

PUPPET THEATER TRANSPOSITIONS OF CONTEMPORARY PICTUREBOOKS

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ABSTRACT

The paper examines selected contemporary puppet theater transpositions of picturebooks in order to explore the connections between picturebooks and puppet theater, focusing on how transformed verbal-visual elements of picturebooks are manifested in puppet plays. The starting point are common characteristics of picturebooks and puppet plays, such as the multimodal nature of picturebooks – the synthesis of various art forms as a component of puppet plays. The analysis is informed by Milan Čečuk's thesis (2009) that picturebook expression is evident in multiple ways in puppet plays, which the author interprets as animated three-dimensional picturebooks. In all the analyzed puppet plays, the narrative progression and visual expression of the picturebook are retained in ways that enhance stage dynamics. Additionally, the transformation of verbal and visual discourses of picturebook templates into components of puppet plays is reflected in the pictorial sequencing of scenes.

KEYWORDS:

picturebook, verbal discourse, visual discourse, theater of different means of expression, classic puppet theater

INTRODUCTION

Puppet theater transpositions of picturebooks as literary-artistic templates in contemporary Croatian puppetry represent a phenomenon that invites exploration of the connections between these two artistic forms of expression. By analyzing selected contemporary puppet play renditions of picturebooks, this paper seeks to address the following questions: What are the connections between picturebooks and puppet theater? How are transformed verbal-visual elements of picturebooks reflected in puppet plays? The analysis begins by examining the shared characteristics of picturebooks and puppet plays, such as the multimodality of picturebooks—the synthesis of various art forms as a fundamental component of puppet plays. It draws on Milan Čečuk's thesis (2009) that picturebook expression manifests in multiple ways in puppet plays. Verbal-visual discourses of picturebooks are analyzed in terms of their narrative level and the degree of their participation in storytelling (Grdešić, 2015), which are linked to the morphological analysis of puppet plays, which includes key elements such as text, visual art, music, puppet animation, and acting (Kolár, 1992). In analyzing puppet plays, the research considers the principles of puppet dramaturgy and the unique features of puppet genres, encompassing both traditional puppet theater and theater of different means of expression, to which the analyzed plays belong.¹

THE PUPPET THEATER AND THE PICTUREBOOK – THEORETICAL DETERMINANTS

The puppet theater is an art form that integrates multiple disciplines – literature, theater, visual arts, and music (Kolár, 1992). It shares a connection with the picturebook, a multimodal form that combines verbal and visual discourses to convey a story (Narančić Kovač, 2018). In the context of picturebooks, “each of the two discourses has separate means of expression, in accordance with the possibilities

¹ The term classic puppet theater refers to plays performed exclusively with puppets; the term theater of different means of expression refers to plays in which live actors and puppetry as means of expression are intertwined on stage. According to Henryk Jurkowski (2007), such performances mediate between live dramatic and material puppetry elements, and in addition to puppets on stage, they include actors, masks, props, and objects. As the analysis will show, contemporary Croatian puppetry includes puppet plays of all genres, which shows that the artistic tendencies of Croatian puppet theaters are in line with those in Europe.

of the two respective media, that is, communication systems” (Narančić Kovač, 2015: 101). Moreover, as Marijana Hameršak and Dubravka Zima observe, the picturebook is considered “an art form, independent of the field of (children’s) literature. And, because of its specific visual dimension, it outgrows the category of ‘literariness’ characteristic of the literary field, but also owing to its spatiality or sculptural quality (the book as a tactile object)” (Hameršak and Zima, 2015: 163). Similarly, Narančić Kovač (2015: 8) emphasizes that “a picturebook is essentially determined by its three-dimensionality. Like a sculpture, it occupies real space, is tactilely accessible, and the individual elements of its appearance convey meanings integral to the work as a whole.”

