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THE FAIRY TALE PILLOWS OF SLAVKA MANEVA

Abstract: This paper examines the collection of short stories, more precisely fairy tales by Slavka Maneva, titled as "Starry pillows". The collection shows unusual narrative procedure, where the months of the year, each characterized by something, give to the children fairy tales as gifts and the last one is from the author herself. These fairy tales have all the characteristics of a tale: the time and place where the events take place are not familiar; here we find mythological creatures, magical elements and fairy tales that are presented as legends which are part of the mythology.

Key words: fairy tale, Slavka Maneva, Macedonian literature for children.

1. Introduction

With its diversity, enchanted world, characters, unusual events and many more, the fairy tale has always attracted the attention of young readers. Fairy tales are unique, i.e., original literary art form which contains both obvious and hidden meaning. The most profound meaning of the fairy tale can be different for each person in different stages of its life, which means that they cannot be used only for aesthetic enjoyment since they touch the depth of our soul and our being, where our experiences such as love and sadness, anger and shame, pride and fear etc., exist (Velički, 2011: 93)¹. One such book is "Starry pillows" by Slavka Maneva, which is conceived as a gift from the author intended for the youngest readers. Regarding this book, Slavka Maneva says:

"In my book, dear children, each month will give you one fairy tale and the thirteenth one is a gift from me. However, at first I will tell you something about them in order to get to know and love them. Usually during the introduction the name is firstly given, but here it's impossible, because every

¹ Vladimira Velički, *Bajka ili put do djeteta*, Detinjstvo, Novi Sad, Zmajevе decje igre, 2011, p.93.

month has a few names. One is according to the calendar, and others are given by the people, according to its characteristics."

As announced by the author, the book consists of a series of fairy tales for all the months of the year, and each of the months gives us one fairy tale. The last one, i.e. the thirteenth fairy tale is a gift from the author herself.

2. Slavka Maneva's fairy tales

The first month of the year gives us "**A tale of the perplexed princess**". This fairy tale is about a spoiled princess who did not know how to do any domestic tasks and sat by the window all day long, and all the people who had passed by had to bow down to her. Her father always told her: *"My child, you will know nothing ... And later you will be ashamed because of it."* The stereotypical image of princesses that prevails in fairy tales, where they are presented as spoiled, doing nothing all day long, always forced by their parents to marry the king's son, do not always have the same ending. The same thing goes here, the king spoiled the princess too, so the moment came when a young boy had to advise him, hence the moral: *Sometimes even children think better than adults.* Usually, in most fairy tales kings are strict with their daughters, but in this fairy tale the daughter is a daddy's girl. Kings are always trying to raise their daughters well and eventually to marry them to a king's son. The behavior of the young princess depends on the upbringing of her father. As indicated by Vladimira Velički, fairy tales often present different types of behavior. The situation starting from the beginning of the story, often difficult and scarce, troublesome and seemingly hopeless, suggests a one-sided lifestyle which means that the situation depends on the preceding behavior of the character. In the further course of action, some inconsistency, an antagonistic character or more of them appear and the hero must compete with or be separated from them, defeat them, i.e. has to change something with his/her behavior or action, despite the preceding passivity. The main archetype situation which is often negative or marked with negative behavior can be cured by means of a positive behavior. The tales show us that the salvation is possible and the recovery can occur. Thus, the tale leads the path of inner transformation (Velički, 2011: 98)².

Often, in fairy tales the one who wants to marry the king's daughter, should fulfill the orders given by the king. Princesses in fairy tales are described as the most beautiful girls with red cheeks, long hair and soft hands. Especially frequent and popular are the motives by which

² Vladimira Velički, *Bajka ili put do djeteta*, Detinjstvo, Novi Sad, god, 2011, br.1, p.98.

the ordinary, poor man with his wisdom and wit manages to acquire the throne, mostly by marrying the king's daughter.

