
VIOLENT DEATH IN SOUTH SLAVIC CHILDREN'S FOLKLORE

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IZVLEČEK

Nasilna smrt v južnoslovanski otroški folklori

Prisotnost motiva nasilne smrti v določenih otroških folkornih besedilih lahko predvideva magični izvor besedila samega. Dokazi za to predpostavko so otroška prekletstva in zaklinjanja, kjer je smrt ena glavnih dogajanj. Primer za to je norčevanje iz pripadnikov drugih narodnosti (Vlahov, Latinov, Ciganov itd.): "Ti, Latin z repom, jutri boš umrl." V nekem zaklinjanju, na drugi strani, najdemo tudi tipično grožnjo živali iz otroške folklore: v pesmi, ki jo pojejo polžu, temu ukazujejo, naj pokaže svoje roge: "Polž, pokaži roge, če jih ne boš pokazal, te bom ubil s sekiro na zeleni trati!"

Ni potrebno dokazovati, da so tudi pesmi pestunij besedila magičnega izvora, nasilna smrt pa je motiv, ki ga najdemo pogosto tudi v drugih besedilih odraslih, ko se igrajo z otroki. To velja za sledeči motiv iz srbske oziroma hrvaške pesmi: "List se je zvrnil, starka je ponorela in pobila vse otroke", kjer lahko starko razumemo kot eno izmed otroških demonov. Verz "Volkovi bodo ubili mati na polju", ki mu sledi prošnja volku, naj tega ne stori (ker je mati dobra in bo dala svojemu detetu mleko), je drugačen. Pomembno je, da je perspektiva ubijanja samo grožnja, tako kot je to vidno v drugih otroških besedilih magičnega izvora. Smrt živali ima popolnoma drugačen status in velja za naravno dejanje, celo za smešno dejanje (npr. "Ko so ubili gos, so vsi otroci jokali, ko pa so jo pojedli, so bili vsi veseli."). "Naravne" smrti kot opozicije "nasilni" smrti v južnoslovanski otroški folklori ne najdemo. V južnoslovanskih jezikih je nasilna smrt najpogosteje izražena z besedama "zaklati" in "zadaviti".

Ključne besede: folklor, južni Slovani, smrt, otroštvo, žrtev

Keywords: folklore, South Slavs, death, childhood, victim

The aim of this article is to point at some lacunas evident in contemporary South Slavic folklore research. We have in mind the whole line of children's rhymes that are deliberately completely avoided in both folklore anthologies and textbooks. The main reason for this neglecting is probably the fact that contemporary reader, and even scientific researcher, find these texts morbid.

Our starting point was the distinction between natural and violent death in Slavic perception of the world, considering the violent one a not-one's-own death. The idea

was to check how it is reflected in South Slavic folklore texts, paying special attention to the usage of these texts for and by the children. We will focus only on children's point of view of incidental situation, as it is performed by the adults for children in the early childhood, and how it is performed by children themselves, some years later.

Due to the specific type of material certain terms used in this article need additional explanation. The violent death is frequently displayed in children's folklore through the incidental situation. Incidental situation can remain not effectuated, i.e., remain on mere threat or curse, or some similar verbal expression. This situation is created by actors, that in children's folklore could be directly mentioned in the text itself (directly mentioned actor is the explicitly quoted actor that is unchangeable and not depending on the context), and indirect participants of the incidental situation, so-called contextual actors. Contextual actors take part in the text from the context, from performer's or narrator's standpoint. This actor is changeable, and in each situation of the text performing it is related to the concrete child or children. This child is mentioned by its proper name, or its presence is evident from the use of personal pronoun in first or third person singular. First person is used by child itself or by the narrator instead of the child.

Actors of incidental situation can assume two different positions - the positions of agens or patiens, frequently related by conjunctio instrumentalis (cf. Toporov 1998). In anthroponymic code agens can be, e.g., Aunt, Turk, Queen, or Me. The Wolf or Bear belongs to the zoomorphic code agens, in ridicules agens could even be Hen. The agens in children's curses sometimes is not specified, but it is obvious - the concept of the death in curse being provoked, violent one, e.g.: *tomorrow you will die*. The usage of the distinction ones-own and not-ones-own death related to the patiens in children's folklore can provoke interesting consequences. The violent death (slaughter, where the agens is a man) has completely different status (status of the ones-own death) and it is considered a natural act, even funny, e.g.: *When they killed the goose, all the children cried, when they ate the goose, all were happy*. On the other hand, perishing of the wild animal (disregarding the agens) has a status of not-one's-own death. Natural death of the human being (one's-own death) opposed to the violent one, is rarely found in South Slavic children's folklore.

