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Folkloristics went through relatively big changes in the 2nd half of the 20th century. It was and still is confronted with several theoretical, methodological and practical challenges of the time. The dominant features of the problematic issues studied by folkloristics have gradually changed, as well as the concepts and analytical tools used. The studied forms of social communication have also been affected by changes. On one hand, folkloristics brought new topics and research issues, deepened interdisciplinary approaches and the methods of research, thus expanding the research fields. On the other hand, folklorists continued summarising the picture of folklore, becoming gradually perceived as cultural heritage tied to a closed historic era in terms of style. Simply said, both research trends represent a discontinuous and a continuous line of research in a wider time horizon. Certainly, the tendency to such a “double-track” character is not a specific feature of scientific knowledge exclusively of the past decades, though the borderline between both approaches came significantly to the front and was deepened at the turn of the millennium.

To some extent, this situation is related to inter-generational shifts in the approach to the subject of study of folkloristics leading, inter alia, to an ever stronger anthropologisation of humanities in general (Kuligowski, 2012), and to an abandonment of big theories. Dorothy Noyes therefore establishes for folkloristics “a plea not for grand but for humble theory” (Noyes, 2008). The changes in theoretical approaches and the shift of the core of research from the “picture of the past” to the “processes going on at present” (Kiliánová, 2006) thus create new and attractive challenges for further folklore studies.

The general trend of the anthropologisation of humanities brings folklore studies closer not only to cultural and social anthropology, but also to ethnomusicology. Though both scientific disciplines have different historic roots, the borders between them were not always clear, especially since the turn of the 20th and 21st century. This mainly applies to the comprehensive research of songs, which is also characteristic for the modern “Slovak ethno-musicological school”. (It is characteristic for the parallel study of the textual, musical and functional aspects of songs.) This “permeability” of borders is also proven by, for example, the research in music sociology (Mačák ed. 1989, 1990) or some syntheses of song genres (Burlasová, 1991; Urbancová, 2005), etc.

With regard to the accentuation of continuity vs. discontinuity in the basic con-
cepts of research, the said changes are reflected (for example, in the Central European space, but not only there) somewhat differently in the different countries and regions. The difference in the approaches and concepts can be also found in the attitudes of the different researchers.

In simple terms, we speak about two lines of research in Central Europe: a) the lines based on the principles of the “German school” (Bohemia, Hungary, Moravia, Germany, Austria, Slovakia, Slovenia); and b) the lines gaining ground in Polish folkloristics in which we can find several approaches (Hajduk-Nijakowska, 2009). They are formed in the background of a deflection from literary science towards anthropology: “folkloristics as the anthropology of the spoken word” (Sulima, 2005); the category of the “folk type of culture” (Stomma, 1986); ethnology and philosophical inspirations by French phenomenology: the category of the “folk type of thinking” (Robotycki, 1985, 1998); or the Slavistic oriented ethno-linguistics (Adamowski, Smyk, 2010).

Certain continuity of “national schools” plays a special role, in particular, in European ethno-musicology where similar changes take place more slowly and less dramatically within a determined period compared to verbal folkloristics. The analytical tools and concepts used by ethno-musicologists in the different regions are often incompatible to some extent. They correspond to the specific features of art history nature, such as historic and genetic music styles (Slovakia: Kresánek, 1951; Elscheková, Elschek, 1980), regional styles, etc. The respective changes are reflected, among other things, in an increased emphasis on the contextual and transcultural aspects of research.

The problem of verbal folkloristics today is the lack of a generally acceptable and understandable expert terminology and classification. This refers to the denomination of examined processes, texts and, in particular, genres. The terminological unstableness so characteristic for periods of major changes is determined by “national (area) schools” and also by language specificities. This concerns not only European, but also non-European relations. The new, “other” approaches and terminology also require new topics and contexts for the phenomena studied by folklorists, such as various verbal, visualised and other forms of mass media and internet communication.

The more intensive application of interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary methods in research is reflected both in the use of the basic theoretical and methodological concepts common to several humanity disciplines, research methods (such as oral history) and analytical categories of inter-disciplinary nature (media theory, identity and identification, the processes and contexts of the origin of cultural constructions, cultural representations). In these research areas, the borders between disciplines disappear and become “permeable”. Historiography is one such example. Social history and ethnology/cultural/social anthropology get closer to each other with historic research focusing on “small history”, i.e. on the study of the past through “everyday culture”. This relates, inter alia, to the use of folklore sources as a support argumentation basis for historiography on one hand, and the opening of other research fields for ethnology and folkloristics (in the research of culture as a sign system) on the other hand.

The cognitive focus of the research on prosaic narratives based on the theory and methodology of cognitive anthropology and psychology represents one such specific area of such research in Slovakia and the Czech Republic. It has been more widely used since the turn of the millennium among the youngest generation of researchers (Bužeková, 2009; Bahna, 2011) working on the borderline between folkloristics, religion studies and social anthropology.

This issue of Slovenský národopis/Slovak Ethnology brings various folkloristic con-
tributions in terms of topics, theory and methodology. The common element of these texts is the procedural approach. Another unifying aspect of most of the articles is the focus of the authors, using materials from recent field researchers, on the present. Their studies are either dedicated to transformation processes (M. Pavlicová a L. Uhlíková, S. Poljak Istenič) or to the specific issue of modern legends (P. Janeček) and internet folklore vs. electronic folklore (M. Domokos).

The article of two researchers from Brno Martina Pavlicová and Lucia Uhlíková presents and analyses the current trends in ethnologic and folkloristic research in the Czech Republic, also reaching beyond the wider contexts of the former Czechoslovakia. The authors observe the continuity and discontinuity processes along the axis traditional folklore – folklorism – transition processes of the past two decades in the background of the mechanism of gradual incorporation of folklore elements into the national culture, as well as other parallel and subsequent processes. They highlight the current wide variability of folklore functions in general, and the importance of external influences in these processes. They offer an umbrella concept for this area of research – “ethno-cultural traditions”. In the framework of these traditions, they present case studies of two forms of such traditions from the Slovácko region (south-eastern Moravia) – “male folk choirs” and “slovácky verbuňk” (male folk dance from Slovácko region).

The issue of rituals was a grateful subject of research back to the origins of both ethnographic and folklorist/cultural-anthropologic research. It appeared to be an important area of scientific interest also during the recent study of transition processes at the turn of the 20th and 21st century. The Slovenian author Saša Poljak Istenič observes the continuity and discontinuity of traditional culture phenomena at present through an example of agricultural rituals. She provides a case study of rituals in agricultural work, referring to traditional agrarian culture. Rituals have survived until the present in changed forms and with new functions. Rituals, the actors of which are farmers, have acquired specific forms and functions at public events. The aim of the ritual is to attract customers to buy goods. The author examined them in a region close to Ljubljana, the Capital of Slovenia. She deals with them in the context of methodological changes in the research of rituals in European ethnology after 1989, and observes the changes in their contexts with respect to several aspects (for example, in relation to the concept of the rural idyll or tourism). The examined field is an example of a successfully developing regional agrarian culture. The elements of traditional culture embody here the perspectives of prosperity and sustainable positive economic development for wider communities.

Petr Janeček has been dealing with the research of legends in the Czech Republic for more than a decade, and published several books on this topic in the period 2006–2009. The published study contributes to the research of an internationally widespread type of this genre. Within the given environment, the research has witnessed an increased popularity of this matter since the beginning of the 1990s until the present. The author builds on previous studies of this narrative conducted from the 1970s. He examines the narrative as part of the children’s folklore and teenagers’ repertoire, and explores it in the context of the practices of “traditional culture” and child and youth psychology.

The Hungarian author Mariann Domokos offers a contribution to the discourse on a “new” research topic in the history of folkloristics concerning internet communication and its relation to folklore. This topic represents a big challenge for the folkloris-
tic research of current processes. On one hand, it attracts researchers’ attention by means of many open questions: from terminology, research approaches and methods, relations to traditional culture or their absence, function(s), composition of genres to the multi-media character of the form, specific poetics, etc. On the other hand, the opinions of folklorists on this area of research often differ or are even contradictory. Along with several terminological and methodological suggestions for the discourse, the author also offers concrete examples from the Hungarian internet environment, considered to be folklore.

The other current trend in folkloristic research mentioned in the introduction includes the contributions by Katarina Šrimpf, Hana Urbancová and Monika Kropej. The authors build, in particular, on the expressions of traditional culture, not avoiding the present-day context.

The article of another Slovenian author Katarina Šrimpf is a contribution to the reflection on “the Other” in traditional narratives. She based her study on the archive and field research in the bordering regions of Slovenia and Croatia. The author explores the way of creating borders through oral traditions, i.e. stories, jokes and mockery in a specific border region along the upper stream of the Sotla River. She observes their contexts and functions in the processes of mutual co-existence of people on both sides of the border.

The study of the Slovak ethnomusicologist Hana Urbancová represents an original contribution to the research of two traditional, though differing song genres in terms of genetics and typology, functionally related to death and funeral, from Slovakia and from among Slovak minority communities living abroad, such as funeral laments as a historically closed folklore genre, and farewell hymns. Both genres are explored by the author through research on the borderline between ethno-musicology and folkloristics, building on the records of laments obtained and recorded through oral traditions in the second half of the 20th century and handwritten records from the 19th century.

Monika Kropej returns to the topic which was examined by several folklorists from the countries of the former Kingdom of Hungary, such as the historic personality of Matthias Corvinus (1443–1490), Hungarian King. He is depicted as a “good king” in folklore narratives from Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia, and also acts as the national hero or “King Liberator” in the Slovenian context. The author accompanies this topic with interesting materials based on the narrative traditions and presenting her transformation through an example of an entertaining event known as the “Castle of King Matthias” in today’s Carinthia.

In the Research Report section, Jana Belišová presents the results of long-term field research of musical and song expressions of the members of the Roma minority in Slovakia and their transformations in time through an example of a specific genre – lament songs.

The articles published in this issue of the Slovenský národopis/Slovak Ethnology magazine correspond to the current trends in folkloristic studies, as presented in the introduction, and enrich the international ethnological and folklorist studies with the recent results of research in Central Europe. They also bring new challenges for further research. We wish our readers pleasant reading.

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FOLKLORE TRADITIONS IN CONTEMPORARY EVERYDAY LIFE: BETWEEN CONTINUITY AND (RE)CONSTRUCTION (Based on two Examples from the Czech Republic)*

MARTINA PAVLICOVÁ, LUCIE UHLÍKOVÁ

Nowadays, ethnology can hardly assert that folklore traditions are only a phenomenon that lives independently in villages as a part of the everyday life of the local inhabitants. The role of folklore, even of that documented in different collections largely, has essentially changed alongside the transformation of the society, the rapprochement between village and town ways of life and the beginning expressions of mass culture. Some expressions have remained a continual part of everyday culture as a residue, some have been transmitted into new environments and contexts, some have been reconstructed, and others significantly stylized or deduced. They were and are a source of inspirations and modern expressions that in many respects take over the functions similar to the original ones. How should we understand folklore traditions in the 21st century and analyse them? The study based on field research dealing with two distinctive expressions (the male solo dance verbuňk and male folklore choirs in the Slovácko region) tries to answer this question. Contemporary Czech ethnology classifies both expressions as so-called ethno-cultural traditions. The chosen field probes capture the present situation in one of the folklorically most distinct ethnographic areas in the Czech Republic, documenting the wealth and diversity of the folklore tradition that just pretend to be continual in many cases – at least it looks like this on the surface.

Key words: folklore, folklorism, ethno-cultural tradition, social construction, everyday life, Czech Republic

Nowadays, ethnology can hardly assert that folklore traditions are a phenomenon that lives independently in the villages as a part of the everyday life of the local

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inhabitants. However, in general awareness as well as in the contemporary world this attitude tends towards a similar stereotypical attitude. The romantic view of folklore in the past as well as the survival of this view in developing folklorism was discussed in a special study (Pavlicová, Uhlíková, 2011). This study also pointed out the ideas of foreign authors devoted to this issue, as well as different answers giving reasons for this: from love to tradition (folklove) (Lafazanovski, 1996) and traditionalization as a general need (Ivey, 2011).

Folklore and its role are still of particular interest to researchers even in a society that by far does not bear a resemblance to the society at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries when the interest in folklore rose. It was not very surprising when the American anthropologist John Forrest pointed out that the future of the academic study of folklore and the fact of whether folkloristics as a discipline can survive are not quite clear at the beginning of the 21st century (Forrest, 2006: 140). If we stayed within the intentions of the romantic view mentioned above, folkloristics would be an antiqued discipline today, or it would be reduced to a “mere” comparative discipline; we would ask a similar question in this case as well. However, the word “folklore” contains an intricate network of different factors that form its tradition and legacy. It is becoming more and more apparent that these factors can hardly be analysed without a deeper understanding.

Foreign ethnological research views folklore and its importance for society from different angles. There are examples from different cultural and ethnical settings, from which we keep a certain distance, that offer a good opportunity to observe how variable the functions of folklore could be in the contemporary world and which role the outside effects play. Dina Roginsky, a researcher working at Yale University, writes in her study *Nationalism and ambivalence: ethnicity, gender and folklore as categories of otherness* (2006) that while ethnicity can be an abstract form of cultural identity, folklore is the most accessible and visible expression thereof (Roginsky, 2006: 244). Fully in compliance with this opinion, we can understand the various expressions that create a part of cultural and personal identity that are related to folklore and its adaptations in diverse forms. Roginsky, who deals with Israeli traditional dance based on both Jewish and non-Jewish folk dances,¹ understands this fact in accordance with the process that for more than two centuries has tried to involve (with different intensity according to historical and geographical conditionality, of course) folklore elements in national culture (Roginsky, 2006: 245).

In the European environment, the process mentioned above is well-described as early as at the outset of the 18th century; the major ideological streams and personalities that dealt with folklore from the practical or ideological point of view are well-known. Alongside the rise of national self-consciousness and self-determination, folklore and some other expressions of folk culture became a significant tool to fulfil these struggles and to become the main launching pad for their content and forms. The Czech environment can offer a lot of diverse examples essentially enriching the national and cultural and accentuating especially the aesthetic function of folklore. They concern both art and the field which becomes involved in the professional sphere today, e.g. collections of folk songs or verbal folklore. However, if we free ourselves of the romanticizing view, we can see very clearly the constructivist tendencies

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¹ This mentions different components that were mostly imported from the native countries of Jewish immigrants and interconnected with folklore elements of Palestine original inhabitants (Roginsky, 2006: 240).
that formed the image of folk culture as to the wishes and visions of the nationally-oriented part of the society. From the social point of view, this part of the society included the classes of intellectuals, especially writers, philosophers and historians; in the case of Slavonic nations living in the then Austrian Empire, many patriotic priests also became involved. The political or cultural-political functions were considerable since the outset, too. Within the Czech context, the ideas of national revival spread from salons, where intellectuals were meeting in the cities, to other town classes and then to the country, and attracted many fans and practitioners to folk culture and mainly folklore. However, their activities were encouraged by the romantic view of folk culture mentioned above, the superiority of aesthetic function, and the selection of expressions that were worth recording.

Nevertheless, it is necessary to add that in the period of the first interest in the disappearing expressions of traditional folk culture and the safeguarding thereof, which was evident as early as the second half of the 20th century, this culture was still a functioning system whose transformations influenced by new elements coming from the town society had only just started. The decline of many expressions of folk culture and the transformation of other ones were accelerated by two world wars in the Czech environment in the 20th century. In consideration of political development, the second half of the last century accentuated traditional folklore, better said that the part that was acceptable to the doctrine of the totalitarian communist regime (Pavlicová, Uhlíková, 2013: 32–34) and that could be used in the folklore movement which was strongly developing at that time. The former communist block had a similar model for the approach to folklore and its adaptations for stage performances. This is documented e.g. by the German researcher Philipp Herzog (2010), who speaks about “Soviet-style folklore” in Estonia and brings the knowledge comparable with the situation in the Czech, or rather Czechoslovak society of the same period. The researcher considers it surprising in the post-totalitarian countries that – despite the bad experience with the use and presentation of folklore in the past – the new free society did not take against the image of folklorism that rose at that time (Herzog, 2010: 119). A similar experience can be found in local or regional Czech research. On the contrary, Juraj Hamar (2008) in his study Folklór v tieni scénického folklorizmu. Na margo folklórneho hnutia na Slovensku po roku 1988 [Folklore in the Shadow of Scenic Folklorism. A Comment on the Folklore Movement in Slovakia after 1988] appositely described the rise of new social stereotypes in connection with folklore and folklorism, which “copy” the period of totality in many respects (e.g. relationships to political parties).

Folklorism, understood as the so-called second existence of folklore, became the subject of research only in the 1960s and 1970s and moved the limits of research from the traditional folk culture to its application. Yet it turns out today that folklorism does not stand for the only possible explanation for the passing down of folklore traditions in society, or for the only one cultural and social stream originating in the legacy of folklore. The everyday culture of a human being has not lost its connection to traditions – whether this term means the traditional folk culture, or what the wider public considers the traditional folk culture (Pavlicová, Uhlíková, 2008a: 53). Moreover, the division into folk traditions and traditions that just refer to folk culture but have been constructed recently (i.e. for which Eric Hobsbawm uses the term invented tradition – compare Hobsbawm, Ranger 1983) is not possible in many cases. In the terrain, a researcher has to deal with a very diverse sphere of culture that its contemporary bearers hold to be a traditional one – regardless of whether this concerns:
a) an original folk tradition that has not been interrupted until now (although transformed to a certain extent, exploring various achievements of its time and responding to present events, as we know from e.g. Carnival processions),
b) a revived tradition (interrupted and newly introduced, sometimes quite exactly reconstructed or only a tradition relating to a disappeared tradition with its idea, but newly constructed to a large extent),
c) a new tradition that has been invented and that only finds inspiration in traditional culture by using some of its elements (folk costumes, songs, dances, elements of traditional customs, rituals or ceremonies) and reviving some of its particular and already extinct forms and expressions (e.g. masks, folk dress, musical instruments, techniques of handicraft).

This spectrum mentioned above is covered by the term “ethno-cultural tradition”, which in our opinion covers the issue of folklore and its contemporary existence much better in many respects. This term offers the opportunity of studying this issue to a wider extent than in the case of folklorism, which always assumes a true starting point in the traditional folk culture (Pavlicová, Uhlíková, 2008a).

In the field studying the transformation of ethno-cultural traditions, the field research in the Czech lands focuses on both sociocultural phenomena and expressions of individual or group culture. The first group includes e.g. formation and transformations of local or regional identity, or satisfying the personal or group needs by cultivation of ethno-cultural traditions (activities of folklore or different ensembles and groups concentrated on presentation of folklore and other folk culture expressions; place and functions of ethno-cultural traditions in the cultural life of a village or region, but also in the life of individuals; transfer of ethno-cultural traditions from generation to generation; position of ethno-cultural traditions within the educational process, etc.). The research into the expressions of ethno-cultural traditions includes: a study of song, dance or narrative repertoire of individuals or groups, so-called new output (new songs written in the style of local folklore tradition), analysis of how the folklore material is interpreted by cimbalom or brass music bands, transformation in customary tradition and ceremonial culture (continual, interrupted, new traditions), etc.

While considering everything that is mentioned above we should realize that the focus is not just on the researchers themselves and on how they mark the matter of study. The Slovenian ethnologist Ingrid Slavec Gradišnik in her contribution explaining the approaches to Slovenian folk culture and science writes that ethnologists and folklorists play two prominent roles in Slovenia today: they keep their reputation as “traditional” experts for folklore and events that relate to cultural heritage, and simultaneously they are supposed to be gatekeepers against the danger of globalization. According to Gradišnik, a research text is no longer an authoritative scientific discourse but it is connected with at least three discourses: a professional, an amateur, and a media one (Gradišnik, 2010: 142). The interaction between a) practitioners or bearers, b) researchers, c) mass media, is important for the formation of ethnologic knowledge (Ibid: 142–143).

It is obvious that the ratio between these levels, which are defined only imaginarily, cannot be identical for a concrete subject of study. These levels are extended by other aspects linked especially to tradition and the historical and social contexts.

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2 On the role of folklore ensembles in the range of fulfilling individual and collective needs compare Pavlicová, Uhlíková 2008c.
If we keep dealing with the level of bearers which is the basis for folklore and its study, it is visible that at first glance one can hardly differentiate between what a tradition bearer still understands as a marginal expression for his/her contemporary life and what, on the contrary, becomes a more significant part of his/her identity, world of thoughts and life style. Generally, it is necessary to study the social overlapping – what can be applied to a certain community and what remains an individual matter?

Two phenomena which Czech ethnologists are focusing on now as significant parts of cultural traditions in the South-East (the Slovácko region) have been chosen to be probes into the spectrum of developmental tendencies connected with folklore cultivation. One of them is the male dance called “verbuňk”, the other one male folklore choirs. Can they be understood as a continuation of folklore traditions from older periods? Do they move in the axis “folklore and its second existence” or can they be analyzed in a different way? Can they help us to discover the role of folklore (or at least a part thereof) in the contemporary world?

**MALE FOLKLORE CHOIRS IN THE SLOVÁCKO REGION**

When studying the transformations in ethno-cultural traditions, the field research concentrates on sociocultural phenomena, or on expressions of the culture of individuals, local communities, or interest groups that are aimed – to a larger or smaller extent – at safeguarding ethno-cultural traditions and their public demonstration. Folklore ensembles or groups, whereby the attribute “folklore” is not very exact, even if these ensembles and groups are connected with folklorism, are almost the most important ones: children’s ensembles and music bands, adult ensembles, groups from the Slovácko region or Walachia whose stage arrangement is more or less unambiguous, and music bands with different instruments (cimbalom, bag-pipe, brass music bands etc.).

However, in many Moravian villages it is the village youth [chasa] who are responsible for maintaining the local traditions. Ethnologists mostly do not relate these adolescent single young people to the sphere of folklorism even if the chasa members do not live in a vacuum – to a certain extent they are always influenced by folklorism spread by mass media. The activities of local voluntary fire teams are outside the folklore movement. In many locations, these teams play the main role in organizing and practising the ethno-cultural traditions; to a smaller extent, the presented sphere includes a few choirs working in churches. Men and women’s folklore choirs move between the organized folklore movement (folklorism) and spontaneous everyday culture with a strong link to the local or regional folklore tradition – the real or the invented one.

The field research into male choirs in Moravia has been carried out irregularly for nearly ten years, namely within the study of singing and musical opportunities con-
nected with the presentation of folklore traditions. It focused on monitoring the conditions for their existence, form, and character. The research results show that folklore singing and music in the contemporary Czech society are rather connected with team activities and with groups of practitioners (singers, dancers, musicians), very often in the presence of a more or less passive audience. The hitherto field probes focused mainly on the ethnographic area of Slovácko and partially on the neighbouring Brno area, which takes over some elements of the Slovácko traditional folk culture for many reasons – it is an issue of future development whether this cultural expansion will affect even the ethnographic identity of this area.

In the folklore traditions of the quite fruitful rural Slovácko region, whose image (auto-and hetero-image) inseparably includes wine-growing and viticulture, single or married men’s singing always played an important role. Profane singing was never an institutional form – this is documented only for sacral singing (literary fraternities or mere church choirs). The first male choirs in Slovácko were formed alongside the organized folklore movements in the early 20th century. These choirs performed as a part of so-called folklore groups. Nevertheless, male collective singing can be identified as a part of the programme at the Czecho-Slavic Ethnographic Exhibition (1895); for the first half of the 20th century, it was a part of different cultural activities aimed at public demonstration of folklore.

According to the information available, the first independent male choir was formed in 1957 in Velká nad Veličkou. However, until the formation of the Velička...
folklore ensemble (1967), the choir singers also acted as dancers at public performances. The next male choirs can be noted in 1964 in Kudlovice and Kyjov. It was the choir from Kyjov that – within the folklore movement – became a significant symbol of male collective singing and a model for many later choirs in Slovácko. Until 1989, one can observe a slowly increasing number of male choirs in this region; in that year, the cultural, social and economic situation in the Czech society changed essentially as a consequence of the fall of the totalitarian regime.

On the local level, an increase in civic activities could be observed since the 1990s. This increase became even more intensive at the outset of the 21st century: new clubs were founded, cultural and sports activities developed, interest in roots, local history and traditions in the widest sense of the word rose, many local monographs were written, folk costumes were reconstructed, work at children’s folklore ensembles and music bands (which can also be considered a part of invented tradition) experienced a boom. Male choirs expanded unusually at that time, and their growth continued until the first decade of the 21st century when their quantity increased significantly. Nowadays, we register more than one hundred independent male choirs in Slovácko, which means that they work in nearly every village.

The field research into male choirs focused not only on making a survey (list of locations, date of formation) but also on the role they play in the maintenance and transformation of existing ethno-cultural traditions, or in the formation of new ones. The questions were also aimed at individual motivation and approaches of choir members, explanations of how these ensembles work, targets of their work, repertoire etc. It will require much time to finish the field research, yet now we are able to present several concrete results and determine the typical elements connected with the functioning of this phenomenon that is in its principle a new one in the range of the folklore tradition’s transmission.

As a matter of principle, the formation of particular male choirs does not have ties to the previous or contemporary activity of other folklore bodies in a village. It is mostly encouraged by a random circumstance (burial, wedding, New Year’s Eve party, preparation of local feast); many villages experienced unsuccessful attempts to found a choir before. The assumptions that many choirs are formed by former members of local folklore ensembles or groups (i.e. former dancers who have grown-up children and are established enough in their job so that they can use their leisure time for taking care of folklore traditions) was not confirmed.\(^{12}\) The choirs consist predominantly of married men,\(^{13}\) middle-aged or older; the average age, however, varies, and the ensembles often consist of different generations whereby the difference between the youngest and the oldest member can be even forty or more years. The membership in choirs is based on similar conditions throughout the entire region: it is the willingness to take part in rehearsals and to sing together. The singing quality of individual members is important only in choirs that have higher artistic ambitions, which depends mostly on the conductor and his demands. Sometimes, these ambitions can be based on collective opinion, especially if good singers predominate in the choir.

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\(^{12}\) The hitherto only exception found is the male choir from Svatoborice-Mistřín – the dancers of the local folklore group become choir members when they get married: the folklore group is intended solely for single men, while the choir for the married ones.

\(^{13}\) In local dialect there is a word for married men (mužáci) which many choirs use as a part of their name: Mužáci from Lanžhot, Mužáci from Kobyli, Mužáci from Mutěnice and others. However, it includes also the men who have lost this marital status.
Nevertheless, as the research has shown it is the dress that is a significant condition for membership in a male choir in the Slovácko region. The choirs perform solely wearing folk costumes and every singer must have his own folk costume, sometimes in several variants. The research has revealed that either the singers use garments inherited from their fathers, other relatives or friends, or they have the garments or the complete folk costume made after they have become choir members. Based on a common agreement, the choirs quite often acquire new garments collectively, mostly with the idea these will be used by the coming generation of singers. The costs for having a complete folk costume made are rather high in all parts of Slovácko; the lower limit of the costs is about twenty thousand Czech crowns, although it can even reach thirty-five thousand Czech crowns. Some garments must be renewed more often; moreover, the figures of the singers change with age so they have to invest in their folk costumes again.

The formation of such ensembles is motivated by the men’s internal need to sing as well as by their need to sing in an organized group. In many cases, the decision to found a choir was supported by a circumstance where there was a strong person in the village who knew the local or wider folklore traditions and who had musical talent, organizational skills, and natural authority. Mostly these are persons from dynasties or families of musicians, which have cultivated folklore traditions for generations (both authentic and invented ones). They are often collectors of folk songs, dances or composers of songs composed in the spirit of folk songs. However, one can find choirs whose conductor is a professional (a trained conductor paid by the choir members); cases are even known when one person is the head of several choirs because no suitable person could be found in the place of the choir’s activity.

The way of learning the songs depends on if the choir members can read music or not. If they can, they learn their new repertoire from sheet music; in the opposite case, they learn new songs based on listening (the songs are sung or played on a musical instrument first). During the field research, we met a case when the men did not read music but they sang according to the course of melody (notes going up or down) combined with listening to other singers.

The course of the rehearsals, learning technique, repertoire composition, and level of stylization depend mainly on the conductor’s knowledge. As to the interpretation of songs, two-part singing predominates, which corresponds to younger folklore tradition (more-part singing was not typical for Moravia until the end of the 19th century); today, choirs demonstrate three- or four-part singing under the influence of church or traditional choirs focused on different genres (artificial music). During public performances, the choirs sing mostly a capella, although some ensembles are accompanied by one instrument (cimbalom, violin, accordion) or a folk music band (with or without cimbalom).

The repertoire of the Slovácko male choirs is variable today. Its composition is determined by choir members’ knowledge, their motivation, and ambitions on the one hand, while on the other hand, it depends on how the local folklore traditions are preserved and how intensive the collector’s interest in a particular village is. Some choirs sing only profane songs, while other ones also add spiritual songs into their repertoire. We can find conservative choirs that sing solely the folk songs captured in their location (from contemporaries, or manuscripts or printed collections); other ones just respect their sub-region (Kýjov area, the ethnographic areas of Podluží, Uherské Hradiště, Uherský Brod, Strážnice and Kopanice) or region (songs from the whole Slovácko re-
In addition to traditional sources, also the radio, television, and sound carriers recorded by different choirs can serve as the source of repertoire. There are bodies whose repertoire includes folk songs from different regions (Slovácko, Wallachia, Lachia) as well as works of different genres (classical music, spiritual music).

So-called “new outputs” inspired by folk songs have become an integral part of the repertoire of male choirs. Folklore traditions in the Slovácko region still evolve in authors’ works that are based on the formal structure and partially the content of folk songs from a particular Slovácko sub-region. Because the non-folk origin (or rather the author’s name was known to the public) stopped the song from being spread and accepted by ensembles especially in the second half of the 20th century, some authors claim their compositions with delay. Generally put the new works are accepted by interpreters and the public with a positive response at present; they are no longer seen as forged tradition, but rather as its development.

The text analysis of new works shows it has moved from the themes related to already extinct expressions of traditional folk culture in the field of livelihood (farming, handicrafts, home production, etc.) and social relations (recruitment, rebelliousness, compulsory labour, etc.) to the motives that satisfy the contemporary ideas of authors and interpreters about living folklore traditions. New texts are determined by shared collective vision about the character of “a Slovácko” song as well as by stereotypes evoking an image of the Slovácko region and its folklore among the contemporary audience. “It consists in the style (...) as if it was an old song. It talks about horses, girlfriends, as well as what they used to wear (...). It is like ours, about vineyards, about feasts, about wine.”

It is retro. But something new there that would be a spraying platform or a similar Mountfield, this is not there.”

The research of individual motivation of singers has shown that the function of male choirs can display two features. On the one hand, we can find choirs whose principal task is the social interaction in the course of learning. Although they perform for the public, they prefer natural spontaneous singing in wine cellars, etc. The style of singing of these choirs originates from local traditions (be it a more authentic expression, or an interpretation influenced by folklorism but considered as a traditional one by the singers and public); in the choir, you can find good and less good singers. The repertoire and regularity in rehearsals is adapted to this – many choirs meet regularly only in the so-called festival season, i.e. in the months that allow singing outdoors, and such singing is demonstrated at shows of male choirs, folklore festivals or different local ethno-cultural activities.

The other group consists of choirs heading towards high-quality public presentation and building their good reputation. Their work features higher intensity of rehearsals, more authoritative conducting, and emphasizes good singing, which excludes the participation of less talented singers. They usually have a more demanding repertoire and traditional singing can lose its importance: some choirs include stylish presentation of songs with more than two voices. Such choirs tend to publish their own song-books or recordings on a commercial basis and singing together in the choir is placed high on the ladder of priorities of the members of those ensembles.
However, in the 21st century all male choirs desire to make a recording as a target of their work. The ensembles that do not accentuate the quality in the sense of systematic artistic work and public presentation record the CDs solely for their own need in some cases, as a non-public recording. However, in most cases this editorial work is to represent the choir, village, and its folklore traditions.

To a large extent the activity of male choirs affects the cultural and social life in the villages; in many locations, these ensembles have taken over the task of voluntary fire teams which became one of the most important tradition-keepers in the second half of the 20th century (their function was mostly organizational, but they sometimes acted as tradition bearers). Today, male choirs take part not only in maintaining the ethno-cultural traditions but also they encourage the formation of new activities referring to older folklore traditions but only based on some expressions of traditional folk culture (songs, dances, folk costumes, etc.). These include e.g. live nativity scenes at Christmas, opening of wine cellars, slivovitz tasting, as well as the already mentioned meetings or shows of choirs, which have evolved into local folklore festivals in many cases, with the participation of visiting folklore ensembles not only from the region, but also from Slovakia for instance.

The activity of male choirs cannot unambiguously be classified as folklorism. In relation to their members, many choirs fulfil the functions which ethnology rather links to everyday culture (occasion to meet and sing together, communication with other vintners and exchange of information, relaxation, escape from everyday problems) or to satisfy their own needs (solidarity, acknowledgement and respect, self-realisation). As resulting from the responses of choir members in the villages with a developed winegrowing tradition, the men understand the singing of folklore songs as an integral part of wine production and its following consumption or sale. In some cases, they mentioned the connection with local sport activities – mutual football matches are finished “over wine” in this region, with singing of folk songs.

The activity of choirs also pursues (deliberately) the aim to maintain and develop folklore traditions and to draw attention to their village. This also is the reason for CD recordings, even though the artistic ambitions of particular choirs are very different. This was confirmed by the responses of male choir members, and by visits to their rehearsals and performances as well as by listening to the recordings mentioned above, and analysis of their dramaturgy.

**MALE DANCE VERBUŇK IN THE SLOVÁCKO REGION**

*Verbuňk* from the ethnographic area of Slovácko is a male dance known not only to experts but also to the wider public. The awareness of this dance undoubtedly rose after it had been awarded the title “A UNESCO-Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity” in 2005 and consequently inscribed in the newly created UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Although

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17 Visits to wine cellar aimed at wine tasting or purchase connected with gathering and folk song singing (often accompanied by folk cimbalom music or other type of music) have been very popular in Moravia for tens of years; in connection with the development of tourism focused on sale of wine their importance has grown in the recent decade (e.g. cycle paths in South Moravia).

18 In 2008, the inscription of Slovácko *verbuňk* was transmitted on the Representative List that results from the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (accepted at the UNESCO General Conference in 2003). Comp. also Blahůšek, 2010.
this international list is still being extended by tens of cultural phenomena from all over the world, *verbuňk* was the first Czech expression ever to be awarded the title.19

The origin of *verbuňk*, similar to that of many other expressions of traditional folk culture from the spiritual or social sphere, is rather hypothetical. In the 20th century, the male dance connected with recruiting or historical Haiduck dances became an irreplaceable phenomenon among male dance expressions in the ethnographic area of Moravian Slovakia, which has been called the Slovácko Region since the second half of the 20th century. At the outset of interests in traditional folk culture, the knowledge about this folk dance seems to have been more sporadic than it would appear today. As mentioned by *Slovník české hudební kultury* [Czech Musical Culture Dictionary] (1997) under the entry “verbuňk”: “The Hungarian name verbunkos relates to the German words werben and Werbung, which are terms for ‘armed forces hiring’ or ‘recruitment’ (...) In the 18th century, this term was used for musical expressions, or dances used for recruitment to the Austrian army in Hungary.” (Fukač, Vysloužil, Toncová, 1997: 989).

In Hungary, hiring to the military continued until 1848, while in Austria compulsory military service was introduced by Joseph II as early as in 1781 (Holý, 1993: 17). Other possible roots of *verbuňk* could be found in Haiduck’s military dances, which have been documented in Hungary since the early 16th century; male improvised dances distinguished themselves by expressed physical and dance ability (Ibid: 18). Although the presumption may be that these historic dance expressions could stand for moves similar to the traditional *verbuňk*, the evolution of this dance was captured much later.

Nowadays, *verbuňk* is described as a male improvised dance from South-East Moravia in which we can find the following components:

– opening singing of songs of New-Hungarian nature, and dancing part of slow tempo,
– dancing part of increasing tempo graduating to very fast tempo,
– hopping and jumping movement compositions accompanied by other dance moves (leg stretching out and backwards, knee bending, stamping, handclapping, clapping on boots etc.) (Jelínková, 1993: 8).

The presumption is that the *verbuňk* basis can be seen in an improvised masculine dance expression – so-called *cifrování* – that supplemented pair rotating dances by an individual presentation of the dancer (Fukač, Vysloužil, Toncová, 1997: 990). According to ethno-choreologist Zdenka Jelínková, the move parallels can also be seen in dancers jumping in front of the music bands, documented in different sub-regions of Slovácko as a masculine dance expression. However, the same researcher mentions the lack of records termed as *verbuňk* in song collections from the 19th century (Jelínková, 1993: 10): a song stated as *verbuňk* can be found only in the so-called Gubernial Collection (1819),20 probably from the Kyjov area; there are no mentions in the editions by František Sušil21 and František Bartoš 22 either – except for the dance

Jací, tací, recorded by the collector Martin Zeman in the ethnographic area of Horňácko (Holý, 1993: 10).23

A more thorough research of verbuňk began only in the second half of the 20th century when researchers together with those interested in folk dance, often members of newly founded folk ensembles, carried out field research. However, it turned out that verbuňk is a quite young dance for some regions and is based mainly on individual masculine dance expression, so-called cifrování, demonstrated while dancing in pairs, or in male dances of a jumping nature (Holý, 1993: 15–19). As early as in the early 20th century, the development of verbuňk in many areas was indisputably encouraged by the creative ability of particular dancers as well as by the extending folklore movement. In the Strážnice area, for example, the name of František Vajčner-Plaček is well-known (1893–1974), about whom the folk song collector Vladimír Úlehla wrote that he knew him “as a good dancer at student holiday gatherings in 1910–1912” (Úlehla, 1949: 803). In the Uherské Hradiště area, it was e.g. Ignác Plevák (1906–1991), an important organizer of cultural events in Staré Město between the two world wars and an excellent dancer, who practised folk dances for different performances.24 When the verbuňk contest was established at the folklore festival in Strážnice in 1946, the rules differentiating regional types of verbuňk in Slovácko began to take shape. It can be said that only at that time did the dance styles of some distinctive representatives spread out. These styles were gradually considered to be characteristic.

The evolution of verbuňk can be continually observed with significant personalities (bearers of traditions) e.g. in the Uherské Hradiště area mentioned above, which can be one of the selected examples. During the research implemented with Ignác Plevák at the end of the 1980s, he pointed out two basic features of verbuňk in the ethnographic area of Dolňácko25 that should be respected: mild “floored” cifrování and arms on the back (Pavlicová, 1992: 160). However, it was no longer possible to find out to which extent this meaning was influenced by the folklore movement between the two world wars, or to which extent the own imagination of the dancer or his knowledge of local dance tradition manifested themselves in the dance. It was not possible to compare him with other representatives of his generation; actually, in Staré Město it was he who taught boys of the same age to dance folk dances that were no longer a common part of the local dance repertoire of that time.26 The knowledge of this bearer gradually spread among younger members of the local folklore ensemble founded in the 1950s (Jan Vojtíšek, born in 1929 and others), who passed down their knowledge of verbuňk to other generations of ensemble members.

