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Theme of the issue: Ethnology in the third Millenium: Topics, Methods, Challenges

- HAUKANES, Haldis: Futures full of promise, futures of despair. Contrasting temporalities in the life narrative of young Czechs
- PODOLINSKÁ, Tatiana: Roma in Slovakia – silent and invisible minority
- BARNA, GÁBOR: Rites, Feasts, Identity. Possible Questions and Answers on the Present-day Functions of Rites and Feasts
- POPELKOVÁ, KATARÍNA: Holidays – the Mirror of Society. The Social and Cultural Contexts of Present-Day Holidays in the Slovak Republic
- GIRY, Julien: A Specific Social Function of Rumors and Conspiracy Theories: Strengthening Community's Ties in Trouble Times. A Multilevel Analysis
- GULIN ZRNIČ, Valentina: Ethnological and cultural anthropological approaches to the city: framework of the Zagreb city-making
- UHEREK, Zdeněk: Not only moving bodies: contested and transforming concepts in migration studies

CONTENTS

**Theme of the issue: Ethnology
in the third Millennium: Topics,
Methods, Challenges****EDITORIAL**

- PODOLINSKÁ, Tatiana, POTANČOK, Vladimír: Editorial. Institute of Ethnology of Slovak Academy of Sciences in the third Millennium • 114

ARTICLES

- HAUKANES, Haldis: Futures full of promise, futures of despair. Contrasting temporalities in the life narrative of young Czechs • 120
- PODOLINSKÁ, Tatiana: Roma in Slovakia – silent and invisible minority (Social Networking and Pastoral Pentecostal Discourse as a case of giving voice and positive visibility) • 135
- BARNA, GÁBOR: Rites, Feasts, Identity. Possible Questions and Answers on the Present-day Functions of Rites and Feasts • 158
- POPELKOVÁ, Katarína: Holidays – the Mirror of Society. The Social and Cultural Contexts of Present-Day Holidays in the Slovak Republic • 171
- GIRY, Julien: A Specific Social Function of Rumors and Conspiracy Theories: Strengthening Community's Ties in Trouble Times. A Multilevel Analysis • 187

RESEARCH REPORTS

- GULIN ZRNIČ, Valentina: Ethnological and cultural anthropological approaches to the city: framework of the Zagreb city-making project • 203

ESSAY

- UHEREK, Zdeněk: Not only moving bodies: contested and transforming concepts in migration studies • 222

NEWS

- PODOLINSKÁ, Tatiana: The Institute of Ethnology SAS Evaluated as One of the Best Scientific Institutions in Slovakia • 234

BOOK REVIEWS

- Gabriela Kiliánová, Juraj Zajonc: 70 rokov Ústavu etnológie Slovenskej akadémie vied: kontinuita a diskontinuita bádania a jednej inštitúcie (70 Years of the Institute of Ethnology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences: Continuities and Discontinuities of Research and of One Institution) (Margarita JÁGEROVÁ) • 235

CALL FOR PAPERS SN 2/2018

RITES, FEASTS, IDENTITY. POSSIBLE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON THE PRESENT-DAY FUNCTIONS OF RITES AND FEASTS

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What is it that makes rites important in our individual and community lives? What can this role be? Is it to make occasions more festive? What makes an occasion festive? Does celebrating mean to live with rites and use rites? How does the use of rites or rituals make an occasion more festive? What is the role of the feast and celebration at the level and in the life of the individual and the group (family, settlement, state, nation)? Why is it that we can feel our times to be an age of festivals (=special feasts)? What does this increase mean?

These questions already point to the possible direction for answers, namely that rites can be the vehicles of important elements of content that make them necessary in all ages and all social systems: this content characteristic at the same time also emphasises the social role and function of rites. At this point the world of rites and feasts is connected to the levels of public life, power and politics. Rites and feasts are in constant movement and change.

Rites have become a subject attracting multidisciplinary interest with many new approaches. Among the functions of rites it is mainly their expressive, social and renewal role that enables the creation of individual and community identities. Here the rite may be connected with the feast that breaks away from the routine and frame of everyday life and offers the possibility of practising it.

