

## ETHNIC STEREOTYPES IN THE DISCOURSE OF FORMER-YUGOSLAV TV AND CINEMA

**Abstract:** This paper is an attempt to analyze particular scenes from the TV series *Složna braća* and *Crni Gruja* and the film *Balcancan* for the purpose of surveying the featured stereotypical representations of former-Yugoslav ethnicities, identifying their roles within the said examples of film and TV discourse, and proving that familiarity with the discursive practices of these particular cultures (discourse communities) is essential for interpreting these artistic discourses (texts) in the manner intended by their authors. Ethnic stereotypes are, therefore, discussed as socio-cultural constructs or myths generated by the discursive practices of a particular culture, as, it is discourses that „bring cultural objects into being by naming them, defining them and delimiting their field of operation“ (Stam, Burgoyne and Flitterman-Lewis, 2005: 216). They are also viewed as part of a larger structure – a discursive universe comprised of interrelated mythical texts (Johansen and Larsen, 2002: 55–56) shaped by former-Yugoslav discourse communities. For this reason, the mentioned texts will be analyzed as sharing the said discursive universe.

**Key words:** stereotypes, ethnic stereotypes, film discourse, semiotic analysis, discourse analysis, former Yugoslavia, Balkans

### 1. Introduction

This paper is concerned with the discourse analysis of scenes from two former-Yugoslav TV shows, *Složna braća* and *Crni Gruja*, and one film, *Balcancan*, focusing on the role of stereotypical representations of former-Yugoslav ethnicities featured in these instances of artistic discourse. The corpus includes three scenes from the first episode of *Složna braća*, two from the seventh episode of *Crni Gruja*, and three from *Balcancan*. The scenes are selected because they seem to contain „determinate moments“ (Hall, 2006) in the process of decoding certain elements of the texts. The aim of the paper is to survey the ethnic stereotypes from the corpus, identify their purposes and, finally, prove that familiarity with the discursive practices of former-Yugoslav ethnicities (the ones having formed the stereotypes in question) is essential for interpreting these artistic texts in the manner intended by their authors.

In achieving this, the authors of this paper primarily rely on the semiotic approach to discourse analysis, as explained by Daniel Chandler, J. D. Johansen and S. E. Larsen, as well as on Kristeva's theory of *intertextuality* and Foucault's theory of *cultural objects* as explained by R. Stam et al. Since

the paper focuses on the way scenes interpreted, or *decoded*, by the presumably *ideal* receiver, Stuart Hall's essay *Encoding/decoding* is also applied. Finally, the authors also rely on various definitions of stereotypes.

Being familiar with many of the discursive practices that have shaped the corpus, the authors dare presume the asymmetry between their codes and the codes of the authors of the analyzed texts to be negligible. The existence of most stereotypes mentioned in the paper is evident from the sources cited. In some cases, however, the authors rely on their own familiarity with the aforementioned discursive practices.

The authors make claims only about the messages conveyed by particular signs in particular scenes, speculating to a certain extent about their importance within the wider context of the discourse.

The first part of the paper contains a theoretical framework, while the second one contains a discourse analysis divided into three parts, one for each instance of film discourse. The final part offers a summary of conclusions.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

A stereotype is a set of preconceived images and expectations relating to the appearance, behavior and personality traits of a particular social group (Pickett, 2011: 1712). These images are constantly reinforced through popular media and have become common knowledge although they are often far from reality. Though stereotyping in the media is often perceived as demeaning and offensive, there are times when the use of stereotypes is preferable to the construction of realistic characters. More specifically, stereotypes can be very useful when writing fiction, since creating „simple, vivid, memorable, easily-grasped and widely recognized“ characters saves time and space that would otherwise take to describe complex characters in detail, when details are not particularly important to the story (Dyer, 2006). In other words, the works of fiction analyzed here can be said to reduce certain characters to a set of pre-established stereotypical features for the sake of producing the effects intended by their authors. Out of many stereotypes present in the corpus, the paper will focus on certain ethnic stereotypes only, which are defined as generalized representations of an ethnic group, composed of what are thought to be typical characteristics of members of the group (Brigham, 1971). There are a number of former-Yugoslav ethnicities represented in *Složna braća*, *Crni Gruja* and *Balcančan*, the most prominent among them being Croatians, Bosnians, Serbs and Kosovo Albanians, whose examination is central to this paper. Aside from representing territorially close ethnic groups with a long history of ethnic conflicts, the mentioned stereotypes have in common the following characteristics. Firstly, they can be either self-derogatory or held by characters outside the group, which is why they are generally perceived as

„negative“ in the sense that they often concern criminal activities or other forms of social deviation frequently regarded with contempt and derision. Secondly, they are treated with a humorous and/or satirical tone, and exaggerated to the extent of becoming ludicrous and absurd, which makes them a suitable means for providing social criticism.

