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**TWENTY EIGHT YEARS OF COLLEGIALLY AND FRIENDSHIP  
WITH THE ACADEMICIAN AND POET  
Prof. Dr. KATICA KULAVKOVA**

**Introduction:**

I have known my dear colleague, academician and poet Prof. Dr. Katica Kulavkova for twenty eight years, since I met her one day in a workshop about the exchange of university students, in Strasbourg, France, that had been organized by an NGO, called Transeuropeenne. I was representing the Center for Comparative European Studies, that I had founded together with my Professor Süheyla Artemel in Boğaziçi University, İstanbul, and Professor Kulavkova was representing the Department of Comparative Literature of St. Cyril and Methodius University, in Skopje. We were encouraging the exchange of our students as we both believed that getting to know different cultures would broaden the horizon of our students and peace among nations could only be built through meeting and cooperating with people from other countries and cultures, and joint projects with common targets that bring young people together would be very beneficial to achieve that aim. Professor Kulavkova and I myself knew that from our own past experiences in different countries when we were both university students ourselves. After that occasion, as two women academicians, we have always been loyal to each other and supported each other's projects with academic contributions on our common areas of expertise, that is Comparative Cultural Studies, Literary Theory, Imagology, Comparative Literature, Literary Criticism and Semiotics. In all of these spheres I have always appreciated Professor Katica's meticulous academic work, scientific knowledge, inspiration, as well as hard discipline.

In this article I would like to list some of the main research projects in which we both have taken part, organized either by Katica Kulavkova or by myself, in Skopje and Istanbul, respectively, that would reveal the academic impact of our joint endeavour during the last twenty eight years.

## **I. International Workshops on Academic Research Projects and Their Published Proceedings**

### **1. ‘The Image of the Turk in Europe’ from the Declaration of the Republic in 1923 to 1990s**

This international research project was launched by myself in the Center for Comparative European Studies (CECES), at Boğaziçi University, in 1999, in which Professor Katica Kulavkova participated with her article, entitled;

#### ***From Simplification to Paranomasia: The Resemantization of the Paradigm of the Turk in Macedonian Literature.***

The workshop of our first collaboration was held at Boğaziçi, on May 5-6th, 1999.

23 Academicians from 10 European countries of various scientific disciplines took part in that workshop that was supported by the UNESCO, Turkey’s Economical and Social History Foundation and The Prime Minister’s Office for Press and Publication.

In those years I was wondering whether the foundation of the Turkish Republic by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in 1923, accompanied with significant reform movements, such as the democratisation of the country and its people, introduction of civil rights and secularism, women rights, the Latin alphabet, education reforms, reforms in agriculture and industry and many others, as well as announcing the motto that ‘Turkey is confined within its borders and will not extend its territories!’ had changed the Turkish image in Europe that had prevailed in the minds of the Europeans for centuries as “Turk, the expansionist”, “Turk, the antiChrist”, “Turk, the enemy of Christianity” and reflected in various kinds of media, such as flyers, folk songs, novels, poems, short stories, opera, illustrations and paintings.

It was inevitable that in such a project the inception, dispersion and reception of ‘the Image of the Turk’ would show different patterns in areas and countries that had proximity to the Ottoman Empire and later to Turkey than in the countries that were far away. This was also the case in the Balkans in general, and in Macedonia in particular, and therefore it had to be scrutinized from that perspective and that was done in Katica’s article in detail by showing the common cultural aspects, influences as well as discrepancies due to the two different religions the people of the countries had been observing, the delicate animosities and feelings underlying the building of newly emerging national identities in the Balkan countries that were reflected in the literary

realm of those particular countries. The examples of the simplified images are abundant in history, but it seems that in recent years they have been replaced by more complex paradigms. Whether the underlying reasons for that change in paradigms could be due to the changing face of Turkey after 1923 ... still remains a question.

Kata Kulavkova analyses in her article the vast literary and social data in Macedonian literature and culture she had collected by grouping them under the following three paradigms:

1) focusing on oral literature and analysing it from the point of view of archetypal and pragmatic aspects,

2) focusing on social plays, lyric poetry, ballads of the 20th century that reflect the issues that prevailed between the two World Wars, where the impact of the newly emerging national identities in the communities concerned manifest themselves in literature as “we” versus “the others”/ as enemies which also reflects the armed conflicts of the period, as well as unfulfilled love stories between the male and female characters of the two communities due to the two different religions, Islam and Christianity.

