

Re-inventing/Re-presenting Identities in a Global World

Re-inventing/Re-presenting Identities
in a Global World

Edited by

Smatie Yemenedzi-Malathouni,
Tatiani G. Rapatzikou
and Eleftheria Arapoglou

**CAMBRIDGE
SCHOLARS**

P U B L I S H I N G

Re-inventing/Re-presenting Identities in a Global World,
Edited by Smatie Yemenedzi-Malathouni, Tatiani G. Rapatzikou and Eleftheria Arapoglou

This book first published 2012

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

12 Back Chapman Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2XX, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Copyright © 2012 by Smatie Yemenedzi-Malathouni, Tatiani G. Rapatzikou and Eleftheria Arapoglou
and contributors

All rights for this book reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system,
or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or
otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner.

ISBN (10): 1-4438-3569-2, ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-3569-5

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	vii
Introduction	ix
Part I: From Hegemony Subversion to Post-Modern Dispersals	
<i>The Rise of Silas Lapham</i> and <i>Sister Carrie</i> : Country Girls and City Vamps Evangelia Kyriakidou	3
Racial Politics and the Construction of Identity: <i>The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</i> and <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> Ekaterini Koutsimani	21
Dwelling on the Distance: Modern Poetry of Exile Maria Dalamitrou	43
The Director's "Cut": The Heritage of Post-War Trauma in Tim Burton's Films Giorgos Dimitriadis	57
Ex-centric Spatial Images in Robert Wilson's Theater Maria Ristani	77
"The Same Old Story Once Again": Robert Kroetsch's <i>The Studhorse Man</i> and Margaret Atwood's <i>The Penelopiad</i> Tanja Cvetkovic	89
The American South between Quotation Marks(?): Regional Identity in the Context of Globalization..... Gabriela Dumbrava	101

Part II: Global Identity: Case Studies

Hybrid Identity? Representations of Social Actors in the Romanian-American Press Irina Diana Mădroane.....	119
“Name Uses”: The Immigrant and Repatriated People’s Situation in Contemporary Greece Ekaterini Lygoura.....	139
<i>Hostage</i> : Filming the “Other” Side of Immigration in Greek Contemporary Cinema Betty Kaklamanidou	155
Soti Triantafyllou’s <i>Synghoresis [Forgiveness]</i> : Revising Southern Womanhood from Overseas Sonia Gertzou	167
Contributors	179
Index	185

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The editing committee would like to thank the contributors of this volume for their cooperation, throughout all the stages of this project. They have worked with diligence and enthusiasm to achieve the best result possible.

Many thanks also to Cambridge Scholars Publishing for giving the opportunity to young scholars to publish their recent research material and for showing so much understanding during the whole period this project was in progress.

Finally, we would like to extend our thanks to Amanda Millar for her editorial assistance and Carol Koulikourdi for her continuous support.

Smatie Yemenedzi-Malathouni
Tatiani G. Rapatzikou
Eleftheria Arapoglou

INTRODUCTION:
RE-NEGOTIATING IDENTITY
AND RE-ASSESSING GLOBALITY

SMATIE YEMENEDZI-MALATHOUNI
TATIANI G. RAPATZIKOU
ELEFThERIA ARAPOGLOU

The financial crises that have taken place in the western world since the early twentieth century have developed into a globalized phenomenon which has affected both western and non-western economies as well as the fate and culture of people on an international scale. In this fluid and tangential environment, new ideologies and identities have been forged and fermented before being annihilated again with the advent of the next crisis. In the global tank of conflictual socio-political interests, nothing has remained intact, while the mobility and interaction of populations have increased. However, the specific process, which has taken place simultaneously on a local and global scale, has accelerated the pace of cross-cultural diversity and intersection. With identity being the most complex factor influenced by personal choices, international events and social classification, the volume at hand proceeds with the examination of various past and current cases of identity re-formulation and cross-cultural exchange, as its title denotes. An attempt is made in the essays contained here to explore the multiple and opposing forces at work within the European and North-American terrains that have taken place since late nineteenth century, in order to illuminate the multi-tiered dynamics that have been formulated both locally and globally by bringing together perspectives from culturally, nationally and linguistically diverse people and communities.

It is within this context that the present volume ventures to discuss the concepts of cultural identity formation and enactment, immigration,

repatriation, diaspora, as well as racial and gender politics within a globalized context, where borders between the canonical and the other are being contested. Within this context, the individual writers and artists examined in the essays contained in this volume are viewed as participants in an intercultural and multi-leveled exchange of experiences and perspectives, in their effort to enact and represent identities that are fluid, heterogeneous and often invented. Moreover, the volume at hand examines cultural and literary diversities that have emerged from the reciprocal traffic of ideas and influences on both sides of the Atlantic among cultures, politics, aesthetics and disciplines, with an emphasis on cultural, racial, and gender identity as a site of crisis, fragmentation and re-contextualization. In this respect, the essay contributors in the present volume bring forward their own concerns as regards conventional perceptions and representations of “cultural difference,” by focusing on an array of chronologically and geographically distinct cases, in their effort to bring to the fore variable facets of the notions under consideration.