The English expressions 'holiday' and 'feast' reflect the dual nature of the concept: a 'holy day', a time of freedom, time that is not controlled, as well as the excesses that accompany such events. It lifts the person celebrating it out of the everyday, weekday routine, and makes them part of this special time.

Today we are witnessing the desecralisation, fragmentation and individualisation of rites and feasts. Their religious/Christian nature is pushed into the background and new desecralised feasts have appeared and are taking shape. Since the turn of the 19th to 20th century national and state days have come to increasingly predominate in the order of feasts and the dominance of civil and ideological celebration can be observed.

The religious, state and national days have been shaping and dividing communities since the 19th century. The mobility appearing at all levels of society also opens up a new possibility for integration along which new feasts can appear creating what

are now a whole series of local festivals. The social acceptance of the new order of feasts reflects the acceptance of the social order. Science has also become a force shaping identity, celebrating itself and its institutions with the rites of scientific conferences. In this way the feast with its rites can shape religious, national, political, regional and local, group and individual identities.

Key words: rites, feasts, identities, church holidays, desacralisation, fragmentation, Central Europe

CONCEPT AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FEAST

The interpretation of the feast appeared as an important question in philosophy, the possible interpretations inspired the answers given by ethnology and anthropology.

Man is a two-dimensional being; he lives in the time of weekdays and feast days. The feast raises the person holding it above everyday routine, making it part of special time (Assmann, 1991, 1999). According to the German philosopher of culture Josef Pieper, the feast is "harmony with the world", the acceptance of life (*Zustimmung der Welt*, *In Tune with the World*). From the viewpoint of cultural history, he sees the origin of the feast in the cult. He regards cults praising God to be its purest form (Pieper, 1999). According to another view (Roger Caillois and Michael Bahtyin) the feast is characterised primarily by contradiction and excess. However, while Caillois emphasised the dominance of the "sacred" (Caillois, 2001), Bahtyin stressed the overstepping of bans, the freedom and exemption from rules and restrictions – including also the rules of religion (Bahtyin, s. d., cited in Nyíri, 1975). Others see the freedom of the feast in the licentiousness of the fools' feast, in the confrontation on the one side of ideals and reality, that is, the expected and desired life, and on the other the reality of everyday life (Cox, 1969).

The feast is certainly an extraordinary time lifted out of time as a whole (Van der Leeuw, 2001: 338). Feasts may be repeated, forming cycles, thereby showing that they are a continuation of something and lead somewhere (Van der Leeuw, 2001: 338), that they may be related to each other, and their structure may also express symbolic contents. Although most of those who have studied the feast find it related to the *sacral*, the *sacred*, in a wider context they also mention its *extraordinariness*, its *quasi-sacral* nature.

FEAST AND POWER

Our feast structure is complex, many-layered, grouping together into a whole commemorations and occasions of diverse origin. Feasts bring the feeling of order and stability to our world (Bálint, 1943). The most important social and cultural function of the feast is its role of *ordering time* (Leach, 2000: 101).

Obviously a feast structure is effective if its components are organised into a whole on the basis of a largely uniform world view, if there is the least possible discrepancy among them, and if the society as a whole or its broadest possible strata accept it and identify with it. The aims held up for the community can be read from a state's feast culture, and the given system's culture of political activity can also be read from the feasts. (The way it calls on people to celebrate, and what feasts the state makes

compulsory.) We can also observe whether the political administration is capable through its feast culture of creating an emotional and intellectual community with the thinking of its citizens. Changes of feasts that occur after changes of political system clearly illustrate this discrepancy, followed by the establishment of a new “harmony” through transformation of the feast structure.

The interests and aspirations of the forces in power, at any given time, and the nature of that power are reflected in the order of its feasts. The state feast is a forum and means for creating a connection between the citizen (individual) and the existing political power (community organisation). The state, and earlier the churches, wanted and want to bring under their control some of our feasts, even the major milestones in the life of the individual (birth, marriage, death).¹ This is one way not only of keeping a record of society but also of controlling it.

Thus the relationship between the state and the church can be measured through the state and national days of the given state, and the holidays recognised by the state (church feasts).