In 1986, the verbuňk contest was revived at the International Folklore Festival in Strážnice. This can be considered to be the strongest incentive for the present expansion and next evolution of this dance in the sense of the regional style codification,

23 As the oldest descriptions of verbuňk Holý considers M. Zeman’s (1854–1919) records “Na husára nebo verbírská” and “Verbunk: Jací, tací”, which are published in the collection Horňácké tance [Dances from the Ethnographic Area of Horňácko], issued as a part of Zeman’s legacy in 1951. However, he pointed out that the melody accompanying the dance Jací, tací is rather slow and relating to a dance of jumping nature, there is not a dotted rhythm as there is with the songs that accompany verbuňk in Slovácko today (Holý, 1993: 15).
24 For more see Pavlicová, 2012.
25 Slovácko as an ethnographic area is divided in several subregions. Podluží, Dolňácko (Strážnice area, Kyjov area, Uherské Hradiště area, Uherský Brod area), Hornácko, Moravské Kopanice; it can be extended by transition ethnographic areas of Hanácké Slovácko and Luhačovické Zálesí.
26 For more comp. Pavlicová, 2008: 201–211.
way of singing, permitted innovations in the dance and others (comp. Krist, Pavlištík, Matuszková, 2005). At that time, verbuňk was no longer danced outside folklore ensembles.

If we stay in Staré Město, it was Josef Bazala (born 1960) from the location that stood out at the contest. He began with enriching the dance tradition, which had been personified by Ignác Plevák and other members of local ensembles until that time, with the styles of other dancers from the region, who went through the after-war folklore movement and many of whom also took part in the first Strážnice contests: “Vojtěk, I think, he was a good verbuňk dancer, and his expression was certainly more natural and sincere than that of Vališ (...). Vojtěk was more flowing (...) Vališ’s verbuňk was more cut into parts (...)Well, I danced cifrování partially in the same style...” (Pavlicová, 1992: 163). The mentioned František Vališ (1922–2002), also a native from Staré Město, used to be a dancer in the Hradišťan folklore ensemble. The research by his grandsons, also verbuňk dancers in a folklore ensemble, was done by Kateřina Černíčková-Silná in 2003. She published her findings in the study Verbuňk na současném Uherskohradišťsku – funkce a význam [Verbuňk in Contemporary Uherské Hradiště Area – Function and Importance]. She showed in the example mentioned above that even though verbuňk was a mere expression of folklorism at a public presentation (a performance of a folklore ensemble), it could be passed down from one generation to another within a family on this basis if there were some interested in ensemble membership in the family (Černíčková-Silná, 2008: 222).

Based on his participation in the contest in Strážnice, Josef Bazala, similarly to other participants who represented the style of a certain sub-region of Slovácko, was forced to analyze verbuňk much more than dancers on a natural dance occasion: “For example Pudelka was a dancer who made things up as well. He is said to jump up falling down on his knees from the top of this jump. (...) And uncle Pleváku used to dance odzemek while dancing the sedlčák dance from Staré Město. Well, people used to make many things up really often. It was uncle Pleváku who always used to say that the arms must be on the back but this could be just an opinion (...) Kropáček and Vališ danced with their arms up. (...) I could hear (...) a theory that men used to be short and because uncle Pleváku was tall he was tall even without his arms.” (Pavlicová, 1992: 163–164) The knowledge that Josef Bazala gained while observing other dancers and that he tried to include into “his” verbuňk, is connected with his personal vision he specifies with more and more details: “I know I included more jumps into it. Maybe even more sharpness and then I tried to increase the tempo of the fast verbuňk.” He came to a typical expression in which he interconnected his personal feeling and dancing skills with the image of the regional verbuňk from Dolňácko, as it took shape in the folklore movement.

The dancer Erik Feldvabel (born 1978) followed Bazala in Staré Město. He won the verbuňk contest in Strážnice four times and set another distinctive personal stamp on the demonstration of this dance. He is followed by many dancers who consistently learn to dance the verbuňk in a local folklore ensemble. The participation in the contest in Strážnice is one of the targets of their endeavour. However, they also concen-

trate on the knowledge of the dance for performances on stage. The aim of practising the *verbuňk* is also to maintain one of the symbols of local identity – a male dance as an integral part of annual door-to-door processions at the feast and following local folklore festival.\(^{30}\)

The *verbuňk* contest encouraged many dancers to learn this dance in other sub-regions of Slovácko. The contest rules gave shape to “regional” styles. On the jury there were dancers from folklore ensembles from the first after-war years as well as repeated winners of the contest’s modern stage. Not only awarding the spectator’s prize gave the audience the possibility to become involved in the assessment; it also provided an initiation for the dance which was then evaluated by the wide public and promoted. The fact that this movement encouraged an interest in *verbuňk* even in localities where no records on this dance were documented is essential; *verbuňk* was even practised outside the Slovácko region (Teturová, 2012). The wave of interest was extended by a prestigious children’s contest for “recruits”, which trains new potential dancers (Habartová, 2010).

In the case of *verbuňk*, we can study the process of variations of particular dancers and how they refine their style within the contest rules\(^{31}\); we can observe its expansion even outside folklore ensembles (however, again in connection with the folklore movement’s activities) and investigate the relation of recipients – non-dancers – to this dance in particular localities. Here is the place for a discussion on how we can understand *verbuňk* in the Slovácko region. Is it a part of everyday life in the sense of its irreplaceable demonstration on selected solemn occasions, or is it an expression, the importance of which relates only to the activities of folklore ensembles and their repertoire? Does it concern folklore and folklorism, or an ethno-cultural expression that has been incorporated into the local tradition as a new element? If we examine particular bearers, transmissions of elements, processes of variations, interaction on a dance occasion, we will be given a unique possibility of comparison with older knowledge, or even with film records the beginnings of which date back – e.g. in the ethnographic area of Podluží – to 1918.\(^{32}\) Here we can analyze *verbuňk* as an expression of dance folklore the regularities of which can also be found in contemporary dance expressions. However, if we examine mainly the context of the dance, it is no longer possible to speak simply about folklore. In the case of stage presentations, we must state this is folklorism. At the same time, *verbuňk* plays a much more extensive role: presentation of the locality and region, prestigious awards at contests of adult dancers and children, compulsory activities and control by experts connected with the inscription of *verbuňk* on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, participation of political representatives at the events connected with the inscription. *Verbuňk* is no longer just an expression of folklorism but a part of ethno-cultural activities whose formation and structure (and related functions) are wide. Folklorism is just a tool for their fulfilment. The contemporary research shows

\(^{30}\) It is necessary to note that it is the folklore ensemble that organizes the festival alongside the municipality.

\(^{31}\) Comp. Statute of the Contest for the Best Dancer of Slovácko *Verbuňk* at the International Folklore Festival Strážnice 2010 (in: Blahůšek et al., 2010: 106–108). The expert jury assesses the way of singing, the dance and the form of folk costume – “the hat must not be fastened, the shoes must not be of stage design, the folk costume will not have features of stage costume”.

\(^{32}\) In 1918, the film *Podlužácké hody v Lanžhotě* [Feast of the Podluží Ethnographic Area in Lanžhot] was probably made about which Jitka Matuszková also wrote that “it can serve to study the development of a dance form especially that of *verbuňk* ...”. Comp. Matuszková 1992.
how important the contest in Strážnice was for verbuňk and the folklore movement. For instance, Lucie Hacarová in her work Verbuňk ve Vracově a jeho současné existence [Verbuňk in Vracov and its Contemporary Existence] (2013) presents with conviction that even in the place (a locality between the Kyjov and the Strážnice area of the Dolňácko region) where the tradition of verbuňk dancing dates back to as late as the 1960s thanks to the members of local folklore ensembles, verbuňk can be found as a dance expression required at local festivals and we can also analyse its position in local tradition. The author gives information about how the dance developed in this locality, where individual dance figures “cifra” were brought from and how the opinions on the dance evolved. Although the examined locality and its environs belong to the Slovácko region, where verbuňk was documented in general (i.e. the situation is different from that of verbuňk transmission to different ethnographic areas where it did not occur in folk tradition at all), we are dealing with a newly formed tradition that is based on an outside construction put into the local environment. Keeping a distance, we can say that it was the bearers themselves, the experts and the public that took part in this tradition, i.e. aspects which the already mentioned Gradišnik speaks about as a necessity for ethnological knowledge of the present.

Today, verbuňk is stated as a typical male dance in the Slovácko region and hardly anybody would doubt its continual tradition within the line folklore – folklorism. However, as indicated above, the spectrum of the genesis of the dance, the factors influencing its development, and the function in which it finds itself is much wider than it would appear at first glance.

CONCLUSION

As shown by the analysis of two expressions of ethno-cultural traditions, folklore traditions fulfil numerous functions in contemporary Czech society, which are connected with the everyday culture of their practitioners. However, they play an important role in a different context than in that of their formation. As a part of traditional folk culture, they functioned as a dichotomy of a working and a festive day within the strict framework of the religious calendar and the rural year. As society transformed, this framework moved significantly. With the loss of its original functions, many folk traditions ceased to exist. However, the historical and social development assigned new roles to folklore and other expressions of traditional folk culture.

These traditions are understood as reasonable leisure time activities, they are a space for fulfilling the personal needs of the participants (especially within the organized folklore movement but also outside it). In some regions, they are also an important element to create and maintain the collective identity (local and regional) and its outside representation. This is bountifully explored in the Czech Republic to strengthen the local economy because financial means from the commercial sector go into households in communities, i.e. into the public sector. The traditions fulfil a function of goods – they are an important business article in the field of tourism, the hospitality industry, services connected with recreation; they play a certain role in the field of ecological agriculture. Folklore is becoming an attractive scene for commercial events, such as tasting of products of so-called traditional cuisine or alcoholic drinks (wine, beer, dif-

33 The author dealt with the answers of eleven verbuňk practitioners (born 1943–1988) about verbuňk.
ferent kinds of brandies). Despite the fact that the relation of the Czech society to folklore traditions is rather ambivalent mainly because of folklorism in totalitarian Czechoslovakia, as mentioned above, this is an important phenomenon, intentionally and institutionally supported and understood as cultural heritage.

Not only in the Czech Republic, but also in other places, the intangible and tangible cultural heritage fulfils many social and cultural functions. As proven by works on this theme, one of the factors that forms heritage is also an increased interest in history, historical memory and roots (even though in connection with these categories many ideological parameters can be observed in different countries). The attractiveness of the cultural heritage in the sector of economy is important: the development of tourism and related existence of eco-museums, cultural areas and natural parks. Thanks to these aspects, the contemporary society is able to include its own past as well as the past of others into its opinion (Klein, 2006).

The attractiveness of folk culture for modern people can be understood from many points of view. As shown by ethnologic research, some expressions of folk culture have survived residually and remain parts of everyday culture; some have been transmitted into new environments and contexts, some have been reconstructed, some others significantly stylized or deduced. New traditions have come into being but, just refer to folk culture, find inspiration in it and within this concept they are accepted by the society.

Today, all types of ethno-cultural traditions are provably constructed within the process of social interaction and communication. The language of the participants plays an important role in the formation of ethno-cultural tradition, similarly to the construction of the rest of the social world. The language is not only a means to depict the reality, but it takes part in the construction thereof. The meanings of the objects are not given in advance and firmly; they are assigned by social participants, so they can be changed. As a result of traditional ethnographic research and some ethnologic traditionalistic tendencies, many elements of ethno-cultural traditions or their systems can be understood as so-called invented traditions (neologisms, fictions, non-anchored cultural activities). However, the participants (bearers, organizers, audience and the wider public) understand and assess them as a part of local or regional traditional culture and their function is understood as being identical with continual folk traditions. Where is the border between what we can call a construction (invented tradition to a larger or smaller extent) and what indisputably belonged to folk culture and continues in everyday culture?

As obvious from the mentioned example, the caesura on which even some ethnological research in the second half of the 20th century were based are completely disappearing in this respect at the outset of the 21st century. Folklore plays an important role in social awareness in not only different forms of cultural heritage, but also in the shapes that approximate to folklore only in a certain part of its content or form. The consent of the participants and wider community that accept these forms, participate in them, and incorporate them into the system of the cultural tradition of a place is essential. Simultaneously it can be stated that the (re)constructivist tendencies are given different dimensions and forms than in the past, although they are not a fully new process in connection with the use of folklore and folk culture. They have accompa-

34 This theme was presented more thoroughly in special studies (Pavlicová, Uhlíková 2008b, 2013).
nied the interest in this phenomenon since its beginning; simply their purposes and functions differed. Today, we do not strive to strengthen the national identity in them (even though this function occurs at an international level) but to represent local or regional identity, strengthen social bonds by means of direct, inter-personal communication, as well as share the simple mutuality and closeness of people, often multiplied by emotional experiences. Ethnology, or rather folklore studies, is given a new dimension that does not rank it among antiquated scientific disciplines in the 21st century.

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36 This level, which can hardly be defined in professional discourse, is reflected with humour and details in the texts written by local experts in folk culture or regional writers, e.g. work by Josef Holcman – Hýlom, hálom, aneb Kyjov v jízdě králů [Hýlom, hálom – or Kyjov in the Ride of the Kings]. Skoronice: Kulturní a vlastivědné sdružení Skoronice, 2007; Cena facky [The Price of a Slap]. Zlín: Kniha Zlín, 2009; Stroj se (ne)zadrhl [The Machine Did (Not) Jam]. Uherské Hradiště: Ottobre 12, 2012.


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After the Second World War, most rituals connected with agricultural (manual) work died out along with the economic and social base of such activities. This also caused the gradual omission of some classical ethnological concepts and themes and diminishing interest for such research topics. However, some such rituals survived until the present in a modified form and with new purpose and are enacted either in families (related to the traditional belief in the power of nature) or in local communities (in tourism contexts). New rituals also emerge since farmers, who face new challenges in selling produce and products, ritualize selling at public events to attract customers. The shift in perception of tradition by the general population in turn revived the ethnological interest for such phenomena. The article analyses the methodological changes in ritual research, as are reflected in European ethnology, and illustrate the changing of contexts with the case-study in the vicinity of Slovenia’s capital, Ljubljana. In connection with the notion of rural idyll and heritage tourism, ritualization of everyday farming activities has been used as a strategy for improvement of living. Traditional and new agricultural rituals have become a means for sustainable development and identity politics; they add to regeneration of the local economy, affect a sense of belonging and integration of the local population.

Key words: rituals, ritualization, heritage, agriculture, tourism, rural idyll

INTRODUCTION

After the Second World War, political, ideological, economic, social and cultural changes influenced economic and social restructuring, different employment challenges and nature of work, but also rituals connected with working itself. Presumably the most visible changes occurred in the primary sector, where inhabitants started to abandon agriculture to work in industry and other non-agrarian businesses. Most rituals connected with agricultural (manual) work died out along with the economic and social base of such activities. This also caused the gradual omission of some classical concepts and themes (e.g. “work customs”, farmer’s way of life etc.) of post-war...
ethnology (mainly characterized by cultural history school), and diminishing interest for such research topics.

However, some rituals, connected with agricultural work, survived until the present in a modified form and with new purpose, and are enacted or staged either in families (mostly related to the traditional belief in the power of nature) or in local communities (in tourism contexts). Additionally, new rituals emerge since farmers, who face new challenges in selling produce and products, ritualize selling at public events to attract customers. Such practices therefore gain different development potential. This shift in perception of tradition and folklore by the general population, which started to use it for improvement of life, also revived the interest for such phenomena among ethnologists who re-evaluated classical concepts and older studies to better understand the contemporary world.

The article analyses the methodological changes in ritual research, as are reflected in European ethnology, and illustrate the changing of contexts with the case-study of agricultural rituals in the vicinity of Slovenia’s capital, Ljubljana. In connection with the notion of rural idyll and heritage tourism, ritualization of everyday farming activities in there searched area (e.g. selling) has been used as a strategy for improvement of living: increasing family income, achieving recognition of the farm, placing the local area and community on a tourist map etc. Traditional and new agricultural rituals have become a means for sustainable development and identity politics; they add to regeneration, strengthening or development of the local economy as well as affecting a sense of belonging and integration of the local population.

CLASSICAL CONCEPTS, NEW PERSPECTIVES

During and after the process of forming and defining ethnological studies, fundamental changes brought on by industrialization with its side effects supposedly caused the disappearance of tradition. This was believed to lead to the loss of particular cultures, identities, values, morality, originality, distinct character, etc. Therefore in the second half of the nineteenth century Slovenian collectors and researchers of folk material labelled the most “striking”, interesting elements of culture of the predominantly peasant population as “national goods”, “national treasures” etc., using them to illustrate Slovenia’s cultural richness and uniqueness, that presumably placed it on a par with other European nations. The same applies to other European countries, especially those previously under the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. Their successors elevated local or regional elements to the level of national character, thus nationalising folk culture to create a sense of national identity. In doing so, ethnographers tampered with tradition, reworked and reinvented it, with the intention of preserving it and “saving it from slipping into oblivion”. Thus, ethnology in its beginnings was characterized as “a national rescue action” (Löfgren, 1990: 4), and with this ambition, it gained prominence in European countries as an academic discipline of national importance.

Until the 1960s, the subject of research in most national ethnological disciplines remained the culture of rural populations. Culture was understood as a unit of elements which were easily sorted in the boxes of the folk life archives. A way of life was transformed into the collection of customs in which individual elements could be studied separately, without attention to its context. The vision of the past was unproblematic,
and the customs were considered as glue that united people into the harmonious whole. People were perceived as the bearers of tradition and not its creators. The study of customs additionally referred to the “Sunday-best version”; the focus was on the most festive characteristics (Frykman, Löfgren, 1996: 5). Due to the perceived importance of such practices and their colourful features, the study of so-called customs and habits – generally understood as inherited or acquired, socially recognized and obligatory behaviour at a given occasion that elevated the act above everyday (cf. Ložar–Podlogar, 2004a) – became a flagship of (Slovenian) ethnology (cf. Kuret, 1965–71). However, religious acts (especially those in prescribed or settled form, e.g. church ceremonies), generally denoted with a term “ritual”, were rarely the focus of researchers’ attention due to the communist regime that strived to establish new festive calendar with new ceremonial practices.

The 1960s marked the shift in focus of European ethnologies – including Slovenian – and their subject of research. Attention was given to the contemporary phenomena and non-agrarian communities (cf. Kremenšek, 1973). One of the most influential debates of that time – especially in the German area – was on folklorism (cf. Moser, 1962, 1964; Zeitschrift für Volkskunde, 65(1), 1969; Köstlin, 1969; Bausinger, 1970), which greatly contributed to the end of worshipping phenomena of folk culture and of searching for survivals. The concept of folk customs got a negative connotation in some of the European national ethnological disciplines since it was associated with obsolescence and essentialism. The researchers preferred to use the terms with a non-ideological charge (interaction, role-play forms of communication, transaction, ritual life etc.) which were easily used for current as well as past phenomena and implied previously absent cultural meaning (Frykman, Löfgren, 1996: 6). However, Slovenian ethnologists were late in implementing different research approaches to studying customs compared to the methodological shift in other national ethnologies. The studies of festive – or ritual – practices until 1990 remained mainly based on the cultural-historical research of folk culture.

In the 1970s and 1980s, people again started to take interest in the history and revitalization of traditions (cf. Boissevain, 1992). When ethnologists noticed this trend and realized that young people express themselves through customs, referring to the past when building their present identity, they needed new tools to interpret this trend. They used old studies and extensive collections of material on this subject to better understand the present. An historical perspective allowed for the distance to contemporary life and its characteristics. What previously seemed ethnology’s weakness turned out to be its advantage: comparative material on which to build research. New circumstances thus created a desire to return to classical topics and material with new perspectives and questions (Frykman, Löfgren, 1996: 6–7).

In the 1980s, the growing number of festivals, customs and habits as well as their intensive advertising (especially in tourism) and frequent media coverage motivated Yugoslav ethnologists to take a closer look at the study of customs (cf. Narodna umjetnost, 24, 1987) and again focus the attention on the ritual life. Further intrigued by the political situation, i.e. the disintegration of Yugoslavia and consequent introduction of new festivals and holidays with accompanying ritual practices, they published numerous works on such phenomena based on the critique of up to then understanding of festivals and customs; the shift was also marked by terminological changes (e.g. the term “ritual” started to denote political ceremonies and contemporary festivities). They employed new research perspectives and concepts to grasp the politics
behind such practices and their social conditions (Rihtman-Auguštin, 1992, 2000; Čapo Žmegač, 1997; Đorđević, 1997; cf. Prica, 2001; Rihtman-Auguštin, 2001). On the other hand, despite the growing number of monographs on ritual practices and festive life in Slovenia – mostly on calendric rites – one cannot find any consistent evaluation of older concepts and research (cf. Kozorog, 2013). “Classic” studies were for the most part merely upgraded with historical overviews and description of the contemporary state (Ovsec, 1992, 2010; Bogataj, 1997, 1998, 2006, 2011; Peršič, 2003; Balkovec Debevec, 2008; Bogataj, Brejc & Bratovž, 2010). It is only in the new millennium that one can find studies of festivals and ritual practices from other starting points, e.g. politics, power relations, identity, sustainable development (Gačnik, 2000; Fikfak, Gačnik, Križnar, Ložar – Podlogar, 2003; Slavec Gradišnik, Ložar – Podlogar, 2008; Simonič, 2009; Jezernik, Velikonja, Slavec Gradišnik, 2013; Kozorog, 2013; Poljak Istenič, 2013a, 2013b; Slavec Gradišnik, Jezernik, Velikonja, 2014). Contrary to the ethnological research tradition, rural festivals or ritual practices were only rarely the centre of scientific attention, and even in a few existing cases the discussions were mostly descriptive, lacking deeper analysis.

SO WHAT’S UP WITH AGRICULTURAL RITUALS? CASE-STUDY FROM LJUBLJANA’S COUNTRYSIDE

Numerous ethnological studies in the past dealt with traditional activities, which were considered as ritual practices merely because they were disappearing, and no attempt had been made to reflect on the meaning of ritual. One such example is studies on peasant work with accompanying practices which made work easier, reciprocated mutual help and provided opportunities to socialize with the opposite sex. However, contributions on the so-called “working customs” (which were a separate category in ethnological systematics) have been negligibly rare in Slovenian ethnology. Niko Kuret’s work (1965–71) on the origins of such customs and Robert Gary Minnich’s work (1979) on pig slaughter are the only examples of extensive analysis of agricultural customs in Slovenia, otherwise only mere fragments can be found in the articles on working procedures, tools, handicrafts, professional groups, calendric rites, neighbourhoods, relatives, or in the topographic studies. Since manual work almost completely disappeared due to motorization of the countryside and reciprocal help was no longer needed, the class of “working customs” – defined as the acts with ceremonial (later more or less entertaining) content that accompanied agricultural handwork (Ložar – Podlogar 2004: 82) – became the category of the disciplinary history. One of the consequences of their disappearance is also our inability to recognize ritual elements of today’s farming (or “working customs”). Does contemporary peasant work have any ritual dimension at all? How to grasp such phenomena?

This question was the starting point of a decade long research on the Janče area, which forms part of the rural outskirts of the Slovenian capital of Ljubljana. Agriculture played a minor economic role in the area by the early 1990s. Farming was in decline, and economic and demographic structures were unfavourable, with high out-migration figures, a weak sense of community and significant unemployment rates. Then in the beginning of the 1990s, a municipality employee from this area motivated inhabitants to cooperate in the Integrated Rural Development and Village Renewal Program, funded by the Slovenian agricultural ministry. The project’s aim was the es-
establishment of home businesses, e.g. sale of homemade produce and the development of the tourist farms, with urban visitors as the target audience. New pastures and orchards for integrated fruit production were established, meadow growth and gardens were revitalized, and several basins for irrigation were built. The inhabitants established a tourism society in 1993 and organized the first Slovenian Strawberry Country Festival at Janče a year later; the festival was soon replaced by Strawberry Festivals and Chestnut Sundays. A public site for such events was built alongside a playground. The Fruit Route (Sadna cesta) was established as a section of the tourism society in 1996 in order to comply with legal restrictions and establish a common brand with the aim of selling crops and produce at events. By 2013, 37 different entities (farms, a plant nursery, herb garden business, and a foundry studio; some of them already resigned) joined the association, which won the award for special achievements and unique rural development model by the European Association for Rural Development (ARGE) in 2004. In 2007, the municipality joined the European LEADER program of rural development. As a result of all interventions, the main occupation in the area today is fruit and livestock production, though usually at least one member of the farm is employed in Ljubljana.

The tourism society is the key initiator of social activities in the area alongside the sports club and the local primary school. It has approximately eighty members, most of which are also members of its section, the Fruit Route, which involves around twenty entities. While members of the Fruit Route gain economic benefit from events, non-members have no additional income from tourism. The original purpose of the local tourism society is to represent farmers and help them sell their produce e.g. fresh and preserved fruit and vegetables grown on farms, forest fruits, mushrooms, chestnuts, marmalades, pastries and sweets, liquors and juices. In order to do so they organize tourist events, two Strawberry Festivals and three Chestnut Sundays a year. The staging of different practices linked to manual peasant work is an important part of the program of such events, and the reconstruction of such practices is done according to local memory. Older people still remember extensive and demanding collective activities, i.e. harvesting, threshing, flax scutching and corn husking. The most vivid narratives were recorded about farm activities that allowed people to socialize, in particular millet threshing by foot and corn husking. In addition to the technology and procedures of particular farm activities, people remember chatting, joking, playing riddle games, singing, dancing, feasts, and, most of all, fighting for the last millet sheaf they called baba (in Slovenian language meaning old ugly woman) in which the farmer who invited people had hidden a bottle of liquor or sweets.

Here, when there was “a stack” [millet threshing], they always put a bottle of liquor into the sheaf. We called that sheaf “baba”, it was the last sheaf. They put bottle inside, or biscuits, or something like that. I remember that once they all ended up with torn shirts because they fought for that liquor.

Q: Was it an honour to get the last sheaf?
A: Of course it was. That’s why they fought so hard for that bottle.
Q: And what did the one who got that “baba” do with the bottle?
A: They mostly scuffled for so long that they spilled the content. If not, they shared it.
Q: Did you girls get it too?
A: They also offered it to us, but we were not inclined for drinking.
Q: What about the biscuits?
A: They crumbled them during that scuffling.
Such acts gave work its proper rhythm and made it easier to carry out. These forms of work that connected economically interdependent people (mostly relatives and neighbours) died out with the electrification and motorization of the area in the beginning of 1970s at the latest because mutual help was no longer needed. This was a period when being a worker was much more appreciated and favourable than being a farmer, and inhabitants started to abandon agriculture in order to work in industry or other non-agrarian businesses.

However, some traditional farm activities done by hand did remain alive or were recently reconstructed in a special, ritualized way. So although one could argue whether or not these activities can be understood as ritual – local inhabitants certainly do not employ the expression “rituals” or “customs” to describe them – we can definitely follow the efforts and motives to differentiate them from other (everyday) activities. To grasp the meaning behind such acts we have resorted to the concept of ritualization used by Catherine Bell (1992, 1997), who drew attention to the circumstances and cultural strategies that initiate certain practices and endow them with special meaning. Ritualization is “a way of acting that is designed and orchestrated to distinguish and privilege what is being done in comparison to other, usually more quotidian activities” (Bell, 1992: 74). Each ritual is strategic as well as practical, as it is entered into with an intention to accomplish something in the sociocultural world. People ritualize everyday activities by means of formalization, fixity and repetitiveness, which are the strategies to make the acts more prestigious, influential and authoritative. Ritualization of activities includes demarcated space, regulated periodicity, restricted codes of expression and emblemization, specialized roles and supporters (followers).

Organizing up to five events a year for two decades, the tourism society prepared, for example, hand mowing competitions with traditional tools (scythes), corn husking competitions and competitions in assembling a farm cart. While the last activity is something that was never practiced among local inhabitants, the first two, originally also done in a sort of competitive way, still live in the local memory. They were reconstructed because people thought them to be colourful enough to draw the attention of the target audience of local festivals and they were also easy to perform – either in a form of the so-called “theatre of history” or as a competition in skills and speed. In addition, they made presentations of corn husking like they think it used to be, and of mowing “from dawn to dusk”, i.e. from waking up in the morning, sharpening a scythe, mowing, raking and loading, to a meal and a party. Fruit pressing with the hand press to make new cider and spirit distillation are also regularly staged at autumn events. While the former has been practiced less frequently outside events and is present within the community to a lesser degree than it used to be (only when wanting to process a small amount of apples), the latter has not changed much over the years and is still regularly practiced by local inhabitants. Presentations of manual skills are also occasionally performed, including basket and crepe paper flower making.

But not only old, traditional farm activities done by hand become ritualized. When organizing Strawberry Festivals and Chestnut Sundays, local inhabitants also, in a way, ritualize the sale of crops and home-made products. They employ different techniques to accord specific days and activities a special value, to “elevate” them above the ordinary in order to grant them a festive mode and, more importantly, to promote the area and

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individual farms to increase the sales and income. For example, events are organized during special days of the year, on Sundays in June and October when fruits are ripe, and are advertised as “festivals” and “Sundays”. The locals always arrange the public site for the festivals in the same way, with stalls in a half-circle at which farms exhibit and sell their products, tables for visitors as well as tents for shelter and exhibition. Stalls are arranged in a fixed order and although minor changes are possible, they are neither willingly nor happily accepted. Participants hang up proper flags to mark the festivity of the event. To visibly express local identity at the events, they wear folk costumes designed on the basis of sketches made by the long-standing curator of the textile department at the Slovene Ethnographic Museum. The fact that they choose festive apparel (“Sunday best”) indicates that they consider these events to be festivals in spite of their profitable orientation and the significant amount of (even voluntary) work they require.

The organization of events is quite demanding for people with little bureaucratic experience, so the tourist society holds several meetings to specify the tasks and reach the agreement about the roles people should undertake before and at the event itself. Although members of the Fruit Route have to do more voluntary work than non-members in order to gain the privilege of selling at stalls and being advertised in the promotional materials, every member of the tourist society and even their children take over at least one task to ensure the event runs smoothly; e.g. cleaning the space, setting up the stalls and tables, organizing and executing food and beverage service, preparing the cultural programme, taking care of public relations, etc.

The program of events is rather fixed and includes presentations of farms through live-broadcast of the moderator, the sale of diverse products, dance parties, cultural programs, presentations, traditional manual activities competitions, other diverse competitions (e.g. for the title of the strawberry queen, the biggest apple, treasure hunt etc.), and a number of games. Each year they add minor novelties to prevent visitors from being bored. Some activities are only reserved for a specific festival, be it the strawberry exhibition, the performance of a particular brass band, an expedition on the Blackberry route, the hunt for the treasure, lottery, etc. The festivals begin with ceremonial speeches first by the president of the tourist society and occasionally followed by other speakers, for example, the representative of the City of Ljubljana who also opens the strawberry exhibition at the first spring festival. There is no ceremonial conclusion to such days; people tidy stalls after they run out of goods, usually by 7 pm.
The festive mode of these particular days is also apparent through the culinary assortment, especially of pastries, which is one of the main tools to promote a farm. Farms also participate in the exhibition of traditional local produce (mainly strawberries) and dishes at the first spring festival by preparing baskets of the most beautiful

Stalls at the festivals, set in a fixed order on the top of the hill (792 meters above the sea) in front of the Janče Mountain Lodge. Strawberry Festival, 7. 6. 2009 (photo by the author).

The exhibition of the best strawberry crop. Strawberry Festival, 7. 6. 2009 (photo by the author).
strawberries or other fruits as well as traditional pastries and beverages. They prepare new, modern dishes with traditional ingredients, mostly pastries and cookies in addition to traditional food. Visitors also perceive the events as “festive days”; one even stressed the festive mode as the reason that strawberries should be cheaper.

A BROADER PERSPECTIVE: RITUAL PRACTICES AND RURAL IDYLL

Festivals depicting the rural way of life have been in full bloom all over Europe. Their popularity can be traced back to the 1960, at least in Slovenia. The Country wedding in Ljubljana (1965–1990) is still the most well-known example of such festivals in Slovenia (cf. Poljak Istenič, 2014). During its run, it annually attracted over 100,000 spectators and up to 3,000 people (in addition to professionals) were keen to actively participate at individual events. Country weddings in smaller towns are still popular as well as festivals depicting traditional agricultural work, i.e. harvesting, mowing, threshing, scutching flax, etc., with the urban population comprising the majority of visitors (besides locales) – and also target tourists. For example, up to 20,000 people attend five local festivals at Janče each year; the number of visitors at individual event exceeds the number of inhabitants in the village by fifteen times.

The events, organized for selling the crop and food, have become an important segment of social life in the Janče area. Most of the local population, which is not part of the tourism society or the Fruit Route, attend them in order to enjoy themselves. Due to the high numbers of visitors who return at other times of the year to buy the pro-
duce from farmers, the latter consider tourism an activity with a significant economic impact, which creates a more positive general attitude towards land and farming. All this has helped to preserve farming in the area, reduce out-migration and strengthen the identification with rural life. They have also helped people to show the non-local population all that the countryside has to offer.

Those claims are also proved by statistical data. Out-migration has stopped; in some villages (especially in lower parts of the area) the population has even increased. One of the main reasons incomers give for their decision to migrate is the quality of life, i.e. “peace”, “quiet”, “a good environment to raise children”, etc. There is also a considerable increase in the number of houses. According to publicly available data from the year 2002, the average age of inhabitants in the researched area is 35.87 years, which is less than Slovenian’s average (39.5, years; and 38.9 years in rural settlements). The aging index which indicates the ratio between people older than 65 and younger than 15 years old – with a higher number indicating an older population – is also more favourable than Slovene’s average; it amounts to 61.4 compared to 96.3 on national level or 89.9 in rural settlements. Such a low index is due to fertility increase and migration into this area, especially significant in the last two decades. Considering migration, the ratio between those who live in the area from the birth and the newcomers is in favour of the migrants (42.13 vs. 57.87); there are more people in the hillside villages living there from birth (55.76 %) while in the valley there are considerably more people who moved there (72 %). Enrolment figures in the local primary school follow the positive trend and teachers report that children have developed visions of staying in the countryside and earn a living at home. This data shows that the area has gained the notion of the rural idyll.

The concept of the rural idyll refers to the positive meanings that the “rural/country/peasant” has in predominantly urban socio-cultural environments. In accordance with this view, people use the notions of rural and urban to evaluate their identities and give sense to their lifestyles, with “rural” implying ideas of a lifestyle that people see as more natural, complete, and harmonious. The rural idyll is the core of representation and reproduction of the rural for recreational purposes. Idyllic representations have a visible impact on the development of the countryside, be it in terms of migration or tourism (cf. Mingay (Ed.), 1989; Halfacree, 1995; Little & Austin, 1996; Valentine, 1997; Matthews, Taylor, Sherwood, Tucker & Limb, 2000; van Dam, Heins & Elbersen, 2002; Daugstad, Rønningen & Skar, 2006; Fløysand & Jakobsen, 2007; Poljak Istenič, 2008; Vepsäläinen & Pitkänen, 2010). The awareness of this potential caused the introduction of marketing processes into the management of natural or agricultural areas referred to as the “neo-liberalization of nature” (cf. Higgins, Dibden & Cocklin, 2012). Contemporary agriculture therefore presents a dynamic socio-economic system encompassing all stages of production, processing, distribution, marketing, retail, consumption and waste disposal (McIntyre et al. in Sumner, Mair & Nelson, 2010: 54). However, through current development, the cultural aspect a previously inherent component of agriculture was lost (cf. Pretty, 2002).

Culture – and (cultural) heritage – are important components of sustainable development today (cf. Fakin Bajec & Poljak Istenič, 2013) and its fourth pillar (see Agenda 21 for Culture 2008). Culture contributes to sustainable development when it succeeds in raising consciousness of its meaning, provides a forum, bestows legitimation and opens up the opportunity for farming and sustainability to meet. In doing so, it creates a climate where efficiency, fairness, agro-ecology and cooperation can emerge and
thrive (Sumner, Mair & Nelson 2010: 60). The tendency of re-connecting agriculture with its cultural context is already observable in a progressive emphasis of a return to food products from the “past”, adaptation of traditional production styles, certified quality of geographical origin or genuineness and salubriousness of traditional products (Cannarella & Piccioni 2011: 690).

At the turn of the millennium, the City of Ljubljana also noticed that further development of the local area with already revived agriculture (and local economy) is not possible without some complementary measures. Therefore it started to expand its rural developmental programs beyond agriculture, e. g. employed an ethnologist as an expert for rural heritage, encouraged educational activities etc. When culture was put back to agriculture, other activities started to blossom in the area and different people got motivated to participate. Besides the already described practices for economic and tourism purposes, some farmers decided to register as a tourist farm and started to advertise their services in terms of a “peaceful” and “cultivated” (i.e. farming) environment, “home-grown”, “organic” food, “architectural heritage”, and other idyllic components of the countryside. Part of this idyllic image also includes farm activities that are offered to tourists as part of the “experience of rural life”. It is therefore obvious that local inhabitants recognized this “urban desire” as a good foundation for local development and employed effective means to capitalize on it.

On the other hand – probably also because of the positive attitude towards farming on account of its profitability – some traditional agricultural customs in the area have also been preserved. They can be linked to magic practices to ensure fertility of the land or protect the crop from natural disasters. For example, some older people in the area still preserve the sticks from butarica (the Palm Sunday bundle) and thrust them into the fields in the shape of the cross on the Pentecost Saturday or Sunday, and they sprinkle holy water over the fields, outbuildings, or houses.

Q: Did you in any way bless the fields in the past, did you have such a habit here to do it on some holy days?
A: Yes, every house [practiced it]. On the Pentecost.
Q: On which day?
A: It was not important when, Saturday, Sunday, whenever you had time to go.
Q: And what did you do then?
A: We had those rods from “butarice” [Palm Sunday bundles]. And holy water.
Q: And what did you do with these rods?
A: A cross.
Q: Did you bind up the rods, how did you make this cross?
A: We only set it up, only thrust [the rods] into [the soil].
Q: Where did you thrust them into?
A: On the field.
Q: But was it important where on the field, in the middle, on the edge?
A: No, [it was] only [important to set the cross] into every corn, for example, wherever a different corn was sown, there we had to [set it up].
Q: How did you bring the holy water to the fields?
A: In the bottle.
Q: How did you sprinkle it over the field? What exactly did you do with this water?
A: We sprinkled it. I simply poured it into my hand and sprinkled it.
Q: Was it important how to sprinkle the field, for example, from left to right, did you make a cross?
A: No, that was not important.
Q: Does anybody still practice this today, as far as you know? On the Pentecost?
A: I have done it. I still do.

However, not many ritual practices connected to agriculture that still reflect traditional beliefs – although the original magical meaning is long forgotten – can be observed in Slovenia, especially not in the vicinity of Slovenian’s capital, and official church holidays that are still related to agriculture are also less and less observed (e.g. Corpus Christi or Thanksgiving Sunday).

