

THE SLOVENIAN BALLAD: FROM ORIGIN TO TRANSFORMATION

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Abstract

This article provides a comprehensive portrait of the content and formal structure of the Slovenian folk ballad, giving an overview to its characteristics, definition, typology, themes, collectors, bearers and stories and incorporates various perspectives on contextual aspects. The author first presents Slovenia and its geographical position within Europe throughout its history and ethnic as well as linguistic structure. From the general description of ballads and their origins, which extend into three thematic groups: European, Slavic and originally Slovenian, it moves to questions of the position of Slovene ballads in the present times. Then, through analyzes of selected ballads from *Lovely Vida* and *King Mathias, A Musician before Hell*, *The Tenth Daughter*, *Suitor's Rejection*, *Condemned Infanticide* and *Faronika the Fish* she presents their original stories and forms and their transformations in contemporary Slovenian literature, music, dance, art and society. Slovenian folk ballads are paradigmatically important folklore creations that make it possible to perceive Slovenians as a nation defined by key stories.

Keywords : Slovenian ballad, transformation, folklore, literature, culture, identity

INTRODUCTION: WHERE IS SLOVENIA AND WHO ARE THE SLOVENIANS?

Slovenia's historical and geographical position gives its territory a distinctly "transitional" nature, with the intermingling of cultures and languages in the past; ethnic minorities in Italy, Croatia, Hungary, and Austria; various political conditions; and other sociocultural elements. The history of the Slovenian nation (Dušan Nečak 1999), which until 1991 was a nation without a state (as part of the Carolingian and German states, the Austro-Hungarian empire, the short-lived State of the Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs, royal Yugoslavia, and then socialist Yugoslavia after the Second World War), has also left its mark on Slovenian folk song/ballad tradition. Nonetheless, it is actually the folk song tradition that in its basic linguistic and creative core has shown the greatest native character, despite the influences of the other cultures that coexisted with it—at times

harmoniously, and at other times in opposition.

Despite the transitional nature of Slovenian territory, the structure of the Slovenian population is relatively nationally homogeneous even today. Only two ethnic groups have been accorded the status of indigenous minorities: Italians on the western margin of the country, and the Hungarians in the east. Slovenia is also home to various other former Yugoslavs, Roma, and a small German population and after 2004 (entering in EU) some population came from Europe and elsewhere. In the past, Slovenian culture was marked by various Germanic, Romance, South Slavic, and Hungarian influences. The most heterogeneous areas are those along Slovenia's borders—in particular Istria, where the cultures of the Slovenes, Italians, and Croats mixed (Mojca Ravnik: 1996: 11–29), and White Carniola, where the descendants of the Serbian Uskoks (refugees from Turkish-occupied territory), who immigrated in the 16th century, still live today (Marko Terseglav 1996: 9). Varied mixtures of cultural and linguistic elements resulting from Slovenia's history can also be found in Prekmurje, in the Rába Valley (Sln. *Porabje*)—a Slovenian-populated area in Hungary—and in Slovenian and Austrian Carinthia. In a similar way, the distinct cultural spirits of the Italians and Slovenians have mingled in the Resia Valley, Venetian Slovenia, and Friuli in Italy, where Slovenian populations still live.

SLOVENIAN FOLK BALLAD – CHARACTERISTIC, DEFINITION, COLLECTORS, BARERS, FUNCTION, TYPOLOGY AND THEMES

Characteristics and definition: Ballads are defined through genre and tradition, also largely through their transfer by oral tradition. Hence, ballads dramatically recount the story of an event and its outcome; they are embedded in the dynamic process of variant creation and are in dynamic relationship with the context, in which they have a specific function in an individual community. All of this also makes it possible to study their reception and interpretation. Other important parameters in the process of creating ballads include continuity, variants, and selection. In addition to the creator or singer, this also involves the researcher, who represents a link in spreading the knowledge of ballads, their characteristics, special features, and universalities. In Slovenia, folk ballads have been dealt with or at least briefly touched upon by both the leading literary historians and folklore specialists (ethnologists), as well as anthropologists and even lawyers (Marjetka Golež Kaučič 2018).

On the one hand, ballads are part of human creativity, imagination, and a reflection of people's lives, but on the other, they are an aesthetic artifact that contains all elements of an artistic creation. Proceeding from folklore as the broadest possible body of knowledge of a specific ethnic group, this knowledge in particular can also produce creative flows, which may also include the creation of ballads. In two parallel systems, one can determine the connections and contrasts between literary and folklore studies that have resulted in different conceptions of folk ballads, including oral vs. written (John Miles Foley 2002; Marko Terseglav 2007); language, manner of expression, and

