

Fairy tales in the Czech literature for children and youth (1990-2010)

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It is not possible to describe the position and the form of fairy tale in the Czech literature for children and youth of the past two decades without returning to transformations of the Czech literary scene immediately after 1989. The 1990s in the Czech literature for children and youth were a turbulent period influenced by social changes brought about by de-monopolization and fragmentation of publishing activities and also by the chance of open confrontation with the international book production featuring top as well as trivial and utilitarian works. The new national production of that period remained in the shadow of edition returns to the time-tested books from the golden collection of the Czech literature and also returns to the banned authors of the previous period. Quantitatively, catchy translations prevailed on the book market.

Literary critics and historians described the situation with the help of metaphoric similes that became common as apt characterizations of the children's literature of the late 20th century. In the now non-existent journal *Zlatý máj* the national production of the first half of the 1990s was called "stagnant water" by Petr Matoušek. In the publication *Meandry a metamorfózy dětské literatury* [Meanders and metamorphoses of children's literature] (2003) Svatava Urbanová sees the developmental dynamics of the contemporary literature for children and youth as an alternation of "metamorphoses", i.e. changing sections in the mainstream of the production for children, with "meanders" in which the movement slows down and a stagnation comes in¹.

At the beginning of the 21st century we may already say that the Czech literature for children and youth has avoided crisis scenarios predicted by literary critics in the 1990s. The decline of the publishers' (and authors') interest in the contemporary Czech literature was a temporary side-effect of the installation of the free book market. The influx of trash literary production from abroad could not supersede values of the national production in the readers' minds. Even as late as the mid-1990s Zdeněk Zapletal was afraid of the harmful influence of "the ubiquitous Donald ducks, turtle and frog mutants; Uncle Scrooge and others will knock out Čapek, Lada, Little Beetles and many others."² It is symptomatic that Zapletal puts standardized representatives of the fairy tale genre as a synecdochic representation of the whole children's literature – the Disney's commercial production – against artistic texts that are part of the golden collection of the Czech literature for children. Fears of the children's literature becoming an isolated enclave removed from the national literature did not come true. On the contrary, the contemporary literature for children and youth also gains a potential to appeal to adult readers and children's books begin to be written by authors successfully established in the area of literature for adults. The fairy tale, both in an adapted form and as an authorial one, still represents an important genre space.

Adaptations and modifications of fairy tale matters

In the early 1990s a great number of fairy tale and legend anthologies appeared representing a natural reaction to possibilities offered by the free book market. Besides commercial editions relying on classic fairy tale topics in catchy and simplified forms, both textual and pictorial, there also appeared editions originating due to the chance to present a fairy tale legacy according to one's own choice and conception.

¹ URBANOVÁ, S. *Meandry a metamorfózy dětské literatury* [Meanders and metamorphoses of children's literature]. Olomouc: Votobia, 2003.

² ZAPLETAL, Z. Dětská knížka ani její kritika nemají na růžích ustláno [The children's books or their criticism are not roses all the way]. In *Kritika literatury pro děti a mládež (1945-1995)*. Brno: Ústav literatury pro mládež, 1995, pp. 17-18.

The fairy tale as a genre representing a trans-generation link was a promising market success and, logically, did not avoid trivializing modifications. Neither the names of the original collectors and adapters can be a guarantee as their works are now presented in different contextual and axiological links and often in non-professional textual editions. As an example of that trend we may mention the edition of fairy tales by Františka Stránecká in the Brno publishing house Jota from the early 1990s³. It even included such fairy tales (*O maceše čarodějnicí, O koňské hlavě, O hodné Bětce a zlé Julianě* [About a witch stepmother, About a horse head, About good Betty and bad Juliana]) the end of which, accompanied by naturalistically depicted motifs of cruelty and evil, may get in contradiction with the understanding of the victory of the good by the contemporary child reader.

The demand of the book market, satisfied especially in the first half of the 1990s by sub-standard translations and insensitive adaptations of both folkloric and original fairy tale topics, was then heard in a number of publishing houses that established fairy tale editions arranged by thematic criteria or cultural-geographical aspects. The Albatros publishing house set up the edition *The Most Beautiful Fairy Tales* combining demands of the editorial approach with reading attractiveness and since 1995 it has published twelve anthologies "from treasures of Czech and foreign fairy tale writers" where each volume dealt with one of the fairy tale characters (e.g. *Nejkrásnější pohádky o třech sestrách* [The most beautiful fairy tales about three sisters], 1995; *Nejkrásnější pohádky o čarodějnicích* [The most beautiful fairy tales about witches], 1996; *Nejkrásnější pohádky o strašidlech* [The most beautiful fairy tales about ghosts], 1997; *Nejkrásnější pohádky o vodnicích a mořských bytostech* [The most beautiful fairy tales about water sprites and sea creatures], 2000; *Nejkrásnější pohádky o princích* [The most beautiful fairy tales about princes], 2005).

A specialized edition of other nations' myths, fairy tales and legends (*Mýty, pohádky a legendy* [Myths, fairy tales and legends]) was published by the Argo publishing house. The edition, which has more than thirty volumes, draws on storytelling traditions of various nations and continents all over the world leaving the stories to have their non-stylized roughness and rawness with which they react to everyday and existential problems of the mankind. While some anthologies openly aim at adult readers, others – primarily oriented towards fairy tale matters – may be offered to child recipients, too (e.g. *Strašidelný chrám v horách. Japonské lidové pohádky a pověsti* [A haunted temple in the mountains. Japanese folk fairy tales and legends], 2009; *Paní moře. Řecké pohádky* [The lady of the sea. Greek fairy tales], 2009; *Pomsta hadů. Mýty tchajwanských domorodců* [A revenge of snakes. Myths of Taiwanese people], 2010, etc.).

Also the Brio publishing house came with editions of world fairy tales for children presenting translations of fairy tale anthologies with illustrations of Czech artists in their edition *Pohádky z celého světa* [Fairy tales from all over the world] (e.g. *Africké pohádky* [African fairy tales] illustrated by Miloš Kopták, 2006; *Čínské pohádky* [Chinese fairy tales], 2007 and *Keltské pohádky* [Celtic fairy tales], 2009 illustrated by Renáta Fučíková). The edition *Pohádkový kolotoč* [Fairy tale merry-go-round] emphasizes the thematic aspect giving more space to various original approaches of individual authors (Miloš Malý – *Pohádky ledového větru* [Fairy tales of icy wind], 2004; Martina Drijverová – *Pohádky z hor* [Fairy tales from the mountains], 2003; Magdalena Wagnerová – *Pohádky z moře* [Fairy tales from the sea], 2004; *Pohádky z vodních hlubin* [Fairy tales from water depths], 2004).

