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Nikola SUNARA (Split)

Filozofski fakultet Sveučilišta u Splitu

niksun@ffst.hr

Marko DRAGIĆ (Split)

Filozofski fakultet Sveučilišta u Splitu

mdragic@ffst.hr

FAIRY WORLD IN CROATIAN MYTHOLOGICAL TALES AND PETAR GUDELJ'S POETRY AND PROSE

Procopius of Caesarea, Byzantine writer and member of the court of Byzantine emperor Justinian I described the customs of Slavs who infiltrated the Byzantine territory in the 6th century A.D. In his piece *De Bellis* he wrote that Slavs especially worshiped nymphs (fairies) and rivers. Jacobus da Varagine also wrote about fairies in his cult piece *Legenda Aurea* written in 1275 and published for the first time in 1470. In Croatian mythology, fairies are commonly mythological creatures. In Slavic and Croatian mythology, fairies are fabulous beauties, almost always dressed in long white, less often blue, dresses, with combed long golden-yellow hair, blue or green eyes, a flower wreath on their head, harmonious voice, quick and lean. They are an incarnation of beauty. In Croatian tales, fairies endowed people with physical and spiritual strength; gave strength to weak shepherds; bestowed beauty upon girls. According to the Croatian tales, fairies taught people to be considerate, humble, and kind and instructed girls and women in weaving, making bread, healing, and other skills. Also, according to tales, they protected children from danger. It is said that they did evil only if someone annoyed them by betraying the secret that one of their feet had donkey or horse hoofs or goat cloven hoofs.

Fairies can be found in many literary works written by Croatian writers, such as Marin Držić, Petar Zoranić, Juraj Baraković, and many others. Numerous Croatian writers have produced literary pieces of anthological value inspired by stories about fairies. Among them is Petar Gudelj considered by historians of

Croatian literature to be the greatest living Croatian poet. Therefore, paper analyses Petar Gudelj's collection of poems and prose *Zmija mladoženja* in search of fairy motifs and compares them to relevant literature and Croatian mythological tales.

Keywords: *mythology, fairies, Petar Gudelj, traditional stories, folk beliefs*

1. Introduction

Fairies are the most common mythological creature in Croatian folklore. They are the companions of heroes in oral stories and poems. The fairies are leaders and advisors in many Croatian literary works such as *Tirena* by Marin Držić, *Planine* by Petar Zoranić or *Vila Slovinka* by Juraj Baraković and other authors. The fairies are mythical inhabitants of impassable and mysterious mountains whose peaks rise above valleys inhabited by people whose admiration, awe and imagination they provoke.

The following paper offers a review of knowledge about the fairies in Croatian tradition. Texts from Petar Gudelj's collection of poems and prose *Zmija mladoženja* in which fairies occur as one of the central motifs are compared with the before mentioned knowledge about fairies. Those who are aware of the abundance of tales about the fairies in the foothills of Biokovo and in Imotska Krajina are not to be surprised by the fact that the fairies are an important element in the poetry of Petar Gudelj who is connected by his birth and life to that area.

The aim of the paper is to compare Gudelj's characterization of the fairies with the perceptions of them which were recorded by scientist and collectors of immaterial cultural heritage in the field. Results of the comparative analysis will indicate in what manner the Gudelj's image of fairies differs from the oral tradition and in which manner it coincides.

2. Origin of the fairies

The first mention of fairies is found in *De Bellis*, a work by 6th century Byzantine writer Procopius of Caesarea, in which he says that Slavs specially worshiped fairies and rivers (Dragić 2018: 133). Orbini mentions them in *The Realm of the Slavs* while talking about Slavic beliefs: *They also worship forests and fairies with other demons to whom they offer sacrifices and while making sacrifices, they prophesy* (Orbini 1999: 86). Zovko in *Vjeronjanja iz Herceg-Bosne* (1901: 144) says that fairies come from India and that every country and town have exactly twelve fairies and that there can be neither more nor less of

them. In case something bad happens to one of the fairies, their elder will send a substitution from India while the injured fairy recuperates. According to a tale recorded by Kutleša (1993: 396), they are the daughters of Adam and Eve whom they hid from God because they were ashamed of their great number. When He came to visit them, he did not find their daughters and so they did not receive His blessing. However, He showed them mercy and, instead of blessing and heavenly delight, gave them strength, beauty, speed, power over clouds, water, mountain regions, and desserts. Dragić (2013: 197) cites several tales about the origin of the fairies. In the first tale, they came to be when Adam and Eve hid six of twelve of their children from God and so He told them: *How many visible, so many invisible*, thus turning the hidden children into faeries. In the second tale, God turned Eve's most beautiful daughters, whom she kept secret from Him, into fairies and they have always existed and will exist until the Last Judgment of the world. According to the third tale, Adam and Eve had fifty children. As they were ashamed of bringing all of them for baptism, they led just thirty of their children. God got angry at them because they hid the remainder of their children from Him and He told them that the children who were left at home would all be witches and fairies. Croats believed, says Dragić, that fairies were the souls of the prematurely deceased or murdered girls or children. In most cases, it was believed that girls who died young became fairies. Šešo (2016: 26–28) cites a tale about the origin of fairies which was recorded by Lovretić in Otok in Slavonia. According to that tale, the fairies originate from Adam and Eve who hid half of their children from God, and God turned those children into fairies. He brings other tales about the origin of fairies in which God turns all of Adam's daughter into fairies, or He punishes Cain for murder by making wolves, dogs, snakes, fairies, succubi and sorceresses from his blood.

Fairy in Gudelj's short story *Pra-pradidov rubac* identified herself as the young man's sister and Adam's daughter: *This is given to you by your sister, daughter of Adam* (2007: 273). This is in accordance with the tales of the fairies' origin in which they are Adam's and Eve's hidden children. The story entitled *Mari se Kajinjoj poznalo* is about a girl who got pregnant but was not accepted by her mother and for that reason she committed suicide by jumping into a pit where both she and her child were accepted by the fairies inhabiting the pit (Gudelj 2007: 287–288). Transformation of Mare, who ended her life by jumping into a pit, is in accordance with the tales that speak of prematurely deceased or murdered girls and children becoming fairies. A poem about *rusalki* also matches the mentioned tales and says that they were girls: *Engaged, unwed, unloved. Which were taken from their wedding, before / being kissed, by death and brought to whirlpools of the wide rivers behind the Carpathians. / To the other world* (Gudelj 2007: 295).

