"WE ASKED FOR WORKERS. WE GOT BUREKS INSTEAD"

Meanings and Material Significance of the Burek in Slovenia

Jernej Mlekuž, Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts

The dish *burek* was brought to Slovenia by people from the other republics of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) in the 1960s. It is now the handiest and most frequently used signifier in Slovenian popular culture, media, vernacular language etc. for immigrants from the former republics of the SFRY, the Balkans, the SFRY itself and the phenomena associated with it. This paper addresses why and how this semantic hyperinflation occurred to precisely this fast food. The burek is a product of Slovenian nationalism *par excellence* and cannot be understood without taking into consideration the material conditions of the object. The paper shows that the burek plays a significant role in the formation and reproduction of identities.

Keywords: material culture, meanings, nationalism, burek, Slovenia

The Unleashed Burek

In the first open-source online dictionary of spoken Slovene, *Razvezani jezik* (The Unleashed Tongue), the *burek* – an important, frequently prepared and eaten dish among many immigrants and their descendants in Slovenia and also Slovenia's popular fast food – is described as follows:

> In the vernacular a burek also means an idiot or an incompetent [person]. Example: "You'*re a bunch of complete bureks!*" Of course this pejorative use contains slightly veiled chauvinism or racism; a burek in this sense implies a stupid and incompetent southerner, a person from the Balkans or the Orient. (Razvezani jezik 2012)

The large majority of users of this phraseme are probably not aware of this "slightly veiled chauvinism or racism". In some cases, for instance among certain (secondary-school) peer groups, it can even be a term of endearment. However, it is clearly not a term of endearment in the song "Ti si burek" ("You're a Burek") by the national folk-music group Trio Genialci. In the popular video (at least judging by YouTube views),[1] a well-heeled Slovenian businesswoman comes home to find her immigrant husband (ostensibly a Bosnian) on the couch wearing a singlet and track suitbottoms, with a beer and a remote in his hands, his feet on the table, football on the telly, a baby in the corner needing its diaper changed and her husband's brother also on the couch, also with a beer in his

Jernej Mlekuž 2017: "We Asked for Workers. We Got Bureks Instead". Meanings and Material Significance of the Burek in Slovenia. *Ethnologia Europaea* 47:2, 72–86.

hand. As she throws him out of the house, she sings the following refrain:

> You're a burek, a burek squared
> And instead of me, put a rope around your neck
> You're a burek, a burek squared
> But why was it me you fooled that time
> Get your stuff and get out of here.
> (Trio Genialci 2008)

The burek has therefore made its way into not just Slovenian hands, mouths and streets, but the Slovene language as well. And in no small measure: "Burek? Nein, danke" – probably Slovenia's most well-known and frequently reproduced graffito (in this and the following statements the burek again signifies, connotes, stands for immigrants, the Balkans etc.); "Burek? Ja, bitte" – the title of at least two articles in prominent Slovenian newspapers; "Anti Burek Sistem" (or A.B.S.) – the name of a project by the skinhead group SLOI; "I'll have a burek, but not a mosque" – another popular Slovenian graffito; "you don't have enough for a burek" – a very frequently used slang expression meaning "you have no idea" or "you're clueless", similar to "you're a burek" or "you're a burek squared"; my own book *Burek.si!?* (Mlekuž 2008a) an academic work which owing to the "triviality" and probably also the "significance" of the object of study triggered numerous discussions and vehement responses among the general public. These examples are only a few of the more noticeable media and pop-culture roles played by the rolled or folded dish, filled with all sorts of fillings, and having the status of an increasingly naturalized "immigrant" from the Balkans. And it is precisely its immigrant status which has to the greatest extent formed its current meaning in Slovenia. Slovenia was the most industrially developed republic of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY), and therefore attracted the highest proportion of immigrants from the other Yugoslav republics (see Josipovič 2006, 2012). This led to heated nationalism in the decade before and after Slovenia gained its independence (1991), which was in great measure focused on immigrants from the SFRY, who had formerly been fellow countrymen but were now "foreigners" (see Pajnik 2002). But why and how did the burek inspire so much semantic richness, so many different meanings – however predominantly attached to nationalism and its need for a culinary Other?

In seeking an answer to this question, this article starts with the fundamental idea of modern studies of material culture: that materiality is an integral part of culture and society, and that culture and society cannot be understood outside of materiality. To focus more closely: the meanings of objects cannot be understood (solely) as a product of discourses and signifying practices, but must be looked at (also) as embedded in the objective, material domain, in numerous complex ways. The investigation of meanings does not entail the negation or elimination of materiality.

Thus, the article does not deal with the meaning of things in general, but specifically with the meanings of material culture, of objects. As Daniel Miller (1994: 397) says: "the phrase the 'meaning of things' (…) tends to implicate something beyond the narrow question of semanticity by which artefacts, like words, might have sense and reference. Rather, the notion of meaning tends to incorporate a sense of 'meaningful' closer to the term 'significance'." When we speak of the meaning of objects, continues Miller (1994: 397), the main emphasis is more connected "with questions of 'being' rather than questions of 'reference'." This article explores how the meanings of the burek, the question of its semanticity, is connected or intertwined with the question of its significance. It argues that when investigating the meaning of the burek, questions of "reference" should be dialectically confronted with questions of "being". Thus, the sense and reference of the burek will be observed through the optics of its significance.

The question of the "being" or significance of objects leads to the central idea of a "material turn". According to the key theorists, objects are significant in relation not so much to what they *mean* (the semiotic) as to what they *do* (cf. Gell 1998; Miller 1987, 1998, 2010). Such an approach, following Alfred Gell (1998: 6) could also be called an "'action'-

centred approach", that is "preoccupied with the practical mediatory role of (…) objects in the social process, rather than with interpretation of objects 'as if' they were text." Thus the article also argues that the burek not only represents or reflects meaning, but also intervenes, makes a difference, and alters people's minds.

The article is based on a very wide range of materials (50 conversations with burek consumers and other people associated with bureks, such as burek stand owners and specific burek consumers, mostly youth groups in the past and present), periodicals and websites, (pop-)cultural and other products, participant observation with some selected groups (e.g. secondary-school peer groups consuming "ultragreasy bureks" (see Mlekuž 2017), collected primarily in the years 2005–2007 for a Ph.D. thesis, as well as less intensively collected newer materials (mostly periodicals and websites), that have not been part of any specific research project.