How an author may successfully deal with fairy tale and legendary topics of the folk origin may be illustrated by two representative anthologies by Vladimír Hulpach *Pohádkové vandrování po Čechách* [Fairy tale wandering about Bohemia] (1992) and *Pohádkové vandrování Moravou* [Fairy tale wandering about Moravia] (1998) which were created on the basis of a respectful number of sources and the author's collected stories. Hulpach divided Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia into several areas thus

³ STRÁNECKÁ, F. *Moravské národní pohádky* [Moravian national fairy tales]. Brno: Jota, 1991.

successfully putting into readers' minds an idea of rambling the Czech and Moravian countryside, also noticing matters of the German and Jewish origins established in the storytelling tradition and not often included in book editions of the past decades. In his exploration of legendary and fairy tale traditions Hulpach did not deal only with historically evidenced figures but also with fairy tale characters such as white and black ladies, midday witches, evil spirits and water sprites. A remarkable work thus appeared showing a surprising variability of some fairy tale types and bringing also interesting information about the past and the life of our ancestors. It is so because in the stream of the narrative Hulpach uncovers layers of fantasy on a probably historical core of legends or fairy tales without hiding his own updating part respecting the special character of the folk tradition.

Thematically unique and literarily exceptional is an anthology called *Jak chodil Kristus pán se svatým Petrem po světě* [How Christ the Lord and Saint Peter wandered about the world] (2005) where Vladislav Stanovský collected representative folk narratives about the earthly wanderings of Jesus Christ and Saint Peter.

Adaptation efforts of Czech writers began to focus more systematically not only on national fairy tale topics (e.g. Milada Motlová, Zuzana Nováková, Helena Lisická, Marta Šrámková, Oldřich Šuleř) but also on foreign ones (Zuzana Nováková, Jan Vladislav, Vladislav Stanovský, Pavel Šrut). The tradition of retelling Oriental fairy stories, Old Egyptian myths and legends has been taken over by Jiří Tomek (*Dary krále džinů* [Gifts of the king of djinns], 1995; *Bohové a faraoni* [Gods and pharaohs], 2000; *Perlová zahrada* [The garden of pearls], 2007).

Besides experienced writers of children's literature these works were also sporadically written by authors appearing in the literature for children and youth only exceptionally. In a fairy tale collection written by Karel Křepelka and called *Tančící hvězdy* [Dancing stars] (1995), including fifteen fairy tales "from all parts of the world", the earthiness of folk narrative is balanced by fragility of poetic metaphors.

In the early 1990s prominence was given especially to adaptations of Jewish and Roma fairy tale topics that had not had enough space in the previous decades. A fairy tale anthology by Leo Pavlát called *Osm světél* [Eight lights] (1992), whose Czech edition was preceded by French, English, German and Dutch editions, is characterized by a respectable representation of Jewish stories with a wide time-space view. In the context of Czech literature for children and youth Pavlát's narratives were not only an informed insight into Jewish sacred texts and mysticism but also a generally valid narrative about the necessity of tolerance. The final part of the book, the composition of which skillfully reflects the Jewish feast of Hanukkah, brings funny stories about residents of Chelm. The characterization of blinded Chelm wiseacres evokes associations with the Basket Case townspeople confirming the international character of fairy tale topics.

A description of the Roma culture and mentality is given in the fairy tale book *O Mamě Romě a romském pámbíčkoví* (2001) [About Mother Roma and the Roma good Lord] by Hana Doskočilová. The book has another, more precise, title *Twelve Roma commandments as they are told by Roma mothers to their children* and describes the legendary origin and formation of the characteristic features of the Roma people. Mother Roma is the highest authority for Romanies creating their moral code and watching over its observation. She is linked with God whom, a little old man wizened because of sadness for human pride, she carries as one of her children in her canvas on the long way from slavery to freedom in a new home. Doskočilová offers a view of the Roma identity being formed in her fairy tale stories and parables that result in apt "commandments".

Also some re-editions play a significant role in the context of the contemporary fairy tale literature thus evidencing universal values of the fairy tale genre with innovated narrative points respecting the tradition. In this context we may mention Oldřich Sirovátka's *Plný pytel pohádek* [A full bag of fairy tales] (1978, re-edition in 2007) or the retelling of Beneš Metod Kulda's fairy tales *Pohádky z Valašského království* [Fairy tales from the Vallachian kingdom] by Jan Skácel, originally published under

the title *Jak se bubnuje na princezny* [Drumming to call princesses] (1984) and under the name of Blanka Stárková (1984). Among noticeable artistic works is undoubtedly the retelling of world fairy tale topics by Vladislav Stanovský and Jan Vladislav *Strom pohádek z celého světa* [A tree of fairy tales from all over the world] (2 volumes, 1958, 1959) that provoked, because of Stanislav Kolíbal's illustrations, a wild discussion about the function and possibilities of experiments in the literature for child recipients. Publishing these fairy tales in re-editions (in 1999 an anthology *Strom pohádek* [A tree of fairy tales] arranged by Vladimír Hulpach; in 2008 and 2009 the second edition of both volumes in Knižní klub publishing house) only confirmed their timelessness and literary and illustration qualities.

New publishing houses on the Czech literary scene

Albatros, one time the exclusive publisher of children's literature as the successor of The State Publishing House of Children's Literature, is still closely associated with literature for children and youth but new impulses come nowadays from other places. New publishing houses that do not see only a quick commercial effect in the book production for children but form their strategy on the basis of a perfect book product (from text, illustrations, typography to book binding) brought about a welcome revival of the Czech literary scene in the second half of the 1990s and transparency by clearly profiled edition and culture activities.

In 1995 Ivana Pecháčková founded the publishing house Meander which became renowned especially for the edition *Modrý Slon* [Blue elephant] where great attention is also paid to illustrations and a part of the printing takes place in the bibliophile form. Meander also published books by authors with the dissident past for whom writing for children was only occasional (Václav Havel, Ludvík Vaculík, Vratislav Brabenec) or purely private activities (anthologies of fairy tales *Povídáčky pro Klárku* [Tales for Klárka] and *Povídáčky pro moje slunce* [Tales for my sun] and the novel *Perlorodky* [Pearl oysters] originally written for his own children by Jiří Stránský in prison). However, for some authors the first contact with children's literature meant the beginning of a more permanent relationship (Viola Fischerová, Pavel Brycz) in which the publisher's initiative played an important role. Books written by the universal artist Petr Nikl, who himself declares uncertainty about the target category of his readers, are classified only with difficulties as to the genre and the recipients, but they were ranked in the children's literature thanks to Ivana Pecháčková.

The publishing house Baobab, which presents itself as an alternative one, is celebrating this year the first decade of its existence having gathered a clearly defined circle of authors, especially from among young visual artists, often students or graduates of VŠUP (Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design in Prague). The book *Tucet aneb 12 nejmenších pohádek* [A dozen or the 12 smallest fairy tales], announced in the 2011 edition plan, is a synecdochic snapshot in this respect presenting various artistic approaches of authors publishing in Baobab (there can be found Markéta Šimková, Darja Čančíková, Michaela Kukovičová, Alžběta Skálová, Chrudoš Valoušek, Eva Volfová, Radana Přenosilová, Dagmar Urbánková, Juraj Horváth, Tereza Říčanová, Dora Dutková and Petr Šmalec).

