

TYPICAL INTER-TEXTUAL ASPECTS BETWEEN SLOVENIAN FOLK SONG AND CONTEMPORARY SLOVENIAN POETRY

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The period in which individual contemporary Slovenian creative writers drew on the Slovenian folk song may be marked off by the years 1958 and 1990 (this being the period studied in our project). The basic finding is that contemporary Slovenian poetry emerged within a circle of a great number of creative writers whose work showed a wide variety of associations with the folk song. Many authors, from Svetlana Makarovic to Boštjan Seliškar, drew on the form or content of particular folk songs. The folk song is built into the contemporary poem as a totality of melody and words, and in the diversity of its poetic procedure, as a memory formula.

It is true to say of all contemporary Slovenian poets that they have encountered the form and content of particular folk songs as eternally circulating elements coming to light from memory, tradition or the subconscious, becoming joined like palimpsests with the new content and form of a particular poem. All that is needed for the forms and content of folk songs circulating in time to become part of a certain work of contemporary Slovenian poetry is a single moment or emotional impulse in the poet's creativity.¹ Or, as T.S. Eliot put it: "which was [. . .] in suspension in the poet's mind until it to the proper combination arrived for it to add itself to."² In contemporary poetry the folk song finds its place at the point where individuality becomes generalised with the popular, where the "national spirit" becomes crystallised, and where the general is to be found in the particular and the particular in the general. The folk song is a reflection of the community, passing from one creative mind to many other mouths; in every particular variant it finds its content and thus is found by the contemporary poet.

And the semantic circulation and variation of the motifs, themes and forms of the folk song are resumed in contemporary poetry by past, present and future memory.

The basic categories of contemporary Slovenian poetry in relation to folk poetry are: tradition, memory, myth, search, ethnicity, ethos, death and

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¹ Cf. Bojana Stojanovic, "Poetika univerzalizma v mladem slovenskem pesništvu" [The poetics of universalism in young Slovenian poetry], in: Zbornik - *Sodobni slovenski jezik, književnost in kultura*, Ljubljana, Filozofska fakulteta, 1988, p. 136 and p. 161.

² T.S. Eliot, "Tradicija in individualni talent" [Tradition and the Individual Talent], in: *Iz pesmi, dram in esejev*, translated by Janez Stanek, Ljubljana, Cankarjeva založba, 1977, p. 222.

love. The interaction of folk elements and contemporary aspirations has extended to three levels of poetic creativity: to the linguistic-poetic, social commitment and intimate levels.

The folk song, as a syncretic unit with music as its channel of communication and text as its communicator of content, likewise has a life of its own. Text, texture (melody) and context further expand this life into the sphere of music and specific functions within a particular context. The whole of the folk song can be united with the search for the whole in contemporary poetry.

The most interesting cases range from merely incidental common features to whole inter-textual strings and can be found in two contemporary Slovenian poets, Veno Taufer and Gregor Strniša. In the development of contemporary Slovenian poetry they proceed from identical historical points of departure. In ideas and philosophy they are fundamentally different, but they are nevertheless inter-textually related: Strniša uses Taufer's verses from the cycle *Nemi Orfej* [The Dumb Orpheus] as a motto for his collection of poetry *Odisej* [Odysseus] in the *Dom* [Home] cycle (1963); Taufer relies for motifs and themes on Strniša (*Odisej, Orfej in Evridika*) – [Odysseus, Orpheus and Euridice] [...] And they are both intertextually connected with the folk song/ballad. Taufer's collection entitled *Jetnik prostosti* [The Prisoner of Freedom] (1963) contains a cycle that already touches on the most sensitive myth of Slovenian literature – the Orphic myth, *The Dumb Orpheus* – and communicates to us the powerlessness of the Word. Taufer found his place in the folk song, in a variant string of the folk ballad *Godec pred peklom* [The Fiddler Before Hell]. Since Orpheus is silent in his poem, or society has no ear for his poem, Taufer, in his later *Pesmarica rabljenih besed* (1975) [A Song-Book of Used Words], resolves this dilemma in four poems entitled *Godec pred peklom* so that it is no longer Orpheus who sings but things.

