

**ČAPAC.SI, OR ON BUREKALISM AND ITS BITES.  
AN ANALYSIS OF SELECTED IMAGES OF IMMIGRANTS  
AND THEIR DESCENDANTS IN SLOVENIAN MEDIA  
AND POPULAR CULTURE**

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ABSTRACT

**Čapac.si, or on burekalism and its bites. An analysis of selected images of immigrants and their descendants in Slovenian media and popular culture<sup>2</sup>**

The purpose of the paper is to present and analyse certain tendencies in Slovenian media and popular culture which discourage immigrants and their descendants from integrating into Slovenian society. Owing to the scope of the research topic (the size and complexity of media and popular culture), the research is “problem-oriented”; the research spotlights are focused only on certain places in media and popular culture which have proved to be problematic, worthy of consideration and critical analysis. It is therefore research that focuses on the problematic nature of certain processes, regimes of representing immigrants and their descendants, which can be critically analysed using a Slovenian orientalist discourse – burekalism.

KEY WORDS: burekalism, orientalism, media, popular culture, immigrants (and their descendants)

IZVLEČEK

**Čapac.si ali o burekalizmu in njegovih ugrizih. Analiza izbranih podob priseljencev in njihovih potomcev v slovenskih medijih in popularni kulturi**

Namen študije je predstaviti in analizirati nekatere momente slovenske medijske ter popularne kulture, ki priseljence in njihove potomce odvrčajo od integracije v slovensko družbo. Zaradi širine predmeta raziskave (obsežnost in kompleksnost medijske ter popularne kulture) je raziskava zastavljena »problemsko« – raziskovalni žarometi so usmerjeni samo na nekatera mesta v medijih in popularni kulturi, ki se kažejo kot problematična, vredna razmisleka in kritične analize. Gre torej za raziskavo, ki kaže na problematičnost nekaterih postopkov,

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režimov reprezentiranja priseljencev in njihovih potomcev, za študijo, ki kritično analizira slovenski orientalistični diskurz – burekalizem.

KLJUČNE BESEDE: burekalizem, orientalizem, mediji, popularna kultura, priseljenci (in njihovi potomci)

## WHAT BITES, WHO GETS BITTEN OR INTRODUCTORY BITES

In the self-flattering book *Burek.si?! Koncepti / recepti* (Burek.si?! Concepts / Recipes) among other things I discussed burekalism – of course with the inestimable assistance of Edward Said (Mlekuž 2008). Burekalism? Burekalism is, in Said's words (1978: 2), "a style of thought based on an ontological and epistemological distinction made between" a population and place defined by the burek and a population and place not defined by the burek. Furthermore, burekalism is, again in Said's words (1978: 14) a "style" of the non-burek defined population "for dominating, reconstructing and having authority over" the burek-defined population.<sup>3</sup> In order not to lose our place in these long passages, the definitions of burek-defined and nonburek-defined populations will be translated, contracted to conceptually not completely equivalent categories adapted to the needs of this paper: "immigrants" and "Slovenians".

Burekalism can of course bite into many very different things.<sup>4</sup> It is particularly fond of anything redolent of bureks, anything which more strictly, seriously, studiously put, belongs to the imaginary, symbolic space of the burek, i.e. the Balkans, the "South". In this paper we will experimentally set before the hungry maw of burekalism a population group which appears to have a sort of in-between status, to float somewhere in the midst, if it is indeed in the midst, between "immigrants" and "Slovenians", between the burek-defined and the nonburek-defined populations and spaces, "neither here nor there", or as described in a newspaper headline: "I am and I'm not" (Leiler 2006: 14). This in-between status – if it is indeed in-between, more a no-man's status ("neither here nor there") is masterfully illustrated by Ahmed Pašić:

<sup>3</sup> In his introduction, Said gives not one but three definitions of orientalism, which were shown in detail by Aijaz Ahmad (2007), to be "conflicting definitions". In addition to the two stated above, which we can understand as (1) a mentality or even an epistemology and (2) as a "Western style of dominating /.../ the Orient" (Said 1978: 14), thus in the Foucauldian sense as a system of representations; Said also understands orientalism as (3) an interdisciplinary field of academic knowledge.

<sup>4</sup> As this sentence suggests, we shall understand burekalism as a discourse – in the words of Michel Foucault (2002: 54), as "practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak". Or, as Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (2001: 108) state more didactically: "What is denied is not that such objects exist externally to thought, but the rather different assertion that they could constitute themselves as objects outside any discursive condition of emergence." Things thus acquire meaning and become objects of knowledge only within discourse – they then do not reflect any "natural" essence of things, but only *constitute* them. Again following Foucault (1991: 18), discourses shall be treated "as violence which we do to things".