More specifically, *Re-inventing/Re-presenting Identities in a Global World* addresses the construction of manifold cultural identities in relation to globalist discourses, and seeks to explore the ambivalences, fluctuations, and modalities which underpin such a process. Hence, the volume presents identity politics and poetics in conjunction with the discursive techniques employed by the writers and artists under discussion here, in an attempt to assess the significance of cultural agency both in a global and local context. This highlights the main approach the contributors to the volume are taking as they argue against dualisms—such as, for example, the one of “universalism” versus “postmodernism” that has dominated the debates on globalization since the end of WWII—focusing instead on the examination of the shortcomings of ideologically-generated theories that typify and/or misinterpret the experience of globalization.

Cultural critics and literary theorists alike have interpreted the impact of globalization on the cultural sphere negatively. For instance, globalization has been associated with the erosion of cultural identities as a result of the menacing encroachment of a western cultural imperialism. Although the contributors in the current volume recognize that contemporary global identities have moved beyond the classification of local or culturally-autonomous identities, they also avoid interpreting globalization as a sweeping process whose corrosive power has simply destroyed localities, displaced people and homogenized cultural experience. Rather, they seem to be agreeing with the fact that globalization has not led to the mere loss of cultural diversity, but to the proliferation of

powerful expressions of cultural singularity(-ies). The articles selected here echo Manuel Castells whose 1997 book *The Power of Identity* critically reflects on the proposition that “[o]ur world and our lives are being shaped by the conflicting trends of globalization and identity.”¹ Interestingly, far from being interpreted as the “fragile victim” of globalization, the concept of “cultural identity” is seen by all contributors in this book as constituting a reactionary force to the centrifugal force of capitalist globalization (albeit multi-form, disorganized and heterogeneous). This view echoes Fredric Jameson’s concern as to the dangers and risks inherent in an apparent de-centered and materialist-driven globalization which is dictated by the “intermediaries of the great, mostly American-based transnational or multinational corporations, [...], along with Northamerican values and cultural forms, [...] being systematically transmitted to other cultures.”² However, the various socio-political crises and conflicts the U.S. has faced since late nineteenth century mark, according to Wai Chee Dimock, a departure from a “U.S.-centric” globalization, because “[r]ather than taking the nation as the default position, the totality we automatically reach for, we come up with alternate geographies that deny it this totalizing function.”³ This is particularly evident in this volume whose commentaries gradually flee from U.S.-bound hierarchies to an extended and culturally diversified terrain that covers Canada, the U.K. and the Balkans. This subversion of totalities marks a transition in the way one looks at the world, and the geographical position one holds while perceiving the world. One comes to realize that no matter how important and powerful certain nations wish or appear to be, it is always the individuals who will have the last word either as the recipients of the after-effects of arbitrary and unjustifiable nation actions, or as the harbingers of change and subversion.

Thus, the concept of “cultural identity,” marking the reciprocal exchanges between the individual and its surrounding global and/or local environment, remains here at the center of contemporary theoretical debates, despite the deconstructive and anti-essentialist critiques of ethnic, racial and national conceptions of cultural identity. In this sense, the overarching argument in the volume echoes Paul Gilroy’s statement that “we live in a world where identity matters”⁴ and addresses the suggestion made by Stuart Hall that, although identity is an “idea which cannot be thought in the old way,” without it certain key questions remain

¹ Castells, *The Power of Identity*, 1.

² Jameson, “Notes on Globalization as a Philosophical Issue,” 64.

³ Dimock, “Introduction: Planet and America, Set and Subset” 3.

⁴ Gilroy, *After Empire: Multiculture or Postcolonial Melancholia*, 301.

unanswered.⁵ In fact, the theoretical framework that all the essays in this volume share is grounded on Hall's critical discourse on "identity":

Identity is not as transparent or unproblematic as we think. Perhaps instead of thinking of identity as an already accomplished fact, which the new cultural practices then represent, we should think, instead, of identity as a "production," which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation. This view problematises the very authority and authenticity to which the term, "cultural identity," lays claim.⁶

Hall's discussion of "identity politics," as presented in the quote above, challenges essentialist, unified views on identity; in fact, the cultural critic substitutes the term "identity" with the alternative term of "identification," thus stressing the importance of construction and conditionality in the process of self-making. In "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," Hall specifically explains that cultural identities are fashioned within the discourses of history and culture, and do not constitute an essence but a positioning.⁷ This constitutes an interesting point since Hall brings the diasporic self to the center of attention by reinstating its importance not as a mere sign of identity dispersal, but as a valid claim on the status of contemporary identity politics. However, this position does not attempt to hide, but rather expose, the risks that this new type of selfhood involves.