The most evident inter-textual relations between folk songs and poems by individual authors can be seen in the phenomenon whereby particular works with similar contents come up through various periods and form inter-textual sets.³

Inter-textuality (according to Kristeva) is a property of texts which carry in themselves elements of existing texts, establishing a variety of

³ "Inter-textual series, which extend over several centuries, emerge especially when 'working on the myth', which leads to newer and newer versions and variants; they want that which is in the myth provoked and what cannot be ultimately consumed to become again and again mediated to the contemporary horizons of expectations (Pfister 1985a: 5-8). Works having a "common subject-matter" represent accordingly a special literary tradition (Vodicka 1976: 53-54), which is a significant factor in the identity and continuity of the system of the national or international literary unit." In Marko Juvan, *Imaginarij Kersta pri Savici v slovenski literaturi: medbesedilnost recepcije*, Ljubljana, Literatura, 1990, p. 2.

connections with them; these elements have a variety of roles in new texts.⁴ This property will be observed in the poetic realisations of two inter-textual sets named after two folk songs/ballads: *Galjot* and *Godec pred peklom* by Taufer and Strniša.

Both authors have in common:

1) the folk ballad as a spiritual foundation of the individual inter-textual set;

2) most of the poetic treatments of folk songs by the two authors proceed from a song that has a story at its poetic core: Slovenian folk songs/ballads.

The inter-textual set is made up of texts passed on through different periods of time that emerge in various literary periods in great numbers and are used by different authors so that they form a set. For example, *Mrtvec pride po ljubico* (Lenora) comes from the 18th century and has a series of realisations right up to the present day.⁵

Each inter-textual set is in fact a set of independent variants based on a common motif or theme. Each such set bears evidence of: the supra-temporal nature of the theme; the everlasting or repeatedly established topicality of the motif or theme; and powerful existential, ethic or ethnic charges. These sets re-establish the most varied meanings in the dialogue-determined world of culture.

Inter-textuality is one specific relation between folk texts and contemporary

⁴ Cf. Note 3, pp. 2127. See also: Julia Kristeva, *Semiotiké*, Recherches pour une sémanalyse (in French), Paris, Seuil, 1969.

⁵The folk ballad *Mrtvec pride po ljubico* [The Dead Man Comes to Get His Beloved] and the poetic reworking of Burger's *Lenore* by the Slovenian romantic poet France Prešeren have melded into one motif-nucleus used as a source by many poets. Thus we can observe an interesting and subtle set starting with the folk song (Š 61: Karel Štrekelj, *Slovenske narodne pesmi* [Slovenian Folk Songs] I-IV, facsimile of the 1895-1923 editions, Ljubljana, Cankarjeva založba, 1980) as the original version A and Prešeren's *Lenora* (Kranjska Cbelica - Slovenian literary review from 1830), on the basis of which the folk song *Mrtvec pride po ljubico* originates, as version B (SLP I (60: *Slovenske ljudske pesmi* I (narrative songs/ballads: Heroic, Historical, Fairy and Mythological), edited by Boris Merhar, Milko Maticetov, Zmaga Kumer, Valens Vodusek, Ljubljana, Slovenska matica, 1970). This is continued with the artistic treatment of this basic motif. Poetic renderings vary in both style and content (Jenko's *Knezov zet* [Prince's Son-In Law] (1860) combines within itself a transformation of the song about a gardener serving the lord of a castle and the motif of the dead man coming to get his beloved), and they undergo considerable "damage", inversions, stylisations and complete changes (*Vojakova nevesta* [The Soldier's Bride] (1890) by Aškerc, *Lenorina pesem* [Lenora's Song] (1963) by Strniša, *Lenora* (1972) by Makarovic, *Želod* [The Acorn] (1972) by Strniša, *Sveder* [The Gimlet] (1983) by Zagorčnik, *Lenora* (1988) by Vincentic) to set up a series similar to seven dispersed arrows coming from the same point of departure but directed at different targets (meanings), in various forms (ways). Cf. Marjetka Golež, *Slovenska ljudska pesem in sodobna slovenska poezija* [The Slovenian Folk Song and Contemporary Slovenian Poetry], Ph D, Ljubljana 1993, 322 pp. plus 200 pp. appendices.

