HERITAGE DISCOURSES IN EUROPE

RESPONDING TO MIGRATION, MOBILITY, AND CULTURAL IDENTITIES IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Edited by
LAIA COLOMER
and **ANNA CATALANI**

HERITAGE DISCOURSES IN EUROPE

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT, CULTURAL HERITAGE, AND DIGITAL HUMANITIES

This exciting series publishes both monographs and edited thematic collections in the broad areas of cultural heritage, digital humanities, collecting and collections, public history and allied areas of applied humanities. The aim is to illustrate the impact of humanities research and in particular reflect the exciting new networks developing between researchers and the cultural sector, including archives, libraries and museums, media and the arts, cultural memory and heritage institutions, festivals and tourism, and public history.

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Edited by
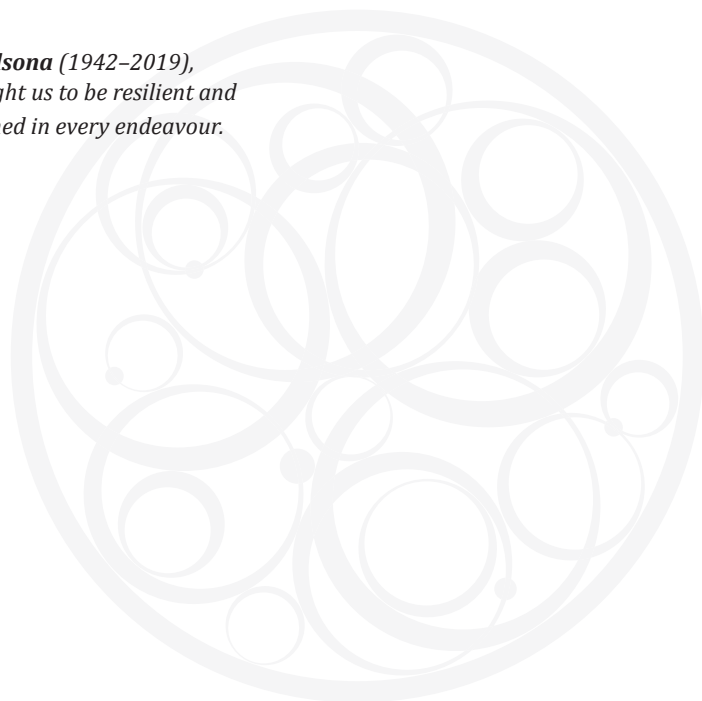### LAIA COLOMER AND ANNA CATALANI

We dedicate this book to our parents:
Renato Catalani *(1936–2018)*

and

Pilar Solsona *(1942–2019),*
who taught us to be resilient and
determined in every endeavour.

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Chapter 1

CULTURAL IDENTITIES, MIGRATION, AND HERITAGE IN CONTEMPORARY EUROPE: AN INTRODUCTION

LAIA COLOMER and ANNA CATALANI

THIS VOLUME CONSISTS of seven chapters and one afterword by leading and up-and-coming academics who work on cultural identity and heritage. Significant research has already been done in the field of heritage studies highlighting, for example, meanings, experiences, and discourses in heritage, history, and nationalism, diaspora and migration, and cosmopolitanism and globalization.[1] The aim of this volume is to expand on this by analyzing the role of cultural heritage and by especially focusing on the intersection between identity, memory, mobilities, and sociocultural agency.

