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STUDIES
The paper to the 60th anniversary of the Institute of Ethnology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences wrote G. Kilianová, the Director of the Institute and M. Vrzgulová, the Chair of the Academic Board of this Institute.

Key words: Institute of Ethnology SAS, Institute of Ethnography SAS, ethnography, ethnology, scientific research, field-work researches, traditional folk culture, phenomena of every-day-culture, projects, theory, methodology

Summary

The paper to the 60th anniversary of the Institute of Ethnology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences wrote G. Kilianová, the Director of the Institute and M. Vrzgulová, the Chair of the Academic Board of this Institute.

In the first part they analyzed the ethnological study in the Institute of Ethnology SAS. They resumed the academic and research agency of the Institute of Ethnology, they focused on principal goals and main research tendency from 1946 to 2006, on changing theoretical concepts and methodological approaches. In the second part they summarized nowadays situation in the Institute, introduced the current study and presented the new projects. In the end they outlined the possibilities for future direction of ethnological research concluded four main fields where
the ethnological research in the Institute of Ethnology of Slovak Academy of Sciences will/would be involved in the nearest future.

HONOUR TO SYMMETRY: OR ALSO WE ARE THEM

(CHVÁLA SYMETRIE ALEBO AJ MY SME ONI)

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The first part of the article is dealing with the notion of symmetry/asymmetry in the development of ethnography/ethnology in Slovakia. From historical material, which for the first sight brings only the evidence on numerous and differentiated asymmetries, starts with the asymmetry between past and present and finishes with asymmetry between these, who are speaking, and those, who are spoken about. Author turns toward a development of discipline as it appears to someone who attempts to do a philosophical reflection, and for whom the notion of symmetry represent the starting point, because he thinks it is inherent to the very object of his interest. Passage from ethnography to ethnology announced that the discipline overcome a protoscientific stage, entered element of logos, strengthened its methodological base and eliminated everything interlinking it with enlightening or ideological service. It is noteworthy that symmetry, its place and role in the development of the discipline have been several times transformed in the passage from ethnography to ethnology.

Key words: ethnography, ethnology, philosophy, epistemology, diskurs

Summary

The notion of symmetry appearing in the title of article gets the specific meaning. From historical material of ethnographic writings, which for the first sight brings only the evidence on numerous and differentiated asymmetries, starts with the asymmetry between past and present and finishes with asymmetry between these, who are speaking, and those, who are spoken about. The period, which is today considered to be overcome and even though one usually mentions that this period contributed by several noteworthy results, which are permanent inspiration for the research projects; its theoretical programme is considered to be too narrow. There is a period of the disciplinary focus on regional descriptive studies in my mind. This focus seems to be too narrow today, because it seems to be limited to collecting, description and classification. Another objection against regional descriptive orientation is that its theoretical definitions were interlinked with the acceptation of various social functions, which had little or nothing to do with purely academic interests. Through the categories of folk and tradition, the collection of sources, building of collections, descriptive and cumulative approaches accumulated functions, which had enlightening, ideological, and often directly political characters. Ethnographic research originated in an attempt to search for, depict, classify, describe and store material and spiritual parts of national culture, which were understood as traditional folk culture. The categories such as the nation or folk in this case covered and weakened all differences in social rank, education and functions, which could remind researchers of their others; they were, despite all differences, part of the same national community, which was the object of their collecting and documentary activities. Even if they faced unknown, forgotten, extincting, or by the origin foreign elements of spiritual and material life, they did not have feeling of any fundamental otherness, and did not enter into an asymmetric relation to their research objects: they were unfolding and uncovering only what has been an unknown part of their own national identity and what has brought just another proof of the richness and variability of its expressions.

Search for differences, distinctions and variations is embedded in this ethnographic discourse within the framework of building symmetric relations: the category of symmetry, together with the category of continuity were able to build bridges leading even to the most distant margins of the expressions of national community. Hence whenever ethnographic research went, it could find only elements, which from the point of view of the nation contributed toward the knowledge of self. Theoretical and methodological disadvantages of regional descriptive approach were apparent for these, who adopted ethnological point of view. Passage from ethnography to ethnology announced that the discipline overcome a protoscientific stage, entered element of logos, strengthened its methodological base and eliminated everything interlinking it with enlightening or ideological service. It is noteworthy that symmetry, its place and role in the development of the discipline have been several times
transformed in this passage from ethnography to ethnology which was not specific for Slovak development but can be identified in other countries, though, of course, in different times and different ways of realisation.