CONCLUSION

Old agricultural tasks done by hand, such as mowing, harvesting, threshing, flax-breaking, transhumance, pig butchering, etc., which were accompanied by practices (customs) that made the work easier or gave it a proper rhythm, disappeared along with industrialization and general modernization of the countryside. On the other hand, emerging work-related practices in a modern society where agricultural work is mostly automatic, done with machines, seem to have no deeper meaning, no prescribed or settled form and no obligatory repetitiveness. The question of remaining agricultural rituals can therefore easily frustrate the researcher, especially if one tries to dissect what exactly is the meaning of the terms “custom”, “habit”, “ritual”, “rite”, “ceremony”, “festivity”, etc. (cf. Povrzanović, 1987) or find practices traditionally recognized as ritual, i.e. “survivals” (such as magical acts on the Pentecost or some other church-related holidays). However, when the researcher’s attention is focused on everyday life, it is easy to recognize that people endow some acts with special meaning. This ritualization of activities, as we call it according to Bell (cf. 1992, 1997), differentiates such acts from quotidian tasks and creates a festive feeling, similar to the past perception of major agricultural works as a sort of peasant festivals.

Due to the agricultural policy of the European Union with its subventions and national compensation system in case of natural disasters, a farmers’ biggest challenge has become selling the produce. This is one of the reasons that selling at public events has become ritualized; e.g. by demarcation of space, regulated periodicity, special codes of expression and symbolization, specialized roles, audience, etc. One of the attractions of such events is also local heritage. Its modification and romanticization, which these events mostly manifest, are typical examples of folklorism. Even though ethnologists have generally regarded this phenomenon as a “distortion of folklore” or even “fakelore” (Dorson, 1969), today they for the most part agree with David Löwenthal (1985: 410) that we do not need unalterable heritage but instead her-
itage that we can constantly interact with, that brings together the past and the present. Heritage tourism in particular provides opportunities to portray the past in the present and the chance to experience the past through the prism of the endless possibilities of interpretations (Nuryanti, 1996: 250).

Ritualization in the researched area has been primarily used as a strategy for improvement of living: increasing family income, achieving recognition of the farm, placing the local area and community on a tourist map etc. Local festivals have also become an important segment of the social life in the Janče area, as local people generally attend at least one spring and one autumn event for their own amusement and to foster relations with their more distant neighbours. Those who complain that development has “destroyed Janče completely” and would prefer “some peace and quiet” are the exception. Agriculture with its ritual practices becomes transformed into a symbol of the area that links inhabitants to different communities (neighbours who help each other with machines, crops or work; an informal group of women who prepare traditional food for the event at the city centre; the tourism society that organizes selling events, etc.), contributes to the development of local tourism and sustainable development. Although there is little explicit mention of heritage in strategies of sustainable development (e.g. *Agenda 21 for Culture*), one cannot deny its potential to contribute to various strategic goals. Projects or activities involving local traditions can help regenerate, strengthen or develop local economies, a sense of belonging and population integration.

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**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

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Narratives can create borders, discrimination and exclusion, but also connections, links and friendships. Towns along the Slovenian-Croatian border are interconnected in historical, social and economic terms, which have enabled connections of people on both sides of the border. With the analysis of stories, jokes and anecdotes collected mainly on the Slovenian side of the Slovenian-Croatian border area along the upper stream of the Sotla River it can be seen how boundaries and borders are created and formed through the narrative tradition of the area.

Stories collected on both sides of the border are, on the one hand, connecting people and breaking down national borders, and on the other hand, deepening divides and intensifying the boundaries. At the same time, these connections and contacts are erasing raillery, confrontation and rivalry which can be seen in quips/jeers, singing slurs, deprecatory rhymes, jokes, humorous stories and legends collected in the Slovenian-Croatian border area.

Key words: Slovenia, Croatia, border, narrative tradition, identity construction

Slovenia is a country that has borders with four neighbouring countries: Italy, Austria, Hungary and Croatia. The entire length of the border is 1370 km out of that 670 km are with Croatia which is our longest neighbouring border (Grm, 2013: 35). Places along the border in the upper current of the river Sotla in the Slovenian municipalities of Rogatec, Rogaška Slatina and the Croatian municipality of Hum na Sutli, have been and still are connected in a variety of ways.

Narratives were collected within the framework of research of narrative tradition in the Slovenian border area along the upper current of the river Sotla in 2010 to 2014. The age range of informants was from 15 to 90 years. The article will present the material mostly collected on the Slovenian side of the border which in various ways constructs “the other”; people that live on the other side of the border. The emphasis will be on how Slovenians through various genres “create” the “Croats”.

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Border towns and the connections between them

Border towns have been connected in the past as well as today geographically, historically as well as economically and on a social level. For example there have been numerous mixed marriages on both sides of the border, which is a consequence of the transience of the border, different gatherings, parties and common dances. Even today there are strong family bonds between the inhabitants on both sides of the border. Economic ties between the two countries were more intense in the past, especially the Slovenian ties with Croatia. In this area a lively trade involving cattle, coal, agricultural and other products was developed in the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. There was more of the same in the other border areas all along the Slovenian-Croatian border. In the economic sense the Croatian border population was more connected to the Slovenian side in the past, because especially in the town of Rogaška Slatina after the Second World War textile, glass-making, joiner/cabinet-making industry, etc. developed and was where people could get a job. The data from other parts of Slovenia also speaks to the lively trade of Slovenians and Croats in the border regions. In the Slovenian north-east region of Prekmurje the egg and poultry salesmen named “kupinarji” often bought their goods in the Croatian region across the border called Međimurje (Pšajd, 2006). “Šavrinke”, female egg sellers from Slovenian Istria, sold their eggs and other produce from the Croatian towns of Pula and Rijeka to the Italian city of Trieste (Ledinek Lozej, Rogelja, 2000). Historically speaking in the border regions with Croatia important trade cities for Slovenians were: Varaždin, Zagreb, Karlovac in Rijeka (Zajc, 2006: 288). It cannot be said that Slovenians gravitated to the Croatian side only because of the trade opportunities. In the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century young Slovenians went to Zagreb above all to study at the university. There were also Slovenians who went to Croatia in search of a job. Different connections among the inhabitants of both countries in the border regions are quite common so that is why it is common also in the narrative tradition.

Connections in the narrative tradition

Connections that the people have created primarily because of economic and social relations are reflected in the material collected in the field, because the narrative tradition is transferable and trans-cultural, which means that it does not know any national borders between countries. Because there were and still are places and people along the border connected in the historical, social and economic sense the connections and relations between people enabled the transfer and interweaving of the narrative tradition. Because of friendly, family and other ties the stories were handed down from one side to the other.

The similarities in the narrative tradition are visible above all in the motifs: similar motifs can be traced on both sides of the border. Most tales are about village witches and the harm they do to livestock and people1, stories about ghosts and the souls of the dead. One of the motifs, which can be detected on both sides of the border is

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1 Slovenian researcher Mirjam Mencej has done a research on the topic of witches in the lower Obsotelje (Mencej, 2006) in which she has written about all the aspects of witch believing that can also be found in this area.
“Frightened to Death” (ATU 1676B) (Uther, 2004: 364-365). Most commonly it is a bet in an inn, and someone has to go to the cemetery at night to pick up a certain object, which is most commonly a funeral cross. When the person who lost the bet brings this object back to the inn half the bet is won. However, it becomes complicated when the cross has to be returned. Upon returning the object, something usually happens to the person’s clothes (they get tangled with cross when it is stuck back into the ground by the grave, the person kneels on an apron, and gets stuck) the hero of the story thinks that he is being held down by the dead because he desecrated the grave. The hero usually dies of fear. This tale type is widely internationally spread so it is not uncommon that it can be also found in this area. This story is well known on both sides of the border and is connected to the cemetery at Sv. Peter na Prišlinu (St. Peter on Prišlin) and Sv. Trojica na Prneku (Holy Trinity on Prnek). Churches with cemeteries stand on opposite hills and are just a few kilometres apart, but itch of them have a different version which is linked to the place. This version refers to the cemetery at St. Peter in Croatian Village Prišlin:

I will tell you something; what fear does; during the Second World War in the time of the Ustaši and their self-proclaimed Independent Croatian State. The Ustaši often visited this inn near the church of St. Peter. They went there to drink and in the evenings they would play cards. There laid a corpse, I forget now who it was, in the chapel of rest and in our cemetery. There is a new chapel of rest now. Inside laid a dead man. The Ustaši could not help themselves, the vagabonds that they were, not to say: “Which one of you has the guts to go down there, cut that man’s head off and bring it back here and gain several thousand kuna.” One of them said: “I know I am not afraid of anything!” So he went there alone and cut off the head. He was afraid before but he was pretending to be a hero. He did it anyway. Now he had to take the head back to the chapel of rest. So he brought the head back, closed the door and closed his coat in the door. He got frightened because he thought the dead man was holding him. His heart gave out, they had to revive him but it was too late, he was gone. These are the things that you cannot pretend to be a hero about (Rogaška Slatina, 15. 12. 2010).

How the interweaving and transfer of the narrative tradition occurred in the border area was verbalised by one informant:

These fears and hags. This was dealt with and discussed, on both sides of the river Sotla, in approximately the same way and the people believed practically the same things. There was once a white mare, she was here once. Stories were told from both sides to one another. Back then the people were socialising here and there much more. Originally from the Austro-Hungarian times and the ties have been present ever since. There was practically nothing special here. This can be seen in the languages themselves you can understand a Zagorac better in Ljubljana than in Zagreb (Rogaška Slatina, 16. 3. 2012).

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2 Ustaši were Croatian Nazi collaborator armed forces.
3 Kuna is the Croatian currency.
4 Material with full information of informants can be seen in the archive of Institute of Slovenian Ethnology, Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts in Ljubljana.
5 Zagorac; an inhabitant of the border Croatian region of Zagorje.
The border between Slovenia and Croatia was never really strong. The exchange of goods and information was always present and because of the non-existent language barrier the connections in narrative tradition are also strong.

THE BORDER THROUGH THE NARRATIVE TRADITION

Because it is the border area, it is understandable that some of the narrative tradition relates to the border itself. In the aforementioned border area the common most widespread belief is that the border before Second World War was not on the river Sotla but on the top of the hill above the river on the Croatian side of the border. People even today mention many times that the original border was elsewhere. Whether this story is true has not been established up till now. However the river Sotla appears as a border river since Roman times, when the administrative area of the Roman town called Celei a today city of Celje mapped the area reaching to the river Sotla (Šašel, 1992: 144-145). The border on the river Sotla was preserved in the time of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (from 1918 to 1943), when it was a border river of the Dravska banovina (Dravska region) (Krajevni leksikon, 1937: 609) and till today the river is the border between the Republic of Slovenia and the Republic of Croatia.

People who live along international borders often differentiate/distinguish themselves from others (Georges, Jones, 1995: 224-225). Identities are established in relation to others, who are different than us, therefore we interpret ourselves in relation to the “other”. Creating a national identity in a border region is easier to a degree that the “other” is in the immediate vicinity or on the other side of the border. Borders between us and them are established also in a way that an attempt is made to depict the neighbours as inferior or worse (Gingrich, 2004). As Ryszard Kantor wrote “a battle for human souls” is happening in the ethnic and national border territories (Kantor, 1996: 28), which usually appears when people are leaning towards self-determination. This self-determination of groups most commonly occurs in times of threats, conflicts or political and social-economic changes. Self-determination can be a result of forces within a group, but more often a result of measures taken by the centres outside of the group, e.g.: various organisations, the church, schools, administrations or well known figures with authority in public life (Kantor, 1996: 28). To sully or blemish a neighbour and at the same time express ideological folklore is very convenient, because it can be spread quickly through various channels. Through various genres of folklore, different stereotypes are often transferred. A generally widespread stereotype, which can be detected in almost every genre collected in the area discussed is; “A Croat is a thief”.

This neighbourly rivalry can be detected almost everywhere in the world. In South America Susan Gordon researched the border between Costa Rica and Nicaragua. The Costaricans, which live in the north of the country along the border with Nicaragua, use a large number of negative descriptions for their neighbours (illiterate, daredevils, swaggering, corrupt, graceless, superstitious, violent, etc.) (Georges, Jones, 1995: 193-195). As in the relationship between Costa Ricans and the people of Nicaragua a strong dislike of the Slovenian population towards the Croatian population along the upper stream of the river Sotla is felt through the narrative tradition. In this article mostly the

6 In Slovene that is “Hrvat tat”.
attitude of the Slovenian population towards the Croatian will be presented. The analysis will rely on the material collected in Slovenia. Along the upper stream of the river Sotla stereotypes, which serve the purpose of bragging of Slovenians over Croats, can be detected mainly in jeers, jokes and humorous stories but also in other narratives.

**JEERS**

Ridicule and scoffing can be found in various genres, e.g.: anecdotes, parody, satire, humorous stories, jokes and jeers. The target of ridicule can be various groups of people: people with mental or physical disability and disabled people are often ridiculed or laughed at. The targets are also representatives of certain professions e.g.: police officers, priests as well as other members of the “other” ethnicities, minorities and local communities (Fischer, 2004: 1080-1086). Jeering is often focused on psychophysical characteristics; the colour of a person’s skin, ambitiousness and selfishness in business with Jews, physical appearance and customs of Sinti and Roma. By doing this, prejudices are established and preserved, which lead to stereotypes (Fischer, 2004: 1082).

Jeers are a short form of folklore the purpose of which is to jeer or ridicule. To jeer at the expense of various groups can be detected in two forms; in prose form, which can be longer or shorter (jokes, humorous stories) and in short often with rhyme forms (jeers, short poems) (Moser, 1950: 399). Jeers are often considered to be children’s folklore (Merhar, 1956: 108; Knific, 2006: 38; Stanonik, 1998: 94; Stanonik, 2006: 259). Some jeers do belong to childish creativity but their authors and carriers are more times adults (Terseglav, 1990: XIV), which was noticed by the informers in the discussed area. One person said: “These jeers were spoken by adults, while the children just repeated them” (Zibika, 17. 12. 2011).

Hugo Moser writes in his book *Schwäbischer Volkshumor*, that names for ridicule or scorns were present in Germany already in the middle ages. In that time the scorn for the Swiss created a Kuhmelker or Kuhmäuler (a cow-milker, a person who milks cows), (Moser, 1950: 399). Slovenians also have short names for neighbouring nations. A general characterisation for an Italian is “makaronar””, on the border with Italy the jeer is “Tuljo”⁹. For Austrians, people from Tyrol in Austria and Bavarians the jeer is “jodlarji”⁹, along the northern border with Austria, Austrians are called “krajtlihi”¹⁰. For a Hungarian in the past the jeer “Voger” or “Oger”¹¹ was used. Otherwise an important element of national stereotypes is that other nations are usually considered inferior than one’s own nation (Gundelach, 2000: 113).

As mentioned above jeering uses jeers, long and short forms for jeering are often in rhyme form and are similar to a short poem. Jeering with these short forms is typical for jeering among villages as well as jeering among countries. In Prekmurje there was a well-known jeer for Hungarian women: “Voger, Voger/ jajca na klin/ žlico na polico/ pa hajd na vogrsko prasico”¹² (Rešek, 1990: 61). As Mira Glažar from Brežice remembered,

It appears that the most widespread jeer for Croats was “a Croat a thief”. This short jeer originates from a variety of longer jeers in which this word phrase is the beginning. Along the southern border with Croatia, along the river Kolpa, they knew a jeer: “Hrvati so tati/ kaj čmo jim dati?!/ Eno vrečo peska/ da jim v riti treska./ Eno vrečo Ajde/ da jih vrag obajde./ Malo morat gasa/ da bo iše spasa”\textsuperscript{15} (Primec, 1997: 315).

With local jeering (in German: Ortsneckerei) it is usually about jeering customs, characteristics and the behaviour of the inhabitants of the neighbouring village, city, region or country. Jeering names are created. The purpose of this kind of jeering is provocation, ridiculing spiritual, social, societal imperfections (for example: Abderiti, Schildburgers etc.), and a separation from others and strengthening their own self-confidence (Fischer, 2004: 1082).

In the second half of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century some high up politicians and educated people said: “Sotla separates us, blood joins us and blood is not water” (Zajc, 2006: 198) and they did not exactly know whether the Croats along the Styria border were Croats or maybe even Slovenians (Zajc, 2006: 198-201). The inhabitants in the upper stream of the Sotla River did not have these problems. The need to make a distinction of “us” from “them” has created a variety of jeers and even insults. In most jeers from this area the stereotypical image of a Croat as a thief, robber or a cheat is present. These jeers can be divided into three groups. The first group of jeers consists of an answer to how long or when a Croat is a thief. “Hrvat je tat, od mize do vrat”\textsuperscript{16} (Zibika, 17. 12. 2011) or “Hrvat je tat, od nedelje do nedelje”\textsuperscript{17} (Sladka Gora, 28. 10. 2011).

The most common explanation of people as to why Croats are thieves was that the inhabitants of the border Croatian villages were poorer than in Slovenia and were often accused of stealing. In their opinion a jeer “A Croat a thief” developed out of that situation.

The second group of jeers makes fun of the frequent attendance of pilgrimages and the religious devotion of people and also the simultaneous disregard of the teachings of the church e.g. stealing: “Hrvat ima belo uš/ vsak ga pozna da je muž./ Rad pa hod na božjo pot/ tam pa krade vsepovsot./ Naj bo raca la kapun/ njemu dojde vse pod klun”\textsuperscript{18} (Rogaška Slatina, 20. 10. 2011).

In the third group we put jeers that complete the formulation “A Croat a thief” and they do not belong to the first two groups: “Hrvat tat, pa če ga v luft vržeš še vedno Hrvat dol pade.”\textsuperscript{19} (Kostrivnica, 22. 12. 2010).

The formulation, which is not a jeer but it refers to the belief that Croats have long fingers is as follows: “If you want to be poor, you go to Croatia with a suitcase and you return naked” (Zibika, 17. 12. 2011).

\textsuperscript{13} In English: “German numbskull/ beech tree peg/ tied with a clove/ brought down with a vine”.
\textsuperscript{14} In English: “White/ blue/ red/ Windische (derogatory word for Slovenian) toad”.
\textsuperscript{15} In English: “Croats are thieves/ what shall we give them?/ One bag of sand/ so that it slams against the bottom./ One bag of buckwheat/ so that the devil visits them./ A little gas/ to have some fun.”
\textsuperscript{16} In English: “A Croat is a thief from the table to the door”.
\textsuperscript{17} In English: “A Croat is a thief from Sunday to Sunday”.
\textsuperscript{18} In English: “A Croat has white lice/ everybody knows he is the man./ He likes to walk God’s path/ where he steals everything that comes his way./ Let it be a duck or a capon/ everything gets under its beak.”
\textsuperscript{19} In English: “A Croat a thief, if you throw him in the air he still comes back down a Croat”.
From the presented jeers a negative charge can be detected, which only intensifies with other genres. Such a strong disposition is not felt with jeers that the Croats used for Slovenians. However this is not the standard because the amount of material gathered in Croatia was too small to claim that with certainty. A Croatian jeer at the expense of Slovenians written in the upper valley of the Kolpa river is as follows: “Kra-
jnjc²⁰ repo seje./ žaba mu se smeje./ Žaba reče rega rek./ krajnc poserje debeu drek”²¹ (Primc, 1997: 315). In the upper stream area of the Sotla river the following jeer was written down: “Kranjac globajac gre na božjo pot./ Pol pa šinfa vse posot”²² (Rogaška Slatina, 15. 12. 2010).

The people we talked to had an opinion or presumed that the jeers in the discussed region were present at least since the First World War²³. Adults and children were jeering. The children were jeering with short rhymed forms, while the adults were using a shorter version of jeers and insults. For a Croat it was the offensive remark “a thief”. It was used as joking jeer or as an actual insult. There was a widespread belief among the people that Croats are no better than gypsies if they get an opportunity they will steal something or swindle someone. Between the year 1950 and 1960 according to the in-
terviewed people jeers were preserved only among children, jeering among adults almost completely died out. This time period corresponds with the time period of Yugoslavia after Second World War and the general climate of encouraging friendly bonds among nations included in Yugoslavia. As previously mentioned in presenting economic ties in the discussed area it was a time of strong economic development of Rogaška Slatina and the daily migration of people from the Zagorje region in Croatia to Slovenia, who worked together with Slovenians in various companies and factories. Jeering according to the informants returned to both sides of the border around 1988 in the time before the Slovenian war of independence from Yugoslavia in 1991. Then mostly adults were jeering and insulting each other, which often led to conflict. Whether jeering is still present today is hard to say. A strong negative disposition is present especially among older people towards Croats which is noticeable in everyday conversation in a context relating to political and economic topics.

**JOKES, ANECDOTES AND HUMOROUS STORIES**

From the 1970s the topic of ethnic humour has been established in research of humour (Popa, 2006: 136). This area of research of humour deals with the study of jokes or humour where the target is a specific ethnic community²⁴ or nation. Ethnic jokes: jokes are a means by which the joketeller attributes human deficiencies to other ethnic groups in a funny, excessive or ludicrous fashion (Davies, 1990: 307; Apte, 1985: 108).

²⁰ Kranjac, Kranjc, Carniolan or Slovenian from the Carniola region.
²¹ In English: “A Carniolan is planting turnips/ a frog is laughing at him./ The frog says “ribbit, ribbit”/ the Carniolan shits a fat shit”.
²² In English: “Carniolan boletus/ goes on god’s path/ then he gossips all around” Globanja; an old name for a boletus or big porcino mushroom with a dark or bright brown top Slovenian name is: jurček.
²³ When people started to jeer in the discussed area is hard to say because in the older material jeers are not written down. Hugo Moser wrote that jeering names in Germany were present in the middle ages (Moser, 1950), With Slovenians Matija Majar in 1844 is shocked by the neighbourly jeering (Majer, 1844), which leads us to the conclusion that jeering was present back then.
²⁴ Ethnic community or ethnicity is a group of people which are most commonly bound by name, joint beliefs, culture, origin, faith, norms, values, customs, language and identity (Slavec Gradišnik, 2004: 113).
One of the more researched corpus of ethnic humour are jokes about Jews (Davies, 1990). In Slovenia and in the former Yugoslav republics the most popular ethnic jokes are jokes about the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Kropej, 2007: 12; Vucetic 2004). In this study ethnic jokes about the inhabitants of Croatia collected in the upper Sotla river region will be presented.

Jokes, as opposed to jeers, are not intended as direct name calling, their function is primarily to entertain. However ethnic jokes include stereotypes\(^{25}\), derived from human characteristics, which are exaggerated and this exaggeration is often humorous (Wehse, 1996). Jokes, as such, are an excellent instrument to mark and expose differences; jokes are also excellent for expansion of stereotypes. A researcher of jokes and humour, Christie Davies, realized from the example of jokes about fools or idiots that when people define who they are in the sense of their membership in their local community they will tell jokes about the stupidity of people in another community. By positioning themselves in connection towards the other community people define themselves as who they are not, or which group they do not belong to. In traditional societies where people carry out one of their social identities out of their membership in the local community, jokes are told about members of the group which is similar to their community. The teller of the joke “sees himself or herself in a distorted mirror when observing the members of this community. As we laugh at our own reflection in the hall of distorted mirrors, we similarly laugh at the jokes about the stupidity of our closest neighbours” (Davies, 1998: 12-13).

Ethnic jokes can be a part of identity processes because groups define the borders and with that themselves by trying to show that the rest around them are worse than they are. That is why groups divide the world into “us” and “them”, and with that nations or ethnic groups are constructing their unique character. By labelling “them, the others” characteristics and features which are similar are specified. It is more important that social features are set that “we” do not possess (Gundelach, 2000: 114). So tales and jokes that include stereotypes and distorted images of ethnic groups and nations have the function of showing somebody different and this serves as a strengthening of the idea of a nation as a social object. Jokes and jeers about Croats such as: “What do a green dog and a good Croat have in common? Neither of them exists” (Rogaška Slatina; 2. 3. 2012), serve the people of the border Slovenian towns for creating their own identity, which is built on drawing up boundaries between “us” Slovenians from the “others” the Croats.

Even though it is supposed that ethnic jokes are also told by people who do not believe in the stereotypical images that are included in them (Gundelach, 2000: 122; Apte, 1985: 141), it is possible to see from the context of telling the joke that they sometimes have the similar function as jeering. That is to say to jeer and offend in a milder socially acceptable way. This can be seen in this joke:

\[\text{Well. Two Croats came, a husband and wife. They went on God’s path, on foot of course. They ran out of food on the way. On the Slovenian side they had chickens and hens. So they stole an old hen. The little chicks stayed all by their lonesome. Upon their return they came to the same place again. Only little chickens were there. And the wife said: “You see we stole their mother”. The little chickens were chirping: tiff, tiff, tiff (sounds like thief - with a loud sound) my mother}\(^{26}\). The Croat said: “You see they know us” and he quickly crossed over to the other side of the river Sotla. (Rogaška Slatina, 15. 12. 2010)\]

\(^{25}\) The term stereotype was first used by Walter Lippman in 1921.

\(^{26}\) Word play that uses words to illustrate animal sounds.
The telling of ethnic jokes and humorous stories could be classified as the so called banal nationalism, which was defined by Michael Billig. According to him we are faced with symbols of nationalism every day. For example when using the national flag at sporting or cultural events, in the press when news is divided into domestic and foreign, when in every day conversation we divide in context nationalities to “us” we and “others” they etc. Everyday use of national symbols and referring to them reminds us subliminally and out in the open that we belong to a nation. Banal nationalism is one of the identity mechanisms, which is interwoven into everyday life (Billig, 2012). Everyday representation and confession of nationality could be detected also in ethnic jokes and humorous stories. Together with stereotypes jokes at the expense of your own nation as well as other nations are part of banal nationalism because through their discourse national belonging is declared. Also the telling of this story could be discussed in the context of banal nationalism:

Somewhere near Podčetrtek they had a mass, and the priest was doing Holy Communion outside. He saw he was running out of the host. So he said to someone he knew: please get a hold of some host. Two people improvised and cut up some horse radish. The priest knew exactly who was Slovenian and who Croatian was. So he gave the horse radish to the Croats. One Croat said: “Holy Mother of God, these Slovenians have a burning God.” (Sladka Gora, 28. 10. 2011)

Banal nationalism has, despite the fact that it is expressed in informal terms in a fun or humorous way, the same features as emotional perhaps even extreme nationalism in the sense that the nation is an important social category and forms an important part of individual identity or in other words; “our own nation is always superior in relation to other nations” (Gundelach, 2000: 114). Ryszard Kantor ascertains, that culture in the border region is richer because of intense inter-ethnical contacts, at the same time people sporadically respond to questions about national ideologies and defending them, offensively, are prone to confrontation and arguments or are even openly aggressive (Kantor, 1996: 28-29). All these negative reactions reflect or can be seen in certain narrative genres of course, in contexts that touch upon the positioning of Slovenians against Croatians or vice versa. Something else can be said about jeers and jokes about Croatians. Some of them are openly negative, even hostile; in them we can clearly detect the superiority in relation to others.

LEGENDS AND OTHER NARRATIVES

Narratives give, unlike other genres, a certain importance and confirmation to national stereotypes. Through narratives stereotypes constitute themselves as something that is real, because legends are stories about an event or experience that the teller, a known or unknown person experienced. Emphasising the reality is one of the important elements of the legend (Dégh, 1995: 226-235). One such story that speaks about the activity of the Croatian population is as follows:

If any pig died the Croats would dig it out, put it in the Sotla River for two days, then make sausages out of it and sell it to the Slovenian. This is true one hundred percent. I know this because I was still young when they came. We were supposed to
slaughter the pig but the pig got a fever and died. It weighed more than 200 kilos. Then they found out and they came, dug it up and took it. Then they had it in the water down there. There was mill in a gorge, it is still there now. And there they had it in the water for two days. Then off they went home with it. Then they sold the sausages from this pig in the town of Trbovlje (Rogaška Slatina, 15. 12. 2010).

These stories also express a distrustful attitude towards a neighbouring nation and setting into the forefront their own superiority. Exactly the next narrative puts into words the creation of the “Other” and positioning of one nation in relation to the other. The first neighbour, the inhabitants of the neighbouring village or neighbouring country is always inferior and not worthy of trust:

They never liked Croats. Croats and gypsies they should be given a wide berth. However it was you could never trust, because you could always trust your neighbours neighbour, never your first neighbour. The Croats were first neighbours and they could not be trusted. They said: Fear a Croat, because a Croat is not an honest person. (Kostrivnica, 22. 12. 2010)

The prejudice against Croatians followed people their whole lives and the adults that wanted to distance themselves from this needed a long time and lots of internal strength as one person, we talked to, said. Some especially the older Slovenian inhabitants never got rid of their prejudice and hate.

CONCLUSION

The narrative tradition serves as an element of bringing people together as well as pulling them apart. In both cases it serves the function of distinguishing one social group from the other and with that constituting identity in relation to the “other”.

Peter Gundelach showed with his study of jokes that the Danes, Norwegians and Swedes tell about each other, that ethnic jokes are told only then when there is a connection between the community in which the joke is told and the community, which is the target of the joke (Gundelach, 2000: 113). Mahadev L. Apte ascertained about the telling of ethnic jokes that joking relations are characterized by three factors: First, the joke-teller and the butt of the jokes are related by some kind of structure or social relationship; second, the joking relationship is a relatively permanent feature; third, joking relationship helps define and redefine the boundaries of socially different groups (Apte, 1985).

These three points can also be detected in the case of genres collected in the area of the upper stream of the Sotla River on the border between Slovenia and Croatia, which in different ways constitute the “other”. Slovenians and Croatians in this area are connected by family ties and social relations, which are a consequence of economic daily migrations of Croatians to Slovenia. Even though it is not possible to ascertain when the folklore genres developed in the discussed area, it is possible to claim that they are a fairly constant phenomenon but their presence is changing with current political relations and other events and the need to express nationality. And so jeers were less present in the time when both countries were a part of Yugoslavia and there was more emphasis on belonging to a joint state than any particular ethnicity. The presence of
jeers increased in the 1980s when ideas of an independent Slovenia started to strengthen and belonging to the Slovenian nation and expressing that again became an important social norm. While telling jokes and joking stories, which ridicule the neighbouring nation, people laugh at characteristics, customs and features of someone else and by doing this, they establish their own identity. They also help to determine and redefine the borders of groups that live in the immediate proximity.

The most common stereotype, which can be detected in the collected material, is that Croats are thieves. This stereotype is present in all genres from jeers, jokes, humorous stories and legends. Even though there is a general conviction that stereotypes are often built on incorrect and generalised suppositions, there maybe some truth hiding in them (Kolbas, 2013: 13-18) and narratives are the genre where a little of that truth can be detected and with the help of which we can find the explanation for the origin of stereotypes. It is a fact that the discussed area was poor in the past, most of the population made a living by farming and agriculture; industry was developed only on the Slovenian side of the border. Poverty often forces people to use any means necessary to survive and as such we can comprehend certain narratives, which speak of theft and the ingenuity of people in the border region.

All of the presented folklore genres and themes that are discussed have this in common, that their story-telling is part of their identity processes. Identity is established in relation to “others”, people, ethnic groups or nations, which are different towards us. Creating a national identity in the border region is so much easier because this “other” is in the immediate vicinity or on the other side of the border.

REFERENCES

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

KATARINA ŠRIMPF (*1985) – a doctoral student at University Nova Gorica. Since November 2010 she has been working as a research assistant at the Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts at Institute of Slovenian Ethnology. She is preparing a doctoral dissertation on oral tradition, folk stories and urban legends in Obsotelje and Croatian Zagorje. Her fields of research are beside folk narratives, contemporary legends and folk beliefs also folk costumes and fashion history.
Funeral laments and farewell hymns represent two genetically and typologically distinct genres of funeral singing, now at the stage of expiry or with their historical evolution already closed. The farewell hymns were derived from the European literary tradition of valedictions, which can be mapped back to the baroque period. Funeral laments are a component of the archaic layers of orally transmitted culture, with written records and sound recordings made predominantly during the 20th century. The song material from the territory of Slovakia and from the milieu of Slovak enclaves abroad (sound records of laments from oral tradition in the second half of the 20th century, manuscript records of farewell hymns from 19th century historical sources) became the starting-point for a comparison of these two genres of funeral singing, with the aim of identifying their common and distinguishing features. Using selected genre elements (attitude to death, lyrical subject, category of time, composition of the text, tunes) it was possible to identify their typological differences and to define their functions in the funeral ceremony.

Key words: funeral singing, song genre, lament, hymn, poetics, musical style

Singing beside the dead is one of those universal cultural forms which were differentiated, according to historico-evolutionary, social and cultural-geographic conditions, into a number of vocal and vocal-instrumental genres of folk and composed music (e.g. lament, lamentation, hymn, psalm, planctus and requiem). Funeral laments and funeral hymns are genre modalities which evolved alongside each other in the traditional European milieu, as two different forms of parting with the death through the medium of singing. An external criterion for the classification of laments is the context of the occasion for singing and the ceremony (funeral, wedding, recruiting and soldiers’ laments) (Kaufman, N., Kaufmann, D. 1988; Chistov, Chistova 1997; Važanová, 2004). Funeral hymns are an internally diverse grouping, whose most significant component was codified alongside the official repertoire in printed hymnbooks, with an unofficial repertoire also from manuscript sources and oral tradition (Dobrovich, 1955; Kríza, 1994; Fischer, Schmidt, 2005; Slaviňska-Dahlig, 2009;
Ruščin, 2009; Hulková, 2009). An important part of the latter repertoire was the farewell hymns.

In the local conditions of the traditional rural milieu, farewell hymns, together with funeral laments, became an important part of funeral singing. Although they emerged from different contexts of religious ideas and belief, with differing historical periods and socio-cultural backgrounds, for a certain time they were maintained in the funeral ceremony as two genre forms of the ceremonial departing with the dead (Urbancová, 2010).

The song material from the territory of Slovakia and from the milieu of Slovak enclaves became the starting-point for a comparison of these two song categories, with the aim of identifying their common and distinguishing features. The paper elucidates these songs on the basis of archival material, as two song genres with a historically concluded development. Using appropriate methods which combine the approaches of ethnomusicology and ethnology (folkloristics) with musicology, literary theory and historiography, the paper compares these song genres through elements selected as fundamental genre features, and defines the internal and external functions of these song groups in the funeral ceremony.

SOURCES, BEARERS, CEREMONIAL CONTEXT

The funeral lament (in folk terminology plač [weeping], vikladaňie [narration]) is a ritualised form of parting with the dead which is a relic of pre-Christian forms of traditional ceremonies and customs. The ritual of wailing over the dead is one of those ceremonies with a universal foundation, which was originally diffused in various forms in all traditional cultures and ethnic groups (e.g. Holý, 1959; Suppan, 1963; Bartók, Kodály, 1966; Alexiou, 1974; Nenola, 1986; Chistov, Chistova, 1997; Sperl, Sulîteanu, 1998; Dahlig, 2005; Pavlicová, Uhlíková, 2010). In Europe this ritual survived in some regions down to the 20th century; based on the regional traditions, characteristics typifying European forms of funeral lament also emerged (Stockmann, 1992: 82-85; Ling, 1997: 57-65; Porter, 2001: 181-184). From medieval times the rite of wailing over the dead was an object of church prohibition. While there are monuments of European visual art that may be regarded as older historic proofs of the existence of funeral lament (Urbancová, 2008), the church prohibitions are precious evidence of the vitality of funeral lament at a certain period and in a certain social milieu (Komorovský, 1971: 45). They were expressions of the Church’s official attitude to non-Christian forms of folk rites and customs. The rite of wailing over the dead in the traditional milieu in Slovakia survived in the form of mainly isolated local and micro-regional traditions to the first half of the 20th century, with overlaps even into the more recent period (Burlasová, 2009).

Particularly during the second half of the 20th century, funeral lament in Slovakia became a subject of field documentation and archiving in the form of sound recordings and their transcriptions. From archival sources we currently have at our disposal more than 200 written records of funeral laments from Slovakia and from the Slovak minority milieu abroad: most of them are complete melodic-textual records, while the remainder consists of texts without melodies. Slovak lament is one of the remarkably well-preserved traditions of funeral lamenting in central Europe. Slovakia ranks among the regions with surviving relics of this traditional song genre in a Europe-
wide context. Although the records come from most of the regions of Slovakia (Abov, Gemer, Hont, Horehronie, Liptov, Novohrad, Orava, Podpoľanie, Ponitrie, Považie, Spiš, Šariš, Tekov, Zemplín), they represent traditions only of isolated localities, in exceptional cases of micro-regions. They have been recorded in a broad time span from the 1930s to the present day, with the principal concentration in the second half of the 20th century, when laments in Slovakia began to be systematically documented either as living forms or as reconstructions based on the memories of singers. They are products of fieldwork carried out by a number of researchers, as part of a mapping of regional and local song traditions on the entire territory of Slovakia and in the milieu of Slovak minorities abroad (S. Burlasová, O. Demo, A. Elscheková, J. Kováčová, E. Krekovičová, L. Leng, I. Mačák, J. Manga, M. Mušinka, M. Nemcová, K. On drejka, F. Poloczek, S. Stračina, B. Urbanec etc.).

In contrast to the laments, field research in Slovakia took virtually no interest in the funeral hymns, especially those farewell hymns known as odobierky [departing songs]. From oral tradition only a small number of specimens were recorded, and these provide only fragmentary evidence of the genre. The tradition of farewell hymns was dying out during the entire second half of the 20th century, when it managed to integrate into contemporary forms of funeral ceremonial culture as part of the so-called new song production (Krekovičová, 1984; Chorváthová, 1991).

The farewell hymns emerged in the traditional folk milieu in Slovakia as responses to the literary valedictions of the baroque period, which became subject to an intensifying process of folklorisation in the course of the 18th century (Vanovičová, 1997: 10). Farewell hymns took shape as a repertoire which was not included in the official (printed) hymnbooks and spread in manuscript records and copies as a semi-folk form of song production. It is an image of Christian culture in forms which on the one hand were adapted to the local setting and its mentality, while on the other hand they reflected the educational level and professional status of their authors, recorders and performers. In terms of the poetics of their texts, the sung farewell hymns corresponded to the verse farewells which were recited as part of the funeral ceremonies (Chorváthová, 1991).

Only a few researchers have pointed to the sung farewell hymns as a further developmental stage of the Slovak baroque valedictions (Chorváthová, 1991; Gáfriková, 1997; Vanovičová, 1997). Through preliminary archival research in the Archív literatúry a umenia Slovenskej národnej knižnice¹ [Literature and Art Archive in the Slovak National Library], I have found several manuscript sources: repertoire compendia, hymnbooks and songbooks, which document the tradition of the farewell hymns in the differentiated forms it took in the course of the 19th century. To study these songs I chose sources differing in type, which are interesting also in terms of classification of the song and musical repertoire they contain. On the one hand they represent various genre forms of the funeral repertoire, while on the other hand exhibiting the different levels of artistic quality found in the farewell hymns, from the most aesthetically demanding forms to simple expressions that are close to folk art.

