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ENGENDERED HERITAGE: SHAKESPEARE'S ILLYRIA TRAVESTED

The chronotope Illyria in Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, a reference to an actual geographic space at the time, namely to the Dalmatian coast and the territory of the Dubrovnik Republic, is connected here with the festive background of the play, particularly with the motif of cross-dressing, carnival inversion of gender roles. It was and still is also a characteristic of the Dalmatian carnivals, especially those in the Dubrovnik region. The "white masks" at the Pelješac peninsula show striking structural similarities with *Twelfth Night* in the way they exhibit the archetypal androgyny and the costumographic conventionality of gender-roles through a ritual which merges features of carnival and wedding processions.

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The issue of Mediterranean cultural heritage¹ and manifold art of its travesties in literary works, discussed within the Croatian context, inevitably makes us remember Shakespeare's Illyria, a unique example of Croatia, notably its Mediterranean part, becoming a famous literary chronotope. As you may perhaps already know, it is quite firmly established that the imaginary country reigned over by Duke Orsino in Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* wasn't so imaginary for Shakespeare's contemporaries after all, or no more than Venice in some of his other plays was an imaginary town. In fact, as Josip Torbarina (1993) and Rudolf Filipović (1972) have convincingly demonstrated, the mentioning

¹ This article is an enlarged version of a paper presented at the Regional conference of the Mediterranean P. E. N. centers, which was held in Split, in September 1997, entitled *The Art of Inheriting*.

of the Illyrian coast which generously received the shipwrecked twins, Viola and Sebastian, was not simply a reference to "a vague, fabulous, fantastic and nebulous country just like that maritime power called Bohemia which is partly the scene of the *Winter's Tale* and to which he (Shakespeare, L.Č.F.) alone gave the exit to the sea" (Torbarina 1993:68).² It was meant to allude to a well-known geographical space, the Dalmatian coast, well known at least to some English authors of voyage literature — and the voyage literature, according to some critics, was probably also one of the Shakespearean culturological sources where Italy was concerned, for instance (cfr. Praz quoting some of them, though himself rather sceptical in this respect, 1954). The actual prototype of the unknown fictional Illyrian city whose "reliques" and "things of fame" that "do renown it" Shakespeare's characters are so eager to visit (Act III, Scene III) was quite surely Dubrovnik, a city known in 17th century England as a port, a center of commerce and shipbuilding, where ships called "argosy" were built,³ according to the Italian name of the town, Ragusa. It seems that some gentlemen from Dubrovnik, who were merchants, lived, died and were even buried in 17th century London. One of them, Pavo Gundulić, is said to have been a regular visitor to an inn near the Globe Theatre, whose name was "The Elefant", the very same name that was given to the imaginary inn in the "unknown town" of Illyria.

² Jan Kott seems to be sustaining this notion, when he calls "all Illyrias... illusionary". Still, it is useful for us to notice that Jan Kott reminds us how "mythology can be beyond time, but not beyond place", and insists on the double nature of Shakespeare's topography, always uniting myth and history, concrete human experience and powerful projections, all his pastoral places being "mythical and real at the same time" (Kott 1997:98). The term "chronotope", which I borrowed from the Russian theoretician Bachtin, who uses it exclusively in connection with the theory of novel as a dynamic, *historical genre* with overlapping traditions, is here appropriate exactly in the aforementioned sense attributed by Kott: in fact, Illyria is a point of intersection of two components which intertwine all throughout the Shakespeare's dramatic work, a tradition of the mediaeval, allegorical topography easily recognizable in scenographic features of the Globe Theatre, and of the emerging modern stage which will progressively manifest a historical conception, individualizing and concretizing events and places, but at the time, primarily through language (cfr. Kostić 1983:92-95).

³ The term "argosy" is mentioned both in *The Taming of the Shrew* and in *Othello*, as well as in the *Third part of Henry VI* (cfr. Torbarina 1993:67). Here are some of Torbarina's (wishful?) remarks about Shakespeare's knowledge of Dalmatia and Dubrovnik: "Whether Shakespeare knew the etymology of the word 'argosy' or not, he seems to have known more about the place where argosies were built and where they came from. (...) All commentators agree that under the name of Illyria Shakespeare meant the seacoast of Croatia..." (1993:68).

