

ŠINGALA-MINGALA: FROM RECITATION TO THEATRE

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The author follows the stages of the metamorphosis of the folk tale named *Šingala-mingala*, from its oral performance to the puppet show it has inspired. The main purpose of the article is to show that all these stages are legitimate links of the communication chain which enables the tale to live. The tale, having passed through the afore mentioned stages, has only changed the system of mimic conventions and has thus returned to its initial performative mode. The author searches for the fulcrum of the conformity of the tale structure to the stage adaptation which, in spite of the indispensable changes imposed by the procedure, does not necessarily mean that the crucial features of the genre have been disordered.

The purpose of this article is to discuss the course of the folk narrative *Šingala Mingala* from its recitation, as recorded by Maja Bošković-Stulli in a village near Sinj, through its written form as published in an anthology of oral narrative (edited by Maja Bošković-Stulli) to its dramatization (by Borislav Mrkšić) and performance in the Zagreb Puppet Theatre.

The journey of this oral form thus refocuses interest upon all the crucial issues of contemporary folklore research in oral literature, including: oral expression as the determining factor of the work's structure, its performative and presentational aspect, links between the work, its performance and the context of its production and reception, problems concerning the publishing of oral literature and its existence out of the original context, as well as the conception of folklore as a communicative process. As *Šingala-Mingala* was dramatized and put on the stage, some basic theatrical questions are also involved: the adaptation of a narrative text

for a stage-performance and, closely related to this, the relationship between the text and its theatrical performance, which in our case means the relationship between an adapted folk *tale* and a *puppet* play for a specific audience, namely children.

The teller of the folk tale, later named *Šingala-Mingala*, was a sixty-three year old stone mason and peasant, Ante Rančić, who had heard it told in Budimir near Trilj, his native village. From 1922 he lived in Brnaze near Sinj. It was there in October 1965 that he related folk tales, beliefs and legends to Maja Bošković-Stulli who recorded them on tape. *Šingala-Mingala* was then transcribed and included in a manuscript collection of 175 tales and legends (mns of IEF no. 751). It was published, together with an introductory commentary by Maja Bošković-Stulli, in the annual *Narodna umjetnost*, 5-6, 1967-1968. In 1968 a film was made about Ante Rančić, the teller, (script by Maja Bošković-Stulli) in which he recites the very same tale. Considering it a treasure of oral narration, Maja Bošković-Stulli gave it pride of place in her anthology of folk tales of the same title (1983). In 1991 *Šingala-Mingala* was the title of a performance in the Zagreb Puppet Theatre. The poster advertising that performance is headed by the name of Borislav Mrkšić, the author of the stage adaptation. The programme informs the audience that the adaptation was "based on" a folk tale, but includes no information concerning the teller, who, relatively autonomously, created the tale, nor of the collector, to whose patience and aesthetic sensitivity the stage adaptor owed the story. As soon as the piece was performed others became part of the authorial chain: the actors, the creator of the puppets, the scenographer, the composer of the music and afterwards probably a part of the audience, too - all the further, unforeseeable, more or less successful, publicly anonymous tellers of the story. The circle was thus closed and freshly opened - the tale, enriched by its theatrical variant, came back among anonymous receivers and transmitters to live on through continual transformations in spite of being temporarily fixed in words on paper, on magnetic tape, on video and in a "signed", "art" theatre performance.

When she published the tale, Bošković-Stulli made it clear that she had not recorded the name of Ante Rančić simply as a convenient substitution for the anonymous collective folk creator. She regarded this peasant as an outstandingly skilled teller and as the authentic creator of the tale in the form it took when she recorded it. In her introductory note she stressed that it is Rančić we must thank for the basic stylistic and compositional qualities of the narrative, i. e. respect for the norms of oral narration such as: epic repetition of episodes and retardation, symmetrical repetition of dialogue, the necessary dynamism provided by the priority given to action over the description, and, above all, the general atmosphere of hu-

mour created by his witty personal commentary (Bošković-Stulli, 1967-68, 306).

