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*Pages on the Crisis of Representation:
Nostalgia for Being Otherwise*

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Joy Damousi
The University of Melbourne

ETHNICITY AND EMOTIONS: PSYCHIC LIFE IN
GREEK COMMUNITIES

In December 2006, I was asked to speak at the launch of a photographic exhibition of the former migrant camp Bonegilla, which was established in 1947 and closed in 1971. The organizers – the Bonegilla Former Resident’s Association – were keen not only to acknowledge the central importance of that site to immigration history in Australia – of which there can be no doubt – but they also wanted to claim a space of celebration for their experiences in the camp. For these residents the time they spent in Bonegilla was one which produced fond memories, positive experiences, and enduring friendships and relationships. Bonegilla aroused intense emotions for these former residents; it was a period of adventure, separation, loss and hope. In contrast to less celebratory accounts of the experience of Bonegilla by migrants, this group wished to keep alive a memory which was not darkened by what may have followed in their experiences as migrants in their newly adopted country.¹

This exhibition was a timely reminder of the complexity of how to represent the migration experience – good, bad, somewhere in between – and in understanding the emotional investments migrants have of the representation of their past and of their migratory experiences. One of the key themes of this paper is the repression and expression of ethnicity and emotional life that has been largely ignored in the history of the migration in this country.

For some time now, I have been interested in the interplay between the history of emotions, politics, identity and Australian culture. In my work on mourning, memory and the two world wars, I tried to highlight the ways in which Australian cultural life has been understood with little reference to emotional life, and pointed to the ways in which grief in these instances had been politicised.² What I mean by that is the ways in which for many marginalised groups, grief and injury have become the ‘very condition’ of their politics.³⁻⁴ In these studies, I looked at the fathers, mothers and widows who lost their sons and husbands in war and reflected on the ways in which their collective group memory of historical loss and continued

suffering mobilised them to demand a cultural and political recognition of their grief. For them, this history of loss was fundamental to who they were as they attempted to articulate a public language of grief to claim a legitimacy for their private loss.⁵ Throughout the twentieth century, people have drawn on ideas about the self and emotional life to deal with public and private trauma. In order to examine this approach, I have looked at how medical professionals, intellectuals, writers, academics and ordinary people sought solutions and answers to their emotional state through psychological frameworks and understandings.⁶

But ‘emotional literacy’⁷ – to borrow Graham Little’s term – has been seen as distinctively un-Australian. We have been told that emotional life has not been a part of our cultural life, where hedonism and complacency has defined the ‘lucky country’. Donald Horne described Australia in 1964 as ‘not a country of great political dialogue or intense searching after problems (or recognition of problems that exist). Australians prefer to play or watch sport, and this gives one of its principal meanings’. For Horne, Australians were suspicious of public emotion. He characterised them as a ‘largely non-contemplative people who often like the thought of action and the future’.⁸

In thus denying Australians or Australian society any emotion or self-expression, and with no care other than for immediate material concerns, Horne was effectively negating any engagement with any injury or loss that may have been experienced in this country. Much of Australia’s past has been written without a recognition of the trauma its history has created. In ignoring this aspect, the historical version of many facets of Australian history, are distorted.

This of course has had much to do with the opportunities to grieve and express emotions in our culture. I have argued elsewhere that there has been a discernible shift from a mid-twentieth-century sense that grieving and trauma was not spoken of in the community and restrained by obligation and duty, to a late-twentieth-century consensus that we can articulate grief, that it is desirable and necessary to do so and that we *need* to grieve.⁹

These issues need further consideration, and there is a growing literature amongst psychologist and other health workers to address and consider the enduring impact of war for the families who endured its impact after the Second World War. The children of fathers who went to war is another area where recent and fruitful research is being undertaken, as is the experience in general on children of war.¹⁰ The hidden residue of wartime experience remains a significant gap in Australian historiography,

especially in relation to the impact war has on the waves of immigrants who settled in Australia after the war.¹¹ Much of this experience has been captured in the rich literature of poetry and novels that have documented and explored the nature of these experiences.

