

## OVERLOOKED AVANT - GARDE IN THE YOUTH OPUS OF LOJZE KOVAČIČ



### Comparative Literature

**Keywords:** Lojze Kovačič, youth opus, art deco, avant-garde, Bauhaus, topsy-turvy world, camera obscura, puppets, radio, commercials.

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### Abstract

The article presents the literary works for youth by Lojze Kovačič (1928-2004) who mostly wrote for adults. He was born in Basel, Switzerland, but before the Second World War, the author's family had to leave Switzerland and they emigrated to the then Kingdom of Yugoslavia, to the birthplace of his father. As early as 1947, he began publishing in Slovene in the student newspaper "Mi mladi" (We Young). After 1950, he wrote short modern fairy tales for children with modernist elements typical of adult literature. This deliberate modernity already heralds a top author who, for example, translated Kafka for children. In his initial phase, he collaborated with illustrators (e.g., Milan Bizovičar), created comics with avant-garde art elements and wrote science fiction. The most famous is the collection of short contemporary fairy tales "Zgodbe iz mesta Rič-Rač" (Stories from the City of Rič-Rač, 1962-) which has been reprinted several times and represents only a third of the author's oeuvre. Two-thirds are unpublished, scattered through various radio shows and magazines. The editor of Pionirski list, Marija Kovačič Vida, published texts by a whole generation of authors in the 1950s and 1960s. In the most famous anthologies, entitled "Za celo leto: priročnik iger in deklamacij" (For the Whole Year: A Handbook of Games and Declamations, 1960) and "Praznični koledar: pesmi, črtice in igre za šolske prireditve" (Holiday Calendar: Poems, Literary Sketches, and Games for School Events, 1976), she made an outstanding review of literary creativity intended for children and youth. Based on the study of the author's oeuvre for youth, we can easily conclude that the author is a pronounced modernist, as he used avant-garde approaches, elements of art deco, Bauhaus, camera obscura, puppets, mundus inversus, commercials, etc. He translated picturesque visual images into modernist texts for young people. At the end of the article, suggestions are given for a scientific-critical monograph dealing with the author's literary opus for youth which is characterized by translation of visual into verbal and vice versa (e.g., puppets, comics), as well as between other media. It is paradoxical that L. Kovačič in his literary works intended for adults was rather critical of the socialist system in his second homeland (1945-1991), but he nevertheless published the most literary units for youth during this very period, and his work was also regularly included in the curricula (1984, 1998) and readers in schools, while in the latest curriculum from 2019 he is completely overlooked and omitted. Based on his writing, L. Kovačič is a truly European author. He died on 1 May 2004, the day Slovenia became a member of the EU and the intense oblivion of history began. L. Kovačič was one of the victims of this process.

### Introduction

The Slovene writer LOJZE KOVAČIČ (Basel, Switzerland, 1928 – Ljubljana, 2004) is a representative writer for adults who has established himself not only in Slovenia but also in international context. In 1938, on the verge of the Second World War, the ten-year-old Kovačič moved together with his parents from Switzerland to the then Kingdom of Yugoslavia. He did not know Slovenian at the time. His first language was German. He describes all this in the most famous and translated trilogy "Prišleki" (Newcomers) – a literary fresco, where he tells the European history of the 20<sup>th</sup> century through the fate of an individual in the dramatic period of the Second World War. But his career as a writer started in 1947 when he published his first story in the student magazine "Mi mladi" (We Young).

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## Early publications – 1947

These are the stories: a fragment of “*Maruška*” and “*Zgodba iz našega mesta*” (A Story from our Town). Both texts are addressing open, although they are intended for an adult rather than a young addressee.

The fragment entitled “*Maruška*” was published in November 1947 in the students’ literary journal of the Ivan Cankar student dormitory “*Mi mladi*” (We Young). It contains autobiographical references that become a constant in the author's opus for adults.

The commander shifted his weight from one foot to another. We waited. The decision of the staff will now be pronounced.

“Comrades, a female comrade wrote to a Serb from the second brigade. She’s, as you’ve heard, a bit retarded. What Maruška did is a misdemeanor against discipline. We all know that. But...”

He shuffled his fingers over the map, thinking. We followed his every move. We cared for him.

“... I don’t think we're going to send her home. I know her; she suffered a lot in the war. She is bitter, pessimistic, because she has had nothing good, bright in her life. As a little girl, she was beaten...”

The commander’s voice grew: “She has to master the bright life of ours; she has to know the laws of the youth track. Maruška has to return from the track different, more cheerful, so that she can handle everything ugly. Teaching, showing her, arousing this power in her, is also one of our great tasks.”<sup>2</sup>

In the same newspaper, in December 1947, he published an excerpt “*Zgodba iz našega mesta*” (A Story from Our Town) from the novella bearing the same name.

In our town lived Herman Heller, a retired gunsmith. He inherited a house and a park along the municipal road from his brother, who lived with us for many years and was supposedly a high-ranking official. The house was already old then, built in the Bavarian style, with a low wooden roof and green windows. The park bordered on a road with a high hedge and on the other side it was opened into a groomed beech forest which was also Heller’s property. [...]

The author goes on to describe Heller’s life and how his “wife’s death” did not affect him. He went on to write on page six:

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<sup>2</sup> Kovačič, Lojze, 1947: *Maruška*. *Mi mladi: literarno glasilo dijakov dijaškega doma Ivana Cankarja*, No.1 (November), pp.2-4.

The radio crackled. Adolf Hitler of Munich spoke. A sharp voice shot up and echoed through the empty morning streets. Then the animal howling and stumping of a thousand feet began [...].<sup>3</sup>

In the first publications of the 19-year-old L. Kovačič from his student period the cultural elements of the first homeland are noticeable (e.g., Adolf Hitler, Bavarian style, Herman Heller). The question remains whether the term “in our country” refers to Switzerland or Slovenia. In the short prose entitled “*Maruška*”, there are elements of criticism of his second homeland (brigade, commander, staff ...) already in his student period.

### Period of writing for youth

Based on a detailed bibliography and digitization of units, professionally prepared in 2010 by Katja Kemplerle from the Ljubljana City Library and Tomaž Bešter from the National and University Library on behalf of the Beletrina Publishing House, the writer's youth phase can be divided into three phases.

1. Magazine phase – The initial period of Lojze Kovačič's career as a writer was the phase of youth literature, as he published mostly in serial publications for youth. During this period, Kovačič was in the so-called magazine phase (1949–1960).

2. Monographic phase – Later he gradually passed into the monographic phase (1958–1961) and began publishing in book form with a social theme (e.g., “*Novoletna zgodba*” (New Year's story), 1958).

3. Anthological phase – From the point of view of youth literary science, the third phase (1962–1974) includes an anthology or a collection of short contemporary fairy tales titled “*Zgodbe iz mesta Rič-Rač*” (Stories from the City of Rič-Rač, 1962) with reprints (1969, 1981, 1994 and 2011). This period ends with the picture book “*Možiček meddimniki*” (The Little Man Among the Chimneys, 1974).

In terms of literary systematics, only a third of his youth opus is published in this central collection, while two thirds are, unfortunately, fragmentarily published and dispersed and de facto unknown. This is, of course, the structural shortcoming that this article points out. Interestingly, empirical data on publications show the greatest presence in the youth literary system: anthologies, readers, curricula, and cultural space during the previous political and social system (1945–1991), although writers were extremely critical of the then political system. Subsequent publications are occasional, as the writer no longer wrote literature for youth.

