

FEMALE UNRULINESS IN SLAVONIAN FOLK PLAYWRITING AND FOLKLORE

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The analysis presented in this paper has a double scope: it questions the role and the representative force of cultural and folklore intertexts in Slavonian folk playwriting, but focusing on a specific issue - on how these intertexts contribute to the construction of a diversity of female characters, often represented as "unruly" women, the only one responsible for conflicts in the possible worlds of analysed dramas.

Comparing the participation and role of women in Slavonian folk playwriting in the second half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth on the one hand, with her role in Slavonian folklore on the other, one can count on a series of both similar and divergent features worthy of attention, particularly applicable in the light of existing literary-critical and folklorist interpretations. The issue of gender roles and conflicts, and literary quotational manipulation with folklore symbolism in such papers have attained the status of unquestionable content which has, on the whole, been shrugged off.

My perspective here is located on the boundaries of literary criticism, literary anthropology and folkloristics, in the insecure and controversial field of interdisciplinary borrowings, hybridizations,

impermissible adoption of the authority of others, and, in the opinion of many, inappropriate relocation of methodological models and analytical categories to fields of research foreign to them, with doubtful judgmental breakthroughs, often such which cast more light back on the initial environment of the judgment than speaking in a new way about the nominally assigned point of the analysis. Such waverings also accompany literary anthropology, a branch of the practice of reading of literary meanings which try to concentrate on finding traces of referential cultural context in literary texts. One could also say that it is accompanied by the threat of blinded imprisonment in the dungeon of literary language and in the fiction of its possible world, doubt in the reliability of literature as a culturological document, but also intuition of its unexplored anthropological eloquence. Parallely with the process of the crumbling of faith in "authentic" material which, raw and unselected, is offered as the foundation of anthropological cognitions (there being profuse reflection about the unavoidable subjectivism and bias of field notations, about the unconscious pre-field "sieve" of ethnographic collection and selection of material, about the fictitious status of not only actual oral utterances about culture but also of those preserved in subsequent notation - see Prica 1996), the appetites of literary anthropology are growing. Its ambition is to spread out over both sides of its methodological syntagmatic coinage - to support, to supplement, and perhaps even to call into question existing anthropological knowledge about the culture in question, but also to enrich the procedures of literary interpretation. Of course, competent evaluation of the relevance of literary material¹ for the discussion about the symbolic pertinence of cultural characteristics - an evaluation which is, to a great extent, a matter of personal judgment, but also a matter of trust in the possibility that agreement in principle can be achieved on this point - is the assumption of each contribution - this modest one included - to that emerging branch of scholarship. Croatian folkloristics has already laid its foundations, repeatedly proving its legitimacy by this very digging among those imprints of culture found in folklore texts which lend themselves to identification independently of the features immanent to the genre, motifs which have "migrated" from other cultures through the relatively independent logic of literary influences (see Bošković-Stulli 1982), and particularly among literary quotations and reshaping of folklore intertexts, but always with the primary intention that the latter be given the status of archetypal universality, an autonomy in relation to the reality of life, as well as the status of aesthetic equality in relation to so-called art literature in written form.

¹ Literary anthropology, namely, is usually based on realistic prose (see Poyatos 1988).

Now, it seems to me that material of the selected genre - the Slavonian folk play of the second half of the nineteenth century, and Slavonian playwriting with themes from village life from the first decades of the twentieth - provides obvious justification for the interdisciplinary hybridization referred to above. It has been established more than once that this body of drama is characterized by the very "rootedness in the soil" from which it springs, "an amalgam of the writer, the environment and the spectator" (Batušić 1973a:16–17, 1973b:15), that it aims to establish a firm thematic and communicational link with the community for which it is intended, through the direct nature of its creatively manipulated and easily recognizable iconic similarities with the reality off stage. There is a further claim that these plays are often characterized by social criticism, although admittedly moderate, cheerful and optimistic; and, finally, that these works achieve the constitutional links of the genre with the local ambiance, language and village or small town community precisely through incorporation of elements of so-called "folklore diversity of documentary features" and "copying of ethnographic motifs" (Batušić 1976:181, 214) i.e. through quotations and allusions to selected segments of folk musical, expressive and customary symbolical forms.

Naturally, all the features mentioned still cannot speak in support of the thesis that one can see in these literary works anthropological utterances which quite reliably testify to actual social and symbolical structures, because these signals of collusion of the world of fictional presentation with the context of its emergence and acceptance, are - as it is popularly termed - transposed elements of reality, which are subjected to prior selection, followed by recomposition and finally evaluation in the service of a certain ideological viewpoint (often sentimental, moralistic and didactic, but also, at least when Tucić and Kosor are in question, a poetically aware viewpoint). Still, some degree of similarity is necessary between the drama text and the cultural text into which it fits as an equal participant in the struggle between competing designational practices, particularly when speaking mainly of works which aim at establishing close unhampered contact with their audiences through easily recognizable elements, fulfilling a "wish for self-presentation" of these audiences (Bobinac 1995:176), and even, in some cases, leaning towards stimulating the public to social improvement. The greater the wish for congruence, the more alluring it is to observe the necessary conscious and unconscious failings, muffled and suppressed aberrations of the cultural text, and particularly their contemporary tacit adoption in literary criticism.

Here I shall try to show them by comparing female characters, the role and participation of women in Slavonian folk playwriting on the one,

and in Slavonian performative folklore genres on the other hand, as well as their interpretative evaluation, particularly because of the stressed status of folklore as the source from which Slavonian popular dramatists drew so amply, not only looking for motifs and plots in oral literature, or even, as some say, finding authentic rough humor in popular jests, but also utilizing folklore and customary motifs as symbolic sinegdohs of the traditional system of values which such plays regularly plead for (Bobinac 1995:178).

So how do women fare in this coupling of traditional and dramatic images? Just as, to use Lévi-Strauss's term, in the "conceived order" of Slavonian extended family collectives at the end of the last and beginning of this century - they fare as a rule badly, although at various semantic levels and with various evaluational denominators with various playwrights. One thing is sure - women in Slavonian plays about village life cannot complain of a shortage of roles, nor about the number of protagonists who represent them. Just a glance at some of the play titles often indicates the fact that the women in them are some sort of "leading force" or "focal value": thus, for example, Jurković's *Smiljana*, Okrugić's *Šokica*, Jurković's *Što žena može* [What a Woman Can Do], Ivakić's *Inoče* [Second Wives] and *Majstorica Ruža* [Mistress Ruža]. Women are almost always equal, if not superior, active creatures in the world of drama. But active to which end?