February, the second month, gives us "**A tale of the small dwarf**". The little dwarf called Beans was an orphan since a little boy. Here, the author Slavka Maneva describes the loneliness of the dwarf while the others gathered with their families. Beans decided to seek a better and more comfortable place to live than the old one. He took shelter in a cabbage. Fall came and the cabbage was torn from the field and sold. The little Beans was placed in the home of an old woman. He was very disappointed: "*Why did I have to live in a cabbage? – it thought. It would have been better to stay in my father's house, even though it was windy.*"

In mythology, dwarfs resemble humans, but prefer to live underground or in mountainous areas. Usually they are shorter than men with big long beards. The dwarfs have the ability to see in the dark and other ones so they can live underground. Here they collect treasure like gold, silver and precious stones, and spend their time in forging valuable weapons. They are known as miners and blacksmiths, but are also skilled in any other craft. *Sometimes no matter how much we want to escape from reality and go to a better place, in the ideal world, we always come back to the place where we started from and where the little things made us happy.* So, fairy tales are not any imaginary or false stories for the gullible, but a captivating poetry that acts against the inconsolability of nonexistence of a miracle, but the miracle is nothing but an experience which shows that anything can change, and above all – we can change. Fairy tales do not give specific advice, but with the help of their imagery they encourage us to live (Dickerhoff, Lox, 2010: 11)³. In such cases, the tale is a condensed wisdom, a mythological and linguistic layer that directs or encourages, comforts or reconciles with fate. The hero, and through his words the writer also, suggests that the situation in the tale should be resolved and a central thread should be established which will always flicker unnoticeably in the process of merging the possible and the impossible (Smiljkovic, 2008: 52)⁴. Thus, the small dwarf, through experience, comes to realize about himself and his philosophical existence. Nikola Cvetkovic, talking about the poetics of Dragan Lukic's fairy tales, points out that children are very fond of dwarfs as a special kind of fantastic creatures, because children are small and enjoy when in tales they encounter dwarfs, they quickly befriend or empathize with them, since they believe that dwarfs belong into their world (Cvetkovic, 2003: 137).

³ Heinrich Dickerhoff, Harlinda Lox, *Märchen für die Seele*, Krummwisch, Königsfurt Urania, 2010.

⁴ Ctana Smiljkovic, *Zanrovi u bajkma Grozdane Olujic*, Detinjstvo, Novi Sad, Zmajevе decje igre, 2008, no.4, p.52.

March is the only month that has a female name. In many fairy tales we can find it as "Grandma March". As a gift from "Grandma March" is "**A tale of the weeping willow**". The fairy tale tells the story of the love between a brother and sister who swore to eternally love and help each other:

"I swear that I will always help you whenever you are in trouble. If I don't – I will turn into stone! ". "And I swear that I will always love you I and will never lie to you. If I don't – I will turn into a tree!"

The sister got married and after a long time returned all sad and withered: "*What happened to you, my dear sister? What pains you to have lost so much weight?*" The sister did not reveal the pain to her brother and as promised, she turned into a willow. The author, Maneva, tells this fairy tale as a kind of legend that has been known for a long time. The tree is still called "weeping" willow since it corresponds to the mental state of the young girl. The emphasis here is placed on the selfish love between the brother and sister and the sister's sacrifice to spare her brother from any inconveniences, she transforms into a willow. *We should never hide our sorrow or happiness from our loved ones, because they are always there to rejoice at our happiness and mourn at our sadness.* The transformation, so richly described in fairy tales, is one of the most covered topics, a testament to the close relationship of the fairy tale with the myth. In the fairy tale, as in the myth, each member in the chain man-animal-plant-object can be transformed into another member. Giving human-like characteristics to animals and nature comes from the old animist understanding of the Universe, as the overall unity of the living and the dead (Denkova, 2011:6).⁵ In the ongoing development of human civilization, the tree had a major role, not only as a valuable raw material in many industrial areas, but also the tree is a symbol which is an integral part of the human essence. With its position and existence, the tree represents a link between earth and heaven. The connection of the root with the soil indicates the source of and the man is directly associated with that source. Using the vertical weeping towards the sky, the tree indicates its weeping towards the source of light, and this connects with the man who consciously and constantly seeks to rise, both on the spiritual and intellectual level. Therefore, not surprisingly, the tree will become a symbol of the man, later even of the cross, but also a symbol of the God-pleasing life and as well as a symbol of knowledge (Jasovic, 2010: 37)⁶. In this text the weeping willow is not randomly chosen as a tree in which the sister transforms/morphs, since here the motive of repentance is