2.1. Types of fairies

Ivan Kukuljević Sakcinski dedicated special attention to the fairies in a text he published in sequences in *Danica* from October 3rd to November 7th 1846. He noticed that in the earlier papers the fairies were compared to the Roman nymphs. He categorizes and places them into three elements, air, earth, water, and quotes their folk names: *vila oblakinja*, *vila planinkinja* or *podgor-kinja* and *vila vodena*. Taking into consideration their spiritual characteristics, fairies can be good and evil. Thus, air fairies are always good, water fairies are always evil, and earth fairies have an ambivalent character, sometimes they are good, and sometimes they are evil (Kukuljević 1846a: 160). He divides earth fairies into the mountain and field fairies (Kukuljević 1846c: 167). Water fairies, in accordance with the folk belief, are divided into two groups. The first group consists out of those which are half fish and half girl and are always in water, especially in the sea. The folk calls them sea virgins, sea-girls or sea-maids. The second group physically resemble beautiful pale girls and live in rivers, lakes, wells and springs and which they gladly come out of. They are called underwater fairies (Kukuljević 1846d: 177). Kutleša (1993: 396) says that the folk thinks that there are three types of fairies. The first group contains the real fairies which are beautiful, slim and tall, have blue or green eyes, golden hair, and are almost always dressed in white, rarely blue. *Vilci*, so called by Kutleša, are in the second group. They are male and that is the only characteristic that differentiates them from the fairies. Because of their small number, fairies look for partners among humans. The last group that Kutleša mentions are *vilenjaks*. They are the favorites of the fairies among the humans and so they are lucky, rich, and heroic and can even fly after fairies turn them into *vilenjaks*. According to Dragić, considering their habitat people divide faeries into cloud fairies, mountain fairies, water fairies, and lake fairies¹. It is believed, he continues, that there are nine types of fairies and, along with that, only in Biokovo's hinterland stories are told about the existence of black fairies (2013: 198–199). Fairies can be good, evil and of ambivalent character. Good fairies are not always good, but sometimes punish people who do not hold up their part of the agreement or those whom they deem not worthy of

¹ In Jajce and its surrounding area tales are told about lake faeries: *Long time ago, in the old times, in the rapids by the watermills, lake faeries used to bathe. As all faeries, they were beautiful and young. A miller fell in love with one of the young and beautiful faeries. Wanting to be with her forever, he jumped into the rapids under the watermill. He never returned nor was found. Everyone knew how much he loved the fairy, so no one cried nor wrote an obituary. Everyone knew that he went to meet his loved one and that they were happy now.* (Dragić 2008: 430).

them. Because of that, they are characterized as mild, rather than exclusively good. It is believed that evil fairies do evil deeds when they are provoked or when people misbehave and they take revenge on them (Šešo 2016: 30, 34).

Gudelj mentions sea and mountain fairies in the poem *Vilinsko vrime* (2007: 285) and *rusalki* in the eponymous poem for which he says that they are in rivers, *our prematurely deceased sisters and loved ones* (2007: 295).

2.2. Perception of faeries

All fairies, according to Kukuljević, are beautiful young women with a pale face and dressed in white. Their hair is golden and long and when unbound it reaches their heels. Their body is slim and often compared to fir and they are light like birds. Fairies' eyes pierce like lightning and their voice is melodious so a person who once hears faeries' song can no longer listen to the human voice and spends its whole life in heartache caused by that pleasure. He who sees a fairy constantly yearns for her beauty and, not finding pleasure in earthly beauties anymore, soon dies of grief (Kukuljević 1846a: 160). However, all fairies do not look the same. Tellers in some places told Kukuljević that earth fairies have goat legs (Kukuljević 1846c: 167). Zovko cites donkey leg as their physical characteristic and mentions how fairies when meeting people looked if someone was looking at their donkey leg which they hid under their dresses. If the interlocutor tried to see the donkey leg, they stopped the conversation immediately and took vengeance inflicting evil on him, his family and their property. They dressed in dresses which they borrowed from women during the night who never knew that fairies were wearing their clothes. Every day they had to change their dress because if they did not do so, they would die. They returned the borrowed dresses in the same condition and in the same place they found them earlier. The fairy song they used to perform in the *kolo* reminded of bees buzzing more than of singing (Zovko 1901: 145–146). Filakovac (1905: 144) describes fairies as women with a very beautiful waistline, in long white clothes, with long golden hair that almost reaches their legs. They moved as if they were levitating and no one ever saw their face. In Poljica, Ivanišević notes, fairy looked like a young girl and the only thing distinguishing it from humans was that instead of human legs she had mule hoofs. With a blushed face and dressed in white, she had long unbound hair reaching the ground, while some fairies braided their long hair. Not all of the fairies had the same complexion or color and he cites that within them there were four different drops of blood: white, blue, yellow and black. White was Christian, blue the Orthodox, yellow Jewish and black Romany (Ivanišević 1905: 254). In his recording from Bukovica, Ardalić (1917: 302) notes

that the fairies were very beautiful girls in shiny clothes that no one could look at. Up to the knee, their leg was from a mule, but the person who would notice that was wise not to wonder about it or laugh because the fairy would take revenge on the disrespectful people. The folk recounts different beliefs on the fairy legs. Some think that they had goat feet, others mention donkey hoofs, and the remaining believe that the people invented that to explain the fact that the fairies were always encountered in high and inaccessible places which could only be reached by goats. The characteristic people warn about is fairy sensitivity because the individual who would betray a fairy or give away her secret would suffer a serious punishment (Kutleša 1993: 396). In the paper about the spiritual culture of littoral Bunjevci, Škrbić (2000: 219) says that fairies were perceived as relatively noble and physically attractive beings. They were assumed to be the creatures on the side of God because they helped Mary and Jesus. The whiteness they wore is evidence of their innocence because fairies never get married. Their beauty was only disturbed by the hoof. Čiča, in his book *Vilenica i vilenjak* (2002: 77), connected two labels to fairies. They are white and stepsisters. When describing their appearance, Dragić (2013: 198–199) highlights their beauty, long golden-yellow combed hair, blue or green eyes, and long white or rarely blue dresses. They only inflicted evil upon those who would betray that they had one horse or donkey hoof or goat's cloven hoof. Special attention was given to fairies' hair because it was believed that it possessed strength and life so heroes often used to wear hairs on their belt which would give them strength and made them invincible. Those who would pull out a fairies' hair would become victims of their curse and the fairy who lost a hair would die of grief. For that reason, fairies richly rewarded those who would untangle their hair without breaking a single hair. Records gathered by Vuković are in agreement with the conclusion of the before mentioned researchers because in her case fairies are also described as beautiful girls dressed in white with long hair and donkey hoofs instead of legs which give them away as fairies. The fact unique to recordings from the Zagvozd area is that fairies' hair had a foul smell because of the parasites living in their hair. For that reason, people who would run into a fairy would have to be exceptionally careful not to insult her, thus they would have to tell her that her hair smells good in order to avoid her retribution. Fairies were also vengeful to those who talked to other people that they encountered them. Vuković (2013: 11–12) concludes that in their essence fairies are not malevolent nor dangerous to those who do not insult or betray them. In *Vile s Učke* Rudan (2016: 300–305) describes fairies as supernatural beings similar to women and tales compared them to nuns because they lived in a secluded female community. In her book it is emphasized that fairies used *zaprežić*, a

part of their garment, to carry rocks when they built the Pula Arena. Other important characteristics of the fairies as underlined by the author are enormous strength evident in examples in which fairies carried large stone blocks for the building of Arena, but at the same time they were depicted as clumsy for miscalculating the time so they were unable to complete the Arena before the sunrise or they lost the stone blocks along the way. In all parts of Croatia, Šešo notices (2016: 24), fairies were described as beautiful and gorgeous and they symbolized happiness and yearning. Confronted with the contemporary situation in the field he concludes that nowadays believes in fairies are rare, but people still tell stories about them and describe them in accordance with the common features of fairies: beauty, combing of long hair, animal forms that deforms their beauty. The same author cites their negative traits, namely arrogance, vanity, and vengefulness. He, as well, mentions a tale in which God punished fairies for boasting about their beauty by turning their feet into hoofs (Šešo 2016: 34–35).

