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## Transfer of Oral Fairy Tales into the Medium of Picture Books – (Re) Interpretation of Cultural Heritage in Croatian Native Picture Books

*Following the theory of literary regionalism (Brešić 2004; Kolar 2013), this paper interprets part of the literary oeuvre of Mirko Ćurić, a Croatian writer from Đakovo, through the prism of the Slavonic literary model. The analysis includes three native picture books created by interpolating the oral heritage of Đakovo (collected in 1936 – Papratović), and in collaboration with visual artists (Vjekoslav Radoičić, Gualtiero Mocenni and Simone Mocenni Beck, Manuela Vladić Maštruko): Palčić (Thumbling), Mladoženja jež (Hedgehog Groom) and Hrabri pijetao (Brave Rooster). Starting from the oral fairy tale as the original text (Genette 1997), embedded in the medium of the picture book, the method of transferring the oral literary text into the author's artistic medium of the picture book, primarily designed for children, is interpreted, the intertextual transformation strategies and the relationship between the literary and artistic layers are analysed with the aim of observing the model of preservation of Đakovo's (Slavonic) cultural heritage in the context of the contemporary (non)child reader. Selected picture books from Đakovo, touching directly or marginally on the Đakovo area, in the historical, ethnological, literary, linguistic, artistic and cultural context, represent a significant contribution to the poetics of native picture books within the Slavonian literary model. Through the process of paraphrasing the text of an oral fairy tale, through the implementation of appropriate intertextual transformation strategies, achieved through linguistic, literary, and artistic stylistic procedures, changes in poetics in relation to the original texts were recorded, and through artistic enhancement with heritage artefacts, the picture books were additionally contextualized natively.*

Članek na osnovi teorije literarnega regionalizma (Brešić 2004; Kolar 2013) skozi prizmo slavonskega literarnega modela interpretira del literarnega opusa Mirka Ćurića, hrvaškega pisca iz Đakova. Analiza obravnava tri ljudske slikanice, nastale z interpolacijo ljudskega izročila Đakova (zbranega leta 1936 – Papratović) in v sodelovanju z likovnimi umetniki (Vjekoslav Radoičić, Gualtiero Mocenni in Simone Mocenni Beck, Manuela Vladić Maštruko). To so Palčić (Thumbling), Mladoženja jež (Hedgehog Groom) in Hrabri pijetao (Brave Rooster). Izhajajoč iz ljudske pravljice kot izvirnega besedila (Genette 1997), vdelane v medij slikanice, članek interpretira metodo prenosa ustnega knjižnega besedila v avtorjev umetniški medij sli-

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kanice, namenjene v prvi vrsti otrokom. Medbesedilne transformacijske strategije ter odnos med literarnimi in likovnimi plastmi so v članku analizirani z namenom opazovanja modela ohranjanja đakovske (slavonske) kulturne dediščine v kontekstu sodobnega (ne)otročkega bralca. Izbrane slikanice iz Đakova, ki se neposredno ali obrobno dotikajo območja Đakova, v zgodovinskem, etnološkem, književnem, jezikovnem, likovnem in kulturnem kontekstu pomenijo pomemben prispevek k poetiki ljudskih slikanic znotraj slavonskega literarnega modela. Skozi proces parafraziranja besedila ustne pravljice in z uporabo ustreznih medbesedilnih transformacijskih strategij, temelječih na jezikovnih, literarnih in umetniških stilističnih postopkih, so bile dosežene spremembe poetike v odnosu do izvirnih besedil, likovni poudarek na artefaktih iz ljudske dediščine pa je slikanice še dodatno folklorno kontekstualiziral.

## Introduction

In recent times, Croatian children's literature has seen the production of picture books and illustrated books, whose focus are literary and visual narratives of cultural heritage contents with the intention of promoting native cultural values among the youngest readers. The appearance of such art books with themes of native contents, from historical, natively contextualized persons and events, through local microtopos, to a wide range of cultural, ethnological-anthropological native phenomena, with a greater or lesser retention of the local language idiom, gave birth to a special type of picture book that we can call - native picture book. Inscribing regional poetics in this literary genre also supports the theory of literary regionalism (Brešić 2004), i.e. literary topography – micro-regionalisation (Kolar 2013), which focuses on regionally marked literary texts related to a specific space and/or language, without the intention of partialisation of Croatian children's literature, with the aim of valorizing lesser-known authors, which is supported by the thesis of Stjepan Hranjec, who believes that:

*.../all (...) literature in fact, not only Croatian, more or less regional: the writer will, at least in part, look for material and inspiration where he spent the most beautiful, most intense part of his life. The phenomenon will be especially intensified in children's literature because many writers - wanting to get closer to the child - travel to their own childhood, to their native land, so it is completely justified to talk about children's literary regionalism. (Hranjec 2006: 261).*

Although most of the native picture books have an informational and educational role due to their functionality, a part of them, created on the basis of oral-literary forms, can also be viewed through an aesthetic function, which also includes educational and entertainment function. Part of the scientific interest in heritage-oriented picture books is also evidenced by the study "Izlet u muzej na mala vrata" ("Trip to the Museum Through Small Doors") (2014) by Diana Zalar, Antonija Balić Šimrak and Stjepko Rupčić, in which the authors, from a literary-theoretical, literary-historical and artistic point of view, on the corpus of printed picture books in Croatian city museums, among other things, question how Croatian cultural heritage is reflected in picture books. Offering several answers related to the poetics and typology of museum picture books, which cover a wide field of thematizing cultural heritage