Underpinned by neoliberal orthodoxies, today's matters—such as population flows, economic dynamics, environmental changes, and media politics—are becoming world-wide concerns that can no longer be managed and addressed solely within a national context. In order to avoid perpetuating postcolonial inequalities and unsustainable environmental circumstances, these issues require a "*glocal*" approach, that is to say, both a global and a local modus operandi. This glocal perspective offers new scenarios with regards to cultural representations, cultural heritage, and identity formation. Most nation-state discourses, indeed, no longer offer people a clear guide to under-standing who belongs together and in what way they relate to each other.[2] A lack of solid narratives about social belonging drives groups and individuals either to look for security in traditional cultural discourses of identity (that only reinforce old narratives of "we," "home/homeland," and "the other")[3] or to explore new forms of cultural identity in solidarity (that in turn generate other forms of togetherness and engagement in the community). Both discourses and new forms of cultural identity, though, are not neces-sarily defined by citizenship, passports, or geographical origins and hence are more fluid in their characterization, shaping, and understanding.[4]

According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the world is facing the highest level of displacement ever experienced, with an unprecedented 65.3 million people forced from their homes because of war, internal

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1 For an overview of the most relevant works produced in these fields in the past decades, see Anheier and Isar, *Heritage, Memory and Identity*; Waterton and Watson, *Palgrave Handbook*; Fairclough, Jameson, and Schofield, *Heritage Reader*; Logan, Nic Craith, and Kockel, *A Companion*; Labrador and Silberman, *Oxford Handbook.*

2 Schierup, Hansen, and Castles, *Migration, Citizenship*.

3 Betz, "Against Globalization."

4 Castells, "Globalisation and Identity."

conflicts, environmental crises, or poor economies. Amongst these, 21.3 million are refugees; the rest are economic migrants and internally displaced persons.[5] During the past four years, Europe has also been affected by such mass movements, with refugees and displaced people coming from Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. Since then, these mass movements have become known as the "2015 refugee crises." However, this is only one example of the large-scale displacements that are nowadays taking place across the globe and that are creating, in a postcolonial context, new forms of cultural creolization or hybridization.[6] Compared with previous displacements and the resulting sociocultural interactions, these new encounters are marked and influenced by the effects of globalization and hence it is important to briefly define our understanding of globalization in contemporary Europe.

Globalization, it can be argued, is currently defined by trans-planetary and supraterritorial connectivities, understood as social and cultural links between people located anywhere across the globe.[7] These connectivities operate next to and are mixed with those based on physical proximity (e.g., neighbourhood and local community).[8] Consequently people's cultural identities are created and negotiated not only in local contexts, but also within the international scene, by retaining links with other cultures or societies of origins (e.g., in the case of migrants and diasporic groups)[9] and through the means of digital and social media. Hence, it is possible to say that more people than before live in spaces/ places that are not exclusively nation-bound but that are both local *and* global arenas. Papastergiadis[10] uses the phrase "deterritorialisation of culture" to refer to the ways in which cultural formation is no longer linked to physical proximity to a given cultural centre. Instead the term defines people's capacity to demarcate their cultural identity and community belonging in different sociocultural landscapes—or "global ethnoscapes."[11] Within this scenario, migrants (both forced and not) are not just the subjects of policies of integration, neither are they simply a workforce in, debatably, welcoming societies. They are sociocultural contributors who take action, make decisions, and create social relations both in the country of origin and in the country of settlement.[12] These interactions generate new forms of cultural creolization and have direct consequences on the ways in which cultural heritage is defined and gains significance amongst groups, both local and glocal.[13] This book aims to explore exactly this ongoing challenge and the resulting discourses about cultural heritage and identity in contemporary Europe.

Europe and its cultural heritage, it is fair to say, have changed markedly in comparison to a decade ago. Today's cultural, economic, and historical changes are also having

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5 UNHCR, "Figures at a Glance."