What role was, according to ethnological literature, imposed on women in the conceived patriarchal order of the extended family community (Lovretić, Lukić, Filipović - according to Rihtman-Auguštin 1982:33)? Despite their somewhat greater freedom in girlhood, when they married, women were nominally subjected to relatively harsh spatial and social segregation, within which their sphere, as in the majority of traditional communities, remained the home and household tasks, along with which they also had to work in the fields. Social links as a rule are not meant to be created freely, but exclusively through the family and neighborhood. In decision-making, they are subordinated in relation to the male members of the family, unless the issue which is eventually raised concerns organization and functioning of female tasks, although it was not rare for them also to take part in jobs which were not foreseen in the "ideology" of the collective. It will not be difficult to find personified matches for that conceived construction in Slavonian playwriting. This is how Freudenreich's Maca summarizes the ideal projection of the role of women:

Oh, I know what an honest woman who loves her husband is supposed to do. It is not only a woman's duty to be meek and obedient to her husband, to work with him, to share joy and sadness with him, it is

also her duty to help him on all occasions, even if it costs her her head!
(Freudenreich 1973:62).

This ideal wife motif runs through everything from Kosor's Mara in *Požar strasti* [Flame of Passion], Ilarija's wife, who is industrious and quiet, but, almost like Guša's Stana, pious to the extent of superstition, which is evidently despised, and even Guša's malice in comparison with her shines with some demonic attractiveness of the fateful bond between a man and the land. It should also be said how the model daughter-in-law, Ruža, is compared in the play with the land, or, in other words, the property, and functions only as an object of exchange between the families, as some sort of additional prop of power, alternatively in the hands of the violent Ada and the offended Ilja. Although she is obedient, chaste, and hard-working, as her mother-in-law sees her, Ilja still has his doubts about her, asserting that she would voluntarily submit even to her rapist:

Girls like it when people lose their heads for them (...) And best of all, girls like to be dragged off. (...) Dragged off, and then let go immediately, just as long as they have been dragged off. (...) Have you ever seen animals being beaten - How in their pain they beg their tormentor with their eyes, how they love him in their torment... (Kosor 1958:242).

Marko's Eva in Kosor's *Pomirenje* [Reconciliation] would also fit well into this gallery of rare chosen ones, although even she at one moment regrets giving up her youth, and the uncertainty and insecurity she may experience if Marko relinquishes the property, because she becomes upset and says:

I am afraid that, as soon as he leaves me, I will no longer be able to think and that will be my real death... (Kosor 1926:41).

However, these plays are not dominated by such devoted, although always potentially weak women, but precisely by many forms of challenging deviations from the given norm. Slavonian popular playwriting, from Okrugić to Ivakić, abounds with women who do not respect the rule that their place is at home: from Okrugić's and Kozarac's young female characters who are mentioned in passing, of whom the entire village gossips that they sell their honor for colorful scarves and necklaces, to Ivakić's episodic Mara and the passionate Ljuba from the play *Inoče*, who boldly visits Andro at night, or the unsurpassable, devious and self-promoting manipulators with male lust, Kata "the Flirt", Julka "the Debauchée" and Ljubica "the Trouble-Maker" in *Vrзино kolo* [Witches' Brew] who are unabashed in entering a tavern so as to be the objects of

male evaluation.² In Kosor's *Pomirenje* we encounter the motif of female theft as a sure sign of the disintegration of the family collective, unfailingly linked with promiscuity,³ while, as Dunja Rihtman-Auguštin demonstrates, literature about life in the family collective, from Reljković to the present, is unanimous in its assessment that it is precisely women who are often the thieves of the collective's surplus and the sole generators of conflict and destruction of the collective, particularly if they are individual heirs of the inherited property (Rihtman-Auguštin 1982:33). It would seem as if the "realized order" bore witness to a certain discrepancy with the "conceived order", and Rihtman-Auguštin concludes that it is possible to speak of a relatively powerful Slavonian *female subculture* - of independently acquired cash from the concealed collective surplus, which took place with the tacit agreement of the males, of independent changing of the mistresses of the households according to the size of the "tal" i.e. dowry, and thus of diverse forms of indirect influence in male decision-making.⁴ Or, as Okrugić's character, the blind Pantelija, juicily put it:

And there are husbands like that today. Their wives wring their necks
and they suffer in silence. Their wives trample them with their slippers,
and they don't utter a word (Okrugić 1973:135).

In Jurković's two plays, too, based on popular prose, wives are the ones who cause their husbands' troubles. So the writer of the introduction to

² Contrary to them, the womanizing, unmarried character is defined as being "with a good heart, proud, but not at all arrogant", a character whose sexuality is a desire for freedom outside the bonds of marriage which were "invented by women, the damned witches" (Ivakić 1980).

³ "Josa: What hurts me most, Dad, is that you have a bright mind and healthy eyes, but you see nothing, you don't want to see, everything that happens in our house. Calm down, please, calm down and hear everything: yesterday Pero's wife stole a sack of wheat, to sell it, to buy make-up and - to go whoring, and you - Oh!" (Kosor 1927:7).

These lines could be explained as the insinuations of a diabolical Josa, without the fight which breaks out in a later scene between two members of the family collective who accuse each other:

FIRST AND SECOND WOMAN: She stole wheat, ha, ha, ha! I caught her, people, when she was stealing, ha ha ha! She was stealing grain, people, wheat! Ha ha ha! She was with the gendarme, with the gendarme, on the hay in the shed!

SECOND FAMILY MALE: I have had a presentiment for a long time, a long time, that Black Friday was dawning on our collective... Nobody listens to his brother, the young confront the old and raise their hand at them insolently!... The women steal, cheat and betray their men" (Kosor 1927:15).

⁴ "Women must have had a relatively strong influence, primarily as equal participants in the work process, and then as owners of some of the property, particularly the cash. In fact, under the level of the family collective worldview, which derived from collective ownership and distribution, and that distribution did not respect the working contribution of the individual but the family, male line - consequently, beneath that worldview - women achieved a different structure of relationships in everyday life." (Rihtman-Auguštin 1982:36).

Jurković's drama with the illuminating title, *What Women Can Do*, generously forgives Jurković's concluding departure from the folk tale as a necessary comedigraphic convention, and says:

The writer was unable in this comedy to follow the popular tale, because while the husband in the tale paid back in full his wife, so that she lost the will to drive her husband crazy, Jurković's play ends with reconciliation between husband and wife (Jurković 1926:18).

And that there were such "repayments" for female disobedience is testified to not only by the picturesque preserved couplets ("Beat your wife even if she is not at fault/ may her white liver rot"),⁵ by exhaustive ethnological analyses (Erlich 1964:217–229), but also by the lines of Okrugić's "debauchées", Teza and Margo, who maliciously comment in *Šokica* that the blacksmith's wife has no right to speak about their virtue because if she were virtuous herself "her husband would not be beating her up all the time". Andro from Ivakić's *Inoče* seems to be speaking authentically when he reminds Kaja that her re-marriage, although done in ignorance of the true facts, would have made other men in his position - "smash her head in".⁶ This rage at women whose obstinacy is the cause of all evil, particularly the *white plague* (a decreasing of the number of new-born children) culminates with Okrugić's character Marijan's outburst to his wife:

Then have your virtuous female comrades, they suit you perfectly, so you won't be alone, and they suit this house too, a house of shame, fornication and murder. You can lord over them here, here the hotbed of witches, here the witches' brew, here the bad blood between young men and women, here kill the babies, here poison the whole village, until all women become barren and baby-killers, and all the men highwaymen and murderers, until all traces of the village are wiped out in those terrible sins, and it becomes a boundless desert, a site of human execution and a place where wolves howl (Okrugić 1884:90).