On the Dining Table and on the Street

The burek – a pastry made of phyllo dough with various fillings, well-known in the Balkans, in Turkey[2] (*bürek*) and under other names in the Near East, came to Slovenia with immigrants from the republics of the SFRY in the 1960s (which according to the 1981 census made up 5.4%, and according to the 1991 census 7.6% of the population of Slovenia, and the large majority of whom came to Slovenia as migrant labourers [Josipovič 2006]). Slovenia, the most industrially ambitious republic in the SFRY, needed a workforce. And with that workforce – with immigrants from the former republics of the SFRY – came the burek. To paraphrase Max Frisch's well-known epigram: We asked for workers. We got bureks instead.[3]

The burek was and still is frequently prepared and eaten by immigrants from the former republics of the SFRY and their descendants in Slovenia. But what stands out is its vital role in the manifestation and constitution of the society and culture of Muslim immigrants from Bosnia and Herzegovina, and to a somewhat lesser extent among other immigrants of the Muslim faith, in Slovenia. The differences appear first of all in appellation. While the great majority of ethnic and other communities from the former SFRY use the word burek to signify a dish made of phyllo dough filled with various meat, cheese, vegetable and fruit fillings, the inhabitants of Bosnia and Herzegovina are not inclined to use the word burek so broadly. They use the word burek to signify a dish made of phyllo dough filled (only) with meat. And this dish is a part of a group of pies which also includes the *sirnica* (cheese filling), *krumpiruša* (potatoes), *zeljanica* (spinach), *kupuspita* (cabbage), *pita sa tikvom* or *tikvenuša*/*masirača* (squash), etc. Furthermore, the burek and the other pies are irreplaceable elements of various religious, life- and other events, such as *iftar*, "an evening meal during the fasting month of Ramadan", Bosnian Muslim holidays, weddings, etc. The burek is therefore an important companion to rites of passage. And here it should be mentioned that the majority of the negative connotations that the burek has in the stylistic figures of the Slovene language, and with which I introduced this text, are in direct contrast to the meanings the burek has in Bosnia and Herzegovina – the land of the burek "numero uno" – where it is associated with homeliness, warmth, safety and sociability. The place of the burek in Bosnia and Herzegovina was explained quite nicely by Bosnian pop star Dino Merlin when asked why he had called his album *Burek*:

> I wanted to show the burek on the symbolic level as one of our culturally valued objects, but similar to a man who walks past his wife every day without seeing her beauty, we are not aware of its value. So we have all of this, but we don't know it. Something that has been verified as good for centuries is defined as high-quality, classic and art. That is, only those things that survive for centuries are worthy of appreciation and epithets such as "classic" and "art". The burek is both an authentically Bosnian and an anti-globalist phenomenon. (Cited in Bikić 2004: 10)

Immigrant families in Slovenia treat the burek not as a mere commodity; it is eaten by people who make

it themselves and serve it to family and friends. The participants in the exchange of a homemade burek see it as a gift or an expression of hospitality. The circulation of homemade bureks and on the other hand the production and consumption of industrial, bakery-made and street bureks demonstrates the difference between a gift economy and a market economy (see Gregory 1982; Mauss 1954) or, to use Appadurai's (1986) definition, "regimes of value", between which there is very little common dialogue.

Also more than obvious is the conceptual and contextual difference between making and eating bureks and other pies within immigrant families, that is bureks which elude the market, and bureks which were given life by the market economy. In the majority of immigrant families, bureks are prepared and eaten as the main daily meal, either lunch or dinner, and thus support the traditional and most likely also still the dominant family meal structure. Commodity bureks – at least street bureks, that is *fast food* bureks – in the majority of cases resist this traditional dominant meal structure. They are usually eaten "on the run" – more subordinate to hunger than to a seated meal – and unlike in immigrant families, where bureks or pies are served on a plate and eaten with utensils, always wrapped in paper and eaten with one's hands. In immigrant families bureks are a relatively traditional dietary element, closely connected with the cultural tradition, while commodity bureks, at least on urban streets, in Slovenian bakeries and shops, are something of a novelty, which the majority of ethnic Slovenes have known for no more than three or four decades. The space, distance, and limited communication between these two economic spheres or contexts are also borne witness to by the fact that the great majority of immigrants, primarily of the Muslim faith, from the former SFRY with whom I had conversations and who make bureks and other pies several times a week, had never in their entire lives in Slovenia tried a bakery-made, industrial or street burek. And most probably, if burek stands run by Albanians from Macedonia had not appeared in Slovenia in the 1960s and if bureks had not been introduced by local bakeries and industrial food producers in the 1990s (nowadays the majority of bureks produced in Slovenia are made in "Slovenian" bakeries and industrial food plants), the majority of less adventuresome Slovenes would never have heard of the burek. At least not in Slovenia.

Following Raymond Williams (2005: 40–41), I could say that among immigrant families, the burek is a part of a residual culture which is significantly removed from the dominant culture. By "residual", Williams (2005: 40) means that "some experiences, meanings and values, which cannot be verified or cannot be expressed in terms of the dominant culture, are nevertheless lived and practiced on the basis of the residue – cultural as well as social – of some previous social formation." The emergent meanings of the burek, however, stand to a large degree in opposition to these residual meanings, particularly those that are employed in the dominant culture. On the level of meanings there are two more or less op-

Ill. 1: Fast food burek. Photo by the author, Ljubljana 2015.

posite positions with respect to the burek, with very little common dialogue: the unincorporated residual culture (the burek among immigrants) and the incorporated emergent culture (the burek among non-immigrants, subject to various discourses, primarily nationalistic, about which more will be said below, and healthy-lifestyle discourses, about which more has been said elsewhere [Mlekuž 2008a, 2017]).[4]

Today, the burek has worked its way deep into the Slovenian dietary mainstream. According to a newspaper survey from 2005, it ranks among the most popular fast foods or street foods in Slovenia, and in urban areas it is even the most popular fast food.[5] It is also probably the champion, at least among fast foods or street food, with respect to quantitative growth in production and consumption, and in the category of expansion into numerous new areas and institutions. Nowadays the burek can be found not just on the streets of Slovenia's towns or hiding in immigrant (and increasingly non-immigrant) kitchens. In fact, it is stealing shelf space from other deep-frozen items in the freezers of Slovenian (super)markets (it is produced in both frozen and non-frozen form by Slovenia's two largest industrial bakeries), eaten by the Slovenian Army, enjoyed as a snack in Slovenian schools (but no more than once a month), appears at numerous formal and informal parties and events, is served on certain flights of the Slovenian national airline, is delivered in trucks carrying Slovenian-made goods to foreign markets etc. Which again does not mean that doors everywhere are open to bureks, much less wide open. For instance, they are almost completely ignored by general, broad-format "Slovenian" cookbooks written for or adapted to Slovenian cooks. In a survey of thirty cookbooks, only one of them contained a recipe for burek. This disavowal of burek-recipes in the "sacred", highly selective and controlled world of books is all the more striking in contrast to the plethora of recipes found in the "profane" periodical press and above all on websites. On Slovenia's most popular culinary website Kulinarika.net can thus be found a full 44 recipes for burek, which places it among the most popular dishes in Slovenia (of course it is very difficult to compare the relative popularity of different dishes, but if we compare it just with its fast-food rival the hamburger, the latter falls far behind with just 9 recipes).[6] This will also be touched on below. But first it is worth discussing how the burek became a part of this, what Williams calls incorporated emergent culture and what its place is within that culture.