formal structure; prosody, the issue of genre, content structure, and the interconnection of folklore and literature; and context (Zmaga Kumer 1991; Golež Kaučič 2003, 2018). However, even though there are mainly differences between the two systems, the basic connection between folk and artistic ballads lies in the fact that they carry the same emotional dimension. In order to classify Slovenian folk ballads, a classification system and a clear typology must be provided. A classification by content (which is one of the most useful ones for ballads) was already made by Karel Štrelkelj in the first volume of the collection *Slovenske narodne pesmi* (Slovenian Folk Songs, 1895–1898), whereby he produced a typology of the folk songs and provided as many variants of each type as he was able to collect (obtain from collectors) and process at that time. In the twenty-first century, Slovenian folklore studies carried out a new folk song classification, in which the most important parameter for ballads (i.e., content) was isolated from the four basic parameters defining individual genres in the genre system. In Europe, an exceptionally large number of genre classifications of ballads have been made and they all emphasize the enigmatic nature of the genre and problems in defining folk ballads (from Sigurd B. Hustvedt 1930; Erich Seemann 1967; Gottfried Weißert 1980; Atkinson 2002, to the Slovenian folklore scholar Zmaga Kumer, 2002). The selection of methodological discourse is also important for studying folk ballads and therefore folklore specialists chose various methods for exploring this genre, ranging from the functional method (Vladimir Propp, 1958) to the oral-formulaic theory (Matija Murko 1928/1990, Milman Parry 1953–1954, and John M. Foley 2002)), research on metaphors and performative characteristics (Barre Toelken 1996), melodic kinship (Bertrand Bronson 1959-72 and Valens Vodušek 2003), the study of bearers (Thomas McKean 2012), communicational parameters (Ruth Finnegan, 1998), song reception (Wolfgang Iser 1974 and Robert Jauss 1978), and context (Lisa Gabbert 1999), and the study of text as the most important element of the text-texture-context triad (Joseph Harris 1991 and David Atkinson 2002).

Collectors: In Slovenia the first manuscript collection was by Dizma Zakotnik (1755–1793) and dates from about 1775. It includes the heroic ballad of Pegam and Lambergar (SLPI/1), the song of King Matthias, and the ballad of the River Man. Slovenian ballad collectors included Marko Pohlin (1735–1801), Jožef Rudež (1793–1846), Stanko Vraz (1810–1851), and many others; at the end of the 19th century the most important of these was Karel Štrelkelj (1866–1937, he is like J. F. Child), whose collection, *Slovenske narodne pesmi* I (SNP, Slovenian Folk Songs, 1895–1923) is still the best-known in Slovenia. It contains all types of narrative songs. The new, scholarly collection *Slovenske ljudske pesmi* I–V (SLP, Slovenian Folk Songs, 1970–2007, see Kumer and Golež Kaučič) contains all types of narrative songs except for those about animals and humorous ones, which will be published in volume 6. This collection also presents the melodies along with the texts, a feature Štrelkelj's collection lacked.

The **definition** of “folk ballad” in Slovenian and European folklore studies has been more or less clear since 1966, when the first international meeting of ballad scholars, the Ballad Commission (KfV) of the International Society for Ethnology and Folklore (SIEF), was held in Freiburg.

Participants there accepted the following definition: “A ballad is a song that tells a story that is pointedly dramatic” (Kumer 1998: 31). On the basis of the resolution accepted at this meeting, Zmaga Kumer prepared a catalogue of ballad types, *Vsebinski tipi slovenskih pripovednih pesmi/ Typenindex slowenischer Erzähllieder* (Type Index of Slovenian Ballads) which was published bilingually in Slovenian and German in 1974. It represents one of the first European ballad catalogues. Since 1966 we have considered ballads to be narrative songs with dramatic emphasis regardless of whether they end tragically or happily. Folklorists assert that the word “ballad” in the sense of narrative song was also brought into literature with Gottfried August Bürger’s “Lenore,” published in 1774. “Lenore” became a textbook example of an artistic ballad with completely prescribed content, even though it was based on the example of folk ballads and also appears as a folk ballad in other national ballad traditions. In Slovenia it was popularized not only through Prešeren’s (France Prešeren was Slovenian the greatest poet from 19th c. and the seventh stanza of his poem *Zdravljica* is Slovenian anthem) translation of Bürger’s original; it also exists and is still sung in a folk version, “Mrtvec pride po ljubico” (A Dead Man Comes for His Beloved, A SLP I/59). In international use, the word “ballad” as a technical term was taken over from German folklorists, and the examples of folk ballads were originally taken to be northern ones, such as the English, Scottish, and Scandinavian ballads.

Slovenian folk ballads may be defined as follows: “*Concise narrative songs with occasionally more pronounced dramatic or dialog structure, with at least three types of rhythmic structures and diverse melodies with or without choruses, with a special method of narration (singing), and a sad or happy ending.*”

Ballads are not only a reflection of reality, but a *creative image of reality*.

In addition to text, texture (or melodies), and context, the **bearers** or transmitters of the ballad in Slovenia are also very important; not only do they call ballads “old” or “sad” songs, they also distinguish these songs from others. These bearers are always individuals, but of course they are not isolated from the culture of their time, so their selection and interpretation of ballads is also very individual. There are a number of prominent folk ballad singers, such as Katarina Zupančič (a.k.a. Živčkova Katra) from Vinje (in Upper Carniola), who was a type of “traveling or itinerate singer” that “wore nice clothes for Carnival, went from house to house and sang” (Kumer 1986: 169). Other examples include Ana Foladore from Resia, Marija Tekavec (née Skajževa) from Lower Carniola, and Rozika Ofič from Styria, all of whom could sing numerous ballads. Their repertoire demonstrates that they individually selected songs based on their own interests and also based on their life stories (see also Golež Kaučič 2001: 170–172).

