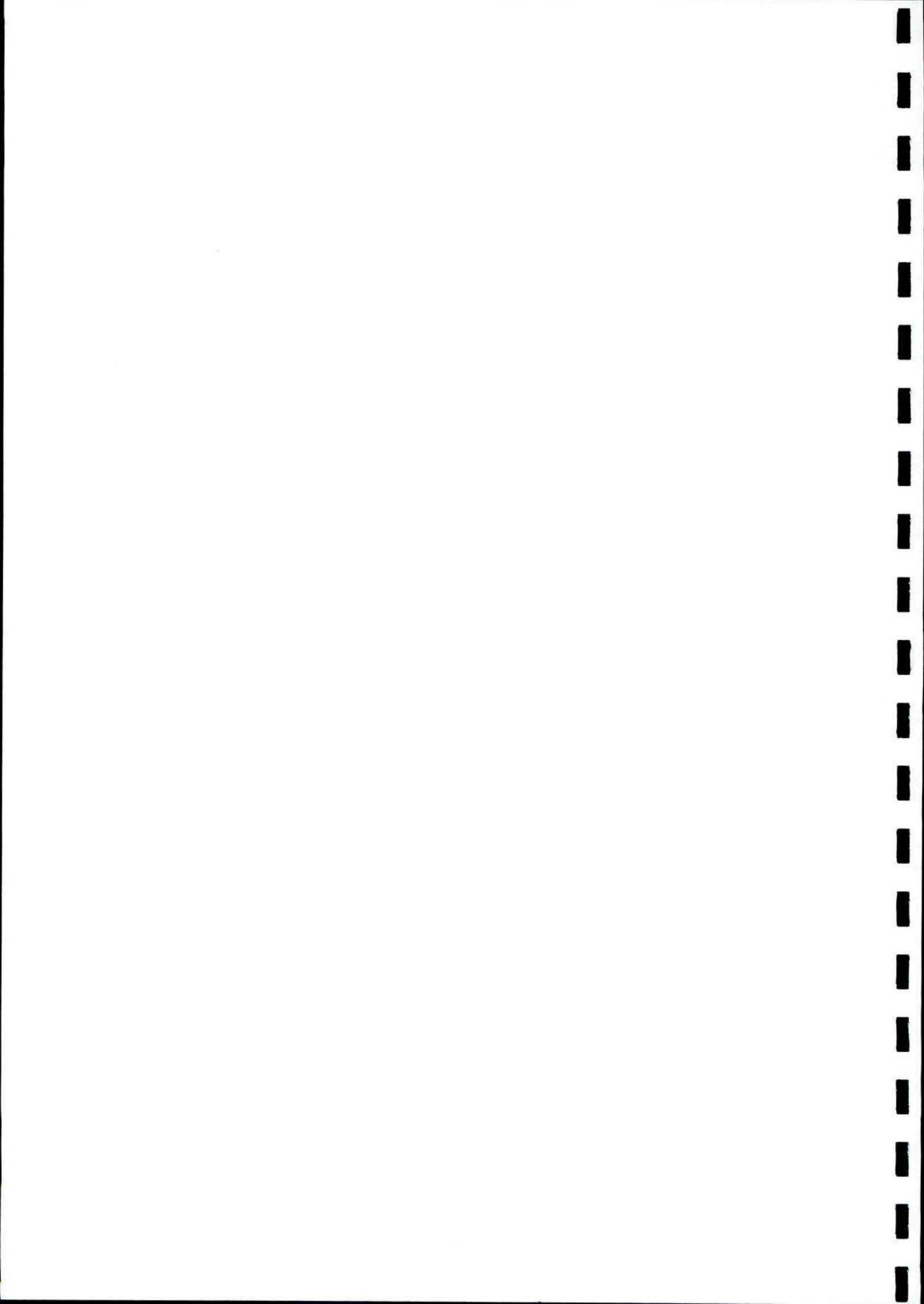
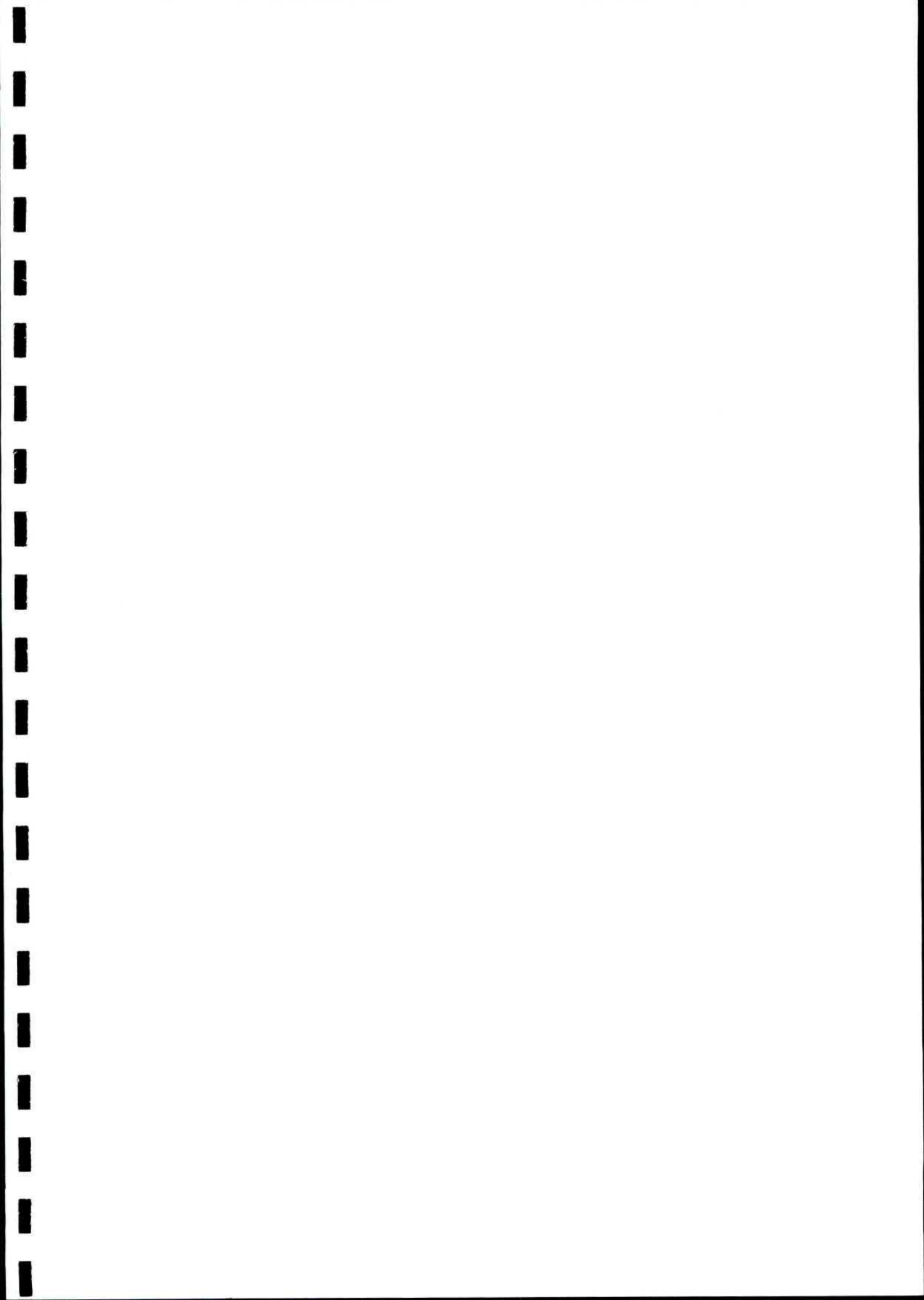


**THEME:**  
Illustrations as Goods  
- the artistic value of illustration  
and conditions on today's book market

International symposium BIB'95

9. September 1995, Bratislava Slovakia





## INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM BIB'95

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and conditions on today's book market

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## Introduction

The volume of Biennale of Illustrations Bratislava 1995 appears in an unusual form. However, it is only a temporary solution. The first part of the volume consists from papers read in Slovak or Czech language at the BIB'95 International Symposium and they were edited. The second part consists from papers read in English or French. These papers are published unedited, i.e., in the form they were submitted by the authors to the organizers of the BIB.

The theme of the BIB '95 International Symposium was *Illustration as Goods - it's artistic value and place in present book market*. This theme ensued from general knowledge of the sad situation on present book market in the sphere of children's books. Only small number of illustrations gets to exhibitions of artistic illustration and to our BIB from the book counters. The papers at the symposium dealt with why it is so and what to do in order to change it. However, it is pleasing to know that there are many excellent artists - illustrators who did not lose all their love for children's books and illustrate them for pleasure of the children and their own pleasure. BIB'95 gave evidence of that and provided floor for dedicated words by illustrators - Polish artist Jozef Wilkoň, French illustrator Frederic Clément, Russian artist Nikolai Popov and Italian illustrator Lorenzo Mattotti. Only one paper - that by Frederic Clément - is published in this volume, because other artists had not prepared their discussion contributions in writing.