So how is Illyria perceived in Shakespeare's play? As Rudolf Filipović writes, from the eight passages in *Twelfth Night* that do allude directly to that toponym we can conclude that for Shakespeare it was a country of tall, strong, skilful and bloodthirsty men who liked to drink a lot. These same eight passages made another Shakespeare critic, Leslie Hotson (1955, cited after Filipović 1972:301), conclude that that was the general perception of Croats, Illyrians, Dalmatians in the English social knowledge of the time, them being known mostly for their crudeness and drunkenness as sailors and pirates. After all, a further confirmation of this is provided in *Measure for Measure*, where, to save Barnadine's head, a substitute head is held up to the Duke, the head of a "Ragozine" who was "a most notorious pirate" (Act IV, Scene III)! The historical irony, however, stems from the fact that there is a recently discovered Spanish song, dating from 1591, commented upon and translated into Croatian, which narrates an episode of quite a different sort, that is, the story of a Ragusean boat being assailed and robbed by English pirates (Budor 1997)! Be that as it may, this is where the discussion of the *role* of the toponym Illyria in the possible world of *Twelfth Night* ends, as if the choice of the location for the play was a pure, accidental and marginal whim of the playwright, and had absolutely nothing to do either with those parts of the text where its name is not mentioned, or with the play's structure, dominant motives or the general issues. And yet, Shakespeare mentioned it eight times in his text, and neither of the known sources for the plot are situated in Illyria!

Now, although there is an opinion that, wherever it may have been situated, the action of Shakespeare's plots always referred to England (Praz 1954:98-105), there can not be a shred of doubt that not only the writer himself — as, after all, was Queen Elisabeth I (Hotson 1972) — was fascinated by the Italian urban centers, art, language,⁴ philosophy

⁴ Although Praz is rather reserved when it comes to direct influences and claims that Shakespeare's sources were the translations of Italian plays and short stories, Shasheeb demonstrates that the English writer learned the Italian language from two Italian-English manuals, published by John Florio, well-known in London's intellectual circles and Italian tutor in Southampton's households. Comparing some of Shakespeare's rhetorical devices and borrowings from the Italian sources he used, Shasheeb concludes that they must have been read in the original version (1991). On the other hand, there is another interesting insight concerning the matter and offered by Camille Paglia: contrary to Praz's assumptions that Shakespeare is "chaste" in comparison to other Elizabethan playwrights inspired by sadistic elements in the Italian literature, and that therefore one can conclude Shakespeare relied much more on the references to England culture, Paglia shows how abundant is the sadistic imagery, prolific with "flights of

and literature, from which he amply drew. At the time, the whole of Mediterranean culture, its legends, myths and customs included, played an important, if not the leading part in the global European cultural heritage. May I remind you that acknowledging that fact was the only way that Josip Torbarina could explain the blatant and stunning correspondence of numerous motifs, themes and even separate lines, between Shakespeare's oeuvre and plays by the Ragusean playwright Marin Držić (cfr. Torbarina 1967), who died when the English writer was just three years old, and naturally, could not have possibly influenced him.

The awareness of this common heritage of not only arts and literature, but also of *popular culture*, which both writers cherished in strikingly comparable ways (for Shakespeare, see Barber 1959 and Laroque 1991; for the comparison between Držić and Shakespeare in this respect, see Čale Feldman 1997a:159-174) as an inexhaustible source of archetypal images colorfully summing up and dramatizing human complexities, drove an English researcher in anthropology, Richard Webster, to a bizarre hypothesis. At the end of his article, he admitted he could not really "prove" (1973:21) that Shakespeare's *Othello, the Moor from Venice* had something to do with a ritual sword dance, containing a dramatic plot, that is still performed on the Croatian island of Korčula. The dance is called "moreška" — the name being a Dalmatian distortion of the Spanish word "morisco" signifying "a Moor". Again, the English anthropologist reminds us not only of Dubrovnik and the Dalmatian coast being the already acknowledged actual geographical location of Shakespeare's Illyria, but also of another possible confirmation contained in Othello's words evoking his travels in distant countries, that seem to refer exactly to the island Korčula, known for its quarries: "Rough quarries, rocks, and hills whose heads touch heaven..." (Act III, Scene IV).

