

# Ludvik Janež – a storyteller and collector of local folklore stories\*

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*The article presents Ludvik Janež from Čadrg, (Tolmin, northwest Slovenia), who is a folklore storyteller and collector of storytelling heritage. His rich repertoire has made him quite a name in his domestic environment, and in recent years he has often been invited to local schools, kindergartens, and various public events to enhance their cultural programme with storytelling. The article points out that with the observed storyteller the context of the event has an essential effect on the choice of text and texture (the performance of the narrative). By selecting his repertoire, its performance, and interpretation, the storyteller intentionally adapts to the social structure of the target audience and the event's purpose. This means that the storyteller is aware that every group has different expectations and reception abilities. He therefore tries to motivate every specific group for optimal listening and understanding with carefully chosen contents and the means (requisites, costume, language) he uses to enhance his performance. Based on these elements, Janež's repertoire can be divided into 5 types, which are all closely connected with the traditions of his native village.*

**Keywords:** storytelling, storyteller, storytelling event, folk narratives, folklore, Slovenia, Ludvik Janež, context, texture, repertoire, Čadrg, Tolmin.

## 1. Introduction: Storytelling in public and private environments

Based on field observation with participation of Ludvik Janež's storytelling and a comparison of the sound and video records made on these occasions, the research focuses on the differences in the storyteller's performance in different circumstances and when addressing audiences of different composition. The research draws on Dundes's definition that a storytelling event consists of text, texture, and context, which are inseparably linked and influence one another (Dundes 1980), and on Bauman's analytical strategy; he shows, through concrete cases, that oral narrative performance is indissoluble unity of text, narrated event and narrative event (Bauman 1988). I also had many conversations and performed semi-structured interviews with the storyteller. The latter stimulated his self-reflexive consideration of his storytelling strategies.

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In the course of time, Ludvik Janež changed from a so-called *passive narrator* in his domestic, private environment into an *active narrator* (Siikala 1990: 156–170), who wants to spread the local storytelling heritage to a wider public through public performances. The situation in which Janež tells his stories, and above all the characteristics of the specific audience, including age structure, social background, and knowledge of the tradition (Toelken 1996: 1936–141)<sup>1</sup>, have a strong influence on his choice of repertoire and its performance.

When telling stories in public circumstances, the storyteller does not know the audience personally and he therefore selects in advance a repertoire in line with the event's purpose (a cultural event in a school/kindergarten, an independent narrative event for adults or an audience of different ages, storytelling as a side event of another cultural or tourist event, etc.). In public events, the instant interaction between the narrator and his audience is reduced to spontaneous responses, which most often occur when the story is finished (laughter, amazement, exclamations, applause, etc.), while verbal responses (remarks, comments, etc.) during or after the performance are not typical (Ivančič Kutin 2010: 207, 208). The contrary is true of storytelling in a private environment, to a group of people who know one another. This situation enables all the participants (including the audience) to become actively engaged in the narrative flow through comments, remarks, questions, emotional responses and the like, and thus actively influence the development of the contents and the narrative's course, i.e. influence the storytelling folklore meeting as a whole. A private storytelling folklore meeting consists of a series of folklore events (stories) and intermediate pauses (connecting texts); within this framework conversation at the level of everyday verbal communication occurs between the participants. Through verbal and emotional interaction within the connecting texts associations are developed, leading to the next folklore event (story). Therefore, the connecting texts are the driving force in developing a folklore meeting while it lasts (Ivančič Kutin 2011: 28, 29). The storyteller (or storytellers, if the role is assumed by several people) instantly responds to the prompts of the people present. In view of their function and influence on the further course of storytelling events in a private context, the following roles can be discerned for the recipient (audience): motivator, assistant, inquirer, yea-sayer/no-sayer, complementor, and commentator. Some roles are closely connected with previous knowledge of the storyteller's repertoire (Ivančič Kutin 2007: 36–38; Ivančič Kutin 2011 pps. 33–36).

### **The life history of Ludvik Janež and the village of Čadrg<sup>2</sup>**

L. Dégh pointed out that *the storyteller is an integrating agent whose life history, cultural profile, and total repertoire in terms of content, form, style, and manner of telling must be jointly studied* (Dégh 1995 p. 22). Storyteller Ludvik Janež has undoubtedly been strongly influenced by living in the mountain village of Čadrg in northwest Slovenia. From early on he was able to draw on the rich storytelling traditions of his grandparents and other locals. Regardless of the genre (fairy tale, folktale, memory story, etc.) his stories are always connected with his domestic environment.

<sup>1</sup> Based on the audience's involvement in and familiarity with the tradition, Toelken discerns four types: central audience, bystander audience, outsider audience, and cultural audience.

<sup>2</sup> This outline of the storyteller's life and work is based on a range of interviews with him in the 2005–2011 period.



Photo 1: Ludvik Janež during the interview. Photo by Barbara Ivančič Kutin, 2011.