The first part of the volume includes papers by PhDr. Blanka Stehlíková, leading Czech fine art theoretician, by Slovak writer Daniel Hevier, Portuguese illustrator M. J. Sottomayor and Russian theoretician and editor Olga Kondakova in Slovak, resp. Czech language.

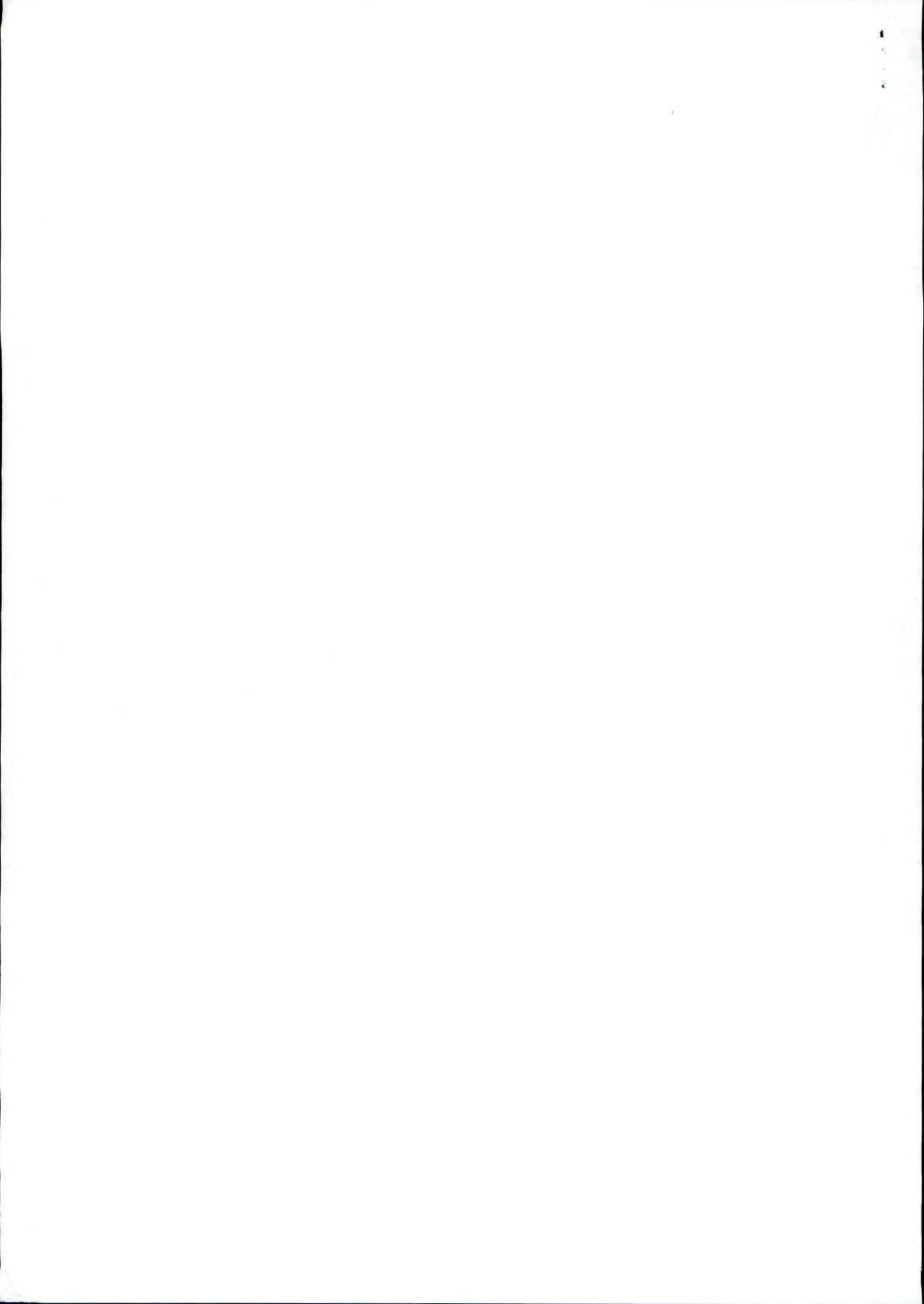
The second part of the volume includes the already mentioned paper by Frederic Clément, the paper by leading Italian fine art expert Carla Poesio, German illustrator Binette Schroeder and Belgian children's book specialist Greet Spaen.

Thirty years ago, we discussed illustration as work of art at the symposium, nowadays we discuss it as commercial article: "One can hardly doubt about the value of artistic education. The one who cultivates the art, cultivates the mankind." (Prof. Klaus Doderer, Germany, at the BIB symposium 1967).

We are glad to have contributed to this cultivation of humanity with our symposium.

In Bratislava on September 20, 1996.

Anna Horváthová, Art historian,  
Scientific secretary of the symposium,  
Volume editor



Frédéric Clément

France

**J'**aimerais poser sur le silence qui précède mon long flot de paroles qui suivra: une phrase de José Luis Borgés que je marque systématiquement en tête de tous mes carnets de notes et d'esquisses:

“J'exerce mon Art avec le sérieux d'un enfant qui joue...”

Ceux qui ont rencontré mon travail se doutent que je ne vais pas parler du mot “marché” auquel je ne comprends absolument rien si ce n'est pour aller chercher des citrons bleus, des souris vertes, des miroirs magiques, des alouettes, non.

Non, je suis tenté de parler d'un mot

qui m'est cher:

c'est le mot cadeau.

Ce mot cadeau qui est la clé de toute ma création. Car au départ, quand me vient l'envie, l'idée d'un livre ou même d'une seule image.

Je sais que c'est pour l'offrir... toujours -

J'offre à une maie, à mon amour,

J'offre à ma petite fille (mon prochain livre est pour elle...)

J'offre à une passante, à un promeneur, à un petit garçon traîneur de trains à roulettes,

à un lécheur de vitrine, à un rempailleur de chaises ou encore j'offre à un rat de bibliothèque.

Je glisse en douse sur papier glacé ou papier velouté tout - tout ce que j'ai dans la tête, tout ce que j'ai reçu de l'amie, de l'amour, de ma petite fille, de la passante, du petit garçon traîneur de trains, du lécheur de vitrine

du rempailleur de chaises ou du rat bibliothèque.

Je donne ou plutôt:











Daniel Hevier

Slovakia

## ALICE IN THE SUPERMARKET

(A CONTRIBUTION TO THE THEME ILLUSTRATIONS AS GOODS)

I don't know whether my professional background (a graduate of university study on esthetics, editor, editor in chief, owner of the publishing house, author, parent and book addict) is sufficient for this forum. If not, please be so kind to accept my several notes as opinion of a man who struggles voluntarily and with pleasure with the present symposium topic „Illustration as goods“ for more than 25 years.

I understand the present symposium topic as purely theoretical, purposeful and abstracting as an illustration, respectively a book illustration and even more detailed a book illustration for children and youth, is only one layer of which a book is composed. As it is known, other ones are text, graphic design, cover, format, paper type and its weight, size of letters, literary, genre but also not defined, and sometimes irrational elements such as author's name, country of origin, reputation of the publishing house and other factors.

However, I have seen too many publishers' negotiations, I had to decide too many times whether I like this or that book, whether to buy it to myself or my children, whether a concrete illustrator meets my author's or publisher's taste to know that the illustration in a children's book is still on the first place.

A picture, in the childhood of our mankind, equally as in the childhood of each of us, was present in an immensely intensive way. And today we live in time, which I am under temptation to call sometimes as a surface visuality period. The visuality replacing shapes, lines and colours for artificial ones. The advertisement, fashion, industrial design, mass culture, TV, video, computer area, sport, motoring – these are external phenomena of the artifi-





Today, the present illustration generally may become (at existing technical, typographic, communication possibilities) a magnet, attracting a childishly educated illiterate to a book, returning a place to the book, belonging to in the mankind history as it had up to now.

Of course, it may happen under conditions that the illustration will subject to a general phenomenon I called a surface visuality. For instance, if it accepts computerisation offers only on a strict selective basis, that it will be able to re-interpret incentives from advertisement, industrial design, entertainment industry, that it will simply create – I repeat it again – an intimate space for a personality of a child.

It may seem to be a paradox and surprise that this intimate space need not be always created by artistic, professionally done illustrator's phenomena we know from BIB exhibits and production of five to six publishing houses in the world. However, it cannot be created by a decadent, industrial production of illustration of Disney type either, when the original painter's handwriting is split in hands on hundreds of anonymous illustrators – craftsmen. Neither it can be created by a computer graphic technology itself.

