

Characters, village, Faith and Art in narrative prose of Stjepan Džalto published in 1970 – 1990 period

In this article, the prose oeuvre of the Croatian writer from Bosnia and Hercegovina, Stjepan Džalto, written and published in the period of Communism, between 1970 and 1990, is reviewed. It's three story collections and three novels. Džalto's prose is recognized as a prose created in the way of combining the traditional oral and folk literature as well as the author's artistic shaping approach. Formal merits of this prose are distinguished and picturesque narration, realistic-veristic descriptions of the rural life, anecdotal features, vivid dialogs, inner monologues, as well as wording full of expressive phrases. The writer builds his prose text mainly by echoing an ordinary, stylistically intensified *parole* as well as by humorously paraphrasing proverbs and other forms of folk linguistic heritage and communication. Usually, the scene is a detached Croatian-Catholic village-parish in Bosnia, where typical situations, conflicts, tragedies and catharses happen. The village and its inhabitants are confronted with serious challenges, from misery and alcoholism, over atheistic indoctrination and repression by the Communist regime and its servants to the big changes caused by the economic development; peasants began to leave, temporarily, for the rich Germany as guest workers. This prose is permeated with critical attitude towards negative appearances within people and society, though with Christian spirit, Catholic values and moral criteria as well. Not criticism and satire, but experiences of lives as wholes would have the last word. A lot of 'villains' happen to come to the moral-religious, inner conversion before they die, returning ruefully to the Catholic faith of their community, and, in that way, to the previously despised kindness. Džalto's prose, now re-evaluated, represents an enrichment and broadening of the Croatian and Bosnia-Herzegovinian prose spectrum in the said period.

Key words: Stjepan Džalto; prose; village; folk literature; humorous-satirical literature; literary shaping; Catholicism