Cultural Roots and Relocations in Greek American Poetry

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"Third Home in Diaspora"

The traditional sociopolitical pressure for the assimilation of immigrants to America has given way in some degree to multicultural dialectics, whereby national borders and ethnic boundaries are no longer restrictive spaces of inclusion and exclusion. Rather, these spaces constitute hybrid physical and imagined regions that stretch across and encompass people who are affiliated with different ethnic, national, gender, class, or other groups, resulting in the revision of traditional theories of ethnic discourse in America. The immigrants, and in particular Euro-Americans, no longer view themselves or are viewed by other ethnics or Anglo Americans as marginal to the dominant culture and society, as were those who migrated at the turn of the twentieth century, who were compelled to abandon old patterns of life and adapt to entirely new social and economic circumstances (Jones 219). In the wake of the flexible and new transborder and global connections between immigrants and their homelands during the past few decades, local and non-local factors have converged[1] to produce new sociocultural, political, and economic realities and forms.

Immigrants may thus become transmigrants, shaping and participating in the various structures of transnationalism[2] while establishing multiple personal and collective social relations across borders and boundaries.[3] Transnational immigrants are not only given the opportunity to maintain

functional relationships with families and friends across national boundaries or economic investments in their homeland, but they also enjoy upward class mobility in America (Jones 217-18). During this accommodation process, complications and unexpected situations are bound to arise whereby the cultural, spiritual, and other "luggage" that the migrants carry with them cannot be comfortably relocated to the new environment in any straightforward way. Although their narratives attest to their Americanized identity, the small and everyday ways in which the immigrants express their resistance to the dominant culture and society do not "directly challenge or even recognize the basic premises of the systems that surround them and dictate the terms of their existence" (Basch et al. 11).[4] The contradictions, slippages, and rhetorical disjunctions in the immigrants' discourse "mark the impossibility of a fully successful conversion" (Wald 243) into the dominant culture and society while they manifest themselves in the liminal spaces of ceaseless border crossings between the pre-American homeland and the new country of settlement.[5] The stage of liminality, according to Hamid Naficy, is the second one in the formation of exilic culture. As Naficy puts it, liminality and incorporation "involve ambivalences, resistances, slippages, dissimulations, doubling, and even subversions of the cultural codes of both the home and host societies. The end result is not unified or stable; it is an evolving syncretic and hybrid exile culture" (Nacify xvi).[6]

Contradictory and hybrid forms and practices of Greek American culture are revealed in the poetry written by the Greeks who immigrated to the United States around the second half of the twentieth century. Seeking to fulfill their educational needs, professional dreams, and financial ambitions, or simply to escape the oppressive political climate in Greece mainly due to the dictatorship (1967-74), these writers tried to construct a coherent and demystified

cultural identity in diaspora. This challenging re-routing of "home" culture during the transportation and transmission of the ethnic roots from the migrants' homeland to America produces a highly volatile, flexible, and fragile intermediary space, which I have named "third home."[7] The new diasporic "third home" is not a "home away from home" and is not "third" in terms of temporal or spatial priority. Rather, the term "third home" denotes the unique combination and restructuring of the elements of both the "home left behind" and the migrants' American "home" in order to create something entirely new, where the private and the public intersect, where the ahistorical and the historical merge, and where the realistic and the metaphorical combine, in order to attest to the necessary reconstruction of one's cultural roots within diasporic soil.

Being at the intersection of two or more distinct and diverse temporal and physical contexts, which are both real and imagined, the diasporic "third home" is primarily a mediating discursive space, where the immigrants are preoccupied with issues of cultural contiguity or cultural alienation, ethnic membership or disruption of ethnic ties, and national belonging or tension with one's nation. The "third home" is thus a cultural and spiritual compound as well as an identity-specific space, within which the transmigrants try to elucidate their experiences from the perspective of their new American reality. Simultaneously, they attempt to confront or resolve the disjunction or rupture along the interconnecting links between their idea of homeland and the idea of losing their homeland, or their fear of becoming lost within the host society.[8]

In particular, the creation of the "third home in diaspora" is premised on the negotiation of two kinds of attachment that the migrants hold with the "home" and the host culture and society respectively. Edward Said calls "filiation" the relationships among people based on biology and natural

bonds, while he calls "affiliation" those compensatory affinities that replace filiation and are based on social and cultural forms that connect people on a transpersonal level (*The World* 19-20). I believe that the migrants' ties with their natal culture and society belong to the filiative scheme due to their naturalness, while the social structures and associations that the migrants form with America belong to the affiliative one due to their reparatory role. However, the distinction between filiation and affiliation is obscure in diaspora because one may be related to his or her natal culture with relationships of both filiation and affiliation when one is in exile (*The World* 16). Therefore, the construction of the "third home" in diaspora is not merely a passage from filiation to affiliation in the sense of rejecting or replacing one's "home" culture and society to adapt into the new dominant ones when it is desired or demanded by circumstances. Rather, the "third home" is simultaneously characterized by a paradoxical rejection and acceptance of both cultures because the migrants cannot live, or do not choose to live, outside either of these sets of relationships.

Belated Arrival to the pre-American "Home"

The immigrants' critical review of their pre-American "home" is the first discourse on which the "third home" is established. This discourse is replete with ambiguities and conflicts, because the migrants attempt to define themselves and their post-migratory experience against what they discover and rediscover upon their return "home," carrying simultaneously the linguistic, material, cultural, and other "luggage" they have accumulated over their years abroad. Upon their real or imagined return to their Greek "home," immigrants experience the sociopolitical "reality" of Greece as "belated arrivals," in Yiorgos Kalogeras's words. Their belatedness reinforces the reevaluation and possible subversion of their relations of filiation, while it

"expedites their own acculturation in the US." Similar to ethnic travelers, who, according to Kalogeras, perceive and articulate "Greece" as both familiar and alien, as both reality and unreality, migrants feel the anxiety of their belatedness.[9] Although the time they visit Greece is familiar because they discover moments of their "nation," time remains essentially Other, as linear chronology is replaced by heterochrony that disempowers their ethnic identity. They cannot "place" themselves in this time "without denying their own historical specificity" ("The 'Other Space'" 704-05). Coming "home" belatedly defies their attempts to render and perceive themselves as legitimate members of their nation in modern times, since they express no intention of taking part in their "home" nation's internal affairs. On the other hand, the nostalgic remembrance of heroic and noble events and people of any period of the national history may consolidate their sense of ethnic identity and prevent the total or partial loss of patriotic sentiments.

The migrants who return "home" may relish and rely on their insider's view of their Greek "home," but they may also seek to disassociate themselves from this "home," since, often reluctantly, they realize their inability or lack of desire to rebuild their connection to the modern Greek's social and cultural circumstances and concerns. Their pre-conceived ideas about their originary "home" may conveniently cancel or overlook any disturbing or shameful aspects of it, creating an idealized authentic image of "home" which comforts them in exile; or, on the other hand, the pre-established or prejudiced ideas about "home" may result in a harsh critique of and bitter disenchantment with the contemporary Greek reality, which presents to their eyes only a sad vestige of an idealized, quite mythologized, and selectively recollected private and common past.

