

CVIJETA PAVLOVIĆ

Faculty of Philosophy, Department of Comparative Literature
Zagreb, I. Lučića 3

**MORLACCHISM
ACCORDING TO THE NOVEL
LES MORLAQUES BY JUSTINE WYNNE
THE COUNTESS ROSENBERG-ORSINI
(VENICE, 1788)**

Justine Wynne, the countess Rosenberg-Orsini (1735?-1791) writes the novel *The Morlacchi* (*Les Morlaques*) in 1788, inspired by an allegedly true event. Relying on various sources she strove to give the reader a trustworthy story of Morlacch life and their primeval community, still unspoiled by civilisation. This article attempts to answer the question how successful she was in this. The portrait of the Morlacchi that Justine Wynne offered was obviously interesting and appealing to the audience of the time. In the atmosphere of a new European literary fashion of interest for the distant and unknown, the novel *The Morlacchi* also found their place. Justine Wynne took her place among authors (Macpherson, B. de Saint-Pierre, Herder, Goethe, Mme de Staël, Ch. Nodier and others) who at the turning of the century, through their interest in the primeval and exotic, introduced a great new literary epoch, the period of Romanticism.

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The great date in the history of French society and culture, an event that defined further reconstruction and subversions in civilisation from the end of the eighteenth right to the middle of the nineteenth century, is definitely the French Revolution. In the determination of literary periods in history, 1789-the year of the Revolution is usually considered to be the date of the beginning of Romanticism-a movement that sustains melancholy as its basic feature, but also discontent with the newly established situation in which French history is changing daily by

overthrown governments, great conquests and great defeats, by changes in the status of a country that was until recently the centre of cultural aristocratic Europe, and has now, through a series of revolutions that were to take place in the nineteenth century, become a centre of malcontents and rebels of a new literary generation. As a feature of Romanticism, emphasis is put on the exotic, distant, unknown and therefore interesting. The saturated European ratio is giving way to the romantic individual, self-confident genius who, being too weak to react revolutionarily to social changes at the beginning of Romanticism, expresses his own discontent by withdrawing to a different world, distant in space and time, to a world of the past and far off lands.

The tendency to present the exotic had its origins. Sentimentalism prepared the way as a direct literary reaction to rational Classicism and Enlightenment and the social events towards the end of the eighteenth century were to be an even stronger stimulus to the literary choice of new landscapes and decor with accentuated local colours (*couleur locale*). We are tracing the path of Rousseau and his student hereafter, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre who speak in favour of a return to nature. The exotics of Europe also comprise of primitive milieus the values of which are locked in myths, legends, folk tales, tradition and Romantics will use this skilfully to form a typical romantic hero.

When Austria surrendered the Illyrian provinces to France (1809), the opportunity arose for French writers to become interested in our regions. Nodier and Mérimée, the former mystifying our folk ballads and writing a novel inspired by the people and way of life in Dalmatia, the latter writing a mystification of songs that he had allegedly heard from an (imaginary) gusle-player travelling around the hinterlands of the Dalmatian coast, both introduced a part of our folk customs, admittedly stylised in a romantic way, into the collection of typical works in the period of Romanticism. Interest for the Slavic language and customs also has its roots in the second half of the eighteenth century. Herder gives Slavs a special role in the future of human society and in 1774 Fortis publishes *Viaggio in Dalmazia* [Travels into Dalmatia] in Venice, a work that did not have literary intentions but became the source of a series of literary visions on an unusual population.

In 1788, the same year that Bernardin de Saint-Pierre publishes the idyllic novel *Paul et Virginie*, the plot of which takes place on the island of Mauritius in the Indian Ocean—a French colony in those days, the novel *The Morlacchi* (*Les Morlaques*) appears in Venice by an author

that is almost unknown today but was famous in her time, Justine Wynne, countess married Rosenberg-Orsini. She was read by Goethe, Mme de Staël and Nodier proving once again the mutuality of European Romanticism.

Justine Wynne was born in Venice around 1735 (according to some sources in 1732). The daughter of an English baron and an Italian mother, brought up by a French nanny, she married a German, the count Rosenberg-Orsini and was left a childless widow after only 6 years of marriage. She then decided to dedicate herself to literature. She was on friendly terms with count Benincasa who, during Napoleon's time, served also in Zadar. In 1788 her novel *The Morlacchi* (*Les Morlaques*) was published in French. She died in Padova in 1791.

The Morlacchi were published in a small number of copies. Not even the National Library in Paris has them. The fact that, besides several other libraries, among them the library of the British Museum in London, the National and University Library in Zagreb possesses the novel *The Morlacchi* is all the more reason to speak of this work by an unusual representative of the Italian aristocratic society. In the catalogue of National and University Library in Zagreb the novel *The Morlacchi* can be found under an unexpected term of reference according to the author WYNNE DI ROSENBERG, JUSTINE which is unusual because of the connection between the author's maiden name and her husbands surname that is above all written in an incomplete form and causes confusion in the librarian. When it is finally tracked down, we discover why the reference creator incorrectly connected the two surnames. On the front page we find: *Les Morlaques par L. W. C. D. U & R* that can stand for Justine Wynne, comtesse des Ursins & Rosenberg.

