

TEXTS AND CONTEXTS OF FOLKLORISM

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In ethnology and folklore studies, folklorism generally denotes a social and cultural phenomenon that presents and revives folk culture forms in a series of versions ranging from scholarly reconstruction to (folk) performance. The author presents texts and contexts of this phenomenon through the international development and definitions of the concept, as well as through experts' and actors' views on the Country Wedding in Ljubljana.

Keywords: *folklorism, theory and practice, tourism, Country Wedding in Ljubljana.*

Termin folklorizem v etnologiji in folkloristiki označuje družbeno-kulturni pojav, ki folklorne oblike ljudske kulture predstavlja oz. oživlja v nizu različic med znanstveno rekonstrukcijo in ljudsko poustvarjalnostjo. Avtorica skuša tekste in kontekste folklorizma prikazati prek mednarodnega razvoja koncepta, prispevkov o folklorizmu v Sloveniji ter nazadnje s poglobljeno strokovnjakov in akterjev folklorizma na primeru Kmečke ohceti v Ljubljani.

Ključne besede: *folklorizem, teorija in praksa, turizem, Kmečka ohcet v Ljubljani.*

INTRODUCTION

The period following the industrial revolution is often portrayed as the destruction of the past (Nuryanti 1996: 250). Industrialization drastically changed lifestyles and caused a gradual disappearance of traditional cultural elements. Technological innovations, radical modernization, mass migration, and the lengthening of life have contributed to the feelings of uncertainty people experience (Lowenthal 1995: 396). These processes strongly influenced the relationship towards tradition. They aroused romantic, sentimental, and nostalgic feelings about it and “a new awareness that seeks to find novel ways to communicate with the past” (Nuryanti 1996: 250).

This phenomenon is usually labeled folklorism, at least in Germanic and Slavic countries or, more precisely, in ethnologies and folklore studies developed in these countries. It generally denotes a social and cultural phenomenon that presents and revives folk culture forms in a series of versions ranging from scholarly reconstruction to (folk) performance. Selecting and promoting certain aspects of the past/tradition/heritage (the research domain of ethnologists and folklorists) is encountered especially often in tourism.

In the mid-1960s, almost three decades before heritage became, as Palmer puts it, a “buzz word” (1999: 315), the biggest annual festival in Slovenia, the Country Wedding in Ljubljana, used elements of traditional culture to promote Slovenia as an attractive tourist destination. This article first presents the international development and definitions of the concept as well as discussions about folklorism in Slovenia. Then a case study of the festival is used to show the difference between viewpoints of the experts (ethnologist and folklorists) and folklorism users (organizers, performers and consumers).

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONCEPT

The first use of the term *folklorism* goes back to the 1930s, although there is disagreement about who first used the term and it was not used the same way by all researchers. The French expression *neofolklorisme*, which was coined by the ethnologist Albert Marinus, was used to label a new theoretical orientation according to which folklore facts were essentially social facts, which it was necessary to study from a functional, sociological point of view (Hultkrantz 1960: 188–189). In Slovenian the expression *folklorizem* referred to folklorization phenomena in literature (Stanonik 1992: 673), and in Russia the term was used to refer to the study and use of oral literature (or folklore) by writers during their creative work (e.g., Mark Azadovsky) or as a label for non-scholarly publications by journalists, writers, and folklore enthusiasts that used folklore material (Šmidchens 1999: 55).

The concept as it is known today was introduced to ethnology in 1962 by Hans Moser in his article “Vom Folklorismus in unserer Zeit” (Folklorism in Our Time, published in *Zeitschrift für Volkskunde*), and it was expanded two years later in the article “Der Folklorismus als Forschungsproblem der Volkskunde” (Folklorism as a Research Issue in Folklore Studies, published in *Hessische Blätter für Volkskunde*; see Moser 1962, 1964). He defined folklorism as the “secondhand transmission and presentation of culture,” and added that a more precise definition was still evasive (1962: 180). Based on German discussions following Moser’s articles, Hermann Bausinger established eight theses about folklorism in the mid-1960s, in which among other things he drew attention to the fact that folklorism is “yesterday’s applied ethnology,” which in many respects cannot be separated from original folklore, and that folklorism and its criticism are identical in many respects (see also Bendix 1997: 179–180). In order to expand the discussion of folklorism beyond its German domain, he sent a questionnaire to ethnological institutes throughout Europe (see Bausinger 1969). Five European ethnologists (Polish, Hungarian, Yugoslav, Swiss, and Portuguese) wrote articles for the *Zeitschrift für Volkskunde*. The researchers agreed on the secondary nature of folklorism, but they assessed the phenomenon differently (cf. Antonijević 1969, Burszta 1969, Dias

1969, Dömötör 1969, Trümpy 1969). At the same time, Konrad Köstlin criticized the direction of discussions on folklorism up to that point in *Rheinisches Jahrbuch für Volkskunde*. He determined that researchers were continuing to discuss the same issues and that they were simply using folklorism as an additional set of materials (Köstlin, cited in Bendix 1997: 181). Following his example, Hermann Bausinger's works also recognized folklorism as a direct challenge to the basic canon of the field (see Bausinger 2002 [1971]).

In the book *Grundzüge der Volkskunde* (Essentials of Ethnology, 1978), ethnologists in Tübingen included folklorism among important new concepts, which may, according to Bendix (1997: 183), also demonstrate the implicit acceptance of the term by the Tübingen School of folklore studies dominant at the time, which retained folklorism within the discipline. Bausinger (1984: 1408) also dealt with in the *Enzyklopädie des Märchens* (Encyclopedia of Fairy Tales). He wrote that folklorism was not an analytical concept, but rather a descriptive one with a critical dimension, which had a mostly heuristic value. As such, he pushed ethnology into topics connected with political economy, cultural policy, and the folklore market considerably earlier than the Americans began to study these issues. Its theoretical implications have provided an impulse toward better understanding of culture today and in past periods. Folklorism, despite not being a theory, has broadened ethnology's horizons. Despite the initial rejection of folklorism as something invented and manipulated, historical research has forced folklore researchers to recognize parallels between scholarly reconstructions of folk cultural elements and social efforts to construct aesthetic representations of folk character (Bendix 1997: 185–186).

