

Informal education for boys only? The theme of gender in the work of Jaroslav Foglar

Ivo Jirásek, Richard Macků, Jiří Němec, Lucie Jarkovská

Abstract: The paper deals with the work of the Czech children’s author Jaroslav Foglar from a gender perspective, reflecting on two themes in particular: the absence of heroines; and his understanding of boys’ reciprocity and friendship with the adoration of physicality. The impetus for this analysis was data from a questionnaire survey, the aim of which was to determine which aspects of Jaroslav Foglar’s work are most appreciated by readers and which they think apply to real life. The quantitative analysis of the data (n=1174) did not reveal any statistically significant differences in the men’s and women’s responses; however, the qualitative analysis of the open-ended statements is illustrative of the underrepresentation of girls among literary heroes. The diverse ways in which Foglar’s work captures friendships between boys allow even today’s readers to expand their perceptions of masculinity beyond traditionally defined boundaries.

Keywords: children’s literature; literary heroes; story; gender; inequality

Introduction

“Until the far-off day when we die, we will all regret not being in Dvojka [Two] because we are not boys.” This sentence is from a letter from members of the Brownies (Světlušky) girls’ club (Zachariáš, 2007, 199) addressed to Jaroslav Foglar and printed in Čigoligo, the Dvojka magazine, in February 1944. It shows that even at the time he was writing, Foglar’s work was noted for its absence of girls. Apparently this was not the first such statement the scout leader and writer came across. He was unwittingly reflecting the asymmetries in the gender expectations that structured the lives of girls and

boys. The aim of our paper is to describe the gendered aspects of his work and: 1) To reflect on the debate about the absence of girls, which is far from being confined to the last few decades. 2) To consider the possible gender progressive potential of Foglar's male characters. 3) To describe readers' perceptions (survey respondents) of Foglar's work in the context of gender.

Gender and Children's Literature

Children's literature is a source of cultural representations of gender that both reflects the dominant cultural framing and attempts to break free of it or subvert it. Analyses of children's literature have shown that male protagonists are more prominent and feature more in children's literature and that children's literature may be one of the mechanisms for maintaining the asymmetrical gender status quo. For example, McCabe et al. (2011) examined nearly 6,000 titles published in the U.S. during the twentieth century and found that men were twice as likely as women to be the heroes of stories. Influenced by Rousseau and his notion that education should help prepare girls for their natural role as mothers, while their brothers should be toughened up by Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, children's literature developed in parallel as girls' literature and boys' literature (Heywood, 2020).

Stories do not have a universal effect on children; they are not just passively accepted, but actively grasped and grounded in their worldviews, forming an attitude towards the world that is confronted with their own lived experience and the cultural representations around them. Depending on their position, children may accept or reject a story, or adapt its meaning to bridge the contradictions it creates. Stories present metaphors, figures and forms through which children can interpret their own social placement (Davies, Saltmarsh, 2007). Through listening to stories, children learn to recognise themselves and others within gendered narratives, and it is therefore important to note which synaesthetes are predominant, peripheral, or entirely absent.

In recent decades, some books have challenged the assumption there is a binary gender structure and gender essentialism, presenting lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and genderqueer characters (Capuzza, 2020; Earles, 2017; Hermann-Wilmarth, Ryan, 2016) and other queer or transgender themes (Bittner, Ingrey, Stamper, 2016). But this issue is beyond the scope of the current paper. Rather than discussing the gender binary, we will focus on the representation of girls and boys in literary works and the ways in which men and women read them.

The portrayal of sex and gender in Foglar's books

Jaroslav Foglar (1907-1999) was a writer, comics scriptwriter, scout educator and editor of youth magazines. The heroes of his books and the members of his scout troop are boys on the verge of adolescence, undergoing personal transformation under a positive example of friendship and an active lifestyle. Thematically, his writing promoted physical activity and the outdoors, the development of social relationships, especially in peer groups, with an emphasis on morality and the ethical dimension of holistic personality development in various dimensions of the physical, mental, social and spiritual existence of the adolescent.

Jaroslav Foglar's writing was a completely unique phenomenon in Czech youth literature, both in terms of its scope and enormous readership. It did not remain in the literary sphere, but was reflected in readers' lives and became a source of ideology in certain interest groups. According to research, his work was popular among readers and rated extremely highly in popularity surveys over several decades and influenced its readers (Jírek, 1964; Sohr, 1968; Uherková, Úlovcová, 1993).

Much has been written both by Foglar and about Foglar. For example the *Collected Writings of Jaroslav Foglar*, published by Olympia Publishing House between 1991 and 2018, includes not only his novels, short stories, manuals, but also his autobiography, excerpts from his chronicles, and a collection of plays, and stretches to 27 volumes in total. In addition, there are there are two collected volumes of his comics and several of his novels have been published in comic form. Since 2018 Albatros, which publishes children's and young people's literature, has been publishing Foglar's books in a new graphic format, in cooperation with the Jaroslav Foglar Scout Foundation'. His writing continues to attract interest despite the very different social conditions. The rich secondary literature presents detailed accounts of his books (Nosek-Windy, 1999), the influential work of reading clubs (Pírek, 1990), and summarising his life and influence on diverse social groups and individuals (Jirásek, 2007; Zachariáš, 2007; Zapletal, 2007), and on outdoor education and experiential pedagogy (Gintel, 2019; Jirásek, 2019). Some of it focuses, for example, on Foglar's activities in the Board of Trustees for Youth Education, an extracurricular organisation in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia through the Second World War (Bauer, 2018), the literary analysis of his work (Dvorský, 2011; Vučka, 2015), the religious aspects of his writing and the social phenomenon of *foglaring* (Hošek, 2017, 2018). Researchers

can access the 270 boxes of archival material stored at the Memorial of National Literature.