Calories and Symbols

According to interviews with burek producers and consumers, and newspaper articles, street bureks were eaten primarily by immigrants all the way up to the 1980s. At that time, the burek started being eaten by non-immigrants, usually those who, according to Peter Stankovič (2005: 36), were not drawn to nationalist "euphoria" and the "Yugophobia" associated with it.[7] In the 1980s, after the death of Tito (1980), Yugoslavia found itself in a serious crisis, which was a consequence of economic difficulties, emergent nationalisms and in-fighting amongst the communist elite. The causes and driving forces of the Yugoslavian crisis have been explored elsewhere (Ramet 1999; Pavković 2000). However, the crisis led to new thinking about national identity among Slovenes, particularly in relation to the "southern brother nations" and to Western Europe. This thinking relied on assumptions about lazy, corrupt, dirty, Oriental foreigners, who were alleged to be leeching Slovenia's economy dry, whereas without them Slovenia could already have caught up with Western Europe (Žižek 1990: 55). Thus a period of intensive differentiation between Slovenes and other Yugoslavians began, a movement that has ideological, political and economic dimensions and which resulted in Slovenia's gaining of independence in 1991.

These "non-immigrant" burek eaters in the 1980s were primarily college students, punk rockers, and urban youths in general. At the level of meaning, as Stankovič adds, this means that the burek soon was not signifying only ethnic differences (between "Slovenes" and "non-Slovenes"), but also those Slovenes who did not have any major problems with the presence of immigrants from other republics of former Yugoslavia (Stankovič 2005: 36). However, according to conversations with the protagonists

of urban subcultures (and urban vagabonds) in the 1980s, in those times the burek was not a sign or a symbolic object within various subcultural groups, nor was it a significant, important part of subcultural consumption. One prominent member of the generation of punk rockers from the late 1970s and early 80s (who were to play a significant role in Slovenia's liberalization and independence movement, see Lovšin, Mlakar & Vidmar 2002) says that food was not a part of subcultural expression among the punks – as opposed to punk cuisine in the USA, where it is a complex subcultural food system, with its own grammar, logic, and symbolism (Clark 2004). "Part of the subculture was drinking alcohol, mainly in the form of beer." One representative of the generation "which was politically and culturally socialized around the time of the first *Novi rok* (New Rock) concert (1981)", has this to say: "This whole thing with bureks in my opinion is more of a coincidence than anything else. Anyhow, at one in the morning the only thing open was a burek kiosk and nothing else. So once in a while I had a burek. […] I didn't usually do that. If some kiosk had been serving something else at one in the morning, I might have gone for polenta." And it was no different even outside of Ljubljana. One informant recalls the "punk times in the mining town of Idrija": "At least in the circle of people whom I hung out with at the time, I didn't have any kind of 'food-fetishism', of course as long as you don't count alcohol, which I wasn't too selective about, as food. The only important thing was price-performance." So the great majority of people who ate (or did not eat) bureks in the 1980s did not understand it as an explicitly political gesture. The burek was not (yet) politicized in the first half of the 80s. For urban youth, as well as everyone else who occasionally ate bureks, it was, as the conversations indicate, a source of calories, not symbols. However, this simplistic, plastic division is highly problematic. Semanticizing, according to Roland Barthes (1969: 12), is unavoidable: "as soon as there is a society, every usage is converted into a sign of itself". Thus, the purpose of a burek is to be filling, and that purpose cannot be separated from a sign for food. And I could go on and on. A burek is intended to be filling in a hurry, and this purpose cannot be separated from a sign for fast food. A burek is intended to be filling when everything else is closed, and this purpose cannot be separated from a sign for food for night-owls, etc.

At any rate, the burek made it possible to get something warm to put in an alcohol-laden stomach, something cheap for shallow pockets and something that was available even at the most impossible hours in the already very modest "socialist" range of products and services available in the 1980s. Again, in those times in the majority of the larger Slovenian towns, with a few exceptions (primarily hot dogs and chips), bureks were the only warm food available late at night and in the early morning (for more on consumption patterns in socialist Slovenia and Yugoslavia see Luthar 2010; for more on the "culture of everyday life" see Luthar & Pušnik 2010; for more on the disconnect between the social liberalization of the 80s and socialist consumption see Hyder Patterson 2011). And this is probably the crucial – though not the only significant – impetus in the burek's march onto this stage of signifying, discourses and nationalism.

The essential point of this early burek narrative of consuming "calories without symbols" is therefore that the "immigrant", "Balkan", "southern" burek found its way onto Slovenian streets, and worked its way to "non-immigrants", that is Slovenes. The fact of this "non-Slovene", "immigrant", "foreign" burek being in the hands and mouths of Slovenes bothered some people – those who, to use Stankovič's words, had problems "with the presence of immigrants from other republics of the former Yugoslavia". It is from this point on that the story of the burek and nationalism starts to become more complicated, to grow in increasingly interesting and complex ways. To make slightly free use of Thomas' (1991) syntagm, when the burek's presence bothers someone, it becomes a "socially entangled object". It is therefore very important to the burek's semantic genesis that the burek was a visible object, or better an object of observation – one of the rare (food) objects of observation on Slovenian streets at that time, when there were no kebabs, pizza by the slice, hamburgers etc., that is "western fare", in

urban areas. The burek thus becomes an object of the nationalistic gaze, it is noticed and talked about in nationalist discourse, which treats it as a some kind of representative of anything "foreign", "Balkan", or "southern". Food, as was probably most convincingly demonstrated by Pierre Bourdieu (1984), structures our lives in a very complex manner, most often completely subconsciously. Furthermore, as Richard Wilk (1997: 183) argues, "distaste and rejection is often more important than taste and consumption in making social distinctions". And the burek in its early "semantic years" made a good case for this assertion – it was more significant in forming identities for those who did not consume it than for those who did (cf. Savaş 2014).