As a motto to the novel the countess chose Horatio: *Sublimi feriam sidera vertice* (the highest peak of glory and happiness).¹ This is the final verse of Horatio's introductory song that serves as a prologue to the first three books of his odes. In it Horatio calls upon the Maecenate and dedicates his work to it. Freely translated, the meaning of this verse would be: "I shall be the happiest man", i.e. literally: "With a raised forehead I shall touch the stars" and is preceded with the line: "If you accept me among lyric poets..." by which Horatio expresses honour and joy that he, a lowborn, had such a great friend and enjoyed his protection and assistance. By singling out this final verse from the context, Justine

¹ Divković, *Latin-Croatian Dictionary*, 4th edition, Zagreb, reprint 1987.

Wynne decides on the form in which she will write what she wishes to convey to us because, as Horatio had said already, the stars can be reached through poetry — which in this case refers to literature in general — if the writer receives confirmation (from the Maecenas and today the readers) that he is artistically inclined and that his artistic aspiration is justified.

The author devotes the introductory chapter to determining the regions inhabited by the Morlacchi which indeed was necessary since this population and their customs were pretty unknown to the Italian and therefore European conception of social structures of a civilised continent. According to Klaić, Morlacchi (Greek. *mauros* — black + Vlach) is the (often insulting) name used for the inhabitants of northern Dalmatia (Zagora), once cattle-breeders of the Dinaric kind; it equally referred to members of the Catholic and the Orthodox religion. In *The Croatian Lexicon* the name is explained in a wider context as "the name that was used in the past to denote the population in the hinterland of Venetian Dalmatia. It probably originated from the Byzantine-Greek (Morovlachs, Black Vlachs) name for shepherds, descendants of the Balkan autochthons. To the Venetians, the Morlacchi (Morlacchi, Murlacchi) were all inhabitants of the hinterland from Kvarner to Bari except those in cities and towns. The term Morlacchi is also used for the population fleeing from Turkish territory and settling in Dalmatia and Istria and also extends to geographic concepts (the Velebit channel is referred to as Morlacchian). The Morlacchi had an important role during the wars against Turkey and Venice encouraged them to cross over to her territory and used them as military population in the regions along the border. At that time the Morlacchi were not a special ethnic or religious category, they represented the collective name for all newcomers in the Venetian military service (both Catholic and Orthodox). Sometimes the name Morlacchi is used as a regional denotation for mountain dwellers on the land synonymous with the domestic name *Vlah* or *Vlaj* by which a city dweller calls a peasant in the hinterland. In the XIX century, in the period of Romanticism "Morlacchism" became a very interesting subject for many travel writers, writers and scientists (A. Fortis, I. Lovrić, M. Kažotić, Ch. Nodier, P. Mérimée and others) who described the patriarchal way of life and customs in their work. With the cessation of Venetian power in these areas the name Morlacchi gradually disappears but is still disputable in historiographies dealing with the region of Venetian Dalmatia. Above all, in Serbian historiographies it is

incorrectly and unscientifically used for political reasons as a synonym for the whole of the Orthodox population completely leaving out the identical share of Catholic population in these regions. The nickname 'black' came from their clothes of dark fabric. The term extends to refugees from Bosnia, Herzegovina and Venetian Albania that settled in Istria in the XIX century. The Morlacchi were eminent participants in the wars between Turks and Venetians in the XVII century (Ilija and Stojan Janković, Petar and Ilija Smiljanić, Marko Sorić, Stanislav Sočivica). After the fall of the Venetian Republic, non-Slavic Morlacchi are assimilated in terms of religion as Croats and Serbs."²

Morlacchism was mentioned in reference to ancient epic poetry, "Morlacchian" songs were compared to Homer's epics and Ossian's ballads and Julije Bajamonti from Split writes of Homer's Morlacchism (*Il Morlacchismo d'Omero*).³ In the 18th century the idea of Morlacchia was born, as a remaining part of Arcadia, a country uncorrupted by civilisation that European sentimentalists modelled by J. J. Rousseau were seeking. The Morlacchi was the name used for the population in the region from Zadar and Nin to the Neretva border-line, in a smaller context the Slavic population of Dalmatia that had settled here from the north and mixed with the autochthons but were not limited to Dalmatia and their territory expanded far north into the Turkish country and south towards Greece. When the Morlacch lands came under Venetian rule in 1645,⁴ the Italians became interested in a community that in Europe, on the boundary between East and West, exhibited all characteristics of primeval behaviour by living a primitive life in an oasis of uncorrupted human values.

The countess Rosenberg-Orsini studied the map of the region that she speaks of in her work carefully. In the introductory chapter the Morlacch lands are situated in an entirely specific area that was geographically checked in detail and precisely determined by its northern and southern borders. So, if the curious reader questions the authenticity of the geographical expansion of this area, he can literally trace the authors well laid out determination of the territory with his finger: the county of Zadar, the areas of Skradin and Knin comprise the northern part of Morlacchia that in this part borders upon "Austrian Croatia"

² *Hrvatski leksikon*, Vol. II, L-Ž, Zagreb, 1997, p. 131.

³ *Povijest hrvatske književnosti* 1, 1978, Liber - Mladost, Zagreb 1978, p. 263.

