

## Preface

In planning and designing the sixth volume of *Gramma/Γράμμα*, the editors intended to provide a collective response to a vital issue from the southernmost end of the Balkans. Our project materialized in the context of certain socio-political realities. Genocidal wars which resolve questions of ethnicity and national identity spread across the peninsula, over the Aegean and into the Anatolian planes. And while in Greece, at the same time, the terms ethnicity and national identity evoke memories of lost people and places, in Thessaloniki these memories involve the recent and often apocalyptic loss of diverse ethnic groups.

Thus we have decided to allow our journal to speak of people and places in contexts which would underlie this sense of deracination, loss and negotiation with memory and forgetfulness. Overall, however, we engaged in a dialogue with expressions of ethnicity or ethnicities in the context of travel and exchange. This dialogue involved the Mediterranean, Britain, the US, and Canada because most of the papers explore ethnicity in these cultural contexts; furthermore, the Mediterranean, the US, Canada and Britain are implicated as the intellectual influences which opened up this field of study for the contributors and editors of this volume.

The unity of the issue is not a given. We have tried to work with the selected papers in order to establish a common ground for the dialogue which emerges; however, each one of us took his/her own road to this exchange. We all agreed that ethnicity is modern and invented; thus we acknowledged the fact that people's identification with "imagined" communities and their experience with "encountered" ones determines ethnicity's infinitely variable socio-political content. We have theorized the boundary and the border to signify ethnicity's many ambiguities and we have crossed both boundary(ies) and border(s) following the physical and intellectual routes of our subjects of study, but also of ourselves.

We hope that our unit on Greece, Greek Americans, Greek Canadians will contribute to the discussion of centre and margins, be those centres and margins Europe and Greece, or Europe and America, or America and Greece. This unit is written in Greek and English with the intention of reaching audiences in both languages, but also to demonstrate some type of ethnic linguistic exceptionalism to maintain some sort of ideological integrity and proclaim a commitment to the language of the place of publication.

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