Table No. 1

Austria	Czech Republic	Hungary	Slovakia
Jan. 1. New Year	Jan. 1. New Year	Jan. 1. Day of Peace	Day of the Establish- ment of the Slovak Republic
Jan. 6. Three Kings			Epiphany
		March 15. National feast	
	Good Friday		Good Friday
Easter Monday	Easter Monday	Easter Monday	Easter Monday
May 1. Labour Day	Labour Day	Labour Day	Labour Day
	May 8. Liberation Day Czech Republic		Day of Victory over Fascism
May, Ascension			
May, Pentecost Monday		Pentecost Monday	
May, Corpus Christi			
	July 5. Cyril and Methodius Day		July 5. Cyril and Methodius Day
	July 6. Jan Hus Day		
Aug. 15. Assumption			
		Aug. 20. St. Stephen's Day	
			Aug. 29. Slovak Uprising Day
			Sept. 1. Day of the Constitution of the Slovak Republic
			Sept. 15. Our Lady of Sorrows, patron of Slovakia

1 It is instructive from this point of view that the Hungarian government has just recently proposed that Good Friday be declared a public holiday. The state itself declares which days from among the days of religious type it wants to accept.

Austria	Czech Republic	Hungary	Slovakia
	Sept. 28. St. Wenceslas Day		
		Oct. 23. 1956 Revolution Day	
Oct. 26. National Feast of Austria			
	Oct. 28. Independence Day of Czechoslovakia 1918		
Nov. 1. All Saints' Day	Nov. 17. Struggle for Freedom and Democracy Day	Nov. 1. All Saints' Day	Nov. 1. All Saints' Day Nov. 17. Struggle for Freedom and Democracy Day
Dec. 8. Immaculate Conception			
	Dec. 24. Christmas Eve		Dec. 24. Christmas Eve
Dec. 25. Christmas	Christmas	Christmas	Christmas
December 26. St. Stephen's Day (Protomartyr)	St. Stephen's Day (Protomartyr)	Second Day of Christmas	Second Day of Christmas

What does this table show? Above all that the basic stratum consists of Christian feasts, events in the history of salvation: Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost. In addition to these, in dominantly Catholic Austria several other specifically Catholic feasts are also public holidays. The other three countries are denominationally more divided, so the feast order of Catholicism is not dominant there. It should be noted that in the Czech Republic the national saint, Saint Wenceslas, is interpreted not primarily as a Christian saint but rather as a Czech ruler. In Hungary the feast of King Saint Stephen on August 20 is of a similar character: the day commemorates the foundation of the state linked to his person (during the socialist period, the socialist constitution), and the new bread. Already in the early 20th century the day had become the day of public servants (Barna, 2011: 111, 113). Among the feasts in Slovakia, a country with a Catholic majority we find September 15, the feast day of Šaštín Pieta, Patrona Slovaciae – Our Lady of Sorrows, in memory of a patron of Slovakia, since 1927. The day of the “missionaries to the Slavs, Cyril and Methodius” (July 5) in the Czech Republic and Slovakia refers to the “Apostles to the Slavs”. This can also be a memory of the former Czechoslovakia. It indicates that the “Apostles to the Slavs” are important not only in religious life, but politics also attributes significance to them in a Slavic (pan-Slavic) context. The secular content is even more marked in “the anniversary of the execution of Jan Hus” (July 6), that emphasises the courage and moral steadfastness of Jan Hus, “his struggle for justice and the Czech people”, his resistance to the Catholic Church (Rückl, Štika, 2012: 171–172). In other words, even the content of feasts with a Christian church basis has become secularised (Rückl, Štika, 2012: 171–172). Among the feasts with a secular basis, occasions of victories, independence and freedom dominate.

The consolidated equilibrium of state and church can be observed in the (Central) European societies, with a greater state predominance that is also reflected in the world of feasts in which church feasts are recognised by the state as public holidays.

Let us consider an example from Western Europe too!

In strongly secularised France today's feast order has developed as the coefficient of four components: the universal church legal system (Codex Iuris Canonici = CIC), the local church with its own customs, the state with its own feasts and finally the citizens with their own religious beliefs and interests (Join-Lambert, 2012: 51).