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry was, frankly speaking, a third class painter but his illustrations to Little Prince are already not considered as author's eccentricity and book curiosity.

I mentioned this extra example to emphasise the above problem even more. The book illustration area for children and youth is a territory where not everybody may build up his tent. An excellent painter, precise graphic artist, excellent designer, perfect photographer, skilled draughtsman can be absolutely unusable for this area if he misses the capability and readiness to create a visual intimacy.

At the moment I started to write my contribution, RAGTIME radio broadcast a listener's program in which adult people but still young listeners discussed the topic Fairy Tales with the moderator. Several times, the following opinion was heard: when I was child, I did not like Andersen's fairy tales. Why? Asked the moderator. And the answer was: I was afraid of illustrations.









sic, and maybe children's book illustration, where the ballet-master, musician and artist, because of high difficulty of censoring of their creative work, could work in the official, rather than „underground“, sphere and, at same time, could remain honest. To be honest and enjoy the benefits, including material benefits as well, is the natural aspiration of each sincere artist. The Pushkin's assassin that the artist „cannot sell his inspiration but he may sell his manuscript „is transcribed in the XX-th century into“ the artist cannot sell his inspiration, but he must sell his manuscript!“. In the totalitarian period the state itself „bought the manuscript“ from children's book writers and illustrator, which was the reason why so many professionals have found here the refuge.

But, we will try now to clear out the economic reasons of a high artistic level of the Soviet book illustration. There reasons are as follows:

1. The Soviet power liked children „Children are the only privileged class in our country“, it repeated, and made two practical conclusions out of this demagogic slogan: it has established the indisputable principle of financing children's books from budget subsidies as has maximally centralised the process of their development and production. The giant publishers „Detskaya literatura“ (Children's literature) with its annual planned output of 600 million copies of 528 names of books, the considerably smaller-scale publishers „Malysh“, the Leningrad branch of the „Detskaya literatura“ publishers and a few nonspecialized publishers were the only publishers entitled to produce books for children.
2. The amounts of royalties paid to the illustrators by all these publishers were strictly regulated by the state document named „Rates of royalties“.

The relatively high royalties played highly positive role in raising the quality of the Russian book illustration. This assertion needs the explanation.

On the one hand, the economic position of Russian artists in the totalitarian period was very poor, but, on the other hand, it was relatively high. It was poor because the market of works of art did not exist in Russia at all. Private persons did not buy pa-







salary of workers of other professions. Maybe this is the reason why many children's books in Western countries are illustrated either in haste or by not highly professional artists.

3. Another reason accounting for a high quality of the Russian book illustration arises from the same very principle of super-centralized power, so characteristic for the Soviet system as a whole. The production activity in this system was planned and did not obey the laws of economics. Therefore, the work of publisher was almost unaffected by the economic efficiency realised produce'. The problems of financing of publishing of books, their commercial expediency, selling, production costs, selling prices and quality of printing were no concern of the director, the chief editor and the chief illustrator. The chief illustrator did not walk on the ground, but „soared up in the sky of pure art“. Having almost absolute authority, he or she was responsible only for ideology, a little bit for artistic quality and for nothing else.

Was it good or bad?. It was good when in the 1930s V. Lebedev, one of the highest-calibre Russian vanguard artists, became the chief illustrator of the Leningrad division of the „Detskaya Literatura“ publishers (he occupied the post of a consultant). Having allowed the group of such brilliant artists as V. Honashevich, D. Mitrokhin, N. Tyrsu, E. Charushin, V. Kurdov, Yu. Vasnetsov to rally round him, and having combined into a single flow of inspiratory creation the work of these artists and the work of such talented writers and poets as S. Marshak, K. Chukovsky, D. Kharms, A. Vvedensky, Ye. Shavarts, B. Zhitkov and others, Lebedev has created the school of children's book illustration of the Soviet period, the school of such inertial power that even today it continues to influence the work of the Russian book illustrators.

It should be remembered that this school was created at the time when poets and writers could not fall asleep at nights. And their insomnia was not caused by their inspiration. They were waiting for the „black Maria“ to carry them away from their homes to tortures and executions. And the life of the children for whom these artists and writers wrote and illustrated books was still more wretched. It was the time when on April 7, 1935 on the initiative of I. Stalin, „the best friend of children“, the Central Executive Committee and

the Council of People's Commissars adopted the Decree on criminal responsibility of children „of 12 years of age and older“. After executions of their fathers, the homeless children often turned against their will into thieves, were put behind bars and often shot. During the Great Patriotic War, children who came 15 min late at their workplace or who picked up even one potato on a collective farm field were sentenced to 10 years of imprisonment. Only Russians know what kind of a prison the Russian prison is and only one man Franz Kafka - was able to paint it in his imagination. And when I think about the situation in which those artist - our predecessors - painted their fine illustrations, I know that the human being possesses such inspiration and purity that can survive, even in the nightmarish situations. I begin to think that we have not lost the love of the God.

Gut this period was the 1930s, the period when the tidal wave of the Russian contemplative vanguardism had not yet ebbed away. But it was replaced by thoroughly new phenomena and thoroughly new people.

Now, I can list the names of the chief illustrators of the later period whose activity may also be interpreted as a unique phenomenon, if only in terms of the time period during which they occupied this post (in one occasion it lasted for 40 years) and the scope of their administrative authority, which was so vast that the creative work and, sometimes the life of many writers and artists, were dependent on their whims. And, just as in all other spheres in this country, this authority was absolutely boundless and immune from responsibility. However, such boundless authority was granted not only to chief illustrators. In the USSR, there was such a nomenclature-level post, absolutely incomprehensible for Western people, as the post of the Chief Artist of the USSR State Committee of Printing Matters. This man was essentially a supervisor over all the book illustrations for 1/6 part of the Earth's land. It is paradoxically that during nearly 20 years this post was occupied by the man who was neither an artist nor even a professional in this sphere. There were also the spheres of concentration of this authority - the semi-public formations composed of the artists having a sort of the state certificate for immortality. However, the not so much possessed such authority as strived to possess it, for it gave fantastic advantages to the bearers for such certificate.



Summarizing the aforesaid I contend that, just as in all other spheres of the national economy of the USSR, the sphere of children's book illustration had its own institute of the boundless authority immune to economic responsibility. Functioning of this institute complicated extremely the normal creative life of artists. Many of them, particularly young artists, could not adapt themselves to this situation, and, feeling that their talent would remain unrealised, became drunkards in line with the Russian tradition, or even committed suicide. But, on the other hand, this institute yielded also much benefits. Ignoring of economic laws and complete indifference to profits from the publishing activity made it possible in many cases to bring up young promising artists, publish the book whose illustrations, though dislike by the public at large, were the real works of art, and avoid the sugariness and primitivization of the Soviet children's book illustrations.

And, finally, the last aspect of the problem of the book illustration as a commodity concerns the state price-formation policy in the sphere of the children's book. The strict Regulations on price formation that existed in the USSR could not be violated under any circumstances. The ultimate aim of these Regulations was to allow every worker to buy his or her children any books and in any number. In 1988 a coloured small-format book cost 5 kopeks and a large-format book with more than ten illustrations - from 1 to 2.30 roubles. The minimum worker's wage of 80 roubles was enough to buy 1600 small-size books or about 50 large-format books, i.e. enough to buy a small library. An average salary of high-paid people in 450 roubles was sufficient to buy 9000 small-format and about 400 large-format books - it was the volume of a medium-size library.

But in reality, far from everything was so nice as was written in the Regulations. First, a considerable part of books could not be sold even despite their very low price. These books told children the stories about the „grandfather Lenin“, about pioneer Pavlik Morozov who betrayed his father and about the „dear Party“. All those books were, in fact, a waste paper.

Secondly, books for children were published in too many copies by Western standards. The small-format books - by the millions,













But there were not only „losses“, but „profits“ as well. First, the books for children have become much larger in number, they are no longer short-of-supply goods. Secondly the illustrators have lost the sense of fear. This fear - the feeling common for all Soviet people - was aggravated in the book illustrator by the fear of his colleague who had become his supervisor.

Now, the illustrator who knows that he or she is capable of making good illustrations fears nobody. He or she does no offer any longer his or her services to publishers, but publishers request his or her services. As for supervisors, or merited or people's artists, the posts or ranks mean now almost nothing for the reader at large and, hence, for the illustrator as well. And this is one of the most positive factors of the collapse of the institute of centralised authority of one artist over another established by the system of the „winning“, „developed“, „stagnant“ socialism.

I have considered the problem of „illustration as a commodity“ in the retrospective aspect and in the aspect of the present-day book publishing. Now, I will try to make the forecasts, which, to my opinion, may be both pessimistic and optimistic.