Apart from publishing books both Meander and Baobab develop other activities connected with children's literature (an irregularly published journal of Baobab A Literary Café organized by Meander together with Švanda Theatre) thus strengthening the entity of their literary production which then creates a sub-context in the existing context of literature for children and youth (*Knihy z Baohemie* [Books from Baohemia] is based on promotion materials of Baobab).

In a number of publishing houses there appeared separate editions focused on good books for children and youth: the *Raketa* edition of the Labyrint publishing house or the respectable edition *Myths, fairy tales and legends* of the Argo publishing house. The Brio publishing house was among the first with its edition *366 narrations for every day* starting to publish a specific format of a fairy tale bilderbuch with a calendar composition of texts for every day of the year. It published, among others,

the fairy tale book *Červený panáček* [A red little man] (2002) by Anna Neborová, *Jablečňák* [An apple man] (2003) and *Žabina a spol.* [A frog man and comp.] (2005) by Magdalena Wagnerová and Martin Skala, and *Verunka a kokosový dědek* [Verunka and a coconut greybeard] (2004) by Pavel Šrut and Galina Miklínová. Regarding the quantitative overproduction of children's books from Librex (notorious for kitsch illustrations by Adolf Dudek) or Fragment, the significance of such non-commercial books increases and their way to child recipients is at least partially made easier by grant projects of the Czech Ministry of Culture and by national and international awards.

The question is whether some of these works do not become publications rather for adults attracted by their interpretative openness and multiple layers, non-ostentatious retro-stylization of illustrations (often corresponding with generation experience) and attention paid to typography due to which such publications gain an air of individualized bibliophile works. It is actually the publishing houses themselves and their practice that define the boundaries between children and adults both in the Czech and foreign literatures.

The contemporary literature for children and youth – a literature of blurred boundaries

Since the 1990s one may have witnessed the loosening of the traditionally perceived boundaries by which the literature for children separated itself as a subsystem as well as the boundaries by which it was internally stratified according to genres and values and categorized according to readers. This "collapse of the category of time"⁴ is a phenomenon linked with the acceleration of the social development in the past two decades and it appeared in fairy tales, too, where the traditional duel between the good and the bad has shifted to the current allegory gaining a philosophical multi-layer nature and value ambiguity.

In the Czech literature the type of fairy tales referring to the contemporary social-political situation appeared as early as the 1960s (e.g. some fairy tales from Ivan Klíma's anthology *Kokrhací hodiny a jiné příběhy z Vlašských Klobúk a podobných Tramtárií* [The cock-a-doodle-doo clock and other stories from Vlašské Klobúky and similar backwoods], 1965). In the first half of the 1990s, works of the previously banned authors were profusely published. The anthology *Uzel pohádek* [A knot of fairy tales] which was first published in 1978 in Munich got to Czech readers in 1991 with an introduction by Ivan Klíma who was also an editor of it. Under the title, which is an allusion to *Nůše pohádek* [A basket of fairy tales] by Karel Čapek, the reader finds an anthology of fairy tales by the contemporary authors persecuted by the Communist regime (Ivan Klíma, Václav Havel, Jan Trefulka, Karel Sidon, Alexandr Kliment, Pavel Kohout, Zdeněk Pochop, Ludvík Vaculík, Jan Vladislav, Jan Werich and Jan Skácel) some of whom got in touch with children's literature only once due to the circumstances rather than due to their poetics or a unifying genre and topic. Some of the fairy tales refer to absurdity of the totalitarian regime (*Pižďuchové* [The Pizhduks] by Václav Havel, *O třech pachatelích* [About three culprits] by Ludvík Vaculík). However, an interpretation of these fairy tales in conformity with the genre conventions is not necessarily linked with a certain historical-geographical context but the adult reader may find the information about the context helpful.

A peculiar update of the fairy tale genre with a shift to travesty appealing to adult readers can be found in works by Magdalena Wagnerová whose fairy tale travesties *Pavouk na šalvěji* [A spider on a sage] (2003) and *Strom s granátovými jablky* [A tree with pomegranates] (2004) may speak not only to children but also to adults. The pomegranate kingdom represents the Czech lands and the national

⁴ Cf. ŽILKOVÁ, M. Kolaps kategorie věkovosti [The collapse of the category of time]. In *Tvořivá dramatika*, 7, 1996, č. 3, pp. 31-33.

mentality depicted with the help of self-ironic detachment which is fully appreciated especially by adult readers who are able to decode all humorous allusions.

Many authors intentionally count on the effect of ambiguity. In *Krátké pohádky pro unavené rodiče* [Short fairy tales for tired parents] (2007) Michal Viewegh depicts the introductory narrative situation with regard to the adult recipient whom he gives receptive as well as interpretative instructions because only in the hands of the adult mediator the book may broaden its communicative potential and appeal to the child recipient. However, regarding the child recipient a reading reduction is the result, which casts doubt upon the conception of the double-recipient.

The convergence of the worlds of adult and child recipients in the fairy tale genre is not only a consequence of the quicker maturing of the young generation but also a consequence of certain “infantilization” of the world of the adults who escape to the fairy tale world from the dull life.

Play and playfulness as the main compositional principle in the contemporary literature for children and youth

Following the eruption of fairy tale texts in connection with child’s play in the 1960s the play has been confirming its function of a constitutive genre element. A number of fairy tale texts directly use the play as the basis or the point of their topic plan.

A nice tribute to child’s play is Tomáš Pěkný’s book *Coletka a pes* [Coletka and the dog] (2000) in which a girl with plaits named Coletka dreams up a pet. The dog of a bizarre appearance resembling salami is on formal terms with Coletka and is an inspirer as well as a participant in their common play activities. An important element in those activities is Coletka’s child immediacy and the dog’s metamorphoses evoking the legendary series *Pane pojďte si hrát* [Sir, let’s come and play] by Břetislav Pojar. Transformations and individual roles alternate in quick sequences being based on visual as well as verbal associations out of which other characters with absurd features get born (e.g. the personified expression Of Course). The dog is able to transform itself in a bench, an angular ball, binoculars or even darkness. The whirl of mad ideas and improvisations ends up in a folklore rhyme whose limitless composition replicates the story itself bringing the child recipient, eager for a sequel, back to the beginning.

The very act of reading changes in a play with the reader which is played by the narrator offering various readings into the text. In the fairy tale about Sníček [The Dreamer], included in the poetry book *Záhádky* [Little Secrets], Petr Nikl has the pages cut in three strips thus providing not only plentiful possibilities of visual metamorphoses of a fanciful animal but also playful variations of the text. Similarly, Marka Míková in her narrative about the girl Hredka in the book *Knihafoss* [Bookfoss] (2007) suggests an alternative way of reading with skipping passages, which resembles arbitrary moves of game pieces in a playing field. Direct participation of the recipient in playful reading into texts is counted on by Zdeněk K. Slabý in his collection *Nedokončené pohádky* [Unfinished fairy tales] (2007) offering a chance to compare children’s ideas with the endings of the author and other readers.