Similarly to Hall's view of identity as a "positioning," Edward Said contended that people have multiple identities founded on the opposition between the inside and the outside. In *After the Last Sky* (1985), the critic claimed that "all cultures and societies construct identity out of a dialectic of self and other, the subject 'I' [...] and the object 'it' or 'you'."⁸ Therefore, to Said, identity is a matter of signification, a sign that obtains its meaning by its difference from other signs. This is exactly where Hall positions the precariousness of such an endeavor. In particular, in "The Local and the Global," Hall echoes Said when he argues that "[i]dentity is a structured representation which only achieves its positive through the narrow eye of the negative."⁹ Based on this assumption, the cultural critic holds that identities are always situational, and, therefore, can even be contradictory in the way the local and the global interact and intersect with

⁵ Hall, "Who Needs Identity?," 2.

⁶ Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," 222.

⁷ Ibid., 226.

⁸ Said, *After the Last Sky: Palestinian Lives*, 40.

⁹ Hall, "The Local and the Global: Globalization and Ethnicity," 21.

each other. What Hall's and Said's arguments reveal is that the process of identification involves the interplay between the subjective experience of the world and the socio-cultural and historical settings in which subjectivity is shaped. In other words, identities may be fashioned on the grounds of gender, race, class and culture, but identity construction is also the product of political and cultural as well as historical discourses, as these are shaped not from nation to nation and identity to identity, but from individual to individual. No matter how positive this sounds, it, nevertheless, posits indirectly the inherent dangers and concerns that such a process may entail, since the more the local and the global fuse with one another, the more identities erode. Of course, here one needs to pay attention to what is targeted: is it identity as a construct, or identity as an ontological entity that is at stake?

John Tomlinson takes a much more positive stance than the one taken by Hall and Said by pointing to the fact that such a complex formulation of "cultural identity" may lead to an enhanced version of it that will not be the easy prey of globalization.¹⁰ This is because identity is not some "fragile communal-psychic attachment, but a considerable dimension of institutionalized social life in modernity"; hence, globalization will actually proliferate rather than destroy identities.¹¹ Tomlinson understands that the concept of "identity" is a particular, *modern* way of socially organizing—and indeed regulating—cultural experience.¹² Considering Anthony Giddens' contestation that modernity has meant, above all, the abstraction of social and cultural practices from contexts of local particularity, it comes as no surprise that self and communal definitions of identity based on specific, usually politically inflected, differentiations—such as gender, sexuality, class, religion, race and ethnicity, and nationality—lie at the core of modern identity imaginings, which postmodern or post-postmodern identity has come to challenge.¹³ Indeed, due to the force of modernity, individuals "live" their gender, sexuality, nationality, religion and so forth as discursively organized belongings. But what happens when one changes position and steps beyond the "confines" of western culture? Hall talks about the "third [...] New World [...] the 'empty land' [...] where strangers from every other part of the globe collide," in his attempt to expose the hierarchies and power relations at play here both from a

¹⁰ Tomlinson, *Globalization and Culture*, 270.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 271.

¹² *Ibid.*, 272.

¹³ Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*, 144-80.

geographical and cultural, as well as a linguistic point of view.¹⁴ However, what happens when it is the western culture itself which is the “empty land”? Can one talk about discursively unified notions as the ones mentioned above, when emptiness is located in our own back yard?

The global kind of identity that this volume envisages is the outcome of various processes at work, taking into consideration both the multicultural constitution of modern nation-states as well as the emergence of trans-national forms of culture.¹⁵ With hybridity having explosively emerged in studies of the experience of modernity as both a reaction to purist ways of thinking about “race” and as a more widely used term in post-colonial studies, anthropology, and cultural studies in an attempt to suggest different forms of cultural mixing and interactive exchange, it is now pointing to the next step forward. For example, Hall in “New Ethnicities” writes of cultural identity as always hybrid,¹⁶ while Salman Rushdie in “Good Faith” describes hybridity as transgressive, counter-hegemonic, resistant, and interruptive.¹⁷ At the same time, Homi K. Bhabha’s concept of hybridity as “colonial mimicry”—taking form, on the one hand, in the imitations the colonized makes of the colonizer and, on the other, as a double process whereby both the colonized and the colonizer produce hybridity through interaction—has been extremely influential in cultural as well as literary studies.¹⁸ What seems to be at stake now is not what hybridity stands for as a generalized intellectual term, but what hybridity has come to signify nowadays for both the localized and globalized western culture. Sabine Broech positions hybridity *within* the western terrain, looking at otherness and difference as practices that are simultaneously at work. Characteristically, she writes: “It will become crucial to patiently deconstruct the legacy of ‘our’ white national and individual histories and to name ‘our’ implications in the social construction of white dominance in order to refuse being interpellated into a socially forceful nostalgia for (white) normalcy.”¹⁹ This is quite evident in the essays of this volume since it is basically whiteness and the attitudes or reactions it triggers with regard to its own variations and shadings as these are explored and questioned in the essays of this volume in various and geographically diverse territories beginning

¹⁴ Hall, “Cultural Identity and Diaspora,” 243.

¹⁵ On this, consider, for example, the book by Featherstone, Lash, and Robertson entitled *Global Modernities* (1995).

¹⁶ Hall, “New Ethnicities,” 502.

¹⁷ Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism, 1981-1991*, 393-414.

¹⁸ Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 85-92.

