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Treasure, Thievery and Mischief: Blending Culture and Negotiating Boundaries in the Worlds of Little People

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This study places *Croatian Tales of Long Ago* (1916) by Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić in the context of international literature by discussing “little people” in children’s fictional texts. “Worlds of little people” (Lynch-Brown and Tomlinson 2005) reveal *conceptual blending* at a linguistic, cultural and semantic level visible in the creation of new emergent structures. Brlić-Mažuranić’s combining of seemingly incompatible concepts (Fauconnier and Turner 2002) from various aspects of Slavic and Croatian mythologies as input spaces in the process of conceptual integration demonstrates the ability of little people to transcend boundaries and allows for the creation of new and unique cultures and lexica. Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić’s *Croatian Tales of Long Ago*, populated with tiny characters such as Malik Tintilinić, is a superb example of an original, adaptable world comparable to those created by Swift, Andersen, Tolkien, Baum, Barrie, Norton, Dr. Seuss or Dahl. Consequently, the conceptual integration at work in Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić’s original Croatian mythology has resulted in the empowerment and enchantment of readers from long ago to the present day.

Keywords: conceptual blending, culture, little people, modern fantasy, mythology

Introduction

In 1991 Roald Dahl’s final book *The Minpins* described Little Billy surrounded by “more than twenty small windows all around where [he] was sitting, and from

each window the[se] amazing little faces were peering out” (18). Such depictions appeared as early as Charles Perrault’s “Little Thumb” (*Histories or Tales of Past Times*, 1697) and in Jonathan Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels* (1726) in tales and adventures not originally intended for children, but gladly consumed by them. Subsequently, the existence of “little people” and “worlds of little people” in children’s literature, as noted by Carol Lynch-Brown and Carl Tomlinson (2005), has become both a tradition and a modern fantasy phenomenon. Lynch-Brown and Tomlinson suggest that little people “delight children because they can identify with the indignities foisted upon little and powerless people”, also because “the big people are invariably outdone by the more ingenious little people” (122). Many authors such as Hans Christian Andersen in *Fairy Tales Told for Children* (1835), Mary Norton in *The Borrowers* (1952), L. Frank Baum in *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900), Dr. Seuss in *Horton Hears a Who!* (1954), or J.R.R. Tolkien in *The Hobbit* (1937) successfully use the function of little people and their appearance as an understatement, signifying the cultural “give and take” of knowledge, goods, salvation, as well as a strong sense of community.¹

Likewise, the appearance of little people was the point of origin of Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić’s *Croatian Tales of Long Ago* (1916), a collection of stories that had a profound impact on Croatian literature and culture. As one of the most prolific Croatian (children’s) writers, Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić was the author of fairy tales, stories, poems, novels, and fables, had a whole period of children’s literature (1913–1933) named after her, was the first woman ever to become a member of the Yugoslav Academy of Sciences and Arts and a four-time Nobel Prize nominee (Zima 2014: 239), and was recognised both in her homeland and abroad.² It is our intention to place Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić in the context of the international literary canon by taking a look at the motif of little people, specifically Malik Tintilinić and the Domaći, as the manifestation of *conceptual blending* defined by Fauconnier and Turner (2002) and its implications on the creation of an original national mythology. *Croatian Tales of Long Ago* is an exceptional collection in Croatian children’s literature, marked by numerous editions and translations, as well as by its stylistic, thematic and ethical qualities (Hranjec 2004: 38). From Dubravka

¹ The most obvious example being Norton’s *Borrowers* who “borrow” from the “human beans” or Tolkien’s Bilbo Baggins who is a “burglar”. However, Swift’s *Gulliver* helps the Lilliputians steal their enemies’ fleet, Baum’s *Munchkins* introduce Dorothy to the Land of Oz and Dr. Seuss’ *Whos* perpetuate the multiethnic idea that “a person’s a person no matter how small” (Dr. Seuss 1954).

² A review in the *Time and Life* (London, 5 December 1924) revealed that in *Croatian Tales of Long Ago* “[e]ach story is a parable of life, full of meaning and beauty” (cf. Narančić-Kovač 2016: 99, 102). The first English translation was published by Frederick A. Stokes in 1924, a mere eight years after the Croatian publication of the *Tales*.

Zima's research on Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić's membership in the Academy and her four Nobel Prize nominations (2014), it is evident that these achievements were primarily based on the cultural impact of *Croatian Tales of Long Ago*. The *Tales* have also been recognised for their complexity in terms of sources and influences, resulting in a unique authorial expression.