Ludvik Janež was born as the last of four in 1949. He attended primary school in Čadrg and was later employed at a factory in Tolmin, where he worked for 30 years until he retired. Although he lived in Tolmin during this period, he daily commuted to his native village to help his parents on the farm. After their death, he renovated the family home, which had been damaged by an earthquake,<sup>3</sup> and permanently settled in Čadrg with his family.

Čadrg is located at an altitude of 700 m above the left bank of the Tolminka River and 9 km from the town of Tolmin. Statistical data show that the village had the highest population in 1910, when 219 people lived in its 27 houses. The environment of steep slopes and scanty arable land made it very hard to make a livelihood. The few fertile, gently sloping stretches of land were used by the villagers for farming, and to feed their animals (mostly sheep and just a handful of cows), they mowed the meadows on the steep slopes above the village, as well as stretches of grass on remote clearings, carrying the hay to the valley on their back or on a sledge. In the summer months the animals were driven to the mountain pastures, where curd and cheese were produced. The forest provided firewood and building timber and the villagers also carefully gathered leaves for litter (Ivančič Kutin 2006a: 135). The village's population sharply dropped after the Second World War and by 1991 it had only 21 permanent inhabitants (Barbič, Benedejčič 1993: 71). This drastic fall was related to the village's near inaccessibility: the narrow road across the steep and in some places precipitous slope, 300 m above the

<sup>3</sup> A strong earthquake struck the Soča Basin in April 1998.

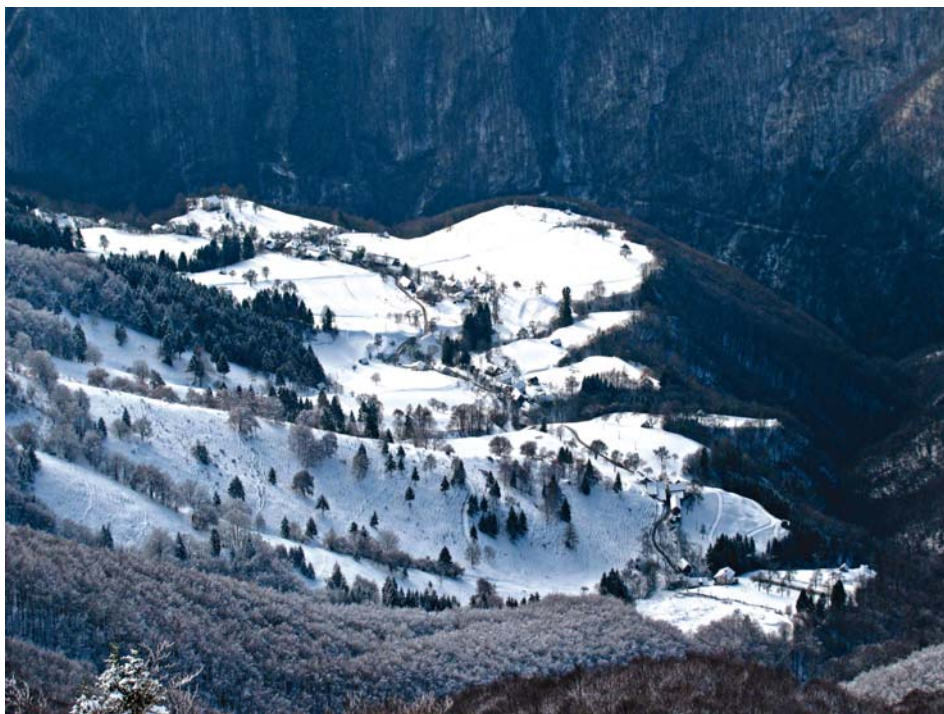


Photo 2: The village of Čadrg. Photo by Gorazd Kutin.

river bed of the Tolminka, was constructed only in 1973 by the villagers themselves and with help from the army. The village never had a church, cemetery, inn, or shop. Before the construction of the road the villagers had to walk two hours to Tolmin for all their errands and to attend mass. From the late 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards, children were educated in Čadrg and a school was built in 1906, which operated with interruptions until 1964 (Kutin 2007: 16).<sup>4</sup> That year the school was closed down and the village's children lived at a boarding school in Tolmin until the 1990s, when their parents started to daily drive them to school. In 1999, the empty school of Čadrg, owned by the village community, was rented to a Don Pierino community for the rehabilitation of drug addicts; it was an initiative of Ludvik Janež and was unanimously adopted by the villagers.<sup>5</sup>

Today (2012), around 30 people permanently live in Čadrg. There are 4 living farms in the village, 3 with around 12 milk cows each and a small farm with 2 cows only, which makes a livelihood from ecological farming. The village produces a cheese that is well

<sup>4</sup> Teaching was suspended several times between the two world wars: from 1925 to 1941, during the fascist occupation of the western Slovene territory, Italian was the only official teaching language.