The discussions about folklorism in Europe have been similar to the American debate regarding the “authenticity” of the products of folklorism, in which these “false traditions” are either negatively defined as *fakelore* (see Dorson 1969) or else defended from this type of value judgment by scholars. The issue of authenticity is largely dealt with today by the anthropology of tourism or economic and political anthropology. Various forms of “searching for authenticity” include, for example, the concepts of ecotourism, ethnic tourism, alternative tourism, heritage tourism, and so on. The American anthropologist of tourism Dean MacCannell introduced the term *staged authenticity* (see 1973) and, despite having different points of departure, his conclusions are similar to the ones European ethnologists have reached on the basis of ethnographic research on folklorism. In political anthropology, the concept related to folklorism most commonly used is *invented tradition* (see Hobsbawm and Ranger, eds. 1983). Traditions that seem old or that present themselves as such are often actually relatively recent in origin and sometimes completely invented or fabricated. Anthropology largely uses the concept in its research into phenomena connected with ethnicity (e.g., nationalism and national identity).

DEFINITIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF FOLKLORISM

The most frequently cited definition of folklorism, “second-hand folk culture,” is still Moser’s. He uses this term to describe the generally growing interest in “folk culture” and all of its forms in contemporary life, especially when they are already disappearing; at the same time, people are generally unwilling to preserve disappearing forms of “folk culture” or to accept them again in a truly authentic form when they are revived, but adapt them to their own interests (Moser 1962: 179–180). From the stock of traditional culture, folklorism accepts only certain elements that have become attractive due to their artistic form or emotional content. Selected elements are rarely presented in their authentic forms, and are most often reworked in order to meet aesthetic, practical, and other needs, especially in tourism. As such, these elements are torn from their authentic setting, often separate from their bearers, and they appear only in particular places (Burszta 1974: 311–312).

The most frequent form of folklorism is “audiovisual folklorism”; that is, in music, dance, theater, and art (Stanonik et al. 2004: 132, cf. Stanonik 1990: 29–34). Oldřich Sirovátka proposed a division into “direct” folklorism (i.e., copying or presenting presumably original forms of folk culture) and “indirect” folklorism (i.e., transmitting transformed elements of folk culture to other means of communication; Stanonik 1993: 252–254). The literature contains many other divisions and names for the forms in which folklorism is manifested (e.g., literary, theatrical, ritual, rural, minority, modern, and regional folklorism, among others). There are also many functions of folklorism, from those related to patriotism, politics, professions, tourism, and commerce to cultural functions (Stanonik et al. 2004: 132); or external (for commercial tourism purposes or political propaganda) and internal (satisfying people’s needs to find simplicity, or a fresh outlook in the exotic, the desire to learn about other places and peoples, nostalgia for lost tradition, the need to preserve tradition, at least in some forms, an enjoyable recreational activity, and, finally, the awakening of national and local patriotic pride; Bošković-Stulli 1971: 175).

Definitions of folklorism apply to all forms of folklore in all contexts, but researchers have primarily used the term only in connection to applications of folk literature, folk music, folk life, and material culture in the “cultural industry” or in cultural programs connected with political activities. Researchers west of the Iron Curtain usually defined folklorism within a commercial context, whereas those to the east recognized it in the cultural programs that were sponsored by the authorities. Only rarely did they use the term to designate the activities of the (early) ethnographers that interfered with tradition, reworked it, and even invented it. They characterized such activity as the “ideological manipulation of folklore” (Dorson), the product of “nationalistic inferiority complexes” (Dundes), “invented tradition” (Hobsbawm and Ranger), and so on (Šmidchens 1999: 53, 63).

At least in Slovenia, folklorism was also always equated with phenomena originating from the rural environment, although, for instance, Janez Bogataj pointed out *that we can label a great variety of phenomena connected with heritage as folklorism, and not only those that are connected with inappropriate presentations or use of folk costume, song, and dance. This especially applies to heritage that was the property of various social strata in the past, and not only to that which was ascribed to the largest one; that is, the rural stratum.* (Bogataj 1992: 16)

Despite that, the transfer of bourgeois elements to the rural setting was usually understood as a normal and logical improvement in lifestyle, raising the standard of living and offering cultural advancement, whereas the revival of bourgeois elements in the urban environment, or the rituals and customs of members of various social strata and professions that took place in the urban environment, was understood as the revitalization, preservation, replication, and recreation of aesthetic elements and values. Up until the last few decades, none of this was the object of ethnological studies. Such an understanding of folklorism therefore reveals the discipline's "peasantological" heritage.

Dunja Rihtman-Auguštin has observed that the theory of the relationship between folklore and folklorism, as formulated by German ethnologists in the 1960s, is not based on definitions of folklore and folklorism, but rather on the opposition between the situation in which folklore is realized (the first existence of folklore), and another situation, in which folklore is used outside the environment in which it arose (the second existence of folklore). The phenomenon therefore fundamentally changes in another context. Rather than relying on the opposition between folklore and folklorism, it is better to rely on the theoretical assumption of the parallel existence of folklore and folklorism, on their interconnectedness; in her opinion, attention would better be turned from the object of research to processes and interactions (Rihtman-Auguštin 1988: 9–10, 14).

