

# Identity and Cultural Slavic Representations

## *Foreword*

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## Texte intégral

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One of the objectives of the Center for European Slavic Studies (CESS) is to promote scientific dynamics in a relatively restricted field and to facilitate interdisciplinary and multilingual intellectual exchanges by gathering currently disparate segments of Slavic research to create a kind of digital European portal.

It seemed to us judicious to dedicate our first meeting to the subject susceptible to varied approaches to the identity and the cultural representations of the Slavic world. Especially in the view that representation as such is a phenomenon profoundly human; it is the product of the human spirit. The world exists for the humans only through representation: the image or the immaterial reflection of physical evidence becomes a reliable medium by which the mystery of life gives itself to the human mind.

The image and the imagination - the virtual lands of humanity - become the source from which the importance of representations that veil and reveal multiple facets of the reality. The Slavic images in the context of European imagination have many aspects relevant for cultural identities which need to be discovered. This thematic chapter - the cultural and identical representations - seems to be more than suitable to open a cycle of European researches on the Slavic world in the view of abundance of scientific fields and the various aspects which they can bring out. To talk about Slavs, also means to talk about their collective representations, and the way they see themselves. Such an approach enables

the mental images to be transmitted in the direction of Slavic collective real-life in diverse domains: the history, literature, music, painting, mythology... Through the Slavic identities, part of their cultural memory is expressed and woven in the European cultural landscape. On the other side, to conceive the idea of the Slavic world, is also to analyze the influence of Western thought or the cultural representations of European civilization on the peoples and the cultures little known in Europe, albeit very much present on the European ground.

The aim of this first scientific event organized by CESS could be succinctly summed up as an invitation for the meeting in the cultural image and the perception in order to make visible the variety of cultural imaginary expressed through parallel European identities. Through representation geo-historic space is transformed into cultural landscape. Where are the Slavic cultural and identical representations located in the European cultural landscape, is the question to which our thoughts turn...

The first volume of the CESS' Review is dedicated to the Acts of the international and interdisciplinary colloquium organized by the Center for European Slavic Studies from 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> 2010 December at the University of Poitiers.

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