Slovenian poems, yet we have parallel or successively (i.e. one along with the other, or one following the other) arranged texts, and a syncretic organism of text and melody.

For this reason we distinguish between two types of inter-textuality. The first combines inter-textuality with music and is part of folk poetics, its structure being: a) prototext as one of different variants of folk songs (sometimes archetext, which is the first in a series of variants of the folk song, emerges as prototext; due to the anonymity of the folk artist the variant is usually difficult to define); and b) mettext as all other variants of a folk song. The structure of the second type of inter-textuality is: a) prototext as a folk song; b) metatext as a written poem containing folk song elements.⁶

These different kinds of inter-textuality may be observed in the two most significant representatives of contemporary Slovenian poetry, Taufer and Strniša. While diametrically opposed in their attitude towards the world, poetry and folk song, it is through the motifs of the folk song/ballad that they often become inter-textually related. Taufer has chosen the folk song/ballad for the experimental procedure of building quotations into his poems; he has chosen the element of variance characteristic of folk songs and made use of those of its thematic fragments "which thrillingly attracted him".⁷ Through these fragments he started on his path from a small microcosmic perspective of viewing the world towards the universe (e.g. stone, the bone of a dead person), unlike Strniša, who has proceeded from a cosmic perspective (stars, universe). The inter-textual contacts enumerated above can be very clearly analysed in two intertextual sets: *Galjot* [The Galliot] and *Godec pred peklom* [The Fiddler Before Hell] – the latter is concerned with the Orphic myth. Both authors draw on the folk song/ballad and are spiritually linked to each other through the same motif.

Inter-textuality in contemporary poetry functions as a new turn in culture or as the re-establishment of the meaning of the preceding poems containing the same motif⁸. The new poem calls the folk song/ballad, as well as all realisations of the motif up to now, into the reader's horizon of memory, thus awakening the memory of forgotten meanings. The basic texts (the folk songs/ballads *The Galliot* and *The Fiddler Before Hell*) and their musicality re-establish themselves within the new poetic organism

⁶Cf. Anton Popovic, *Aspects of Metatext*, Canadian Review of Comparative Literature / Revue Canadienne de littérature comparée, Edmonton, Academic Printing and Publishing, 1976, 3, pp. 225-235.

⁷Veno Taufer, *Pesmarica rabljenih besed* [The Song-Book of Used Words], DZS, Ljubljana, Accompanying Word, 1975, p. 43.

⁸Cf. note 4, p. 30.

Marjetka Kaucic, "Typical Inter-Textual Aspects"

(*The Galliot*: folk song/ballad – archetext, prototext and metatexts: Taufer, Strniša, Vincentic; *The Fiddler Before Hell* - archetext, prototext of the folk song/ballad and metatexts: Taufer, Strniša, Makarovic).

GALJOT
Medbesedilni niz

Predloga	Pologa 1	Pologa 2	Pologa 3
<i>Ljudska</i>	<i>Strniša II</i>	<i>Taufer B</i>	<i>Vincentic A</i>
Galjot je vozil galejico Vseskozi je prosil boga De b' še enkrat na suhem stal, De b' še enkrat prišel na dom.	Slani pesek, morska ravan pod žgocim soncem se smehlja Galjot z zaprtimi ocmi, z mrtvaško temnimi dlanmi.	le vlecite te žile vesla še veselite se še globoko v meso morja še globoko skozi val še v brezno še do dna znoja	Še sedem let bom prikovan devet pa v železju ponoci ne odplavaj stran podnevi sem z nevesto.

*THE GALLIOT*⁹
Inter-textual set

Original version	Version 1	Version 2	Version 3
<i>Folk song</i>	<i>Strniša II</i>	<i>Taufer B</i>	<i>Vincentic A</i>
The galliot was rowing his little galley All the time he was praying to God That he might once more stand on dry land That he might once more come home.	Salty hell, the plain of the sea Smiling under the parching sun on, The Galliot with closed eyes, With deadly dark palms.	Just pull on these veins on the oars deeply into the flesh of the sea further on deeply through the wave Into the abyss, onwards to the bottom of sweat	Another seven years I'll be chained down and another nine in iron. At night do not swim away, by day I am with my bride.