Researchers today are also generally discovering that they cannot rely on their professional knowledge when classifying folklore elements and evaluating them as genuine and authentic, or inauthentic and artificial; the issue of the originality of tradition is therefore becoming increasingly less plausible. Because folklorism creates new variations, it is part of the folklore process. Authenticity is therefore unimportant in the ethnographic description of these processes. The term "folklorism," as it has been defined, is difficult to separate from "folklore" and, as Guntis Šmidchens determined, has little practical value in folklore theory and is not useful at all in ethnography. He thinks that a new definition of folklorism must be broad enough to encompass discussions on folklorism to date, but narrow enough to exclude examples of secondary tradition, which were not mentioned in the theoretical discussion in connection with this concept (Šmidchens 1999: 54, 56). Thus, following Šmidchens, the phenomenon may be defined with regard to those that practice and receive it, adapting tradition to

their needs; as part of the folklore process, the conscious recognition, adaptation, use, and repetition of folk traditions as a symbol of the identity of a local or regional community, an ethnic group, or a nation. This is a way to understand and explain cultural changes and human creativity, due to which tradition and unascertainable original forms or practices in time and space are always changing, being added to, overlapping, expanding, being transferred, dying out, and being revived.

NOTES, DISCUSSIONS AND STUDIES OF FOLKLORISM IN SLOVENIA

After the Second World War, Slovenian folklore specialists and ethnologists (primarily) dealt with the issue of folklorism and regularly encountered this phenomenon, but rarely discussed it. They mostly discussed folklorism in tourism, especially in connection with rituals (see Kuret 1960, 1961a, 1961b, 1962, 1969, 1978), folk costume (see Makarovič 1963, 1967, 1968, 1972, 1978a, 1978b), in folk songs and folk music (see Kumer 1978a, 1978b) and in dance tradition (see Ramovš 1988, 1989).¹ These aspects also appear most frequently in the general theoretical literature in ethnology and in syntheses of the findings of ethnology in Slovenia. In his textbook *Obča etnologija* (General Ethnology), Slavko Kremenšek drew attention to various efforts to renew rituals and customs that have already been abandoned (see, e.g., 1973: 221–222), and his article in *Pogledi na etnologijo* (Views on Ethnology, Baš and Kremenšek, eds. 1978) drew attention to neoromanticism in Slovenian ethnological thought, which sought a uniform national style in the folk culture of previous eras (see 1978: 39–45). Other contributors to this volume included Marija Makarovič, who wrote about folk costume (1978a: 201–209), Niko Kuret (who explicitly identified the phenomenon with the term *folklorism*) on rituals and customs (1978: 328–329), Zmaga Kumer on folk song in the present (1978a: 335–364) and contemporary instrumental ensembles (1978b: 375–377), and Gorazd Makarovič on folk art (1978: 380–384). In *Slovensko ljudsko izročilo* (Slovenian Folk Heritage, Baš, ed. 1980), individual photographs or the mention of folkdance groups merely hint at folklorism (see Kuret 1980: 172, Ramovš 1980: 229). In *Slovenski etnološki leksikon* (Slovenian Ethnological Lexicon, Baš, ed. 2004), folklorism is discussed as an independent entry (see Stanonik et al. 2004: 131).²

The first theoretical article on folklorism, “O folklorizmu na splošno” (On Folklorism in General), was published in 1990 in *Glasnik SED* by Marija Stanonik, who also

¹ Descriptions of folklorism in general-interest publications were more frequent, especially in connection with folk costumes (Marija Makarovič, Marjanca Klobčar), folk music (Zmaga Kumer), and folk dance (Mirko Ramovš).

² The concept is discussed in the *Enciklopedija Slovenije* (Encyclopedia of Slovenia) as a subentry of the entry “Folklor” (see Terseglav 1989: 130).

examined this concept and concrete phenomena of folklorism in later works (see Stanonik 1990, 1992, 2005a, 2005b, 2006). She defined the term folklorism, treated it in historical periods, examined its geographical distribution, and presented its functions and the forms it appears in. Most Slovenian researchers that address folklorism phenomena continue to cite this study today. Ingrid Slavec Gradišnik deals with folklorism in her comprehensive work *Etnologija na Slovenskem. Med čermi narodopisja in antropologije* (Ethnology in Slovenia: Between the Reefs of 'narodopisje' and Anthropology, Slavec Gradišnik 2000); she analyses, which Slovenian folklore specialists and ethnologists discussed this in connection with which phenomena and what their relationships to these phenomena were.

Descriptions of folklorism are frequent in thematic ethnological works, but they mostly remain at the descriptive level. In the topographies produced as part of the research project *Etnološka topografija slovenskega etničnega ozemlja* (Ethnological Topography of Slovenian Ethnic Territory), no researcher was able to avoid documenting the phenomena of folklorism or at least its bearers (e.g., folkdance groups), although the data are fairly sparse in most of the topographies. Usually they list various events, define their times (when they began, when they take place), and describe their elements (exhibits, cuisine, etc.) or give information about folkdance groups. For the most part they write about the phenomena within the context of discussing dissolution and level of preservation of the traditional culture. In a similar manner and with a similar breadth, folklorism phenomena have also been addressed in the majority of regional and thematic volumes written by Slovenian ethnologists.

Taking into account all of the components of cultural heritage, so far folklorism phenomena have been most comprehensively addressed by Janez Bogataj (see, e.g., 1989, 1992, 1993, 1994). In his book *Sto srečanj z dediščino na Slovenskem* (One Hundred Encounters with Heritage in Slovenia), he systematized the relationship to heritage, addressed the role and applied aspects of heritage in everyday life, and individual segments of heritage according to ethnological classification. According to his classification of relationships to heritage, folklorism phenomena can be categorized into a romantic-nostalgic relationship, as well as into a marketing or economic relationship (e.g., collecting and presenting old tools as wall ornamentation). These are defined as cultural phenomena whose characteristics are:

emphasizing the external cultural elements, their amateur presentation at the level of special features, the uncritical inclusion of heritage in concepts of tourist events, and entertainment (e.g., in television shows in recent years). Folklorism is more or less a substitute for (instant) heritage; it could also be categorized as a forgery, amateur (i.e., non-expert) reconstruction, and often banal as well. Of course, all such forms are accompanied by swearing to their originality, authenticity, typicality, talking about roots, and so on. . . . Such phenomena also arise when

presentations of particular heritage are not presented comprehensively, from the perspective of several disciplines, and are based on one-sided decisions by experts. (Bogataj 1992: 16)

According to the types of tourist events, folklorism phenomena belong among those events that interpret heritage, and when they meet professional criteria they may be referred to as “living museums” or “theaters of history” (performances by folkdance groups, presentations of peasant work, and festivals dedicated to various crafts and working communities; for example, charcoal burners) or among those events in which heritage is a secondary element used in an artificial, directed manner, as part of imagined dramaturgy (e.g., the *Country Wedding in Ljubljana*; Bogataj 1992: 34).