<sup>3</sup> Kovačič, Lojze, 1947. Zgodbe iz našega mesta (odlomek iz istoimenske novele). *Mimladi: literarno glasilo dijakov dijaškega doma Ivana Cankarja*, No.2 (December), pp.13-18.

## Publications in serial publications, 1947–

From the point of view of youth literary studies, we could divide the periods of his youth opus into publications in serial publications (1947–, especially from 1950–1969), when almost 70% of all publications were in Mladinska knjiga magazines. To name but a few: *Ciciban* (24), *Najdihojca* (1), *Pionir* (Pioneer) (5), *Pionirski list* (Pioneer's Paper) (27) and *Mali veseljak*: ilustrirana priloga Pionirskega lista (*Little Reveller*: illustrated supplement to Pionirski list) (11 units) – a total of 52 out of 65 units or 80% of serial publications. In later decades, it was more about occasional and rare publications, partly due to the writer who no longer wrote for children, and partly due to the lack of interest of the editors in their own history.

### *Editorial policy*

He first started publishing for children in serial publications: *Ciciban*, *Ljubljanski dnevnik* (Ljubljana Diary), *Mali veseljak*, *Mlada njiva* (Young Field), *Pionir* and *Pionirski list*. After the war, there was no primary youth literature, in short: there was no youth/children's literature. Namely, youth/children's literature from the period between 1918 and 1941 did not correspond to the new time and context. The center of the youth literary system became the Mladinska knjiga Publishing House (founded in 1948) which developed and propelled Slovene youth literature by publishing primary literature (poems, fairy tales, folk tales..., illustrations, comics, etc.), newspapers (*Pionirski list*, *Pionir*, later *Mladina*) and magazines (*Ciciban* 1945–) and the collections *Mladi oder* (1945), *Sinji galeb* (1952), *Čebelica* (1953), *Kondor* (1956), *Zlata ptica* (1956), *Najdihojca* (1958), etc. Kristina Brenk was responsible for the development of the field, while the editor Marija Sever, with whom Lojze Kovačič married in 1951, had a decisive influence on belles lettres. Marija Kovačič – Vida (1926–1978) was the editor of the newspaper *Pionirski list* (1949–1976) at the Mladinska knjiga Publishing House. The renowned academician Lev Milčinski described her as a “noble woman” in 1984. She encouraged young writers, still beginners at that time (e.g., *Dane Zajc*, *Lojze Kovačič*, etc.) to write for children and young people. For many of them, it was an opportunity to train and also an opportunity to earn a living.

### *Lengthy modern fairy tales – science fiction and adventure stories*

In 1955, Lojze Kovačič published a lengthy modern fairy tale entitled “*Blaže in Nežica vvesolju*” (Blaže and Nežica in Space) with drawings by Milan Bizovičar in 23 sequels as a science fiction narrative with a typical structure (home – away – home).<sup>4</sup> Twelve-year-old Blaž and eleven-year-old Neža go to a (science) fiction world, because of “stealing” of pears in the garden of the evil Šepavec. At the end of the text, a metafictional passage appears, as they were just having a long dream.

<sup>4</sup> Kovačič, Lojze, 1955/56. Blaže in Nežica v vesolju/illustr. Milan Bizovičar. *Pionirski list*. Volume 9, no.1(21.9.), no.2(28.9.), no.3(5.10.), no.4(12.10.), no.5(19.10.), no.6(26.10.), no.7(2.11.), no.8(9.1.), no.9(16.11.), no.10(23.11.), no.11(30.11.), no.12(7.12.), no.13(14.12.), no.14(21.12.), no.15(11.1.), no.16(18.1.), no.17(25.1.), no.18(1.2.), no.19(8.2.), no.20(22.2.), no.21(29.2.), no.22(7.3.), no.23(14.3.)

This is Blaže, a twelve-year-old boy who is in the second grade of high school. He is a devilish boy, which is visible in his clear eyes, a warlord in his street, an excellent gymnast, a boxer and a football player, a toppler who only has foolish things on his mind, and he has a fickle character (Kovačič 1955: 1).

This is eleven-year-old Nežica, his sister. She is hardworking at school and also helps her mother doinghousework. When it rains, she knits socks for her little doll, and on sunny days she plays shop and moms with other girls in the backyard (Kovačič 1955: 1).

He published the next lengthy modern fairy tale entitled “*Čudovito življenje Tomaža Strune*”<sup>5</sup> (The Wonderful Life of Tomaž Struna) (21 sequels), with illustrations by Milan Bizovičar, in *Pionirski list* (1959/60) and later (1963) the text was adapted for a radio play in eleven parts.

The hero of our story is Tomaž Struna. He is ten years old, goes to school, and is quick and strong. He has a hard tuft of hair on his head and a red T-shirt with a hole on his belly. He lives in house no. 57 which has eleven chimneys and cats and flower beds on the windows. He has a brother named Janko and a sister Metka and a mother. His father is a driver. Two days before the start of our story, he had to travel a long way by truck, and he returned only four days after the end. This is a great fortune for the story, for the father is strict.

And yet our hero is something special. He lives another life, brilliant, tense and exciting, full of adventures, battles and victories in all corners of the world. But because of this, much more awkward and funny things happen to him in ordinary life, until... (Kovačič 1963: 1)

### ***Publications in other monographs, 1958***

After ten years of publishing in magazines (magazine phase), Lojze Kovačič published the first original realistic short fairy tale “*Novoletna zgodba*” (A New Year's Tale) in the *Čebelica*<sup>6</sup> book collection. This short modern fairy tale<sup>7</sup> or picture book with illustrations by Milan Bizovičar is intertextually related to Andersen’s “*The Little Match Girl*”. This was the beginning of Kovačič’s monographic phase.

It was still snowing as dad walked toward the suburbs (Kovačič 1958: 1).<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Kovačič, Lojze, 1959/60. *Čudovito življenje Tomaža Strune*, ilustr. Milan Bizovičar. *Pionirski list*. Leto 13, no.1 (15.9.), no.2 (22.9.), no.3 (2.10.), no.4 (9.10.), no.5 (15.10.), no.6 (22.10.), no.7 (29.10.), no.8 (5.11.), no.9 (12.11.), no.10 (19.11.), no.11 (26.11.), no.12 (4.12.), no.13 (9.12.), no.14 (16.12.), no.15 (23.12.), no.16 (28.12.), no.17 (6.1.), no.18 (13.1.), no.19 (4.2.), no.20 (10.2.), no. 21 (17.2.).

<sup>6</sup> *Čebelica* is a book collection for children, founded in 1953 by the systemic youth author Kristina Brenk, based on the example of the *Kranjska čbelica*.

<sup>7</sup> In youth literary science there are three models of fairy tales, 1. Folk (e.g., J. and W. Grimm), 2. Classical (e.g., H.C. Andersen, etc.) and modern short (e.g., E. Peroci, S. Makarovič, D. Zajc, etc.) and lengthy modern fairy tale (e.g., “*Drejček i ntrije Marsovčeki*” [Drejček and the three Martians], “*Kosovirja*” [Kosovirs], “*Potovanje tisočeramesta*” [Journey to Thousands of Cities], etc.).

<sup>8</sup> Kovačič, Lojze, 1958. *Novoletna zgodba* / ilustr. Milan Bizovičar. Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga. (Knjižnica Čebelica; 41).