Milan Čečuk (2009) identifies a kinship between the narrative conveyed by a hand puppet in stage space and the storytelling achieved through the literary and artistic elements of a picturebook. Although Čečuk’s analysis primarily focuses on the relationship between hand puppets and picturebooks, his conclusions extend to puppet plays involving other types of puppets. Čečuk asserts that: “A puppet play in itself is a kind of living, three-dimensional picturebook. From an artistic perspective, it is always most effective and expressive when conceived as such. In some cases, a puppet play is literally constructed like a picturebook” (2009: 70). Čečuk highlights two fundamental ways in which a puppet play incorporates the narrative progression and pictorial expression of a picturebook. The first is

“a static way that only requires the decor to suggest the setting of the story in a picturebook way, only associative in the picturebook sense, which thus creates an adequate visual and spatial atmosphere for the action, and (the second) much more puppeteer way that understands the possibility of pictorial sequencing of scenes in connection with the development of stage dynamics so that the decor serves as much more than merely an artistic and architectural means for creating a spatial ambiance” (Čečuk, 2009: 70-71).

The following analysis will demonstrate which of these staging methods were used by the authors of the selected puppet plays.

PUPPET THEATER TRANSPOSITIONS OF CONTEMPORARY PICTUREBOOKS

Silvija Šesto, Ana Šesto, and Adriana Meglaj:
The Ninth Sheep (2011)

The picturebook *The Ninth Sheep* (*Deveta ovčica*), written by Silvija Šesto and illustrated by Ana Šesto and Adriana Meglaj, features not only a verbal discourse but also two visual discourses. These extradiegetic-heterodiegetic narrators² tell the story of a boy, Ivica, who is anxious about his first day of school and its associated responsibilities. The night before school, Ivica struggles to fall asleep. His mother helps him using a traditional method – counting sheep. This leads to her intradiegetic-heterodiegetic narration of the little sheep's story, which unfolds in Ivica's dream as they engage in dialogue. In the story, Ivica attempts to count the sheep but, being unable to count yet, falls asleep when he reaches the ninth sheep. This sheep becomes trapped in his dream. As the little sheep converse with Ivica, they teach him how to count. Eventually, Ivica successfully counts to nine, freeing the ninth sheep from his dream (Šesto, Šesto, and Meglaj, 2011).

The intertwining of reality and dream gives the picturebook's verbal and visual discourses the qualities of a fantasy story.³ When the mother says the word "sheep" during her conversation with Ivica, the sheep respond from their framed photos, where their names are listed, with the words, "Someone is calling us..." (Šesto et al., 2011: 8). In the visual discourse, the figure of the Dream is depicted as a drawing on the first surface. Meanwhile, the surfaces featuring the sheep incorporate an intra-pictorial text that references a "big, wide, green meadow (from a dream)" (Šesto et al., 2011: 9), echoing a line from the popular musical *Yalta*, *Yalta* by Milan Grgić and Alfi Kabiljo.⁴ This intertextual reference caters to both

² This signifies polyphony in picturebooks that "is established not only when the voices of the two narrators meet, but also through the different points of view they introduce into the narration; not only through the expressive possibilities of linguistic discourse but also through those of visual discourse" (Narančić Kovač, 2015: 154).

³ Milan Crnković and Dubravka Težak define the term fantasy story as a story in which "miraculous things arise in such a way that inner reality (dreams, desires, subconscious cognitions, fears, repressed experiences) is presented as an apparent reality. The key moment in such a story is the so-called shift into the unreal that is carried out by a special process (dream, unconsciousness, illness, play, etc.)" (Crnković and Težak, 2002: 23-24).

⁴ According to the website (accessed on 23 June 2024): <https://www.komedija.hr/www/repertoar/jalta-jalta/>

child and adult audiences, a characteristic typical of contemporary picturebooks (Beckett, 2012, as cited in Narančić Kovač and Zalar, 2015: 3).

The verbal discourse uses capital letters, making the picturebook suitable for young readers who are about to start or have just started primary school.