<sup>5</sup> Ludvik got the idea about renting out the school when the media in Slovenia frequently reported on the problems the community had to find a location for its operation – local communities indeed objected against having such a community in their vicinity. The community in Čadrg consists of 5 to 9 people, who have only little contact with the locals. They maintain a garden and a field; to feed the sheep they raise for their own needs they mow areas abandoned by the villagers.

known around Slovenia in a jointly owned cheese dairy. Ludvik's farm is the smallest one, but he has turned part of it into a rental tourist flat. The area that is cultivated has changed greatly and so have the ways of working the land: farming has been reduced because the more gently sloping stretches, where fields used to be in the past, are now machine mowed for hay. In the summer the cattle is driven to pasture on the steeper slopes in the vicinity (formerly these slopes were mowed for hay) and daily taken back to the home shed (Ivančič Kutin 2006b, p.135, 136).

### **3. Ludvik Janež as a collector and narrator of local folklore and memory stories**

Ludvik liked to listen to stories as a child. His model and principal source of information was his grandfather, but he also liked to listen to other older locals, especially those who had survived the front lines of the First World War. With these stories of all kinds he then entertained his peers on the pasture. Their neighbour used to say to his mother: »Reza, nothing will come of your son, all he thinks about are fairy tales!«

Soon after he turned 20, he started to take down the stories he heard from the locals, in particular fairy and other tales, memories of the old times and stories about the history of the village. He also published some material of folk narratives (Janež 1975).<sup>6</sup> In 1991 he joined the Razor folklore group as a storyteller and actor; the group strives to preserve the cultural traditions of the Tolmin area, performing at cultural and tourist events all over Slovenia with folk dances, music, songs, and storytelling.

As a freelance storyteller, who always tells his stories in his native dialect, he is a popular performer at local schools, kindergartens and in the context of cultural programmes at a variety of events (openings, book presentations, etc.). His repertoire for public performances includes over 30 very diverse stories, which he selects, adapts, and interprets according to the structure of the listeners and other circumstances (place, space, time, etc.).

Telling stories as part of the public performances of the local folklore group, as well as in schools and kindergartens, has moved him beyond the context of private storytelling. When performing in public he is dressed in a costume from before WWI.

Ludvik Janež loves to tell stories in private situations as well, any time and any place where he finds people who are interested in his stories. It's his personal need to practice his art, this means he is a performing artist and natural entertainer of responsive audience, unlike tellers of sensitive personal testimonial narratives (Dégh 1995: 10). As a talented and experienced storyteller, who is capable of self-reflection about his performances and as an expert on local traditions he is also a reliable informant for folkloristic and ethnological researches.

### **4. Ludvik's storytelling with regard to the recipients**

With regard to the structure of the audience, we can divide Ludvik's storytelling and repertoire into 5 types.

<sup>6</sup> He published 4 Čadrg stories written in dialect in a local ethnological anthology. The editors added a short commentary to the stories.

#### 4.1 Repertoire for kindergarten performances

He likes to say that children are his most demanding and critical audience. It is therefore necessary to choose stories with utmost care. Usually he begins by telling 6 to 7 short humorous stories and Čadrg's animal fairy tales (e.g. *A bear shakes a pear tree*), and continues with some of his memories from the times when he was a shepherd, about shepherd games and toys. He motivates them to listen by performing in a typical peasant outfit and using various requisites related to the individual stories, e.g. old objects, tools and toys that are no longer used and therefore completely unknown to the younger generation (cow bell, hazel whistle, small knife).

#### 4.2 Repertoire for primary school performances

Ludvik has noticed that storytelling in primary schools is intended for the lower grades only, until the age of 10. He thinks that teachers and school curricula pay too little attention to the relevance of the narrative tradition and that this is a great pity. In primary schools he tells stories about village life in the past: what children and youths used to do (what went on at village dances, how boys liked to brawl, how they courted their sweethearts at night, about village characters). For this stage he likes to tell stories about local characters and their funny adventures, smugglers and robbers who had hiding places in caves in the precipice below Čadrg (Ludvik heard many of them from his grandfather, who had over 90 years, and also from an old man from Čadrg, who claimed that they were all true stories). He actually tells the same stories to adults, but different versions; for example, he finishes the story about a bear who attacked sheep in different ways:

for adults: the bear was captured, killed, and eaten.

for children: the bear had to promise that he would no longer steal sheep and they let him wander off into the forest.

Ludvik has developed a special strategy for his performances in kindergartens and the lower grades of primary schools: he starts with something exciting and after some 20 minutes, when attention usually drops, he turns to something that stirs the children, encourages them to participate, and at the same time enables him to continue his thread. The whole performance should not be longer than 40 – 45 minutes. Body language, mimicry and voice creativity are the most important elements of stories told in kindergartens, while performances for adults do not require so much acting.