Fairies in Gudelj's story *Sinovi Cvite Mikrutove* are described as beauties: *All day long they walked with them around the fair, everyone was in awe of their beauty (...)* (2007: 76). They were similarly depicted in a story whose framework Gudelj took from Fr. Silvestar Kutleša: *She is beautiful, two eyes cannot get enough of looking at her (...)* (2007: 298). In *Pra-pradidov rubac* fairy is described as tallish (2007: 272) and the same is repeated in *Petar Delipetar* (2007: 298) and in the story about fairy named Ljupka, also taken from Kutleša: *In every manner similar to girls of her age, just taller and more beautiful* (2007: 299). Fairies are dressed in white or blue in the story about sons of Cvita Mikrutova: *(...) all marveled at their beauty, white and blue clothes and no one knew who they were* (2007: 76). Young fairy from *Pra-pradidov rubac* (2007: 272) and Ljupka from the eponymous story (2007: 299) were dressed in white as well as the young fairy who crossed Iva Nenadić's path in the evening when she was returning home with her flock of sheep (2007: 302). The fairy who was harassing Petar Delipetar during his midday rest from hard labor was dressed in blue. Gudelj described the fairies which were following the Mikruts as having long and blonde hair (2007: 76). In the poem *Staroslavenska večera* Slavic women blonde and longhaired, in linen dresses reaching their heels, were no different from the fairies (2007: 294). The fairy unbound her yellow hair in front of Petar Delipetar (2007: 298) and Iva Nenadić saw a young girl of ten or twelve years, with goldish hair reaching her waist (...) passing in front of her (2007: 302). Ljupka's hair, aside from being long and golden, glowed in the dark: *the Karamatić's while dining did not light a candle: her hair was their light* (2007: 299). Fairies watched the sons of Cvita Mikrutova with their blue eyes (2007: 76) and eyes of Stipan's fairy

stepsister were *wide, deep, blue* (2007: 273). In the poem *Vilinsko vrime* their eyes were flashing (2007: 285) and in *Staroslavenska večera: Their eyes were glowing blue and silver from spring under Velebit and Biokovo* (2007: 294). Rusalki's eyes became *waterish* (2007: 295) and Ljupka watched gently at Ivan Skalešić Kutleša and *the glow of her eyes, blue and purple, quivered over his face* (2007: 300). The narrator's great-grandfather Stipan in *Pra-pradidov rubac* heard the fairy's song before he saw the fairy. *At noon over Jamutina I heard a girl singing, quiet and harmonious: not sure if it is a girl singing or a wild bee buzzing* (2007: 272). Gudelj mentions flapping of fairy's wings in the poem *Vilinsko vrime* (2007: 285) and in the tale about Ljupka he noted that she did not have wings (2007: 299). In *Vilinsko vrime* he compared fairies to girls and noticed that (...) *you could not differentiate fairies from girls nor girls from fairies* (2007: 285). In *Staroslavenska večera* he says: *Our wives and girlfriends, blonde and longhaired, in linen dresses reaching their heels, were no different than the fairies, so many among us, in the early dawn, took a fairy with him on the journey* (2007: 294). He also records differences between women and fairies when Petar Delipetar notices: *I see: she is not one of us. Everything about her is like in other girls, but different, unusual, stranger. She is beautiful, two eyes cannot get enough of looking at her, and she is charming and nice, but, none the less, I am afraid of her* (2007: 298). Gudelj gave special attention to rusalki and says that their eyes became *waterish* and their hair green. He compares their yellow-green hair to willows: *As willows, they unbind their hair and let it down the river. So, their hair / gets mixed with the vegetation* (2007: 295). Their kisses are cold and they smell of mud like river fishes. When they get out of the river and into the wheat and rye fields, their hair is silver and green like rye (2007: 195).

2.3. Fairy habitats

Air fairies live among the stars and clouds. They left our world when it changed (Christening is cited as a possible reason) and populated the stars. The fairies that inhabit the clouds have their city of gold, crimson and pearls (Kukuljević 1846b: 164). Mountain fairies reside on mountains, hills and in forests. Their palaces are located inside caves, pits, and grottos. Field fairies live in the fields and plains. The same author says that in the old times they gladly walked over meadows and pastures and at the threshing floors and crossroads they had their playgrounds or sat and combed their golden hair. Water fairies reside in the sea, rivers, lakes, wells, and springs (Kukuljević 1846d: 175–177). Filakovac (1905: 144) lists meadows, edges of forests, water, garbage dumps and ash dumps as places where fairies are seen at dusk or in

the early morning. Ardalić (1917: 303) wrote that fairies inhabit inaccessible locations like high ledges or *kukovi*. Forest fairies (*nagorkinje*), as recorded by Škrbić (2000: 219), live on wooded hills, and Čiča (2002: 95–96) states that fairies inhabit *clean locations* and can usually be seen under oaks, elm, pear and hawthorn trees. Those trees stand out with their beauty, size or position and people avoid going to the *clean locations* so as not to anger the fairies. Dragić (2013: 198) lists clouds, mountains, forests, fields, caves, wells, creeks, rivers, lakes, seas as places where fairies reside and precisely names Biokovo, Mosor, Omiš, and Velebit as Dalmatian fairy habitats. In Vuković's paper (2013: 10) fairies occupy mountain areas, pits, caves, meadows. Šešo (2016: 29) finds fairies dwelling in secluded places far from people, such as caves, mountains, pits, holes in the ground, steep cliffs.

Gudelj's fairies most commonly reside in pits. In the poem, *Svim svojim pšeničnim tijelom* fairies sleep in the Dvogrļača pit (2007: 6). Fairy palace is situated in the Jamutina pit in the story *Pra-pradidov rubac* (2007: 272). The following verses can be found in the poem *Vilinsko vrime: Around us, under us, above us, fairies. In caves, in pits, in clouds* (2007: 285). Fairies from *Staroslavenska večera* have inhabited *Adriatic caves and pits. Their blue and silver eyes could be seen in undersea sources beneath Velebit and Biokovo* (2007: 294). Fairy Ljupka answered a question about the fairies' habitats as follows: *We reside in high mountains. In caves and pits, lakes and clouds*. She especially highlighted mountain Vran as a place of fairy assembly (2007: 299).

