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# Multiple intergenerational identities: Greek – Australian women across generations

## Abstract

'Who am I?', 'What am I?' constitute a dramatic moment in self-realization. The posing of the question 'who am I?' is a critical step towards the realization of, examination of, and apprehension in the creation of identity. The question of identity is a central issue in social, cultural and psychological studies, and as such is very relevant to migrant communities and their associated issues. Identity is composed, transformed and functioned in the course of life through multiple, polysynthetic interactions with the environment. Identity does not constitute an unalterable perception as it is a product of a dynamic process of psychological, social and historical construction. This article is an examination of three generations of women, who have self-defined themselves in a hyphenated process of identification – as in Greek-Australian – in a multicultural social framework that proves the hypothesis that identity is a strong personal mystification that encompasses multiple stages and incorporates a variety of compound elements for its formation.

## Introduction

The fundamental concept of 'self' has been an ingrained enunciation in philosophical processes since ancient times as expressed dynamically in the phrase 'know thyself', and later on as elaborated critically by Aristotle. In modern times Freud, Lacan, Foucault, Marx, as well as more recently

renowned scholars like Erikson, Durkheim, Weber, and Levi Straus, sociologists, anthropologists and psychoanalysts have created an immense dialectical volume of scholarship on social identity. In more recent times the process of rapid instability, due to world changes, human mobilization and globalization, is incomparable with other historical epochs. The historical human migrations, technology, Internet and the transformation of old values, world-views and cosmo-theories portend the emergence of a multitude of multilayered and complex processes of identification. Erikson et al. (1972:274) claimed that 'the study of identity becomes as strategic in our times as the study of sexuality was in Freud's time'. Further interpretation of the statement leads us to realize the parallels between then and now, and to conclude that the same hegemonic forces that repressed sexuality in Freud's time would be able to repress identity today. Bastos and Bastos (2010: 314) asserted that:

*Indeed, both forces – the search of Identity and sexuality -are strong emotionally ambivalent processes linking the self-contradictory organization of the mind to the self-contradictory organization of the world; they begin in the bonds of individuals to their parents and siblings in families and communities of descent and that of personal identities to familial, communitarian, ethnic and national identities (and sometimes religious identities) in ways that state politicians and bureaucratic managers, philosophers or social scientists cannot control or manage.*

### Sociological/anthropological paradigms

Further, in their thoroughly analysed project, Bastos and Bastos (2010: 316) gave a reflective proliferation in the theoretical framework of social-historical background of the concept. They refer to four anthropological paradigms that are 'grounded in particular philosophical roots and very unlikely to break free of these structural constrains' (2010: 316). The first paradigm encompasses two classic essentialist positions that are characterized by two distinct domains: nature and reason. By using neo-Kantian statements, they declare that the 'process to become human is related to the unmediated passage from nature to culture'. This position is backed by socio-biology, evolutionary psychology and the new discoveries in genetics, and it maintains the view that human behaviour can be understood through 'evolutionary psychology'. Nature has its own laws; phenomena like diversity, violence,

social hierarchization, are natural phenomena. Whereas socio-historical phenomena like imperialism, colonialism (suppression to the black into the superior white) and capitalism are viewed as historical applications of natural laws. In this philosophical field, science and theories are designed to be competitive as well – an almost ‘Darwinian struggle for survival’ (Popper 1986: 87). In the field of anthropology a variety of theories exist between countries, even universities, schools, academic individuals et cetera. In social and human sciences, which intellectual products will be exported in the globalized world, or which ones will be forgotten is decided by the ‘intellectual fashion’ of the day.

The second anthropological paradigm takes its roots from neo-Platonic, neo-Kantian philosophy and law, and it originated in the United States. This version views man as a rational, reflexive and moral being governed by reason; his main goal in life is to search for ‘the absolute identity of the Ego with itself’ (Bastos & Bastos 2010: 319). Human beings have to struggle to discover and maintain a moral identity, through education, good practice, law and order as well as moral universalism. In this rhetoric, ‘Personal and group identities must be submitted to the rational values stemming from the social contract and democracy’. There is a world that promotes good family moral values and may be develops a ‘supra-national world citizen or cosmopolitan identities, which are seen as non-ethnic’ (Bastos & Bastos 2010: 319).

