

## **Stereotypes in Perception of Otherness in Balkans Literature from the Last Part of 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

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**Abstract :** The article is focused on a problem that tends to be extremely characteristic and essential to European literature – the relations between the Balkan Peninsula and Europe and the stereotypes the Balkans evoke – a melting pot, a powder keg, a bridge, a crossroads, along with other negative definitions. The stereotypes and visions are examined as the layered images of a particular nation. The work deals with the Balkan writers' way of confronting stereotypes by reversing the image of the 'dark' Balkans and the 'bright' Europe and thus establishing the Balkans as a place of beauty, music, and poetry. In many aspects, the European image of the Balkans (the so-called Balkanism) is comparable to the European attitude to the Orient (the so-called Orientalism). On the basis of the analysis of specific texts by Balkan authors, the article proves that the identity of the person of the late 20th and early 21st century is something individual and much more complicated than a patriotic self-definition because the identity of the contemporary person is multilayered. It is not flattering to be a bridge, a crossroads or a corner. However, a person is a creature of transition. Our idea demonstrates that the state of transition always brings both weakness and strength – it is the Balkans that connect Europe to the world.

**Keywords :** image, Slavs, Balkans, identity of the modern Balkan person

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