Thus the dominant meanings which defined the burek throughout the 1980s and 90s (and in the present day) were not produced in their primary, original forms by burek eaters. What was at work was (and still is) a nationalist discourse which did not accept the burek as its own, that is "ours". In other words, it was bothered by the presence and visibility of the burek on Slovenian streets, in the hands and mouths of youths and all others who occasionally ate bureks. The nationalist discourse thus focused its attention on the burek, and the burek was no longer just food, but also a signifier, a symbol, or a metaphor. It didn't fill Slovenes with just calories, but with symbols as well.

The graffito "Burek? Nein danke", which appeared in a street in the capital city of Ljubljana in the second half of the 1980s and has occasionally reappeared on the town's walls since then, is one of the earliest and most explicit nationalist "uses" of the burek.

Another probably less explicit but earlier nationalist reference – of which countless examples could be listed – is found in the 1986 song *Jasmina* by the group Agropop – one of Slovenia's most popular pop bands in the 80s. A female voice (Jasmina) sings the refrain in Serbo-Croatian over a distinctly Balkan melody, which speaks of the love of an immigrant and/or a Balkan person for the Slovenian Jasmina:

He was truly, a real man,
He smelled strongly of horse.
He has a really hairy back.
He got me with a cheese burek.

While it is possible to ask whether Agropop's song is at all politically or nationalistically motivated, there is no ambiguity in the case of a project called

Ill. 2: Graffito in a Ljubljana street. Photo by the author.

"Anti Burek Sistem (A.B.S.)" by the skinhead group SLOI, which recited its texts in verse at pub counters. The project, by a group from the early 1990s, which played without instruments, is most likely a very explicit, highly motivated, dutiful nationalist burek statement. According to Arjun Appadurai (1981: 494), food is "a marvellously plastic kind of collective representation" with the "capacity of mobilizing strong emotions". Thus, a nationalist assault against the burek began in the second half of the 80s and flared up during breakup of Yugoslavia (for more on this see Mlekuž 2015). It is worth taking a moment to seek an understanding of how this assault functioned.

The process of self-definition, as was masterfully shown by Edward Said (1978[2003]), includes the dramatization of differences with others. It should be noted here that on the territory of present-day Slovenia, before the arrival of immigrants during the time of the SFRY, there was already a dish or several versions of a dish that was very similar to the burek in both form and manner of preparation. But it was not called a burek.[8] For the "Slovenian" burek therefore it is a case of the "narcissism of minor differences", as Freud (1905[1991]: 279) called it, where "minor differences in people who are otherwise alike [...] form the basis of feelings of strangeness and hostility between them". But it would probably be wrong to view and define the Slovenian "anti burek sistem" solely as an attack. As stated above, the burek is becoming increasingly more naturalized or incorporated into Slovenian society and culture. This incorporation or inclusion, according to Dick Hebdige (1979), proceeds on two levels, via two processes: (a) via the conversion of alternative or oppositional signs – that is signs which stand in opposition to the dominant culture – into mass-produced products, which Hebdige (1979) called the commodity form, and (b) via the labelling and redefining of practices, styles, behaviour, and things which are annoying to the dominant culture by dominant groups, so that they conform to and belong within their conceptual frameworks – what Hebdige called the ideological form. In this process of ideological and conceptual inclusion, these non-conformist practices and things which are annoying to the dominant culture can be (b1) on the one hand trivialized, naturalized, and domesticated – thus differentness is transformed into equality, and difference is denied, and (b2) on the other hand, as Hebdige (1979: 97) shows, this differentness can be turned into a spectacle, a clown show, or a scandal – thus difference is emphasized or manufactured. Probably the most bizarre product of this incorporation, which simultaneously offers varying interpretations (a clown show or denial of difference), the Carniolan burek – as read on the manufacturer's website – is "a Slovenian version of the most popular dish in the Balkans!" Carniola was the central Slovenian (and the most Slovenian) region of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and the adjective continues to be used today to adorn numerous items considered to be Slovenian *par excellence*, including the flagship of Slovenian cuisine, the Carniolan sausage. The Carniolan burek was launched onto the market in 2013 by the industrial food processing company (and Slovenia's largest producer of baked goods) Žito, whose website states the following about their new product: "Slovenia's most popular quick snack has finally arrived with a traditional Slovenian taste" (Žito 2013). The "traditional Slovenian taste" of "Slovenia's most popular quick snack" is provided by pieces of Carniolan sausage and cabbage which are added to a cottage cheese filling. The Slovenian colonization of the (Carniolan) burek is further demarked by the Slovenian flag, which is stuck into this "Carniolan" or "Slovenian" product.[9]

However, the integration process of immigrant and foreign food in general can be highly varied and complex. For example, the doner kebab, which was brought to Germany by Turkish immigrants, played a central role in the recognition of that migrant group. At the places where Turks first sold doner kebabs as an exotic ethnic food (which was mainly bought by Germans) and was used as a positive symbol of cultural connection in multicultural discourse, the effects of the changing attitude towards foreigners led to a loosening of the association between "Turkishness" and the doner kebab. Stands and chains appeared with names like McKebap and Donerburger. At the same time, "doner" became a

sobriquet for Turks. A multicultural youth festival in Berlin in 1987 was called "Disco doner", and the following slogan appeared in controversies about immigrants (*Ausländerfrage*): "Kein doner ohne Ausländer!" ("No immigrants, no kebabs!") Amidst this political chaos the doner kebab sold better than ever. But for Turks the continued association with it means a further denial of their increasing social mobility. The final irony is that in their attempts to loosen and move away from the association with the doner kebab, the sellers of this food moved into selling Italian food (Caglar 1995).

But let's go back to the beginning, to the cause of this nationalist interest in the burek. The appearance of the "Balkan", "Turkish", "southern" burek on Slovenian streets, and its increasing popularity and visibility, undoubtedly engendered nationalistic sentiments. But it is probably an exaggeration, if not actually wrong, to lay all of the blame for the parasitizing of the burek by nationalism on the appearance and visibility of the burek alone. There could also be other impetuses, though they are significantly less important, if they are important at all. As an example of such an external impetus, I might mention the silver medal won by Slovenian skier Jure Franko at the Olympics in Sarajevo in 1984 – Yugoslavia's first medal at a winter Olympics. The wordplay "Volimo Jureka više od bureka" ("We love Jurek more than burek", in Serbo-Croatian), which appeared at the time and is still remembered by many Slovenes, can still occasionally be found in humorous contexts in Slovenian media, pop culture and everyday speech, and undoubtedly brought the burek closer to Slovenes.[10] For example, in 2002 an article about a round-table discussion entitled "Slovenes and the Balkans: On the Europeanization of Slovenian society and the flight from the Balkans" in the newspaper *Več* carried the headline: "From Jure to the burek and other stories" (Stepišnik 2002: 5). And I could continue to list factors which brought the burek into the sphere of Slovenian nationalism. One of them, to continue in this vein, is probably that burek does not just rhyme with Jurek (a diminutive of the Slovenian name Jure), but also with Turek (Slovene for "Turk"). Turk, in the Slovenian (and to a great extent the European) popular imagination, (still) connotes a threatening Other (see Muršič 2010; Jezernik 2010). And this is even reflected in the titles and descriptions of burek recipes: "So that the burek will not be a Turek", or "a little more SLO[venian] and veggie, mushrooms for a change" (Šalehar 2004: 57).