In general, the link between women and the practice of sorcery, as well as with evil spirits, is often a theme, from Freudenreich's *Maruška*, through Okrugić's plays *Grabancijaš* [Bohemian] and *Sačurica i šubara* [Fur Bag and Fur Cap], Grandma Jelača in *Smiljana*, Jurković's sole female character who is really to blame for everything, who is overtaken in the

⁵ Nikola Bonifačić Rožin, *The Folklore Material of Slavonska Požega and Its Surroundings*, 1967, ms. IEF 929, p. 47. This is a notation of texts from round-dance songs from the Bučje village chronicle.

⁶ It concerns the re-marriage of a widow which was socially regarded very negatively; however, this was relatively justified in ethnological literature as a phenomenon which was the logical consequence of customary pressure according to which a widow had to remain in her husband's family collective, in which she often felt neglected and dissatisfied - see the quotation from Lovretić in Bošković-Stulli 1982:81.

end by her own wickedness and carried away by an "evil spirit", right up to Ivakić's explicit characteristic title, *Vrzino kolo* [Witches' Brew] and Kosor's base fortune telling, the very opposite of real piety, in *Požar strasti* [Flames of Passion]. Becić's *Lajtmanuška deputacija* [The Lieutenants' Wives' Deputation] shows that male disciplinary rights, as well as dramatic misogyny, can also be given more sophisticated and humorous highlights. In this play twelve *nouveau riche* village women, dressed tastelessly as urban women - "lajtmanuše" - show their remorse in front of Colonel Mihičević, not from fear of a scandal, but from fear of being educated and being given training in the use of the guns, as they are being threatened by the officer.

Other motifs which were popular in Slavonian folk playwriting - the question of relationships within the family, pre-marital and extra-marital relationships, unwanted motherhood among girls, the relationship of fathers-in-law to their daughters-in-law, the re-marriage of widows, and the like - were the subject of Vera Erlich's ethnological study on the family in transformation. Excerpted information relevant to the region clearly show Slavonia to be an area of relatively liberal relationships and attitudes, as demonstrated, in any case, by the numerous, fairly licentious love songs which are often quoted in the plays.⁷ However, even though the rich Slavonian bread-basket was traditionally a region in which "love and joy are sought openly", two factors had a negative influence in that regard - the influence of oriental culture, on the one hand, in a region which was for a long period either under the Ottomans or doing battle with them, and the disintegration of the family collective and the dominance of capitalist economics on the other. This exposed the village to relationships with "gentlefolk", and destroyed the former status of girlhood, a girl being a valuable object to be obtained by young men. New social circumstances imposed "the necessity of maintenance of the old standard by rational methods", which "introduced tragic tones" into family life, in which girls yearning after happiness in love lost the most, because their dowry was the only guarantee of legalization of such a relationship and, through marriage, of the attainment of social standing.

The victims of this conflict between old values and new social relationships in Slavonian drama, too, were the so-called "dishonored" girls, for example, Janja in Okrugić's *Šokica* who becomes pregnant with a soldier of the Eastern Orthodox faith, and is rejected by her father as

⁷ For more on this point see Bošković-Stulli 1982. Here are a number of unbridled couplets from a transcription of Lovretić's manuscript which is taken from the article mentioned, p. 77:

Oh, what rights have come into force now, / you can live with someone unmarried.

My mother had her own carouser, / I had seven, one was too few.

being "unworthy that the earth bears her weight any longer", as being someone whom "everyone will scold, everyone will drive away from the door"; or Jurković's Smiljana, an infanticide, whose former fiancé tears the wedding wreath from her head, because "she is not a maiden, and may not wear a wedding wreath", who is cursed by her father who threatens to throttle her shame in blood; or perhaps Oja, unjustly accused of adultery by her mother-in-law in Ivan Kozarac's boldly commenced, but unfortunately unfinished *Rane* [The Wounds] (see Bogner Šaban 1991).

However, as I have already indicated, a faithful girl's love and steadfastness do not always justify "dishonor", so that the implicit or explicit ideological and didactic efforts of Slavonian playwrights in this sense often lead backwards rather than forwards to that imaginary line of civilisational progress to which some of them ostensibly aimed, either through moralization or through poetic avantgardism, like Kosor, a writer whom Dubravko Jelčić tried to defend against such comments as are mine here, emphasizing that in *Požar strasti*:

... there is no point in searching for Slavonia in its living realities...
despite those - dramaturgically superfluous! - realistic folklore scenes
with the forest workers (in the III act)...

rejecting them further on in the text as "stylistically inappropriate folklore scenes" (1966:299, 301). The scenes in question show a sturdy macho forest-worker's bragging, to which, to be fair, the hero Marko responds by throwing him out of the house, anticipating Jelčić's critically throwing out of "folklorism" as a stylistic impurity from the symbolic and expressionistic aura of ideas. However, Jelčić seems not, for example, to include in that style complex the idyllic ritual preparation for the imminent wedding, ruined by doubts about the bride's fidelity, or the scene of the entry of the bride into her mother-in-law's house,⁸ in which

⁸ Kosor stages the arrival of the bride in the house as follows (264): Shouts, the sound of uproar, the rolling of cartwheels at the back of the yard. A GREAT HOST OF GUESTS and YOUNG PEOPLE from the village pack the yard. The BOYS and GIRLS stand in a row. The BRIDEGROOM leads the BRIDE by the hand. SHE is dressed in silk and wears a gold headdress on her head in the style of married women. The GIRLS sprinkle flowers on the path. At the threshold of the house her mother-in-law MARA is waiting with a pillow in her hand, with her father-in-law ILARIJA beside his wife. The BRIDE steps across the pillow, kisses the hands of her father-in-law and mother-in-law, and sinks into her embrace. Sobbing with joy, her MOTHER-in-LAW leads her into the house.

(...)

MARA (to the Bride): Apple of my eye! My sunshine!

ILARIJA (to the Bride): My sweet little daughter!

BRIDE (kissing their hands)

MARA: Set to, dear guests, don't stint this house. Eat and drink as much as you like. My sunshine is with us, my sweet little daughter-in-law! (264)

In contrast to the foregoing, Vera Erlich (1964:73–79) points out that Croatia is a region of exceptionally conflicting relationships between mothers-in-law and their

the traditional and patriarchal foundations of Kosor's characterological Manicheism is particularly evident.