The notated hymnbook of funeral hymns Musy se ťažko trápiti [He has to suffer badly]² by an anonymous writer (fragment, first half of the 19th century, 36 songs) is a type of source which, apart from farewell hymns odobierky, also contains hymns

¹ Slovenská národná knižnica, Archív literatúry a umenia, Martin (=SNM ALU).
² Musy se ťažko trápiti. SNM ALU, sign. B IV/11.
from the official funeral repertoire. The un-notated songbook by Ján Bukovický *Nektorie piesne pohrabnie* [Some funeral songs]³ (second half of the 19th century, 14 songs) contains exclusively farewell hymns *odobierky* which have a markedly folklorised form of valediction. The widest span of the funeral song and musical repertoire, in terms of extent and genre diversity, is contained in the manuscript collection *Pohrábná kniha* [Funeral book]⁴ by Pavol Kačic, organist in Bošáca (end of the 19th century). Alongside the farewell hymns (altogether 43 songs, mostly notated), it contains widely-used funeral hymns from the official repertoire, psalms and Masses for the dead. This remarkable collection of the funeral repertoire is interesting also for this reason, that at a distance of 25-30 years a revision was undertaken from the standpoint of a later user (Ján Kačic of Bzince). The changes and deviations concern only the texts and are written directly into the song texts in another hand, which may testify to a change in taste not only in the collection’s user but also in the socio-cultural hinterland of the micro-region, in the vicinity of its urban centre Nové Mesto nad Váhom. A common feature of all the historical sources for the funeral song repertoire is the absence of any form of record or mention of funeral laments: those were transmitted exclusively in oral form and within the family, where principally a daughter would be taught by her mother or other women from the family circle.

The above-mentioned sources of laments and farewell hymns form an image implying two mutually separate traditions of funeral singing, totally isolated from each other. Iconographic sources offer a different perspective. A remarkable proof of the parallel existence of laments and hymns in the ceremony is provided by photographic documentation from the 1930s-40s (Pančuhová, 1991). The pictorial documents (especially the extensive photographic cycles of the funeral ceremony) testify on the one hand to group singing from printed hymnbooks, while on the other hand there is solo singing by a priest or cantor from slender, manuscript notebooks.⁵

This observation, and the material in itself, led to the thought of comparing both genres of funeral singing. What was their function in the ceremony? Are the farewell hymns a substitute form of the laments, a differing genre form of the same social function, or is it a case of two independent traditions which for a certain time functioned in parallel, one alongside the other?

The sources I have used are from the 19th and 20th centuries. They represent certain developmental stages of two distinct song genres: the laments, which are typologically anchored in the traditional ceremonial culture, stretching far back into the past, and the farewell hymns, which are derived from the line of baroque literary production. Most of the records of funeral laments are from the second half of the 20th century; manuscript records and copies of the farewell hymns which I had at my disposal are from the 19th century.

The question may legitimately arise whether it is correct to compare the two genres with such a time displacement. In the 19th century the collectors of folk songs did not take any close interest in recording laments, for this reason among others: they did not regard them as song forms but rather as formations in the frontier zone between words,

³ *Nektorie piesne pohrabnie. Jánoš Bukovícký, Szkleno. SNM ALU, sign. B II/12.*


⁵ My own experience in field research from the 1990s has confirmed that where laments were also preserved in the context of the funeral ceremony, they were at the same time accepted by local priests and cantors as part of the generally respected local tradition. (Field research in Rusyn villages in Upper Spiš, 1997.)
song and natural weeping, which belonged more to the context of ceremonial culture than to that of folk singing. The long-term survival of ceremonial songs, which have been documented without fundamental changes even through long passages of time, permits one to compare the poetics of both genres without fundamental distortion, although with awareness of the above-mentioned time shift. I am therefore proceeding from the assumption that the forms representing funeral lament in the 19th century were fundamentally similar to those which were preserved in the 20th century.

If we look at the bearers of the tradition of song and authorship in the two genres, differing images appear: the performers (and often the authors) of funeral laments in Slovakia were exclusively women – *plačky* [mourning women]. Either they came from the circle of the dead person’s relatives, or they had the status of semi-professionals as respected singers in the community, hired for reward, most often given in kind (Bednárik, 1939: 80). Although in rare cases evidence of male laments has survived also (Komorovský, 1971: 49-50), the association of men with this custom was exceptional and untypical in Slovakia.\(^6\) The authors (and often the performers) of farewell hymns were, on the other hand, men – local priests, cantors and organists, or lay churchmen, the so-called *modleníci* [supplicants]. The presence of women was limited to singing in a group or choir. Some researchers, however, point to confessional differences here.\(^7\)

Mourning singing appeared in all key phases of the funeral ceremony (Čajánková, 1956; Chorváthová, 1991; Jágerová, 2001). The scheduling schema for delivery of laments and farewell hymns (as well as verse farewells) was basically similar but with this difference, that in some cases they occurred in identical phases, elsewhere in immediately adjacent phases of the ceremony. Laments and farewell hymns were normally delivered in these situations: 1. immediately after the confirmation of death; 2. at the first visit of relatives, neighbours and acquaintances to the dead person’s house; 3. during the nightly vigil by the corpse; 4. before the coffin was borne from the house; 5. when the coffin was closed (in the courtyard); 6. before departure from the house (or from the courtyard) to the graveyard; 7. on the way to the graveyard; 8. when the coffin was placed in the grave, or over the grave. Farewell hymns were also sung in the house when the corpse was placed in the coffin, after the arrival at the graveyard, at the filling in of the grave and at the close of the funeral ceremony, at the funeral feast. Laments, as opposed to farewell hymns, were recited also for a certain time after the funeral: during a number of weeks immediately after the ceremony, during regular visits to the grave, and at the yearly memorial days for the dead.

**ON POETICS AND MUSICAL STYLE**

In terms of the poetics of texts, it is essentially valid to say that laments represent a relatively homogeneous tradition of oral forms, while the farewell hymns show more inner differentiation according to the degree of folklorisation they have undergone. If the laments emerged from the breeding-ground of archaic ideas widely dif-

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6 In the older records from Slovak territory performance by males is found only in cases of parodic forms of lament.

7 Ľ. Chorváthová (1991) recalls the presence of women in the Catholic milieu and associates it by way of explanation with the transformed role of mourning women, after the disappearance of the custom of wailing over the corpse.
fused in traditional agrarian cultures and came into being in that context, by contrast the farewell hymns were derived from literary tradition, but with their expressive means becoming gradually more open to the broad social layers of the inhabitants, as a consequence of the reception of the literary genre in the traditional milieu.

Taking selected features of poetics as examples, I want to indicate the relationship of both these genres of funeral singing. I will focus on those elements which are manifested in both genres as fundamental and determining: 1. the lyrical subject of the statement; 2. the category of time; 3. the compositional construction of texts; 4. the image of death; and 5. the tunes (musical component).

The lyrical subject as a category of poetics is influenced by the convention of the given genre, while it creates a space for detachment from the real subject – from the author or performer and his/her empirical existence. In laments the lyrical subject is identified on the primary plane with the person of the performer (or author): it overlaps with the subject of the female-singer, who is taking leave of the dead person and who appears in a clearly defined relationship with him (daughter, wife, mother, hired mourner). In farewell hymns the lyrical subject is the voice of the dying person who takes leave of those who survive him. Only much less frequently is it combined with the standpoint of the survivors; even when this occurs, however, the conclusion of the song always belongs to the voice of the dying person. In more poetically stylised forms the dying person may be represented by some of his attributes in personified form (an unmarried girl speaks to the survivors not only in her own right but also through the medium of her garland, a symbol of virginal purity).

The differing status of the lyrical subject in laments and farewell hymns is connected with the different functions of these two song genres. Laments are delivered as a magico-ritual means, designed to relieve and secure the dead person’s departure – this is connected with ideas of dead people returning and doing harm to the living (Jágerová, 2001: 18-19, 24). Laments (like many ceremonial songs in the traditional repertoire) have an ambivalent character (Dahlig, 2005; Urbancová, 2009: 34): on the one hand they function as an impersonal ritual form (e.g. mourning women rub their eyes with onion or garlic “so that they’ll cry well”, hence so that the rite of wailing over the corpse will satisfy all the required external attributes) (Mjartan, 1934-1935: 31), but at the same time they are a means for expressing genuinely experienced personal grief (an expression of the authentic grief of survivors). One may presume that the first form predominated in the expression of semi-professional mourning women hired for reward (often paid in kind, as is also mentioned in the texts of songs), while the second was dominant in the expression of women from the circle of close relatives (texts with intimate content and emotional resonance). The farewell hymns, promising the blessed state of life after death, were sung to comfort and relieve the grief of those surviving; their didactic, moralising voice was connected with the origin of this song genre (Štěpánek, 1989: 48).

The category of time and its use in funeral singing is linked indirectly with the problem of coming to terms with the loss of a close person. It involves relations between time planes in the chronological line of past – present – future. The laments make use of the present state (i.e. the death of a near one) for confrontation with the past: they describe some moments from his life, they name activities which he did not bring to completion and objects that remained after him, they emphasise his irreplaceability in the family, among friends and in the local community, and they ask the dead person’s forgiveness for wrongs and trespasses committed against him in the past. Part of this
perspective is a fear of the uncertain future, which is perceived exclusively in negative
colours – the absence of the deceased in the lives of the survivors henceforward is em-
phasised. Here there is probably a principle of wider validity, according to which the
past and the future are both subordinated to the present in laments: the present is the
result of the past and the cause of the future (Lichačov, 1975: 221-229). The attempt to
ward off death and reverse the current state is expressed in direct address to the de-
ceased. In the interpretative context of the ritual of passage, which is divided into three
kinds (rites of separation, threshold rites, and rites of incorporation), these motifs un-
ambiguously correspond to the rites of separation (preliminal rites), which are char-
acterised by disinclination to abandon the current state and accept the new situation,
unwillingness to come to terms with the new position (Gennep, 1997: 19).

In farewell hymns the present and the future come into mutual relationship: the
dying person thanks the survivors for all they have done for him and resigns himself
to earthly death, which is destined for all without exception, and prepares for eternal
life. In the spirit of Christian doctrine, the texts of the farewell hymns stress the posi-
tive image of the future – they uphold the passage to the joy of eternal life. From this
standpoint, the farewell hymns lay greater stress on the elements of the rites of incor-
poration (postliminal rites) (resigning oneself to death and the definitive transition to
a new state) (Gennep, 1997: 19).

The composition of the text is connected with the type of work and the mode of ex-
istence/transmission of the song genre (the oral or written form). In general, there is
a fixed schema for the construction of laments: address to the dead person, question
about the reason for his going, question about where he has gone to, and where and
how he may be looked for, question about who will help the survivors. The performance
of laments depends on a principle of improvisation: it is supported by stable melodic-
textual formulae which make up the skeleton of the compositional structure (Kom-
orovsky, 1971: 47-48). As a general rule, versified passages were subject in a greater
degree to the schematism of the expressive means, while prose passages were a unique,
unrepeatable expression; while rendering the prose forms the singers introduced ver-
sified passages as clichéd interpolations (Burlasová, 1978: 187). In Slovak laments,
judging by the songs recorded, what dominated was the element of emotional experi-
ence and grief at the loss of a near one, and thanks to this, many laments carry the
marks of a type of lyric poetry. Epic insertions play little part in the Slovak tradition of
laments: they are replaced by fragmentary realia from the life of the deceased, or praise
of him, exaltation of his virtues and merits. The relatively impoverished and schematic
stock of motifs may be associated with the conditions under which the laments were
registered, collected and recorded: predominantly these were simulated, artificially
evoked situations (reconstructions) rather than authentic occasions – singing directly
in the context of a funeral ceremony.

The compositional schema of the farewell hymns likewise includes a relatively fixed
structure of texts: the introduction comprises an address to death, a statement by the
deceased, or a formula recalling fairground songs; the core is a leave-taking with the
survivors according to the hierarchy of relationship; the motif of prayer follows at the
end. Variable components include reproaches to death and insertions with didactic in-
struction or a moralising aspect. Most of the motifs correspond to the features of baroque
valedictions, although in folk redaction they appear in reduced form, according to the
degree of folklorisation (e.g. antique and biblical characters or didactic motifs are pres-
ent more in farewell hymns of a “higher” style).
The attitude towards death is a common theme of funeral songs, but the poetic means of portraying death are different in the two genres. Laments typically have metaphoric and stylised means for its expression. The absence of direct mention of death is probably connected with a verbal taboo (Burlasová, 1978: 189), which is typical especially of the oldest layer of folk ceremonial songs. In laments death is found as an image of a long journey; it is described by means of the category of broad space, and by means of obstacles and barriers, as a departure or straying with no return. A moderated naming of dying is used in the form of variations on physical remoteness or through fixed word conjunctions using poetic tropes. The metaphoric naming affects many attributes of funeral culture: the coffin is depicted as a house/room without windows and doors; the loneliness of the survivors is perceived as a loss of defined space or an inappropriate state. Direct naming of death, the graveyard, the grave, is manifested only rarely in laments, and then it is probably an idea carried over from the funeral hymns. Through the influence of the funeral ceremonies, in rare instances Christian motifs came into the texts of the laments. These convey the Christian mode of expressing grief, paralleling the emotional sighs and cries typical of funeral laments. Some of the Christian motifs come from the stock of topical elements in the funeral hymns and farewell hymns. The poetics of the laments allows a partial infiltration of the comic, and not only in the form of the so-called parodic laments, which fulfilled specific social functions (Kaufman, N., Kaufmann, D., 1988: 371-377), but also as a temporary break in the serious form of the lament, changing to a humorous register right in the middle of wailing – these oscillations between the serious and the un-serious were a legitimate part of the performance of laments in traditional funeral rites.

In contrast to the laments, the direct naming of death is typical of the farewell hymns, often as part of fixed verbal collocations (death the cruel, frightful, awful, merciless, false). The personification of death is a means of making it constantly immediate: the dying person addresses it literally and comments on its activity, using naturalisms. Dying is conceived in resigned terms as a manifestation of God’s will. In farewell hymns terrestrial death is definitive, perceived in the context of motifs of the “memento mori” type, also the vanity and impermanence of terrestrial life. Death is considered a preparation for eternal life and a means of transition to the joy of supernatural life.

On a general level, laments and farewell hymns are linked by similar techniques of creation, although these are applied on the basis of differing types of tradition (oral and written). In particular, these techniques include analogous compositional schemas, the appearance of topical elements, fixed introductions and conclusions. A common element also is the penetration of realia into the song texts: they are bound up on the one hand with the biography of the deceased, his personal and social life (laments), and on the other hand with the relationship of the dead person to his surroundings (farewell hymns).

Differences between both genres of funeral singing in the texts is emphasised by their linguistic expression: whereas the language of laments is exclusively the language of local dialects without traces of literary influence, the linguistic style of the farewell hymns comes from religious literature with an infiltration of colloquial language elements.

The musical component of laments and farewell hymns is in a high degree contrasting: these represent different musical styles and different developmental stages of musical thinking. Indeed, it is precisely the musical element that has left these two genres in mutual detachment and in relative separation.

The improvised performance of laments was based on non-strophic passages, artic-
ulated in lines or in an amorphous form; the strophic form was rather an exception, appearing where the delivery in the laments lost its improvisational character (Burlasová, 1977: 230-231). The structure of improvised laments is subject to a certain dramaturgy which works to construct smaller, semantically independent musical-verbal segments, combined in a resultant, compositionally thought-out form. Forming the musical basis of the laments, there are two style modalities which have their basis in the elementary structures of vocal music, as defined by comparative musicology (Sachs, 1943: 30-44): recitation with emphasis on the text being rendered; and expressive presentation, with emphasis on the expression of emotion, using asemantic words with a sounding effect (sobs, sighs, interjections, natural weeping). The musically stylised forms of these two modalities are archaic tunes with characteristic style features (descendent and rotating melodies, transition from song to speech or weeping and vice versa, free parlando-rubato rhythm, tunes of narrow range, tunes of a structure disjointed by ties with few motifs, a melodic line enriched with flexible intonation, glissando, intonation slides). Musical analysis has shown that the improvised delivery of mourning women depended on one or more melodic formulae, with the singer selecting, combining and adapting these to the text (Urbancová, 2009: 46-49).

The farewell hymns often came into being as new words to old music: up-to-date texts were composed to well-known and widely-diffused tunes. Farewell hymns are exclusively in strophic form. The interior construction of the strophe is diverse and depends not only on the tunes adopted but also on how artistically and aesthetically demanding the texts are as literary work. The melody of the farewell hymns draws on older layers of church modal tunes, but especially from the more recent layers of harmonic song, which made its way into church singing in the baroque period and thereby became diffused also in the folk milieu. In Slovakia the principles of harmonic thinking and the associated schemas for the formal construction of tunes (sequences, cadence motifs, periodicity, closed form) took firm hold in folk music from the middle of the 17th century and particularly in the 18th century (Elscheková, Elschek, 2005: 98-104). Often one comes across prolonged melodies without a firm metrical scheme or a schema of double or uneven time, among them dancing-type tunes. However, in the musical component of the farewell hymns, one cannot rule out even the use of regional folk tunes, which infiltrated this song genre through the influence of local musical traditions.

Similarly distinct are the style features of performance. In Slovakia laments are part of the tradition of solo singing. In contrast to the laments, the farewell hymns have wider options for performance. While predominantly they were linked with male solo expression, alongside this one might find singing by a chamber group or small choir. In the performance of laments what was dominant was the intimate and expressive utterance, with linked visual effects (gestures and miming); in the farewell hymns what prevailed was a cultivated and expressively sober manner of performance, their emotional effect being bound up with the content of the texts.

CONCLUSION

Based on a comparative probe, laments and farewell hymns appear as two polarised genres of funeral mourning singing. Their relationship has hitherto been per-
ceived with time shifts in the background (laments were replaced by farewell hymns) (Chorváthová, 1991: 26; Pavlíková, Uhlíková, 2010: 33), and less on a typological level. The poetics of these two song genres are different, but nonetheless mutually complementary. If laments and farewell hymns functioned in the structure of the funeral ceremony in parallel, one beside the other, then they must also have had a mutually complementary role: they express the relationship to death in specific modes and by means of different poetics, which fulfilled different functions in the ceremony. On this basis they could be accepted in the funeral ceremony simultaneously, flanking each other as two genre forms of mourning singing.

The simultaneous parallel presence of laments and farewell hymns in the funeral ceremony may have corresponded to the syncretism of folk belief at the level of the structure of the entire ceremony. Analysis of available song material has at the same time confirmed that there was no interpenetration of the two song genres at the level of song structure. While that may be evidence of the complementarity of both song genres in the context of one ceremony, it may also indicate their relative isolation in the consciousness of the singers and tradition-bearers of funeral singing: laments and farewell hymns functioned as two specific song genres of the funeral ceremony.

Funeral singing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LAMENTS</th>
<th>FAREWELL HYMNS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pre-Christian basis</td>
<td>Christian basis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>oral tradition</td>
<td>written (manuscript) tradition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non-strophic forms</td>
<td>strophic forms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>woman (plačka)</td>
<td>man (priest, cantor, modlentík)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>address by mourning woman to the dead indirect naming of death</td>
<td>address by the dead to survivors direct naming of death</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(verbal taboo)</td>
<td>(personification)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>past ← present</td>
<td>present → future</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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HANA URBANCOVÁ (*1956) – musicologist and ethnomusicologist. She has worked at the Institute of Musicology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in Bratislava since 1992. Since 2005 she has held the position of head of the Department for Ethnomusicology, while since 2009 being also concurrently director of the Institute. As an external teacher she lectures in ethnomusicology at the Department for Musicology in Comenius University’s Faculty of Philosophy, and at the Department for Dance in the Music and Dance Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts. Her research interests are traditional song culture in Slovakia (focusing on the question of song genres), comparative research in the Central European context, the music of ethnic minorities (Germans in Slovakia), the historical sources of traditional music, and the theory and history of ethnomusicology. She is the author of three monographs (Trávnice – lúčne piesne na Slovensku: ku genéze, štruktúre a premenám piesňového žánru, 2005; Mariánske legendy v ľudovom speve: príspevok k typológie variačného procesu, 2007; Jánške piesne na Slovensku: štruktúra, funkcia, kontext, 2010). She prepared for publication a manuscript collection of the Slovak Christmas repertoire from the mid-19th century (Andrej Kmet: Prostonárodné vianočné piesne, 2007) and collaborated on a source edition of historical sound recordings (As Recorded by the Phonograph: Slovak and Moravian Songs Recorded by Hynek Bím, Leoš Janáček and Františka Kyselková in 1909 – 1912, ed. Jarmila Procházková, 2012). As an editor she has prepared a third, revised edition of a monograph by O. Elschek and A. Elscheková (Úvod do štúdia slovenskej ľudovej hudby, 2007), and has edited a selection of the works of S. Burlasová (Kapitoly o slovenskej ľudovej piesni, 2013, in print). She is the author of over 80 scholarly studies published in journals and volumes in the areas of ethnomusicology, musicology, ethnology and history of art.
BLOODY MARY OR KRVÁVÁ MÁŘÍ?
GLOBALIZATION
AND CZECH CHILDREN’S FOLKLORE¹

PETR JANEČEK

An expressive cultural practice of invoking a ghostly female figure, most often called Bloody Mary, an important part of the folklore of children and adolescents in the West, represents a unique amalgamation of ritual practices, folk beliefs, and demonological narratives. This phenomenon, extensively studied by Western folklorists since the 1970s, is closely connected to a wider discourse of children and youth ghostlore, and interpreted as a girls’ ritual reflecting prepubescent menstrual anxiety, reflection of process of ontological psychological development devoted to mastering emotion of fear of schoolchildren, or, in later adolescence, a reflexion of archetypal self-development processes in a Jungian sense. The paper, using data documented during longitudinal field research of Czech contemporary folklore, presents the growing popularity of this expressive practice in a Czech setting in the last fifteen years, starting with the late 1990s. Comparing the Czech situation with similar cultural processes analyzed in Sweden, Spain, and especially Russia, the paper describes the diffusion of this practice by global popular culture and its glocalization to suit peculiar Czech youth ghostlore inspired by historical personages. Reflecting global, ever-shifting contemporary culture flows, especially changes in local realities of “ethnoscapes”, “mediascapes” and “ideoescapes” during the 1990s, the practice of invoking Krvavá Mary seem to be both parallel and the transformation of local practices such as schoolchildren’s spiritism and horror stories of the 1970s and 1980s.

Key words: Bloody Mary, children’s folklore, contemporary folklore, contemporary legend, globalization, Czech Republic

¹ The submitted study is based on data documented by the author and students of his university courses in oral tradition and non-oral transmission in the Internet, within longitudinal folkloristic field research, during which, between 2004 and 2014, more than 800 texts of contemporary folklore acquired from more than 600 respondents were recorded in the territory of the Czech Republic. More than 200 texts concern children’s demonological folklore, whereby 39 texts explicitly mention the figure of Krvavá Mary, Máří or Máry. I would like in particular to thank all anonymized respondents and my students Nikola Černá, Pavlína Fišerová, Veronika Frňková, Markéta Hlaváčková, Eva Horáčková, Hana Málková, Ondřej Taker, Nikol Vodičková and Katsiaryna Zayats. Let me express my special thanks to Marina Bayduzh from the Institute of Northern Development, Russian Academy of Sciences, Siberian Branch, Tyumen, Russian Federation for making her valuable and hitherto not published study available, and Dr Claudia Schwabe from the Department of Languages, Philosophy and Communication Studies, College of Humanities and Social Sciences, Utah State University, Logan, Utah, U.S.A for her valuable advice.
I won’t cry for you
I won’t crucify the things you do
I won’t cry for you, see
When you’re gone I’ll still be Bloody Mary
(Lady Gaga: Bloody Mary. Born This Way 2011)

INTRODUCTION

The theme of globalization became more essential in ethnological sciences only after the disintegration of the bipolar world in the 1990s. Theoretically-based innovative approaches to this phenomenon accentuated the multi-layered nature of global cultural processes that are typical for downgrading the locally specific “cultures”, that was caused by global, mutually interconnected redeployment of people, finances, technologies, ideas and media texts (Appadurai, 1990, 1996).

The theme of globalization quite soon drew the attention of folklorists who started devoting themselves in particular to the analysis of a typically global folklore phenomenon – the electronic folklore (Csaszi, 2003; Krawczyk-Wasilewska, 2006; Blank, 2009; Burszta, Pomieciński, 2012; Hajduk-Nijakowska, 2012). The influence of globalization processes on the folklore repertoire both in its electronic and oral forms was soon reflected – both theoretically and based on field data – in Slovak folkloristics (Hlôšková, 2001; Krekovičová, Panczová, Bužeková, 2005; Panczová, 2005, 2013). Czech folkloristics documented the same rather by material-based even if quite extensive collections of children’s folklore (Pospíšilová, 2003; Votruba, 2008) as well as by contemporary legends and rumours collected from oral tradition and in the Internet (Janeček, 2006, 2007, 2008).

This case study examines the influence of globalization processes on social construction of the contemporary and relatively widespread form of children’s folklore that appeared in the Czech Republic in connection with political and social changes caused by opening the political and media boundaries after 1989. It tries to show the parallel impact of several globalization aspects that have influenced an informally transmitted collective practice (as well as related texts) in which a demonic female figure, mostly called Krvavá Mary, is invoked. Besides the critical assessment of previous research into this syncretic phenomenon, which is internationally one of the most thoroughly studied expressions of children’s folklore, the study focuses on its national and international historical parallels, comparison with similar development in Russia and some European countries, and especially on contemporary “glocal” Czech form of this practice that only at first sight seems to be globally unified. It also put great emphasis on cultural and adaptive strategies supporting the current popularity of this practice in the Czech Republic.

Without the help of these two researchers, the submitted study could never have come into being. I also thank both anonymous reviewers for their valuable comments concerning the content of the study, which have led to its improved quality.

2 K. Sree Ramesh in his presentation at the conference Folklore and Globalization, held on 27 February 2013 in Mysore, India introduced seven basic themes of contemporary folklore studies, which the modern folkloristics should focus on while it is trying to overcome the paradigm constructing just the “authentic”, i.e. rustic/tribal/subalterrn folklore: folklore in the postcolonial context, impact of globalization on folklore, folklore and social change, folklore and ecology, commodification of folklore, folklore of the contemporary society, and urban folklore (National Seminar on Globalization and Folklore, 2013).
BLOODY MARY BETWEEN FREUD, JUNG, AND DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

Buřka told us about Bloody Mary - that if you go with a candle to a mirror and you chant three times Bloody Mary into it, you will wake up in the morning covered with bloody scratches. Your nose should be bleeding too. (L. P., female, born 1991, university student, Vidochov, referring to situation around 2000).³

The cultural practice of summoning a sinister and potentially dangerous female figure from the mirror by chanting her name repeatedly (1 – 1000 times) or by a stereotyped magic formula constitutes a unique blend of ritual behaviour, incantation, folk belief and demonological legend. The female figure called Bloody Mary (or Mary Worth, Mary Whales, or Mary Lou)⁴ is a significant phenomenon of children and adolescents’ folklore in the USA. This quite widespread practice most often performed by several school-age girls (6 – 14 years old) in a darkened room, which is a part of wider discourse of children and youth’s ghostlore, has been intensively documented by folklorists since the end of the 1970s (Knapp-Knapp, 1976; Langlois, 1978; Brunvand, 1986: 80-82). Along with the many versions of practice documented by fieldwork, numerous accompanying narratives explain the origin of this mysterious apparition. Sometimes these correspond to characters known from popular legends such as The Vanishing Hitchhiker or La Llorona (a ghost of a girl who died in a car crash, or that of a woman who killed or lost her children). Their social function and cultural importance are interpreted as well. Alan Dundes in his pioneering psychoanalytical study (Dundes, 1998) interprets this practice as an adolescent girls’ ritual reflecting the unease and fear but also the joyous anticipation of the first coming menstruation, resulting from a prepubescent fantasy about menarche. Dundes interprets the bleeding face in the mirror as an “upward displacement with blood issuing from the head instead of from the urogenital area” (Dundes, 1998: 129-132, 2001). This Freudian interpretation is based on a systematic concurrence of the basic elements of this practice (it is done by girls at the age before the first menstruation, it takes place in a bathroom, and often involves a bloody self-image, it may conclude with flushing a toilet). Dundes’ analysis is seen by many reviewers as one of the most serious interpretations of a folklore text by this doyen of American folkloristics (Fine, 2002; Paul, 2003). Texts inciting to psychoanalytical interpretations of the above type can be found in a Czech setting too:

³ Text documented by Nikola Vodičková, student of “Introduction to Study of Folklore” course at the Department of Anthropology, Faculty of Arts, West Bohemian University in Pilsen in 2013 from her colleague in student dormitory in Pilsen. It was told spontaneously before going to bed. The narrator heard the story from her friend in her village, when they attended the first stage of elementary school.

⁴ Barbara Mikkelson mentions other alternative designations of this demonic being documented in the USA (without mentioning the frequency of their occurrence) Bloody Bones, Hell Mary, Mary Worthington, Mary Johnson, Mary Jane, Sally, Kathy, Agnes, Black Agnes, Aggie (Mikkelson, 1999). Specific is the name La Llorona, documenting syncretism of this practice with the cycle of demonological legends about La Llorona (The Weeping Woman), widespread in Mexico and some USA states, especially among Hispanic Americans (Brunvand, 2001: 233).
I was frightened by my schoolmates having told me if I repeated 9x “Bloody Mary” while staring into the mirror, I would see myself upside down, my face would be covered in blood and every time I would stare into the mirror Bloody Mary would appear to me. This will be me!

(I. Š., female, born 1991, university student, Domažlice)5

However, as Linda Dégh shows in her book *Legend and Belief. Dialectics of a Folklore Genre*, this ritual practice is connected neither solely with girls nor with school-age children (Dégh, 2001: 243-244). Dégh says: “The key in this legend is believing and trusting. The daring diviner must repeat many times (from 10 to 1000) the phrase “I believe in Mary Worth” to persuade the unfortunate ghost to show herself. She exists because someone believes in her” (Dégh, 2001: 244). It was the folklorist Elizabeth Tucker who continued Dégh’s work and who – inspired by analytical psychology of Carl Gustav Jung – interpreted the relative narratives and practices widespread among a different generational group of American first-year university students, as a reflexion of archetypes that occur during the process of awakening the ego connected with late adolescence (Tucker, 2005).

Yet the undisputable fact remains that school-age girls usually constitute the majority of persons taking part in this practice in its narrative and ritual forms. However, within this group defined by gender and generation, this practice is just one of those possible; the same author put the Bloody Mary invocation into the context of other predominantly girl’s liminal practices, such as “levitation” and “trance session”, documented in the USA between 1976 and 1984. When performing these practices, “preadolescent girls are experimenting with their own power to regulate the intriguing, sometimes threatening awareness of their own development” (Tucker, 1984: 133; 2012). Bill Ellis puts this practice into even wider cultural context: he interprets it as a part of demonological discourse shared by most American children and adolescents of both genders. This discourse includes invocation of ghosts by means of ouija board, ritual practices with mirrors, legend tripping and narrations about Satanic activities (Ellis, 2000; 2003; 2004). He also emphasizes a certain formality of the ritual with Bloody Mary invocation. Adolescents know very well that physical hazard is just apparent with this practice because the ritual can be interrupted at any time, and from the liminal space of contact with the supernatural, they can go back to the ordinary, safe world (Ellis, 2004).

In his analysis of similar ritual texts at British elementary schools, Marc Armitage offered an alternative psychological explanation. In the analysis, he emphasized the role these texts play in children’s ontogenetic psychological development, namely in how school-age children can conquer their fear: “Rather than being a mechanism for dealing with real, malicious and possibly life-threatening situations, they may be more about dealing with irrational fears triggered within children at a particular stage in their development. These stories, therefore, may actually be an outward manifestation of the developing human mind itself.” (Armitage, 2006: 22), i.e. This is the approach of developmental psychology that also has been applied on children’s folklore, specifically on children’s rhymes, also in the Czech Republic (Pospíšilová, Uhlíková, 2011).

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5 Text documented by Ondřej Taker, student of “Introduction to Study of Folklore” course at the Department of Anthropology, Faculty of Arts, West Bohemian University in Pilsen in 2013. The text was documented on 11 December 2013 between 11 and 12 p. m. from his colleague student residing in Pilsen. Told after the conversation had been brought round to the spiritual themes.
BLOODY MARY IN EUROPE AND RUSSIA

I grew up in Sweden and when I was nearly eight, we were summoning Svarta Madame – Black Madame very often there. She was a female that killed about ten babies; she flew to the rocks and died there then. We always had to invoke in the dark – we closed the eyes and chanted her name ten times in a row – after that she suddenly appeared.

(A. Š, female, born 1986, university student, Prague, referring to situation around 1994; Janeček, 2008: 313)

As early as in the 1980s, initial studies noticed that this practice had spread outside the Anglo-Saxon world and syncretised with local traditions of children’s folklore. In his study from 1988, the Swedish folklorist Bengt af Klintberg pointed out the tradition of invoking a female figure with an English name (Mary, Bloody Mary, Black Molly) from the mirror. This tradition has been noted since the 1970s in Sweden and – in his opinion – imported from the Anglo-Saxon world, most probably from the USA. In Sweden, it adapted itself to local language and culture: “The Swedish name Svarta Madame (Black Madame) appeared on the scene, it spread quickly, and is now the completely dominant form” (Klintberg, 1988: 159). This local language version proved to be fully dominating and it influenced even the later Swedish names of this being, which can be translated as Bloody Black Madame, White Madame, Dirty Madame and Creepy Madame.

Among children, mostly girls between 9 and 13 years, this figure used to be connected not only with negative but also with positive abilities; invoking her name could bring not only bad luck but also happiness; her often bizarre visual appearance varied in a similar way. In contradiction to American children, this being was not understood so seriously, which – in Klintberg’s opinion – was caused by the tendency of Swedish children’s folklore to disparage the role of ghosts in general. This may have been caused by the dominant approach to the supernatural within the Swedish society that was different from the traditional Anglo-Saxon interest in ghostlore (Klintberg, 1988: 166). Lee Virtanen noticed a similar not very serious vivid interest of children in invocation of ghosts, especially Satan, in Finland (Virtanen, 1978).

The practice of invocation a ghost from the mirror in a linguistically close English setting shows a specific form. During the field research conducted in the second half of the 1990s at 120 elementary schools in England, Marc Armitage documented the knowledge of this practice at more than 65 % of them; the invocation of a demonic female was mostly connected with a specific place in girls’ bathrooms, most often a toilet cubicle, whereby the ritual was often accompanied by repeated chanting in verses, for example: “White Lady, White Lady, we killed your black baby” (Armitage, 2006: 5). 75% of respondents called the being as White Lady, other names were Green Lady and Grey Lady (Armitage, 2006: 2).

As to the author, the English practice of White Lady invocation as well as the relating narratives continues English traditional ghost stories and demonological folklore in which this figure played a significant role. The contribution of Armitage’s study also consists of accentuating the specific spatial and social context of this practice, which includes elementary schools, namely the bathrooms – that means one of few places where adults do not keep watch over school-age children for a certain time. Therefore, he also proposes the generic name of the invoked being to be Toilet Ghost (Armitage, 2006: 1).
In Continental Western Europe, similarly to Sweden and England, this originally American phenomenon was “ecotypified”, i.e. adapted to local linguistic, cultural, and social peculiarities. In Spain, as the study by Alejandro A. González Terriza proves, the female figure invoked by children from the mirror is known as Verónica. Spanish versions speaking about this connection of ritual practices and legends share some identical features: motif of premature death of a young woman, and interconnection of physically close spaces that are incoherent under usual circumstances (especially the world of the living and the dead) through a mirror (González Terriza, 2001-2002). In the second part of his study, the author presents five variants of the ritual concerned: simple uttering of the ghost’s name; invocation using scissors and a book (usually the Bible); using a mirror; using scissors and a mirror; using scissors, book, and mirror. He defines the whole folklore complex, sharing Alan Dundes’s interpretation partially, as being connected with the first expressions of sexuality; his opinion Verónica is a symbol of the passage from childhood to adolescence through the menarche and the first sexual experience (González Terriza, 2003-2004: 154).

In contemporary Germany, local children and adolescents use both the original English name Bloody Mary and local name Heilige Blutige Maria (Holy Bloody Mary). In the German-written Internet, three basic versions circulate how to do the ritual correctly (for example to repeat her name 20 times or 40 times), including plenty of serious and parodying videos on YouTube.com6. As to Marc Armitage, similar practices are also known in other countries in Western Europe, such as the Netherlands (De Witte Dame) and France (La Dame Blanche); from further destinations let us mention Canada, Australia or Japan (famous and perhaps not related Hanako-san – Little Flower Girl) and Thailand in Asia (Armitage, 2006: 3).

However, the most interesting process of adapting the global practice of summoning a female ghost by means of a mirror to local cultural conditions was documented in the Russian Federation. In the 1990s in local children’s folklore, Bloody Mary met a local established “competitor”, namely The Queen of Spades (Pikovaya dama). As to Marina Bayduzh, the unique Queen of Spades appeared in Russian children’s folklore in the 1970s when it found inspiration in the story by Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin of the same name. The motif from this story written in 1834 was secondarily supported by products of popular culture that showed similar themes (Bayduzh, 2014; Toporkov, 1998). Through the connection of literary and pop-cultural texts perceived by means of school education and mass media, the figure was originally included – as an animated card first – in the abstract genre of children’s folklore called strashilky (“thrillers” – Kōiva,1996; 1997). The ritual of calling the name of The Queen of Spades, first by means of a corresponding card, later through a mirror used for divining the future occurred in the 1980s. The latter was influenced by pop-cultural adaptations of the texts for children and youth, that contained a motif of beings living in the world behind the mirror (mainly the Soviet cartoon inspired by Lewis Caroll’s works Alice in Wonderland, Through the Looking-Glass, and What Alice Found There directed by Ephram Pruzhansky from 1981-1982). The ritualistic invoking The Queen of Spades was booming in 1980 – 1990 when this tradition occurred in Estonia (Bayduzh, 2014) and Bulgaria where it has survived, known by its local name of Damapika until now

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The initially positive if ambivalent figure of *The Queen of Spades* became more negative at that time, which brought it formally closer to *Bloody Mary*. *Bloody Mary* reached Russia in the 1990s, alongside mass media and Hollywood-movies. “Her” presence together with the affinity of rituals and characteristics of both demonic figures synergically speeded up *The Queen of Spades* to have been established as a peculiar negative being understood as *Bloody Mary’s* “older sister”. In the contemporary folklore of Russian children, they coexist (Bayduzh, 2014). While *The Queen of Spades* kept her traditional features that came into use in the 1980s (e. g. the abstract guise of light or dot, an ambivalent position of a figure that tells the future, or the use of candles or perfume to summon her), *Bloody Mary* is strongly connected with historical figures of Mary I. Tudor (1516-1558), and Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots (1542-1587).