In general, ethnologists that deal with contemporary rituals and customs, or with holidays throughout the year, cannot avoid folklorism phenomena. Nonetheless, it is necessary to emphasize that this mostly merely involves listing them together with other (tourist) events or describing the script of the event or the sequence of events. Recent exceptions are Jasna Simoneta’s article on the “Carst Wedding” (2003), the articles about the “Country Wedding in Ljubljana” (Poljak Istenič 2005) and on rituals and customs as folklorism (Poljak Istenič 2008, 2009), and Mateja Habinc’s article on traditionalism and the folklorization of holidays in socialism (2009). Among examinations of concrete folklorism phenomena, the book *Kurentovanje in karneval na Ptuj* (The Ptuj Carnival Celebration, 2000) by Aleš Gačnik stands out, in which he writes:

Along with changing concepts of the event, various expectations, ambitions, rises and falls, enthusiasm, and censure, this once one-day ethnographic carnival event has developed into a ten-day carnival celebration caught between urban and rural content, between tradition and show-business. The event is increasingly becoming a folklore and tourist spectacle, an economic, cultural, entertainment, and tourist event of public significance, one of the most recognizable trademarks of this region. Kurenti and other traditional carnival characters are the main attraction, drawing visitors from near and far. The Ptuj carnival has to a great measure influenced the “fate” of both regional and national traditional carnival culture, especially the heretically colored heritage of the costumed protagonist—the kurent. Despite the double nature of the Ptuj carnival, good and bad, the temptations of the kurent should be remembered, cloaked in a question and answer: whether the traditional carnival figures known as koranti would still jump and rattle their bells in the villages of the Ptuj Plain, were it not for folklorism (i.e., the kurenti at the Ptuj carnival) is a question that I would answer positively only with reservation. (Gačnik 2000: 28)

More detailed studies of folklorism published since 2000 can be found in connection with music, dance, or song heritage. Rebeka Kunej’s dissertation *Štajeriš na Slovenskem*

– *etnokoreološki in plesno-antropološki vidiki* (The Steierisch in Slovenia: Ethnochoreological and Dance Anthropology Aspects) also examines this dance as an example of folklorism. She determined that this folk dance became a folklore dance; that is, a dance performed by folkdance groups (2007: 189). Bojan Knific dealt with the appearance of folkdance groups' clothing (2008b). Kunej and Knific also regularly publish articles (and Knific also books) connected with dance folklorism or the appearance of clothing (see, e.g., Kunej 2004, 2006, 2010; Knific 2003, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008a, 2009a, 2009b, 2010a, 2010b).³ Katarina Juvančič has written about folklorism in connection with post-creating folk music tradition (2004), Marjetka Golež Kaučič in connection with song heritage (2005), and Mojca Račič Simončič has written about artistic folklorism based on examples of exhibitions (2005).

The researchers that have examined folklorism have found it difficult to avoid evaluating it; and only rarely it has been judged from the perspective of its performers. Most often, researchers have been critical toward the phenomenon; they most highly valued the examples of folklorism that were most similar to the assumed “original,” or whose reconstruction was the most “professional.” It is evident that they assumed the a priori position of connoisseurs of the original, indigenous cultural phenomenon or its “proper form”; ethnology, or its appropriately educated and trained mediators, became the obligatory authority for “proper,” “professional” reconstruction and interpretation of these phenomena or acted as the necessary authority for appropriate scholarly reconstruction and interpretation of these phenomena:

Rural tourism is also being increasingly penetrated by folklorism, whose fictional forms of everyday life present the way people used to live in the past, often from a completely romantic and kitschy point of view. Of course, it cannot be said that this kind of folklorism is always void of quality. When the work of an amateur enthusiast of cultural heritage is based on professional research, the “second-hand” presentation of heritage can also be an important form of representing both everyday life and holiday customs. (Hazler 2002: 58)

Evaluation may be most apparent in the assessment of folklorism as positive and negative:⁴

Can a revived ritual, custom, or tradition reintegrate the song into the custom and consequently regain the song's primary function? Or is just folklorism because a revival of something lost can be nothing but folklorism? When dealing with this issue, it must be borne in mind that folklorism can be either positive or negative, depending on its entertain-

³ In principle, studies of dance folklorism could also include Mirko Ramovš' volumes *Polka je ukazana* (*A Polka Has Been Requested*; 1992, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 2000) because they also itemize dances as performed by folkdance groups in catalogue form (descriptions and labanotation).

⁴ See also Ramovš (1988).

ment or commercialized motives or a true desire to reconstruct the past in order to bring back a part of our cultural tradition or restore our cultural memory. . . . The new customs and rituals into which a song has been re-integrated as an integral part belong to a social reality that believes in the value of tradition in present times and restores it accordingly. Positive folklorism enables a part of tradition to be restored in the right way and be presented as our heritage, contributing to the restoration of our cultural memory without deforming it in the process. . . . There is nothing wrong with the entertainment character of the song until the transformation processes that belong to negative folklorism become too widespread (Golež Kaučič 2005: 181, 182–183, 187; my emphasis).