The "morris" dance, the only English folk event that could have perhaps influenced Shakespeare, being of autochthonous ritual origin, is a

daemonic metaphors" in Cleopatra's speech, for instance, which proves how Shakespeare sensed and seized the "Mediterranean imagination" (1991:218). She also insists upon Cleopatra's self-dramatizing, theatrical, "fluid Italian expressiveness", which confirms "the negative Northern European view of Italian and papist character in the Renaissance. Renaissance England was more flamboyant than modern England but less so than Renaissance Italy. Hence in the spiritual geography of *Antony and Cleopatra* Egypt is to Rome as Renaissance Italy was to Renaissance England. Cleopatra belongs to an emotional and sexual southland" (1991:221).

folk dance of *many* dancers with blackened faces, which is a sign of probable *magical* provenance, only *later* acquiring the racial reference (cfr. Chambers 1903:199). It is not likely that the "morris" dance is an English version of what was presumably "originally" a Spanish agonistic ritual with clear *historical* background, as the "moreška" surely is (Foretić 1974:7-20) — one among rare relics⁵ of an elaborately devised and structurally complex choreographed dance representing a struggle of the white Ottoman king and the black king, a Moor in some versions,⁶ for a captured princess. Indeed, in his fascinating argumentation, in which he justly insists upon the above mentioned differentiation between folk rituals and historical scenes, Webster forgets to mention a very important trace of this historical aura in Shakespeare's play that could have well served him as a "proof": if we remember the Duke's line saying "Valiant Othello, we must straight employ you/ against the general enemy Ottoman" (Act I, Scene III), the recognition of a resonance of the ancient historico-ritual plot no longer seems absurd, especially having in view that the action of Shakespeare's plot takes place in Venice, where this sword dance was performed in the 16th century (Foretić 1974:15). It is also worth mentioning that it is only on the territory of the Venetian Republic that Italian translations of the Croatian textual parts of "moreška" have been preserved.

A dozen years after Webster's conjectures, the connection between the "morris" ritual dance — whose structure is much simpler than the dramatic plot of "moreška", and whose dominant props, it should be noted, are not swords, but little bells on the costume of performers, jingling as the dance proceeds, on the one hand — and *Othello* on the other, was discussed and confirmed by Francois Laroque, who acknowledges that Shakespeare not only "had a good personal knowledge of this folk dance", but also must have been aware of a similary named, though historically and geographically distant, "old martial Sword dance", since "both the opening and the closing lines spoken by the general" in *Othello* "contain allusions to swords"! However, Laroque seems here to presume that Shakespeare searched for conceivable origins

⁵ For further information on both the historical development and contemporary versions of this ritual in modern Spain, see Harris 1994.

⁶ There are numerous variants of confronted enemies in this dance, according to the historical situation of the country in which the ritual was cultivated — Arabs and Christians, Arabs and Moors, Moors and Christians, Moors and Ottomans... (Foretić 1974:7-20; Harris 1994:45-47).

of the "morris" dance, and not that he knew about possible *contemporary living versions* of the old martial, historically grounded sword dance, among which one of the most likely to be heard of by Shakespeare were surely Venetian performances during carnival, and which also included Korčula's "moreška" — not even mentioned by the French critic (1991:289-291)!