⁹ Gallioti were rowers working on galleys, which were warships propelled by oars and used from the 14th to 17th centuries, especially in Mediterranean states. Galleys had 25 or more oars on each side and every oar had 3-4 men (in the later larger Venetian galleasses, up to 8 men per oar). The oarsmen were convicts, slaves, prisoners of war or even volunteers. The gallioti/convicts were in the worst position; they were constantly chained to their benches, many of them for a lifetime. There were not only criminals among them but all kinds of “heretics”, mutineers and the like. Gallioti were forced to row with brute force, and criminals were particularly mercilessly lashed (cf. Boris Merhar, *Slovenske ljudske pesmi* [Slovenian Folk Songs], Ljubljana, Mladinska knjiga, 1963; *Desetnica* [The Tenth Daughter], Ljubljana, Mladinska knjiga, 1994, p. 164 and p. 288).

The folk ballad *The Galliot* (Š 250) is about a galliot who is merely a tragic figure from medieval times. This is a song about an unfortunate man who has been forgotten by his kin, who have arranged their lives differently; he therefore gives them up, determined to spend his life on the galley and to die there: "Rejoice, little fish, as you'll pick my bones." Strniša¹⁰ introduces his poem with an empirical quotation from a folk ballad, using it as a motto for his five-part poem: "Do you, handsome and young lad, know / How are they faring back at home ?" / "At your home they are fine, / Your son will be saying his first mass [...]". Strniša's poem acquires symbolic dimensions, although it is based on a folk ballad that tells a true story. By making a particular reference (in this case an empirical quotation) and by bringing in a figure from the folk ballad, we can observe interesting meaningful transformations emerge when the two texts touch upon each other. Strniša's poem *The Galliot* tells the supra-temporal story of a man who rows his vessel of life for as long as "from the sky Orion shines into the spring night." It seems that the story of the Galliot repeats itself through space and time. At one moment the galliot is young again and although he is aware that he is in chains, he can dream that he is free. But this is already the author's complement to the folk motif, for if time and space do not exist then this living environment, the vessel, cannot seem so limited and final. Strniša also touches on the folk ballad by the allusive reference "fish swim in the water", which is reminiscent of the last stanza of the folk ballad, where the galliot comes to realise that he will die on the galley, whereas Strniša turns this verse into a metaphor for ever-moving life. This poem wholly transforms the motif of the folk song/ballad, modernising and exposing its meaning.

The poem has five parts, and each part is a tri-partite composition of three four-line stanzas with assonances. The first part is a surrealistic picture of birth and death. In content it is wholly original, only stylistically drawing on the folk ballad through the composition of stanzas. In the second part of the poem the galliot, presented by Strniša as a supratemporal figure, emerges: "The galliot with closed eyes, / with deadly dark palms. . . / And the oar heavy as a thousand years / and as long as nine nights." The galliot does not see the coming and going of the spring, caught as he is in his eternal rhythm of rowing. The third part is again a jump over into natural events, the rotation of the seasons, and the arrival of winter which, however, the galliot again does not see (IVth part), for "In the port a black vessel, / on it, in chains, the galliot sleeps." In the fifth part of the poem Strniša transfers the events, the sailing of the vessel, from our realistic world into the cosmos; he changes the vessel into a black cloud which resembles it. He concludes the poem with the insight that whereas man's

¹⁰Gregor Strniša, *Galjot* [The Galliot] (*Zvezde*, Ljubljana, Državna založba Slovenije, 1965, pp. 54 - 61).

life may be caught in everyday events and time, man can nevertheless see more: "The cloud has disappeared, from the sky/ Orion shines into the spring night." In the poet's compositional organisation of his work, the folk ballad has acquired the role of concretising real and recurrent life, while the galliot has become a symbol of man, of a voluntary slave to the world and to life who, in his dreams or when looking into the sky, may forget reality.