One of the central aspects of an emotional history of Australian cultural life that has been ignored is that of the emotional aspects of migration, and how this has impacted on communities in Australia. I would argue that this is the case in terms of both migration, and the migratory experience, and also of the question of generational transition of grief, depression and psychological states, especially after the Second World War. Whilst studies in psychology and psychiatry have considered the incidence of depression in the Greek community, especially amongst the elderly and amongst women, much of this is examined without a reference to the historical and cultural context from where this emerges.

The second aspect to the psychic dimension to migration is its enduring legacies on the second generation. This is a large absence in the literature on second-generation migration on ethnic communities in general, but Greek ones in particular. The one area where there has been considerable scholarship is that of the Jewish migration and second-generation experiences of trauma. What of those of the second generation who have absorbed the experiences of their parents? How has the migratory experience impacted on this generation? I would argue that the assimilationist policies of the 1950s and 1960s – did not provide the climate for such an expression – and indeed – these policies actively aimed to negate such expressions.

A part of this aspect is to consider the ways in which the experience of war has profoundly shaped family memory and narrative amongst immigrant Australians. It is concerned with the role these memories of war played in defining cultural and ethnic identity. By adopting this approach, the aim is to focus on the impact of war between cultures and generations in the movement of people across national borders. In moving the discussion beyond the development of the nation-state and the framework of assimilation, it considers how returning war memories shape new forms of ethnic identities and subjectivity, and how memories of these events have been re-worked and reconfigured within a new home of Australia.

This project takes as its frame of reference the view expressed by transnational scholars for the need to transcend national histories and the borders of nation. It pursues the challenge presented by interdisciplinary historians who call for the history of migration from war to be widened and expanded.

This aspect raises the question of the intergenerational transmission of war by considering the demands of adjusting to a new culture for the children who both migrated from Greece, especially after the war and the civil war, and the children of those who did so but who were born in Australia, and who inherited the war stories of their parents. Studies of communities in Australia who have endured war have largely considered this in terms of the return of Australian soldiers.¹² There is now a large body of literature that has considered soldiers who have returned from war and the impact this has had on their families and the reception by society of their condition. In shifting this focus to families of immigrants and their war experiences, this paper attempts to examine a further dimension of the return of soldiers from war and its expression in Australian culture and society across the generations.

In what follows, I tackle these two themes – the relationship between the psychological and cultural – and second, the issue of the transgenerational experience within the Greek community, especially of wartime memory as ways of broadening our current understandings of immigrant history.

STUDIES IN MIGRATION

The story of Greek migration to Australia is well known and substantially documented. The massive post-war migration of Greek immigrants to Australia was one of the largest migration waves in Australia's history. The post-war immigration policy implemented after the Second World War saw large numbers of assisted and non-assisted Greek immigrants migrate to Australia. Between 1945-1959 there were 63,423 permanent arrivals from Greece. As Dimitreas has pointed out, most of the Greeks who migrated to Australia did not receive government assistance, but were sponsored, as the government at the time did not favour Southern Europeans. In the period from 1947 to 1972, only 72,449 of the total of about 214,304 Greek immigrants received government assistance; the rest were sponsored.¹³ The values and attitudes that shaped this policy had its basis in the White Australia Policy, abandoned in 1966, which discriminated between assisted and non-assisted southern European immigrants. Whilst this history of migration has now been well documented from various aspects, it has been conceptualized within a particular framework. These studies have been concerned with the social and cultural aspects of immigration history; questions of assimilation and government policy; issues of workplace inequality, and the policies of assimilation and identity. Most of these

studies have considered the impact of migration on the host nation economically and culturally and within the context of settlement within Australia.¹⁴ A further body of scholarship related to this work considers the crucial question of language acquisition and ethnic identity in Australia, and how this has emerged.¹⁵

This history of Australian Greek migration has not as yet drawn on the psychology of immigration as extensively as those working on this theme in other countries. While some work within Australia has shed light on migration and psychological states research in Canada and the US in particular has highlighted this aspect and drawn together a body of material that adds significantly to our understanding of the Greek Diaspora.