Typology

Slovenians have over **337 types of ballads**, and Slovenia by no means lags behind the regions richest in ballads, such as Scandinavia (e.g., Denmark has 539 types), Great Britain (English and Scots **305** in Child collection), and other Slavic countries. The originality of Slovenian ballads lies in

their themes rather than forms. They are classified into eight groups by theme: heroic and historical; myths and fairy tales; legendary; social: love; family; animals and humor; and miscellaneous. The following statistics indicate the relative shares of each type: mythological content (12%), historical (3%), social (6%), legendary (42%), humorous and miscellaneous (5%), and love and family together (34%) (Kumer 1996). Ballads are known throughout all of Slovenia, but some regions have more than others; particularly rich areas include the area around Kamnik and Moravče, the southern foothills of Pohorje, the Ribnica Valley, Resia, and southern Prekmurje (Kumer 2002).

There are three thematic groups within the Slovenian ballad tradition: general European, Slavic, and originally Slovenian:

1. **General European** content: these include ballads about a girl soldier, "Godec pred peklom (Orphic myth)," "Rošlin in Verjanko (Orestes myth)," and ballads about the return of a husband to his wife's wedding, about the brother that poisons his sister, and about dead bones.

Because ballads or their motifs or themes can travel and establish themselves in various national traditions, one can say that particular national traditions receive them and thereafter transform them in their own way, or that particular traditions take over an entire reservoir of content, motifs and themes, myths, and so on independently of others; these represent "archetypal" stories. One example is the Slovenian "Jelengar," which was first the Dutch "Halewyn," and later German "Ullinger." Some German ballads were brought to Slovenia by the Kočevje Germans, who came to Slovenia in the 14th century, but they also took some Slovenian ballads with them back to Germany after second WW, such as "Lepa Vida." The one among them that is still known is the originally Slovenian ballad "Desetnica" (The Tenth Daughter), which does not have any corollaries in ballad form elsewhere in Europe; the motif is known only in prose form. "The Twa (Two) Sisters," a well-known Anglo-Scottish ballad, which David Atkinson believes is one of the few true folk ballads according to all the new criteria (2002: 212), is the story of a murder in which a musical instrument is made from the victim's body; it is known in song or prose tradition through all of Europe. Slovenia has only one recorded version, "Gosli iz človeškega telesa izdajo umor" (A Fiddle Made from a Human Body Reveals a Murder, SLP I/52, see Roth 1968). Slovenian ballad tells of two sisters that are in love with one boy; the boy has chosen the younger one. Out of jealousy and because of the property, the older one murders the younger one by pushing her into the sea. The murder is later revealed when a fisherman catches a bone, makes a fiddle out of it, and starts to play (Golež Kaučič 2007, 2018)

2. **Slavic:** these include the ballad about the brigand's wife; the ballad of the River Man's wife; and ballads about the spurned lover that puts a spell on the unfaithful one; and about the shepherd whose heart is torn from his chest by three women. An example of the first type, known as "Kata, Katalena: Z razbojnikom omožena" (Kata, Katalena: Married to a Robber, SLP V/248) contains the theme of a woman married to a robber and murderer; it is Slavic and probably comes from the Common Slavic culture or heritage because it is known to all Slavic peoples in their own particular

variants (Kumer 2002).

3. **Originally Slovenian:** the ballads of the rescue of a girl from the hands of a Turkish abductor; of the miller who quarreled with Death; of the galley slave; and of the dancer carried off by the devil and Desetnica (The Tenth Daughter, SLP I/51).

Function: The Slovenian folk ballad has a few other particulars that distinguish it from artistic ballads, which it is perhaps necessary to especially emphasize. It is compact both as a story and in its form; it has a melody and a particular role in the people's lives. A ballad can take the role of a dirge (such as the ballads of the death of the bride on her wedding day, of the widower at his wife's grave, and of the death of girl who has married far away). Singing was always a part of group labor, such as harvesting grapes, weeding, shucking corn, spinning, or shelling beans, and often ballads were among the songs sung. In Slovenia there was a custom, which is retained in some places today, that the deceased were laid out at home on a bier, around which the members of the household, relatives, and friends would gather and sing; in this context the ballad takes on the role of a dirge or wake song. Some ballads have been preserved until the present because of this custom. They can also be devotional songs (in the Karst region there is a Three Kings carol that has the legendary ballad of Mary and the ferryman as its central part), lullabies (such as the ballad of a servant girl whose child is murdered by the lord's wife), and children's songs (such as "Povodni mož" GNI M 20.713, Kumer 1975: 454).

The **ballad as a dance tune** is also preserved at the southern edge of Slovenia in White Carniola, where at the winter solstice celebration on 27 December they danced the round dance while singing a **fairy tale ballad** of a shepherd whose heart is torn from his chest while he sleeps by three women – his mother, his sister, and his lover. The ballad is called "Tri žene iztrgajo mladeniču srce: Pobelego polje z ovčama" (Three Women Tear Out a Young Man's Heart: A Field White with Sheep, SLP I/23), and the dance rhythm is taken from the song rhythm to create the round dance, which came to Slovenia from the Balkans with the Uskoks (Ramovš 1979: 305-312). This dance and step are similar than Faroe dance and steps.