The visual discourse in the picturebook consists of photographs of Ivica, his mother, and the sheep, depicted as knitted hand puppets (*ginjoli*). This use of photographic imagery classifies the work as a photographic picturebook.⁵ Ivica's anxiety about attending school is depicted in the visual discourse of the picturebook through a series of photos. These images show Ivica's puppet in various positions (e.g., sideways, upside down) alongside intra-image text such as "TERRIFYING SCHOOL!!!" (displayed on a black-and-white photograph of the school building) and "WORRY - FEAR - IVICA PETRIFIED!!!" (printed in bold red letters). In contrast, the second part of the same double spread features photos of his mother's puppet with a friendly expression, recounting her fond memories of school. The accompanying text, displayed in a warmer ochre color, reads: "JOY - BEAUTIFUL MEMORIES," alongside a color photograph of a school building constructed from Legos (Šesto, Šesto, and Meglaj, 2011). The photographs⁶ are further enriched with drawings of the Dream character, an ambulance car, and a fence that sheep jump over. These elements are paired with intra-pictorial text in the visual discourse, adding a humorous tone and incorporating elements of comic style into both the illustrations and the picturebook as a whole. Through the use of intra-pictorial text, the visual discourse of this picturebook evolves into a dual discourse, as it "offers iconic and symbolic signs that supplement the linguistic discourse" (Narančić Kovač, 2015: 207).

⁵ As author Jane Wattenberg (2018: 302-314) writes: "...most picturebooks contain hand-illustrated pictures, while photographic picturebooks are full of photographs or photo-based illustrations. Whether without words or as a fusion of words and pictures, a photographic picturebook usually highlights a continuous narrative and covers a wide range of topics. Whether in color, partial color, or simple black and white, photographic picturebooks range from photo-documented scenes from real life to photographic fantasies that use photomontage and collage techniques."

⁶ Photos from the puppet play *The Ninth Sheep* can be viewed on the website of the Branko Mihaljević Children's Theatre in Osijek at the following link (accessed on 15 December 2024): <https://www.djecje-kazaliste.hr/galerija/deveta-ovcica/>

Ljudmila Fedorova: *The Ninth Sheep* Children's Theater Branko Mihaljević in Osijek, 2014

The puppet play *The Ninth Sheep* premiered in 2014 at the Children's Theater Branko Mihaljević in Osijek. It was staged as a classic puppet theater production, directed and dramatized by the renowned Russian puppet director Ljudmila Fedorova.

Following the dramatized text of the picturebook's storyline, Fedorova, according to critics, elaborated on the characters' psychological motivations by adding numerous narrative and visual details. The storyline is dramaturgically coherent and well-justified, with themes and expressions tailored to appeal to both children and adults (Biskupović, 2014). The play combined table puppet animation with shadow theater, a dual approach that mirrors the dual visual discourse of the picturebook *The Ninth Sheep*.

Natalija Burnos, the designer of the puppets and the scenography, created figures such as "a chubby boy, a small shaggy sheep, and a mother puppet proportional in size to the boy and their respective ages" (Biskupović, 2014) as table puppets. The boy Ivica's thoughts, fears, and restless dreams, as well as his mother's memories, were presented through shadow theater.

The puppet theater stage "was extremely practical and well utilized. It featured a room with a single closet, a bed, a bookshelf, and a model airplane hanging from a rope, all set on a higher level than the main theater stage to create additional play space. The closet and side shelf were used for shadow theater scenes, with the shelf unfolding to transform into a meadow where sheep jump" (Biskupović, 2014). A particularly striking scene depicts the ninth sheep singing a song about its dreams and hopes in the lower part of the stage, where everything is inverted. The sheep hangs from grass positioned at the top of this space, surrounded with clouds that have been transformed into flowers. The inverted scenography visually conveys that this sequence occurs in the boy's dream, maintaining a connection to the fantasy elements of the original picturebook.

Eric Carle: *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* (1969)

The extradiegetic-heterodiegetic narrators of the verbal and visual discourses in Eric Carle's picturebook *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* recount the story of a small caterpillar that progressively consumes more fruit and other foods with