Over the course of twenty years, there has emerged a body of scholarship which has considered issues of depression and anxiety within migrant communities and of their neurosis, of their hopes and the demands of cultural adjustment. Studies of Greek communities around the world have revealed many lives were fragmented by this experience and by the emotional impact of migration.¹⁶

ELDERLY

One study, which has considered anxiety and depression among Greek communities completed in 2004, explores the states of depression and anxiety in older-aged members of the Greek community in Australia. This study found a higher rate of depression and anxiety in Greek-born immigrants than amongst Anglo-Australians, which was consistent with previous findings of the high levels of the symptoms of anxiety disorders in the Greek population and in Greek born immigrants. Some have argued that cultural norms and values such as child-rearing emphasizing over-protectiveness in Greeks may lead to a sense of insecurity, contributing to emotional disorders such as anxiety. There are however, other factors such as social, economic, and health factors that need to be taken into account when comparing Greek and other cultural groups. Low education level, poor physical health and higher experiences stress are all factors that have influenced levels of reported depression and anxiety. Moreover, this study also found that the longer-term settled communities such as the Greek community couldn't be assumed to be psychologically healthy by virtue of the period of time spent in Australia. In the sample used, the residents had been in Australia between 30-50 years. Some factors which have been cited which

have effected such communities include: deteriorating health status, reduction of social networks through death and emigration of peers, retirement and intergenerational conflicts with their children as the latter adopt more assimilative lifestyles within the host culture than their parents.¹⁷

In other findings of this study, there were associations between depression and anxiety and Greek birthplace, being female, low education and occupational levels, low current financial status, nor currently working. Furthermore, studies examining depression and anxiety in adult and elderly Greeks have shown that those with lower education, those undertaking unskilled manual work, the unemployed and those generally living under stressful low socio-economic conditions, were more likely to have reported a greater number of depressive, anxiety and psychosomatic symptoms. Social isolation is one of the most recurring difficulties indicated in older members of the community and especially highlighted in local Australian studies of elderly immigrants. Increasingly of course, this is going to become a major issue, with the rising proportion of elder immigrants in the Australian community.¹⁸

What I want to lay stress on here is that this is an untold story in Australian immigrant histories and needs to be integrated within it. When stories of migration are told, they continue to be done so within the parameters of the great success story of assimilation; of the educational and professional achievements of the second generation; and the experience of returning 'home'. For an older generation – for those who took that first step of migration – the stories are often haunting, with an enduring psychological legacy.

NEVRA/NERVES

I want to now turn to a second study, not in Australia, but in Canada, which considers 'nerves' or *nevra* in Greek communities. In her study of Greek women in Montreal, Pamela Dunk raises the question of whether nerves can be thought of as a culture-bound syndrome, whether it has shared meanings for different cultures, and when 'nerves' cease to be a normal expression of distress, and become labelled as a sickness requiring medical attention.

In her 1984 study, Dunk shows that *nevra* as a normal expression of distress shares many similarities with nerves around other groups around the world. However, she argues, the meaning of *nevra* as illness, is unique to the situation of Greeks in Montreal in that it is inextricably bound-up with gender relations and the social

and material conditions of these immigrants. She argues that the concept of *nevra*, while it is useful to interpret this as a culturally interpreted symptom, it is important to emphasise that the interpretation is mediated by gender and economic relations as well as ethnicity.

Dunk found *nevra* was described as a physical complaint, either alone or in combination with headaches, dizziness and pain, and often accompanied by *stenochoria* and anger. The discomfort experienced as a result of *nevra* was described graphically by some of the women as a sharp pain radiating out from the heart or starting at the back of the head as moving gradually down the spine. Many of the patients she had seen has suffered chronically from nerves and had taken some medication for it – usually tranquilizers or antidepressants. Some opted for medication from the doctor, a few wanted the doctor to contact their husbands and families and negotiate a more sympathetic response on the part of their families and most wanted someone to talk about their problems.