The social analysis of Foglar's work and the *foglaring* movement has so far focused on comprehensive descriptive summaries, historical, literary and pedagogical discourses, and the religious aspects. However, a compact sociological analysis is still lacking. This paper intends to help fill the gap by investigating a defined social phenomenon, gender issues in relation to Foglar's work, which tend to be scattered across journal articles or biographical and reflective literature, and have not yet received full attention. In this paper, we focus on two types of content in particular: the lack of attention paid to girls in Foglar's writing and educational work, and the debates over the alleged homosexuality in some of his novels and attributed to the characters and the author. Foglar did not discuss or problematize gender norms or stereotypes. This neglect is partly down to the era in which he was writing (from the 1930s onwards), but also his interest in not growing up and remaining in the world of boys forever (Foglar, 2005b).

A world for boys only

Even a cursory glance at Foglar's comics or a superficial reading of his books leaves readers in no doubt that Foglar's writing was about boy heroes and intended primarily for boys. The focus of his novels and comics is strongly masculine, and intergender relationships are portrayed in an one-sided way. Foglar himself explained why he paid little attention to girls in his work: "Somehow the girlish element didn't fit into my stories. I had nothing to occupy them with. I couldn't think of girls' adventure stories. Moreover, in scouting boys and girls had to be separate. So, I didn't get much experience with girls' thinking. I prefer not to venture into areas I know little about." (Maurer, 2013, p. 20).

Adventure literature, the genre of his work, is mainly aimed at pre-adolescent readers. However, Foglar's desire to remain a boy for all eternity is directly related to his construction of a fully self-sufficient boy's world, where the adult world can be safely ignored (Nezkusil, 1991) and boyhood is a key, independent, basic category of life (Červenka, 1965). While on the one hand this creates a specific world in which pre-adolescents have their own existential universality and matters of compulsive urgency that only they can deal with (Lopatka, 1991). It is also a world with no adults and no girls. This was first noted by critics in the 1960s. Továrek, for example, states: Anyone focuses only on boys and neglects girls, anyone pretends as if the other sex

did not exist, does not act considerably (Továrek, 1964). Boyhood, however, does not go on forever. All children have to go through adolescence and find solutions to the problem all adolescents inevitably face, namely “the relationship to the other sex and the placing of the awakening eroticism in its proper place in life.” (Kovářík, 1964, p. 212). However, Foglar’s books are characterised by the absence of the female component and the rudimentary nature of all sexual issues ([Hybler, 1987]. Vacke makes an interesting observation, noting that the feminine element is almost absent in these books, they are full of the boyish adolescent mentality (Vacke, 1988).

Foglar had platonic relationships with girls and women throughout his life. Although he lived exclusively with his mother, one cannot assume that the fact that girls and the female element generally play a secondary or minor role in his work is down to his having no partner or wife. But they are consistent with Foglar’s claim that girls’ lives and girl-boy relationships were unfamiliar territory that he chose to avoid in his work.

Foglar did not just write books, but was the editor of several magazines. He gradually honed his ideas and repeatedly proposed that there should be a modern children’s, or ideally boys’, periodical. His working mock-up of the commercially conceived magazine Čigoligo was subtitled «a magazine for Prague boys». Then Melantrich Publishing House designed a magazine with the working title *Tam-Tam*. Its first draft assumed a boy readership as well; although the second version, probably in response to the publisher’s criticism, specified that it was a “Czechoslovak boys and girls magazine” (Bauer, 2018). The main magazines in which Jaroslav Foglar was able to realise his editorial ambitions, *Mladý hlasatel* and *Vpřed*, bore the subtitle “for boys and girls”, as can be seen from the reproductions of the title pages (Nosek-Windy, 2003). Hence the content, including the legendary *Swift Arrows* comic strip, was not exclusively intended for boys, despite them being the main literary heroes. At an educated guess, in *Swift Arrows* picture series, female characters appear in about 15% of the comic strips, girl figures in about 6.5% of the fields, and have active positive role in less than 4% (Fafejta, 2007). However, it is clear from Foglar’s working notes on unused themes that he had intended to include girls more in his fictional work. After all they accounted for a large part of the subscribers to the magazines he edited and he wanted to “find stories where the hero is a girl – or to write them myself” (Zachariáš, 2007, p. 340).

However, neither the limited space given to girls, nor the apparent “gender inappropriate” behaviour in the fictional world of the literary heroes,

put female readers off. Readership surveys have shown no difference in the frequency with which boys and girls read Foglar or its popularity among boys and girls, with both boys and girls claiming to have been favourably influenced by the heroes' actions, for example, focusing on physical fitness or sensitivity to nature (Urbanová, Matýsková, 1992). Tens of thousands of boys and girls were also involved in reading clubs, and there were special girls' clubs that drew inspiration for their programme from the Foglar books (Nosek-Windy, 2017). At least one club had "five members, four of whom are boys, and the club is led by a girl" (Pírek, 1990, p. 112).