Conceptual blending, language and culture

Recent literary criticism has drawn on existing research in the field of cognitive linguistics to shed light on literary practice and phenomena.³ In talking about the world, we invoke all kinds of knowledge – *mental spaces*. They provide a conceptual background for the contextualisation and evaluation of the speaker's ideas. Accordingly, *conceptual blending* implies the overlapping of mental spaces, as well as conceptual integration. The result of conceptual blending is a blended space containing elements from two (or more) input spaces. Originally, blending was studied only as a word-formation process, where elements of two words were joined and the result was a new word with a new meaning (Radden 2008: 11–13) (e.g. *smoke* + *fog* → *smog*). Subsequently, cognitive researchers realised that blending occurs not only at lexical, but also at conceptual, semantic and cultural levels. As such, conceptual integration functions in many fields – everyday creation of knowledge, conceptual change, metaphor and analogy, scientific discoveries, counterfactual thinking, grammar, acting and shaping (Fauconnier and Turner 1999: 77–78), being “a powerful means of creating new meanings from input spaces” (Radden 2008: 13). Coulson also elaborates conceptual integration theory, claiming that it offers a general model of meaning creation where a set of compositional processes functions within analogy, metaphor, and many more semantic and pragmatic phenomena (2006: 189). Equally, *blending theory* clarifies many former doubts about conceptual metaphors and metonymies, as well as other phenomena in cognitive science. According to Turner (2003), the mind constantly integrates apparently incompatible mental patterns. For Stephens and Geerts (2014), without such tendencies “radical adaptations could be neither imagined nor comprehended” (2014: 193). The fantastic, adaptable and fluid world of Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić's *Croatian Tales of Long Ago* is the perfect example of how conceptual blending works in rather complex ways. We will focus on the example of Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić's little people to illustrate this point.

³ See, for example, John Stephens' and Sylvie Geerts' “Mishmash, Conceptual Blending and Adaptation in Contemporary Children's Literature Written in Dutch and English” (2014) or the forthcoming 3rd Cambridge Symposium on Cognitive Approaches to Children's Literature (17 March 2017).

Little people drawn from the past

Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić's creation of *Croatian Tales of Long Ago* can be observed as an example of a process significantly marked by conceptual blending at a semantic, linguistic (lexical/etymological) and cultural level. In "Stribor's Forest"⁴ she introduces the guardians of home and hearth, Domaći, thus (Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić 1924: 170):

The old woman wondered what on earth was going on there in the dark, and went into the kitchen. And when she got there the kindling-chips just flared up on the hearth, and round the flame there were Brownies⁵ dancing in a ring – all tiny little men no bigger than half an ell. They wore little fur coats; their caps and shoes were red as flames; their beards were grey as ashes, and their eyes sparkled like live coal.

More and more of them danced out of the flames, one for each chip. And as they appeared they laughed and chirped, turned somersaults on the hearth, twittered with glee, and then took hands and danced in a ring.

And how they danced!

In line with the characteristics of literary little people, Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić's Domaći are lively tiny creatures who engage in mischief by bringing joy to the old Mother whose son marries the Snake-Woman, for "[I]t seemed to the old woman as though she were growing young again" (1924: 172). They are involved in an exchange of material goods, having landed in the old Mother's house by means of the kindling-wood that she had received as compensation from the poor girl whose sleeve she had mended. Finally, they provide access to treasure and salvation by taking the old Mother to their master Stribor who offers the old Mother a return to the village of her youth, "fenced about with silver" (182–183), which she politely declines, not willing to part from her son.

The origin of the Domaći was depicted by Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić in the letter to her son Ivan Brlić written on 30 November 1929:

One winter night our home was, very unusually, completely quiet. There was no one around and the rooms were semidark, and seemed big and empty except for fires burning in all the stoves. Very mysterious! From the most distant room in the house, a huge dining room, I suddenly heard someone knocking. "Who is it?" I asked but there was no answer. Again I heard, "knock! knock!" and again asked "Who is it?" with no reply. So I went to explore and entered the big dining room with some trepidation. Suddenly I heard the sound "Crack!" and the fire in the stove flared up in a little explosion. A pine log was loudly throwing up sparks out into the room towards me, like a flock of tiny stars, and when I raised my hands to catch that golden gift, they flew up to the roof and... they were gone. – I was reading Afanasiev's *Vozzrijenija drevnih*

⁴ Orig. "Šuma Striborova".

⁵ F.S. Copeland's translation refers to the Domaći as "Brownies", tiny creatures with a similar role in Anglo-Saxon mythology (Keightley 1892: "The Brownie").