Discourse analysis sees the sign as an action taking place at three levels simultaneously, which together comprise *discourse* in the semiotic sense of the word. First, the sign is a material phenomenon, belonging to a particular sign-system, and taking place in a physical space. Secondly, this physical aspect of the sign has the form of a dialogue, including a speaker and hearer establishing or maintaining certain interconnected roles or positions. Finally, this dialogue takes place in an institutionalized situation where the established roles are valid and the intentions conveyed understandable. This is termed a *discursive universe* (Johansen and Larsen, 2002: 55), but it is also referred to as a setting or context, the conditions and circumstances shaping the meaning of an event.

For this reason, the semiotic approach to discourse analysis sees all forms of art as discourses responding not to reality but to other discourses. As a result, literary researchers often speak of *intertextuality* between literary texts, meaning that texts can quote, refer or allude to one another. The ways in which texts can relate to other texts include sharing common themes, motifs, symbols, codes and conventions, and a real or possible world i.e. a discursive universe (Chandler, 2007: 197–198; Stam et al., 2005: 207–210). Furthermore, since stereotypes fit the three-layered definition of the semiotic sign, they can also be viewed as a form of discourse, with its ability to exhibit intertextuality and share discursive universes with other discourses. Ethnic stereotypes are thereby discussed as socio-cultural constructs or myths generated by the discursive practices of a particular culture, as it is discourses that „bring cultural objects into being by naming them, defining them and delimiting their field of operation“ (Stam et al., 2005: 216).

Stuart Hall defines the communicative exchange as a „passage of forms“ from the *producer* (encoder) to the *receiver* (decoder), which goes through four linked stages: production, circulation, distribution/consumption, and reproduction. The advantage of this definition is that it allows for the differences/asymmetry between the codes of the encoder-producer and decoder-receiver (Hall, 2006), the code being essential to intelligible discourse as a „set of discursive practices familiar to users of the medium operating within a broad cultural framework (discourse community)“ (Chandler, 2007: 147–148). In terms of film discourse, it is this lack of equivalence between the codes of the author and the audience that causes misunderstandings and misinterpretations of the intended message.

When employing intertextuality consciously, the author relies on the assumption that the audience belonging to the same discourse community

will also have similar habits of making inferences from a given discourse. This kind of audience, whose decoded meaning is virtually equivalent to the encoded meaning of the author, is usually referred to as the *ideal viewer* or *ideal receiver*. Within the discursive universe of former Yugoslavia, for example, the author expects the ideal receiver to be in the habit of interpreting such signs as *šajkača*, *šljivovica*, *brass music*, *celebratory gunfire*, *cursing*, *violence*, etc. as symbolizing different aspects of *Serbianness*. This is why all the scenes analyzed contain signs connotatively associated with the stereotypical representation of former-Yugoslav ethnicities. Obviously, as „connotative levels of signifiers, (as) Barthes remarks, 'have a close communication with culture, knowledge, history...'“ (Hall, 2006) they can be efficiently used to refer to objects formed by the discursive practices of a culture, such as myths, stereotypes and universes within which they make sense. Therefore, as with the already given example of *Serbianness* and different signs referring to it, one has to be familiar with the connotative meanings the signs presented have in the given discursive universe in order to make sense of the scenes and infer what is intended. In that sense, these signs are supposed to incite and facilitate the process of decoding, contextualize the meaning of the actions, which the viewer comes to understand as the consequence of either the ethnicity of the character performing them or the ethno-political context presented.

This analysis treats the selected scenes as „messages in the form of sign-vehicles of a specific kind organized [...] through the operation of codes within the syntagmatic chain of a discourse“ (Hall, 2006) aimed at the receiver discourse community. They are selected because they contain what Hall calls „moments of decoding“, meaning that their analysis provides insight into the process of decoding what is represented and understanding it as a stereotype belonging to the given discursive universe.

### 3. Ethnic Stereotypes in Former-Yugoslav TV and Cinema

#### 3.1. *Složna braća*

The obvious function of the first appearances of stereotypical characters, as well as settings and events, in *Složna braća* is to reveal their ethnicity. Such scenes are packed with signs that indicate their background through stereotypical representations, leading the audience to ascribe the presented characters' actions to their ethnicity, and interpret the presented settings and events as consequences of the ethnicities of their participants.