Masculinity, emotion and warm relationships

Jaroslav Foglar, a graduate of a two-year business school, did not engage in the deeper educational or intellectual side, but intuitively identified the interests and experiences of the boys to whom he devoted his life. He longed to remain a boy forever and never grow old; however, "this passionate confession and worship of boyhood of mine" (Foglar, 2005b, 8) was evident in non-literary contexts as well. It is precisely because of this vigorous understanding of boyhood that one can see the deeply psychological impact of some of the archetypes in his texts, which is evidence of the dimension of mythic or mythopoetic experience (Dvorský, 2011; Hošek, 2017; Nezkusil, 1991; Sládek, 2008; Vacke, 1988; Vučka, 2015). His boyhood novels can be compared to a symbolic esoteric initiation drama ([Hybler, 1987).

However, such initiations occur in gender segregation contexts only, in our case in the boys' group. The term initiation refers to a situation in which a person – often through a complex but subtly elaborate ritual or ceremony – becomes someone else, acquires a different social role and position, is introduced to a new social group or initiated into a mystery, etc. Rituals of passage (Bílý, 2012; van Gennep, 2018), shamanic initiation (Eliade, 1964), initiate mystagogy (Eliade, 1981), baptism or confirmation in Christianity, and many other phenomena are indicative of a common feature of personal transformation in the transformation of boys into men. These days, outdoor education courses, for example, can may provide the initiation experience of "becoming a man" (Jirásek, 2021).

Ancient Greek pederasty is a similar social phenomenon, but it is not the same as homosexuality. The latter term describes a relationship between men in a sexual sense; the former emphasizes the cultural or social discourse and pedagogical context. Mythologically, it is derived from the god Zeus dazzling Ganymede, a most beautiful young man whom he lusted after

and made wait on the gods (Homer, 1992). Philosophically, especially by Plato's dialogue *Symposium* (Plato, 1951), describing, among other things, Alcibiades's eulogy of Socrates. It is a de facto specific pedagogical institution, the relationship between a grown man, a skilled warrior, and an ephebe, a beardless adolescent, whose training and integration into adult society he assumed patronage over. However, the basic purpose and essence of these relationships between boys and men was not physically sexual (homosexual) but emotional and social. Pedagogical Eros is an erotic relationship in principle, but it is not necessarily a sexual one, having a holistic effect on the person. This is because there is no more powerful educational method, technological means, or educational practice than the informal relationship between teacher and pupil, between educator and educated. However, the historical parallel is only partially applicable, especially to novels featuring an adult leader (a typical example is Rikitan, the leader of the *Boys from the Beaver River*, or Tapin, the leader of a scout troop). The crucial difference, then, is the fact that in Ancient Greece it was exclusively an individual relationship of the particular; in Foglar's stories it is a leader and a group of boys.¹ Nevertheless, we believe that a certain element of non-sexual pedagogical Eros can be traced in these novels.

It is this dimension of the emotional relationships among adolescent boys and with their male role models that has been identified as one of the possible reasons for the great popularity of Foglar's books (Komárek, 2003). The author of the critical essay quotes the following excerpt from one of Foglar's poems: "The majestic notes of the song are carried through the darkness, and Joska's trembling hand seeks Mirek's and presses it firmly. Mirek squeezes back. Strong and long." (Foglar, 2005a, p. 33). Meaningful handshakes or couple walking hand in hand can be found in almost all of Foglar's books, along with shared glances, admiration of an athletic tanned boyish body clothed in only trunks or shorts. There are also descriptions of heartache, excited memories of friendship, displays of affection and jocular teasing, and jealous break-ups. The novel *Chata v Jezerní kotlině* is perhaps the best example of descriptions of an uncomplicated relationship with all the peripetia of unfulfilled desire (Foglar, 1996). In this novel the relationship descriptions point to the awakening need for tenderness and intimacy. If we were to replace "Ludva's name with the girl's name in Chapter 51, she could appear in a love novel with no changes." (Vacke, 1988, p. 1).

¹ We thank an anonymous reviewer for pointing out this discrepancy.

Foglar's descriptions of boys displays of emotion have been seen as a homosexual manifestation, and thus evidence of the author's sexual orientation. They are not related to paedophilia or ephebophilia in the sexological sense of the word, but are an idealization that has an influence on personal developmental and is socially beneficial. One could call it a pre-bodily realisation of the pedagogical Eros. Considering the impact on youth, it is important to stress that of the more than eight hundred boys who passed through Two, none has ever indicated possible harassment or even abuse; sexual orientation as an opportunity for coercion would certainly have come to the attention of the State Security services, who were monitoring Foglar (Zachariáš, 2007; Zapletal, 2007). His fascination with boyhood probably had nothing to do with sexual orientation, but was intrinsically linked to pedagogical ideals. Foglar's alleged homosexuality, as presented by some tabloids, is analytically interesting more as a practice that tries to change the masculine frameworks that go beyond the portrayal of friendly relationships between boys. Their emotional warmth, physical urgency, and emotional explosiveness transcend the formulas of masculinity that portray men only as competing individuals. In terms of overcoming these aspects of gender expectations, it is more subversive to acknowledge male friendships of this quality than to label them homosexual.