(from contemporary reinterpretations of children's literature classics, through picture books dealing with famous scientists and artists, with cultural heritage of the native area to those whose focus are Croatian folk tales, with greater or lesser literary-linguistic interventions), it is clear that in the typologically diverse picture books marked with cultural heritage contents, there is a larger part of those created on the basis of an oral fairy tale, the transformation of which creates a new verbal-visual medium, with all the challenges it carries a noticeable complex and demanding poetics of the picture book. The picture books of the Đakovo region, originally collected and published in the thirties of the twentieth century, subsequently printed in the edition of the Đakovo cultural circle and the City of Đakovo as part of the "Slikovnice Đakovačkih novina" ("Đakovo's newspapers picture books"), with all the peculiarities of belonging to the "Slavonic literary model" (Ivon and Vrcić-Mataija 2019) are exposed to such challenge. Therefore, starting from the oral fairy tale as a source text/hypotext (Genette 1997), embedded in the medium of a picture book, in this paper we deal with the ways of transferring oral literature into the new, author's medium of a picture book primarily designed for children, with the aim of detecting intertextual transformation strategies in three narrative picture books of the Đakovo region: "Palčić" ("Thumbling"), "Mladoženja jež" ("Hedgehog Groom") and "Hrabri pijetao" ("Brave Rooster")<sup>2</sup>, with the relationship between the literary and artistic layers and models of preservation of the Đakovo's (Slavonic) cultural heritage in the context of the contemporary (non)child reader, contributing to the understanding of the picture book as a multimodal work of art that encourages the development of multimodal literacy in children (Haramija - Batič 2013).

### **Child Reader - Between an Oral Fairy Tale and a Native Picture Book**

The introduction of the oral fairy tale into the system of children's literature, apart from genealogical and terminological issues, which are indispensable in the literary-theoretical study of the oral fairy tale, with which the term folk tale is often associated in Croatian literary science, opens the question of its suitability for children as recipients on the syntactic, semantic and ontological levels of narrative substructure. As in children's literature we witness "double, communicative (author-reader) and age-related (adult-child) otherness" (Hameršak-Zima 2015: 95), communicative otherness in the form of an adult (grandparents, parents) as a possible mediator in reading/talking to children, determined by the context of the relevant time, but also by the individual cultural horizon of the mediator and the child. Bošković-Stulli (1963) pointed out the difference in the role of oral fairy tales for modern adult readers and children, with the conviction that they have a greater meaning in a child's life:

*.../folk tales in their heyday were an exuberant form of oral creativity with an important artistic function in life, which is now gradually becoming a thing of the past; their characters and motifs inspired and still inspire literary creators in diverse and distinctive ways, so through*

2 Versions of the above-mentioned fairy tales are also known in other countries (see more about ways of transmitting fairy tales between nations in: Bošković Stulli 2006.; Vrkić 1997a, 1997b).

them the stories live on in contemporary culture; for children, stories have preserved their original charm until today; it's all like that - but what can they say by themselves even today to an adult cultured reader of literature? To many, certainly nothing" (Bošković-Stulli 1963: 26).

Emphasizing the appropriateness of folk tales for children, their focus on children's recipients is evident in the words of the fairy tale collector of the Đakovo region - Milena Papratović: "Short stories' are told in the village in the winter during spinning or conversing, grandmothers tell them to children, while young men tell them when they are herding cattle or pigs, or again by women when they are combing (plucking) feathers." (Papratović 2020: 12). This point of view, however, does not give us the right to claim that the contemporary children's implicit reader communicates with the world of oral fairy tales in a simple manner. The distant time frame from the thirties of the last century, when the stories were written down, extends to the middle of the 19th century when dating, the time in which the grandmother of one of the most common storytellers lived, which is culturally significantly different from the present. Starting from a potentially interested children's audience, respecting its contemporary repertoire and the horizon of expectations that make up social, cultural and historical norms (Majhut 2005), Mirko Ćurić, writer from Đakovo, together with a group of visual artists, initiated the "Đakovačka slikovnica" ("Đakovo's Picture Book") project in 2004, to bridge the cultural imaginarium. Starting from the contemporary "idea of the child to whom he is addressing" (Majhut 2005: 74), he tried through the narrative and artistic layer - "by collective authorship" (Hameršak-Zima 2015: 95) to preserve the Slavonic oral fairy tale innovated in the form of a native picture book, and to make the native cultural heritage of Đakovo close to the youngest readers.<sup>3</sup> The editors of the reprints of Đakovo fairy tales had this in mind, whose narrative is enriched with illustrations by the young artist from Đakovo, Dajana Karas, and in which the original Slavonic language idiom is preserved. "It is Croatian heritage and a national treasure that today should be offered to everyone, especially young people and children, so that they too, like in the past, read them, and their grandmothers would tell stories to their children." (Svirac 2020:5-6). Authors of Đakovo picture books have solved the problem of bridging the "imaginarium of another time" (Francem 2020: 111) by dressing native oral stories in picture books, making them suitable for children, while preserving the narrative of Đakovo's native heritage by implementing several intertextual transformation strategies.

### **Intertextual Strategies in the Relationship Between Oral Fairy Tales and Native Picture Books**

Acknowledging the fact that a fairy tale and a picture book are two different artistic expressions of specific poetics, aware of the challenges that the transfer of the text of an oral fairy tale into a picture book contains, we focused the interpretation on the comparison of the original text and the picture book. "If you want

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3 It is a series of about twenty picture books based on folk tales collected by Milena Papratović, the first doctor of ethnology in Croatia (Živaković Kerže 2011), who in 1936, while visiting the villages of Đakovo, collected about forty folk tales, thematically and structurally diverse, which saw their repeated edition in 2020.

to make a picture book based on a fairy tale, then the text of the fairy tale will need to be paraphrased regularly. Only an appropriately paraphrased fairy tale can be a picture book” (Majhut and Batinić 2017: 39). Determining the procedures for paraphrasing a fairy tale in a picture book presupposes the interpretation of intertextual transformation strategies in relation to the semantic and syntactic substructure of narrative and artistic narrations. Such starting point includes the analysis of language (through the relationship between dialectal idiom and standard language), the poetics of fairy tales (through the oral - author relationship), and the poetics of picture books (models of visual imitation of folklore artefacts).