The "impetuous girl" (Matković 1949:383) and the infanticide Anica from Tomić's *Pastorak* [The Stepson] is heartlessly exposed to public self-condemnation, nor is a better fate foreseen for Jela and her mother in Tucić's *Povratak* [The Return]: women are the first who succumb to poverty, and we know how - through adultery and procuring. This often implicit plea on the part of the dramatists for a return to the traditional values of restraint and purity are sometimes joined by those of their literary critics. Here is how Branko Hečimović's voice sounds out not only with that of Tucić, but also with the fictitious Ivo's:

At that moment Ivo has a premonition of her tragedy, which is much greater than his, because it derives from conscious guilt... and that is why he answers her with 'The worse for you if you survive'. This at the same time gives notice of Jela's victimization and extends the duration and tragic nature of the work (Hečimović 1976:109).

Miroslav Vaupotić makes the following comment on Ivakić's women:

His women, voluptuous and alluring, do not always express their sexuality and erotic desires elementary and sensually like the prototypes of women with unrestrained temperaments, who would not recognize any moral conventions nor social obligations (...) Quite to the contrary, the sole expressly debauched woman, biologically predestined for unrestrained bacchanalian sex, is his Mistress Ruža...

Vaupotić then draws attention to the fact that there are also "positive" female characters in Ivakić's work, such as Ljuba the stepmother and Kaja the daughter-in-law, who:

... like some domestic suffering Caryatids suppress their instincts and desires, and vegetate almost fatalistically "thrown" into life as a bitter destiny which they themselves cannot and would not alter (Ibid.:597).

But there, Slavonian women obviously did very much want to alter their bitter destiny,⁹ and that this was so is testified to not only by Slavonian

daughters-in-law, because the patriarchal system is not strong enough, and women come into their husbands' homes as adults, in some cases with almost the same amount of property, and find it harder to adjust than sons who grew up in the house (78).

The same follows from certain oral verses presented by Bošković-Stulli in her article - 1982:79.

⁹ Female subordination is not always accepted with an identical dose of defiance, nor is it everywhere evaluated as subordination with identical criteria, as the female conceptual framework of certain traditional communities, according to some authors, can imply differing evaluation, for example, of "public" duties and of duties in the house, than that which is implied in the male system of cognitive evaluation (Rogers expounded such a supposition for a village in the French Lorraine province, 1979, and Muraj in connection with Zlarin, 1996).

popular playwriting but even by that nursery of collective projections and representational symbols from which Slavonian playwrights relatively selectively drew, and which their critics usually experience as the source of authentic "atmosphere" and producer of "local color" (Matković 1949:380–381; Bobinac 1995:177), a decorative alloy of superstition, national costumes and tamburitzas, to which, as Batušić says, the plays in question often "succumbed" because of their "folkloristic" color (1976:181, 216), namely - the Slavonian folklore itself. Apart from the ubiquitous love songs (Okругić: *Šokica, Saćurica i šubara*; Ivakić: *Inoče*; Kosor: *Požar strasti*) and reference to popular beliefs, always perceived as a sign of blameworthy pagan remnants which survive with surprising persistence alongside Christian principles, and, as we have seen, thanks almost exclusively to the female arrogance, immorality and lack of faith, we encounter here and there in the Slavonian folk plays sayings which in lapidary poetic style express value norms which are disappearing ("Women, [cast the] nonsense aside and let God be on your minds!"), as well as occasional verbal and non-verbal allusions to ritual dates (Tucić's *Povratak* takes place on Christmas Eve), and family relationships (Jurković's *Andrija* says: "Which wise parent ever asked a foolish girl about such matters?"; Rajko kisses his mother's hand, just as Kosor's Ruža kisses the hands of her mother-in-law and father-in-law). There are also customary activities connected with weddings, those very rituals which maintain the idyll of a charming and conflict-free aura in a ritual confirmation of conceived order (in *Požar strasti* the daughter-in-law, Ruža, brings her mother-in-law lavish presents on the eve of her wedding,¹⁰ a list of her dowry is presented,¹¹ there is the ritual entry into the new home, and the author cites wedding toasts; the already mentioned wedding wreath in *Smiljana*). But are all these really "representative excerpts" from the richness of Slavonian traditional "life" and folklore? Why are its theatrical forms, its performative genres, so poorly represented

¹⁰ Mara: "Your little wife, your little dove, is with me. She brought me presents: shirts and scarves and all sorts of things. And all made by her own golden hands. And I gave her in return silk, gold and large ducats, how gentle and sweet she is!" (Kosor 1958:243).

¹¹ The Dowry: TWO FEMALE NEIGHBORS busy around a table.

THE FIRST: I heard that the girl is bringing a lot with her.

THE SECOND: She's been preparing for two years.

THE FIRST: Fifteen linen skirts.

THE SECOND: Nice, my word!

THE FIRST: Three trunks full of linen and hemp weave.

THE SECOND: She has lots.

THE FIRST: Colored scarves and numerous white ones.

THE SECOND: And does she have any ducats?

THE FIRST: Two rows of large ducats.

THE SECOND (the tray falling from her hands): Jesus and Mary, but she's rich (Kosor 1958:255).

in Slavonian popular playwriting, which, as it is claimed, owes so much to folklore both from the aspect of its receptiveness and of its submergence in the traditional worldview horizon?

Perhaps one of the answers can be found in the following fact: in some ways different from the case in other Croatian regions, the female in Slavonia dominates in diverse forms of attractive, presentational customary practice, not only as a participant in children's procession of mixed gender, such as *križarice* processions; processions for girls only, such as *filipovčice* processions, the St. Philip and Jacob day processions, which are the female pandan to St. George's Day processions which were once in some places exclusively for men. Women, from as early as Lovretić's time (19th century), were the prime movers even at Carnival,¹² and they are also main performers in the unique ritual, unknown in other Croatian regions, the procession called *kraljevi* (or *kraljice* or *ljelje*, depending on the area). Both these presentational opportunities are important inasmuch that women are given or take specific presentational freedom in both these customs, a freedom about which who knows what judgments would be given by evaluators of Slavonian folk playwriting, namely the freedom to dress and behave as - men.¹³ Transvestitism is a form of scandalous provocation of the essentialistic, biological experience of gender: it reveals

¹² I will quote two extracts from the pens of two renowned ethnologists and folklorists which show the extent to which the mentioned fact is an important and rare piece of information, since female participation in Carnival is regarded as being of recent date: "There are many more such examples which show that women were primarily treated in the Carnival ritual as an object of symbolization of fertility, because her fertility was an important condition for the reproduction of the entire traditional (agrarian and patriarchal) way of life. (...) However, the new way of life also brought some new accents. (...) In addition, women also took on an active role in Carnival processions, and not merely that of passive observers and victims. We see them dressed as men and musicians as they follow a group of "zvončari" (men dressed in fur and decorated with large bells) and attract attention with lascivious behavior in the street (in Rukavac Bregi), we see them as they perform and dance in the role of majorettes, sailors and clowns (in Podgrad), we even see them wearing the traditional bear mask which has definitely been the privilege to date, only of male masked persons (Podgrad)." (Supek-Zupan & Lozica 1987:156). Later, Lozica himself revised this contention about the more recent character of female participation in Carnival: "e.g. very old sources such as the canon accepted at one of the Synods in Constantinople during the time of Justinian II (see Baroja 1979:178) mention mutual gender inversion in the calends and festivities held on the first day of the month of March" (Lozica 1991:136).