It's a problem of identity. In Slovenia we are (and always were) Bosnians. Or something of the sort. When we went to Bosnia, we were Janezes [Janez is a common Slovenian name, used by other Yugoslav nations to tease Slovenians t.n.], Slovenians, Slovenijales [the name of a Slovenian furniture company, which translates roughly as "Slovenia wood" t.n.], diaspora, Fructal [a Slovenian juice company t.n.]. A paradox. Not of the earth, not of the sky [original in Bosnian]. (Pašić 2004)

Of course this in-between, no-man's position of "neither here nor there" does not provide any protection against burekalism for the children of immigrants. For burekalism the children of immigrants, like their parents, are the ontological Other, immigrants, non-Slovenians, Balkan, southerners, "čefurs", bureks, as we are told among others by the burekalisied Pašić: "In Slovenia we are (and always were) Bosnians." And as a secondary school student, mad at his schoolmates who "for a lark" dressed "in track suits and other čefur gear", states on one of the blogs: "For me it comes down to this: You're either a čefur or you aren't! There're no in-between stages!" (Laž 2007)

The subject of the analysis is therefore burekalism's bites into the children of immigrants (or immigrants in general, since for burekalism, as stated above, they are more or less the same thing), these acts of dominance in the panoply of culture and nationalism<sup>5</sup> which indicate or at least intend to show who is the master and who is the foreigner, the servant in the house. But to speak about the bites of burekalism without a precise understanding of burekalism is like commenting on a chess match without understanding the rules of chess. If we therefore want to understand the acts of burekalism we have to understand the concept of burekalism. So: what is burekalism? And then: what does it do and how does it do with the descendants of immigrants (and immigrants in general)?

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<sup>5</sup> Slovenian orientalist discourse (burekalism) is in many ways coloured by a type of "cultural nationalism". Why then should we not rather speak about the more generic cultural nationalism? Firstly because the concept of cultural nationalism is most often used in distinction to the concept of political nationalism and thus refers mainly to the process of nation-building. Cultural or the frequently synonymic ethnical nationalism is based on the principle of blood ties (*jus sanguinius* or the nation-state model as we know it from the formation of central and eastern European nations), while political nationalism is based on the territorial principle (*jus soli* or the national-state model used in the formation of western European nations) (Bielefeld 1998: 257; Velikonja 2002: 285). Therefore, if in the case of burekalism we are already speaking about nationalism, then that nationalism does not refer to the most general use of nationalism, as a process of the formation or growth of nations, but more to other, narrower senses of the term: a feeling or consciousness of belonging to a nation, national language and symbolism, social and political national movements, and particularly ideology (nationalism), which is the final and chief use of the term (see Smith 2005: 15–20 and elsewhere). In the same way I believe that it is inappropriate to equate burekalism with xenophobia or xenophobic language, which has among other places been critically analysed in Slovenia in numerous papers, probably most vocally in the publications of the Peace Institute (e.g. Kuzmanič 1999; Petković 2000; Pajnik 2002, etc.).

## WHAT IS IT THAT BITES?

The concept of burekism does not deal with the correlation between burekism and the burek – the burek in this place is of course just a signifier of foreigners (from the Balkans), immigrants or in this particular case the children of immigrants – but with the internal congruity of burekism and its ideas about the burek, in spite of or notwithstanding any congruity or incongruity with a “real” burek (Said 1978: 5). What kinds of ideas then does burekism spread about the children of immigrants? On the website “cefurji.net” under the title “Razstava o čefurjih” (Exhibition on Čefurs), jalidi writes:

Okay, I'm setting up an exhibition about čefurs [at the Slovenian Museum of Ethnography!] – actually its official name is The Second Generation of Immigrants in Ljubljana - Čefurs? / The point of the exhibition is first of all to present the attitude of Slovenians to so-called čefurs, and then to present the stereotypes of how čefurs are supposed to be seen and what they do. Finally, the purpose is to present the actual cultural identity of the second generation of immigrants. / Right now I'm in the process of collecting things to display at the exhibition, and I need some help. The idea is to get things like old jellow cab (sic) shoes (the ones with the rubber toe caps), wide big star trousers, track suits that make loud swishy noises, some kind of butterfly knife, a pistol (rubber of course), some kind of gold chains (it will probably be difficult to find someone willing to lend a real gold chain, so I'll have to find a knock-off), then shawls and t-shirts for the FK Delije football club, flags (BIH, Serbia) which people have used at various celebrations, orthodox crosses on neck chains etc. / the exhibition will of course also feature music and films: A few selected songs (national folk songs, originals) which the second generation (so-called čefurs) listens to (Dragana Mirković, Halid Beslić, Ceca, Braca Begić for the originals), hit films (e.g. Rane [Wounds])... (jalidi 2005)