Most of the collected Croatian oral fairy tales retained the peculiarities of local language idioms, having preserved the charm of folk originality, about which Bošković-Stulli (1963) affirmatively wrote:

They were all collectors of dialectal texts, and it is no coincidence that they were the ones: unencumbered by the need to contribute to a perfect literary language, striving to capture the dialectal speech as faithfully as possible, they probably and inadvertently felt that other charm of folk storytelling that springs not only from a fantastic fable, but also from the innocent-spontaneous spoken word, irregular and unrefined, yet irresistibly suggestive with its unmoulded syntax and fresh folk vocabulary, with which the adequate meaning of the text, the mood of the moment and personal intonation can be expressed to the end. (Bošković-Stulli 1963: 19).

The oral fairy tales written down by Milena Papratović also preserve the linguistic characteristics of the language, additionally enhanced by the speaking and writing competence of the narrator in the Slavonic dialect. Kolenić (1997) additionally calls the speech of the Slavonian dialect Šokački, and one of its features, which are incorporated into the language of Đakovo's fairy tales, is a diverse “ě” pronunciation reflex. The intertextual linguistic transformation from the Slavonic dialect to the language standard is evident in the picture books. Linguistic-stylistic transformation - adapting the language to the modern children's audience, while preserving part of the lexemes of the heritage character through the native lexicon, represents a kind of inversion twist - by transforming into a standard language, deviating from the native idiom, in which fairy tales were originally created, paradoxically, the stories do not lose their native layer. In terms of language, nativeness is partly preserved at the level of the lexicon, although in a smaller proportion than that represented in fairy tales. For example, the absence of dialectal lexemes: *bostan*, *sajtlik*, *matorac*, *porcijon*, was replaced by the standard, stylistically unmarked lexemes: *vrt* (garden), *čašica* (cup), *pijetao* (rooster), *posuda* (dish), while lexemes *korito* (trough), *krmača garača* (black sow) are preserved, and some other native lexemes were added as a function of approximation children's readers of native heritage: *žirovanje* (acoring), *čordaši* (swineherders), *svinjska čorda* (herd of pigs). The concession of the native idiom to the standard language, with the mentioned linguistic transformations in which the linguistic-semantic cultural layer of Đakovo is partly inherited, introduces us to the stylistic-poetic transformations, observed through the relationship between the oral literature and the artistic poetics of the fairy tale, with the intention of observing intertextual strategies which, as a result of the intention to preserve the narrative of the prototext, with regard to the relationship between visual and narrative, ranges from quotation to paraphrase (Oraić-Tolić 2019), from imitation to transformation (Narančić Kovač and Zalar 2015). In the analysis of the mentioned strategies we start

from Propp's and Lüthi's designation of the poetics of the fairy tale with the intention of observing the way the author's writing is added to the oral literary discourse. Based on composition, structural determinations and syntax, Propp's (1982) definition of a fairy tale does not include the necessity of wonder, but starts from the function as the bearer of the plot. For Lühti (according to Bošković-Stulli 2012), the poetics of a fairy tale is related to the way motifs are formed, and strangely, part of the action is "the ultimate expression of an abstract, isolating and sublimating style" (Bošković-Stulli 2012: 283). They have in common the knowledge of the hero's journey between worlds, from the initial lack to the happy ending, with miraculous helpers and gifts. "For Propp, in a fairy tale, the hero's actions are important from the point of view of consequences, and not of his feelings. Lüthi observes that the hero's feelings are expressed through action - which is partly similar to Propp, but still manifests seeing through a different lens: the composition is seen as inseparably connected with style" (Bošković-Stulli 2012: 285). Reading the narrative layer of the Đakovo's picture books in relation to the intertext of the oral fairy tale is on the track of noticing the hero's positioning with regard to action and feeling. The shift of interest from the hero's adventure to the sphere of his emotionality inevitably affects the transformation of the narrative style, and thus the change in the poetics of the fairy tale, which takes on the characteristics of an author's, artistic fairy tale from an oral literary one, despite a high degree of intertextual equivalence. It is a stylistic transformation that did not disturb the interrelationship between the oral Đakovo's fairy tale and its realization in the form of a picture book, but instead created an interesting interplay, complemented by an artistic layer close to the contemporary child recipient.

### Slavonian "Palčić" ("Thumbling")

Shifting the emphasis from the hero's action to his emotionality is a key element in the stylistic, and therefore the reception, transformation realized in the narrative layer of the picture book, on the trail of the poetics of "childhood" (Hameršak 2011), not because of fear of experiencing a fairy tale, the fictionality of which the contemporary child recipient is used to, but because of the need to approach the contemporary culture of childhood. Proof of this is Thumbling, the youngest member of the family, the only long-awaited child, a hero - a traveller, who in the original text of the Đakovo fairy tale collected in 1935-1936, when he *grows up a bit* but does not *grow up*, leaves home "because he has had enough, with his father and mother looking after him strictly, and because he wanted to see the world." (Papatović 2020: 97). The hero, characterized by a lack of adventure, goes out into the world out of curiosity, just as the hero of Čurić's picture book does, with the addition "because he has had enough of being strictly watched over by his father and mother because he was small" (Čurić-Radoičić 2006), which enhances the hero's physicality close to the child recipient. The identity of the new text with the original text, combined with the author's stylistic additions, favours balancing between complete citation and a shift to a new author's discourse aimed at the child recipient, which is visible in the elaboration of the travel motif, contextualized in the context of the contemporary cultural imaginarium. The narrator's heterodiegetic position, variable in focalization between the omniscient, appropriate "adult view" (Narančić Kovač 2015: 85) and the

hero's view, complicates the language and style of the artistic, paraphrased fairy tale in the picture book, making it close to a child:

Thumbling was very interested in what wonders were hidden in the world. He knew that his parents often travelled to other villages and cities, and he thought that they were forbidding him to do that is because they didn't love him enough. If they can travel the world by themselves, why can't I, he often thought. Now it seemed to him that this was an opportunity to finally get to know that unknown, magical world. His mother and father searched for him until it was dark. They called him, but he didn't want to answer them, hiding under a cabbage leaf. (Čurić-Radoičić 2006)

The hero's contextualization in the family discourse, in the original oral literary text, expressed by parental love ("Father and mother loved him very much and took care of him..." Papratović 2020: 97), in Čurić's version is deprived of its emphasis, while the hero's emotional state, refined by switching the heterodiegetic narrative focalization to the hero's - by suggesting the child's perspective, the hero's self-initiated act of leaving home is justified by the need to get to know the magical unknown world. In addition, Čurić's Thumbling is also characterized by boredom, a motif that is absent in the prototext, as a characteristic close to a modern child: "He waited on the dry land for the rain to pass and got a little bored." / "And the man ran away because he thought those were ghosts. Thumbling laughed, but soon he got bored again." (Čurić-Radoičić 2006). The obstacles that the hero encounters when conquering an unknown space do not require of him to use magical powers or objects; he is saved by his physical "invisibility" to adults, which functions as the hero's fantastic property. Encounters with an unknown man, woman and dog, as well as (mis)adventures with peasants, are devoid of the relationship of a classic conflict with an opponent. Thumbling emerges from adventures intact, protected by the gift of tininess as the halo of a "child" who, having eliminated the initial lack of adventure in his life, upon returning home realized the value of home and parental protection. In the context of the native imaginary, the unnamed space of the hero's adventure, from the family home and garden, through the unknown forest, as a symbol of the loss of security, in the village - marked by a pig slaughterhouse, acquires a concrete - Slavonic (Đakovo) cultural code, present both at the level of text and prototext. This segment of the story, which culminates in the uncertainty of Thumbling's fate, is further elaborated in the picture book, which uses intertextual equivalence, through the strategy of imitation, to establish a citation dialogue, both according to the prototext and in relation to the cultural heritage of Đakovo, on the basis of which the author further elaborates the hero's psychological profile in the context of the native imaginarium. To that we would add a dialogue with the contemporary culture of childhood in relation to obedience, prohibitions and subversion, which are absent in the original text, in which the hero, regardless of the fact that he is small, has grown up ("he has grown up, and yet he remains so small." Papratović 2020: 97). The hero's action (drinking brandy, falling into the trough) is not questioned in the oral narrative: "Thumbling stops at the trough, in which there was meat for sausages, and there was a bottle of brandy on the trough. Thumbling gets drunk and falls into the meat trough." (Papratović 2020: 97). Such a narrative point of view is understandable, because the hero, although he is small, is not a child. In Čurić's version, Thumbling functions as a child all the

time (physically and mentally), which further directs the picture book to children, whereby the act of children's alcohol consumption, although humorously intoned in the fairy tale, functions extratextually as an act of prohibition.

As he was small, no one noticed him, and he entered the yard, where the pigs were being slaughtered. Thumbling stops by the trough, in which there was meat for sausages, and there was a full glass of brandy on the trough. Thumbling's parents always forbade him to drink and told him that it was not good for children. And he was always interested in the taste of brandy and why adults like to toast brandy and drink that drink that makes them happy, but they forbid it to children. Thumbling grabs the glass and drinks brandy. He drank fast so it burned in his throat and made him dizzy and he fell into the meat trough. (Ćurić-Radoičić 2006).

Just like the motif of boredom, the subsequently introduced motif of fear works as well as the invocation of parental protection, which confirms Thumbling's childhood identity (*grown up* Palčić of the original text is deprived of such emotions): "Thumbling was afraid that the housewife would take the sausage in which he was trapped and throw it into the pan with hot oil. "Where are mom and dad now to help me," he cried, fearing that he would be fried in a hot pan." (Ćurić-Radoičić 2006). The event of the Slavonian pig slaughter was additionally upgraded with the motif of song and joy and the making of sausages (the stylized recipe of which the child recipient has the opportunity to hear/read) as indispensable components of the native imaginarium: "He tried to shout, but he didn't succeed because he was in that mixture, and people were talking and singing loudly, so they wouldn't be able to hear him anyway." / "The butcher mixed him with meat, salt and pepper into the mixture with which they stuffed the sausage." (Ćurić-Radoičić 2006). Thumbling's rescue from the sausage is delayed by the introduction of the character of a gypsy woman who, in Ćurić's version, by avoiding the ethnic stereotype as a cultural image distant in time, transforms into a poor woman with a hungry child, whose socially vulnerable status is focused on the emotional world of the child recipient, which in the original text is reduced to action sequence with no emotion:

And then some poor gypsy woman came, and the people gave her that piece of sausage, in which Thumbling was. The gypsy woman put the sausage in her bag and went on. (Papatović 2020: 97)/  
And then some poor woman came. She asked people to give her a piece of meat to feed her hungry children. People gave her the same piece of sausage that Thumbling was in. The poor woman put the sausage in her bag and went on. (Ćurić-Radoičić 2006).

The return home in the oral literary narrative happens quickly, while in Ćurić's text it is stylistically elaborated with emotions of joy within the family context, due to participation in the hero's subsequent, albeit narratively silenced, retrospective narration in which "a hidden adult manipulates the child reader in order not to raise him and include him in a typically adult system of cultural and social values and behavioural norms..." (Narančić Kovač 2015: 86).