¹³ This concerns a relatively rare practice in the history of Croatian drama and theater, a practice to which I shall be devoting attention in a separate paper: we know that the roles of women in the English theater were played by men right up until the eighteenth century, but also that English, Italian and French dramatists often foresaw at least imaginary situations in which women dressed up as men. Jean E. Howard's study which speaks of transvestitism in the theater of early modern England draws attention to the fact that women even dressed as men in the streets of London in Shakespeare's time, which can be concluded from documents in which preachers are ordered to deliver from their pulpits sermons full of invective against such behavior (1993:20–21).

the extent to which gender is a product of social conventions, a projected, efficacious "masquerade" with costumographic props arbitrarily grafted on in gender differentiation.¹⁴

Naturally, if we speak of the *kraljevi*, *kraljice* or *ljelje* customs, the implications of the presentational transformation will be somewhat different than at Carnival time, although there are some points of contact. It should be emphasized how this ritual, which takes place at Pentecost in the form of processions of specially dressed and equipped female groups¹⁵ which visit the prominent village houses, and particularly the house of prospective bridegrooms and brides, with ritual greetings, songs

¹⁴ Thus the book with the title *La mascarade des sexes* (1989) by the French anthropologist, Stéphane Breton, which deals with the ritual sexual images, and the most recent German literary criticism edition with studies which are lapidarily called *gender-studies* based on research which deals with the role and representation of sex/gender in various subject areas, is also titled by the word *Maskeraden* (1995). For information about the transvestite motif in the theater, see *Controversies on Cross-Dressing* (1993) and its expansive bibliography.

¹⁵ This is Gavazzi's well-known description: "In broad strokes, leaving aside the unessential, as far as can be deduced from the material about these customs, the *kraljice* are performed in the following manner: A certain number of girls, all of them grown-up, equip themselves with several props. Some of them, 8 to 10 at the most, add only a man's hat (borrowed from a boyfriend, brother, or the like) to their festive costume, the hat being decorated with heron feathers, or ducats, and even both, and with other things (in some places crowns are worn instead of hats, as for example, among the Bunjevac Croats who add many-colored grains). It is customary in some places to attach or hang a mirror to the front of the hat or crown, with a lot of colored ribbons hanging from the back. Everywhere they carry swords (real ones which are old, or wooden ones) and hang either many ribbons from them, or pierce an orange, lemon or apple with the blade. One of the members of this group is called the *kraljica*, or queen, or *kralj* (king) and confirmation exists that this member of the group was sometimes cross-dressed as a man - in the Đakovo area). Where there is a king there is usually a separate queen (but she always has a man's hat and a sword). Along with these two main characters (and there do not have to be two of them in all regions) there is often a flag-bearer, a girl decked out like the others, carry a colored flat on a pole and waving it about. Sometimes some other members of these groups have their names and roles, particularly characters called the best man and the bride. - Together with the group dressed in this way, there is often another one made up of girls dressed in (white) formal costumes, sometimes with veils over their faces (they are called *orubljice* - for example, in Otok near Vinkovci). They, in fact, are only singers - and follow all the activities of the first group of queens with songs. Sometimes the entire company is divided into two groups: kings and queens - and the members of the first one wear the crowns mentioned (hats, etc.) on their heads one or two girls among them lead the entire company (they are called *polovinje*) - with their special features. Apart from these main ones, there is often another accompanying group - a certain number of other girls, and finally the special characters (usually boys, rarely girls), who are usually called beggars, *kajmak*-makers and *cheese*-makers and so on, who collect gifts in a basket. - There is also particular mention in the songs of *rastavljači*, of some type of assistants who perform the "royal" dances. It seems that the rule was that a piper went with the queens, and in more recent times a couple of young men with tamburitzas accompany them" (Gavazzi 1939:71–72).

and collections, was until now mainly the subject of historical and geographical comparative observation,¹⁶ while the fact that it was performed exclusively by women, some of whom wore characteristic male clothing and props - a hat and a sword - and played male wedding roles - that of the best man and the flag-bearer, is, on the whole, merely noted and not taken as a pertinent factor in explaining the custom. It is usual to link the performance of the *kraljice* with traditional male chivalry events which are morphologically similar in some aspects, as well as with chain initiation sword dances of the Korčula *kumpanijas* (Ivančan 1967:115—116), or even with the *rusajlijas* and *kalušari* in neighbouring Balkan countries (Lozica 1991, 1992), without regarding as relevant and requiring explanation the fact that these dances, similar to the *kraljice* in some elements (including the date of the processions), are performed by *men*, and the fact that the dances and processions mentioned *do not show any symbolic links with weddings*.¹⁷ Ivančan says: "The apparent difference lies in the fact that here the dances are not danced by girls, as in the *kraljice*, but by men" (1967:116). Lozica justifies his comparison additionally by speaking about the "male characteristics" of the *kraljica*, and makes unfounded identification of the male *performers* on the one hand, and the male *characters* of the king, best-man and flag-bearer *presented by women* on the other (1991:149).

This comparison is supported mainly because the *kings'* dances with swords can be interpreted in this light exclusively in their initiational and apotropaic function, or, in other words, as a magical form of driving away dead forebears, and, according to some opinions related particularly to the *kraljice*, driving away the souls of deceased unmarried girls who are envious (sic!) of the prospective brides, as the male symbols in the female ritual are interpreted by Marijana Gušić (1967:26–28), who is the only one to emphasize the transvestite character of this disguise, explaining it in the following fashion:

¹⁶ According to Croatian ethnologists this relates to a custom disseminated in north-eastern Croatia, in Slavonian Podravina, and among the Bunjevac and Šokac Croats in Vojvodina. Serbian ethnological literature mentions that the queens also danced throughout Serbia. It would not be fitting to speculate about the "authentic" national home of this custom, whether it is observed as having derived from the pagan ritual *dies rosae* from Roman times, or as having emerged from the Slavic pagan substrate, from the *Rusalija* feast day, because in both cases what is involved is a pre-Christian holiday which survived Christianity (Lozica 1991).

¹⁷ In this sense, it seems far more justified to me (not carried out to date!) that the *queens* be compared with the "white masques" from Pelješac, performed by men, cross-dressed as women, or, more precisely, in some costumographic hybrid of man and woman. The form of the procession and the roles of its participants show that this is a wedding custom fitted into a Carnival occasion, which is perhaps just one more indicator of how transvestitism in folklore should be linked with both of the liminal phenomena mentioned.