While most of the explanation of *nevra* was psychological and cultural, they experienced this as a physical problem. Psychosomatic conditions are central to much of the documentation of psychological illnesses. Dunk argues that in order to understand this condition in Greek communities, it is important to identify the specific social and economic conditions of the Greek families and the effects of migration on the family structure. These included,

- low wages and pressures of work in factories or piecework at home; the double-work day experienced by women who work outside of the home;
- transformations involved in moving from a rural agricultural society to an urban industrial one where there is a reorganization of immigrant families and an intensification of the work of immigrant women;
- combination of work and household responsibilities leaves little time or energy for leisure and social activities;
- social support networks are minimal for many Greek women in Montreal, and while men's networks included *cafenio*, women did not often have similar structures.

Cultural expectations were however also crucial in understandings of the context for *nevra*. These included ideas about appropriate roles and means of expression for men and for women. Honour and shame were still defining categories for men and for

women. The point is made that men protect the family honour through self-respect and sense of honour – *philotimo* – whilst women's sexual shame or modesty (*dropi*) must be protected through their controlled behaviour. Gender differences in behaviour and expression partially explain why women present with *nevra* more often in a medical setting. As one health professional noted, shouting and screaming was considered normal for a Greek male. The expression of nerves for men can be a sign of manliness – asserting a masculinity that can mean he does not take no for an answer. For women, shouting and screaming are considered uncontrolled and unacceptable. Nerves for women are usually associated with women who are uncontrollable, and a victim.

How did doctors respond to this condition? Some tried to focus on psychosocial factors with their patients and recommended appointments with social workers or psychologists, but there was a stigma attached to mental illness, and many women did not take this up. Others saw it as a version of depression or anxiety and prescribed tranquilisers or antidepressants. One approach is to take a battery of tests – but invariably no discernible problems are found, and the problem is dismissed as psychosomatic. There is also a tendency to individualise the problem, and it becomes a question of the problems discussed between the individual doctor and patient.¹⁹

Dunk found that *nevra* is a common complaint by women in the Greek community in Montreal. It is attributed to family problems, work conditions, sex roles stresses and poverty. The other reasons are conditions of family and homework; limited avenues of expression for women; few social networks available to women. 'While being Greek does not break one's nerves, being a bind of a double work-day in the factory and the home may precipitate *nevra*.'²⁰

Both of these studies focus on women, and the impact of migration on women. There could have been a further discussion of the cultural and social aspects from where these conditions emerged. I raise these because these types of discourses had been negated in the Australian experience and in the telling of the migration story.

The larger, unspoken question in these studies is that of the second generation, and how the migration experience has impacted on the next generation.

ASSIMILATION AND INTERGENERATIONAL TRAUMA

In Australia, if we are to consider the impact of migration, we also need to explore the context within which this took place after World War Two.

I argue here that the assimilationist policies of the 1950s and 1960s set the context for a climate that did not allow for a public expression of grief, or an emotional response to the challenges of migration. After the war, Australian immigration policy was defined by an assimilationist policy where migrants would disperse and integrate within the community, and become 'invisible'. As John Rickard puts it: 'Australia had decided that it wanted immigration, but it did not particularly want immigrants'.²¹

Although the assimilationist policy shifted during the course of the post-war years, and was the subject of debate, its essence remained: it aspired to attain cultural homogeneity and preserve notions of the 'Australian way of life'.²² While much of the purpose of post-war migration centred on the single male worker to boost the economy, and the labour shortage which beset the Australian economy after the war, there were several campaigns and initiatives put in place to encourage single young women to migrate to Australia. It was not long before marriage and the family became a target of these groups, particularly around assimilation.