each page, ultimately cocooning and transforming into a butterfly. The visual discourse, beginning with the peritext of the picturebook, introduces motifs reflected throughout the story using irregularly shaped, colorful circles. The picturebook's illustrations, created by using a collage photography technique,⁷ incorporate an interactive component designed to engage the child reader. Ivana Batarelo Kokić, in her categorization of picturebooks based on the level of representation of interactive elements, includes *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* in the group of printed picturebooks with interactive features. She notes that these features "include interactive components that are directly linked to the story" (Batarelo Kokić, 2015: 392) and appear on nearly every page of the picturebook (Batarelo Kokić, 2015: 388). According to Smiljana Narančić Kovač, beyond the linguistic and pictorial discourses of the picturebook, the design of the book as a three-dimensional object significantly influences its individual discourses and their characteristics. The trimmed and die-cut pages of *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* exemplify additions that expand the expressive potential of pictorial discourse, with the pictorial storyteller using these features to convey narrative meanings (Narančić Kovač, 2015). Moreover, alongside its trimmed and die-cut pages, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* includes flaps that conceal portions of the illustrations, making it a lift-the-flap book (Batarelo Kokić, 2015: 380, as cited in Matulka, 2008).

**Ivana Đula and Milica Sinkauz (based on Eric Carle's picturebook):
The Very Hungry Caterpillar, Zadar Puppet Theater, 2021**

The puppet play *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* premiered at the Zadar Puppet Theater in 2021. It is based on the picturebook by American writer and illustrator Eric Carle and presented as a theater production of different expressive means. The play was directed by Renata Carola Gatica and dramatized by Ivana Đula and Milica Sinkauz.

In Renata Carola Gatica's vision, puppet actors appear both as animators of

⁷ According to Goldsmith (2003), Carle's illustration technique consisted of assembling collages cut from tissue paper that the author colored in a full spectrum of colors, cutting and gluing the paper to cardboard to create the images, and sometimes highlighting individual details with crayons. Carle would photograph the finished collages, and the color photo would serve as an illustrated page. While preparing the famous picturebook *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* (1969), Carle found that his own playful use of the hole puncher could expand the narrative of his illustration, and, in his subsequent picturebooks, he manipulated the size of the pages, as in *The Grouchy Ladybug* (1977), and used raised surfaces, as in *The Very Busy Spider* (1984).

puppets and props and as storytellers alongside the Caterpillar puppet. The Caterpillar puppet is a hybrid design, combining features of a table puppet and a yawning puppet, reflecting its transformation as it grows larger and more sluggish day by day (Kolega, 2022).

Ivana Đula and Milica Sinkauz incorporated into their dramatization of Carle's picturebook two intradiegetic-heterodiegetic narrators who compete about who will get to tell the story to the audience. Once they reach an agreement, they become intradiegetic-homodiegetic narrators, recounting a hypodiegetic story about a small, hungry caterpillar. As the caterpillar's hunger becomes apparent, they offer him fresh fruit each day, which enables him to grow. Meanwhile, the songs by Ivana Đula and Luka Vrbanić, featuring playful wordplay, onomatopoeic sounds, and layered meanings, serve as a link to the scenes involving each type of fruit and other foods consumed by the caterpillar (Kolega, 2022).

The visual design of the play, created by Alena Pavlović, draws on the visual discourse of Eric Carle's picturebook. The stage is set with white screens adorned with floral motifs and a white floor. Puppeteers wear white overalls embellished with multicolored buttons, while oversized representations of apples, plums, strawberries, and oranges, as well as the ever-growing caterpillar, take center stage. Similarly to the picturebook, where pages are cut to show where the caterpillar has eaten through the fruit, the stage props also develop holes, with the missing pieces becoming part of the caterpillar. However, in contrast to the picturebook the caterpillar is not entirely green. Instead, he becomes more colorful as he grows. Each new ring added to the caterpillar puppet matches the color of the food he has just eaten⁸ (Kolega, 2022). As in the picturebook, the play concludes with the caterpillar's transformation into a butterfly. This metamorphosis is achieved through the puppeteer-actress, who transitions from animating the caterpillar puppet to embodying the butterfly herself. The transformation is accomplished by attaching wings to the costume of the puppeteer-actress, Sanja Grgina, who has previously controlled the caterpillar puppet. The performance ends with a direct address to the children in the audience, culminating in a song about growing up, performed collectively by the three puppeteers.