2.4. Fairies' activities

Fairies, according to Kukuljević (1846a: 161), can change their appearance and take qualities of fairies belonging to a different element, but all of them are wise healers, fortune-tellers, and prophets and can overpower any human being with their wisdom and strength. Furthermore, fairies forge extremely sharp sabres that can even cut through stone, they build fast ships and give away superb horses which have no equal in the world. The air fairies collect thunder and lightning and watch over the world from above. Sometimes they come down to the ground to prophesy to people and defend them from evil or to teach young people different arts. In the area surrounding Križevci, it was believed that every young Friday (the first Friday of the month) a fairy would come down to teach women how to cure and be of service to people (Kukuljević 1846b: 164). The mountain fairies hunt over mountain areas and are armed with arrows. They also sing, dance *kolo*, prophesy and cure people. When they are in a good mood, they talk to people and animals and ride horses and deer. Occasionally, a conflict emerges among them and

then the mountain roars with screams and the ground shakes. The earth fairies invite young heroes, shepherds, and hunters to their dances where they bestow on them good and bad luck in accordance with their will. The author mentions examples of men marrying the mountain fairies and fairies giving birth to children which they plant to ordinary women. These children are smarter than human but have no other fairy characteristics. He also emphasizes that the mountain fairies preferred to sing and prophesy (Kukuljević 1846c: 167–168). He mentions that they were seen under the moonlight around the graves of murdered people dancing in a circle carrying torches. The field fairies were good and they helped with the field work, but since the people have changed their old customs and started fighting, the fairies have disappeared from the Croatian fields and can rarely be seen by people they like (Kukuljević 1846d: 176–177). The water fairies, Kukuljević (1846d: 177) points out, are almost always malevolent. They lure young men to water so they could pull them into the deep from which there is no coming back. They leave water under the moonlight to dance on the hills. Sometimes they throw something into the water to make it poisonous and the people who drink that water die of poisoning. It is believed that people should not drink the water in which the fairies live because they always watch over it and are especially angry if someone blurs the water. When they do not have a reason to inflict evil, they try to set people against each other because it gives them a pleasure to see people killing each other (Kukuljević 1846e: 180). Zovko (1901: 145) noted that fairies eat on a squared stone and that they only eat green food. Filakovac (1905: 144–145) mentions that fairies dance *kolo* to bagpiper's song. A mark of their dance remains behind them, especially on uncut grass, and around the mark, a white foam can be seen that the people believe to be the fairy saliva. Fairies give birth to children, but there is no mention of male fairies. When the fairy child is baptized, the fairies from that region assemble in celebration under a big tree. The person who would disrupt their celebration would get into great trouble. Ivanišević states that fairies comb their hair with golden combs, wash their faces on wells, buzz like bees when singing and cannot be understood. They eat noble food: honey, butter, young lamb and pork. They walk around caves, wells, and dance *kolo* on meadows which leaves a mark behind them.²

² This tale was recorded in 2011 in Vinovo Gornje: *A man called Stipan Matas told me this. He is from Kladnjice, his mother from Gotovci. And he told me – he was born in 1895 – when he was a boy, a woman from Matasi married Marko Gotovac from Gotovci. Her name was Anđelija. And she, that Anđelija, was with her sheep, and Stipan was close to her. And fairies... there were, as he said, eight or ten of those fairies, approximately, on a meadow, in Dubrava. And they called Anđelija: – Hey, Anđelija, hey, Anđelija, come over and we will dance kolo! And she replied:*

They have wings and can fly and they are known to take horses and ride them during the night. In the morning that animal is found by its owners tired with its mane tangled in ten, twelve folds. Those horses are thought to be lucky, and if their mane is untangled, it gets tangled up again on its own (Ivanišević 1905: 254–255). In the Bukovica area, fairies have helped heroes since the ancient times and it was said that the people who learned about the medicinal herbs from the fairies are *from the fairy side*. Fairies prefer to comb their hair when the sun is shining while it is raining at the same time. People should be particularly careful when the fairies are singing because they easily fall asleep and the fairies can hurt them. In that area as well, people emphasize the danger of stepping on a mark left behind by a fairy dance, especially with your left foot (Aradalić 1917: 302–303). Some of the tellers expressed their belief to Škrbić that fairies dance *kolo* during the night in open places which leaves a mark called *vilenjsko* or *vilensko kolo*. Those kinds of places should be avoided because, according to teller's testimony, fairies can lift people who trespass on that ground in the air. People living around Velebit and Kapela, who spoke of fairies to the author, highlighted their ability to fly and mentioned that during the night they steal people's horses which they ride or use to thresh wheat. The horses are returned to their stable before the dawn, but marked by a tangled mane. They believe that fairies can do all of the earthly businesses much faster than people (Škrbić 2000: 219). Čiča (2002: 96) notes that in Lika wind is related to fairies because, according to a tale, they create it and wind can seize a person and throw him or her somewhere or the fairies use a whirlwind to bring the people they want to themselves. The same author (2002: 97–98) mentions fairies' malice in situations when someone offends them and the danger of stepping on a mark left behind by a fairy dance. The fairies, according to Dragić, seduced young men in their sleep, cured people, helped poor girls to weave attire for marriage, helped weak shepherds, took

– *May the devil take you, you have harassed me, she said, a couple of days ago, whole day, and now you call me again.*

And Stipan, he was with his flock. She was also, that Anđelija. And they kept calling her and calling her and he said: I will go over there and see those fairies.

– *And they – girls. Fairies – girls. They have long hair up to... up to the middle of their back.*

– *Beautiful, – he said, – girls, these fairies – he told me. – But, – he said, – those fairies have donkey legs. Legs like a donkey. And they started dancing kolo with her; and she, that Anđelija, danced with them, on that meadow – it is called Dubrava. And when they... when she had had enough of it... she could not dance as they could – devil only knows how long would they dance – so, they called Anđelija many times to dance with them, those fairies. But they are beautiful, you know. And... the only thing that diminishes them, you know, donkey legs. And now, that Anđelija was seen a couple of times, that she would dance with them. But she would not want to dance. No. They made her. I would not know anything else to tell you about the fairies (Dragić 2017: 59).*

young people over lakes, and brought elderly people to church, endowed and rejuvenated people, taught them in skills and knowledge the fairies possess, kept children out of harm's way, rode horses and tangled their manes, bestowed beauty upon inconspicuous girls. Tales about the fairy *kolo* dance are numerous and a person who would distract them from their dance or would watch them dancing, would become mute or blind (Dragić 2013: 198, 201; 2018: 135–136). At the Biokovo's foothill, they were seen riding horses and dancing and tellers stress the fact that fairies do not move like people, they fly (Vuković 2013: 10–11). In tales from Istra, fairies build, sleep, give strength, dance, appear and disappear, help the ones who were with them, give birth and take care of their offspring, know how to do agricultural work. They usually appear during the night (Rudan 2016: 308). The tales about fairies braiding horses' manes during the night which no one could untangle and about them riding horses are numerous.³