The name of Ante Rančić reemerges in another article by Maja Bošković-Stulli, where she discusses the mimic (presentational) nature of the oral literary performance (1984). This is of particular interest to us, concerned as we are here with the similarities of these two communication situations, that of oral narration on one side, and on the other, that of theatrical production. These similarities can explain, we believe, the conformity of the tale structure to its dramatic treatment. For, having passed through the written stage, having inspired (and perhaps more than that, as we shall suggest later) a puppet show, Rančić's recitation has regained its performative aspect, it has been resurrected in a live, momentary, and to a certain extent perishable interaction between performers and audience - certainly not a negligible factor in the initial "official" narration, as well. We thus discover in this article that the teller was not only skilled in handling language, but also had some kind of histrionic gift which helped him to enrich his narration and to make it more arresting. Analyzing Bošković-Stulli's record of the non-verbal elements of Rančić's performance (Bošković-Stulli, 1984, 372-373) we can see that this kind of expressive enrichment could really be treated as presentational. His gesture is strictly functional, depending upon and reinforcing the key moments of the tale. It either indicates what some character is doing (the butcher and the main protagonist), or it represents some element of the scene (thumb and forefinger making a circle to indicate a keyhole). At one moment the mimed action presumes the imaginary presence of an object (chopping meat, squeezing a chicken to make it lay gold) or transforms the objects within the narrator's reach into costumes and scenery for the performance (banging on the table or on his own pockets when the characters are supposed to be doing this), at another it takes over the role similar to that of the curtain in a stage production (Dorfles, 1991, 161-167), marking the boundary between imaginary and real time and space (gesturing with wide arms and extended fingers to mark the end of the tale, instead of reciting the usual closing formula)¹. The described skill of our narrator is only one suitable example among many permitting us to draw a parallel between the oral literary performance and the theatre performance. Every narrator recites in a certain tempo, choosing appropriate intonation and stress. Besides gestures, he often uses facial mimicry and movements of his whole

¹ See the study by S. Skwarczynska (1974), in which she treats gesture as a specific theatrical expressive system, tracing at the same time problems connected with the analysis of such a system, gesture being a sign that flows through the performance and which cannot be divided from human organic and mental life, i. e. from the human being as a body of the theatre art.

body, which need not only be simple mimetic support but can sometimes take the place of the entire unverbilized scenes².

The example of Ante Rančić reinforces the consciousness that oral narration is "a semiotic space for mutual action, interference and hierarchical organization of languages" (Lotman 1981, 14, quoted after Lozica, 1985, 16). It has led two Croat authors concerned with this subject, Ivan Lozica and Maja Bošković-Stulli, to deepen the discussion on the performance conditions of oral narration. The discussion, in fact, should not be solely confined to *mimic aspects* of the oral narration although their presence obviously prompts the whole consideration. The comparison with the theatre performance need not be reduced to the enumeration of theatrical sign systems that can be used while reciting. The result of such a procedure at first sight may make the comparison seem almost out of place - for instance, Bošković-Stulli in oral narration finds only four of Kowzan's (possible, not indispensable) thirteen kinds of theatrical signs: speech, tone, facial mimicry and gesture (1984, 370). For a theatrical performance, which requires only a live person and acting space, they are sufficient, so her conclusion that signs in oral narration "partly coincide with those of theatrical performance... but do not correspond in number", does not reveal the pertinent difference between oral narration and theatrical performance. On the other hand, her observation that a theatre performance is the enactment of a written text while oral narration is a spontaneous creation of the moment it is being spoken, brings us somewhat nearer the core of the problem, though once again the quick generalization makes her miss two crucial things: in the first place, not *all* theatrical performances are based on fixed, written texts (the author herself mentions the Commedia dell'Arte, but there are many other examples, from the very beginnings of drama to the present day); secondly, even when a theatre performance has the same title as a dramatic text, it is not simply *an enactment of the text* (although in everyday conversation we talk about it as if it were), especially not if we consider it in its integral form. Firstly, a written text often needs to be shortened and adjusted for the needs of a given performance in which, just as with all oral literary genres, it is recreated. Then, every performance is *an autonomous interpretation of the written play* - within which, changed and adapted, freed from stage directions, often enriched by the actors' improvisations and extemporizations, the very text of the play is present (Ubersfeld, 1982b, 10-11; Inkret, 1989, 52), in the same way as the single recitation of oral literature is *an autonomous creation and interpretation of the traditional pattern* which

² "Telling is a kind of presentational performance, an event in which, besides the spoken text, body movement, the appearance of the narrator, time and place, audience and sound effects play an important part" (Lozica, 1985, 13).

largely governs some (not all!) language characteristics of the performance, while other language transformations, along with all nonverbal dimensions, are left to the creativity of individual narrators. True, the "pure" form of the traditional pattern does not exist - especially not, except relatively recently, in an easily accessible written form, for, even when it is written down, it is only one version of a pattern - but we have already shown that the written form of the play does not lessen the number of textual variants, through which, theatrically interpreted, it will equally continue to live as in the reader's concretization.