Materials and Methods

To bolster our interpretations we analyse data from a research survey conducted in the summer months of 2020. We looked at thematic areas in the work of Jaroslav Foglar that respondents positively assessed (experienced) to varying degrees and then considered the extent to which they applied them in their own lives. The research was not primarily gender-focused, but the data indicated that this might be a fruitful avenue of research. In particular, the final open-ended item, which respondents could answer freely, in the questionnaire raised issues of gender asymmetry and the underrepresentation of female literary heroines in Foglar. The question was not compulsory, but 104 respondents (9%) took the opportunity to make additional comments. Most responses of this type were brief and related to organisational issues (the structure of the questionnaire, etc.) or were evaluative/complimentary comments (appreciation of the research topic), etc. However, other responses related to the reading experience or further clarified respondents' impressions about the influence of Foglar's work or personality. We thematised these responses into nine categories and subcategories. One category was devoted to the topic of gender and contained nine responses.

Readers' most frequently disapproved of the absence of girl heroes. We consider it significant that these were all female respondents. Another potential group of accounts characterises the theoretical background of the "Masculinity, emotion and warm relationships" section of this paper. However, this content can only be noted in a single response, and it may be significant that this is the only statement by a male respondent in this section of the questionnaire.

To collect the data, we designed a questionnaire containing mainly categorical and scalar items based on published studies that had analysed and discussed the content of Foglar's work and its possible influence on readers' personality development (Hošek, 2017; Jirásek, 2007; Sohr, 1968; Zachariáš, 2007; Zapletal, 2007). We asked, among other things, what respondents' impressions were of his work, which areas (themes) they liked and which ones they applied in their daily lives. Respondents answered on a seven-point scale ranging from strongly yes to strongly no and commented on 15 areas (e.g., literary qualities of the text, story that draws the reader into the plot, role model of the main characters, encouragement of moral action, healthy lifestyle, outdoor life and camping, emotional descriptions of the landscape, etc.). In a slightly modified form, we then asked about the content themes that respondents applied to their daily lives. In addition to these key areas of the questionnaire, selected in relation to the research question, there were also sociological items (gender, education, occupation, etc.) and other items which we will present in the data interpretation.

The data collection was conducted electronically based on a motivational challenge that was distributed via a modified snowball sampling method. To reach the respondents, we used social media, email contacts of organisations that claimed to be carrying on Foglar's work and asked them to further disseminate the appeal. Given our research goals, we wanted to reach respondents who had personal or indirect experience of the work of Foglar and, guided by this logic, we created a deliberate sample. In total, we obtained responses from 1,174 respondents, 686 men and 484 women (4 respondents did not specify their gender). The largest age category was 30-50 years, and contained 661 participants (about 56%). First contact with his work (book, comic, etc.) was typically before the age of 12 (965 respondents, 82%). The sample had a higher proportion of respondents with university education (704, or 60%) and together with respondents with postgraduate education or scientific training (162, or around 14%) they made up 74% of the sample.

Results

Stories with plots that draw the reader in were the most popular theme of Jaroslav Foglar's work (average answer 2.2), extreme scale (+3 – definitely yes) was also a modus and represented 668 times. The responses are also characterised by low variability (variance), as can be seen from the standard deviation (1.3). The second most popular theme was the moral aspects of the work (especially the goodness, the honesty of the main characters, helping the needy, etc.). This was followed by the importance of friendship in peer groups and the opportunity to participate in various activities, and this was valued almost as much as the protagonists' role models. All these themes were rated on an extreme scale (+3 – definitely yes) and the frequency of the mode ranged from about 450 to 500 respondents/teams. By contrast an item that was unpopular among respondents was spiritual initiation, which received the only average negative rating. Similarly under-represented themes were the aesthetic and artistic literary quality of the books and warnings about dangers.

It is in the context that we were interested in any gender differences in the assessments. We investigated this via a visual inspection of the graphs and non-parametric tests. We tested the null hypothesis: that there are no statistical differences in the choice of responses on the scale, in other words, that the medians of a particular opinion level of men and women are statistically insignificant. To our surprise, the women's responses were similar to the men's responses. The only two differences identified were in the variables "romantic corners of the city courtyards and alleys" and "peer cohesion, participation in the life of the club (club, party, etc.)". We further verified this via an analysis of variance (ANOVA) and arrived at the same results. The difference was significant at the $p < 0.05$ level of significance in both cases. Thus, we can conclude that while women value descriptions of the environment more, especially romantic corners of city streets, men prefer peer groups, group cohesion, etc.

We then proceeded to answer the second part of the question, the areas of Foglar's work the respondents applied to everyday life. Judging by the highest mean and mode and frequency, we can conclude that most readers had incorporated being outdoors and camping into their lives, followed by justice (ethical aspects) and helping the needy. In both cases the mode of these variables was the extreme position +3 (definitely yes), which was represented around 500 times in the first case and around 450 times in the second case, and the mean of the answers was about 1.6. The other two themes that were rated highly were emotional perceptions of nature and landscape and peer

cohesion (participation in a party, class, etc.). Here again, the modus was extreme (+3 – definitely yes), but with a lower frequency (385 and 335). Conversely, spiritual values attracted negative preferences.

Again we were interested in whether there were gender differences in the real-life application of the values or attitudes in Foglar's work. For this set of items, using the same procedure as above, we did not identify a single statistically significant difference.

