguing of the entire collection of originals, a new 3+ Gallery with 500 m² of unique exhibition space was opened on 1 June 2022. In addition to the permanent presentation of parts of the collection, the gallery is also preparing author exhibitions (Jindra Čapek's *World of Fantasy*, Štěpán Zavřel's *Journey to the Stars*, Maurizio Olivotto's *Bestiarium* and Vlasta Baránková's *BIM BAM BUM*), guided tours, programmes for schools, creative activities and workshops, and in the future also summer illustrator courses. The combination of a unique collection, one-of-its-kind exhibition spaces and an attractive historic UNESCO World Heritage town has created a place where you can dream with your eyes open, where children come first, and where you will discover a collection of the finest illustrations for children from around the world.

The works in the collection are mainly original illustrations for published books, design illustrations and free drawings. Design illustrations are usually complete sets of designs, which further increases their attractiveness. The pieces include a representative cross-section of techniques currently used in book illustration. The collection of 583 illustrations includes a library of about 330 titles published by Bohem Press, i.e., the total production of the publishing house, as well as dozens of exhibition catalogues of publishers from all over the world and about 450 picture books from other world publishers from the private library of Otakar Božejovský.