Slavjan na prirodu at the time, and at that moment I remembered the “domaći”. And this is how the “brownies” who eventually appear in “Stribor’s Forest” came into being, from that little explosion and tiny flock of sparks and stars. After that other stories came, seven of them, without any specific “genesis”. In a way they too were like the “brownies” thrown out from the hearth of an ancient Slavic home. (Translated by Bulaja 2002).

While denying a specific “genesis” of the *Tales*, Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić nevertheless attributes the origin of the whole collection to the encounter with the Domaći. However, this excerpt also demonstrates that the *Tales*, although a superb example of modern fantasy owing to its known authorship and originality, was also created as a result of a multitude of influences, connections and correlations, all immersed within a complex conceptual system. This is also very likely the reason why images of the Domaći and Malik Tintilinić permeate the public sphere and the media to the present day (**Fig. 1**).

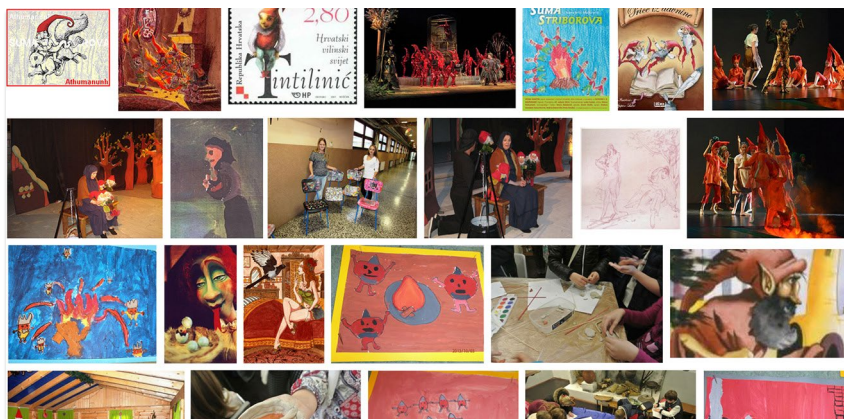


Fig. 1. A simple Google search of “Malik Tintilinić”, “Domaći” and “Šuma Striborova” yields an impressive number of results.

Sl. 1. Jednostavno pretraživanje pojmova „Malik Tintilinić“, „Domaći“ i „Šuma Striborova“ uz pomoć programa Google donosi iznimno velik broj rezultata.

The case of Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić strongly supports the idea of a unique emergent structure. The development of mental spaces theory and conceptual integration has the purpose of explaining cases where the contents of two or more mental spaces combine to create new inferences (Coulson 2006: 189–190). It is a basic and comprehensive mental operation that enables the *blending* of two or more mental spaces, thus creating a new mental space, which is not just a combination of the initial ones, but possesses its own emergent structure. A typical conceptual network consists of two input spaces, a blended space and a generic space. There can also occur a partial mapping between two input spaces, and selective

projections from the input to the projection space (Fauconnier and Turner 1999: 77). By combining various input spaces, Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić created an original national mythology to which we turn in exploration of our tradition and heritage.

Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić's use of conceptual blending is particularly apparent in her creation of the Domaći as the catalysts of *Croatian Tales of Long Ago*. Accordingly, **Fig. 2** maps the generic, input and blended spaces that lead to the final creation of Brlić-Mažuranić's little people:

