

## Abstract

In Slovenian (youth) literature, three authors who have worked in the field of drama and/or theatre stand out – namely, Svetlana Makarovič, academically trained actress (*Sapramiška*), Milan Jesih (*Four Plays for Children*, adaptations of Andersen's fairy tales *The Emperor's New Clothes* and *The Ugly Duckling*) and Andrej Rozman Roza. The paper will focus on the latter, who was strongly influenced by the theatre experiment in Slovenia, especially during the formative period of his studies of the Slovenian language (1974–1978). Andrej Rozman Roza (1956) started performing and/or publishing plays in the period 1981–1990 (*Inspector Schwake*, 1986; collection of texts *Ana Monró Theatre*, 1991, etc.). He is known in literary history as a youth poet and is included in Slovenian language curricula (1998, 2011, 2018). However, the definition of a systemic author is more appropriate for him (I. Even Zohar, M. Dovič) since of the six functions in the literary system (author, institution, market, repertoire, book, reader) he holds at least three roles (author, “institution”, book [living book], etc.).

This paper focuses on adaptations of classics of Slovenian (Cankar, Levstik, Linhart, Prešeren, etc.) or world literature that – regardless of literary genre or type – have become crossover literature in the process of literary reception, especially in picture-book editions (e.g., *A Midsummer Night's Dream* which has the international fairy tale type number ATU 899A [*Pyramus and Thisbe*]).

According to B. Kümmerling-Meibauer's definition of crossover classics or authorship, Rozman is a crossover author. In addition, according to L. Hutcheon's theory, adaptations are an important part of Rozman's work and contribute to the updating of classics and modern classics.

The paper presents the collection *Brvi čez morje* (*The Footbridge Across the Sea*), which contains thirteen plays, three of which are folktale texts – *Janko and Metka* (*Hansel and Gretel*) [ATU 327], *Obuti maček* (*Puss in Boots*) [ATU 545B], *Vžigalnik* (*The Tinderbox*) [ATU 562] – and one which is a fairy tale, *Kekec* [ATU 1137]). Intertextually, they refer to folktale types.

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**Keywords:** theatre experiment, youth drama, William Shakespeare, Andrej Rozman Roza, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, crossover, ATU 899A, *Pyramus and Thisbe*

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# The Theatre Experiment in Slovenia (1966–1986) and Its Echoes in Youth Drama – Andrej Rozman Roza

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## Summary

In Slovenian (youth) literature, three authors who have worked in drama and/or theatre stand out, namely, Svetlana Makarovič, Milan Jesih and Andrej Rozman Roza. The paper focuses on the latter. According to B. Kümmerling-Meibauer's definition of crossover classics or authorship, Rozman is a crossover author. In addition, according to L. Hutcheon's theory, adaptations are an essential part of Rozman's work and contribute to the updating of classics (e.g., W. Shakespeare) and modern classics (e.g., *Kekec*).

The paper presents his collection *Brvi čez morje* (*The Footbridge Across the Sea*) which contains thirteen plays, three of which are folktale texts – *Janko and Metka* (*Hansel and Gretel*) [ATU 327], *Obuti maček* (*Puss in Boots*) [ATU 545B], *Vžigalnik* (*The Tinderbox*) [ATU 562] – and one which is a fairy tale text *Kekec* [ATU 1137]. All four tales refer intertextually to folktale types.

The folktale type of Shakespeare's play, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1594), translated by Oton Župančič (1968) and adapted by Andrej Rozman Roza with the same title (1999), can be found in Hans-Jörg Uther's internationally renowned classification *The Types of International Folktales*. Although Uther cites Ovid's poem *Metamorphoses* about Pyramus and Thisbe (55–166), the motifs of (un)happy lovers in comic and/or tragic form can also be found in Boccaccio's *The Decameron* (Seventh Day, Fifth Tale), Chaucer's *The Legend of Good Women* and Shakespeare's tragedy *Romeo and Juliet*. Uther's classification shows this is the so-called universal folktale type with its variants of (un)happy lovers and their families.

Rozman's work was strongly influenced by the theatre experimentation in Slovenia (1966–1986) and its echoes in youth drama. The characteristic features of his work are crossover, multiple meanings and adaptations. Moreover, he introduces experimental

elements throughout his oeuvre, that is, the active involvement of the audience; the merging of institutional and non-institutional culture; the complementariness of amateur and professional culture; student and non-student audiences; the concept of acting and non-acting; the play within a play, a new quality; and performance through dialogue (at literary events in elementary schools, too), etc.

The experimental elements in Rozman's work complement Bakhtin's theory of the carnival: a ritualistic, dualistic perception of the world, a carnival world (the totality of popular festivities, universality), ambivalence, etc. Rozman has deployed the elements of experimental theatre on squares and streets, as well as in the "bicycle protests" during the COVID-19 pandemic (2020–2022), combining elements of experimental theatre and, at the same time, supplementing them with the literary theory of the carnival (the square, familiarity, rude remarks or mockery).

Based on a comparative analysis of Shakespeare's original *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Rozman's adaptation, the paper concludes that the latter combines the elements of experimental theatre and carnival theory, which confirms the hypothesis of crossover writing and subversion, as Rozman innovatively combines the notions of *homo narrans* and *homo ludens*.