The fictionalized ideal of the "home left behind" and its inevitable collapse that subsequently justifies the immigrants'

Americanized identity permeates the poetry by Greeks in the USA. For instance, Eleni Fourtouni,[10] in her poem "Nostos," underlines the breach in ethnic lineage and the failure of filiation with one's natal culture by presenting the native's return "home" not as one met with joy or welcoming faces, but, ironically, with strangers, whose presence reinforces the speaker's determination neither to revive, nor to re-associate with, her ethnic roots. In a deeply disappointed tone, the speaker predicts a future devoid of familial comfort and love, while she addresses her deceased ancestors:

> I have no language
> to call you back
>
> Your names, fleshless
> angels, tangled in
> a foreign tongue—
> obscured, like unraveling dreams,
> your bodies rotted
> in graves no longer your own,
> your bones dug out to make
> room for the new dead.
>
> The ritual of forgetfulness
> performed. (*Watch the Flame* 37)

Perceiving the same old familiar "home," people, and culture through the eyes of an American now, the speaker does not express any intention of bridging the gap of communication between herself and these "strangers," as she simply affirms her status as an "outsider" to the group of her origins. The poem thus focuses on the speaker's inability or reluctance to cross over the newly constructed socio-cultural boundary between herself and the Greeks. Since there are no primordial or "natural" ties to validate her commitment to an ethnic heritage in a self-comforting and promising manner, the migrant now feels more detached and alienated from her

ethnic roots than prior to her visit. What is interesting here is that the migrant's exile in America qualifies as a "new home," albeit culturally and socially different from the host one, while the "old home" is devoid of its familiarity, individual history, and unchallenged safety and stability. By referring to this process of disconnecting her self from her "old home" as a "ritual," the speaker, being doubly estranged, underlines the total dismantling of natural filiation, which is the ineluctable outcome of the migrant's return (Said, *The World* 16).[11]

Prevalent in the poetry about transnational migrants' return "home" is the failure of *nostos* and the native's disillusionment with the pre-American "home." This is the main theme of the poem "The Village of Vourliotes After a Twenty-Year Absence" by Kostas Myrsiades (1940),[12] which depicts a rather disheartening and even shameful picture of the "home" that one hopes to re-discover after a long absence:

> Narrow village streets paved in donkey dung.
> Old women draped in shawls.
> A community of shades.
> Vague memories from some distant past.
> Ithakas
> are made of dreams. (53)

In a laconic way, the speaker who observes the scene performs an effectively harsh critique about the landscape and the people of his native village. Actually, his critique does not focus entirely on what he finds, but rather on what he hoped he would have found, but did not. The total absence of young people that would give a hint of life and a possible promise of a future change leaves the village trapped within a permanently resigned state. The lack of any sort of technological progress that would transform the village into a more comfortable and convenient place in which to live, combined with the scarcity of cultural or any other sort of

liveliness, intensifies the speaker's loneliness and reinforces his certainty that the return to his native "home" is simply an illusionary dream that has turned into a nightmare. Contrary to the happy outcome of Odysseus's *nostos*, the speaker's visit to his pre-American "Ithaka" cannot provide any social-psychological basis that would reinforce his attachment to his native culture. Thus, he chooses to redefine his Greek "home" as an alien and Other space that could be preserved, preferably and safely, within his memory, in the form of a fictionalized personal past. To be sure, Myrsiades does not blame only the Greek village for its degeneration; as becomes obvious throughout his poetry, he also accuses the actions of a careless state that fails to preserve local sources of tradition related to an authentic form of Greekness. For Myrsiades, it is only inevitable that, after a detrimental civil war and a destructive dictatorship, local forms of culture and politics would also decay.[13]

The ambiguous feeling of psychological and sociocultural homelessness when one performs an imagined return to the "home left behind" is dealt with in Manya Coulentianos Bean's[14] poems "Expatriates" and "Expatriates II." The former poem nostalgically evokes beautiful images of the Aegean Sea and the Greek natural landscape, which are, however, starkly contrasted with the sad images of "widows drenched in mourning" since World War II, the "harsh light" and "harsh streets," and the local people holding "a starfish and a crucifix / in each hand." The images that allude to the tragic and painful history of the Greek nation is what the speaker and the other expatriates carry in their memory. However, as the speaker in "Expatriates II" admits, when one is an expatriate, there is a certain inability to retain more specific or clear memories about "home" that could provide some comfort in exile. Apart from facing the fractured survival of their native tongue, because of the chronological and spatial distance, the migrants cannot remember details

of their national history or the names of the patriotic heroes that were sacrificed for their nation's liberation from foreign powers. Sympathizing with the other exiles who, like herself, are "locked" in their "own alien landscapes" in America, the speaker deplores the migrants' predicament:

> The words won't come to us
> in either language.
> The bread and water words
> we can still hold on to
> but the others, those describing exile
> or "nostos"—the return—
> or how the brain gets numb,
> cross over into loss
> dispossessed of flavor and the delicate
> thrust towards joy. (5)

The loss of the word *nostos*, and hence its semantic and spiritual value, is the climactic moment of the immigrants' displacement in diaspora. Bean specifically relates the impossibility of *nostos* with the failure of keeping personal and collective memories alive through the uninhibited maintenance of the Greek language in exile. However, this is only a misleading justification or deceptive explanation for the elimination of hope that *nostos* entails, because Bean's particular anguish is expressed in English, which means that she has bridged one of the most significant boundaries in cultural "dwelling" in America: language. By employing the dominant language, the speaker, and by extension the writer, constructs a common ground of communication and interaction with American culture and society, impairing the attempt to maintain solid ties with "home" by articulating the latter in one's native language. Despite the poem's proclamation that the return "home" will never be accomplished with joy, if it is accomplished at all, on account of the migrants' detrimental loss of their native language and the inescapable fracturing of their "home"

memories, the speaker is presented by Bean as not one who would resist cultural dispossession in diaspora. Quite the opposite, the speaker is depicted as a passive participant in the Americanization process, forsaking her efforts to rekindle her filiation with her Greek "home" even before the actual journey back ever begins.[15] This attitude of resignation is not criticized by Bean, who extenuates its effects by presenting it as the naturally retrogressive result of the ravaging of filiation when one is away from "home."

From the more personal and private sphere of family and relations of filiation to the more collective and affiliative one of community and nation, the bonds with "home" are impeded as the contemporary version of "home" provides little spiritual and psychological comfort, while its eternal and distinct nationalist character belongs to a long lost past. The national past as it is perceived by the transnational poets is based on the idea of their "home" nation's historical continuity and sacred homogeneity, while it is nourished by the relevant fear of the nation's death or the threat of its extinction if the national myth and the national fiction are not adequately or perpetually sustained.[16] Nonetheless, the celebration and commemoration of a mythical national past, which supports the continuity of the nation against historical change and modern time, allows the migrant poets to refrain from any sacrifices or actual involvement in sociopolitical movements in their own "home" countries. Instead, they invest in national sorrows and national heroic triumphs, without either suffering the former or actively celebrating the latter. This kind of imagined and romanticized patriotism that the migrants' national affiliations promote makes no demands and imposes no responsibilities or obligations on them, while it is primarily a form of amnesia or "deliberate misreading of the past," which offers the exiles a sense of communality and solidarity (Naficy 171).

The feeling and expression of static patriotism towards

the Greek nation, specifically in relation to the tragic events during World War II and the Greek civil war (1944-49), is the theme in Bean's long poem "Monody" (6-16). The poem is divided in sections, each dealing with a specific personal and collective experience or event, from 1942 in Athens when the speaker was a child to the present time when she is a professional in America. Initially, the speaker draws up a mournful picture of the terrible hunger that people suffered during the German occupation. Those moments are deeply engraved in her mind, as she remembers her mother waiting patiently for the hen's egg "before the hen / could break it / and eat it herself"(6), or as she recollects her own helplessness and anger when she sent away a beggar woman who was asking for some oil to feed her hungry baby. Authenticating her point of view by predicating it on the memories she gathered when she was an innocent child, the speaker describes the disheartening scene of the poor children in Athens who "would cease their playing to root / in garbage eating some orange peels / and stuff I couldn't see or name." The poem thus effectively delineates for American readers a tragic history that this audience has probably never had to go through. The bitterly recollected incident with a German driver who took a boy's arm and "slammed it across his knee - / broke it" (9) because the boy had jumped into the truck and started throwing its load of bread to the hungry people in the streets is emblematic of the speaker's sympathy for her nation's and country's suffering as well as her determined denunciation of any form of racism and discrimination, such as those promoted by the Nazis. As the quintessential expression of her patriotism, the speaker relives her childhood wish to take part in the social and political resistance of 1945:

> [. . .] if I were a man
> condemned to death
> I'd take off my shirt

before they shot me
so it wouldn't get full of holes
(saving it for a brother
back in the mountain village)
just as those comrades did once (11).

