

A VOICE or A SONG

A variable conditioned by the functional and the aesthetic traditional values

(based on a sample of the Radovish region Lazarian rite)

The music is a phenomenon capable to reveal the nature of the emotions in a manner and with a credibility that hardly any language possesses. Its basic function is to involve people in a common experience within their social or cultural background, which, relative to its nature, may be of various disposition. From the rites to the lyrics or from the functionality to the aesthetics.

The science spots the creation of “the folk song” within the first audio organizing of the human vocal intonation. The very notion of “organization” penetrates deeper into the psychology of the folk aria’s creation, first appearing out of purely functional reasons, as a manner to distinct an activity from everyday life. Because, while acting, doing deeds of particular interest to an individual or a group, beside the numerous requisites and rules to be obeyed maybe the most significant element are the words needed for that particular act. And, of course, most magical are the words pronounced in a special, “song-like” manner. The distinction of this function perhaps provides for the first moment of singing: a song which at the given moment is purely functional. This emphasized functionality of the word brings closer, or provokes, the first moment of creation of aria – song, which gains its differed basic form. But, within that functionality the folk aria contains aesthetic elements, aiming to take the action into a special ambient, intended primarily for the listener, regardless if it is a divine or a human creature. Since the folk aria’s function is to achieve its goal (to initiate a trans or to transfer a message or a wish), it also gains a form most adequate to the achievement of the given goal. At this stage the form is completely liable to aesthetic elements close to the specific mentality, region and culture.

Moments of special interest to the Ethnomusicology when forming the folk aria are its soundness, its syllables and phonetics, but also the melody which is liable to greatest transformations. It is the melody and its characteristics that are the basic carriers of the ambient that the folk aria carries within itself when performed. At the same time, the word and the melody are in a tight symbiotic relation. On one hand, the text appears as a carrier of the action, i.e. the message while, on the other, the melody creates the necessary magical sensation of the moment within which this message is transferred and achieves the goal of the rite’s performance. Experiences for the field researches in Radovish region, where the folklore is to a large extent preserved in its original form most often only with aesthetic alternations, reveal information that justify the theory of folk aria’s evolution to song. Beginning with the very terminology present in this region, which refers to certain functionality at the

performance of the songs, the following conclusions are primarily based on established examples still alive in the Radovish region villages. All parts and phases used to present the evolutionary process will follow exactly the functionality and the aesthetics, categories which, in fact, are the light-motive in the creation of the traditional folk aria-song.

The folk terminology divides the vocal tradition on two groups, that is:

- rite songs, called “singing on voice”, “voice songs”, specifying the “voice” in matter: “Lazarian voice”, Gyurgyovden voice”, “Harvesting voice”, “Wedding voice”... In the folk terminology the term “voice” appears pretty often, but with various meanings. “Voice” may be found as “a short or a long voice”, “wedding guests’ voice”, “traveler’s voice”, “ancient voice”, then voice, or “the voice”, “voicing”, “singing on voice”, or “voice songs”, “voicer”, and finally, among many other variants, the term of interest in this work, “wedding, harvesting, Easter, Kolede voice”. This term and all its meanings were in the focus of the ex-Yugoslav science literature interest, especially of the musicological and the ethnomusicological¹. The scientific account on the most present meaning of this term states that “Voice” in the folk terminology is most often understood as, “melody formula created within certain tonal structure, and modeled and shaped depending on the text, the moment of performance, the intention and the function, as well as depending on the performer’s inner musical capability. The term “VOICE” carries within itself clearly specified features of a specific melody formula functioning for centuries, perhaps more unconsciously than intentionally transferred by the preserving and the performance of the rite. The present situation is different. Musically, but not psychologically, the “voice – melody” is altered, but the function of the established terminology, that is the distinction of the singing by naming it “a voice”, still remains, in spite of the fact that today’s juvenile Lazarian or Kolede processions are accompanied by some “new” songs.
- The non-rite songs, on the other hand, don’t have a specific name, but do have specific aesthetic categories different from the rite ones.

¹ Danica Petrovi } “Osmoglasnik u muzi~koj tradiciji ju`nih Slovena”, Beograd 1982; Sotir Golabovski “Osmoglasnik-Makedonsko crkovno peewe”, Skopje 1995; Miodrag A. Vasiqevi } “Funkcije i vtrste glasova u srpskom narodnom pevawu”, Beograd Rad VIII kongresa SZFJ str.375; Miodrag A. Vasiqevi } “Narodne melodije Leskova~kog kraja”, Beograd 1960 str.130; Miodrag A. Vasiqevi } “Narodne melodije iz Sanxaka”, Beograd 1953 str.XVII; Jerko Bezi } “Odnosi izmed`u razli~itih osobina i oblika tradicionalne seoske vokalne glazbe u Jugoslaviji i njihovih naziva”, International colloquium music and the language mode, Warsawa 1981; Radmila Petrovi } “Dvoglas u muzi~koj tradiciji Srbije” Rad XVII kongresa SZFJ, Pore~ 1970, Zagreb 1972 str.333; Dragoslav Devi } “Etnomuzikologija” skripta; Metodija Simonovski “Muzi~ka terminologija u makedonskim narodnim umotvorinama”, ZVUK Jugoslovenska muzi~ka revija 51, SKJ 1961 str.28; \or|i \or|jev “Makedonskoto narodno peewe so izvikuvawe” dokt.disert., Beograd 1985; \or|i \or|jev “Izvikuwata vo makedonskite svadbeni pesni” M.F. br.29-30, Skopje 1982; Qubinko Miqkovi } “Bawa”, Kwa`evac 1978.