The poem *Ladja* [The Vessel] from the collection *Podatki* [Data] (Ljubljana, 1972) by Venko Taufer already carries in itself the past in the present and vice versa; it brings a destruction of meaning and form, which are broken down into individual elements, thus forming new meaning. It presents an inter-textual reference to the folk poem, and indirectly to Strniša, and, with the whole mosaic of syntagms, sentences and idiomatic phrases, it calls forth the popular *Galliot*: "bent horizon / the blind galliot" and establishes a frame of meaning similar to that of Strniša. For Taufer as well the vessel is a symbol of life, guided by the blind galliot, a man who does not see although above him there are "the stars of all the seas". Imagery has been replaced by metonymy. The "blind galliot" from the folk ballad has an expressly metaphoric value. The association extends to the man/individual on the vessel of life. This is no longer a narrated story, it is the communication of existential philosophy. The story of an individual, known from the folk ballad, has been transferred by Taufer to the level of the community; in this way he became associated with folk elements via the man of folk song/ballad (the main hero or folk singer) who is a man of community rather than man as an individual. The author returns to *Galliot* again, in two variants of this poem in *Pesmarica rabljenih besed* [Song-Book of Used Words] (Ljubljana, 1975, pp. 23-24), where he uses precisely this poem to illustrate the state of being without a native land, without a home. In the search for meaning in the absurdity of existence, the main hero, allusively evoked only in the title, reaches out for some seemingly solid thing, the vessel (symbol of life) – "back to the vessel while there is still time" (*The Galliot 1*). Of his own accord he attaches himself to this empty existence, to the only life he knows: "Just pull on, these veins, pull on the oars [...]". The motif is highly transformed, and references to the folk song are rare. Taufer exposes the magic of language, new associative meanings, new phonic aspects; the elliptical sentences are indicative of the incision in rhythm. In this poem, meanings which are seemingly disconnected are idiomatically related only by the principle of the proximity of meaning and the parallelistic construction of the text. Metonymy is a poetic procedure which Taufer uses as a pars-pro-toto principle in association with the folk song as well: that the verse denotes a whole through something individual. If we look more closely at both poems, we find in the first (*The Galliot*) only incessant movement, search, the fluctuation of activity, of feelings, thoughts and cognition; the person may be the poet, the galliot or the reader.

The entire poem is weighed down by oppressive moments, words jostle along, and nothing has remained of the folk ballad *Galliot*. Only the words “vessel”, “oar” and “sail” remind us of the folk ballad. In the last two-verse stanzas we can hear the rhythm of rowing and the efforts of the vessel pushing itself through the fog and the wind. Here Taufer, using the rhythm of charms, comes close to the folk song/ballad: “the oar through the grey mist, the sail through the grey wind / light in the water, bodies in the wood, sand in the skin.”

The second poem (*The Galliot 2*) consists of one stanza. It contains a reflection of the folk ballad with some quotations taken from it: “rejoice” (an allusion to the verse in the folk ballad “rejoice, little fish, as you will drink my blood.”) By condensing words and their meanings, Taufer communicated the truth of how inevitable rowing is on the vessel of life: “Rejoice, go on, deeply into the flesh of the sea, deeply through the wave / into the abyss onwards to the bottom of the sea.” For Taufer the symbolic reality, the illusion, is important and not the real objects or states in the course of life; and this gives a new ontological dimension to the text. The vessel symbolises the world in both Taufer’s and Strniša’s poems. Taufer’s galliot is blind; Strniša’s counterpart is likewise not gifted with eyesight. But perhaps both poets –by pointing in the direction of the folk ballad– want to open their readers’ eyes to see significant things.

GODEC PRED PEKLOM
Medbesedilni niz

Predloga	Pologa 1	Pologa 2	Pologa 3
<i>Ljudska</i>	<i>Strniša</i>	<i>Taufer B</i>	<i>Makarovic</i>
Šal je Deveti kralj v en lepi smenj je kupil gosli pa crn lok, šal je pred peklenske vrata gost. Pred peklam je godel letni dan, oj letni dan in noc in dan.	Pridi. Potopi roko v strune in les glasbila bo vzcvetel v temen zven. Cez veliko noci bo težki šcit lune vrnil šepetajoc odmev.	deveti kralj okrog prazen votlo znotraj noter v kost piska skoz in skoz naprej nazaj deveti kralj	Po morju se vozi deveti mož deveti mož, žalostni mož, kaj pa je tebi deveti mož, da si tako hudo žalosten.