Despite the convincing identification with her own people's misfortunes and struggles, the bravery that the speaker displays here and that is rendered as totally sincere and authentic, as it emanates from a child's point of view, contributes to her nation's cause for liberation only in a highly imagined, spatially and temporarily distant, albeit vigorous, way.

This sort of belated patriotism as described above is anachronistic and hence redundant for the nation's cause,[17] since the speaker was never actually involved in any kind of resistance against the Germans. Still, the references to her immediate experience establish and affirm her Greek origins and identity as long as this identity is legitimized by pure nationalist ideologies. In this light, the ensuing Greek civil war is depicted not only as shocking for the speaker, since she became suddenly aware of the dark side of Greek national politics, but as also responsible for expediting her renunciation of Greekness and her acquisition of an American identity.[18] The speaker's realization that during the civil war she was, just like other Greeks, a gullible victim of the communist guerillas' ideology, as "it was easy to curse / the fascist German enemy / and promise and vow / undying hate" (14), underscores her aversion to any form of threatening ideology that alienates one from the claims and aims of true patriotism. At the same time, her antipathy to the communist rhetoric complies with her current American identity. When later in her office in New Jersey the speaker explains the symbolism of the color khaki for her while she is looking at a blanket, "handwoven wool / a brown and khaki gift," offered to her by a woman whose brother was tended by the speaker's family when he was seriously wounded, the

indeterminacy of who shot the man—"the King-lovers / or the Communists" (15)—is rendered insignificant, since that specific color and that particular blanket remind her of war memories and dangerous nationalist politics. Therefore, the speaker's affirmation of her Greek identity is particularly associated with "authentic" national rhetoric and politics, which will be exclusively dedicated to the welfare and the safe future of the nation's members, while they will successfully resist any sort of foreign-born political agenda, such as communism. Concurrently, her aversion to what she perceives as the repressive sociopolitical ideology of leftist politics corroborates her adopted American identity, which is further sanctioned by the dominant American sociopolitical system.[19]

The immigrants' perception and critique of the premigratory "home" from a hegemonic and exterior position is largely embedded in a constructed ethnic and national amnesia that supports the validation and reaffirmation of those aspects of ethnic heritage and national culture that can protect their membership in the "home" nation. On the other hand, the illumination of the saddening and often upsetting aspects of "home" may impede their affiliation with the "home" nation and support the migrants' decision to invest emotionally and culturally in their American selves. As long as their Americanness is not threatened and as long as the myth of an unadulterated Greek nation is properly preserved, affiliation with the "home" nation is not sought after as a way to mend the ruptures in the filiative relations but as a welcome reminder of the immigrants' origins and as a declaration of patriotic sentiments.

Although a number of Greek American poets write about the atrocities committed against the Greek nation by foreign rule,[20] endorsing a nationalist discourse, they may attack their native country, when the latter does not properly protect the ostensible integrity and unity of the nation. The inadequacy

of the Greek state to safeguard its citizens' legitimate cultural identity, traditional heritage, and social autonomy is exposed in the poem "Transplantation" by Regina Pagoulatou (1920)[21] (*Transplants* 9-11). The writer's personal experience of arrest, imprisonment, and exile during the Greek civil war, because of her political convictions, adds fuel to her denunciation of the Greek modern state. In a disapproving voice, the speaker addresses a personified Greece, whose remains of "ancient glory" are neglected and forgotten by the natives, while Greece as "madam of a Tourist Brothel, in the business of procuring flesh" allows foreign powers to invade and exploit her on the pretext of showing gratitude for the "crutches" that the foreign allies "donated" to her during times of need and despair (9). The prostitution of her country to foreigners and the ensuing erosion of the boundaries that used to protect her nation's autonomous essence and cultural distinctiveness expedite the speaker's decision to acquire an adopted country. It is in this "host" country though, where, quite unexpectedly, she can transform her deracination into a positive, celebratory rediscovery of both her own self and the uncorrupted identity of her "home" nation. Now, in America, the speaker's voice becomes more affectionate and kind towards Greece:

> Land of dream, of rejection, of paradox,
> from the primer of Deuteronomy[22]
> I learned to read the oracles of my second fatherland.[23]
> My grafted euphoria branches out
> through New York's steel latticework,
> refracting my inner light into billions of particles
>
> the inner light, which is nothing more or less
> than my primordial root:
> your own womb, O Mother Earth! [24] (11)

As a consequence, the speaker's transplantation "among the ethnic minorities" in America and her inevitable alienation

from her "home" have effected the affirmation of her immutable and sacred membership in a homogeneous Greek nation and a pure Hellenic culture, which, nevertheless, have never existed in the idealized state which the speaker conceives.[25]

The untenability of establishing allegiance with one's "home" nation's current affairs is also expressed in the poem "Crescendo" by Theodosis Athas (1936-73).[26] In a vehemently anti-war statement, the speaker accuses Greece of instilling "rage" in the youths who then "not knowing / not believing / that death has dominion" throw themselves into battle. Although it is not stated directly, Athas must be referring to the Greek civil war that bred fanaticism and hatred among the people, especially the young ones, who felt they could change the future of their country. Addressing Greece, the speaker proclaims:

> your sunrise is always stormy, Greece
> your emergence from the depths of time uproarious
> you blossom above the swamp of the world
> scattering a swarm of legends like fireworks through the centuries
> the apogee of Your trajectory is crowned by exquisite deaths
> of young men.(34)

The speaker's reverence to his nation, which is implied by the use of the capital letter in "Your," is ironic and hence false, as he does not believe in the manipulation of the national history and the legendary past by nationalist ideologies, which, in essence, are the sole perpetrators of the tragic consequences of war.

Therefore, the "home" culture and nation are essentially fetishized by the migrants who consciously adhere to idealized "home" imaginings that are fixed in terms of space and time. As Naficy explains, fetishization in exile "results when the exiles invest heavily in constructing certain cathexted[27] images of homeland and the past knowing

deep down that those are forms of disavowal, or of partial representation" (127). While the process of remembering and forgetting the "home" is painful, fetishization and stereotyping "empower the hitherto powerless exiles and reduce the threatening spell of the two lands" (Naficy 129).[28] However, "the overcathexis of fetishes positions the exiles to become victims of their own creations," as the illusions about the homeland may also invite nostalgia for it (129-30). This paradoxical situation destabilizes the migrants' attempts to establish affiliative bonds with their "home" nation and culture, since the construction of such bonds primarily relies on a misrepresented or idealized national past and Hellenized culture that cannot sustain the migrants' highly imbalanced and precarious daily reality in America, despite the corroborative effects of such an affiliation in psychological terms.

Critique of the American "Home"

The debilitating sentiment of homesickness still prevails and as Rosemary Marangoly George notes, this sentiment "can cut two ways: it could be a yearning for the authentic home (situated in the past or in the future) or it could be the recognition of the inauthenticity or the created aura of all homes" (175). Trying to fight homesickness while struggling with emotional and psychological imbalance and doubt in diaspora, the Greek American poets reluctantly attempt to establish compensatory relations of affiliation with the American culture and society in their effort to find some internal and external stability. This is another fragile set of relations, as it is primarily embedded in an essentializing critical discourse of resistance to cultural assimilation. Mainly endorsing stereotypical perceptions of Americanness, this discourse constitutes the second one on which the construction of the "third home in diaspora" is founded.

Stereotyping is an important aspect of the immigrants'

perception and critique of America, in the sense of reifying the foreign language and culture as well as the American people and their behavior so that the immigrants can comprehend and fit in their new "home" in a less self-defeating way. As Nigel Rapport argues, individuals who seek to locate themselves within and conceptualize a world of "great newness, multiplicity and flux" have recourse to social stereotypes as "a means of positing a wished-for definitional stability while simultaneously being able to come to terms with the continuity of possibly radical change" (271).[29] What is needed in social sciences, according to Rapport, is a "better appreciation of stereotyping as a cognitive resort" that helps the immigrant self construct his or her individual story in the midst of migration, as well as maintain a sense of belonging to a group, since the differences between self and other are considered as more clear-cut, albeit hyperbolic. Additionally, stereotyping affords the individual a view of "outside looking in," which is a less complex view compared to the one from inside the group to which one feels alien. So, stereotypes are primarily "a stable and widespread discursive currency" as they "afford bearings from which to anticipate interaction, plot social relations and initiate knowing—and from a safe distance, too—however far removed their biases become from the manifold elaborations of relationship and being which eventuate" (279-80).