These songs are independent and not liable to the rules crucial for the rite “voices”. They are SONGS. What is really amazing is that these songs are much easier transferred and remembered. It seems that the psychological factor, which here appears so innocently, is crucial for the preservation of the tradition.

What is the relation between the “voice” and the song”? The conditions under which both melody formulas have been created and preserved are primarily liable to functional and aesthetic categories that we are trying to discover here. Insofar as the function of the voice, which appears in conditions of strict rite rules, the psychological limitation which, in certain moments, prevents alternations in aesthetic sense, is clear. It seems that the melody, as an element most liable to alternations, becomes a variable crucial to the preservation of these rules. Can we consider that the former “voice” (melody), regardless if it is referring to the primal sorceresses’, riddles, bee-keepers’ or Lazarian songs, today, in a specific melody form, is so unrecognizable and so altered that the former “criers” wouldn’t accept for their own? By using the empiric method through the process of investigating in a specific region during the past 30 years, one comes to conclusion that the rite voice is liable to aesthetic, but not to functional alternations, which appear as a precondition for their preservation. The evolutionary development in this category is preconditioned by the function which in its consistency adjusts to all changes.

On the other hand, the non-rite song was created under emphasized aesthetic values, which are textually and melodically more liable and open to alternations, independent and individual, created under the influence of the inner feelings and marked by the musical gift of the performer-singer. But, to the contrary of the “voice” which, in order to sustain fell upon the alternations, the song remained to a larger extent generally preserved in its original form. Excluding the inner micro-alternations, which are also completely individual and depending on the musical talent as a factor, the basic melody and the basic aesthetic elements at the non-rite song are far more respected than at the ordinary “voice”. The non-rite songs are more consistent in their aesthetic rules that have functional significant in regard of the preservation of these songs. On the expense of the aesthetics, the non-rite song went through all kinds of alternations, even functional ones (the songs once sang only by women on a matinee, or only by men on the gatherings, today are performed jointly in all occasions). But, if there is an attempt to involve extremely different aesthetic alternations, which deviate from the basic melody model of the song, it is condemned and not accepted, especially by the older generation, the same one that justifies the melody alternations at the rite songs.

Can we say that the voice becomes a song, or that the song becomes a voice? Because today the features and the categories that preserved the rite “voice” for such a long time in a strict and unaltered form, gain new dimensions which previously belonged to the song. And the non-rite song gradually changed its characteristics and, generally, under the present transferring and performing factors entered the frame that previously belonged to the “voice”. If penetrate more deeply into this issue, the answer would still be no! Because the other crucial preconditions for such a formulation lead to opposite conclusions. The voice, as altered as it may be, still has the basic features to be called so, while the song is a more free form, which has much wider horizons and smaller limitations, at least regarding the rules of performance.

But, seen from the aspect of the relation between the function and the aesthetics, these two categories changed their places. Maybe that is where the evolutionary, that is the process of preserving the tradition, smolders.

The Lazarian rite, performed in the Radovish region in Eastern Macedonia, is an extraordinary example of the evolution of the vocal rite practice. Supposing that until 30 years ago the rites in the Radovish region were performed strictly and functionally, one may follow to a certain level the alternations, which in this region appeared during the last quarter. These alternations mostly affected the psychology of the people, who gradually lost their cult attitude towards the tradition. This region's population's attitude towards the tradition provides for conclusions considering the evolutionary process, both in ethnomusicological and in anthropological sense. The opportunity to meet on the field both, the younger and the older generation and to attend their separated and their joint performance provides for sensing their different attitude towards the traditional values. At the same time, researching in such a region, with diverse geographical setting and a population originating from two Slavic tribes, provides for conclusion which may define some of the developmental conditions and the alternations in the specific tradition.