The optimistic forecast: In a few years children's books will no longer be scarce products. There will no longer be superprofits, and the period of „catch and run“ will come to its end. They will be replaced by fierce, but fair, competition destined to transform our national economy as a whole, provided, certainly, that the country will manage to come out of the political and economic crisis. In such situation, only those publishers will manage to revive which publish competitive books, i.e. finely-illustrated and printed and, I would say, „intelligent“ books. The Role of the illustrator will grow still higher and the new publishers will, at last, learn that they will not be able to survive without the professional artistic editor, who is indispensable for long-term development of book publishing.

The second optimistic forecast is that if the new more natural and more reasonable economic laws establish themselves in Russia, the royalties of book illustrators will undoubtedly rise and book illustrators will no longer have to immigrate or work under contracts with foreign publishers or change their artistic genre. Maybe some of them even return home.



The third optimistic forecast: the state-sector publishers, which will be compelled in fierce competitive struggle to rely on their own power alone, will carry out the radical, rather than cosmetic, restructuring of their activity.

At last, the fourth optimistic forecast: the price on books is unlikely to rise so high and the dollar is unlikely to fall so low that it would be more profitable to import books than to produce them in Russia. I.e. the book will remain that only kind of commodity in Russia which is not imported and which is affordable not only for traders but for workers as well.

And which may be the forecast of a pessimist who, as people said in the stagnant times, is also an optimist, but only well informed.

If the Russian economy fails to perform radical restructuring, the process of decomposition of the Russian statehood will run amock. Russia will be self-destroyed together with its people. Though, the history knows such cataclysms, nonetheless even on the historical scale it will be a tragedy, because what will die together with the people is the most compassionate art of the XIX-th century and the most utopic art of the XX-th century. In this tremendous archipelago of the art, there is the small fragrant island that I love just as I love my motherland, my home and my family. This island is the very singular school of the Russian children's book illustration. And if it happens, just as is forecast by pessimists, then the best representatives of this school will either immigrate or become extinct or go into other genres of the art. The school itself will die. And when I think about this possible fate of this school, I imagine myself saying it the words with which N. Oleynikov, the talented poet-absurdist, who wrote both for children and adults, applied to the small fish being fried on the pan. In those grim times, for the poet this fish was probably the symbol of all life creatures that were dying not their natural death. For me, this fish symbolises my beloved, bright, multifaceted and vigorous school of the Russian children's book illustration:

Oh, my small carp-fish being fried on the pan,

Where is your yesterday's smile?



Lubomír Krátky

Slovakia

## SOME NOTES ON BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

**I**n a constantly growing number of books issued for children, books having a well cultivated graphic design are always in the minority. This situation is not caused only by the level of illustration itself. However, the lack of art is seen at a children's book in the most significant way.

The illustration does not use to be a primary component of the book. It's part of the book unit in which individual elements complete each other mutually. The graphic design and illustration should act in a book as instruments of a good orchestra. An unadequate organisation of the text, inappropriate choice of letters and badly done typography, and the effect of the best illustration may be damaged. We would also find examples of it at BIB exhibits, frequently already on book jackets. A wide team of experts has its share in the illustrated children's book and their close co-operation has to be organised by somebody.

Therefore, I consider a non professional approach of the publisher's sphere for a primary originator of a bad quality children's book. These are people who should co-ordinate and inspire a team of experts to their outcomes. However, their ideas about a book are uncertain and especially without any respect of art design. The publishers themselves do not usually involve necessary experts - managers. Maybe they do not realise how important and difficult the visual book component is. In such a complex unit as a children's book usually is, this amateur approach is clearly visible.

In our post communist countries, in a free entrepreneurial sphere, man cheap imported books appeared with cartoon pictures. We cannot accuse the artist of these publications monstrosity, as he



prepared his drawings for animation possibilities but a man, who reproduces these pictures in a book in a static form. Here, a misunderstanding of specific features of a book illustration and emotionlessness to a book appear. The other side of it is that the market being flooded by this ballast, does not provide any space for a real illustration creation. It is notably a social side of the matter but to make possible to an illustrator to grow and grow up, he has to be given opportunities and it is not enough to get them in a occasional and sporadic way.

I had the opportunity to take part in several workshops for illustrators from so called developing countries. Though they frequently came from countries with a rich art tradition, their developmental level in the illustrated book area consisted in the insufficient book awareness of publishers and editors, who should know how to navigate an artist at making illustrations. Parallel to illustration making, participants had an opportunity to get acquainted with the basic book typography what was highly appreciated by them by the way. I leave on consideration of this event organisers whether to organise such workshops also in the future.

In Slovakia we had a well functioning publishing house for children's books Mladé letá. It was established in hard times of the communist ideology and beside good books, it issued also a lot of bad books but within it, a graphic design department arose and its editors' work consisted especially in managerial activities. They searched for and professionally assisted to part time illustrators. They submitted exact requirements on extent, type, number and economic consumption of illustrations to them. They tried to visualise illustrator's nature and orientation. They supervised the book graphic design or invited to co-operation a graphic designer. They followed and protected illustrator's interests in the production process. They were able to change flexibly original ideas about a book, if illustrator's imagination required it. They significantly contributed to a high artistic value of children's books because their approach was professional.

Some years ago, at reducing the number of workers, the management of the publishing house was of such an opinion that it's possible cancel this department as the first of all. Today, this publis-







Carla Poesio

Italy

## THE BOOK COVER: A MEETING POINT BETWEEN ART AND ADVERTISING COMMUNICATION

**T**oday no one objects anymore when the book, and especially the illustrated book, are considered as goods.

From this standpoint the book is subjected to the laws of marketing; must combine together art and commercial profit, must keep the competition with TV and other media, cleverly exploiting the resources of the image.

Its existence relies on meeting the audience's requirements and conquering the audience itself.

It is goods even when compared to other goods and their technique of distribution. We can verify it as far as the actual selling strategies are concerned, i.e. new ways and places of selling, like supermarkets, newsagents and fairs.

To clarify this picture let us take into account a component of the book - such as the bookcover which is provide with a double function: the commercial and the artistic, tightly connected.

Like the disk jacket (and, why not? Like a chocolate box) the cover is the containing exalting its content.

It is the touchstone for both: the graphic designer and the illustrator (and sometime the two rôles coincide in the same person). But it is mostly a famed graphic who is in charge of dealing with the creation of a new format and of a distinctive design which, in turn must reveal the style, the mark and the cultural aims of the publisher.





graphic setting of the series: the type of format, the grid, the font, the lettering a.s.o.

His aim is to differentiate the new series from an other series already existing on the market. The series, in fact, must be immediately identifiable among many others.

This research of DIFFERENTIATION shall be expressed in a particular device which shall remain the same in the whole series.

Yet the illustrator must struggle in order to tune his need for being new and original in every book cover to the recurring graphic device, mentioned above - which can be seen as a constant created by the designer.

## SOME EXAMPLES

Now I'll show some examples of Italian book covers within the context of their bookseries.

I have chosen book covers of pocket books or of rather cheap series, to show how the artists solved the problem of assigning to the covers an advertising and informative connotation on one hand - as required by the exigency „books as goods“ - and an aesthetic and interpretative value on the other.

Emanuele Luzzati's artistic invention is originally submitted to the graphic setting created by the designer Claudio Saba for the serie „La freccia azzura“ by Editori Riuniti publishing house: a definite space cleared than the blue background (and also viceversa). Luzzati treats this space as a door, letting his figures go out of the frame. Like actors on stage his characters come in and go out of such door, and start, like that the action which is narrated in the book.

We see it clearly in the slide with Ali Baba where one of the forty thieves is peeping behind the supposed door.

The same applies to the parade opened by Pulcinella's wife in Punch and the golden fish, a revision of the old fairy tale of the poor fisherman with greedy wife. The pagentry involves also the final page of the cover.

Also Grazia Nidasio in the series „Volta pagina“ (Turn the page) of Emme Edizioni publishing house adopts a similar formula. She depicts the characters as they were moving sideways towards the edge of the cover (title of the book: A trap in your mouth by Michel ucet). The same happens in the following slide (title of the book: Veronica by A Nanclti) where the characters „attack“ the events which are narrated in the pages inside.

## THE APPEAL OF THE COMPOSITION

Another orientation is the one of selecting some characters AND some objects that refer more than other ones to the plot and arranging them in a composition exiting at the utmost the reader's interest and curiosity. To underline this artistic aggression.

I quote here the words of a series director: „ I choose book covers which look the reader's eyes“

This procedure implies a previous, well meditated work of weighting, of the evaluating the fundamentals of the narration.

For instance: in the rich series of the publisher PIEMME, called „The steam boat“, the graphic device implies essentially a background where the white space of the grid has a primary rôle. Almost every illustrator of the series exploits in his own way such „island of white“.

Let us see Emilio Uberuaga's work for the book The with of the mountain by Gloria Diaz where the heroine is a quite modern witch with her favourite hobby of flying dangerously: an activity which has been very impressive for the illustrator. His book cover in fact focuses on the dizziness of the flight (almost a plane-dive). The witche's body is in an anomalous position, visually transformed in a hideogramm or in an emblematic hieroglyph, midway between hour an surreality.