Everyone laughed at Thumbling because he didn't like the brandy, but they listened with anxiety as he almost ended up in a hot pan or in a dog's mouth because he was trapped in a fresh sausage. Thumbling realized that his parents were right to prevent him from wandering around the world alone, where there are many dangers awaiting him. From then on, he listened well to his parents because he saw that they wanted him well. Do you listen to your parents? (Ćurić-Radoičić 2006).



Positioned as a hero - an adventure seeker, Thumbling in both texts, through a self-initiated departure, goes through the process of initiation: from an uninformed and immature hero, with a lot of unknowns about the world to which he is headed, through the experiences of natively contextualized adventures, he transforms into a hero with an insight into the dangers of the unknown world; from a somewhat subversive, upon returning home, Thumbling becomes an obedient hero, from which in both texts one can read the education aimed at a child recipient: in the prototext it is short and devoid of additional explanations, and in Čurić's text it is elaborated, adapted to a contemporary child recipient.

Unlike the narrative layer in which, as Sipe (1998) points out, words have a greater potential for transmitting information about time, the visual layer contains a greater potential for transmitting information about space. This is precisely why Radoičić's illustrations are interesting; as they artistically describe Thumbling's Slavonian adventure, realized in a bright, playful and humorous handwriting, they are suitable for children in a naive artistic style that "looks very "childish" in execution and is distinguished by its two-dimensionality and flat painting approach." (Balić-Šimrak i Narančić Kovač 2011: 11). Complementarily supplementing the fictionality of the narrative discourse, the artistic layer of the picture book, through the intertextual process of imitation, brings the stylized Slavonic folklore heritage, which as an ethnographic intertext, is realized with the motifs of pig slaughter, family and rural environment. Alluding to the artefact of the Slavonian countryside and children's folk costumes, the visual artist additionally contributes to the preservation of Slavonian heritage values with his folkloristically articulated style.



**Picture 1.** Radoičić, Illustration of a pig slaughterhouse  
Source: Čurić, M., Radoičić, V. (2006)



**Picture 2.** Radoičić, Illustration of a happy ending  
Source: Čurić, M., Radoičić, V. (2006)

### “Mladoženja jež” (“Hedgehog Groom”) – Slavonian Herder

Unlike the story about Thumbling, in “Mladoženja jež” (“Hedgehog Groom”) and “Hrabri pijetao” (“Brave Rooster”) fairy tales the heroes are animals - travellers who leave home by their own desire (hedgehog), or are chased away from home (rooster)

and hen) and have their opponents. Finally, being born as a long-desired child, Thumbling and the hedgehog share some common traits: both willingly move away from home, but unlike Thumbling, who does not announce his departure to his parents, the hedgehog leaves with their approval - into the forest. In addition to the emotional one, the beginning of the narrative in the fairy tale is contextualized into the material discourse of the desired child (“There once were an old man and a woman, and they had no one. The old man was sad that he had no children, so he said to the woman, to whom would he leave the house and the land, it would be good if the woman gave birth, even if it were a hedgehog.” Papratović 2020: 10), while the beginning of the narrative in the picture book is further elaborated stylistically and linguistically, thanks to which the characters of the old man and woman, emotionally profiled, acquire a parental identity, enhanced by a religious but material world view:

There once were an old man and a woman, and they had nobody. They lived a nice life, but they were sad. The old man was sad because they had no children. “To whom will we leave all that we’ve acquired” he used to say to the woman. They had a lot of land, a forest, a nice house. “God didn’t let us have any children,” answered the woman in a sad voice. At that moment a hedgehog, accompanied by two small hedgehogs, passed through their yard. “If only we had our own child, even if it were like this hedgehog”, the old man wished. And what he wished for came true. His wife soon gave birth to a little hedgehog (Ćurić; Mocenni and Mocenni Beck).

By paraphrasing the text of the oral fairy tale, the story narrative of the picture book creates a new context, close to the modern child with whom the hero, even the hedgehog, corresponds in emotional portrayal, which is also contributed by the change of the narrative point of view and the expansion of dialogues with parents:

I’ve already grown enough. I won’t just lie around, eat and drink. Give me something to do. - And what would you do - his father asked him. The hedgehog answered them, let them bake him an oilcake, and he would take their sow-blackie to the forest to feed her acorns... - Where are you going to take our blackie?! You’re not a herder, but a hedgehog! We’ll lose both, the sow and you. (Ćurić; Mocenni and Mocenni Beck).

Even in the picture book, the narrator does not change the order of events, but changes his attitude towards the story by adding a humorous and contemporary tone to it by introducing and/or replacing certain motifs. For example, the concept of *herder*, which is absent in the oral fairy tale, is introduced into the picture book, while the characters of the forester/forest ranger and the bishop from the oral fairy tale are replaced in the picture book by the terms forest manager/chief forester and pastor.

“The forester told the bishop that it is weird that he can’t find whose pigs they are, and he is not allowed to herd them.” (Papratović 2020:43)

“The forest ranger got scared by the mysterious voice and ran away out of the forest. He informed the forest manager what had happened. “You got drunk again!” shouted the chief forester at the forest ranger... The forester told the pastor that a miracle had happened in the forest: they could not find whose those pigs were, and they were not allowed to herd them.” (Ćurić; Mocenni and Mocenni Beck 2014).

Worry, fear and uncertainty, along with initial sadness and acquired joy, are the emotions with which the old man and woman confirm their parental identity, while the hedgehog (hero traveller), aware of the need to do useful work, realizes

his identity by going to the forest - a native space that simultaneously functions as a place to preserve cultural heritage, but also as a place to gain the hero's power based on the acquisition of responsibility. On the basis of the universal motifs of the fairy tale, the Slavonic native narrative is strongly emphasized through the visually stylized spatial topos of the artistically realized oak forest and local images of acorns and acorns that function as a means to gain the hero's power.