¹⁹ Broech, “White Fatigue, or, Supplementary Notes on Hybridity,” 55.

with America, moving to Canada, then passing to England, and finally reaching Albania and Greece.

The economic and socio-political crises that tantalize the western world nowadays shed light on the existence of shifting centers of power and control, highlighting the fragile balance between the regional, or the local, and the global. With the whole world being nowadays, due to financial concerns, in the midst of a major cultural, political and historical restructuring, the notion of *topos* that has traditionally projected itself as a “place apart,” should now be seen against a background of fluxes and transformations, under the effect of contingent encounters, intra-national conflicts, and cross-cultural representations. Dimock characteristically claims that such a “transnational axis dissolves [...] autonomized chronology, meshing it with a continuum still evolving, and stretching as indefinitely into the past as it does into the future.”²⁰ Living then in a world of groundless centers and repositioned localities and borders, one needs to look at identity as a constantly re-generative and conflictual term. This is exactly what the essays in this volume attempt to expose: what has been readily typified as “different,” stereotyped and demarcated. Starting with the hierarchic upheavals as regards race, gender and ethnicity in the late nineteenth-century America, the essays in the volume attempt an overview through the examination of various cases of communities and cultures in an attempt to bring an array of trends and practices to the attention of the reader that stretch as far as the Balkans.

With emphasis placed on various literary, cinematic and theatrical texts, which cover the whole span since late nineteenth century while bringing us close to the present day, all essays tackle identity and the way cultural production has responded to migration, diaspora and inner conflicts caused by major historical, geographical and political shifts that have challenged the way individuals have viewed themselves in relation to others and their own self. This kind of shift often features as a temporal and spatial displacement that sways from confusion and disorientation to an imaginative confluence of various cultural practices that lead to the emergence of a diversified and expansive form of selfhood. What makes the essays in this volume interesting is their focus on the inadequacies of western culture, as this is formulated on the American and European/Balkan grounds, that brings to the attention of readers issues that do not necessarily relate to an English-speaking world, gradually leading to the disintegration of the once “powerful” English-centric self image. What derives from these papers is that the process of self-questioning, which just

²⁰ Dimock, “Introduction,” 7.

after WWII was enacted within “powerful” nations, such as that of the U.S., leads today to the emergence of a different kind of consciousness which places linguistic and cultural diversity under a different light. Walter D. Mingolo states that this is “enacting the relocation of languages and the fracture of cultures,” which leads nowadays, in conjunction with the socio-political and financial crisis still raging in the western world, to the emergence of a new, interstitial global field of socio-cultural and political action.²¹

In the first strand of essays included in this volume, which are grouped under the title “From Hegemony Subversion to Post-Modern Dispersals,” attention is paid to the investigation of the way in which socio-cultural, historical and political ideologies, which initially emerged from an American-centered space, were gradually challenged and broken down so as to transfigure from mere absolutes to diverse, both spatially and temporally, mindsets on both sides of the Atlantic. Emphasis has been placed here on the voicing of the injustices and falsities the western subject has faced and put up with both on a personal and socio-political level, as this is manifested in the multiple and plural perspectives that have emerged from the cross-fertilization of literary and cultural practices in an effort to re-negotiate and acknowledge the multiple geographical and cultural scapes of western reality.

The volume begins with Evangelia Kyriakidou’s “*The Rise of Silas Lapham and Sister Carrie: Country Girls or City Vamps*” which illustrates the attempts of women to negotiate their identity in the cross-social diversity of the late nineteenth-century urban American context. Using the two seminal works of American realism cited in the title of her essay as the main textual references, Kyriakidou discusses here the way in which the realization of the “American Dream” and that of the “rise from rags to riches” have developed into a highly discriminative and restrictive force by an urban social hegemony, totally intolerant to those attempting to cross the boundaries of the established spatial, social or gendered roles. The ensuing social exclusion of the “other,” Kyriakidou contends, is mostly felt in the case of provincial women who attempted to transgress the border of the canonical so as to redefine their female role within the evolving American industrial context of the time. Despite the social disapproval and discouragement inflicted on them, and by challenging the prevailing power structure and the ruling-class morality of their society, the Lapham girls and Carrie—according to Kyriakidou—function in the

²¹ Mingolo, “Globalization, Civilization Processes, and the Relocation of Languages and Cultures,” 42.

narratives as a reactionary force that asserts feminine identity alongside the conviction that it does deserve a place in the cultural discourse and the historical setting of the expanding urban centers of nineteenth-century America.

The concept of spatiality as viewed from the spectrum of regionalism and its interrelation to one-sided perspectives with regard to human experience surfaces in Ekaterini Koutsimani's "Racial Politics and the Construction of Identity: *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and *To Kill a Mockingbird*." As she demonstrates in her pieces, these two literary texts published in 1884 and in 1960 respectively, despite their diverse historical background share and uncover the same racist ideology. This ideology, Koutsimani argues, can be taken as a political act conditioned by the social and spatial context the two texts have in common: that of the American South. More specifically, the focus of this essay is on the central children characters featuring in the two novels under discussion as exemplifications of certain racial attitudes with respect to the construction of a national "American" identity prevalent in the U.S. in late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The writer hints at the risk of perpetuating racist attitudes among young Americans who have traditionally been the reading audience of these two texts.

