

BOOK REVIEW

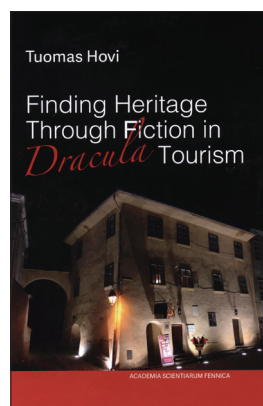
MUTUAL INTERACTION OF TOURISM AND CULTURAL HERITAGE ON THE EXAMPLE OF DRACULA LORE

Tuomas Hovi. *Finding Heritage Through Fiction in Dracula Tourism*. FF Communications 311. Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 2016. 253 pp.

The book focuses on the mutual interaction of tourism and cultural heritage. The author is interested in to what extent we can talk about the positive and negative impacts in the expositions of lore oriented to mainly tourists. To what extent does tourism make the authentic tradition fade away and be replaced by a superficial, stereotyped lore presentation focusing on queer facts and meant merely to satisfy tourists' thirst for thrill? Or should the presentation of the tourist lore experience, on the contrary, value its role in the preservation and display of the characteristic features of local cultural history and folklore? The author's analysis and conclusions are based on his fieldwork carried out in Romania in 2010 and 2011 (for instance, the stories and folklore motifs that guides tell tourism groups) as well as thematic websites of local tourism agencies.

I am afraid that quite a few readers might wonder what else could be said about Dracula in such length as everyone has already heard something about him. However, on second thoughts, even many scholars of culture have to admit that their knowledge is not thorough enough: although they have heard about the blood-thirsty Count Dracula and this character can be encountered in novels and films, it is the tourists that have visited places connected with him that might have a better overview of whether it is a historical or a fictional character, which motifs related to Dracula have been more widely known in folklore, and what has happened to the lore related to him in its place of origin today. As the research reveals, the information presented to tourists is not necessarily superficial; some theme packages offered by tourism agencies last even for a week and introduce, in addition to vampire lore, also the cultural history of the region on a wider scale.

Nevertheless, the author has dedicated plenty of pages in his book to the authenticity of the Dracula lore offered to tourists, involving the aspects of constructed tradition, intertextuality, and hybridisation. In conclusion the author emphasises that Dracula-related tourism should be viewed, above all, as a way of introducing Romanian local lore with the help of Western popular fiction. So it is a constructed tradition based not on local folklore, although it makes use of local folklore (for instance, folktales, folk dances). Here we should also emphasise the author's observation that even the word 'vampire' itself was unknown in older Serbian folklore and therefore most probably imported from elsewhere, although its counterparts in local belief existed already earlier.



However, the author considers it essential to emphasise that the fact that even if it is constructed tradition, we should not disparage it as something inauthentic or valueless. These traditions are cultural phenomena, which can disclose their own developments and which can play an important role, for instance, in shaping the national or cultural identity. Therefore, as the author maintains, even the Dracula tourism packages organised in connection with Halloween tradition imported from Anglo-American cultural space can offer unique experience to visitors and these experiences can inspire people to tell genuine memorates, which later on are integrated into family lore. The author also holds that even if local people consider Dracula-related souvenirs as inauthentic, nonetheless, for tourists they are authentic tokens of visited places.

The author concludes that although Romanian tourism agencies make use of the Dracula topic to arouse touristic interest, their main aim is to present to the tourist, with the help of this topic, mainly the unique aspects of local culture and history, and highlight, above all, the specificity of the region and its lore.

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