#### 4.3 Repertoire for various cultural and tourist events

Ludvik is often invited to enliven very diverse local cultural and tourist events with his storytelling. He chooses stories that are suitable to the occasion and circumstances (time, place, audience). For example: at the »Rebels Day« event at Tolmin Castle he tells stories about the count of Tolmin, or at the presentation of a book about water he tells stories about water. A good example of how he adapts his storytelling technique to the circumstances was an event in Trenta: it was held at the eve of St John's Day (June 21) and Ludvik therefore related the introduction of his performance, the first story, and the per-

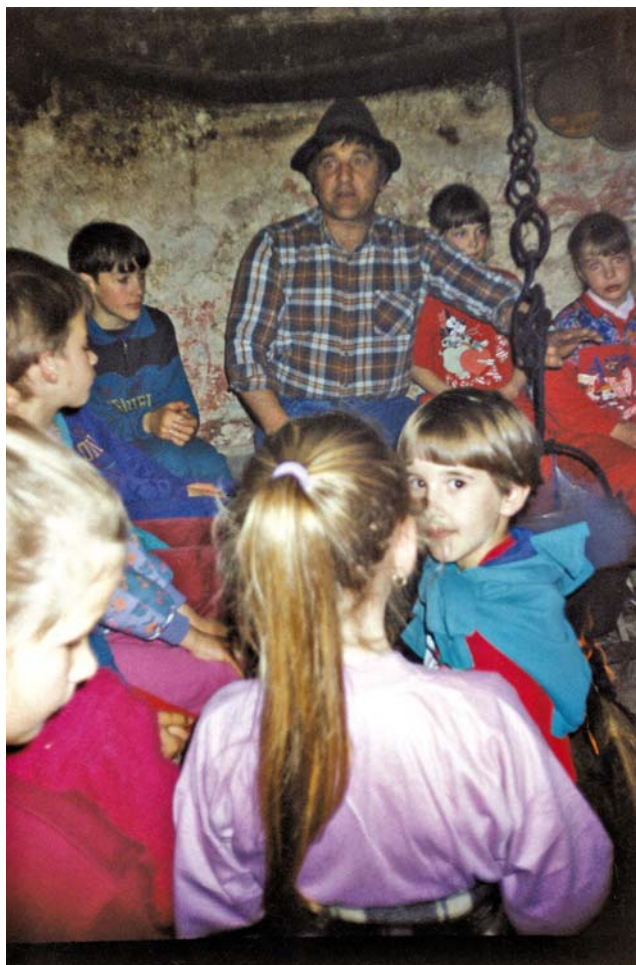


Photo 3: Ludvik during a performance for a primary school in a black kitchen in Čadrg. Early 1990s. Photo from Ludvik's private archive.

phrases, local customs and the like, which he considered necessary to be better understood. He was dressed in his standard storytelling outfit, including hobnailed forestry boots, and he differed from the other storytellers<sup>8</sup> by the requisites he had with him (a basket and shepherd's staff); the way he told his stories was close to a theatre performance. The dramatic effects of his narrative was undoubtedly affected by the specific stage lighting (illuminated stage, dimly lit audience area), because it obstructed communication and interaction between the storyteller and an audience unknown to him.

formance's conclusion to a belief that was widespread among the people of this particular environment in the past (see the transcription in the second part of the article).

Ludvik performed beyond the borders of his local environment in 2008, at Slovenia's main storytelling festival »*Fairy tales today*«, held annually<sup>7</sup> at our most prestigious cultural institution - the Ivan Cankar Cultural Centre in Ljubljana. For this performance he selected a handful of stories presenting his native village of Čadrg: on the origin of the name of the village and that of the nearby mountain called Bogatin (meaning: *Rich man*), in which a treasure was buried that was the subject of many tales about people who wanted to find it. Although the public was from all parts of Slovenia as well as from abroad, Ludvik told his stories in dialect, but in between he often explained dialect words and

<sup>7</sup> In 2010 the festival was held for the 13<sup>th</sup> time in succession.

<sup>8</sup> Ludvik represented Slovenia in the section »Around the world with fairy tales«; the other performers were foreigners from different parts of the world, who live in Slovenia, and to all of them it was the first time in their life that they told a story in front of an audience.



*Photo 4 Ludvik Janež during a performance for adults in Cankarjev dom. Photo by Nada Žgank, 2007.*

#### **4.4 Ludvik's repertoire in the Razor group**

Ludvik's performances in the Razor folklore group (its repertoire includes dancing, singing, music, and stories) strongly differs from his general storytelling repertoire. Here, he rarely performs on his own, but usually together with two or three actors to perform simple sketches on ordinary, comical events from peasant life. Ludvik writes the texts for these performances and they often include dramatic adaptations of local folklore tales.