The discussion of how the burek and nationalist discourse became intertwined also touches on Slovenia's independence in 1991. This event brought about the end of the official Yugoslav policy and ideology of brotherhood and unity. But nationalism clothed in popular discourse was already at work in the 1980s and earlier. The burek did not become a victim of nationalism because of Slovenia's independence, but independence – with all of its attendant changes and shocks to society and culture – undoubtedly draped the burek in much more diverse and colourful clothing.

Objects and Subjects

After Slovenia's independence, the burek decidedly becomes an *object* of alternative or oppositional praxis, which is easiest and most simply interpreted within the framework of the burek's important and visible semantic place in Slovenian culture and society – that is, as a response or even resistance to the (growing) nationalism (on nationalism in independent Slovenia see Pajnik 2002; Mlekuž 2008b). But this probably would not have happened to the burek if it had not had a special place within the available range of products and consumption at that time, and thus (again) it is also necessary to understand the socially conditioned rationalities (vis-à-vis the burek). Conversations with youths in the 1990s testify to how the burek very quickly became a popular and even revered part of the diet primarily among young urbanites, college and secondary-school students. Although it is difficult to shed sufficient light on the complex relationship between this "burek-loving" discourse and the consumption of bureks, it is not hard to identify the socio-cultural background to this relationship.

Peter Stankovič (1999: 46) says that a rebellious spirit began to spread primarily among urban youths

who expressed ambivalence towards the project of Slovenia's independence. As an example of the initial manifestations of this rebellious spirit, Stankovič refers to a party which occurred completely spontaneously at the cult club B-51 in Ljubljana on the exact day of the declaration of Slovenian independence, June 25, 1991: "At the moment when all of Slovenia was celebrating its secession from Yugoslavia, a crowd of young people danced and drank beer until morning to the nostalgic sounds of Yugo rock, and at the end they were partying to the wild rhythms of Serbian turbo folk"[11] (Stankovič 1999: 46). This rebellious spirit manifested itself in a love of all things "Balkan" and "southern". This was not in fact a political movement, Stankovič continues, but brought about or constituted an interesting cultural reversal, in which for part of the urban youth (primarily college students, alternative types, secondary-school students etc.), everything Balkan changed from a symbol for the bad into a symbol of the good. Thus it was a deviation which stood in opposition to the "official", dominant nationalistic discourse:

> In an instant, so-called Balkan parties were everywhere, pop and rock music from the former Yugoslavia became "the law", even for those who were too young to have grown up with their sounds, the use of Serbo-Croatian in vernacular speech increased to truly unbelievable proportions, bureks and baklava became the height of fashion, famous Serbian comedy films (Who's Singin' over there, The Marathon Family, Balkan Spy, The Fall of Rock and Roll etc.) became references to be cited as often as possible, in short, a certain nostalgic sentiment spread among the urban youth which probably more than anything else reflected a certain fear that life in independent Slovenia would become too "Austrian": closed, cold-hearted, buttoned-down and provincial. (Stankovič 1999: 46)

Or as one of my informants historically analysed his love: "[...] at the beginning of the 80s, when nobody even dreamed that the country would break apart, I also couldn't have Yugonostalgia, which was probably responsible for my later love of bureks". Thus, the love of the liberated youth and other love for the burek is associated with a certain nostalgia, which at least in certain segments and cases can also be understood as a sort of implicit rebellion against the dominant popular and also the multitude of official nationalist discourses in the newly formed country (for more on anti-nationalism in the Yugoslav context, see Bilić & Janković 2012). So the burek is consistently encoded as non-Slovenian, by nationalists and rebels alike.

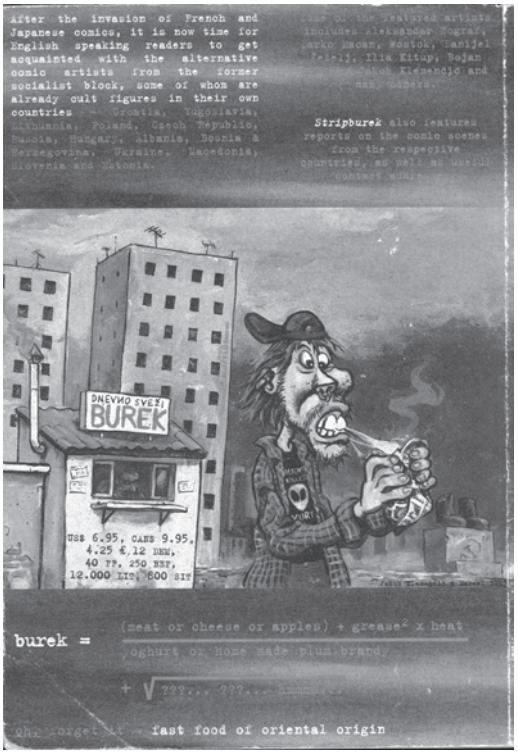
According to Stankovič (2005: 36), primarily among the younger urban population, among college and secondary-school students, the burek began to function increasingly as a sign for something cool, and also began to affix other meanings to the concepts of the South and the Balkan. These alternative political meanings, which were more or less in diametrical opposition to the nationalist discourse, were probably more of an alternative than an oppositional discourse (the line between them, as Raymond Williams pointed out, often being blurry).[12]

One of the first articulations of this alternative discourse was the bureks that were handed out at the entrances or used as entry tickets to various "Balkan parties" in various clubs in Ljubljana at the beginning of the 1990s. At the first Balkan party, on May 24, 1991 at the B-51 club, upon purchasing their tickets at the entrance, guests received a shot of rakia and a burek, filled with Serbian cheese, onions and bread. But in fact, the most frequent articulation or statement of this alternative discourse was simply eating a burek. As conversations with college students in the 90s (as well as my own memories) testify, the merrymaking at so-called Balkan parties and other student parties at which Yugo music was an important element, often ended with a burek. Eating bureks was a kind of ritual conclusion to a night of partying.