The immigrants' understanding of American society as too modernized and too neatly organized, and of the American people as too superficial, emotionally and intellectually, should not be considered as merely a harsh critique of America. The stereotypical Othering of American culture and society helps the transplanted individuals to consider the potential of the occurrence or construction of viable points of cultural alignment and convergence between them and the Americans, both the "mainstream" and the more "marginal" ones.

The immigrants' fear of social uprootedness and the closely related need to establish a nurturing and individualized social and cultural context where they can feel safe and secure despite the constantly shifting and complex reality they live in are thematized in the poem "America: First Images" (94-97) by Youlika Kotsovolou Masry (1941).[30] In the poem a relentless condemnation is unleashed against what the speaker perceives as the superficially content but emotionally bankrupt psychological make-up of the Americans, whose "ever-smiling faces, / plain, unquestioning eyes, / unsophisticated gestures, / sparkling colors" and "practical minds" are in complete contrast with the "heaps of feelings, / burning flames and cold icebergs, / storms and rainbows" that the speaker has brought from her "home" together with the material of "raw cultures / and their potential for synthesis too" (94). The question the diasporic speaker asks, "what is the secret of your culture?" is ironic, because the poem argues that there is no real secret, as there is no real American culture, least of all a culture that carries as much historical, philosophical, and emotional depth as the Greek one. In an effort to perform a typical humanizing gesture, commonly applied by the Western observer/subject towards the Oriental observed/object, the speaker offers to educate the Americans with what she considers as the riches of her ethnic culture:

> Easygoing people
> I want to take you by the shoulders,
> tenderly at first,
> communicate my inwardness through meaningful touch
> but also shake you strongly,
> smoothly talk to you over a night's time
> about other truths and values.
> Then, deep look in your eyes
> discover what's beyond that glacial look
> and if there exists a world of nothingness

> build together, stone by stone,
> a city for human needs
> and live there with you
> in conscious peace
> and awareness
> of constructive interaction. (94-96)

Considering the dangers and traps that may lurk beneath the glamorous exterior of American culture and society, the speaker indirectly suggests that her "host home" should, in fact, be regarded by the migrants as their non-authentic and alien Other. So the migrant's attempt to grow new "roots" in diaspora is predominantly an experiment in reviewing and revising Westernized conceptions of Otherness by perceiving the dominant Americans as culturally exotic, marginalized, naïve, and, most importantly, deprived of a noble civilization. The only course of action available to the Americans in the poem is to surrender their conscious and subconscious selves to the speaker, who can thus reinstate her own cultural authority and moral superiority. In an intentionally hegemonic attitude towards the members of her American "home," the speaker renders the dominant Other silent in order to define and redefine her own self consciousness against it and to be able to make an arbitrary decision. This decision will directly involve the Americans but they will have no say in it, as they are not allowed to speak in the poem and subsequently reject or consent to their imposed humanization. The migrant states her wish to build a functional relationship with them, which will be based on the moral values and cultural paradigms of Greekness, and which will hopefully alleviate her loneliness in America.

Evidently the confrontation with the Other, even in these highly essentialist terms, is crucial to the diasporic individual's self-consciousness. Identities, as Stuart Hall argues, "are never completed, never finished" but always "in the process of formation." In addition, identity means a

process of identification which "is always constructed through ambivalence, always constructed through splitting. Splitting between that which one is, and that which is the other" ("Old and New Identities" 47-48). The Other is thus a necessity to the self because people cannot "look the same, feel the same, call themselves the same." For Hall, identity, which is always a representation that is revealed in a narrative, is never "a sealed or closed totality." Identity is contradictory, full of ambivalence and desire, as it is composed of more than one discourse and is always told from the position of the Other and "always across the silences of the other" (49).

Social stereotypes of American Otherness, as this "different" sociocultural identity is constructed and understood by the transmigrants, are employed within the contours of an ironic critique of the "host home," functioning as the main resistance mechanism against Americanization and cultural assimilation, in the poem "Jogging" (*Traffic* 29-31) by Miranda Paparetou Cambanis.[31] Sneering at what she considers to be typical white middle-class America, the speaker accentuates the cultural gap between her and the members of the dominant society. However, in this poem, the immigrant does not see any possibility of a satisfactory or fertile rapprochement with the Americans. On the contrary, her view of them and their culture is embedded in ironically harsh, and even sarcastic, language that obviously undermines any intention that the speaker might ever have of presenting a realistic picture of her host "home." Without ever referring to them nominally—a denigrating gesture in itself—she wonders about the Americans' ostensibly systematic and unproblematic lives, which, however, lack emotional depth and intensity, as these people have an "alarming blankness in their eyes" (29). The poem describes in detail the regular schedule of the typical American family who "have to have three meals a day / and always supper at 6:00 / (otherwise they might have to improvise / something

different to fill the time at home" (20). Their obsession with routine, perfect timing, healthy living, psychoanalysis, advanced education, and political correctness infuriates the speaker who insistently views herself as an outsider to this Other world that she inhabits. The portrayal of the Americans as "ludicrous" in their priorities and as totally incapable of self-awareness and realization of their needs to the point that they naively "produced children—lots of them / since God said so" (30), indicates that the stereotyping here exceeds its remedial function of assisting the immigrant towards a self-fulfilling and less upsetting existence in diaspora. The speaker's discourse is clearly entrenched in prejudice, which "involves a refusal to interpret experience [and] a failure to make contact with another productive" (Woolley 79). However, the justification of such an intransigent attitude soon follows, as the Americans:

> keep all the "different" people out of their
> neighborhoods so the prices can stay healthy, too,
> and the children can keep on living in
> their all-white fantasy world [. . .]. (30)

Obviously, seeing herself as potentially one of the unwanted "different" and "non-white" people with whom the Americans are so afraid of socializing exasperates, and the diasporic subject lashes out at the American myth of youthful happiness, exposing its fakeness and bankruptcy. Educated in and conditioned by a culture and society whose ethics have regarded the doctrine of individualism primarily as a threat to morality and where the elderly are usually afforded special respect and attention within the family,[32] the speaker feels pity for the American elderly, who "do not jog / because they are neatly put out of sight / in wheelchairs that move as slowly as their / remaining years" (30-31). By putting their parents away, the American children:

> [. . .] can finally take that trip to Europe

they've been wanting to take since college
without having to worry about the weekly
Sunday visits. (31)

For the Americans, the trip to Europe will signify the validation of their cultural superiority compared to the Europeans, whom, in all probability, they will consider as too traditional and too backward in their social practices and politics. Out of self-righteous self-admiration, the Americans will probably return from their trip taking more pride in themselves and feeling no guilt for abandoning their helpless parents. Without doubt, this is not a "home" where the migrant longs to belong, as it does not merely contrast with her originary "home," but it threatens her moral integrity and cultural solidity with its superficiality and simple-mindedness.

The lack of a clearly defined social and cultural space of belongingness, a solid social positioning, a definite cultural orientation, and a strong ethnonational support system further inhibits the immigrants' search for a coherent and consistent present, a past secured in history, and a future that will guarantee the sprouting of their new cultural roots in diaspora. Added to that anxious quest is their sense of socio-cultural displacement in America. Although it was their own choice to migrate, rarely or never do the Greek American poets whose work is discussed here directly criticize that choice. Hence they tend to blame the dominant culture and society for imposing impenetrable boundaries to their smooth and unperturbed accommodation. One of these boundaries is the English language, which draws an ambivalent reaction on the part of the poets. Some poets like Pagoulatou, Masry, Paidoussi, Panos Vozikis,[33] Makis Tzilianos,[34] Carmen Capri Karka, Christophoros Agritellis,[35] Lili Bita[36] and others write in Greek, while Cambanis, Athas, Bean, Fourtouni, Myrsiades, Minas Savvas[37] and other poets write their poems in English.