It is not only a play at the intra-text level which has been peculiar to children’s literature since it broke free from didacticism. Play and playfulness now consist in the deepening and extending of the work by other inter-textual and contextual bonds and frequently also by non-literary activities. Play is then not a product derived from the book as we know it from the commercial literary production (card games, T-shirts, stationary with pictures of literary characters, etc.) but it is an ideational shift reflecting the efforts to make the child recipient as active as possible. To a certain extent the book itself becomes an object of play and the very first contact with an unusual book form disrupts stereotypical reading attitudes provoking curiosity (e.g. the typographical arrangement of Nikl’s *Pohádka o Rybitince* [The fairy tale of Rybitinka]). *Kouzelná baterka* [A magical torch], the book written by Olga Černá and illustrated by Michaela Kukovičová, includes a miniature book based on the principle of the child game

“projector” so the readers may make one of the characters of the story move. Also various CDs appear offering new possibilities of reception: Jan Hlaváč's book *Krtčí výlety* [The mole's trips] (2006) illustrated by Jitka Petrová is enriched by a computer game freely developing the story; Marka Míková's book *Knihafoss*, illustrated by Darja Čančíková, includes a CD with songs the lyrics of which are part of the story.

Fairy tale characters, or from water sprites, fairies, pucks, sorceresses and ghosts to animals and Kdybychové [Ifs]

In artificial fairy tales of the past two decades there are a certain circle of timeless characters drawing on folk fairy tales but it is being broadened and made up-to-date by playful as well as parodical shifts. Regarding that Svatava Urbanová notes: *A fictional world of the Czech original fairy tales does not create myths but it rather overlaps with the real world, the inventory of motifs from both fantasy and real world being relatively stable.*⁵

The Czech artificial fairy tale already underwent in the inter-war period a process of fairy tale characters being made plainer. Water sprites and fairies, sorceresses and sorcerers of Karel Čapek or Josef Lada drew on the folk tradition but remained firmly rooted in the Czech countryside. Rather than being dark demons in the original tradition of folk fantasy, they reflected a typology of earthy village figures depicted with caricature exaggeration: water sprites as surly or prudent keepers of their waters, or a sorceress as an old woman collecting herbs who may be contacted anytime for advice. Authors writing since the 1960s brought those figures even closer to the children's mentality depicting them deeply rooted in the surrounding natural world. In fairy tales by Václav Čtvrtek or František Nepil water sprites, fairies and other anthropomorphized creatures come literally from the womb of Nature being an inseparable and common part of the local countryside. This conception of fairy tale characters closely connected with Nature and its events is followed by other authors in the 1990s: Emil Šaloun, Jaromír Kincl or Irena Gálová. Gálová originally wrote fairy tales in Slovak about a little girl born out of a nut (*Lískulka*, 1996; *Lískulka se toulá* [Lískulka rambling], 1999; *Lískulka v pohádkovém světě* [Lískulka in a fairy tale world], 1999; *Lískulka na ostrově Žbiribiri* [Lískulka on the island of Žbiribiri], 2001); presently, she has settled in the Czech lands and her works evidence the continuing permeability of Czech and Slovak literary contexts in the area of children's literature. In the character of Lískulka, who gradually discovers the world on her fairy tale journey, one may find a clear model of the socializing process of a little child. That may also be found in works of other contemporary authors, e.g. in Magdalena Wagnerová's fairy tale *Vodníčková dobrodružství* [A little water sprite's adventures] (1985).

The approach of making fairy tale characters plainer has been adopted by Ilona Borská in the fairy tale novel *Mokrejšové, vodníci z Louže* [The Mokrejšs, water sprites from Louže] (1994) in which she tells the history of a water sprite family in a chronicle-like manner, while Marie Kubátová emphasizes an ecological aspect in the book *Pohádky vodnického dědečka* [Fairy tales of a water sprite grandfather] (1990).

A swift and wide development of nonsense poetics in fairy tale literature since the 1930s and especially from the 1960 has also brought transformations of traditional fairy tale characters towards humorous updates and parodical shifts. This process continued in the past decade, too. Alois Mikulka has returned, through grotesque, to a humorous play with characters and motifs of classic fairy tales (*Karkulka v maskáčích* [Karkulka in battle dress], 2001; *Lupiři a policajti* [Robbers and cops], 2003). Hermína Franková's fairy tale *Čarodějnice bez koštěte* [A sorceress without a broom] (2006) actually became a crazy comedy in which the authoress followed her own theme used in the 1971 film *Dívka na*

⁵ URBANOVÁ, S. O skřítcích, vodnících, vílách a čarodějnicích. [About pucks, water sprites, fairies and sorceresses] In URBANOVÁ, S. a kol. *Sedm klíčů k otevření literatury pro děti a mládež 90.let XX. století*. Olomouc: Votobia, 2004, p. 74.

koštěti [A girl on a broom]. The sorceress who at one time decided to remain in the human world is the mother of a curious teenage daughter and makes use of her knowledge of witchcraft producing cosmetics. In the book *Ustrašená strašidla* [Fearful ghosts] the title of which signals a transformation in the conception of characters by using oxymoron Jiří Kahoun places personified animals and fairy tale creatures in a wood and their friendship is strengthened by shared fear of the unknown. The fairy Vivi, introduced by Markéta Pilátová in her fairy tales *Víla Vivivíla a stíny zvířat* [The fairy Vivivíla and shadows of animals] (2009) and *Víla Vivivíla a piráti Jižního moře* [Víla Vivivíla and pirates of the Southern Sea] (2006), is conceived in an original way as a rebellious punk: dressed in trousers and a sweater, her hair stiffened with mud and a rusty fishhook in her nose, she comes from the marshland that is her home. She does good deeds she is supposed to do in order to return to the realm of fairies with pragmatic thinking and with the help of her life-giving power “vivi” which she is able to lend.

In the 1990s a noticeable, even if not quite new, phenomenon appeared, i.e. works extending the parody attitude from fairy tale characters to their representation in the manner taken over from conventions of educational literature. As early as 1961 Radovan Krátký published the book *Bubáci aneb malý přírodopis duchů, přízraků a strašidel* [Bogies, or a short encyclopedia of ghosts, phantoms and bugaboos] which he wrote as a parody of dictionary. He does not present a pure fantasy play in the disguise of a lexicon but he reconstructs fantasy creatures on the basis of their appearance in folk fairy tales and legends revealing at the same time the superstitious motivation of the development of these creatures. Mystification has been adopted by Vítězslava Klimtová in her *Lexikon ohrožených druhů strašidel - lesních, lučních a domácích* (1992) [A lexicon of endangered species of bogies – forest, meadow and domestic ones] but the authoress unfortunately overused her idea in further follow-ups and variations (e.g. seven volumes of *Malý lexikon strašidel: Skříťci domácí*, 1997; *Skříťci lesní*, 1998; *Rusalky a víly*, 1998; *Vodníci*, 1998; *Čarodějnice*, 1998; *Bludičky a hejkalové*, 1998; *Domácí diblíci*, 1999 [A small lexicon of bogies: Domestic goblins, 1997; Forest goblins, 1998; Water nymphs and fairies, 1998; Water sprites, 1998; Sorceresses, 1998; Faeries and wailing spirits, 1998; Domestic elves, 1999]). This deviation from mere parody to boundless mystification is undoubtedly connected with the spread and frequency of demonic characters in the literature of the early 1990s⁶ but it also evidences an increasing tendency to make use of an attribute linked with fairy tales as a shield, which is most often fantasy creatures, without respecting the internal ideational-thematic and compositional order characteristic of the given genre and giving a loose to one's own fantasies.