#### **4.5 Spontaneous storytelling (without a standard repertoire)**

##### **a) Performances for tourists passing through the village**

Visitors, hikers, tourists and the like are interested in many things and Ludvik says that by telling them stories he merely answers their questions. People usually ask about life in the village in the past. He therefore tells them about the history of the village: natural disasters (earthquakes, storms, avalanches) and the First World War (what local people experienced at the fronts, what happened in the village). Themes from the First World War were of particular interest to Ludvik from childhood and he later recorded many stories and anecdotes of the locals about the period.

He also likes to act as a local tourist guide for groups announced in advance: he shows them the sights (a black kitchen, an old well, a hundred-year-old pear tree, etc.) explains the local (mainly oral) history and tells stories connected with the past and present life in the village and the local oral tradition.



### **b) Telling stories to friends and acquaintances in a private environment**

Ludvik mentions that the natives of his village do not always consider his interest in storytelling a virtue. In a peasant community where everyone works from morning till night, telling stories is often viewed as a waste of time. His own family is greatly supportive of his »hobby«, to which he dedicates all of his free time, even though he hardly ever tells stories at home, and never in the way he uses for his performances. Ludvik gets to talk more when he has visitors or in a company. As he says himself, stories keep coming to his mind and are related to the actual discourse in a given situation.

Spontaneous storytelling, when neither the teller nor his audience are prepared to the event in advance, can only occur in favourable conditions of time, space and participants. It is only in such a sociable/social situation that we can observe storytelling as a process and the interaction between the participants in a primary (private) environment. Such a storytelling event consists of a series of folklore events (complete stories) and so-called »connecting texts« in between the stories (Ivančič Kutin 2007: 38). These connecting texts include the contributions of all the participants, not only from the storyteller: people discuss the story they've just heard, exchange views, add their own experiences about similar events, situations, etc.), or the conversation turns to another theme. Connecting texts are thus an important driving force which moves a spontaneous storytelling event from one story to the next as long as the participants are interested in listening and the teller in continuing. (Ivančič Kutin 2006b: 628).

### **c) Ludvik Janež as an informant**

To date Ludvik has been consulted as an expert on local history and traditions and as a storyteller by students of ethnology and Slovene, researchers of spiritual culture, producers of radio and television programmes and documentaries. Most of Ludvik's storytelling material was documented in the early 1990s by Janez Dolenc, a professor at the Tolmin grammar school, who systematically collected local folklore tales. He published 18 stories told by Ludvik in his book *Zlati Bogatin* (Dolenc 1992)<sup>9</sup>, and Ludvik is mentioned as the recorder of three further stories.

I started to cooperate with Ludvik in 2005 when I was preparing an article on fallow and house names in the village of Čadrg and the stories related to them.<sup>10</sup> Ludvik is a very helpful informant as he sincerely wants to share his knowledge with anyone who is interested. He is not only fond of telling stories, he is also good at discussing stories, his performances, describing his strategies, reflecting on audiences and their specific responses, etc.; the informant's attitude and his views on the relevant issues are always of major significance to the researcher.

<sup>9</sup> *Zlati Bogatin* is a selection of folklore tales from the Upper Soča Basin, the north-western part of the Slovene territory. The book was published as the fourth volume in the *Glasovi* collection; from 1988 to 2010 38 volumes have been published in this collection and each of them covers a part of the Slovene ethnic territory (together they to date contain 12210 units). The collection has been edited by the Slovene folklorist Marija Stanonik from the beginning.

<sup>10</sup> Among the published material are 6 short stories told by Ludvik Janež (Ivančič Kutin 2006: 152, 154, 155).

Charateristics of performance with regard to the structure of the audience						
	preparing before the performance	requisites	costume	non-verbal manner body/voice	dialect	improvisation
Performance for children	+	++	++	++	+(-)	+
Performance for adults	+	+	+	+	++	+(+)
Performance in the folklore group	++	++	++	++	++	-
Spontaneous performance	-	-	-	+	-(+)	++

**Table 1:** + present; ++ stressed; - absent; +(-) / -(+) / +(+) only some

Depending on the context of the performance (participants or purpose: when performing locally, he uses a strong dialect; but when performing in other places his language is closer to Standard Slovene.<sup>11</sup>

### Examples of the same story told by Ludvik Janež in two different contexts

How he adapts his performance to the given context is well illustrated by two examples of the same story (*How Lap saw an apparition of his future bride in his dreams on St John's night*), which Ludvik Janež told in two different situations. An accurate, literal transcription of the text is necessary for observing the storyteller's personal narrative style in an observed situation.

#### 5.1 Example 1: Ludvik Janež in the role of storyteller at a storytelling event, Trenta, June 21, 2007

The small cultural event took place in Trenta on June 21, 2007, at the eve of St John's Day. The cultural part of the event included a performance by the storytellers of the »Imagination for a tuppence« (*Za dva groša fantazije*) team. They stopped over in Trenta as part of a 4-day-long »Fairy Tale Tour.« All members of the team are speakers at Radio Student Ljubljana, who often (independently or as part of a bigger event) perform in public with a rich repertoire of folk tales. The team tells fairy tales on the radio and has recorded several CDs, which are very popular with adults and children alike.