Specific material of the death orientated children's folklore for the purpose of this article is limited to texts only, children's games being considered solely if their texts are also independently attested, not vice versa. Existence of the same text both within ritual and independently (without context) is always good indication in searching for the text origin, and further for the origin of the motif itself. This treatment will be illustrated mainly with such transformed texts, starting from the children's games, or adults' ritual folklore, children magic texts and other texts of not marked usage. The inverse process was also possible, i.e., some neutral children's text gradually could substitute original incantation texts.

1. Anthropomorphic patiens

1.1. Contextual actor (Child): agens (Aunt, Uncle, She-bear)

Involved contextual actor - child participates in the game as potential victim, as it is said in the text itself. Children's game comprises closed circle, one child in the middle is to be Aunt (*tetka*), with its hands she imitates the process of making cookies. At the end of the rhyme, Aunt becomes angry and drives children away, catches them and strangles them, because of the teasing words of children's singing: *Tetka kolačiće pljeska na bukovu listu, list se provali, tetka se pomami, pa svu decu pognjavi*. ("Aunt is making cookies, on the beech leaf, the leaf broke, aunt went mad, and killed all the children", Vlasenica in Bosnia). This children's game text is well-known all over Serbo-Croat language territory, which is not the case with the game itself. The same text is a song sung to a child while swinging or as a lullaby. According to the agens type all the known variants are divided in three region groups, while the patiens is contextual actor - the child to whom this rhyme is sung. In the East agens is She-bear: *Nuni nuni nuška, kraj Morave kruška. Tuj mi sedi tetka, te mi ljulja Petka, Nuni, nuni, Petko, ete gu ide mečka da udavi Petka*. ("Pear tree beside Morava. There sits my aunt, swinging Petko. Sleep, sleep, Petko, here it comes she-bear to choke you", Niš, Serbia); in central area agens is Uncle: *Ljulja ljulja ljuške, na Moravi kruške. Gde je moja tetka? Kolačiće pljeska. I meni bi dala ali ne da tetak otpao mu repak na veliki petak*. ("Pear trees are on Morava. Where is my aunt? She is petting cookies. She would give them to me, but the uncle would not allow, let his tail fall off on Good Friday", Čačak; Serbia); in western regions text model the agens is Aunt: *Hajdemo mi na more, na zelene javore, gdjeno moja tetka kolačiće pleska na bukovoj ljeski; ljeska se prevali, tetka se pomami*. ("Let us go at the seaside, on green maples, where my aunt is petting cookies on beech leaves, leaf overturned, my aunt became furious", Herzegovina). Starting from the supposition that even in this case peripheral regions are more conservative than central ones, we can suppose that the Uncle is secondary in text variants, together with his action (he would not allow cookies to the child). In that case, the Aunt and She-bear are isofunctional and the incident they provoke is fatal.

The actions performed by the mentioned actor (Aunt), which is not always agens, are: petting cookies, crushing nuts and nibbling hazel-nuts. Searching for explanation of this actor's function, the folk tale about the origin of fleas, lice, nuts and hazel-nuts, can be helpful. An old woman was bored, and she prayed the God: *Daj mi Bože jal ušicu, jal bušicu, ja oraščić, ja lešnjčić - da se zabavljam* ("God, give me louse, or flea, or nut, or hazel-nut, to amuse myself"). Its function in text can be made clear with South Slavic ethnographic data about existing correlation between the children, from one side, and nuts and hazel-nuts from the other. In Samobor, Croatia, people believe that during the year abundant with nuts and hazel-nuts, lots of children will be born, also. For the same purpose (to have many of children) during Montenegrin wedding, people throw nuts and hazel-nuts; Catholics in Karlovac put hazel-nut branch in front of the bride; in Homolje (Northern Serbia) the bride herself puts acorns, hazel-nuts and nuts under her dress in order to give birth to boys only.