Ethnologists therefore most often treated folklorism phenomena either as the “distortion of original folklore” or as a “phenomenon that preserved many things that would otherwise have been forgotten.” However, “researchers are unable to be neutral in their stance: they can study its genesis, but it ultimately reaches us in its modern forms, which offer people profit, power, sense, and identity” (Slavec Gradišnik 2000: 429). Perhaps it is possible to avoid judgment about the suitability of using folk heritage by viewing the phenomena from the perspective of their performers. From their perspective, folklorism can be a means for improving one’s economic position, increasing recognition, and awakening a sense of belonging to the area, and it can also improve their quality of life and strengthen both personal and local identity; of course, it can also simply serve as entertainment (see, e.g., Poljak Istenič 2008, 2009).

VIEWS ON FOLKLORISM: *COUNTRY WEDDING IN LJUBLJANA*

The *Country Wedding in Ljubljana* was a multi-day tourism event during which over three hundred couples from the majority of European countries, North America, Africa, and Asia were married between 1965 and 1990 “following old rituals and customs”. Although “country weddings” had already been held at folklore festivals during the interwar period, none of these attained as much popularity as the one in Ljubljana. During the mid-1980s, up to twenty-four couples were married at it, 2,500 to 3,000 people participated in the wedding procession dressed in folk costume, individual events were viewed by over 100,000 spectators, and over one hundred (predominantly foreign) journalists covered the event. Along with the fact that even abroad the event is still remembered, this ranks it among the best-known and largest-scale Slovenian tourist events in history.

The idea of holding such a festival arose at a time when the authorities in Yugoslavia were also starting to promote tourism. According to the development concept

of the Slovenian Tourist Board in the 1960s, one of the things intended to attract the attendees was the presentation of rural tradition and folklore;⁵ on the other hand, there was also an intention to develop modern urban events. Maximizing the number of attendees from abroad was also supposed to be achieved by advertising tourism (Repe 2006: 86–88). During this time, Slovenian ethnologists and folklore specialists increased their collection of material and documentation of phenomena, and at the same time they also sought to demonstrate that folklore was not something backward, but was part of national identity and therefore justified as a subject of scholarly research. They had an ambivalent relationship toward folklorism: they rejected the distortion of folklore, but at the same time they recognized that folklorism phenomena preserve heritage (Slavec Gradišnik 2000: 428). In line with this, some of them avoided participating in tourism and culture, and wished to only study “original” heritage, whereas others took an active part in projects and events so that the phenomena would be suitably contextualized or (on the part of some) to prevent their folklorization, whereby, paradoxically, they themselves more or less became actors in folklorism. Both relationships of ethnologists towards folklorism were displayed in an interview conducted by Marija Makarovič in the early 1970s at the *Country Wedding*:

Tourist organizations clearly have their needs, and some of these needs are complementarily addressed by folklore and folkloristic events. It would be impossible, and also completely pointless and unnatural, to root out these efforts, although one hears this desire expressed by some experts from time to time. These phenomena, like all others, need to be observed and properly evaluated. The difficulty lies in the fact that, because of improper communication, people receive a false impression of the past because we know that these events are far from being a historical reproduction of the phenomena; moreover, it is not possible to automatically transfer authentic copies into a contemporary, completely different environment. . . . If announcements in the daily press, on invitations and flyers, which abundantly popularize such events, make the public understand that this involves some kind of folk costume, some kind of ritual that is a complete or partial copy of older rural culture, carried out with the wish of satisfying certain needs, much is already accomplished with this. (Kaj je to: narodna noša; with minor changes also cited in Makarovič 1972: 66–67)

⁵ Fashion shows, pop music festivals, various fairs, and other events that the Slovenian Tourist Board supported and promoted began to become part of the broader selection of tourism events in major towns and tourism areas at the beginning of the 1950s, achieving a larger scale in the 1960s. By that time, the Slovenian Tourist Board had started cooperating with the Zavod za ljudsko glasbo (Folk Music Institute) because of the scant presentation of folk music and rituals. They especially promoted commercial performances by folkdance groups that were to be organized by tourist associations in cooperation with cultural associations (Repe 2006: 81).

According to the organizers, the main purpose of the *Country Wedding* was to promote Slovenia. The intention was for the event “to acquaint the world with Ljubljana, Slovenia, Slovenian customs, and folk life in general through the press, radio, television, and word of mouth by those participating in the event” (Manuscript). The use of heritage in tourism was intended to create an image of Slovenia that in their opinion would be attractive to tourists. Various groups of people at various levels of organization that were interested in the preservation of Slovenian cultural heritage—folkdance groups, groups wearing Slovenian folk costumes, craftsmen producing traditional Slovenian crafts or souvenirs, tourist associations, village communities, and farmwomen’s associations—were invited to organize various events during the festival. Although all of them depicted or re-enacted segments of traditional rural culture, they focused on those that were artistically or emotionally more attractive to tourists; for instance, folk dances and music, folk costumes, wedding customs and traditional food. In order to make the event more attractive to tourists in the first period of the festival (1965–1975, when the festival was literally called the *Peasant Wedding*), the organizers included the most interesting and colorful Slovenian customs regardless of their origin. Even though the newspaper *Dnevnik* printed a special issue with explanations of the original elements of the customs depicted at the *Wedding*, as well as of their variants, they were selected according to their attractiveness and spectacular elements and presented as *Slovenian national* customs.⁶