For this reason it seems advisable not only that we leave for a moment the question whether oral literary performance contains any previously analytically isolated theatrical sign systems or not, but also that we go further from the simple statement about oral narration being a performative event in a context. We should return to what is common to these two types of consideration, and because of which, or within which lies what gives them both their importance - the narrated tale itself. What is it that provokes and makes possible the appearance of the mimic features and is the performative character of oral literature present in the very linguistic structure of the work, of which some characteristics make it close to the structure of drama? Ivan Lozica in a way opened up this aspect by establishing a distinction between *narration* and *presentation* (1985), two modes which constantly interchange and interweave during an oral narrative performance. But what makes this possible? According to Lozica, by using the *narration*, the performer builds his message as a verbal/auditive work, remaining "outside the story", while *presentation* is the embodiment of the story by the performer's successive transformations from character to character, during the course of which he makes use of his personal mimetic recourses of facial expressions, gesture, voice and behaviour. "Narration is primarily created through verbal art, while presentation is nearer to a theatre performance. Some tellers prefer narration, while others like presentation more. Also there are stories and situations in stories which are more suitably expressed by one of the two modes. But there are no tellers and no stories which use only one of the two modes" (Lozica 1985, 17). But what are these stories or situations in stories that "are more suitable for one of the two modes"? Lozica says that there are no fixed rules: indirect speech and description are largely accompanied by the expressively one-dimensional, exclusively verbal/auditive narration, while direct speech frequently gives impulse to the presentation, but he himself notes that the opposite is also true (1985, 18)!

We have already noted that Rančić used gesture not only as a form of character identification but also to signify the fictive place of action or to transform originally neutral objects around him or on his person into

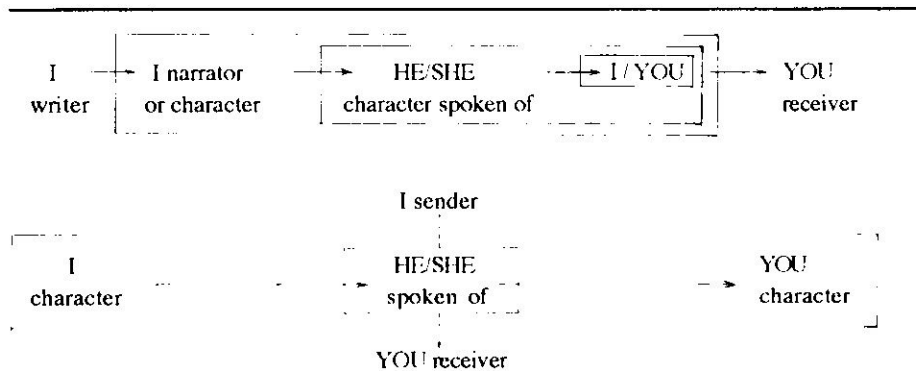
signs. In other words, the presentational mode can surface even at those moments of the tale in which it is *as if* the narrator remains outside the tale, apparently confining himself to reporting some fictitious event which happened long ago. We may then ask whether there is any point in distinguishing between the narrative and presentational modes taking into account that in the text or in parts of it the two are interchangeable.

Maja Bošković-Stulli felt that the logical extension of Lozica's position was that "showing, presentation and mime are present on all levels of recitation, but are structurally subordinate to the narrative mode" (Bošković-Stulli, 1984, 375). What she is trying to say here is that for a folk tale to be a folk tale neutral utterance is sufficient: the presentational aspect cannot be neglected but it is hierarchically subordinate to telling and "telling is not a stage performance" (1984, 388). The difference between narration and presentation as *performing* modes here becomes imprecise, because it seems that the author now confuses two different levels: the text of the tale and its performance. In her conception narration figures as the narrator's neutral *telling about* a fictive world, that is to say the part of the linguistic text in which the narrator talks in the third person, while presentation is a narrator's attractive *transformation into* some fictive element of that world, which can at times intermingle or run parallel with both narrative indirect and direct speech.

While we may agree that presentation is at all times possible at all levels of oral performance, although it may be reduced exclusively to the auditive, the second part of the statement, related to the hierarchical relations within oral performance, demands at least a more detailed analysis. Maja Bošković-Stulli in fact places structural primacy on *certain aspects of the verbal text* considering that in oral narration *telling about* something takes structural precedence over the *auto presentation* of fictional characters, apparently the predominant source of the mimic "embellishments" of the performance, which is undoubtedly one of the key differences that distinguish narrative from dramatic *text* structure³.