Text variants collected in a zone of Balkan language league together with Aunt and Uncle contain She-bear as a text actor. This bear kills (strangles or takes away) the child called Petko. The examples are from Western Bulgaria (Dimitrovgrad, Kjustendil) or from South-eastern Serbia (Boljevac, Niš, Leskovac, Bujanovac). In this region sometimes the Aunt makes a plea to the She-bear not to scare children, but She-bear then strangles the Aunt. The Aunt (*tetka*) in this region is one of euphemisms for the bear. This is the case at Boljevac, at the Saint Andrew - Bear's Day (this festival is known only to the South Slavs, cf. Gura 1997:172, SD s.v. Andrej) when the parents shell corn and show it to the children explaining that the aunt was here and ate dinner. In the vicinity of Pirot the same day is called Aunt's Day (*Tetkin d'n*), and the bear is called *tetka*. Also, in some villages near Niš She-bear is called *teta*, *tetka*. Early in the morning on Bear's Day, the adults show to the children bit corn saying: *Children, the bear was here*, or: *Look, what the aunt ate*. In the village of Hum they make bear traces in snow. On that day working is prohibited, because the bear can strangle a person disobeying that rule, tear his clothes, or make some other damage.

Completely different is the situation to the west from the Balkan language league territory, where the unique text actor is Aunt (*tetka*). Location of this actor (*tetka*) is pear tree, or beech along side the Morava river, or brook, middle of the field, heaven, seaside, green maple, or the Aunt is sitting on beech/pear leaf (connected with following incident: this leaf broke or overturned). Demonic role of the Aunt is evident only through her relationship with the contextual actor (me, my child): *tetka se pomami, svu djecu pognjavi, samo mene ostavi* ('the aunt infuriated and killed all the children but me'). This action is frequently expressed through incidental folklore formula *provali/pomami* (broke/infuriated).

There is a similar situation in children's game *Sije baba mlivo* ('The old woman sowing flour', attested in Bosnia). Children in wheel dancing sing to the Old woman that imitates sowing with sieve: *Seje baba mlivo na rešeto krivo, ne može ga posipati već ga stade prospati* ('The old woman is sowing flour with a torn sieve, she can't do it, so she begins to spill it'). Then, the children blow in flour, old woman gets infuriated and runs after them. The same text is used while swinging child's head in hands: *Sije baba mlivo na rešeto krivo*. ('The old woman is sowing flour with a torn sieve'). The same text is attested without ritual context, only as a song and contains the same incidental formula *provali/pomami* (broke/infuriated): *Sij baba mlivo, na rešeto krivo, rešeto se provali, baba se pomami*. ('Sow, old woman, flower with a torn sieve, the sieve broke, the old woman got infuriated'), or: *Seje baba brašno na dedino krilo. Krilo se provali, baba se pomami pa svu decu podavi*. ('The old woman is sowing flour on the old man's lap. The lap broke, the old woman got infuriated, and strangled all the children'. All these examples come from Bosnia).

Even the connection Aunt : cake is a folklore formula, cf. following proverbs: *Hvala mu kao i tetki bez kolača* ('Thank him like aunt without a cake'), *Bog te sačuvao božićne jugovine i tetina kolača; Ne raduj se božićnoj jugovini ni tetinu kolaču* ('God save you from Christmas south wind and aunt's cake'; 'Don't look forward to Christmas south wind or to aunt's cake'); also, when the child chokes up, others tell him: *Doneće ti tetka kolače* ('The aunt will bring you cakes', Kosovo).

1.2. Contextual actor (Child): patiens (my Mother), agens (Wolf)

In children's folklore mother's death is frequently isofunctional with the death of the actor itself, i.e. child. The illustration for this thesis is the case of involving the child in folklore text already mentioning mother (it implicitly includes a particular child). On the other hand, in the same example polyfunctionality of the same text can be followed, so at Punat, on the island of Krk, there is a saddle shaped stone 'horse' used by children for riding that 'horse'. On this occasion, while riding stone or branch, children say following rhyme: *Ijo, cu, na konja, pal je Marko pod konja, na šenicu bilicu, milu majku zazove, ćiću mu je dala, i još će mu dati, kada ide spati.* ('Jump on the horse, Marko fell under the horse, on the white wheat, he called his dear mother, she gave him breast, and will give it to him again before he goes to sleep'). There is a belief that on the same stone initiation occurs when future magician comes to age, what makes possible supposition that this game, as well as the text, is a relict of some initiation ritual (cf. Bonifačić-Rožin 1976:150-151).