"Burek eating" was also often accompanied by other "burek-loving" activities. Consumption, particularly the consumption of such meaning-laden things as the burek, is not a solitary, unique phenomenon, but is embedded in a network of other associations and activities. The burek is thus frequently found in youth and student magazines, groups,

songs etc. For instance, in the name of the first anthology of an original comic from Eastern Europe, Stripburek, in the name of the acting troupe Burekteater, in the song "Burek, oj, oj, oj" by the garage rock band Kripelbataljon – to give just three more or less random examples from this unmanageably long list. In short, the burek becomes a very popular object, used frequently and in various ways, and often even an object of veneration among urban youth, which further provokes and motivates nationalists to aim their arrows at it more often. So the burek helps to create a special and distinctive national/transnational sense of belonging (that does not exclude the shared experience of the former Yugoslavia) in what Appadurai (1996) has called new "ethnoscapes".

However, at least from the mid-90s on, the background to this anti-nationalistic discourse cannot in any way be reduced to nostalgic commemoration of



Ill. 3: The cover of "Stripburek: Comics from behind the Rusty Iron Curtain", a special edition of the comic Stripburger. Courtesy of Stripburger, Forum Ljubljana.

the former SFRY and/or worshipping of the South, the Balkan, brotherhood and unity. If I said that the initial, original meanings of the burek among the young urban population, among college and secondary-school students, were more or less diametrically opposed to the nationalist discourse, but that they could probably only rarely be labelled as an explicit rebellion against nationalism – that is, it was more likely an alternative rather than an oppositional discourse – from the mid-90s on there were increasing numbers of explicit, politically engaged statements which touched on the burek in one way or another. And if I said that this alternative, implicit discourse at least to a certain extent coincides with a type of "burek-loving" discourse which is to a great extent formed and represented by burek-eaters, it rarely if ever appears or is reflected in utterances, in contrast to the explicit, oppositional practice of eating bureks. Thus in this explicit, oppositional discourse, the burek is not an object of veneration in and of itself, but is merely a signifier. This signifier occupies a subordinate position in the existing power relations, which indicates a lack of strength. Of course, such a division can be problematic, as the line between the explicit and the implicit, between oppositional and alternative, as noted above, is often blurred or erased. One example of an explicit, oppositional discourse is the aforementioned graffito "I'll have a burek, but not a mosque", which touches on the long and heated debate over the (non-)construction of a mosque in the Slovenian capital (Ljubljana is probably one of the few European capitals that still does not have a mosque), or the title of the article "Burek? Ja, Bitte" (Stankovič 2005), a paraphrase of another aforementioned graffito, in which the response to the burek is primarily a defence of immigrants and their culture: "[T]he burek [can] also be seen completely differently as a symbol. Not as a symbol of backwardness and a lack of civility, i.e. 'the Balkans', but exactly the opposite, as a symbol of the contribution of the culture of immigrants from former Yugoslav republics to the civilizing of Slovenia itself" (Stankovič 2005: 36). The burek thus becomes or is a distinctive, powerful "intertextual" object in the sense that the meanings that are imputed to it are in-

fluenced by printed, broadcast and other statements (cf. Hebdige 1979: 80–84).

Let's return to the youth and their adoption and consumption of the burek, to the material level of production of meaning, where it is necessary to understand – and this needs to be emphasised – the place of the burek among the fast foods available at that time and in particular the food that was available at the most "impossible" hours. I believe that it is taking a very narrow view to see the burek merely as a symbolic object which students and other youth in the 1990s chose *solely* due to its symbolic weight, its symbolic position – that is because of its semantic associations with immigrants, the Balkans, the SFRY and related phenomena. One first has to ask what was even available at that time at an affordable price, anytime, anywhere, and with at least a minimal possibility of choice (i.e. cheese, meat or apple). Students and other youths in the 90s did not eat bureks primarily because they were "Balkan" or "southern", or because it represented a rebellion against the dominant nationalist discourse. They did so mainly because they were cheap, filling, very accessible at least in urban areas, and because, as several of informants stated, "it sat perfectly in an alcohol-laden belly". If it was primarily about symbols, then the students would have chosen *čevapčiči*, which at least through the 1980s were a more symbolically laden food than the burek – and they were frequently called upon when people were looking for a signifier of the South, the Balkans, and southerners. For example, in the provocative, nationalistically galvanizing and highly influential article by Slovenian critic, essayist and editor Bojan Štih entitled "That's Not a Poem, That's Just Love", published in Slovenia's leading cultural magazine *Naši razgledi* (Our Views) in 1982, as well as the fiery polemics which that article provoked in nearly all of the major Yugoslav print media of the time, there is no mention of the burek – but we do find *čevapčiči* (Mlekuž 2015).

However, this "banal", pragmatic, material fact does not invalidate the role played by the burek among youths. To put it more ambitiously, the practices associated with the burek and its transformation significantly informed youth culture in the 90s (cf. Hebdige 1979). The burek externalized meanings and values, made them visible and intelligible for further actions by subjects. The burek "provides the basis on which subjects [youths] come into being, rather than simply answering their pre-existing needs" (Myers 2001: 21). Or in Miller's words: the burek "represents culture, not because [it is] merely there as environment within which we operate, but because [it is] an integral part of the process of objectification by which we create ourselves as an industrial society: our identities, our social affiliations, our lived everyday practices" (Miller 1987: 215). The burek was the very medium through which the youth made and knew themselves. It did not simply reflect pre-existing meanings and social distinctions but actively participated in the reproduction and transformation of these meanings and social distinctions. It did far more than just express meaning. Bureks and youths – objects and subjects – are inseparably connected in a dialectical relationship of creating each other.

Conclusion

On the level of meanings, two more or less opposite positions can be identified with respect to the burek, with very little common dialogue. The burek in immigrant families is a part of a residual unincorporated culture which is significantly removed from the dominant culture. The fast food burek from Slovenian streets is, on the other hand, part of the incorporated emergent culture and subject to various discourses, particularly the nationalistic one. It is probably the handiest and most frequently used signifier in Slovenian popular culture, media, vernacular language etc. for immigrants from the former republics of the SFRY, the Balkans, the SFRY and the phenomena associated with it.

The crucial importance to the burek's semantic inflation was the simple and banal fact that in the 1980s the burek was one of the rare products available late at night, that it was warm and cheap and that it was probably one of the very few visible dietary objects – objects of observation – on Slovenian streets. The burek's presence bothered some people, it became an object of the nationalistic gaze, it was

noticed and talked about in nationalist discourse, which treated it as a some kind of representative of anything "foreign", "immigrant", "Balkan". In this case, the burek was more significant in forming identities for those who did not consume it than for those who did. So, the burek attracted meanings, and made them visible and intelligible so that they could be further employed by subjects. Its meanings turned out to be significant.