THE FIDDLER BEFORE HELL
Inter-textual set

Original version	Version 1	Version 2	Version 3
<i>Folk song</i>	<i>Strniša</i>	<i>Taufer B</i>	<i>Makarovic</i>
The ninth king went to a beautiful fair,	Come. Sink your hand into the strings	the ninth king	The ninth man sails on the sea,
He bought a fiddle and a black bow,	and the wood of the instrument will bloom in the dark sound	around him empty	the ninth man, the sad man,
He went to fiddle at hell's door.	After many nights the heavy shield of the moon	inside him hollow	What is up with you, the ninth man,
He fiddled before hell a year and a day, A year and a night and a day	will return a whispering echo.	he whistles through and through forward backward the ninth king	That you are so deeply sad?

This Slovenian folk ballad is regarded as a continuation of the ancient tradition relating to Orpheus, who went into the underworld to rescue his dead wife Euridice. The old pagan motif was of course adapted –at least externally– to the Christian world. The fiddler who, as a reward for fiddling, chooses one or several of his closest relations sometimes has a fairy name (*pobic*, i.e. boy, the ninth man/the sad man, the ninth king/the sad one), sometimes an heroic one (King Matjaž), and most frequently a legendary one (St Thomas, St Veit, St David; SLP I; p. 282). According to the first record (Vraz, 1834), over 30 variants of this folk ballad were known in Slovenia; but in none of them does the fiddler seek to save his wife from Hell, as Orpheus does from the underworld (death). The fiddler in our folk ballads often succeeds in saving some of his relatives –in two songs even all the souls except that of his mother and another three– from “eternal damnation” in hell and to open for them the way to Heaven (*Desetnica* [The Tenth Daughter], Merhar, p. 274).

The inter-textual set, where we put forward the thesis that it also includes musical elements of the folk ballad is *The Fiddler Before Hell*. The main text and the set of its variants (prototext/archetext, text and

melodies, myth and music) are a kind of multimedia form,¹¹ and this form is a syncretic whole: the folk ballad *The Fiddler Before Hell* (S 65 and SPJ I/48: 3) and its variants.¹²

This original version elaborates the Orphic motif, the motif of the fiddler who, through music, saves his relatives from hell. This is the basic motif that comes up in the inter-textual set in contemporary Slovenian poetry in six realisations. The metatext, *Orfejeva pesem* (Orpheus's Song) by Gregor Strniša (*Odisej*) (1963), transforms the folk ballad as a whole as it transfers the Orphic motif into the present time. Orpheus becomes a symbol of a poet who sings about life. "Come. Sink your hand into the strings / and the wood of the instrument will bloom in the dark sound/ After many nights the heavy shield of the moon / Will return a whispering echo". This part draws attention to the supra-temporal aspect of music/poetry, which does not die and which has a special power resounding in eternity. This metatext is variant 1, which contains in itself the musicality of folk songs/ballads. When a certain song establishes itself in the new text of contemporary poetry, it brings with it musical elements to be sensed in the sonority of the text, in the rhythm and in the assonances of the poem. Strniša's poem is inter-textual, containing the folk ballad only to the extent to which we recognise the Orphic motif, while the four poems by Taufer are already inter-textually closely related to the folk ballad and to the poem by Strniša through the title *The Fiddler Before Hell* (*Pesmarica rabljenih besed*, Ljubljana 1975). All four poems by Taufer represent variant 1 because they contain musical elements and transform the folk text, but they also have elements of metatext 2 as they contain explicit references and several elements from the original version projected from the new semantic environment. The express condensation of meaning (he omits punctuation altogether) accelerates the rhythm of Taufer's poems. Objects have their ring, sound and tone, and all together they have one primeval melody. But some of Taufer's words and their meanings in fact sing or play: "he plays/ the soul on four on three/ on one and more/ and more" (implied is the method of singing of the Slovenian folk song: for two or three voices, for four voices) and "into a bone / he whistles through and through/ forward backward/ the ninth king". The ninth king is the figure quoted from the folk ballad; in Taufer he whistles on his pipe to save souls from the hell of life. The poem also has an emphatic sound quality and rhythm similar to folk charms: "who strikes who cracks [. . .] solid as a bone / procurer of sound [. . .]." Or as the author himself says: "when it is not Orpheus who sings but things, beings and he a being among beings and