Living in a certain region also means accepting its living conditions. The regional affiliation means certain specificity of the local or the migrated population, a specificity which mostly reflects that population's folklore. The regional affiliation also involves deeper reasons concerning not only the natural environment, but also their genetic belonging to specific ethnic groups. The Radovish region includes two currents of Slavic tribes. The majority are Macedonians belonging to the Lower-Vardar and Strumitsa-Mestan ethnic group, mixed with Chitac Turks. That is where the characteristic similarity of these people with the neighboring Strumitsa and Shtip region comes from. On the other hand, by the end of the 19th century the northern mountain part of the Radovish region were also populated by the Shops, an ethnic group which is characteristic by its great ability of both, to adjust and to dominate². The integration of these two tribal groups provided for conditions for certain mutual influence, where the Shops proved as more dominant³. An example for the alternation in the tradition preconditioned by such antropogrphical changes in a region, is the Lazarian rite which is still preserved in the village of Jargulitsa (as in all the other

² Galaba Palikrusheva, "Contemporary Ethnic Processes in the Radovish Shops' Region", Collection of the XXXI Congress of SZFJ, Radovish, 1984, Skopje 1986, p. 33: "The migration of the Shops in this region is due to the poverty and the overpopulaton of their home region. In that time, the Plackovica region was 'a place more widely fertilized with Vlah fertilizers' (the Vlachs were the native population of this area of high mountains and remained there very short time after the arrival of the Shops, leaving the region under the pressure of the Shops' conquering of the pastures). The creaton of the new Shop settlements and their strengthening provoked a conflict between the newly arrived Shops and the native Vlah and Juruk population. That contributed to the development of a great Shops' hostility towards the weaker Vlachs, whose pastures were turned into fields. Later on the Vlachs definitely retreated, leaving only the toponims as 'Vlachs' Huts', Vlachs' Spring' etc.

³ Ibid... "the Radovish Shop group developed an extesive group awareness and number of institutions to preserve it. They kept the basic characteristics of their folk dresses, the group endogamy and the group cults, as well as the great mutual devotion. The field people say that the Shops are simple, and they tease them all the time.

villages of the Radovish region). This village is inhabited by Poljans (field people, natives) and Shops (arrived 30 years ago). As mountain people, the Shops don't practice the Lazarian rite. The celebrated Voditsi⁴, which dominates in the mountain regions. The Lazarian rite is a holyday celebrated one week before Easter, the Sunday after the Lazar's Saturday. The Lazarians are female rite processions, which carry deep believing in health, fertility, protection, and initiation. They are getting prepared at the oldest Lazarian girl (the one who is about to marry), dress in special clothes, and decorate with a feather each (to protect them from curses). They visit every house in the village, singing rite songs and dancing rite folk dances, from the moment they enter a courtyard and for each member of a family. If there is a child in the house, each Lazarian girl swings it. All that is intended for the hosts in each house and for the village as a whole to have good health. Each house presents the Lazarian girls with gifts, a rite bread and else.

Today Lazarian rite in this village is a symbiosis of three parallel traditions, the analysis of which reveals the extinction of a tradition, the sustaining of another, and the creation of a completely new tradition, mostly altered considering the "voice". In the past times the Lazarian songs were sung on "Lazarian voice", in "clusters", where the leading vocal was called "a crier", and the two vocals on the side, laying on one tone, are called "droners". Even today the older women follow the young "Lazarians" and sing their "old" Lazarian songs. But, it seems that today's Lazarian processions sing old songs on a new voice. What is going on today? The function of the rite is preserved, and by that the identity of the native population (the Lazarians are girls, with a special clothes for that day, in the past times a folk dress, today a factory cloth - they are dresses little brides in white - but decorated with feathers, with a rite bread, they go around the village and visit every house, just like they did in the past times). They are convinced that they are Lazarians, singing on a Lazarian voice. But, still, the Shops managed to introduce something characteristic to them: the main "crier", carrier of the "Lazarian voice" is a Shop by origin, dominant and intrusive by her temper. During the rite, the older native women, who are just spectators today, claim that the songs performed are not on the Lazarian voice. They sense the alternations that the "crier" managed to introduce through the years, by changed the "Lazarian voice" with the Voditsi one. She sings Lazarian songs on a Voditsi voice, the one that remained deeply in her subconsciousness. But, the story goes on and with that the life of the rite in that village which, in order to be preserved, went through certain alternations. This years-long assimilation is very interesting, although the two rites are not performed at the same time. The conflict of two completely different motivations is unavoidable. On one hand, the Poljans preserve their functionality on the expense of the aesthetics, and on the other the Shops preserve the aesthetics on the expense of the functionality, since now they sing the "Voditsi voice" on Lazar's Day. At the same time, the new "Lazarians", little girls, sing completely new Lazarian songs, with a completely new melody, adjusted to their juvenile musical talent. The phenomenology of the population's psychology and its persistence to preserve the tradition is amazing. And here we reach the dominant question: function or aesthetics? It seems that, still, the inner need to preserve the identity in any form prevails. The need for an identity, which is a basic human strive, preserving the tradition as its fundamental carrier for such a long period of time. In the entire

⁴ A holyday characteristic for the high, mountain settlements, celebrated on January 19, when female and male processions go through a village and sing rite songs for health.

evolutional process, the identity still gives priority to the functionality, which is primordial since, as in this specific case, both groups give up their own to preserve their own: the preservation of the tradition.