How would assimilation work? Writing in 1953, the political scientist W. D. Borrie defined assimilation as

a process of immigrants and the local population merging together. This does not... necessarily mean that the two groups must be entirely alike, but rather that there should not exist between them differences which will prevent immigrants from participating in the economic, social and cultural life of their country of adoption on a basis of equality... Perhaps assimilation can most simply be considered in terms of the Australian environment as a process of resulting in the gradual narrowing down of the differences between migrant and native groups.²³

Borrie pointed out that this type of assimilation takes time, and usually takes place over the course of a generation. Australians were for the most part, indifferent to non-British settlers until there might be a 'crisis' at which point a consciousness would arise about the presence of such groups. The implication was that all Australians supported this process:

Once these crises have passed... Australians have again tended to forget about these minorities and leave them to become assimilated as best they can. And for most Australians this has meant the shedding by the migrants of all traits of language, habits and customs which have been considered to be un-Australian.²⁴

More significantly, he saw the full assimilationist model working through the family and over successive generations. First generation settlers 'seldom become completely assimilated, but that by the second generation the majority want to accept as their own the ways of life of the country in which they settled'.²⁵ Borrie celebrated the efforts being made by the government to enhance 'assimilation'. These include apprenticeships, housing, and organizations formed to assist migrants to 'learn of and appreciate the way of life of Australians'. Language programmes, radio programmes were set up, and through the Good Neighbour Councils, 'where Australian citizens can help migrants to mingle more freely in their new society'.

Assimilation would therefore be achieved over time and with a conscious effort.²⁶ 'It cannot be over-emphasized that the merging of these New Australians into our society is not a matter than can be achieved in a decade, or even in two decades, but must be considered in terms of generations'.²⁷

The family and the second generation were to be the cornerstone of state intervention on assimilation. There was an understanding that cultural mores such as language would not be easily shed. There will be an effort to revive 'national life and culture' when these migrants settle, and certainly these can enrich Australian culture, but also that these activities provide migrants with a 'sense of security'. The hope of assimilation lay with immigrant's children:

Although many of the New Australian adults now in our midst may not become fully assimilated, and although with the best will in the world... they will retain characteristics of language, thought and custom which will render it difficult for them to feel that they are fully integrated members of our society participating on a basis of complete equality, past experience suggest that their children will not feel this way.

It was the children that

can form the best link in the merging process between Old and New Australians... But while it is important for old Australians to be prepared to learn as well as to

teach, it is equally important for the New Australians to be tolerant of the national and regional peculiarities of Old Australians. They must understand our complicated political organization, our industrial and legal institutions, and so on.²⁸

During the 1950s, efforts were made to attempt to accommodate the needs of such children, but educationists were certainly ill-equipped. The view that Australian values and 'way of life' would be promoted through children was part of the prevailing government philosophy. Writing in 1951, J.B. Cox, the headmaster of a primary school in a migrant holding centre, wrote that his staff had 'no special training for this work, nor do they use any foreign language, but they have met their peculiar problems with commendable initiative, patience and skill'. Although they had no 'previous schooling of the children', and there were children 'of diverse European origins' and mostly had 'negligible' English, efforts were made to enforce not only the language but also its value system:

the child must learn to think in English from the start... English is to be the basis of all instruction. It is the avenue to mutual understanding. It is the key to the success of the whole immigration process... English must be spoken to the pupils and by them, all day and every day, in every activity, in school and out of it.²⁹

It was made explicit that all the activities were aimed to influence the child 'to understand and obey orders and, in general, to 'fit' into our school life and later into our society'. A focus on the Australian life style would allow new arrivals 'to learn the significance of all that we honour and respect'. The culture, language and values of the country of origin was not considered; parents were considered only within the context of 'problems'. Throughout the 1960s, education played a key role in assimilationist policies, and the education authorities were slow to act on the needs of non-English speaking children.³⁰

These ideological understandings were also framed, I would argue, within Jennifer Rutherford's formulation of the investment in the image of Australia as a 'good neighbour and good nation', which masks an intense aggression towards 'the Other'.³¹ This investment in an image of Australia as a 'good nation' is a theme which runs throughout the immigration and race story – one of 'benevolence' but also of aggression, which is premised on a denial of trauma, dispossession and alienation. The 'fantasy of Australia as a good and neighbourly nation', argues Rutherford is

one which frames a 'disparate set of cultural practices, discourses and historical epochs'. Its 'underbelly' is:

the Australian legacy: dispossession of the Aboriginal peoples of Australia, the White Australia policy, the assimilation policies of the twentieth century, a pronounced antipathy towards and intolerance of the feminine, and a continued cultural policing of traits that... carry the stain of difference.³²