Some Slovenian ballads that are now already part of the ballad tradition are of recent origin; they were created from the second half of the 19th century to the mid-20th century in eastern Styria and are also called "farewell songs." They were created based on real accidents or killings with narration of the individuals, places, and dates, as a sort of wake song, broadsheet song, or obituary song. In England this type of song is known as a *broadside ballad*, in Germany as a *Bänkelsang*, and in Bohemia and Moravia as a *kramářská píseň*. Only later did they become ballad and thematize the murder of lovers, killings during serenading, the sudden death of a daughter, or the killings of mothers or sons (SLP IV/218, 219; SLP V/253, 254, 276, 277). In these, the folk singer expressed his or her own horror at the terrible event – which is colorfully described – commended the deceased, and mentioned the sorrow of his loved ones (Kumer 1996: 30).

Slovenian ballad today

What is the state of the ballad in Slovenia today? At present, ballads are alive in various forms and diverse contextual circumstances, but ballads in the proper meaning of the word are still timeless stories that amaze and always leave open a large semantic space.

We can observe ballad in several contemporary phenomena:

1. The authentic folk song still recording on the field (living folk tradition)
2. Stage interpretations of folk ballads that folk singers are performers at festivals (meetings of folk singers and musicians and folk dance group performances) for audiences
3. Revivals and reinterpretations of ballads by folk performers as well as artistic adaptation by jazz, pop, rock, classical performers and composers
4. Literarization/folklorization in prose, poetry, drama and in modern dance
5. Renditions in painting (Golež Kaučič 2001)

BALLADS AND THEIR MODERN LITERARY, DRAMA, MUSICAL AND DANCE TRANSFORMATIONS

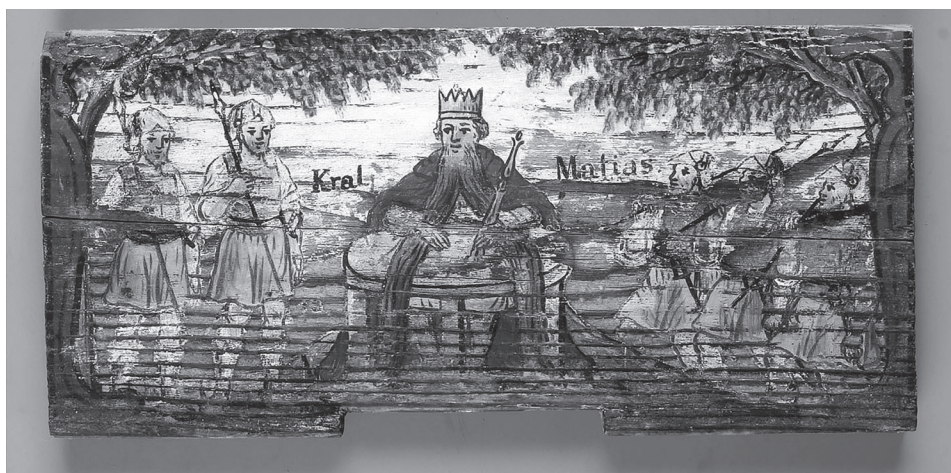


Figure 1: Kralj Matjaž, Beehive Panel, Slovenian Ethnographic Museum, Ljubljana, Slovenia, No. 2338

1. **Lepa Vida in Kralj Matjaž** (Lovely Vida and King Mathias): demonstrates how folk ballads can also be interpreted using psychological or psychoanalytical theory and theory based on archetypes and their symbolic representations, which can also be applied to folklore (Jung 1995; 2017, von Franz 1997). Kralj Matjaž/King Matthias and Lepa Vida/ Lovely Vida represent a hero and a heroine in Slovenian folk song and narrative tradition, and they can be perceived as male and female archetypal symbols or symbolic representations (anima, animus). Lovely Vida, who can be traced in the female archetypal variants of the ballad "Lovely Vida," is a heroine that is kidnapped by the Saracens in this folk song, but later on she became a symbolic archetype of a dissatisfied and suffering woman that longs to move abroad and "be somewhere else and something different," but

that at the same time also symbolizes an inexhaustible life force. King Matthias, who is presented as an archetypal hero in two song variants—“Kralj Matjaž reši svojo ugrabljeno ženo” (King Matthias Saves His Kidnapped Wife) and “Kralj Matjaž rešen iz ječe” (King Matthias Saved from Prison)—is manifested as a clever, experienced hero that saves others with his wisdom and becomes a superhero or a mythological character. This is strongly evident in the literarization of both characters and stories through various literary and historical periods of Slovenian literature, in which the ballads “Lovely Vida” and “Kralj Matjaž” (King Matthias) have undergone numerous literarizations. They have both formed strong intertextual series over the course of literary history. For example, Lovely Vida acquires a connotation of longing, objectification, and consumerism from France Prešeren to Jani Oswald and Andrej Rozman, and King Matthias becomes demythicized, with the hero assuming the passivity of the anima and becoming an instrumentalized symbol of consumer society in works by Jani Oswald and Maja Haderlap and tragic story of Slovenian women who had to go to become a wet nurse in Alexandria by Jani Kovačič (Golež Kaučič 2018, Kovačič 2021 : Lepa Vida lešandrinska – Lovely Vida from Alexandria). Over the course of history, they first become mythological poems, whereas in the modern world they are demythicized and objectified. However, in Slovenian tradition both King Matthias and Lovely Vida are also manifested with “national symbols,” they appear in various cultural and social environments, and they achieve wide canonization because they continue to come back into social and cultural circulation.