Fairies helped people, protected their wheat from hail and thunder and as compensation took *a handful of still green and milky wheat: to make green and milky fairy bread. To make a cookie for the youngest fairy daughter. They will leave half of it for a hungry shepherd boy, on a rock by a plitvina* (Gudelj 2007: 6) as it is described in the poem *Svim svojim pšeničnim tijelom*. In the same poem, it is evident that the fairies went to water early in the morning because they only drink water no one touched or drank before them. They used to sit in the moonlight and sing (2007: 7). The fairies gladly danced *kolo* on meadows and that is the reason why people *always left a small field under grass so that the fairies have a place to dance* (2007: 7). Mate Pilja, fairies' favourite, danced *kolo* with them and described the experience: *At dawn, before my departure, in Stinički dolac, on dewy clover, we danced kolo* (2007: 287). Rusalki return from the other world once a year in the eponymous poem: *To make wreaths, to kiss boys and to dance kolo* (2007: 295). In multiple places, Gudelj mentions how fairies used to wash clothes and dry it on mahaleb

³ This tale was recorded in Unešić in 2004: *Once my sister-in-law and I went to search for our horses. Ten o'clock passed and back then people did not close horses into barns and some insisted that we had to go to Krka to grind wheat and that we had to go and find the horses because we had to come early to Krka. And we went to horses, found all but one. Kata, my sister-in-law, being more relaxed than me, called to him: „Come, Sivac, come!“ He was at least two or three kilometers from us and when he ran towards us, grey fire was under his hoofs caused by his speed and rocks and his mane was tangled up, and no one could untangle it, his nostrils cracked, all the heavenly angles could not untangle that mane that was circularly braided!*

It is said that horse, if it is good, fairies ride it, they need a fast one and they make braids in its mane which are not to be cut because they would suffocate the horse if they are cut. (Dragić 2017: 57).

cherries or on stones near pits. The first example can be found in the poem *Svim svojim pšeničnim tijelom* and says that fairies *in Stublina washed their clothes and dried them on mahaleb cherry trees* (2007: 7). They dried their clothes *in the moonlight on mountain stone slabs* in the poem *I kliču splitske djevojke* (2007: 160). In the poem about the Vodenjača pit fairies *at midnight spread their clothes over stone slabs and dry it in the moonlight* (2007: 271). Ljupka says that they weaved their clothes *on stone looms, in caves, out of St. Michael Day cobweb, fog and moonlight: that's why it is so thin and white* (2007: 299). In the poems, *Konjska smrt* (2007: 35) and *Staroslavenska večera* (2007: 294) fairies used to braid horses' manes, and on Midsummer Day they made a wreath which they used to decorate the Kraljevićs' oxen in the story entitled *Kraljevići* (2007: 42). When the Kraljević brothers were thrown into the Čalina pit during the war, the fairies saved them from certain death and led them out of the pit at the daybreak. That day, Gudelj says, *they will have lunch and dinner with the fairies. Milk from barren snakes and goats and green fairy bread* (2007: 43). In the poem *I kliču splitske djevojke* fairies *feed their and other people's lost and stray children with ground young, still immature barley and give them goat milk to drink* (2007: 160). Vilenjak Mate Pilja, who was in search of Mara Kajina, was invited to dinner by the fairies. *The dinner was fairy: green fairy bread in chamois milk. Oranges from Dubrovnik gardens, cave honey. Cold water from the springs under Biokovo in crystal glasses* (2007: 287). Young fairy Ljupka told that fairies eat *black bread, honey and chamois milk* (2007: 299). Marijan Aljić-Gudelj claimed in the story *Turska glava* that *his wall was dug by a fairy in one night for one Bosnian pasha, on a lost bet* (2007: 213). In *Mitski Runovići* fairies used to sit in the moonlight on two dolmens in Runovići. *Two upright stones (dolmens, čulaks), between which the Sun entered and descended into Radičevac. So that it may, on its tiresome voyage from Mračaj, Osoje, and Bijakova, be empowered by its water. In the moonlight, the fairies sat on them and combed their hair. It is still possible to find golden fairy hair in brambles under them* (2007: 233). Gudelj's fairies, as well, possess extensive knowledge of plants and they take care of them. In the poem *Vodenjača jama* Gudelj has written: *Fairies carry water out of water pits at dawn. They water flowers* (2007: 271). They picked medicinal herbs all over mountains and used them for healing (2007: 294). The herbs also gave them supernatural capabilities and so Ljupka anointed herself with a miraculous herb called *širnešljika*, brought to her by naive shepherds, and vanished. *She begged shepherds to bring her širnešljika herb from Radovanj. They brought many herbs but never found širnešljika. One time a shepherdess found it and brought it back. Ljupka anointed herself with the herb and disappeared: flew away like a fairy* (2007: 300).

2.5. Relationship with people

Few virtuous people can meet a fairy without danger to them. Such men and women fairies would teach some of their secret knowledge and skills. Fairies have a special affection for people who are blood brothers or sisters with them and that is evident in the fact that these people can outperform everyone in everything because their fairy blood sister is at their side all the time ready to help (Kukuljević 1846a: 160–161). Even nowadays many tellers say that people, liked by the fairies, could become *vilenjaks*.⁴ The fairies would lure a man and he would mindlessly walk over mountains and hills. First, he would meet the eldest fairy who was in charge to which he would swear that he would always be a friend to fairies. She already knew if he would really be a friend to them so she would slap the one who would lie on the cheek and sent him back where he came from. The one speaking the truth would be allowed to proceed to the next fairy who would teach him everything about herb and their medicinal properties. The third fairy would teach him how to make different meds, to whom they should be given and to whom not. In the end, he would reach the fairy assembly in which all the fairies would be gathered. They would meet him and accept him, talk with him and teach him different things. The fairies would be joyous to include a new member into their company and thus they would sing and celebrate.⁵ Filakovac (1905: 144), who says that all fairies are ill-tempered, proceeds to say that they reveal themselves to some people and to some not. They are known to injure or even kill the people whom they do not like. The ones they like they endow with good luck, clairvoyance, knowledge of divination, healing, herbs. In Poljica it was recorded that some people who interact with fairies become *vilenjaks* and can fly from one place to another in a moment. Together with fairies they walk over mountains and fly overseas and with the help from fairies amass great wealth without working. The fairies were known to take people and keep them by their side for years. They were described as good donors but would get angry

⁴ In Predgrađe near Ljubuški, a teller told the following: *Everyone was saying that my grandfather was a vilenjak. He was able to jump inside a house from the floor on to the roof beams. In the evening, when he would be returning from a meeting, he always sang, and in Lent, he sang lament of the Virgin Mary. Many people said that one moment you could hear him on Tikiruš, the other at home, the next on Vitaljina (a distance of 5–7 kilometers). Some even said that the fairies carried him. He always complained about his mother and sisters spitting at him (as at a supernatural force), and in the house they tied him up, but in vain. He suddenly jerks and jumps onto a beam. He never had peace and especially during the night. Just after the first rooster would crow, he would fall asleep like a log.* (Dragić 2005: 191).