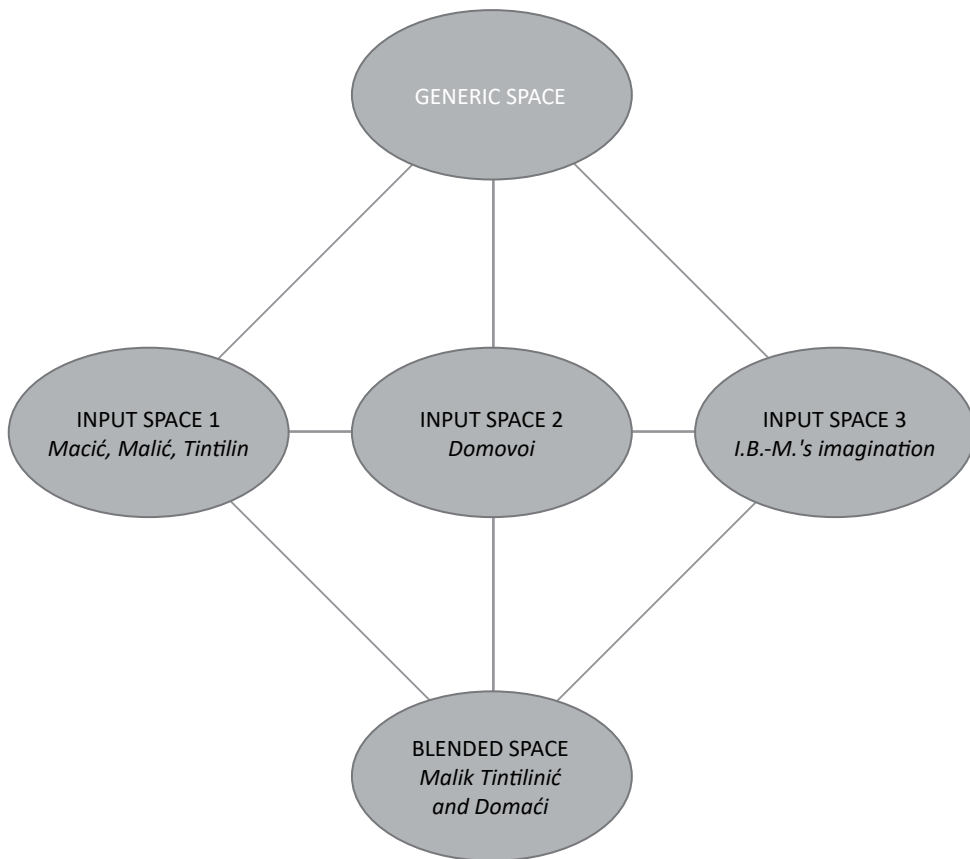


Fig. 2. Image of the mental spaces involved in the creation of the Domaći and Malik Tintilinić.

Sl. 2. Slika mentalnih prostora uključenih u nastanak pojmova Domaćih i Malika Tintilinića.

In the network of conceptual integration, the generic space involves an abstract structure that is common to all the input spaces. The first input space for

the present linguistic and conceptual projection includes *Macić*, *Malić* and *Tintilin*, characters from Croatian tradition and mythology. *Malić*, *malik* or *maljak* is a tiny Istrian and Dalmatian household god, depicted as a small mischievous boy with a red hat, emerging from leaping flames. He is always positive and ready to help. Complementing *Malić's* looks and character, *Tintilin*, also part of Croatian folklore, a demon with a red hat, swooshing through houses, functions also as one of the constituents of input space 1 (more on the characters below) in the process of conceptual blending. The *Domovoi*, small and bearded⁶ house gods from Russian mythology, known as tricksters and shapeshifters, make up the second input space. Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić, being well read and of extensive knowledge, therefore also under the versatile influences of Slavic mythology, as shown in her letters and through her collaborations, added elements from her own imagination in the form of input space 3, thus creating brand-new, original concepts in the form of *Malik Tintilinić* and the *Domaći*. They are combinations of selected features from all three input spaces, new concepts with new original elements.

Conceptual integration works at multiple levels in the case of *Malik Tintilinić* and the *Domaći*. Both names, *Malik Tintilinić* and *Domaći*, are linguistic blends, created from *Malić*, *Tintilin* and *Domovoi*. Blending processes and mental spaces resulting at semantic and cultural levels permeate in a certain way, since the creation of unique characters, as are *Malik Tintilinić* and the *Domaći*, has brought new concepts not only to children's literature, but to culture and conceptual systems in general. *Malik* and the *Domaći* are part of the general cognitive experience of Croatian (and international) minds and lives, thus being a universal (inter)national cultural blend/phenomenon.

So, while creating *Croatian Tales of Long Ago*, Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić relied on fragments of Slavic mythology, as well as the oral tradition of storytelling and the Christian tradition. The specific sources indicated in the aforementioned letter to her son and detected in research conducted by Maja Bošković-Stulli (1970), and subsequently by Andrijana Kos-Lajtman and Jasna Horvat (2009, 2012), are Alexander Nikolayevich Afanasyev's *The Poetic Outlook of Slavs about Nature* (1865, 1868, 1869)⁷ and Anton Tkány's *Mythologie der alten Teutschen und Slaven* [Mythology of Old Germans and Slavs] (1827). Several examples are listed in **Table 1**.

⁶ Sometimes hairy all over.

⁷ Orig. *Vözzrijenija drevnih Slavjan na prirodu*; another possible source is the mythological study by Natko Nodilo *Religija Srba i Hrvata na glavnoj osnovi pjesama, priča i govora narodnog* [The Religion of Serbs and Croats, on the main basis of songs, stories and folk speech] (1890).

Table 1. Some examples of names in *Croatian Tales of Long Ago* derived from Slavic mythology and Croatian folklore and folk tradition.

Tablica 1. Neki primjeri imena u *Pričama iz davnine* koji su razvijeni na temelju slavenske mitologije te hrvatskoga folkloru i folklorne tradicije.