⁴ Marijan Stojković: "Morlakizam", *Hrvatsko kolo*, ed. J. Pasarić and B. Jurišić, book X, Matica hrvatska, Zagreb 1929, p. 255.

above Obrovac and the mouth of the river Zrmanja. The Adriatic Sea extends to the west with numerous islands and the coastal towns of Zadar and Nin. Southern Morlacchia extends to the area of Šibenik, Trogir, Split, Makarska and Imotski, irrigated by the rivers Krka, Cetina and Neretva. The Ottoman Empire extends in the vicinity of these two "provinces", on the land opposite the sea.

Not wishing to base the geographic determination on enumeration of names of towns and natural borders alone, Justine Wynne also confirms Morlacchia as a historical entity within the ancient Illyrian past and within contemporary geopolitical, albeit insecure, determinations of Slavic countries. The Morlacchi, she claims, are autochthons, or at least the oldest inhabitants of the countries in which the Latins, Skits, Goths and Vandals settled after the fall of the Roman Empire and mixed among themselves, so only those living in Morlacchia itself can be considered original inhabitants.

The author herself explains her choice of literary genre for describing the customs of a nation. The countess says: "The natural sequence of everyday events in a Morlacch family acquaints us with the customs and habits of a nation in a more approachable way than the cold and methodical description of a traveller. We do not believe it would be necessary to turn to the Romanesque or bizarre. The facts are true and the national details presented faithfully. All the customs, habits, prejudices, characters and circumstances will follow from the events and characters introduced into the plot... This is possibly the most comfortable way to correctly describe a nation that thinks, speaks and acts in a way totally different from our own."

When speaking of sources, Justine states that this she obtained this data from people that had lived in these lands, from talks with some Slavs from neighbouring regions, from the works of the few writers that wrote about the subject and finally, the work of a competent contemporary, the Abbot Alberto Fortis, *Viaggio in Dalmazia* [Travels into Dalmatia].

This implies the persuasiveness and reliability of data presented in the novel, a literary variety that belongs to fiction but which, owing to the introduction, is depicted under the mask of exemplarity as a reaction to the demands of its time to compete with fact. In other words, Justine Wynne emphasises the need to speak about this nation through the genre of fiction, i.e. a novel, but one that is based on authentic events and verifiable data.

The theme is a family tragedy described through the view of an objective storyteller. Since this novel belongs among rare European cultural treasures, it doesn't hurt to give a brief summary: The head of the Narzevizca tribe in Dicmo, old man Pervan, has two sons. Stiepo, the elder, married Dascia, but they have no children. The younger, Jervaz, Pervan's favourite and his Jela have three children. They live happily in a small farming community until the arrival of Erza, a merchant's son who supplied Pervan's family with necessary goods once a year. Stiepo, Jervaz and Erza become friends and Erza initiates the brothers' curiosity with his stories of the brilliance of coastal towns and the wealth of Venice. Despite pleas from their father and wives, they decide to set out and Jela and the children leave with them. In Zadar they meet Marcovich, a sailor and soldier who hates Jervaz because he stole Jela from him in their youth. In the encounter Marcovich kills Jervaz and dies soon too while trying to escape. The travellers return to Dicmo veiled in black and when Pervan hears the sad news, he dies of sorrow. Stiepo become the new headman.

Such a simple plot is developed by analepsis by which the storyteller almost imperceptibly describes what she thinks is important to the story itself and what preceded the situation in which the reader finds Justine's Morlacchi in the first sentence. However, this trip to the past did not take the form of a brief review nor a routine report, but extends right to the fifth chapter of the novel, which means it takes up half the book exactly. Only from the seventh chapter does the story go on — it continues from where it was started by the first sentence of the first chapter. Not only is the introduction of anachronism not a storytelling whim, but it is justified by non-literary powers. Since *The Morlacchi* are a novel about a "primitive community" which had developed all its cultural treasures within the framework of epics, still purposefully and as occasion serves, the first song that appears in the novel is completely justified and therefore motivated and by singing of the past transfers the subsequent course of narration from the moment of the present to the moment that had already taken place (*The Song of Pecirep*). In this way, in the line of events, incidents with the "negative sign of the past" (not negative in the qualitative sense of good and bad) gradually, in linear motion, come to a starting point only to continue in a direction with a positive sign.

This is the novel's time co-ordinate. Space is also broken up into two entities: the Morlacch lands, i. e. home, stand opposite the towns,

Venice — of which there will only be talk, but it will not be reached and Zadar — the scene of tragedy and civilisation in general. One could say, generalising that two poles oppose each other here: home — with a positive sign and everything that is not home — with a negative sign. On the time axis as on the space axis, the starting point is the arrival of Erza at the village of the Narzevizca tribe. Albeit, it is stretched through the chapters speaking of friendship, customs, prejudices and the preparations for the journey. When the leading characters leave the village, the reader also leaves the Morlacch land with them. Everything that takes place in the village after that remains beyond our view. The storyteller deals with the principal heroes and leaves behind places and events in which they do not participate. The reader returns to the Narzevizca village only when the heroes return. The characters always motivate the change of place in which events take place.

The storytelling is streaked with folk customs that can be grouped into several thematic circles. These very folk customs which in quantity take up most of the novel and are often used as retardation, meaning that description prevails over narration, represent the greatest value of the novel. From them, the meaning of the term Morlacchism according to Justine Wynne, the countess Rosenberg-Orsini can be interpreted.