³ Käte Hamburger, after a detailed argument, comes to the conclusion that "narration is one form of the mimetic function more that narrator has at his disposal when compared to the dramatist (in both cases she is referring to the empirical author, note by LČF). This function can disappear and still fiction may arise, namely a dramatic, but not a filmic one. It means that epic narrative functions are replaced by other functions, as we shall see in more detail afterwards" (Hamburger, 1976, 181). Cesare Segre (1979, quoted according to de Marinis, 1982, 47-48) proposes these two different models for (written, note by LČF) narration on the one hand and drama texts on the other:

As opposed to this mixture of analytic levels we can say that such a thing as expressively neutral telling does not exist, that narration and presentation cannot be divided nor separately defined as *performance modes*, since even during the course of the narration in the third person the narrator is absolutely *in the story*, or rather in the fiction, as a voice creating the setting, and who therefore cannot be abstracted from the action⁴ and whose use of past tenses (this or that character said...), as Käte Hamburger observes (1976, 81-142), in no way indicates the empirical chronological distance between actions in the tale and the narrator, but just the opposite, their fictional contemporaneity, that is, timelessness⁵: it is not the actual teller, Ante Rančić, who tells us something about the fictive characters but the fictive voice of the fictional narrator of the traditional pattern whose masterly interpreter and embodiment is the voice of Ante Rančić. When he pronounces the words of the fictional narrator, just as when he "acts" individual characters, he is both "the creator and the work at one and the same time" (Lozica 1985, 16). He never actually experienced nor saw the events of the fable, in spite of the fact that during the narration he transforms himself into a person whose account of "what really happened" is reliable and complete and to which we may ascribe the solidity of the imaginary world into which he leads us. The striking preponderance of "subjective" stylogenic procedures in the records of oral narration (Bošković-Stulli, 1975) and the interpolation of the teller's true context during his recitation serve only to strengthen, through a momentary "return" to real world, the



⁴ The best proof of this is the use of free indirect speech, a stylistic indicator of the involvement of an omniscient fictive narrator in the story, i. e. into the statements, emotions and attitudes of the seemingly autonomous characters.

⁵ The author distinguishes between what she calls "real statement" and "fictional narration". In the first, adverbs of time are related to the Here and Now of the empirical author of the statement ("Next day she went..."), while in fictional narration adverbs of time used by the empirical author depend on the Here and Now of the fictional characters ("Tomorrow she goes...").

illusion that the actual teller and the fictional narrator are one and the same conscience⁶. Every word uttered is a live conjuring up of an imaginary world, whose stage setting is mainly, it is true, created by words, but words uttered by the concrete, personal, sounding, material voice of Ante Rančić, Here and Now, in a time and place common to the actual teller and his audience. These conditions are sufficient for us to be able to speak of mimic performance in its general meaning, with its own particular conventions, although our notion of a theatre production is usually still linked to the Italian stage, elaborate baroque scenery and an "accurate" enactment of a classical text⁷.

⁶ This kind of illusion is particularly stressed in first-person narratives where the narrator expressly states that he was present at the events narrated, or was even involved in them. Concerning the difference between narration in the first and narration in the third person, see Stanzel, 1992, 178-200. In the oral narrative performance these two kinds of narration can alternate with great ease, which Maja Bošković-Stulli sees as another proof of the presentational aspect of oral narration within the linguistic structure of the recited text itself. There are also reverse cases, in which the narrator at the beginning of the tale "admits" that it is only a tale, that he/she has only heard it told. The narrator starts his telling as if the beginning "It is told..." were implied, and as if he were continuing an interrupted sentence: "That once upon a time there was a...". He can also constantly use conjunctive mode for seemingly apodictic statements, to stress the fictional character of the fable (Bošković-Stulli, 1975, 162-171). There are oral performances in which the separateness between the real and the fictional narrator is deliberately foregrounded: the tale is told in the first person, but using a grammatical gender opposite to the real narrator (Bošković-Stulli, 1984, 387). The relationship between the fictional and real narrator who is present in the very moment of the reception of the work, as a phenomenon characteristic only of oral narrative performance needs, of course, to be more systematically examined.