In the second period (1979–1990, when the festival, due to its slightly different concept, was renamed *Wedding in Ljubljana*, but publicized in English as the *Country Wedding in Ljubljana*), the organizers transformed the selection of certain local customs and habits into the presentation of regional customs and habits, while at the same time maintaining that the *Country Wedding in Ljubljana* was “the final manifestation, a parade of various Slovenian characteristics in general,” which, according to them, were “the heritage of marriage customs and manners in various forms, and from various parts of Slovenia” (Bogataj 1987: 1). In some instances, the events incorporated into the *Country Wedding* were the result of a professional (i.e., ethnological) reconstruction of actual customs in a given location; one of them was the dowry transport in Mekinje near Kamnik, reconstructed on the basis of a study by the ethnologist Marjanca Klobčar. Local customs were most often explained as variants of some general Slovenian culture. A booklet printed for one of the *Country Weddings* explains that:

*the Country Wedding in Ljubljana is inspired by an invaluable source
of customs and manners of Slovenian folk heritage and should therefore*

⁶ One of the most unusual and controversial interpretations of cultural heritage was the traditional *vasovanje* (village courting’ custom), when young single men climbed a ladder under their sweetheart’s window. In Ljubljana, where the brides stayed in a hotel, this was reconstructed with a hooked ladder leaning against the brides’ windows. In 1968, one uninitiated bride ran from her hotel room screaming because she had mistaken her courting visitor for a burglar.

be viewed as one of the most prominent events organized in Ljubljana. For older generations, this preservation of the way of life in the past is an opportunity that reawakens pleasant memories while the young learn about their folk heritage and original folklore that represent the basis of Slovenian cultural heritage; this, on the other hand, is also a good opportunity for numerous guests and tourists from abroad to learn about our cultural wealth and diversity of folk customs. (Ohcet v Ljubljani 1985: 2)

Although the *Country Wedding's* organizers in the second period of the festival tried to depict regional customs by employing local participants, due to the tourist nature of the event they did not succeed in creating an authentic impression. For example, when a wedding reception was held on a farm in Carinthia according to local customs, the BBC television crew believed that the customs were being performed by professional actors.

The most visible sign of Slovenian national identity and of folklorism at the *Country Wedding in Ljubljana* was folk costume. In the 1980s, 2,500 to 3,000 people in folk costumes or regional variants of traditional costumes participated in the wedding procession. The parade of folk costumes at the tourist event allowed the expression of Slovenian identity within the Yugoslavia of "brotherhood and unity" and made it visible, presenting it not only to Slovenians, but also to members of other ethnic groups in Yugoslavia and visitors from abroad.⁷

Even in the most successful years of the event, ethnologists often cited the *Country Wedding* (as well as other smaller tourism-oriented country weddings in other parts of Slovenia) as an extreme example of the "distortion" of folk heritage:

Unfortunately, folklorism often has a negative impact on heritage, does violence to it, distorts it, and reduces its true value. The negative consequences of folklorism are seen, for example, in folkdance groups, when a circus attraction is made out of folk dance with invented additions and inappropriate stylistic changes, when external splendor deforms the appearance of folk costume, when many musical ensembles force a folk song into the rhythm of a waltz or polka, and notably rural customs (country weddings, sorting of the cows) are presented unsuitably and in inappropriate environments (in towns); as well as in souvenirs (miniature hay racks, wagons, dolls dressed in folk costume), and so on. This heritage is no longer a value, but instead kitsch, which damages what is otherwise the healthy taste of the Slovenian people. (Ramovš 1982: 3, my emphasis)

⁷ However, unlike the Slovenian participants, some participants from abroad had real difficulties when trying to find a folk costume, or even invented one; for example, a wedding couple from the Italian town of Parma borrowed costumes from a theater representing a bourgeois style from the past, and a Canadian couple came dressed as North American Indians.

It is also cited as an example in definitions of or encyclopedia articles about folklorism:

In modern times, folklorism has appeared due to having fun or as a replacement for original folklore forms. It is part of mass culture in which there is a desire to preserve traditional values, to commercialize, or both of these are interwoven: authenticity with forgery, expert reconstruction with taste to appeal to the masses, artistry with banality (e.g., carnivals, country weddings). (Terseglav 1989: 130, my emphasis)

Even after the Country Wedding stopped being held, ethnologists criticized its model (or at least tried to explain and contextualize the use of tradition at such events) in their professional literature, even though some of them had participated in the event or at least advised the organizers on certain traditional cultural elements; for example, Janez Bogataj (customs), Marija Makarovič (folk costume), Marjanca Klobčar (transporting the dowry), and so on. They especially highlighted the selection of attractive elements of traditional culture and the transfer of rural rituals and customs to the urban environment. Janez Bogataj, for instance, pointed out that the festival created the opportunity “to isolate many cultural elements from their natural milieu, only to be artificially reconstructed, either by representation or else by theatrical reenactment, in the street, on wagons, and on stages” (Bogataj 1992: 338). It also seemed contentious to ethnologists to present Slovenia to tourists through a traditional rural culture: “Since the beginning of this century until today in Ljubljana, the capital of Slovenia, they are trying to create a cultural and tourism image in European eyes through the *Country Wedding* (!)” (Križnar 1983: 65, emphasis his).

Some participants themselves also believed that such a presentation of Slovenia was not the most felicitous. A Carinthian Slovenian that was married at the *Country Wedding in Ljubljana* in 1983 stated:

I think the promotion was too narrow. If Slovenia had used the Country Wedding in order to show something different, and not just its folklore, I would have liked it better. For example, we went to the Kamnik Pasture, where some farmwomen made butter and cheese for us while two accordion players provided the musical background. Everything took place on this level. For the whole week, wherever we went, to Kranjska Gora or to Bled, we had to wear our national costumes; there was only folklore and nothing else. . . . This is not enough [for tourist promotion]. If you limit yourself only to that, you give the impression of a “folklorized” country, even to the tourists from abroad, and the creation of such image is really not necessary for Slovenia and the image that it wants to promote abroad.

Another groom from Austria, married in 1990, also felt that the village lifestyle and the customs connected with it were unduly glorified. He said that “they presented Slovenia as though it were only folklore, from a completely one-sided perspective.”