⁵ Jovanka Denkova, Knizevnost za deca, Goce Delcev University, Faculty of philology, Stip, 2011.

⁶ Predrag Jasovic, Drvo kao književni motiv i simbol, Detinjstvo, Novi Sad, Zmajevе decje igre, 2010, 1-2, p.37

present due to the lie told to her brother, although not on purpose and with the best intentions, it still remains – a lie. The weeping willow with its inclination towards the ground in the form of penitential bow, reminds of the repentance of the sister for not sharing her worries to her brother.

April, the month of spring, greenery and colorful flowers ... A gift from this month is "**A tale of the avens flower**". The motive of this fairy tale has similar content with the folk tale "The girl and the twelve months" and the classic folk tale "Cinderella". The stepmother as in the aforementioned fairy tales torments her husband's girl while treated her own as a precious stone. The hard-working girl fell in love with the shepherd boy, and the evil stepmother noticed it: "*Well bring him to me, daughter, so I can see him if his beauty and mind deserve yours-she said.*" The girl was naive and did as the stepmother told her. The cunning stepmother using magic put a spell on the boy and he fell in love with her ugly daughter. When the girl found out she fled to the mountain and disappeared wearing a pink dress. After some time, the boy woke up from the opium and searched for his loved one, he went up the mountain and the entire mountain was covered with a carpet of pink flowers as the color of the missing girl's dress. Till this day the flower is known as a flower of love and the young shepherd girls adorn themselves with it. Several moral values are highlighted here: kindness, honesty, patience and love. As in the previous fairy tale, here also the metamorphosis is implied when the girl transforms into the avens flower with big red or golden-yellowish leaves. Love as a motive in the tales is also addressed by Dragan Lukic. He believes that special attention should be paid to this and to acquaint the child not only with parental love, but also children need to acquire knowledge about the sublimity of the love between a boy and a girl. And according to Lukic, fairy tales are the most suited for it, not only because they love in the tales is just "found", but also because for its realization much nobility, heroism, devotion and beauty is needed (Lukic, 1960: 12)⁷. The love between the boy and girl, about which it learns from the tale, should leave a strong impression on the child of something pure, beautiful, graceful, and solemn. It is the basis for developing its own ideas about the beauty of love (Cvetkovic, 2003:136).⁸

Similar to this fairy tale is "**A tale of Vilen**" by Gligor Popovski, but the difference is that Vilen has to drink the water from which the rainbow drank and in that case he will be rewarded, i.e. he can have everything he can wish for, but to be careful not to dip himself into

⁷ Dragan Lukic, Bajka u životu deteta, Rad, Beograd, 1960.

⁸ Nikola Cvetkovic, Tumacenje književnosti za decu, knjiga I, Filozofski fakultet, Sremska Mitrovica, 2003.

the water, because he will be punished by metamorphosing into an animal. Here, however, it is different because the boy is the one who drinks opium and the girl is punished and is turned into a flower.