<sup>11</sup> As a »tourist guide«, for instance, he spoke Standard Slovene when collaborators of the Institute of Slovenian Ethnology visited Čadrg on an excursion.

At the event in Trenta, 5 storytellers of the team each told one story and Ludvik Janež was their special guest at the event. They had met him one year earlier when performing in Čadrg (Ludvik's native village), at a non-commercial festival of nature and music, organized by the youths of the village. They invited Ludvik to Trenta only a couple of hours before the event and he gladly joined them, even though he was not prepared. His ability to improvise was obvious from the way he linked his storytelling (and repertoire) to the context of the time (midsummer night) at the beginning and conclusion of his performance, his ease of communicating with the audience, and the smooth transitions from one story to another. He did not know anyone in the audience (Trenta is around 60 km from Čadrg), but because of the rural nature of the place and people he felt completely at ease (the audience consisted of around 40 people, adults and children, and most of them were locals).

Ludvik stands up as the last of six storytellers. The speaker introduces his performance as the event's dessert. Dressed in a shirt and sleeveless sweater, wearing a hat and hobnailed forestry boots, Ludvik steps in front of the audience and says good evening. He pretends to be a simple country lad, taking a small flask from his inside breast pocket and sipping from it. This comic introduction captivates the audience at once and they now watch and listen with increased interest. Ludvik exploits their attention right away to establish contact with them: he asks the audience if they know what feast day it is (June 21). Ludvik links his story to the concrete time of midsummer night, starting his performance with a story about the folk superstition that this is the night when one can see one's future bride or bridegroom in one's dreams. He then links this superstition to a story about the village simpleton Lap from Čadrg and all the following stories turn around the same protagonist, who is said to have been fond of telling more or less incredible stories. Ludvik tells four of them in his performance. He concludes his storytelling performance with a reference to its beginning, midsummer night, and the superstition related to it: he tells the audience goodbye by saying that he is off to bed – and that he may see an apparition of a young lass in his dreams.

During the whole performance Ludvik maintains contact with the audience, receiving positive responses. The performance lasts about 9 minutes and ends with a rousing applause. The first story about Lap lasts 3'15" (after he slips brandy from a flask).

#### **Transcription of the text from the video tape<sup>12</sup>**

*Announcer: And here is the last storyteller – a dessert, a cherry on the top of the cream cake - Ludvik Janež from Čadrg!*

*Ludvik: Good evening and God bless y' all! My, my, quite a lot of ye folks 'ave turned up and I dunno what to do. Ye'll 'ave to listen good or ye won't catch on to what I'm sayin' ... Now, what should I tell ye, ... wait ... (sips brandy from a flask). ... First things first, and now I'm all set. D' ye know what's today? It's the shortest night and longest day. And d'ye know 'ow we went to bed in Čadrg on this evening? All the lads who were fit to marry 'ad to strew turnip seeds in their bed, undress stark naked and lie down. And this was the night when they 'ad an apparition of the woman who'd suffer 'er 'ole life with them. And*

<sup>12</sup> The video record of the event was made by Arnold Mark, Barbara Ivančič Kutin transcribed the text from the film; English translation by Franc Smrke. (Video record is preserved in the Archive of ISN ZRC SAZU).



Photo 5: Ludvik Janež telling about local customs and, in the same position, he later tells the transcribed story to the excursionists. Čadrg, April 21, 2010. Photo by Barbara Ivančič Kutin.

the men too, they too 'ad to go to bed. I dunno if they undressed stark naked ... but they 'ad to pray five Our Fathers. But they were not allowed to say Amen at the end and so they prayed and prayed and prayed until She appeared, the woman they 'ad to put up with their whole life.

And now I'll tell ye somethin' else – there once lived a bloke in Čadrg ... nay, a lad, Lap was 'is name, who was a bit soft in the head. 'E was into loggin' a lot, down in Romanija (a forested area in Bosnia) and in the evening, at the eve of St John's Day 'e went to bed and started prayin': Our Father who art in heaven ... (murmurs with his eyes closed). 'E prayed five Our Fathers without ever sayin' 'Amen' at the end and there she was! Beautiful! All black eyes and black hair! A real angel. In the mornin' when 'e woke up 'e started musin': there was no such angel in Čadrg, nor in Zadlaz or Ravne, not even in the whole of Trenta. There was no such beauty anywhere. Well, Lap then finished loggin' in Bosnia and returned home. When 'e passed by a neighbour's farm a lass came out of the stable carryin' two pails. And that is when 'e saw those beautiful black eyes and black hair, and 'e said to 'imself: »That's the one. That's the one I'm goin' to marry. And so 'e did. 'E really did. The first year 'e way always callin' 'er 'is angel »O, my darlin' angel! What would ye like to eat, angel of mine? But after a couple o' years she was no longer an angel 'cause they started squabblin'. They were bickerin' all the time, and Lap often slipped away to 'is neighbour. »How did I deserve such a lousy life? Must it really be so miserable? May the devil take St John who put me up with such a shrew that makes me suffer all my life.« Ye see, folks, that's what 'appened to poor old Lap ...