6 Bhabha, "The Third Space"; Pieterse, *Globalization and Culture*.

7 Tomlinson, "Globalization and Cultural Identity."

8 Scholte, *Globalization*.

9 Glick Schiller, "A Global Perspective"; Vertovec, *Transnationalism*.

10 Papastergiadis, *Turbulence of Migration.*

11 Appadurai, *Modernity at Large.*

12 Glick Schiller, "Explanatory Frameworks."

13 Colomer, "Heritage on the Move."

an impact on the understanding and shaping of European heritage.[14] Additionally, in line with the globalization effect, the once-familiar "European cultural dimension" has been transforming from defined nations and clear, national cultural identities to a cultural mosaic, where entangled traditions, narratives, and identities are redefining a new cultural landscape.[15] Key catalysts have been, as we have said, the migratory movements, whether voluntary (e.g., work, affective liaisons, family reunifications, studies, retirement, social freedom, and career trajectory) or forced (e.g., war, climate change, political/gender persecution). However, it is important to specify that although migration has been traditionally understood as merely performed by people from outside Europe, reaching European shores due to economic reasons conflict, within this volume, we intend to widen this notion and include all kinds of mobilities occurring and transforming our understanding of the humanity living in Europe. This is because alongside Senegalese, Ecuadorian, Iraqi, Pakistan, Chinese, and Turkish immigration, Europe displays important ethnic variations at the level of internal migration, with a clear geographical gradient with high mobility in Northern and Western Europe but lower mobility in Southern and Eastern Europe.[16] Internal European Union (EU) migration responds to housing markets, financial deregulation, economic growth, the labour market, health facilities, and higher education exchange facilities, and includes an increasing number of young adults, retired citizens, intercultural families, and single women.

Based on these reflections, our starting point is that the human geography of Europe today is much more complex and radically different to the one of even a decade ago: it is made by a number of geographies and ethnicities, which generate and negotiate the merging of new identities and cultural narratives, differently from those assumed by the traditional socio-ontology of methodological nationalism.[17] Therefore this volume aims to explore closely these new expressions and negotiations of cultural identities, focusing on the uses and significance of European cultural heritage today, as well as the discourses generated about it. The core questions the contributors address dwell on cultural identities in transformation and in relation to heritage (or its absence) but also on the ways in which cultural organizations and heritage sites become meeting points for discussions, creative exchanges, and development between the different cultures shaping Europe today. Specifically, the authors question how new cultural identities are challenging the notions and significance of cultural heritage during the era of forced migration and mass movements; they consider the ways in which the current authorized heritage discourses in Europe are changing because of migration and globalization as well as the extent heritage sites and museums that can become effective meeting points for socio-cultural dialogues between locals and newcomers. Finally, this volume's authors have also been exploring the ways in which heritage sites can be creative platforms for heritage discourses, better "tuned" to today's European multicultural profile and thereby better reflecting current European reality.

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14 Harrison, *Heritage*; Smith, *Uses of Heritage*.

15 Delanty, "Entangled Memories."

16 Bernard, "Cohort Measures of Internal Migration."

17 Beck, "The Cosmopolitan State."

Outline of the Chapters

This book fits within a fast-growing body of research and academic literature examining the complex phenomena of migration and cultural heritage.[18] It aims to make, though, a unique contribution to the topic by focusing on the different and interlaced narratives of cultural heritage, identity, migration, and mobility, and by contextualizing them within the multifaceted context of contemporary Europe. Past and recent work on the subject area has mainly considered how cultural institutions have approached and represented migration in Europe, and how mobility has been challenging the society and contribution of museums and heritage sites towards the understanding of migratory experiences.[19] Furthermore, research on museum displays has shown how exhibitions dealing with migration have included primarily benign representations of migrants and their material culture. Although such displays have aimed to engage, through participatory approaches, with the migrant minorities, they remain Western-centred interpretations, whereby migrants and refugees are seemingly presented as people in need of humanitarian intervention and support. Additionally, a growing body of literature has also been looking at museums and their social responsibility in relation to minority groups and with regards to prejudice, equality, social justice, and citizenship.[20] Such work has highlighted the need "to differentiate between performative activism and operational activism," with the former being a just a "show" rather than a real engagement with the people represented.[21]