⁵ cf. Zovko 1901: 147.

if a person would look into their present and then the present, usually gold, would turn into coal, straw or some other worthless matter. Human resistance and sharing information about meetings with them were another thing that annoyed them. They used to live, sleep and have offspring, always female, with a young man of flawless behaviour. Ivanišević (1905: 227, 239, 255), as well as others, warns about the danger of stepping on the mark left behind by the fairy dance because the fairies smite the one who does that and what follows is illness, without cure, and death. The one who would meet the fairies would be lucky, and if he would make friends with them, they would give him anything he would want, strength, money, health, and happiness (Ardalić 1917: 304). In the area around Velebit people talk about fairies kidnapping handsome young men and beautiful women (Škrbić 2000: 219). The relationship between fairies and humans is in its most concrete form in the case of *vilenica* and *vilenjak*. In the traditional culture *vilenica* is a person of folk's trust whose specialty is healing, but whose skill set includes removing spells which are a common cause of illness.⁶ *Vilenjak* was fairies' favourite whom they would help and sometimes they even had children together. People known as *vilenica* and *vilenjak* are mediators between the fairy world and our world. *Their testimony about the experience with the fairies, as well as other people's stories about the nature of that relationship, separates them from their surroundings* (Šešo 2002: 82–83). The fairies choose a child they will kidnap and that child *is initiated into the mystic arts by the creatures, (...), which possess the knowledge about medicinal herbs, the future and have tremendous power* (Šešo 2002: 85). After the child was initiated and the training has finished, it is returned to its community with abilities typical of an initiated person. Fairies do not train *vilenjak* just to help people, *the fairies also help him to perform the magical flight (...)*. Šešo recorded that *vilenjak* can help if a person steps on the mark of a fairy dance (2002: 88). In the Zagvozd area tellers mentioned, besides fairies, creatures close to them which they called *viljen/vilen/vilenjak*. Those are people chosen by fairies to be their friends. They had some fairy characteristics like cheerfulness, agility, speed, and work efficiency (Vuković 2013: 13–14). Fairies looked for partners among the best and most handsome young men for, according to a tale, they only gave birth to female offspring (Dragić 2013: 201). In tales from Istra, fairies mostly do good, but their help is not unconditional. They helped people they liked and the ones who helped them. An important detail in their relationship with people is that people accept their subordinate role. If a person tries to occupy a position of power in that relationship, fairies will not agree to that (Rudan 2016: 306). Tellers spe-

⁶ cf. Čiča 2002: 72.

ak of real people kidnapped by fairies and they also mentioned relationships between young men and fairies which sometimes resulted in offspring. Those relationships never ended happily because in time fairies always leave their husband and child vanishes with them.⁷

The delicacy of relations between fairies and humans manifests itself in Gudelj's work too. People share the common living space with the fairies being careful not to offend them. So, on a field near the Dvogrļača pit, occupied by fairies, farmers always left a small valley uncultivated so that the fairies have a place to dance. One year, when they ploughed it over, the fairies made their revenge. *Once when great-grandfather Pilip, defying fairies, ploughed and seeded it, fairies danced all over Dvogrļača, and that year nothing remained of wheat* (2007: 7). Shepherds went to water carefully during the day to avoid fairies who went early in the morning. Fairies were vindictive to those who were disrespectful or who made fun of their leg and that is the reason why Joviša Kraljević died. *The preceding night, Ustasha raided the Kraljević vale. They captured nine Kraljević men, bound them with wire and led them to Čalina pit. They unbound them by the pit and the Kraljevićs made the wide Orthodox sign of the cross and jumped into the Čalina pit one after another. All the Kraljevićs were caught in the air by the fairies, except for Joviša. When Joviša jumped, fairies moved their hands out of his way. He broke his neck* (2007: 43). That happened to him for making fun of fairy's donkey leg. *He lifted a fairy's skirt who came on Wednesday to market in Imotski. He revealed her donkey leg and wool between her legs. He disgraced her in front of the whole world* (2007: 43). He did not give water to a fairy child although he had an opportunity to do so (2007: 43). That is why his brothers left the pit guided by an invisible fairy while he remained on its bottom. Fairies had a special relationship with *vilenjaks*. Gudelj tells that everyone knew that Teco Lubina was *vilenjak*, but everyone was afraid of him and no one dared to say that to him. His hair was curly and thick because fairies used to pull their fingers through it. They braided his horse's mane and every year he won at a horse race in Gorica. Many believed that was not a horse, but a fairy turned into a horse. Fairies threw fish to Teco out of clouds. People would see him at multiple places at the same time. He knew what weather would be like seven days in advance (2007: 59–60). Teco was in conflict with Stipe Uršić from Brela. *They led the hail clouds: Teco clouds from Imotski to coast, Stipe coastal to Imota, they fought using pulled out fir and beech trees all over Bijakova. Once, Teco threw a knife at Stipe, from cloud to cloud, hit his hip, and maimed him. Since then Uršić has pulled his right foot behind himself* (2007: 60–61).

⁷ cf. Šešo 2016: 39–40.

Fairies took people they liked with them and the disappearance of the Mikruts was explained that way. They were seen accompanied by girls of miraculous beauty dressed in white and blue with blue eyes. When the Mikruts disappeared, the folk explained their disappearance with words: *Fairies, only fairies. They have put a spell on them and took them to their palace on and under Bijakova. It is not the first time they have taken the most handsome young men from fairs in Slivno, Krstatice, Raščane, and Župa. No one ever saw them* (Gudelj 2007: 76).

Women of family Pekić were of fairy kin and their husbands *vilenjaks*. When girls would reach the age of twelve, they would go to Biokovo to stay with their fairy cousins. When it was time for the daughter of Đidija Pekić to go to the mountain, he refused to let her. His wife glanced at him grimly and he slapped her for doing so. A severe punishment followed.

At that moment, it started to thunder out of the clear sky over the Pekić house. When he heard angry female voices out of a nearby pit, Đidija fired his gun into the pit. The gun blew up in his arms, wounding his face and arms. Gunpowder burned his eyebrows and eyelashes, scorched his eyes. Since then, he was left with only left eye vision and that was poor.

His wife and children went missing. Wine in his wineskins turned into water. Stone tanks broke and oil poured out of it and into the pit. Buttons on dolamas turned dark, kumparans got worn out. In jars where they used to keep gold, found coal instead. Flour was swept away by the wind. The meat turned to wood. Three wolves filled with hay ran howling to Osoje.

Đidija's wife was a fairy. His mother and grandmother and great-grandmother were also fairies. All of his aunts and sisters-in-law were fairies. He was a vilenjak and all of Pekić family were vilenjaks (Gudelj 2007: 206).

Fairies often rewarded their favourites and so the narrator's then seventeen years old great-grandfather Stipan met a girl near *Jamutina* who sang in a fairylike fashion similar to a bee buzzing and collected clothes which were drying on stone slabs. He came in front of her and asked if she would give him a scarf. She answered: *Yes, take this one, mine. My grandmother weaved it of fog and moonlight in Bijakova and gave it to me. I wore it in my bosom when my breasts started to grow. While I fly, I use it to tie my hair* (Gudelj 2007: 272). He wanted to give her something in return, but she told him: *Fairy gifts have no compensation. This is given to you by your sister, Adam's daughter. To you and your home. May this scarf, my gift, forever remain in your house. Never take it out of the house. Show it only when proposing to girls and when your daughters are born and getting married. You will have the most beautiful brides. You will give birth to the most beautiful and wise daughters* (Gudelj 2007: 273). He wished to follow her into the pit and told her that he loved her,

but the fairy would not allow him to follow her and pointed out that she was his sister. She recommended that he marries her blood sister Mara Sokolova.