## 5.2 Example 2: Ludvik Janež in the role of local tourist guide, Čadrg 21. 4. 2010

Ludvik told the same story in Čadrg during an excursion of the staff of the Institute of Slovenian Ethnology from Ljubljana. For about 2 hours he acted as a local tourist guide, leading the group through the village, stopping at interesting sights and talking village life, local history and culture in the past. He realized that the participants were specialists in ethnology and folkloristics, and so he tried to satisfy their specific interests; because they were from other regions, he rarely used the local dialect (after using a dialect expression, he would usually explain it in Standard Slovene). Adapting to the circumstances, his narrative was informative and he told stories from oral tradition only to illustrate other pieces of information. The same was true of the story *How Lap saw an apparition of his future bride in his dreams on St John's night*. In this case, the story had nothing to do with the concrete time as in the preceding example, but was connected to explaining local customs and traditions. He told the story to illustrate a local superstition. The text was shorter and simpler, the narration relaxed, with less dramatic or emphatic vocal delivery (shouts, changes in loudness, speed and vocal pitch), less movement and mimicry, and without the requisites and outfit he usually wears when performing at storytelling events. The story was therefore adapted to the concrete purpose and situation, but it nevertheless had all the characteristics of a well-rounded narrative unit. The narration lasted 2'36. Ludvik then continued to talk about local history.

### Transcription of the text from audio tape<sup>13</sup>

*In the old days people used to try their fortune on the eve of St John's Day. A lass, who wanted to know whom she would marry, would strew turnip seeds in her bed, undress stark naked and lie down. In her dreams she would then see her future husband. As simple as that. But things were quite different for the lads and I'll tell you about it. There once lived a lad in our village, whose name was Lap and who was into logging a lot, down in Romanija. People from our village used to go logging to Bosnia, Styria, and even further away. »On the eve of St John's Day,« Lap said »I was lying down in my hut there and I had to pray five Our Fathers without ever sayin' 'Amen'. And so I prayed and prayed and prayed and finally fell asleep (the narrator lets his arms drop, joins them and closes his eyes). And what did I see in my dreams? A beautiful woman, all black eyes and black hair! In the morning I woke up and I started thinking if she was someone from our village. But no, she wasn't. Nor from the next village. There wasn't anyone like her.« One day Lap of course returned home from his logging stint and when he passed by his neighbour's stable, a lass stepped out of it. She wasn't a local lass, but from the village of Logaršče and Lap said: »When I saw her black eyes and black hair, I knew she was the lass of my dreams.« And so they got married. And yes, she really was beautiful, and for some time everything went well. Lap would never call his wife by her name. He would always say »O my angel, my dear little angel.« He never called her anything but »my angel«. But later, when she wasn't an angel any more and they squabbled a lot, Lap would seek solace with his neighbour and tell him: »May the devil take St John who put me up with such a shrew!«*

<sup>13</sup> The video record of event was made by Miha Peče, Barbara Ivančič Kutin made the audio record and transcription of the text from the film and sound records; English translation by Franc Smrke. (Video record is preserved in the Archive of ISN ZRC SAZU).

### 5.3 Comparison to the situations

<i>How Lap saw an apparition of his future bride in his dreams on St John's night</i> Context of the narrative performance: public and space				
	Costume / requisites	Dramatization with body and voice	Dialect	Improvisation
Storytelling performance, Trenta 21. 6. 2007	+	++	++	+
Excursion ISE, Čadrg 21. 4. 2010	-	+	-(+)	+

**Table 2:** + present; ++ stressed; - absent; -(+) only some

The examined examples show how Ludvik told his story in relation to the audience, space, and time of the event.

In the first example he chose a repertoire that was interesting to an adult audience, but the contents were also understandable to children. He linked the stories to the actual date – St John's Night. As this was a storytelling performance, he was dressed in a costume (hat, chequered shirt, old trousers, forestry boots), used a requisite (a pocket brandy flask), and build his narrative with all the means that enhance dramatic tension (direct speech, dramatic present, witty comparisons, coarse expressions). He included in the text references to the venue (Trenta) to further capture the audience's attention, and increased the comical aspect of his performance by speaking the dialect of his native village. Ludvik's performance thus consisted of audience motivation, a core of four stories, and a conclusion linked to the beginning.

