

(Translated by: Katarina Pavičić-Ivelja)

Maja VERDONIK:

Lutkarski žanrovi na sceni Gradskoga kazališta lutaka Rijeka i suvremeno hrvatsko lutkarstvo (2011. – 2019.)

(Puppet Theatre Genres on the Stage of the Rijeka City Puppet Theatre and the Contemporary Croatian Puppetry (2011 - 2019))

Učiteljski fakultet Sveučilišta u Rijeci. Rijeka, 2019, 223 pages

Maja Verdonik's scientific monograph *Puppet Theatre Genres on the Stage of the Rijeka City Puppet Theatre and the Contemporary Croatian Puppetry (2011 - 2019)*, published by the Faculty of Teacher Education of the University of Rijeka in 2019, provides an insight into the contemporary puppetry in the city of Rijeka with an overview of the past ten years of puppetry in Croatia and beyond. It is a scientific monograph that reflects the author's continuing effort to explore the history of puppetry in Rijeka, which began with her monograph *Rijeka City Puppet Theatre (1960-2010)*, published in 2010 in the edition of that theatre. Her latest scientific monograph is divided into several major thematic units.

The first unit, entitled *Children and the Puppet Theatre Play* deals with the puppet theatre plays (texts) for children, which, along with poetry and prose, constitutes the third genre of children's literature. As a skilled connoisseur of children's literature, Maja Verdonik provides a thorough overview of contemporary literature on the children's puppet theatre plays and suggests a novel view of the interconnectedness between children's literature and puppetry, given that puppetry is studied within the field of theatreology.

In one of the subchapters of the book, the author devotes special attention to the puppet theatre play as a text pertaining to the puppet theatre, whereby she refers to the theoretical tenets of the Czech theorist and practitioner Erik Kolár, who has provided instructions on how to create a classic curtain-style puppet theatre performance and which literary genre is best suited for a particular type of puppets.

In the scientific theory of puppetry, genres have usually been determined based on the types of puppets used. However, new genres surfaced as a response to the changes that had occurred in the theatrical expression of the European puppetry of the early 20th century, as well as in the Croatian puppetry of the 1970s. The greatest theorist of European puppetry, Henryk Jurkowski, consolidated these changes into the term *theatre of various means of expression*, which represents the starting point of Maja Verdonik's work. Actors and masks appear on stage on equal footing with the puppets; the puppets, in turn, do not have to resemble humans and animals but may be used as props or objects. The curtain is discarded, and the mechanism of the puppet theatre is uncovered, while Aristotle's principles of the unity of place, time, and action are disrupted.

The author lists the subgenres of the theatre of various means of expression, thereby being guided, as Henryk Jurkowski put it, by the attitude towards the theatrical illusion as the basic principle. Thus, some of Rijeka's performances were delivered in the manner of the *illusionistic theatre*, which does not reveal the source of animation or voice energy, while others followed the principles of the *theatre of temporary illusion* in which both the plot and the process of theatrical

creation are demonstrated. In Croatian and especially Rijeka puppetry, the author also detects both the theatre of objects and the theatre of materials.

The following, central unit depicts puppet theatre performances premiered at the Rijeka City Puppet Theatre in the period between 2011 and 2019. In presenting the Rijeka repertoire, the author defines two genres for each puppet theatre performance: one for the play script and the other for the performance, which is a novelty in the interpretation of the puppet theatre performances. In the puppet theatre performance, all elements are of equal importance, and the stage requires complete harmony. Insight is provided into quite different puppet theatre genres with regards to the choice of script and the manner of performance, so it can be concluded that a literary genre does not necessarily require a particular mode of performance, as Erik Kolár once suggested. This unit, with its subsections, presents the puppet theatre performances mostly based on stories and fairy tales, thus confirming the usefulness of the puppet expression in depicting stories or fairy tales. In addition to fairy tales, there are performances based on fantasy stories and even some unusual sources – picture books. In addition to the puppet theatre performance, interpreted here as a genre comprising subgenres, the author highlights genres such as the multimedia play, storytelling theatre – defined as a form of interplay between traditional storytelling and theatrical expression with elements of animation, one of which was performed in the form of Japanese kamishibai theatre, musical-stage puppet and acting performances, delivered with elements or entirely in the form of musicals, philosophical theatre for children, experiential theatre for the youngest viewers, which also fits into the context of the so-called new theatre, i.e., the postdramatic theatre for adults.