The fifth month is May. As a gift from May we have "**A tale of the black bull**". This tale belongs to the miracle tales unlike the previous ones that fall into the group of fairy tales. The tale took place in a village, which had a big accident when early in the morning a strong earthquake was felt, *"What was this, folks? – they said. - The earth is opening and it will swallow us all!"* The villagers climbed the mountain and caught a glimpse of a black bull as had never been seen before, with bloody eyes and horns as trees. *"Where did this miracle come from? – they said. What is going to happen, my brothers?"*. Everybody was concerned and sought salvation. The theme in fairy tales is a struggle for predominance in crisis, poverty or a natural disadvantage, fight for personal affirmation, and this in the tale is wealth, personal happiness or the hand of a beautiful girl or boy... Through the multitude of difficulties and temptations which the hero must pass, he/she is provided help by a typical aide. The assistance is direct or indirect, through the use of a magical item... The conflicts in the tale are sometimes caused by "the spiritual" forces. Lihachov points out that in the tale a battle of wit is fought, a battle of various intentions and magical forces of nature. Intentions do not encounter resistance in the middle, but collide with other intentions, often unmotivated. Therefore, the obstacles in the tale cannot be predicted. They are unexpected, sudden (Lihachov, 78: 63-64)⁹.

They went to a wise old man to seek advice: *"Such monsters appear once in a hundred years. If you find a hero to break his right horn with a stone axe, the bull will immediately die and you will get rid of this trouble."* The presence of this character in the stories, the character of the old man was pointed out by Aleksandar Prokopiev¹⁰, in the book *"Patuvanjata na skaznata"* (*"Journeys of the fairy tale"*), where referring to the claim of the Swiss psychiatrist Carl Gustav Jung that the appearance of the wise old man in the story actually symbolizes the missing authority, Prokopiev says: „In fairy tales, as well as in dreams ... the old man appears when the hero is in a hopeless situation. The clever, gray-headed old man enables concentration on the moral and physical strengths, and the ability to persist... The old man knows the right path and the way that path can be crossed. He gives genuine advice or magical means for overcoming dangers." (Prokopiev, 1997: 95)

⁹ D.S. Lihachov, *Umetnicki proctor bajke, in Narodna bajka u modernoj književnosti*, Nolit, Beograd, 1978, p. 63-64.

¹⁰ Aleksandar Prokopiev, *Patuvanjata na skaznata*, Magor, Skopje, 1997.

The hero in the tale is distinguished by his exceptionality and strength and is often the result of a miraculous birth. The hero acquires magical powers with the help of a magical object, in order to overcome a problem, as in this tale magical objects are the mirrors and the carpet, and the problem is to defeat the black bull. A poor boy stepped forward and defeated the bull with his cunningness and the villagers were very grateful: *Well done, my good boy! – they told him - "Only a hero born from a mother can save us from evil"*. Slavka Maneva uses hyperbole in the description of the appearance of the bull: *"On the hill lay a huge bull as had never been seen before, with bloody eyes and horns as crooked trees"*. The wise old man as in most fairy tales is the one where people find salvation in his advice. *It does not necessarily mean that the one who is not physically big, it is not mentally, as in the tale the young boy is described.*

"A tale of the fireflies" is a gift from June. This fairy tale tells about the father's strictness towards his daughter. Unable to bear the torture, the girl fled into the woods. There she was very impressed by the sunlight and beauty of nature. When her father found out he cursed her to turn into a night fairy. So it was done. The fairy befriended with the insects and helped them, and they always said to her: *"Grandma fairy, you're the greatest craftsman for mending butterfly wings and that's why we love you so much."* One day she asked the moon for a grain of sun to help the beetles and butterflies and to respect her father's will: *"Forgive me, Father, but I am doing this because I want to help, as you taught me while you were alive"*. Fairies are very popular characters in the Macedonian folk tales. They usually appear as enemies of man, but in this case the girl is cursed to become a fairy and to help her friends (the insects). The fairy in this tale who wanted to help the insects can be compared to the Sugary child in "Shekjerna prikazna" ("A sugary fairy tale") by Slavko Janevski. The Sugary child in the fairy tale is a hero who wants to help animals who are residents in the forest (the rabbit, turtle, squirrel, snail), actually they seek help from the sugary child to free the nightingale from the thieves (the bear, wolf and fox).