The preservation of the mother tongue equips the poets

with a significant resistance mechanism to Americanization and hence to affiliation with the "host" culture in artistic terms. On the other hand, the poets who publish their work with an English translation on the facing page of a book achieve a more productive co-existence of both languages, since they can reach out to a wider American audience with the intention of initiating this audience into their "home" culture, while they also valorize their interiority vis-à-vis the "host home." However, the total disregard of the Greek language points to a more successful sociocultural insertion into the American "home." Although withdrawing from the use of their native tongue does not mean that their cultural and ethnic distinctiveness and belonging are severed, choosing to write in English is both a cause and an indication of the poets' vexed relationship to both their originary and their new "homes." English may facilitate their intention to mediate between these two "homes" and assist in their efforts to translate their ethnic particularities to English-speaking readers, but it necessarily imposes a solid boundary between the poets and their fellow native readers.

In any case, the majority of the Greek poets who immigrated to America express a deep feeling of alienation caused by the required use of English, which hinders their efforts to develop affiliative relationships with American culture and society, since English interferes with their artistic expressive means. The ambiguous relationship that the Greek poets in America have, both with respect to their native language and the dominant one, suggests that the process of choosing another "home" and hence another language is not a simple or unproblematic one.

In Pagoulatou's book entitled *Motherhood*, the speaker laments and wonders why the Lord made "Greece the epicenter of the Earth" and why He threw her "to land ungoverned and anchor / in the West" (52). By presenting herself as the ingenuous and unsuspecting victim of God's

will, the immigrant explains her relocation and diaspora within "the foreign country's crucible" (54)[38] as being a part of some grand universal scheme. So her strategies to resist the loss of her native language and culture in exile acquire greater power and significance, since they essentially defy God's plan. Talking about her life in America with her young daughter, the speaker compares their house to a "secret school," alluding to the unofficial classes usually taught by priests while the Greek nation was under Ottoman rule. Although in the poem the speaker insists that there is an "undeclared revolt" against the English language, she encourages her child to treat this language as "Enemies that unsuspectingly intrude / to corrupt / your Greek conscience" (56). Her cultural contestation against homogenization in America is transformed into a subconscious fight against both the Turks and the Americans, who threaten the national sovereignty and purity of her "home." Although the poem finally presents a peaceful coexistence between the two languages, this is achieved by the affirmation and construction of false premises, as it is the foreign elements of the English language that "surrendered their weapons" before the two languages and hence cultures finally "walked together" towards "ancient knowledge / in the shade of Acropolis / firmly vaulted / by Sappho and Plato" (56). Against the hegemonic structures of the West, Pagoulatou constructs a reverse orientalizing and ostensibly humanizing discourse, whereby her native culture will determine and elaborate the "intellectual, aesthetic, scholarly, and cultural energies" of the Western Other.[39]

For the immigrants' children, language learning is indeed "a complex story of mutual adaptation, of the accommodation of two or more ethnolinguistic groups in particular structural contexts," such as public schools (Portes 181). However, as Iain Chambers argues, "[l]anguage is not primarily a means of communication; it is, above all, a means of

cultural construction in which our very selves and sense are constituted" (22). In migrancy, "[w]hat we have inherited—as culture, as history, as language, as tradition, as a sense of identity—is not destroyed but taken apart, opened up to questioning, rewriting and re-routing" (24).

The cultural re-routing, this time in a more conciliatory attempt towards bridging the two languages and their sociocultural contexts, is the theme in Masry's poem "Foreign Language."[40] The speaker is initially intimidated by her venture into the English language, which is presented as a wide ocean where the migrant, either as a seagull from above or as a dolphin from below, tries to draw near and potentially understand its hidden pleasures as well as dangerous traps. Contrary to Pagoulatou's fear of losing her mother tongue and hence her authentic ethnic identity, Masry contemplates the possibility of extracting elements of both languages and blending them within a "third home" of interethnic and cross-cultural bonding and synthesis. Being aware of approaching English "lightly and hesitantly" as well as "boldly and clumsily," the speaker addresses the foreign language in a meditative tone:

> as I plead with the winds,
> the Aiolos winds of another land
> the ambassadors of another Voreas,
> to join in one single gust
> *your* warp,
> *my* woof,
> I wonder if it be possible
> for your wares,
> —however much they're different and *other*—
> to shake hands,
> exchange embraces
> inside the plenteous light
> of a morning star both share:
>
> a teardrop.

The common experience of joy and sadness forms the basis for the productive convergence of the two languages and cultures that the migrant speaker envisions as a feasible alternative and consolation to the abysmal frustrations of uprooting. Notwithstanding the obvious impossibility of linguistic merging of English and Greek, Masry's poem proposes the mutual recognition and peaceful maintenance of cultural differences between the migrants and the members of the dominant group, without, however, implying the superiority of either one. Although the poem employs the Greek myths and gods that are related to the sea, the cultural reconciliation that is needed by the speaker will start from the migrant's initiative, thus paying respect to her "host home." In this way, Masry succeeds in resisting the common temptation expressed by a number of diaspora poets: to become overcritical of American culture and society and, simultaneously, uncritically nostalgic towards the "home left behind."

"Third Home" as an Always Postponed Belonging

Whereas in older theories of diaspora, "home" was commonly used to denote a social and psychic space of belonging, safety and security, comfort and reassurance, associated to one's homeland, family, friends, childhood, language, culture, and tradition, in recent theoretical inquiries, the concept of "home" has been scrutinized and variously defined in order to accommodate the most recent discourses of postcolonialism and late capitalism. "Home" is now regarded as a deterritorialized, hybridized, and flexible entity and concept that resists completeness and locality, while it allows for the emergence of cultural difference in the enunciation of identity. As notions of nativeness and native places are complicated by people's common self-identification or categorization by others in reference to "deterritorialized 'homelands,' 'cultures,' and 'origins'" (Malkki 52),[41] the conceptualization of "home" has to take into account hybridized and malleable forms of identity, as well as new formations of the time and space where identity is experienced, developed, and articulated. The emphasis which postmodern theory has placed on the multiple allegiances of diasporic people enables the critique of ideas of fixed origins, immutable ethnic identities, and distinct communities or groups that may be separated by impermeable real or imagined boundaries. Therefore diasporic people are no longer considered as either deeply rooted in a specific "home left behind" or routed towards their premigratory "home," in psychological, cultural, or sociopolitical terms; this is so because diaspora often takes the form of voluntary migration in quest of better economic opportunities or a more cosmopolitan way of life. Diasporic people have a heightened awareness of their multiple belonging and the paradoxes of living within transnational social and cultural spaces.

The reconfiguration and expansion of what constitutes physical and psychological displacement in diaspora thus involves the problematization of any naturalized or homogenized connections between place, people, and culture(s). In addition, the reevaluation of the causes, patterns, circumstances, and consequences of modern diaspora models prompts the revision of the myth of the diasporic people's ultimate return "home." Granted that all myths are socially constructed because they "arise in specific times and places, in response to identifiable circumstances and needs, and they are passed on through processes that can be readily observed" (Steinberg 263), the diasporic myth of going back "home" is constantly rewritten in order to underscore, as well as contribute to, the reconceptualization of diasporic life as one based on multidimensionality, mobility, and cultural difference[42] along ethnic and transethnic connections.

The "third home in diaspora" becomes what Chambers calls

"a dwelling in language, in histories, in identities that are constantly subject to mutation," as old and new experiences intercept each other in the migrants' consciousness. Being inside and outside the situation at hand and living "at the intersections of histories and memories, experiencing both their preliminary dispersal and their subsequent translation into new, more extensive, arrangements among emerging routes" (5-6), the migrants are bound to be paradoxically compelled to embrace as well as to reject their new relationships of affiliation with the American culture and society.