Now I would like to return to *Twelfth Night*, since its plot doesn't happen in Venice, but in Illyria, near to the island Korčula, in an unknown town of great fame, situated in "a principality" in Illyria, which is probably the Dubrovnik Republic, the only free state in that area. Most critics who have discussed the action of *Twelfth Night* have concluded that its structure is unique — it produces a subtle "rhythm of restraint and release", with "protean shape-changing and assuming of false roles", as Jean Howard would say (1985:172, 197). Jorg Häslser stated that "the mood is relaxed, as so often in Illyria: we get an impression of unlimited leisure and time to jest away", reminding us of Viola's/Cesario's lines saying that it is "witchcraft that drew" her/him to "the danger of this adverse town" (1974:70). I did not quote these two scholars in order to prove that Shakespeare was acquainted with the supposedly actual Illyrian atmosphere of restraint and release, human falsehood, witchcrafted destinies or leisure and time "to jest away", but to return to the title of the play, which actually quite directly says the same thing — *Twelfth Night* is not only a date, but also a whole period of time in the ancient calender "to be jested away", precisely, a period of *twelve days* which differentiated the lunar and the solar year. In Roman popular tradition, in which these days corresponded to the *Calendae* of January, it was a time to be spent in masking, and, more specifically, in *transvestism*, cross-gendered masking and dressing. This was a pagan cult, which partly survived Christianization, but which Christianisation partly succeeded in relocating to the period between *Twelfth Night*, that is, the 6th of January, and the fifty days before Easter, namely, to the period of the Carnival. Still, residues of pagan festivities remained in medieval *ludi* and elizabethan street mummings and court revels all throughout the mentioned period of twelve days between Christmas and Epiphany (for England cfr. Chambers 1903; for origins in Roman pagan festivities see 237-247, for cross-dressing 238; *Twelfth Night* in London streets and at the court 391-403, Laroque 1991:32-154; for a general explanation Lozica 1997:26-29).

Now let us return to Shakespeare's plot: it was borrowed, according to some scholars, from the Sienese academics, notably from their play *Gl'Ingannati*, the same play that is often connected with Marin Držić's *Uncle Maroje* which was written earlier, particularly with one of its characters, Pera, because of the same motif used in *Twelfth Night*, the motif of a heroine who leaves home *dressed as a man*.⁷ The motif of cross-dressing, costumographic inversion of roles, though borrowed from the Italian sources in which it figured as a convention (rather often more explicitly sexual), finds its most complex elaboration in and almost pervades both *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night*, for which these two plays became a favourite object of study for "alternative", neohistoricist and feminist Shakespearean criticism (cfr. Greenblatt 1988; Belsey 1985; Paglia 1991; Hawkes 1991; Howard 1993; Elam 1996). However, the critics often disagree in interpretation of Shakespeare's ambiguous treatment of the gender problematic,⁸ which in a different manner underlies almost all his works, even the Roman plays (Paglia 1991:212-229; Kahn 1997). The fact that women's parts in Shakespeare's plays were performed by young men, and the evidence that the playwright used this fact in a dramaturgically productive and significant way, additionally complicates attempts to embrace all the possible layers of meanings, so that the criticism which had this point in mind ranges from culturological explanations of the medical constructions of gender-identity (Greenblatt 1988:93, for the critique of his conceptions also see Elam 1997:151-159), to aesthetic perceptiveness and comparisons with other, far-eastern uses of this theatrical convention, as a means to play with the (gender) illusion and the reality of stage (Paglia 1991:204; Kott 1997:157-162).

Having all that in view, and looking more closely at the intricacies of Shakespeare's plot, scholars were led to draw closer comparisons between the play's title, its archetypal associations and festive

⁷ Despite the fact that Josip Torbarina mentions the motif of cross-dressed persons as a common one between the two writers, it seems that he did not realize how strikingly similar is the structural manipulation of this motif in both plays: namely, as I have demonstrated elsewhere (Čale Feldman 1997c:158) both characters, Viola nad Pera, are put under symmetrical risks of being revealed as women only pretending to be a man — both are challenged as men to show their combative potential (Viola-Antonio/ Pera-Dživulin Lopudanin), and both are, although being women, perceived as attractive sexual objects by another woman (Viola-Olivia/Pera-Petrunjela).