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The same rhyme, with slightly modified incident, is spread all over Serbo-Croatian language territory: *Cucun cucun na konju, vuci majku zakolju, u pšenici u polju. Nemojte ju zaboga, majka mi je dragana, sise mi je davala. Opet će mi davati kad stanemo spavati.* ('Ride on horse, wolfs slaughter the mother, in wheat field. For God's sake, don't do that, she is dear, she gave me her breast. She will give me again before sleep'). The actors provoking incident are almost always wolfs (sometimes a Turk can stand in the place of wolf, or the evil is not named). Only once the victim is described as an old woman. Location is regularly the same: wheat field (rarely: deep brook, broad stone). Further development of the death incident is possible this way: *da je za breg odnesu, da je vrane pojedu* ('to take her behind the hill, for crows to eat her'). Still, this fatal incident remains in text only in a form of threat. Contextual actor - child is begging the wolf not to accomplish his threat, sometimes even offering him some recompensation: *nabraću ti jagoda* ('I'll pick up strawberries for you', transferred without adaptation from the folklore offer to a bear). Some examples of this rhyme have at the end continuation in a form of a children's prayer before sleep.

In folklore children's curses mother's death is used in strictly determined situations. The following one is connected with playing speechless: *ko ne rekne ap, umrla mu mat i najmladji brat.* ('Who wouldn't say ap, may his mother and the youngest brother die', Slavonija). This curse is also used in a situation when some child would not share his food with the other children: *Ko jede sam da mu umre majka.* ('Who is eating alone, may his mother die', Kosovo), or: *Moja ruka prosi ako nećeš dati umreće ti mati sutra u 6 sati* ('My hand is begging, if you don't give anything your mother will die tomorrow at six o'clock', Belgrade). In the same context isofunctionally appears death threat to the child itself: *Podijeli krivoj ruci pa te neće mrki vuci pred djamijom dje klanjaju Turci.* ('Give to the twisted hand, black wolfs will not kill you in front of the mosque where Turks are praying', Kordun). In South Slavic children folklore wolf kills domestic animals, too: *Pojo vuk telce, i popove štence, ne žali pop telce, man on žali štence. Seoski su telci, a popovi štenci.* ('Wolf ate calves and priest's pups. The priest is sorry for pups, not for calves. The calves belong to the village, pups to the priest').

Death threat to the mother in children's folklore is isofunctional with some other incidents, e.g. house fall: *Dete, dete, kokoške ti prete, plovčiči ti govore da ti majku umore*. ('Child, chickens are threatening you, little ducks are talking to kill your mother', Serbia), and: *Dijete, kokoši ti prijete. Orozi ti govore da ti kuću obore*. ('Child, chickens are threatening. Cocks are talking to strike down your house', Bosnia), *Dijete, kokoši ti prijete da ne jedeš jaja za godinu dana za luburu jaja; orozi ti govore, da ti kuću obore*. ('Child, chickens are threatening not to eat eggs for a year, for a dish of eggs, cocks are telling that they will strike down your house', Bosnia).

32 In South Slavic children's folklore some texts are known where incidental situation - wolfs killing mother - is effectuated. The examples are from Slavonia and Bosnia: *Gavran gače sa jele. Pitajte ga što vele? Bome dobro ne vele: vuci ženu pojeli! Čija žena žalostan? Arlova Marija! Arlov žali Mariju, i pečenu pogaču*. ('Raven is cracking at the fir-tree. Ask him what they are saying? Indeed, they don't say good: wolfs have killed the woman! Whose woman, forlorn? Arlov's Maria! Arlov is lamenting Maria and baked cake'). The final segment of this rhyme is unique, it preserves fragments of husband's funeral laments, cf. *Đabar kuka i plače: Jaoj moja Jurija! i kuvana večera i mekana ložnica, i satrena obuća*. ('Đabar, is weeping and crying: ow! my Yuria, and cooked dinner, and soft bedroom and cleaned shoes!') or: *Jaoj moja Urijo, nepredena kudiljo, nevarena večero, neprostrta posteljo!* ('Ow, my Uria, tow not spun, dinner not cooked, bed not prepared!'). This husband's lament reveals ideal women's qualities as wife and housewife. Similar content - praising ideal woman's qualities - is found in some South Slavic wedding laments, where the bride is weeping before wedding in front of her friends, cf. the example from Kosovo: *Zašto ćerku odvojiste? Da li kuću ne pomela? Da li vodu ne donela? Da l ve nije jadona oprala? Da l vi nije izatkala? Da l čarape nije saplela? Da l u trlo nije ulegla? Da li stoku nije pomuzla?* ('Why did you separate your doughtier? Didn't she broom the house? Didn't she bring the water? Didn't she, poor thing, wash you? Didn't she weave? Didn't she knit socks? Didn't she enter the sheep-fold? Didn't she milk the cattle?'), or: *Zar te nije, tajko, izula? Zar ti nije obuću našla? Zar te nije ispratila? Zar te nije pričekala? Zar te nije ponudila? Ni postelju namestila?* ('Didn't she take off your shoes, father? Didn't she bring your shoes? Didn't she see you off? Didn't she meet you? Didn't she offer you? Didn't she prepare the bed?'). The same ideal usage of the women is found in droll children's rhyme from Serbia: *Aoj Ero nevero što si ženu otero, tebi žena treba da ti mesi hleba, ručak da gotovi, večeru da sprema* ('Ow! Era, you treacherous one, why did you throw out your wife, you need her for making bread, cooking lunch, preparing dinner'), or: *ženu mi ne diraj, žena mi treba, da mi mesi leba, ručak da kuva, decu da čuva, gaće da krpi i boj da trpi*. ('Don't touch my wife, I need her, for making bread, for cooking lunch, for looking after children, for mending my pants and for sustaining beating'). This motif of ideal woman is found in Russian wedding laments, even using the same syntax.