On the other hand, neither the organizers nor the Slovenian participants I interviewed were critical about the image of the country presented through the *Country Wedding*. They all felt that there was nothing wrong with the fact that the festival depicted Slovenia as “an agricultural country filled with folklore customs.” As stated by a spokesman for the Ljubljana Tourist Association and the main organizer at the time: “Thank God that the tourists did not receive an impression of Slovenia as an industrial country. . . . Instead, they beheld its still unspoiled countryside and people willing to depict its customs.” According to a bride at the 1968 *Country Wedding*, people raved about the homey character of the festival in the period of developing industry and were glad that the *Country Wedding* made it possible for Ljubljana to open up to contacts with the countryside. Other participants (couples being married) also admit they have beautiful memories of the event because they had fun at it:

I really got involved in that event also by dressing up in folk costume from the Gail Valley, and in my Gail Valley clothing I really behaved like it was a party. So I played around a bit with this custom. So, on the one hand, I didn't take it all that seriously, but very much like a party, and I also behaved in that spirit for those ten days: I sang, shouted, howled, I did all of this, even a bit more than the others, so that everything together would be kind of funny.

Many people have saved newspaper clippings, photos, and videos of the event when they were married. Thus the event is still remembered today with regard to how much it satisfied people's (internal) needs for self-promotion, expression of personal, local, and also national identity, for the recognition of the new, preservation of the old, and not least of all for fun.

Despite the negative opinion of the ethnologists that judged the event with regard to suitability of interpretation or use of heritage, and other criticisms of the content it promoted, the *Country Wedding in Ljubljana* achieved the goal of its organizers: it was reported on by all major European newspapers (as well as some outside Europe), as well as on television and radio. Information about it circulated through word of mouth. Many Slovenian tourists reported that, when they mentioned where they were from while traveling abroad, the people there knew about Slovenia precisely because of the *Country Wedding*.

It can therefore be stated that the *Country Wedding* was the freshest and most successful postwar advertisement for Slovenia as a tourist destination. In addition, the festival also had some other (positive) effects. It had an influence on later tourist events in Ljubljana—at least the spatial planning of events—and local folklore festivals in other parts of Slovenia (e.g., the country weddings still held today in Laško, the Bohinj Valley, and Semič), as well as on similar events among Slovenian emigrants in Australia (in 1975 and 1977 a *Slovenian Country Style Wedding* was held in Wollongong). In the early years the stores competed to have the most attractive display based on the country

wedding theme, which stimulated regular decoration of displays and thus product advertising. The festival also gave rise to culinary achievements because restaurant owners prepared various courses for the weddings guests, competed in food preparation, and sought to use the most innovative approaches in preparing food. It stimulated the founding of new folkdance groups and their creativity in general, and in addition to this the creativity of craftsmen and shopkeepers, people working in catering and tourism, and artists. People became enthusiastic about their own heritage; interest especially increased in folk costumes. At that time many Slovenians put their own folk costumes together or bought new ones so that they could appear and participate in the wedding procession in Ljubljana. The organization of the dowry transportation in Ribnica is said to have marked the beginning of renovating the Škrabec Homestead in Hrovača, which competed for European museum of the year in 2004. For this occasion they reconstructed and revived many rituals and customs, especially those related to courtship and work (manual tasks). Through folk costume, as well as through the cultivation of their own rituals and customs, and the preservation of their heritage in general, Slovenians were also able to publicly express their own identity in the Yugoslavia of “brotherhood and unity.” In addition, political contacts were also made through the festival. From the perspective of the organizers, the event was therefore a very successful promotional and commercial campaign, and its success was significantly aided—regardless of expert (i.e., ethnological) opinion—by the use of folklore in an inauthentic context; that is, “second-hand folklore” or folklorism.

CONCLUSION

Especially in the German context, the debates about folklorism were an important discursive area for establishing paradigmatic changes in ethnology. The reflections on it were part of the basic self-reflective analysis of the history of ethnology and theoretical practice (Bendix 1997: 187). Nonetheless, nobody has yet written a seminal work on this concept and phenomenon. In Slovenia, ethnologists were late in recognizing the relevance of folklorism. Although one could add to it the nationalization of folk culture, which can be traced in Slovenia from the nineteenth century onwards, this is mentioned primarily in connection with rituals and customs, the appearance of clothing, folk music, folk song, folk dance, and folk art. In these studies there is a clear “peasantological” disciplinary heritage because folklorism has mainly been equated with phenomena that stem from the rural environment.

Folklorism and related concepts are related to the theory of culture, which presumes original, authentic, and true forms of cultural phenomena, practices, and traditions; in part, this even holds for the concept of ‘invented tradition’ because this is intended to replace old ones when they can no longer be adapted to new circumstances

due to the rapid transformation of society (see Hobsbawm 1983). Many theoretical orientations that are now part of the discipline's history have occupied themselves with seeking old, original, and true forms. The majority of Slovenian ethnologists that have paid more detailed attention to the phenomena of folklorism have also treated it from the a priori perspective of connoisseurs of the original, indigenous cultural phenomenon, or its true form; they evaluated them based on their similarity with a presumed original or with regard to the suitability of the reconstruction, which depended on the participation of the ethnologists or ethnological institutions, and they assessed them as positive or negative based on whether the performers were distorting original folklore for fun or commercial motives, or whether they were preserving it from oblivion.