The two discourses on which the "third home in diaspora" is constructed negotiate the migrants' relationships of filiation and affiliation, without, however, resolving the fissures and contradictions that arise during these processes. Having failed to recover their filiative bonds with the "home left behind" or their affiliation with their "home" nation's current affairs, while being entrapped in sociocultural uncertainty and alienation that permeate their affiliative connections with the "host home," the migrants find themselves within an awkward in-between position of inescapable loneliness, cultural displacement, and an essential identity crisis.

Emblematic of the creation of the "third home in diaspora" and its purpose of stabilizing the migrant's past, without merely longing for it regretfully, but assessing it in contrast with the perilously inhabited and culturally hyphenated present is the poem "Letter to My Mother" by Cambanis (*Traffic* 93-95). The writer of the letter begins by acknowledging that her voluntary transplantation to America happened "as quickly as a flame turns cold / in exile, / then dreams of the fire and wants to come / back alive, but can't" (93). The flame is a metaphor for the immigrant's ardent desire to seek the lures of America for herself, but the cold represents the breach in one's consciousness when the process of "unselving," as Meena Alexander calls it, begins.[43] During this disquieting

process, the speaker tries to explain to her mother that her choice to continue her life in America has been a self-destructive and illusionary one, as she realized that it has been impossible for her to invent a space of belonging that she would unequivocally call "home":

> Distance has twisted both of my feet
> so that neither fits here or there.
> Here is a lot, but not enough,
> There is everything I left,
> taking a chance in permanence
> and losing it.
> The only thing that's permanent is change.
> [. . . . .]
> and nobody likes it if you are gone too long
> and pretend to belong.
> I am tired of trying to belong.
> The truth is
> nobody ever does
> although many outdo themselves
> in adjusting to the worst, shaping it into
> impressive clichés
> such as causes, tranquility, nuclear family, love. (94)

Admitting that she failed in her decision to migrate to America is a brave act on the part of the speaker. She clearly distinguishes between her manner of social and cultural inclusion in America from the practices commonly adopted by other transplanted people, who resort to some temporary distractions and "goals and objectives for a rewarding life," such as "volunteer activities, / The Faculty Club, / The Trying to Find Your Identity Club" (94-95). The speaker intends to convince her mother and, most of all, herself that she has retained her identity intact and uninfluenced by dominant cultural and social practices. Yet, despite the ephemeral satisfaction that the preservation of her cultural authenticity and moral integrity may offer her, she sadly admits that the only source of solace and happiness will always be her

mother's "heart / that contains forty years' deposits / no withdrawals / and no regrets" (95). Nonetheless, this source is permanently locked within the past and hence it cannot actually balance the cultural and emotional instability of the diasporic "home." It is in the space of one's memories and imagination that the "third home" can finally allow the growing of temporary "roots," which, however, will always be undermined by the flux and mobility of the modern diasporic existence.[44]

Developing two inherently paradoxical and contradictory discourses, which accommodate cultural sameness and difference, descent and consent, filiation and affiliation, and whose purpose is to provide a sense of belonging and rootedness in a creatively imagined way, transmigrants employ both the hegemonic position that their Americanization affords them and, at the same time, valorize their ethnic and national ties with an idealized "home." The border space they occupy between and within historical reality and ahistorical utopia, and between linear time and heterochrony is the only emotionally and spiritually empowering position that they can afford and can call their own "home." The construction of the "third home in diaspora" by the Greek American poets examined in this essay illustrates the transformation of cultural roots into new diverse routes whose trajectories may be imbued with the migrants' ethnic past, national history, and familial traditions, but they resonate on a culturally, linguistically, and nationally redefined and diverse space whose continuous tensions and interrogations ensure the vigorous advancement of contemporary Greek American culture.

NOTES

[1] For the idea of the convergence of local with nonlocal factors, see Buell 548-49.

[2] Transnationalism is defined "as the process by which immigrants build social fields that link together their country of origin and their country of settlement" (Schiller, Basch, and Blanc-Szanton, 1).

[3] See Schiller, Basch, Blanc-Szanton, 1-2

[4] In *Nations Unbound*, Basch, Glick-Schiller, and Szanton-Blanc remark that the multiplicity of involvements that transmigrants establish in both home and host societies make it difficult to find the language to describe such social positionings: "Transmigrants use the term 'home' for their society of origin, even when they clearly have also made a home in their country of settlement. The migration literature describes the country of settlement as the 'host,' but such a term, though compact and convenient, carries the often unwarranted connotations that the immigrant is both 'welcome' and a 'visitor'" (7).

[5] According to Edward Said, culture designates something to which one belongs as well as something that one possesses, and because of that proprietary value, "culture also designates a boundary by which the concepts of what is extrinsic or intrinsic to the culture come into forceful play" (*The World* 8-9).

[6] Naficy distinguishes between syncretism and hybridity, although he acknowledges how similar they are. Syncretism involves the impregnation of one culture with another in order to create a "third, stable culture, while hybridity involves an ambivalence about both of the original cultures, thereby leading to creation of indeterminacy and shifting positionalities. This is a state of unbelonging, in effect a form of freedom, nomadism, homelessness, or vagrancy—even opportunism—because it settles on nothing but difference itself" (127).

[7] I first formulated the "third home" theory in my article "Creating a 'Third Home' in Diaspora: Reading Meena Alexander and Miranda Panaretou Cambanis."

[8] See Naficy 129.

[9] Kalogeras's argument that ethnic travelers experience "Greece" as both familiar and alien is based on Michel Foucault's theory of space and his example of the mirror. Foucault conceives of the external space where we live as "a set of relations that delineates sites which are irreducible to one another and absolutely not superimposable on one another" ("Of Other Spaces" 24). In this space there are sites, according to Foucault,

that "suspect, neutralize, or invert the set of relations that they happen to designate, mirror, or reflect" (25). These sites that simultaneously relate to all the others as well as contradict them are of two types: utopias and heterotopias. In every culture and civilization, Foucault continues, the utopias are unreal spaces because they present society in a perfected form, while the real places are counter-sites, which are "a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted." The latter real sites are called "heterotopias." Between utopias and heterotopias there is a sort of "mixed, joint experience" of a "placeless place," which Foucault describes as the "mirror." The mirror is both a utopia and a heterotopia because it is both unreal and virtual and also a reality that: "exerts a sort of counteraction on the position that I occupy. From the standpoint of the mirror I discover my absence from the place where I am since I see myself over there. Starting from this gaze that is, as it were, directed toward me, from the ground of this virtual space that is on the other side of the glass, I come back toward myself; I begin again to direct my eyes toward myself and to reconstitute myself there where I am" (24).

Kalogeras suggests that "'Greece' sends back 'the reflection' of our traveler complete with the space that surrounds him or her, producing an all-too-familiar sociocultural reality for the traveler. Yet this reality is rendered alien and unreal because its production predicates the traveler's stepping through the mirror. Thus 'Greece' is perceived and articulated both as familiar and alien in the work of Greek-American travelers" ("The 'Other Space'" 704).

[10] Fourtouni was born, raised, and educated in Greece before she moved to the United States as an exchange student in 1953. Apart from *Watch the Flame*, she has published the poetry collection *Monovassia 1976*, which, in addition to its mythological references, mainly celebrates romantic love set in a bucolic and harmonic natural landscape. Fourtouni has also compiled and translated the book *Contemporary Greek Women Poets*, which includes poems by Katerina Anghelaki-Rooke, Melpo Axiote, and Jenny Mastoraki among others.

[11] See also Fourtouni's poem "The Return," which was published in the web magazine *Rio* and which employs a similar theme. In the poem, the speaker returns to an old village house only to find it deserted and inhabited by animals and crawling with insects. Darkness, coldness, and silence prevail, while the speaker tries to hang on to something familiar for comfort, even on the ghosts who inhabit this place and who belong to her grandmothers: "*Yioryitsa, Panayiota, Lefkothea* . . . / All these grandmothers. I'm here because of them, / said my daughter, age six, born in

the USA." In addition, in the poem "Απολογισμός [In Retrospect]" by Carmen Capri Karka, the speaker's search for a meaningful and coherent identity is frustrated by her conviction that: "Some day we shall return / to the town where we were born / like ghosts to a deserted tower" only to be faced with the crude reality, which reveals that happy memories of childhood innocence and happiness are long gone, which leads to the speaker's realization that, in the end, "We do not belong anywhere" (15-16, my translation).