One such scene is the first appearance of the Croatian characters Miljenko and Manjina, which takes place in the tavern „*Složna braća*“. The visual signs indicating the characters' *Croatianness* may be divided into three groups, each group being associated with a particular element of the Croatian stereotype. First, their wearing colourful shirts and sunglasses is a reference

to the seaside, which, for a former-Yugoslav viewer, is clearly associated with Croatia. Another group of signs are references to Mišo Kovač's image: Manjina's bandana and long hair, and both characters' medallions and rings with rocks in them. These additions may be inspired by Kovač's open support of Croatian independence, but also as a result of him being one of the most famous Croatians in history and a symbol of the nation ('Mišo Kovač'). Their physical appearance might also refer to the stereotypical *galeb*, a Dalmatian womanizer, also familiar to the former-Yugoslav audience (Novačić, 2011: 125–126). Thirdly, there are references to the stereotype that Croatians perceive themselves as more civilized, and therefore more „Western“, than other Balkan nations (Simonović, 2012). This perception of Croatians is exemplified by the characters' excessive drinking of *Coca Cola* and playing video games, both actions being stereotypically attributed to the influence of the capitalist West, as well as by Manjina's relating a ridiculous story about Franciscan monks making waffles in Croatia long before the discovery of America.

The first appearance of the Serbian characters Kecman and Kiza is announced with sounds of rapid gunfire, explosions and yelling from outside the tavern, followed by panic among the guests. Together with their actual appearance seconds later – barging violently through the door, cursing, and Kecman wearing a military uniform and holding a gun – it signifies violence, militarism, short temper and foul language, all elements of stereotypical *Serbianness* (Seignovert, 2012). In order to „anchor“ the reading of this behavior as „Serbian“, just before the characters enter the tavern, the camera focuses on Manjina saying, „Serbs are here“<sup>1</sup> (Karajlić, Novković and Pejaković, 1995). The rest of the scene emphasizes the *Serbianness* of the characters even more. A bottle of home-brewed *rakija*, which Kecman claims has healing powers, is introduced as a symbol of stereotypical Serbian traditionalism, as home-brewing is considered an important Serbian tradition (Davel, 2014). Another pair of „Serbian“ traits, suspicion for all things western and belief in a global anti-Serbian conspiracy, is symbolized by Kecman's attack on a CNN reporter while accusing him and his country of starting the war.

The stereotypical image of Bosnia as a country in which war has become a part of everyday life was created by both regional and Western media (Seignovert, 2012; Judah, 2012). The reproduction of this stereotype in the first depiction of Bosnia in *Složna braća* includes the image of an old woman hanging a UN flag on the clothesline, a farmer trying to cultivate land next to a large minefield and, finally, that of a postman doing his usual work, while a tank passes by. The signs indicating war, such as the UN flag, minefield, and tank, are incorporated in the scenes commonly associated with the ordinary life of small-town people, such as the woman hanging out the laundry, postman delivering mail and farmer doing farm work, therefore unifying the two worlds (systems of signs) commonly seen as opposite and impossible to coexist. The characters

<sup>1</sup> Translation provided by the authors.

pay no attention to the signs indicating war, at least not more than to their work, which emphasizes the normality of war in the presented environment. The relation between the existent concept of Bosnia and its representation on the screen being established, the authors continue to present some more complex fusions of the two systems. Seconds after the mentioned postman scene, the audience is shown a group of children playing. Although playing war is usual for children everywhere, there is an important difference in this case. These children are divided into two groups, the „captors“ and the „prisoners“ whose hands are tied behind their backs. The game is finished when the „captors“ line up the „prisoners“ and „shoot“ them, after which the „prisoners“ fake being hit and dying. But soon afterwards, they switch roles. What the children seem to re-enact is a war crime (killing of war prisoners), and, being familiar with all the war crimes (proven or alleged) committed during the war in Bosnia, the audience is able to read this as a consequence of the „Bosnian“ war crimes, making the whole event „Bosnian“. The scene, besides being very darkly humorous, evokes the tragic events at the core of the stereotypes presented. The switching of roles may be an attempt to say that such crimes have been committed by all the warring sides.

To conclude, besides its basic roles – to make the audience read the characters, events and settings through the prism of ethnicity and produce a comic effect – the stereotypical representations in these scenes occasionally serve to point to the political circumstances that brought these representations into being.