Hajduk informs jalidi that her project is about “a description of a čapac, a narrow subculture”. But that's exactly what burekism does: it generalises and simplifies. We find a similar case of generalising and simplifying, as well as essentialising and naturalising of identities, on a Siol blog entitled “The Adventures and Trials of Martin Dušak – where the readers are first:” under the heading “All fake čefurs are going to get it sooner or later!”:

A lot has been said in the last few days about čefurs in general. And a lot of it has been focused on track suits. Today at our school we had a day for them – Track Suit Day. So I also dressed up as a joke. The point of the day was that we would all be dressed in the same way and nobody would look at us crosswise. But when we think about track suits, we immediately associate them with čefurs. And so around nine of us class larkers dress up as čefurs. We dressed in shiny track suits, found ourselves neck chains and of course a toothpick. Hey, why not? Let's be fake čefurs for a day! But I was soon punished for this act. I was unlucky, and on the first day of faking I was hit for around 200 euros, of course because of čefur aggression. While I was

taking a picture of three people talking, one of them got mad, came up to me and accidentally slapped my digital camera out of my hand, and it fell on the floor. So the photos below are the last ones I took with that camera, since the lens is totally kaput. DON'T PRETEND YOU'RE A ČEFUR IF YOU'RE NOT! (Dušak 2007)

What kinds of ideas and images does burekalism then spread about the children of immigrants? Undoubtedly stereotypical ones, which force a reduction of complicated, complex and varied phenomena into simplified, solid and essentialistic characteristics. How many čefurs in track suits, with gold chains around their necks and toothpicks in their mouths, do you actually know? In the case of burekalism we therefore have to deal with stereotypical utterances – utterances which emphasise, constitute and essentialise differentiation,<sup>6</sup> and which are a forceful place of the exercising of power in processes of signification. In other words, it is about the power of signifying, the power of imposing concepts, classification, typifying, a sort of symbolic power, a conceptual violence.

Furthermore, through stereotyping (probably the most commonly used weapon in perpetrating symbolic violence, as Stuart Hall (2002: 258) points out), authors of varying disciplinary provenances maintain the social and symbolic order. Or in other words, stereotyping is used to maintain and consolidate power relations. Therefore, to believe that immigrants and their children are burekalisised only for the needs of the imagination is in my opinion injudicious, naive and wrong. The relations between Slovenians (non-burek) and Balkan people (burek) “is a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony” (Said 1978: 17), about which commentator Boris Jež speaks in an article entitled “The Dictatorship of the Carniolan Sausage”, in which we read:

Slovenians fortunately eat Carniolan sausage, at least that is what we hear, and these days some antinational fanatics have even prepared some kind of public protest against the ‘dictatorship of the Carniolan sausage’. This is nice to hear, as the conventional wisdom would indicate a dictatorship of the burek and čevapčiči. (Jež 2004: 4)

The immigrants and their children have been burekalisised not just because they figured out that they were foreigners, Balkan, southerners, in short bureks, but because it was possible – that is, they were forced into a position where it was possible – to make them foreigners, Balkan, southerners, bureks. When they speak with burek-defined people, i.e. immigrants and their children, in the language and name of burekalism, they speak in a way that suits non-burek defined people, Slovenians. Let's look at just the three most popular

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<sup>6</sup> Without differentiation, at least from the perspective of (post)structuralism, there is no meaning; difference is essential to meaning. Burekalism, like all other discourses, therefore does nothing else but continually producing differences. The apparently stable identities which burekalism enshrines are therefore from the perspective of (post)structuralism above all relational, defined and constituted (simply) in relation to others. In order for an identity to exist there must always be a difference with respect to an Other, and as the vulgar radical constructivists (with whom I do not share the same thoughts) would say, it doesn't matter at all what you fill it with.