In the next large section of the book, dedicated to the puppet theatre and other genres of the Croatian puppetry of the analyzed period, Maja Verdonik presents a cross-section of contemporary performances in Croatian puppet theatres and theatres for children and young adults, classified according to the characteristics matching those of the Rijeka City Puppet Theatre performances of the same period. The subsections of these units were created based on literary and other textual sources behind the performances. For the sake of insight into the broader context, the author includes some exceptional achievements of Slovenian puppet theatre productions for the youngest viewers. The representation of plays performed in the puppet theatres in Croatia and beyond serves a dual purpose: on the one hand, it provides an overview of the repertoire performed on the Croatian puppetry scene over the past ten years and, on the other, an insight into Croatian theatre critique, especially reviews on the puppet theatre performances.

Maja Verdonik's scientific book *Puppet Theatre Genres on the Stage of the Rijeka City Puppet Theatre and the Contemporary Croatian Puppetry (2011 - 2019)* underscores an important fact that accompanies modern puppetry in Rijeka and Croatia: all elements of puppetry expression have been dismantled into their constituent components leading to an atomization of the puppet theatre. Among the puppets, props, and objects, the actor behaves as a visible animator, as a character in a play, or even as both at the same time.

The miniature stage and curtain have disappeared from view to allow visible puppeteers to perform the play in unlimited stage space, thereby mirroring onto the puppets their own facial and bodily expressions and gestures. Despite the fears

of one of the pioneers of Croatian theoretical thought about puppetry, Milan Čečuk, regarding the influence of the equal participation of actors and puppets in a puppet theatre performance on the development of puppetry, it may be concluded that the actor enriches the stage while in no way undermining the independent status of the classical puppet theatre, that is, of the plays performed solely using puppets. The endurance of the theatre of various means of expression, to use Henryk Jurkowski's term, and its subgenres is evident in the performances of the Rijeka and Croatian puppet theatres and theatres for children and young adults of the past decade. The puppet has found its place in a completely new theatrical context, which Maja Verdonik demonstrates in this scientific monograph.

References and sources form an integral part of the book and include: photographs of theatre performances from the Rijeka City Puppet Theatre delivered between 2011 and 2019; Theatrography, i.e., data on authors and performers; Index of names, plays, and terms; Abstracts in Croatian and English; and the Author's note.

Teodora VIGATO

(Translated by: Matea Butković)

Sanja VRCIĆ-MATAIJA:

Hrvatski realistički dječji roman (1991. – 2001.)

Croatian Realistic Children's Novel (1991 – 2001)

Sveučilište u Zadru. Zadar, 2018, 287 str.

Sanja Vrcić-Mataija's scientific study *Croatian Realistic Children's Novel* (1991 - 2001) deals with one of the most popular genres of children's literature – the realistic children's novel and its position within contemporary Croatian children's literature, more precisely the literature of the last decade of the twentieth century. As the author explains in the introductory part of the study, the aggravating circumstance regarding the periodization and poetic systematization of Croatian children's literature from the end of the last century is the lack of a more substantial time deviation that would provide the detachment of scientific and objective evaluation. However, the same circumstances open up the possibilities for the systematization, interpretation, classification, and periodization of literary works, whose emergence could be directly witnessed during the recent past. In an effort to establish a possible typology of the Croatian children's realistic novel in the period between 1991 and 2001, Sanja Vrcić-Mataija has chosen the typologically synchronic approach, and by identifying the poetic features of the realistic children's novel has provided a contribution to the systematic production of this genre in that decade as a starting point in determining the future historical periodization of Croatian children's literature. In an attempt to define the poetic definition of the realistic Romanesque corpus underpinning the typology, the author intended to penetrate the poetics of a literary decade, determined, among other things, by the state of the poetics of the children's novel.

The inevitable factual history also represents the peculiarity of the selected research period in Croatian children's literature, i.e., the external, socio-cultural