It was New Year's Eve. A thick curtain of snow fell on the city and covered the black chimneys of the old shanty houses with white caps (Kovačič 1954: 1).<sup>9</sup>

The main literary character is a boy Janko from a socially underprivileged family (a sick mother). Unlike the tragic ending of the anti-fairy tale “*The Little Match Girl*”, where no one helps a dying child in spite of overcrowded tables and New Year's Eve, in Kovačič's text the neighbors share food and drink and finally celebrate together. Social cohesiveness is obvious, as are autobiographical elements, even though the text is fictional.

The editor Marija Kovačič<sup>10</sup> also included his short modern fairy tales in anthologies or collections, e.g. “*Novoletna zgodba*” (New Year's story) and “*Štirje možje vsnegu*” (Four Men in the Snow) were published in “*Za cello leto: priročnik iger i ndeklamacij*” (For the Whole Year: A Handbook of Games and Declamations, 1960; and “*Tejko gleda v prihodnost*” (Tejko Looking to the Future) and “*Zgodba o zmešanem računanju*” (The Story of Crazy Calculus) were published in “*Praznični koledar: pesmi, črtice i nigre za šolske prireditve*” (Holiday Calendar: Poems, Literary Sketches, and Games for School Events, 1976)<sup>11</sup>. In later anthologies, from 1991–2004 onwards, which is actually contradictory in terms of his reputation, his short contemporary fairy tales are rarely included and published. A few were published anyway: e.g., his fairy tale “*Pst, volk je v sobi*” (Shh, the Wolf is In the Room) was included in the collection “*Pravljice za leto I ndan: januar, februar, marec*”<sup>12</sup> (Fairy Tales for a Year and a Day: January, February, March (1993), the fairy tale “*Le za nosom*” (Follow Your Nose) in the anthology “*Bisernica: slovenske kratke pripovedi za otroke od 1945–1995*”<sup>13</sup> (*Bisernica: Slovenian short stories for children from 1945–1995*, 1996), and “*Vdeželi dedka Mraza*” (In the Land of Santa Claus) and “*Vojaška postelja*” (Military Bed) in the anthology “*Vse najboljše, Ciciban: 100 i nveč najboljših iz šestdesetih letnikov Cicibana*”<sup>14</sup> (All the Best, Ciciban: 100 and More of the Best From the Sixty Volumes of Ciciban, 2005).

In my scientific articles on the author<sup>15</sup>, I follow the notion that the professional public has not recognized his originality, nor has it been able to define or place it in an international context and space. Which, of course, is a shame?

<sup>9</sup> Kovačič, Lojze, 1953/54. *Dečekinstarka*. *Pionirskilist*. Volume 7, no.26 (24.3); *Ko zvezde žare kakor zmrznjen zvok*. *Pionirski list*. Volume 7, no.16 (28.12.)

<sup>10</sup> Marija Kovačič-Vida, maiden name Sever, was the editor of the newspaper *Pionirski list* and the magazine *Pionirat* at the Mladinska knjiga Publishing House from 1949 until her retirement in 1976, and later she also collaborated with the magazine and the publishing house until her death in 1978.

<sup>11</sup> Kovačič, Marija, *Praznični koledar: pesmi, črtice in igre za šolske prireditve*, 1976.

<sup>12</sup> Edited by Niko Grafenauer.

<sup>13</sup> Edited by Marjana Kobe.

<sup>14</sup> Edited by Slavica Remškar.

<sup>15</sup> Blažič, Milena. *Novosti v kratki sodobni pravljici Lojzeta Kovačiča – študij primera Zgodbe iz mesta Rič-Rač*. In: Troha, Gašper (ed.), Blažič, Milena (ed.), Leben, Andrej (ed.). *Lojze Kovačič: življenje in delo*. Ljubljana: Študentska založba, 2009, pp.152-169.

Blažič, Milena. *Arhetipi indvojnosti v kratkih sodobnih pravljicah*. In: Komel Snoj, Mateja (ed.), Kovačič, Lojze. *Fragmentsi o prišleku: spominska knjiga Lojzeta Kovačiča*. Ljubljana: Študentska založba, 2008, pp.383-388.

Troha, Gašper (ed.), Blažič, Milena (ed.), Leben, Andrej (ed.). *Lojze Kovačič: življenje in delo* (Zbirka e Beletrina). Ljubljana: Študentska založba, 2013.

Troha, Gašper (ed.), Blažič, Milena (ed.), Leben, Andrej (ed.). *Lojze Kovačič: življenje in delo*. Ljubljana: Študentska založba, 2009.

Blažič, Milena (debater), Troha, Gašper (debater), Renko, Manca G. (debater). *Družbeno in družabno – Lojze Kovačič, sodobni mladinski klasik: 16 June 2014, Maladrama SNG. Pogovor o romanu Otroške stvari Lojzeta Kovačiča*.

Blažič, Milena. *Lojze Kovačič – Mladinski klasik*. Str.131–137, V: *Mladinski klasiki: izbor člankov in razprav*. 1<sup>st</sup> ed. Ljubljana: Pedagoška fakulteta, 2016.

### *Short Contemporary Fairy Tales and Zgodbe iz mesta Rič-Rač, 1962*

He published his first own short modern fairy tale in pictorial book form entitled “*Novoletna zgodba*” (A New Year’s Story) in 1958. The next independent publication was the first edition of the collection of short modern fairy tales entitled “*Zgodbe iz mesta Rič-Rač*” (Stories from the City of Rič-Rač) from 1962. The first edition contains fourteen units. In the second edition, in 1969, nineteen texts were published, and twenty in the third edition of 1981, while in the fourth edition of 1994 twenty-one texts were included. All editions were published with illustrations by Milan Bizovičar. The fifth edition from 2011 has twenty-one short modern fairy tales (with illustrations by Damijan Stepančič).

Kovačič added an author’s supplement entitled “*Povesto sebi i knjigi*” (A Tale of Myself and the Book) to the second, third and fourth editions. To the 1994 edition, he added autopoetics to this supplement, entitled “*Zakajne pišem več zgodb za otroke*” (Why I Don’t Write Stories for Children Anymore). His most prolific period of writing for children was in the 1950s, less in the 1960s, when he published most of his youth texts. Later, he tried to revive writing for children, when in 1979/80 he published a short modern fairy tale “*Zgodba o levu in levčkih*” (The Story of the Lion and the Lions) in *Pionirski list*, with illustrations by Ančka Gošnik - Godec. In 1980, he published it in the magazine *Lutka* (Doll) and a year later as a radio play. It was published as a stand-alone picture book in 1983 with illustrations by Matjaž Schmidt. Kovačič was also the editor of the magazine *Lutka* (1966–1973). However, according to available sources, this was his last text written specifically for the youth. Afterwards, he devoted himself entirely to the adult literature.

#### *Zgodbe iz mesta Rič Rač and camera obscura*

Kovačič developed a model of a short modern fairy tale which is characterized by a two-dimensionality that can be clear, positioned between the world of experience and imagination, and sometimes blurred, but he introduced many novelties. One of these is likeness to movies; he was influenced by film noir or a wide-angle view of what’s going on, a panoramic perspective as if he was observing through a film camera. Quite often, however, he turns everything upside down as if he were using a camera obscura.

But one night, when the Moon was glowing like a big headlight of a truck and was like a hole through which it is possible to look into a large lighted hall, the boy decided to travel (Kovačič 2011: 23).

It’s night. Only the radio plays on the shelf and glows in the middle of a dark room like a small theater (Kovačič 2011:50).