Table No. 2

Catholic holy days of obligation	State feasts and public holidays	Catholic feasts prescribed by the Codex Iuris Canonici
Sundays, including Easter Sunday and Pentecost Sunday	Sundays, including Easter Sunday and Pentecost	Sundays, including Easter Sunday and Pentecost Sunday
Christmas	Christmas New Year	Immaculate Conception (December 8) Christmas Solemnity of Mary (January 1) Epiphany, (January 6) Saint Joseph (March 3)
Ascension Day	Easter Monday Ascension Day Pentecost Monday Labour day (May 1) Victory Day (May 8)	Ascension Day
Assumption Day (August 15)	National Day (July 14) Assumption Day (August 15)	Corpus Christi Apostles Saints Peter and Paul (June 29) Assumption Day (August 15)
All Saints' Day	All Saints' Day Armistice Day commemorating the end of WWI (November 11)	All Saints' Day (November 1)

What does the example of strongly secularised France show? The same as that of the previous countries: Christian feasts form the basic stratum, and the major Marian feast is also a public holiday. Among the secular feasts are “victory days” in commemoration of past French glory. The state itself encourages commemoration. People celebrate on a particular occasion. That is, they remember something, or hope for something (Nyíri, 1975: 140–141). The feasts serve to bring the past into the present.

Thus the system of public holidays/feasts is largely the same in the different countries of Europe, an indication that this system is based on an identical/similar spiritual/mental/ideological foundation. That foundation is Christianity – regardless of whether the European Union recognises that in its “constitution” or not, whether we like it or not. This system of feasts is supplemented in the various groups of countries with common or differing local church and national feasts based on the particular

history and situation of the given country. But if this is so, it could be thought that the basic stratum of Christian feasts has remained important right up to the present. A European identity could be built on this Christian tradition largely common to the whole of Europe, but that is rejected by the present official European Union policy that does not recognise the Christian roots of European mentality. But the situation is far from being so simple. There is no longer a ritual centre ensuring unity as Christianity did, and that would embrace the whole of society, bringing uniformity to people over their different roles (Stollberg-Rilinger, 2013: 241).

FEASTS IN LATE MODERNITY

What is the situation regarding the Christian feasts in Europe today, what is the relationship between Christian and state feasts and the society in the period of Late Modernity?

Christianity is a religion of memory, every aspect of it recalls some event in the past, in the history of salvation. However, parallel with the process of secularisation and individualisation religion has lost some of its strength as a central organising force and is no longer among the forces holding the society together or is limited only to smaller groups. Parallel with that, there has also been a decline in knowledge of the "history of salvation" pointing to the future that it represents and tells. There is therefore less and less need of the Christian feasts as places and occasions of remembrance. At the turn of the 19th to 20th century the national ideal occupied the place of religion bringing with it a corresponding feast structure, but with the disintegration of communities in the course of the 20th century this too has lost much of its central, organising force. This can be observed in the diminishing attraction of state/national feasts in most countries. But together with this the humanist content of the feasts has also been lost, and the national days have become emptied (Bieritz, 2012: 13). In Late Modernity feasts are losing their dimension of interpretation, remembrance and reminding in both the public and the private sphere. Despite this there is no reduction in the demand for rituals, in which the demand for transcendence above everyday life is expressed. And some people are in fact devising new rituals (Stollberg-Rilinger, 2013: 242).

We are now witnessing the individualisation and fragmentation of rites and feasts. Here, it is not the feast itself, but the celebration that is important. In this way the Late Modern feast as an event refers only to itself (Bieritz, 2012: 5–6). People celebrate a state in which they are at the given time, while remembrance or looking to the future play an ever smaller role. Their religious/Christian character is pushed into the background, new desacralised feasts emerge. This can provide a frame for preserving many rites and rituals. Typical places and forms of such celebration today are fairs, leisure parks and shopping centres (Bieritz, 2012: 10–11).

