
Roma People Between Stereotype and Social Reality

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Abstract:

The paper offers an in-depth examination of the ways in which stereotypes, prejudices, and racism shape the perception and representation of the Roma community in Romanian society and literature. The study highlights how stereotypes, whether negative or seemingly “positive”, operate as mechanisms of exclusion, thereby reinforcing discriminatory attitudes and legitimizing marginalization. This phenomenon is exacerbated by the cognitive predisposition toward confirming pre-existing beliefs, illustrated in the text through cases such as the misinterpretation of academic performance (“a weaker academic result obtained by a woman may be mistakenly understood as confirming stereotypes”).

The analysis integrates the historical dimension of Roma oppression, from slavery and the Holocaust to contemporary forms of discrimination, underscoring the structural continuity of racism. In parallel, Romanian literature, from classical to contemporary authors, is examined as a space that reflects, perpetuates, or challenges ethnic stereotypes.

The article argues for the necessity of recognizing Roma individuals as persons rather than as a homogeneous entity. It emphasizes the role of education, public discourse, and cultural representations in dismantling prejudices and promoting an inclusive society.

Keywords:

Roma minority studies, ethnic stereotyping, discrimination, cultural representation, literary analysis.