These two essentialist views were challenged by two different paradigms, namely non-essentialist views, which proclaim different world-views and the ability to inspire significant social movements. ‘The difference between these two perspectives resides in the primacy of a dramatic, psycho-historical vision, or that of a sociological and culturalist (neo-Durkheimian), normative and self-regulatory perspective’ (Bastos & Bastos 2010: 319). Society in one version is a crucial element while the human being is mirrored as a self-sufficient individual, ethnocentric and self-contained. Society however is supportive and transcendental as well. ‘Thus in that perspective identity has a transcendental monopoly on the social monad, instituted as super-individual, organized as political actor in the arena of international competition’ (Bastos & Bastos 2010: 320). This view which proclaims that it is ‘post-Durkheimian’, is founded on neo-Kantian discourse and may be seen to be drawn from Aristotle’s *Politics*. As Aristotle tells us, ‘The thing that owned is in the same relation with its owner as the part with the whole: and the part

is distinguished from the whole, and belongs to it' (et al Aristotle, Politics, 1995). According to this philosophy, man is moulded and determined by his surroundings, such as, environment, as well as economic, technological, historical and cultural contexts. The social roles that individuals adopt are functional, and spring from the models created by society and the state. This structural-functionalist paradigm produces an illusion that the individual contributes to society's homogenization and therefore promotes an ideal, functional social cohesion. Bastos and Bastos (2010: 322) critically imply that this sociological approach signifies the end of culturalist anthropological research.

The fourth sociological paradigm of identity is based on Freudian and Marxist scholarship, and has been adopted and created by sociologists, anthropologists and psychologists in the twentieth century western world. It is a multidimensional and generative model that encompasses a critical approach to the role played by the state as well as models and theories developed in order to support the practices of the state:

*These structural-dynamic models, as bottom-up models, rest upon research on the great bi-directional articulations of the organization of the soma with that of the psyche (Freud), and the organization of the psyche with that of the world at large (Marx, Freud, Piaget et al., Erikson, Marcuse, etc.). They also build upon typologies, based upon phases, transitions and crises, linked to the great historical, cultural, cognitive and psychopathological tendencies of the structural-dynamic organization of the contradictions of the psyche (Freud) and between actors of social life and history, e.g. those between genders, generations, social classes, civilizations, states or ethnicities (Marx and Freud) and variable scales and geometries, as generators of oppression, defensive resistance and emancipator struggle. (Bastos & Bastos 2010: 322).*

The authors implied that sociological research mainly controls the social order; they also familiarized audiences and readers with recognizable actions and those that support controllable identities. The authors also problematized their own situation and projected a problem to the readers of the role played by sociologists, psychologists and anthropologists for the discussion of the concept of identity. Who after all will their scholarship benefit? The state, the people, or only themselves? The authors (Bastos & Bastos 2010: 423), concluded that the above mentioned model, which resulted from their Marxist-Freudian combination, was the result of times in which migrations

were not a problem. The newly emerged situation of immense global migration and human mobilization, with all the relevant issues, the liberal citizenship, the post-modern ideals of cosmopolitanism, the threats for the modern state, and the liquidation of modern societies, was not taken into account in their scholarship. In the new era of post-postmodernism and globalization a new language is needed to express the projected self in a particular society. But before getting to that, what role has been played by language?

## Language

The study of theorization of Language originated with Saussure (Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics* (1983); he marked the start of a new and highly influential way to think about language. The division of sign (language is in the system of social signs) between *structure* (signified or *langue*) and *surface* (signifier or *parole*), led to the philosophical position of structuralism. This intellectual trend influenced American and European philosophers-linguists like Charles Sander Peirce (1991), Ronald Barthes (1993), sociologists, feminists and anthropologists; Claude Levi-Strauss (1969, 1978). It took the idea of linguistic structuralism and applied it to the study of non-western, small-scale societies and tribal communities (Warren Kidd, (2002: 142). Jacques Derrida et al. (1978) argued also that we need to pull signs apart to see what they are hiding from us, to separate the sign from the object in order to see more clearly what the real truth of the matter is (Warren Kidd, 2002:150). This is what he called 'deconstruction'. In order to explain the production and reproduction of the textual meaning Derrida created the notion of *différance*, which is the combination of two words, *deferral* and *difference*, but phonetically is not distinguishable. Derrida (he cited in Anthias) wanted us to realize that the meaning of the words and signs can never fully summon forth the true meaning unless they are defined by additional words from which they differ, hence the word *deferral*, but the meaning is forever different, 'catch me if you can ...' (Anthias 2002: 495). The second word, *difference*, has the notion of that which differentiates elements from one another; it creates a binary of oppositions and hierarchies that underpin the meaning itself. "These ideas allow us to think about identity as an issue of "difference" and power" (Warren Kidd, 2002: 154). The role of power in culture, identity and language is a theme that also dominates the work of Michel Foucault and his ideas have influenced a great many sociologists.