Mara Kajina jumped into a pit in story *Mari se Kajinoj poznalo* after she got pregnant in an extramarital relationship (Gudelj 2007: 286–288). *Vile-njak* Mate Pilja from Krstatice was sent to find her. He descended into the pit and reached the fairy palace where he was welcomed as a friend. However, he, although a friend of the fairies, kept to some established rules of behaviour. The fairies invited him to dinner where he saw a young girl with a child, but refrained from asking questions *because to fairies' inquisitiveness was the most hated human trait*. Just before morning, he joined fairies in a *kolo* dance and while dancing the young fairy gave him a scarf to take it to her mother Kaja. After he took his leave from the fairies, he went to see Kaja with the scarf and people met him like returned from the other world. *They thought that it was not me, but my spirit. Some, when they saw me, fled* (Gudelj, 2007: 288).

In a tale which Gudelj, with modifications, took from Fr. Silvestar Kutleša's⁸ book, Petar Delipetar narrates to Fr. Silvestar about his encounter with fairies in the summer of 1924 during the time of harvest. Name of the teller in Kutleša's original tale was Ivan Delipetar. In the evening, after the reapers went home, he and his son went down the field collecting the remaining wheat ears in the moonlight. When he reached the middle of the meadow, he saw eight or nine fairies sitting in a circle. He did not dare to look at them directly, but pretended not to see them and kept walking by them without losing sight

⁸ Original tale: „On a summer day in 1924 I had a couple of men and a lot of women helping me with a harvest. That day I finished harvesting. When the night fell the reapers had dinner and after the dinner went to carry sheaves of wheat to the threshing ground. The sky was clear, the moon was shining like it was daylight. I accompanied the reapers and helped them pick up sheaves. I told the reapers to go down the field in a single line because it is easier to pick up wheat ears when you go in a single line than in two lines. The reapers did not understand me or did not want to listen to me and went in two lines down the field. When they were finished, my son and I went to pick up the remaining ears. I went down one line and he went down the other. There were about twenty paces separating us. We were going parallel to each other. Right in the middle of the field, I encountered fairies sitting on the ground. There were eight or nine of them. Sitting in a circle, like people at lunch. When I saw them, I was startled and turned my look away. I passed behind them and looked at them covertly. They brought their heads to each other, whispered something and laughed. I came home unsettled but told nothing about it. The next day at noon I went to the threshing ground to sleep in the shade. And I slept for some time. In my sleep, I felt someone touching my leg. When I woke up, I saw a young girl by my side. She was quite tall, thin in the waist. All dressed in blue. She was smiling at me, beautiful as an apple. I saw she was not one of us. I moved away, but she moved closer. I remained silent; she did the same. When she saw that I was moving away, keeping silent, not even looking at her, she leaned over me and spat in my face. Then she was gone fast, like a fairy.“ (Ivan Delipetar, *Vice*, August 3rd 1936) (Kutleša 1993: 389)

of them. They whispered something, laughed and glanced at him. He went home upset and told no one of that encounter. The thought of it did not allow him to sleep so tomorrow around the noon he took a nap in the shadows on a threshing floor. He was awakened by a feeling that someone was by his side and the feeling was right because a young girl was sitting next to him, looking at him and smiling. She had all the physical characteristics of a fairy, she was beautiful, thin at the waist, tall, dressed in blue with blond unbound hair. He immediately noticed that she was different: *I saw: she was not one of us. Everything about her was like in other girls, but different, unusual, stranger. She was beautiful, two eyes could not get enough of looking at her; and she was charming and nice, but, none the less, I was afraid of her* (Gudelj 2007: 298). He did not know what she wanted from him and thought that she might be one of those he saw the previous night. He started moving away from her and looking the other way. She did not like his behaviour, so she leaned over him, spat in his face and disappeared as swiftly as a fairy (2007: 297–298).

The second tale Gudelj took from Kutleša⁹ and modified was, Gudelj says, said to Kutleša by his aunt Mara. Young fairy Ljupka was caught by the Karamatić shepherds and taken to their home. From then on, she lived alongside her peer Manda Lovrina. Together they guarded goat kids and lambs, spun, knitted and weaved and in those works Ljupka was better than any of the girls in the Karamatić family. She was similar to girls of her age in every regard, except she was taller and more beautiful and had blonde hair. Other girls asked her about her family and home and she told them that she has mother Milka and a lot of aunts and cousins who are all fairies who live in mountains, pits, lakes and clouds. She also told them about their way of life.

⁹ Original tale: „*The Karamatić shepherds caught a young twelve year old fairy in Oštrc and brought her home with them. The fairy ate, drank and slept with her peer Manda Lovrina. She asked her about her name and the fairy answered that she was Ljupka, nicknamed Koka. Then they asked her if she had someone to call her own. She said that she had her mother, Milka. She told her friend where she lived and what she ate. Black bread, milk and honey, and she lived in mountains, caves, in pits and lakes and clouds. When Manda asked why her mother had abandoned her, she replied: „My mother did not abandon me, but she left me to guard our house in Brina. She went to Vran, to the fairy assembly. She told me she would not come back for three days and instructed me not to go anywhere from the cave. I did not want to stay still, so I went after her and got lost in Oštrc where the shepherds have found me!“ She had neither wings nor donkey leg. Her clothes were white, and her yellow hair always combed and unbound. She often sighed and looked at Brina and clouds, never cried. She asked shepherds to bring her a herb called širnešljika from Radovanj. Shepherds brought herbs, but not the right one. Once a shepherdess found the right herb and brought it to her. Ljupka anointed herself with it and disappeared. She flew away like a fairy and only said: „My poor, it has been a long time since you saw your Koka!“* (Mara widow of M. Kutleša, December 8th 1932) (Kutleša 1993: 394)

Three years which Ljupka spent with the Karamatićs were the best three years for that family. Their estate thrived, cattle and land were fertile. When she reached the age of fifteen, the family intended her for Petar, the oldest son of the family patriarch Mate. However, she was inclined only to Kutleša's father Ivan Skalešić Kutleša. Even though she was fond of him, her only wish was to return to her home and to her mother. For that reason, she talked shepherds into bringing her a herb she called širnešljika. When after a long search a shepherd brought the right herb back to her, she anointed herself with it and disappeared in a moment. All mourned for her, and especially Ivan Skalešić. Still, she came to him in sleep and told him that there was a girl for him in Vileničina Brist. She told him: *On Sunday stand next to the gates of the church of Saint Roch and look at girls entering the church. The one who looks at you the way I did and smile at you the way I did, she is the one. You are hers; she is yours.* The one who took a look at him was Ruža, the daughter of Jure Vilenica, a girl of fairy kin (Gudelj 2007: 299–301.) The original tale differs from the Gudelj's modified one in several details. Mara Kutleša in the story she told Fr. Silvestar Kutleša mentions neither that Ljupka spent three years with the Karamatićs nor that that time was a period of prosperity for the family. She said nothing of her being better than others at work or of her fondness of Ivan Skalešić Kutleša.