The chapters included in this volume build on this work and question further the changes that heritage, as a concept, as a practice, and as a performance,[22] is going through due to the cultural clashes and/or opportunities for cultural regeneration (of individuals and groups) created by mobilities and migrations in contemporary Europe. It questions, through different case studies and perspectives, the role that individuals, as the hosts of the welcoming country or as the newcomers, have in shaping heritage in contemporary Europe.[23] Cultural heritage here is understood as an action, as a process through which cultural identities are revealed, questioned, negotiated, and (re)created, rather than acting only as a mirror of past identities. The chapters included in this volume thus explore this unfolding situation, taking a wide understanding of cultural heritage, stemming from museum studies, memory studies, public archaeology, and ethnography and dealing with a variety of contingent issues, such as education, museum performance, affect, and care, intangible heritage and the idea of absence, musical heritage, religious practices

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18 Levin, *Global Mobilities*; Gouriévidis, *Museums and Migration*; Whitehead, Lloyd, Eckersley, and Mason, *Museums, Migration and Identity*; Innocenti, *Cultural Networks*; Ang, "Unsettling the National"; Amescua, "Anthropology of Intangible Cultural Heritage and Migration."

19 Macdonald, *Museum, National, Postnational*; Bounia, Nikiforidou, Nikonanou, and Matossian, *Voices from the Museum*; Hegardt, *Museum Beyond.*

20 Sandell and Nightingale, *Museums, Equality and Social Justice*; Message, *Museums and Racism*; Labadi, *Museums, Immigrants, and Social Justice.*

21 From a conversation between Alisdair Hudson and Bernadette Lynch, quoted in Lynch, "'I'm gonna do something.' Moving beyond Talk in the Museum."

22 Haldrup and Bærenholdt, "Heritage as Performance."

23 Nettleford, "Migration, Transmission and Maintenance."

in a globalized world, and human–thing entanglements. These inter- and cross-disciplinary perspectives complement each other and show the necessity of a diversity of approaches, as a key methodology, to understand the complexity of today's cultural heritage and identity in Europe, particularly with respect to mobility and globalization.

This volume comprises seven chapters, whose authors are all female academics from different disciplines, different European countries, and at different stages of their careers. While this was not intentional, it is a welcome coincidence in the current social and cultural climate. The book starts with an exploration of the relationship between intangible cultural heritage and cultural identities in Europe, from the point of view of refugees and forced migrants. In her chapter, Anna Catalani dwells on the notion of the absence of intangible cultural heritage during displacement. Catalani considers the binomial absence–presence of heritage as a staged process, starting from the assumption that human beings experience absence as an emotional, temporary rupture with their cultural traditions. This rupture develops through three phases: from an initial lack of intangible heritage (which means "putting aside" the known cultural traditions to focus on the journey); to an "absent presence" of heritage, where cultural heritage becomes the object of longing, through selected memories; to a re-acknowledged presence of heritage, through a redefinition of cultural traditions in the new context. This latter phase takes place only when the temporary disconnection between displaced individuals and their heritage has been elaborated and the felt absence of intangible heritage can become a catalyst for positive personal and collective changes as well as for identity redefinition.

Alison Jeffers returns to issues on the complexity of refugee artists' identity and how this complexity could be explored in museum performances. In her contribution, she looks at the complexities of being a "refugee artist" in a heritage setting and at the emerging potential value of conceptualizing heritage and identity as contingent. Theatre performance, though, is here being acted out within museum institutions, thereby using colonial cultural heritage "deposited" in British museums, as a means of both challenging and destabilizing contingent identities, either of the refugees and "their heritage" in the museums or those of their audience as members of a local community. Performing a multiplicity of heritages is a way of narrating the multiplicity of identities, of both refugee artists and local audiences, and of the heritage they engage with, in today's postcolonial institutions/refugee "crisis."