Slavic mythology	Croatian folk tradition
Svarožić (All-Rosy; son of god Svarog)	Regoč (Reygoch; Ignjat Đurđević; <i>Suze Marunkove</i> ; Vladimir Nazor: <i>Veli Jože</i>)
Stribor (Stribog)	Legen (the city of Frosten; Leđan)
Mokoš (Mokosh)	Relja (Relya; Hrelja, derived from epic tradition)
Bjesomar (Rampogusto)	Malik Tintilinić (Wee Tinkilinkie; malik – devil; Belostenec)
Zora-djevojka (the Dawn-Maiden)	žena-guja (Snake-Woman; also Christian symbolism)
djed Neumijka (Old Man Weather)	
Poludnica (the Noon Crone / Witch)	
Zmaj orijaški (the Fiery Dragon)	

Source: Hranjec (2004).

Accordingly, Branimir Donat suggests that Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić built original structures on the foundation of mythology and oral tradition and created “an artistically vital fairy tale pastiche” (1970: 31). In her research, Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić dealt with incomplete mythologies which she reconstructed and combined to form original plots and storylines. This resulted in original tales with an archaic foundation, stylistically resembling the orally transmitted tales of Croatian folklore and folk tradition. The conceptual blending explanations of Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić’s phenomena fully support the previous research findings.

The times of Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić

The fantastic scenes that Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić constructed throughout her work, the historical and biblical creatures, as well as her patriotic sentiment (Hranjec 2006: 57), were also the result of her upbringing and circumstances,⁸ reflecting the influence of the period of the *belle époque* and *neo-romanticism*,⁹ and her family. In her “Autobiography” commissioned by the Academy of Sciences

⁸ “I remember well the excitement that I felt about the strange surroundings and unusual folk costumes of the local people. The mountain Klek, with its strange and striking shape, and the romantic river Dobra running nearby fired my imagination till late into the night, spinning in my mind the strangest images and the most fantastic ideas” (Brlić-Mažuranić: “Autobiography”; transl. by Bulaja 2002).

⁹ Marked by tendencies towards the imaginative, exotic and historical subject matter, stylised expression and the picturesque (Hranjec 2004: 40). The “epochal characteristics are also found in her extremely visual experience, in the *pictures* that she in the preface to the collection considers the core of every art” (Skok 1995: 25, emphasis in the original). Such influences are also discussed in Dubravka Zima’s monograph *Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić* (2001).

and Arts in 1916, Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić lists her immediate influences, foremost her grandfather Ivan Mažuranić, Croatian poet, linguist, lawyer, politician and the first commoner to become Croatian Ban, as well as Josip and Fran Mažuranić, poet and friend Franjo Marković, Bishop Josip Juraj Strossmayer, and her own children. However, Kos-Lajtman and Horvat (2009) suggest that much of the terminology might have been derived from Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić's collaboration with her father Vladimir Mažuranić, a scientist, lawyer, and author. Evidence of this can be found in the dictionary of legal and historical terms *Prinosi za hrvatski pravno-povjestni rječnik* [Contributions to the Croatian Dictionary of Legal and Historical Terms] from 1908 to 1922 and its appended version from 1923.¹⁰ According to scholars, the dictionary contains notes written by Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić herself, and entries that might pinpoint the origin of specific names, such as that of Malik Tintilinić, the head Domaći in “Stribor’s Forest” (see **Table 2**).

Table 2. Entry for *malić*, *maljak* and *tintilin* in *Prinosi za hrvatski pravno-povjestni rječnik* by Vladimir Mažuranić, 1908–1922. The creature is primarily defined as an apparition, a spirit or a ghost (of a child), often with negative connotations, such as the devil, or otherwise in an idolatrous context.

Tablica 2. Natuknice „malić“, „maljak“ i „tintilin“ u djelu *Prinosi za hrvatski pravno-povjestni rječnik* Vladimira Mažuranića, 1908. – 1922. To je biće ponajprije određeno kao utvara, prikaza ili duh (djeteta), često s negativnim konotacijama, kao npr. vražić, ili, naprotiv, u idolatrijskome smislu.

malić, malik, maljak	m., a type of apparition, approximately the same as macić or mačić. See Maljak (p. 626)
maljak	m., same as macaruo, malik, etc. The phantasm is different on different sides. Methinks, however, one must not forget Mikl. Etym. Wtb. under the word maljeva. – perhaps there is no confirmed relationship with the Old German mal, yet the old meaning of malik in Slov. language is statue, idol, (the same as kumir), thus implying evil spirit, etc. Belost. says it is also a synon. for devil, so <i>sub verbo</i> lar, “malik, household god” (among pagans). Like the basilisk, maljak emerges from an egg, laid by a cock, etc. (p. 626)
tintilin	m., spiritus, ghost (of a child), macić, maljak; see macaruo, etc. (p. 1452)

Source: Andrijana Kos-Lajtman and Jasna Horvat (2009).