The richest thematic circle is the one about the "family spirit" of the Morlacchi. Old Pervan sings of the glory of his ancestors and stresses the importance of community. His first words are: "Always remember that we are all brothers, that we have the same name, the same blood, the same father, famous Pecirep Narzevizca." For such a community the past is equally important as the present and this is why the story of the alleged ancestor and founder of the Morlacch family was placed at the very beginning. It is vital to tell it because it is a confirmation of the family establishment, the origin of the Morlacchi and their identity. *The Song of Pecirep* is a perfect example of the stylisation of epics that glorify heroes: Pecirep is merciless towards his enemies, devoted to his friends, a respectable father and husband, a courageous and fearless avenger. "The stone that covers his ashes will not last as long as the memory of him and our descendants will always attend the place of his holy remains."

In order to present the full glory of Slavic nations the question of Morlacchi origin is interfered with by a Russian brotherhood story that is unsuitable to Morlacchi regions (the Morlacchi completely lacked consciousness as to the importance of nationality). From Peter the Great to the Empress Catherine, the Morlacchi are connected to the Russian

people thereby creating a separate thematic circle, grafted partially and as occasion serves and will be dealt with later.

The thematic circle of sanctity and importance of family and its duties is specially expressed by placing the Morlacch community in relation to civilised society: "Children's obedience, this debt to nature, the first of our duties, in civilised countries gives way to other duties that society invented in order to make man a slave..."

The role of the headman, what he represents to the family and how the family and tribe are grieving at his loss is sung of in *The death song for headman Rostar* (*Chanson de mort pour le Staréscina de Rostar*). The headman leads his people in the battles against the Turks, judges at sports events, competitions, awards the best, gives away the bride to the groom, gives advice as the father of all, everyone listens to him and obeys his orders. The headman ensures the family's prosperity and his role is carried forward as a special honour from generation to generation within a family.

Morlacch women are guarded as property and the husbands treat them as such. They on the other hand are happy and completely content with their position. It is equally difficult to seduce a Morlacch woman as it is to steal their horse. The Morlacch man cannot be imagined without his horse, sabre and a good and obedient wife. The countess Rosenberg-Orsini must have heard terrible stories of the relationships between men and women in such a primitive community. She could have learned of their patriarchal laws from books. Still, she softens these relationships, romanticises them in accordance with the romantic approach. Perhaps the dressing up of witnessed facts is a reflection of unacceptance of uncivil behaviour towards women because from the perspective of a highly civilised society and also from the perspective of a real high society lady which associated with Casanova,⁵ the author could not accept, let alone understand the brutal laws of the Dinaric region. Subsequently, by introducing a few words on true love she could count on a better reception from the audience. After all, the love motives contributed significantly to the development of the Romanesque plot. That is why the description of Jela and the first encounter with Jervaz is given in the manner of sentimental novels. Old Pervan, for example, sings of his love

⁵ Rudolf Maixner: "Traductions et imitations du roman 'Les Morlaques'", *Revue des Etudes slaves*, 1955, XL 1-4, p. 64.

for Anka, Stijepo's and Jervaz's mother (*Histoire d'Anka — The Story of Anka*) and cries at the end.

The motive of pious adoration of the Russian Empress Catherine the Great also gives the author the opportunity to idolise woman this being in accordance with her taste and the novel's tone. The Morlacchi allegedly owned icons of Russian rulers, above all of famous Catherine who they worshiped as a saint. In Justine Wynne's novel owing to the glory of the Empress Catherine woman in general became an object of admiration. A woman's role is to satisfy her husband, to tend to him and take care of him just as he looks after his horse and sabre. His horse, his sabre and his wife will all help the Morlacch when necessary, but only his wife will know how to give him pleasure in his moments of rest. A woman's love is sweet and gentle. The gentle love of Stjepo and Dascia is specially striking. In these parts of the novel the countess could allow herself the most freedom. The mostly objective narration, accompanied in some parts by comments full of awe of the unusual customs and by attempts of rational explanation, changes here and as the story carries on it advances closer and closer to the character of Jela. Finally, in the climax of her doubts a large part of the chapter is devoted to describing the strength of her emotions. The author, belonging to a world in which amorous behaviour was defined in the finest nuances, understandably could not accept the uncivil codes of Morlacch behaviour, so she "softened" them by telling the story from the point of view of a concerned, gentle but courageous woman (Jela).

However unenviable Jela's and Dascia's positions were, they were respected and privileged compared to other women in the Morlacch community just by the fact that they were wives of the headman's sons. The servant does the most difficult work and had Jela and Dascia not lived in the village headman's house, they would have had to do this themselves. Several sentences devoted to the servant Nika complete the author's view of Morlacch family life.

To the Morlacchi brotherhood and sisterhood is equally sacred as family. Throughout the novel often the worried headman utters words of warning. They warn of the necessity of preserving these old values that were respected by their ancestors. Frequently they oppose civilisation, the source of all evil. For example, the headman speaks of the importance and sanctity of family, especially of the sons' obedience, this "gift of nature", the first duty of the Morlacch community that in cultural

communities gives way to thousands of other duties invented by the society to make man a slave:

Therefore, it is not surprising that so much attention is given to the marriage ceremony and the wedding customs in which a precisely defined and thoroughly worked out sequence is respected. The customs of marriage proposal are especially picturesque. The countess had studied her sources carefully and described the ceremony in detail giving attention even to the groom's clothes. A procession sets forth comprised of a standard-bearer, wedding guests with the groom's chief attendant, best man, brother-in-law, *parvinzi*, *zacioniszi*. The bride and groom hold hands by their little fingers and walk around the altar and priest, they are crowned three times with a crown of leaves and they utter aloud: "The faith of Christ is stronger than the elm-tree forest." Later, motivated by the journey of the leading characters of the novel, we find descriptions of wedding customs in other regions, e.g. in Zlarin.