⁸ Photos from the puppet play *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* can be viewed on the website of the Zadar Puppet Theater at the following link (accessed on 15 December 2024): <https://www.klz.hr/repertoar/predstave/vrlo-gladna-gusjenica>

Vjekoslav Jurdana and Radovan Kunić: *Tončić Petešić* (2017)

The picturebook *Tončić Petešić* (2017), written by Vjekoslava Jurdana and illustrated by Radovan Kunić, is composed in verse and uses the Liburnian Ekavian dialect (Grakalić Plenković, 2017).

The story's protagonist is Tončić, a young rooster facing the trials of growing up, with his greatest challenge being the fox, Belica. Tončić's father, Zvane Peteh, offers him advice on dealing with the fox, but Tončić must ultimately navigate his own path, learning from personal experiences. As Sanja Grakalić Plenković (2017) observes, the story presents an ideologically and thematically desirable framework for young readers. This is evident in the characterization of the protagonist and his transformation, where good triumphs over evil: the young rooster matures into a brave and victorious individual. Tončić's journey of growth and self-reliance underscores the challenges and efforts required during childhood, symbolizing the universal struggles of maturation. The picturebook also encourages children to reflect on parental authority, making it relatable through the subjective experiences of the main character.

The verbal discourse of the picturebook is composed of rhythmic verses enriched with rhyme, sonority, and onomatopoeia. The extradiegetic-heterodiegetic narrator occasionally shifts into the intradiegetic level through the author's use of metalepsis,⁹ addressing Tončić directly with questions such as "What are you going to do now? How will you, poor thing, solve the problem?" (Jurdana, 2017: 23). Tončić's childhood is emphasized through the diminutive form of his name (*Tončić*) and the playful nicknames his father lovingly gives him (*otročić*, *minji petešić*). Similarly, the sweet-talking fox uses affectionate terms like *kuščić* to address him (Grakalić Plenković, 2017). The vocabulary of the picturebook includes archaic, stylistically marked Chakavian lexemes, reflecting the oral literary heritage of Istria and the Croatian Littoral (Grakalić Plenković, 2017). To aid readers unfamiliar with the Chakavian dialect, the book's peritext features a glossary that facilitates understanding for those outside the Chakavian-speaking region.

The extradiegetic-heterodiegetic narrator of the visual discourse narrates the

⁹ "According to Genette, the author's metalepsis is a causal relationship that unites the creator of an artistic representation with the representation itself (Genette 2006: 11), while in the reader's metalepsis, the author pretends to draw the reader into the fictional world, connects the reader or listener with the act of narration (according to Genette 2006: 19-20)" (as cited by Kuvač-Levačić, 2014: 557).

rooster Tončić's story through a series of surfaces rendered in warm pastel tones. These illustrations often feature verses overlaid on colorful backgrounds. During the story's most intense moments – such as Tončić's confrontation with the fox Belica and his courageous act of crowing – the illustrations span double-page spreads, with verses seamlessly integrated into the artwork. In some instances, the visual narrator employs metalepsis, directly engaging the reader on the intradiegetic level by positioning Tončić's gaze toward the audience, thereby creating a direct connection between the protagonist and the reader.¹⁰

Vedrana Balen Spinčić

(According to the motifs from the picturebook by Vjekoslava Jurdana and Radovan Kunić): *Tončić Petešić*, Dramatic text for narrative theater, Rijeka City Puppet Theater, 2023

The puppet play *Tončić Petešić* premiered at the Rijeka City Puppet Theater in 2023. It is based on the picturebook authored by Vjekoslava Jurdana and illustrated by Radovan Kunić. The play is presented as a narrative theater production in the form of a story-play,¹¹ centered around the theme of regional heritage. Directed by Serđo Dlačić and dramatized by Vedrana Balen Spinčić, the play belongs to the genre of theater that incorporates diverse expressive means as well as object theater.

According to Patrice Pavis, narrative theater is a form of text and/or play that utilizes non-dramatic narrative materials (novels, poems, and various texts) and does not organize them around characters or dramatic situations. Instead, it emphasizes the actor's role as a storyteller (Pavis, 2004). This approach aligns with the concept of theater of different means of expression – a form of puppet theater in which the actor and the animated puppet, as inanimate matter, are interconnected. This form also draws upon elements of narrative theater and traditional storytelling techniques (Jurkowski, 2013).