¹¹See: A. Hansen-Löwe, "Intertekstualnost i intermedijalnost" [Inter-textuality and inter-mediation] in: *Intertekstualnost & Intermedijalnost*, edited by Zvonko Markovic, Zagreb, Zavod za znanost o književnosti Filozofskog fakulteta, 1988, p. 45.

¹²See the variety of variants of this song in SLP I, pp. 257-284.

things equal to everything singing an equally different song of other different beings and things."¹³ The elements which are inter-textual references taken from the folk ballad are: the ninth king, who cracks (cries); the ninth country; he whistles; the soul; he plays. If we look at *The Fiddler Before Hell* more closely, we see that, despite the fact that the folk ballad is indicated in the title, not many elements quoted (the ninth king, he plays) allude to the folk ballad. Instead of the dumb Orpheus, Taufer has found a new fiddler before hell – "a soul who plays [. . .]" has the ability to create and in this way he seeks to save lost souls from "the hell of life" that modern man is destined to. If in the folk ballad the fiddler is saving people from hell with the help of music, Taufer as a poet has become silent and must first find a new language, especially in the music and rhythm of the poem which would awaken people and start saving them from the hell of an empty life. His words have become bound up with the folk ballad. With the poem (sung, charmed, whispered, whistled and cried out differently four times), Taufer tries to awaken the world with the help of folk ballad. It is Taufer's poem *The Fiddler Before Hell* where the poet, out of breath, asks from where that sound might come which everybody will hear. In the second the fiddler is the ninth king. In the third the rapid rhythm is stopped and music is heard only when a drop falls onto the string: "beyond the sea, drops / no string [...]". In the fourth poem he establishes the multiple meaning of words and the form of the fluctuation of words through one long stanza: "for the soul [. . .] over the soul/ he plays on one on three / on four and fewer / and fewer [. . .]". Taufer accepted the variation of the folk song as a procedure which he experimentally modified.¹⁴

Taufer breaks up the "story" of the folk song/ballad into its individual components, or preserves the story and imparts to it his new poetic traces where, from the poem, his thought is clearly visible or the folk element vague. But Strniša – on the basis of one motif, of folk-song stylistic features or of the entire folk song/ballad – narrates his cosmic stories in a singable way in the form of a "simple" little poem. Strniša therefore sets out on a supra-temporal journey through inferno and cosmos, whereas Taufer experiments with the folk song/ballad and seeks to find new foundations and roots in the results of his poetic experiment. Taufer tends towards the existentialism of stylistic experiments, and Strniša towards cosmogony and metaphysics.

Inter-textual aspects are disclosed by the following inter-textual process of employing elements from the folk song/ballad and transferring them to the contemporary poem:

¹³Veno Taufer, *Pesmarica rabljenih besed* [The Song Book of Used Words], Ljubljana, 1975, p. 65.

¹⁴Veno Taufer, note 14, pp. 5-9 and p. 43.

1. The taking-over of the elements has its deeper philosophical, social, ideological, national and personally declarative dimension.

2. The interpreting of values (how they are built into the poem) varies:

(a) experimenting, playing with the language, stylistic stimulations, formal reasons;

(b) the taking-over and interpretation of formal elements grafted onto contemporary content but still only an apparent imitation of both form and content;

(c) a complete transformation of motifs, themes and formal forms; a dualism between form and content.

3. The assessment of folk elements as material (aesthetic dimension) for one's own creativity in the sense of a poetic and ironic attitude towards old forms and content in folk tradition; the re-establishing of an identifying attitude towards folk elements; the recognition and building-in of these elements as a basic "canon" for the contemporary poem as well; national and ethnic reasons.

