



***Ο μύθος του Άλλου στα Βαλκάνια.  
Αναπαραστάσεις, κοινωνικές πρακτικές και επιτελέσεις***

***“Myths of the Other in the Balkans  
Representations, social practices and performances”***

The Department of *Balkan, Slavic and Eastern Studies* (Macedonia University of Thessaloniki) in collaboration with *Via Egnatia Foundation* organizes an *International Conference* to be held in **Thessaloniki in February 2011 (between 20-27/2)**.

We shall have the opportunity to explore past and present myths constructed and performed by the Balkan peoples in their attempt to deal with otherness within and beyond their familiar environment.

In other words, in the context of specific relations of power and hegemony what primarily interests us is otherness as it is related to national self or ethnic status, as well as otherness engendered by religious, cultural and gender differentiation. We are also interested in practices related to otherness in the premodern world; such practices were negotiated within traditional structures and by historical minorities, but can also be identified in the contemporary, post-cold-war period, as well as the era of globalization and economic migration.

A central question to be asked is how difference is represented and managed as a feeling of otherness through the myth histories, folk tales and folk songs, legends and oral traditions, literary works, films and the media, in jokes and comic strips, generally speaking in every form of verbal or non verbal narration.

We also focus on peoples' oral stories, which we record as researchers, artists and observers, on how we process them ourselves and in turn narrate them. In this context, special emphasis is given to the conditions under which stereotypes of the Other are established and/or undermined. We do not seek to explore myths of intolerance, but the ways in which the fear of the Other, of the unknown, which threatens to shatter the apparent internal national/ethnic cohesion on a personal and collective level, is expressed and subsequently tamed. From this perspective, together with the myths of otherness, we seek to explore the outcome of relations of power, the conditions though which those myths manifest themselves in realistic terms. At the same time, we are interested in the emotional impact generated by this experience.

This meeting aims at the exchange of views, but equally at an attempt to reach to a common denominator for the presentation of material related to the management of

the difference between the Other and the Self in the pluralist environment of the Balkans. All myths are products of human relations and contacts, which do not always emerge peacefully, but rise through contact and communication, violence and confrontation, harmonious and traditional coexistence.

We solicit contributions by Anthropologists, Historians, Folklore Specialists, Psychologists, Sociologists and in general by Social Science and Cultural Studies scholars.

The meeting will involve scholarly presentations and film screenings, plenary sessions and workshops, music and food. Papers, films and music must be based upon empirical data and experiences in the following fields: narratives, social practices and performances.

Papers should be relevant to questions of otherness such as:

1. the national self
2. the gender difference
3. the minority condition
4. the migration experience or else.

Deadline for applications is September 30, 2010.

Please e-mail an abstract of your 'myth' and the way you plan to narrate it as well as a brief CV (1 page) to the following address.

On behalf of the Scientific Committee,  
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