### 3.2. *Crni Gruja*

The humor in the TV series *Crni Gruja* is often based on representing different aspects of stereotypical *Serbianness*, but, for the sake of this analysis, only the seventh episode titled *Džebana* is surveyed. The reason for this lies in the fact that some characters appear in this episode only and are there for the sole purpose of representing their ethnicities, having virtually no other dimension to their character, which makes it the most obvious use of stereotyping in the series. The scene analyzed is that of public procurement where businessmen of different ethnic origins (Serbian and Albanian among others) offer to supply weapons for the upcoming Serbian revolution.

The Serbian character Krivi Stojko is a stereotypical representation of a Serbian villager. His unsightly clothes made of coarse material (probably sheepskin) as well as his accent imply his rural background and lack of education. Feeling awkward while doing business and hesitating to speak indicate the character's lack of familiarity with the ways of the „modern world“, again a characteristic stereotypically associated with the undereducated people of Serbian rural regions, but also of Serbs in general (Seignovert, 2012). His funny<sup>2</sup> and old-fashioned name is also commonly associated with village folk. Once this connection between the familiar stereotype and the character is established,

<sup>2</sup> *Stojko* is an informal term for *penis* in Serbian slang, as well as an old-fashioned male name.

all his actions can be viewed in terms of his ethnicity. Therefore, his offering bribe to the procurer immediately evokes the stereotypically Serbian „custom“ of bribing one’s way to success. The bribe being in the form of *rakija* makes the action even more „Serbian“. Recent Serbian history (and, therefore, the media reports, too) is rich with cases of suspicious public procurement, which enables the audience to contextualize this scene. Additionally, the plot of the series being set in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century makes the whole scene transparently anachronous, allowing the author to make a grotesquely humorous statement. Namely, by showing this happening during the early beginnings of the modern Serbian state, the author seems to claim that such behavior has always been characteristic of Serbs and that not much has changed since.

The Albanian<sup>3</sup> bidder’s accent and clothes betray his origin, too. On top of that, his cold look, expressionless face and serious demeanor are features stereotypically associated with dangerous men, suggesting the stereotype of Albanians as ruthless criminals (King and Mai, 2009). This character also tries to bribe the procurer, expecting help with his drug-peddling business in return. The character having been read as a reference to the stereotype, his criminal behavior is interpreted as „Albanian“. Again, there are many anachronisms implying that Balkan is unchangeable. However, there is more to this character than his appearance. Firstly, the stereotypical representation of an Albanian among Serbian (as well as regional) audience inevitably brings to mind one of its elements that has become more prominent recently – the „Albanian“ hatred of Serbs (Seignovert, 2012). By naming the character Srboljub Krstići, the author achieves a humorous effect not by adherence but by deviation from the stereotype, his name implying love for Serbs while his surname is an „Albanized“ version of the common Serbian surname Krstić. Secondly, it is important to note that Srboljub and Gruja, the protagonist who is undoubtedly Serbian (though also willing to participate in shady deals), are played by the same actor (Lazić and Stoimenov, 2003), which might be an attempt to express belief in the similarity between these two nations. Finally, the fact that the audience draws the „correct“ inferences about the Albanian character, although he looks exactly like the protagonist, is also very interesting.

Again, besides guiding the viewers into understanding the characters’ actions as consequences of their ethnic backgrounds and thus achieving a comic effect, the stereotypes featured in these scenes have another dimension – a satirical presentation of a deterministic view of the socio-political situation in the Balkans.

### 3.3. *Balcancan*

While the stereotypical signs deployed in the TV series *Složna Braća* represent Serbs as loud and irritable barbarians, in *Balcancan*, the still violent

<sup>3</sup> His origins are never clearly stated, however, his speaking Serbian implies that he originates from an area inhabited by both Serbs and Albanians, most likely Kosovo.