The assimilationist policy denied diversity and difference; it negated a space to explore notions of culture beyond the Anglo-Australia. Whilst the policy acknowledged the difficulty of becoming Australian, it made no allowances for the emotional legacy of migration, of the sort I mentioned earlier.

But what has been the cost of these policies amongst the second generation in the Greek community.

The intergenerational transmission of emotional life has been the subject of many studies, especially in the context of children of Holocaust survivors. The observations to emerge from this literature can illuminate the ways in which children carry many of the emotional burdens of their parents. Some of these studies consider the 'conspiracy of silence' where there is a non-verbal agreement in the family of keeping some traumatic experiences unspoken and detached from everyday life. It arises not only from the parents' need to forget and to adjust to new social contexts, but also from their belief that withholding information about the horrors of the Holocaust was crucial to their children's normal development. As a result, a 'double wall' of silence developed that was mutually maintained by both generations where, 'parents do not tell, and children do not ask'. Studies have shown the ways in which the intergenerational communication of trauma was considered specifically in relation to the social emotions of anger and guilt in response to their parents.³³ Within the Greek context, the impact of war on a daily basis for families has been the focus of study, as has the psychological aspects of war. The shifting importance of collective memory within generations has been considered in some studies, which have shown the way in which the first and second generations hold particular memories of the war, but for these have been reconfigured for the third generation.³⁴

What has the Greek child of migration had to absorb?

While the demands of adjusting to a new culture for adults has been the subject of psychological studies and discussion, as we have seen, the specific dynamics of

children who both migrated from Greece, especially after the war and the civil war, and the children of those who did so but who were born in Australia, remains an unexplored, and a yet to be examined fertile area of research.

We can only speculate some of the traumas experienced and then carried to Australia from this generation of immigrants to their children. Many immigrants to Australia had experienced both the Second World War (1940-1944) and the Civil War (1944-1949).

The invasion of Greece by Fascist Italy from Albania, between October 1940 and April 1941 brought Greece into the war, and ultimately defeat by the Germans. What followed was a capitulation, as the German army occupied Athens and the first collaborationist government of occupied Greece was formed. Greece was then divided amongst the Axis powers: the Germans, who occupied central Macedonia, including Thessaloniki; Eastern Macedonia went to the Bulgarians; and the rest of Greece – the Peloponnese – remained under Italian occupation. It was under these circumstances that the Greek Communist Party emerged with considerable strength and influence. The struggle for survival during wartime occupation of Greece was intense, as was the five years of uninterrupted civil war that followed it. Reprisals, massacres and the biggest wartime killer – famine – accounted for half of the total of deaths between 1940-1949 – which devastated Greece.

The experiences of world war were compounded by the protracted civil war which took place simultaneously and then continued beyond the end of the Second World War. 'The Greek civil war' observes Mark Mazower, 'was Europe's bloodiest conflict between 1945 and the breakup of Yugoslavia'.³⁵ The origins of the civil war in Greece began during the German occupation between 1941-1944. Two forms of civil conflict emerged at this time, one between the collaborators (usually on the right) and resisters (on the left), and the other, from 1942, between the resisters themselves. In 1943 tensions between the two side escalated and when the Germans withdrew in September 1944, fighting between the two groups intensified. By 1946, this violence had escalated dramatically. In the years that followed, and until 1949 when the civil war finally ended, the casualties rose dramatically and the country was in complete turmoil. By 1950, a strained peace set in, and it was arguably not until the collapse of the military junta in 1974 that there was genuine political harmony.³⁶

While estimates vary on the numbers of violent deaths at this time, there appears to be an even greater loss of population caused by emigration; the total numbers of exiles amounted to 136,000 people.