**FAMILY OF PRESENT DAY (On example village of Pitelová)**

*(RODINA V SÚČASNOSTI - Na príklade obce Pitelová)*

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The study is concerned with the life of a present family in the village of Pitelová. The first part analyzes family structure and form. It presents social situation of families, the most frequent family activities, forming of roles, division of labor, position of children and internal emotional climate within the family. In the last part it indicates value attitudes of respondents towards family.

Key words: structure of family, social situation of families, family activities, division of labor within family, children, emotional climate within the family, value attitudes towards family, family behavior

**Summary**

After 1989 family had to adjust to the new political, economic and social situation. The decrease of birth rate and size of households, postponement of parenthood as well as marriage to older age, higher divorce rate, cohabitation of children born out of marriage, one member households and single parent families belong to the changes of family behavior.

Manifestations of these processes caused polemics on crisis of the family. The researchers of family however assume that in present time we come across change of the family rather than its destruction. The evaluation of family life should be concluded from the judgment of quality of relations within the family.

In my study I have concentrated on the family of present day in the village of Pitelová. The research material proved that bad economic conditions of the inhabitants influence building new houses. That is why in the village grandparents, their child with partner and unmarried economic dependent grandsons often live together (29 cases).

Extended families of parents and their single economically independent children have the highest frequency (49 cases). Single man households (26 cases), two generation individual complete families (26 cases) and marital families (24 cases) are also rather highly represented.

Because of better working conditions as well as general life conditions young generation migrate to cities. That is with low birth rate the reasons why mostly people over 40 years of age live in the village.

Two children model of family prevails in the whole village. Before 1989 the average age of respondents in the time of first child birth used to be 20, 3 years in case of women and 22, 9 in case of men. After 1989 the average age increased to 21, 2 years in case of women and 25, 2 years in case of men. All of the respondents however recommend move the age limit up due to psychological maturity of people. Child firmly stands on a high level within the value hierarchy of respondents. Child makes sense of their lives. If they couldn’t have children they would think about adoption, or another possibility of artificial fecundation.

The fact that parents are busy influences common family activities (going to the church, visiting relatives, watching TV, fishing, summer trips, playing with children, common doing of housework, or works in the garden and around the house).

The families are gradually sharing their duties. Men start to participate on taking care of household as well as women start to enter the public life. Men and women are becoming equal partners. Man is no more just a person to make living of the family (even if he still considers himself to be). Both man and woman are participating on bringing their children up. Man is trying to be a mainstay to his family. The research however showed that most of the household works is still being done by women.

According to the respondents carrying stress from work to the family, health problems of members of the family, financial problems, quarrels with the grandparents (if they live with them), regular absence of husband in the family due to his job are the most important problems.
Conservative and modern family behavior model is typically for Pitelová. Higher average age in the time of first child birth, downtrend of birthrates, cohabitations, compensating of gender roles are modern attributes. Common housing of several generations, mutual help, self-supplying are conservative attributes.

In general, family is very important for respondents. It creates the sense of their lives. They most appreciate love, peace, mutual trust, good relations, coherence, understanding, respecting partner, children within the family.

WHY THE BRITISH FAMILIES EMPLOY AU PAIRS AND WHAT THE SLOVAK AU PAIRS CRITICISE ON IT

(PREČO MAJÚ BRITSKÉ MATKY AU PAIR A ČO SA NA TOM SLOVENSKÝM AU PAIR NEPÁČI)

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This paper draws on larger ethnographic research on an experience of Slovak au pairs living in London. After examining reasons why British families employ au pairs I will introduce ways how the Slovak au pairs interpret this kind of childcare.

Key words: au pair, childcare, reproductive work, family, paid domestic labour

Summary

This paper draws on larger ethnographic research on an experience of Slovak au pairs living in London. After examining reasons why British families employ au pairs I will introduce ways how the Slovak au pairs interpret this kind of childcare. I will argue that the families’ decisions for an au pair scheme were based on an uneasy compromise, trying to combine their economic conditions, ideas on motherhood, childcare and female identities with the available alternative forms of childcare and the state’s political and economical conditions. On their part the Slovak au pairs viewed both the families’ choice of an individual paid childcare and the concept of quality-time as the lack of parental love and care. This analysis enables me to show that criticising British families the Slovak au pairs condemn the concept of childcare they find unusual. This data reveal the clash between two different concepts of childcare as well as the ways how these concepts can be changed within the life of an individual.