Maria Dalamitrou in her essay entitled "Dwelling on the Distance: Modern Poetry on Exile" crosses the Atlantic so as to examine the development of modernist poetics alongside the experience of exile, which she juxtaposes with expatriation and immigration. Although each one of these states is formulated by different personal or socio-cultural and political circumstances, it is the sense of displacement, absence and memory that bounds them together. By resorting to a number of modernist poets, such as T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, H.D. and W.H. Auden, Dalamitrou attempts to shed light not on the mere literary merits of modernism, but on the temporal and spatial disjunctures that have enunciated it. She locates modernist experience in the actual process of the poets' departure both from home and from what is familiar for another destination. However, none of them ever completes the journey, since it is not what one leaves behind but what one needs to acquire that heightens the rift one experiences during the transition. What modernism describes in literary terms as an oscillation between tradition and nostalgia, history and myth derives from a real experience of de-rootedness, rupture and de-familiarization, which is where the creative potential of modernist writing resides. By making language their new *topos*, these poets resisted assimilation with the promotion of a multi-layered take on reality through the adoption of various writing techniques and forms of expression.

Creative expression constitutes the focal point in Giorgos Dimitriadis's "The Director's 'Cut': The Heritage of Post-War Trauma in Tim Burton's Films." Here Dimitriadis takes the whole argumentation a step further through the examination of Burton's cinematic work, which covers the period between 1980 to the present day. In his analysis, Dimitriadis concentrates again on the way culture, through cinema this time, responds to massive socio-political and cultural changes in an attempt to focus, in a creative and often imaginative manner, on the human condition and the traumas it carries forward. It becomes apparent here that cinematic experimentation and cinematic genre development are directly linked to the traumas western culture experienced during WWI and II. The repository of visual themes directors draw from is not accidental but it carries a particular cultural significance, as this paper highlights. Burton's case constitutes an example of postmodern filmic production which combines past literary and filmic elements, coming for instance from fairy tales, gothic fiction, horror films of the 1920s and 1930s, so as to comment on the corrosive effect aggression and violence have on the way individuals view both themselves and the world around them. In this battle with and against external and internal forces, individuals nowadays, as Burton shows in his own unique and creative way in his films, fight against their own perspectives, ideologies and convictions. This kind of battle no longer takes place in the trenches of WWI and II, but in a psychological arena where horror and laughter go hand in hand. In the imaginative worlds Burton portrays in his films, human identity does not simply linger between opposing forces but succumbs to its own destructive instincts.

The following essay by Maria Ristani with the title "Ex-centric Spatial Images in Robert Wilson's Theater" constitutes the next step in the process described in this group of essays. Ristani gives prominence through her discussion to the spatial potential of Wilson's stagings as they constantly move between cultural identities and geographical locations, offering the spectators an experience of dispersal and diffusion. Using texts that come from various historical periods and cultural backgrounds, Wilson challenges temporality and hence spatiality by annihilating any chronological differences between them. In his productions, there are no boundaries as everything and everyone participates in the making of the theatrical experience, which remains open even at the end of the theatrical performance. In Wilson's plays, one sees the enactment of a new non-linear but multiple world order that moves beyond any prior canons of linguistic and cultural propriety. The significance of Wilson's productions

rests in their ability to denounce hegemonies and homogeneities by revealing the risks and benefits that cultural amalgamations contain.

A similar process, now viewed from the perspective of myth, is carried forward in Tanja Cvetkovic's essay entitled " 'The Same Old Story Once Again': Robert Kroetsch's *The Studhorse Man* and Margaret Atwood's *The Penelopiad*." In her piece, Cvetkovic focuses on the retelling of the myths of Odysseus and Penelope in Canadian literature with particular attention paid to the postmodern novels by Kroetsch and Atwood. The way these two myths are approached and recontextualized by both authors proposes variable readings as well as points of view in an attempt to move beyond dominant discourses and ideologies regarding gender. In the case of Kroetsch's Odysseus, light is shed on his explorations and sexual adventures while he is traversing the Canadian prairies; Atwood's Penelope though narrates her own version of the story by breaking her silence as well as revealing her own machinations and mischievous acts while waiting for Odysseus's return. By subverting the conventional discourses myths usually derive from and by adopting the narrative technique of the trickster, both Kroetsch and Atwood succeed in constructing a global model of mythical identity that moves beyond geographical and historical boundaries so as to contest the verity of storytelling by making readers aware of its own constructedness.