3) focusing on the modern Macedonian literature, mainly on short stories and novels. Here Kulavkova observes a shift in the reflection of the image of the Turk and claims that the ethos is not ‘black and white’ anymore, but “nuanced and individualized”. (Kulavkova 2000:299) This seems to be a positive development towards a more objective perception of the “other”. Kulavkova concludes with the following important statements:

“The Turkish-Ottoman layer is one of the many imprinted in Macedonian memory history, culture, language, tradition, spirituality... Each reference to the (relatively recent) past leads to the Ottoman Empire and to its culture, which has left deep traces within the text of contemporary culture. It is simply an unavoidable, real inter-text, which is more or less visible in Macedonian contemporary literature and language. There are numerous purely literary and spiritual reasons for re-evoking the signs of the inter-text. This is exactly what Macedonian contemporary writers are doing. The image of the Turk is poly-semantic: it suggests the idea of power against the skill of slavery and liberation from slavery, an association with another religion and language toward which, in time, neither Christianity nor the Macedonian language have been left completely isolated nor indifferent, and it includes the new myth of that which is someone else’s yet ours, ours yet someone else’s- the archetype of the mysterious and fateful, the praxis and culture of hybridization and dialogicity...”(Kulavkova 2000: 305)

Furthermore, she states:

“It gives us grounds to conclude that the once-simplified image of the Turk is growing in disseminated complexity nowadays.” (306)

The proceedings of that workshop were published in Istanbul, by the ISIS Press, in 2000.

## 2. 'Representations of the 'Other/s' in the Mediterranean World' and Their Impact on the Region

This international research project was also launched in the Center for Comparative European Studies, at Boğaziçi University, by myself, in 2001. Professor Katica Kulavkova's article for that project was

### *The Mediterarnean 'Chronotopos' and its 'Differentia Specifica'*

The workshop of our second collaboration was held at Boğaziçi University, on 6-7th September, 2001. To that project, 20 academicians from European, Asian and African countries contributed with their invaluable articles, based on their research. The project was again supported by the UNESCO, The European Cultural Foundation, Quincentenary Foundation, Boğaziçi University Foundation, Turkish Primeminister's Office for Communication and Information and İstek Foundation of Yeditepe University.

As it is known, the Mediterranean basin had been the 'Cradle of Civilizations' for many centuries until it lost its unique strategic position to the Atlantic Ocean, with the discovery of the Americas, in the Age of discoveries, in 1502 that started with Christopher Columbus' expedition towards the est. That expedition was partly triggered by the occupation of the Ottoman Empire vast areas around the Mediterranean Sea, thus blocking the spice and silk road through which goods from China and India were flowing to the West. As a result, the fertile trade in the Mediterranean region in particular, and in Europe in general, were impeded and it became necessary to enliven the commercial life in Europe to find alternative trade routes to reach again those desired precious goods of the East.

The Mediterranean had not only provided great inspiration to philosophers and scientists from the West and the East who had shaped the minds of human beings with their valuable work and put the foundation stones of the universities, but it had also inspired artists, painters, sculptors, poets and musicians who created great art works. The three monotheistic religions spread from the Mediterranean area to the rest of the world. Its mild climate, beautiful landscape, fertile earth and temperate sea provided a suitable atmosphere for a rich flora and fauna that attracted people from all over the world to that area. Life and the specificities of the Mediterranean region have always attracted the interest of archaeologists, historians, cultural economists, social and political scientists, experts in cultural and literary studies, culinary studies and vine experts, agricultural studies, ecologists, oceanographers and many others. However, given all these advantages Mediterranean space has not always been a peaceful area. There have been many struggles, fights and wars among the countries bordering the sea or with the other countries and kingdoms from the North and the East. It is a known fact that clashes between countries are mostly bound to conflicting interests, colonialistic ideas, deep rooted animosities, as well as political strategies. The fights have very

often been fuelled through existing “stereotypes” about the “‘other’ country and people.” These stereotyped images have often been inherited from the religious, ethnic, or national communities people live in. They permeate easily into the uncounscious level and pop-up when the time ripens for the clash of benefits.

That research project aimed to investigate, with an unbiased look, literary and visual “representations of the Mediterraneans”, created by others in the same region during the twentieth century. It aimed to focus on the semiological implications of the discourse used in them, reflect upon the sociocultural factors that have been instrumental in the formation process of these representations, and analyse their impact on interregional relationships. It was hoped that the contributions to it would highlight facts about Mediterranean peoples “perceptions” of the “other/s in the region” with whom they have been sharing a common space, climate, cultural heritage, as well as some similar experiences for centuries, like terrible disasters, such as earthquakes, fires and floods and raise consciousness in human minds about “treating the other/s”. The awareness of which in turn, would hopefully contribute to the peace attempts in the region.