Also Chiara Carrer (the winner of Caralonia Prize 1993) has chosen a humorous book cover for the book The monster' house. Here the theme of horror fades in a visually suggested question:

„is IT really there or does IT simply seem to be?“

In fact the monster ins only a shadow, a terrifying one, indeed but not enough to frighten the baby hero who advances fearlessly.



Also Carmen Solč Vendrell in her bookcover for *The mystery of the haunted house* by David Adler, PIENNE publisher, chooses horror as a main theme. She creates a shadowy almost indistinct figure in order to suggest the sense of gloomy theatregoing. Moreover, she accentuates it by unifying with the same phosphorescent yellow colour three key point: the monster's eyes, the hero's shirt and the background which defines the outside of the dangerous room, which is thus isolated with its frightening content.

Nicoletta Costa for the book cover of *the castle's ghost* by Mira Lobe, PIENNES publisher, represents the hero of the plot: a ghost. She points out the innocuousness of this peaceful ghost, who is very prone to sleep, and for such liking, haunts especially bedrooms (which look so abundant in the composition).

Harmlessness and peacefulness are expressed through the insistent roundness of the forms and the unlikely red cheeks of the hero.

## THE HERO

The illustrator quite often chooses to represent in the book cover the hero alone or with a second level character. He tries sometime to confer some peculiar traits on him (her) or them in order to allow the observer to foresee or to guess the observer other special features of such character and to make him, layer, at the same time, to find his expectations being realised in the inner pages.

Aun BALZOLA follows such orientation creating the bookcover of *Histories of Franz* by Christine Nöstlinger, PIEMME Publisher. In the plot the hero is described as an introverse boy, quite hyper sensitive, with a lot of difficulties in his attempts to integrate himself with the others. Obviously these are psychological connotations and it is not easy to express them visually. Asun Balzola fulfils the task by representing the boy in an unusual position: upside down (and quite at ease in it!). The form is reduced to the essentially but is full of expressiveness. This illustration is an example not only of an intelligent interpretation of a text but also of a great strength of communication which exploits very well the „Island of white“ mentioned above which the designer previewed as a device for the whole series.











Binette Shoroeder

Germany

„REASONS FOR CHILDREN'S  
PICTURE BOOKS BEING  
AN INTERNATIONAL  
SUCCESS - OR THE OPPOSITE“  
REFLECTIONS ON COPRODUCTION

**F**irst of all I would like to thank you very much for your kind invitation. It always has been a great pleasure for me to come to beautiful Bratislava

Before going into the matter I would like to point out that in this lecture I will concentrate on childrens picture books of a HIGH ARTISTIC and/or VERY INTERESTING QUALITY.

There are so many brilliant illustrators in the world. In this lecture I only can show some examples from my collection - please forgive me if I miss one of your favourites.

I. My MAIN CONCERN

In school we all haven been well educated in writing and reading, but the visual education was very superficial. Our school systems ignores its importance more and more - at least in Germany. A fact which is depressing, especially in these times, where the modern medias, like TV, video, computergames etc. Are overflowing the life of our children.

For me children's picturebook illustrations belong to the most important materials there are to teach „looking“, to gradually introduce children to visual qualities to CULTURE.





I would like to speak to you about these 30 years, but not without looking back for some moments into publishing habits of the last century.

(I mainly speak about the German situation, but I think it was more or less a bit the same everywhere.)

## PUBLISHING IN THE 19TH CENTURY

It is not uninteresting that already in the 19th century you could find mass market books of very low quality which were sold not by the piece but by the kilo or ton. The Löwnsohn Verlag, a kind of forerunner of coproduction, printed mass market books terribly bad taste in many languages and exported then in a great range above all to England, but also Scandinavia and other European countries. Books of high quality like those of Kate Greenaway never reached an equal print run. You see, things haven't changed too much.

Publishing on base of licence has been done since a long time but selling a licence means, that you have to produce and publish the book first. Only then you look for a licence partner, who is prepared to join into the second edition or to buy the films.

## A NEW ERA OF BOOK PUBLISHING

We all know that it is extremely expensive to produce a picture-book. A small publishing house with a small budget in a small country with a small bookmarket couldn't afford the cost of ambitious bookprojects. This was the moment for COPRODUCTION, a magic word in the world of books since.

Around 1961 two publishing houses from Switzerland had the same idea: to do coproductions instead of licences. BETTINA HÜRLIMANN from Atlantis Verlag, a wellknown and rich publishing house with childrens picturebook department since 1930.

And DIMITRI SIDJANSKI from Nord-Süd-Verlag. He was daring newcomer, an outsider with no money but with revolutionary ideas and lots of idealism.

It never was clear weather it was Bettina Hürlimann or Dimitri Sidjanski who did the first coproduction. At least Dimitri Sidjanski



was the one who would not have been able to afford a single book without coproduction - he simply didn't have the money to do so.

Both publishing houses created a phascinating variety of books. The books of Bettina Hürlimann were highly artistic, but more in a traditional way. Those of Nord-Süd were artistic and avantgardistic without being sophisticated.

Very soon other publishers realised how clever the idea of coproduction was - and that there was a lot of money to make. New children's picturebook publishing houses popped up everywhere and they all joined into the coproduction party. Some of them specialised in creating the books, others in buying them. In the end of sixties it were Harlin Quist (USA) and François Ruy Vidal (France) who kreatur a new kind of very well designed sophisticated, avantgardistic and sometimes shocking picture books. They definitely have changed the world of children's picturebooks.

The art of illustration had turned from a regional level to an international one. It was thrilling to watch foreign illustrators entering the german market. International standards brought in new impulses and challenges. Illustrators from countries all over the world showed us new ways how to transport delicate and difficult problems into childrens picturebooks, taboo topics like fear, aggression, violence, war, death etc.

And it was a overwhelming moment when one day english humour and nonsense walked into german bookstores, childrens rooms and kindergardens!

A new era had started, a kind of gloden age of illustration, which lasted for about 20 years. (It is significant, that on the other hand the tradition of illustration for adult books went way down.)

I myself am indepted to coproductions for my greatest success - artistic as well as financial. I was a lucky girl to meet Dimitri Sidjansk at the Frankfurt Bookfair in 1969. With North-South Books I was introduced into the international bookmarket, happily enjoying „the golden age of illustration“. But I must say that in the first 20 years I have been much more successful in foreign countries than in my own country Germany. (Only about 6 years ago I started a kind of german career with „The Frogprince“. 1A The german picturebook lobby and the journalists sort of „discovered“ me... after all that time!)





#### IV. WHAT IS IT THAT MAKES A CHILDREN'S PICTUREBOOK AN INTERNATIONAL SUCCESS - OR THE OPPOSITE?

Before we go into this matter, I would like to show you some of the very great illustrators of the past, some classics which still have a big influence on childrensbook illustration of our days.

In SCANDINAVIA Elsa Beskow's 1 „Hänschen im Blaubeerwald“ became a real classic. A classic of our time is Tove Jansson 3.

In FRANCE the charming pictures of Bouté de Monvel 5 have left their traces and so have those of Edmond Dulac 6. A modern classic is Jean de Brunoff's 7 „Barbar“.

The RUSSIAN classic is Bilibin 8. B. Lebedev 9 stays for the russian avantgarde in childrens picturebooks.

ENGLAND has given us Kate Greenaway 10 and Arthur Rackham 11.

And the UNITED STATES join in with „Little Nemo“ by Windsor McCay 13, with Walt Disney... and with Maurice Sendak 14.

You will find their enriching influence a bit everywhere in the world of modern childrensbook illustration. They still are a kind of solid base to all what happens today in the field of childrens picturebooks.

But now let us go into analysing picturebooks and lets start with the succesful ones:

#### ANALYSE 1

#### SUCCESSFUL SUBJECTS FOR STORIES

- stories about little animals, like mice, rabbits, squirrels, little piglets and at the moment especially about little bears.

Earnest E. Schepard „Winnie the Pooh“ - thats the one who started it all! GB. I don't show him - you all know him!

15 Maurice Sendak „Little Bear“ USA





35 Lucy Cousins „Maisy goes swimming“ GB

Exception: Loustal „Dune“ 35A, 35B, a french comic star. His style is too sophisticated to be a success on the international children's book market.

- historicising styles, reminding of other centuries or of illustrations done by p.ex. Arthur Rackham, Bouté de Monvel, Kate Greenaway etc.