**THE CONTEXT OF CHILDREN’S GHOSTLORE IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC**

*Krvavá Mary* legend tells about a face that appears in the mirror in a darkened room if you chant three times *Krvavá Mary* into the mirror. After you repeat the name, a face appears that can hurt you in various ways, or even kill in the worst case. She can scratch our face, endanger you with a knife or eat our face. Different versions are rumoured, sometimes even that Mary was a cannibal with a disfigured face and that’s why she wants to eat or disfigure ours. If Mary comes, it is difficult to get rid of her. Prayer might be the most time-proven method. (L. H., male, born 1987, quality controller, Pilsen)

How this globally widespread practice manifests itself in today’s Czech Republic and how has it been adapted to local children’s folklore? Czech children, unlike the American or Russian ones, historically might not have had available such distinctive figures, as *Bloody Mary* or *The Queen of Spades*, who could become a principal object of children “occultism”. On the contrary, local children’s demonology distinguished itself by significant plurality; popular invocation of ghosts, i.e. pseudo-occultist séances documented in retrospect among 6 – 13 year old girls since the end of the 1970s, most widely in the 1980s, focused most often on “real”, i.e. historical figures. Since the 1980s, the Czech writer Božena Němcová (1820-1862) has been one of the most popular persons. She is understood as the founder of modern Czech prose, thus ironically she can hardly be connected with numinosum. Children’s emic explanations giving the reason for her demonization compiled her alternative life story according to which “her children were killed and therefore she hates children and wants to kill them.” A more widespread native explanation applied the principle of *ethic inversion*, according to which people who were “kind” during their lives (such as Božena Němcová or Antonín Benjamin Svojsík [1876-1938], the founder of the Czech Boy

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7 Text collected by Nikola Černá, student of „Introduction to Study of Folklore“ course at the Department of Anthropology, Faculty of Arts, West Bohemian University in Pilsen on December 12th 2013, 8:00-8:25 p. m. Told with enthusiasm at a friendly get-together in the evening. The narrator remembers the story from his childhood, it was told among children of the same age.

8 According to some respondents, the popularity of Božena Němcová could be caused by certain “contra-cultural” rebellious expressions of school children responding to plethora of her adoration or to depiction of her dramatic fortunes, especially the life in poverty, during classes.
Scout movement, or Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk [1850-1937], the first President of Czechoslovakia) became “wicked” and potentially dangerous as ghosts:

One day in the mountains with Scouts, we were bored and somebody said we could summon the ghosts. Immediately a discussion began how this should be done. An older girl Scout started patronizing us and warning us, we should never attempt to summon Božena Němcová. There’s rumour going around that if somebody thinks about whose ghost shall be invoked, to most people Božena Němcová occurs. All persons who were kind during their lives are terribly bad as ghosts. Němcová’s ghost is said to be awfully wicked, it destroys things and can even kill. She told us once, maybe 15 years ago, a group attempted to do this; nobody knows what exactly happened but none of them could speak for a week, they did not have a good perception and they were covered with bruises and scratches.9

In accordance with this principle, it is, for instance, fully safe to call Adolf Hitler or even Satan himself (Janeček, 2008: 313-316). It was the “Non-Holy Trinity” of Adolf Hitler, Satan and Božena Němcová that probably belonged to the most often summoned ghosts in the 1980s. These figures were continuously supplemented by “suitable” historical figures known for their presumed or real cruelty, mainly Countess Elizabeth Bathory [1560-1614] who was popular especially in Slovakia, but also in Russia (Ellis, 2007; Bayduzh, 2014), or with Francis Drake (1540-1596). In contrast to American girl slumber parties (Dégh, 2001) and English elementary school bathrooms (Armitage, 2006), it was Pioneer and other summer camps that constituted the most popular setting for calling the ghosts, similarly to Russia (Bayduzh, 2014). The girls summoned here ghosts in their leisure time, after lights-out, in tents or cottages. Ghost calling was accompanied by close liminal activities, first of all by talking horory – (“horrors”, an equivalent of Russian genre strashilky) – scary stories inspired by oral tradition and popular culture (Janeček, 2007: 287-309; Janeček, 2008: 300-312). After all, this is the current practice in children’s summer camps even today:

Well, frightening stories... They are rather told by girls, age 9 – 13. They are mostly based on a book (for example The Steps of Horror) or a movie.10

Another popular setting for summoning the ghosts was the leisure time at summer open-air schools and winter skiing trips, or visits to friends’ flats, i.e. always places without the direct control by adults – teachers or parents. Summoning the ghosts distinguished itself by high plurality not only in selecting the apparitions but even in the way of practical summoning – the most used paraphernalia were candles (the presence of a ghost showed itself by glimmering or extinguished flame) and hand-written boards or papers with letters or digits (socialist bricolage which replaced the not available ouija board used in the West) to which the ghost pointed by moving a glass or another thing. Also known were forks intricately wrapped in paper napkins, a ring swinging on a chain, running water from water tap, or using a reading book or the

9 The narration retrospectively recorded by Ondřej Taker, male, born 1989, university student, Nové Strašeci. See also note Nr. 5.
10 Text documented from a friend, experienced summer camp counselor, by Pavlína Fišerová, student of “Introduction to Oral Narratives” course at the Faculty of Humanities, Charles University in Prague on July the 1st 2010 (personal communication).
Bible wrapped in black paper; although, significantly, almost never a mirror was used (Janeček, 2008: 315-316). As to the number of figures and the ways of calling them, children’s practices of summoning the ghosts in the 1980s can be described as a broadly widespread pluralistic tradition, in contrast to the Anglo-Saxon world and – to a large extent – Russian setting. This local tradition can be characterized as a “realistic” and “historical” one – the most frequently summoned ghosts were historical figures known from school lessons of history or literature, related to the national or world history. Even though figures from traditional demonological legends, such as Bílá paní (The White Lady) that was extremely popular in the Czech Republic and often used for artistic and pop-cultural works for children, were well known, they were not summoned as they were in England. Similarly, the documented existence of abstract figures from children’s horory, such as Black Hand, Black Dot, Yellow Curtains, Black Train, summoned by children in Russia (Bayduzh, 2014) and Estonia (Kõiva, 1996, 1997), did not bring the attempts in the Czech Republic to invoke them (Janeček, 2007: 290-298; Janeček, 2008: 308-311). The boundary between the orally narrated text and the ritual followed in the Czech “culture of historicism” the same line as the boundary between the fictive folklore figures from traditional legends and children thrillers and the historical personalities did.

After the social changes in 1989 in the Czech Republic, the first texts appeared that substantiated progressive upset in this historicizing model. In addition to historical figures known from school lessons, figures relating to popular culture, mainly music (John Lennon, Jim Morrission, later on Kurt Cobain) and film (Marylin Monroe) became more important. To be adopted among more often called ghosts, they have to enjoy society-wide popularity and especially to die tragically, early or under mysterious circumstances. These figures became a part of children’s repertoire thanks to mass media, especially television, and popular culture, especially film – cultural inspirations that expanded in the 1990s, pushing out school lessons and reading that dominating before.

**BLOODY MARY IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC**

*In the sixth year, we went for a two-day trip with our school for the first time. The teachers strained to tire us out but to no effect. So we gathered in the evening and were telling scary stories. One of them was the story about Krvavá Mary. If you say in front of a mirror at midnight – Krvavá Mary, Krvavá Mary, Krvavá Mary – Mary will come out the mirror and scratch your eyes out. Of course, I know that’s a load of rubbish; but to tell the truth I have not tried it so far. ☺*

(E. H., female, born 1988, university student, Jihlava, referring to situation around 2000).11

Bloody Mary who spread to Western and Central Europe and Russia some time ago presents the most significant figure among these ghosts inspired by popular culture. The Czech setting seems to have distinguished itself by a certain cultural resistance

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11 Text documented retrospectively from her own memories by Eva Horáčková, student of “Introduction to Oral Narratives” course at the Faculty of Humanities, Charles University in Prague, in 2010.
within the former socialistic bloc because the first narrations of this type occurred only at the very end of the 1990s, most significantly after the year 2000. A certain role might have been played by the fact that dominating inspirational media for these practices, i.e. frequently perceived Hollywood and partially Japanese movies with this theme (e.g. Candyman, 1992, Gakkou no Kaidan, 1995, Urban Legends, 1998, Urban Legends: Bloody Mary, 2005) and American television series (X-Files, 1996) were produced mostly only in the second half of the 1990s.

In this time, the invocation of Bloody Mary adapted itself organically to the social practise which existed more-than-20-years whereby Czech children are summoning the ghosts within “traditional” space-time continuum of open-air schools and summer camps. It has mostly a form of a mere allusion to the ritual, without performing it in reality:

“...I think the story about Krvavá Mary we were telling at night and in the room. We were a group of about 10 children. Because we were – with 3 exceptions – a girls’ class so girls must have formed the majority of those present. We were telling the story about Krvavá Mary just as a scary story on our school trip where we wanted to frighten ourselves a little bit. I was impressed by it then. “12

Nevertheless, if a real invocation takes place occasionally, it rather takes the “traditional” shape of Czech children’s occultism, including the key principle of ethic inversion, whereby ghosts are summoned by means of candles and a board with letters, without a mirror:

To girls occurred nothing better than to call somebody wicked because it might happen that those who were bad in their lives are nice after their death and vice versa. At that time, Bloody Mary was very popular or a man whose name begins with “H” and who was not nice in his life, especially in his relation to Jews. We called both of them and wished at least one to come. At school they overheard an incantation that might have sounded like: “We are calling you, the spirit of Bloody Mary; ghost, appear and if you are here in the room let us know about you in any way”. We were summoning in a darkened room, only with a candle light, the candle stood beside a wooden board and while the incantation was being told, all of us were holding hands and our eyes were closed. After we had stopped summoning, we released our grips and everybody was sitting in the circle around a wooden board. Hands of that person who wished to ask a question were put onto a horseshoe and the person concerned pronounced the question he wished to put to the ghost.

(M. H., born 1991, female, university student, Prague)13

Some oldest recorded versions preferred the apparition to be designated in English as Bloody Mary.14 Later on, this was translated partially to Krvavá Mary, which doubtless is a dominating form today (Mary in this compound word sounds as a foreign-

12 See note Nr 11.
13 Part of long annotated text documented retrospectively from her own memories and with help of her cousin by Markéta Hlaváčková, student of “Introduction to Oral Narratives” course at the Faculty of Humanities, Charles University in Prague, in 2013.
14 Similarly to Russia (Bayduzh, 2014), Czech setting also most often understands under the term Bloody Mary a kind of alcoholic drink; quite popular also was the radical feminist Internet magazine Bloody Mary riot grrrlzín, published between 2005 and 2011 (Bloody Mary riot grrrlzín, 2014).
language name that implicates Anglo-Saxon environment; the correct Czech translation should be *Krvavá Marie*). Similarly to Russia, this foreign name leads to children’s tendency to understand this figure as a spirit of a foreigner who died abroad. This tendency primarily results in connecting the ghost from the mirror with historical figures of the English Queen Mary I. Tudor (1516-58) and Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots (1542-1587), as is the case in the West and even more widely in Russia. Recently, this process of historicization has become more popular especially thanks to blogs and other texts published in the Internet and written by children or adolescents.\(^{15}\) A typical example can be offered by the article *Bloody Mary* written by user Liz on 15\(^{th}\) April 2009 at a blog that is devoted to *Guardians of Time Trilogy*, the literary series for youth, by Marianne Curley. This article explicitly combines the texts borrowed from literature, the Internet, and oral tradition with school history:

Who was and who is Bloody Mary? It is not easy to answer this question because about 50 different stories are narrated. One story says Bloody Mary is a witch; another one says she is a disfigured bride. However, Bloody Mary is called by other names too: Bloody Bones, Hell Mary, Mary Worthington, or Mary Jane. Some legends even go as far as to say that she is the Virgin Mary. On the contrary, different legends say she is Satan’s sister, daughter, or wife! Ritual ceremonies that can summon Bloody Mary differ from each other as well. However, the most common elements used in the rituals are a mirror, a darkened room, and repeated chanting of a certain spell. Some versions say Mary can be called only on certain days. Other versions describe that water must drip onto the mirror, or that you have to hold, for example, a knife in your hand etc. On the other hand, some legends say that you attempt to summon Bloody Mary whenever you go around a mirror in the dark, whether you like it or not. Nevertheless, in most legends a ritual must be performed. A certain incantation must be chanted beside the mirror, too. Moreover, even these incantations do not agree with each other. There are many versions saying which incantation shall be used. For instance: Bloody Mary, I believe in Mary Worth, Bloody Mary, I have your baby, or the Lord’s Prayer told backwards... Some rituals often include sitting in a circle, holding each other hands and lots of lit candles. Well, I also hassled almost everybody with this as I did with Mary and this I was told by Isabela...x)

As to one story, she was a little girl with pustules covering all her body and bleeding, and children jeered at her. Then she died and so did the children. According to others, she was a blind girl who killed somebody and they hung her. She might gouge out the eyes and break mirrors into small pieces.\(^{16}\)

The following comments taken over from the discussion about the above article present an apt summarization of native, emic understanding of this practice by Czech children and adolescents. At the same time, they document its ambivalent status between reality and fiction, which is typical for dialogical genre of legends in general whose “truthfulness” is continuously constructed within the process of social communication (Dégh, 2001), in this case by means of the Internet communication:

\(^{15}\) The most informative Czech blog written by children and adolescents devoted solely to the *Bloody Mary* phenomenon is called *Krvavá Mery* (*Bloody Mery*), started by an 11-year old girl in 2011 (*Krvavá Mery* 2014).

\(^{16}\) *Krvavá Mery* (2014).
otherwise this is an interesting article, it is told by us that if you want to call Bloody Mary you must get in front of a mirror at midnight and repeat 3-times in a row: “Bloody Mary”... I have heard that friends of my schoolmates did this and their faces were scratched...... nwm, nom..
(Oroniel15, 19th April 2009, 17:43)

good heavens, no Mary exists and especially a bloody one
(Bubu, 10th February 2010, 22:27)

Sure, she exists. When I was about 12, with a friend of mine we chanted 3-times into the mirror “bloody Mary”. We made a joke of it and went to bed. However, in the morning, I had a finely scratched letter “M” on my forehead and my friend had the same on her forearm. So I believe in her and I have respect until now. By the way, I am 20 now.
(Ingrid, 7th March 2010, 17:09)

It may be true indeed it’s a legend so something is true and something not but one thing is sure bloody Mary existed and I don’t know the other things about her
(Leon, 4th May 2010, 10:45)

To a large extent, the growth in popularity of Krvavá Mary in the Czech Republic corresponds – with regard to time – to the period after 2005 when fairly mass Internet access was created for Czech households – at that time, more than half of all households had access to the Internet (Czech Statistical Office, 2012). Today, the Czech-language Internet documents plenty of texts and audio-visual information dealing with this figure. Recently, her growing popularity has been influenced mostly by social networks, especially Facebook and YouTube, which complete the pop-cultural, mainly film inspirations that dominated at the turn of the millennium. The Internet with its interactive nature has an advantage over pop-cultural inspirations. Thanks to this, the Internet constitutes a vital platform to discuss this issue; it can supplement the oral tradition functioning in a similar way. This fact is supported by the discussion about the video-clip Krvavá Mary, accompanied by Lady Gaga’s song Bloody Mary in the “corresponding style”. The video-clip was made by user Skarletei on 26 January 2012 on YouTube. This document gives a peculiar witness to growing plurality in local folk knowledge about this practice that intricately combines the school and the “Internet” history with the products of global popular culture, which are produced within the discourse of contemporary cultural literacy based mainly on mass media:

mmm except for a few minor mistakes and some things which were not correct, it was quite OK :) and chosen lady gaga :) well done except that it did not have to be just Marie the first or a witch but this also could concern the virgin Mary :) by the way where did you find out that brutal death is waiting immediately after the first invocation?? as to my sources I think only after the third one :)
(Sui Sykes)

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17 All three comments can be found online at Krvavá Mary (2014).
A ghost can appear anywhere you just have to know how to call him. (1ijoj)

You don’t have to, I have read either it can be done in the dark or if you have a candle. Isn’t it all the same? Still and all, you can call her. You stand in front of a mirror (in the dark!), you say 3times Bloody Mary (Skarletei)18

Some comments refer to emergent local peculiarities that might be based on local oral tradition combining the globally widespread motifs with a traditional folklore motif of a spurned bride:

I believe in her. Because a lot is rumoured about her but I wouldn’t like to call her. I don’t know if she is a witch or Queen Mary I. However, I know she could be a bride if this is the case. She is the talk of ours we think she is a bride, who was at the altar and her bridegroom left her. If this is true, so she began to kill people when she killed her bridegroom who ran away from the wedding altar. I just know that something like this is in existence and it is among us (Zina Ťoková)19

Other localization strategies relate this practice to particular events in medieval or modern Czech history mediated by school lessons or mass media:

Krvavá Máry... She was a witch who was burned to death as John Huss was, sometime in those days... When you call her, you wake up on the next day with bleeding letters KM on your hand...20

They (schoolmates – note by P. J.) say that it is the spirit of the lady from Kuřim with a knife who killed her children and her sister last year...21

At some elementary schools, Krvavá Mary gets involved in completely new contexts and she is called by alternative names too, again inspired by works of popular culture (horror movie Ring):

If Samara or Bloody Mary cuts with her knife a pupil in primary third year (the cut cannot be seen so the victim does not know about it), then he or she dies in the 8th or 9th year. (T. Ř., born 2003, female, schoolchild, Brno)22

The secondary consequence of Krvavá Mary’s popularity in the Internet and on television consists – in contrast to dominating “confirmation” of her existence by these “reliable” sources, in a certain distance and its involvement into the fictive worlds,

18 All three comments can be found at Skarletei (2014). For folkloristical approach to comments on legend-related performances on YouTube videos, see Tucker 2011.
19 Skarletei (2014).
20 A. K., born 1999, female, schoolchild, Prague, collected in 2009 in family setting.
21 N. F., born 1996, female, schoolchild, Brno, collected in 2008 in family setting.
22 Text documented by Veronika Frňková, student of “Introduction to Study of Folklore” course at the Institute of European Ethnology, Faculty of Arts, Masaryk University in Brno, in 2013.
made by a group of children. However, this fictitiousness is mostly not reflected in real social practice. Many respondents feel respect for this demonic figure even in their adulthood, as documented by interpretations of interviews with respondents conducted by student researchers:

The narrated story was not considered to be true, perhaps because it is well known and adapted for screen in more versions. Yet the narrator would not do the particular act.\(^{23}\)

The narrator heard the narration from her friends when she was child. She understands the narration as a non-sense but she would not perform the ritual. The narrator does not perceive the superstition as a definitely truthful one but her superstitiousness and belief do not allow her to perform this ritual. It can be said that instinctively she considers it to be true.\(^{24}\)

He understands the story as truthfully anchored in the past. He takes the same view thereof even today. Interpretation: the narrator considers the story to be funny and full of adrenaline. On the other side, he admits that he believed and had a great respect, too; he confesses he believes until now.\(^{25}\)

Paradoxically, frequent absence of social routine in real summoning the demonic figure from a mirror confirms its existence and cultural relevance: although on a verbal level \textit{Krvavá Mary} is often disparaged and considered to be a mere “superstition”, on a behavioural level even a large group of adults does not set about summoning her.

Therefore, contemporary cultural practice of the invocation of \textit{Bloody Mary} is strongly localized; during this localization, not only her name has been changed (from international \textit{Bloody Mary} to Czech \textit{Krvavá Mary}), also her position within domestic cultural tradition of children’s “historical occultism” has evolved. This type of occultism requires the invoked figures to have historical, pseudo-historical (in the case no historical figure is available), or at least pop-cultural models provided with an accompanying etiological narrative. The Czech \textit{Krvavá Mary} (or even right archaic names \textit{Máří} or \textit{Máry}) presents a vital amalgam of oral and customary tradition whose cultural relevance is secondarily confirmed by “real” historical precedents mediated by school lessons and reading, popular culture, mass media and more often by Internet communication of children and youth. The terrifying visual impression is not only confirmed in this way but – as pointed out by Bill Ellis – when naming and providing it with a particular history, children and youth win control over it (Ellis, 2003: xiii-xv).

\begin{center}
\textbf{KRVAVÁ MARY BETWEEN FOLKLORE AND POPULAR CULTURE}
\end{center}

\textit{There is talk among little children at open-air schools and summer camps that if you stand in front of a mirror in a darkened room at midnight, you look in it and call “Bloody Mary” three-times, Mary appears in the mirror. One girl wanted to at-}

\(^{23}\) Interpretation of Nikol Vodičková. See note Nr. 3.

\(^{24}\) Interpretation of Ondřej Taker. See note Nr. 5.

\(^{25}\) Interpretation of Nikola Černá. See note Nr. 7.
tempt this because she didn’t believe anybody and to prove this is not true. Nothing happened first but after a while, a strange bloody figure appeared and scratched her face. She had to recall it, otherwise it would have killed her. According to the children, this superstition originates in a real story that happened in the 19th century in America. A certain woman with her children and husband lived a satisfied life there. One day, however, civil war broke out and Mary’s husband had to enter the army. The war lasted many years and the husband had not come back yet. Moreover, in the region where Mary and her children lived, famine and droughts occurred. People began suspecting Mary of witchcraft, they avoided her and threw the blame for their poverty on her. Mary shut herself with her children off from the outside world in her house and stopped going out. In despair, she killed her children, for whom she was not able to support, and she went insane. She used to go round the town with bloody hands and people began nicknaming her Bloody Mary. However, when her husband came back home from the war after many years, he could not recognize his wife in the disfigured beggar woman roaming around the house and on the assumption that she was a thief he killed her. After he had found out who she was, he became dismayed and killed himself by jumping off a rock. Since that time if somebody chants three-times in a row Bloody Mary, Mary appears and kills him or her because she understands this address as a defamation of character.26

Where to search for the roots of this ritual practice of children and youth? Which way does it relate to traditional folklore of the Czech-speaking space? At present, we have no reliable documents about the existence of this practice in the West before the 1970s, namely before 1972, available (Langlois, 1978). The only documented evidence is grounded in a mention of a single respondent of Marc Armitage who postulates a similar practice existed in Great Britain as early as the 1950s (Armitage, 2006: 8).

However, some authors noticed its affinity, of form and partially content, with prophetic rituals performed by young girls in Anglo-Saxon lands in front of water surfaces or mirrors on the eve of the All Saints´ Day to see their future sweethearts. These rituals originated in Pan-European widespread prophetic practices with mirrors (Klintberg, 1988: 162-164). The folklorist Jiří Polívka in his thorough study documented plenty of examples of such practices and relating folklore texts within a wide geographic and time scope (Polívka, 1917-1918). The most known domestic example consists in the literary adaptation of this motif in the ballad Christmas Eve by the notable Czech poet and folklorist Karel Jaromír Erben (1811-1870) published in his collection Kytice [A Bouquet] from 1853 and 1861 (Erben, 2012). At the same time, the hardworking field collector Václav Krolmus documented a specific use of a mirror with the aim to see a demonic female figure, namely a witch, in a Czech setting, in the text relating to celebrations of Sts. Philip and James Night (Walpurgis Night) on 1 May: “Many of them bring mirrors with them, put them facing the fire and stare into them in order to better recognize the witches who are standing or kneeling, going or sitting round the fire.” Nevertheless, as he adds afterwards, this is not a description of a ritual practice, but a folklore text: “Czech folk tales and superstitions give witness thereof. Do not think, you simple soul, that this happens in our days; this happened when pagans were here and when they converted to Christianity in many places that were so holy for pagans in

26 Anonymous respondent, archive of Petr Janeček.
Bohemia. (Krolmus, 2013: 314). After all, a mirror was one of traditional attributes of St. Walpurga, considered to be a patroness against magic and witchcraft, as Josef Virgil Grohmann documents in the oldest scientific German-written collection of Czech superstitions Die Sagen aus Böhmen [Legends of Bohemia]. According to his mythological theory, Grohmann understands Walpurga as one of Weisse Jungfrauen, i.e. White Virgins, a reflection of pre-Christian pagan goddesses, who, besides other things, tell pairs of lovers their common future (Grohmann, 1863: 32-34, 44-46). In his work Aberglauben und Gebräuche aus Böhmen [Superstitions and Customs of Bohemia] from 1864, devoted to Czech superstitions and customs that he acquired through oral tradition and found in written sources, Grohmann mentions plenty of folk beliefs that explicitly connect mirror with night apparitions of demonic beings, or with the evocation of negative states, for instance:

_The one who wants to see a devil shall look into a mirror at night._
(Grohmann, 1864: 27)

_A sick person should not look out of the window; otherwise his sickness will get worse._
(Grohmann, 1864: 151)

_If a person looks into a mirror and can see another face beside his own face, this is a bad sign announcing near death._
(Grohmann, 1864: 220)

_The one who looks into a mirror at night can see a devil in it._
(Grohmann, 1864: 224)

_If a person looks into a mirror in the evening, he will go down with hepatitis or he will see his death in the mirror._
(Grohmann, 1864: 225)

The texts of legends and memorates about the use of mirrors to reveal witches by wise women are documented by Antonín Tomíček at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. In his work Víra v duchy na Litomyšlsku [Belief in Ghosts in the Region of Litomyšl] he wrote: “Well, there lives an old woman in that village Sezemice and she might know more than just eating the bread. She shows the witch in a mirror and she can punish her however anybody might wish” (Tomíček, 1926: 38); as to the legend, the executioner from the town of Litomyšl might have had similar skill (Tomíček, 1926: 48).

Such folk beliefs potentially form a folk discourse that explicitly combined mirrors, night, prophetic practices and negative figures (witches, Devil, Death) appearing therein. Almost one hundred years later, this led to an easier acceptance of the Bloody Mary ritual practice in the Czech lands.\(^2^7\) However, serious documents are missing. According

\(^2^7\) The theme of a mirror in Czech folk culture is summarized by the corresponding entry in Národopisná encyklopedie Čech, Moravy a Slezska [Ethnographical Encyclopaedia of Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia] (Kafka, 2007), within legend tradition then by Katalog českých démonologických pověstí [Catalogue of Czech demonological legends] (Luffer, 2014). In Central-European tradition, besides witches, a mirror is more often connected with devil, demonic figures of vampire type (Trudenspiegel) and basilisk. Alexandra Navrátilová mentions traditional practice of covering the mirrors in the house after a family member had died “so that the dead could not choose somebody to follow him” (Navrátilová, 2005: 116).
to currently available data, children’s occultism in the 1970s and 1980s did not work with mirrors as a matter of principle. This means for communication with the behind world was documented in a Czech setting around the year 2000. At that time, mirrors were also used, probably under the influence of global tradition on Bloody Mary, to summon “traditional” Czech ghosts like Božena Němcová in a partially international setting, perhaps not a coincidence. The following example demonstrates how this global form of children’s folklore has gradually become an “A-text” in the Czech culture in the Yuri Lotman’s sense; thus a “valuable” text transformed into the own cultural system with the intention of being safeguarded and reproduced (Lozoviuk, 2005: 69):

When I was about 10, my parents left my 2-year-older friend and me at home alone to watch each other. My friend told me then what she had heard at school about summoning the spirit of Božena Němcová. She might have scratched out one girl’s eyes after she was summoned, so we decided to attempt if this works.

We made small paper stairs from half of A4 format sheet; we moved the stairs to the mirror so that Božena Němcová could get out of the mirror and enter the room. We lit a candle, put the stairs to the mirror, locked in the bathroom, and started calling her. Nothing happened, yet we were pretty scared and we turned on all the lights in the flat to be on the safe side.

Note: Until now, I have not understood why exactly Božena Němcová should be a wicked ghost and scratch the eyes out. Somebody told me once, she lived a hard life and she desires to take vengeance, but still and all, it doesn’t make much sense.28

Similar documents supporting the combination of folk prophetic rituals and negative figures can be found in the Anglo-Saxon world where love prophetic rituals with mirrors used to relate to the figure of a witch in popular culture (e. g. postcards) at the beginning of the 20th century. They could influence the next development of this children’s practice (Ellis, 2000; 2004). Even based on such “incoherent” data, the traditional ethnographical approaches perhaps could create an anachronistic short link between the Czech folk divination and superstitions, and the contemporary practice of summoning Krvavá Mary. However, as pointed out by Carl von Sydow in his study criticizing Wilhelm Mannhardt’s theories, folkloristic studies in their interpretations should keep realizing the “importance of starting not from preconceived mythological reality, but from contact with living reality.” (Sydow, 1934: 308).

Therefore, taking into account the present absence of more recent data supporting similar practices from the 20th century, it is suitable not to embark on unsubstantiated historical speculations and consider the contemporary Czech invocation of Krvavá Mary to be a product of diffusion from the West during the last fifteen years.29 Exactly the approaches of neo-diffusionism and neo-migrationism, that have been revived in folkloristics alongside the study of contemporary folklore (Pels, 1992) in the last

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28 Text documented by Katsiaryna Zayats, student of “Introduction to Oral Narratives” course at the Faculty of Humanities, Charles University in Prague, in 2013.

29 A single usage of the name Máry (Černá Máry – Black Mary) in Czech children’s folklore of previous periods can be found in a counting-out rhyme that was recorded at the beginning of the 1980s: Černá Máry, skoč do jámy. Kdo tam je? Čert tam je. Co tam dělá? Vaří kaši. Čím ji mastí? Kolomastí. Čím ji jí? Lopatou. Má palici chlupatou (Votruba, Horáková, Kadlecová, Maxová, Pleskotová, 2010: 88). The possibility of polygenetic development of identical elemental imaginations must be taken into account as...
decades, can help to explain mechanisms of how folklore texts of the past were wandering, in case these approaches are applied on the circulation of contemporary texts. Arjun Appadurai’s theoretical model postulates that contemporary social imaginary, working with five aspects or dimensions of global cultural flow acting in parallel (ethnospaces, technoscapes, financescapes, mediascapes, ideoscapes) that in his opinion best describes the constant “fluidity” of the contemporary world, it proves to us this practice in a fully new light (Appadurai, 1990; 1996). Its appearance in the Czech Republic at the turn of millennium was not just a mere mechanical transfer of a folklore text from point A to point B by concrete people, but a process functioning on more levels simultaneously. A certain role (even if a smaller one than traditional folklore migration would emphasize) was played by the transformations in ethnoscapes, in particular by the return of Czech expatriates and their families after the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989 who brought with them Western practices of summoning a ghost from a mirror (as documented by one of our examples from Czech expatriates from Sweden), but also by later influx of tourists, foreign workers and after that also expats. The flow of ethnoscapes to a certain extent influenced by the flow of financescapes, was supplemented by mutually interconnected transformations in technoscapes, mediascapes and ideoscapes, which are crucial for constructing these local cultural expressions. It was exactly the popular culture, penetrating through these dimensions and relating to transformations and easy-to-reach film and telecommunication technologies that gave rise to local Czech practices of Bloody Mary invocation. The impact of popular culture was synergistically supported by the fast creation of the Internet access in the early 2000s. Thanks to local changes in social imaginary, a unique amalgam developed here of pop-cultural products spread by mass media, negotiating of the cultural meanings in the Internet, ritual practices, folk beliefs, and orally widespread texts. These can hardly be designated according to traditional folkloristic terminology as a “mere” local folklore oicotype (Sydow, 1932). Its fundamentally multi-media nature is heading, in agreement with Waldemar Kuligowski, towards understanding it as a specific form of popular culture in which a mythic vision of the world, typical for folklore before, is implemented (Kuligowski, 2010). Not only a mirror but also a TV screen can become a window to another world (Klintberg, 1988: 162-164). Today it is mainly a computer screen, perhaps even more significant means in the case of Czech Kravá Mary.

CONCLUSION

Children’s legends are true mirrors of the society. Their actors, actions, language, mannerisms, and paraphernalia originate in everyday living. Children did not invent witches, bogeymen, vampires, werewolves, Bigfoot, or the Hookman, rather they learned

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well, as documented by the following personal experience narrative: Helena has two older sister who sometimes got up to mischief, scared her or ran away from her as happens in all families. When she was a child, she was afraid of going to the bathroom alone because she had to pass a darkened hall. Therefore, she always woke one of the sisters to come with her. The sisters did not want her to wake them up every night, so they gave her a torch that she always shined in order not to be scared. After some time, they made fun of her and told her that if she shined the torch on a mirror at midnight and she looked in it, she would die. There was, of course, a mirror in the hall, so everything repeated from the beginning and the sisters had to come with her to the bathroom because she was again afraid, even with the torch... “H. B., female, born 1989, clerk, Česká Lípa – Svárov. Text documented by Hana Málková, student of “Introduction to Oral Narratives” course at the Faculty of Humanities, Charles University in Prague, in 2012.

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about them in media the same way they learned everything else prescribed by both private and public education. In script and in custom, the canon of legendary characters, heroes, and antiheroes is continually rewritten and updated to stay contemporary. (Dégh, 2001: 246)

Since 2007, a Bloody Mary stuffed toy produced by the American company Toy Vault is available for purchase on the Internet everywhere in the world (including the Czech Republic). The company depicts this ephemeral being coming from the other side of a mirror as a terrifyingly real black-haired woman dressed in white, with bloody hands, face showing large witch nose, and empty eyes. The serial product from Nightmares; Fact or Fiction line commodifies the folklore figure for the needs of toy industry besides Mothman, Voodoo Doll, and Chupacabra, other American folklore phenomena that are on the boundary between the real and the fictive. Similarly to children’s narrations (and their folkloristic explanations), it garnishes Bloody Mary with a marketing mixture consisting of allegedly real history, folklore, and causal explanation of murderous apparition’s motivation: “The legend of Bloody Mary has been a figure of American myth for decades. However, many people don’t realize Bloody Mary was a real person. Mary Worth, a beautiful, vain, young woman, was killed violently in a car accident in the early 1960’s. Her face was horribly disfigured in the accident, thus the legend began. Mary was so angry over her mutilation, she swore to destroy all who called to her through the thing she loved the most … a mirror. Are the abundant mirrors of the world simple sheets of glass? Or does Mary wait patiently behind the reflective surface...”

Like this toy, also Czech Krvavá Mary and Máří constitute a rather significant cultural import, a phenomenon which originated on the other side of the Atlantic. Contemporary however, Czech cultural practices of summoning the terrifying ghost from a mirror demonstrate the fruits of globalization that is far away from the serial product of consumer culture. Similarly to Russia and other countries of the former socialist bloc, the invasion of Bloody Mary in the 1990s did not mean a mere “Americanization”, “Westernization” or passive “globalization” of local children’s folklore. On the contrary - instead of cultural homogenization, in all these countries the global was syncretically combined with the local. In Russia, there came to the symbiosis with the local tradition of The Queen of Spades invocation and to the formation of her “kinship” to Bloody Mary; in the Czech Republic, she was included in local context of relative demonological practices of children and youth, mainly those of ghost invocation. Contemporary folklore expressions of this type might be one of few cultural phenomena that can be designated as hybrid, syncretic products of globalization, far away from pessimistic reading this process as cultural and social homogenization (Bauman 1998). While summoning Krvavá Mary, or talking about it, Czech children form minimum liminal social spaces the structure and form of which correspond to globally widespread spaces formed by American, Russian or German children. However, they fill these spaces with locally specific, Czech historical content.

The contemporary practices of Krvavá Mary or Máří invocation are rather a result of glocalization construed as an intersection of the global and the local when constructing the cultural phenomena; after all, one of the main mechanisms of glocalization includes the adaptation of global universal forms to local contents (Robertson, 1992).

30 Toy Vault (2014).
According to this conception, the global cultural forms do not force out and exclude the local ones – on the contrary, they create them to a certain extent – the local form of Czech Bloody Mary would have never come into being without globalization. Especially thanks to it, or more precisely to the globally distributed products of popular culture, this element of Anglo-Saxon children’s folklore could overcome significant time and space boundaries to become assimilated in Czech folklore and to influence the contemporary appearance of children’s demonological practices. It followed plenty of folklore phenomena that were transferred to the Czech-speaking space from abroad by means of elite, scholar, artificial, semi-popular, or popular culture in the past and that are viewed by us as “traditional” or “local” – folktales, legends, jokes or children’s games. Was it belles letters, exempla, chapbooks, TV series, movies or Internet communication that acted as media to transfer these phenomena, in all the cases locally viable and authentically viewed tradition developed that is able to absorb various kinds of local impulses and that – to a large extent – lives its own independent life.

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Films

Music

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NARRATIVE TRADITION ABOUT KING MATTHIAS IN THE PROCESS OF TRANSFORMATION

MONIKA KROPEJ

Folktales have become, among other things, objects of promotion; they have been incorporated in heritage tourism, they are presented as cultural objects, and displayed to the local people, tourists, visitors, and the general public. Among such folktale events are fairy tale parks, museums, tourist attractions, artistic, cultural and entertaining events, and narrative festivals. Discussed will be the “life” of folktales in the present time on the example of the narrative tradition of King Matthias in Slovenia, which was converted into a cultural and entertainment event named “The Castles of King Matthias” that takes place in the small town of Črna na Koroškem/Črna in Carinthia. Analysed will be socio-economic and historical backgrounds that cause such transformations of narrative traditions, and also the problems and positive effects that may be the result of these processes.

Key words: folktales, King Matthias, folklore, ethnology, folk narrative, cultural heritage, tradition

INTRODUCTION

In present-day Europe, folk story-telling, folk plays, folk dances and other ethnographic performances are mostly part of events organized by local communities or cultural associations. Individuals or groups narrate or enact folk fairy tales or folktales, usually of local origin, at specific cultural events and on other occasions. The local’s return to folklore often aims to establish regional autonomy and cultural identity. This can be noticed especially within discriminated or ethnically endangered groups. Such is the case of Slovenes living on the other side of Slovenian borders with Italy, Austria, Hungary and Croatia, or of certain minorities living in Slovenia. The success of such phenomena lies in the fact that it offers identification to numerous social classes and ethnic groups. However, it can also be manipulated in order to attain national, political and economic objectives. These processes will be analysed on the example of the narrative tradition of King Matthias in the region of Carinthia in Slovenia.
The folk hero King Matthias acquired his name – as is more or less commonly accepted today – from the Hungarian king Matthias Corvinus Hunyadi (1443–1490), who was famous for being a just and benevolent ruler. Numerous folk songs, tales, legends, myths and proverbs about king Matthias are preserved throughout Central and Eastern Europe and in the Northern Balkans, namely in Hungarian, Slovakian, Czech, Slovenian, Croatian, Serbian, Romanian, Ukrainian, Ruthenian and partly German folklore. This folk tradition derives not only from the renaissance period, when King Matthias was first preserved in the written sources and in people’s imagination as a benevolent and prosperous ruler. Many elements in King Matthias’ poetic and narrative tradition are much older, but new ones were invented or added as well. A lot has been written by researchers in the above-mentioned countries about the folklore of King Matthias. Among others, Hungarian folklorist Vilmos Voigt has recently written a synthetic article about King Mathias in Hungarian and European folklore (Voigt, 2010).

In Slovenia King Matthias appears in folk songs, tales, legends, myths, proverbs and even children’s games. But within each genre he has different connotations and roles. It was reported by Marc Antonio Nicoletti (c. 1536–96) in “Patriarcato aquileienese di Filippo d’Alenconio” that people from Tolmin sang and told stories about him already in the middle of the 16th century. Prophecies, like the one about the linden tree growing in front of the cave of King Matthias, which once dry, will turn green again, as well as other prophecies connected with King Matthias, are widespread in Slovenia; they have been registered already by Slovenian folk poet from 18th century Andrej Šuster – Drabosnjak in his book *Bukelce od Matjaža* [The books about Matthias].