1. Vida, Vida, Vida was washing swaddling clothes,
Was washing swaddling clothes, up to her knees in puddle.
2. A black negro came to her: “What are you doing here, Vida,
On this white sand, on this black sea?”
3. “Vida, Vida, Vida, why are you no longer so fair,
Why are you not so fair as you were in those first years?”
4. How can Vida be as fair as she was in those first years,
with a young boy crying in his cradle, and old husband moaning by the stove (SLP V/244)

Lepa Vida in Comic book: <http://www.ljudmila.org/forum/kociper/vida01s.html>

*In one hot day in August
Lovely Vida went to Trieste
To buy a diapers for a baby
And pills for ill husband.*

*And when she bought all this
She went to the park and rest [...] (Excerpt).*

Lepa Vida Lešandrinska (Lovely Vida from Alexandria)

*Everyone wanted me to leave, so the estate would stay with us,
I nursed in Egypt for our family might survive [...] (Excerpt) (Ženske storije 2021).*

2. A Musician before Hell”: The Orpheus Motif, presents a Slovenian ballad and compares it to certain European ones. “A Musician before Hell” is a Slovenian folk ballad that continues the Orpheus tradition, but also heavily transforms it and adds it meanings that reflect the Slovenian historical reality and folklore tradition. The thirty-one variants of the song demonstrate varied story structures and diverse subjects appearing in the role of Orpheus. They can be divided into several song subtypes, from those in which the hero is the musician, the Ninth King, Saint Vitus, and so on, to the variants from Resia, in which king David (known as *Sintilawdeč* in the Resian dialect) is the hero, and the version in which a woman appears in the role of the musician. The ballad contains mythological traces reflected in the act of playing an instrument that allows the musician to enchant or frighten the ruler of the underworld, so that he promises him a reward; this means that music is exceptionally important. The reward is saving a relative from hell. An original Slovenian special feature is the failed rescue of the mother because her sin was too great and she kept looking back. The mythological structure in the ballad is very strong, but also concealed with secular elements or elements of everyday life, and so on the one hand the story is mythological and on the other it reflects certain conditions in life that are connected with traditions and the Christian views of the world of the living and the dead. The European tradition also contains Sorbian, Moravian, English, Danish, and Osetian variants of the ballad. In Slovenian literature, the ballad has undergone quite a few literarizations, ranging from France Prešeren via Ivan Cankar’s *Kurent* to modern literarizations by Gregor Strniša, Veno Taufer, Svetlana Makarovič, and Ivo Svetina, in which the Orpheus motif and the folk ballad “A Musician before Hell” acquired new semantic dimensions. From the ballad one can decipher the people’s attitude toward the world of the dead and toward transcendence illustrated by the heaven-hell and sin-punishment dichotomies. With its various protagonists, the ballad is widespread across Slovenia, but the reception and design of the story vary by region. It becomes a multimedia form that combines sound with meaning (Golež Kaučič 2018).

3. “Fairy tale ballad Desetnica/ The Tenth Daughter”: Fairytale Elements and Fate in literature and music, focuses on the topic of the tenth child born to a family.

1. The Reaper, he has bony legs,
And only God knows where he goes,
Tra-la-li, tra-la-lo,
Only God knows where he goes.

2. Wherever he descends upon,
 Something sad surely occurs,
 Tra-la-li, tra-la-lo,
 Something sad surely occurs.
3. Today he's here, tomorrow there,
 And only God knows when he'll call,
 Tra-la-li, tra-la-lo,
 Only God knows when he'll call.
4. Once there lived ten youthful maids,
 Ten youthful maids, ten sisters young,
 Tra-la-li, tra-la-lo,
 Ten youthful maids, ten sisters young.
5. The Virgin Mary, passing by,
 Wished good fortune to them all,
 Tra-la-li, tra-la-lo,
 She wished good fortune to them all.
6. But no response did she receive,
 Save from the youngest, Marjančica,
 Tra-la-li, tra-la-lo,
 Save from the youngest, Marjančica.
7. Into her pocket Mary dipped,
 And found Marjančka a golden ring,
 Tra-la-li, tra-la-lo,
 She found Marjančka a golden ring.
8. Marjančka scurried home apace,
 And showed her mother the golden ring,
 Tra-la-li, tra-la-lo,
 She showed her mother the golden ring.
9. But Mother took the ring from her,
 And kneaded it into a loaf,
 Tra-la-li, tra-la-lo,

She kneaded it into a loaf.

10. She cut the crust around the bread,
And saved the middle for Marjančka,
Tra-la-li, tra-la-lo,
She saved the middle for Marjančka.

11. Oh cut, Marjančka, cut the bread,
It's you who has to travel on,
Tra-la-li, tra-la-lo,
It's you who has to travel on.

12. I will not drink, I will not eat,
And neither will I stay with you,
Tra-la-li, tra-la-lo,
And neither will I stay with you.

(SLP I/51; Archive no. GNI M 28.213b, recorded 1967, Gorenjska region).

