

DOI 10.51558/2490-3647.2025.10.2.257

UDK 821.163.42-93-32 Brlić-Mažuranić I.
821.163.42-93.34 Brlić-Mažuranić I.

Primljeno: 10. 06. 2025.

Izvorni naučni rad

Original scientific paper

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FANTASTIC ELEMENTS IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF CHARACTERS IN FAIRY TALES OF IVANA BRLIĆ- -MAŽURANIĆ

The paper deals with elements of the fantastic in the corpus of fifteen fairy tales of Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić gathered in the *Collected Works* edition (2011, vol. 3), and their interpretation on several levels. The fantastic elements help the writer construct characters that are related to pre-Christian Slavic mythology, as well as those characters in the shaping of which we can recognize the influence of the astro-mythological interpretation of the world where they are assigned the role of prophets or witnesses of fantastic events or transformations. These elements are particularly significant in creating marvellous, supernatural, imaginary characters that reflect the inner imaginative life of the writer. It is possible to interpret these unique characters through the prism of dreams and the subconscious, when they become witnesses of two closely interwoven inner worlds of the author: the public one, which derives from her cultural background and archetypal reflections of her education, and the intimate one, as an echo of her memories, anxieties, allusions and ideals.

Key words: Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić; *Croatian Tales of Long Ago*; *Fables and Fairy Tales*; fairy tale; fantastic story

1. THE FAIRY TALES OF IVANA BRLIĆ-MAŽURANIĆ

Croatian Tales of Long Ago, considered the best and most famous collection of fairy tales in Croatian literature and part of its canon, was published three times during the author's lifetime, in 1916, 1920 and 1926, by the Matica hrvatska¹ publishing house. The other seven renowned Brlić-Mažuranić's fairy tales were published separately, during her lifetime; four fairy tales were published in literary journals outside the collection *Croatian Tales of Long Ago*², while three more were published posthumously (together with already known fairy tales from literary journals) in the collection *Fables and Fairy Tales* in 1943³. All 15 fairy tales were finally published together in 2011, as part of the Collected Works edition, printed according to versions kept in the Brlić family archive in Slavonski Brod and taken from handwritten or typewritten archives (Brlić-Mažuranić 2011). The published fairy tales are easier to date, so it is assumed that they were written over a longer period of around 20 years (from 1913 to 1932), but for the fairy tales that were not published during the author's lifetime, it is not possible to determine this precisely. Three were printed posthumously, so it is unclear whether they were fully completed (*The Girl and the Monster* gives such an impression) and whether (therefore) they were intended for publication at all. It is assumed that the unpublished fairy tales were written approximately at the same time as the *Croatian Tales of Long Ago*, either before or after them.

Although artistic fairy tales and fantastic stories were part of the Croatian literary tradition even before the *Croatian Tales of Long Ago* (cf. Pintarić 2008; Pavlović 2012), this collection is considered the best anthology of artistic Croatian fairy tales, which is why critics and literary historians distinguish between the fairy tales written before and those written after this famous collection. During the last two decades, researchers of children's literature have taken great interest in the work of Brlić-Mažuranić. *Croatian Tales of Long Ago* have been interpreted in numerous works

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- 1 The first edition of *Croatian Tales of Long Ago* was published in 1916 as a collection of six fairy tales (*How Quest Sought the Truth, Stribor's Forest, Fisherman Plunk and his Wife, Reygoch, Little Brother Primrose and Sister Lavender* and *Bridesman Sun and Bride Bridekins*, illustrated by Petar Orlić), while the author added the fairy tales *Toporko the Wanderer and Nine Princes* and *Jagor* in the third edition (1926, illustrated by Vladimir Kirin). Quotations from the fairy tales for this paper are taken from the English translation by Fanny Copeland (Brlić-Mažuranić 1924; illustrated by Vladimir Kirin) and from the *Collected Works of Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić, Critical Edition*, vol. 3: *Fairy Tales and Fables* (2011), translated by the author of this work.
 - 2 *The Story of the Furious Mile and the Six Chicks* (in the journal *Smilje*, 1913); *The Golden Bird and the Poor Child*, *Naša deca*, 1923; *Merchant Nav*, *Književni sever*, 1927; *Hrvatsko kolo*, 1927; *The Story of Zorko the Bright-eyed and of Happiness*, *Hrvatsko kolo*, 1932 (cf. Zima 2011: 218).
 - 3 *The Story of Sultan Abdala*, *Why Were the Miserable Lera and Her Orphan Born*, and *The Girl and the Monster*.