Another level of shifting imaginary creatures from the demonological repertoire and anthropomorphization of animals or things in the contemporary fairy tales is original creations consisting in personified concretization of abstracts, emotional states and character features. Even if this phenomenon is not quite new (it suffices to mention Vladislav Vančura and his bogie Barbucha born out of fear in the fairy tale *Kubula a Kuba Kubikula* [Kubula and Kuba Kubikula], 1931, Daisy Mrázková's fairy tale *Chlapeček a dálka* [A little boy and the distance], 1969, or František Nepil's story *Naschválničci* [Little on purpose doers], 1981) but what is surprising is its frequency and variability.

Boredom in Viola Fischerová's fairy tale book *Co vyprávěla Dlouhá chvíle* [What Boredom told] (2005) comes and leaves according to how it manages to hold the child's attention. In the fairy tale *Jak František vyzrál na Papejše* [How František won over Papejš] from the above mentioned book the goblins Papejšes are embodiment of temptation which children easily yield to. In the book *Modrý Poťouch* [The blue Poťouch] (2010) Miloš Kratochvíl presents a whole range of “trouble-makers” maliciously attacking both children and adults. Quarrelers, Envious, Offence-takers, Greedies, Peace-takers and other creatures have their characteristic explicitly put down in their expressive names. In his

⁶ Cf. URBANOVÁ, S. O skřítcích, vodnicích, vílách a čarodějnicích [About goblins, water sprites, fairies and sorceresses]. In URBANOVÁ, S. a kol. *Sedm klíčů k otevření literatury pro děti a mládež 90. let XX. století*. Olomouc: Votobia, 2004.

mystifying presentations and classifications of fabricated creatures Kratochvíl – similarly as Pavel Šrut in his books *Lichožrouti* [Odd-eaters] (2008) and *Lichožrouti se vrací* [Odd-eaters return] (2010) – makes use of the character of an informed professor who has dedicated his life to their research. Unlike Šrut who deepens the psychological dimension of his characters Kratochvíl unfortunately remains stuck in a certain characterization flatness peculiar to fairy tale conventions. Šrut in his books about Odd-eaters, imaginary creatures feeding on odd socks, created a metaphor referring to feelings of loneliness and natural inclination to a larger community. Another Šrut's novel *Pan Kdybych hledá kamaráda* [Mr Were-I looks for a friend] (2010) verbalizes the main thematic line by the very title. The conditional in the name of the main character evokes his life attitude based on conservatism, passivity, indecisiveness and unfulfilled expectations. A "linguistic" approach was also taken by Šrut in his earlier fairy tale book *Dva lelci ve skříni, o Karlíkovi nemluvě* [Two leleks in the cupboard, not to mention Charlie], (1990), in which he materialized "leleks" appearing in a frequently used Czech idiom.

The fairy tale character is often devised in accord with mythological thinking as a creature in the state of initial integrity with the surrounding natural world; it is not necessary to explain its origin or role. The creature is then usually defined, as Tove Jansson's moomins, by a species name or a playful name with an arbitrary relation to its characterization (e.g. Martina Drijverová's *Robinové* [Robins], 1995, or Duto, Tupo, Wosan Gosan and other creatures from Marek Šolmes Srazil's book *Pohádky do postýlky* [Fairy tales for the bedtime], 2005).

A counterweight to rich fantasy creations in the conception of fairy tale characters is heroes or narrators of fairy tales coming directly from the reality of children's lives, i.e. from their relationship micro-space (see the wave of "daddy's" literature⁷ in which the principle role is taken over by fathers: Zdeněk Svěrák *Tatínku, ta se ti povedla!* [Daddy, well done!], 1991; Jiří Stránský *Povídačky pro Klárku* [Stories for Klárka], 1996; Ludvík Středa *Tatínkovy pohádky* [Daddy's fairy tales], 1997; Arnošt Goldflam *Tatínek není k zahození* [Daddy's quite all right], 2004; *Tatínek 002* [Daddy 002], 2006).

Domination of pictures over verbal art

One of the most dynamically developing areas of the contemporary literature for children is undoubtedly picture books which were not so numerous in the past Czech literature. A significant impulse for their boom was the inspiring influence of the foreign production in which Czech artists often participated (Květa Pacovská, Jindřich Čapek, Štěpán Zavřel, Josef Paleček, Libuše Palečková, or Petr Sís). Picture books cease to be understood as a genre exclusively aimed at children in the pre-reading period presenting itself as a genre with reception permeability in which the visual and literary elements are connected in a peculiar artistic form. Contemporary picture books develop in several ways differing in authors' attitudes to illustration techniques and thematic areas, usefulness and oscillation between tradition and innovativeness. It is so because they address a generation growing up in the world overwhelmed by visual impulses. Communication through simplifying icons and pictograms, which is natural for today's children, on one hand creates pressure towards simplicity, universality and comprehensibility of the visual expression but on the other hand it forces artists to look for original expression and new ways to be different and more visible. A fairy tale continues to have an important place in a picture book.

Many artists look for new ways choosing artistic techniques and non-traditional materials which incite children's fantasy. Embroidery instead of drawing was used by Eva Volfová in the story about seeking a safe home *Kočka z kávové pěny* [A little cat made out of coffee foam] (2006), toys made by crocheting come to life in the book *O Andělovi, Noční můře, statečném medvídkovi, hodném slonovi,*

⁷ Towards transformations of the traditional authoritative role of father in these fairy tales see Siegllová, N. Role tatínka v pohádkových knihách na přelomu 20. a 21. století. In *Cesty současné literatury pro děti a mládež*. Slavkov: BM Typo, 2005.

opici a divoké huse [About Angel, Nightmare, brave little bear, nice elephant, monkey and wild goose] (2006) which was “made in crocheting and recorded” by Petra Kubáčková. Direct tactile perception has been counted on by Vendula Chalánková in her folding picture book *Červená Karkulka* [Riding-hood]. Dagmar Urbánková created in her book *Adam a koleno* [Adam and a knee] (2007) impressive corners of the family micro-space with the help of elaborately used cloths, products of nature and tiny things of all kinds. Her book *Chlebová Lhota* [Bread Village] (2010), stylized in the form of a village chronicle, was literally kneaded, twisted and baked out of dough and populated with figures and filled with furniture molded out of bread crumb and pieces of textile. She combined illustrations with the photographs of objects and comic sequences. Art installation in connection with photography is also characteristic of the work of František Skála whose “photographic comics” *Skutečný příběh Cílka a Lídy* [A real story of Cílek and Lída] (2007) is situated in a real outdoor setting where Skála put his own puppets made exclusively out of natural materials. Jiří Stach and Lenka Uhlířová in the parable *Velká cesta Malého pána* [The great journey of a Little Gentleman] (2008) also mix illustrations and photographs closely connecting the visual element with the text and illustrations sometimes take over the narrating role. The question arises whether some of these works will not remain in the category of interesting experiments appreciated more by adult readers.