Following the guidance of director Serđo Dlačić, dramatist Vedrana Balen Spinčić introduced a new element into the play's text: the character of the Actor in Black. This narrator interacts with the audience in standard Croatian, while

¹⁰ Cf.: Kuvač-Levačić, 2014: 557.

¹¹ This is a peculiar stage form, conceived as a combination of narrative, performance-acting, and musical expression with elements of animation, in repertory at the Rijeka City Puppet Theater since 2016 (cf. Verdonik, 2019: 69-78).

the animal characters – who appear only in visual form in the picturebook – now speak in the Chakavian dialect. This linguistic adaptation was inspired by the verbal discourse of the original picturebook, thereby reinforcing the play's regional and cultural identity.

Radovan Kunić, who created the scenography and the puppets, based his designs on his original illustrations for the picturebook *Tončić Petešić*. By applying the same color palette to both the painted background screen and the figure of Tončić Petešić – crafted as a hybrid of a table puppet and a yawning puppet – Kunić achieved the visual effect of animating the three-dimensional quality of the picturebook.¹²

Puppeteer Alex Đaković serves a dual role in the play. In addition to narrating the story, he also assembles the scenography for each scene live on stage. Moreover, he animates various objects, transforming them into puppet characters within the story. These objects are everyday items commonly found in village yards, which take on the roles of specific characters.¹³ For example, a broom becomes Zvane, Tončić's grandfather; a bucket of water represents Tihomir the pig; hedge shears are used to depict Belica the fox; and items of clothing – like shirts, scarves, or sunglasses – are repurposed to portray other characters (Bošnjak, 2023).

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The multimodality of the picturebook, as a combination of verbal and visual discourse, establishes a connection between picturebooks and puppet theater, a scenic form of expression that integrates multiple art forms. Since visibility is a fundamental feature of puppet theater, a puppet play can be perceived as a

¹² Photos from the puppet play *Tončić Petešić* can be viewed on the website of the Rijeka City Puppet Theater at the following link (accessed on 15 December 2024): <https://www.gkl-rijeka.hr/index.php/toncic-petesic/>

¹³ Henryk Jurkowski emphasizes the theater of objects as one of the phenomena that has marked the aesthetics of puppetry in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Jurkowski writes about the object as a stage character: "The object on the stage visually remains what it is. The (spectator's) perception of objects in the theater in the first moments refers to what we know about the objects and to what we see on the scene in the first moment. During the play, the puppeteer suggests to us other meanings behind the objects that arise from the play's plot. Thus, we constantly see the same object on the scene, whose action suggests a new connotation arising from the associations it evokes. What we see consists of two opposite elements, depending on which of them is stronger: we see either the object or the stage character, which is why their existence in stage perception has the character of a flicker" (Jurkowski, 2007: 194-195). Jurkowski (2007) calls this phenomenon opalization.

three-dimensional picturebook brought to life (Čečuk, 2009). This idea is further supported by interpretations of picturebooks as art books that, with their three-dimensional and sculptural nature, enter real space and become tactilely accessible (Hamersak and Zima, 2015; Narančić Kovač, 2015).

The performances analyzed in this paper highlight several approaches to interpreting picturebooks within puppet theater, all of which build on the shared characteristics of these two artistic forms.

The picturebook *The Ninth Sheep* by Silvija Šesto, Ana Šesto, and Adriana Meglaj employs visual discourse through photographs of hand puppets (*ginjoli*), which directly reference puppet theater. This reflects Milan Čečuk's assertion that there is an inherent kinship between the story developed in stage space by hand puppets and the story conveyed in picturebooks through literary and artistic means (Čečuk, 2009). In the puppet play performed at Branko Mihaljević's Children's Theater in Osijek, based on *The Ninth Sheep*, the production diverges from the picturebook's use of *ginjoli*. Instead, it utilizes table puppets and shadow theater, creating a visual parallel between the events occurring in reality and those taking place in the protagonist's dream – an essential characteristic of a fantasy narrative. The dynamism of the stage production is heightened by using puppets to activate all planes of the stage, thus drawing the performance closer to the visual expression of the picturebook.