“Slovenian”<sup>7</sup> sitcoms in independent Slovenia: *Teater paradiznik* (Tomato Theatre), *TV Dober dan* (Good Day TV) and *Naša Mala klinika* (Our Little Clinic).<sup>8</sup> In all three we find southerners represented as lower class: as cleaners (Fata in *Dober Dan*),<sup>9</sup> and doormen



(Veso in *Teater paradiznik* and Veso Lolar Ribar in *Naša Mala klinika*). And through the work and business that they do in such sitcoms they are not only socially stigmatised, but with their frequent, to put it kindly exotic, strange, feeble-minded behaviour they are also represented as culturally inferior. Why do we never find southerners in burekalisated TV products in serious business suits, white doctors' gowns, the relaxed and extravagant garb of artists? Why do southerners never speak eloquently, do intelligent and chic things, fascinate? The answer is simple. Burekalism is a mindset which is measured according to the judgement of non-bureks; it is a way of thinking

which operates in the orbits of burekalism, it is a joke which in burekalist society always hits its mark. And lest we forget, it feeds on, draws from, relies on the powerlessness of the self-representation, self-articulation, self-assertions of bureks. Or in the words of Karl Marx (1967: 106): “They cannot represent themselves, they must be represented.”

This brings us to the next qualification. I should add that Said's *Orientalism* (1978: 6) is still of invaluable help to us here. One ought never to assume that the structure of burekalism is nothing more than a structure of lies or myths which, were the truth about them to be told, would simply blow away. We must try to grasp the sheer knitted-together strength of burekalisated discourse, and its redoubtable durability. Burekalism is much more formidable than a collection of falsifications and lies, it is not just an airy Slovenian fantasy about the burek, but a created body of theory and practice in which there has also been considerable material investment. An example of this material investment? The “Exhibition on Čefurs” at the Slovenian Ethnographic Museum, which I believe has

<sup>7</sup> The adjective “Slovenian” should have at least two sets of quotation marks here, since the director of two of the mentioned sitcoms is a Bosnian immigrant to Slovenia (Branko Djurić). The director of *TV Dober dan* is Vojko Anzeljc.

<sup>8</sup> The sitcom *Teater paradiznik* was originally broadcast on the first national television program (TV Slovenija 1) from 1994 to 1997, while *TV Dober dan* was aired from 1999 to 2002 and *Naša mala klinika* from 2004 to 2007 (both on POP TV, a commercial station with the highest ratings in Slovenia). All three of these sitcoms were extremely popular and had very high ratings. To mention just the latter: In 2004, 2005 and 2006, *Naša mala klinika* won the Viktor (the Slovenian equivalent of an Emmy or a BAFTA, t.n.) for most popular acted TV broadcast, had the highest ratings of any show on Slovenian television and was one of the most watched TV shows in Slovenia. The episode with the highest ratings was viewed by as many as half a million people (in a country with a population of around 2 million t.n.).

<sup>9</sup> The photo is from the website [http://www.cirovic-lucija.com/tv\\_dober\\_dan.htm](http://www.cirovic-lucija.com/tv_dober_dan.htm) (12. 3. 2008), where you can see other photos of Fata from filming, appearances and magazines.

remained in the world of ideas. So let's look for another – it won't be difficult, we find the next one in the text after the "Exhibition on Čefurs": the "class larkers" dressing up as čefurs. Continued investment has therefore made burekalism, as a system of self-evidence, knowledge, and signification, an accepted grid for filtering through the burek into Slovenian consciousness, just as that same investment has multiplied the statements proliferating out from burekalism into the general culture.

Burekalism, still following Said's (1978: 7) thought, therefore depends for its strategy on a flexible positional superiority, which puts the non-burek defined person (Slovenian) in a whole series of possible relationships with the burek without his ever losing the relative upper hand. Within the umbrella of the domination, hegemony, and superiority of non-burek defined people over burek defined people there has emerged a complex imaginative corpus, suitable more or less for the entertainment and metaphorical needs of popular culture, the media, colloquial language, publicists, literature, and so on. To return again to Said (1978: 12), burekalism is therefore not a mere political subject matter or a field which is reflected passively by culture, language, or place. It is also not a large and diffuse collection of texts about the burek, southerners, and immigrants, nor is it representative of some nefarious Slovenian plot to keep down immigrants and their descendants, Southerners, Balkan people, *čefurji* and *čapci*. It is rather a dissemination of superiority, dominance, geopolitical and politico-cultural awareness into popular culture, colloquial, and other language, entertainment, the media, literature, art, and more.