36 Jindra Capek „Der Hahn im Korb“ (illuminations 15 AD)

37-38 Genadi Spirin „Rapunzel“, „Die Nase“ (historicism, russian painting of the last century) Russia

40 Lisbeth Zwerger „Die sieben Raben“ (Rackham) Austria

41 Kaarina Kaila „Däumelinchen“ (Rackham, Beskow etc) FL

42 Stomi Ichikawa (Bouté de Monvel) J

45-46 Michael Sowa „Esterhayz“ (romanticism) D

47-48 Vladimir Radunsky „The Pub grew up“, „Hail to Mail“, USA/Russia, (russian avantgarde, Lebedev)

At this point I would like to show you some very successful illustrators, whose work have got two different sides. One side is perfectly adapted to the demands of coproduction, the other one is not.

The first one is HELEN OXENBURY 49-53. I adore her work, her english humour. You may remember her early style: funny, wicked, grotesque. She was rather successful with these illustrations.

But her real career started when she began to work for Sebastian Walker of Walker Books. She did a serie of little board books for him which became worldwide success. Her illustrations were still funny, but not grotesque. Her heroes, especially little children, were of a new loveable quality. Perhaps this had to do with the fact that she had a new baby or her own at that time.

Her illustrations from that time on were very different. They became more "normal". Her drawing were no more wicked, still very funny, but very close to nature and she began to use watercolour in a classic and very professional way. She has lost the „bite“ of her early work, she now is „digestible“ in the best meaning of the word. And her books sell like hot cakes!

Nixt is MITSUMASA ANNO 54-56, internationally the most wellknown japanese illustrator. He has made a lot of unforgettable books which have been published all over the world. Some people might not even realise that he is japanese. But ANNO has created also some very japanese books.

KAZUO IWAMURA 57-60 became very famous with his books about mice and squirrels. Some years ago I discovered a book, which was very different and which will never be published outside of Japan. „In the last train“.

JOZEF WILKON 61-66 is another example. I am sure most of you know his work the famous baby lion books, etc etc. But there is quite another side to his work, a side of high artistic quality - a very polish side. These books never were published outside Poland

This seems a good transition to our next chapter, to the books which in their own country might even be quite successful, but which have little or no chance in field of International Coproduction.

## ANALYSE 2:

### BRILLANT BOOKS - BUT TOO DIFFICULT

#### SUBJECTS TO BE SUCCESSFUL

- stories about political, social problems (always with exceptions!)

67 Jörg Müller „Der Aufstand der Tiere“ (new medias)

68 Peter Schimmel „Die Lisa, ein Leben“ (u.o. about Nazi time)

69 Carme Sole Vendrel „Les enfants de la mer“ (children in Brazil)

Exceptions: Roberto Innocenti 69A „Rosa Weiß“ I (concentration camp)

70 Wenche Oyen „Abschied von Rune“ N (death)

#### FABULOUS BOOKS IN UNSUCCESSFUL TECHNIQUES

- black and white illustrations



- 71 Chris van Allsburg „Jumanji“ USA  
72 Arthur Geisert „Oink“ USA  
73 Gennadi Kalinovsky „Alice“ GUS  
74 Keitsaburo Tejima J  
75 Katrin Mensing „Bruno ist brummig“  
- illustrations done in oil colour or other „heavy“ colours  
74A Antoon Kring „Olaf et Marjorie“ (École)  
76AA Nicole Claveloux  
- illustrations done with collages  
76C Sara „Dans la Guele du Loup“ (Épigones)  
76E Binette Schroeder „Lelebum“  
76G „Zebby“

## WONDERFUL BOOKS IN UNSUCCESSFUL STYLES

- illustrations of a special regional touch and-or ethnic character  
78 Tatjana Mawrina GUS  
80 Swetosar Ostrow Gpopular prints, the Luboks  
82 Suekichi Akaba „The rats sumo“ J  
83 Toshio Kajiyama „The wind festival“ J  
84 Yasuo Segawa „Gloh“ J  
85 Yasuo Segawa „The battle of the Monkey and the crabs“ J  
86,87 Takaaki Nomura „Grandpa's Town“ J  
89 Raymond Meeks „Pheasant and Kingfisher“ Australia

## ARTISTIC BOOKS í la KLEE, KANDINSKY, MATISSE ETC ARE BOUND TO BE UNSUCCESSFUL

- 99 Mireille Vautier „Une lle dans ma beignoire“ F (Matisse)  
90 Woodleigh Hubbard „C is for curios“ USA (Klee, Kandin-

sky)

91 Lane Smith „Big Pets“ USA (Klee, Kandinsky)

92 Kristiina Louhi FL (Klee)

94 Antoni Boratynski P (Klee)

96 Kunio Sato J (German expressionism)

100 Nikolaus Heindelbach D „Der Ball oder ein Nachmittag mit Berti“ (German expressionism, Georges Grosz, Otto Dix)

101 Keiji Ito/Yorouyu Ikuta „Klin Klan“ (Surrealismus) J

102 Yuji Kobajashi (Max Ernst) J

103 Chris van Allsburg „The Stranger“ (Edward Hopper) USA

## STUNNING BOOKS WHICH ARE TOO SOPHISTICATED, TOO EXCENTRIC, TOO ABSTRACT ETC.

Scandinavia: (Although Norway has only 4 millions inhabitants, you find a lot of most interesting and avantgardistic books. This is only possible, because the publishinghouses are subsidised by the Norwegian government.)

105, 107 Fam Ekman N

109 Ibn Sandemose N

112 Saara Tikka F

- Exception: 112A Anna Höglund S. Her excentric illustrations are very popular in Germany and very much loved by children and adults as well

France: (In France the level of quality has never really gone down. In the last years some publishing houses like p.ex. Epigone, Grandir, Editions du Rouerge, Syros but also Seuil Jeunesse, École des Loisirs, Pastel, Le Sourire qui mort etc. Produced a range of most interesting avantgardistic books)

114, 116 Claire Forgeot “Maco des Grands Bois“, „Talhuic“

117 Jean Christian Knaff „Manhattan“

119 Gregoire Solotareff „Lulu“ (published by Moritz Verlat,

a subsidiary company set up in Germany by École des Loisirs. The critics were enthusiastic - but I have not seen a single book in the bookstores I go to)

120,121 Frédéric Rébéna „Qui a tué Minou-Bonbon?“

123, 124, 125 Anne Brouillard „Lesourire du Loup“

Spain:

125 Francisco Melendez „El verdadero inventor del Buque Submarine“

United States:

127, 128 William Joyce „A Day with Wilbur Robinson“

129 David Wiesner „Tuesday“

You will have notice, that England does not appear in the chapter about unsuccessful books. The english picturebook market is in a charming way very traditional - perhaps this is the secret of its big international success. The avantgarde has got very little chance in England.

At this point you may ask, why artist use these unpopular techniques and styles which norrwinded parents don't accept for their children. One reason could be that in our tie bookillustrations for „adult-books“ are out of fashion. If as an illustrator you don't like or if you don't habe the chance to do illustrations for periodicals and other magazines, you are left with children's picturebooks.

As I mentioned already at the beginning, I personally think that these ambitious illustrations are a great chance for the children's visual education and for the improvement in the art of children's book illustration.

Still - we al know that these kind of sophisticated books have no chance on the coproduction market, although these books mostly represent essence of national culture.

## V. EXCEPTIONS

There are some exceptions which do not fit in the theories and patterns mentioned above. The three following artists have collected nearly everything in their work which you think MUST make







142 Egbert Herfurth „Der zerstreute Zauberer“ „Das derdiedasbuch“

143 Klaus Ensikat „Jeder nach seiner Art“

The CZECH and the SLOVAKIAN REPUBLIC always have been shining examples for excellent illustration:

144 Albin Brunovski

145 Ondrej Zimka

146 Frantisek Skala

147 Vaclav Spale

149 Jirji Salamoun

POLAND: a country, famous for its brilliant grafik design

150 Janusz Stanny

151 Robert Knuth

152 Jerzy Czerniawski

154-156 Wieslav Rosocha

LITHVANIA: famous for every different, beautiful books

157 Sigute Valiuviene

158 Marija Ladigaite

159 Leonardas Gutauskas

160 Bronius Leonavicius „Bruknele“

161 Irena Guobiene

162 Gintaras Gesevicius

163 Kestutis Kasparavicius „Münchhausen“ (now published by Schreiber-Esslingen)

and last not least RUSSIA:

164 Genadij Pavlischin „Märchen von Amur“

165 Vera Pavlova

166 Juri Vasenko

167 Alexander Koschkin „Pinocchio“

168 Michail Majofis

169 Sergej Kovalenkov (Now with Schreiber-Esslingen)



170 Boris Diodorow „Nils Holgerson“ (Now with Ipornée, France)

171 Nicolai Popov (Now with Michael Neugebauer Verlag, Austria)

There is an enormous and phascinating artistic potential in the east. The breakdown of the economy, the political insecurity above all in Russia, in Lithvania and in Poland have taken on alarming proportions which endanger also the existence of many illustrators.

The economic situation in the Slovakian and the Czech Republic is much better. These countries have always been famous for their beautiful books. But if today you go to a bookstore you will find very few new book of interesting quality...only some of the „international illustration pie“.