Serbian stereotype, embodied in the war criminal Veselin Kabadajić, assumes a more sophisticated guise. Here, too, the scene introducing Kabadajić serves primarily to instruct the viewer to interpret Kabadajić's character solely in terms of his stereotypical *Serbianness*. Indeed, it takes no more than a few seconds for the ideal viewer looking at the scene rife with signs indicating *Serbianness* to conjure up an image of the most stereotypical Serb. In his first scene, Kabadajić is seen jogging while a brass band follows running behind him and playing music, which seems to make him ecstatic to the point of shooting his gun in the air. This scene blends several signs indicating different aspects of the Serbian stereotype. The first sign is the sound of a gunshot announcing his appearance, which is immediately followed by the sound of brass music. To an ideal viewer, these two signs alone – celebratory gunfire and brass music, which represent common celebratory traditions in Serbia – should be illustrative enough of Kabadajić's *Serbianness*. In addition to acquainting the audience with the ethnicity of the character, the purpose of this scene is to provide more information about this particular instance of the Serbian stereotype and its relationship to other Serbian stereotypes. Namely, it reveals Kabadajić's knack for weapons and noise, which bears similarities to the previously mentioned Serbian stereotypes, whereas the fact that this kind of behavior is exhibited during a mundane activity such as jogging implies a typical everyday routine. Finally, his outfit combines a sizable gold cross, indicating Christian zealotry which is closely related to Serbian nationalism, with a tracksuit. This implies Kabadajić's nouveau riche lack of taste, which is a recognizable element of the Serbian gangster stereotype. Together with the previous signs, these two serve to paint an overall ludicrous picture of an excessively nationalist Serb, his nationalism being yet another sign confirming him as the personification of the Serbian stereotype.

This kitschy display is sharply contrasted with the scenes showing Kabadajić's elaborate residence and entourage of bodyguards, security guards and snipers. In the scenes to follow, this ostensibly successful businessman is revealed to be a dealer in counterfeit and contraband goods. However, what is both shocking yet very familiar is the revelation regarding the origin of his money, which appears to have been seized as plunder in the Bosnian War. More precisely, he is accused of orchestrating the Srebrenica massacre. This, together with the sound of his name, is sufficient to lead the audience to conclude that Kabadajić's character is a reference to the real-life Serbian war criminal Radovan Karadžić (Smith, 2014). To reinforce this point, the author places a poster in Kabadajić's room showing him with the caption „Every Serb Is Veselin We Won't Go to the Hague!“ (Curci and Mitrevski, 2005) alluding to the 2002 campaign in support of Radovan Karadžić launched by the Serbian extreme-right organization *Obraz* and titled *Every Serb is Radovan*. By claiming that „individuals are not put on trial in the Hague, but rather the whole Serbian nation“, this campaign had the goal of equating



Karadžić with the Serbian nation and presenting him as a national hero and general role model (Tošić, 2007). As a result of the mounting Serbian nationalism in the aftermath of the Bosnian War and the indictments served to several of the Serbian political and military leaders of the period, it is clear how *Serbianness* came to be associated with war crimes (BBC News, 2003). Having this in mind, Veselin Kabadajić is perceived as a caricature of the Serbian-criminal-turned-national-hero stereotype.

Due to the wide media exposure garnered by the Bosnian War, the stereotype of Bosnians engaged in perpetual ethnic conflicts is still prevalent in former-Yugoslav cinema. Much like the depictions from *Složna braća*, *Balcancan* also portrays Bosnia as a permanent war zone. Namely, the fictional Bosnian town of Čaprljane is represented as divided between two warring sides – Muslims and Croats – who still spend their days shooting and killing each other, even though the war ended 6 years before the events described in the film (Clinton, 2013). Usually, the signs connotatively associated with the Bosnian stereotype are used to emphasize division, sectarianism and ethnic conflicts.<sup>4</sup> However, here, it does not take long to realize that all the signs indicating differences between Muslims and Croats from Čaprljane have a ring of artificiality about them. The fact that they live in separate parts of the town, practice a different faith, observe different customs and are ultimately trying to annihilate each other on account of that is implicitly understood by the viewer familiar with recent Bosnian history. Yet, explicitly, all these discursive practices are reduced to one puny cross around a Croat's neck making for the only perceptible difference between the two factions. In fact, apart from the cross, the two contending groups are almost indistinguishable: they speak the same language; they are all wearing similar clothes and sporting shaven heads; they have the same oppressive and tyrannical attitude toward women but they are even more vicious toward each other. The absurdity of their conflict culminates in the last scene, where both Muslims and Croats are seen eating, drinking and singing a traditional Bosnian love song together, as if to take a break from the shooting, which nonetheless ends in their wiping each other out.