Let's take a look at two examples of this kind of dissemination of superiority in the field of culture. Probably the simpler, more transparent example, which we can also view as an example of a unique Slovenian advertising multiculturalism, is the ad for the WC duck Anitra, featuring the already mentioned popular media icon from the television sitcom *TV Dober dan*, Fata the Cleaner.<sup>10</sup> Fata the Cleaner, who in the television ad grins foolishly through missing teeth and says: "Okay, I'm going to clean up", with her coded work equipment (her cleaner's shoes, gown and broom), provides a clear example of stereotyping. The image with its stereotyping imposes upon the viewer ethnical and class (as well as gender) categorization. Immigrants are therefore people who perform poorly paid, less (intellectually) demanding work, associated with mankind's dirtiest aspects. This kind of stereotypical representation spreads and consolidates ideas about the superiority of Slovenians and can thus be read as an authoritarian instrument of subordination.

The second, more complicated example appears to be more innocent and can even be viewed as an example which makes fun of Slovenian male sexuality (sexual dysfunction). It is a song called "Lepi Dasa" (Handsome Dasa; *dasa* also means hotshot) or "Lepi Dasa iz Vrbas" (Handsome Dasa from Vrbas), the first song by an artist using the pseudonym Lepi Dasa, first premiered in 2006 at one of Slovenia's main festivals of popular music, *Melodije morja in sonca* (Melodies of Sea and Sun). Although the song, sung in an (excessively) rich "southern accent", did not make the final, it did, as we can read in Wikipedia, "become a hit throughout Slovenia" (Anon.):

<sup>10</sup> The ad has been critically analysed by Ksenija H. Vidmar (2003: 853–854).

Once upon a time in a parking lot daddy's tyre [rubber] blew out  
When a black-haired puma got it in its claws  
Nine months later they both sensed  
That they had given birth to a future star in Pampers

And when I became a part of the estrada scene  
Tomaž and Zoki both said I'd amount to nothing  
I just whistle at all the parameters  
and extend only to my own centimetres.

(Chorus)

When I play polkas I wake up all the sub-Alpine men  
And shake the tits from the coast to Koroška  
No matter if they're pear shaped or skinny  
As long as all the Slovene arses start to shimmy

For the young babes I'm like Tito's relay  
Sometimes I also get hit on by older aunties  
If the girls are too hot I drink whisky and pills  
If the line is too long I do some carpet glue too

My fame has spread among the hungry lasses  
With Dasa they can always get Gavrilović salami  
If you, baby, would just take your foot off the gas  
You'll know how feels when Dasa does the driving

(Chorus)

And though I am I admit an emigrant from the south  
In fact I'm a really nice guy  
And though I was once even erased  
Look at me, aren't I straight out of a fairy tale

(Chorus) (Lepi Dasa)

But the frisky Lepi Dasa, who shook “the tits from the coast to Koroška”, also offers a different reading, or to put it another way implicitly thrusts a different image on us. Lepi Dasa with his fixation of his meaning and his essence at the level of sexuality naturalises the essence of immigrants at the level of primary needs, i.e. biology. As Frantz Fanon (2002) showed with his study of (stereotypical) representations of black people, the concentration of meaning around their genitalia consolidates the essence of blackness



at the level of the physical, in contrast to representations of white people, which mainly refer to the mind.

With burekalism, still following Said's (1978: 8) thought and words, one must repeatedly ask oneself whether what matters is the general group of ideas overriding the mass of material – about which who could deny that they were shot through with doctrines of Slovenian superiority, various kinds of racism, nationalism, and the like, dogmatic views of burekalism as a kind of ideal and unchanging abstraction? – or the much more varied work produced by almost uncountable individual authors, whom one would take up as individual instances of authors dealing with, tripping over, touching on immigrants and their descendants.

I think that with burekalism it is both. It is conditioned both by a certain dogmatic group of ideas and the creativity and originality of individual contributors. But nevertheless I believe that between dogmatism and productivity at least on some manifest level there is an important difference, which is also reflected in the methodological limitations, namely that they cannot be addressed using entirely the same tools. Burekalism poses as something relaxed, productive and open, but on the other hand it conceals a strict, closed orthodoxy. It claims to be insignificant, but the limitations that it invisibly constructs are themselves an indication of its power. A power that should not be underestimated. In the first place, these limitations concern the fact that burekalism determines, as we have seen, which things should be noticed and stated, and which should be silenced and ignored. This analysis of silence is however problematic and slippery, and is never a completely convincing and consistent task. It is difficult to say how much of a factor burekalism is to a particular silence, or whether it contributed anything at all. For example? In the book *Slovenija gre naprej* (Slovenia Moves On, i.e. Slovenia Qualifies), probably the most noteworthy book written during the time of the “Slovenia football fairytale” (after the Slovenian national football team's “unbelievable” qualification for the European Championships in 2000 in Belgium and the Netherlands and their “even more unbelievable” qualification for the World Cup in 2002 in Korea and Japan), the role of immigrants and their descendants is nearly completely ignored. In 130 pages, in which the then-current members of the national side are presented, together with every conceivable bit of personal data, detail and points of interest, we find nearly nothing that would even hint at the fact that the fabulous “Slovenian” football team was composed in a large majority by the children of immigrants. Just one rather dull remark by Senad Tiganj, which appears to have been included in the text in order to present the footballer's culinary tastes. We read: “/.../ among national cuisines he adores Montenegrin specialities. ‘My parents come from Montenegro, and I go back there every year and enjoy my grandmother's cooking.’” (Anon. 2001a: 111) The silence resounds even louder in the ears in the following characterisation of Zinedine Zidane: “the French football magician of Algerian extraction” (Anon. 2001b: 27). This example of course opens the floor to a series of other questions, which relate to the “nature” of the book, the (mega)event and other things. And these questions require a specific and precise treatment, for which there is neither time nor space here.