Christmas has not only lost the thought of the birth of the Saviour, but is increasingly also losing its character as a "feast of love". Nowadays Christmas tends to mean shopping occasions in the weeks before the feast, the *celebration of consumption*. Likewise, we do not know what to do with the story of the resurrection of Christ, and so in the past decades Easter has become a kind of spring feast (Barna, 2014; Join-Lambert, 2012: 62). Pentecost has entirely lost its content. In short, the feasts that are in danger are those that have no relevance or meaning in profane life (Join-Lambert,

2012: 59). Maria Liljas Stålhandske speaks directly about an *existential and ritual void* in the late modernity, which makes people *ritually homeless* (Stålhandske, 2005: 129).

However, the mobility and differentiation appearing at all levels of society also offers a new opportunity for integration that can give rise to new feasts or festivals. There can also be a role for the economy and commerce in this at the global level. It is to this (and the cut flower trade) that we owe the spread throughout Europe of Mothers day, Advent markets and the Advent wreath from earlier times. This is also the driving force behind the rapidly spreading festive rites of Valentine's Day and Halloween, together with a well organised communication strategy that is spreading these feasts that are somewhat foreign to European culture, together with elements of their rites, principally through the network of kindergartens, schools and cultural centres. Here the simultaneous impact of novelty and amazement can be readily observed.

Use of the schools and the mass media is not new. Totalitarian regimes (such as the French Revolution, socialism and communism that came to power in 1917 in Russia, at the end of the 1940s in the countries of Central Europe, or the Nazi German state) introduced their own new and irreligious feasts (Lane, 1980; Stollberg-Rilinger, 2013: 74). They all used the communication means of modern society (school, media) to create a new order of feasts, the so-called proletarian feast culture or Soviet feast culture and help it put down roots in society and so legitimise it (Lane, 1980). After 1990 the feasts of socialism were replaced everywhere. However, feasts such as *Women's Day* (March 8), *Labour Day* (May 1), and Children's day were able to survive the change of political system because they had less ideological content.

Interestingly, certain local traditions, even some thought to be long forgotten, have now acquired new value. Recently, beside the church year, calendar feasts, national/state days and individual celebrations, local feasts have also appeared as special occasions for smaller or larger communities (settlements, urban districts, or strata, occupation groups – these also existed earlier). They draw their symbolic tools from the local culture, to which they attribute expected and assumed authenticity. But these are not related to the occasions of remembrance; they are based on peasant culture, on the gastronomic traditions of the particular time, drawing elements from them linked to ecological, touristic or economic interests. Examples from Hungary include the fish soup cooking competitions and feasts held in Baja and Szeged, the Csabai sausage feast in Békéscsaba or the cooking of mutton stew in Karcag. These events can, of course, also be interpreted as signs of democratisation, but it must also be seen that these are not groups formed on the basis of shared memory, they are merely communities of experience drawn together for a single event. Similarly communities solely of experience are formed nowadays on the religious tours organised by travel offices.

The new awareness of the relationship between man and nature created and keeps alive the day of birds and trees which was included among the feasts in the early 20th century, and more recently the day of water has appeared and no doubt other examples could probably be cited. However, here the ideals and the ideological background are not responsibility felt towards the created world and the Creator, but a health-conscious, ecological type of purely humanist attitude. Small minorities, such as the often very aggressive LGBT groups or groups of handicapped people have their own day in the European feast calendar (e.g. World Sight Day 13th October).

Science has also appeared among the forces shaping the feast, celebrating itself and

its institutions with the rites of scientific conferences, just as it is doing now in the frame of an international conference. There are fine examples of graduation ceremonies, conferment of doctoral degrees and inauguration of professors. We could also mention the Nobel Prize award ceremony, or the congresses of national and international scientific organisations and societies. All of these occasions are surrounded by a multitude of rites.

Similar examples can be found in the area of the arts and sport. It is sufficient to think of the Oscar Awards ceremony, the Oscar Galas, or the Olympics. Rites and various systems of symbols play a big part in all of these.

rites

Rites generally appear at festive occasions. Their presence shows that they fulfil an important function that makes them necessary in all periods and all social systems.