and have been received with great affection by generations of readers and critics as part of the Croatian literary canon. The fairy tales outside the collection, on the other hand, have hardly been analysed, so that their critical reception is associated with only a few researchers (Crnković-Nosić 1994; Detoni Dujmić 1998; Zima 2011; Giacometti 2013; Kuvač-Levačić 2013; Ivon 2014).

Among the similar features that permeate all of Brlić-Mažuranić's fairy tales, one can identify neo-romantic structuring of the fairy-tale space as a stage setting, the initiation of the plot through external stimuli (Zima 2011), and visual characteristics associated with the Secession (Mihanović-Salopek 2002; Pavlović 2018; Zima 2018), especially emphasized in the preference for the chromatics of the Art Nouveau palette and golden motifs (Grakalić Plenković 2018). However, although in the fairy tales outside the famous collection "the fairy tale motivation is in many ways analogous to the motivational solutions in the Croatian Tales of Long Ago" (Zima 2011: 221), the differences between the two stand out "poetically and ideologically" (Hameršak and Zima 2015: 244). This is evident in the design of the fairy tale space, the choice of motifs and the construction of characters, with the idea of the child and childhood as the "essential structural motivational basis" (Zima 2011: 219) in the foreground. The characters in all fairy tales can be classified into two groups: the human (everyday, ordinary) ones and fantastic ones. In the origin of characters in fairy tales from *Croatian Tales of Long Ago*, Zima (2011) highlights a tripartite division, emphasizing not only human and fantastic characters, but also fantastic characters with mythological origins (mostly anthropomorphic natural phenomena). She underlines that the anthropomorphization of natural phenomena is abandoned in the other tales, which, given that it is not impossible that the stories from the collection and the other tales were written at the same time, provides an interesting impetus for further analysis of the transformation of the author's process in character construction.

2. BETWEEN THE CLASSICAL FAIRY TALE AND THE FANTASTIC STORY

The worlds of fairy tales, the marvellous and the fantastic intertwine, touching each other, and often become indistinguishable, which makes it difficult to separate the modern fairy tale from the fantastic story. Despite terminological ambiguities, theory distinguishes the (artistic) author's fairy tale from the fantastic story and the modern fairy tale (cf. Caillois 1978; Todorov 1987; Zima 2001b; Džafić 2008; Mendlesohn 2008; Pintarić 2008). The development of the fairy tale in the national literatures fol-

lows a similar course, beginning with the folk tale and anonymous authors, then the artistic (author's) fairy tale, to the modern fairy tale and, finally, to the fantastic fairy tale. Regarding the Croatian fairy tales, *Croatian Tales of Long Ago* are mentioned as the beginning of the author's fairy tale in Croatian literature.

Although the same characters can move between them, the real and magical worlds described in Brlić-Mažuranić's fairy tales are not always clearly separated, and we cannot always recognize a firm boundary between them. An exception is the fairy tale *Stribor's Forest*, where the boundary is clearly visible and physically located; the temporal and spatial boundaries of the two worlds, everyday life of the old woman and her son and the world of Stribor are clearly defined and thus indicate the degree of magic; the entrance to the enchanted forest where the sinful souls are transformed, and then in the forest itself, at the entrance to Stribor's realm, where a silver fence marks the gateway to a magical world, where reality completely disappears and present and past are forgotten (cf. Brozović 2018)⁴. In the fairy tale *Fisherman Plunk and his Wife*, the gentleness and flow of the sea waves separates the world of The Sea King from the everyday life of the poor fisherman.