While Slovenian folk songs tell how King Matthias fought against the Turks or saved his wife Alenka (*Alenčica*, *Lenčica*) from the Turkish jail, Slovenian stories often mention the mighty King Matthias and his army sleeping in an underground cave or in a cellar, for instance in the mountain Peca, in Postojna Cave, in Sveta gora in Styria, under the mountains Dobrač and Krim, in Donačka gora, in the mountain Triglav, in Sorško polje, in Pliberško polje (Pliberk Field), by Mrzla voda under Višarje, by Zavratec near Idrija etc. It was predicted that he and his army will wake up and come to the aid of the people when their country will be in danger. According to other predictions, King Matthias will not appear before the end of the world and will bring peace, justice and prosperity. Such expectations about a saviour and/or a new predicted golden era are shared by many peoples and are not connected only with King Matthias. These folktales have preserved motifs that are older than the real Hungarian King Matthias Corvinus.

Other motives came from fairy tales, ballads, romances and chivalric novels. Some Slovenian folk songs are also related to the ancient motif of “Fiddler at the Entrance of Hell” (*Godec pred peklom*), which is reminiscent of Orpheus, as has already been
stressed by Avgust Pavel (Pavel 1909); others include myths about the ancient Diony-
sius. Zmaga Kumer came to the conclusion that none of the Slovenian narrative folk
songs carrying the name of King Matthias could have been directly connected with
the historical figure of the Hungarian king and that his name in the text appeared only
subsequently (Kumer, 1984: 22, 33).

King Matthias, painted by Jože Karlovšek, 1955 (Archive of the Institute of Slovenian Ethnol-
ogy ZRC SAZU)
Folktales about King Matthias are very rarely prose adaptations of folk songs about him as they often have a completely different content. Some of the stories include the traditions of Alexander the Great, King Salomon and Sybil (Šembilja), the medieval apocryphal tradition of the wise Salomon and his even wiser Marcolf the trickster, and the fairy tale motifs of the “The Clever Girl and the King” (ATU 875), “The King and the Abbot” (ATU 922) etc. The most common are the tales about King Matthias resisting God, who punishes him and his army by closing the mountains around them. Some stories tell how a boy, who is really God, adds salt to the food of King Matthias. King Matthias wants to have the salt and promises to give the boy land as wide as a day’s travel on horseback or as wide as God’s servant and maid, who are the sun and the moon, walk in a day; thus the whole world belongs to God. King Matthias does not give the promised payment and God punishes him by closing the mountain around him and his army. He and his army now sleep around the stone table in the mountain Peca or somewhere else, and his beard winds around the table. Other stories depict how the sleeping Matthias is visited in the cave by some travellers. For a moment he wakes up and tells a traveller to look through the window. When the visitor does as he is told he sees through the first window a vast field and a crowd of people, through the second window a beautiful grain field harvested by a single man and through the third window another crowd of people. Matthias explains that the first image is from today, the second will appear when King Matthias returns, while the third window presents the future, when the people will multiply and become corrupted.

It also happens that King Matthias asks the visitor if there are still tiny ants crawling towards the three peaks of the mountains or whether there are still “the flying pilgrimage processions” headed towards the sacred peaks. When they stop doing so, Matthias will raise the black army and peace will be restored. He also enquires if the crows still fly around the mountains. If the answer is that they do, he has to sleep for another 100 years. In some folktales he asks, if there are still magpies in the world, this means that he still needs to sleep, until they are gone. In Tolminsko, people describe that King Matthias asks the passers-by if the fig tree still bears fruit. When it no longer will, he will come and defeat all the kings. In the mountain where he sleeps are also treasures. Sometimes, he instructs the traveller to gather some leaves or feathers from a pit, which then at home, or when a man looks back, turn to gold. In other stories, the man who comes into a cave stays there for 300 years, thinking that it’s been only a few hours.

The tradition of King Matthias combines both the epic and the mythological heritage. The tales of King Matthias sleeping in the mountain and his awakening reflect the cosmological and apocalyptic ideas. Once as King Matthias draws his sword halfway out of the sheath, the army will begin to wake up. When it will be completely pulled out of the sheath, or when the sword alone rushes from the sheath, or when his beard is three, seven or nine times wrapped around the table, the army will wake up and the golden age will return. In other narratives, King Matthias will then gather a terrible army and destroy the world. In front of the cave, in which King Matthias sleeps, grows a dry linden tree, which turns green at Christmas. Between midnight and one in the morning it also blossoms, but then it dries again. It might become green once again at St. George’s Day, when King Matthias wakes up and hangs his

\[\text{ATU = International classification of folktales according to Aarne, Thompson (1961) and Uther (2004).}\]
shield on it. Once the linden tree becomes green, King Matthias’ army will come to life again.\(^4\)

The political role of King Matthias was revived in the middle of the 19th century as a reflection of national self-awareness and a symbol of the national or social idea. That was also the time of peasant uprisings, wars and insurrections. Other similar heroes who sleep in the mountain (motif D 1960, 2)\(^5\) are also King Arthur of Brittany, who is said to sleep in the hollow Mount Etna, the Danish Holger, the Czech Vaclav, the German Frederick II, Charles the Great (Charlemagne), Frederick Barbarossa and the gypsy Penga. Attila’s grave is also said to be under the mountain at the centre of the world.

Today we can say that in Slovenia King Matthias is a folk hero, who could also be called the Slovenian national hero. The tradition about him has been spread throughout the Slovenian ethnic area and left the most significant impact in Carinthia and in the vicinity of the local mountain Peca, where people still say that King Matthias resides in a stone cave.

Traditions about King Matthias have been explored by many researchers. Among the first in Slovenia were Simon Rutar (1879) and Avgust Pavel (1909). Slovakian folklorist Ján Komorovský (1957) believed that the name of King Matthias was at the forefront of traditions, where it can be still found today, due to the poor conditions that occurred after the death of Matthias Corvinus. A thorough study was written already in 1906 by a Pole, Zenon Kuzelja, who derived the Slovenian King Matthias from the younger medieval German tradition. In the charged atmosphere after the Carinthian plebiscite, Georg Graber (1914) wrote a biased statement that the Slovenians adapted their version of King Matthias from German folklore examples. Leopold Kretzenbacher (1941) agreed with him. In 1951, in the monograph of King Matthias, Ivan Grafe- nauer refuted these claims. Seven years later, Milko Matičetov (1958) wrote an extensive study on the tradition about Matthias and presented new material – 85 recently collected Slovenian tales about King Matthias of that time. Matičetov was of the opinion that all historically tangible traditions about King Matthias can be found and are concentrated in the stories about the “good king”. Many researchers have stressed the stylization of the hero and the process of preserving historical events in the folk collective memory. However, it is not my intention to discuss the extensive research work on King Matthias’ folklore in this paper.

**KING MATTHIAS AS PART OF CONTEMPORARY CULTURAL HERITAGE IN CARINTHIA**

The tradition about King Matthias has been most vividly preserved in Carinthia where it has been still kept alive in the first half and in the middle of the 20th century

\(^4\) King Matthias had a noticeable impact also in Slovenian literature. Poems about him were written by France Prešeren: “About Matthias, Hungarian King” [Od Matjaža, ogrskega kralja, 1832], Anton Aškerčič: “Kralj Matjaž” (1890), Oton Župančič: “The Dance of King Matthias” [Ples kralja Matjaža, 1900], Ivan Cankar wrote a novel: “Marko the Wanderer and King Matthias” [Potepuh Marko in kralj Matjaž, 1905], which was analysed by Lukács (2010: 376–378); Ferdo Kozak wrote the drama ”King Matthias” (staged in 1974, published in 1978); Leopold Suhodolčan wrote a play for young adults “Cris-cross King Matthias” (staged in 1975, published in 1979); and Dane Zajc wrote a puppet show ”King Matthias” (staged in 1976).

both in the Slovenian and Austrian part of Carinthia (Graber, 1914: 105; Möderndorfer, 1946: 221–224; Šašel, 1936/37: 11; Grafenauer, 1951; Matičetov, 1958). It is connected with Mt. Peca (2126 m) which is the second highest peak of the Karavanke range and the most eastern two-thousand-meter-high mountain of the Slovenian Alps. In order to keep alive as much of the tradition about King Matthias as possible, people in this region began to organize a cultural and tourist event called The Castles of King Matthias [Gradovi kralja Matjaža]. Since 1993, it has been organized annually at the end of January in Podpeca near Črna in Carinthia [Koroška], on the plain Mitnek under Mt. Peca.⁶

The village Črna with a 300-year-old mining tradition lies next to the Meža River. This is where charcoal burning, the building of ironworks, the opening of mining districts of lead and zinc ore, and the building of smelting factories took place. In the centre of this town, which was first mentioned in 1137, is the church of St. Oswaldas well as an open-air museum on the dwelling culture of the miners of Črna. The mine is preserved for tourist purposes, while the neighbouring village Mežica also has the museum; ‘The Underground of Peca’ [Podzemlje Pece].

The idea of creating snow castles of King Matthias was established after Slovenia became independent in 1991, and was initiated by Dušan Štrucl, who at that time worked in NOVNA (Studio for Rural Development). At that time, life in Podpeca started to slow down and the mine and the school were closed. People started to move away. Something needed to be done in order to keep the village alive. The idea of The Castles of King Matthias was realized with the help of Matjaž Mrdavšič, the innkeeper of the tavern At Matthias’ [Pri Matjažu] on Mitnek in Podpeca, who took the initiative and offered a space for the event, together with the implementation support. He explained:

“NOVNA came to present the idea and asked if I wanted to support the project The Castles of King Matthias. Many people say that this project was started by me, but that is not the truth. The project was designed by the municipality Ravne na Koroškem, while Črna took it under its wing once it got its own municipality. I do admit that it was me who took the opportunity to realize and start this project. Throughout the years, the event grew close to my heart and I was especially happy and excited when people started talking about Podpeca. It made us all very proud of it.”⁷

The castles of King Matthias are made by the participants of this event who come from all over Slovenia and from abroad, and often attract sculptors and artists as well. The people of the Upper Mežica Valley and from all over Carinthia regularly visit the Castles of King Matthias and identify themselves with the event. Many visitors from other parts of Slovenia and the neighbouring countries also come to see snow castles and other sculptures which sometimes convey politically critical messages. The first day is dedicated to the building of snow castles and socializing with other adults, and they choose their own King Matthias and his lady Lenčica. On the second day, parents bring their children and they put their knowledge to the test, they sing and create.

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⁶ The bearer of the tradition today: Okrepčevalnica pri Matjažu (Matjaž Mrdavšič), Podpeca 43, 2393 Črna na Koroškem. Connection with other institutions: TIC Park kralja Matjaža (formerly: Park kralja Matjaža d.o.o.).

⁷ Recorded by M. Kropej, January 1, 2010 (Archive of the Institute of Slovenian Ethnology ZRC SAZU).
The castle area is open to visitors for a week, a month or longer, depending on the weather.

During the duration of the event, more than thousand snow castles and other snow
sculptures have been built up to now. Groups of people who build the castles come from all over Slovenia as well as Europe. Teams consist of five to eight members who must register in advance and pay registration fee. The teams choose an interesting name, usually from their dialect vocabulary or current social events. On the 30 and 31 January 2010, the event was held for the 18th time. The teams created 105 castles and the event was attended by 732 competitors. At the same time, an artistic and literary contest takes place in the elementary schools of Carinthia. The winners are announced on Sunday, the second day of the event.

The cultural and tourist event The Castles of King Matthias revives a new local variant of folk legends about King Matthias:

“King Matthias and Lenčica

King Matthias was a good king, who had promised his people to fight for their rights. Once, his fiancée Lenčica was abducted by the Turkish sultan who took her to his camp. When King Matthias noticed that Lenčica had disappeared he went looking for her. He attacked the Turks with the help of his army, and won. He took his fiancée home, where they got married. The Turks left Carinthia after the defeat. Lenčica and Matthias were not happy for very long, since the country was soon attacked by the Austrians in order to gain Carinthia. The battle took place in the field where the king had been crowned and where many soldiers had lost their lives. King Matthias did not give up so easily and rode away with those soldiers who survived. When they came to Mt. Peca, it suddenly opened. The king and the soldiers entered the cave, which was instantly closed again, and they all fell asleep. They still rest there and will wake up only when the beard of King Matthias is wrapped nine times around the table at which he sleeps.”

The narrative tradition about King Matthias is connected with the local landscape, and it survived in Upper Mežica Valley [Zgornja Mežiška Dolina] also because it offered the inhabitants cultural identification through a web of ideological, historical and social relationships.

King Matthias was kept alive as a folk hero not only because of the rich narrative tradition but also because of the political role he acquired in the middle of the 19th century, as a symbol of the Slovene nation. King Arthur in the British Isles gained a similar importance in the 19th century, and became a political and state legend (Šmitek 2012, 207). The national pressure in Carinthia was very strong, which is the reason why the lore about this national hero was revived to such an extent precisely in this part of Slovenia. This is confirmed also by history: near the top of the mountain Peca is Kordeževa Glava (2126 m), there is a cave in Mala Peca in which the first bust of King Matthias was erected in 1932, carved from linden wood, by the sculptor Nikolaj Pirnat. However, political passions dictated the fate of this statue. After German occupation in 1941, the statue was hacked down and destroyed by the national turncoats (nemškutarji). In 1962, it was replaced by a bronze statue of the sleeping King Matthias, made by academic sculptor Marjan Keršič Belač.

8 From the local leaflet from 2010. These stories are different from year to year and are published on web pages: http://www.gradovikraljamatjaza.com.
Creating the castles of King Matthias feels close to the local population, since the Matthias tradition is something they became acquainted with already in the kindergarten and in primary school. The educational system includes the Matthias tradition in the field of culture. Annual art and literary competitions for the best painting and essay about King Matthias play an important role and add to this tradition. The organizers and active participants also have an important role in maintaining the tradition.

The event brings the locals and people from near and far closer, and acquaints them with the tradition of King Matthias and the cultural heritage of this area; it is also bringing the past to the present. Events related to King Matthias contribute to the quality of life of the people who live here, add to the enrichment of the cultural landscape and also contribute to the social life of the Slovenian population living near and far. The role of creating the castles of King Matthias, together with the events and memorials associated with this tradition, enrich the cultural and tourist offer in this part of Slovenia. Their importance is also connected with the revival of areas that are often far away from other cultural and economic centres.

There are other attractions in the area around Črna: Potočka Zijalka, Črno Jezerce (Black Lake), Olševo, and the Najevnik linden tree (Najevska lipa) that grows on the way to the Mt. Uršlja Gora, where meetings among statesmen are arranged under this tree. There is also St. Anne’s church on the border with Austria, with the famous statue of black Madonna. Guided cycling tours are organized through the tunnels of the...
abandoned mines, which are named “With Bicycles through the Underground”; King Matthias marathon and mountain biking *Divja jaga* (wild chase); story-telling about a mine dwarf in Črna and the *Štalekarjev skok* (Štalekar’s Jump). This is the event named after Count Štalekar who jumped by the horse to the other bank of the Mežica river. In the neighbouring Carinthia, you can also see the stone “Matthias Table” in Homec/Homitz in Rož near the Church of St. Mary, situated precisely on the hill, or a sort of mound, in which according to some stories King Matthias resides (Šmitek, 2012: 225).

However, within all these events and memorials, The Castles of King Matthias play the central role in the lives of locals, as well as in the recognition of this area within the wider cultural setting.

Since Carinthia is not near any major centres of Slovenia and has poor infrastructure it is even more important to use its tradition with the purpose of increasing its cultural identity, tourist offer and to improve the quality of the lives of the people living here. The King Matthias Castles has been enriching the lives of local people both on the cultural as well as social level.

**NARRATIVE TRADITION AND THE POLITICS OF PRESERVATION, PROMOTION AND UTILIZATION OF FOLK HERITAGE**

It is true that heritage is a problematic concept due to the wrong usage or even misuse both in public rhetoric and in academic discourses, and that it is burdened with too many theoretically conflicting interpretations. Exploitation and enhancement of cultural heritage is an ungrateful and dangerous doing because of the unbearable weight of history that hangs over this heritage. It is imbedded in the reproduction of those elements of culture that our ancestors inherited from their predecessors that, despite constant social, economic and political transformations, managed to survive from antiquity to the present day. Manipulating it is always an expression of the relationship of power between those individuals or social groups who have the power of its interpretation, the qualitative evaluation and appropriation, as well as of those who create and (re)shape it (Juvančič, 2005: 88). However, recent research by ethnologists, which takes into account the role of folklore in a broader cultural context, reveals that folklore is often crucial for the creation of local and other identities; it helps people to connect as a group, and in the times of crisis helps them to survive (Mathisen, 1993: 35-46).

The cultural and spiritual heritage of European nations and regions is diverse and today mostly kept alive by individuals or groups in their local environment, or by professional or semi-professional re-creators and artists. Often it is a subject of promotional activities and national trends. Numerous instances of folklore and cultural heritage are closely connected with the media and experience the so-called media existence and a consumer “revival”, as Maja Povrzanović (1988) has described this phenomenon.

Ethnographical heritage is often presented as tourist ware or tourist goods, or folklorisms, which can be very risky since it is very easy to slide to the level of worthless trash or cheap nostalgic romanticism. Good examples of this are certain Slovenian mass tourist events which tend to be based on quickly-made, uncritical programmes with the sole aim to please the tourist industry and create commercially “attractive”
events. Attempts to promote Slovenia by taking traditional carnival masks, such as the kurenti, originally from the north-eastern part of Slovenia, abroad, to the World Cup skiing championship or the Olympic Games, or even to Portorož during the summertime, certainly belong to this category. Slovene traditions, abused in this manner in order to propagate, represent and promote Slovenia, usually create a false image of Slovene heritage.

Such tourist and promotional activities lack professional judgment as well as strategic planning with clearly defined models. According to Janez Bogataj, living with our cultural heritage, and its significance for today as well as tomorrow, can be perceived on three levels: continuity, identity, and challenge (Bogataj, 1992). Heritage needs to be understood from the point of view of a definite historic period, and we also have to keep in mind that heritage changes constantly. Its place in the modern world has to be found, otherwise we will repeat stereotype models connected with the past, fall into the trap of false romanticism, or uncritically adopt the so-called populist polka-song syndrome. Living with heritage should not be done on a superficial level but should reveal historically verified models. Contemporary practices and solutions should be patterned after different heritage models, and positive efforts of the population or individuals should be supported. It is often enthusiastic individuals in different environments who try to preserve this heritage. How can we stimulate individuals, re-creators, and also organizers if their efforts have not been upgraded? By conveying high-quality material to the media and the public, by supplying expert advice and, when necessary, by taking part in designing programmes and folklore events, professional institutions could act as necessary support.

It is necessary to elaborate on the related methodology designed on recent and substantiated theoretical and practical research, and on this basis present a more suitable programme for the understanding, recognition and protection of spiritual heritage. But heritage presentation is the area in which keeping within professional boundaries often yields decidedly bad, or at least biased, results. The disciplines that come into contact with folk heritage should strive to find a common ground and start to cooperate in order to be able to properly direct cultural politics. Ethnologists, sociologists, cultural and tourist workers, editors of radio and television programmes, and

9 Contemporary criteria for identifying good (and bad) practices in the preservation, promotion and utilisation of folk culture heritage persist on the following:
1. Ethnographic criterion: The aim is to focus on phenomena characteristic for a locality/ region that belong to the cultural image of the place. These can be living phenomena (with a long tradition) or extinct phenomena that reappear in a new form as part of local tradition.
2. Environmental criterion: Is the studied phenomenon in harmony with the characteristic environmental features (including historic structure of settlements and countryside) – does it lead to the positive development or the destruction of the region/ locality and its environment?
3. Cultural-historic criterion: does the studied phenomenon follow historic aspects of culture? (1. traditional phenomena existing in several generations, 2. newly introduced phenomena based on tradition which can become an impulse for a new tradition such as, for instance a culinary festival based on traditional meal preparation; 3. phenomena that are traditional in other regions or cultures, but do not have any historic roots in the given locality (bad practice).
4. Aesthetic criterion: aesthetic function has to be studied in line with aesthetic criteria of the society and the period when the phenomenon was established/ created. Partners should collect and describe also practices that are aesthetically badly managed (promoting local traditions but presenting aesthetically unacceptable products - kitsch).
5. Ethical criterion: good practices have to respect human rights, animal rights, dignity, morals, hygiene etc.
6. Psychological criterion: studied phenomena should be part of local, regional or national identity, they should not go against local consciousness or awareness.
numerous other experts can, through their work, enlighten, stimulate and revive the forgotten traditional culture.

Ullrich Kockel claims that the reflexive tradition, understood as a process, is potentially a progressive force, and that for most regions across Europe local culture and identity have been exploited to provide foundations for social and economic growth, and promoting local and regional ‘heritage’ as a resource, especially for tourism (Kockel, 2007: 19). Though this is often the case and cultural heritage was often misused, the difference between heritage and tradition does not diminish the potential which narrative culture could have even though it would be used as part of the intangible heritage. Elizabeth Goodman has discovered that the use of oral narrative performance has enormous potential for tourist tours as a way to help visitors imagine, for example, past lives and events in a particular location (Goodman, 2007). The so called “sites of memory” attract peoples’ attention and can be easily remembered, at the same time they also contribute to the visitor’s experience of the place (Nora, 1989). As Mikhail Bakhtin introduced a theory of “chronotope” (timespace), Tara Chittenden developed his idea further and applied it to the sightseeing tours which include storytelling. She concluded that “temporal-spatial” narratives produce a symbolic landscape through a web of ideological and spatial relationships, and facilitate the rethinking of tourist experience (Chittenden, 2011: 180).

It may be said that in Europe folktales have mainly lost their primary function and are kept alive artificially. This, of course, is a long process that has been taking place since the period of Enlightenment, but has undergone swift and thorough changes in the last decades. Folktales of today have been incorporated in heritage tourism and displayed to the local population, tourists, visitors, and the general public. Among such folktale events the Castles of King Matthias are among the most prominent in Slovenia. This may not be a very authentic way of preserving our tradition but it has a great impact on the collective memory and collective identity in this region. Transmitted and preserved narrative tradition often plays a crucial role in everyday cultural values (Bacchilega, 2007: 167).

In the case of the Castles of King Matthias and other events of folklorisms of the same kind (Liszka, 2013) we are dealing with the constructed new cultural production – the narrative has turned into performance including game and story but the event still preserves a strong link with the land and the persistent national worldview. It contributes to the development of local and regional identity; improvement of local entrepreneurial activities; and improvement of general knowledge of folk culture heritage. This event also increases the interest of younger generations in folk culture. It is this still-living heritage that helps in preserving specific elements of our daily lives and culture that constitute local identity and diversity.

**CONCLUSION**

Building the castles of King Matthias is a tourist and cultural event that preserves the memory of a once rich oral tradition and heritage of the Slovenian people, which was especially alive in Carinthia due to the political and historical factors. If we keep in mind that the traditional folk narrative only rarely appears in its original form in present-day Europe, and knowing that the narrative heritage has been maintained either with the help of professional or amateur storytellers performing at certain
events, and also with the help of literature and other media, we can no longer, or very rarely, identify traditional European narratives in their prime form as a part of the collective narrative or collective heritage of a certain region.

Considering the fact that Ivan Grafenauer in 1951 conceived his study about King Matthias on 45 Slovenian narratives about King Matthias which he collected from different sources and literature, and that seven years later Milko Matičetov succeeded in collecting as many as 85 folktales mainly during his field research in the Slovenian ethnical territory, and with the help of other collectors of that time. But already a few decades later in the book series Glasovi [Voices], which Marija Stanonik started to publish in 1988 and which brings folktales from different Slovenian regions10, only in two of these books folktales about King Matthias have been traced – three from Loško Pogorje in Upper Carniola [Gorenjska]11 and one from Prekmurje12 on the border with Hungary. It is surprising that even the collections from Carinthia (Austrian and Slovenian) did not include narratives about King Matthias.

This fact clearly proves that without the support of such events as the Castles of King Matthias or other of this kind, preservation of narrative heritage in this region seems to be impossible. At the same time this event can stimulate folk storytelling about King Matthias and other narrative traditions from this region by narrators or recreators, as an accompanying performance or practice.

The Castles of King Matthias is an event with which the local population thoroughly identifies. The tradition is successfully transmitted also to younger generations, and with the help of educational and cultural or social activities establishes the link to folk narratives.

Over the last few decades the narrative culture in all societies has undergone a remarkable change. But as folklore tradition it has direct links with cultural identity and social coherence of the community (Honko, 2013: 34). Today the circulation of people and cultural goods is so rapid that heritage is soon transformed into nostalgic fantasy. Industry reproduces it into touristic attractions and politics projects it on the fields where it wishes to govern. But contrary to heritage, tradition lives on through constant changes, and narrative culture can be manifested today in different forms, not only as narrative performance. We have to face this fact and also accept other social communications in the processes of narrative transformations.

REFERENCES


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10 Each year at least one or two new books appear, and at present there are already 42 books from almost all Slovenian districts.

11 Janez Dolenc, Kres na Grebljici. Povedke iz Loškega pogorja (Glasovi 22). Ljubljana: Kmečki glas, 2000: p. 82, no. 228, 229, 232: Kralj Matjaž. The stories speak about King Matthias who was fighting with God, and saved himself and his army by hiding under a mountain in Carinthia.


Ortutay, G., 1942: König Mathias in der mund-
lichen Überlieferung der Donauvölker. Ungarn 3 (April), 221-230.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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The layer of lament songs plays an important role in the repertoire of Slovak Roma. Either they are songs of the old layer phurikane giľa or in the new layer neve giľa. Laments songs were called by interpreters also čorikane giľa (poverty songs) or žalosno giľa (lament songs). Their singing has often been connected with memories of sad or tragic events in the life of a singer and both singers and listeners experienced strong emotions during their performance. Singing, often connected with crying, used to release sadness, tension, sometimes helped to express things which were hard to say. In the field research we find only a few such songs. Usually they are sung by older people, because the younger generation cannot fully identify with them.

Their function is taken over by a part of the new layer of songs called neve giľa, which Roma usually entitle sladakos (sweet songs). Many are about love, but the lyrics of some sweet songs – sladakos remind us of čorikane giľa. We find in them eternal themes, such as sickness, death, abandoned children, hunger, poverty, imprisonment and unhappy love. Singers use exclamations, they address God, mother and thus they look for an answer to their bad luck. From a musical point of view these songs are totally different. Melodies are inspired by pop music of various genres and so also a young generation of Roman can identify with this layer of songs.

One of the aims of this contribution is to show in lyrics samples the most frequent themes of lament songs and how they are transformed from older into newer song layers and how they reflect the life of Roma in a poetical way. The cathartic function is in many cases preserved, but as models of behaviour are being gradually changed, also the expression of emotions during singing of these songs is more restrained. Lament songs in Roma ethnic do not need a special occasion. They reflect a momentary mood of a singer and thus they can be sung whenever; at a funeral, a wedding, at a dancing party and also during a week day. They help Roma cope with a hard life.

*Key words:* Roma, lament songs, themes of songs, song repertoire, functions of songs
Cigán, ktorý neplakal, nie je Cigán.
Nie je z cigánskeho rodu.
Nepozná slzy, čo nepripustia nádej, dych k telu.
Nepozná naše slzy, vyplakané, márne.

*Katarína Patočková: Som Cigánka*

A Gypsy, who did not cry, is not a Gypsy.
He is not of the Gypsy kin,
He does not know tears which does not admit hope, a breath to a body,
He does not know our tears, wept out, in vain.

*Katarína Patočková: I am a Gypsy*

Slow sad songs have their fixed place in the repertoire of Slovak Roma. In the past lament songs had been formed into a fixed and relatively easily identifiable musical and lyrical form. These songs of the old layer *phurikane gila* (ancient songs), were called *čorikane gila* (poverty songs), or *žalosno gila* (lament songs). In slow-pace songs of the old layer an irregular parlando rhythm stands out. For a performance there is characteristic difficult phrasing, acceleration, deceleration, inaccurate intonation, melodical ornamentation of tones, glissandos. One often uses in songs interjections and exclamations: *jaj*, *hej*, *de*, *di*, *Devla* [God], *mamo* [mother]. Songs in the traditional rendering were sung without musical accompaniment and singers improvised a lot (Belišová, 2012: 69). The lyrics of these songs reflect the reality, in which Roma live, in apotical way and often their singing used to be connected with particular memories of sad or tragic events in the life of a singer. A singer either projected his/her own story into an existing song or s/he adjusted the lyrics of a song to his/her situations and memories. S/he helped herself/himself with travelling stanzas, fixed images. Singing connected with reminiscences helped to release sadness and sorrow. At present this function is taken over by a part of songs from a new and transitional layer. From a musical point of view they are *neohalgató* (songs of transitional layer used for listening) or *slaďakos* (songs of the new layer *neve gila*). *Neohalgató* are based on *čorikane gila* of the old layer due to their rendering, a slow gliding rhythm, melodical ornaments and use of interjections and they are the less numerous group of songs in the song repertoire of Roma. Usually they are sung in a polyphonic way and their rhythm can be divided into bars. Most frequently they are created as a reaction to a particular event which has its personal observers. *Sladakos* belong to songs of the new layer. From a musical point of view they are inspired by pop songs of various genres (Belišová, 2012: 78, 81).

However, we can find parallels not only in the function of lament songs of the particular layers but also in their lyrics. My work with lyrics of Roma songs is determined by the fact that Roma language is not my mother tongue. Although I can understand it a little and thanks to the help of obliging Roma and the dictionary of their language I can use more or less literal translations of lyrics of Roma songs, my understanding of these texts cannot be, in details and slight semantic nuances, as perfect as for someone who speaks the Roma language since his/her childhood. Perfect understanding of language cannot be compressed into any dictionary or translation of particular words. Each language has apart from a different appellation of things, actions, states of things,
feelings, also its own logic of understanding of various phenomena, its own way how to use words for describing of any reality. One word in Roma can have many meanings. One has to learn at least a little bit to understand and “feel” in a Roma way so that one can understand not only a word as such, but also in the context of a sentence and of a larger textual unit. Language is allegedly more than sounds and words – it is a key and bridge into the world. We look at the world with the help of a language through a special prism in a quite unique way. Each language creates a specific vision of reality; at the same time it represents a common memory of a certain ethnic. Particular images of reality construed by various languages differ from each other (Steensen, 1998: 18 and Budil, 1992:105 cited in Šatava, 2009: 65).

We can divide Roma in Slovakia into two basic groups: ancient Roma settlers and Olachian Roma. Some authors mention also countless groups of Boyashes in the vicinity of Prešov and Levice2 and the group of Sints. Ancient Roma settlers can be further divided, according to linguistic environment in which they live, into Slovak and Hungarian Roma (living especially in the south of Slovakia) which is expressed in the influence of these languages on the Roma language. The song material which serves as the basis for this contribution comes from Slovak Roma from field research in the years 1988 – 2013.

It is not typical for a spontaneous nature of Roma to prepare in advance for singing and to think over what they will sing about. A male or female singer gets into a certain mood and their words flow as if by themselves. Then it can happen that an interpreter joins together illogical and unrelated lines or stanzas. However, this is not important. What are important are the mood of a singer and the mood which s/he can communicate to others. We can find this way of interpretation also in Hindu poetics in which there is a special term for it – *ras*, which means juice. It is a certain emotional solution in which various, on the first sight dissimilar, things can float, but which must be in tune with the “chemical substance” of this *ras*. Neither Indian nor Roma poetics requires a strict logical and content unity of particular lines. The emotional homogeneity of *ras* is important (Hübschmannová, 1998: 11-12).

Lament songs fulfil an important role in their environment. The life of any man has in itself a dimension of pain and suffering. There is even more poverty and suffering in the life of Roma and through singing of sad songs this personal pain can be melted into a general suffering that has also afflicted others. Singing of these songs has a cathartic and psychotherapeutic function. I have observed more emotional expression during the singing of *phurikane giľa* and *neohalgató*. They were sung mostly by old women who, often due to a great emotional stress could not sing more than two or three songs at a time. The young generation cannot so readily identify with *phurikane giľa*, they express their sadness and sorrow through a new layer of songs as far as musical character is concerned, entitled *neve giľa*. However, they are in their lyrics very close to *phurikane giľa*. I will try to show the most frequent themes in the lyric samples of the songs of old, transitional and new layer and to compare their presence in the particular layers.

The lyrics of these songs represent a reflection of life and living conditions of Roma. A striking theme in all layers is *misery and poverty*. Poverty and suffering accompanied Roma in the past, whether we mention pogroms on Roma in the 16th – 17th centuries in the western and in part of central Europe (Horváthová, 1964: 51-55; Liégeois, 1995:

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2 For the first time they are mentioned in Slovakia by Katalin Kovalcsik (1996) and later also by Attila Agócs (2008).
All photos in this article and on the cover are from the archive of the Civic Association Žudro
violent attempts of Maria Theresa to assimilate them (Fonsecová, 1998: 195), slavery of Roma in Romania which was abolished as late as in 1856 (Hancock, 2001: 47) and finally forced labour camps and holocaust during World War II. Even the Velvet Revolution in 1989 which brought the majority population democracy and freedom, brought most of Roma gradual social decline. They lost jobs provided for them by the socialist system. In segregated Roma settlements we can see generational poverty, which means the poverty of at least two consequent generations which can be solved with much more difficulty than the situational poverty caused by some unexpected tragedy. Generational poverty has its own culture, unwritten rules and system of values. In the generational poverty an individual holds an opinion that the society, he lives in, is responsible for his situation from which he expects to find a solution (Payne, DeVol, Smith, 2010: 55). In the context of demographic characteristics and institutional structure we can speak in connection with Roma about a culture of poverty. The subculture of poverty can be characterised by minimal earnings or social benefits, by a lack of professional qualification, by bad health condition, by suffering from usury and indebtedness. Externally it can be observed in creating relatively isolated rural or urban ghettos (housing projects in concrete blocks of flats), in alcoholism and other addictions, in physical violence as well as in the so-called mother households where a father is absent for a longer time or where several men take turns in the role of a father (Dubayová, 2001: 118).

Poverty is a source of further unhappiness, illnesses, premature death, hunger, loneliness, bad relationships in the family, of refusal, and of physical violence. These themes and motifs can be often found in Roma songs of the old and new layers. In some songs several motifs are accumulated.

\[ \begin{align*}
\text{Joj}, & \text{ čori som, čori som,} \\
& \text{čori man vičinen.} \\
\text{Joj}, & \text{ mekh oda čoripen,} \\
& \text{kas daj the dad nane.} \\
\text{Kana maro čhinav,} & \\
& \text{banges pre ma dikhes.} \\
\text{Hej, de} & \text{ ma dikh pre ma banges,} \\
& \text{bo me les na čhinav.} \\
\text{A me rovav la bidate,} & \\
& \text{kaj man ňiko na kamel.} \\
\text{A me mange khere gefom,} & \\
& \text{tejle mange me bešlom.} \\
\text{Miri romňi phenla, so tute?} & \\
\text{Amen rovas, Devla, žaľate.} \\
\text{Le Devles me mangav,} & \\
& \text{kaj phares me dživav.} \\
\text{So džanav te kerel?}
\end{align*} \]

\[ \begin{align*}
& \text{[Wretched am I, wretched am I,} \\
& \text{wretched I am called.} \\
& \text{Even more wretched are you,} \\
& \text{when you have no mother or father.} \\
& \text{When I cut bread,} \\
& \text{you look at me crossly.} \\
& \text{Hey, don’t look at me crossly,} \\
& \text{‘cause I’ll not slice off a piece.]}
\end{align*} \]

\[ \begin{align*}
\text{phurikane gila, Alžbeta Žigová, Varhaňovce, county Prešov, 2001} \\
\text{A me rovav la bidate,} \\
& \text{kaj man ňiko na kamel.} \\
\text{A me mange khere gefom,} \\
& \text{tejle mange me bešlom.} \\
\text{Miri romňi phenla, so tute?} \\
\text{Amen rovas, Devla, žaľate.} \\
\text{Le Devles me mangav,} \\
& \text{kaj phares me dživav.} \\
\text{So džanav te kerel?} \\
& \text{[I cry from poverty,} \\
& \text{that nobody wants me.} \\
& \text{And I went home,} \\
& \text{I sat down over there.} \\
& \text{My wife asked me, “What’s wrong with you?”} \\
& \text{We cry, oh God, from sorrow.} \\
& \text{to God I pray,} \\
& \text{how badly I live.} \\
& \text{What should I do?]}
\end{align*} \]

\[ \begin{align*}
\text{neve gila, Jana Gáborová, Vecheč, county Vranov nad Topľou, 2009} \\
\text{A me rovav la bidate,} \\
& \text{kaj man ňiko na kamel.} \\
\text{A me mange khere gefom,} \\
& \text{tejle mange me bešlom.} \\
\text{Miri romňi phenla, so tute?} \\
\text{Amen rovas, Devla, žaľate.} \\
\text{Le Devles me mangav,} \\
& \text{kaj phares me dživav.} \\
\text{So džanav te kerel?} \\
& \text{[I cry from poverty,} \\
& \text{that nobody wants me.} \\
& \text{And I went home,} \\
& \text{I sat down over there.} \\
& \text{My wife asked me, “What’s wrong with you?”} \\
& \text{We cry, oh God, from sorrow.} \\
& \text{to God I pray,} \\
& \text{how badly I live.} \\
& \text{What should I do?]}
\end{align*} \]
Lyrics of some songs literally describe the generational hereditary poverty. Poverty is the only heritage which parents give over to their children.

Mamo miri, mamo miri, mukhľal mange o čoripen. O čoripen, o pharipen, andre miro kako jilo.  

[Mother mine, mother mine, you left poverty to me. Poverty and misery in my black heart.]

phurikane giľa, Rudňany, county Spišská Nová Ves 2001

The heritage of poverty is carried already by young children who are forced to go begging.

Cikne čhave, bare čhave palo svetos phiren, le gadžendar šuko maro mangen. Devloro, spomožin amenge, ó je, amenge, savore Romenge.  

[Small kids, big kids, walk in the world, they beg dry bread from white men. God, help us, oh yeah, us, all the Roma.]

neve giľa, Petrovany, county Prešov, 2009

The lyrics of further songs carry in themselves a certain measure of self-reflection and scrutiny of why poverty afflicts especially Roma. It is possible that elements of self-reflection got into songs with the help of Christian missions which are active more intensively among Slovak Roma for at least the last ten years. It is suggested also by intensive addressing of God in a song, a singer addresses God, s/he looks for the cause of poverty in Roma themselves but at the same time s/he expects help and support from God.

Di so amenca, Devla, so amenca hin, di save Roma na lačhe sam, le Devlestar sam. Sako džanel mište, so dživipen hi, so amenca, Devla, so amenca hi.  

[What is happening to us? Oh God, what is happening to us? We, Roma, are not good, we’re from God. Everybody knows well how badly a man lives. What is happening to us? Oh God, what is happening to us?] 

neve giľa, Vikartovce, county Poprad, 2009

We can find in the old layer several songs with the theme of journey and poverty. However, this journey can sound more as an escape from poverty but without a clear destination which could change this poverty.

Ole čore Roma pal o svetos phiren. Pal o svetos phiren, phari voďi cirden.  

[The poor Romanies wander around the world. They wander around the world dragging heavy souls with them.]

A similar atmosphere of hopeless pilgrimage is expressed also by a song of the new layer. In this song, similarly as in *phurikane giľa*, there are used interjections and exclamations *joj, Romale*.