The process of moving across space and time in search of new meanings is further examined in Gabriela Dumbrava's essay entitled "The American South between Quotation Marks (?): Regional Identity in the Context of Globalization." Here, she "revisits" the conventional tension between the archetypes of the American North and the American South as distinct cultural spaces by projecting it against the more complex background of globalization. In particular, she traces the way in which the most controversial American space, the South, has re-viewed itself within the larger, and equally controversial, context of the post-modern global cosmos. In order to illustrate the way in which the vision and artistic creed of contemporary writers underlie the paradigm shift in the post-modern reconstruction of Southern identity, the author not only discusses contemporary Southern prose, but also concentrates on a selection of personal interviews she has conducted with Bobbie Ann Mason, Robert Olen Butler, and Randall Kenan, which she incorporates in her piece. What she attempts to highlight here is the three authors' attitude towards their native place and past as sources of inspiration and influences on their artistic sensibility. As Dumbrava concludes, Mason, Kenan, and Butler break away from traditional paradigms of content and form, yet assimilate

their Southern heritage into a form of discourse capable of ordering the experience of the contemporary world.

The articles in the second strand of essays, titled “Global Identities: Case Studies,” bring to the attention of the readers a few case studies which exemplify the processes of the making and remaking of a hyphenated identity in a global world, and demonstrate the response of both the immigrants themselves and of the host-country inhabitants to the multicultural and multiethnic fermentation at work. The essays appearing under the above heading, deal, first, with the immigrant attempts to survive in the constantly fluctuating globalized world at the end of the twentieth and the first decade of the twenty-first century, where national and cultural identities continuously clash and coalesce; second, they deal with the immigrants’ effort to avoid the utter compromising of their ethnic and cultural identity. The case studies discussed in these articles, perhaps with the exception of the last essay, discuss the consequences of economic crises and political changes which have created a huge wave of what is generally called “economic refugees,” the term denoting people who have migrated in search of better work and living conditions for themselves and their families. The writers of these first three case studies describe the reciprocal cultural exchanges as well as the newly-created geographical position from which these immigrants perceive the world and their place in it. The first case study describes the conditions adopted by the Romanian-American Press which contributed to the construction of a hybrid American-Romanian identity within the discourse of the American and Romanian history and culture. The next two case studies discuss the issue of Albanian migration to Greece and the immigrants’ efforts to balance the contest between the enforced outside identity and the inherited inside one as well as the situational character of the adopted identity. Despite the substantial differences between the two host countries, those of Greece and the U.S. that feature in these three case studies, it becomes evident that the various geographical and political dynamics at work create a similarly powerful cultural and dominant spatiality within which immigrants are expected to position, if not to adjust themselves, in the process of a self-made identity. Yet, the important question posed at the end of all three cases is the extent to which these multi-layered, newly constructed identities are eroded in the process of adjustment from the “other” to the local. It appears that this same process of adjustment is also the theme of the last case study which focuses on a feminine discourse in the American South. The identity formation discussed in it transcends the local boundaries and reflects global concerns as it demonstrates the

attempts of women to position themselves in what Hall would call an “empty land” and step outside the confines of western culture.²²

More specifically, in the first study case, with the title “Hybrid Identity? Representations of Social Actors in the Romanian-American Press,” Irina Diana Mădroane focuses on the Romanian-American identity after 1989, which is the period after the Romanian transition from a communist regime to a neoliberal capitalist society. Despite the fact that the Romanian immigration spans almost over two centuries, as the writer notes, the Romanian-American identity and the factors which have contributed to its creation have not been adequately researched especially after the 1989 immigrant impetus. In the discussion of the above noted identity formation process, the writer attempts an analysis of the media participation in the engineering of the diasporic Romanian identity. Mădroane bases her research on editorial samples from the Romanian-American press selected to reflect the ongoing process of such an identity formulation. Focusing on the dual function of the press, the ideational and the impersonal, the writer emphasizes the discursive quality of the newly-created Romanian identity being the result of an ongoing negotiation between the history and culture of the host country, that of Romania itself, and the transnational Romanian communities, as this is communicated through the highly-individualized voices of the press actors. Mădroane’s case study demonstrates the complexity of the forces involved in the creation of the hybrid identity of the dis-placed Romanian-Americans, as well as the multifunctional role of the Romanian-American press.

The attempted formulation of a hybrid identity is also the focus in Aikaterini Lygoura’s case study with the title “ ‘Name Uses’: The Immigrant and Repatriated People’s Situation in Contemporary Greece.” Here, Lygoura discusses the strategies of name construction that the receiving Greek society has enforced on the economic immigrants or repatriated people who have crossed the Greek borders. Based on a series of case studies of subjects residing in areas with a significant flow of migrancy during the years 2004-2006 as well as on close observation of organizations, societies and unions that deal with immigrant issues in Greece, Lygoura describes the social and cultural interaction between the locals and the relocated immigrant workers by focusing on their voluntary or enforced adoption of Greek names. She attributes the process of “renaming” to both the efforts of the immigrants to integrate themselves in the labor market as well as to the efforts of the dominant community to assimilate the diasporic flow, thus conditioning social and cultural

²² Hall, “Cultural Identity and Diaspora,” 243.

interaction through the process of new name adoption. Despite the fact that the name adopted in the host country has mostly been performative, extroverted, and a means to establish one's identity within a foreign public space so as to define the immigrant self in relation to the local other, Lygoura indicates that in many cases the adopted name is used even when interacting with members of the same immigrant ethnic group. Lygoura claims that this implies a redefinition of the immigrants' own identity as well as a negotiation of their social and cultural space.