The wedding is accompanied with "epitalams"⁶ with the whining of gusles. This type of wedding song could have appealed to the reader of that time, brought up on literature of the Rousseau variety. It praises woman's beauty comparing it with the beauties of nature, the shining stars and the morning dew. The relationship between wife and husband is compared to the dawn that is followed by day: "Daughters of Toposnich, when the dawn is beautiful, the sun comes: it reaches her, catches her in its arms; the dawn faints and disappears and the sun wakes her with each morning." However, the fact that the countess had heard somewhat of the manner in which wedding songs are sung in Croatian parts and that these epitalams were not just the fruit of her wild imagination is confirmed by a short remark by the singer at the very end of the epitalam joyously announcing that his song will be awarded with wine.

Like weddings, funerals too are a part of life that has to be accompanied by adequate forms of behaviour. The dead are mourned after by a song of lament emphasising the misfortune that has stricken the whole community by the loss of a loved one. If the Morlacch has been killed, a custom that imposes an obligation on the whole family cannot be avoided: a bloody revenge is a question of honour and is carried forward from generation to generation with unbelievable passion and the greatest

⁶ Justine Wynne calls wedding songs epitalams and these are synonyms to a certain degree, but the term epitalam is not inveterated in Croatian oral poetry.

hatred. Since a real live event⁷ such as this one that took place in Venice inspired the countess Rosenberg-Orsini to describe the life of a small Morlacch community, we find the bloody revenge in the development of the plot. Yet, intervening with rational mind and the voice of civilisation, somewhat unconvincingly but totally in accordance with her time, the author calms the boiling blood of the Morlacchi with the advice of Erza Draganich, a town man. New spilled blood will not bring back a drop of the blood that is being lamented. So, "crime" as Erza says, should not be added to the misfortune that God Almighty has brought upon the Morlacch village although to the Morlacchi bloody revenge does not carry any guilt whatsoever. Erza, a cultured Morlacch, does not believe in witches and vampires, the presentiments of evil, he calmly explains an eclipse of the moon as a natural phenomenon while in the Morlacch village it is interpreted as a certain sign of universal catastrophe. The reconciliation of nature and civilisation is the solution that Justine Wynne offers us: "... in order to be happier than rich town dwellers that enjoy all the of riches civilisation, the courage of the Morlacchi only needs to give way to ratio and justice."

It would be misleading to think that the narration pauses only at key points in human life that are indeed very picturesque and interesting to Europeans at the end of the 18th century, but thereby not less appealing than for example the description of the bear hunt. Here Mrs Rosenberg takes the opportunity to tell the story, a kind of myth about the origin of the bear. According to Morlacch tradition the bear is a fallen angel which was punished for pitying Lucifer and was condemned to wandering around forests and mountains in the form of a terrible bear. Since the Morlacchi are farmers and also skilful hunters and as mythological stories and fairy tales are included in the descriptions of everyday life, the countess noted and emphasised what she thought were real values to the Morlacchi by placing them in the same chapters (the narration about women, bears and vampires are placed in succession in the same paragraph). Both the mythological bear and walking zombies are an everyday event in the primitive community that finds a place for

⁷ "This unbelievable event and the fight and death of the young Morlacch, presented in a brief outline here, took place in Venice several years ago in front of many witnesses at the great, i. e. Slavic dock. This tragic event stirred my curiosity and interest for this poorly known nation and inspired this work that is equally unusual as the Morlacchi themselves." This is what Justine Wynne says in the notes in chapter 14 of this novel. The real event became an object of literary elaboration. The author changes the place of events and places the tragedy in Zadar instead of Venice.

them too in their simple logic and then treats them as an unavoidable part of life.

A large part of Morlacch life and therefore Justine Wynne's novel is comprised of belief. Vampires are the major phantoms of the superstitious common people. The Morlacchi firmly believe that vampires attack women, drink blood, come across lost travellers at night. Fearless warriors dare not oppose the forces of evil as they form a counter-balance to the equally firm belief in God. Indeed, prayers alternate with and are treated equally as witchcraft and spells. Jela anticipates great evil according to evil presentiments. She will try to clarify if not prevent it so that she can oppose it bravely. She visits the Baornicza, a counter-balance to a witch, an old woman that can undo spells and foretell the future. The Morlacchi do not fear the forces of good but respect them. Justine Wynne emphasises this with simple sentences while she describes the atmosphere when the Morlacchi women, Jela and Nika the servant encounter the supernatural powers of the immortal Baornicza: "Jela and Nika stared at her (the Baornicza) with a surprise that was mixed with awe and pleasure." Misfortune is inevitable but the Baornicza chooses her words wisely and tells Jela exactly what Jela cares for; As long as he lives, Java will love Jela. The loyal wife decides to travel with her husband so that in every moment she can remind him of home and preserve the family.