Andro svetos mange džava, *joj,*
odoj le čhavenc, *Romale.*
Bares me phirav, čores me dživav,
te merel me, čoro, na kamav.

[I go into the world, *oh my,*
with kids, folks.
I walk a lot, I live poorly,
I don’t want to die, me a poor man.]

neve giľa, Červenica, county Prešov, 2009

I expect with the new layer of songs with the motif of a journey that some of them reflect the migration of Roma to find jobs in England and other countries. In that case travelling is usually a solution of poverty even if a temporary one. In some cases families must be divided, for example a man travels away and a woman with children stays at home. Sometimes even children are divided. Many Roma from the county Spišská Nová Ves migrated to find work to the English city Sheffield. These families or their parts do not leave for good but only for several months. After some time they alternate with other members of their community, especially with their relatives. They have already a background in Sheffield, employment agents, jobs in factories which are not attractive for the local population, for example the work in ice-houses etc. Families are alternated in their jobs, and apartments. Believers from a religious community Maranata also created their own religious community there, and have their Roma pastor. The following song is very popular in this period in the Spiš region. It is a song of a lonely man who went abroad to earn money for his family but he is not successful, and he does not even have money to come back home. In the 3rd and 4th stanzas one sings *te pijel me kamav la romňaha le čhavorenca*, which would literally mean *I want to drink with my wife and children*. However, in the transferred sense it means that he wants to sit with his own family and to enjoy good times with them. The collocation *to sit at the table* usually expresses relaxing at home. Although the song has a regular rhythm, its rendering is very emotional and reminds one of *čorikane giľa*. The song is divided into bars, pairs and foursomes of bars create closed musical phrases, melodies of particular phrases

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4 The variant of the last stanza can be found in the Slovak folk song *Kačička divoká, zletela zvysoka* [*A wild duck flew down from a height*]. This song belongs among popular songs in Slovakia. See Galko, Ladislav (Ed.). *Slovenské spevy* [Slovak songs, Volume II] zväzok II, 1973, Bratislava: Opus, č. 484. For another see: Galko(Ed.), *Slovenské spevy*, zv. VII, *Slovak songs, Volume VII* 1989, p. 312. In the Slovak song small children who eat sand, are the children of the killed duck. In the case of the Roma song this stanza is almost literally borrowed, translated into Slovak language, but inserted into a different context.

1. A wild duck, flew down from a height, good shooter shot into its side.
2. He shot her wing and right leg, she wept bitterly, she sat down on water, on water.
4. My small children sit on the stone, drinking turbid water, eating fine sand.

5 Podolinská, Hrustič 2010: 42; information from my research in the village Bystrany 2013.
Rakúsy. Photo: Jana Belišová

Zborov, Vatrisko. Photo: Jana Belišová
have a curved character and are terminated with a long tone. Singers usually prolong this final tone, by which they violate the regular rhythm of the song; it thus gets a partially parlando character, which evokes the old layer of songs.

Rovav la žaľate, 
kaj man andro svetros tu mukhfal. 
Te pijel me kamav 
la romľaha le čhavorenca. 
Khere kamav te džal, 
lovore man nane, 
o o Roma man maren vaš lake. 

[I cry from sorrow, 
that you let me go into the world. 
I want to sit 
with the wife and kids. 
I want to come back home, 
but I don’t have money. 
Roma will beat me for her.]

neve giľa, Markušovce, county Spišská Nová Ves, 2009

Poverty is closely connected with care about children. Families are usually numerous and very proud of children. The education of a child is a team responsibility, it is provided by a wider family. A child lives with three of four generations of adults and the world of a child permeates with that of adults. The status of a woman in a community is increasing with the number of children born. However, families mostly do not plan how to earn a living for this large family. They start to feel fear and problems when there is not enough food, money, or when one of the important adults leaves, gets ill or dies. These motifs can be found equally in the songs of the old and the new layer.

Ola mire čhave 
maro mandar mangen. 
Katar lenge lava, 
te man love nane. 
Oda lenge phenďom, 
tajsa love chuda, 
maro lenge cinav. 

[Those children of mine are asking for bread from me. 
Where will I get it from when no money I have? 
So I said to them, tomorrow I’ll get money, I’ll buy bread for them.]

phurikane giľa, Markušovce, county Spišská Nová Ves, 2001

Šun tu, Bože, šun, so me te kerav. 
Nasvalo me som, te merel me džav. 
Te me merava, le čhaven mukhav, 
joj, Devla, spomožin. 
Ma roven tumen pal mande. 

[Listen, oh God, listen, what should I do? 
I am sick, I am going to die. 
When I die, I will leave the kids, oh my, oh God, help us. 
Don’t cry for me.]

neve giľa, Markušovce, county Spišská Nová Ves, 2009

In the songs of the new layer there often appears a motif of a sick child, it isn’t rare that a child stays in hospital. Its parents are desperate because they do not have money for a doctor, for the transport into the hospital, they cannot bear to look at the suffering of their child. It is interesting that in lament songs of the old layer one does not sing very often about sick children and children in hospital. The stay in hospital in the past was rather exceptional; it enters these songs along with better access of Roma to health services. These songs reflect desperation and hopelessness of parents.
Katar lovore me lav
vaš mri čhaj nasvaľi?
Šun, mamo, šun miri,
de amen lovore,
hoj la sikh me te říďžav
androdi špitaľa.

neve giľa, Vítaz Dolina, county Prešov, 2009

Ke špitaľa me džav,
pro vastora la říďžav.
Romale, na džanav, kaj te džal,
na kamav, hoj te merel miri čhajori.

neve giľa, Petrová, county Bardejov, 2009

Although another song belongs from a musical point of view to the old layer, it contains a contemporary motif. *Children’s allowances* are sung about in it. The song with its otherwise archaic techniques becomes generally valid. It is flexibly adjusted to the contemporary period with its cultural facts and terminology. The songs of Roma are typified by this flexibility and ability through old forms to communicate and express new reality. With all likelihood the man and bread-winner for the family worries that he will not get children’s allowance if he does not work. In this song there is enciphered also the problem of unemployment. It is interesting that it does not say that if he does not work he will not get his wage but children’s allowances. So it is not quite clear what kind of situation he tries to solve or if he used the correct terminology. However, there is a clear existential fear to sustain one's family, most apparent in the whole song and so it contradicts the stereotypical opinion that Roma are the people of the present and do not think about the future.

*Di* te me buči na keraha,
di o pridavki na chudaha.
*Jaj, di* tu so chaňa *di* mire čhave,
jaj, *de* te me buči na keraha.

*phurikane giľa*, Rudolf Husár, Abranovce, county Prešov, 1988

A similar motif can be found in the song of the new layer in the same location seven years later. The song was sung by the sister of Rudolf Husár, Erika Šarišská, who in the period of recording this song (1995) was composing her own authorial songs. It is possible that in this case she was inspired by an old song.

Buči me na kerav, love na chudav,
love man nane mire čhavenca.
O Devloro dela, man love na dela,
o saššipen amen ov dela.

*neve giľa*, Erika Husárová – Šarišská, Abranovce, county Prešov, 1995
In the more positive cases children can become a reason of forgiving and reconciliation between arguing partners.

Phučav man tuke mangel, phučav me mangel, so me kerdžom. De ma dikh man, ale dikh le čhaven, bo o čhave amaro dživipen.

[Please forgive me, please forgive me for my wrongdoing. Don’t look at me, rather think about our children, since children are our life.]

*phurikane giľa, Žehňa, county Prešov, 1988*

Family patterns in generational poverty are often confused and unclear. It emerges from these interviews that an ideal is a patriarchal model of the family which assigns decisions to a father and women should only take care of children and the household. Men sometimes justify it by positive reasons: “And man’s duty is to go to work and earn money. We don’t allow them to go to work because a woman is a gentle being... woman is something like a Virgin Mary. And on the other hand, a man is like a bulldozer” (Scheffel, 2009: 115). However, this ideal rarely becomes reality. When men do not get jobs, their position as bread-winners and defenders of the family is weakened. However, women retain their eternal commitment of mother and thus we meet strong women in settlements who are not subjected to their husbands and are a moving power in the family. Moreover, as mothers who bore children thanks to mother’s allowances they assume the husband’s role of bread-winner because money comes into the family thanks to children born to these mothers and that strengthens the position of these mothers even more. Some men take it very badly and they withdraw into a passive attitude, to alcohol and they release their frustration violently on their partners and children. Younger men slowly accept the changed situation and without problems join in with duties in the households and in the care of children (Scheffel, 2009: 116). Many married couples are created on the basis of common law without official or church legalization of the marriage and when among Roma there occurs a break up of a partner relationship, especially younger pairs leave each other and then live with other partners. Thus there arise complicated family constellations. The most difficult situation is with children. But also in these cases a mother remains the head of the family, even if she has experienced several partner relationships. If a family live in generational poverty, it is more than probable that *the mother is a crucial figure*. If a very young girl, who also does not have a stable partner relationship, becomes a mother, the care of her child is taken over by the young mother’s mother and the child becomes a sibling of this young mother (Mappes-Niediek, 2013: 63).

The thing which should have been disadvantage and humiliation proved to be her strength. It is a woman who will take care that even in times of the greatest misery they have something to put into a kettle and on the table because unlike a man, she is able in the extreme destitution to be humiliated, and go and beg wealthier Roma or non-Roma for money or food. A woman is always with children, they create a deep emotional relationship to her and she is able on the basis of her natural authority to influence the choice of life partners of her children. Men pompously claim to be respected but the real authority in the family is a woman. Similarly as she loves her children and sacrifices for them, also they pay her great respect. It is felt also in many songs which look like conversations with one’s mother. Singers address the mother with exclamations *oh, mum!*, or *mum, what should I do*, or just in the middle of a sentence they say *I love her, mum, very much*. The
following sample is an expression of feelings from some vague tragic event. The centre of this song is a weeping unhappy mummy who visited her daughter or son.

**Geľom pro nadraži,**
*de* mra užarel.
Mra užarel
hi bare jivenc.

Avel joj, avel joj
rozmukhle balenca.
Rozmukhle balenca
rovňake jakhenca.

**De kana maro čhinav,**
banges pre man dikhes, mamo.
Ma dikhes pre man banges,
bo me ňič na chaľom.

**De kana maro čhinav,**
banges pre man dikhes, mamo.
Ma dikhes pre man banges,
bo me ňič na chaľom.

*phuríkané gíla, Milan Míko and Martin Bíly, Petrová, county Bardejov, 2001*

If a son or a daughter does not obey mum, for example if he or she marries someone his/her mother has not approved of, there comes misery, bad luck and punishment from God. However, sometimes a temperamental mum takes justice into her hands. In the sample a son has not obeyed his mum and married an evil woman, adulteress, as she is called in the song. He swore to his wife that he would not drink spirits. Maybe due to a forced oath, one means a wedding oath, because she was pregnant and he was the father. In any case, his mum – *phuri daj*, did not leave his disobedience just like that.

**Sulachardžom la bara lubňake,**
sulachardžom, bo mušindžom,
že paľenka na pijavá.

**Avľas ke man mri phuri daj,**
Me la ilom, bo la da na šundžom.
Me la ilom, la da na šundžom.
**Di chuďas man a mardžas man.**

*phuríkané gíla, Žehňa, county Prešov, 1988*

It pays to listen to the advice of one’s mother, especially if she advises on her deathbed to marry such a man who will pay her respect. The word *paťiv* – means respect but also virginal honesty.

**Te miri daj merlas,**
mange nakazinlas,
*joj, de kajses romes te lav,*
*joj, de se man paťiv dela.*

*phuríkané gíla, Valéria Mišalková, Rakúsy, county Kežmarok, 2001*
Not even in another čorikane giľa song can lovers get rid of the feeling of mother's presence and they care very much about what mum thinks about their relationship.

Šuki prajta na čingeren,  
bo balval na phurdel.  
Di počoral pes kamas,  
la datar pes ladžas.  
Imar mri daj mange phendžal,  
hoj pes na rozdžava.

[Don’t pluck dry leaves,  
because the wind doesn’t blow.  
We secretly love each other.  
we are ashamed of mum.  
My mum already told me  
not to split.]

phurikane giľa, Marcela Dreveňáková, Bardejov Poštárka, 2002

Motherhood, children, family, they are the biggest values in Roma communities. However, attachment to particular members of a family or even to one’s own children can be in the culture of poverty changed and deformed. It is usual that a parent takes a liking to one child more than other children (Mappes-Niediek, 2013: 64) and s/he can even refuse some children. Why doesn’t a mum cuddle her child? A lack of motherly love is in a Roma family very untypical. There are more songs with a motif of an unloved child in the repertoire of lament songs.

Joj, mamo miri, mamo, či  
me na som tiri,  
joj, de hoj man na ťikeres  
joj, jekh orica pal tut.

[Alas, mother, my mother,  
don’t I belong to you?  
Alas, that you don’t cuddle me  
at least for an hour.]

phurikane giľa, Ilona Mačová, Žehňa, county Prešov, 1988

A similar motif but in the relationship towards a son, can be found among the songs neve giľa.

Čoro som, e daj man na kamel,  
le čhaven joj avri čhivkerel.  
Šun, mamo man, ma bister pre ma,  
hoj me som tiro čhavoro.

[I am poor, mum doesn’t want me,  
she throws the kids out.  
Listen to me, mum, don’t forget about me,  
because I am your son.]

neve giľa, Petrovany, county Prešov, 2009

It is not rare that also an opposite process of alienation occurs. Children will not take care of their old and sick mother.

Čhavale mirale,  
bari nasvaňi som,  
uchanen mro šero  
bo me na birinav.

[My dear children,  
I’m very sick.  
Comb ye my hair  
‘cause I have no strength.]

Jaj, on mange phende,  
že len nane časos.  
A mange sas časos  
pandžen te baravel.

[They have told me  
that no time do they have.  
But I had more time  
to raise five kids.]

phurikane giľa, Božena Gunárová, Klenová, county Snina, 2002
Even if solidarity and mutual help in widened Roma families is generally kept as a rule, in the following song it is different. The point is that one brother wants to borrow (possibly money) from another brother but faces the unwillingness of his brother. He claims he has no money although probably all the people know he has a lot.

*Mangav kečen le phralestar,*

*jaj ov phenel, že les nane.*

*De tu ma phen, hoj tut nane,*

*hoj but Roma te našunen.*

*Hoj but Roma le gavendar,*

*joj, bariláď mange keres*

[I’m asking my brother for a loan, 
oh, he’s saying he has nothing.

Don’t you say that you don’t have 
so that many Romanies wouldn’t hear you.

Many Romanies from the villages, 
oh, you’re embarrassing me greatly.]

*phurikane giľa, Žehňa, county Prešov, 1988*

There is an interesting view of this song from the point of view of a traditional Roma custom not to thank and not to ask. According to Milena Hübschmannová, this custom may come from a traditional Indian culture, from the philosophy of *ahimsá* – non-violence. A man should protect life even in its most inconspicuous form, in the form of a fly or an ant. That is in normal life almost impossible. While manipulating with water, fire, when washing something, one inevitably destroys these fragments of life and thus according to ahimsa s/he prepares for himself/herself a bad karma. However, s/he can redress it by deliberately supporting life in a different way. For example, Indian women go early morning and water trees in a desert and feed wild peacocks. To treat a guest also belongs to a strengthening of life and therefore one does not thank for hospitality. On the contrary, a host thanks a guest that the latter helped him to create good karma. Hospitality, generosity belongs among traditional features of Roma communities along with the custom not to ask and thank. If I need something and ask for it, I make a miser of the man from whom I ask it. He can even be offended by it. In the original Roma language one even did not find an adequate expression for the word ‘borrow’. There is used either the expression taken over from Slovak – *požičinel*, or from Hungarian, *del kejčen, kečen* – literally to provide loan (Hübschmannová, 1993: 111 – 113).

A central theme of many songs *čorikane giľa*, lament songs on poverty, is *disease and death*. The way of life of Roma in settlements, connected with shortage and poverty, leads to a more frequent occurrence of serious illnesses. In general one smokes too much which causes a frequent presence of lung diseases – of pneumonia, tuberculosis, lung cancer. These diseases cause premature death of many Roma, especially among men.6 Another risk factor is excessive drinking and a bad way of living. Small children are usually inadequately dressed in winter, they sleep in the room where people smoke a lot, and their food does not contain an adequate amount of nutrients and vitamins. They are more frequently ill than non-Roma children. Their illnesses are most frequently diseases from cold – laryngitis, bronchitis, pneumonia, influenza diseases. In summer with inadequate hygiene in settlements without a high quality source of drinkable water and without a sewer system there occur easily spread infectious diseases, for example jaundice, dysentery.7 Women have many children, in hard conditions they have

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6 Research from 1988: testimony of a nurse from a lung clinic in the County Hospital in Prešov, who personally attended seriously ill patient Pavol Mača – Kočibal, “chairman”, “vajda” from Žehňa, county Prešov.

to take care of a large family, they are exhausted and more easily succumb to diseases. From my observations I can claim that an average age of Roma in settlements is lower than that of non-Roma. A sixty-year-old man is considered old. During research in 1988 the oldest woman in the Roma settlement Hurka in the village Žehňa was eighty years old, whereas non-Roma women usually lived until ninety years old. This observation was confirmed by people from the Roma and non-Roma part of the village.

It is natural when children bury their parents. When they are adult, they can cope with it. But the death of a young person is unexpected and thus more traumatic. In the song Andalečku nasvaľi som a girl speaks with Andal and asks for real help from a head doctor who would tell her what is her illness. She does not want any doctor but a head doctor. Doctors who had previously treated her maybe did not want to tell her the truth about her health condition and she had a premonition of the seriousness of her illness. She wants to hear what she can expect even if it is death. The song expresses fear and uncertainty from the unknown.

Andalečku, nasvaľi som, vičin ke man je dochtoris. Le dochtoris, le primaris, jaj, te phenlas, so man dukhal.

[My dear Andal, I’m sick, call a doctor for me. A doctor, an experienced doctor, alas, so that he tells me what’s hurting me.]

phurikane giľa, Milan Horváth, Tuhriná, county Prešov, 1994

Adi rat bari, me som nasvalo, phen lake, mamo, so me kerava. Me, mamo, tiro čhavoro, me, mamo, ajso nasvalo, me, mamo, terno čhavoro, te merav.

[The night is long and I am ill, tell her, my mum, what should I do? Mum, I am your boy, mum, I am so ill, Mum, I am a young boy, I am dying.]

neve giľa, Erika Husárová - Šarišská, Abranovce, county Prešov, 1995

In the song Dalke, dalke, mri dajori an ill woman in her hopelessness lays metaphysical hope into the fact that she is put into a big bed. As if the dimensions of a big bed could give her strength for her to be cured. She does not have that strength, anymore. She does not have power, she has so much of life, a little bit of life, and then she has to die.

Dalke, dalke, mri dajori, de thov man pro oda hadžos. De oda hadžos ajso baro, i hoj me sasťovav avri.

[Mommy, mommy, my dear mom, put me in my bed. The bed is so big, it will cure me.

Di se mar na birinav, i de o jilo man dukhav. Di kajci mange mro dživipen, jaj di te merel mušinav.

I can no more my heart is aching. This much life I have, I have to die.]

phurikane giľa, Erika Husárová - Šarišská, Abranovce, county Prešov, 1995
In the previous songs young people were dying and they left in this world his or her lover, mum or brother. In the song Ole mire duj čhavore a new element is added. A mother of small children has her own mother because she speaks with her. But she also has small children who pray to God to leave their mother for them. She is unhappy from the fact that after her death there will be children left unprovided for and she puts a question for which there is no answer: Mum, what should I do? It is a question of hopeless people, frequent in the songs čorikane giľa. It is a rhetorical question for which no one expects any answer.

Ole mire duj čhavore
avka roven, Devles pre man mangen.
Mamo miri, nasvaľi som,
terňi som, te merel mušinav.

Phendžas mange mri phuri daj,
so me čori, joj mamo, di kerav?
Mamo miri, nasvaľi som,
nasvaľi som, te merel mušinav.

In another song there is its tragic dimension unveiled step by step. At first we learn that in the hospital there are four lights shining. We expect that the song will speak about someone who is in that hospital. Soon we learn that in the place where the mother lies there is no light. Where is it? Is it one of the hospital rooms? In the room where mum lay there is no light because she already lies under the black soil in the cemetery where there is also not light and on her head there grows green grass. The switched off lamp belongs among the signs which foresee death of someone close (Horváthová, 1964: 341).

Andr’odi špitaľa
štár vilaňa labol.
Čak odoj na labol, joj,
kaj miri daj pašfol.

Pašfol joj mar pašfol,
de andre’odi kaľi phuv.
Death is usually represented as a *small black bird* who foretells death. In the past among Roma an idea was spread, that for a dying person comes someone from the deceased for a longer time. However, only the dying person can see this dead person. Therefore maybe the singing in their songs speak with such certainty that they must die. This person gives signs about the death, most frequently in the way that he changes into a small black bird – crow, swallow. If a small black bird knocks three times on a window, someone will die (Horváthová, 1964: 341). It is a frequent image in Roma folk culture, not only in songs but also in fairy tales. In the following song a small black bird came to ask for the heart and in another song it only sat down on a window from which a son or a daughter guessed what happened and went to say goodbye to their mum for the last time.

Oda kalo čirikloro  
mangel mandar mro jiloro.  
Diš mangel, mangel, sig te merav,  
ča le čhaven te na dikhav.  

[The small black bird  
is asking for my heart.  
Is asking, asking me to die sooner  
just not to see the children.]

Roma told me several time stories about a premonition of death. A certain woman from Bardejov said her father died. Although he was ill, nobody thought that death would come so soon. Perhaps except him alone. At least, his relatives interpret it in retrospect. In the last evening he asked his family to put him on a wheel-chair and they went with him to visit neighbours, relatives, acquaintances in order to say goodbye. So they went from house to house, everywhere they drank a little, people were singing his favourite songs and went with him further and were saying goodbye. Always more people joined him so gradually a crowd of singing people was created who accompanied him on his last journey around the settlement. His daughter recalls that during that evening he was quite calm and settled. As if he had no pain. When it all ended early in the morning, they put him to bed, where he slept from exhaustion not to wake up again.8

The death of a man is harder if he has children. He has to sustain the family and after his death his wife must take care of it. She wanders around the village and asks

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8 Research in Bardejov in 2011.
Lesiček. Photo: Jana Belišová

Vitkovce. Photo: Jana Belišová
for a piece of bread for the children. Always only women went begging. It would be under man’s dignity. Maybe he would rather die from hunger or he would go stealing with a risk of ending in prison. The motif of stealing because of children also often occurs in the lament songs of both layers.

Šunen man ade, šunen man Romale, me čoro som, te čorel mušinav. Aven ade Romale, šunen ade, so phendžom, te čorel gełom, le čhave čaľardžom. [Listen to me, listen to me, folks (Roma), I am poor, I must steal. Come here, folks, listen to me, to what I told you, I went to steal, I fed the kids.]

neve giľa, Erika Husárová – Šarišská, Abranovce, county Prešov, 1995

The death of one’s father is the topic of another song from the new layer neve giľa. The text points to a contemporary period because a daughter learns about the death of her father from a telephone call.

O dad mange muľa, me čori sľom. Savoro avľa igen sig. Ba o! Kana vičindžal, pro apsa mange džal. Andro jakha o dad hi, pro khoča tut mangav, le dadeske lačhi phuv, šukar čar kaj te barol. [My father died, I am a poor girl. Everything happened so quickly. When you called me, my tears were falling. I have my father in front of my eyes, I beg you on my knees, for some good soil for my father, nice grass to grow.]

neve giľa, Anna Oláhová, Detva, 2009

Relatives of the deceased person are in mourning for a year. In practice it means that they do not attend weddings, they do not sing. During my research I experienced more times that people refused to sing exactly because of the fact that somebody in their family had died. Women dress in black, especially when they go outside their settlement, into a village or town. Men’s attitude to sorrow is looser. They wear a black armband ribbon on a sleeve for one or two months (Mann, 1988: 199). At present these customs are retreating among young people. Wearing black dress after the death of some relative is widely spread also among non-Roma. But people do not like to wear “sorrow”, how it is popularly called, because the black colour permanently reminds them of what happened. It prevents them from forgetting. As C. S. Lewis writes: “Part of every misery is, so to speak, the misery’s shadow or reflection: the fact that you don’t merely suffer but have to keep on thinking about the fact that you suffer. I not only live each endless day in grief, but live each day thinking about living each day in grief.” (Lewis, web).

Parno me na urav, kalo me na kamav. [I don’t wear white, I don’t like black. But I have to wear it, ‘cause my mother’s dying.]

Jaj de mušinav te urel, jaj bo imar mri daj merel. phurikane giľa, Hermanovce, county Prešov, 2002
A black shirt is one of the symbols of death; it appears in several songs about death.

Mamo, te me merava,  
siven mange kalo gad.  
Kalo gad, kale čipkenca,  
kaj te phenel mire pheňenca.  

[Mum, when I die,  
sew me a black shirt.  
A black shirt with black laces,  
To tell my sisters.]

neve giľa, Muránska Dlhá Lúka, county Revúca 2009

In the past čorikane giľa probably had many stanzas, there was more improvising in the singing and the song was adjusted to a particular story. Slow-paced songs of Slovak Roma in the old layer have at present usually from one to four stanzas. The exception is represented by songs sung by older women from the village Svinia, county Prešov in 2001. These songs, the way of singing, improvising, exulted the state of female singers, that all resembled folk laments, which have been part of funeral rituals in Europe. According to Albert L. Lloyd, author of the entry Lament in Grove’s dictionary from 1980, in the area of Europe chants accompanying burial rituals are situated between lament and the funeral chant itself. The stages of lament include interjections, exclamations, addressing of the dead (Štefková, 2009: 64). Melodies of laments have a narrow ambitus and rhapsodic rubato-character which is not possible to fit in certain regular tact scheme. The melody is predominantly descending and from a tonal point of view it inclines toward a flat scale character. All phrases are closed with falls by a second with a repeated bottom tone whose most expressive form is the final cry. Laments are always unique expressions on the border between the speech and singing which include also elements of momentary inspiration (Štefková, 2009: 65). “The idea of lament as a bridge between life and death had a strong tradition in Greece. Common ‘lamenting’ was a source of group catharsis (purification) and was creating a strong bond between women who were lamenting, apart from a deceased person, also misfortunes and problems of one’s own life” (Štefková, 2009: 67).

Much of the above mentioned things I could observe during the archaic way of singing in Svinia. There were three women who sang, and they sang only one at a time. Each of them had a simple melody which they sang in the length of 8 to 23 stanzas. The tune was hard to record into written notation because the women intoned inaccurately, at times they changed into recitative or their voice broke from sorrow. If the already singing woman could not sing due to weeping and affection, another one fluently assumed the singing. In this way they all alternated several times. We can find here changing of lament and singing, relatively narrow melodical range, rubato, and group catharsis. Although the singers do not address the deceased person, as it is the case in lament chants, then stanza often starts with addressing of the mother joj, dajori mirori [oh, my mum] or phralale, pheňale [brothers, sisters], joj Devlale, Devla [oh, my dear God, oh God]. Singers put together unconsciously an emotional jigsaw from lines of various songs with motifs of poverty, cemetery, weeping mum, forest, death of parents, forsaken and hungry children, illness, loneliness, regretting bad things, disappointment. Particular motifs and lines were repeating and permeating in various ways. This block of lamentations lasted for almost an hour. I would never ever anywhere else meet with a similar way of singing.

Lament songs represent an important part of the repertoire of Slovak Roma. In the old layer of songs phurikane giľa these songs were designated like these žalosno giľa
Jana Belišová

(1) lament songs) or čorikane giľa (poverty songs). In the new layer of songs neve giľa we do not find a genre which would lament them with such a title. However, during the analysis of the lyrics neve giľa, especially of the genre sladakos (sweet songs), we find many parallels in themes, motifs and poetical images. Songs with the themes of misery, illness, death, being forsaken, loneliness, refusal, hunger, pain, and fear for life of the closest relatives and for one’s own life occur in a high frequency in both layers of Roma songs. Lyrics of these songs reflect reality, in which Roma live, in a certain, not quite straightforward way. This reality used to be in the past and is at present marked by generational poverty which transcends also into a family life, relationships among married couples and among parents and children. These relationships often differentiate from an ideal which Roma communicate under the influence of poverty. Family life has for Roma, especially in segregated communities an extremely big importance. An ideal pattern is a father able to provide for the need of the family, a caring mother who devotes her time to household and loves her children. However, reality is that men cannot get employment, they lose their position of bread-winner for a family and that leads to many negative phenomena, such as alcoholism, violence in a family or to criminality. Their function is assumed by women who substitute income for the family, in the past by begging and at present by social allowances. That put great claims on them, they are under stress and that sometimes deforms their relationship to children who demand mother’s attention and love in these songs. However, a lack of love for children is exceptional, more often we learn in songs about a fear for children, for their provision or their health. In the new layer of songs a very frequent motif appears of a child in the hospital which we do not find in the old layer. The songs have lyrical character but in spite of that one can guess a story behind them. In some songs we find also epic elements but rarely a song offers an accurate picture of some tragic event, rather it expresses feeling which these events evoke in people. More important is mood than a story itself which is hidden behind this mood. One uses poetical images and symbols for expressing sadness, loneliness or approaching death. Women are closer to interpretation of lament songs than men.

Unlike lyrics of lament songs, in which we find parallels between the old and new layers, the tunes are different. Whereas lament songs of the old layer have a fixed relatively identifiable musical form, songs of the new layer are situated under the influence of many genres and thus are very mixed. Transition between these layers is represented by a small group of songs neohalgató. Certain similarity can be found in the rendering of lament songs of the particular layers. They are usually very emotional and even weepingly performed, they have parlando character not only in the songs phurikane giľa without a solid rhythmical structure, but rhythmical structure is usually violated also in neve giľa with a fixed metrum. Interjections and exclamations are often used; singers in them address mother or God. Emotional rendering of these songs is closely connected with the cathartic and psychotherapeutic function of songs which have songs of both layers.

Roma do not need any special occasion for lament songs. They reflect the momentary mood of a singer and so they can be sung whenever, at a funeral, at a wedding, at a dancing party as well as on a week day. These songs hold a mirror up to a hard life on the margin of a society but at the same time influence their interpreters and listeners in a cathartic way, they help them to get rid of sadness and to cope with a hard life.
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The article investigates the possibilities of interpreting computer-mediated information as folklore. Although among folklorists it is still not fully accepted, for the generation of digital natives it is evident that computer-mediated communication is suitable for transmitting folklore as well. The aim of this article is to formulate initial questions about the possibilities and framework of collecting electronic folklore, especially about its not yet elaborated methodology. The author recommends that out of the vast number of terms used for the phenomenon concerned ‘electronic folklore’ and ‘Internet folklore’ should be applied. The former one is to be used for modern folklore created, altered and transmitted via electronic devices, while the latter one is for phenomena that contain folklore and are transmitted through the Internet.

Key words: methodology of modern collection, Internet folklore, electronic folklore, contemporary folklore, Facebook, digital native generation

In the present paper¹ I intend to study the possibilities of interpreting the information transmitted by computers as folklore with special regard to the Internet and a Web 2.0 type service of it, the community site called Facebook. ‘Web 2.0’ is a collective name of Internet applications, where the consumer of the information is its creator at the same time. Users edit the contents of websites and share information among themselves. In communication theory, the expression prosumer² propagated by the American writer Alvin Toffler, is used. In this type of interaction the consumer plays an active, creative role in the process of producing information. Therefore the main concepts of Web 2.0 contents are interactivity and content sharing.

Due to its speed and simple operation, the Internet has become the main means of communication, whose study cannot be avoided by folklorists. Besides featuring tra-
ditional folklore genres, it has created characteristic folklore works reflecting on the features of e-mail correspondence and community networks. The main aim of my paper is to provide insights into the international literature on Internet folklore, which is becoming ever richer and difficult to keep track of, and to formulate initial questions about the possibilities and framework of collecting electronic folklore, especially about its not yet elaborated methodology.

In my opinion, the uncertainty concerning the evaluation, the usability and the operation of the Internet, and the partial research findings that are published isolated and difficult to gain access to, can be considered the two major obstacles hindering the regular study of the Internet from folklorist aspects.

**IS E-FOLKLORE FOLKLORE?**

In my opinion, there is a generation gap between those who were born in the years around 1980 and those who were born earlier concerning their judgement of folklore phenomena transmitted through modern technological devices. It is not a national or an Eastern-European characteristic as a similar phenomenon can be observed in the USA too, where the use of Internet is among the widest spread (McNeil, 2009: 80.). My experiences show that older generations tend to consider folklore transmitted by the Internet as phenomena that are interesting but without any aesthetic value, the products of mass culture, fleeting and not worth the interest of folklorists. For the digital native generation (McNeil, 2009: 80.), these phenomena are not fleeting curiosities but form a part of their daily life, the Internet is the main field where they face folklore (both as consumers and as producers), and it expresses their collective desires and fears. The digital revolution, which took place in the last quarter of the 20th century, gave a new meaning to communication and at the same time a folklore transmitting channel with a quality different from the previous ones appeared in urban folklore. With the rise of PCs and the increasing importance and technological possibilities of e-mail communication, the Internet and e-mail became the main means of sending not only text messages but also static and dynamic pictures in the 1990s. Today, besides e-mails, the different net forums, mail lists and chat rooms play an important role in narrating stories. The textual and visual jokes, riddles, urban legends or toasts for particular days transmitted through the Internet provide such a treasure trove of sources that folklorists cannot ignore it. In my opinion, electronic chain letters or chain mails deserve special

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3 In the Research Centre for the Humanities, at the Institute of Ethnology of HAS an annotated bibliography and collection of links of the relevant literary works has been compiled since 2012 by Katalin Vargha and the author, in technical association with Zsolt Nagy Károly. This collection is expected to be available in the summer of 2014 through the website of Institute of Ethnology (http://www.etnologia.mta.hu/). Another bibliography compiled by Mikhail Alekseevsky (http://mdalekseevsky.narod.ru/biblio-internet.html) provides almost 500 items on Internet and folklore and on the anthropology of Internet in different languages (mostly in English and Russian). His theoretical and terminological conclusion can be read online: Internet v Folklore ili Folklor v Internte: sovremennaya folkloristika i virtual’naya real’nost’ [Internet in Folklore or Folklore in Internet: Modern Folkloristics and Virtual Reality] (2010) http://mdalekseevsky.narod.ru/alekseevsky-congress.pdf.

4 The lack of the research of modern or contemporary folklore in Hungary has been emphasized by many scholars (e.g., Mikos, 2010: 62.). Although there have been some pioneering studies (e.g. systemizing urban legends, the folklore of the parliamentary elections in 2002 and 2006, online anti-proverbs, etc.), there are only a few people who hold it important to research present day folklore. There are promising exceptions too, such as Nagy, 2005, 2006; Vargha, 2005; Bodoky, 2006; Balázs, 2011.
attention, which are the virtual preservations of the traditional St. Anthony’s chain or
chain of luck (Radchenko, 2013a; Blank, 2007; Kibby, 2005; Krawczyk-Wasilewska,
2003), the urban legends and belief legends (Brunvand, 2012; Tucker, 2009; Fialkova,
2001) and the visual, textual and audio-visual jokes (or digital jokes as they are called
collectively see e. g. Laineste, 2003; Ellis, 2003; Brednich, 2005). The probably most
popular folklore genre on the Internet nowadays, the so called Photshop jokes, which
are based on a combination of text and picture fall in this category. Virtual montages
(mainly jokes) produced by using an image creating software called Adobe Photoshop
constitute an independent form of visual solutions. They are edited by manipulating
the pictures in a humorous way. The products created and transmitted this way are
called Photoshops or in general Photoshopleore in the international literature (Frank,
2004; Foster, 2012; Bodoky, 2006). In his study, Bill Ellis, following Alan Dundes, sug-
gested using the terms ‘cybercartoon’ or ‘computer-generated cybercartoon’ for those
digital jokes, which flooded the Internet after the terrorist attack on the World Trade
Center. The phenomenon became very popular after 11 September 2001, changing the
ways these jokes were produced and spread (Ellis, 2003). Instead of the term ‘cyber-
cartoon’ (which rather referred to the drawn jokes characteristic of xeroxlore) the term
‘Photoshop’ caught on. According to Russel Frank, there are two reasons why this latter
term is more appropriate to denote pictures modified by computers: 1. they are not so
much drawings but pictures 2. it is the emic term Photoshop that caught on among
users too (Frank, 2009: 114).

The authors of the folklore works transmitted on the Internet are unknown, these
are passed on from user to user, and they are built of traditional elements trying to be
formula-like. Due to the technological possibilities they are easy to change, therefore
they have several variations, they can be spread easily, concerning their functionality,
they react to current issues, relevant to the community. There are a large number of
studies and compiled works (without aiming to give a complete list, e. g. Kõiva, 2009;
Blank, 2009b; 2012; Krawczyk-Wasilewska et al., 2012) as well as thematic journals
arguing the importance of online research and the digital and E-folklore. (E.g.: Folk-
lore 2003. 25; Fabula 2007. 48 (1/2); Folklore Forum 2007. 37 (1); New Directions in
Folklore 2011. 9 (1/2); Folklore 2013. 53.). Taking some definitions as their starting
point, most of these works aim to prove that most criteria of traditional folklore can
be identified in the IT communication media (Schneider, 1996; Nagy, 2005: 466;
Blank, 2009a). The main counter-argument questioning that the above mentioned
modern sources can be considered folklore is the lack of the word of mouth, which
was considered the most important characteristic feature of folk poetry for a long
time. However, the definition of folklore as a purely oral tradition excluding the writ-
ten media has become anachronistic in Hungarian folklore research too in the recent
decades. This change of paradigm may be due to the work of Alan Dundes, who ques-
tioned the interpretation of folklore as a phenomenon that is the opposite of technol-
ogy. More than three decades ago he argued that technological advancement does
not eliminate but induce the creation and the spreading of folklore. So the lack of

5 Recently, the phenomenon of ‘chain post’ or ‘chain messages’, transmitted through Facebook, has
drawn the attention of folklorists (Vooilad, 2013).

6 “So technology isn’t stamping out folklore; rather it is becoming a vital factor in the transmission of
folklore and it is providing an exciting source of inspiration for the generation of new folklore (...). My
point is that there is a folklore of, and about, the computer.” Dundes, 1980: 17.
word of mouth is not an exclusive criterion of folklore. It can also be observed that the phenomena existing in digital or secondary written forms do not only bear the characteristics of classic printed writings concerning their spread and the simplicity of the way they can be varied. Lately, it was Simon J. Bronner, who emphasized in his work *Digitizing and Virtualizing Folklore* that computer transmitted communication can be placed between oral and written traditions. According to Bronner, this position provides it with the possibility both to pass on and to create tradition (Bronner, 2009: 23, 32). To my mind, concerning their interactivity and synchronism, online information is closer to oral than written traditions.\(^7\) Taking everything into consideration we can give a positive answer to the question put in the title, the group of phenomena bearing the above mentioned characteristics and mediated by computers can be considered folklore works.