⁷ It is upon these features of oral performance that Paul Zumthor bases his comparison of oral poetry with theatre: "Polyphonie d'information", comme disait Roland Barthes, le théâtre apparaît, de façon complexe mais toujours prépondérante, comme une écriture du corps: intégrant la voix porteuse de langage à un graphisme tracé par la présence d'un être humain, dans l'épanouissement de ce qui le fait tel. En cela il constitue le modèle absolu de toute poésie orale. (...) J'admets... comme un postulat que tous les faits poétiques dont j'aurai à traiter participent en quelque manière à ce qui fait l'essence du théâtre: que tout ce qui est dit de celui-ci peut, d'une certaine manière, l'être d'eux". (As "information polyphony", as Roland Barthes would say, the theatre appears, in a complex but always powerful manner as body writing: it joins the voice which carries language with graphics which the presence of a human body wrote in the space, in the full flower of that which makes him a human being. In this way theatre is the absolute model of all oral poetry. (...) I accept as a postulate that all the poetic facts which I shall discuss take part in a manner which is the essence of the theatre, and that all that is said about it may in some sense be said about those facts (Zumthor, 1983, 55-56). If we were to look for an institutional and authorial theatrical sub-genre with which to compare the live recitation of a folk tale, perhaps the nearest would be the monodrama whose conventions allow the domination of the narrative perspective, the perspective of the single character, over the auto presentation of the other characters dependent on that perspective.

If it is clear that oral literature cannot be defined outside the performative mode and context, which is inherent in the very term *oral* literature, then it is obvious that its stylistic and structural characteristics cannot be discussed in isolation from its performative mode and context. It is worth reminding ourselves of this since attempts to define drama as a literary genre out of its inherent performative intention have been led astray down similar paths⁸. I do not wish to completely identify all forms of traditional oral literature with, say, classicist or modernist drama - the differences are varied and enormous, from thematic preferences to linguo-stylistic characteristics - but they do present similarities for literary scholarship. Even when they are written down, oral literary forms still retain something of their oral origin, their performative existence, which makes a key factor of their structure (Bošković-Stulli, 1975, 1980). Just like drama, oral literature in its written form is a "direct 'symbiosis' of *writing and speech* within one and the same text" (Inkret, 1989, 521)⁹. The written variant is at one and the same time part of oral and of written literature, so that, like in the case of drama, adequate analysis of it cannot be carried out using only the instruments and aesthetic criteria suitable for written literature (Bošković-Stulli, 1982, Lozica, 1988).

In an oral folk tale which has been written down *writing*, i.e. all its incontrovertible literary values (Bošković-Stulli, 1975, 1980, 1982), becomes interwoven with *speech* - by which I mean not only all the traits of the traditional pattern that facilitate oral production and reception of narration, but also all the linguistic and mimic (presentational) features of that particular performance which have left their mark in the text and which force the reader to experience not only an imaginary world, but also the narrative performance itself (Bošković-Stulli, 1982, 48). In drama the *writing* and the *speech* interfuse in the sense that there is, on one side, the

Monodrama also entails only one voice and body on the stage, which alternatively "lend" themselves to other characters - the performer, through the exclusive use of his own material existence, builds the imaginary world, conjures up the imaginary stage properties, changes of time and place, and so on.

⁸ Typical dramatic conflicts were sought, as were typical dramatic situations and the like, but everything that was reached on one side was equally applicable to narrative literature intended only for reading, and on the other it did not in any way universally cover all drama texts written at all times in all places (de Marinis, 1982). Thus "modern theories of drama are almost all founded on the thought that a drama text, in its specific language organization and textual composition, is also and primarily a text for the stage, some kind of a 'score' for theatre performance" (Inkret, 1989, 27).

⁹ Inkret attributes these properties only to the drama, considering that "such an ambivalent existential modus ... is not known by any other kind of literature" (Inkret, 1989, 52), but the same can obviously be established for oral literature. Inkret here has in mind the drama as opposed to other literature intended exclusively for reading.

written linguistic form as sanctioned by its original author, and on the other side there are its textual matrices of theatricality, which is why, when we read a play, we do not construct in our minds only an imaginary world, but also either previous or future possible stage performances of the play (Ubersfeld, 1982b, 18) aroused by these matrices.

What, then, are these stylistic and structural elements of the folk tale which are generated by the oral communication situation? They range from the paratactic organization of the sentences, frequent repetition, omitting declarative conjunctions or verbs, through natural alternation of direct and indirect speech to predictable composition, retardation and repetition of discursive units, the presence of introductory and closing formulae which separate fictional from everyday utterances, the obligatory tripartite gradation of episodes, the combination of "isolated" situations which facilitate both the teller's task of learning by heart and the public's attention span.

To these must be added, and upon them depend, the specific thematic features that characterize folk tales. When it comes to the European tales, it is Max Lüthi (1962, 24-31) who neatly summarized these as: a one-dimensional world, in which this side and the world that lies beyond exist on the same level, the strict functionality and flatness of characters resulting from description confined to the naming of things and external manifestations and events in which psychology is completely ignored, characters exempt from the effects of time, etc. (see also Bošković-Stulli, 1958; 1975).

