

Introduction to the Special Issue¹

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Contemporary debates in cultural studies often focus on the influence of global economic processes on international, national, regional and local cultural productions, with creative works being subjected to analyses within the context of economic systems of production which are marked by the growing tendencies of neoliberalism and globalization. Anglophone literatures, cultures and media not only represent these trends but also embody the relationships between globalization and glocalization, between global and local identities, between the tendency towards the creolization of culture and the increasingly vocal calls for the preservation of ethnic and regional cultural specifics. Since the advent of mass production, mass consumption and mass communication has brought about a domain in which it is more and more difficult to identify a core which is capable of imposing cultural hegemony, the previously dominant theories of postmodernism and postcolonialism have lost the capacity to address the changing character of the globalized world.

Studies of the cultural mechanisms of identity construction by scholars such as Kirby (2009), Nealon (2012), Lipovetsky (2005), Bourriaud (2009) or Vermeulen and van den Akker (2010) suggest that the relationships between globalization, cultural production and identity construction are further complicated by the complex character of the global processes that have fundamentally reconfigured the economic, political, social and cultural spheres, with globalization largely seen as being responsible for the development of structural tension in postmillennial societies throughout the world. This tension is particularly apparent in the interactions between the discourses of globalization and identity. Since globalization has affected all traditional processes of identity construction, postmillennial societies undergo struggles for identity that include the replacement of determination by social standing or by obligatory determination, i.e., self-construction (Bauman 2001, Bornman 2003), the creolization of identities (Bourriaud 2009), the rise of hyperindividualism (Lipovetsky 2005) and pseudoautism (Kirby 2009), the collapse of a sense of community (Bauman 2001) and the rise of surrogate communities such as shared interest groups, professional groups or virtual groups (Bornman 2003). The appearance of new identities not only involves the emergence of a cosmopolitan identity marked by the sense of disembeddedness but also a global identity that implies “global self-reflection” and “identification with the total of humankind” (ibid.).

On the other hand, however, the pressure of globalization has also revitalized ethnic, regional, and communal identities and encouraged the emergence of “glocalization” (Robertson 1995) which integrates “innovative hybrid practices that local cultures have invented to assert their identity” (Tartaglia and Rossi 2015). It has also provoked an increase in regionalism rooted in local identity, i.e., a sense of identity which “harbours emotional and symbolic meanings that people ascribe to a sense of self and the attachment to place” (ibid.).

The authors of the texts included in this Special Issue, all of whom are members of the research team of the VEGA Project 1/0447/20 *The Global and the Local in Postmillennial Anglophone Literatures, Cultures and Media*, granted by the Ministry of Education, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic, have studied the processes of identity construction and identity struggles in their respective fields of interest, and their examinations of literary and media products collected here represent a valuable contribution to contemporary debate.

Adriana Saboviková, Silvia Rosivalová Baučėková and Zuzana Buráková approach the phenomenon of space from three different angles, with Karin Sabolėková adding a historian’s perspective to the issue, while Martina Martausova focuses on the microcosmos of family complementing the portrayal of space with the post-feminist gender perspective.

For **Adriana Saboviková**, the visualisation of place in British procedural television dramas outlined in **Mapping the Representations of Post-conflict Belfast: *The Fall* and *Marcella*** represents a platform on which the latest globalization tendencies are confronted with the regional and local characteristics of contemporary social conditions in Northern Ireland. Saboviková's study of this televisual discourse is enriched by **Karin Sabolíková**'s analysis of ongoing historic changes in Northern Ireland. In **The Vulnerability of the Good Friday Agreement in Light of Brexit**, Sabolíková adds a political and economic dimension to the debate by examining the impact of the Brexit referendum of 2016 on the fragile peace settlement implemented through the framework of the 1998 Good Friday Agreement.

The discussion of landscape continues in **Zuzana Buráková**'s study of a selected aspect of American literary discourse in **The End of the Landscape at the End of the World** where regional spaces encounter the global and universal territories of the writer. The study of the literary portrayal of London's urban space in **Wandering Through London, Getting Nowhere: The Inescapability of Place in Zadie Smith's *NW*** leads **Silvia Rosivalová Baučeková** to the discovery of intriguing relationships between the setting, narrative and class hierarchies. Last but by no means least, **Martina Martausová** reveals how post-feminist sensibilities are transformed into the representation of characteristics of the microspace of family in American cinema in her article titled **What the Hell Do I Do with the Child?: The Persistence of the Father in American Cinema**.

Notes

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