As the story continues, the evil presentiments become more frequent. Not only does the falling of the wedding crown made of leaves, a symbol of love and community, indicate the novel's climax, but a sequence of other symbols of the rebus of superstition follows: owls hoot, the moon obscures the sun, the horse throws Jervaz to the ground and flees to the stable. Pervan sadly comments: If this is what fate wants, danger is inevitable. If they had to stay, they would die equally of sorrow as of the misfortune that threatens them. An unquenched desire of a young man is equal to poison.

A desire to experience the new, curiosity sets the plot of *The Morlacchi* in motion. However, everything that is outside the circle of established values of a traditional community-conservative, closed in its simplicity and strictly respected rules of oral culture-belongs to the side of negative values. Jervaz is killed by a Morlacch due to misunderstandings within the Morlacch community from long ago, but he dies because he has crossed the sacred circle of an untainted community. He dies on his way to Italy; he is cowardly killed in Zadar (Zara) in a

town where his community cannot protect him. The importance of community is confirmed by the tragic death of the brave Jervaz because by the fulfilment of evil presentiments, the Baornicza and all evil signs that we today term as belief got their confirmation and justified existence. By coming into contact with the world in which civilisation has reigned for centuries, not only has the Morlacch world received confirmation of its own values, but it has risen to an almost idyllic world that civilised, sentimental, pre-Romantic Europe yearns for.

Yet it is interesting that for no established reason, the Morlacch community from Dicmo abstains from the bloody revenge that was to them an unwritten sacred rule only because Erza Draganich, the voice of reason, advised them so. Justine Wynne, she herself being a member of the other, civilised world consciously made this concession towards inconsistency and incredibility of the custom so that through the character of Erza, she could propose compromise as the only possible way of survival of the rigid Morlacch community. Stiepo, Jervaz's brother becomes the headman and the novel ends with the already quoted words: "(...) in order to be happier than rich town dwellers that enjoy all the of riches civilisation, the courage of the Morlacchi only needs to give way to ratio and justice." It is the 18th century, the corrector of "savageness", at work both as the author's proposal and as a handy solution to the story's end, not taking care of consistence. Otherwise, the bloody revenge would drag with it other plots and new characters and could go on forever, until the tribe is exterminated. This would not correspond to the spirit of the century in which the novel was created or the taste of the audience without which the work is unfeasible.

Justine Wynne could have found all the elements described here, the chapter about the highwaymen, a description of the Morlacch customs, hospitality, animosity, brotherhood and sisterhood, superstition together with faith in God, in Fortis' *Travels across Dalmatia*. However, there are two motives that Fortis does not mention. The first is the already mentioned motive of the bear hunt and the second is the idolatry of the Russian Empress Catherine the Great. Although the author expanded her knowledge of the Morlacchi also by reading Lovrić, she could not have found these motives in his *Bilješke o Putu po Dalmaciji opata Alberta Fortisa i Život Stanislava Sočivice* [Notes on Travelling across Dalmatia by the Abbot Alberto Fortis and The Life of Stanislav

Sočivica].⁸ When writing about superstition, Lovrić states the snake as a symbol with several meanings and its origin is connected to the formation of the world. Justine Wynne writes in a similar way about the meaning of the bear. According to the notes on the sources, as she could not have found this mythological story in Fortis or in Lovrić's comments on Fortis' Travelling, she could have taken it from "the few old authors that wrote about that subject" or made it up herself.

The Morlacch Russophilism has no affirmation either in the literature that Justine consulted while writing the novel. However, the cult of Catherine II existed in the literature of regions continuously jeopardised by the Turks as a consequence of the historic role of the Russian Empire as a specific protection from the danger coming from the east. The Austrian-Russian-Turkish war 1787-1791 was the subject of around twenty literary works in 18th century Croatian literature. This theme became especially popular in directly endangered Slavonia in which we find a series of epics inspired by the belief that Joseph II and Catherine II will drive the Turks out of Europe (For example, Krmpotić's epic: *Katarine II i Jose II put u Krim* [The journey of Catherine II and Joseph II to Krim]).⁹ The adoration of Russian Emperors as protectors could have developed perhaps in a primitive milieu such as the Morlacch lands. Even Morlacch families of the "Greek religion" kept icons of Peter the Great but it is equally probable that in her novel Justine Wynne wanted to flatter the Russian Empress whose son she met personally during his stay in Venice. The countess romanticises the motive that she may have come across using a hyperbole, so her Morlacchi order a statue of the Empress Catherine from Venice in order to worship it and pray litanies in front of it that resemble litanies to the Virgin Mary. After all, the whole novel is dedicated to the Russian imperatress: "à Catherine II, impératrice de toutes les Russies" [To Catherine II, imperatress of all Russians].

The storyteller leading through events that are crucial in community life belongs to the civilisation and European spirit of the 18th

⁸ Ivan Lovrić: *Osservazioni di Giovanni Lovrich sopra diversi pezzi del Viaggio in Dalmazia del signor abate Alberto Fortis, coll'aggiunta della Vita di Socivizza, Venezia, 1776; Bilješke o putu po Dalmaciji opata Alberta Fortisa i Život Stanislava Sočivice*, Zagreb 1948.