Discussion

The results of our questionnaire survey complement or correct some of the statements that we repeatedly encounter in assessments of Jaroslav Foglar's work. In the theoretical literature published earlier, as well as in our respondents verbal (qualitative) open statements, the gender imbalance of the literary fictional world appears to be a rather urgent topic. The absence of girl heroes, the unrealistic separation of boys' and girls' worlds, the inaccurate portrayal of the social reality in the writer's work have been raised repeatedly (Fafejta, 2007; Kovářík, 1964; Lopatka, 1991; Továrek, 1964; Vacke, 1988). Moreover girls confessed to feeling inadequate and wished they could be boys (Maurer, 2013; Zachariáš, 2007). In contrast, our quantitative results confirm the previously established reading preference is consistent for both genders (Jírek, 1964; Sohr, 1968; Uherková, Úlovcová, 1993; Urbanová, Matýsková, 1992).

Women, like men, appreciate stories with plots, even ones that tend to feature boys. Similarly, both genders engage in outdoor activities and camping. An aspect that deserves more explanation is the gendered or gender-identical appreciation of the moral aspects of the work, and readers' desire to incorporate the ethical aspects into their lives. There is an explicit focus on good and morality in, for example, the stories of the *Swift Arrows* (Foglar, 2003) and their evaluations of the perceived ethical aspects of morality as a constitutive element of Foglar's world, or even the parallel notion that the comics are a representation of Plato's ideal polis (Floss, 2007). This perception stems from various literary appeals for young people to refrain from using vulgar words and cheating, but instead to keep their word and help the needy, compete fairly and admit mistakes, help clear the snow, and for child readers to be ready to perform good deeds when required and report matter beyond their control to adults and authorities. Moreover there is evidence of their readiness to obey these appeals and incorporate them into their own lives (Veselský, 2007).

We cannot compare our findings with international literature, as Jaroslav Foglar and his work are almost unknown abroad. Although some of his writing has been translated into Slovak and Polish, and there is a Hungarian, German, Russian and Esperanto translation of one of his books, none has been translated into English, which has a similar role to Latin in medieval international communication. Partial scholarly probes into Foglar's work through the prism of comic studies (Alaniz, 2008; Jirásek, 2020b) and pedagogy (Jirásek, 2020a; Jirásek & Turcova, 2017) are better known.

To enable a deeper understanding of the context of this paper in an international context, we attempt to fill the gap in primary and secondary literature in English with a brief annotation of the selected sources that form the thematic basis of this paper (Table 1).

Table 1: Annotation of selected sources

Author	Title in Czech	Title in English	Annotation – explanation of the title
Hybler, M. M. H.	Jaroslav Foglar: Tajemství Velkého Vonta	Jaroslav Foglar: The Secret of the Great Vont	This title is the title of the last part of Foglar's trilogy about a fictional city district „Stínadla“. „The Great Vont“ is the head of a boys' organisation in Stínadla called Vonts. The symbol of the Great Vont is a conundrum called „Hedgehog in a Cage“.
Bauer, Z.	Klub zvědavých dětí - Jaroslav Foglar a Protektorát: Čtenářské kluby, zakázaný skauting a Kuratorium pro výchovu mládeže.	The Curious Children's Club – Jaroslav Foglar and the Protectorate: Reading Clubs, Banned Scouting and the Board of Trustees for Youth Education.	Foglar, through the magazine <i>Mladý hlasatel</i> , called for „reading clubs“ to be set up. In the twentieth century scouting was banned several times for political reasons in Czechoslovakia. The Board of Trustees for Youth Education was an extracurricular organisation in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia through the Second World War.
Červenka, J.	Může být člověk chlapcem nadosmrti?	Can a Man Be a Boy Forever?	Foglar's descriptions of boys were based on his belief in the value of boyhood and his lifelong desire to stay young and remain a boy for all eternity.
Dvorský, M.	Mýtus zvaný Stínadla: Rychlé šípy, Vontové a hlavolam – realita versus fikce	The Myth of the Stínadla: The <i>Swift Arrows</i> , the Vonts and the Conundrum – Reality versus Fiction	The „Stínadla“ is a fictitious urban quarter with narrow winding streets. Foglar set his novels in this neighbourhood. The „Vonts“ is the name of a boys organisation in the Stínadla. The symbol of the Great Vont is a conundrum called „Hedgehog in a Cage“. The <i>Swift Arrows</i> is the name of the boys' club in Foglar's novels.

Fafejta, M.	Analýza role žen, dívek a Mírka Dušina v Rychlých šípech: obsahová analýza Rychlých šípů.	An Analysis of the Role of Women, Girls and Mírek Dušin in The Swift Arrows: A Content Analysis of The Swift Arrows.	Women occupy a specific position in Foglar's work – they are never the main characters, and are sometimes inferior. „Mírek Dušin“ is an honest, sincere friend who is willing to sacrifice himself for others. He is the leader of the Swift Arrows boys' club in Foglar's novels.
Foglar, J.	Chata v Jezerní kotlině.	Cottage in the Lake Basin.	The novel tells the story of the friendship of two boys who visit a romantic wild landscape outside the city. Foglar emphasises an unspoilt boyhood and physical culture, but issues a sharp warning against smoking.
Foglar, J.	Rychlé šípy	The Swift Arrows	The Swift Arrows is the name of a boys' club in the works of J. Foglar. The stories of the Swift Arrows have become famous mainly through his comic books, although stories about them can also be found in the book trilogy about Stínadla.
Foglar, J.	Devadesátka pokračuje	Ninety Continues	Foglar originally wrote this novel for the magazine <i>Junák</i> . It continues the story „Under the Junak Flag“. It tells the adventures of Ninety, a scout troop. A considerable part of the book is taken up with a description of the long-running game Alvarez.
Foglar, J.	Život v poklusu	Life at a Trot	Autobiography by J. Foglar, covering the period from his childhood to the last years of his life.
Hošek, P.	Evangelium podle Jaroslava Foglára	The Gospel According to Jaroslav Foglar	This book presents Foglar's work from a religious perspective: the influences of Indian totemism and Roman Catholic spirituality, secret rituals, ecstatic states induced by the splendour of nature, sacred places, the role of goodness, truth and beauty.
Hošek, P.	Duchovní rozměr fenoménu Foglar	The Spiritual Dimension of the Foglar Phenomenon	According to the authors of this collective book, Foglar's work is an extraordinary, remarkable phenomenon in twentieth-century Czech culture. The author focuses on the spiritual dimension of Foglar's work and its reception by readers.
Jirásek, I.	Fenomén Foglar	The Foglar Phenomenon	This collected volume was published on the centenary of J. Foglar's birth and looks at his work in relation to contemporary experiential education.
Jírek, B.	Počítejme s Foglarem	Taking Foglar into Account	The author presents the results of the popularity survey of J. Foglar's work in 1964.