The ballad of the tenth daughter is an original Slovenian ballad, not in terms of motif, but rather the development of the story and the use of two variants or settings (i.e., noble and common). It is thought to have been created in the late Middle Ages in the vicinity of Upper Carniolan castles. Folk tradition treats the tenth child in the family as someone that can harm the family, especially if it is a girl. Therefore, the tenth daughter was persecuted in Christianity as well. In turn, people believed that tenth sons had supernatural powers and so they welcomed them in their homes. The memory of a pagan custom, according to which every tenth part of the crops or livestock, or the tenth child of the same sex, had to be offered to the gods, has been preserved through this song to the present day. Sacrifices were gradually replaced by banishing the child or giving him or her away to the Church. According to some researchers, these ballads contain Old Indic conceptions of descendants, because only male children are important and a family with daughters only may be cursed. Both characters can be connected with nature as well as various beliefs and mythological elements, but the tenth daughter's conversation with the tree is only included in the first two transcriptions—the one by Jožef Rudež and the one edited by France Prešeren, which was also used later by Fran Milčinski. The tenth daughter may also be depicted as the white woman's (i.e., death's) assistant, even though the white woman can also be understood as a type of a fairy that tells one's fortune. The motif of the tenth child may also be associated with the division into months or traveling in a circle. Even though the ballad of the tenth daughter is an original Slovenian ballad, similar songs can be found in the south Slavic tradition. In addition to modern Slovenian poetry, the tenth daughter also finds her place in modern Slovenian folk-revival music, which brings the ballad

back to life and transfers it to new levels of perception because singers no longer perform the ballad in its original form (Bogdana Herman 1995, with music by Svetlana Makarovič). It has experienced many transformations as a literarized song. It has left a strong trace in modern Slovenian poetry, which can be credited to its timeless message that those that are different are often unwanted or even ostracized. This message was included in the most multi-layered and diverse manner in her poems by Svetlana Makarovič 1999, 2002 *Herself*, who even personally identified with the heroine (Golež Kaučič 2008; 2018: 148–151).

Ballad on the stage

Love ballads, also referred to as narrative songs about love fates and conflicts, form a large thematic group (third in terms of frequency) that addresses the most basic and universal emotion. This emotion causes a wide variety of conflicts, responses, dramatic actions, and their outcomes. However, it is not expressed in a lyric manner, but it is hidden inside a plot in which narrative comes to the fore, in the impulsive acts of the ballad subjects, and in the dramatic denouement, which may be tragic or not. The love ballad “Zavrnitev vasovalca” (A Suitor’s Rejection) or “Stoji, stoji Ljubljanca” (Stand, stand the Ljubljana town, SLP IV/222) is about a linden tree in the center of Ljubljana. When in 1775 Dizma Zakotnik wrote down “a song about a dance under the linden tree in Ljubljana’s Old Square,” he may have referred to this linden tree, under which Ljubljana boys/men would gather and decide on how to seduce the girls. One of them starts bragging that he is going to seduce his girl that evening. But the girl hears him, runs home and locks herself into her room, and when the boy comes to seduce her, she prevents him from doing that, scolds him, and tells him she heard him. The song quickly spread across Slovenia, so that there are over a hundred variants altogether. The linden tree in the center of Ljubljana becomes the center of social life and is personified in the song. (OSNP 7505) Because today the song forms part of folklorized dances performed on stage, it has also become part of modern re-creation and, even though it is only partially categorized as a ballad, it does not include a dramatic ending. With the new performative function, which only repeats its original function, it preserves its vitality even outside its authentic environment. This love ballad on the stage became a folklorized song and syncretic art form with music, dance adaptation. And with some city costumes from early 20. century in Ljubljana. Presented by Academic Folklore Group France Marolt (Kunej 2017; Golež Kaučič 2018: 211-215).

Ballad entering in poem in 2018 and got a Ljubljana's ballad trail

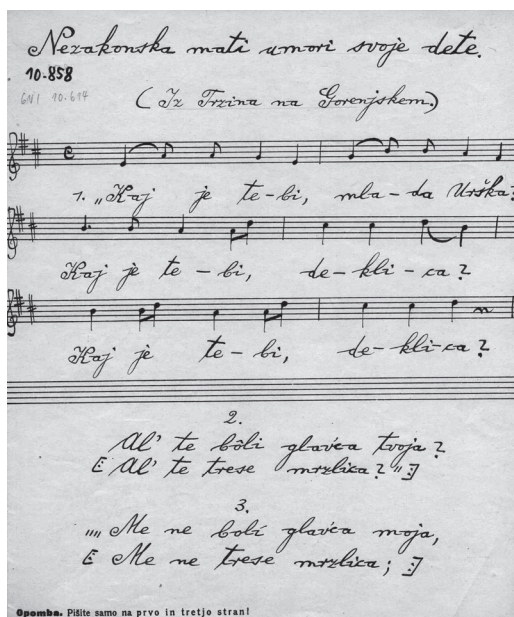


Figure 2. Nezakonska mati umori svoje dete/ Unwedded mother murdered her child, recorded by Franc Kramar, 1914, Archive GNI: Manuscript OSNP, no. 10.858, Gorenjska region. Sung by Elizabeta Perne, 1st page.