However, we can ask one question: Is it possible that burekalism also had a hand in this silence about the descendants of immigrants?

Let's stay on the football pitch for a while. Burekalism can also be accused of an apparently insignificant, minor distortion of spelling. As Peter Stankovič (2002) noted, the last names of footballers from immigrant families are as a rule spelled with a hard č ("ch"). (Many last names in the Serbo-Croatian speaking area of former Yugoslavia end in "ić", with a soft "ch".) From a practical aspect this is understandable, since the letter č is not part of the Slovenian alphabet. But in view of the fact that the names of other athletes from the west who play on teams in Slovenia are spelled correctly in the original – i.e. (in some cases) with letters that are not in the Slovenian alphabet – something else is at work here, as Stankovič points out.

Now let's move for a moment from football to language, the Slovenian language, arguably the central element of Slovenian nationalism, the central element of the exclusion and constitution of the Other, and a frequent tool of burekalism. We shall present just one of a series of burekalist statements, which incorporate (a lack of) knowledge of the Slovenian language as an element of exclusion. This example is taken from "high culture", from the Slovenian National Theatre, Drama Ljubljana. In *Smoletov vrt* (Smole's Orchard, a Slovenised version of Chekov's *The Cherry Orchard*), which – as it says in the first line of the catalogue – is "utterly saturated with 'Slovenianness'" (Ivanc 2006: 7), the character Nebojša, sitting at a table laid for a holiday banquet, explains how he went into a building with a sign over the door that said "Mestna hranilnica" (City Savings Bank) in order to "nahrani z mesom" (stuff himself with meat).

Inside, all of the waiters were behind windows, like in some sort of bank. I asked one of them where I could get an "odrezak" [Serbo-Croatian for cut of meat]. 'Oh, "odrezek" [Slovenian for coupon],' he said. 'Yeah, a pork chop,' I replied. He looked at me a bit funny and said: 'First you have to fill out a form, take it to the window with your money, and there you will get a coupon.' Ever since then I have known that an "odrezek" is not a "zrezek" [that is, cut of meat]. /.../ Then as usual I went to the train station for (...)

What else but "a burek and a real Turkish coffee". (Hočevar 2006: 57)

### **BITE AFTER BITE ... WILL BUREKALISM EVER BE SATISFIED?**

Through burekalism – Slovenian orientalist discourse – Slovenians emphasise, constitute, and essentialise differentiation and produce complacency. However, the objects of this differentiation and complacency are immigrants and their descendants. Burekalism is therefore a place where power encroaches into processes of typification and signification.

tion, it is a discourse, a style with a will to power, which speaks of Slovenians as lords and of immigrants as serfs.<sup>11</sup>

And why in fact do Slovenians require the constitution, or as Said would say “production”, of immigrants and their descendants as *others*; why are burekalised immigrants and their descendants most likely the most profound and most frequently appearing Slovenian expression of the other; why are these social marginals so symbolically central? Because, to put it roughly, they want to increase the “strength and identity of [their] European [Slovenian] culture, by setting it off against the Orient [the Balkans, the South, the burek] as a sort of surrogate and even underground self” (Said 1978: 15).

Finally, after this coarse response, we shall attempt to answer the question posed in the subheading: will burekalism ever be satisfied? It will be satisfied, or it will cease to exist, when the epigram “Burek? Nein danke”<sup>12</sup> is replaced by something else. Something else? How about “Europe? Nein danke”. Or even better, “Burek? Ja bitte!”<sup>13</sup> (Translated by Peter Altshul.)