In the third tale Gudelj took from Kutleša¹⁰, the one that Iva Nenadića told him, she, then fifteen, came into contact with fairies. She was guarding her flock of sheep on a hill called Bovan which was known as a fairy habitat because in a pit under it was a fairy home. Stories were told about that hill for a woman, Ana Majina, was turned into an owl by a fairy after her calling for

¹⁰ „I was a girl of fifteen years. I went to guard the sheep. One day I took them to a big mountain. I sang a song, as I like singing. My dear flock grazed peacefully. Female works I already did good, I petted my sheep with a little rod. Out of the mountain, a fairy called: „U, u, shepherd, u, u!“ I remembered that thin – beautiful voice could not belong to a human being, and I answered her: „U, u, f... you, u, u!“ In the evening, when I drove my sheep home, I looked to the side and saw a girl of ten-twelve years, crossing my path and going into the forest. She was dressed in a long dress, had yellow-golden hair going down her back and under her waist. Immediately I thought to myself she had to be a fairy. I got my sheep home, but I was thinking about the calling and the girl in white. I kept quiet and told no one because I heard from older people that you should not talk about sightings. The next day I took a barrel and went for water to Ričina. I started pouring in water when a calling came from a hill near Ričina: „U, Ive Nenadića, u, u! Come to us!“ And I replied: „U, I will not go there, u, u!“ I poured the water; took up the barrel and ran home. I saw them playing around me. I prayed to God during the whole way home to free me from them. I, young virgin, without a sin, prayed to God and God answered my prayers. They did not harass me anymore.“ (Ive Nenadić, an elderly woman, 68 years old, August 3rd 1936) (Kutleša 1993: 389)

the sheep and goats woke up a fairy child. A fairy called for Iva Nenadića: *U, u, shepherd, u, u!* She, realizing that it was a fairy, because of her thin and harmonious voice and knowing that no other woman dared to come there, replied: *U, u, f... you, u, u!* In the evening, when she was returning home, a twelve-year-old girl dressed in white with long golden hair crossed her path and went into the forest. She told nothing of it to anyone for it was believed that sightings are not to be discussed. Tomorrow, when she went to Ričina to get some water, fairies called for her again: *U, Ive Nenadića, u, u! Come to us!* She replied: *U, I will not go there, u, u!* She went home immediately. She was afraid because she saw fairies playing around her. She prayed to God that they leave her alone, and her prayers, as she said, were answered and fairies no longer haunted her (Gudelj 2007: 302–303). The mentioned story differs from the original tale in the fact that in the original recording Iva Nenadić did not mention that she guarded her sheep at the Bovan hill and there is no mention of Ana Majina who was turned into an owl by a fairy for waking up a fairy child.

2.6. The disappearance of fairies

Ivanišević's tellers connected the disappearance of fairies to the advent of the modern time and technology, so they told him that fairies no longer appear since the time when people started using rifles and machines, and they describe the time when they walked among us as being fruitful and happy (1905: 255). Ardalić sees priests who banished them from books as the reason for their disappearance (1917: 304). Dragić remarks that tales blame human sins for the disappearance of fairies (2013: 198).

3. Conclusion

Gudelj's poetry is organically connected to the mythical Biokovo area where it came to be. Fairies, as the central piece of Croatian mythological tales, take up an important place in his poems and stories, and their depiction greatly coincides with the recordings from other parts of Croatia. In Gudelj's works, fairies are also Adam's daughters or prematurely deceased girls. In his poems and stories, as well as in folk perception, they are described as beautiful girls with long blonde hair, dressed in white or blue, with blue or purple eyes, whose singing buzzes like bees, etc. They are similar to ordinary girls in every manner. However, they are somehow different, more beautiful, more dangerous. But, Gudelj does not mention one important characteristic which is widely distributed in folk tales and that is fairy's donkey or goat leg. Habitats of Gudelj's fairies coincide with the folk tradition, provided that he

puts special emphasis on pits where fairy palaces are located and from where they fly out. Gudelj's fairies help people. They dance *kolos*, sing, comb their hair, ride horses and braid their mane, know herbs and use them to heal or for magical flights. The fact that the consulted literature does not mention and Gudelj describes multiple times is that fairies wash and dry clothes around their pits. Their relationship with people was based upon a delicate balance and deep respect they expected from the people. In Gudelj's text, we can see several examples in which people did not show due respect towards fairies and were severely punished for it. As they severely punished the people who broke unwritten rules on the relationship with them, they awarded and protected those whom they liked and who respected them.

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VILINSKI SVIJET U HRVATSKIM MITSKIM PREDAJAMA TE POEZIJI I PROZI PETRA GUDELJA

Prokopije iz Cezareje, bizantski pisac i član dvora bizantskoga cara Justinijana I opisao je običaje Slavena koji su u 6. stoljeću prodirali na bizantski teritorij. U svom djelu *De bellis* napisao je kako su Slaveni posebno štovali nimfe (vile) i rijeke. O vilama piše i Jakov Voraginski u kultnom djelu „Legenda aurea“ napisanom 1275. godine a prvi put objavljenom 1470. U hrvatskoj mitologiji vile su najčešća mitska bića. U slavenskoj i hrvatskoj mitologiji, vile su bajkovite ljepotice, gotovo uvijek u dugim bijelim, rjeđe plavim haljinama, dugih zlatnožutih počesljanih kosa, s modrim ili zelenim očima, s cvjetnim vijencem na glavi, milozvučnog glasa, hitre i vitke. Oličenje su ljepote. U hrvatskim predajama vile su ljude darivale tjelesnom ili duhovnom snagom; nejakim pastirima darivale su jakost; neuglednim djevojkama darivale su ljepotu. Prema hrvatskim predajama vile su odgajale ljude da budu obzirni, skromni, dobri, a djevojke i žene podučavale su tkanju, pravljenju kruha, liječenju i dr. Također, prema predajama, čuvale su djecu od pogibelji. Pripovijeda se da su činile zlo jedino ako bi im se tko zamjerio izdajući tajnu da im jedno stopalo ima magareća ili konjska kopita ili kozje papke.

Vile susrećemo u djelima mnogih hrvatskih književnika, primjerice: Marina Držića, Petra Zoranića, Jurja Barakovića i mnogih drugih. Mnogobrojni su hrvatski književnici nadahnuti pričama o vilama stvorila djela antologijske vrijednosti. Među njima je i Petar Gudelj koji je po mišljenju hrvatskih povjesničara književnosti najveći živući hrvatski pjesnik. Stoga se u radu analizira zbirka poezije i proze Petra Gudelja *Zmija mladoženja* u potrazi za vilinskim motivima koji se kompariraju s relevantnom literaturom i hrvatskim mitskim predajama.

Ključne riječi: *mitologija, vile, Petar Gudelj, tradicijske priče, narodna vjerovanja*