After Slovenia gained its independence in 1991, the burek became a popular and even revered part of the diet primarily among young urbanites, college and secondary-school students, an object of alternative or oppositional praxis associated with a positive attitude towards immigrants, the Balkans, the SFRY and related phenomena, and even an object of adoration and worship. But students and other youths in the 90s did not eat bureks primarily because they were Balkan or southern, or because it represented a rebellion against the dominant nationalist discourse. They did so mainly because they were cheap, filling, very accessible at least in urban areas, and because they "sat perfectly in an alcohol-laden belly". However, this "banal", material fact does not reduce the role that bureks played among young people. Bureks actively participated in the process through which the youth made and knew themselves. Its appropriation enabled a highly creative and productive process of (re)production of subjectivities, identities, and groups. The burek does not just reflect or represent meaning, but intervenes, makes a difference, and alters people's minds.

Notes

1 From February 20, 2008, to January 24, 2017, it had 353,167 views, which is undoubtedly a huge success on the Slovene market of just over two million people.

2 Bureks were served at the Sultan's table at least as far back as the 15th century, and a recipe for burek first appears in a Turkish legal text (*kanun*) in 1501/02 (Zirojević 2014).

3 In the original: We asked for workers. We got people instead.

4 Despite its relative distance from the dominant culture, a residual culture can be incorporated into it through concrete activities. "By 'emergent' I mean, first, that new meanings and values, new practices, new significances and experiences, are continually being created. But there is a much earlier attempt to incorporate them, just because they are part – and yet not a defined part – of effective contemporary practice" (Williams 2005: 41).

5 In a telephone survey by the daily newspaper *Delo* it took second place (14.3%) behind the winner, "pizza by the slice" (27.1%) and ahead of hamburgers (11.1%), sandwiches (8.6%), French fries (7.1%), hot dogs (4.4%) and kebabs (4.2%). In urban environments there are significantly more burek, hamburger and kebab fans, while in rural areas pizza and French fries enjoy above-average popularity. The proportion of burek lovers also increases with the level of education of the respondents. Among people with higher education the burek even trumps pizza and takes first place at 23.3%, with pizza in second place at one percent lower. The telephone survey asked: "Which of the following is your favourite type of fast food?" They also asked what kind of burek was the respondents' favourite. The most popular was the cheese burek (47.3%), followed by meat (16.7%), apple (10.6%) and pizza burek (4.7%). The telephone survey was conducted on February 25, 2005, on a sample of 406 people (Pal 2005: 13).

6 See https://www.kulinarika.net/iskanje/?splosno_besede=klobasa+&imageField.x=0&imageField.y=0.

7 Nationalism was also present before the 1980s in the form of popular and other discourses. For instance Gorazd Stariha (2006), through an analysis of documents kept in the archives of the Petty Offences Magistrate in Radovljica and the Radovljica District Court, demonstrated that as early as the 1950s in upper Gorenjska there were several cases of expressions of intolerance, chicanery, and even physical violence directed at immigrants from other republics of the SFRY.

8 Various types of flatbreads and cakes made of phyllo dough which were similar to the burek in appearance, preparation and content were known primarily in the south-western and south-eastern parts of Slovenia (e.g. *prleška oljovica, presni kolač, pršjača, belokranjska povitica, prosta povitica*). These were prepared primarily as holiday and ritual dishes and dishes prepared at the end of major agricultural jobs. However, technical and other similarities still do not constitute an argument for one or another kind of influence or even a common origin of the dishes.

9 The Carniolan burek is an example of a so-called hybrid dish – dishes created on the basis of cultural mixing and creolization, and which in the long historical perspective are probably the rule rather than the exception (cf. Delamont 1995). The question that arises (and which was posed to me in numerous interviews and conversations) is whether the burek can become a "Slovenian dish", that is a Slovenian dietary icon. The

answer is affirmative, as the biographies or histories of numerous dishes bear witness to the fact that such conceptual changes or transitions can occur in a relatively short period of time. For instance, up to the 1970s the donut, today a Canadian icon, was presented in the Canadian media as American food (and was in fact imported from the United States). In the 70s several restaurants began to advertise donuts, mainly in order to attract American tourists, and by the 80s it had appeared as a powerful symbol of Canadian life (Penfold 2008).

10 The graffito "Burek, nein danke" would probably never have appeared at all if not for the famous European anti-nuclear slogan from the early 1980s, "Atom, nein danke".

11 Turbo-folk is a musical genre – a mixture of Serbian folk music with modern pop music elements. Having mainstream popularity in Serbia, and although closely associated with Serbian performers, the genre is widely popular in Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Bulgaria and Montenegro.

12 The difference between the alternative and the oppositional is a difference, to use Williams' words, "between someone who simply finds a different way to live and wishes to be left alone with it, and someone who finds a different way to live and wants to change society in its light" (Williams 2005: 41–42). So the alternative reflects political passivity, while the oppositional is about political engagement in practices which represent a form of competition against or deviation from the dominant forms.

References

Appadurai, Arjun 1981: Gastro-Politics in Hindu South Asia. *American Ethnologist* 8, 494–511.

Appadurai, Arjun 1986: Introduction. In: Arjun Appadurai (ed.), *The Social Life of Things*: *Commodities in Cultural Perspective.* Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, pp. 3–63.

Appadurai, Arjun 1996: *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Barthes, Roland 1969: *Elements of Semiology*. London: Cape.

Bikić, Jasna 2004: Ja sam živi dokaz protiv riječi nemoguče. *Ljiljan*, June 11, p. 10.

Bilić, Bojan & Vesna Janković (eds.) 2012: *Resisting the Evil: [Post]-Yugoslav Anti-War Contention*. Baden-Baden: Nomos.

Bourdieu, Pierre 1984: *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. London & New York: Routledge.

Caglar, Ayse 1995: McDoner: Doner Kebap and the Social Positioning Struggle of German Turks. In: Janeen Arnold Costa & Gary J. Bamossy (eds.), *Marketing in a Multicultural World: Ethnicity, Nationalism, and Cultural Identity*, pp. 209–230.

Clark, Dylan 2004: The Raw and the Rotten: Punk Cuisine. *Ethnology* 43:1, 19–31.

Delamont, Sarah 1995: *Appetites and Identities: An Introduction to the Social Anthropology of Western Europe.* London: Routledge.

Freud, Sigmund 1905[1991]: *On Sexuality: Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality and other Works*. London: Penguin.