(et al, Foucault, 1984, 1989a, 1989c). Stuart Hall is one of those scholars that in his highly theorized text of identity, *Who needs Identity?* (1996) highlights amongst others, the contribution of Foucault in the field of social studies. Bastos and Bastos (2010) criticized deconstructionist scholars in the way that they have theorized linguistically the notion of identity; for them, identity is beyond language and binary categorization, although these rhetorical tools would contribute to the definition of identity. For Bastos and Bastos (2010: 327),

*The question cannot therefore be solved merely by changing analytical parameters, but rather by leaving behind forms of thought bound to categories, which are a product of the Simplified Thought (Morin 1981 :21-22) which skotomises the most dramatic dimensions of realities beyond language (as hunger, violence or terror), and which are revealed as mutilating (Morin 1992), (as binarized categories are).*

### Ethnicity and ethnic/cultural identities

Any individual is able to participate in multiple, various and different totalities, like family, race, religion and political parties. Identity then may be defined according to both social processes and the hegemonic, organizational criteria that differentiate those processes. In this case a complicated system is created, which consists of multiple, personal and collective identifications that defines the identity's relationships. In this framework an individual's cultural identity is based, on one hand on those elements that characterise the individual as a member of a particular group, and on the other, in their personal quaintness. Thus when we attempt to study identity at the collective and/or cultural level, in reality, we expect to study an individual's main perceptions, opinions, attributions, and at the same time to acquire their ways of thought and actions through which their identity is synthesized and transformed. The construction however of a cultural identity is a result of conscious choice. Resulting from the individual's attempt to legalize and differentiate themselves from 'others' – the legality that allows individuals to proclaim, 'I am what I am becoming'.

The basis of the construction of this cultural identity is the existence of one common and long tradition. Through this historical, traditional framework the collective identity of a particular cultural group is expressed, confirmed, and partially composed. On the other hand, the preservation of

this tradition – and further for cultural identity – it depends solely on people's survival imagination, their creativity, their knowledge, their willingness and resistance to save and cultivate it. As Anthias (2000: 497) claimed:

*Issues of collective identity, while related to those of self-identities, in the sense that the self is embedded in collective idioms and draws defining characteristics from them – contain important processes that can be singled out in terms of boundaries of otherness and sameness, while an essential step in the production of Self is the boundary of the self from the 'other' – in the first place the recognition of the bodily and psychic separation from the mother – in the case of the collective identity it involves the step of recognizing the many others that can stand as 'selves', i.e. in the family, in the ethnic group, in the gender and so on – and similarly that are constructed as collective others.*

Cultural identity is rather a synonymous or closely connected with ethnic identity. Ethnic identity derives from ethnicity and ethnicity derives from the Greek word *ethnos* – ἔθνος – which describes people's collectiveness. The dominant view in literature, promotes ethnic identity as a particular type of cultural identity, which constructed through a shared culture and historical tradition, denotes positive attributes – unlike racism that promotes negative notions. The researcher is also faced with different trends and views, approaches and versions in the field of interdisciplinary studies (Geertz, 1973, Jenkins 1994). The terms ethnic and ethnicity however are used in social studies and refer mainly to migrant groups, usually in a multicultural society, like that of Australia. Ethnicity encompasses identities that reflect a group's common ancestry, language and religion, it also promotes the sense of belonging to this particular group. For example, Australians of Greek descent share the same ancestry, language and religion, and create their own different collective, cultural identity which defines them as different from other ethnic groups in multicultural Australian society. Their hybrid 'Greekness' denotes a collective ethnic and cultural identity that incorporates various elements, derived from their common ancestry, but when combined and filtered with their 'Australianness' they create something new. How different are Greek-Australians becoming from those Greeks in Greece, in the course of their life in Australia? At what level is the course of their differentiation from one generation to another? The hyphen that separates the two nouns in Greek-Australian gives equal value to both words. Greek-Australians are aware of the

equal value given to the two parts of this description: they are both Greek and Australian, and both identities have equal value in their lives.

### Self-defined/hyphenated Greek-Australian identities

This paper discusses oral narratives from Greek–Australian women across three generations. It aims to reveal the shifting identities that penetrate inter-generationally, enunciate their formation, transformation, changes and development over time. Generational research is applied to the same family in order to witness the changes within the Greek family and its surroundings.