Tejko pulls away the radio and looks from behind, through the holes, to see them all together. He doesn't even dare to breathe so as not to overturn anyone with his breath (Kovačič 2011: 51).

He portrayed scenes in short modern fairy tales as a sequence of film shots. He was also influenced by advertisements (shop windows, inscriptions, illuminated advertisements, etc.).

### *Zgodbe iz mesta Rič-Rač and art deco*

In the latest monograph by Bettina Kummerling Meibauer and Eline Druker, entitled “*Children’s Literature and the Avant-Garde*”, 2015,<sup>16</sup> the authors explore the impact of the avant-garde on youth literature. This includes the influences of art deco, Dadaism, expressionism, constructivism, surrealism, new reality, new style and pop art. All these art trends mostly originated during the First and Second World Wars, but they appeared in youth literature after the Second World War, as an echo of all these -isms. According to their theory, which explains how avant-garde impact on youth authors is not only an artistic expression but also contains ideological and didactic ideas that are otherwise inseparable from artistic ones, this influence has found a natural refuge in youth literature. In Kovačič’s youth texts, we find avant-garde or –as they call it – art deco motifs, e.g. (all quotes<sup>17</sup>):

Architecture (“*Hišica dveh bratcev*” (House of Two Brothers), “*Mesto Rič-Rač*” (The City of Rič-Rač), “*Možiček med dimniki*” (Little Man among the Chimneys), “*Pet balkonov*” (Five Balconies), “*Povest o raztrganem mestu*” (The Story of a Torn City), etc.).

1. “*Tejko gradi hišo*” (Tejko is Building a House) – HE BUILDS HERE/ large twenty-storey skyscraper / construction company / “MORTAR”/Here he is building/an eight-story apartment building/ TEJKO (Kovačič 2011: 7–8).

2. “*Možiček med dimniki*” (Little Man Among the Chimneys) – How many lights: blue lights–those are roads, green lights–those are parks, yellow lights–those are the railway and the airport, scarlet lights–those are buses, pink lights–those are shop windows, rainbow lights–those are signals and advertisements (Kovačič 2011: 70).

3. “*Otroškadežela*”(Children's Land)–The houses were tall and painted like game cubes,<sup>18</sup> and on them were painted cats with mustaches, beaked geese, chimney sweeps with white teeth, and large storks (Kovačič 2011: 79).

<sup>16</sup> Kummerling Meibauer, Bettine and Druker, Eline. *Children's Literature and the Avant-Garde*. Amsterdam; Philadelphia: J Benjamins, 2015.

<sup>17</sup> All quotes taken from: Kovačič, Lojze. *Zgodbe iz mesta Rič-Račin drugod*. Ljubljana: Študentska založba, 2011.

<sup>18</sup> The influence of the Bauhaus design which combined elements of avant-garde and socialism.



## 1. THEATER

1. “*Pet bahačev*” (Five Braggarts) – I can go inside, shut myself up and play the radio, or I put on a puppet theater (Kovačič 2011: 48).

2. “*Radio*” – Only the radio plays on the shelf and shines in the middle of a dark room like a small theater (Kovačič 2011: 50).

3. “*Možiček meddimniki*” (Little Man among the Chimneys) – Few lamps are lit and illuminate the inscriptions on the night houses: [...] MIRACULOUS PUPPET THEATER [...] (Kovačič 2011: 71).

## 2. FILM

1. “*Na luno*” (To the Moon) – But the Moon in the middle of the sky now had big green eyes with long lashes like a movie actress, a curled mustache, a gorgeous nose and she laughed kindly and encouragingly all over the Earth with her wide, red lips (Kovačič 2011: 24)

2. “*Fantek na oblaku*” (The Boy on the Cloud) – There were those who wrote for newspapers, those who filmed for movies, and those who narrated on the radio, and then there were also those who filmed for television (Kovačič 2011: 59)

3. “*Možiček meddimniki*” (Little Man Among the Chimneys) – We give you as much as you ask for, and on top of that we put a TV in each house so you can have fun (Kovačič 2011: 68).

## 3. TOYS (“*Glinasti konjiček*”, Clay Hobby), design, useful objects:

1. “*Zgodba o raztresenem fantku*” (The Story of a Scatty Boy) – The shop window was full of toys: planes, a train and rifles, little men on poles and red-painted trucks.

2. “*Hiša dveh bratcev*” (The House of Two Little Brothers) – Janko is small, podgy, and funny and knows how to play. They live in the upper part of the house and their toys are downstairs.

3. “*Radio*” – But in the middle of a dark shop full of toys, horses, ladders, ducks and carousels, there is certainly an old, fat, friendly lady standing and saying that she can hear voices from the radio, saying: “Dear children, come to my store tomorrow morning to get toys” (Kovačič 2011: 51).

## 4. BOOKS

1. “*Pošta Balon*” (Mail Balloon) WHOEVER CATCHES THIS BALLOON, I WISH HE HAD A LOT OF BOOKS AND A BEAUTIFUL GREEN LAMP SO THAT HE COULD READ FAIRY TALES IN THE EVENING (Kovačič 2011: 21).

2. “*Pet bahačev*” (Five Braggarts) – I'm reading a great book in which cats box and shoot, but you don't! And he quickly hid the book behind his back so that no one would see the great covers and everyone would drool over the desire for such a book (Kovačič 2011: 48).

3. “Dva črna gospodka” (Two Little Black Gentlemen) – He will become a big and smart man who will read learned books and live in a white house with a garden full of trees, huge as elephants, the other replied (Kovačič 2011: 76).

#### 5. FASHION (clothes, patterns– floral and geometric)

1. “Radio”– He’s probably sitting inside, small as Tejko's thumb, dressed in a checkered suit and with a straw hat pushed over his eyes (Kovačič 2011: 50).

2. “Možiček med dimniki” (Little Man among the Chimneys) – [...] in the large shop windows mannequins dressed according to the latest fashion are silently entertained on the garden chairs and deck chairs [...] (Kovačič 2011: 63).

3. “Možiček med dimniki” (Little Man among the Chimneys) – Sometimes he climbs the city clock tower which is lit all night and has a green dial and instead of pointers two flowers made of gold (Kovačič 2011: 71).

4. “Možiček med dimniki” (Little Man Among the Chimneys) – They are inhabited only by poor people, newspaper and flower sellers, postmen who no longer work, but still wear postman hats and uniforms because they have no other clothes, shoemakers, makers of gingerbread, stamp-makers, knife and scissor grinders, glaziers, repairers of old umbrellas, potters, etc. (Kovačič 2011: 63).

#### 6. FURNITURE (“Vojaška postelja”, Military Bed)

1. “Dva zmerjalca” (Two Scolders) – They had to tidy the house for two weeks: clean, wipe, renovate furniture, dig in the garden, plug holes in the walls and ceiling, make new wooden doors and a garden fence with a letter box, and finally they had to go to town to buy a new light bulb with the power of five hundred candles, if they wanted to read fairy tales at night (Kovačič 2011: 56).

2. “Povest o mestu Rič-Rač” (The Tale of the City of Rič-Rač) – They opened the closet to change clothes, but the closet split in half and all the clothes in it were torn. The left half of the clothes remained in one half of the closet and the right half of the clothes in the other (Kovačič 2011: 61).

3. “Možiček med dimniki” (Little Man among the Chimneys) – Sometimes a cart with furniture and people moving from the old town to the palaces on the other side drives along the street. They stand on the cart and hold cupboards, flowerpots with asparagus, or mirrors to keep them from falling off the cart (Kovačič 2011: 66).