I have hear that many new small publishing houses have been founded in Russia - most of them disappear after a short time. Most of them are bound to fail, because they lack money and know haw. Still, they are a proof that lots of efforts are made, that culture is alive and carries on.

We only can hope, that the high standard of illustration of the east european countries will survive and will stimulate the western market which has become so poor already.

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Belgium

## ILLUSTRATIONS AS A COMMERCIAL ARTICLE

### A STATUS QUESTIONS IN BELGIUM

**D**irector of the National Centre for Children's Literature in Flandes. You can look at illustrations as a commercial article from two different angles.

1. the illustration as a commercial article on its own.
2. The illustration as a commercial article as part of the book for which it has been made.

I have tried to make a survey of the use of illustrations as commercial articles in these two ways in Belgium.

#### ILLUSTRATION ON ITS OWN

Looking at the illustration in this way. You could say that the illustration is in itself the article that is to be sold.

In Belgium, some illustrators sell their original work as a work of art. Some illustrators want to keep all the originals they have. Whether the illustrator can sell his art or not, depends entirely on his celebrity or his connections in the world of art.

Another interesting way of selling the illustrations, is the use of illustrations on all kinds of objects. Here, the illustration is a means to sell something else. And that can be anything from placements to cutlery, garments, beakers,...

In Belgium the situation may be slightly different from other countries.

I have the impression that we buy and sell millions of illustrations every year. But, not one of our illustrators has any benefit from this.

Looking at all the gadgets I could find in my house, carrying illustrations I found masses of objects bearing classical illustrations like Beatrix Potter's Winnie the Pooh, Walt Disney's etc. These can probably be found anywhere in the world. In the northern part of Belgium we do have gadgets carrying illustrations by Dick Bruna and Fiep Westendorp. This might be due to the fact that the fact that the Bruna Books and Annie M. G. Schmidt are very popular in Flanders.

I did not find one object carrying illustrations coming from a genuine Belgian children's book, and I wonder if this is also the case in other countries.

A typical Belgian phenomenon, could be the massive use of illustrations coming from comic albums: Suske en Wiske, Asterix, Jommeke,...

## ILLUSTRATION AS PART OF THE BOOK

An illustration could also be regarded as a commercial article in that sense, that it sells the book it has been made for. I have tried to find out to what extent the illustration is used as a means to sell the book. Therefore I sent a small questionnaire to all publishers of childrens' books in Flanders, focusing on the question: how does an illustration influence the economical aspect of bookpublishing?

The questionnaire was divided in three parts: fiction books, non-fiction books and picture books. The answers were given by the editors of the children's book in the publishing houses.

### Fiction books: 8 respondents

- When choosing the illustrations for a fiction book, all publishers take into account the age of the target group and the content of the book. The majority also takes in account the series the book will be published in. For translations, not one of them takes notice of the original illustrations.



- All respondents say that the cover of a book influences sales figures, they all make use of the cover when they promote the book, all but one say that the general outlook of a book influences sale.

- As far as the inside illustrations are concerned, they only have influence on the individual buyer, the person who has the book in his hand. Inside illustrations are far more important in books for smaller children.

- Half of the respondents make promotion material based on illustrations. These are mostly booklayers, postcards and posters. Sometimes T-shirts are made, calendars, badges.

- Only one publisher makes gadgets carrying illustrations.

- All publishers but one say that illustrations make books expensive, they are a considerable weight on the budget. One publisher says they do not have any influence, but he then adds, that books simply have to have illustrations. To him, illustrations are so necessary that should not be considered an extra cost.

- All respondents but two say that illustrations have no impact on selling foreign rights.

### Non-fiction books: 6 respondents

- When choosing the illustrations for a non-fiction book, all publishers take into account the age of the target group and the content of the book. The majority also takes in account the series the book will be published in. For translations, 4 out of 6 respondents take notice of the original illustrations. In translated non-fiction books most illustrations are taken over.

- All respondents say that the cover of a book influences sales figures, they all make use of the cover when they promote the book. All publishers say that the general outlook of a book influences sale.

- All respondents say that the cover of a book influences sales figures, they all make use of the cover when they promote the book. All publishers say that the general outlook of a book influences sale.









Maria Jose Sottomayor

Portugal

## ILLUSTRATIONS AS GOODS: WHAT IS CURRENT IN PORTUGAL

I have pleased myself on having knowledge that BIB's 95 symposium theme will be „Illustrations as Goods“ and accordingly I had a great will to put in writing some anxieties and doubts that this mater has arisen since I began in children's literature.

BIB is a special space to question and exchange our reflexions why illustrated high quality books which call on our sensibility, bring out new narratives, provoke many ways of interpretation, together with the very text, remain staying in Bookshops's shelves, while editions without any aesthetical value are sold out.

This is an unusual fact, for I have mostly noticed that the child has unbelievable capacity, whenever we give it such opportunity to look calling illustrations, to do several reading of images, because those illustrations feed its curiosity giving opportunity to observe, to reflect, to question itself and to go further.

Unfortunately, however, the books are not bought by the children and the choices are therefore made by adults.

In the majority of portuguese editions, according to my view, there are several reasons which seem still to children's books.

We are born, grow up, are guided through our studies and formed, with barely exceptions, in stereotyped books and schoolbooks.

The innovator aesthetical sense showing in Portugal in books for children and youth from the beginning of Republic (1910) as far as the appearance of dictatorship (1926) disappeared afterwards and, during 50 years, the official art of Salazar's time was the naturalism.

We were ever accustomed to follow the saying that modern art should be considered as aggressive, making a trauma and even unuseful.

Till today, this fact still remains in spite of 24 years living in democracy, beasing in many adults minds, because there is no will to adopts a true cultural politic.

If only a few, mainly publishers, writers, teacher are willing and have capacity, opening and a bigger maneability to accepts other kind of illustrations not being only a mere repetition, ornamental redundancy of the text, it is owing to anothers opportunities of their information.

Reality, however, is quite a different one. The majority of kindergarten teachers and teachers who arrive to teaching are not active people because during their school life they were only asked to be on class, to listen and to sit for examination. To sum up to all that there is a strong competition for the final result marks which reduces any possibility of changing ideas.

This is a vicious cicle - the children formed by adults coming from this scheme, will be, of course, conformed themselves, mere spectators and afraid of everything questioning them.

They are only a few publishing houses, at this moment, wish maintain portuguese original collections where one feels a true wish to show the function of the iconic language and its relationship with the textual language, besides a careful graphic project. I may refer publishing houses in Oporto: Ed. Afrontamento which in spite of the limited number of published titles has, in my point of view, the best workers in Children's an youth's literature, some of them having won prizes, including BIB'89 Golden Apple-"Silka" portraing illustrations by Manuela Bacelar and some other books translated in foreing languages; Ed. Asa the first publishing house wich opered up a portuguese authors, high level collection; and Porto Editora.

In Lisbon, Ed. Quetzal and finally some editions of Ed. Caminho have had our writers texts illustrated by portuguese painters.

I publishing houses, in first place, do not risk to offer other proposals to children, bearing in mind „this is not for children“, loo-



king at them as no thinking beings, we are all mutilated, losing for ever our aim to train our observing capacity, to question our standards and accordingly preventing others to grow up, using and developing their potentialities.

When the publishing houses do not invite our artist (I have many authoritative statements) under the excuse so often unfounded, that they will be charged with few larger than their possibilities and instead they are please to call to illustrate a work someone who is able to make scrawl trying a drawing, they are disrespecting not only authors texts but, what is worse, also the readers mainly the youth and those who are far from the main cities, refusing sometimes the chances to have knowledge with our plastic artists - in other words, with Art.

It is a paradox, but our writers are often accomplice, as it were, in this matter with a few exceptions (Sophia de Mello Breyner Anderssen who have always kept up by their text regarding the illustrations).

To my view may be said, perhaps, that there has always been an over text valorisation as compared to illustration, the latter placed as secondary - regarded as just a decoration and not as a new looking on the text.

All this has been preventing the appearance of reflection works about illustration on children books and even so there is not up till now a catalogue showing portuguese illustrators on children and youth literature.

Gulbenkian Foundation together with Education Ministry is making from 1980 Symposium where is awarded the only prize for illustrators. The winners, however, have never seen their originals exhibited and neither any Symposium has been dedicated to illustration.

We have witnessed in eighties in Portugal, like in other countries, to a „boom“ of children's literature published by several publishing houses looking for this public. The increase of buying power which enlarged the middle class, together with a better communication with European Economic Community resulted that the child began to be looked as a potential buyer and the books started to be one of the new ways.













and number of illustrative books increased, either text books, especially language text books, or various encyclopaedias and editions devoted to various scientific branches. Many of them were taken over from abroad together with original illustration material, however, they supported the establishment of home editions at the same time, especially in the area of history and recent history of Czechoslovakia, in which foreign illustrations were, of course, missing. It is a paradox that for instance our books about nature by Czech authors and Czech illustrators, exported with success by Artia publishing house from the end of sixties, issued in many language mutations and many re-editions in the world, could get to our home book market only in these years in a higher measure. Of course, illustrations of the illustrative literature are a specific space to the illustrator for an illustration, interesting from the artistic point of view.