The origin of the character Malik Tintilinić implies conceptual blending at a cultural and etymological level. *Malik* (and variations) is a mythological character

¹⁰ *Dodatak prinosima za hrvatski pravno-povjestni rječnik* (1923).

often appearing in the oral tradition from Istria to central Dalmatia (also recognised by Kajkavian Croats and Slovenes), whereas *tintilin* is mentioned in the tales of southern Dalmatia and the area of Dubrovnik (Bošković-Stulli 1970: 169). In the oral tradition, *tintilin* appears as a tiny boy in red clothes and a red cape, mischievous and joyful, who brings prosperity. In “Stribor’s Forest”, Malik Tintilinić is the most outspoken, cunning and mischievous of all Domaći, the protagonist who provides the means to expose the Snake-Woman and restore the original order (Brlić-Mažuranić 1924: 173):

I will help you! I will go to the sunshiny land and bring you magpies’ eggs. We will put them under the sitting hen, and when the magpies are hatched, your daughter-in-law will betray herself. She will crave for little magpies like any ordinary forest snake, and so put out her tongue.

In her 1970 study, Bošković-Stulli explains that “[I]n the index at the end of the book [Malik] is presented as ‘the old folk name for one of the liveliest domaći,’ but that is not true. The name Malik Tintilinić was coined by the authoress herself, aware of the beliefs about malik and tintilin” (169).¹¹ The image of Malik Tintilinić remains recognisable a century later. He is the tiny fire-like guardian of the hearth and the playful protector of the weak and the oppressed. In other words, by blending the local mythologies, Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić created a novel mythological creature recognisable across the national culture.

In such a manner, Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić created a distinct language of the *Tales* as well. Consequently, her work has been recognised for the opulence and stylistic richness of her literary expression. As a virtuoso of the Croatian language, Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić often used archaisms, verses and the rhythm of folk poetry, as well as the decasyllabic verse of heroic epics. She was infinitely lauded for her rhythmic and narrative playfulness, luxuriant picturesqueness and lexical opulence (Hranjec 2004: 44), also evident in her description of the Domaći (Brlić-Mažuranić 1924: 171–172):

Round the hearth, in the ashes, under the cupboard, on the table, in the jug, on the chair! Round and round! Faster and faster! They chirped and they chattered, chased and romped all over the place. They scattered the salt; they spilt the barm; they upset the flour – all for sheer fun. The fire on the hearth blazed and shone, crackled and glowed; and the old woman gazed and gazed. She never regretted the salt or the barm, but was glad of the jolly little folk whom God had sent to comfort her.¹²

¹¹ All translations were done by the authors, unless indicated otherwise.

¹² Here is a fragment of the original Croatian text: “Pa zaigra kolo: po ognjištu, po pepelu, pod policu, na stolicu, po ćupu, na klupe! Igraj! Igraj! Brzo! Brže! Cikću, vrište, guraju se i krevelje. Sol prosuše, kvas proliše, brašno rastepoše – sve od velike radosti. Vatra na ognjištu plamsa, sjaji, pucka i grije” (Brlić-Mažuranić 1997: 85).

Therefore, conceptual blending is also present in the distinct literary style of Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić. Ana Pintarić suggests that Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić combined elements of classic fairy tales, embellished with details, descriptions and narrations like those of Oscar Wilde, was thematically positioned between the Grimms and Andersen, and stylistically by means of introducing characters based on Slavic mythology conceived unique and original fairy tales (2008: 166).

Likewise, the translation of Domaći and Malik Tintilinić points to conceptual blending as the general strategy for finding the equivalent term in the English language. The first translator, F.S. Copeland, opted predominantly for names which corresponded to the cultural equivalent of the mythical creatures, in this case the “Brownies”, “little home ghosts that come to hearth, and they often do a lot of damage, but sometimes they can do good” (Keightley 1892: “The Brownie”). The temperament of the Brownies resembles that of the Domaći, including their inclination towards the exchange of goods, with the only exception being their outfit which is predominantly brown (ibid.). However, because of the local origin of some of the characters, such as Malik Tintilinić, the translation simply accommodated the English language equivalent and resulted in new terminology (i.e. *Wee Tinkilinkie*). It is important to note that because of the blending involved in the creation of such distinct characters, they are immediately recognisable across cultures as well.