Rather than summarizing Katica’s valuable contribution to that project, I would prefer to cite a long passage from her introduction that would give an idea to my readers, how extensive, comprehensive and deep her approach to the subject was:

“In the light of imagology and its interdisciplinary and comparative methodology, an examination of the Mediterranean *chronotopos* is one of the several ways in which the Mediterranean trans-historical matrix – past, present and future – through which the possible metaphysics and primordial ontological existence of the term Mediterranean<sup>1</sup> can be explored. The imagological examination represents only a part of the “Mediterraneanology”- a wider nascent interdisciplinary area that has as its subject of interest the historical, civilizational and cultural tradition of the Mediterranean.<sup>2</sup> We attempt to render the name of this complex comparison-oriented discipline without ignoring the extant development of scientific and research projects, studies and acknowledged institutes of interpretation and actualization of the Mediterranean as “space and history” (Fernand Braudel, *L’Espace et l’histoire*, Paris, 1985), as “peoples and heritage” (Braudel, *La Méditerranée*, 1985), as a type of “breviar” (Predrag Matvejevic, 1990), as a “cultural sphere” (Blaze Koneski, 1980), as a “geopolitical cultural context and tradition” (MASA Bulletin, 1999), as a narrative and metafiction in development, as myth and history, as factographic

<sup>1</sup> Imagology is defined as a sub-discipline, interdisciplinary culturological complex, especially convenient for defining literary images of the “Other” (man, people, culture, space, time), and in a wider range, for applying comparative methodology in different realms of science and culture.

<sup>2</sup> Rephrasing N.A.Mishkin’s term “Roman historical tradition” differentiated from Roman history, where the prior leans on immediate historical resources and artworks, while the latter uses indirect sources as well.

material and construction of the imagery, as a cultural memory in shape of oral and textual practice.

In such a theoretical, imagological and hermeneutical context, it seems more appropriate to speak of a Mediterranean *chronotopos* (chronos-and-topos), than of a region, a geopolitically recognizable space or of a cultural and traditional complex.” (Kulavkova 2005: 39)

After having scrutinized the so-called “*Mediterranean chronotopos*” in detail, she comes to the following conclusion:

“That semiotical storage seems to filter the temporal and impermanent historical changes, and retains the archetypal, mythic and cosmological semiosis of the Mediterranean, reflected in the permanence of the need to sacralize and ontologize the Mediterranean *chronotopos*. And thus it happens, that the discourse of the past, the present and the future (the text of “the Seen”) and the discourse of the atemporal and atypical (“the not-Seen”) succeed each other either subsequently (chronologically), or in opposite order (logical analogies), and to form a single complex epistemology of the Mediterranean *chronotopos*.” (Kulavkova 2005: 49).

The Proceedings of that research project were published in Istanbul, by the ISIS Press, in 2005.

### 3. Balkan Image of the World

This international research project was launched in the Macedonian Academy of Sciences & Arts by Katica Kulavkova, in Skopje, in 2006. Its workshop was held in Skopje. It also received the support of UNESCO and MANU. That project was our third collaboration with Kata. The title of my article for that Project was;

#### *The Image of the Turk in Europe, in History and Today*

In that article I elaborated upon various stages of that image, that started in the 11th century and continued to our day. The image that had been propagated through various kinds of media showed transformations due to time, space, culture, ideology and authorial intention. The paper tried to look at that complex phenomenon from a comparatist point of view and by highlighting the sociocultural aspects in which the image was formed and reshaped, it tried to deconstruct the underlying reasons of those changes and raise an awareness in the minds of the people about stereotypes that have harmed the human relationships. By doing that it attempted to enhance the capacity of empathy building in the receivers’ minds. (Kuran-Burçoğlu 2006:133)

The proceedings of the research project was published by the Macedonian Academy of Science & Arts in Skopje in 2006.