Thematically, fairy tale picture books range from classic fairy tale topics, their innovations, poetic-like descriptions of children’s world, to literature with educational aspects. Martin Skála’s cycle *Strado & Varius* (2002-2005) is devoted to important figures of classical music. The first part dealing with a little violin born out of an egg found on the Paris pavement by an old violinist called Varius was stuck in the genre conventions of a fairy tale about inseparable friendship but further sequels moved rather to the educational pole and illustrations wittily dealing with music motifs gradually began to lose their exclusive position.

Also Lucie Lomová set out on the way of treating fairy tale topics in the form of comics creating a comic series about a personified mouse couple *Anča a Pepík zasahují* [Annie and Joe step in] (2006) and *Anča a Pepík opět v akci* [Annie and Joe again in action] (2007) and she even dared to adapt classic Czech fairy tales by Karel Jaromír Erben in *Zlaté české pohádky* [Golden Czech fairy tales] (2008)⁸.

Continuity with the fairy tale output of previous generations and new directions

In the late 1990s Věra Vařejková said that quality texts from the 1960s and the 1970s as well as classic original fairy tales from the 1920s and the 1930s had not found yet a stable continuation blaming it, among others, on strong extra-literary influences that the post-1989 period brought about.⁹ However, looking at it from the distance of two decades elapsing from 1989 one may say that continuity with the fairy tale output of previous generations has not been completely interrupted but that the following of their development tendencies takes place in the form of taking over certain text-creation methods and compositional principles.

For example, the thematization of narrative act in fairy tales by Jiří Stránský (*Povídačky pro Klárku* [Tales for Klárka], 1996; *Povídačky pro moje slunce* [Tales for my sun], 2003), by Ludvík Středa (*Tatínkovy pohádky* [Dad’s fairy tales], 1997) or by Zbyněk Malinský (*Cyril a Teniska* [Cyril and a tennis shoe], 1994) consists in emphasizing the lively narrative (including the use of a general composition) as a constitutive fairy tale characteristic which was also accentuated by Karel Čapek, Josef Čapek or Jiří Mahen in their fairy tale production. Jiří Stránský wrote his fairy tales as early as the 1970s when he was in prison and “tales” became part his letters sent to his eight-year-old daughter.

⁸ See URBANOVÁ, S. *Figury a figurace*. Ostrava: Ostravská univerzita, 2010, s. 95-114.

⁹ See VAŘEJKOVÁ, V. *Česká autorská pohádka*. Brno: Akademické nakladatelství CERM, 1998.

Affinity with Václav Čtvrtek's fairy tales situated in a typically Czech countryside (a wood, a meadow, a pond) can be found in the continuing literary output of František Nepil and since the 1990s also in the works of Jaromír Kincl and Emil Šaloun. Their fairy tales protagonists are closely connected with the natural space and its anthropomorphized inhabitants and with child's trustfulness they help to keep an ethical order in it.

Awareness of continuity is also strengthened by revealing re-editions of older books, findings in literary inheritances or comebacks of authors whose works were banned before 1989. This "comeback" wave was naturally very intensive in the 1990s but even in the past decade there appeared publications drawing attention of child recipients and critics due to their attractiveness and artistic value without being written by previously banned authors. We may mention the fairy tales by Ludvík Aškenazy (the re-edition of *Putování za švestkovou vůní* [A journey to find plumb fragrance], 1992; the posthumous publication of the Czech translation of *Pohádky čtyř větrů* [Fairy tales of four winds]), by Václav Čtvrtek (the re-edition of the fairy tale book from 1948 illustrated by Ondřej Sekora *Kolotoč v Africe* [A merry-go-round in Africa], 1995), or by Jan Werich (the "painful stories" *Deoduši* [Deoghosts], 2010, appearing since the 1950s till the 1970s). Zdeněk Svěrák returned to his fairy tale book from 1971 *Pan Buřtík a pan Špejlička* [Mister Sausage and Mister Skewer] (2010) and wrote its continuation in the spirit of the original poetics based on a humorous contrast and a play with fantasies, meanings and the language itself.

Among comebacks we may also rank publications arising as book adaptations of originally radio or television fairy tales. Passing the test of time they appear in anthologies from various publishing houses (*Hajaja. Pohádky na dobrou noc* [Hajaja. Fairy tales for the bedtime], 2001; *To nejlepší z večerníků* [The best of bedtime stories], 2005) and especially thanks to the Czech TV Edition which is a joint edition project of the Czech TV and the Albatros publishing house.

Nonsense, parody, travesty and humorous shifts

A quantitatively strong stream of original fairy tales includes texts based on nonsense, parody, travesty and humorous shifts affecting all or some of the structural elements of a literary work. Contemporary fairy tale texts are influenced by the development of the previous decades (from associative poetics typical of *Anička Skřítek a Slaměný Hubert* [Annie the Dwarf and Straw Hubert] by Vítězslav Nezval, grotesque comicality of Karel Poláček and his fairy tale *Edudant a Francimor* [Edudant and Francimor], to various authors writing nonsense texts since the 1960s) which many authors smoothly develop in their works.

Miloš Macourek followed up the success of TV bedtime stories and of the book *Mach a Šebestová* [Mach and Šebestová] (1982) illustrated by Adolf Born. The everyday routines of two third-grade pupils are broken by series of unexpected adventures due to a magic prop – a torn off telephone receiver which is able to fulfill the strangest wishes. The narrative built with absurd logic and sense of humor as well as gentle irony has kept Macourek's typical syntactic structure with the use of polysyndeton. Macourek induced the image of child's perspective with which individual action sequences are paratactically ordered in the gradating compositional principle to the point, frequently with an educational aim. In the 1990s the episodes about Mach and Šebestová were published as divided into smaller collections, and new ones also appeared (*Mach a Šebestová ve škole* [Mach and Šebestová at school], 1997; *Mach a Šebestová za školou* [Mach and Šebestová out of school], 1998; *Mach a Šebestová na prázdninách* [Mach and Šebestová on holidays], 1993; *Mach a Šebestová na cestách* [Mach and Šebestová on a trip], 2000; *Mach a Šebestová v historii* [Mach and Šebestová in history], 2002). In the 1980s, Macourek created, with a humorous personifying shift, the character of a clever monkey Žofka Orangutanová, the protagonist of a series of Bed Time Stories and a book published later (*Žofka, the ZOO director*, 1991; *Žofka*, 1992).

Alois Mikulka and Ivan Binar follow folklore topics but while Mikulka shifts his variations of folk fairy tales to grotesque levels Binar remains at updating and mixing it with social prose (Bibiana whistles, 2009). Arnošt Goldflam's fairy are civil ones, too. They move on the axis of parody and self-irony with which the narrator - father – tells about his brave acts (Daddy is all right, 2004; Daddy 002, 2006).