**ISSUES OF TERMINOLOGY**

Above it has been stated that computer-mediated communication (CMC) is able to mediate folklore. For the methodical and harmonised research concerning the computer and the folklore transmitted by other modern communication devices, it seems necessary to introduce concepts that can be applied consequently and can be used to define the object more exactly instead of the complicated definitions. The present paper does not aim to set up a whole new terminology; it only attempts to collect the most frequently used concepts and to recommend their further study.

In the literature, the collective names applied to online folklore, ethnographic and cultural anthropological research are ‘cyberethnography’, ‘virtual ethnography’, ‘virtual anthropology’ or ‘netografy’ (Blank, 2007; Gasouka, 2012). No proper Hungarian equivalents to these terms have been invented so far. Although it may not be necessary to invent a separate definition of the contemporary, electronic online research, as it would only make the gap between traditional and modern folklore even wider, suggesting that these are separate sciences. My point of view is that defining the object is basically important and the elaboration of methodological principles is vital, but separating or removing research from folklore artificially would be a grave mistake.

The terms ‘computer-mediated folklore’ (Jordan, 2011) or ‘computer folklore’ (Preston, 1996) come from a time before the arrival of the age of the Internet, but they are still in use. They are often used to refer to the Internet (‘Internet and computer lore’ Blank, 2009a). The terms ‘electronic or e-folklore’ and ‘e-lore’ are also used frequently (Krawczyk-Wasilewska, 2006) generally referring to e-mails containing folklore transmitted through the Internet. ‘Electronic folklore’ or ‘digital folklore’ seem to be appropriate collective nouns to refer to folklore created and/or modified and transmitted through any modern electronic mass media.

E-folklore research started in America back in the 70s, by collecting and studying graphic jokes mainly containing texts and pictures, published by way of xerox machines. Michael J. Preston wrote a piece called ‘Xeroxlore’ about this phenomenon way back in 1974 (Preston, 1974) Dundes and Carl R. Pagter researched non-oral folklore that

was transmitted by technological devices for decades. Any folklore mediated by xerox machines, fax, mobile phones or computers is included here. The terms 'Internet folklore' (Blank, 2009a: 13.) ‘netlore’ (Frank, 2009), and ‘netfolklore’ (Bodoky, 2006) are used to refer to mediating folklore online. The fact that the term ‘Internet folklore’ has appeared as an independent definition is a telling indicator that of all the electronic media, Internet is by far the most important one these days. The lesser known terms ‘virtual folklore’ and ‘online folklore’ are also used to refer to Internet folklore. In the vernacular language the term ‘online folk art’ is also popular, which indicates a wide range of folklore and non-folklore works on the Internet including hoaxes and memes. It is worth inspecting the term ‘meme’, as it seems that more and more emphasis has been laid on the cross-references of folklore and memetics in the past twenty years in international scientific researches. Memetics analyses the extension of the process of evolution to culture. The word meme was propagated by Richard Dawkins and Daniel C. Denett (Dawkins, 2011) in their works, it means: a small self-reproducing unit of culture coded to imitate. Monica Foote also emphasized that memetics can be applied in folklore in her work published in 2007 in a special edition of Folklore Forum addressed to the Internet. In her frequently quoted paper, Foote argues that folklore always consists of memes. However, not every meme can be considered folklore (Foote, 2007: 31). So the term ‘meme’ refers to a method of mediation and not only folklore products fall in this category; therefore it isn’t a proper term to denote all the folklore transmitted electronically or by computers.

After giving this concise and not complete review of terminology, it can be stated that even the international scientific literature has not arrived to a conclusion to use a single terminology that could be used consequently and methodically. In the confusion of international terms ‘computer-mediated folklore’, ‘digital folklore’ and ‘Internet folklore’ seem to stand out. Instead of these, I would recommend the term ‘electronic folklore’, which refers to more mediating media than the computers and therefore it is more practical, whereas for computer folklore I would suggest using the term ‘Internet folklore’ as the products created by computers can mainly be mediated via the Internet. Concerning their classification, Internet folklore and text message folklore should be included in electronic folklore (as distinct mediating channels).

**COLLECTION IN VIRTUAL FIELDS: WHERE? FROM WHOM? HOW? WHAT?**

The pioneering book of studies edited by Trevor J. Blank, which was published in 2009 and its follow-up in 2012, which is at the meeting point of the Internet and folklore, emphasizes the legitimacy of virtual research fields (Blank, 2009b). I would like

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9 On text message folklore, see e.g. Domokos, 2007; Balázs, 2011.
10 Nowadays, urban legends and false news transmitted by chain mails or on Internet websites are called hoaxes.
12 Similarly, within electronic folklore I classify them in the same category as the folklore transmitted through photocopy machines (xerox-lore/photocopy-lore) and fax (fax-lore).
to note here that it still surprises me that although hundreds of case studies and research reports have been published in this topic in the past few decades, it is necessary to greatly emphasize the importance of this subject – even in America. Blank already pointed out in an earlier paper of his that the research of online folklore is highly important and constitutes a great challenge to folklore research although it has not been used enough (Blank, 2007). The papers published in these books prove that the Internet provides a lot of possibilities for folklorists to collect. Besides the notes on the different blogs and forums, certain websites provide the Internet users with thousands of folklore texts and pictures. I consider the online folklore collections, which are to be handled as archives (and not as repertoires), compiled by outsiders to be remarkable, relevant sources as the collections containing text messages, riddles and mainly jokes find their way back to the users, who will use and vary them functionally by selecting from these works. Hundreds of thousands of folklore products are available in the online archives, which are wandering to and fro on the online, oral and written channels. In many cases, the source of pictures or texts forwarded or shared with others on community sites is a website collecting jokes. Due to their immense popularity, community sites themselves provide an excellent research field for folklore research. Facebook (in popular culture it is usually abbreviated as FB) has drawn the attention of Hungarian linguists as the research field of folklore products (Balázs, 2011; Veszelszki, 2011). However, Facebook has not been accepted by Hungarian folklorists yet.

The transmission of folklore texts and images visualised by modern IT communication media is much faster than the traditional way of passing on folklore by word of mouth, taking place within seconds. The ‘face-to-face’ exchange of information has changed to ‘person-to-person’ communication. At the same time, the circle of users and producers has become wider, and the life cycle of particular phenomena has shortened. Besides depending on the technological conditions, another difficulty of collecting folklore in the digital media is that one can never be sure of the narrator’s or information provider’s personality, as on the Internet, everyone has a kind of virtual identity (Wittel, 2000; Gasouka et al, 2012). The question may arise whether the information gathered by us can be credited and even the definition of authenticity is questioned. Therefore during the online field research it is impossible for the information collector to set down all the data that have been compulsory for them since the time of the Budapest School of Narrative Research (Ortutay, 1940). In many cases, only a user name or nickname is available, not the age and even the gender of the user cannot be identified with certainty. It seems that from the aspects of analysis, it is the social situation that is coming into the foreground instead of the individual (Roush, 1997, 51; Gasouka et al., 2012: 114). The answer to the nagging question ‘Who shall we collect from?’ may seem significant as in the self-definition of folklore, folk has always played an important role as the subject of scientific interest. This term

14 A good example of the analysis of Facebook folklore: Vooilad, 2013.
15 According to the regulations of publishing folklore products, the following details shall be given in connection with each and every product: who, when and where published them, when and where the texts were collected.’ (Voigt, 1974: 24). About the need that researchers must adjust their traditional modes of collecting data to the new conditions in the online environment: Garcia et al. 2009, 61–64.
is usually applied with a modern approach in online folklore research, its new meaning after Dundes denotes any group of people who are connected by at least one common characteristic feature (Dundes, 1980: 6). The heterogeneous community of Internet users is naturally an artificial term that cannot be described in homogeneous social characteristics. However, some small online communities can be grasped through their sociological parameters. Nevertheless, it must be stated that one can collect from the same information providers in the virtual field as in the real world. In accordance with other authors, Trevor Blank argues that the Internet as a research field cannot be separated from the traditional, classic research field of folklore. The virtual world is not a territory completely separate from reality, but one of its phenomena deeply rooted in the offline real world (Blank, 2007: 22; 2009). Inasmuch as collecting folklore in the 21st century bears any relevance, the same holds for online folklore collection. Carrying out this collection in a practical way requires certain tools and access to modern technology. Although today almost every researcher has a computer and Internet access, finding and registering the folklore data is not always a simple task. What search engine seems appropriate to be used? What should be the most successful search keyword? These are the first methodology steps of collecting electronic folklore according to Daria Radchenko (2013b: 122). How can image and video files be archived? How can the known or learnable related information be attached to them? What effort is it worth making to identify the person of an information provider? How can we measure the extent to which a folklore product is common? Can we deduce the popularity of a folklore product from the data given by download counters? Many similar questions have to be clarified that may arise while the data are collected and archived.

Online communication is characterised by interactivity and a high degree of user creativity as well as the high speed of transmission and the special group of information providers and their anonymity. Apart from them, I consider strong visuality based upon the fast reception of visual information as the main characteristic of Internet folklore. Taking all these into consideration, it seems clear that the research of e-folklore and within this Internet folklore requires a revision of the traditional collecting methods. The issues of collecting e-folklore have been addressed by several researchers since the 90s. Here is a list of some major methodological papers and case studies: Roush, 1997; Ellis, 2001, 2003; Blank, 2007, 2009a; Garcia et al. 2009; Miller, 2012; Radchenko, 2013b. The present paper cannot aim to lay down the principles of the new methodology; it only tries to help its development with some observations.

After discussing the questions of where, from whom and how to collect, the answer to the question of ‘what to collect’ does not seem to be less complicated. The Internet provides rich sources of folk belief (e.g. Tucker, 2009), folk religiousness (Howard, 2009; Kis-Halas–Frauhammer, 2010; Kis-Halas 2012) and folk customs (e.g. Dobler, 2009) as well as visual, textual, animated and audio-visual folklore phenomena. The research of textual (and visual) folklore seems to be ahead of the research of other branches of folklore in this field too. Nowadays one of the most productive branches of e-folklore is the above mentioned Photoshoplore, which means the community production of humorous digital photos that have been modified by a graphics editing programme (Meder, 2008). They are mainly transmitted on the Internet, where digital jokes are primarily forwarded as e-mail messages or posted on community sites (such as Facebook). The WTC jokes (the visual and textual material connected to the terrorist attack on the World Trade Centre) played a significant role in the boom of
photoshop jokes. The terrorist attack of 11 September was a pivotal point in the creation and transmission of jokes (Ellis, 2001, 2003; Krawczyk-Wasilewska, 2003; Frank, 2004; Hathaway, 2005; Foster, 2012; The reception of WTC jokes in the Hungarian material: Császi, 2002, 2003; Zsigmond, 2003). The traditional structure of genres, which was invented for classic folk poetry, cannot be applied to Internet folklore in its entirety (Heyd, 2009). Urban legends and several small epic genres (sayings, proverbs, riddles, and mainly jokes) are strongly present in the visual space (Meder, 2008) but the online representation of such great folklore genres as folk songs, ballads and folk tales is secondary. (Certainly, here I do not mean the transportation of folk poetry produced offline to the Internet, but those phenomena that were created on the Internet or that are alive on it.) Apart from the products that can be (to some extent) classified according to the traditional categories based upon the classification of texts, there are a number of online phenomena that cannot be interpreted within this framework such as humorous pictures with captions or texts with pictures. In my opinion, not all the folklore-like humorous products or those containing humour can be classified as jokes. To establish a system of online folklore genres, the category of visual jokes within the genre of jokes should be elaborated on more. I would like to mention an example to demonstrate how online folklore phenomena do not fit in the traditional structure of genres. The phenomenon called ‘Hitler Downfall-parodies’ means such video files that are based on a creative adaptation of a scene of the German war drama named Downfall (2004) with new subtitles. The short videos which always react to some current issue parody a scene of the film where Hitler, according to the original screenplay, is informed that his power is over. In the videos created this way, the dictator gets annoyed for different reasons: e. g. he is informed that Santa Clause does not exist, that Whitney Houston died, or that a video of Justin Bieber, the teenage Canadian singer was downloaded more than his. In a ‘metavideo’ he is annoyed by the fact that some of the Hitler videos have been banned by YouTube, the largest video file sharing site, as Constantin Film AG considered the parodies based upon the movie, which anyways increased the popularity of the film, as copyright infringement (which was unjustified). The Hitler parodies are popular in Hungary too, where the actor playing the role of Hitler personalizes the Hungarian president. The video called Gyurcsány Bukása [The Downfall of Gyurcsány] was uploaded on YouTube on 17 May 2008, showing the results of the referendum held on 9 March 2008 (a social yes/no referendum on the cancellation of fees on; visits to doctors, hospital stays, and university tuition). The parodies personifying Viktor Orbán are also popular: Orbán is angry about the financial downgrading of

16 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pS8kgSLA500. Since 27. 08. 2010 there have been 206,728 downloads of the video.
17 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xoi5rX3y_Ek&playnext=1&list=PL53C242BD64638DDE. This video has had 18,315 visitors since 12. 02. 2012.
18 The singer’s clip called Baby hit a record number of visitors in 2010 on YouTube, as it was watched by 250 million people in a short time. Its parody was uploaded by a user passing by the user name Adolf Bieber on 16 April 2010. It can be found here: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ri3aph0AbA4 (124.986 downloads until 30. 04. 2013).
19 The video parodying the ban on the videos was uploaded on YouTube on 20 April 2010 and since then it has had 1,072,501 visitors until 30 April 2013. The video is available here: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kBO5dh9qRIQ.
20 Ferenc Gyurcsány was the president of Hungary between 2004 and 2009.
21 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G93NITCCVtc, 225, 030 visitors since it was uploaded.
Hungary,\textsuperscript{22} the international reception of the media law\textsuperscript{23} or the defeat of Videoton (a Hungarian football club).\textsuperscript{24} Among the Hungarian Hitler/Orbán parodies the most popular is the one reflecting on the extraordinary spring weather of 2013, called \textit{A Bukás avagy a hőhelyzet Magyarországon Orbán módra} [\textit{The Downfall, or the Snow Report in Hungary á la Orbán}], where the prime minister comments on the chaotic traffic situation.\textsuperscript{25} I consider these videos as part of the folklore because of their variations (dozens of variations of the same scenes are known), anonymity (the authors of the subtitles are unknown), community feature and their reaction to current social issues. However, it would be difficult to squeeze these videos in a folklore genre, maybe in the genre of jokes, but the synchronised appearance of film, text and sound is alien to this classification. Although they all have humorous content, they don’t fit in the traditional structure of jokes known from oral tradition, but we can assume that now it is all a certain part of common knowledge.

It is important both during the virtual collection and during the publication of Internet folklore that as much information should be published on the context of the creation of the material as possible. However, in my opinion, besides registering the lesser informative user names, the description of the media in which a visual and/or textual product was created should be highlighted more. The Hitler video parodies can only be understood and interpreted together with the background information, which created them. When publishing Internet folklore, it is vital to have a sound knowledge of a current social issue that created the folklore as well as the context of particular examples.\textsuperscript{26} (Instead of the minute description of the microcontext, a detailed outline of the macrocontext). The recognition of the importance of events, social, economic and political news generating folklore products led to the formation of the term ‘newslore’. I consider newslore to be a collective term of folklore products of different types appearing both on oral and on written and electronic channels. Its main theoretician is Russell Frank (Frank, 2011). Newslore, as its name shows, is a social answer responding to current issues, a kind of criticism, and a mainly humorous, folklore-like product. Newslore research was encouraged by the terrorist attacks on 9/11 2011 in America, whose main aim was to relieve the huge social shock caused by the bombing of the WTC by expressing revenge (e. g. the Bin Laden jokes). In my point of view to understand a certain part of electronic folklore as newslore leads us a more complex description of it by the representation of the context in which the folklore item emerges as well.\textsuperscript{27}

\textbf{INSTEAD OF A CONCLUSION}

As we have seen in the international folklorist literature the research of IT communication phenomena has been gaining importance for years. The dynamics of the

\textsuperscript{23} http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u1oB6RdplBM, 34,231 downloads since 30. 11. 2011.
\textsuperscript{24} http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o2KME3WsZTE, 10,179 visitors since 04. 11. 2012.
\textsuperscript{25} http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rIIAwVCbKlc, 251,995 visitors since 16. 03. 2013.
\textsuperscript{26} Bill Ellis did so with the WTC jokes and so did Russell Frank with the ‘End of the Internet’ type hoaxes: Ellis, 2003; Frank, 2009.
\textsuperscript{27} Having just started the overview of the methodological issues of collecting in virtual fields without finishing it, it may be elucidative to present some examples of the appearance of E-folklore. Some Hungarian examples can be found here: Domokos, 2013a, 2013b.
spread of e-folklore and within this the Internet folklore is different from that of traditional oral folklore products that were passed on from generation to generation. The speed of mediation, the identification of those providing information, the contextualization of the data, the counter-effect online archives have on folklore and their assessment pose a challenge to folklore research. Although digital field research has gained recognition by now, the terminology and methodology of the new phenomena and their system of genres have not been elaborated yet. This paper cannot make up for this gap, this brief sketch is anything but exhaustive, but it intends to stimulate further debates by asking questions relevant to the topic. In my point of view the initial steps towards the methodology of electronic folklore are to clarify essential questions like ‘What are the main obstacles to study folklore in the digital era?’, ‘What are the characteristics of E-folklore and how to describe them? What and how to collect in virtual fields? ‘How to handle the anonymity of informants during the folklore research?’, ‘Can we maintain the system of classical folklore genres? How do new folklore-like phenomena (e. g. video-parodies) fit into it?’ Despite the vast literature on this subject one thing can be surely stated: after the disappearing of traditional folklore occasions a myriad of new phenomena have been waiting for folklorists to be explored.

REFERENCES


Mariann Domokos


liefs, Customs, Tales, Music, and Art. I. (p. 306–307). Santa Barbara, CA, ABC-CLIO.
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

DOMOKOS Mariann (*1979) – folklorist, lawyer. She earned her PhD in comparative folklore studies from Eötvös Lorand University of Budapest (2010). She wrote her thesis on the 19th century history of Hungarian folktales research, especially about the text-shaping methods of the era. She holds master degrees in ethnography and law. Her main research interests are 19th century research methods, text folkloristics, folktales and chapbook tales, Internet folklore, folklore and law. She offered courses in folklore studies at University of Pannonia of Veszprém and Eötvös Loránd University of Budapest. She is currently a sponsored fellow of Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Research Centre for the Humanities at Institute of Ethnology. Her complete publication list is available online: https://vm.mtmt.hu/search/slist.php?lang=0&AuthorID=10025454.
The International Society for Contemporary Legend Research (ISCLR), one of the most important international learned societies devoted to the study of folklore, was founded in 1988 in Sheffield, England, United Kingdom. Its intellectual roots can be traced to the early 1980s, when the now legendary “Sheffield seminars” were held at the University of Sheffield Centre for English Cultural Tradition and Language. These seminars organized mostly by folklorists Paul Smith and Gillian Bennett and focused on the study of contemporary / urban / modern legends, followed the increased academic interest in these actual forms of expressive culture. Following the success of these scholarly meetings, the international society was formed which...shall encourage and support the scholarly study of contemporary legend, in the broadest sense of the term, and related phenomena. “Contemporary” refers not only to so-called “modern urban legends” but also to any legend in active circulation in a given community. (ISCLR Constitution 2011). Five volumes which collected papers from the Sheffield seminars (summarized in Bennett – Smith, 1990) gave way to the ISCLR peer-reviewed journal Contemporary Legend, regular newsletter FOAF-tale News (FOAFtale News, 2014) and various irregular publications. Because of these achievements, the ISCLR can be now regarded as the most important international community devoted to legend studies, with perhaps greater institutional, publication and –most importantly – temporal stability than similar attempts conducted by the International Society for Folk Narrative Research (ISFNR) since the 1960s.

Since 1988, the Perspectives on Contemporary Legend conferences are held annually alternately in North America (USA or Canada) and Europe. This year, the conference has been held for the first time in one of the post-socialist countries, organized jointly by the Institute of Ethnology, Faculty of Arts, Charles University in Prague and the ISCLR, with financial support of the Faculty of Arts (especially Dr. Mirjam Fried, Dean of the Faculty), and the Charles University Research Development Programme No. 09: Literature and Arts in Intercultural Contexts, and organizational support of the students’ club PAKET - Pro AKtivníETnologii (For Active Ethnology).

The conference was one of the biggest conference events conducted in Czech ethnology/anthropology since the EASA 2nd Biannual Conference held in Prague in 1992 and biggest folklore conference ever organized there since the ISFNR Interim Conference held in Liblice in 1966. During six days...
Two generations: Sandy Hobbs (University of West of Scotland, Paisley, Scotland, United Kingdom), one of the founding members of the ISCLR, and Adriana Kábová (Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic). Photo: Jan Pohunek.

The “Dr David Buchan Prize” for best student paper is being awarded to Adriana Kábová by President of the ISCLR Elizabeth Tucker (left) and Secretary Elissa R. Henken (right). Photo: Jan Pohunek.

of the conference, 54 conference participants from 15 countries (Argentina, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Lithuania, The Netherlands, Portugal, Russian Federation, Slovenia, United Kingdom, USA) presented 38 papers divided to 9 thematic panels (Legends and Internet; Legends and Mass Media; Legends and (Sacred) Places; Spatial and Social Contexts of Legend; Legend, Art
and Popular Culture; Occupational Folklore, Legends of Rites of Passage; Legends, Politics and Ethnic Identity; Legends, History, Local Tradition, and Legends and Media Across Time and Space). The panels were accompanied by the ISCLR Annual General Meeting and various cultural events.

An important encouraging impulse for lo-
cal folklorists was given by awarding the “Dr. David Buchan Student Essay Prize” for the best student essay that combines research and analysis to Mgr. Adriana Kábová, who graduated in Ethnology from the Charles University in Prague, for her paper *Blood in radios, heads in televisions: Identity and ‘civilizing forces’ beyond the Sumbanese rumors*. Another encouraging impulse, but for international folklorists, can be seen in fact that, because of this conference, Prague became once more an intellectual meeting place of Western and Eastern folklore studies. This was evident by the highest number of participants from the Russian Federation in the history of the ISCLR conferences, where American, Canadian, and Western European folklorists historically dominated. Results of this intellectual melting pot will be summarized in two special issues of the journal *Contemporary Legend*. The first one will be devoted to Soviet and Russian legend studies, second to the study of legends in Central and Eastern Europe.

Abstracts of the conference were published and are available, along with list of the conference participants and other materials, in printed and also electronic form on the web pages of the Institute of Ethnology, Faculty of Arts, Charles University in Prague (Janeček, Henken, Tucker 2014; Institute of Ethnology, 2014).

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References

In the days from 7th until 9th of May 2014 the 3rd conference of the international project “Visual Encounters with Others” took place in Estonian town Tartu under the title “Constructing the Other through the prism of war: Contested images in Eastern Europe (1930s to 1950s)”. The head of the project is professor Dagnoslaw Demski from the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology of the Polish Academy of Sciences, the local organizers were Liisi Laineste and the Estonian Literary Museum.

After the previous conferences in Warsaw (2010) and Budapest (2012) is obvious how the conference series has extended the original scope from caricatures to various other channels of social groups visualisations. The group of 30 participants from 9 countries (including experts in history, anthropology, folklore and literature studies, linguistics, ethnology, design etc.) offered various approaches to visual depiction of categories of “Us” and “Them”, including caricatures, photographs, illustration or sculptures. The programme of the conference was divided into 9 sections: 1. Visualisation of the East, 2. Baltic viewpoint, 3. Images of the Enemy, 4. Ideology and war, 5. Constructing the Other as a stranger, 6. Contested photography, 7. Visualisation of the East II., 8. Women: New image, and 9. Pointing the West. We can find there for example analysis of memories of Finnish soldiers and their war memories visualising Soviet soldiers (Tuija Saarinen), Estonian caricatures from World War II. (Liisi Laineste), theoretical analysis of the connections between war propaganda and humour (Alexander Kozintsev), images of enemies in Hungarian and German caricatures (Ágnes Tamás) as well as images of traitors and enemies in caricatures of the wartime Slovakia (Zuzana Pančová), visualisations of the beginning of the Cold War through the official press of communist Poland (Kamila Baraniecka Olszewska), Ostforschung as a photographic source during World War II. (Ewa Manikowska), the image of Polish women between 1939 and 1953 (Marta Frąnckiewicz) or an interesting lecture by Christie Davies named “Cartoons, caricatures and conflicts: The British tradition and its East European rivals”.

There was opportunity for informal discussions during the rich social agenda in-
cluding receptions and post-conference trip to the Estonian islands Muhu and Saaremaa. Detailed information about the conference can be found on the webpage of the conference (http://folklore.ee/rl/fo/konve/ImagesIII/index.html). The last conference of this series should take place next year (2015) and its topic will be devoted to visual encounters with Others in the post-war Europe.

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EVA KREKOVIČOVÁ, VLADIMÍR POTANČOK (Ed.):
Personal Bibliography of PhDr. Soňa Burlasová, DrSc.
Institute of Ethnology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences (SAS), Bratislava 2013, 56 p.

Personal bibliographies usually represent a seemingly austere list of works of a certain author, accompanied by bibliographic data in an order respecting the criteria of the bibliography editors. The Personal Bibliography of PhDr. Soňa Burlasová, DrSc. is one of these kinds. Yet, anyone who opens this booklet can see not only numbers and facts, but almost a whole rich and fruitful human life. Each bibliographic unit presents not only publication results, studies, monographs or encyclopaedia entries, but also weeks or months of research works on site or in archives, the study of expert literature, published collections of songs, etc. Some publications, like the Catalogue of Slovak Narrative Songs, could be created only on the basis of a special archive of such songs. This archive within the Institute of Ethnology of the SAS was founded, directed and managed by Soňa Burlasová. Every bibliographic entry thus hides an entire range of rigorous research, and organisational and conceptual work.

In the introductory part, Eva Krekovičová presents Soňa Burlasová as one of the most important representatives of Slovak ethnomusicology and folklore studies who investigates songs as a multi-layer phenomenon with respect to texts, tunes and contexts. She highlights five key areas in the work of Soňa Burlasová: 1. Regional music styles; 2. Theoretical and methodological works; 3. Research of song genres; 4. Comparative study; and 5. The dynamics of changes in melodic processes in the 2nd half of the 20th century. The introduction is complemented with passages from an interview with Soňa Burlasová made in 2012.

The personal bibliography of Soňa Burlasová contains no less than 269 entries that were arranged by the editors in nine groups according to the respective thematic criteria: 1. Historiography; 2. Theory and methodology; 3. Song genres; 4. New song production; 5. Thematic groups of songs; 6. Regional and local study of folk songs; 7. Comparative research of folk songs; 8. Current state of melodics and folklorism; 9. The bearers and creators of songs. Two more groups were added: 10. Encyclopaedic entries; and 11. Reviews.

It is positive that we can also read the reactions to the works of Soňa Burlasová from the expert public – in points 12. Articles about Soňa Burlasová, and 13. Dedicated to Soňa Burlasová, as well as in reviews and citations of her concrete works. Naturally, most of them relate to her more extensive monographic works, though some citations could have been added.

The personal bibliography focuses mainly on the publication works of Soňa Burlasová, and also reflects certain stages of the research development and focus of her
workplace – the Institute of Ethnology of the SAS. Several publications by Soňa Burlasová were part of collective research and works of the Institute of Ethnology of the SAS, such as regional and local monographs (Horehronie, Hont, The Mining Village of Žakarovce), encyclopaedic or atlas works, comparative studies, etc.

Personal bibliographies also help mapping the history and the development of different scientific disciplines, including Slovak ethnology and folklore studies. They reflect the author’s contribution to the solution of current problems that received increased attention also from other scientific units during certain stages of the scientific discipline development, or which responded to practical needs. I am convinced that the Personal Bibliography of PhDr. Soňa Burlasová, DrSc. is a valuable contribution and an impulse to continue with the VEGA 2/0086/11 project “The history of ethnology in Slovakia in the second half of the 20th century: continuity and discontinuity in research” in the framework of which this bibliography was published.

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PETER SALNER:
The Jewish Identity in Slovakia after the Shoah

The Shoah (the Hebrew word for the Holocaust), a social trauma of the past that resonates even today, is a topic which formed and still forms the subject of a considerable number of scientific and expert works. It also represents a traumatic event that influenced many lives, especially the fates of Jews. The Shoah became the central topic of their every-day reality in the post-war period, transformed into the question: “How to cope with the Holocaust?” The answer to this question influenced the attitudes towards Jewishness and the form of living the Jewish identity of the next generations. This is the main idea of the book “The Jewish Identity in Slovakia after the Shoah”. The publication deals with the impacts of this trauma on the forms and very existence of the Jewish identity in the Slovak context and with the way the subsequent social, cultural and economic development of the country formed the dynamics of the development of Jewishness after the Holocaust.

The book was written by Peter Salner who has been conducting research on Jewishness, Jewish identity and the social culture of Jews in Slovakia for many years as a long-term researcher of the Institute of Ethnology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences. He is also a member of the Jewish community. He uses both these factors in his work, and also builds on his personal family experience. The book is written in the English language, and the author summarises in it the results of his research conducted in the framework of the Vega 2/0099/11 project “The adaptation of the urban population in the processes of social changes” in which he dealt with the issue of Jewish identity in Slovakia after the Holocaust, seeking to respond to the question whether Jewish identity in Slovakia is subject to transformation, or is gradually disappearing.

In his book, the author deals with this research topic with an interpretative approach and from an inter-generational perspective of the period from World War II until the present. He compares the interpretation of the Jewish identity in the first post-Holocaust generation (persons who survived the Holocaust) and the second post-Holocaust generation (children of those who survived) from the point of view of the impacts of contemporary social conditions (the period of socialism and ethical atheism, emigration, developments after November 1989, and change of the political establishment). With regard to its structure, the work consists of four content units – preface, chapter I and chapter II, conclusion.
In the preface, the author introduces readers to the topic, describes the methodology used, and explains the reasons for the chosen approach. As for methodology, the author based his research on three types of information sources, through the analysis of which he sought answers to the basic research issues: (1) oral history project called “The fates of those who survived the Holocaust”; (2) informal interest group “Meeting” founded in 2004 (later renamed to “Light”); (3) information from scientific works and autobiographical publications dealing with the Jewish identity (pp. 8–9). As stated by the author, the topic is presented in the form of a dialogue (p. 14) based on testimonies of Jews (first two sources of information) and observations from scientific works concerning belief and Judaism, Judaism and the Holocaust, non-Jewish environment, emigration and the State of Israel, and the Communist regime.

If something is to be transformed or is to disappear, it must first exist and it must have a concrete form. The first task that the author had to cope with while writing about identity was to find an appropriate way of grasping the Jewish identity. He does not offer an accurate and clear theoretical definition of what Jewish identity is. He understands identity as the process of becoming aware of a belonging to a group and distinguishing oneself from others (p. 10), grasping it mainly through the relationship between faith and Judaism, thus determining the limits of the form and fulfilling its particular content through the testimonies of those most affected – the bearers of the Jewish identity. His interpretation of the relationship between faith and Judaism is based mainly on the arguments of the Israeli philosopher and scientist Yeshayahu Leibowitz. He approaches faith as the constitutive element of traditional Judaism.

The topic concerning attitudes to faith arises in the interpretation of identity in both generations studied, but from different time perspectives. The central question with respect to the survival of Jewishness (mainly within the first generation) was: “How could God let this happen? Why didn’t he intervene?” One can observe changed attitudes to faith and sometimes even diversion. Yet, the Holocaust is not described as the cause of changes in the form of survival of Jewishness, but as an accelerator of liberalisation and gradual diversion from faith.

What does it mean for the Jewish identity if there is no faith? What replaced faith after the Holocaust, and why? And what does it mean for Judaism when there is no faith – does the Jewish identity transform or disappear? It is a crucial question when writing about the Jewish identity in period after World War II. According to the author, faith as such transforms, and should not be perceived as the unique attribute of the Jewish identity. He departs from the concept of defining Jewishness through traditional components, such as religion, ethnicity, culture (p. 35). He takes the view that Jewish humour also represents one of the components of Jewish identity in some cases (p. 77).

The second part of the book entitled “Identity of the Holocaust Survivors” provides a basic view of experiencing Jewish identity in the first post-Holocaust generation. The third part under the title “The Legacy of the Children of the Holocaust” deals with the interpretation of identity among the second generation. In these two chapters, the author describes the significant social phenomena and processes needed to understand the contemporary living of the Jewish identity (legislative process, inter-community differentiation, emigration and attitudes towards Israel, the relationship between children and parents, non-Jewish environment). He thus reveals the macro-social, inter-community and family factors affecting the internal mental living of the Jewish identity represented through the testimonies of individuals. With regard to interpretation, these testimonies are supported with statements from other researches on this topic. They describe what formed and influenced
the living of the Jewish identity of the first and the second generation.

In the fourth concluding part of the book entitled “Transformation or Disappearance?”, the author summarises the results of his previous analysis of the interpretation of the Jewish identity of the first and the second post-Holocaust generation as a response to the basic research question – is the Jewish identity in Slovakia in the post-Holocaust period subject to transformation, or is it gradually disappearing? The author is inclined to the transformation process and considers the Holocaust a significant feature of such a transformation. He identifies two important trends concerning Jewish identity in Slovakia: the gradual diversion from traditional forms of religiousness, and differences in attitudes towards Jewishness from the inter-generational perspective (p. 74).

From an analysis of chosen information sources, he derives four pillars of identity of the present-day Slovak Jews (Judaism, the Holocaust, the State of Israel, non-Jewish social and cultural environment) (p. 79), and describes the impacts of the inter-generational identity change.

Given its extent, the book does not provide in-depth, extensive analyses of the identities of the first and second post-Holocaust generation, but it aims to support, by means of primary and secondary empirical data, the author’s argument about the transformation of the Jewish identity in Slovakia after World War II. The author’s interpretation is transparent, and his argumentation is fluent. He follows the approach described in the preface throughout the text. Though the publication does not deal with theoretical approaches to identity, Jewishness, faith (religion) and inter-generational differences, in line with the declared approach it provides an answer to the research question through a dialogue of testimonies of the bearers of Jewish identity and research results. One of the most important messages of this book is the statement that Jewish identity cannot be characterised on the basis of general and universal components referring to any Jewish community in the world, but should be perceived in the specific historic, social and cultural context. Because this is what creates it within the social reality and gives it the status of uniqueness.

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For all who would like to gain general knowledge of contemporary European anthropology and ethnology, this complex synthesis could be useful, which makes efforts to map various actual focuses and approaches in the wide range of European countries.

The first chapter of this collection is devoted to the introduction of the editors entitled “Introduction: The Frontiers of Europe and European Ethnology”. The editors give here insight into their concept inter connecting the notions of Europe and anthropology, in which (as they emphasize) “neither ‘anthropology’ (or its cousin, European ethnology) nor ‘Europe’ are intellectual terrae firmae – historically and conceptually, both can be described as ‘moving targets’: in a constant process of transformation since their first inception – and perhaps, as some would argue, “so elusive that it is doubtful whether they have any reality at all outside the imagination.” (p. 1)

The publication is divided into five thematic units. The first part is devoted to the theme Europe’s Cardinal Directions and the following contributions seek to locate the “Europe” as well as “anthropology” from

The second part brings analysis of the problems of the European Integration. Lisanne Wilken there summarizes “Anthropological Studies of European Identity Construction”, Ksenija Vidmar Horvat solves the problem of the “Memory, Citizenship, and Consumer Culture in Postsocialist Europe”, Thomas M. Wilson deals with the questions of the regions and borders (“The Europe of Regions and Borderlands”). The co-authors Catherine Neveu and Elena Filippova write about “Citizenship(s) in European Contexts”, Justyna Straczk about “Local Practices of European Identity on the New Eastern Borders of the EU” and Marion Demossier about “European Politics, Policies, and Institutions.”

The third part is focused on the topic “European Heritage”, respectively on questions of whether there is any kind of common “European heritage” or collective European identity. We can find here the interesting approach of Sharon Macdonald (“Presencing Europe’s Pasts”) who introduces the concept of past presencing to avoid problems with categorization of “history” and “memory”. Maja Povrzanović Frykman through the case study of war and post-war recovery in area of former Yugoslavia (“An Anthropology of War and Recovery: Lived War Experiences”) demonstrates the importance of ethnographical and anthropological fieldwork. It can contribute to general knowledge about existing group tensions and problems connected especially with “ethnicity as the foundation of fear and separation”, which should not be underestimated. The next contributions are devoted to the questions of religions – “European Religious Fragmentation and the Rise of Civil Religion” (Peter Jan Margry), or to “Studying Muslims of Europe” (Gabriele Marranci), to “Roma and Sinti: The ‘Other’ within Europe” (Sabrina Kopf) and to the landscape as a changing social concept (Norbert Fischer: “Landscape, Landscape History, and Landscape Theory.”)

The fourth part is named Cultural Practice. For example the phenomenon of “European tourism” is analyzed by Orvar Löfgren as a specific form of mobility with the potential for European integration “from below”. Gisela Welz in her contributions presents “The Diversity of European Food Cultures”, while Mairéad Nic Craith concentrates on roles and relations between “Language, Power, and Politics” in the context of intercultural identity politics. The next study written by co-authors Valdimar Tr. Hafstein and Martin Skrystrup is focused on the term “cultural rights” (“Europe at the Crossroads of Rights and Cultures(s)”). They try to map the conceptual terrain of this term through the research of different stories connected with it. The topic of “rights” is present also in the following contribution (“Corporate Social Responsibility and Cultural Practices on Globalizing Markets”), where Christina Garsten compares various approaches to the concept of corporate social responsibility. She argues that this concept has influence on the globalization process, and on relativity or universality of human rights and values. David Murphy in his “Extreme Neo-nationalist Music Scenes at the Heart of Europe” describes his fieldwork / trip experience with black metal and punk scenes in Serbia and Romania, which offer young people a place for sharing alternative kinds of
(not only) nationalistic cultural identity. The last contribution by Christiane Schwab (“Anthropological Perspectives on the European Urban Landscape”) is devoted to urban milieu as a subject of anthropological research. The author introduces changing relations anthropologists have had with cities and then she discusses approaches in urban anthropology dealing with the investigation of the uniqueness of particular cities.

The fifth part is focusing on Disciplinary Boundary Crossings. We can find here the contribution of medical anthropology (Maryon McDonald: “Medical Anthropology and Anthropological Studies of Science”), of the use of internet in ethnographic research (Elisenda Ardevola Adolfo Estalella: “Uses of the Internet in European Ethnographic Research”), visual studies (Terence Wright: “Visual Culture, Ethnography, and Interactive Media”), the interesting concept of the “hybrid worlds” (Elka Tschernokoshe-wa: “Hybrid Worlds of Europe: Theoretical and Practical Aspects”), interconnections between anthropology and literary art (Helena Wulff: “An Anthropological Perspective on Literary Arts in Ireland”), as well as an inspiring and critical essay from the sphere of ethno-ecology and ethno-topology (Ullrich Kockel: “Toward an Ethnoecology of Place and Displacement”).

The aim of the editors was “to be comprehensive, but not exhaustive, explorative but not definitive” (p. 8). I can only confirm that the publication fulfills these criteria and to recommend it to all those interested in development and contemporary tendencies in European anthropological and ethnological studies.

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