Komárek, S.	Jestřáb a kuřátka	Hawk and Chicks	The author critically examines the influence of the work of J. Foglar (whose scout name was Hawk) on specific generations of readers.
Kovařík, M.	Přijde Foglarův Duben?	Is Foglar's April Coming?	The title of the book responds to the title of one of the novels, <i>When April Comes</i> . April, a spring month, indicates the boyhood period of growing up.
Maurer, P.	Ježek v kleci: Dosud nepublikovaný rozhovor Pavla Maurera s Jaroslavem Foglarem	Hedgehog in a Cage: Pavel Maurer's Unpublished Interview with Jaroslav Foglar	The conundrum called „Hedgehog in a Cage“ is the symbol of the Great Vont, who is the head of Vont, the boys' organisation in Stínadla – Foglar's trilogy of stories of the fictional city district.
Nosek-Windy, V.	Jestřábí perutě: povídky o foglarovkách.	Hawk Wings: A Discussion of Foglar's Books.	Hawk Wings is a pun on Foglar's scout name (Hawk).
Pírek, Z.	Čtenářské kluby Jaroslava Foglara	Jaroslav Foglar's Reading Clubs	Foglar, through the magazine <i>Mladý hlasatel</i> , called for reading clubs to be set up.
Sohr, S.	Zase zní píseň úplňku: vyprávění o Jaroslavu Foglarovi.	The Song of the Full Moon can be Heard Again: The Story of Jaroslav Foglar.	This book was published during the Prague Spring and gives a previously unknown overview of Foglar's life and work. It contains a list of his camps. The Song of the Full Moon was sung by the forester's boy Roy Farell – a character in Foglar's novel <i>The Boys from the Beaver River</i> . This song can't be heard by adults, only by boys and girls with hearts that are pure and good.
Veselský, P.	Jaroslav Foglar – „profesor morálky“?	Jaroslav Foglar – „Professor of Morality“?	The author describes Foglar's influence on decency and moral behaviour. The heroes of Foglar's novels are ethical role models.
Vučka, T.	Cesta za modrým světlem: Meditace nad texty Jaroslava Foglara.	The Journey to the Blue Light: Meditations on the Texts of Jaroslav Foglar.	The first comprehensive scholarly monograph on Foglar. The book confronts Foglar's ideals with the views of the critical reader.
Zachariáš, J.	Stoletý hoch od Bobří řeky: Dobrodružství života a metod Jaroslava Foglara - legendy dětské zájmové činnosti	The Hundred-Year-Old Boy from Beaver River: Adventures in the Life and Methods of Jaroslav Foglar – Tales of Children's Interests	In the title of this publication, Foglar is likened to the heroes of his own novels – the boys from the Beaver River.

Another important reason is the thematic and methodological shift in research on gender issues, where merely investigating the differences or correspondences between men's and women's perceptions is less popular and research into non-binary notions of sex and gender (LGBTQ+) is coming to the fore. Until a few decades ago, content analysis of comic strips was concerned with a similar phenomenon to that we observed in Foglar's books, namely that men are overrepresented in comic strips and women are underrepresented as a proportion of the population, and that observation led to the inference that there is socially harmful gender inequality (Chavez, 1985). These days the analysis of children's picture books entails a value inquiry into whether this type of literature supports or challenges the assumption of a binary gender structure and gender essentialism, and thereby whether it can be pedagogically used for transformative purposes. In other words, our results, methodological approach and theoretical grounding may be considered "old-fashioned". Particularly when compared to the contemporary interest in the preference for transgender and crossgender themes manifested in the preference for literary "non-sexist" heroes in the form of tomboys (Shen, 2018), boy heroes behaving in maternal or feminine ways (Bray, 2015), or pregnant men being considered an appropriate topic of discussion with primary school children (Ryan, Patraw, Bednar, 2013).

Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to consider gender in the work of Jaroslav Foglar. The impetus for the paper was the results of a questionnaire survey primarily focused on the imprint a literary work leaves on the lives of male and female readers.

In the paper we summarised the dramatic debates about whether Foglar was homosexual and whether the relationships between the boys in his stories can be interpreted as homosexual. We argue that the interpretation that these relationships are homosexual is based on the fact that the friendships between boys/men in his work are portrayed differently from stereotypical gender expectations. This makes Foglar's work interesting in terms of its gender-transformative potential. On the one hand, some may see in it a process of the extinction of women, while on the other hand one cannot ignore the interest girls-readers in this literature.

