

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

context. Questioning the impact of political and other changes on literature that took place in the aftermath of 1990 is also a question of the position of man, especially the child in contemporary civilization. Numerous socio-political changes, especially the war and suffering on the territory of the former state, conditioned the crisis of man in modern civilization, which was reflected in the literary production since literature is both an expression and a reflection of the context from which it arises.

The Homeland War in Croatia (1991-1995) greatly influenced the course of development of Croatian literature and is considered as a turning point in the periodization of contemporary Croatian literature. Although it did not interrupt all tendencies of literature of the 1980s, the war did initiate a critical structural and thematic restructuring of the Croatian novel, which is why it is regarded in literary and historical terms as a kind of censorship and has been recognized in many writers as a radical thematic turn towards real problems and existential drama of the Croatian people. The author finds it justified to highlight the year 1991 as a borderline in the possible periodization of the twentieth-century Croatian children's literature given the presence of extraliterary reasons that directly influenced the thematic, genre-specific, and conceptual literary content. In the context of observing the impact of social reality on the literary production in Croatian children's literature, Sanja Vrcić-Mataija points out the founding of a new children's book series, *Ratna Vjeverica* (War Squirrel) as part of Zagreb's *Mladost* (Youth), precisely in 1991, which published the works of contemporary Croatian writers, dedicated to the topic of children in the Homeland War.

The present study established the typology of the novels of the realistic narrative model based on the relationship between the fictional and factual, respecting thereby the age criterion of the recipients and literary heroes, the degree of modernity of formative procedures, and the prevailing narrative figure as a key criterion in determining the specific types of children's novels of the 1990s and their subtypes and forms derived from them based on the cultural image of childhood and growing up observed within the space-time topos. By summarizing the given corpus, the author concludes that the children's novel is undoubtedly the most extensive narrative literary type of children's literature in which children and adolescents are the main drivers of action, and the thematic emphasis is not only on events and exciting adventures but also increasingly on the psychic experiences of the main characters. The novels of the researched corpus are a testament to the stylistic diversity, manifested in a simple and easy to understand style, but also in an increasingly complex stylistic structure in which stylistic experimentation and structural innovations can be observed. As a particular research interest, the author emphasizes the depiction of contemporary Croatian reality set the 1990s children's novel, the manner in which it is achieved, as well as the question of how specific projections of that reality, with all its social actualities, are projected onto the image of childhood and identity of children's characters regardless if they are formed by those within a children's group, family, individually, or in the company of an adult.

The typology of the Croatian realistic children's novel from 1991 to 2001, proposed by this study, includes: the children's band novel (within which the author distinguishes the novel of the rural identity of a children's band, the novel

of the urban identity of a children's band, and the novel of the urban identity of a children's band with a displaced setting), the adolescent band novel, the character novel, especially the children's character novel and the adolescent character novel, the family novel (with forms such as the family novel with the portrayal of a traditional patriarchal family, the family novel with the portrayal of a modern patriarchal family, the family novel with the portrayal of a modern liberal family), and an intergenerational novel.

Sanja Vrcić-Mataija's scientific Study *The Croatian Realistic Children's Novel* (1991 - 2001) is a significant contribution to the study of the history of Croatian children's literature. This is especially true of the research and systematization of contemporary literary works (with the interpretation of 87 literary works and more than 200 related bibliographic units), more specifically the children's novel as one of the most popular genres of children's literature in general. The results of the study of the corpus of children's novels written by Croatian authors, obtained in the recent past – during the last decade of the twentieth century – are additionally interesting, among other things, for pinpointing the role of the Homeland War theme, but also as a starting point for future research on the literary production of the Croatian children's novel, with features of the contemporary postmodern and other literary poetry movements.

Maja VERDONIK
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