"The old woman baked an oilcake, the hedgehog put the oilcake in a bag, sat behind the sow's ear, and they went into the forest. Blackie and the hedgehog stayed in the forest for months, and during that time she became pregnant and gave birth to many piglets. There was a herd of pigs that lived in the forest, and the hedgehog took care of them." (Čurić, Mocenni, Mocenni Beck, 2014).

He is depicted as a skilful herder, native hero of his *blackie*, he holds them together and brings them home as well towed pigs.<sup>4</sup>

"He gathered the pigs, sat down again on the old blackie behind her ear and headed for his home. When he came home, all his pigs could not fit in the yard, but had to stay on the street, because there we so many of them. The old man and woman were amazed by the miracle, and even more so when the hedgehog told them to bake him an oilcake and that the king must give him his daughter as a wife." (Čurić, Mocenni, Mocenni Beck 2014).

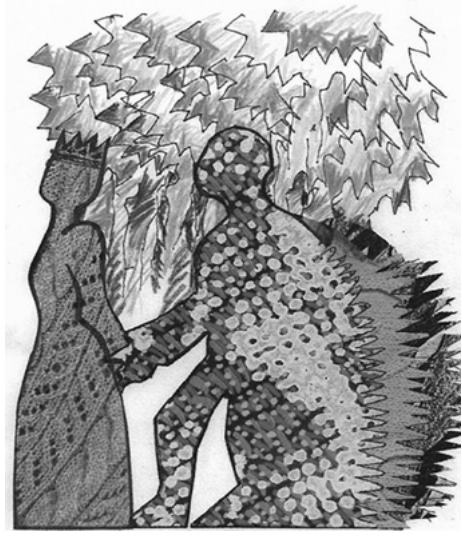
In the meantime, outwitting the forester, the pastor/bishop, powerful lords and ultimately the king himself, he deservedly wins the hand of his daughter, who, due to impatience and frivolity, postpones his permanent transformation into a man. "So the hedgehog lived happily with his wife, having been a hedgehog during the day and a man at night, that there was no one more beautiful than him in the world. The king's daughter was happy, but she still wanted him to be a man so at daytime as at night." (Čurić, Mocenni, Mocenni Beck 2014). The subsequent episode functions as an act of redemption for the hero's wife and his additional positioning as a *pater familias*, whose power he gains in - a distant forest. Their reunion cancels the spell - the hedgehog becomes a man for good, and the stereotypical ending, unchanged in both the texts, retains the oral literary humorous narrative pattern. "They lived happily for a long time and had many children. This is where the story ends, happily ever after just like he intends." (Čurić, Mocenni, Mocenni Beck 2014).

Illustrators Mocenni and Mocenni Beck have shown in a specific way the fairy tale world of the old Slavonian oak forest, characters and events narrated in the picture book. Using the collage art technique, they incorporated the Slavonic cultural code by choosing the appropriate texture of patterns from traditional *koperti* (blankets), tablecloths and *ponjavaca* (blankets) as Slavonic folklore artefacts, localizing the literary narrative in the Slavonic native space. The native layer of the picture book was additionally preserved with the intertextual strategy of imitation of cultural heritage, realized with signals of visual intertext.

4 In Slavonia, the breeding of black pigs, an autochthonous breed, is a traditional branch of livestock production. The swineherders (*čordaši*) took them to forest grazing - acoring. They would stay in the forest from early spring to late autumn, so the piglets would return in late autumn like fattened pigs.



**Picture 3.** Mocenni i Mocenni Beck: Illustration of oaks and pigs  
Source: Ćurić, M.; Mocenni, Mocenni Beck (2014)



**Picture 4.** Mocenni i Mocenni Beck: Illustration of the transformation of a hedgehog into a young man  
Source: Ćurić, M.; Mocenni, Mocenni Beck (2014)

### “Hrabri pijetao” (“Brave Rooster”) – Guardian of Golden Ducats

As with the previous picture books, the narrative of the Brave Rooster, elaborated in relation to the oral prototext, is linguistically and stylistically adapted to the contemporary child recipient by approaching the poetics of an artistic fairy tale, which is evident in the compositional features, starting from the introduction, through the narrative gradation of the plot with a delayed culmination, devoid of scenes of violence until the expected happy ending, shaped by the narrative form in the function of invoking family harmony. The poetically elaborated introduction in the narrative layer of the picture book serves the purpose of material, social and emotional contextualization of the characters of the old man and woman, which is absent in the prototext of the oral fairy tale, in which the action, designed in the form of a list, flows faster:

“There were an old man and an old woman, and they had a rooster and a hen. The old man and the old woman took good care of each other, but one day they argued and split up. The old man took the rooster, and the old woman took the hen.” (Papatović 2020: 49)

“In a village behind seven mountains and seven seas, there lived a poor old man and a woman. Apart from the dilapidated house their only possessions were a rooster and a hen. The hen laid an egg every day and that was their most important food.. The old man and woman got along well, but one day the hen didn’t lay an egg, so they had a fight. They decided to divide their property. Each got a room in the house, and the old man got the rooster, and the old woman got the hen.” (Ćurić; Vladić-Maštruko 2011)

Spatial motifs (*small house, small room*), characterized by a fairy-tale poetics of indeterminacy and the semantics of property and family status, linguistically formed by diminutive forms, close to children’s language, elaborate the cause of the

quarrel between adults, where the motif of the beating, as a trigger of the rooster's departure into the world, is present in both artistic media. The bearers of plot and denouement in both literary narratives are, therefore, anthropomorphized animal characters, again more emotionally elaborated in the narrative layer of the picture book compared to the oral prototext, which also shifts the emphasis from action to feeling. The initial rooster's boredom ("The rooster got tired of the beatings and he ran away into the world." Ćurić; Vladić-Maštruko 2011), through the development of the plot through encounters with potentially dangerous companions (fox, wolf, pond), is upgraded with justified caution ("Everyone knows that foxes eat roosters and I'm not yet ready to become someone's meal." Ćurić; Vladić-Maštruko 2011) and fear, but also a willingness to make unusual friendships that will turn out to be fully justified, which is new in relation to the prototext of an oral fairy tale, which confirms the thesis about the paraphrasing of the fairy tale in the picture book:

"So they went on a journey and they met a wolf and agreed with him that all three would travel together." (Papatović 2020:49)

"On the second day they met a wolf and hid in a hole in a tree, fearing that it would eat them. The wolf promised them that he would not eat them, but invited them to travel with him, because he needed such companions to complete a difficult task with the king himself, and when they completed the task, a rich reward would await them. After much persuasion, the fox and the rooster agree, so to the astonishment of the entire forest, a strange group sets off on their journey: a rooster, a fox and a wolf!" (Ćurić; Vladić-Maštruko 2011).

In both texts, the focus on the king's court figures as the hero's search for wealth, which is reached later, by overcoming obstacles with the help of newly acquired friends - helpers, leaving an impression on the king and the world about his fantastic qualities: "Now the king was seriously worried: - What should I do with that miracle-working rooster that gets out of every trouble?" (Ćurić; Vladić-Maštruko 2011).

Getting out of every trouble, in the end even from the most guarded chamber in the castle, ambiently evoked by the stereotypical fairy-tale spatial imaginary of a room full of gold, located in the text of the picture book "behind seven iron locks and seven oak doors", the rooster proves courage, which is subsequently built on by happiness in the form of material wealth, exemplified by the Slavonic heritage code - *golden ducats* and *woollen covers*, additionally underlined by Vladić-Maštruko's folkloristic illustrations: "Cock-a-doodle-doo old man, bring woollen covers, I'm bringing you golden ducats!" (Ćurić; Vladić-Maštruko 2011). Parting with friends - helpers, which is completely absent in the oral prototext, is again a function of the hero's emotional upgrade:

"The rooster went home to the old man, while aunt Fox and wolf stayed in the forest" (Papatović 2020:49)

"The rooster had enough of adventures, so he went to his house, while the fox and the wolf stayed in the forest. At parting the wolf gave them gold as a sign of gratitude for saving him from danger." (Ćurić; Vladić-Maštruko 2011).

By transforming the hen, originally situated in the space of the home, into a traveller - a seeker of potential treasure, the fable is directed to a humorous discourse, motivated by the idea of deceived expectations:

“Woman, woman, put on woollen covers, I’m bringing you golden ducats! Old woman spread out a large cover and the hen shook out a lot of sand and only one ducat. The old woman got angry and started to beat the chicken again.” Čurić; Vladić-Maštruko 2011). In accordance with the elaborated composition and style of the adapted text of the oral fairy tale, the ending of the narrative, shaped by the storytelling form, functions as an upgrade of the emotional world of the characters, who have matured in the knowledge of the value of family togetherness:

“- We have argued and divided a lot, it’s time to reconcile. I will give the ducats and you the eggs, and everything will be fine, as it was. The old woman agreed, and from that day on, the old man, woman, rooster and the hen lived together in happiness and well-being” (Čurić; Vladić-Maštruko 2011).

The intertextual strategy of paraphrasing the narrative layer of the picture book in the pictorial layer is enriched with visual comments of the story, adding previously denied meanings to it by imitating Slavonian native motifs - artefacts of Đakovo’s golden embroidery. We are talking about the collage process as a form of “transsemiotic citation, in which reality, the subject material world itself, is quoted in art” (Oraić-Tolić 2019: 177). Đakovo’s golden embroidery as a visual quote belongs to the factual mode, and is functionally marked as a cultural heritage. Illustrator Vladić-Maštruko, wanting to create a feeling of spaciousness, used *layout* (Nikolajeva 2012) – showing the scene on two sides. The atmosphere of the Šokački’s motifs (gold embroidery, ducats, acorn motif, men’s and women’s folk costumes, the interior of the Šokačka’s house) underline the ethnographic layer of the story, which is supported by the textual background designed like a jute sack. The motif of the ducat, present as a symbol of prosperity and wealth, to which the heroes of the story aspire, is linked to the artistic expression that completely complements the story with Đakovo’s cultural codes as expressions of folklore cultural heritage.



**Picture 5.** M. Vladić-Maštruko: Illustration of a hen and a rooster decorated with native motifs  
Source: Čurić, M., Vladić-Maštruko, M. (2011)



**Picture 6.** M. Vladić-Maštruko:  
Representation of grandfather and  
grandmother in the Šokačka's folk  
costumes

Source: Izvor: Čurić, M., Vladić-Maštruko, M. (2011)

## Conclusion

By transferring an oral fairy tale to the medium of a picture book, certain intertextual connections were established, but also an intercultural dialogue with the texts of oral fairy tales as source texts, collected in Slavonia, in the vicinity of Đakovo, in the thirties of the twentieth century, but also with Slavonian, Đakovo's cultural heritage. Printed about eighty years after the first writing, the Đakovo's fairy tales in the form of a picture book experienced their paraphrase. Through the implementation of intertextual transformation strategies, realized through linguistic, literary and artistic stylistic procedures, the narrative layer of all the three selected picture books experienced a change in the poetics of the stories in relation to the original texts, and through the artistic addition of heritage artefacts, the picture books were additionally contextualized natively. The shift in the language from the local idiom to the standard form, adapted to the modern child recipient, along with the preservation and/or linguistic reinterpretation of Slavonic ethnological identity, and at the level of local, native lexemes, is a function of adaptation to modern children's expectations. By transferring the text of an oral fairy tale into the guise of a picture book, the stories were visualized, but also there was the "childization" (Hameršak 2011) of the fairy tale as a genre "which in oral communication until then was aimed at children and adults, and sometimes only at adults." (Hameršak 2011: 64). Namely, through the linguistic and stylistic reinterpretation of the old fairy tale, the emphasis is placed on the hero of the story, but also on the implicit reader - a child, with all the characteristics close to the culture of modern childhood, and even a subversive child, characterized by a desire for adventure. Narrative closeness to the contemporary culture of childhood is a sign of emphasized emotionality (which is absent in the original texts): from children's boredom, through fear of vulnerability, joy, mirth. In the paraphrased author's versions of oral fairy tales, the emotionally upgraded identity of the fairy-tale hero additionally upgraded the hero's identity by confirming him as a child. Despite the emphasis on the hero's adventure, realized by the journey, the act of return, embodied in the acquired wealth ("Hrabri pijetao" / "Brave Rooster"), the kingdom ("Mladoženja jež" / "Hedgehog Groom") or the knowledge

