

AT THE JUNCTURE OF TRADITIONS: THE IDENTITY OF THE 'OTHER'

RITA REPŠIENĖ

Summary

Conceiving ourselves *dans l'unité du genre humain* ['in the affinity of the human being'] (Marcel Mauss), we abstract and identify the historical experience, perceive the similarities and differences in the systems of ideas and values and differentiate the unity of the world, postulating it in the definitions of the identity of the 'Other'. The 'Other' is proposed as one of the most conspicuous ideological interpretations of the individual.

The earliest records on the Lithuanians were made by foreigners – writing about us the 'Others' made our past significant. One of the most interesting historical attestations – the records of the general visitation of the Lithuanian Jesuit College of Vilnius and the diaries of the pastoral activity (*Liber Fructuum Spiritualium*) of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries – is a kind of key to new interpretations of the past.

In a traditional community there are numerous ideological contrapositions between one's own and alien, similar and different, ordinary and extraordinary. The position of the 'Other' is presented on various levels: with respect to nationality, religion, community or gender. The mythical mindset demonstrates the 'Other's' singularity in our culture and encourages the perception of the 'Other' from the position of the present.