In the view of Paul Post rites “are a more or less repeatable sequence of action units which take on a symbolic dimension through formalization, stylization, and their situation in place and time. On the one hand, individuals and groups express their ideas and ideals, their mentalities and identities through these rituals, on the other hand the ritual actions shape, foster, and transform these ideas, mentalities and identities” (Post, 2012). This concept of rites focuses mainly on the social function and dimension of rites and rituals, rather than on analysis of their quality and forms. This firmly ties rites to the world of feasts. In my opinion “acting ritually means evoking fine differences, contradictions and strategies in the course of everyday action and distinguishing between them in a value-laden way. In this view ritualisation is actually choosing between modes of action. [...] ritualisation is a mode of action that creates striking, distinctive oppositions, regarding itself as more important, better and more effective” (Barna, 2000: 30). It forms a contrast to everyday life, that is, it is linked to exceptional, even festive occasions.

Rites and rituals are first of all actions, people’s conscious and purposeful intervention in their environment. Secondly, rituals are consciously performed actions, in which a distinction must be made between ritualisation and customary behaviour (Brosius, Michaels, Schrode, 2013: 13–14). The third defining characteristic of rites is their framing: in space and time. Fourthly, their formality is in the form of repeated and repeatable actions. The concept of the rite or ritual is value-laden and is linked to the cultural and historical discourses of a given historical period (Brosius, Michaels, Schrode, 2013: 10).

And like feasts, the areas of meaning of rites are also complex: they can be linked to the culture of remembrance, when certain forms refer to an event in the past, but they can also be associated with leisure culture, that is, the consciously structured actions for leisure time that can be repeated: think of the ways of experiencing sport, tourism and festivals (Post, 2012).

There has been a vast upswing in rites research in recent decades. It is sufficient to refer to the research project of the last decade “Ritualdynamik – Soziokulturelle Prozesse in historischer und kulturvergleichenden Perspektive” in Heidelberg, and the preceding two-volume “Theorizing Rituals”, that broadened the research of rites and made it multidisciplinary.

FEAST, REMEMBRANCE, POWER, IDENTITY

People remember something by celebrating it (Nyíri, 1975: 140–141). The feast serves to make the past present. And the relationship to the past shapes the identity of the group remembering. As it remembers its own history, representing it in the rites of the feast, it shapes its own identity image. Collective identity is often expressed precisely in this ceremonial communication (Barna, 2006: 259).

The feast thus connects the past, present and future, and in doing so it can give meaning to human life. The feast necessarily forms a connection with the past and the future. In this way the feast suspends the time structure of everyday life, it has its own time scale. Anyone who celebrates embraces the past and the future, accepts also the dimensions of time that are hidden to man. Time appears as history (Eliade, 1996: 103–105; Várnagy, 1993: 356). It frees people from the burden of everyday obligations, lifting them out of the limitations of the here and now (Nyíri, 1975: 143). Many individual interpretations can be made of the past, the strong differentiation of society results in many different “individual histories”. Accordingly, ritual behaviour may also assume a variety of forms (Stollberg-Rilinger, 2013: 242), or it may lose its diversity.

The practical aim of a community clinging to its past is to organise and orient itself within a particular temporal frame, and to preserve its identity in the face of threatening disintegration, something to which all communities feel they are exposed. In this way it keeps the past alive in traditions, legends, monuments, public buildings, folk music and folk dance (Carr, 1999: 78). It draws its rites from its own local and/or national traditions. This however can empty the world of feasts and make the whole or a special part of the group’s culture the vehicle of additional meaning. This strategy is followed also in our times by linguistic, religious or cultural minorities threatened by the majority. They do not observe the majority/state feasts, but make their own feasts points of orientation with their traditions as occasions and spaces for anchoring memory.

In our times *state/national feasts* are of great importance, as states strive to make national feasts vehicles and symbolic expressions of group identities, and to ensure that there are suitable ways of consolidating this memory. Placing the events of the past in remembrance spaces (feasts) was and remains the interest and means of consolidating, legitimising and confirming the relations of the existing system, of conciliation, and of change (Rüsen, 1999: 42). The aim of states is to root their present into the past (Stollberg-Rilinger, 2013: 78) and in this way to create a foundation for group identity. It strives to replace the cohesive force of religion/denomination with linguistic and cultural nationalism (Hobsbawm, Ranger, 1983; Cavelti Kee, 2014). Nevertheless we see everywhere in Europe that the mobilising force of state/national celebrations (its acceptance, the number of participants) is low, it is only in schools under the predominant influence of official public administration and the state that it is high. In contrast with this are the festivals of the event and consumption culture of our times that are very popular, they lead to the organisation of smaller groups or attract large masses. It is an indication of the strength of the popular and consumption culture in our days that the Nobel Prize in literature was given to the singer-songwriter, Bob Dylan.