In contemporary Slovenian poetry we can speak of genuine inter-textual contacts with the folk song only at the point where, for an element of folk song, it is possible to determine the environment of its origin. The folk song is hence for both authors a "common cultural tradition" which belongs to the entire nation and to all social structures. And if in the new text "the old" is precisely an element from the folk song or, respectively, a popular correlative, it facilitates the reception of "the new" for the reader.

CONCLUSION

By "returning what has already been seen (*déjà vu*), already read (*déjà lu*) and already heard (*déjà entendu*)", contemporary Slovenian poets are seeking to bring into cultural currency their own truth, their vision of their intimate and the wider world, their own stylistic procedures, and an interplay of words and meanings, primordial meanings and sound, in this way establishing new conditions for new values and new aesthetic qualities. It is precisely by means of the folk song that some creative writers such as Strniša want "to set up a new cosmic awareness", a new harmonious world or, by taking over or adding elements of the folk song, to increase "the content or aesthetic mass of a literary work of art."¹⁵

Contemporary Slovenian poets have resorted to Slovenian folk song as a live current of creativity after tiring of the search for poetic innovation

¹⁵Gregor Strniša, "Spoznavati deželo in literaturo" [To Come To Know the Country and the Literature], *Nova revija* (Ljubljana), Vol. VII, Nos. 71-72 (1988) p. 353. Cf. also: Gregor Strniša, "Relativnostna pesnitev" [The Relativity Poem I-III], *Nova revija* (Ljubljana), Nos. 26-30 (1984), pp. 293-339.

and finding themselves in the world of hollow values. They therefore combine their insights with folk song messages.

ABSTRACT

In the early part of the article the author introduces the finding that a whole range of contemporary Slovenian poets between 1958 and 1990 drew their inspiration from the form or content of individual folk songs. The author discusses the manner and processes of such linkage and goes on to present the most noteworthy phenomena in the interaction of folk and contemporary art in the work of two contemporary Slovenian poets, Veno Taufer and Gregor Strniša; these range from small "folk touches" to entire intertextual concatenations. Using the theory of intertextuality she presents two intertextual concatenations that begin with a folk song (ballad) as the basic theme. These are *Galjot* [The Galliot] and *Godec pred peklo* [The Fiddler Before Hell], which she analyses in detail, identifying the changes the original text underwent in the new settings of original poetry. The article's final finding is that folk song, particularly ballad, is traditionally and historically the most familiar canon, allowing creators of contemporary poetry to use its motifs, themes, word fragments, verse quotations and formal structures to unleash some of their own truths, their own insights into their intimate and the wider world, and their own ideas, concepts and deeper meanings into cultural circulation, thus creating new conditions for new values and new aesthetic qualities.

RESUMO

Na primeira parte do artigo, a autora apresenta a pesquisa que a levou a constatar que uma larga faixa de poetas eslovenos entre 1958 e 1990 colheram a sua inspiração da forma ou conteúdo de específicas canções populares. A autora discute a forma e processos desta conexão, e prossegue apresentando os fenómenos mais significativos da interacção entre a arte popular e a contemporânea no trabalho de dois poetas eslovenos contemporâneos, Veno Taufer e Gregor Strniša; vão estes desde pequenos "toques populares" a totais concatenações intertextuais. Usando a teoria da intertextualidade, apresenta duas concatenações intertextuais que começam com uma balada como tema básico. São elas *Galjot* [O Galeote] and *Godec pred peklo* [O Rabequista diante do Inferno], que analisa em detalhe, identificando as mudanças que sofreu o texto original na nova apresentação de poesia original. A última constatação é que a canção popular, particularmente a balada, é, tradicional e historicamente, o canon mais familiar, permitindo aos criadores de poesia contemporânea o uso dos

seus motivos, temas, fórmulas, citações e estruturas formais para desencadear as suas próprias verdades, as suas próprias percepções no seu mundo íntimo e no mundo alargado; e pondo em circulação as suas próprias ideias, conceitos e sentidos mais profundos nos circuitos culturais, criando assim novas condições para novos valores e novas qualidades estéticas.