Can we here already discern the fulcrum of the eventual metamorphosis of the tale into a more complex system of presentational conventions, for the stage? Within that system, narrator's comments and intervention are not usually heard and are thus reduced to the status of stage directions. Unlike during the oral literary performance, here a certain, relatively continuous balance is achieved between the visual and the auditory and every character is embodied by a different person. It appears that the answer is affirmative: a one-dimensional world, timelessness, accent on the external action at the expense of introspection and isolated situations as fundamental features of the tale are very close to the mode of showing the imaginary world that characterize the Here and Now of the stage scene. The profundity of perspective, i. e. the dependence of surface action on some deeper plan (hidden causes, parallel events, etc.), retrospection and narrator's immersion into a character's psychological state open up considerable problems if all of it has to be presented in a material and perceptible way. The stage demands a relative autonomy of dramatic scenes and the emergence of individual characters through action and speech. When a narrator limits himself to the external presentation of characters: naming,

appearance, behaviour and action, his role may far more easily be subsumed by stage directions¹⁰, though the omission of this part of the verbal text is at the cost of the loss of significant aesthetic, linguistic, stylistic and regional dimensions. These are often in the service of the localization of the international tale patterns (Bošković-Stulli, 1958; 1968). Nevertheless this does not interfere with the logical understanding of motive or the course of events. The function of the fictional narrator, the function of the plain contextualization of the direct utterance of the characters, is taken over by the stage (Hamburger, 1976, 212) that is, by the producer's decisions. The material and the articulation of the narrating human voice are replaced on stage by the material and articulation of the visual and auditive signs of the traditional Italian set¹¹. Characters that do not change in time, or rather that are somewhat isolated from time well fit the dramatic production and the once postulated correspondence between the empirical time of the performance and its reception (the so-called "dramatic time") on the one hand and the fictional time of the fable (the so-called "epic time") on the other (Pavis, 397-400). This, in fact, works to strengthen the experience of timelessness and the temporal detachment of the presentation from everyday chronology. The omission of declarative verbs, simple naming which is sufficient to conjure up any element of the fiction as well as their presentation in sharp and unalterable contours, their "full and final coverage" (Bošković-Stulli, 1958, 80), i.e. absence of individualization and developmental dynamism, opens up a simple path for the sensually concrete dimension of the performative agents and stage properties, which have to be defined by their sole appearance, because there is no narrator who would explain in details either the background or all the complex nuances and problematic aspects of their character. The secondary role of actual time and place (in the geographical-historical sense) makes the tale open to the abstract space of the theatre stage with its own conventions such as the raised stage, wooden boards, spotlights, the curtain, etc. The enrichment that the narrator might contribute through the use of dialect or references from his own socio-cultural context will be supplied by the

¹⁰ According to Inkret's definition, which follows the considerations of Roman Ingarden, stage directions are "composed of the playwright's direct information about the figures in the play, the place and time of the action, the stage, way of acting of certain parts of the dialogue, sometimes about the playwright's own relationship towards certain figures, their behaviour, etc." (Inkret, 1989, 53), i. e. exactly those elements on which the fictive narrator of a folk tale predominantly concentrates.

¹¹ The material of a theatre performance is here to create a fictional context, just as Rančić's material voice creates the fictional narrator telling us about a fictional context: in spite of the real objective presence of the theatre stage and living people-performers, they are tactilely inaccessible and it is that tactile inaccessibility that enables the creation of an imaginary world of diegesis (Suvin, 1988).

stage producer in the form of theatrical elements unattainable by the original narrator: scenery, costumes, music, which can be used with a greater amount of freedom being, as they are, variant and not invariant elements of the tale. Saying this we, of course, follow Propp's conception of invariant functionality and variant attributes (1982, 94) as the basic features of the existential mode of the folk tale, stretched as it is between the traditional model and an individual realization - even a very free interpretation of an invariable functional sequence becomes a legitimate variant in the life of the tale as an oral traditional genre.