What is this phenomenon that researchers call festivalisation?

FROM FEAST TO FESTIVAL AND CONSUMPTION CULTURE

Throughout Europe many state and local celebrations show characteristic features of festivalisation. Klaus Roth speaks of the festivalisation of culture in both the eastern and western parts of Europe, although they differ in certain details (Roth, 2008: 22–23). There can be no doubt that the majority of both national and religious celebrations have become festivalised (Barna, 2011). Part of the essence of festivalisation is a fast-paced, varied series of events that always holds attention and keeps interest alive, in contrast with the often backward-looking, meditative character and atmosphere of the feast that also uses silence. The event is principally important for its own sake.

Festival studies are emerging as a distinct sub-field within event studies (Getz: 2010). Recently scholars within and outside the traditional disciplines have been examining festivals with regard to an increasing variety of issues: their roles in establishing place and group identity (Cohen, 1995: 50); the social and cultural impacts of festivals and festival tourism; creation of social and cultural capital through festival production; fostering the arts and preserving traditions; and a variety of personal outcomes from participation in festivals, including learning, acquired social and cultural capital, and healthfulness. The value and worth of festivals to society and culture has been addressed, as well as the imputed need for festivity (Getz, 2010: 4–5). The festival is also spectacle. It is a place, time and occasion for the representation of local cultures. Each festival, whether religious or non-religious, is a well structured cultural performance with associated marketing and consumption features.

Festivals, religious or profane, may integrate people and establish inner-communities; they induce commonly shared experiences and encourage an atmosphere of fun, pleasure and excitement. In this way festivals facilitate the processes of transferring pleasant experiences onto other subjects, places or phenomena related to them. Festivals act as an urban image device (Karpińska-Krakiwiak, online), but they also appear in rural environments, especially in festivals of a religious nature (pilgrimages) and more recently in the growing number of profane festivals based on local gastronomic specialties (for example the already mentioned fish soup festivals, sausage festival, etc. in Hungary) (Hesz, 2008).

Festivals are celebrations, so by definition they have a theme. They also have a variety of meanings, from different perspectives, that make them complex planned phenomena. Meanings exist at personal, social, cultural and economic levels. The experience itself is at once personal and social, with each form of festival (e.g. music, arts, sport, heritage, religious) embodying different experience potential. This requires knowledge of culture, the arts, and environmental psychology (Getz, 2010).

Festivals, in particular gastronomic ones, are connected to cultures and to places, giving each an identity and helping bind people to their communities. Similarly, festivals and other planned events can foster and reinforce group cohesion and through it the group identity. Festivals may lead to positive self-identification for local communities. This has happened in the case of Saint Patrick's Day which with its street festivals and corned beef and cabbage became an important expression of Irishness everywhere in the world. Or the mutton stew cooking events strengthen the local/regional consciousness in the Nagykunság region (Great Hungarian Plain).

And what is/was happening now, here in Smolenice? Does this festive occasion have anything to do with building identity?

I believe it does. We have come together in Smolenice for these few days to remember an event that took place 70 years ago, when the Institute of Ethnography of the Slovak Academy of Sciences was established. We are celebrating a past event and remembering persons and happenings of the past 70 years. This could be the answer to the question of: *what are we doing? How are we doing it?* Within the frame of a conference structured according to the traditional ritual of international scholarly conferences, where not only the scholarly but also political sphere is represented, in a beautiful historic place that also evokes the arts. In other words, we are holding our remembrance, our celebration within a closed series of actions using symbolic tools, in short, we are ritualising. *And why are we doing all this?* First of all, in order to confirm retrospectively the past aspirations of our predecessors and the institution built on them, secondly to strengthen this institution in its present position and to legitimate its activity for the future. We are doing the together with participants in Slovak and international scholarly life, with representatives of different generations; *to strengthen its identity.*

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