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Sławoj Tanaś: Thanatourism: from death space to tourism space, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, Łódź 2013, pp. 224

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SŁAWOJ TANAŚ

TANATOTURYSTYKA. OD PRZESTRZENI ŚMIERCI DO PRZESTRZENI TURYSTYCZNEJ
 [THANATOURISM: FROM DEATH SPACE TO TOURISM SPACE]

WYDAWNICTWO UNIWERSYTETU ŁÓDZKIEGO
 ŁÓDŹ 2013
 pp. 224

The book gives mature expansion of discussion on thanatourism, still not well explored in Poland. The author is in fact the only specialist in this field and one of the few in the world tourism geography.

The book consists of four main chapters ("Death and culture", "The geography of death culture", "Man in thanatourism space", "The essence of thanatourism"), an introduction, conclusions and list of references (over 250 entries!). The book contains 46 figures, 25 photographs and 12 tables, as well as a summary in English.

Each chapter is a separate whole. However, the author has managed to link them with an invisible thread, which has allowed him to maintain a continuity of thought, and outline the research procedure step by step. As a result, it is a publication where the apparent separateness of chapters has not ruined the academic investigation or the logical process of drawing conclusions. The author has thoughtfully described individual intricate issues, making them understandable for the reader. Despite the sternness and complexity of the theme, the author has showed extraordinary maturity, allowing him to present his line of thought in a highly civilized and respectful manner.

The work breaks new ground in the theory of tourism studies. To the best of my knowledge, no other form of tourism has been given such a comprehensive theoretical frame as thanatourism, thanks to Sławoj Tanaś. Purely theoretical works are very rare

among the younger generation of geographers. The book reviewed here is certainly an interesting attempt to look at this particular form of tourism activity from a new angle.

The vastness of this research area makes it a part of various bordering disciplines, such as cultural studies, ethnology and in part sociology. As an experienced researcher, the author has not yielded to the pressures of an abundant literature and attractive sources accessible to each of these disciplines. Giving it a lot of thought, he has confronted them and at the same time presented the geographical point of view. While reading the book, nobody could doubt that it represents geographical sciences. It refers to human geography in a wider sense, especially the geography of culture, religion and tourism. I would also like to stress that the relations between tourism space and thanatourism sketched by the author which are clearly visible and well presented. The book is interesting and significantly broadens our knowledge of travel in general, and of thanatourism in particular. Despite the unusual subject, the text is easy to understand. It is a truly unique study, as regards tourism research, and has a strong applied character. It should be read by employees of various economic, planning and tourism institutions, as well as by representatives of churches of different denominations who take care of thanatourism space.

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Translated by Ewa Mossakowska