2. Anthropomorphic patiens (Others)

2.1. Text actors : ridicules

Children's ridicules texts mention particular victim by name. They are connected with context and with the active presence of the patiens. The victims in the text containing death threat are mentioned as group members, generically, with pointing out their ethnic origin. Certain types of mocking of the aliens contain specific incidental formula: death threat (expressed by the verb "krepati") followed by troublesome funeral (the same text can refer e.g., to the Serb - Vlach, Dalmatian, or Croat - Đokac): *Oj ti Vlaše repati, sutra ti je krepati! Kuku ruci koja će te vući i lopati koja će te kopati; Đokac bokac repati, sutra ćeš nam krepati. Teško onoj ruci koja će te vući, teško onoj lopati koja će te kopati* ("Hey, you Vlach/Croat with a tail, you will die tomorrow! Woe to the hand that will pull you, and to the shovel that will bury you"). Verb *krepati* ("perish miserably") does not reflect one's own death, the act being even temporally planned ("tomorrow; when"). The same text is used for the citizens of the town of Šabac: *Šabačani repati, kada ćete krepati? Teško onoj ruci koja će vas vući! Teško onoj lopati koja će vas kopati!* It can be used by Orthodox people to the Catholics: *Latinine repati, sutra ćeš mi krepati, teško onoj ruci, koja će te vući, teško onoj lopati, koja će te kopati*, and vice versa, by Catholics to the Orthodox: *Kudrovine repati, sutra ćeš mi krepati* (both examples from Sarajevo). In Bosnia the same text is used for Gypsies.

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Other incidental formula, typical of Serbia, describes pest (*čuma*) that kills all except one, insulting at the same time their mother. It may again be aimed at members of certain ethnicity, e.g. Gypsies: *Ciganka Banka kurva joj majka, mnogu decu porodila, došla čuma te pobila. Sam' ostalo Janče Jovanče* ("Gypsy banka, her mother is a whore, she gave birth to many children, then pest came and killed them. Janče Jovanče just remained"), or residents of different villages, e.g. village Ljubinci: *vaša majka djavoljajka, mnogu decu porodila, došla čuma te pobila, sal ostao taraban* ("Your mother is devilish, then pest came and killed them, just taraban remained"), village Obrež: *Vaša majka torolajka. Mnogu decu naradjala, došla čuma te potrla, sal ostao Baloban* ("Your mother is a whore. She had a lot of children, then pest came and killed them, just Baloban remained"), residents of the other side of Morava river: *sve ih majka porodila sve ih čuma pogodila, samo jedan ostao* ("all of them mother bore, all of them the pest struck, just one remained").

2.2. Text actors: old woman and old man

Completely different is the incidental situation describing violence between an old couple. The old woman (*baba*) and old man (*deda*) in the following examples are common, patiens is not personalised. From the synchronical point of view this incident operates as a humorous one because of the inverse picture of usual gender behaviour. The examples are from Bosnia, Lika, Istria: *Seje/kuva baba lobodu, posla dedu po vodu, nema dede: - leti baba poskokom, nadje dida pod plotom: tikva ga je pritisla pa mu dušu istisla* ("The old woman is sowing/cooking orach; she sends her old man to bring the water, there is no old man: old woman runs and jumps, she finds the old man under the

fence: a pumpkin pressed him and squeezed his soul”) or: *Podje baba u skok, nadje dida uz plot. Uze baba kablinu, razbi didu glavinu. Ne žali baba glavine, nego svoje kabline* (“The old woman jumps, she finds the old man beside the fence. The old woman took a big tub, and crashed old man’s head. The old woman is not grieving for the head, but for her big tub”).