⁹ Dunja Fališevac: *Poetika i ideologija Krmpotičeva epa: Katarine II i Jose II put u Krim*, in: *Cljučevi raja: hrvatski književni barok i slavonska književnost 18. stoljeća*, prepared by Julijana Matanović, Meandar, Zagreb 1995.

century. In the introductory part in which the novel's subject is presented, the storyteller proves to be an objective, unbiased transferor of true events: "The natural sequence of everyday events in a Morlacch family will acquaint us with the customs and habits of a nation in a more approachable way than the cold and methodical description of a traveller. There was no need to turn to the Romanesque or bizarre. The facts are true and the national details presented faithfully. All the customs, habits, prejudices, characters and circumstances will follow from the events and characters introduced into the plot." The storyteller purposefully retains the autochthonous terms, for example Vieschiza-witch and then the novel's author gives an explanation in the notes: "the general name for evil fairies". Justine Wynne truly strives to present all the wonders of this unusual and wild nation, still the events are regularly accompanied by her comments. These are partially the result of the author's judgement that without explanation some events would be too surprising to cultivated Europeans and partially the result of Justine inability to break loose from the rationalisation that is so characteristic of her century. An objective storyteller gives the author's comments and they are partially hidden in Erza's last words on the bloody revenge directed at the Narzevizca tribe. An objective storyteller is the ideal solution for this form of narration because a rational analysis of events and the need to clarify natural phenomena would be completely inappropriate for any character in the Morlacch community. Erza is allowed to give enlightened advice because he belongs to the world of the town, i.e. civilisation.

The storyteller does not seem noticeable but acts as a discreet mediator between two worlds: she comments the story's heroes justifying them when she thinks necessary, arousing sympathy for the natural man: "... and natural man, simple and strong as nature herself, does not wish to save anything, but enjoys, relying on his inexhaustible creation." The chapters end with the storyteller's comments having the effect of morals, maxims and conclusions to some of life's patterns. When describing the wedding customs, the storyteller, i.e. Mrs Rosenberg-Orsini concludes: "The allegorical statement ('The faith of Christ is stronger than the elm-tree forest') is the only expression in the Morlacch marriage ceremony." Chapter 12, for example finishes with the sentence: "To foresee misfortune and not be able to prevent it is one of the unfortunate states of human nature, a source of deadly anxiety from which it seems all other animals are protected by the law of pure instinct."

When speaking of superstition, the storyteller skilfully and almost unnoticeably links the objective observations to the explanation of supernatural phenomena. "Jela remembered the good fairy, Baornicza; her mother had often told her about her: the Baornicza had lived from times immemorial in a cave in the beautiful Mropolazca mountain. *By replacing another Baornicza which had succeeded an even older one, always in the same place, no one ever noticed the change, they believed that it was always the same one and no one knew when she first appeared*; Jela's grandmother swore she had met the old eternal Baornicza." This logical explanation seems entirely enlightening. The description of the cave and the Baornicza is already placed in the romantic view of the world and these are possibly the most beautiful pages in the novel. Here the author achieves a special tension, interrupting the chapter at the moment in which the Baornicza appears in front of Jela and her servant and continues her description in the following chapter.

The storyteller does not recount all the events in Morlacchi life chronologically. Those that he chooses are the best indicator of what the author thinks is most important and most interesting: growth of the family, the birth of children are depicted by only a few sentences, several years are retold in a brief review. Far more space is given to the description of specific customs and, for example, the worshipping of Catherine II. The brief review of time passing is narrated by a storyteller from the outside, a storyteller that does not belong to the Morlacch circle, while the customs come from within the Morlacch community itself from the mouths of Morlacch characters, through dialogues and songs. In order to entertain Erza Draganich (who Justine, thinking that the surname reflects relation constantly calls Dragananich, as an insertion by which it differs from the father's surname Draganich), the Morlacchi bring him to Markovich who had travelled extensively and with whom he could talk about everything. Actually, there is no plot and time stands still to that the customs can be told.

The singing of songs is an important part of Morlacch life. Striving to give a seemingly faithful view of customs unknown to cultivated Europe, Justine Wynne inserted into *The Morlacchi* ten songs besides which she mentions other songs that are sung accompanied by gusles, for example in chapter eight the song of the beautiful wife of Asan-Aga and the loves of Hali-Begh. Owing to the analysis of S. Jovanović, M. Stojković and R. Maixner, the connection between the poetic supplements

of Mrs Rosenberg and Kačić's *Razgovor ugodni naroda slovinskoga* has been confirmed. The author of *The Morlacchi* definitely did not read Kačić, but was undoubtedly informed of him and even had a translated specimen of some of his songs. *Chanson de la bienheureuse Dianiza* is the free translation and an extensive paraphrase of Kačić's *Pisma od Kotromanovića* [The Song of Kotromanovich] and *Chanson de Tiescimir et Vukossava* is based on *Pisma od kralja Tješimira* [The Song of King Tjeshimir]. Justine's version of Kačić's songs turned them into a series of declarations written one below the other so that they would resemble poetry at least visually. In *The Song of Kotromanovich* Kačić sings in verse, in decasyllables of course, what Mrs Rosenberg develops into prose:

For example, the quatrains:

Shouting finely but loudly,
and calling gentlefolk across Bosnia:
"Bad morning to you, Bosnian gentlefolk!
Don't you know, don't you care?"

Three dear brothers are the council,
Three brothers Kotromanović,
In the midst of Jajce, the white town,
they often talk and say this:

"We will marry maiden Danica
to the young Hungarian king,
we will crown brother Vladislav
in the midst of Jajce, the white town.