July, the seventh month of the year gives us a wonderful fairy tale, **"A tale of the rainbow"**. The weaver which is represented in this fairy tale is the ultimate victim in it. Firstly, because she sacrificed for her seven children, and then she is a victim of the king's order. The weaver, who knit beautiful rugs, was famous everywhere and her reputation reached the royal ears: *"Be careful, woman! The royal order is no joke. If you don't weave the carpet, you'll lose your head!"* She wove day and night only to fulfill the king's order. After the carpet was woven, she took it to the river, but a strong wind started blowing and she left with her children to avoid the storm. When they returned the carpet was missing: *"Oh, poor me, I'll lose my head! What*

*will I say to the king's men tomorrow, when they come to take the carpet?"*¹¹ The king's order was executed. On the day of the wedding of the king's son, it started to rain and the carpet from the lake towards the clouds was laid, a carpet in different colors. Since then rainbow was created. As in this tale in which the weaver transformed into a rainbow, a similarity is found in "**A tale of Vilen**" where the author taking elements from the folk tale, introduced and personified a natural phenomenon, which is in actant position of the hero's assistant (Vilen has to drink water at the same moment when the rainbow drinks it). According to popular belief in this fairy tale, the one that will pass under the arc of the rainbow, the one that will drink water where the rainbow drinks from can make a lot of their own wishes come true. This fairy tale is a kind of a legend that remains from the past until today. Until this day, little children still wait with great joy to see the rainbow when it rains.

August is the last month of the summer. The tale that this summer month gives us is "**A tale of the silver sword**". It is a story of a severely ill mother lying in bed who could not see any of the nature's beauties. The son always made sure that she is happy. One day he asked her what her wish was and she replied: *"Let the hill be out of my sight so I can see the meadows and fields on the other side"*. The next day the boy went to a wise old man to ask for advice and he said that the remedy for this wish is the silver sword. Searching for the sword, the boy arrived to the royal palace. The king was in big trouble, because of the great dragon. The boy bravely decided to stand up to the dragon. For defense, the king gave him the silver sword. The boy defeated the dragon, and in return was given the king's daughter. After that, he went to the mountain and saw his mother on the hill: *"Mother, I held my promise! I came home to bring you all to the royal palace for I am the king's son-in-law! Now, tell me, how did you climb to the top of the hill."* And here it is obvious that "the optimism in the tale is more tempting than the transformation of the mythical hero in eternal life in heaven, versus the hero in the story who lives happily ever after on earth (Milinkovic, 2012: 82)¹².

The old man in this fairy tale is also presented as a wise man, from whom the boy seeks help for his mother. Especially frequent and popular are the motives by which the ordinary, poor man with his wisdom and wit managed to acquire the imperial throne. Magical, miraculous items are certainly among the most characteristic elements of the folk tale. It is believed that the abundant presence of miraculous objects in the fairy tale is the result of an

¹¹ Slavka Maneva, *Dzvezdeni pernicinja* (Starry pillows), *Detska radost*, revision 2009 (citation), 2005.

¹² Miodir Milinkovic, *Bajkovite forme u književnosti za decu i mlade*, *Uciteljski fakultet*, Uzice, 2012.

ancient human belief in magical rites, which were performed with the help of various material props.¹³

A gift from September is "**A tale of the peacock feather**". The fairy tale tells of a sick child whose parents could not save him, and in the fairy tale an old grandmother appeared who was portrayed as wise and she tells the cure to the mother and father of the child: *"It is his fate, to be ill. But we will find a cure for him, if you find a green eye in a blue one. Dip the quill in sea oil, smear the child with it and then he will get well. That's it from me, now go home in good health"*. The possibilities of the magical items are great, with their help one can resurrect, kill the opponent, get whatever one wants... The working of magical items is a magical process, whose activation (and termination) requires knowledge of specific signs (movements, words) (Prokopiev, 1985: 206)¹⁴. So in Macedonian folk tale, the ring, apple, belt, herbs, fruits from different plants, water, comb, soap, stone and many others, often occur as miraculous objects and material requisites. They find the cure in the royal palace, from the king's peacocks. The coincidence between the miraculous items in the tales with some other items is not absolute, because the unbridled creative imagination of the popular storyteller added new features to the usual magical items, and created new magical props, which enriched the otherwise overwhelming world of the fairy tale.

