

Description of Funded Research Projects

1st Call for H.F.R.I. Research Projects
to support Post-Doctoral Researchers

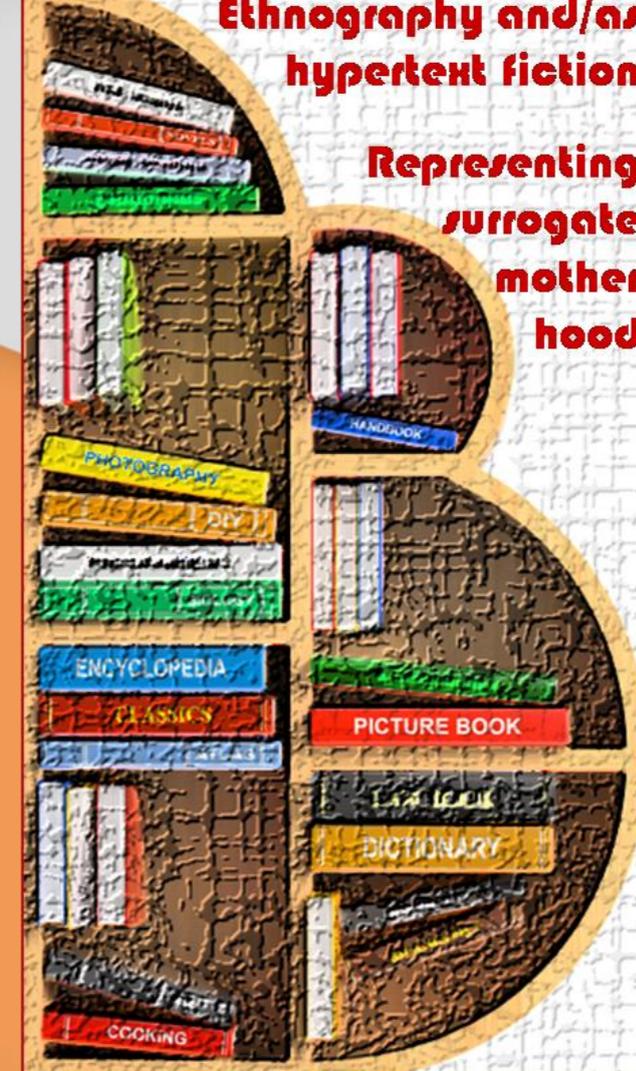


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Research Project Title:

**Ethnography and/as hypertext
fiction: representing surrogate
motherhood**

Principal Investigator:
Anna Apostolidou



Popular Title:
**Surrogate motherhood represented through
digital literature**

Scientific Field:
Social Anthropology

Host Institution:
**Panteion University of Social and
Political Sciences**



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The research project employs the emerging social practice of surrogate motherhood as a focal point in order to address digital ethnographic textuality differently. Its aim is threefold: firstly, it attempts an ethnographic study of surrogate motherhood, which will be qualitatively approached via participant observation and interviewing 'pairs of mothers' (the surrogate and the social mother). Secondly, it seeks to interrogate the practices of ethnographic writing by proposing that the final text of research findings may be presented in a form of fiction writing, namely short stories. Thirdly, it supports the opening up of the ethnographic text in new forms of mediation, by attempting the creation of an ethnographic hypertext with links to multimedia material (papers, videos & photos, interview recordings and excerpts) that will facilitate the non-linear reading of fictional ethnography and its access by non-expert readers. The research stages include: a) tracing the key-themes that emerge from the experience of surrogate motherhood in Greece, b) theoretical and empirical interrogation of the limits between ethnographic writing and fiction, in proposing the production of research-based fiction, c) creation of multi-layered ethnographic texts by using hypertext narration and multimedia material that enhances contemporary non-linear reading practices, and d) involvement of research informants and non-academic actors in the research project through online commentary.

The final deliverables include: a bilingual online platform that will record the ethnographic progress, seven research-based fictional short stories which will be presented in a digital hypertext form (both in Greek and in English), and three academic papers detailing the research planning, implementation and findings. In a new era of readership, research and digitization of art and scholarship, such an undertaking timely places fiction/hypertext ethnography in the growing field of digital humanities and renders the ethnographic text an open body for interrogations by wider audiences.

The research project has two main purposes. Firstly, it aims at identifying the main issues that arise by the practice of surrogate motherhood in Greece concerning kinship ties, parenthood, body, medical intervention, etc. Secondly, it aims at theoretically addressing the affinities between ethnographic and literary writing, thus rendering the results of social research more accessible to non-expert audiences through the language of literature.

With the incorporation of ethnographic material (photos, interviews, scientific texts and findings) in the resulting digital stories containing active links, the hypertexts will be accessible and commented online by researchers, surrogate mothers and the wider public. The familiarization and affective participation of non-expert audiences in key concepts and conclusions of contemporary social sciences is the predominant social impact of this study.

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Having been awarded this grant has changed the way I view my academic prospects. Since I obtained my PhD I have tried working in various related fields without abandoning my research interests, which has been increasingly hard to do in recent years. The H.F.R.I. Grant is one of the greatest opportunities of my career and an encouraging confirmation that innovation is not acknowledged solely by institutions abroad. The opportunity to experiment with the limits of my scientific field, to work among esteemed colleagues who share my passion for research, and the responsibility bestowed to me to coordinate a research team, are unique challenges which I am certain will greatly enrich my academic and personal capacity.

*The Principal Investigator,
Anna Apostolidou*

Funding

Amount: **150,000 €**

Duration: **24 months**

Foundation: **H.F.R.I.**





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