Cultural Intimacy and Nutrition: an Interview and Discussion

Proceeding from the assumption that the domain of food and food-related broader issues of relationship to nutrition are of the key importance for the development of a culture, the relationship of the Serbian society to food/nutrition was thematised through an internet discussion broached by the Miguel Rodriguez’s interview to the daily 'Politika' - 'The Serbs are not a poor nation'. Since the discussion raised the question of food/nutrition as the sole measurement of development, the text examines the revealed local tensions and discomforts arising from the relationship to agriculture, the country and country products in the context of the question of Serbian development, as well as in the context of a proper public presentation of Serbia. The unveiling of the complexity of this relationship was approached from the perspective of the conceptual-analytical concept of cultural intimacy introduced by the American anthropologist Michael Herzfeld, and discourse analysis. The conclusion is that, on account of the variety of ’appetites’ of the contemporary man, development of society cannot be measured solely by the level of access to sources of food; nevertheless, this assessment acknowledges that the key importance of food and relationship to food/nutrition cannot be neglected, even if we wanted to.

Key words: nutrition, cultural intimacy, development, performativity, Michael Herzfeld