Let us search for these features, suitable for dramatic adaptation, in our case *Šingala-Mingala*. In Bošković-Stulli's opinion "nothing in this tale is at variance with the traditional scheme", it is "dynamic and full of action" (1967-68, 305-306). After the opening "Once upon a time there was a..." and the introductory explanation concerning the protagonist's visits to the butcher during which the protagonist is given a joint of meat, an introduction for which a single sentence is sufficient, the "present" action begins, indicated by a sudden switch to the use of the present tense and direct speech (And so, the peasant waits...", "and he doesn't give him anything...", "And he says..."). If we look at the written version of the tale we see that marks denoting direct speech preponderate, allowing easy transposition into stage dialogue. Problems arise from the interpolations of the fictive narrator and the information that he supplies: but here verbs of external happening preponderate ("he cut a piece of joint, "he got home", "on he goes", "he asks everyone", "he gets on the boat and finds the boatman", "he gives him the hen, and he carries the hen home", "he comes to the boat, gets inside, the boatman asks him", "he looks through the keyhole to see what's happening", etc.). Description of internal mood is very limited and often reduced to a single adjective ("he was angry") or the psychological attitude of the character is given in the direct speech of interior monologue ("The butcher began to think: when he gave him that for those two kilos, what will he give me, I'll take him a whole ham, by God") or they are in sentences in the third person, informationally redundant ("The innkeeper saw he was in danger"). Not even the narrator's "personal" comments contribute new information that is not obvious from the dialogue, as for example the narrator's remark that the peasant forgot to ask about the boatman's fate, which is clear to the audience from the preceding dialogue. One can really say that this tale, too, is witness to the fact that the "language and style of these tales is vigorous, dense, unadorned, picturesque in its precision, with no talk at tedious length, nor free play of the imagination" (Bošković-Stulli, 1967-68, 304).

What the protagonists look like is unknown and left to our imagination on the basis of narration. The place of action is a general, unknown

"town", but there are no obvious urban attributes, unless we take the presence of the inn to be one. The "outskirts" where the "peasant" lives is only mentioned to give credibility to his daily visits to the town butcher's. Beside the town there is a river, and on the other bank lies the devil's dwelling place, which is treated on the same level as all other "real" places in the tale. The function of these "real" places is to contribute to the unfolding of the tale rather than to denote any social or cultural context, although the latter is important in the constellation of "the devil's luck" that falls to the poor man in contrast to the haughty cunning of the rich butcher and innkeeper. The tale moves in an unimpeded time sequence, the poor peasant's three days are taken up with his journey and return, and his two nights are spent at the inn where the dishonest innkeeper replaces the magic hen and table with ordinary ones. Thus, taken together with what we said already about the folk tale in general, we may conclude that this tale, even despite the frequent changes of the place of action, presents no obstacles to staging.

The supernatural element of the tale, often cited as the key element of the genre, demands theatrical presentation in which it must work out to be just as natural and understandable as it is in the world of folk tale. This requires a special system of theatrical conventions, a system within which the law of the so-called realistic presentation, a presentation which imitates closely the world of human experience, will not be a cast-iron rule. Every stage on which living people act is to a certain extent governed by this rule, and so the ideal solution for the presentation of a tale is to replace the human being by a puppet - a presentation in a puppet theater. The basic convention which we accept in such a theatre is the animation of the inanimate, movement of the inert, a life breathed into wood, sponge or plastic. Having accepted this initial "wonder", as we must, if we are to follow the performance, we accept a whole series of experientially impossible events and phenomena. It is not only anthropomorphic agents that speak and move here, but the entire material world of the stage can adopt attributes which our experience of the real world tells us can only be those of living beings or men (Mrkšić, 1975, 17). The lack of psychological subtleties, the small range and strictly functional personality of the characters which I mentioned before as features inherent to the tale, are very suitable for the restricted repertoire of facial expression and gesture which a puppet can emulate. It is well known that folk tales often reveal a kind of sanitized cruelty - the tearing off of limbs which, without any effort, are replaced by new ones, wounding without pain and blood, torture with horrible instruments, unsparing punishment and killing of the wicked - the art of the puppeteer makes this not only easy to present but just as abstract as the poetics of the tale require (Bošković-Stulli, 1971, 29-32).

If we consider the growth of puppet theatre art in Zagreb, we soon become aware that, during its short history, its repertoire largely depended on the adaptation of folk-tales (Bogner-Šaban, 1988). This need not necessarily be explained only by the preferences of the child public for whom these performances were mainly designed, but also by the aforementioned affinity between the folk tale as a text to be dramatized and the stylistic quality of the puppet theatre, which needs plays that can give impulse to the imaginative use of its main procedure, namely the human manipulation of materials and objects while the humans themselves largely remain hidden and to the eye of the beholder almost an undesirable element. In this way Šingala-mingala has found a true place in the puppet theatre. What other kind of play could so palpably and in such an unforced manner conjure up a hen that lays ducats, or a table that can richly lay itself with food?