A gift from October is "**A tale of the turtle**". This fairy tale is about a turtle that was not satisfied with its appearance and constantly complained to God: *"Dear God! - she said. – You gave everyone a cloak for their body – someone got feathers, others fur. You gave them wings and strength to be fast, and left us naked to wander slowly across the earth"*. The turtle was unhappy again and together with the other animals, they went to God. Finally, he fulfilled her wishes and everybody was happy and satisfied. In this fairy tale, Slavka Maneva uses allegory as a figure of speech, giving the turtle human qualities (to speak). Animals in fairy tales speak and act like people, hence we can recognize certain characteristics and types of people. This fairy tale is a kind of a legend about the origin of turtles. This legend belongs to the subtype of cosmogonic legends. Legends about the origin of plants, animals and some phenomena in nature, also draw its origin from apocryphal literature, but they are directly

¹³ Tome Sazdov, *Istorija na makedonskata knjizevnost, Usna narodna knjizevnost, Detska radost*, 1997 (p.167)

¹⁴ Aleksandar Prokopiev, *Edno mozno tabelarno pretstavuvanje na fantastičnite elementi vo makedonskata skazna, Makedonski folklor*, Skopje, 1985, br.35.

associated with the medieval hagiographic literature. These legends have arisen as a result of the constant human desire to know the world of nature.¹⁵

The next-to-last month gives us "**A tale of the turtledove**". This tale as well as "A tale of the weeping willow" is a kind of a legend, about the origin of the turtledove. This legend belongs to the subtype of cosmogonic legends, legends about the genesis of the universe as a whole, about the creation of the cosmos (order) from chaos (clutter). They tell the creation of the world thanks to the power of one God (e.g., the Bible).¹⁶ The tale is about the love between two young people who come from royal families. An obstacle in their love is the boy's mother, who is represented as a sorceress, who is part of the mythological creatures and is related to the miraculous objects (in this case the tea) that she poured for her daughter-in-law and turned her into a turtledove. She lurked on the window of her husband and her child all day long. She got the name turtledove by cooing to her child: "*Coo - coo! - and from the palace her child replied: - "Coo - coo!"*" Since then the turtledoves are birds that always fly on windows and coo. They are recognizable by gentle gray feathers and a small black circle around their neck.

December, the twelfth and last month of the year gives us "**A tale of kindness**". This fairy tale is about a slow-witted daughter who did nothing, even when her mother got sick. The mother always stared at the wall against which her bed was laid, until one day the neighbor's daughter came and said to her: "*Why are you standing like a tree? Do you not see what the house looks like? Come on, quickly, bring water and towels, so we can clean it!*" The tale reveals to the child the truth about courage, honesty, deceit, treachery, hypocrisy, truth about the constant struggle in life, truth about daydreaming and falsehood. By highlighting these educational values, the child almost always chooses the side of the hero who fights for the good and teaches them to be active in the fight against all that is directed against evil. (Cvetkovic, 2003: 138). Dragan Lukic also sends this message to the children, that rich in spirit is the one who is never bored, who has no empty and futile deeds to show for leading to indifference and idleness. The idler and slacker are like a clock without its arrows, equally useless when they stand and when they walk (Cvetkovic, 2003: 140).

Finally, Slavka Maneva parts with the reader and tells about her own life, how she was a mischievous girl, so she decided to devote her writing to little mischief-makers, but of course

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http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=3&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0CC8QFjAC&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.gimprilep.edu.mk%2Fmakedonski%2Fdokumenti%2Ffolklor%2520i%2520mit.doc&ei=FNktVNX_HeTTYgOHpYLQDg&usg=AFQjCNFzKD-Oy0ZNh5mZgIKbOP67GBad9A&bvm=bv.76802529,d.bGQ

¹⁶ Tome Sazdov, *Istorija na makedonskata knjizevnost, Usna narodna knjizevnost, Detska radost*, Skopje (p.207)

her purpose was not to scare them, but to make them laugh and to teach them. All the fairy tales were written in the spirit of children literature.