Within the same context, but from a different perspective, Betty Kaklamanidou discusses the cinematic representation of the failure of a young immigrant from Albania to adjust to the social and cultural conditions of the target country. Pointing to the thematic shift from the representation of the Greek diaspora to that of the alien diaspora in Greece, as this features in recent Greek cinematographic attempts, Kaklamanidou concentrates on the reading of a film, that of *Hostage* (2005) by Constantine Giannaris which documents the position of the Albanian immigrant within the contemporary Greek reality. Based on a controversial real event, Kaklamanidou provides readers with the reading of the film, exposing and exploring the nationalistic, xenophobic, and neo-racist attitudes manifested occasionally in the receiving nation-state, which explains the reasons behind the subjugation of all immigrants to a despised and antipopular behavioral pattern. The main character in the film finds it impossible to compromise his identity with the structural constraints imposed on him by a complex network of different power relations and institutions which undermine the sensitivity and dignity of those who "transgress" borders. The character in the film manages not only to guard his own ethnic and individual identity against the pressures exercised on him by the host country, but also to challenge the audience through the exposure of the tensions that emerge from the oscillation between cultural nationalism and ethnic particularity.

In the case of Sonia Gertzou's "Soti Triantafillou's *Synghoresis* [Forgiveness]: Revising Southern Womanhood from Overseas," an interesting cultural and geographical shift takes place: the Greek author Triantafillou questions the naturalization of gender roles and rewrites the white woman's position as a site of crisis and fragmentation within the American South. As Gertzou admits, although a cursory reading of Triantafillou's prose may categorize it as a region-specific text, a closer examination of the author's representation of gendered spaces and identities in the American South reveals that Triantafillou aims at globalizing her commentary on the artifice of cultural representation and the impossibility of dichotomous identities. In Gertzou's view, by

defamiliarizing cultural representation, Triantafyllou produces a hybrid female self, in an effort to undo not only the mythologies of Southern but also of western womanhood in her effort to reconceptualize “global identity” on the grounds of the contingent, the multi-perspectival and the inter-personal.

Taking all the above into consideration, one comes to appreciate the multiple faces of globalization as one travels amongst geographical and cultural locations as well as diverse forms of expression. This very much echoes Fredric Jameson’s view that globalization is “a mobile exchange of perspectives [...] a space of tension, in which the very ‘problematic’ of globalization still remains to be produced.”²³ It is in this constantly reworked space or *topos*, as has been mentioned so far, that is created between binaries, stereotypical attitudes and borders that the global can be contested, questioned and re-formulated. As the above papers denote, from the North American to the Balkan terrain, the whole western world is undergoing a constant processing that is materialized by various cultural and linguistic experimentations and conceptualizations. Cultural and literary production becomes in this edited volume the space within which global politics are enacted and global identities are formed, broken down and re-assembled, since it is mainly through such a process that the impact exerted on globalization or exerted by it can be appreciated and examined. The treatment that each essay in this volume offers in relation to various literary and cultural texts is not abstract and merely theoretical, but it actually highlights how these serve as incubators of socio-political action. It is the diversified and synthesized terrain of geographical locations, socio-cultural and political attitudes, beliefs and expectations that shapes and contests ideologies and identities which is what the essays in this volume reveal. Paul Giles refers to the “monolithic categories of globalization or imperialism” and proposes instead “a socially constructed, historically variable, and experientially edgy phenomenon, whose valence lies in the tantalizing dialectic between an illusion of presence and the continual prospect of displacement,” in an effort to expose the falsity of impressions that imposing powers create by turning one’s attention to the actual forces at work.²⁴ It is within the interstices of such a titillating practice that identities and cultures can be re-assessed and re-negotiated through the stories that can be narrated, constructed, or revealed about them, as the essays contained here highlight. In other words, it is the

²³ Jameson, Preface, xvi.

²⁴ Giles, “The Deterritorialization of American Literature,” 58.

diverse niches of thought and attitude this volume sheds light on which disclose both the functional and f(r)ictional traits of global identity.

Works Cited

- Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. London and New York: Routledge, 1994.
- Broech, Sabine. "White Fatigue, or, Supplementary Notes on Hybridity." In *Reconstructing Hybridity: Postcolonial Studies in Transition*, edited by Joel Kuortti and Yopi Nyman, 43-58. New York: Rodopi BV., 2007.
- Castells, Manuel. *The Power of Identity*. Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 1997.
- Dimock, Wai Chee. "Introduction: Planet and America, Set and Subset." In *Shades of the Planet: American Literature as World Literature*, edited by Wai Chee Dimock and Lawrence Buell, 1-16. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2007.
- Featherstone, Mike, Scott Lash, and Roland Robertson. *Global Modernities*. London; Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1995.
- Giddens, Antony. *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991.
- Giles, Paul. "The Deterritorialization of American Literature." In *Shades of the Planet: American Literature as World Literature*, edited by Wai Chee Dimock and Lawrence Buell, 39-61. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2007.
- Gilroy, Paul. *After Empire: Multiculture or Postcolonial Melancholia*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2004.
- Hall, Stuart. "Cultural Identity and Diaspora." In *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, edited by Jonathan Rutherford, 223-37. London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990.
- . "The Local and the Global: Globalization and Ethnicity." In *Culture, Globalization, and the World System*, edited by A. King, 19-39. London: Macmillan, 1991.
- . "New Ethnicities." In *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, edited by David Morley and Kuan Hsing-Chen, 441-49. London: Routledge, 1996.
- . "Who Needs Identity?" In *Questions of Cultural Identity*, edited by Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay, 1-18. London: Sage, 1997.
- Jameson, Fredric. "Notes on Globalization as a Philosophical Issue." In *The Cultures of Globalization*, edited by Fredric Jameson and Masao Miyoshi, 54-77. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1998.
- Preface. In *The Cultures of Globalization*, edited by Fredric Jameson

