

The Theme

Jacques Lacan said: "*The I is always in the field of the Other.*"... but What is "The Other"?

Many writers and thinkers have said that a person's definition of the 'Other' is part of what defines or even constitutes the self and other phenomena and cultural units. "Other", in social science, is used to understand the processes by which societies and groups exclude 'Others' whom they want to subordinate or who do not fit into their society.

But people also construct roles for themselves in relation to an 'other' as part of a process of reaction that is not necessarily related to stigmatization or condemnation.

Othering is imperative to national identities, where practices of admittance and segregation can form and sustain boundaries and national character. Othering helps distinguish between home and away, the uncertain from the certain.

But besides what others have said about the Other, we are inviting you to reflect in the way you understand the Other... in the way you experience the Other. Are we aware of what happens when we face what is different from us?

We will gather in this Conference with the idea of finding new ways of understanding and experiencing the Other through as many perspectives as possible: philosophical, psychological, literary, political, artistic. We will be exploring images, symbols and stories that can shape new myths and help to promote consciousness of the Other inside and outside us.

The Challenge and the Adventure

During the Conference, you will have the opportunity to meet with The Other and to engage and experience Otherness through many different venues: lectures, discussions, poetry, art, ancient rituals... You will have the opportunity to share your thoughts and experiences, and to learn from others' perspectives.

You can sit and listen to our presenters' expositions, you can participate in the workshops and rituals, you can let yourself immerse in the images of poetry and art... You can take the challenge of opening to Others, resonate with them and have a new or different perspective.

And you can also be part of the presenters... Do you have a perspective on The Other that you would like to share with the people attending the Conference? Send a proposal!

The Setting

The Santa Barbara Mission was established on the Feast of Saint Barbara, December 4, 1786 and was the tenth of twenty-one California Missions to be founded by the Spanish Franciscans.

More than 200 years later, the Mission continues to be the chief cultural and historic landmark in the city of Santa Barbara. It is home to a community of Franciscan friars. The Mission also has a retreat center (**Mission Renewal Center**) which is a space for private retreat guests and a place for groups to hold their own retreats and meetings. The MRC has guest rooms, conference rooms, a fully equipped commercial kitchen and dining room, a beautiful church with a large and active parish, a museum and gift shop, a cemetery and mausoleum, and ten acres of beautifully landscaped gardens.

The Mission's commanding position and grand proportions, graceful lines and soft, blending colors all reinforce her title, "Queen of the Missions."

Before or after the conference, you can enjoy the Old Mission (there are different tours around the place) as well as vibrant Santa Barbara.

The City of Santa Barbara, which is sometimes referred to as the *American Riviera*, is famous for its abundance and beauty of beaches, majestic mountains, recreational areas and colorful culture that enhance the pleasure of both residents and visitors alike and contribute to the city's worldwide reputation as one of the most beautiful in the world.

Enjoy the art galleries, Museums, historical sites and its fabulous shopping and dining.