Due to recent reports on alleged human trafficking in Kosovo, the stereotype of Kosovo Albanians as human traffickers has become rather prevalent (Amnesty International, 2005; Associated Press, 2011). The epitome of this stereotype in *Balcancan* is Shefket Ramadani. He runs a human-trafficking ring in Kosovo, and is depicted as the evil overlord of the Balkans. This is perhaps in line with another stereotype representing Albanians as the odd ethnicity out, since they are the only major ethnicity in former Yugoslavia not of Slavic origin. According to a study conducted by the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia, Albanians are

<sup>4</sup> Bosnians are not a unified ethnicity; instead, they are divided into three ethnic groups, whose ethnic identity, as well as intolerance for one another, is based on their religious affiliation, i.e. Bosniaks are Muslim, Croats Catholic and Serbs Orthodox Christian (Lampe, Malcolm and Pickering, 2013).

the least popular ethnicity in the region as a result of prolonged Albanophobia caused by prejudicial representations of Albanians and Albanian criminality in the mass media (ter Wal, 2002: 163–164). The atmosphere surrounding Ramadani is steeped in dark overtones. Being the central figure in the Balkan underworld, the stereotype he embodies stands for the Balkans' self-imposed misfortune – or as the Italian character in the film puts it, „Nations so small, yet so evil! That's why your history keeps repeating over and over“ (Curci and Mitrevski, 2005).

Balcancan subverts the deep-seated stereotypes of former-Yugoslav ethnicities by downplaying the differences among them and focusing instead on their similarities, which are portrayed as a more likely cause of their tragic history. Additionally, the examined stereotypes are a convenient tool used by the author in order to convey these messages to the ideal viewer.

#### 4. Conclusion

Stereotypical representations of former-Yugoslav ethnicities featured in the instances of film discourse analyzed in this paper perform various functions. The main one is guiding the viewers' inferences about the presented elements, ultimately allowing them to follow and interpret the overall plot and the message of the discourse as a whole. The most obvious purpose of the messages conveyed via stereotypical representations is achieving a comic effect, but they also serve to refer to real-life issues and express authors' views on them. In both *Složna braća* and *Balcancan* attention is drawn toward the socio-political contexts that have given rise to the featured stereotypes, while in *Crni Gruja* the combination of setting and stereotypes is used to present the history of the featured ethnicities in a particular way. Through various exaggerations of stereotypical features they all aim to ridicule and subvert the stereotypes otherwise taken for granted. Finally, adding the comical dimension to stereotypical representations presents ethnic identity as a frivolous matter, undermining the importance attributed to it in the context of former Yugoslavia.

However, for viewers not familiar with the connotations the surveyed signs have in the discursive practices that have brought these stereotypes into being, these signs cannot carry the intended meaning. The fact that, on the other hand, the *ideal receiver* of these texts becomes instantly aware of the „ethnic“ connotation of what is presented on the screen, proves that recognizing stereotypes is also a habit of making inferences that can become „natural“ for a particular discourse community and then be relied on by authors. Both the immediacy with which these scenes are interpreted in the intended way by the target discourse community and the inability of those outside it to read the same scenes „correctly“ exhibits how diverse and culturally conditioned both artistic discourse and the connotative meanings on which it is based are.

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**Aleksandar Petrović, Marija Stepanović**

## **ETNIČKI STEREOTIPI U DISKURSU TELEVIZIJE I FILMA SA PROSTORA BIVŠE JUGOSLAVIJE**

### **Rezime**

Ovaj rad se bavi analizom određenih scena iz televizijskih serija „Složna braća“ i „Crni Gruja“ i filma „Balkankan“, kako bi se napravio pregled stereotipnih prikaza etničkih skupina bivše Jugoslavije koji se u njima pojavljuju, odredila uloga tih prikaza u pomenutim primerima filmskog i televizijskog diskursa, i, konačno, dokazalo da je poznavanje diskurzivnih praksi ovih kultura (diskurzivnih zajednica) od suštinske važnosti u procesu „pravilne“ interpretacije ovih primera umetničkog diskursa (tekstova). „Pravilnom“ interpretacijom se smatra razumevanje poruka koje u tekstove kodiraju sami autori. Uzimajući u obzir to da diskursi „stvaraju kulturne objekte tako što ih imenuju, definišu i ograničavaju njihovo polje delovanja“ (Stem, Burgojn i Flitermen-Luis, 2005: 216) etnički stereotipi se u radu posmatraju kao društveni i kulturni konstrukti, tj. mitovi oblikovani diskurzivnim praksama određene kulture. Takođe se posmatraju i kao deo veće strukture – diskurzivnog univerzuma sačinjenog od međusobno povezanih mitskih tekstova (Johansen i Larsen, 2002: 55–56) koje su oblikovale diskursne zajednice bivše Jugoslavije. Iz ovih razloga, autori posmatraju tekstove koji čine korpus kao tekstove koji se oslanjaju na pomenuti diskurzivni univerzum.

apetrovic018@gmail.com  
marija.xd@gmail.com