Slovenian ballad type no. 287 in Slovenian folk songs and titled **Condemned infanticide** (OSNP 10.858) which we have there in 80 variants from all over the Slovenian ethnical territory. The motif of an unmarried mother that murders or abandons her baby and is punished for that is known in the folksong tradition across nearly all of Europe (Similar theme is in Child: The Cruel Mother: Child 20 or Mary Hamilton: Child 173). Infanticide committed by an unmarried mother is a narrative song topic known to all of humanity, unlimited by time and nationality, which is why it has been adopted by many European nations independently from one another, even though certain mutual influences can nonetheless be seen with individual motif fragments. Urška Mandlovka was beheaded on 22 October 1766 in Ljubljana for the crime of infanticide. She was 17 years old and the most beautiful girl in the St. Peter parish. Her boyfriend and a father of the child was a hired man Jurij. She was put into the jail first, called Tranča (from 1484, where there were different devices for torturing the convicted person) and has been interrogated. She murdered the child because of the fear of very severe punishment of that time and public shame because of being with child out of the wedlock. Urška was condemned to death, but the hangman falls in love with her and proposed her to be his wife and with that act she would not be executed. But since the people believed that the hangman is connected to the devil she refused. The execution took place in Friškovec (outside the city walls) where there was a Ljubljana scaffold and where there was standing a cross made from stone. The "Condemned Infanticide" is a ballad originally created in Ljubljana that later spread

across all of Slovenia, whereby its core content as well as the protagonist remained urban. It was mostly sung by women, who in this way spread the message about the fate of a young woman who found herself torn between her love for the child she did not expect and the demands of the merciless patriarchal society. The thesis is developed that the song's archtext was created by an intellectual that most likely belonged to a higher social class rather than merely by a talented individual, as has been believed so far. Urška Mandlovka (Mandeljc), the protagonist, was a real historical figure, whose story later underwent an extensive series of variants through folklore creativity, whereby different changes to the details were made, but the song's core or content nonetheless remained the same. This is a theme that in addition to its realizations in folklore has also experienced numerous literarizations both in Slovenia and elsewhere in Europe. Infanticide is a basic and archetypal theme derived from real life and strongly anchored in the European cultural memory, and because of its embeddedness in world folklore heritage it also continues to return into cultural circulation. This is also proven by the European literary works dealing with this theme, from Johann Wolfgang Goethe's *Faust* to Jean Paul Sartre's *No Exit*. The analysis of selected literary works also shows what literarizations this theme experienced in Slovenian literature, from Jožef Žemlja's epic song "Sedem sinov" to Svetlana Makarovič's song "Zibelka in Kolovrat" (The Cradle and the Spinning Wheel, 1974). In urban discourse (and in the ballad), the infanticide represented a weak woman that committed the worst crime possible out of the shame of being an unmarried mother, which had to be suitably punished if discovered. The text is an important historical, legal, and even anthropological source because it reveals the relationships between people, the status of women, the legal system of that time, the fates of people that found themselves in difficult situations that went against the demands of the society, and so on. At the same time, it is a sort of reflection of the thinking of a community that remains within the set social frameworks and sees no reason for changing women's status; it only condemns the crime of murdering one's own child, a bloody act that even water cannot wash out. First and foremost, they spread the story and conveyed messages to any woman that might have found herself in the same situation. Later literary depictions during various literary-history periods reflect individual views on women's infanticide as well as criticism of the society's attitude toward women and mothers, and their social position and gender discrimination. Hence, the heroine of this type of ballads and fiction is the woman; the man is practically absent and is merely the one that decides on the woman's future, whereby he, in a way, both fears her and ascribes exceptional power to her as a mother. In 2018 the songwriter Jani Kovačič has written a new ballad according to his attendance of the Ljubljana ballad trail Condemned Infanticide (Balada o Uršuli/ The ballad of Uršula (Bled 2018); *Ženske storije*/ Women stories 2021 and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nc3p3atnimk>)

2. Broke down Ursula, poor and sad:
“Oh, I gave birth to you in a terrible world!
I can’t guard you, I can’t defend you, I can’t feed you.
This burden is too heavy for a young girl!
She moaned, pulling her hair in despair!
In a river drowned she a little child.
With tears she baptized him, with tears she sprinkled him.
That she did Ursula sad. (Excerpt).

Riba Faronika/ Faronika the Fish” in art and ecology



Figure 3: Fresco on church St. Kanzian (from 13. st) in Vrzdeneč (near Ljubljana, Slovenia) with detail of the Faronika the Fish. Photo Rebeka Kunej.

Slovenian mythological ballad is about a water siren-like creature titled “Riba Faronika nosi svet” (Faronika the Fish Carries the World, SLP I/20/2; in Japan: catfish: *Namazu* (鯰) or *Ōnamazu* (大鯰) is a giant underground catfish who causes earthquakes), and gets its depictions in art, literature, and music. Faronika the Fish” and the *Issue of the Universality of Myths* uses the findings and discourses of folklore studies, the theory of archetypes, cultural and critical animal studies, and modern mythological and philosophical studies of water as the origin of the world and the creatures living in it in order to present the Slovenian mythological ballad about a water siren-like creature titled “Riba Faronika nosi svet” (Faronika the Fish Carries the World, SLP I/20/2) and its depictions in art, literature, and music.