⁸ The disagreements concern the degree of liberty Shakespeare is implicitly claiming for women and the critical vision he is displaying regarding women's social status in the Elizabethan period (cfr. Waller 1991:13-14).

background on the one hand, and, on the other, the main motives and themes developed in the play: it represents a whole world of travesties, a world filled by structural insecurities, inhabited by characters of dubious, ambiguous sexual identity, a world of interchangeable personalities — twins — of different sex,⁹ a world of concrete and transposed veilings and deceptions, partly produced by masking and intentional cross-dressing, finally, a world of strange *couplings* and *dissolutions*: twins split in two and then made one again, and, what is more important, couples bound to be married, then separated and reunited in different combinations. In the parallel plot, there are numerous other details connecting the play with the usual Twelfth Night festivities performed regularly in Shakespeare's England, as well as with Carnival in general, which I will not discuss here (Laroque 1991:227-228, 255-256; Hawkes 1991).

If we were to insist, together with Frye, Barber, Laroque and Hawkes, on the *ritual* background of this play,¹⁰ we would emphasize that

⁹ Kott (1997:175) is right in recalling Victor Turner's observations of the sacredness of twins in the so-called primitive societies, where they are subjugated to different rituals, being considered on one hand as a structural aberration of the nature, providing two persons for one place in the kinship system, and on the other as numinous beings, mystically identical: "Yet twinship presents the paradoxes that what is physically double is structurally single and what is mystically one is empirically two" (Turner 1969:45). Shakespeare's time, personal vision, and theatrical elaboration of this paradox, however, added to this blurring one important element more — identical costume, not only forcing Orsino to exclaim: "One face, one voice, one habit, and two persons!" for Viola and Sebastian, but also widening the scope of this metaphor, making it a sign not only of the theatrical, but also of the broader, life's duplicity that pervades *Twelfth Night*: "For to an audience, most of whose members probably engaged in acting in carnival or festive occasions at various points of the year, the duplicity of the player's activity and the doubling, interactive mode of life that it implies must have connoted, to a degree far in excess of our modern experience, the truly natural" (Hawkes 1991:173).

¹⁰ Quoting Frye, Hawkes states that "In the case of *Twelfth Night*, it is clear that the eruption of the 'green world', carnival confusion in the play is on a massive and complex scale. It well-known commitment to topsy-turviness permits role-confusion, sex-confusion, and confusion over motives to proliferate. (...) These dramas of the 'Green world' embody and record the triumph of life over the waste land, of spring over winter, in a two-step rhythmic movement that can be discerned in the body of Shakespearean comedy" (1991:172 and 169). The archetypal criticism, which started with Frye's notion of Shakespeare's comedies being "dramas of the green world" and continued with the mentioned critics, put forward following arguments concerning the connection between Shakespeare's dramatic structures and the festive world of his time: first of all, the theatre itself constituted at the time a part of holiday events, presenting performances which were also festivals of a kind, sometimes also coinciding with some feast days; secondly, the old seasonal festivals must to some extent have

the carnival topoi here — carnival liberties, class and gender reversals — *merge with* wedding rites of wooing, proposing and at last, celebrating the marriage: like the girl Pera in Držić's comedy, Viola, the play's heroine, dresses as man, and becomes totally indistinguishable from her allegedly lost twin brother Sebastian, who — although she does not know it — has also survived the shipwreck and is also wandering through the "things of fame" of Dubrovnik. Turned into a man, she falls in love with a man, her master, Duke Orsino, and, as she appears to be a man, she is wooed by a woman, Olivia, who ends up marrying Viola's twin brother, still firmly believing that she is marrying "her", that is, Viola. I cannot but quote Paglia once again, when saying that Shakespeare, being a sort of alchemist, through the character of Viola (/Cesario/Sebastian) "returned impersonation to *its ritual origins* in the cult of Dionysius, where masks were sacred", representing to us the perfected entity, the androgynus being, a *rebis*, a "chymical *wedding* of male and female" (Paglia 1991:198).