Kummerling Meibaue and Druker believe that this is easily applied to youth authors as well. The theory is applicable and useful for explaining Kovačič's novelties which he introduced in youth literature. All the characteristics of art deco are found in Kovačič's short modern fairy tales:

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<sup>19</sup> Geometric patterns – art deco, e.g., checkered blanket, checkered dress, checkered pencil case, as cubes, cubes, checkered blanket, game cubes, etc.

the image of a child, the influence of exhibitions, posters, design, as well as Bauhaus (blocks). Of course, all this is not currently in the focus of literary science, although they have brought a lot of new things on an aesthetic and narrative level.

The authors believe that some 1) authors considered their “avant-garde” phase to be a side phase (by-products); 2) literary historians accepted the avantgarde/modernity of these authors in the field of adult literature as artistic, while in the field of youth literature it is surprisingly ignored.<sup>20</sup>

### *Intermedia adaptations – puppets, radio, comics, TV*

We neglect the influence of time all too often. Lojze Kovačič was also a “child of time” and thus of the characteristic media of that time, especially the phenomenon of radio. Therefore, many short modern fairy tales have been adapted as radio plays, not only because of their content and plot, but also because of their likeness to movies and picturesqueness (e.g., “Možiček med dimniki” [Little Man Among the Chimneys] (1979), “Hišica dveh zmerjalcev” [The House of Two Scolders] (1980)).

A lengthy modern fairy tale with a partly new title “Čudovito življenje Petra Strune”<sup>21</sup> (The Wonderful Life of Peter Struna) was adapted as a TV puppet series (11 episodes, 1963). It was also adapted and played as a musical fairy tale, as were “Dva zmerjalca” (Two Scolders) in the series “Sedem stopnic do glasbe” (Seven Steps to Music, 1978). Five short modern fairy tales from the “Zgodbe iz mesta Rič-Rač” (Stories from the City of Rič-Rač) were adapted for TV: “Zlata ptica Rič Rač” (The Golden Bird Rič Rač, 1982), “Na luno” (To the Moon, parts 1 and 2), “Pošta Balon” (Mail Balloon), “Najmočnejši fantek na svetu” (The Strongest Boy in the World) and “Pst, volk je vsobi” (Shh, the Wolf is In the Room). These were short TV recordings of 5-8 minutes (1982). Kovačič published short modern fairy tales which were adapted as sound recordings, e.g., “Rokec na drugem koncu sveta” (Little Rok on the Other Side of the World, 1960), “Možiček med dimniki” (Little Man Among the Chimneys, 1979) were released in the form of an audio cassette and “Hišica dveh bratov” (The House of Two Brothers, 2005) was released as a CD.<sup>22</sup>

The Slovenian cultural public was most impressed by the picture book “Najmočnejši fantek na svetu” (The Strongest Boy in the World), in which autobiography and fiction are intertwined. The text intertextually relates to the “strongest girl in the world” – Pippi Longstocking by Astrid Lindgren – and describes the eternal children’s desire for power and arranging the world in their own way.

<sup>20</sup> Kummerling Meibauer, Bettine and Druker, Eline. *Children's Literature and the Avant-Garde*. Amsterdam; Philadelphia: J Benjamins, 2015, p.7.

<sup>21</sup> *Čudovito življenje Petra Strune*: puppet TV series in 11 episodes. Ljubljana: Radio televizija. (29.4.–9.12.1963).

<sup>22</sup> Gramophone records: *Rokec na drugem koncu sveta* [audio recording] / narrated by Jurij Souček; music by Ivo Petrič, 1960. *Možiček med dimniki* [audio recording]/narrated by Štefka Drolc and Polde Bibič, 1979, CD *Hišica dveh bratov*. On: *Juhaiz žebļjev* [audio recording], 2005.

In the field of Slovene youth literature, Kovačič is best known for the already mentioned collection of short contemporary fairy tales “Zgodbe iz mesta Rič-Rač” (Stories from the City of Rič-Rač) which contains only a third of his opus or creative production for youth. The other two-thirds of his opus of work for youth are de facto fragmentary and unknown, even if they are superb. Individual fairy tales from the collection were also published in the form of a picture book, most notably the most famous “Najmočnejši fantek na svetu” (The Strongest Boy in the World, 1959/60) in Ciciban (1977, 1985, and 1998). The mentioned short modern fairy tale with autobiographical elements is one of the most representative short modern fairy tales. Among the more well-known picture books is the “Možiček med dimniki” (Little Man among the Chimneys) which is intertextually related to “Karlsson på taket” (Karlsson-on-the-Roof) by A. Lindgren. “Pst, volk je v sobi” (Shh, the Wolf is In the Room) is also mentioned several times.

The collection “Zgodbe iz mesta Rič-Rač” (Stories from the City of Rič-Rač) was also adapted for radio (1973), and Kovačič’s individual short modern fairy tales also underwent radio adaptations: e.g., “Možiček med dimniki” (Little Man Among the Chimneys, 1979), “Hišica dveh zmerjalcev” (The House of Two Scolders, 1980) and “Zgodba o lev i hinlevčku” (The Story of the Lions and the Little Lion, 1981).

His interest in intermedia projects also led him to work at the Pionirski dom (from 1963 until his retirement). He also became the editor of the magazine Lutka (1966–1973) and together with Ranko Munitić heco-authored “Dežela animiranih čudes” (The Land of Animated Wonders, 1976).<sup>23</sup> In 1985, the Slovenian Youth Theater staged one of his works for adults, “Resničnost” (Reality), directed by Ljubiša Ristić.

### *Illustrators, translations, arrangements, comics, science fiction*

Lojze Kovačič also began his career as a co-author, e.g., in the magazine phase he edited and/or translated from German various texts in which the child is the main literary character, although these are not children's texts, e.g., F. Kafka, “Kinder auf der Landstrasse” (Children on a country road) – most often in the form of comics or texts below pictures. Kovačič thus introduced elements of cosmopolitanism through intertextuality into “domestic” Slovene literature for youth, which is unfortunately often overlooked.

It is also interesting that Lojze Kovačič was the editor, organizer, and translator of monographs. He adapted a lengthy modern fairy tale by Bogomir Magajna, titled “Brkonja Čeljstnik” (1956), which was published in sequels as a comic in the illustrated supplement of the Pionirski list, Mali veseljak.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Munitić, Ranko. *Dežela animiranih čudes* / ilustr. Dušan Petričić. Ljubljana: Univerzum, 1976.

<sup>24</sup> Magajna, Bogomir. *Brkonja Čeljstnik* / ilustr. France Slana. *Mali veseljak: ilustrirana priloga Pionirskega lista*, 1951. Magajna, Bogomir. *Brkonja Čeljstnik* / ilustr. France Slana. *Mali veseljak: ilustrirana priloga Pionirskega lista*, 1952.