[12] Kostas Myrsiades was born in the village of Vourliotes on the island of Samos, Greece. He left the village with his family when he was eight years old (1948) and moved to America. His father had already been a US citizen since the 1920s. Myrsiades spent the period 1969-72 in Greece attending classes at the University of Athens as well as teaching. In addition to his numerous articles and translations from modern Greek literature and culture, Myrsiades has written and edited books about the Greek puppet theater, Yannis Ritsos, and Homer. He is currently the editor of *College Literature* and a Professor of English and Comparative Literature at West Chester University. In his first poetry collection *Others Must Dance for the Lord Dionysus Now*, Myrsiades employs the Greek myths in order to comment on such sociopolitical and cultural issues as the situation in Greece during the Greek civil war, the dictatorship, and the present, the Greeks' migration to America, or the migrant's disappointing return "home." For a general review of Myrsiades's poetry see Crawford.

[13] For instance, see Myrsiades's "An Immigrant Approaching Samos After a Long Absence" (37) and "Samos's Modern Olympians" (28), which is an ironic critique of the degeneration of Greek culture and people, particularly the elderly who look like ancient saints and as such they "rarely toil. / They loaf in solitude / in small asbestos chapels / waiting each twilight some peasant's offering / to fill the single oil lamps that hang before their icons" (28). Additionally, see Myrsiades's ironic poem "The Glory that Was Greece" (16), where an ancient marble statue hurries to imitate Western cultural ideals and forms starting with "thrice-weekly English lessons."

[14] Bean was born in Athens just before the outbreak of World War II. In her early twenties, she visited the United States in order to practice her English. She then decided to transfer to the University of Pittsburgh to continue her studies. There she discovered that in America she could have "electives—that students could actually make some decisions regarding their own education" (personal communication), and so she decided to stay permanently. Bean, who is a supervising and training analyst and

faculty member of the Philadelphia School of Psychoanalysis, uses poetry writing to manage the countertransference feelings that are induced during the treatment of her patients, as well as during her lectures and seminars. For Bean, a poem is a way "to receive and ingest, organize and digest, incorporate and synthesize new information utilizing both the primary and secondary process of thinking" ("We start with Wishes" 39). See also Bean's article "The Poetry of Countertransference," where she explains that countertransference means the response of the analyst to the patient's emotional state (348). She says that her poems have been like "stepping stones" giving her something to stand on, and that writing poems functions as a way to document her countertransference feelings, as a container, as an artifact, as a means to "organize, understand, and integrate new cognitive and affective learning," and, finally, as a diagnostic tool (349). See also her "Managing the Countertransference through Poetry Writing," and "Victoria: A Study of Countertransference through Poetry Writing."

[15] See also Cambanis's poem "Return" (*Traffic* 35), where the speaker sadly realizes that when the migrants return to their pre-American "home," nobody "will be interested in our discovering / how to make the circles of pain square," implying the adverse circumstances they experienced in America. She sadly reaches the conclusion that, "On the other side of the gate / nobody will meet us."

[16] See Brennan 51.

[17] See also the poem "Night-Averof" by Paidoussi (*Νύχτες σε Δυο Ημισφαίρια* [Nights in Two Hemispheres] 27), where, in a sentimental and nostalgic voice, the speaker connects the history of Greece from antiquity and the mythic war of Troy through the dictatorship and the execution of communists by commemorating the women who sacrificed themselves in the name of liberation from foreign rule and civic strife.

[18] See Bita's poems "Civil War" (*FireWalkers* 34), "Blackout" (35), "Deterrence: Foskolo Square, 1944" (36), and "Elegy in the Sun" (37-38) about the hardships suffered by the Greek people during the German occupation and the civil war.

[19] Discussing Greek American immigrant autobiographies and, in particular, Nicholas Cage's *Eleni* (1983), Kalogeras points out that such texts are characterized by "an ethnic as well as an ideological polysemy that makes the construction of the speaking subject particularly problematic" (*Eleni* 78). Through the ambivalent view and "double validation" of "Greece" as an Orientalized physical and cultural space as well as a Westernized, and hence Hellenized, one, "the speaking subject participates in the production or reproduction and dissemination of the hegemonic

structures. This gives rise to a double claim: interiority and exteriority. The subject's interiority as a Greek guarantees an 'authentic' insider's representation of Greece; its exteriority, as an American, vouchsafes its positional superiority to its subject matter, that is, Greece" (79).

[20] Also, see Bita's poem Ο Χορός του Ζαλόγγου (The Dance of Zalongos), which is an account of the circumstances that led Greek women to perform this doomed dance during the Turkish occupation (*Ερινύες* [Furies] 50-53).

[21] Pagoulatou was born on the island of Cephalonia, Greece. After a series of personal misfortunes, she decided to migrate to the USA in 1963 (see Crossette). Her memoirs of her imprisonment and exile on several Greek islands during 1948-50 are included in her book *Exile: A Chronicle, 1948-1950*. Pagoulatou has published several books of poetry, all of them written in Greek with the English translation on the facing page. The short, often satirical and ironic, poems of *Pyrrhichios* focus on sociopolitical issues, life's hardships, and broken love relationships. Her poetry collection *Angels* expresses Pagoulatou's concern and compassion for all those people who suffer from poverty, war, exile, racism, classism, and all sorts of discrimination and danger, which ironically, even the angels cannot prevent. For a review, see Rexine. About Pagoulatou's book *The Nepenthes*, Rick M. Newton writes that "Pagoulatou's poems deal with the wounds that never close—namely, wounds caused by the death of parents and siblings, wounds inflicted on parents by maturing children, the wounds of people whose country is being taken bit by bit by aggressive invaders and occupiers—and the fruitless search for a lasting anodyne" (140). Pagoulatou has also published the books *Οι Πρεσβευτές* (The Ambassadors) (1985), a collection of her articles about Greek artists in America, and *Ο Μαγικός Κόσμος και 91 Άλλα Παράταιρα* (The Magic World and 91 Other Odd Pieces) (1983). Both these books contain articles in Greek, which were published while she was working for the Greek newspaper *Proini* of New York. Another collection of short articles in Greek, in the form of social commentary on various issues, is entitled *Από την Γιούζα* (From Giouza) (1984).

[22] Deuteronomy is the fifth book of the Old Testament. The title derives from Greek and it means a "copy" or "repetition" of the law, rather than "second law," which the etymology of the word suggests (www.britannica.com).

[23] The original Greek word for "fatherland" is πατρίδα, which is of feminine gender in Greek. I prefer the word "homeland" to "fatherland" because "homeland" is gender neutral and more appropriate to the meaning of the poem.

[24] I disagree with Apostolos Athanassakis's translation of the last line: "your own womb, O Mother Earth!" First, there is nothing equivalent in the original Greek text to be translated into "Mother Earth," and, second, I believe that the speaker here invokes her "home" country.

[25] Intensely patriotic and nostalgically nationalist is the poem "Από το Τραγούδι των Ελεφάντων (The Elephant's Song)" by Tasos Mouzakis (1931). In the poem, which is translated by Paidoussi, the speaker addresses Greece as his mother, while he emphasizes her gift for giving life, her virtue of patience, her glorious and painful long history, and her sacrifices for the sake of her children. His body becomes the extension of his mother, Greece:

> It is not your sacred bones
> it is my bones stationed within my body
> in transition
> seeking you. (99)

[26] Athas migrated to the United States at the age of eighteen and he died at the age of thirty-eight in New York City (1973). As Nikos Spanias writes in a short biographical note about him, Athas felt that in America he was liberated from old traditions. "Towards the end of his life he developed a highly orchestrated poetry of tragic forebodings which possessed a remarkable originality" (32). See Tzilianos's article "Θεοδόσης Άθας (Theodosis Athas)" and *Θεοδόσης Άθας: Φιλολογικό Μνημόσυνο για τον Ποιητή* (Theodosis Athas: Literary Memorial to the Poet).