Although *Croatian Tales of Long Ago* has been recognised as Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić’s original work, it is nevertheless referred to in the context of the Croatian cultural heritage and the national tradition of storytelling as well. In the aforementioned letter to her son, Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić explains (1929):

Successful or unsuccessful, defective or perfect, the *Tales* are, in their essence as well as in their realisation purely and completely my own original work. They are indeed created with names and characters from Slavic mythology, and that is all there is to say about their link to any folk mythology or heritage. Not a single scene, a single plot, a single development, a single tendency in those stories is found complete in our mythology. (Everyone who has tried to study Slavic mythology knows that, unfortunately, our Slavic mythology as a whole is a structure of almost completely incoherent guessing; it is like a field full of ruins, in which the only pillars left standing are just the names).

However, she goes on to elaborate:

If any link exists between the *Tales of Long Ago* and our traditional folk poetry, it is perhaps on a deeper level. From this point of view my stories really are not mine: they are inspired by the storytelling, visions, hopes, beliefs and secrets which comprise the soul of the Slavic tribe. From Slavic land and air, from the white hazes of Slavic waters and seas, from Slavic snows and blizzards, from the grain of Slavic fields, our body is being created and renewed – body of all Slavs. From Slavic feelings and emotions, from Slavic opinions and convictions, our mind and soul is made. So, when we dive

into ourselves, to write something from our hearts, then everything we create is truly Slavic folk poetry. (Translated by Bulaja 2002).

All these examples point to the use of conceptual blending as a distinct feature of the creation of *Croatian Tales of Long Ago*. It is for this reason that as the founder of children's literature in Croatia and its most prominent representative (Crnković 1970: 101), Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić is, according to Antun Branko Šimić (1960), "as distinctly Croatian as the Croatian land, Croatian national costume and Croatian wine", but is also often compared to the foreign literary greats such as Hans Christian Andersen or J.R.R. Tolkien. Much like them, she created fantastic worlds, characters and mythologies that have their roots in the past, yet were conceptually moulded in her mind. In this way, Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić created a novel structure that is nowadays considered a national mythology in its own right.

The future of the little people

Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić is a representative example of the *fairy-tale web* as defined by Cristina Bacchilega in *Fairy Tales Transformed*, a construct proposed as a metaphor, a traditional practice and twenty-first-century phenomenon "that reaches back in history and across space to intersect with multiple story-weaving traditions" (2013: 20). Due to the fact that the fairy-tale web spans across the oral tradition of storytelling to the World Wide Web, the complex conceptual system in *Croatian Tales of Long Ago* has found its way into media adaptations and global culture. Accordingly, Ana Pintarić emphasises numerous translations, dramatic performances and media adaptations of Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić's work (2008: 166).¹³ In her novel *Finding Stribor*,¹⁴ Snježana Grković-Janović described the guardians of the home/house/hearth/table/threshold as mythical creatures and tiny household ghosts called Domaći, inhabitants of the stove/fire and invisible until the fire is lit (1997: 257) which builds on and expands the legacy of Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić (Pintarić 2005: 73). Helena Bulaja, the project editor of the *Croatian Tales of Long Ago* interactive CD released in 2002, which involved collaboration with renowned artists and was the recipient of many international awards,¹⁵ claims that it was a challenge to depict *Croatian Tales of Long Ago* in this particular medium (2002):

¹³ See also the study on online media material related to *Croatian Tales of Long Ago* "A Communicative Approach to Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić's Opus in the Digital Media" (2016) by Irena Krumes Šimunović and Maja Koporčić.

¹⁴ orig. *Striborovim stazama*.

¹⁵ e.g. NetFestival 2002.

The digital revolution, globalisation, the Internet, modern communications on the one hand, and the world of fairytales on the other. Where to start it all? Even the concept of an interactive book is so open, and, unlike film, theatre or illustration, it can take almost any form, that at the same time can be a film and an illustration and a game [...].

The trilingual multimedia project *Croatian Tales of Long Ago* sought to explore the relationship between digital media and literature (Bulaja naklada 2000–2014) and was a significant step towards combining hypertextuality, animation techniques and interactivity within the narrative. The result was yet another version of Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić's *Tales* adorned in a new style and format. This adaptability further accentuates the significance of the *Tales* and its emergent structure which allows for the creation of newly blended spaces.