Greek-Australian women in three generations (Sydney, 2009). From left: Grandmother, Maria Simou, granddaughter Rosa Staveri, daughter Eirini Staveri

### First generation: stack in an imagined past!

First generation Greek migrant, women who came to Australian principally after the Second World War carried with them the values, the customs and traditions of post-war modern society that was influenced very much by essentialist, sociological doctrines. Greek migration was directed mainly to Western Europe (mainly Germany) and Australia after the second World War, and less toward America (Greek migration to America was significant before the second World War). Most women of the first migrant generation have been living in Australia for 50 to 65 years (up to 2009 – the year this research was conducted), but they never learnt English appropriately and were never completely socialized in a way that would permit them to



develop a transnational identity; they lived most of their life in the intimate margins of the Greek community in Australia. The Greek Orthodox Church is where they found their real selves; not surprisingly then, most of the women involved in this research maintain orthodoxy as the major element that characterizes their identity. First generation migrant women would never think that they could be anything else other than Greek Orthodox. According to Yiannakis (1996: 151), first generation migrant women keep the responsibility of maintaining traditional Greek family values in order to transfer them to the rest of the family members – namely their children and grandchildren. These values however are transferred in a hybrid social environment (Greek and Australian) and gradually create a new identity: the hyphenated Greek-Australian identity. As a result of not learning English the first generation women, mainly, have imposed indirectly upon the whole family to retain, and for the third generation to learn, Greek in order to maintain communication in intra-family relationships.

Additionally, the results of this research would be different if our question was formulated with the standard question ‘What are you, or what is your identity?’, Instead, we posed a more intimate and psychologically constructed question of ‘How do you feel, Australian or Greek?’, followed by a sub-question, ‘What do both concepts mean to you?’ The direct question of ‘What are you, Australian or Greek?’ could confuse the interviewees and possibly have different results. A sense of locality identifies mainly the first generation, rather than the conscious choice of a psychological realization of a self-defined, hyphenated identity. As one interviewee claimed:

*... I am Greek; if you open my heart you will find Greece. I love Egypt as well ... although I did hate her for a while ... [Think about that] – we were born there and we never receive[d] citizenship. However, although I was born in Egypt, I do not feel any nostalgia for her any more. Australia is now my country, and here ... I cannot say ... I have been living a good life ... Our parents, who were Greeks [they were born in Greece], gave us Greek principals in life and we passed them to our children ... And I believe that our children will pass them to their children ... (G1: Aggeliki, Sydney, 2009).*

Aggeliki self-defined herself as ‘Greek’ and not as Greek-Australian even though she has lived in Australian for more than 50 years. Lack of language learning, education and interactive socialization kept the first generation

behind to create a hyphenated Greek-Australian identity. The meaning of their life is attached mainly to past events and the significance of events is subject to various notions depending upon the circumstances of the present. The present is used to reconstruct the past – affiliation with Greece and Greek tradition, loss of nostalgia for Egypt – which in the process assign meaning for the present – ‘Australia is my country now’.

Another significant factor to discuss in relation to first generation Greek-Australian women is the passage of time. Time is moving on, both in the home country and the host country; many women did not experience the passing of time in Greece – except for a short visit after many years living in Australia. Greece remained in their minds as an idealized image – idealized probably due to passing of time – this image is what they brought with them when they left home and remains, sometimes unalterable. Anthippe experienced a cultural sock when she visited the place she came from, and she does not want to go back to Greece. The Greece of today does not represent her preserved image of her youth; return for her is a kind of re-immigration to an alien country; she concentrates her life in family and religion. Religion identifies her today. As Anthippe stated:

*... Even though I live in Australia, I am not an Australian, I am Greek, although I do not want to go back to Greece ... I used to be living here ... If I would go back, I have to relocate myself in a different, alien environment ... Religion is the most significant element in my life now ... it has transform[ed] me as a human being here in Australia ... the church is everything for me... (B1: Anthippe, Sydney, 2009).*

The problematization of the relocation is expressed clearly here, being Greek in Australia does not help her to re-adjust in Greece, which as a place, is portrayed as ‘different and alien environment’. Maria A1, has lived in Australia (Sydney) for 61 years. She arrived in Australia when she was only twelve. Australia is her country, and she is one of the rare cases –for the first generation - that speaks English well. She visited Greece four times in her whole life, and during the last visit realized that she belongs to Australia:

*I kept the Greek values and I transform them to my children and my grandchildren ... but I loved Australia, the way of life and the values of liberalism that characterize the Australian society. I feel comfortable and happy and I do not want to stay in Greece ... Greece is not [the] same any more ... [there]*

*is nothing anything that I could remember[ed] ... and they treated me as [a] foreigner...so I am feeling very well here (A1: Maria, Sydney, 2009).*

Maria clearly differentiated herself from the Greeks in Greece, and she defined herself as 'Greek of Australia'. The hyphenated Greek-Australia identity does not represent Maria. Her idealized image of Greece has been created and maintained, but it does not agree with the real Greece. Maria keeps the image of Greece in her mind and the hybridization of her identity remains an illusion. Location and 'positionality' then – Australia or Greece – became a fact for determination of 'who Maria is'. As Anthias claimed:

*The focus on location (and translocation) recognizes the importance of context, the situated nature of claims and attributions and their production in complex and shifting locales. It also recognizes variability with some processes leading to more complex nature of positionality faced by those who are at the interplay of a range of locations and dislocations in relation to gender, ethnicity, national belonging, class and racialization (Anthias, 2000:502).*

Maria is not the only one that defined herself in relation to location or dislocation/relocation. Global mobility in recent years intensifies the phenomenon all over the world. This is a significant characteristic for all those people that found themselves in the position (positionality) of having to relocate to other places and to express a sense of belonging. In this case Maria feels 'home' in Australia, although she feels nostalgia for an image of Greece she left behind; she also concluded: 'I sent my children in the Greek school to maintain the Greek cultural values'.

Artemis defined herself with religion in relation to locality:

*I would like very much to live in Greece, but my family is here. I do not have any complaints for Australia, I love her as well .... but Greece is different ... [in religious terms] ... there is a little church on every hill, people are different, they have love for others ... especially for the oldies, there is a respect, it is not like here ... If I have a choice a would prefer to live in Greece, because I am Greek Orthodox ... (G1: Artemis, Melbourne, 2009).*

Artemis is attached to Greece for specific reasons: the sense of belonging in a place that religion has a strong connection in everyday life, and manifest in the many various 'little' churches. Artemis appreciates life in Australia, close to her family, but her psyche lives in a different place and time. She remained forever behind and surroundings did not penetrate her inner self.

She represents many women of this generation who did not learn the language but sacrificed themselves at home with children to transfer traditional Greek values and to help them create a more balanced Greek-Australian identity (see in the process, G2 Agathi, interview). For such women, time was spent working within the Greek community and its surroundings.

### **Second generation daughters: the choice to define yourself!**

Through a process of personal and social conflicts, second generation Greek-Australian women managed to reconcile the external and internal social contradictions that characterized their life. This was mainly in their formative years, when their life was dichotomized between the Greek traditional values of their family and community, and the liberal social values of Australian society. They successfully transubstantiated the traumatic experiences into an enriching formation, transformation and creation of a new identity. This identity is not a product of rejection, conflict or even guilt, but rather a thoughtful question of a conscious self that positioned itself in the process of continuous changes and transformations of becoming a Greek-Australian. Second generation women did not create the same identity as that of their mothers. They are not Greek in nationality nor Orthodox in religion, but mainly and above all, Greek-Australian; and they recognize without any guilt, that Australian social surroundings are an unquestionable part of their multilayered identity. As Agathi indicatively stated:

*I feel Greek, I adore Greece, and I travel a lot ... I follow the Greek traditions and the Greek values and principles, as I was instructed in them by my family, but I feel in the same way for Australia. I am tied with this country – Australia – I love her and I do not have any complaints about it. I never feel that I am not a part of this country no one makes me feel that I do not belong here, nor in the school as a child nether in the university or in my workplace. So I am feeling Greek but I am feeling Australian as well ... a Greek-Australian ... in both countries I have a very good time ... (G2: Agathi, Melbourne, 2009).*

Identity however is a conscious problematical issue throughout one's life; not all women have clear direction for a formation of identity even at a mature age. Individuals feel confused due to their upbringing in surroundings where parents and grandparents impose Greek values in an attempt to maintain a 'purity' of Greekness in the younger generation. But in the process of self-identification, both language and education determine in many cases,

modification, realization, and re-formation of cultural identity. The formation of identity depends not only on personal processes and identification, but also on the psychological existence of the particular group – in this case the Greek-Australian family and community – since ‘the construction of cultural self-identity [is] based on multiple membership, which in turn, depends on the current situation one is engaged’ (Papademetre 1994: 507).

Ioana confessed that the issue of identity was a painful process in her life. By experiencing a situation in which identity was imposed upon her, the cultural sock that she experienced during the acquaintance in a place to which she supposedly belonged – Greece – made her realize that her imagined identity was a mistake. The following narrative reveals the process of her personal and cultural identification, the modification, and the role played by language and learned culture, in order to create her identification as a Greek-Australian, without rejecting it:

*... I think that I will spend the rest of my life in order to comprehend which my identity is ... As I was growing up, I was thinking that I was Greek, because this is what I was told by my parents (especially my father); he imposed it constantly on me, ‘you are a Greek’ he was continually telling me ... and I thought I was only that [a Greek], until the moment I visited Greece and I discovered that I was a foreigner (ξένη). Finally after many years of conflict and continuous redefinition, I now believe that I am ... I am feeling a Greek-Australian and I am very comfortable with this definition. My tertiary education in Modern Greek Studies opened new directions for my knowledge in regard to Greek culture and language and helped me to re-evaluate my Greekness. I am certainly Greek-Australian, and I remain ‘Greek’ [without the Australian], only when I hear Greek music... Greek music makes me feel ecstatic ... it penetrates my inner self ... (G2: Ioana Sydney, 2009).*