Fantastic characters in the fairy tales of Brlić-Mažuranić can be characterized according to different levels of mythological heritage. The collection mainly features figures with a mythological background, fantastic, anthropomorphized figures from nature. In the fairy tales outside the collection, fantastic elements are combined in the construction of characters, from a mythological basis to fantastic transformations, in two groups of fantastic characters: characters whose worlds are linked to the world of mythology and those whose personality is characterised by fantastic metamorphoses and symbolism. These fantastic characters stand out in a certain way from the "classic" fairy tales of *Croatian Tales of Long Ago*, as the connection to mythology is missing and its characteristics are replaced by individual fantastic elements of the author's unique imagination.

3. FANTASTIC, ANTHROPOMORPHIZED FIGURES FROM NATURE

When considering the fantastic elements, all fifteen fairy tales clearly show the difference in the approach to fantastic-mythological figures in the *Croatian Tales of Long Ago* and other fairy tales. Zalar points this out by describing Brlić-Mažuranić

4 Interpreting *Croatian Tales of Long Ago* through the framework of fantastic literature, using F. Mendlesohn's (2008) classification model of fantastic literature, Brozović observes the presence of most of the mechanisms that characterize fantastic literature (such as the motif of portals, quests, and radical reinterpretation of mythological themes).

as the author of the “mythical direction of the fantastic subgenre” and tracing the lineage of her work up to the present day, one hundred years later. With the construction of her mythological figures, she “initiated the classical line of artistic fairy-tale, in which mythological figures stepped out of their previously known, archetypal positions into a new life in the artistic fairy tale, retaining their already known traits and building new ones” (Zalar 2002: 99-100). Therefore, in the *Croatian Tales of Long Ago*, we recognize fantastic elements as a common thread in the construction of characters that, according to the author’s instructions at the end of the collection and in the available correspondence, correspond with pre-Christian, Slavic mythology. These are fantastic figures of Slavic mythological origin, created by anthropomorphizing natural phenomena.

The characters of the other fairy tales are connected to the collection of *Croatian Tales* by several similar construction techniques, but in these fairy tales the anthropomorphization of natural phenomena symbolizing powerful natural forces is missing. In the fairy tales that are not included in the collection, fantastic elements play a role in the creation of individual wondrous figures, which, as individual creations of the author’s imagination, are not inspired by mythology. They are wondrous creatures that cause a shift from the classical fairy tale to the modern fairy tale or fantastic story (Zima 2001b). In the fairy tales that were not published during the author’s lifetime, fantastic elements are more prominent and the supposed departure from the classic fairy tale is more clearly recognizable.

4. ASTRAL-MYTHOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION OF THE WORLD IN THE DESIGN OF THE FANTASTIC FIGURES

The origins of the characters in the collection of *Croatian Tales of Long Ago* have been interpreted in numerous philological and ethnological works focusing on mythological sources, oral and national literature (cf. Bošković-Stulli 1978; Kos-Lajtman and Horvat 2012; Zima 2001b). The construction of fantastic characters in fairy tales, which can be associated with the influence of Slavic mythology and the astral mythological interpretation of the world becomes intertwined with the author’s imagination, as part of Slavic and pre-Christian astral mythology. The influences of astral bodies, the Sun and the Moon, are numerous and varied; they bring a fundamental, symbolic characteristic or stimulus, a trigger for the transformation to the characters that are under their impact. In accordance with cyclical changes of nature and seasons, the fantastic figures reflect this in their temperament and behavior. With their symbolism

and mythological connotations, they will bring strong characteristics to their powers and reactions, or they will become the starting points and catalysts for mystical events and transformations that define them.