Alexandra Bounia's chapter further explores issues of heritage and the so-called refugee crisis in Europe, this time focusing on the social responsibility of museums as activist institutions. Following the work of Schellenbacher and Message, Bounia considers the ways in which museums can respond to the traumatic and complicated phenomenon of migration, by going beyond their role as "social mirrors" of past events (e.g., narratives of the migration/refugee phenomena) and instead becoming creators of new cultural agendas and agencies, like combating social injustices and becoming promoters of new social community relations in terms of solidarity, responsibility, trust, and human rights. For that, she draws on the feminist political theory of the "ethics of care." This ethics of care provides an interesting lens through which to analyze works Greek museums undertook in 2016 in order to develop relationships of care between people touched by the refugee "crisis," and reflect on how these institutions could move towards redefining their role as agents of care in an age of mobility, globalization, and neoliberalism.

School education probably focuses more on the ethics of care of future citizens than on exclusively transmitting knowledge. Maria Feliu-Torruella, Paloma González-Marcén, and Clara Masriera-Esquerra's chapter explores heritage education as a key political tool for civic values fostering tolerance, social integration, and citizenship between pupils and families of different cultural backgrounds and origins, using critical issues of cultural heritage such as diversity, cultural rights, and peaceful and democratic coexistence. Accordingly, heritage here is not something that we inherit from the past to be appreciated and enjoyed, but an expression of rights and values that must be acknowledged, negotiated, and reappropriated, democratically, today. Agency-oriented heritage projects, developed in schools like the examples introduced by these authors, can become a critical practice for citizenship education in Europe by exploring questions of what kind of society we want in the future rather than narrating where we come from culturally.

Issues of identity, roots, and routes are explored in detail by Cristina Clopot and Laia Colomer: the former from a diaspora and religious perspective; the latter exploring notions of homing and belonging. Clopot analyzes the heritage narratives of Russian Old Believers of Romania as a process to resist change in the age of globalization and transmigration. Colomer analyzes narratives of affect towards travelling salvaged objects amongst different type of migrants. Both, though, focus on the apparent contradiction between places and flows as key elements in identity processes amongst today's old and new Europeans. Clopot's focal points are "ethnic group" cultures, their efforts towards heritage preservation (even though the group is disseminated throughout Europe), and how these narratives reflect or refract a European ethos on localism, nationalism, multiculturalism, and cosmopolitanism (e.g., whether they are "united in diversity"). Colomer's chapter, instead, spotlights the entanglement between migrants and those objects selected on purpose to be companions in mobility, and therefore how they act as embodied emotional memories of past, present, and future lives. Throughout this exploration Colomer seeks to define the ways in which such relationships can provide new forms of museum display that exhibit the material culture accompanying mobile subjects.

Finally, Amanda Brandellero's chapter examines the staging of folk music as a perfect metaphor of intercultural processes occurring in Europe. The chapter draws from the experience of programmers and performers of world music festivals in Europe. Their activity engages directly with the diversity of musical genres and cultural expressions, its consuming tendencies, and the resulting creolization in musical creativity. Brandellero argues that their practice as music promoters, producers, and practitioners is an active exploration both of music as a meaningful practice of intangible heritage—against the backdrop of today's European cultural diversity—and of the ways in which this active process of musical production results in recognizing, legitimating, constructing, dissenting, and discarding different cultural identities inside Europe.

Both cultural heritage and cultural identity are characterized by a broad range of meanings ascribed to them. This is because their dynamic nature is part of a constant process of collective and individual creation, negotiation, and creolization. This book explores these dimensions in Europe, taking into account powerful forces of mobility in today's globalized world. While this book is not a complete compendium of the ongoing,

changing, and multiple heritage discourses in Europe on cultural heritage and identity, it aims to grasp some of their essential aspects. Hence, by acknowledging that any experience of movement produces novel forms of belonging and identity, while stimulating shifts in the understanding of cultural heritage, this volume intends to trigger critical reflections on different, ongoing discourses developing right now in Europe about heritage and identity. Such discourses shape and contribute in different ways to the human geography of an inclusive Europe.

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