Ritual context of Macedonian Christmas carol with the same actors and similar incidental situation: *padnalo grede, utepalo dede* (“beam fell and killed the old man”), the old woman is mourning by ridiculous lament: *O lele starče, kuso magarče* (“Oh, woe, old man, donkey without a tail”), can be the clue for the explanation of similar South Slavic children’s texts.

3. Zoomorphic patiens

3.1. Death threat: snail

In children’s incantation text directed to the snail with a command to stretch his horns, patiens is snail, present during the text performance, agens being contextual actor, that is the child pronouncing the rhyme. This structure is typical of children’s incantation texts, although death threat does not come regularly (cf. completely different attitude toward the ladybird). Death threat to a snail exists with other Slavic peoples, e.g. with the Kashubs. South Slavic variants are explicit: *ako nećeš pustiti, mi ćemo te ubiti* (“if you don’t want to stretch them, we will kill you”), *ja ću tebe ubiti, na zelenoj travi, sikirom po glavi* (“I will kill you, on the green grass, with an axe on your head”, both examples from Serbia). Isofunctional to death threat is the threat of destroying the snail’s house: *ako je nećeš pustiti hižu ću ti prodati* (“if you don’t want to stretch it, I will sell your house”); *da ti kuće ne prodam starom dedi/babi za duhan* (“I will sell your house and buy tobacco for the old man/woman”); *caru i carici za krajcaricu* (“to the king and queen for kreuzer”, Bosnia, Croatia), *če ne ti bodem hišo potrlj*; or: *drugač ti hišo poderem* (“if not I will break your house; otherwise I will tear your house”, Slovenia). It is likely that following examples of the threat of breaking the dishes could refer to the snails house: *ja ću tebe ubiti i sudove razbiti; polupaću ti sudove* (“I will kill you and break dishes: I will smash your dishes”, Northern Serbia). Even in this text appears as issofunctional the threat of mother’s death: *da ti mati ne umre, da ti djeca ne plaču, da ti kruha ne ištu, da ti vode ne piju* (“that your mother not die, that your children not cry, not ask for a bread, not drink water”, Bosnia). Ethnographic evidences about the children’s attitude toward snail show that this threat in fact is later frequently effectuated.

3.2. Effectuated death: swallow

Zoomorphic victims of the incident always are mentioned in the text. Basic difference in the folklore status of zoomorphic victim consists in the fact that for domestic animals violent death (caused by man) is one’s-own death, what is not the case with wild animals, especially not with inedible ones.

Folklore text presents the death of a swallow as a violent one, not-one’s-own death. In the children’s text present in the whole Balkan Slavic region (Macedonia, Bulgaria,

Southeast Serbia) determined by collectors as lullaby, counting-out rhyme, or simply children's rhyme to a swallow (when children see that bird, at Macedonia and Bulgaria) there is an invitation for the swallow to prepare feathers for the dinner. The swallow is answering: "I don't feel like having dinner, because my fledgling is killed." Some variants describe the incident: *Carica ga je nagazila i creva mu isterala*; *Carička ga nastanula na zlo mesto na slabinu* ("The queen stepped on him, and squeezed his intestines; Queen stepped on his wrong place, on flank"), *Car mi ga je nagazio* ("The king stepped on him", Eastern Serbia, Bulgaria); in the variant from Levač: *orlica ga raščupala na zlo mesto na grbinu* ("The eagle dishevelled him on the wrong place, on back"). Beside its evident presence in the South Slavic children's folklore, this text appears in some East Serbian collections as a Serbian family feast (*slava*) song.