[27] Naficy has coined a verb out of the noun "cathexis" which means "the concentration of emotional energy upon some object or idea."

[28] Naficy argues that fetishization is "a homeostatic mechanism by which exiles attempt to transform an unstable societas (empirical exilic community) into a stable communitas (symbolic exilic community)" (127). For nostalgic longing, fetishism and liminality, and exilic national imaginary, see Naficy 125-65.

[29] Rapport disagrees with the conventional sociological treatment of stereotypes as "overgeneralized, overdetermined, second-hand and partial perceptions which confuse description and evaluation, which merely reflect ideological biases, instinctual motivations and cognitive limitations." This way stereotypes "may be decried as sources of social pathology," that is racism, sexism, classism, or xenophobic aggression (270).

[30] Masry was born and raised in Kalamata, Greece. In Athens she studied law before moving to France (University of Aix-en-Provence) to pursue graduate studies in social and political theory, and then to the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, on a Fulbright fellowship, to earn a Ph.D. in political theory and psychology. Since 1975 she has been living and working in California. Apart from her lecturing positions at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and the University of California in San Diego for a brief period, she has been a writer, translator, and editor of numerous texts and books. In 1999, the International Society of Greek Writers in Canada awarded Masry the first poetry prize for her poem "Φωτογραφίες (Photographs)" (17). A. C. Daskalakis has praised Masry for the "fertile imagination, the inquisitive mind and the acute sensitivity" that are instilled in her poetry. Talking about her poetry collection in the same review, Masry says: "The intent of my poetry, as I see it, [is] to extend an invitation to the reader to join me in a sustained exploration of the very depths of the human condition, the daedalian architectonics of the human heart. [. . .], in taking those risks of . . . 'archeological excavation' in the rich and least known underside of the human heart, I do not aim at submitting to it, as to a powerful master, but rather at coming up to the surface with an increased awareness and greater tolerance for the weakness of human existence" (Daskalakis).

[31] Cambanis was born in 1944 on the island of Paros, and raised in Athens, where she also studied law. In 1967, she moved with her husband to the USA, where he pursued graduate studies. Although their initial plan was to stay in America for three or four years, they stayed permanently in Chapel Hill, where they also raised their family. Cambanis taught creative writing mostly at prisons in North Carolina as well as at schools. Apart from *The Traffic of the Heart*, which is her first poetry collection that was published, Cambanis, who was deeply affected by the dictatorship (1967-74) in Greece, wrote the one-act play *The Execution*, which is set in Greece and is about the resistance against the junta.

[32] As Alice Scourby notes, individualism and privacy have been notably absent in Greek life in contrast to the American ideal of the self-made person (*Greek Americans* 10). "Individualism lies at the very core of American culture" and it constitutes the morally correct and sacred right of a person to think and decide for oneself and live his or her life as one sees fit. Even the Americans' highest and noblest aspirations, both for themselves, their families, and society, are linked to their individualism (Bellah et al. 142).

[33] Vozikis is an ardent supporter of the use of the Greek language in his poetry and his life (personal communication). He was born in 1933 in Patra, Greece, and he moved to the US in 1976. He has published *Αλλά Ρύσαι Ημάς* [But Deliver Us] (in Greek), *Λιόφυλλα* [Olive Leaves] (epigrams in Greek), *Καθ'οδόν* [On the Road] (in Greek and in translation), *Εραστής* [Lover] (in Greek and in translation), *Ελληνική Γη* [Greek Earth] (in Greek and in translation) and *Φιλορροήματα* [Shedding of Leaves]

(in Greek). Prevalent in Vozikis's poetry is the nostalgia for "home," his strong sense of alienation and loneliness in America, his bitterness because of the political unrest in Greece, and the constant yearning to return "home," which however can never be fulfilled.

[34] Tzilianos was born in 1936 on the island of Cephalonia and he lives in New York. He is the co-editor of the Greek American literary magazine *New Hesperia*. Among other publications is his book of poetry in Greek entitled *Άνισες Φωνές* [Unequal Voices], where many of the poems are an ironic critique of both Americans and the Greeks in America, while the issue of the migrant's homelessness pervades the collection.

[35] Agritellis was born in Athens in 1933 and he moved to America in the late sixties. He studied physics and he does research in Space Physics. He published the poetry collection *Αιολικό Δίπτυχο* [Aeolian Diptych] in Greek, which, among others, includes highly nostalgic and patriotic poems in a lyric tone. About this book, Andonis Decavalles writes: "His prevalent theme, and feeling, is his nostalgia for his fatherland, which finds a wealth of means, manner, and tropes in expressing itself masterfully. Originality may not be one of his primary virtues but a personal voice making new what it has gathered is not absent" (562). For a review of the above book, see also Raizis. Agritellis has also published another collection of poems in Greek with similar themes entitled *Θεαύγεια* [Theavgia].

[36] Bita is a native of the island of Zante. She holds an MA in drama from the University of Miami. In the last few years Bita has toured with her one-woman shows, the most popular of which is "The Greek Woman through the Ages." Most of Bita's work focuses on women, their everyday life, their abuse by men, their dreams, and their painful experiences. Bita has written a book of stories (in English) entitled *Χτυπώντας τον Ουρανό* [Striking the Sky]. Her published poetry includes *Ανασκαφές* [Excavations], *Αστραπές στη Σάρκα* [Lightning in the Flesh], *Βακχικές Ωδές* [Bacchic Odes], *Ερινύες* [Furies], *FireWalkers*, *Fleshfire,* and *Σκίτσα απο Αίμα* [Blood Sketches]. She has also published a collection of stories *The Scorpion and Other Stories.*

[37] Savvas was born in 1939 and moved to the USA as a teenager. He is professor of English and Comparative Literature at San Diego State University. Among his publications are translations of Yannis Ritsos and Constantine Cavafy.

[38] Interestingly, the translator of the poem, who is Pagoulatou's daughter, omits the adjective that describes the "crucible" as "merciless." This is an instant whereby the translator becomes the mediator and interpreter between two cultures. Probably, the word "merciless" would be too

alienating for an American audience.

[39] See Said *Orientalism* 15.

[40] "Ξένη Γλώσσα" (18-19), translated by Laura Georgakakos in collaboration with the writer (personal communication).

[41] In effect, as Malkki argues, "[t]here has emerged a new awareness of the global social fact that, now more than perhaps ever before, people are chronically mobile and routinely displaced, inventing homes and homelands in the absence of territorial, national bases – not in situ but through memories of and claims on places that they can or will no longer corporeally inhabit" (52). Malkki is, however, quick to point out that exile or other forms of territorial displacement are not exclusively postmodern phenomena as people have always moved either through their own volition or through violence (52).

[42] I follow Jonathan Rutherford's definition of "difference" as designating a motif for the "uprooting of certainty. It represents an experience of change, transformation and hybridity, in vogue because it acts as a focus for all those complementary fears, anxieties, confusions and arguments that accompany change" (10).

[43] Alexander writes that where identity is concerned, writing in diaspora "can result in a curious sense of unselving. It is from this consciousness of unselving that I create my work. And so there is a subtle violence for me involved in the production of the work, even as this labor of writing is one of the most intimate things I do as a person" (128).

[44] See also Bean's poem "Heading for Pittsburgh" (17), where the migrant's in-between position is aptly described:

> I dream in the Mediterranean
> awaken on this turnpike
>
> It's not easy to make ends meet
> living here and there
>
> I am like a small animal
> scrambling amid falling rocks
> forbidden to turn around (17).

Also, see Paidoussi's poem "Immigrants" (*Νύχτες σε Δυο Ημισφαίρια* [Nights in Two Hemispheres] 55) in which the speaker refers to the migrants' life in America, where "Unsuspicious, / we promenade the sin of our seeds / in streets whose foreign names / we have learned to recognize / as we do the backs of our hands. / We just don't recognize each other."