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<sup>11</sup> We have said nearly nothing about how the descendants of immigrants feel about these bites of burekalism. In her study of points of view about integration, Mojca Medvešek showed that a full seven tenths of first and second-generation immigrants believe that there are prejudices towards them in Slovenia. They also obtained quite surprising data regarding the concealment of origins. Four tenths of respondents to a questionnaire sometimes or often do not say where they are from, five per cent have changed their last or first name, 15 per cent have thought about doing so, and some four tenths of respondents know someone who has. (Utenkar 2005: 2)

<sup>12</sup> “Burek? Nein danke” is probably one of the best-known “Slovenian” graffiti. It was first seen in 1985 in the old town core of Ljubljana and since then has been copied repeatedly in various forms (graffiti, media, scientific etc. articles, advertisements etc.).

<sup>13</sup> One quick promotional plug: the hottest work which aims at replacing the epigram “Burek? Nein, danke” is – as we can see from the title – *Večkulturna Slovenija. Položaj migrantske književnosti in kulture v slovenskem prostoru* (Multicultural Slovenia. The status of migrant literature and culture in Slovenia) (Žitnik Serafin 2008a), which has also been discussed recently in international scientific periodicals (e.g. Žitnik 2008b).

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## POVZETEK

### ČAPAC.SI ALI O BUREKALIZMU IN NJEGOVIH UGRIZIH. ANALIZA IZBRANIH PODOB PRISELJENCEV IN NJIHOVIH POTOMCEV V SLOVENSКИH MEDIJIH IN POPULARNI KULTURI

Jernej Mlekuž

Namen študije je predstaviti in analizirati nekatere momente slovenske medijske ter popularne kulture, ki priseljence in njihove potomce odvrtaajo od integracije v slovensko družbo. Zaradi širine predmeta raziskave (obsežnost in kompleksnost medijske ter popularne kulture) je raziskava zastavljena »problemsko« – raziskovalni žarometi so usmerjeni samo na nekatera mesta v medijih in popularni kulturi, ki se kažejo kot problematična, vredna razmisleka in kritične analize. Gre torej za raziskavo, ki kaže na problematičnost nekaterih postopkov, režimov reprezentiranja priseljencev in njihovih potomcev, za študijo, ki kritično analizira slovenski orinetalistični diskurz – burekalizem.

A kaj sploh je burekalizem? Burekalizem je način mišljenja, ki sloni na ontološki in epistemološki distinkciji med z burekom opredeljenim in z neburekom opredeljenim prebivalstvom ter prostorom, torej poenostvaljeno in grobo rečeno med priseljenci in Slovenci. In nadalje, burekalizem je slog z neburekom opredeljenega prebivalstva pri gospodovanju nad z burekom opredeljenim prebivalstvom, »restrukturiranju in izvajanju oblasti nad njim«. Naj poudarim, da nam je pri razmišljanju o burekalizmu vseskozi v neprecenljivo pomoč Saidov orientalizem (1996).

Kakšne ideje torej širi burekalizem o potomcih priseljencev? Nedvomno stereotipne podobe, ki vsiljujejo redukcijo zapletenih, kompleksnih in raznovrstnih fenomenov na poenostavljene, trdne in esencialistične karakteristike. V primeru burekalizma imamo

torej opraviti s stereotipnim izjavljanjem – izjavljanjem, ki poudarja, konstruira, esencionalizira razlikovanje in ki je silovito mesto posega moči v procese označevanja. Preko stereotipiziranja – tega verjetno najbolj uporabnega orožja v izvajanju simbolnega nasilja, se torej vzdržuje socialni in simbolični red ter ohranjajo in utrjujejo oblastna razmerja. Zato verjeti, da so bili priseljenci in njihovi potomci burekalizirani samo zaradi potreb domišljije, je po mojem nerazsodno, naivno, zgrešeno. Razmerje med Slovenci (neburek) in Balkanci (burek) je razmerje moči, dominacije, spreminjajoče se stopnje zapletene hegemonije.

Priseljenci in njihovi potomci so bili burekalizirani ne le zato, ker so dognali, da so tujci, Balkanci, južnjaki, skratka bureki, temveč tudi zato, ker je bilo mogoče – se pravi, da so jih prisili k temu, da jih je bilo mogoče – narediti tujce, Balkance, južnjake, bureke. Ko govorijo z burekom opredeljeni ljudje, torej priseljenci in njihovi potomci, v jeziku, imenu burekalizma, govorijo tako, kot to ustreza z neburekom opredeljenim ljudem, Slovencem. Burekalizem je torej način mišljenja, ki je odmerjen po meri neburekov, je način mišljenja, ki v orbiti burekalizma deluje, je fora, ki v bureklistični družbi vedno vžge.