A fish swims in the sea,
Faronika the fish.
Jesus swims after her
In the ocean deeps.
“Oh wait, wait, fish,
Faronika the fish.
We’d like to ask you
What’s happening around the world.”
“If I flick my tail,
The whole world will be flooded.
If I turn onto my back,
The whole world will be lost.”
“Oh, don’t, don’t do that, fish,
Faronika the fish.
For the sake of the innocent children,
For the sake of the women with child.”

This mythological ballad reveals the belief that a mythological creature carries the Earth and it reveals the cosmology of our ancestors. It refers to the ancient belief that the world rests on a huge mythological creature shaped like a fish that swims in the sea. If she moves, it causes an earthquake; if she wiggles her tail, it causes floods; and if she turns on her back, it makes the world come to an end. The song contains apocalyptic elements in the form of Jesus’s plea for the fish to abandon her intent for the sake of children and pregnant women, and take pity on them. The song thus combines cosmology and religion, because Jesus is the only one that can persuade the mythological creature not to move. Even though this song is fragmentary, it nonetheless contains a universal character and motif. It also suggests that Faronika the Fish could be an anima because, according to Jung, an anima can be a magical female creature embodied as a mermaid (half fish, half woman). The animus could be Jesus, even though the frescos on the facades of Slovenian churches do not feature Jesus, but rather Saint Christopher, who could also be the animus. Saint Christopher is usually depicted standing in water with various creatures at his feet: fantastic water animals like Faronika the Fish, creatures from Ancient Greek mythology like the centaur, or Jonah from the Old Testament. Iconographic paintings of Faronika the Fish are very common in Slovenian ethnic territory and mostly consist of frescos inside Slovenian churches or on their facades. All older depictions of Faronika the Fish in churches and reliefs show a two-tailed fish, suggesting that the two tails may even represent the two poles of the world or life (i.e., the earthly and the spiritual pole). However, if this mythology is connected with biology, one can see that this mythological creature might have originally been depicted based on a real living being or, more specifically, the seal, whose upper part looks like a human head and lower part like a fish tail split in

two. If the paintings of Faronika the Fish or Melusine, in which the two tails are most common, are compared to the seal today, one can see that they are only a small creative or imaginative step away. This song underwent literarization by numerous Slovenian authors, from Ivan Pregelj to Andrej Rozman. The latter transforms the ballad and transposes it to the modern day with a clear message of the chasm between the rich and poor, and the ecological message that only when humans turn into animals can they feel the horrors of the world caused by humankind, especially by creating the chasm between the rich and poor, humans and animals, and polluting the Earth. The folk singers: Tercet Juhana learned the song for a local celebration with help of CD by a folk revival singer (music), and text from a printed collection of folk songs (Karel Štrekelj's SNP) and from the Internet and sung a ballad in dialect with no changes in text. The performance of Jani Kovačič, who is one of the few Slovenian singer-songwriters who changed the lyrics of the song, is also interesting (http://www.kud.si/index.php/Projekt:Akkustik_teAter/Prastare_Pesmi.) Kovačič believes that the world is and is not yet. Moving the Faronika Fish is therefore about eternal renewal and renewal of the world, when the end is only a new beginning. Thus, Faronika the Fish is a creature of water and earth in a song that carries prophecies from the past over into the present (Golež Kaučič 2015; 2018).

Conclusion

Slovenian folk ballads are determined through language and characteristics that belong to a single ethnic pool. Because Slovenians have never had any proper "national" epics, this role was assumed by ballads. Some of them turned into key texts or archetypal stories. The archetypal ballad stories transition in song form from folk tradition into the text canon through education and the constant repetition and transformation of meanings, including through intertextual processes, and they return into the cultural and literary circulation through various memory processes. Hence, they experience various dynamic processes in culture and society. Slovenian folk ballads change through their variants, but their melodies are far more subject to change than their texts. Singers can adopt the melodies as they wish, but it is true that individual formulas or word phrases may also change from one song to the next. The number of variants of an individual song depends on the reception of the text and the transfer and stability of the core story, which, however, must convey timeless messages or attractive stories at any time or place. Folk ballads, first aurally and later also visually, dramatize a concise core event without departing from it or explaining it, using a nearly film-like language that makes it possible to switch from the present to the past and to identify with the protagonist's situation or his or her battle with the fatal circumstances. It can be argued that ballads constitute a narrative genre, which, however, usually expands its dramatic quality rather than narration, while sometimes also being on the verge of lyricism, especially when it comes down to ballad fragments or when the core of the conflict is lost. Multimediality may be another paradigm describing Slovenian folk ballads. Folk ballads are composed of a type and variant, are embedded in the idiom of tradition, and their content is conveyed through singing; they

are intertextual and intermedial. Ballad stories are sung texts that function as accumulators or generators of meaning: works from the past represent starting points based on which cultural production continues to redefine its identity; at the same time, they are the bases of possible reconstructions and authorial adaptations and actualizations. In addition, their topics are so universal that they can be accepted by all social strata, regardless of gender or ethnic and social identity, and are not limited by time. Slovenian folk ballads are part of an enormous creative continuum by using selected examples that can demonstrate the traditional, as well as artistic, aesthetic, and emotive value of ballads for those that sing them and for those that listen to them.

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