Constantly moving between two self-displaying personalities, the sexually dubious Orsino, absorbed in his void rhetoric, and Olivia in histrionic mourning, Viola is in an "ambiguous role as a go-between" (Häsler 1974:171); "conveying Orsino's masochistic endearments to the arrogant Olivia, Viola is an androgyne bearing a hermaphroditic message from one androgyne to another" (Paglia 1991:201). In Stephen Greenblatt's terms, *Twelfth Night's* characters and their androgyny are "the theatrical representation of individuality... modeled on what the culture thought occurred during sexual foreplay and intercourse", that is, *a cultural model* for "sexual chafing" (1988:88). The fictionalisation of sexual chafing must be a figurative one, it must happen as *a play of masks and costumes*, for, in Paglia's words, "by fixing the social persona, costume transforms thought, behaviour and gender". Therefore, "*Twelfth Night* relativizes gender and identity by this masque-like succession of

served as antiquarian repositories which the theatrical avant-garde sometimes plundered in quest of inspiration; by adapting popular festivities a dramatist could be sure of catering for the tastes of a public that was itself drawn largely from popular strata, so that transposing folkloric practices to the stage was a way of transforming "the primitive mind"; finally, it added a strange fascination to the beauty of the plays and also their universality (cfr. Laroque 1991:179-200). It is Barber's assumption that it is exactly after *Twelfth Night*, with its "saturnalian moments" and "comic counterstatements" clearly using festivity as a major theme, that the concept of the festive comedy within Shakespeare's work ceased to operate, namely that its impact became marginal (Barber 1959).

representations. The principal characters become *androgynous echoes* of one another" (Paglia 1991:203, 202). Here, the question of dominant motifs turns into a question of *structure*, for *Twelfth Night's* dramaturgy is one of "apparently random accidents", "deflections of direction, intention, and identity and comically predictable drives toward a resolution" (Greenblatt 1988:88). The final scene of the play, filling the stage "by a mechanical procession of entrances" so that "the series of entrances strikes us as a formal pattern of more or less transparent artificiality", and during which twins appear together, is thus presenting an "*artificial symmetry*", "the visual pattern acquiring some of the qualities of tableau" (Häsler 1974:167-168).

Now, although cross-dressed persons indeed are more than frequent members of the vast festive and particularly carnival representational anthropology, here, I would like to emphasize once again, they intertwine with ritual and *representational* procedures of *marital engagements and rearrangements*. Joined together in Shakespeare's slightly melancholy and almost dream-like comedy, they inhabit a necessary liminal "time to be jested away", during which one can illusionary and playfully, through the adoption of fictional identities, explore one's own other self, experiment with gender identities and various gender couplings and combinations, in order to ultimately find and acknowledge one's own "true" feeling and identity (is it ever possible?), being thus thoroughly prepared for the serious bond of marriage. I hear you asking yourself, fine, *so what has this to do with Illyria?*

Well, I can only join the anthropologist Richard Webster in his laments about the impossibility of really proving that Shakespeare knew a lot about Illyria and that *Othello, The Moor from Venice* had anything to do with Korčula's "moreška", and turn your attention to the fact that ritual and *representational* merging of carnival transvestism and marriage customs is one of the rare *uniquenesses* of Dalmatian carnivals in the context of Mediterranean customary heritage, since it seems to be a separate presentational form characteristic to the Balkan¹¹ countries (de Sike 1995:79), and is *unknown* in this form in other Mediterranean carnival traditions (Lozica 1997:47).¹² In fact, exclusively male-

¹¹ I would not like to enter the discussion concerning the question whether Croatia belongs to the Balkans or not: it is evident that *for de Sike* Croatia is a Balkan country.

¹² A trace of a "wedding-within-a-carnival" in other Mediterranean countries is only sometimes linked with the saturnalian residues, when the elected saturnalian king is

-performed or, what is more rare and somewhere also new, mixed¹³ but cross-dressed carnival marriage processions with transvestite brides form a customary part of Croatian carnival festivities (Lozica 1990 and 1997). When it comes to Croatia's Mediterranean part and its major urban centers, these processions are known in Novi Vinodolski and in the *region of the former Dubrovnik Republic*, notably at Konavle, in seaside and hinterland region, as well as at the Pelješac peninsula.