The picturebook *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle is particularly notable for its visual discourse. Its die-cut illustrations introduce a sculptural element, making it an ideal source for puppetry adaptation. This picturebook was adapted for the stage at the Zadar Puppet Theater in the form of a theater production of various means of expression. In this production, actors also assume the role of storytellers. Besides animating the puppet, they actively shape the stage space, which is visually inspired by Carle's original illustrations.

The picturebook *Tončić Petešić* by Vjekoslava Jurdana and Radovan Kunić, with its rich verbal and visual layers, served as the foundation for a story-play production by the Rijeka City Puppet Theater. The production was presented as narrative theater with elements of object theater. Radovan Kunić, who designed the scenography and the puppets, based his designs on his original illustrations for the picturebook, further enhancing them with a three-dimensional quality. This adaptation effectively transfers the visual and narrative elements of the picturebook into the three-dimensional, tactile world of puppet theater.

The play *The Ninth Sheep* incorporates elements of both the dramatic and lyrical

principles of puppet dramaturgy (Česal, 1984, 1987; Vigato, 2008). This means that the dramatization follows a literary template, with scenic imagery playing a crucial role, particularly in terms of the play's visuality. In contrast, the plays *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* and *Tončić Petešić* apply the epic principle of puppet dramaturgy (Česal, 1984, 1987; Vigato, 2008). This approach places significant emphasis on the role of narrator-actors, who actively recount the unfolding events as part of the performance.

In conclusion, it can be observed that, in all the analyzed puppet plays, the narrative flow and pictorial expression of the picturebook are present in ways that contribute to the development of stage dynamics, as Milan Čečuk (2009) argues. The pictorial sequence of scenes is evident in the transformation of the verbal and visual discourses of the picturebooks into components of the puppet plays. The verbal discourses of the picturebooks are adapted into stage performances through the introduction of new characters and songs, while their visual discourses are consistently transformed into essential visual components of puppet plays, such as puppets, scenography, and costumes. This transformation supports Milan Čečuk's (2009) assertion regarding the connection between the artistic expressions of picturebooks and puppet plays, with the latter being described as a kind of animated, three-dimensional picturebook. Therefore, it can be concluded that the results presented in this paper provide answers to questions regarding the connection between picturebooks and puppet theater, as well as the transformation of verbal-visual components of picturebooks into stage-like modes of expression in puppet theater. In this way, the findings contribute to ongoing research in the field of children's literature theory – specifically picturebook theory—as well as contemporary puppetry theory.

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<https://www.klz.hr/repertoar/predstave/vrlo-gladna-gusjenica> Rijeka City Puppet Theater

<https://www.gkl-rijeka.hr/index.php/toncic-petesic/>

LUTKARSKE TRANSPOZICIJE SUVREMENIH SLIKOVNICA

SAŽETAK

U radu se analiziraju odabrane suvremene lutkarske predstave izvedene prema slikovnicama kao predlošcima s ciljem utvrđivanja karakteristika koje povezuju slikovnicu i lutkarsko kazalište te načina na koje se u lutkarskim predstavama očituju transformirani verbalno-vizualni elementi slikovnica prema kojima su predstave izvedene. Polazi se od zajedničkih karakteristika slikovnice i lutkarske predstave kao što je višemodalnost slikovnice odnosno sinteza više umjetnosti kao sastavnica lutkarske predstave, te od teze Milana Čečuka (2009) prema kojoj je ekspresija slikovnice na različite načine prisutna u lutkarskim predstavama koje autor interpretira kao oživljene trodimenzijske slikovnice. U svim analiziranim lutkarskim predstavama prisutni su tijekom radnje i vizualna ekspresija slikovnice na način koji doprinosi razvijanju scenske dinamike te je slikovničko nizanje prizora prisutno u transformiranju verbalnih i vizualnih diskursa slikovnica predložaka u komponente lutkarskih predstava.

KLJUČNE RIJEČI:

slikovnica, verbalni diskurs, vizualni diskurs, kazalište različitih izražajnih sredstava, klasično lutkarsko kazalište