Under the sign of the Sun, as a harbinger of spring and the awakening of nature, the ancient Slavic deity Svarožić (All-Rosy) appears, a truth-loving god, the son of the god Svarog (Dabog), the supreme god of fire and the Sun (Svarožić, HE). In the fairy tale *How Quest Sought the Truth* the brothers meet him in the forest. As a herald of spring and the awakening of nature, the ancient Slavic Svarožić emerges. The Art Nouveau stylization emphasizes the golden color of the youth, and with this golden vision the author combines mythical and fantastic elements as well as the astral-mythological ones, the Sun and the divinity of Svarožić.

When discussing the Sun, we should also mention the fantastic Grandmother Muggish, the Sun's malicious nanny in the fairy tale *Bridesman Sun and Bride Bridekins*. Her characteristics differ from those we would expect in fairy tales (the figure of the goddess Mokoš, as interpreted through folk Slavic pre-Christian etymology, is discussed in detail by Katičić 2011). Unlike the Sun, Grandmother Muggish is fickle, unpredictable, both good and evil. Through a fantastic transformation, she changes her shape and under the strong sunlight she transforms into *any mortal thing, a bird or a snake, an old woman or a young girl, both good and evil...*). Changes in nature affect Muggish greatly, so from Christmas time to autumn she transforms herself; first, she is gentle as she nurses and cherishes the weak old Sun, until Christmas time, when it becomes young again and sets out on its way. As Sun grows stronger and no longer needs her, she becomes more malevolent. Transformations in fairy tales include not only complete ones, as Muggish's are, but also partial transformations, where only a part of the body changes (as in the case of the snake-woman from *Stribor's Forest*, where the transformation did not remove the snake's tongue), and transformations with a magical touch (*The Golden Bird and the Poor Child*).

The Moon, as a symbol of wisdom, appears in the form of the pale Dawn-Maiden (*Fisherman Plunk and his Wife*). Fantastic elements can be found in the influence of the astral-mythological interpretation of the world, which assigns the Moon the role of a prophet or witness of fantastic events or transformations (Chevalier and Gheerbrandt 2007). Thus, fantastic transformations always occur under the magic of moonlight, under unusual circumstances (*When day dawns at the next New Moon, get into your boat, wait for the wind, and then drift eastward with the wind. (...) The mermaids swam out under the moonlight... (...) If you catch that Bass by moonlight you will deliver your dear Plunk from his trouble.*). The moonlight bathes the fantastic crea-

tures in one of the most beautiful Secessionist-style scenes in Croatian modernist prose – a wreath of beautiful, silver sea nymphs. Their silvery glow in the moonlight gives them a measured, discreet and sophisticated touch of eroticism, making them appear like an expensive wreath or a decorative brooch made in Secessionist style, a dynamic moment of dance frozen in silver (*So he paddled up to the mill-wheel, where round the mill-wheel the mermaids were playing their foolish games. They dived and chased each other through the water; their long hair floated on the waves, their silver fins glittered, and their red lips smiled. And they sat on the mill-wheel and made the sea all foamy around it.*)

Moonlight has fabulous, fantastic powers and modifies nature and people; it assigns them prophetic, fateful roles, and so fantastic creatures are created in its light. The fairy tale *Reygoch* begins with moonlight (*Once upon a beautiful summer night...*) and ends with the scene of a joyful game of shepherds in the garden by moonlight. The moonlight also illuminates the meeting of a brother and sister; with silver it paints the joy and serenity of happiness at their reunion after a long absence (*Little Brother Primrose and Sister Lavender*). Moonlight also transforms the stumps of maples and hornbeams into young men (*Toporko the Wanderer and Nine Princes*). The pointed caps of the little house-spirits of Stribor's forest, the Brownies, reminded Zalar of the crescent shape of the moon (Zalar 2002), giving their playful and cheerful merriment the connotation of little wise men, while the warmth of the red color and the hearth from which they emerge associates them with the Sun and the life force (*...all tiny little men no bigger than half an ell. They wore little fur coats; their caps and shoes were red as flames; their beards were gray as ashes, and their eyes sparkled like live coal.*)