Conclusion

By observing the motif of little people in literature, it is apparent that by means of “thievery” and “mischief” they transfer and exchange goods, wisdom and knowledge, and signify the empowerment of a (child) reader. In her writing, Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić created the “poetry of the home” (Crnković 1980) and introduced the little people who are “recognisable in their demeanour, mood, and readiness to help in the battle against the forces of evil” (Pintarić 2005: 86). Likewise, it is true that Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić's characters are “half-mythical co-creators of reality which contain the residue of much that has accumulated in the collective human memory [...]” (Detoni Dujmić 1998: 184). In borrowing, transferring and merging cultures, Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić created an original Croatian mythology. Much like the literary greats abroad, she also generated fantastic worlds and a unique mode of expression which earned her the title of the most prominent representative of children's literature in Croatia and beyond. There is a need for worlds of little people within the fairy-tale web to transfer meaning, language and culture. Thanks to them, Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić has endowed us with fantastic images that inspire us to the present day. Her example shows that integrating concepts, as well as drawing from one's own past and present, results in emergent structures which are the foundation of identity and the future.

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Blago, lopovluk i nestašluk: stapanje kultura i pregovaranje granica u svjetovima napučenima čovječuljcima

Istraživanje smješta *Priče iz davnine* (1916) Ivane Brlić-Mažuranić u kontekst širega književnoga korpusa, fokusirajući se na pojavu čovječuljaka ili sićušnih ljudi u fikcionalnim tekstovima za djecu. Postojanje „svjetova čovječuljaka“ (Lynch-Brown i Tomlinson 2005) primjer je prakse konceptualnoga stapanja na jezičnoj, kulturnoj i semantičkoj razini, koja dolazi do izražaja u tvorbi imena, prostora i značenja. Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić kombinirala je naizgled nespojive koncepte (Fauconnier i Turner 2002), koji pripadaju različitim razinama i slojevima slavenskih i hrvatskih tradicija i mitologija. Takve su kombinacije u *Pričama iz davnine* ključna mjesta u procesu konceptualnoga međudjelovanja koja pokazuju i dokazuju sposobnost čovječuljaka kao književnih bića da prelaze granice, čime omogućuju stvaranje novih i jedinstvenih kultura i pojmova. Napučene čovječuljcima poput Malika Tintilinića, *Priče iz davnine* izvanredan su primjer fluidna i prilagodljiva svijeta, usporediva s onima što su ih stvorili Swift, Andersen, Tolkien, Baum, Barrie, Norton, Dr. Seuss ili Dahl. S

tim u skladu, konceptualna integracija obilježava jedinstven književni sadržaj i stil izvorne hrvatske mitologije Ivane Brlić-Mažuranić čiji je krajnji rezultat osnaživanje i očaravanje čitatelja od davnina do danas.

Ključne riječi: konceptualno stapanje, kultura, mali ljudi, mitologija, suvremena fantastika

Schätze, Diebstähle und Unfug: Zusammenschmelzung von Kulturen und Grenzabsprache in den mit Männchen bevölkerten Welten

Im Beitrag wird Ivana Brlić-Mažuranićs Werk *Priče iz davnine* in einen breiteren literarischen Kontext eingebettet, indem das Vorkommen von Männchen oder winzigen Menschen in fiktionalen kinderliterarischen Texten unter die Lupe genommen wird. „Mit Männchen bevölkerte Welten“ (Lynch-Brown und Tomlinson 2005) stellen ein Beispiel der konzeptuellen Zusammenschmelzung auf sprachlicher, kultureller und semantischer Ebene dar, die in der Schöpfung von Namen, Räumen und Bedeutungen zum Vorschein kommt. Die Kombination von scheinbar unvereinbaren Konzepten (Fauconnier und Turner 2002) ist im Schaffen von Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić auf verschiedenen Ebenen und in unterschiedlichen Schichten der slawischen und kroatischen Tradition und Mythologie vorzufinden. Solche Kombinationen stellen in *Priče iz davnine* entscheidende Stellen der konzeptuellen Interaktion dar, worin gezeigt und bewiesen wird, dass Männlein als literarische Wesen fähig sind, Grenzen zu überschreiten, wodurch sie die Erschaffung von neuen und einzigartigen Kulturen und Begriffen ermöglichen. Indem *Priče iz davnine* mit Männchen wie Malik Tintilinić bevölkert sind, erweisen sich diese Märchen als ein außerordentliches Beispiel von fluiden und anpassbaren Welten, worin sie vergleichbar mit jenen von Swift, Andersen, Tolkien, Baum, Barrie, Norton, Dr. Seuss oder Dahl sind. Dementsprechend trägt die konzeptuelle Integration zu dem einmaligen literarischen Gehalt und dem urväterlich wirkenden mythologischen Stil von Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić bei, deren Endergebnis in der Ermutigung und Bezauberung des Lesers von Urzeiten bis heute liegt.

Schlüsselwörter: konzeptuelle Verschmelzung, Kultur, Männchen, Mythologie, zeitgenössische Phantastik