#### 4. European Research Project for Poetics and Hermeneutics: Memory & Art

This international research project was launched at the Macedonian Academy of Science & Arts by Katica Kulavkova, in Skopje, in 2007-2008, and supported by the UNESCO and MANU. That was our fourth collaboration. The title of my article for that project was as follows:

***Memory Between Reality and Imagination: A Comparison of the Memories of the Ottoman Empire of Jean-Baptist Vanmour (18th Century) & Jean Léon Gérôme (19th Century) as Represented in Their Paintings***

In this article, after focusing on three paintings of each of the two French painters, Jean-Baptist Vanmour and Jean Léon Gérôme that were showing scenes from everyday life in the Ottoman Empire, in the 18th and 19th Centuries, respectively, I analysed the memories of the two painters as reflected in those paintings comparatively, from the point of view of their correspondence to reality and imagination and interpreted them within their socio-cultural contexts through the application of the hermeneutic approaches of scholars such as Hans Georrg Gadamer, Hans Robert Jauss, Paul de Man and others. I showed that the paintings of Jean Baptist Vanmour, who lived in the Ottoman Empire in the 18th Century were reflecting the reality of its day when compared with the miniatures of the Ottoman artists such as Levni of the same century, whereas Jean Léon Geromé's paintings, who lived in the 19th century France and was considered a realist painter in his day, exhibited the fantasies of the Western world about the East and were far from realistic. (Kuran-Burçoğlu 2008:173)

The proceedings of the workshop was published by Manu, in three volumes, in Skopje, in 2008.

## II. Regional Projects

### Integration of the Culture of the "Other" into Higher Education

Professor Katica Kulavkova started a research project in her Seminar at the University of St. Cyril and Methodius on the above mentioned topic and invited Professor Jean Bessiére from Sorbonne University, Paris, and myself from Boğaziçi University, Istanbul.

We visited Katica's seminar in Skopje and discussed with her students different dynamics of the "Self versus Otherness", "rejecting versus integrating" the "Other" and their potential outcomes, in detail. How the culture of the "Other" can enrich the world of ourselves, and many other issues related to that subject. In that seminar, students with different ethnicities and religions were present and heated discussions proved that it was a beneficial and constructive project for the students who developed empathy for the "Others".

### III. Prof. Dr. Nedret Kuran-Burçoğlu'na Armağan: Disiplinlerarası Çalışmalar

This was the name of a *Festschrift*, dedicated to me at the 35th year of my academic life, in 2013. It was prepared by Filiz Ögüt Şermet, my last assistant, in Yeditepe University by collecting articles and memoirs from my colleagues, friends and ex-students. The title of my dear colleague and loyal friend Katica's contribution to this *Festschrift* was as follows:

#### *The Lyrical Contextualization of Women in Oral Tradition*

In that article, Kata Kulavkova elaborated on almost all versions of the topos of women in lyrical contexts in the Macedonian oral tradition and presented us with a variety of very unique examples that are inherent in that tradition, some of which can also interestingly be found in the oral traditions of other cultures.

The *Festschrift* was published in Istanbul, by Korpus Press, in 2013.

### IV. Theory of Literature

In 2004 Professor Katica Kulavkova published her valuable book with this title. It is an important book to be used in Literary seminars of universities. I have used it in my seminars on literature with my Master students in Comparative Literature, at Yeditepe University from 2005 to 2017. My students have found it very interesting and have benefited from it.

Apart from those collaborations that I have mentioned here, Katica and myself have also taken part in significant **Peace Projects**, among which the three of the two Prime Ministers' of Macedonia occupy an important place that I will always remember.

In **conclusion**, I would like to state that during these almost three decades I have always enjoyed working, cooperating and collaborating with my esteemed colleague academician Katica Kulavkova, but I have also enjoyed her loyalty as a true friend. I wish Katica health and happiness with her lovely family on her 70th birthday and hope that we will have the opportunity to enjoy her new contributions to the academic world and I am really looking forward to reading her lovely poems in their Turkish translation!

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## Nedret KURAN

TWENTY EIGHT YEARS OF COLLEGIALITY AND FRIENDSHIP WITH  
THE ACADEMICIAN AND POET PROF. DR. KATICA KULAVKOVA

Prepared as a dedication to academician Katica Kulavkova's *Festschrift* for her 70th birthday anniversary, this paper elaborates upon her academic collaboration with her colleague Nedret Kuran, during almost three decades, on the following spheres: I) Workshops of academic research projects on Imagology, Hermeneutics, Comparative Literature and Culturology, and their publications as books. II) Academic collaboration on literary and cultural seminars. III) Kulavkova's contribution to the *Festschrift* of Nedret Kuran Burçođlu and IV) Katica Kulavkova's book, entitled, *Theory of Literature*. Professor Kulavkova's dedication in all of these academic works exhibits her deep scientific knowledge, as well as her great contribution to literary and cultural scholarship.

*Keywords:* Imagology, Image of the "Other", Image of the "Turk", Hermeneutics, Representation, Comparative Cultural Studies, Mediterranean Studies, Chronotopos.