Foglar's work may blur the traditional perception of masculinity to today's readers. His books are not only about strength, combativeness and competition, but through the sensitivity and strength of the bonds between

male friends, attention is turned to the body as an object, and his writing thereby transcends the traditional conception of the masculine hero. The thus described male friendships are absent in cultural representations, and in this respect Foglar's work is also suggestive of a contemporary world seeking to transform gender relations towards greater openness and freedom without pre-defined gender boundaries.

Regardless of the immense possibilities of human experience, which characterise the current era in contradistinction to almost a century ago, when Jaroslav Foglar began publishing, this type of children's literature continues to gain new readers and supporters – regardless of their gender identity.

Declaration of interest statement

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest related to the work and that the manuscript complies with the Ethical Rules.

References

- Alaniz, J. (2008). Where the white clouds sail... (100 years since the birth of Jaroslav Foglar). *International Journal of Comic Art*, 10(1), 583-586.
- Bauer, Z. (2018). *Klub zvědavých dětí – Jaroslav Foglar a Protektorát: Čtenářské kluby, zakázaný skauting a Kuratorium pro výchovu mládeže*. Praha: Zdeněk Bauer.
- Bilý, J. (2012). *Kruh mužů: přechodové rituály pro muže*. Praha: Synergie Publishing.
- Bittner, R., Ingrey, J., & Stamper, C. (2016). Queer and trans-themed books for young readers: A critical review. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 37(6), 948-964.
- Bray, D. B. (2015). Sissy boy mothering: Male child mother figures in middle-grade fantasy literature. *Children's Literature in Education*, 46(2), 160-174.
- Capuzza, J. C. (2020). "T" is for "transgender": An analysis of children's picture books featuring transgender protagonists and narrators. *Journal of Children & Media*, 14(3), 324-342.
- Červenka, J. (1965). Může být člověk chlapcem nadosmrti? *Zlatý máj*, 9(1), 12-16.
- Davies, B., & Saltmarsh, S. (2007). Gender economies: Literacy and the gendered production of neo-liberal subjectivities. *Gender & Education*, 19(1), 1-20.
- Dvorský, M. (2011). *Mýtus zvaný Stínadla: Rychlé šípky, Vontové a hlavolam – realita versus fikce* (2., rozš. vyd. ed.). Praha: Zdeněk Bauer.
- Earles, J. (2017). Reading gender: A feminist, queer approach to children's literature and children's discursive agency. *Gender and Education*, 29(3), 369-388.
- Eliade, M. (1964). *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy* (W. R. Trask, Trans.). Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Eliade, M. (1981). *History of religious ideas, Volume 1: From the Stone Age to the Eleusinian Mysteries* (W. R. Trask, Trans.). Chicago: University Of Chicago Press.

- Fafejta, M. (2007). Analýza role žen, dívek a Mirka Dušina v Rychlých šípech: Obsahová analýza Rychlých šípů. In I. Jirásek (Ed.), *Fenomén Foglar* (pp. 161-168). Praha: Prázdňinová škola Lipnice.
- Floss, K. (2007). Můj J. Foglar a Platón. In I. Jirásek (Ed.), *Fenomén Foglar* (pp. 103-105). Praha: Prázdňinová škola Lipnice.
- Foglar, J. (1996). *Chata v Jezerní kotlině*. Praha: Olympia.
- Foglar, J. (2003). *Rychlé šípy* (2. vydání – dotisk ed.). Praha: Olympia.
- Foglar, J. (2005a). *Devadesátka pokračuje*. Praha: Olympia.
- Foglar, J. (2005b). *Život v poklusu*. Praha: Olympia.
- Gintel, A. (Ed.) (2019). *Zahrady pozemských radostí: Pohled z dějin výchovy v přírodě*. Praha: Gasset.
- Hermann-Wilmarth, J. M., & Ryan, C. L. (2016). Queering chapter books with LGBT characters for young readers: Recognizing and complicating representations of homonormativity. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 37(6), 846-866.
- Heywood, S. (2020). Gender in children's literature in Europe. *Encyclopédie d'histoire numérique de l'Europe [online]*(Permalink: <https://ehne.fr/en/node/21306>).
- Homer. (1992). *The Iliad* (R. Fitzgerald, Trans.). London: Campbell.
- Hošek, P. (2017). *Evangelium podle Jaroslava Foglara*. Brno: Centrum pro studium demokracie a kultury.
- Hošek, P. (Ed.) (2018). *Duchovní rozměr fenoménu Foglar* Praha: Dingir.
- Hybler, M. M. H. (1987). Jaroslav Foglar: Tajemství Velkého Vonta. *Svědectví*, 20(80), 944-946.
- Chavez, D. (1985). Perpetuation of gender inequality: A content analysis of comic strips. *Sex Roles*, 13(1-2), 93-102.
- Jirásek, I. (2019). *Zážitková pedagogika: Teorie holistické výchovy (v přírodě a volném čase)*. Praha: Portál.
- Jirásek, I. (2020a). Does Alvarez truly need only the brave and the strong? Jaroslav Foglar and experiential education for boys in Bohemia. *History of Education*, 49(6), 856-869.
- Jirásek, I. (2020b). Holistic leisure education through the Czech Rapid Arrows comics. *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics*, 1-15.
- Jirásek, I. (2021). Outdoor education and becoming-man. *Journal of Outdoor and Environmental Education*, 1-13.
- Jirásek, I. (Ed.) (2007). *Fenomén Foglar*. Praha: Prázdňinová škola Lipnice.
- Jirásek, I., & Turca, I. (2017). The Czech approach to outdoor adventure and experiential education: The influence of Jaroslav Foglar's work. *Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Learning*, 17(4), 321-337.
- Jírek, B. (1964). Počítejme s Foglarem. *Zlatý máj*, 8(11), 504-507.
- Komárek, S. (2003). Jestřáb a kuřátka *Mír s mloky* (pp. 105-111). Brno: Petrov.
- Kovářík, M. (1964). Přijde Foglarův Duben? *Zlatý máj*, 8(5), 208-213.
- Lopatka, J. (1991). Sláva a úskalí amatérismu. In J. Lopatka (Ed.), *Předpoklady tvorby* (pp. 174-182). Praha: Československý spisovatel.
- Maurer, P. (2013). *Ježek v kleci: Dosud nepublikovaný rozhovor Pavla Maurera s Jaroslavem Foglarem 1982-1985*. Praha: MauMau.