Finally, a gift from the author is "**A tale of the starry pillows**" as it's the title of the book. As well as the adults, children also try to survive in the world and to find the true meaning of life. The increasing number of experiences gradually introduces them to the world of adults, which sometimes make them think better. There is a strong social moment present in the fairy tale, when the boy decided to go abroad for work in order to save his family and himself from poverty. The mother blessed him and gave him a tissue with three knots. The subtle interweaving of fantasy and reality, the diversity of emotional stimuli and uncertainty of actions have a magnetic attraction for children, but also for adults, who often tell the fairy tales with the same emotions that they experienced in their childhood. The excitement that these fairy tales cause, encourage the development of children's imagination, speech, social communication and creativity in different areas. *"Son, this can help you when you are in a big trouble. You should untie these nodes, but only then, and remember what I say. The first knot is for what you had and what you could have - if you are hard-working. The second knot is for what you have, and what you could lose - if you're not careful. And the third knot is for what you don't have and you will wish to have it with all your heart."* The boy fell in love with the girl who embroidered pillows with silver stars that sparkled at night. Not having the money to buy the pillows he remembers his mother's words, and unties the first knot in which he finds two coins that can buy him a pillow. He untied the second knot when he fell ill and it contained tea herbs. He untied the third knot when he asked the girl that embroiders pillows to marry him and in the knot was his mother's engagement ring. And as usual, this tale also ends with the words "In the end, they all lived happily ever after".

3. Closing remarks

All the fairy tales in this book begin with the phrase *Once upon a time*. The time and place where the events occur are not known, maybe the villages and mountains mentioned in the tales are near us, maybe we have sometimes been there, maybe our grandparents live there, but just MAYBE. According to this "*Starry pillows*" has mythological roots.

Here we encounter the mythological creatures, magical elements and fairy tales that are presented in the form of legends that are a part of the mythology. The myths are still viewed as distorted fairy tales of true historical events, allegories or personifications of natural phenomena or explanations of folk rituals. They were passed on to provide religious experience, to set patterns of behavior and to teach people. In the legends, the miraculous, mythological and religious are one of the main features. The legend reflects reality through a

belief. The main social function of the legend is to support the belief, telling of the miraculous. Mythological creatures that we encounter are the fairy in "A tale of the fireflies" and the sorceress (the mother-in-law) in "A tale of the turtledove".

The children in the fairy tales are represented as orphans (except in "A tale of the peacock feather"; "A tale of the turtledove" and the fairy tale which was a gift from the author "A tale of the starry pillows"), they are children who have not felt the love from both parents. Some of the tales are narrated in the form of a legend ("A tale of the weeping willow", "A tale of the rainbow" and "A tale of the turtledove") in which we find shorter notices and important data aimed to inform about the existence of certain facts.

In Slavka Maneva's tales we encounter magical items, such as, the magical wand in "A tale of the fireflies", the red carpet and mirrors in "A tale of the black bull", the silver sword in "A tale of the silver sword," the tea in "A tale of the turtledove", the peacock feather in "A tale of the peacock feather" and the handkerchief with the three knots in "A tale of the starry pillows". With all its characters, the material - magic props and storylines, wonderfully interwoven, the folk tale created an immensely rich world that comprised - selected and shaped – the various fairy tale answers and narrative images. Featuring nameless characters, undetermined geography, marvelous creatures and mythological creations the tale reached the culmination of the popular writer's capabilities for creative improvisation.¹⁷

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¹⁷ Tome Sazdov, Usna narodna knizevnost, Detska radost, Skopje, 1997, p. 169)

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