3.3. Effectuated death: goose

Zoomorphic victim killing (slaughtering) is in children folklore accepted as a regular event, the death of one domestic animal serving for food is one's-own death. This is clearly expressed in following nursery rhyme: *Delengu, delengu, četir guske na leglu* (or: *četir guske bele sedam jaja snele*), *a kad su ih zaklali svi smo redom plakali. A kad smo ih pojeli svi smo bili veseli*. ("four geese on the nest/four white geese laid seven eggs, when they slaughtered them we all cried. But, when we ate them, we were all happy", Serbia, Slavonia, Bosnia), or: *Mi tu gusku zaklasmo pa za njome plakasmo nije mi žao guske, ko od guske peruške* ("We slathered this goose and cried for her, I was not sorry for the goose, as for goose's feather", Slavonia), *Jednu gusku zaklaše, svu noć deca plakaše, ćuti, ćuti, dilbere, kupiću ti cipele* ("One goose was slaughtered, all night children cried, be silent, be silent, my dear, I will buy you shoes", Radjevina, Serbia).

3.4. Zoomorphic patiens: others

In the following children's rhyme from Bosnia, slaughtering of rooster or cow include implicitly wedding context: *Šta na piru bi, bi? - Zaklaše pjevca krilaša, nametnuše kupusa glavaša; zaklaše kravu Gutuju, dovedoše Fatu Rutuju* ("What was on the wedding? They slaughtered winged rooster, they put on him big-headed cabbage; they slaughtered cow called Gutuja, they brought Fata Rutuja"). Such treatment is expected in other ritual contexts, e.g. in Macedonian and Western Bulgarian Christmas songs: *Idat Božik, nosit nože da kolime tele; tele velit: lele, ne koli mene, koli ga zajka/kokoš* ("Christmas is coming, it is caring the knife for slaughtering the calf; calf is speaking: wou, don't slaughter me, slaughter rabbit/hen"). The same motif appears in the Christmas song from Pelješac (Dalmatia): *a žene su dobre ćudi (...) ubit će jalovicu, počastit će me, ispeć će peč kruha (...) provrtit će bačvu vina* ("Women have good temper, they will kill barren cow, they will stand me a treat, they will bake an oven full of bread, they will open barrel of vine"). One text of St. Lazarus day procession from Southern Serbia mentions slaughtering of a hen: *naš je Lazar u selo. Meste mu pogače, koljite mu kokošku, točete mu rakiju* ("Our Lazarus is in the village. Knead for him round cake, slaughter for him a hen, pour for him brandy"). In all these examples it is possible to consider these animal victims as parts of the food code.

Slaughtering of an domestic animal folklore text can treat even as an award, e.g. in mockery to the crying child, due to the later processing of the animal into high quality food: *Riči, riči, magare, preko blata u bare, zaklaćemo junicu, daćemo ti uzicu i njezino crivo, da ti nije krivo*. (“Roar, roar, donkey, across the mud toward pond, we will slaughter heifer, we will give you string and her bowel, may you not feel injured”); *Čuva plačko goveda i babinu junicu (...) Zakla baba junicu, dade Ibri nožicu*. (“Cry-baby is keeping cattle and old woman’s heifer. Old woman slaughtered the heifer and gave to Ibro the leg”), *Zakla baba junicu, dade plačku guzicu*. (“Old woman slaughtered the heifer and gave ass to cry-baby”).

36 On the other hand, natural death of a domestic animal (dying of a calf, or a cow, e.g.) in the folklore text is an unnatural fact, i. e., material damage: *Kuku lele, krepa babi tele; šuti baba sjutra će i krava*. (“Woe, old woman’s calf died, keep silent, old woman, the cow will die tomorrow”). Material damage, consequently from the folklore perspective is perishing of some domestic animal caused by wolf or bear, cf., e.g. Russian curse to the landlady not willing to reward members of the ritual procession: *Pervaja beda - lošad’ so dvora, vtoraja beda - korova so dvora, vaša skotinka zabludissja! Volk sožret, i medved’ obderet!* (“First evil - to take the horse from the yard, second evil - to take the cow from the yard, your cattle to disappear! Let the wolf devour and bear scratch!”)

Possible global conclusions on synchronic basis derived from here presented South Slavic children’s folklore should take into account it’s relative conservatism, and consequently, possibility of persistence of some archaic traces in it. Close connections between the texts containing the death motif and the adult’s ritual texts or incantations is evident. This fact makes possible supposition that in past difference between the folklore of adults and that belonging to children was not evident, like it is today. Here analyzed South Slavic children’s folklore texts can serve as a ground for dyachronic ethno-linguistic research of the concept of Death in Old Slavic culture. From the other side, it is necessary to emphasize that violence and cruelty are inherent to the children’s folklore in general.

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