Only rarely did ethnologists regard folklorism phenomena from the perspective of the performers. For them, folklorism is a means for improving their economic position and quality of life, raising their profile, and awakening a sense of affiliation to the region, for strengthening personal, local, or national identity; it can satisfy their needs for recognition of the new, preservation of the old, and, not least of all, fun. From the viewpoint of its performers or users, folklorism can be viewed as part of the folklore process, which is constantly creating new variations, thus causing cultural changes and exhibiting human creativity. The divide between the stances of ethnologists (as "guardians" of folk heritage) and the "non-experts" (tourism workers and tourists; or organizers of events, participants, and spectators) is especially apparent in heritage tourism, in which folklore (or heritage in general) is used to attract tourists; exactly this type of tourism has been intensively discussed in the anthropology of tourism in recent years. The role of heritage at events is primarily of a commercial or advertising nature and entertainment; precisely because of the way heritage is presented, which also evokes nostalgia and the patriotic sentiments, these types of events are among the most successful tourist events – regardless of mostly negative ethnologists' critique. In Slovenian, the best known among them is still the *Country Wedding in Ljubljana*, which, due to its varied use of folk heritage, is a classic example of (negative) folklorism cited by ethnologists.

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TEKSTI IN KONTEKSTI FOLKLORIZMA

Termin folklorizem v etnologiji in folkloristiki označuje družbeno-kulturni pojav, ki folklorne oblike ljudske kulture predstavlja oz. oživlja v nizu različic med znanstveno rekonstrukcijo in ljudsko poustvarjalnostjo. Kot koncept ga je leta 1962 v etnologijo vpeljal Hans Moser, med njegovimi najpomembnejšimi raziskovalci pa so bili tübinski etnologi in folkloristi. Medtem ko so bile v nemškem prostoru polemike o folklorizmu pomembno diskurzivno polje za uveljavljanje paradigmatskih sprememb v etnologiji, slovenski etnologi tega pojava do leta 1990, ko je Marija Stanonik objavila prvo teoretično razpravo o njem, niso teoretsko premislili.

V splošni teoretični etnološki literaturi in sintezah dotedanjih izsledkov etnološke vede na Slovenskem so folklorizem omenjali predvsem v zvezi s šegami in navadami, oblačilnim videzom, ljudsko glasbo, pesmijo in plesom, v tematskih ali krajevnih monografijah pa so te pojave (ali njihove nosilce) praviloma zgolj dokumentirali. Nekateri so opozarjali na pomen folklorizma pri ohranjanju dediščine, drugi so ga razumeli kot negativni pojav, kot uničevanje »izvirnika«. Največkrat so bili do pojavov kritični, vrednotili oz. ocenjevali so jih glede na podobnost z izvirnikom ali pa glede na strokovnost rekonstrukcije; zavzeli so torej apriorno pozicijo poznavalcev prvotnega, avtohtonega kulturnega pojava oz. njegove prave oblike ali pa so bili neogibno potrebna avtoriteta za ustrezno, znanstveno rekonstrukcijo in interpretacijo pojavov. Čeprav so kritizirali folklorizacijo dediščine, torej tudi njeno predstavljanje zunaj prvotnega okolja, pa so bili hkrati njeni akterji, saj so (poleg nekaterih, ki so jo zbirali in prikazovali v muzejih) sodelovali tudi s turizmom, da bi preprečili njeno neustrezno prikazovanje. Pri tem so folklorizem (v skladu z disciplinarno zgodovino) istili pretežno s pojavi, ki izvirajo iz ruralnega okolja; prenašanja meščanskih sestavin v kmečko okolje niso označevali za folklorizem, pač pa so ga videli kot izboljševanje načina življenja, dvig življenjske ravni, kulturni napredek. Podobno so pozitivno vrednotili tudi oživljanje meščanskih sestavin v urbanem okolju, saj se o rekonstrukcijah govori kot o replikah, vrhunskem poustvarjanju, kot pojavih z visoko umetniško vrednostjo in znanstveno ustreznostjo. Kot skrajni primer »izkrivljanja« ljudskega izročila ter vzorčni primer folklorizma v različnih definicijah in enciklopedičnih geslih so slovenski etnologi največkrat omenjali Kmečko ohcet v Ljubljani (1965–1990) oz. manjše kmečke ohceti v drugih slovenskih krajih, čeprav so nekateri pri njih tudi sami sodelovali ali vsaj svetovali organizatorjem pri uporabi določenih tradicionalnih kulturnih sestavin. Sporen se jim je zdel predvsem izbor najmikavnejših sestavin tradicionalne kulture in prenašanje kmečkih šeg in navad v mestno okolje, pa tudi turistično predstavljanje Slovenije s tradicionalno kmečko kulturo. Kljub etnološkim kritikam pa Kmečka ohcet s svojimi variacijami – prav zaradi uporabe ljudskega izročila v neizvirnem kontekstu (tj. folklorizma) – po mnenju organizatorjev in drugih turističnih delavcev ostaja ena najuspešnejših promocijsko-komercialnih akcij v zgodovini slovenskega turizma, pa tudi udeleženci o njej še vedno z veseljem pripovedujejo. Spominjajo se je glede na to, v kolikšni meri je zadovoljila njihove potrebe po samopromociji, izražanju osebne,

lokalne, tudi nacionalne identitete, po spoznavanju novega, ohranjanju starega in predvsem po zabavi. Za akterje folklorizma (turistične delavce in turiste) folklorizem tako ni nikoli negativen pojav, pač pa sredstvo za povečanje prepoznavnosti območja, ustvarjanje dobička ali izboljšanje ekonomskega položaja, za ustvarjanje ali krepitev identifikacij na različnih ravneh (osebni, lokalni, nacionalni), za potešitev radovednosti in nostalgije ter navsezadnje oblika zabave. Z uporabo in prilagajanjem tradicije njihovim potrebam in željam nastajajo nove različice izročila, kar ponazarja človeško ustvarjalnost in zarisuje kulturne spremembe.

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Jonathan Roper, "I'm Just a Country Singer", Prešeren Hall, SASA, Ljubljana, 26. 9. 2009 (GNI ZRC SAZU Archive).



Sandra Graham, "Negro Spirituals in the Post-Civil Rights Era in the U. S.: The Traditional in the Present and the Present in the Traditional". Prešeren Hall, SASA, Ljubljana, 26. 9. 2009 (GNI ZRC SAZU Archive).