of life (“Palčić” / “Thumbling”) is not neglected. In this way, the hero of the fairy tale is refined psychologically, and there is a shift away from the oral literary flatness of the hero, and a character profile is acquired, to which the contemporary child recipient can relate. The ontological value of the native stories was preserved, but it underwent its modification by highlighting the heroes of the emotional world in the form of promoting the idea of the beauty and fun of a natively contextualized fairy-tale adventure, whose artistic layer complementarily leads a dialogue with the literary and cultural Slavonic code. This establishes an interesting relationship between image and text, which in the three selected picture books varies between factual and fictional. In this sense the Đakovo’s picture books fulfilled their cultural function; through the representation of a paraphrased text from another, shared culture and an “innovated literary canon” are presented. (Oraić-Tolić 2019: 99). Through the combination of old and new, traditional and contemporary cultural imaginary, a spiritual balance and appropriateness for the contemporary child recipient was achieved in the context of the preservation of heritage values. summarized in the correct and justly ordered world, on which the original narrative of the oral fairy tale was created. Ultimately, the interpretation of Đakovo’s picture books is a contribution to the cultural reading of art books, aimed at preserving the value of native heritage.

### **Povzetek**

Članek interpretira proces prenosa ustne pravljice v medij ljudske slikanice, njegov namen pa je opazovanje načina ohranjanja ustnega izročila v primerkih dela književnega opusa Mirka Ćurića, hrvatskega pisca iz Đakova. Analiza obravnava tri ljudske slikanice, nastale z interpolacijo ljudskega izročila Đakova (zbranega leta 1936 – Papratović) in v sodelovanju z likovnimi umetniki (Vjekoslav Radoičić, Gualtiero Mocenni in Simone Mocenni Beck, Manuela Vladić Mastruko). To so *Palčić (Thumbling)*, *Mladoženja jež (Hedgehog Groom)* in *Hrabri pijetao (Brave Rooster)*. Izhajajoč iz ljudske pravljice kot izvirnega besedila (Genette 1997), vdelane v medij slikanice, članek interpretira metodo prenosa ustnega književnega besedila v avtorjev umetniški medij slikanice, namenjen v prvi vrsti otrokom. Medbesedilne transformacijske strategije ter odnos med literarnimi in likovnimi plastmi so v članku analizirani z namenom opazovanja modela ohranjanja đakovske (slavonske) kulturne dediščine v kontekstu sodobnega (ne)otroškega bralca. To izhodišče vključuje analizo jezika (na podlagi odnosa med narečnim idiomom in standardnim jezikom), analizo poetike pravljic (skozi odnos med ustnim izročilom in avtorjem) in analizo poetike slikanice (modeli likovnega posnemanja ljudskih artefaktov). Izbira postopkov parafraziranja pravljice v slikanico predpostavlja interpretacijo medbesedilnih transformacijskih strategij v odnosu do semantične in sintaktične strukture verbalne in likovne pripovedi. Analiza omenjenih strategij izhaja iz Proppove in Lüthijeve definicije poetike pravljice z namenom opazovati način spajanja avtorjeve pisave z diskurzom ustnega literarnega izročila. V tem primeru gre za stilsko preobrazbo, ki ni posegla v odnos med pravličnim ustnim izročilom Đakova in njegovim prenosom v obliko slikanice; nasprotno, ustvarila je zanimivo medigro, dopolnjeno z likovno vsebino, ki je blizu sodobnemu otroškemu prejemniku. Premik poudarka od junakovih dejanj



v njegov čustveni svet je ključni stilistični element, zaradi katerega tudi recepcija in transformacija pripovedne plasti slikanice sledi poetiki »otročstva« (Hameršak 2011), ki je blizu sodobni kulturi otroštva. V slikanicah je očitna jezikovna transformacija slavonskega narečja v standardni jezik, ki pa skozi ljudsko besedišče vseeno ohranja nekatere lekseme iz slavonskega ljudskega izročila. Likovni umetniki so z uporabo različnih tehnik in izbiro ustreznih motivov – slavonskih ljudskih artefaktov – v slikanice vnesli slavonsko kulturno izročilo in na ta način literarno pripoved lokalizirali v slavonski ljudski prostor. Ljudski moment se v slikanicah še dodatno ohranja s pomočjo medbesedilne strategije posnemanja kulturnega izročila, ki temelji na znamenjih likovnega medbesedila.

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Mirko Ćurić, Gualtiero Mocenni, Simone Mocenni Beck, 2014: *Mladoženja jež (Hedgehog Groom)*. Đakovo: Đakovo cultural circle.

Mirko Ćurić, Vjekoslav Radoičić, 2006: *Palčić (Thumbling)*. Đakovo: Đakovo cultural circle.

Mirko Ćurić, Manuela Vladić-Maštruko, 2011: *Hrabri pijetao (Brave Rooster)*. Đakovo: Đakovo cultural circle.

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