He translated texts from German, e.g., Hans Fallada: “The Story of a Silly Day” (1954/55), “The Story of Confusion” (1957), “The Story of a Brother” (1970/71), and “The Story of a Story” (1983).<sup>25</sup>

He adapted a text by Astrid Lindgren, “Mästerdetektiven Blomkvist” (Bill Bergson, Master Detective, 1953),<sup>26</sup> to be published in the form of a comic. He edited a story of Ernest Hemingway, entitled “Day of Expectation”,<sup>27</sup> as well as Jack London’s adventurous text “The Cruise of the Dazzler” (21 sequels). This was followed by an adventurous text by Metta Victoria, “A Bad Boy’s Diary” (17 sequels).<sup>28</sup> Frederick Marryat’s adventure story “The Pirate” could also be included here.<sup>29</sup>

It is very interesting that he also translated a short literary sketch by Franz Kafka entitled “Kinder auf der Landstrasse” (Children on a Country Road, 1960/61).<sup>30</sup> He also wrote some science fiction, for example, he adapted Alfred Fritz’s contemporary fairy tale “Astropol - Ferien auf einer Außenstation im Weltraum” (Astropol: A Vacation in Space) in 2003 (11 sequels) as a comic<sup>31</sup> and a similar fantastic text by Siegfried Schieter, “The Invisible Man and the Drum” (1960/61), in 36 sequels.<sup>32</sup> Lojze Kovačič started publishing literary works for young readers in serial publications, e.g., 1950/51 in the magazine Pionir a short text entitled “Ura” (The Clock),<sup>33</sup> and later mainly in the magazines Ciciban and Pionirski list. Most often he collaborated with contemporaries from his generation: Milan Bizovičar (40), France Slana (12), Jože Ciuha (4), and 3 units with Ančka Gošnik Godec, Roža Piščanec, Sava Sovre, and another two units each by: Melita Vovk, Damijan Stepančič, Matjaž Schmidt, Cita Potokar, Aco Mavec, Marjan Manček, as well as one picture book each by: Marjan Dovjak, Marjanca Jemec Božič, Dunja Kofler, Miki Muster, Dušan Petričič, Dora Plestenjak, Albin Rogelj, and Ive Seljak Čopič.

### *Translations into foreign languages*

Despite the undeniable quality, very few of Kovačič’s literary works for youth were translated, only a few units, in 1966, “Zgode iz grada Rič-Rač”, aka “Zgodbe iz mesta Rič-Rač”<sup>34</sup> (Stories from the City of Rič-Rač), and in 1972, “Le petit garçon sur un nuage”<sup>35</sup> (Boy on a Cloud) was translated into French.<sup>36</sup> In 1973, “Svetomletom”<sup>37</sup> (Journey without a Plan) was translated into Slovak.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Fallada, Hans. *Geschichte aus der Mürkelei* / illustr. Roža Piščanec, 1938.

<sup>26</sup> Lindgren, Astrid. *Mojstrski detektiv Blomquist* / illustr. Milan Bizovičar. *Mali veseljak: ilustrirana priloga Pionirskega lista*, 1953.

<sup>27</sup> Hemingway, Ernest. *Dan pričakovanja. Mali veseljak: ilustrirana priloga Pionirskega lista*, 1953/54.

<sup>28</sup> Victor, Metta Victoria. *Dnevnik malopridnega Jurčka* / illustr. Savo Sovre. *Mali veseljak: ilustrirana priloga Pionirskega lista*, 1955/56.

<sup>29</sup> Marryat, Frederick. *Morski razbojnik: po knjigi kapitana Fredericka Marryata* / illustr. Miki Muster. *Pionir*, 1954/55.

<sup>30</sup> Kafka, Franz. *Otrocinadeželnosti (Kinder auf der Landstrasse, 1912)* / illustr. Savo Sovre. *Pionirski list*, 1960/62.

<sup>31</sup> Fritz, Alfred. *Astropol: počitnicev vsemirju leta 2003* / illustr. France Slana. *Mali veseljak: ilustrirana priloga Pionirskega lista*, 1953. Fritz, Alfred. *Astropol: počitnicev vsemirju leta 2003* / illustr. France Slana. *Pionirski list*. Volume 6, 1953.

<sup>32</sup> Schieter, Siegfried. *Nevidni človek in boben* / illustr. Aco Mavec, 1960/61.

<sup>33</sup> Kovačič, Lojze. *Ura*, 1950/51.

<sup>34</sup> Kovačič, Lojze. *Zgode iz grada Rič-Rač* / trans. by Dora Maksimović-Pilković, illustr. Milan Bizovičar.

<sup>35</sup> Illustr. by Milan Bizovičar.

<sup>36</sup> Trans. by Zlata Pirnat Cognard.

<sup>37</sup> Illustr. by Milan Bizovičar.

<sup>38</sup> Trans. by Mária Myjavcová.

According to the sources found so far, only two fairy tales have been translated in the serial publication “Le livre slovène”, namely “Le petit homme parmi les cheminées” (Little Man Among the Chimneys) in 1971 and Voyage au pif (Journey Without a Plan) in 1979.<sup>39</sup> In the 1980s, he tried to revive his youth phase with a short modern fairy tale “Zgodba o levih in levčku” (The Story of Lions and the Little Lion), first as a radio play “Zgodba o velikem in malem strahu: radijska igra za otroke” (The Story of Big and Small Fear: A Radio Play for Children, 1981)<sup>40</sup> and later as a picture book (illustrations by Matjaž Schmidt, 1983). The fairy tale was translated into German in 1986 under the title “Die Geschichte vom Löwenvater und dem Löwenjungen”.<sup>41</sup>

## Anthologies

As early as the 1960s, Kovačič's short contemporary fairy tales were included in anthologies, e.g., “Novoletna zgodba” (New Year's story) and “Štirje možje v snegu” (Four Men in the Snow) were published in “Za celo leto: priročnik iger in deklamacij” (For the Whole Year: A Handbook of Games and Declamations, editor Marija Kovačič), 1960, and “Možiček med dimniki” (Little Man Among the Chimneys) in the publication “Pravljice iz naših dni” (Fairy Tales from Our Days). “Tejko gleda v prihodnost” (Tejko Looking to the Future) and “Zgodba o zmešanem računanju” (The Story of Crazy Calculus) were published in “Praznični koledar: pesmi, črtice in igre za šolske prireditve” (Holiday Calendar: Poems, Literary Sketches, and Games for School Events, 1976, editor Marija Kovačič). The fairy tale “Pst, volk je v sobi” (Shh, the Wolf is In the Room) was included in the collection “Pravljice za leto in dan: januar, februar, marec” (Fairy Tales for a Year and a Day: January, February, March, 1993), and the fairy tale “Le za nosom” (Follow Your Nose) was published in the anthology “Bisernica: slovenske kratke pripovedi za otroke od 1945–1995” (Bisernica: Slovenian short stories for children from 1945–1995, 1996). “V deželi dedka Mraza” (In the Land of Santa Claus) and “Vojaška postelja” (Military Bed) were published in the anthology dedicated to the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Ciciban magazine, in which Kovačič published almost half of his short modern fairy tales, entitled “Vse najboljše, Ciciban: 100 in več najboljših iz šestdesetih letnikov Cicibana” (All the Best, Ciciban: 100 and More of the Best from the Sixty Volumes of Ciciban, 2005). What is essential in Lojze Kovačič's short contemporary fairy tales, especially in “Zgodbe iz mesta Rič-Rač” (Stories from the City of Rič-Rač), are the novelties he introduced into traditional Slovene youth literature, namely the distinctive motif of a child becoming a central literary figure.

Also, in literature for adults, Kovačič's central literary character is a child (e.g., “Dečekin smrt” (Boy and Death), 1968), Part I of the “Prišleki” (Newcomers, 1984) and “Otroške stvari” (Child's Things, 2003)). Intertextuality, child and rebellion. Intertextuality – Andersen, Fallada, Fritz, Kafka, Lindgren, Slomšek, Tolstoy.