To pa nas pripelje k naslednji omejitvi. Nikakor ne smemo predpostavljati, da struktura burekalizma ni nič drugega kakor struktura laži oziroma mitov, ki bodo izpuhteli, ko bo resnica izrečena. Poskušati moramo razumeti prav to skupno moč burekaliziranega diskurza, njegovo strah in spoštovanje zbujujočo vzdržljivost. Burekalizem je veliko več kot zbirka potvarjanj in laži, ni le naduta slovenska fantazija o balkanskem, tujem, tuje-rodnem, temveč korpus teorije in prakse, ki je bil deležen tudi materialnih naložb. Zaradi pogostih investicij je torej burekalizem kot sistem samoumevnosti, vednosti, označevanja, tipiziranja postal splošno sprejeto sito, skozi katero se priseljenci in njihovi potomci filtrirajo v zavest Slovencev. Te investicije pa so pomnožile trditve, ki so iz burekalizma prehajale v splošno kulturo.

Burekalizem, kot že rečeno, vseskozi nam je v pomoč Saidova (1996) misel, vedno črpa strategijo iz prilagodljive superiornosti svojega položaja, ki postavlja z neburekom opredeljenega človeka (Slovenca) v cel niz možnih razmerij z burekom, ne da bi kadarkoli izgubil svoj prednostni položaj. Pod dežnikom dominacije, hegemonije, superiornosti z neburekom opredeljenih ljudi nad z burekom opredeljenih ljudi je zrastel kompleksen imaginativni korpus, primeren za bolj ali manj zabavne in metaforične potrebe popularne kulture, medijev, pogovornega jezika, publicistike, literature in še česa. Burekalizem torej ni zgolj politična vsebina ali polje, ki bi se pasivno zrcalilo v kulturi, jeziku, prostoru. Prav tako tudi ni obsežna in razpršena zbirka besedil o bureku, južnjakih, priseljenic in ni odraz nekakšne zle slovenske zarote, ki bi si jo izmislili, da bi tlačili priseljence in njihove potomce, južnjake, Balkance, čefurje, čapce k tlom. Bolj kot kaj drugega je distribucija nadrejenosti, dominance, geopolitične in politično-kulturne zavesti v popularno kulturo, pogovorni in drugi jezik, zabavništvo, medije, literaturo, umetnost, oglaševanje in še kam.

Vedno znova pa se je pri burekalizmu treba vprašati, ali je res pomembna splošna skupina idej, ki preglaši silno množico materiala, – in ali je mogoče tajiti, da je prežeta z doktrinami o slovenski večvrednosti, z raznimi vrstami rasizma, nacionalizma in po-

dobnim, z dogmatičnimi pogledi, da je burekalizem nekakšna idealna in nespremenljiva abstrakcija? – ali pa gre za dosti bolj raznovrstno delo, ki ga je sproduciralo ogromno avtorjev, ki jih je mogoče obravnavati kot posamezne avtorje, ki so se spotaknili, ušpičili, pozabavali s priseljenci in njihovimi potomci.

Mislím, da gre pri burekalizmu za oboje. Poganja ga tako neka dogmatična skupina idej kot kreativnost, izvirnost posameznih avtorjev. A nadalje mislim, da se med dogmatičnostjo in produktivnostjo vsaj na neki manifestivni ravni kaže pomembna razlika, ki se odraža tudi v metodoloških omejitvah: ne moremo jih namreč obravnavati s povsem istimi orodji. Burekalizem se tako izdaja za nekaj sproščenega, produktivnega, odprtega, na drugi strani pa pritajeno skriva svojo strogo, zaprto, ortodoksno naravo. Izdaja se za nekaj malenkostnega, a šele omejitve, ki jih nevidno postavlja, omejitve ki odredajo, katere stvari naj bodo opažene, poudarjene in katere naj bodo utišane, neopažene, kažejo na moč burekalizma.

Slovinci z burekalizmom – s slovenskim orientalističnim diskurzom poudarjajo, konstruirajo, esencializirajo razlikovanje in proizvajajo samoumevnost; priseljenci in njihovi potomci pa so objekt tega razlikovanja ter te samoumevnosti. Burekalizem je torej mesto posega moči v procese tipiziranja in označevanja, je diskurz, slog z voljo do moči, ki govori o Slovencih kot gospodarjih in priseljencih kot podložnikih.