We have a textual confirmation, dating, to be honest, from the eighteenth century, that not only peasants from Dubrovnik surroundings used to participate in the ancient Dubrovnik carnival festivities, bringing to the town rural presentational traditions, but also that, during the carnival, citizens of Dubrovnik, not noblemen but commoners, used to imitate precisely such a custom, a carnival wedding procession (Ferić 1970:654). That this hybrid custom, a wedding-within-a-carnival, probably was alive already during the renaissance period, could be proved by the existence, at the time, of an initiation ritual connected with the entrance of young noble girls into the monastery — big carnival-like masked wedding processions entering a monastery with the unfortunate girl (Novak 1990:162).¹⁴

Especially interesting for us is a custom performed in the village of Putnikovići on the Pelješac peninsula, which shows obvious urban influences, and which in its mimetic aspects, as opposed to the other similar ones in the Dubrovnik region, is not intended as a grotesque parody of the real wedding procession, but is a rather sophisticated sort of combination of uniformly masked wedding procession and dance, and is called *bijele maskare*, "white masks", or *bal u maskari*, "masked dance", and sometimes also *svatovka*, which means "a wedding dance". The characteristic of this masked, originally exclusively male group (formed by *twelve* younger married men) is that it is *symmetrically*

finally given a saturnalian queen with an emphasis on the mocking coronation ritual. Both this custom and the English folk wooing play which brought forth "the theme of rivalry in love presented in a burlesque manner" (Laroque 1988:54), however, are parodic and grotesque in style, and do not involve a whole group of performers as potential bridegrooms and brides, not to say that they lack an internal structural mirroring of more cross-gendered couples, of which I intend to speak.

¹³ It seems today that villages differentiate themselves through the degree of permissiveness in this respect (for Pelješac peninsula which I am referring to particularly see Suzana Marjanić: *Folklorna grada s poluotoka Pelješca*, manuscript IEF, No. 1608, 1997, p. 30).

¹⁴ Novak supposes that this was a relict of the feast of May Queen ruling over men.

structured — namely, split, spatially and through the use of uniformly coloured but gender-differentiated clothes ("men" dressed in white, "women" wearing blue skirts), in two specular gender ranges, a "male" and a "female" one, each range dressed alike within itself, with the exception of wedding "roles" of bridegroom, bride, flag-bearer and a master of ceremonies, who are differentiated by little details (the bride wears golden jewels, but otherwise is identical with other "female" dancers, the bridegroom is decorated with medals, the flag-bearer is dressed in a red, and the master of ceremonies in a white uniform).

There are important costumographic elements, characteristic of both ranges, that add to the impression of these ranges forming *twin-like heterosexual couples* — a hat of straw with flowers on it and coloured ribbons hanging down to shoulders of both "male" and "female" dancers, and, what is more important, a white veil covering the faces of all the men, tied around the neck, impeding our recognition of the true gender of the performers, and making them akin to the famous René Magritte's couple with veiled faces and only clothes to distinguish the gender of the represented figures by their culturological gender-codedness. The dance itself is in a form of a *contradanza*¹⁵ (later also polka and mazurka were introduced), and proceeds as a continuous flow of figures in which two ranges, dancing a different step, come close to each other and then separate themselves, afterwards letting male and female roles switch their places and turn around each other, with a special focus on fictive bridegroom and bride, who are first seated to submit to a short gestural rite of consecrating the union and then placed in the middle of the each range when the dance actually starts. Thus performed, the procession continues its cruise through the village, just to enter the next house and do the same. Men who play the men's parts of bridegroom, flag-bearer, master of ceremonies and others in this ritual, are equipped with swords, just like the confronted white and black warrior groups in the above mentioned "moreška" dance (cfr. Ivančan 1973:175-176; for the dance itself, 189-198).