<sup>39</sup> Voyage au pif (*Potovanje za nosom*) / trans. by Elza Jereb. *Le livre slovène*. No. 34, 1979, pp. 37–40.

<sup>40</sup> The game received second prize in the competition of RTV Ljubljana in 1980.

<sup>41</sup> Kovačič, Lojze. *Die Geschichte vom Löwenvater und dem Löwenjungen (Zgodba o levu in levčku)* / trans. by Milan Mlačnik; illustr. Matjaž Schmidt. Herrsching: M. Pawlak, 1985.

*In the following table, the comparative analysis of the motivic-thematic elements of Kovačič's youth texts reflected the following links:*

1. Andersen, H.C.: The Emperor's New Clothes – Kovačič, L.: Zgodbaoraztresenemfantku
2. Andersen, H.C.: The Little Match Girl – Kovačič, L.: Kozvezdežare
3. Andersen, H.C.: The Little Match Girl – Kovačič, L.: Dvačrnagospodka
4. Carroll, L.: Alice's Adventures in Wonderland – Kovačič, L.: Otroškadežela
5. Carroll, L.: Alice's Adventures in Wonderland – Kovačič, L.: Rokec na drugem koncu sveta
6. Dumas, Alexander: The Three Musketeers – Kovačič, L.: Trije mušketeriji
7. Exupery, A. de S: The Little Prince – Kovačič, L.: Na Luno
8. Exupery, A.deS: The Little Prince – Kovačič, L.: Otroškadežela
9. Fallada, Hans: The Story of a Silly Day – Kovačič, L.: Zgodba o raztresenem fantku
10. Grimm, J. In W.: Hansel and Gretel – Kovačič, L.: Janko in Metka
11. Grimm, J. In W.: Little Red Riding Hood – Kovačič, L.: Rdečakapica
12. Grimm, J. In W.: The Fisherman and His Wife – Kovačič, L.: Vanjainpiščal
13. Kafka, Franz: Children on a country road – Kovačič, L.: Glinasti konjiček
14. Korczak, Janusz: King Matt the First – Kovačič: Otroškadežela
15. Lindgren, Astrid: Karlsson-on-the-Roof – Kovačič, L.: Možičekmeddimniki
16. Lindgren, Astrid: Pippi Longstocking – Kovačič, L.: Najmočnej šifantek na svetu
17. Rodari, Gianni: The Nose That Ran Away – Kovačič, L.: Potovanje za nosom
18. Rodari, Gianni: Excellent Plus One – Kovačič, L.: Zgodba ozmešanem računanju
19. Sandburg, Carl: How the Five Rusty Rats Helped Find a New Village – Kovačič, L.: Petbahačev
20. Slomšek, A. M.: Blaže in Nežicavnedeljskišoli (Blaže and Nežica in Sunday school) – Kovačič, L.: Blaže in Nežicav vesolju
21. Tolstoj, L. N.: Mother and her daughter Annie – Kovačič, L.: Neslanajuha

Kovačič is a distinct author in whose work the motif-thematic reminiscences are obvious, but the author creatively reworks them. In addition to intertextual links, intermedia links can also be found, e.g. the influence of movies (e.g. wide-angle view of events, bird's eye view, observation of the world as through a film camera), motif of flying ("Naluno", "Pošta Balon", "Rokec na drugem koncu sveta", etc.), framing – sequence of scenes ("Tejkozidahišo"). He uses the cinematic technique of writing, hence the filmicity – a view from near and far, a view from afar (new place), then a focus on action and an increase in detail (window).

On the other side, a new city is unfolding; large, white palaces of glass, iron, and concrete rise along the wide roads, having as many windows as, for example, the world's largest newspaper has small advertisements on Sunday (Kovačič 2011: 63)

Influence of advertisements (e.g., inscriptions (MIRACLE PUPPET THEATER, AT THE CASTLE, GLORY OF POEMS, etc.), shop windows, etc.) He flew toward the sky, illuminated by

a million stars that glistened and flickered like the heads of pins. The moon was getting bigger and brighter – like the face of a giant (Kovačič 2011: 23)

All these interesting motif-thematic reminiscences will (hopefully) be the subject of further research and comparison. As well as the writer's "movie-like" process itself

### *The image of a child and childhood*

In the literary work of Kovačič, one of the motif-thematic constants is the image of a child, which is why variations of the basic archetype of a child according to C. G. Jung also appear in the collection "Zgodbe iz mesta Rič-Rač", e.g., an orphan child ("you are an orphan, an abandoned child"), innocent child ("innocent child"), a divine child ("Children's Land ruled by children"). Children are soldiers, officials, and workers, or whatever they want to be, and take care of their parents. The children have names (e.g., Mr. Jani) and there are also wounded children (children cry, beg). In this connection, common symbols of the child (C.G.Jung) appear: pearl, blossom/flower, glass/goblet/cup, jewels, circle, a child of exotic origin (orphan), sun (sunlight, sun in the middle of the city, in the sun, six parasols, golden sun, sun strips), gold (golden frame, golden letters, golden buttons, golden morning, golden names, golden trumpets, golden hair, golden girl, golden sun, golden-yellow shell), star (astronomer, reading books about stars) and being surrounded by stars.

He flew toward the sky, illuminated by a million stars that glistened and flickered like the heads of pins; the chimneys look out over the stars, but even the stars did not shine on this deserted place (Kovačič 2011:35).<sup>42</sup>

C. G. Jung interpreted the frequent use of symbols as the archetypes of the child as the consequence of the suffering of the souls of those who are excommunicated, tortured, and rejected – a confirmation of the writer's literary and autobiographical facts and experiences. Common themes of writers are also the so-called 'children's lands', the conception of the child as king, e.g., Janusz Korczak, "King Matt the First", and Kovačič, "Otroška dežela" (Children's Land).

In our country, it is forbidden for adults to speak when children speak (Kovačič 2011:79).<sup>43</sup>

It is also interesting that his literary characters – especially boys – think a lot: "he thought, thought of, pondered, imagined, and invented". Of the adult characters the father is the central character, the character of the mother is on the verge, although we also find original imaginary literary characters such as "Možiček meddimniki" (Little Man among the Chimneys).

<sup>42</sup>Kovačič, Lojze. Zgodbe iz mesta Rič-Rač in drugod. Ljubljana: Študentska založba, 2011.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid.



“WHOEVER CATCHES THIS BALLOON SHOULD COME TO ME IN THE EVENING OF THE DAY AFTER TOMMOROW SO WECAN THINK UP A NEW, EVEN BETTER STORY THAN THIS ONE”(Kovačič2011:22).<sup>44</sup>

I mentioned that also in his writings for adults the central literary character is a child (e.g., “Deček in smrt” (1968), the first part of “Prišleki” (1984) and “Otroške stvari”, (2003)), although the narrative perspective is that of an adult and also literary language and style used are by no means childish.