The sample of this research identified similarities in the manner for the group in terms of their acculturation and the differences in the way individuals dealt with the process of their identification. It is always the parents – in this case the parents are simultaneously first generation migrants – that face the universal concept of the so-called ‘generation gap’. In this case the problem is doubled, it is more intense and complex. Children and youth feel embarrassed by their parents as they try to fit in; parents faced marginality, and lack of communication creates conflicts. It seems that strong family ties

and maintenance of the Greek way of life – Greek language and religion – (see above B2, Anthippe) emerged dynamically in a rebellious way; Anthoula admitted now that ‘she was embarrassed’ to be Greek, she wanted to be equal with and the same (‘sameness’) as her peers.

*When I was young ... we [all of us children of migrants] are ashamed to say that we are Greeks, because they called us names we are ashamed because our own parents were Greeks ... and we hid it ... slowly we understood and during the maturity I started to feel proud of my heritage ... I came to realize that I am Greek, my parents are Greek ... I love Australia and especially the city of Sydney, because I was born here, but I love Greece as well, perhaps more, because there are my roots. When I am in Australia I said that I am Australian with Greek descent, when I am in Greece I said I came from Australia but I am Greek ... (B2: Anthoula, Sydney, 2009).*

Anthoula shows the path of rejection, conflict and integration in her formative years. She did not want to be a child of Greek migrants and she (and her siblings) hid their Greek heritage and background. Children and youth want to be the same and included – to be a Greek, in some cases and places, automatically excluded you. Anthoula’s narration reveals the traumatic process that children of first generation migrants experienced. It was that period of time when the White Australian policy prevailed and the host society rejected difference in colour, race, and culture. ‘I did not want to be Greek, I tinted my hair, I did not speak Greek and I did not want to go to the Greek church... but now [after many years], I am grateful to my mother who insisted I learn Greek....Greek language and culture have enriched my identity and made me what I am now’.

It seems, however that the more the resistance to assimilate at home, the more children and youth wanted to feel included. And Anthippe, (see above), was exclusively Greek and Orthodox. In the course of her life however, Anthoula came to realize that to be Greek is not so bad after all – probably when the official policy changed and accepted multiculturalism and tolerance to the notion of difference. She has also developed a hyphenated, transnational identity, feeling comfortable in both countries, in both cultures and now integrated harmoniously within the Australian society.

Eirini has a different experience as a child of migrant parents. Maria (above) came to Australia at a very young age; she learnt the language and

integrated in the difficult years when to be something else, except Australian, was strictly unacceptable. By having this different experience (Anthippe, see above), her daughter as a child has had a different process of identification within Australian society that lacked Anthoula's traumatic and/or rebellious behaviour, during her formative years:

*I went to a school with Australian girls and I was very popular with Australian girls that didn't consider me as a wog because I could identify with them. But then again I had Greek friends as well and I was one of the woggiest girls ... I am swinging pendulum. Australian-Greek, Greek-Australian. But when people ask I say I am Greek, born in Australia. It is a privilege to know that the Greek history is so well respected and that every word comes from the Greek language. I am proud and happy and I feel it. With a religion thing (Orthodoxy), I don't feel the Greek inside me (A2: Eirini, Sydney, 2009).*

During the process of acculturation in the new environment, first generation parents dealt with a double social phenomenon. First they have to realize, carry out and develop their process of acculturation and gradual identification (who they are becoming in the new country?), and then to anticipate the even more complex phenomenon of their children's acculturation. This appears to be more complex because this notion is intermingled with the process of adolescence; their persistence to maintain Greek traditional values stem from their ignorance for the language, values, and principals of Australian society. As semi-educated young parents without the command of the English language, immediate or even gradual acculturation for these individuals became really problematic. They experienced a double marginalization, as women and as migrants. The fear also of marginalization, isolation and alienation from their children empowered them with the persistence of maintenance of Greek traditional values. As Artemis said, '... I did not go to school to learn English, there were not any facilities and ... any way, we came here to work ... and to educate our children ... we sacrifice ourselves for our children ... but we did not want to lose them in an alien (for us) society' (G1: Artemis, Melbourne, 2009). Narratives of these individuals touched deeper political questions and at this point its analysis is beyond the scope of this short paper.

