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For those of us who keep returning to Nikšić, Montenegro, year after year to participate in the conferences on English language and literature organised by the Faculty of Philosophy based in this charming little town, the experience is much more than that of presenting a paper to an audience of scholars and researchers working in the field. Ever since the first encounter back in 2005, our gatherings have been marked by the exceptionally warm and generous hospitality of the organisers, by intriguing conference titles, distinguished guest speakers, and a congenial and stimulating atmosphere which allowed for extensive formal and informal exchanges between the participants. We saw old friends and made new ones.

This year was no exception. The sixth international conference entitled *Facing the Other in the Absence of Theory*, held from 30th September to 2nd October, attracted over 90 presenters from countries in the region and beyond, including Russia, Belarus, US, UK, France and Morocco. One of the two keynote lectures was delivered by Toril Moi, the James B. Duke Professor of Literature and Romance Studies at Duke University, who gained international acclaim in 1985 with her groundbreaking *Sexual/Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory*, and more recently with her works on Simone de Beauvoir and Henrik Ibsen. In her paper *Literature, Philosophy, and the Question of the Other: Reading Beauvoir with Cavell* presented on the second conference day she considered Stanley Cavell's understanding of our relationship to others thus continuing her quest for the 'ways of reading literature with philosophy and philosophy with literature without reducing the one to the other'. The second plenary session took place at the opening of the conference after the welcome address by Professor Blagoje Cerović, the Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy in Nikšić. While Moi's speech focused on the intersection of literature and philosophy, Adrian Frazier, the Director of the MA in Drama and Theatre Studies and the MA in Writing at the National University of Ireland at Galway, talked about the interplay between theory and biography in approaching the Other.

Apart from the two plenaries, a total of 18 parallel sessions were organised into areas of common interest, namely literature, linguistics and English language methodology.

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However, some of the paper topics went beyond the boundaries of these categories and we heard a most interesting presentation by Jeanine Belgodere (France) on the aesthetics of Pueblo dance both from an insider's viewpoint as explored by the Pueblo anthropologist Alfonso Ortiz and Pueblo cultural consultants and from an outsider's perspective through the writings of D. H. Lawrence and Marsden Hartley. Other more culturally and socially oriented themes included considerations of various aspects of intercultural communication examined through the underlying assumption that people carry different schemata that are often culture-specific (Elena Makarova, Russia), and reflections on the prolonged effects of colonialism manifested in the destruction of the Other either through extermination or assimilation (Tanja Obradović, Serbia).

The domain of literary studies proved to be the most fertile ground for the investigation of the Other. Cherki Karkaba (Morocco), for example, explored the ways in which the Other is encountered, represented or made in Paul Bowles' *The Sheltering Sky* by focusing on the communicative interaction between the American and Moroccan protagonists on the one hand, and between the author and both his fictional characters and the readers on the other. Noting that the Moroccan Other seems to be reduced, in the eyes of some American characters, to a 'babble of voices', or represented by the 'wild-faced man holding a severed sheep's head', he argued that the portrayal of the Other in fictional writing is a process of interpretation involving the moral responsibility of the writer in the act of approaching Otherness. The subject of the Foreign Other was also addressed within the context of immigrant experience. Faruk Bajraktarević (Bosnia and Herzegovina) analysed Nadeem Aslam's novel *Map for Lost Lovers* and its characters, Pakistani immigrants living in the English Midlands, whose physical distance from the source of tradition allows them to distance themselves from that very tradition, to critically observe and get to know themselves as the Others. Drawing on another bicultural experience, Sandra Josipović (Serbia) talked about the transformation of the immigrant's 'old Chinese self' into the 'new American self' as depicted in the work of Gish Jen. Examples of Anglo-Indian literature featured in several papers including the one by Janko Andrijašević (Montenegro) which dealt with the portrayal of gods in *The White Tiger* by Aravind Adiga and *The Inheritance of Loss* by Kiran Desai, while Aleksandra Žeželj (Serbia) focused on the representation of the Female Other in Anita Desai's novels *Cry, the Peacock* and *Fire on the Mountain*. The position of women, this time in the Australian society, was also addressed by Jelena Basta (Serbia) who presented an autobiographical novel by Drusilla Modjeska entitled *The Orchard*. We found ourselves confronted with an androcentric world in which agency was ascribed to the masculine, and passivity to the feminine, and where women were encouraged to find their identity in their reflections of another. A number of binary oppositions including the gender and racial ones were re-examined and deconstructed in the paper delivered by Mirjana Daničić (Serbia) in which she analysed Toni Morrison's latest novel *A Mercy*. Albert Sheqi's presentation (Albania) was inspired by the same book, while Aleksandra V. Jovanović (Serbia) talked about *The Blind Assassin* by Margaret Atwood in which 'the fictional authoress writes her fictional identity by Other's hand'.

The Language and ELT Methodology sessions were rather heterogeneous in terms of the topics covered and did not necessarily pertain directly to the main conference theme. Milica Vuković (Montenegro) investigated the rhetorical structure of political

interview closings in British, American and Montenegrin broadcast media, Daniela Tamo (Albania) considered different aspects of Modern English as a world language, while Jelena Vujić (Serbia) presented her lexico-semantic study of diminutives and terms of endearment in English and Serbian. The problems encountered by Albanian translators as a result of the lack of terminology in their mother tongue required to denote certain phenomena were addressed by Emirjona Vukaj (Albania), whereas Vjollca Tabacu (Albania) discussed the use of translation in the foreign language classroom. Other issues concerning the field of ELT which were investigated included the use of PowerPoint presentations, drama and video-making, and proverbs in English language teaching.

The social highlight of the conference was the dinner organised by the hosts in the rustic atmosphere of the nationally renowned restaurant *Koliba* where we enjoyed typical local products and the company of our colleagues. The success of the first night out was such that we all decided to get together the following night and savour exquisite Montenegrin cuisine again. This was preceded by a memorable literary evening with Professor Peter Preston from Nottingham University, who was, together with Marija Knežević and Aleksandra Nikčević Batričević, an indispensable member of the Organising Committee since the inaugural conference in 2005. We felt privileged to see him reveal his poetic Other as he read a selection of his poems, some of them poignant, some enigmatic, and some simply hilarious. The last day was reserved for an excursion to Montenegro's ancient capital of Cetinje, a town of immense cultural and historical heritage. A number of participants who had previously visited this historic site, took advantage of the good weather and organised a trip to the Adriatic coast, while others opted for a visit to the Orthodox Christian Monastery of Ostrog carved almost in its entirety in a vertical mountain cliff nine hundred metres above the sea level.

Wonderfully organised, with a wide range and good quality of contributions and with an extensive social programme, we can safely say that the conference was a success. In her farewell speech, Marija Knežević announced that the Seventh International Conference under the title *Voicing the Alternative* was scheduled for 22-24 September 2011 and we immediately started looking forward to visiting Nikšić again.