Gell, Alfred 1998: *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory*. Oxford: Clarendon.

Gregory, A. Christopher 1982: *Gift and Commodities*. London: Academic Press.

Hebdige, Dick 1979: *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*. London & New York: Methuen & Co.

Hebdige, Dick 1988: *Hiding in the Light: On Images and Things*. London: Routledge.

Hyder Patterson, Patrick 2001: *Bought and Sold: Living and Losing the Good Life in Socialist Yugoslavia*. Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press.

Jezernik, Božidar 2010: Imagining 'the Turk'. In: Božidar Jezernik (ed.), *Imagining 'the Turk'*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, pp. 1–16.

Josipovič, Damir 2006: Pregled strukture selitvenih tokov iz BiH v okviru notranje-jugoslovanskih migracij v Slovenijo. *Annales: Series historia et sociologia* 16:2, 285–306.

Josipovič, Damir 2012: Social Solidarity in Post-Socialist Countries. In: Marion Ellison (ed.), *Reinventing Social Solidarity across Europe*. Bristol: Policy Press, pp. 157–190.

Lovšin, Peter, Peter Mlakar & Igor Vidmar (eds.) 2002: *Punk je bil prej: 25 let punka pod Slovenci*. Ljubljana: Cankarjeva založba.

Luthar, Breda 2010: Shame, Desire and Longing for the West: A Case Study of Consumption. In: Breda Luthar & Maruša Pušnik (eds.), *Remembering Utopia: The Culture of Everyday Life in Socialist Yugoslavia*. Washington DC: New Academic Publishing, pp. 341–378.

Luthar, Breda & Maruša Pušnik (eds.) 2010: *Remembering Utopia: The Culture of Everyday Life in Socialist Yugoslavia*. Washington DC: New Academic Publishing.

Mauss, Marcel 1954: *The Gift: The Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies*. London: Cohen and West Ltd.

Miller, Daniel 1987: *Material Culture and Mass Consumption*. Oxford & New York: Blackwell.

Miller, Daniel 1994: Artefacts and the Meaning of Things. In: Tim Ingold (ed.), *Companion Encyclopedia of Anthropology*. London & New York: Routledge, pp. 396–419.

Miller, Daniel 1998: Why Some Things Matter. In: Daniel Miller (ed.), *Material Cultures*: *Why Some Things Matter.* London: UCL Press, pp. 3–21.

Miller, Daniel 2010: *Stuff*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Mlekuž, Jernej 2008a: *Burek.si?! Koncepti/Recepti.* Ljubljana: Studia humanitatis.

Mlekuž, Jernej 2008b: Čapac.si, or on Burekalism and its Bites: An Analysis of Selected Images of Immigrants and their Descendants in Slovenian Media and Popular Culture. *Dve domovini / Two Homelands* 28, 23–37.

Mlekuž, Jernej 2017: When the Grease Runs through the Paper: On the Consumption of Ultragreasy Bureks. In: Jürgen Martschukat & Bryant Simon (eds.), *Food, Power and Agency*. London & New York: Bloomsbury Academic, pp. 169–190.

Muršič, Rajko 2010: On Symbolic Othering: 'The Turk' as a Threatening Other. In: Božidar Jezernik (ed.), *Imagining 'the Turk'*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, pp. 17–26.

Myers, R. Fred 2001: Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value In: Fred R. Myers (ed.), *The Empire of Things: Regimes of Value and Material Culture*. Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, pp. 4–64.

Pajnik, Mojca 2002: *Xenophobia and Post-Socialism*. Ljubljana: Peace Institute.

Pal, Nejc 2005: Mesni ali sirni? Sirni. *Več*, March 4, p. 13.

Pavković, Aleksandar 2000: *The Fragmentation of Yugoslavia: Nationalism and War in the Balkans*. London: Macmillan.

Penfold, Steve 2008: *The Donut: A Canadian History*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Ramet, Sabrina 1999: *Balkan Babel: The Disintegration of Yugoslavia from the Death of Tito to the Insurrection in Kosovo*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Razvezani jezik 2012: Burek. Available at: http://razvezani-jezik.org/?page=burek (accessed June 19, 2014).

Said, Edward W. 1978[2003]: *Orientalism*. London: Penguin.

Šalehar, Matevž 2004: Da burek ne bo Turek. *Več,* January 23, p. 57.

Savaş, Özlem 2014: Taste Diaspora: The Aesthetic and Material Practice of Belonging. *Journal of Material Culture* 19:2, 185–208.

Stankovič, Peter 1999: Rokerji s konca tisočletja. In: Peter Stankovič, Tomc Gregor &Velikonja Mitja (eds.), *Urbana plemena: Subkulture v Sloveniji v devetdesetih*. Ljubljana: Študentska založba, pp. 43–52.

Stankovič, Peter 2005: Burek? Ja, bitte! *Dnevnik, Zelena pika*, January 15, p. 7.

Stariha, Gorazd 2006: Dvigam to čašo za bratstvo in enotnost naših narodov. *Zgodovina za vse* 13:2, 83–114.

Stepišnik, Matija 2002: Od Jureta do bureka in druge zgodbe. *Več,* November 25, p. 5.

Thomas, Nicholas 1991: *Entangled Objects*: *Exchange, Material Culture, and Colonialism in the Pacific*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Trio Genialci 2008: Ti si burek. Available at: http://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=ti+si+burek (accessed January 24, 2017).

Wilk, Richard 1997: A Critique of Desire: Distaste and Dislike in Consumer Behaviour. *Consumption, Markets and Culture* 1:2, 2.

Williams, Raymond 2005: *Culture and Materialism: Selected Essays*. London: Verso.

Zirojević, Olga 2014: Burek. Available at: http://www.mediantrop.rankomunitic.org/olga-zirojevic-burek?fb_action_ids=10152453028704274&fb_action_types=og.likes (accessed June 11, 2014).

Žito 2013: Kranjski burek. Available at: http://kruh.zito.si/2013/05/kranjski/ (accessed June 19, 2014).

Žižek, Slavoj 1990: Eastern Europe's Republics of Gilead. *New Left Review* 183, 50–62.

Jernej Mlekuž is a research fellow at the Slovenian Migration Institute at the Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts. His research interests are migration theory and methodology, cultural aspects of migration processes, popular culture, media, nationalism, food studies, material culture, epistemology, and epiphenomena. Currently, he is finishing research on the sausage *kranjska klobasa*. He is the author of the prize-winning book *Burek: A Culinary Metaphor* (also published in Slovenian, Serbian and Albanian). (Mlekuz@zrc-sazu.si)