Imaginative and philosophically modulated fairy tale

The tendency to philosophization¹⁰ in children's literature which gradually emerged in the world literature for children in the second half of the 20th century was also clearly manifested in original fairy tales. Fantasy and magic elements play the central role in the initiation process of the child or adolescent character (or their anthropomorphized equivalents) and the time-space of fairy tale openly invites authors to use it for creating metaphorical pictures of human desires and actions and for wording ethically imperative parables. In connection with detabooization of literature for children and youth a number of essential topics get into the original fairy tales (e.g. life values and beliefs, natural cycle of life and death) and they are treated in a multi-layer manner in order to speak to adult readers, too, or they are treated with respect to the child recipient so as to prepare space for further interpretations.

Archetypal models of human psyche are uncovered for example in Tomáš Pěkný's story *Havran z kamene* [A raven made out of stone], (1990). The sorceress Young saves life of a girl named Juliana thus sacrificing her chance to become part of the sorceresses' community. The scorching need of love and friendship brings Young to the world of humans where she has to put up with disappointment, though, before she understands what values the real friendship has. The story may be read not only in inter-text overlaps with folklore topics but also as a variation of fairy tales by Hans Christian Andersen (The Little Mermaid) or Oscar Wilde (The Fisherman and His Soul) in which motifs of identity, solidarity, love and ability to make sacrifice for it appear. Pavel Jirásek's fairy tale book *Kamenné růže* [Stone roses] (1988) depicts a journey to find Hope and Desire but the philosophical message in the form of a fairy tale metaphor is drowned in a complicated plot construction with inter-textual allusions.¹¹

Also Eva Hudečková overburdens her fairy tale texts in a similar way. She follows folklore fairy tales but does not respect their established compositional principles and methods. She develops the plot into epic dimensions with a number of secondary and episodic characters that are modifications of traditional fairy tale heroes as well as products of the authoress' imagination. A certain compositional imbalance is also reflected in the imbalance of the language plan (overabundant metaphors slipping to language clichés). The authoress often places her fairy tale allegories into concrete time-space coordinates. The Czech countryside with its traditional language appears in the fairy tale *O ztracené lásce* [About love lost] (1995) (in 2001 it was adapted into a nine-part TV series directed by Viktor Polesný) where the main character Honza manages to overcome her own outsider position and to win over the bad with the help of the personified Love. The atmosphere of the mysterious Prague retreats of the 19th century is evoked by Hudečková in the book *Bratříček Golem* [The little brother Golem] (1994). The updated legend about Golem carries fairy tale elements despite the time-space concretization (contrasts of the good and the bad, a humorous shift of Golem to a child's naïve form). Concretization does not deprive the stories of their mythical nature, though; to the contrary – balancing between matter-of-factness and allegory provides them with an exciting flavor. The characters of Hudečková's

¹⁰ On philosophization cf. ŠUBRTOVÁ, M. *Filozofizace literatury pro děti a mládež* [Philosophization of literature for children and youth]. In URBANOVÁ, S. a kol. *Sedm klíčů k otevření literatury pro děti a mládež 90. let XX. století*. Olomouc: Votobia, 2004, pp. 145-161.

¹¹ This type of fairy tale narrative appears more frequently in the past decade in the Slovak literature for youth, too, which is quite interesting for the Czech literature due to the common starting point of the literary development after 1989. This is evidenced for example by analyses of Viera Žemberová (see the papers on D. Pastirčák or K. Pém in ŽEMBEROVÁ, V. *Autorská rozprávka v deväťdesiatych rokoch*. Prešov: Náuka, 2000) or by Zuzana Stanislavová's calling this trend "fairy tale of serious life topics" (cf. STANISLAVOVÁ, Z. *Moderna a postmoderna v autorskej rozprávke po roku 1989*. In *Bibiana*, 2010, 17, n. 3, pp. 42-50).

fairy tales may grow up and get wise only at the cost of hardship and pain; only against the background of it they are able to appreciate the real life values. Love as a “gift from heaven” overcomes all difficulties and is an instrument as well as an aim of the life journey. In the mysterious parable *Sedmihlášek* [The Sevenvoice] (2002), love, symbolically represented by music from the lost paradise, is a reviving force for the world corrupted by human evil. Hudečková’s texts speak to both child and adult recipients (e.g. a variation on the Faustian theme *Tajemství pražského šotka* [A mystery of a Prague goblin] (2006) where she follows, and not only with partial motifs and characters, her previous fairy tales).

Imaginative fairy tales speak ever more frequently to the smallest child readers, too, offering them metaphors of their own life situations in seemingly simple and often adventurous stories. In the fairy tale *O pastelce bez barvy* [About a crayon without color] (2008) by Martina Komárková the little Crayon faces an important decision choosing its own color. Its wandering through the Pencil Case in order to find its own color shade is not only a poetic trip to a colorful world in which epic miniatures are chained according to color associations but also a way to get to know oneself. More important than the choice of the color is the Crayon’s decision to accept its function and to change in children’s hands according to their needs and fantasies. Petra Braunová situates the plot of her fairy tale *Ema a kouzelná kniha* [Ema and a magical book] (2010) in an Orphanage full of kind but rigidly sterile atmosphere. The opposite pole of austerity and order, metaphorically supported by the brown color, is the Town full of exciting colors, sounds, scents and tastes. The ten-year-old Ema brings a book with growing pages from there. The book is a double symbol standing astride between childhood and adulthood. The purchase of the book in the second-book bookshop is a symbol of the heroines’ maturity and longing for a real life and knowledge leading to adulthood. At the same time the book is able to fulfill the children’s most secret wishes dominated by the desire of love in the family circle.

The fairy tale literature does not avoid existential topics, either. In the fairy tale *František z kaštanu, Anežka ze slunečnic* [Frank from the chestnut, Ann from the sunflowers] Radek Malý presents a narrative about the life cycle the participant of which is the whole nature depicted in catching synesthetic images and connected with plastic images of fading, ripening, withering and decaying. Iva Procházková has proved in her books for children and youth since the 1990s that she is also able to deal sensitively with gloomy topics. In the novel *Myši patří do nebe... ale jenom na skok* [Mice belong to heaven... but only for a while] (2006) she approaches death as an inevitable boundary of any existence and even chooses it as an untraditional starting point of the story. The little mouse Šupito and its former chaser, the fox Bělobřich, meet after death in the animals’ paradise. Their instincts and biological needs have disappeared so a real friendship may arise between the mouse and the fox. The posthumous life full of happy games and calm timelessness do not satisfy the main characters, though, so after a retrospective of their lives they prefer to undergo again the risky earthly wandering. Procházková mixes Christian and Eastern philosophical views of death but her message addressing children unequivocally emphasizes the values of life increased by its finality.

