

EFFORTS FOR VILLAGE TOURISM IN SLOVENIA AND SLOVENE ETHNOLOGY

Slovene ethnology takes an active part in the province of village or rural tourism. It explores village tourism as a form of social movement and pursues its changes and development in particular periods of time. Furthermore it helps to design this activity with the results of ethnological researches. It is probably not necessary to point out that village tourism has been having an important role in Slovene tourist economy in latter years. This form of economic activity has a strong "tradition" in Slovenia and the first examples of townspeople who came to stay or eat in a village surroundings date as far back as before the world War I and especially between the World War I and World War II. "Classical" areas of village tourism today are Bled and Bohinj with their surroundings, Gornja Savinjska dolina and partly also Gornja Savska dolina. Nowadays this form of tourist activity is widely spread throughout the whole Slovenia, although the alpine region is still predominant. But there are examples of village tourism in the flat part of Slovenia as well — in Pannonic Prekmurje where this activity has not been developed up till now; one of the reasons for that was the opinion that the structure of the country itself (its contents as well) does not correspond to the prevailing model of village tourism. An especially well-known, expertly settled and well directed region is that of Stari Vrh above Skofja Loka which is interesting also because it is fully occupied by domestic and foreign tourists every year.

Various parties are interested in promotion of village tourism: from tourist and hotel organizations and various associations to Cooperative Federation of Slovenia which develops this province on professional interdisciplinary basis within which ethnologists take an active part as well. These interdisciplinary efforts have a common ground: tourism is secondary to primary agricultural activity which is specialized, well organized and directed. A very important role is played by the structure of family community which is occupied by the tourist activity in addition to other work. The role of ethnology is thus besides other things — in indicating the division of work within the modern agricultural economy. Yet such a model would be relatively narrow and limited only to the problems of agricultural production and the life style of people active within this production. Efforts extend also to the province of our countryside (cultural and agricultural) and architecture or resident culture, a category which helps to form this countryside. Within the village tourism activity we try to preserve appropriate forms of architecture (such as buildings and whole settlements) with the help of revitalization of the "old" and suitable formation of the "new". We have had too many negative examples of rough intervention into the rural space equilibrium up to now. Of course many reasons for such intervention could be found in improper ways and capacities of work in professional departments (in the field of monument protection or urbanism for example). Yet our information would be too partial if we blamed only professional departments and services for this situation. It is necessary to consider all the other "contemporary" phenomena in the countryside as well — deagrarianization, industrialization, daily migration of the labour force, etc.

Ethnology tries together with other sciences (such as architecture, agriculture, urbanism, designing, urban planning) — to explore conditions for tourist activity in the countryside. We base our research on the results of existent touristically oriented farms or areas. Ethnological researches revealed that a more immediate clinical contact with the bearers of village tourism will be necessary. Consequently the activity is directed to the formation of the relation towards our cultural inheritance as well. Of course this inheritance is not represented — as some may mistakenly think — only by architecture and art monuments, but by all the elements of resident culture, food supply, behaviour, hospitality, stage of relations between guests and their hosts, manners and customs, mutual communication, values and moral standards and others. Throughout many years we have witnessed how owners of farms and country taverns brainlessly furnish them with the elements of past historical periods (the so-called "old articles", "antiquities") under the influence of general fashion. Many of the objects which were "decorated" in this manner became nonfunctional store rooms of nonprofessionally accumulated museum "rubbish". This activity has widely spread also under the influence of various radio broadcasts and several magazines which have begun to publish various "professional" advices for collecting and furnishing. Of course we consistently reject this form of country romanticism or "pseudo museums" today. In no way are we allowed to restrain progress. It would be senseless to compel somebody to use the so-called "black kitchen" for cooking today, a few years before the end of the 20th century ... But we can successfully incorporate — under professional guidance of course — the elements which belonged to our culture and our life style in the past into contemporary life. But for such a measure we need a previous thorough professional analysis and cooperation of various experts. We are also familiar with opinions of

younger country house hold members who try to reject, destroy or sell as quickly as possible all the elements which remind them of past in one way or another. These phenomena are most obvious in the sphere of home-furnishing and nutrition (in structural composition of their menus and in the significance and role of "traditional" elements in nutritional structure, etc.).

We do not wish in any way the touristically oriented farms or areas to become some "neoromantic museums" when nutrition or lodging for town guests are concerned. We simply wish to preserve and shape the newly valued cultural environment so it will suit both the bearer of the village tourism activity and the person who will come to the countryside from a highly urbanized city milieu in search of a holiday, an outing or just relaxation.

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STUDENT ACTIVITY IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ETHNOLOGY

Student activity could be presented only by a detailed analysis of the successfulness of the study; but this is not the aim of this article. It is interesting how the students of ethnology — or at least a part of them — express their professional activity in a number of ways which may concern results of examinations only indirectly.

It is certain that anybody who attends classes for one or two years, seminars or lectures of guest lecturers, who furthermore follows discussions within the Slovene Ethnological Society meetings, etc., has come to realize that ethnology is not a study of "exotic far-off lands", but rather a fairly young science which tries to catch up with everything that may have been lost in the past regarding the present concepts, a science which forms new views and concepts for research of the vast field of work defined as a way of life or life style. Students are constantly able to witness various research projects which require participation of numerous professional ethnologists and are invited to collaborate in these projects with their field work practices, practices in various ethnological institutions or with their seminary and diploma papers. Such collaboration is constantly encouraged and welcomed by mentors and lecturers, but is at the same time also a matter of decision of each individual student and represents a direct professional experience for their future professional work. During the discussions with the lecturers students also suggest various possibilities for improvement of the educational process (which is a scientific process as well) and eventual suppletions of curriculum, although many of their suggestions are hampered by the lack of room space and personnel shortage in the department.

All ethnological research actions, lectures and discussions are open to anyone who may wish to cooperate. Students thus witness theory and practice which — especially in the latter days — spread on to areas of interdisciplinary researches of life style in cooperation with sciences which share similar interests or similar objects of research. After a comparatively successful action of ethnologists and architects for revitalization of the old town nucleus of a coastal town of Izola (ten students of ethnology and three mentors), a conference about the relation between ethnology and architecture was organized. This topic is also the main theme of an optional subject for junior and senior students. A similar cooperation has been established with Slavists in relation to folkloristic research of verbal literature.

Students should thus participate in all the primary tasks and researches of Slovene ethnology and some of them have already contributed to the initial stage of a long-term project entitled "Life Style of Slovenes in the 20th Century". Related to these primary researches will be reorganized seminars which will enable students to get acquainted with contemporary theory and practice of Slovene ethnology. Each seminary will be dealing with special areas of research so the students will be able to participate in a research of, for example, Slovene immigrants, and will become familiar with problems of contemporary ethnological orientations in Europe and other parts of the world, with problems of complex researches, etc.

A stronger activity would be desirable especially where popularization of ethnology is concerned. There are quite a few possibilities for this since at least some of the mass media institutions are willing to receive ethnological contributions. In any case it would be better for the branch and the public as well if such contributions were written by ethnologists themselves and not by people outside this profession which happens often enough in practice.

Many possibilities are thus available; the development of ethnology depends on all ethnologists, therefore on students and those who have come to understand this and try to contribute as much as possible within their own qualifications as well.

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