Thus, if taking into consideration the growth of foreign titles with original illustrations, suppression of the fiction publishing, a relatively high number of home re-editions of the most demanded books on the market and fear of publishing houses to issue original home new works, our illustrators' opportunities were significantly reduced. Moreover, the uncertainty appears whether publishing houses applying for illustrations, are not going to make a bankruptcy, whether publishing of book will be not delayed too much and whether there will be money to pay the royalty. Only indomitable optimists may withstand to such examinations. How much advantageous it is to devote to an essentially more lucrative advertisement! No wonder that in the last year when the situation on the publisher's area started to consolidate, 20% book titles more were published than in 1989 but in the national competition for the most beautiful book, no children's book appeared.

I don't want to cry over spilt milk, I better share with you how we face or intend to face negative phenomena, appearing in our children's literature in the last five years.

Those most affected - authors of children's books - developed the initiative first. The Club of Literature for Youth at the Community of Writers and the Club of Children's Books Illustrators at the Union of Fine Artists which became a part of the Czech IBBY sec-









all his other books were not allowed to be published. These are really extraordinary fairy tales. Šiktanc came from our classic message but his heroes are not carriers of the good and evil from the beginning. They come to the good through a special complicated way. As the title indicates itself, the heroes here are king, thus not folk characters as we were used in Czech fairy tales. And they are also stories, full of a noble grandeur. Illustrations in this book were done by František Skála junior, an artist with a wide expression scale, not avoiding happening presentations and installations either. In the illustration area, he has already proven for several times at many different titles (such as volumes devoted to extinct crafts, Sandburg's Stories from Potatoes Rows, own picture series about Vlas and Brada (Hair and Berad). Skála with his extraordinary sensitivity for the nature of a literary text, created an artistic parallel of stories, finding a starting inspiration in the Czech symbolism. Similarly as the text, his illustrations are rather exclusive, but without any doubts they belong to the best what was created in the children's book area in the last years in our country.

The Golden Ribbon competition, however, remained an event, limited to a narrow group of persons. It did not address the majority of publishers either, it neither became known to a wide cultural public. But more or less, it reacted quickly and it still reacts to what interesting appeared on our book market and provides also a certain orientation at classifying awarded books in other competitions, especially in the competition for the most beautiful book of the year and at awarding annual prizes to publishing houses. The decision about a final form of the Fund will be done at the workshop of experts, held in November this year in Brno.

Of course, objections appeared, whether we again prescribe and set marks, whether the Golden Fund will not become a bogey of a previous compulsory school reading. However, everyday practice shows that hand in hand with the freedom, also helplessness appeared - helplessness of teachers, helplessness of publishers, helplessness of librarians. The Golden Fund should be an inspiration everywhere. Where the teacher, publisher or librarian cannot rely fully on his own knowledge. Compilation of the Golden Fund list, which is evidently to be so wide that it will be possible to choose alterna-

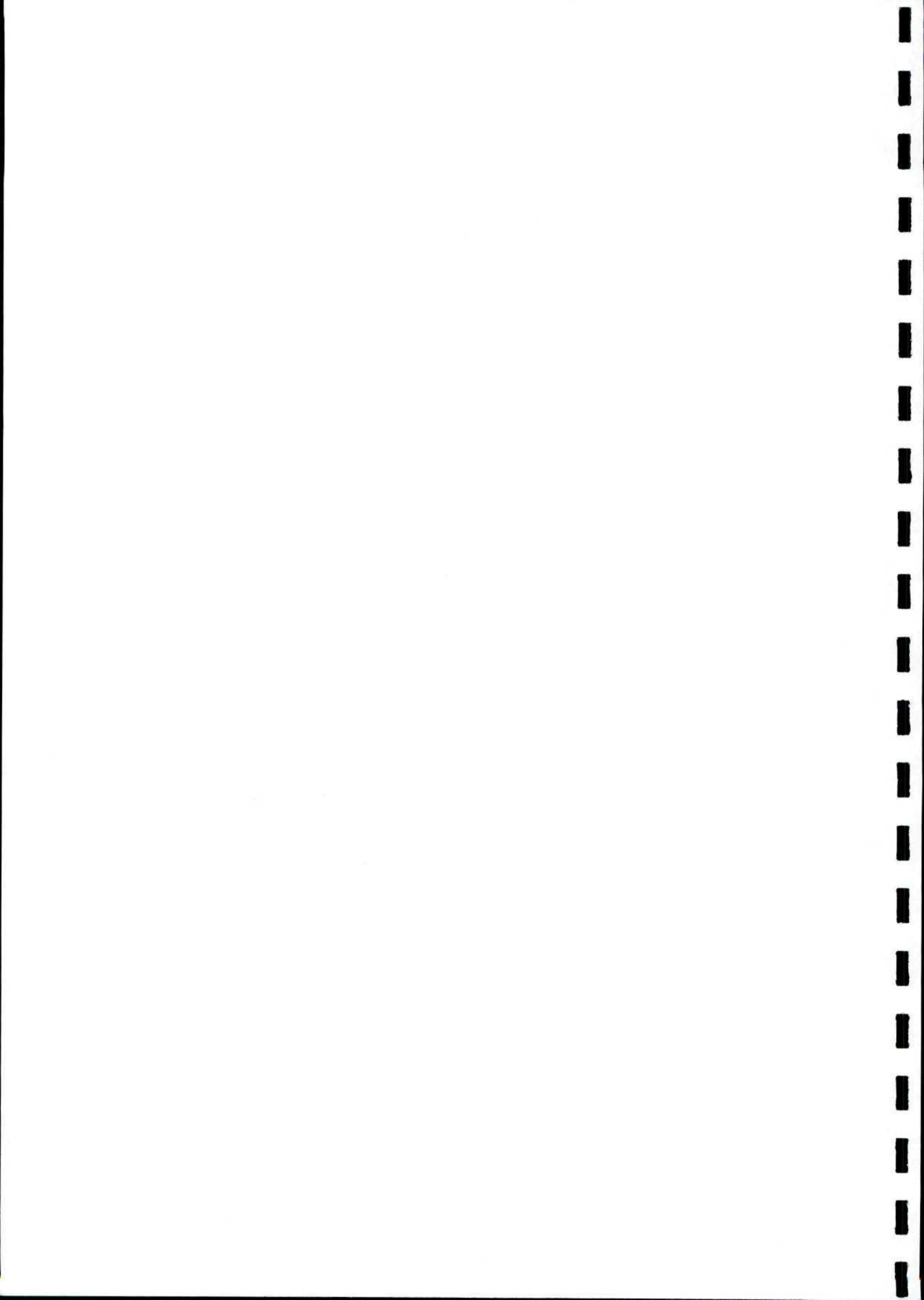


tives, is not enough. Through the Czech IBBY section, we would like to address the Ministry of culture and Ministry of education to recommend these books as a recommended reading to schools and public libraries what may assist to a higher number of copies and thus also a higher interest of publishers.

It is probable that at least a part of post-communist countries, not only fights against similar problems but perhaps also already work on their Golden Funds. It would be surely useful to share their experience, respectively to exchange lists of recommended books through the IBBY Secretariat or university workplaces.

At studying children's books in a wider time horizon, I came to conclusion, that some publications, very important from the viewpoint of children's books development and their illustrations, exist today only in one or two copies and that they are completely inaccessible outside our main cultural centres and completely unknown abroad. Moreover, a danger appears that at a modern reorganisation of the library, or at some natural catastrophe or disaster, they may disappear completely. These are especially books from this century beginning, from the beginning of the movement for belle letters and movement for education through the art which were mostly completely „consumed“ by generations of children and then valuable books of the Czech avantgard between wars, issued in low numbers of copies and if they got public libraries at all, they were withdrawn from them in a short time. When I mentioned this problem in Brno, my colleagues, literary historians confirmed my worries. Therefore, we intend to make a list of the most endangered titles, to address the grant commission of the Ministry of Culture and ask experienced publishers to issue endangered books as reprints under the financial support of the Ministry, respectively other sponsors. The effort to preserve the cultural heritage in the project on endangered books, the effort to provide the best and most beautiful books to the whitest possible group of readers by the Golden Fund establishment, the attempt to implement promote an finally support the modern Czech creation for children by awarding the Golden Ribbon, these are the main activities at the moment by which the Czech YBBY section and institutions co-operating with it, try to face the present, and perhaps only transtionally unfavourable situation in which our book for children and youth is.







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