As we have seen, the ritual group consists of a *kralj* [king] and a *kraljica* [queen]. As a rule, the kings are female and prospective brides i.e. female characters, girls who have taken on a male denotation, and thus, symbolically, a male character. We can recognize this in the symbols, in the male hat and sword. This is an instance of the ethnological motif of transvestitism, of disguise. The female characters who undertake a defined social assignment in this ritual are able to execute the task only in male guise. Why? Obviously because hidden in another character, they will be able to oppose certain hostile forces, and this is thus apotropaic transvestitism. What tasks do the kings have to perform? The kings lead the queens. The queens are younger, young girls just reaching marriageable age, and as their symbol they wear a maiden's wreath on their plaits. The queens are thus girls, ready for marriage, whom the kings, their older comrades who are prospective brides themselves, introduce to the village community. So this is in fact an initiation ceremony performance, introduction of the juvenile members into the circle and into the rights of adults (...) Entering the individual houses, the kings acquaint themselves of the situation in the house, they record the status of possibilities for concluding new marriages, and as we can discern in the fragmented motifs in the kings' songs - *king to the right, queen to the left* - this at the same time sets the order in the village for concluding marriages. Consequently, the prospective brides disguised as males were meant to repel evil spirits from the young initiates (1967:26).

The crucial features of this custom (contamination of the symbolic elements of the chivalry dances and wedding processions, gender inversion we also meet in the Carnival, here particularly in connection with the conclusion of marriage, since the queen system is made up of prospective brides, while, unlike other processional groups compared with them, they visit mainly the houses of young men and girls of marriageable age) could also probably be interpreted as an initiational ritual presentational symbolization of the myth about the androgen, the divine spiritual unity of male and female elements which is achieved by marriage, witnessed to by the persistent myth about the androgen found in literature and rituals worldwide. It is in this light that Mircea Eliade interprets the presence of transvestites in certain European spring customs in agricultural communities (1962:140), similar to the *kraljice* rituals (which take place at Pentecost). He, too, draws attention to the initiational function of the ritual symbolization of androgen transvestitism,¹⁸ since the initiates are regarded

¹⁸ Ritual androgenization does not always include such painless, theatrical form of symbolization: Eliade mentions some Australian aborigine tribes who subject the neophyte to a subincision operation in which the initiate has a female sex organ added (1962:138). He mentioned researching the symbolism of sexuality in communities in New Guinea and the neighboring islands. Stéphane Breton in his book *La masquerade des sexes* describes the sense of such rituals as follows: "Pour la pensée symbolique, l'opposition des sexes est à la fois la chose la plus évidente et le mystère le plus impénétrable. Car s'il faut bien que l'homme et la femme s'unissent, comment le cycle

as asexual creatures who can attain sexual identity, their sexual particularity, determination, differentiation and "sexuality", in other words, readiness for marriage, only after having gone through the actual ritual co-existence of the genders, the mythical original sexual "integrity" of the androgen.¹⁹ In Slavonia, however, it seems that only women go through such a form of initiation:²⁰ in the ritual itself, young men play the sexually congruent, secondary and visibly inferior roles of the *beggar*, the *kajmak-maker* and the *cheese-maker*, while the girls "rule"!

There was also transvestitism connected with conclusion of marriage outside of this custom and Carnival customs, as Magda Radić narrated to Bonifačić Rožin in 1962, describing how the girls came together the day after an engagement had been announced, dressed up as men, and behaved in an unruly fashion in the houses of the future bride and groom:

The day after the engagement, the female neighbors of the bride gather together. They dress up, disguise themselves, come to the house of the bride and drink the *rakija* brought to the bride by her future father-in-law. They make merry there. They play for them, too. The fiancées go through the entire village. As soon as they are dressed up, one of the girls plays the "srdoma". She has a man's cap on her head. She is a

de la fécondité (l'espèce) peut-il être continu (comment la société est-elle possible?), comment peut-il simplement y avoir fécondité si le continu se différencie, si ses moments se séparent? Comment l'espèce peut-elle être à la fois continue et discontinue, diversifiée mais semblable, divisée mais une, et l'individu identique et différent? La pensée symbolique, quelque détour qu'elle fasse, en revient toujours à la question de la différence des sexes dans laquelle on ne s'étonnera qu'elle puise ses paradigmes fondateurs. (...) Or, ces sociétés partagent un héritage commun ou plutôt, une antinomie commune... en raison d'une conception substantialiste de procréation... dans laquelle père et mère donnent un peu d'eux-mêmes, de leur propre matière à l'enfant, féminité et virilité sont mêlés dans chaque individu. La composition de l'identité résulte d'un équilibre dynamique entre des principes biologiques et sexuels hétérogènes dont il revient au rituel de négocier l'influence en reformulant leur dosage. (...) D'un côté, par des artifices culturels, par un surcodage rigoureux, on renforce l'appartenance génitale et ses signes ethnologiques afin d'en faire un modèle d'identité, tandis que de l'autre, par des procédures et des manigances déguisées, on s'efforce d'incorporer les vertus de l'autre sexe que pour le salut du sien propre on se doit d'imiter dans l'outrage et la dissimulation. Il revient au rituel de défendre tour à tour chacune de ses exigences, non seulement de les illustrer mais aussi de les accomplir. (...) A cette opposition (oppos. des sexes, op. L. Č. F.) qui se dessine au cœur de la conscience individuelle, le corps et ses mystères fournissent un instrument idéal de résolution symbolique. Car le corps est le premier matériau d'échange symbolique (et d'échange tout court, dès l'échange matrimonial...) (Breton 1989:143–146).

¹⁹ This refers to Eisenstein's postulate (1944) by which ritual androgenization, as a preparation for the marital coming together of man and woman, is an attempt to communicate with the superhuman essence of the androgen deity through its presentational simulation. This thesis was later developed further by Baumann (1955) - both pieces of information quoted from Ivanov 1984:13.

²⁰ If we exclude, of course, the possible initiational dimension of mutual gender inversion in Carnival customs.

woman dressed in men's clothing. She ties a scarf around her neck. They put a coat on the "srdoma" and pull trousers on her. She puts on boots. Carries a cane, her face smeared with soot. She makes a mustache. She says:

- I come from far away.

Another dresses up in military uniform. She carries a rifle. One has a man's hat and trousers, a coat.

They sing:

Glasses, bottles, they are our textbooks,

And the taverns are our high schools.

Everyone goes, the whole street. Only females. It's gone now. It was not long ago. And they played around at the bridegroom's house, too.

The young people went together immediately that night.