5. OTHER FANTASTIC FIGURES OF PRE-CHRISTIAN SLAVIC MYTHOLOGICAL ORIGIN

Some of the fantastic figures that we encounter in the fairy tales in the collection and also outside the collection can be considered typical of fairy tales (giants, fairies, talking animals). The fantastic elements of some characters can be interpreted as elements of their construction, reflecting the author's attachment to folk tradition and storytelling. In the fairy tale inspired by Slavic mythology *Why Were the Miserable Lera and Her Orphan Born*, the central figure is god Sitivrat. Kuvač-Levačić reflects in detail on the origin and inspiration for the creation of the omniscient figure of Sitivrat in the aforementioned fairy tale and emphasizes that Brlić-Mažuranić incorporates

elements of Saturn myths and the Neoplatonic concept of Kronos (Saturn) in the creation of the Slavic god. Through the symbolism of the circle – sieve (also recognizable in the mentioned whirlpool of the sea nymphs), the chronotope of the journey and the narrative techniques of text design, the author realizes the idea of life as a cyclical process (Kuvač-Levačić 2013). When discussing the fantastic figures of pre-Christian origins, we emphasize the fairies; the good fairies [Curlylocks (in *Reygoch*), who is like the famous fairies of Slavic mythology – small, elusive, golden-haired, wrapped in a fairy veil] and the evil ones, the seven Votaress Fairies (*Little Brother Primrose and Sister Lavander*), who twist clouds with their wings, create winds and raise storms. Their fantastic death, which they have chosen themselves in the awareness of their failure, captivates with its poetic sonority, the images in bright colors and the awe-inspiring dignity that the author gives the fairies at the moment of their disappearance and extinction.

The second group of fantastic figures inspired by pre-Christian origins are the giants. Benevolent giants are common in European legends and myths. One of the *Croatian Tales* is titled after the giant Regoč (*Reygoch*), for whose characterization the author refers to the work of the Dubrovnik Baroque writer Ignjat Đurđević. In the fairy tale *The Story of Zorko the Bright-eyed and of Happiness*, there are three giants named Mokronog, Valigora and Zorko. Again under the magical glow and astral influence of moonlight, a medium for magical events and transformations, the last Brlić's tale we can date begins with the fantastic scene of three giants competing in strength and skill. Like Curlylocks, Zorko will also give up his fantastic powers and choose a human fate as the most beautiful one. Where the mythical interpretation of the world encounters the powers of nature personified by the strength of giants and humans, the mighty Zorko willingly discards his fantastic, miraculous supremacy in strength and size in order to find happiness and peace in the joy of life with the young girl and her love.

6. FANTASTIC ANIMALISM

Fantastic animalism in Brlić-Mažuranić's work refers to the wondrous animals in the fairy tales of the collection *Croatian Tales of Long Ago*, which often serve as helpers for the (fantastic) main characters. These include squirrels, does, Stribor's deer, the eagle Klikun, a bear, and Votaresses' she-wolf. Their power is often associated with fantastic transformations and pseudo-fantastic creatures (Zima 2001a) – such as giant

snakes, birds with iron beaks and golden bees. Among the talking animals we find the stork and her young and the ants.

In the collection *Fairy Tales and Fables*, we also encounter a different type of fantastic beings, where animals function as symbols or represent objects of desire on the path to knowledge. Related to that, Brlić-Mažuranić created several fantastic characters in the fairy tales of this collection that we could describe as entirely unique, and it is their fantastic creative individuality that makes them stand out.