This last feature, which is usually interpreted as a prop of apotropaic function, together with strikingly similar form of hats, connects the "white masks" with another custom which bears similar

¹⁵ Ivančan supposes it is due to the influence of Dubrovnik, a developed cultural center which absorbed Italian fashions. *Contradanza* arrived in Dubrovnik already in the XVII century, since it started to be fashionable in Italy at the beginning of the century (Ivančan 1973:10-11).

characteristics — that is, a symbolic co-presence of the structurally crucial presentational elements: transvestite characters, form of a wedding procession and male roles equipped with swords — a custom called "ljelje", "kings" or "queens", which is performed in Slavonia, by women alone and during spring festivities. As I have argued elsewhere (Čale Feldman 1997b:113-116), this is in many ways a comparable, decorative, not grotesque, initiation custom exhibiting symbolic elements of chivalry dances and wedding processions, as well as gender-inversion (half the women wearing characteristic male clothing and props — a hat and a sword, and playing male roles of the best man and the flag-bearer), in direct connection with the actual conclusion of marriage, since the queen system is made up of prospective brides, while, unlike other processional groups usually compared with them, they visit mainly the houses of young men and girls of marriageable age.

Just like Shakespeare's play, which takes place in the Dalmatian part of Illyria, these folklore presentational events are also rituals of the "green world" — they exhibit and question, not in a grotesque, but more in a dignified dream-like manner,¹⁶ and with curious boldness, the mask-and-costume-like conventionality of gender roles and differentiations as well as the twin-like original mythical perfection, interchangeability, along with androgene essence of sexes beyond these differentiations. Through their ritual co-existence and mixture, alchemically and theatrically invoking archetypal androgyny, they enact the fusion of genders which is to be produced by marriage as the supreme reactualization of the mythic primary wholeness of human nature (cfr. Eliade 1962, Ivanov 1984).

All of this, of course, cannot lead us to the conclusion that Shakespeare indeed studied or knew about carnival wedding processions in Dubrovnik and its surroundings, no more perhaps than he knew about Marin Držić and the strange correspondences of their respective works. It is perhaps just another tiny, usually low-valued coincidence to be put in the puzzle of their common "cultural memory in which traditions, both written and oral, learned and popular, surface through some significant image-patterns and clusters of meaning" (Laroque 1991:282). This common heritage, particularly its festive popular theatricality, was for them also a wealth of embodied images clearly dramatizing those very

¹⁶ Shakespeare's resorting to rituals and popular festivities as a means to present the bordering of the dream world and the world of everyday life was already stressed by Frye and Richter-Barton (cfr. Laroque 1991:194 and 200).

issues they both, as geniuses, succeeded in eternalizing in their great dramatic art.

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UROĐENA BAŠTINA: SHAKESPEAREOVA ILIRIJA PRERUŠENA

SAŽETAK

Kronotop Ilirija u Shakespeareovoj komediji *Na tri kralja ili kako hoćete* u elizabetinsko je vrijeme referirao na stvaran geografski prostor, Dalmatinsku obalu, dok se spomen kneževine u toj zemlji mogao odnositi na Dubrovačku Republiku, kako su ustvrdili još Josip Torbarina i Rudolf Filipović. Ovaj članak sa spomenutim krajem povezuje svečanostu podlogu komedije, na koju upućuje naslov (*Dvanaesetnica*), te posebice motiv kostimografske inverzije spola u sprezi s motivom vjenčanih pogodbi. U doba karnevala, za razliku od ostalih mediteranskih krajeva, u Dalmaciji uopće, a napose u području Dubrovačke Republike, česte su pojave maskirnih vjenčanih povorki. Među njima se svojim neparodijskim značajem izdvajaju pelješke "bijele maskare", kojih se izvedbena struktura i značenjske implikacije ukazuju kao obilježja što taj ples čine dalekim ritualnim srodnikom upravo fiktivnih zbivanja u Shakespeareovoj Iliriji.

Ključne riječi: kazalište, Shakespeare, W., karneval, Hrvatska