- McCabe, J., Fairchild, E., Grauerholz, L., Pescosolido, B. A., & Tope, D. (2011). Gender in twentieth-century children's books: Patterns of disparity in titles and central characters. *Gender and Society*, 25(2), 197-226.
- Nezkusil, V. (1991). Rozpory Foglarova světa: k prvnímu soubornému vydání "stínadelských" příběhů. *Zlatý máj*, 35(3), 157-163.
- Nosek-Windy, V. (1999). *Jestřábí perutě: povídání o foglarovkách*. Praha: Olympia.
- Nosek-Windy, V. (2003). Ediční poznámka. In J. Foglar (Ed.), *Rychlé šípy* (2. vydání – dotisk Ed., pp. 323-339). Praha: Olympia.
- Nosek-Windy, V. (2017). Vzpomínka na Jaroslava Foglara. In J. Filípek, T. Hejna, S. Janov, Menhart, V. Nosek-Windy, J. Polák, M. Teslevič, M. Vraspír, & K. Zelničková (Eds.), *S Jestřábem v srdci* (pp. 61-64). Velké Přílepy: Olympia.
- Pírek, Z. (1990). *Čtenářské kluby Jaroslava Foglara*. Brno: Delfin.
- Plato. (1951). *The Symposium* (W. Hamilton, Trans.). London: Penguin Classics.
- Ryan, C. L., Patraw, J. M., & Bednar, M. (2013). Discussing princess boys and pregnant men: Teaching about gender diversity and transgender experiences within an elementary school curriculum. *Journal of LGBT Youth*, 10(1-2), 83-105.
- Shen, L. C. (2018). Gender and cross-genderism in children's literature: A comparative case study of the figure of the tomboy. *Neohelicon*, 45(2), 653-670.
- Sládek, O. (2008). Role mýtu v díle Jaroslava Foglara. In R. Hamanová & D. Lábusová (Eds.), *K fenoménu Jaroslav Foglar* (pp. 25-36). Praha: Památník národního písemnictví.
- Sohr, S. (1968). *Zase zní píseň úplňku: vyprávění o Jaroslavu Foglarovi*. Ostrava: Puls.
- Továrek, F. (1964). Něco na tom bude. *Zlatý máj*, 8(10), 452-455.
- Uherková, D., & Úlovcová, H. (1993). Co se čte ve veřejných knihovnách. *Čtenář: měsíčník pro práci s knihou*, 45(9), 282-293.
- Urbanová, S., & Matýšková, B. (1992). *Jaroslav Foglar (tematická jednotka pro základní školy)*. Ostrava: Item.
- Vacke, V. (1988). Svět pouze pro chlapce? *Kmen*, 1(40), 1 a 3. van Gennepe, A. (2018). *Přechodové rituály: Systematické studium rituálů* (H. Beguivinová, Trans.). Praha: Portál.
- Veselský, P. (2007). Jaroslav Foglar – „profesor morálky“? In I. Jirásek (Ed.), *Fenomén Foglar* (pp. 106-109). Praha: Prázdňinová škola Lipnice.
- Vučka, T. (2015). *Cesta za modrým světlem: Meditace nad texty Jaroslava Foglara*. Příbram: Pistorius & Olšanská.
- Zachariáš, J. (2007). *Stoletý hoch od Bobří řeky: Dobrodružství života a metod Jaroslava Foglara – legendy dětské zájmové činnosti*. Praha: Ostrov.
- Zapletal, M. (2007). *Záhady a tajemství Jaroslava Foglara*. Praha: Euromedia Group – Knižní klub.

Authors:

Ivo Jirásek, professor
Tomas Bata University in Zlín
Faculty of Humanities
Štefánikova 5670
760 01 Zlín
Czech Republic
Email: jirasek@utb.cz

Richard Macků, Ph.D.
Faculty of Education
University of South Bohemia
Dukelská 9
České Budějovice
Czech Republic
Email: mackur@pf.jcu.cz

Jiří Němec, associate professor
Masaryk University
Faculty of Education
Poříčí 623/7
603 00 Brno
Czech Republic
Email: nemec@muni.cz

Lucie Jarkovská, associate professor
Masaryk University
Institute for Research in Inclusive Education
Poříčí 623/7
603 00 Brno
Czech Republic
Email: jarkovska@ped.muni.cz