The first character of this type is the golden-winged duck, a magical duck that is a friend and companion of the girl Jasenka in *Why Were the Miserable Lera and Her Orphan Born*. Fleeing from the incomprehension and doubts of her villagers, Lera and her daughter embark on a journey to find the meaning of their existence and meet the fantastic little golden duck. Its companionship and love helps the lonely girl to grasp the meaning of their departure and her search. The motif of the golden-winged shelduck can be linked to folk traditions that attribute magical powers to the golden-winged duck. The shelduck is also a common motif in art and in the folk ethnographic tradition and can be found in the epic poem *Pilgrim* by Mavro Vetranović (mid-16th century). In the folk songs and legends of the Dubrovnik region, this species of duck with golden feathers symbolizes a young girl about to get married (Kipre 2015) and is described, similarly to its depiction in the Brlić-Mažuranić's fairy tale, as a fantastic, allegorical creature. In the verses of an epic folk song, she is described as an idealized shelduck with golden wings (Hirtz 1926). Although the inspiration for the creation of the unusual golden-winged shelduck could be interpreted as stemming from folk songs and traditions, her imaginative powers in the fairy tale, exemplified by the variation of the golden hue in the depiction of the duck, which symbolizes the girl's maturation and her romantic concerns, suggest that such an interpretation is only a starting point and somewhat superficial. The shelduck listens to the Jasenka's wishes and helps her as a protector, so its role goes beyond that and cannot be compared to the animals that accompany fantastic heroes in Brlić-Mažuranić's fairy tales.

7. FANTASTIC INDIVIDUALIZED CHARACTERS

Some of the fantastic figures are an expression of Brlić-Mažuranić's individual approach to mythological beings. These characters are particularly unique and not typical of other fairy tales. They have no basis inspired by fantastic mythology, but are characterized by motifs and themes that relate to the literary interests of the Brlić-Mažuranić, such as conflicts between the small and the great, in which the small and

brave defeat the great, the relationship between child and parent, the motives of childhood and growing up and others.

Fantastic creatures known as kikimoras in the fairy tale *The Girl and the Monster*, are tiny creatures that live in holes in the stone and are particularly interesting in terms of the author's preoccupation with children's imaginative psyche. Their physical description is lively and childishly playful, with onomatopoeic expression of laughter and giggles. They symbolize invisible little friends that every child dreams of and who come to their aid when they need them. Through her deep understanding of child psychology, Brlić-Mažuranić created unique fantastic figures that help and support the child. Their loyal support will accompany the girl and help her build a *strong city* in her garden as a reward for her victory over evil. The kikimoras defeat another fantastic creature that appears in the same fairy tale when a very little girl who lives alone in her garden is attacked by a monster. The description of the monster clearly indicates a deviation from the mythological context. The monster grows and spreads as quickly as the girl's fear intensifies. The fairy tale reflects the girl's emotions, her fear of helplessness and lack of understanding matches the monster's growth, gradually turning into terror. The monster is special because it is characterized by fear. It provides surprise, creates a twist and unease, which is one of the most important characteristics of fantastic elements in fantastic stories, as Pavličić (2016) notes, it symbolizes a problem that is solved and concludes the story. Happily for the girl, but unexpectedly for the godparents, who, unusually for a fairy tale, reach the end without punishment or consequences for their actions, relativizing the relationship between punishment and reward, much like in a modern fairy tale. The monster in this fairy tale arises from the girl's desire to get closer to her godparents, either from her longing for closeness or from her attempt to grow up and enter the world of adults and equality. Her inner turmoil and longings are expressed through the appearance of the fantastic monster, taking the girl's problem to a higher level and depicting every child's struggle with the timeless problems of growing up and transitioning from the individual to the collective. The girl develops and grows through new experiences, from the world of childhood to the world of adulthood, and by solving her problem of growing ups he also frees the whole country from monsters. The dynamics of the monster's description is presented against the backdrop of the girl's fears and the contrast between her determination and her courage.