In the second example he acted as a tourist guide for a specific group of people (the staff of the Institute of Slovene Ethnology on an excursion), illustrating the local customs and beliefs with the same story. Here his narrative was much shorter, less dramatic, told in Standard Slovene, and without the use of a costume or requisites. Although the particular story is part of a wider text, whose principal purpose is to inform (and not its aesthetic performance), it retains basic dramatic structure with an introduction, core, and conclusion at the story level.

#### Conclusion

Ludvik Janež is a storyteller who clearly adapts his choice of repertoire and performance to the context of a particular event (the performance's purpose, the audience's characteristics, the specific place and time, etc.). In view of these elements we can divide

his repertoire into five groups. Comparing variants of the same story reveals internal differentiation when the same variant is performed for different target audiences, and the comparison also reveals the performer's excellent ability to improvise. Ludvik Janež certainly is a talented storyteller, who uses his charisma as a storyteller, aesthetic and dramatic wording, and manner of performance to mediate the storytelling heritage of his native village to audiences in a way that meets their expectations (e.g. entertainment / information) and reception abilities (e.g. children / adults). In the course of his field research in Slovenia in the 1950s and 60s, Milko Matičetov came across many excellent fairy tale tellers, but only one of them has been described in a monograph (see Štefan and Matičetov 2010). Because of the changed way of living in the last decades such tellers are nearly impossible to find nowadays. And that is precisely the reason why Ludvik Janež's entire repertoire and storytelling should be documented, transcribed, and analyzed as accurately as possible. I sincerely hope that the present article is the beginning of this work.

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### **Archive material**

Interviews and meetings with Ludvik Janež (recorded and taken down by B. Ivančič Kutin 2005–2011).

Video record made by Arnold Mark, Trenta, June 21, 2007.

Video record made by Miha Peče, Čadrg, April 21, 2010.

Audio record made by Barbara Ivančič Kutin, Čadrg, April 21, 2010.



## Ludvik Janež – pripovedovalec in zbiralec lokalnega pripovednega izročila

Barbara Ivančič Kutin

V članku je predstavljen pripovedovalec in zbiralec pripovednega izročila Ludvik Janež iz Čadrga na Tolminskem. Z bogatim folklornim repertoarjem je znan v svojem domačem okolju, v zadnjih letih pa ga pogosto vabijo v lokalne šole, vrtce in na raznovrstne javne prireditve, v katerih s pripovedovanjem popestri kulturni program. V članku želim pokazati, da pri opazovanem pripovedovalcu kontekst pripovedovanja bistveno vpliva na izbiro teksta in na teksturo (izvedbo pripovedi). Pripovedovalec se namreč z izborom repertoarja, njegove izvedbe in interpretacije zavestno prilagaja socialni sestavi ciljne publike in namenu prireditve / dogodka. Pripovedovalec se torej zaveda, da ima vsaka skupina različna pričakovanja in recepcijske zmožnosti. Zato vsako specifično skupino poskuša k optimalnemu poslušanju in razumevanju njegovega pripovedovanja motivirati s premišljeno izbranim repertoarjem, sredstvi (rekviziti) in izvedbo. Tako, denimo, pri pripovedovanju za majhne otroke uporablja več rekvizitov, poenostavi jezik, prilagaja vsebino (npr. optimističen zaključek pripovedi), ne glede na starost sprejemalcev pri javnih nastopih uporablja kostum (pastirsko obleko, največkrat tudi koš in okovane čevlje) in govori v narečju (jezik nekoliko poknjži, če nastopa za publiko, ki ni iz domačega okolja). Njegov repertoar je vselej v močni vsebinski navezavi na izročilo domače vasi, glede na prilagajanje ciljni publiko pa ga je mogoče uvrstiti v pet tipov: 1) za predšolske otroke, 2) za šolske otroke, 3) za kulturne in turistične prireditve, 4) za dramske nastope v folklorni skupini Razor, 5) pripovedi za spontano pripovedovanje. Pri spontanem pripovedovanju so pripovedi raznolike, Ludvik Janež se z njimi prilagaja hipnim okoliščinam (udeležencem, trenutnemu govornemu kontekstu, kraju, času, prostoru ...) in pobudam ter odzivom udeležencev, pripoveduje pa seveda brez kostuma in rekvizitov. Pripovedi so pogosto povezane z vlogo, v kateri se v dani situaciji znajde pripovedovalec, npr. a) kot pripovedovalec v spontanah situacijah, ki skrbi za razvedrilo, b) v vlogi lokalnega turističnega vodiča za naključne in nenaključne obiskovalce vasi, c) v vlogi informatorja pri raziskovalnem delu (kakršno je tukajšnji prispevek). Prilagajanje kontekstu je v prispevku ponazorjeno z dvema konkretnima primeroma, ko je Ludvik Janež isto zgodbo pripovedoval v dveh različnih situacijah: prvič v okviru pripovedovalskega dogodka, drugo pa kot turistični vodič pri opisu lokalnih šeg. Z različnimi vlogami pripovedovalca je povezana tudi funkcija pripovedi.