Inspiration by both Eastern and Christian philosophy as well as a deep respect for the natural order and its forces are clearly manifested in the work of Daniela Fischerová. In two collections of short stories (*Duhová jiskra* [A rainbow spark], 1998; *Jiskra ve sněhu* [A spark in the snow], 1999) oscillating between a fairy tale, a fable, a parable and a developed spiritual anecdote she speaks to both child and adult readers. The re-edition of *Duhové pohádky* [Rainbow fairy tales] (2003), the first publication of which did not draw much attention in 1982, is shifted to another context due to the illustrations by Irena Šafránková. Fairy tales interspersed with poetry provides the child reader with a view of cyclicity of

natural events. The Garden, given the colors and the order by the Sun in the stories on the boundary between fairy tale and myth, is a space symbolizing the children's world in a catching synecdoche.¹²

A return to the fairy tale narrative tradition may be seen in Karel Šiktanc's collections (*Královské pohádky* [King's fairy tales], 1994; *O Dobré a Zlé moci* [About the Good and the Bad Power], 2002; *Hrad Svícen* [The castle Candlestick], 2009), in which the author's original approach is reflected especially in the expressive poetic nature of his language, individualization of main characters and dynamic composition. Šiktanc's *Královské pohádky* was prepared to be published as early as 1971 but it finally turned out impossible. The belated publication did not make any harm to it, though, only confirming timelessness in both the content and the form. Similarly, Alexandr Kliment's allegoric *Modré pohádky pro malé a velké děti* [Blue fairy tales for little and big children] (1994), originally published in samizdat in 1976, got into readers' awareness only later.

The fairy tale in instructional literature

Besides the line which is more demanding for reception and interpretation there is a strong tendency in the contemporary children's literature towards undisguised orientation on usefulness when books provide recipients with clear instructions how to solve problem situations of ordinary life or how to achieve an educational or cognitive aim. This instructional or instrumental literature links aesthetic aspects with formative ones to make child readers active and emotionally engaged, which makes this literature different from the ordinary didactic production.¹³ Elements of instructional literature appear in original fairy tales in which they function in accordance with their ethical message as a genre constant.

In the past two decades a number of fairy tales for children appeared in which the activating, instructional or educational intention is openly presented as the principal ideological-thematic aim. Thematic circles are very broad: Ivona Březinová gave children a fairy-tale-like handbook of good manners *Neotesánek* (2005), Daniela Krolupperová formulated the cognitive aim in books with fairy-tale methods *Proč mluvíme česky* [Why we speak Czech] (2003), *Viropis aneb Jak bacit bacila* [Book of viruses or How to beat a bacillus] (2004) and warned against poisonous plants in the fairy tale *Zákeřné keře* [Malicious shrubs] (2010).

Pavel Brycz thematizes educational problems in the book *Dětský zvěřinec* [The child menagerie] (2008). Metamorphoses of Brycz's disobedient children are clearly understandable metaphors but still above the average didactic production. In the book *Zlobilky* [Perishers], (2009,) Martina Drijverová depicts child mischief and bad habits with literal exaggeration which has been present in children's literature since the publication of the legendary *Struwwelpeter* (1845) by Heinrich Hoffmann. Drijverová's thematic construction is similar to Dušan Taragel's in his book *Pohádky pro neposlušné děti a jejich starostlivé rodiče* [Fairy tales for disobedient children and their caring parents] but her fairy tales lack Taragel's black humor and sense of absurdity with which the Slovak author uncompromisingly ends the fates of child protagonists. Drijverová's girl characters are only individualized through their bad habits (the girl who keeps making excuses; the girl who does not want to wash herself; the girl who points her finger at people, etc.) that backfire on them in the end. Setting the "perishers" free from the trap of bad habits includes two phases. In the first one it is the punishment, often coming in the form of

¹² The connection of Rainbow Fairy Tales with cosmogonic myths and legends has been mentioned by Svatava Urbanová. Cf. URBANOVÁ, S. Interpretační možnosti textů pro děti (Kulturologická sonda do pohádek Daniely Fischerové) [Interpretative possibilities of texts for children (A culturological probe into fairy tales by Daniela Fischerová)]. In ŠUBRTOVÁ, M. (ed.) *Cesty současné literatury pro děti a mládež*. Slavkov u Brna: BM Typo, 2005, pp. 26-33. ISBN 80-903339-6-6.

¹³ On this type of literary trends cf. Šubrtová, M. Návodná literatura v tvorbě Ivony Březinové [Instructional literature in the works of Ivona Březinová]. *Bohemica litteraria*, Brno : Masarykova univerzita, 12, 2010, 1-2, pp. 117-122.

a fantastic element, which enables both fantasy and realistic interpretations. The second phase is a definitive liberation of mischievous children through kind parental acceptance and conciliation. With these texts Drijverová is closer to the poetics of Miloš Macourek's fairy tales to whom she refers with some motifs for that matter.

Instructiveness is often connected with child play. The play serves as a starting point for developing educational interactions or is depicted as the basic child activity which itself functions instructively (e.g. Olga Černá in the book *Poklad starého brouka* [The treasure of an old beetle], 2007). In Marek Šolmes Srazil's book *Pohádky do postýlky* [Fairy tales for bedtime] (2005) the character called Frňk is born out of the child need for real friendship and as other fantastic protagonists he helps children face feelings of sadness and fear. The play is a therapy to which recipients are invited with appellative endings of the fairy tales (*Ahoj děti a nebuďte smutné!* [Bye bye, children and don't be sad!] *Ahoj děti a nebojte se!* [Bye bye, children and don't be afraid!] *Ahoj děti a hrajte si!* [Bye bye, children and go and play!] *Ahoj děti a mějte se rádi!* [Bye bye, children and love one another!]). They also include final instructions encouraging them to draw the fairy tale characters so that they may serve as a talisman.

Conclusion

It is impossible to give a detailed account of the original fairy tales of the past two decades as a whole. The original fairy tale is a quantitatively rich and dynamically developing genre which defies simple typological labeling and categorizing. For all that we may formulate some generalizing conclusions. The continuity with the existing development of the fairy tale genre within the Czech literature for children and youth is ensured by the unflagging interest in local as well as foreign folklore topics that respect the local specificity of fairy tales in various authors' adaptations emphasizing their all-human and timeless ethical message. In the area of original fairy tales there is a perpetual tendency towards emotiveness, playfulness, nonsense, mystification and experiment. The source of poetization of the fairy tale world is not only the meaning or polysemy of a word but also an image reacting to transformations of readers' expectations in the present world fed with visual stimuli. Authors' approaches vary: from semantic poly-stratification and compositional as well as language richness to re-discovery of the magic of simplicity, from genre contaminations to crystal-clear forms.

The fairy tale gains a potential to appeal to adult readers, too (not only in the role of mediators), as if it were returning to its roots when the narration of a fairy tale was shared across generations. The development of the contemporary original fairy tale confirms stability of its functions, though – despite the variety of the used means of expression. Whereas from the outside point of view fairy tale stories change in the postmodern contamination with other genres and their methods, the original entertaining but primarily magical and existential function of the fairy tale has been increasing. Modern fairy tale stories lead both child and adult readers through poetization from simple perception to empathic cognition.