We should mention a contrast to the relative ritual restraint of the *kings* just described and the carnival male roles which were played by women in Lovretić's time, and still are today. Being probably partially in the service of ritual conjuring up of the mythical connection between male and female, and the magic of fertility connected with them, this custom could also be observed as a broadening of the range of female representational freedom in the direction of the symbolic conquest of behavioral unruliness and social power allocated to men, and it could be regarded as an implicit comment and revelation of the misuses of men's power. Thus is the inversion of gender in the literature and festivities of early modern Europe interpreted by Nathalie Zemon Davis, although she, too, emphasizes the fact that in festivities it was far more usual to find dressing up on the part of men, usually into so-called "unruly" women, and not vice versa, and she only surmises that it was probably a characteristic of earlier centuries (1978:164)! In the 19th century Slavonian village Otok, however, it was mainly women who dressed up and disguised themselves, and not only as unfettered Romany women, but as half-male, half-female characters, as young village bucks, as Romanies, Turks, and then as "sawyers", potters and firemen, priests, tax-men and gunsmiths, soldiers, bogeymen and clowns. In order to dress up as charlatan doctors, says Lovretić, they:

... make a beard from the tow and put on a worn man's suit, wrap a dormouse in a pillow, and then they joke with the women. They tell them to put a dormouse's tail under their husband's pillow, and the man will sleep soundly until morning, and the women will be able to go wherever they like, right through the night (Lovretić 1990:314).

The carnival wedding processions which are in the Croatian Littoral region still performed by *men only*, were performed by either men or women in Slavonia, according to the manuscript material of Nikola Bonifačić Rožin,

or were performed *exclusively by women*, taking on both the male *čauš* [wedding master-of-ceremonies], *barjaktar* [flag-bearer] and *đuvegija* [bridesman] roles as well as the female roles. Women were the only performers in the *St. Nicholas* and *Black Peter* processions before Christmas and *12th Day* [the Magi] festivities, during which they also presented themselves in the alternative gender role.²¹ The ritual shaving which takes place in full wedding rituals, and at Carnival time, is a male presentational and ritual role everywhere in Croatia - with the exception of the village of Nijemci, where it is always performed by - women.²²

Along with the Carnival male roles mentioned by Lovretić and referred to above, Slavonian women from the town of Požega and its surroundings performed during this century the masque of *medvjed* [The Bear] or in Bački Breg, the Carnival couple *Cigan s medvjedom* [The Romany with the Bear],²³ a traditional zoomorphic masque which, as a regular accompaniment to exclusively male zoomorphic Carnival groups,²⁴ is always played by men with rare and completely contemporary exceptions;²⁵ and in Gudinci and Babina Greda, as well as in Otok and Nijemci women continue to play Turks and Chinese, the Doctor who examines Baba [Grandma] Kata (in Bački Breg this dual masque, a Carnival hybrid of a man and a puppet which shows *Grandma carrying Grandpa* with the puppet of *Grandma* carried in front and *Grandpa's* lower body sewn on behind at the waist, is not performed, as elsewhere in

²¹ Nikola Bonifačić Rožin & Ivan Lozica, *Narodne dramske igre u Gudincima i Babinoj Gredi*, 1976, ms IEF 972, pp. 8–16 and 26–28. Narrators Marija Kokanović and Marija Užarević nee Knežević from Gudinci.

²² Nikola Bonifačić Rožin, *Građa iz Nijemaca*, 1962, ms IEF No. 427, pp. 50–52. Narrators Stipan and Ilija Zvonarević and Marija Županjac; *Folklorna građa Otoka i Nijemaca*, 1965, ms IEF No. 755, pp. 1–2 and 15. Narrators Slavica and Ana Braovac.

²³ Nikola Bonifačić Rožin, *Folklorna građa Slavonske Požege i okolice*, 1967 ms IEF No. 929, p. 23. Narrator Ivan Hula, born 1900; *Folklorna građa iz Bačkog Brega*, 1962, ms IEF No. 38, p. 15. The "bear" mask was performed by Marta Sremac, born 1940.

²⁴ The significance of this fact can be appreciated only in the light of the supposition according to which "The rigidity of tradition gives way with more difficulty in 'female matters' when male societies are involved, typical to the Lupercalian element of Carnival (e.g. the *zvončari* in the Kastav region, the *pokladari* on the island of Lastovo), although there are exceptions here, too: among the *nap'hanci* from Turčišće (the Međimurje region) there was sometimes a woman or two" (Lozica 1991:137).

²⁵ Concerning the bear character, Lozica says: "Although the bear belongs among the old zoomorphic masks, he is still very popular today, since as an accompanying figure ... he easily established contact with the crowd in the bell-ringing processions and others with horns, fur coats and bells. In that sense he is also susceptible to innovations in both sense and function: On Lastovo he used to play the role of leader of the Carnival merry-makers (see Lozica 1984); in Podgrad in the Slovenian part of Istria in 1984, the bear was played by a woman (see Supek-Zupan & Lozica 1987:156)" (Lozica 1991:256).

Croatia, by a man,²⁶ but by a woman dressed as a man to the waist)²⁷ uttering a rich series of blasphemous and generally male comments on the inadequacies of Grandma's build.

What is perhaps most interesting is the involvement of women in processions which have marked Lupercalian features (the mentioned adoption of the bear role is such an example) in which male farming tasks are shown, a fact which is interpreted as a reflection of the maternal Roman festivities (Lozica 1986:46): we are indebted to Marija Živković from Beravac, born in 1911, for a longish description of the male-female *bušari*: the men take over the female roles of the *žetelica* [reaper] and *ručkonoša* [lunch-carrier], and women appear in the male roles of the *kočijaš* [coachman] and *oxen, orač* [plowman] and *sijač* [sower]. I shall present here lengthy extracts from the notation because of the interesting gender performing and dialogue combinations which come about during the exchange of lines by members of the Carnival procession and the onlookers. Firstly, the men comment to the "women" in the procession, i.e. to the disguised men, joined at the end by the lawful wife of the man who fictitiously makes arrangements with the "woman" or alludes to assignations which have already taken place; then the "men" from the procession - women in the roles of *sower, plowman* and *coachman* - exchange ambiguous, lascivious sub-texts with the female members of the households they call upon, which is then followed by a conversation between the "men" and the "women" in the procession, in a series of lines in which there is an intertwining of magic content related to the fertility of the land and of the women, with allusions to the social, cultural and sub-cultural regulation of male-female relationships. In the end, both women and men make mocking comments "to the men" about their sexual powers:

²⁶ For example, in Metković, Bribir Vinodolski, Zelovo near Sinj and in Gvozdansk, and Turčišće in Međimurje, see Benc-Bošković 1962:82; Bonifačić Rožin 1966:160 and 1967/68:531–532.