### Third generation: a demand to return!

Third generation Greek-Australian women do not seem to be characterized by the phobias, uncertainties, internal conflicts, rejection or assimilatory guilt of the previous generation. Our sample shows a great appreciation of their heritage which proves that third-generation women accepted who they are, and who they were becoming in the course of their young lives in Australia. As this writer claimed (Bender 1968: 360-70), 'what the son wishes to forget the grandson wishes to remember'. It seems then that this complies with our case in this research. This discussion shows that the grandchildren of the first migrant generation are secure in their Australianness, that there is no doubt that they are Australian, and their additional heritage of difference – a glorious Hellenic past – makes them proud. Eirini is one of these third generation (fourth on her mother's side of the family), who identifies herself more Greek than Australian, culturally. Greek culture plays a vital role in the formation of her identity:

*I feel more Greek ... on a cultural level, I feel that the way I have been brought up, culture is a huge part of a person's life and their identity and everything about them, and for me, Greek culture is very rich, and there is so much in it. When I look at Australian culture, for me there is nothing distinct there. For me Australian culture is an amalgamation of everything that has been brought to this country so, not that's a bad thing, but I in a way, feel that I am here for a reason, because if you compare me with someone from Greece and do a DNA test we are the same ... we are around the world for a reason because we are supposed to keep things going. And I feel that I have a job to do. I do think that I am an open person. I studied psychology, I don't consider myself a closed person but I do feel that I have to take on as many Greek things as I can and keep them going (G3, Eirini, Sydney, 2009).*

Eirini did not reject, question or become confused by the nature of her identity – she even felt that she is destined to play a role in the maintenance and continuity of Greek culture and language in Australia. Her mother, however (see above G2: Ioana, 2009) is still uncertain of what her identity is; her traumatic experience and the cultural shock she encountered in her formative years was so deep that even in her maturity she has doubts in regard to her identity. She keeps trying to find herself in a society that has become more complex; but Eirini, her daughter, overcomes the difficulties and



demands a return to her heritage and cultural roots. Continuity of the cultural values is important for many third generation Greek-Australian women. As Zaharoula stated:

*... when I am in Australia I feel more Greek, but when I am in Greece I feel more Australian. I am sure now that I am Greek-Australian ... I have Greek cultural heritage inside me, and I do not want this element to be lost ... but at the same time I am Australian, because both me and my parents, we are born here ... It is not possible to say that you are only Greek ... You are by definition an Australian, at the same time ... although the children at school teased me (because I am not blond with blue eyes) ... never I felt embarrassment or traumatic ... I am just different ... never have I hidden my heritage ... on the contrary I am very proud of it ... (B3: Zaharoula, 2009, Sydney).*

Zaharoula, has a strict grandmother (see above, B1Anthippe, Sydney) that proclaimed herself as Greek Orthodox in religion to define her existence in Australia. Her mother (B2, Anthoula), was confused in her formative years and rejected entirely her cultural roots, but Zaharoula, finds that her heritage defines her in Australia. She wants to keep inside her Greekness and not to be lost. Zaharoula speaks fluent Greek and although she is very much involved with Greek things, at the same time, she behaves naturally in the broader Australian society as a future legal professional. Although, also, she probably had some problems at school because of her looks (not blond hair with blue eyes), she accepts her difference with pride and never hides that she is of Greek descent. On the contrary, she is very proud of it. Her identity is flexible and inclusive – Greek in Australia, Australian in Greece. She has confidence in her difference – that she creates a unique identity or a combination of completed identities. Both Greek and Australian, without one overarching the other, but both complete and inclusive.

*I am Australian Greek ... Australia first ... I have been to Greece and I love it ... I love it, it was like home ... I felt that I could live there. Here [Australia] is home now ... but I love to go there! ... growing up I had a lot of Greek friends, Italian and Australian and there is difference; we have more culture and when they are coming to my home, there is food everywhere and people everywhere ... it is very full on. Everyone is friendly, and kissing and hugging and they welcome you into their home and feed you ... That is what my friends would receive when coming to our home and they appreciate that (A3: Rosa, Sydney, 2009).*

Rosa, Maria's granddaughter (A1: Maria, Sydney), defines herself as Australian-Greek. Greece is 'nice', probably as a holiday destination, which feels 'like home', and feels good to have a connection with, but it is not however a 'home', because home is in Australia. The home in Australia though has Greek colours, maintains Greek traditional values of openness, inclusiveness and hospitality; it is a 'full house', a different house that visitors receive a different message about life and relationships. Rosa maintains that this is the Greek part for her identity. She defines herself in relation to other young people of her age and she is able to see the difference. Aggeliki expressed almost the same conviction with the other third-generation young women and denoted, with examples, the acceptance of her double identity:

*I feel both Greek and Australian ... I was born and grew up in a Australian environment ... English is my first language, but I follow Greek traditions; thus I think I am both ... I do not think that these two conflicted ... when I am going to Greece I do not feel at home; when they ask me, I said I come from Australia, I do not say that I am Greek ... In Australia I say that I am Greek, or Australian with Greek descent ... well may be I was born here, but I was nurtured with Greek values ... for example I was feeling proud for both the Sydney [2000] and Athens [2004] Olympic games...(G3: Aggeliki, Melbourne, 2009).*

It is obvious that third-generation women not only do not feel guilt, anxiety or embarrassment, but they wish a return to their heritage, to their ancestral roots. They appreciate strongly not only the Greek traditional values that 'nurtured' them in Australia, but for some of them, Greece as a place, as a location, plays a vital role in the formation of their double identities. Greekness, rather, and not Australianness, becomes a solid element that not only enriches them as citizens in this multicultural society, but functions as a psychological tool to maintain a 'healthy', personal identity. As Vaughan and Hogg (2010) wrote:

*My identities probably grew from the many different social relationships in my life. These are anchoring points ranging from close personal relationships with friends and family, from relationships and roles defined by work groups and professions, and from relationships defined by ethnicity, nationality and religion.*

## Conclusion

The analysis of the findings retains the same process in order to investigate the resistance of Greek identity from the first generation down

to the third. The sample shows us that a gradual hybridification takes place from the first generation to the third, but that the core of Greekness is never abandoned entirely – rather, it is transformed into something completely new. This identity is not similar to that of the Greeks in Greece, or with Australians in Australia; it is not the same with other ethnic identities, nor with the rest of Anglo-Australians. It is a hyphenated Greek–Australian identity – neither entirely Australian nor Greek, but both, and in equal value – which has been created gradually from the first generation to the third by encompassing the values, principles and beliefs of both cultures, from both countries.

It seems therefore that in the course of life people are able to develop multiple ‘selves’ which compound the self and reflect an equal number of identities, especially people that have the experience of dislocation/relocation in other places with different languages, ways of life, and other socio-cultural differences. Adaptation to a different location demands changes in every aspect of life, but it is not easy. This is obvious in the case of the written narratives of this research. Women struggled to find out who they are, especially in the past, when the socio-political situation did not accept their difference. The women in my study however managed in the end to develop a balanced identity, which is more evident in the third generation, who without any difficulty, accept who they are becoming. I will argue in this final part of my research that Greekness is the most vital element that passes through all three generations but it is transformed, changed, formulated and felt differently from one generation to another. According to psychological research it is ‘normal’ to develop a variety of different identities, but at the same time, there arises the psychological need for something that would provide a solid element in the course of one’s identity/identities formation.

Although we may have a diversity of relatively discrete selves, we also have a quest: to find and maintain a reasonable integrated picture of *who we are*. Coherence provides us with a continuing theme for our lives – an ‘autobiography’ that weaves our various identities and selves together into a whole person. People who have highly fragmented selves (e.g. with schizophrenia, amnesia or Alzheimer’s’ disease) find it difficult to function effectively (Vaughan & Hogg 2010: 77).

Healthy individuals then, develop different identities that are acted upon by changes within their cultural and social environment, or with their re-evaluation of their behaviours because of maturity and experiences. There

is however an awareness of the self which is autobiographical about one's identity. I will argue that Greek-Australian women – in all three generations examined – in different ways to each other and in each generation represent the classic case of self-awareness of a *self*. This is reflected in the formation of their identities that are compound in their synthesis and integration in Australian society. The concept of Greekness as it has been transformed and formulated across three generations – in the Greek family and surroundings – and as expressed by these women, functions as an autobiography of the self 'that weaves our various identities and selves together into a whole person' (Vaughan & Hogg 2010: 77).

The search for a stable self in today's fragmented world in general, and in the multiple multi-ethnic, multicultural and multiracial Australian society, is recreated, revaluated and redefined in the image of a super-grandmother (the first generation woman, the transformer and nurturer of the concept of Greekness), who represents a genuine, but in many cases imagined Greekness, from one generation to another. It is imagined because for most of these women when visiting Greece, it does not comply with the image they created in their minds far away. In any case, Greekness is maintained religiously, because it is a vital element at the psychological level. This compound identity – Greek-Australian – functions as a stabilized self which provides agency to many existing or imagined Greek values, that are created and recreated in an ethnic, collective environment (Greek community, church, ethnic education) and in at personal level (one's self), as a dynamic process of stability for a multiple and multilayered identity in our unstable and insecure world.

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