- and Masao Miyoshi, xi-xvii. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1998.
- Mingolo, Walter D. "Globalization, Civilization Processes, and the Relocation of Languages and Cultures." In *The Cultures of Globalization*, edited by Fredric Jameson and Masao Miyoshi, 32-53. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1998.
- Rushdie, Salman. *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism, 1981-1991*. London: Granta, 1991.
- Said, Edward W. *After the Last Sky: Palestinian Lives*. London: Faber, 1985.
- Tomlinson, John. *Globalization and Culture*. Oxford: Polity, 1999.
- Werbner, P. and Modood, T., eds. *Debating Cultural Hybridity*. London: Zed Books, 1997.

PART I:

FROM HEGEMONY SUBVERSION TO POST-MODERN DISPERSALS

THE RISE OF SILAS LAPHAM
AND SISTER CARRIE:
COUNTRY GIRLS AND CITY VAMPS

EVANGELIA KYRIAKIDOU

*Man for the field and woman for the hearth;
Man for the sword and for the needle she;
Man with the head, and woman with the heart;
Man to command, and woman to obey;
All else confusion.*
—Alfred Tennyson, “The Princess”¹

*It is the city,
Approaching over the river. Nothing
Of it is mine, but visibly
For all that it is petal of a flower—my own.*
—William Carlos Williams, “The Flower”²

The rapid development of cities alongside the desolation of rural areas in the nineteenth century created new living conditions—not necessarily better—for Americans and especially for female city inhabitants. Although cities were expected to provide more economic, educational and career opportunities to their residents, it appears that in the case of women, urbanization in the nineteenth century caused new problems in addition to those it was expected to cure. Unlike their male counterparts, women who moved to big urban centers became rather marginalized, and almost completely deprived from any societal involvement, further educational improvement, and career opportunities. Excluded from the evolving city society, unless married or under parental protection, as well as from the rapidly developing market place, women in the nineteenth century were restricted in their domestic domain, and remained as isolated and marginalized in the big urban centers as they had been in their former rural residences. Evidently, this exclusion and marginalization of women was

¹ Lord Tennyson, “The Princess,” 82.

² Williams, “The Flower,” 322.

depicted in the American literary production of the age and became the major theme in the city novels of this period. In what follows, I intend to examine and discuss the exclusion of female city-dwellers from the public sphere of city-life, as represented in William Dean Howell's *The Rise of Silas Lapham* (1885) and Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* (1900). In both literary works, the female characters are excluded from the vibrant city life while those women who attempt to partake in urban life and profit from the professed opportunities offered by the metropolis to its dwellers end up either dead or with a "marred" reputation.

Crossing City Boundaries: Flânerie, a Male Prerogative

Nineteenth- and early twentieth-century city novels do not study the city "as a thing in itself, but the city as being perceived by its inhabitants."³ One of the things city dwellers soon realize is the fact that cities are not consistent places, but with visible or indivisible boundaries and borders. On the contrary, city planning involves all kinds of boundaries, whether visible—as is the case with spatial borders—or invisible—such as social or gender limits. "Crossing the boundaries is easier for some individuals than others and often involves more than the exchange of one style of housing for another."⁴ One such boundary crossing is the concept of flânerie. Flânerie, although primarily defined as wandering or even loitering, in my opinion should not be seen as mere idle wandering of city streets; it is too simplistic to say that the flâneur is but a wanderer in the city. Flânerie is really a transgressive activity in the sense that the flâneur enjoys the privileged position of walking around any part of the city, not acknowledging boundaries of any kind. He can roam the infamous, dark districts at the same ease he roams the down-town, well-lit arcades. In short, standing out from the busy city crowd, this haunting literary image of the Western metropolis, the flâneur, appears to be not only an observer but more importantly a person who develops a special relationship with people of the metropolitan crowd, not because of any actual intimacy with them, but only because of his status as both a perceiver and a spectator of city inhabitants and city doings. The flâneur sees, observes, takes in the various faces of the crowd and then textualizes them; he turns them into a text. This is his active role that sets him apart from the occasional onlooker. This gentleman stroller of the big city, as

³ Lynch, *The Image of the City*, 3.

⁴ Preston and Housley, *Writing the City: Eden, Babylon and the New Jerusalem*, 11.