The author of the play, Borislav Mrkšić, has not at first sight stuck very closely to the original. The dialogues are longer, songs have been introduced, the number and relationship of the characters changed, so that now we have two devils in place of one, the butcher and the innkeeper of Rančić's narration are one person, while the old woman and boatman become husband and wife who, after the boatman's long spell in the service of the devils are happily reunited. Moreover the text has lost its dialect and the magic words "šingala-mingala" are not used only by the boatman but accompany any kind of magic business. Some characters have attained personal names, the innkeeper does not even discover about the magic objects by cunning, but the naive and simple chap tells him all about them himself. In spite of this the order of the tale, which proceeds in about thirty short scenes, is scrupulously respected, as well as the exchange of magical objects and the gradation of their spectacular magical power. Nor has any character changed its function: the old woman (now Aunt Milka) and the boatman are characters who provide help and information necessary to the protagonist's movements from this side to that and vice versa; the butcher/innkeeper, now the single person, move according to the logic of "bad characters", that is characters who deceive the main protagonist, placing obstacles in his way etc. The devils take over some of the functions of the narrator and are shown partly as the initiators of the entire action, but retain their primary function as donators of the magical presents. The songs and additional stage effects are to hold children's attention by periodic musical "rests" from the swift course of the action, and the frequent repetitions allow the tale to be followed with ease.

Regarded in its theatrical aspect, the performance is reminiscent of the quignol shows of fairgrounds. The wooden puppets are moved from below and seem to "float in the air". Here the stage is more complicated: it

is divided into four locations of action, two side ones for the appearance of the devil-narrators, and two main ones, one above the other, the bottom one having a curtain which is drawn whenever the boatman is on stage. All other scenes take place in the upper stage apertures: scenes at the inn, the poor chap's home, visits to the devils. These settings are evoked by naive paintings used as scenery, thus remaining true to the spirit of the tale, in which reign wonders that have no real time nor place but are yet connected with the locality. The scenery in general is more akin to the associations of northern Croatia than to the Sinj region, and the costumes are more like those of Slavonia. The wooden puppets' faces cannot produce any facial expression - they are gentle caricatures made easily recognizable by certain details: "hair style", the characteristic head scarf and apron, prominent chin and nose, and the obligatory prop which provokes some particular gesture, etc.

Taking into account the audience for which the puppet show dramatization of Šingala-mingala was designed one can say that the authors of the production largely succeeded: they resisted using the tale as a moral fable and emphasized the simple pleasure of the story at the expense of explicit interpretation, underlining the autonomy of the genre and still interpreting it freely within the conventions of their own chosen medium.

The repertoire of the puppet theatre thus has a performance that does not manipulate the audience by officiously imposing the national quality of the tale. It is a good example of a creative meeting of a local folklore and the authorial, professional use of those of its aspects that make it alive, theatrically inspiring and, it seems, of great interest to the urban child.

(Translated by Sonja Bićanić)

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ŠINGALA - MINGALA: OD KAZIVANJA DO UPRIZORENJA

SAŽETAK

Rad je nastao potaknut prikazbom bajke Šingala-mingala u Zagrebačkom kazalištu lutaka. Riječ je o bajci koju je u Sinjskoj krajini pronašla i zapisala, a nedugo zatim i objavila Maja Bošković-Stulli. Prerade bajki za lutkarske izvedbe česta su pojava, no autorici se ovoga rada ukazala njetka prilika: pratiti put spomenute bajke u gotovo svim njezinim dokumentiranim pojavnostima - od istraživačičina svjedočenja o živomu usmenom kazivanju pripovjedača bajke, Ante Rančića, preko objavljene verzije u časopisu *Narodna umjetnost* i antologiji narodnih pripovijedaka koju je uredila Maja Bošković-Stulli, do lutkarske predstave.

Osnovna je namjera rada pokazati kako su sve sastavnice toga puta legitimne karike komunikacijskoga lanca koji bajci osigurava život, te kako je bajka, prošavši navedene preobrazbe, promijenila samo sustav predstavljačkih konvencija, vrativši se svojemu početnom izvedbenom modusu. U svjetlu takve postavke autorica se osvrće na dosadašnja razmatranja o predstavljačkim svojstvima usmenoknjiževne izvedbe u nas, smatrajući da su mjestimice neprecizna i ne sasvim dosljedna. Istražuje također sve srodnosti između dvaju različitih izvedbenih oblika - početnoga, usmenog izricanja, i završnoga, kazališnog uprizorenja, kako bi pronašla zametke prilagodljivosti bajkovne strukture dramaturškoj obradbi i pokazala zašto scenska adaptacija ne mora, unatoč nužnim preinakama koje se nameću, remetiti bitne odlike ovoga usmenog žanra. Na kraju daje opis lutkarske predstave, primjer na kojemu su vidljiva jezična i ina obogaćivanja predložka, te nastoji obrazložiti čime su uvjetovana i jesu li uvijek opravdana.