We will gather the Hungarian katane
and attack the Bosnian gentlefolk;
we will capture the fields and pastures
and gentlefolk's villages and towns."

(A. Kačić-Miošić)¹⁰

becomes: "Listen, governors of Bosnia, famous warriors, in the town of Jajce (Jakze) they are scheming a plot against you. The children of Kotroman and their father said: We shall give our sister, beautiful Danica (Dianiza) to the Hungarian king: his brother Vladislav (Uladislas) will rule the Bosnians with us..."

¹⁰ Andrija Kačić-Miošić, *Razgovor ugodni naroda slovinskoga*, Korabljica, PSHK, book 21, Zora, Matica Hrvatska, Zagreb, 1967.

Justine Wynne understood the importance of fitting a segment of, conditionally speaking, oral literature into an authentic presentation of everyday life. However, we cannot speak of folk (i.e. Kačić's) songs in her novel because Justine in fact only retells their contents and rather awkwardly at that and there is no trace of the recognisable signs of folk poetry. Still, the existence of each song that was included in the novel is justified at the content level of narration; in other words, the singing of each song is motivated. It does not appear as a supplement but rather as a part of the plot and without it the value of *The Morlacchi* would be significantly reduced. *The Song of Pecirep* (Chanson de Pecirep) sings of the glory of the ancestors because a heroic past is the pledge of Morlacchi existence. *The Story of Anka* (Histoire d'Anka) is a song about love that Pervan sings as an example at the time the wedding guests are preparing for the wedding of his son Jervaz, "epitalams" are sung at the wedding, *Chanson de la bienheureuse Dianiza* (The Song of blessed Danicza) is sung to wish the travellers Jela, Jervaz, Stiepo and Erza a safe journey because Justine's version of Kačić's *Pisma od Kotromanovića* [The Song of Kotromanovich] ends with the invocation: "We pray to Danicza to protect the dear travellers that we love as she loved her brothers and old Kotroman, her father..." Nika sings *The Song of Tjeshimir and Vukosava* (Chanson de Tiescimir et Vukossava) to entertain Jela and drive away her gloomy thoughts. Beside the bier, the deceased are mourned with an appropriate song [The Death Song of Dabromir, The Death Song for Headman Rostar, The Song for the Death of Jervaz] (*Chanson de mort de Dabromir, Chanson de mort pour le Starescina de Rostar, Chanson de la mort de Jervaz*). However "pastiche" the songs may be according to the countess Rosenberg-Orsini, a pale paraphrase of Kačić's songs to the folk ones, they are evidence that the author strove not to stray from the principle she had set in the introductory part of *The Morlacchi* where she states that she gathered the data from reliable oral and written sources. Since she tried to give the reader a view of life in a primeval community still untainted by civilisation which the pre-romantics see as a source of all evil, in the narration she included songs as she had received. Hence the errors, both formal and in the nature of content in presenting the verses. Not differentiating the possible modes of song performance, Justine Wynne says that *The Song of Tjeshimir and Vukosava* was accompanied by gusles and a "tambura" (kind of stringed instrument) and if we take into consideration that this song was sung by Nika the servant and coming down the mountain at that, it is obvious that this kind of

singing was unfeasible and that the description is just an imprecise synthesis of Justine's knowledge of Morlacch customs.

The picture of the Morlacchi that Justine Wynne offered was obviously interesting and appealing to the audience of the time regardless of all these aberrations from authenticity. Soon after it was published the novel became very popular. It was translated into Italian and German and became the inspiration of literary attempts by other authors. In the atmosphere of a new European literary fashion of interest for the distant and unknown, *The Morlacchi* also found their place. In addition to Macpherson's mystification of Ossian's ballads and the novel *Paul et Virginie* by Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, besides Herder, Goethe, Mme de Staël, Charles Nodier and others, Justine Wynne took her place among authors who, at the turning of the century, through their interest in the primeval and exotic introduced a great new literary epoch, the period of Romanticism.

(Translated by Laurette Rako-Zechner)

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MORLAKIZAM PREMA DJELU JUSTINE WYNNE,
GROFICE ROSENBERG-ORSINI *LES MORLAQUES*
(VENISE 1788.)

SAŽETAK

Justine Wynne, grofica Rosenberg-Orsini (1735?-1791) piše 1788. godine roman *Morlaci* (*Les Morlaques*) inspiriran navodno istinitim događajem. Oslanjajući se na različite izvore, čitatelju je nastojala pružiti vjerodostojnu priču iz života Morlaka i njihove iskonske zajednice, još uvijek neiskvarene civilizacijom. Članak pokušava odgovoriti na pitanje koliko je u tome uspjela. Slika Morlaka kakvu je pružila Justine Wynne očigledno je bila zanimljiva i primamljiva ondašnjoj publici. Roman *Morlaci* našao je svoje mjesto u ozračju nove europske književne mode, zanimanja za daleko i nepoznato. Justine Wynne uvrstila se u krug autora (Macpherson, B. de Saint-Pierre, Herder, Goethe, Mme de Staël, Ch. Nodier i dr.) koji su na prijelazu stoljeća zanimanjem za iskonsko i egzotično najavili novu veliku književnu epohu, razdoblje romantizma.

Ključne riječi: francuska književnost, morlakizam, Dalmacija