²⁷ Nikola Bonifačić Rožin, *Folklorna građa iz Bačkog Brega*, 1962, MS IEF, No. 388, 14–17 and 30. "Grandma Kata" according to Bonifačić, a "man in a Šokac skirt with an apron", was performed by Janja Radičev, born 1929, as *we learn only at the end of the notation*, when Bonifačić Rožin provides a list of the roles. Stana Nikolin from the same village testified to how she herself had played that masked role in Bački Breg, which, in her opinion, had been part of their repertoire for some fifty years i.e. from 1910. In 1967, this *Grandma carries Grandpa* masque was described in his notation by Stjepan Grgić as being characteristic to Ivandol near Požega, *but he does not mention the gender of the performer*, while in Mitrovac, for example, as Ivan Hula tells us, the role was played by a man - Nikola Bonifačić Rožin, *Folklorna građa Slavonske Požege i oklice*, 1967, ms IEF, pp. 14 and 23.

Women dressed up as men. There was the coachman and the oxen. They wore their skin coats inside out, and smeared their faces with soot. There were 6 of those oxen. They pull the plow.

The plowman (also a woman) followed after them. He has a large whip, which he cracks after them.

Girls and women went together, all mixed. There were women as old as 50. They were the ones who were the leaders. And men went too.

The sower sows. He has a sack full of linen chaff. He sprinkles it along the way and in front of the house, and through the window into the room.

Everyone was pleased to avoid him. But if the *bušari* (Slavonian term for traditional Carnival masks) went around him it was offensive.

They go along the way and come to the yards of the priest, the teacher or the better-off masters, who give them gifts and something to eat. If there is snow in the yard they plow it. They lift the plow on the main road, and just pull it along. There sometimes are harvesters and sometimes not. The lunch-carrier brings up the rear. There are sometimes two of them. A man and a woman. They carry the lunch on a "bremenjača" with two hooks, which are joined by a strap on which they hang the baskets, gourds with water, a large earthenware jar, and the like.

Somebody from the crowd calls out: Young woman, is it hot or cold?

Lunch-carrier: I warmed it up, but it got cold.

A man from the crowd: But someone surely waited for you in the field, when you are in such a hurry.

Lunch-carrier: Why didn't you hurry and you would have seen.

Man: Who were you with?

Lunch-carrier: Who was I with? Ha, ha. Why are you acting so coy now, well wasn't it you? Frightened of your wife, eh, and now you are putting on airs?

Wife: Oh, that's the way it is. Alright, alright, I'll pay you back. You too have a husband. I have already paid you back, even if you don't know it.

Lunch-carrier: Well there, what if you did, I am happy. We will go to the field again. (She leaves singing.)

Other people in the crowd ask for water: Young woman, give me water.

Lunch-carrier: There's some beside your left leg.

Women from the crowd call out to the Sower: Old Uncle, do you sow? Is your seed any good?

Sower: I could sow some on your field, and then you'd see.

Women call out to the Plowman: Did you plow a good furrow? It is plowed straight?

Plowman: If you were young, I would show you.

Women call out to the Coachman: Does your whip snap well?

Coachman: I've got the handle, you give the whip, and it will crack better.

(...)

Sower: You cooks, your buns are not fully baked. Your man didn't put enough wood on the fire, you didn't sleep well probably.

Lunch-carrier: You probably think that we don't make love, like you and your wife.

Plowman: You forgot the salt.

Lunch-carrier: You don't have to dunk it both night and day.

Coachman: Look how hot she is, just like the onions she brought.

Lunch-carrier: I'm no hotter than you are.

Coachman: We didn't bring any clover for those oxen of ours.

Plowman: Let them eat with us then.

When they come in front of a house:

The Plowman says: There you are, Master, we plowed for you but we did not plane it down for you.

(...)

At the end of their way.

Plowman: People, let's unyoke them. The field is plowed.

We have to go plowing again tomorrow.

Sower: I used up the seed. I have to go home for some more.

Coachman: Ah, I have to plait a new "šikar". Now I have to ask my wife for help.

Women: But is your handle good?

Coachman: Come here and I'll show you.

Men: Listen here, Sower, you must not sleep with your wife tonight. The wheat will be moldy.

Sower: You don't think I'll put you up for the night, do you.²⁸

In conclusion it could be said how both a small literary genre segment of Slavonian folk playwriting and that segment of folklore which corresponds to it in the time and place - a segment of what is, otherwise, a much broader phenomenon of folklore presentation - in a specific and picturesque, but *significantly different* way, dramatize the powerful conflicts within the gender hierarchy of rural Slavonia in the second half of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, conflicts which have not been given much attention. The extent to which both these types of theatrical images influenced the bringing down or entrenchment of that hierarchy, as well as the degree of conflict inherent to it, can remain only a subject of speculation. In other words, in evaluating that participation, one should not forget how the "subversive or transgressive

²⁸ Nikola Bonifačić Rožin *Folklorna građa iz Slavonije* I, 1957, IEF, NO. 282, pp. 13–17, Narrator Marija Živković nee Rakitić from Sikirevci.

potential" of symbolic practice and its meaning "vary with the circumstances of its occurrence, with the particulars of the institutional and cultural sites of its enactment" (Howard 1993:20). But if we want to avoid a speech in terms of vulgar Marxist sociological criticism with regard to culture products as the spiritual "superstructure" of some socio-economic "base", we will have to adhere to the supposition that these theatrical images were unquestionably of efficacious significance in the "cultural economy" of Slavonia, and its contemporary reception. My paper, however, was aimed less at the discovery of the shaded places of emergence of popular culture in literary texts, and more at examination of the culturological representative nature of these folklore and literary texts established *a priori* in Croatian literary criticism and folkloristics, namely at those formulations in which critical papers join in the inevitable, but partly unconscious, culturological distortions produced by texts they are examining.

(Translated by Nina H. Antoljak)

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NEOBUZDANA ŽENA U SLAVONSKOM FOLKLORU I PUČKOM IGROKAZU

SAŽETAK

Usporedimo li udio i ulogu žena u slavonskoj pučkoj dramatici druge polovice devetnaestog i prve polovice dvadesetog stoljeća s jedne, te slavonskom folkloru s druge strane, nadat će nam se niz susretnih i razlikovnih značajki vrijednih razmatranja, poglavito u svjetlu uvida u postojeće književnokritičke i folklorističke interpretacije. Problem spolnih uloga i sukoba, te književne citatne manipulacije folklornim simbolizmom, stjecao je u tim priložima status nepropitnog sadržaja preko kojega se uglavnom olako prelazilo. Dekorativna zadaća koju folklor preuzima u slavonskoj pučkoj dramatici ishodi, ovdje se pretpostavlja, iz istog svjetonazora iz kojeg ishodi i dramaturško-predstavljačka redukcija kojoj se izvrgavaju ženski likovi, gotovo redovito percipirani kao prijetnja stabilnosti mogućih svjetova u kojima se javljaju. Nasuprot tome, predstavljačke oblike slavonskog folklora koje pučka dramatika bez iznimke prešućuje, upravo su oblici u kojima žene igraju bilo ravnopravnu bilo čak premoćnu ulogu.