The above-mentioned confirms that the fantastic elements in the creation of these wondrous, supernatural, and imaginary figures can also be interpreted as constructs of the author's personal, inner, and imaginative worlds. These characters originate in

the cultural milieu that forms the background to the author's environment in socio-logical, cultural and historical terms, and draw on familiar patterns, archetypes, cultural heritage and the author's own collective memory formed through the study and collection of folk and national literature. They are fantastic, wondrous, imaginary, supernatural and – completely unique.

8. CONCLUSION

The fairy tales of Brlić-Mažuranić are part of the 150-year-old tradition of Croatian fantasy, dating back to 1875, and continue to influence contemporary fantasists, alongside the pioneers of Croatian fantastic prose (Donat and Zidić 1975; Župan 1980; Brozović 2018). In addition to the already emphasized fantastic elements within the fairy-tale setting of the classic fairy tales of Brlić-Mažuranić, this work, which is closely linked to the famous collection of *Croatian Tales of Long Ago*, offers a broader perspective on the methods used in the creation of fantastic characters in the other seven fairy tales outside the collection. Fantastic elements can be recognized in these fairy tales on various levels: in the construction of fantastic figures, anthropomorphized figures from nature, figures influenced by astral-mythological and pre-Christian worldviews, as driving forces of the plot, triggers (and witnesses) of fantastic situations, in fantastic animalism and in the creation of a magical, parallel world of fantasy.

In addition to the previously emphasized subtextual basis of old Croatian mythology, this work highlights fantastic characters from two fairy tales outside the collection of *Croatian Tales of Long Ago* that have no mythological basis and which, although few in number, represent a deviation or a step forward in relation to the famous collection. These include the fantastic kikimoras and the monster in *The Girl and the Monster*, as well as the fantastic figure of the golden-winged shelduck in *Why Were the Miserable Lera and Her Orphan Born*. Interpreted in this way, they demonstrate that the fantastic and the wondrous are key poetic elements in fairy tales beyond the *Croatian Tales of Long Ago* collection. These elements can also enrich the reading of Brlić-Mažuranić's fairy tales by expanding the interpretation and direction of the fantastic narrative. An inspiring idea in this context is M. Stojević's thought, as an inspiration for researchers and enthusiasts of the fantastic: "In the Croatian mirror of the wondrous, not all figures are yet discernible." (Stojević, in: Župan 1980: 19)

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FANTASTIČNI ELEMENTI U KONSTRUKCIJI LIKOVA U BAJKAMA IVANE BRLIĆ-MAŽURANIĆ

Sažetak

Rad se bavi elementima fantastike u korpusu svih objavljenih bajki Ivane Brlić-Mažuranić okupljenih u izdanju *Sabrana djela* (2011, sv. 3). U osvrtu na njihovu ulogu u konstrukciji likova, fantastične elemente interpretira na više razina. Prepoznaje ih kao sukonstruite likova koji korespondiraju, prema autoričinim uputama, s pretkršćanskom, slavenskom mitologijom, kao i onih likova u čijem se formiranju prepoznaju utjecaji astralno-mitološkog tumačenja svijeta, koji im dodjeljuju ulogu proroka ili svjedoka fantastičnim događanjima ili preobrazbama. Ti se elementi osobito potvrđuju u kreiranju čudesnih, nadnaravnih, imaginarnih likova koji se izdvajaju kao konstrukti individualnih unutarnjih svjetova autoričine mašte i njena kulturnog nasljeđa. U radu se ovi jedinstveni likovi tumače kroz prizmu snova i podsvijesti. Njihova će se dosadašnja interpretacija time i dodatno proširiti, tumačeći ih kao svjedoke dvaju međusobno isprepletenih unutarnjih svjetova autorice: onoga javnog, koji proizlazi iz njezine kulturne pozadine i arhetipskih odraza obrazovanja, te onoga intimnog, kao odjek njezinih uspomena, tjeskoba, aluzija i ideala.

Ključne riječi: Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić; *Priče iz davnine*; *Bajke i basne*; bajka; fantastična priča

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