### *Literature of social upheaval– topsy-turvy world*

In adult literature, Kovačič's critique of politics is characteristic, which can also be traced in the motif-thematic elements in “Zgodbe iz mesta Rič-Rač”(Stories from the City of Rič-Rač), e.g., militiamen, policemen, officials, soldiers, barracks), and so is rebellion against the established order, so ‘inversus mundus’ or a topsy-turvy world is a common theme (e.g., “Najmočnejši fantek na svetu”, “Otroška dežela”, “Zgodba o zmešanemračunanju”, etc.). It is interesting that in the 1950s he published lengthy modern fairy tales or science fiction (“BlažeinNežicavvesolju”), but later abandoned science fiction elements, except for a few (e.g., “NaLuno”) and preferred to write short modern fairy tales, where the main literary figures are mainly boys, most often a boy named Jani or Janko, which is undoubtedly an autobiographical reminiscence of his own sons (“Najmočnejšifantek na svetu”, “Otroškadežela”, “Pošta Balon”, “Fantek na oblaku”, “Potovanje za nosom”, etc.). These are interesting short modern fairy tales that thematize well-known motifs in a modern way according to the model of a folk tale, both literally and in a figurative sense, e.g., in the story “Dva zmerjavca” (Two Scolders) the brothers scold each other and use derogatory terms (e.g., goat, donkey, calf, etc.) and the mentioned animals appear in the room until the boys “learn some common sense”, as the author writes.

Lojze Kovačič is better known as an author for adults, but less so as an author for youth. In the Slovene literary system, the collection of short contemporary fairy tales “Zgodbe iz mesta Rič-Rač” (Stories from the City of Rič-Rač) with twenty-one texts is well known, as these texts introduced many innovations in the 1950s and 1960s. Unfortunately, about two thirds of his youthful opus remains in serial publications although it is extremely interesting for further scientific research. The image of the child is extremely modern and has no comparison in the current literary production of the 21<sup>st</sup> century which stems from a much-simplified restoration and solving problems with “animals”.

### *Autopoetics – Kovačič about himself*

Like all great writers, Kovačič also was capable of self-reflection of his own poetics; already in the magazine phase of 1960/61 he writes: “It will be unusual to experience the new year 2000”

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<sup>44</sup>Ibid.

(published in Pionirski list). We might add that he indeed also experienced the New Year in 2000. However, he only confronted his true autopoetics at the end of his youth phase in 1969, in the record “Povest o sebi in knjigi” (A Tale of Myself and a Book), published in “Zgodbe iz mesta Rič-Rač s ponatisi” (Stories from the City of Rič-Rač with reprints) in 1972/73, and probably finally in 1994 in “Zakaj ne pišem več zgodb za otroke” (Why I Don't Write Stories for Children Anymore), with a postscript from 1961 and also reprinted in 2011.

The writer explained that he stopped writing for children when he started working with them “live” – he got a job at the Pionirski dom in 1963 and, in his words, started playing puppet games and “started inventing” longer and shorter games, such as “Hansel and Gretel”, “Little Red Riding Hood”, etc. He was thinking of “bringing these games back into storytelling”. He vividly described the irreversibility of the process, i.e., why he stopped writing for children. It's as if I wanted to compose a beautiful round orange in a golden yellow peel from the juice of one squeezed orange again, with a stalk on top (Kovačič, 2011: 102).<sup>45</sup> Professionalization and “professional” work with children also contributed their share. Undoubtedly, the break-up of his first family also had an impact, as children became something “impersonal” to him; thus, the authenticity disappeared which he no doubt perceived. The stories became fairytales, the situations mythical and the heroes lost their names.

#### ***Kovačič in the curricula of 1984, 1998, 2011 and 2018***

The above criticism is reflected in the lack of Lojze Kovačič's literary works considered in curricula. Thus, it is not in the curricula for primary schools, not in 1984, when Slovenia was still part of the SFRY, not in independent Slovenia (1991-2004), not in Slovenia as a member of the EU (2004-). The irony of fate is that he died on the day Slovenia became a member of the EU, on 1 May 2004.

There are many autobiographical elements in Kovačič's short modern fairy tales, as he himself mentioned, but there are also many fairy tale elements in autobiographies. The perspective of the child in the youth opus typical of his magazine phase in the 1950s and 1960s is child-centric, in contrast to the image of the child in adult literary frescoes, which is adult-centric.

Great authors around the world, including Nobel laureates, wrote literary works for children either at the beginning of their literary career or in private, which is also characteristic of Kovačič. He is often compared to James Joyce. The latter wrote two fairy tales in 1936, later entitled “The Cat and the Devil” and “Cats from Copenhagen”, which can be found in letters to his grandson Stephen. Both are superb and have motif-thematic and literary-stylistic elements that show a true literary master at work.

In 2010, the Beletrina Publishing House planned to publish L. Kovačič's “Zbrana mladinska dela” (Collected Works for Youth). A study-accurate bibliography was made, including the

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<sup>45</sup>Ibid.

digitization of fragmented texts for study purposes, but the publishing house later withdrew from the project. Somehow it all got lost. The youth literary system lacks an integral publication of the author's literary works for youth which would lead to a redefinition. In his youth phase, the author already showed he will once obtain the status of a European literary master of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but was unfortunately ignored in domestic curricula, even though his literary works should be studied all around the world, because he developed Slovenian literature (for youth). If we want to achieve more than just tourist visits to Slovenia, we need to take our artists seriously, especially those that bring cosmopolitanism and avant-garde in Slovenian literature. At the moment, youth literary science is globally the most interesting, while adult science is lagging behind, caught in the web of supposed nationally important tendencies. Recognition of literary phenomena and classification is a matter of principle for the profession. It is easy to rewrite the puzzles of American civil society and comment on them from a distance. As it turns out, the closest is the furthest. We have to settle the accounts between ourselves and with each other. Maybe the answer lies in the two thirds of Lojze Kovačič's literary opus for young readers that were never published?

### *Summary*

Kovačič's creation of literary works for children can be understood as an autonomous phase in his otherwise early period of writing for adults. Of course, he left the strongest mark in the field of writing for adults, but his contribution to literature for youth, especially with the repeatedly published collection of short contemporary fairy tales entitled "Zgodbe iz mesta Rič-Rač" (Stories from the City of Rič-Rač, 1962, 1969, 1981, 1994 and 2011),<sup>46</sup> is remarkable. Let me emphasize the motivic-thematic innovations, as he renewed the model of a short modern fairy tale, he introduced European intertextuality in Slovene literature, used science fiction elements, filmicity, and he boosted the development of Slovene comics with exceptional illustrators who were beginners at the time. Lojze Kovačič contributed an important breakthrough on the linguistic, form-morphological and motivic-stylistic levels. As I have already mentioned, two thirds of his oeuvre is more or less unknown to young readers, but due to quality and innovation it will be necessary to redefine Slovenian literature for youth and what a contemporary classic of youth literature really means. Unfortunately, Kovačič's literary production for youth is still fragmentary and unknown. Despite the effort and justification of the significance of these literary works in the context of youth literary science and literary science as a whole, there is no interest in publication. Many of his unpublished works far exceed today's production. Lojze Kovačič's literary works for youth in the 1950s represent a mature creative phase, not only according to the criterion of quantity (around 100 units), but above all the criterion of quality, especially for short contemporary fairy tales. The author's mature phase in the field of literature for youth also represents an early phase in the field of creation for adults, as a kind of hallway or tutorial, but due to the quality of writing for children it completely exceeds this concept and has the status of an

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<sup>46</sup> Illustrated by Damijan Stepančič.

autonomous field where Kovačič established himself as an editor, adaptor, translator, and especially as an innovative writer.

The interpretations of literary science (for adults) would greatly benefit if his as of yet unpublished literary works for youth would be widely known, which includes his innovations, intermedia approach and intertextuality, creation of comics, science fiction, Kafka 'for children', etc., as this would also redefine his literary works for adults by accepting a new perspective.

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