In the following the civil war, Greeks looked beyond a ravaged Europe to rebuild their lives. Mass migration took place to the US and Canada, but it was Australia which attracted a significant number of these Greek immigrants. A concerted effort to attract workers because of labour shortage after the war, and its relative distance from war torn Europe, made Australia an appealing and attractive destination, given the devastation the war left behind. Transnationalism provides the framework from which to consider these movements. It has been used to ‘signal the fluidity with which ideas, objects, capital, and people... move across borders and boundaries. Scholars of transnational culture... make reference to hybridity, hyperspace, displacement, disjuncture, decentering, and diaspora’.³⁷ Ann Curthoys and Marilyn Lake identify transnationalism as a set of ‘processes and relationships that have transcended the borders of nation states’, that offer ‘insight into interconnectedness of political movements and ideas’.³⁸ World war created the quintessential conditions of transnationalism – displacement, mobility, movement – as well as a connectedness of ideas and political movements across nations.

These themes of war memory, family, and transnational migration come together in a collection of memories about Greek resistance to Fascism between 1941-1949, called *All that Grief*. In this volume, we have the memories of those who survived the atrocities of war. In the Preface to this collection the editors note the importance of these stories of politics, violence and trauma to the migration story and see these as a way to

help people understand the complex political and historical events that shaped the moral choices those involved in them had to make. If Australians are to develop a multicultural outlook they need to know something of the experiences that shaped the lives of people in other countries and drove them to migrate to Australia.³⁹

One of the testimonies, by Egli Ionnidis, tells of invasion by Germany, and of atrocities, brutality, violence, and poverty during the Civil war. Her father was imprisoned but released. She recalls:

So my father was released from his life sentence in 1953 after six years of imprisonment and he returned home, a stranger to me. I was thirteen and he was more like an uncle to me than a father. Estrangement within families was the

long-term effect of those war years. My relationship with him is still more remote than I would like.⁴⁰

She arrived in Australia in 1956, with no English and no family. 'I didn't like Australia. I didn't like the people. Because I couldn't speak English I had to work in a factory to pay off my ship fares. For one year I cried two or three times a day. I even cried at work'.⁴¹

The story of Evangelos Ioannou of war offers a similar testimony. Growing up in Kastoria, who joined the resistance during the Second World War. He tells of how his uncle was killed, the trials of war, with its concomitant violence, atrocities and trauma, took place. In describing the ways in which the German Army entered into the Northern part of Greece, there is violent history which is told:

To stop us getting any help from the villages they behaved like monsters. They burned every house and barn in the villages, they killed very able-bodied man... They were specially vicious where Partisans shot any of their motor-cyclists who used to go alone as scouts in advance of the army.⁴²

These are memories of events that occurred many years ago, and memories are certainly embellished and constructed in particular ways. But these testimonies remain central to their identity as Greeks in Australia. This experience of course defines this identity in particular ways. Some have reflected on the ways in which they have indeed related these stories to their children. Theodoros Spidiropoulos articulates this dilemma, thus:

It is very wrong not to speak the truth to our children. We should not be forced to hide our experiences. We were so terribly victimized. And the Greek newspapers kept up such lies about us. A number of Greeks who have migrated here were so victimized that they taught their children to have nothing to do with politics. This upsets me greatly, because I believe everything in life depends on politics.⁴³

Others have documented how they experienced the traumas of war, which they brought to Australia. Polihronis Gounaridis describes his recollections as 'I was fighting non-stop every day for six years', and he tells of starvation, torture, violence

and death. When his Australian friends tell him they are sick, he relies, 'You Australians are dying of the good life'.⁴⁴

These examples are extremes, to be sure, but it is precisely these experiences that haven't been processed in any meaningful way in terms of the impact this experience may have had on their families, and their children in particular.

There are other testimonies in this collection which raise a series of questions about the psychological impact of war. My intension here is not to pathologise this experience, but instead to consider an approach to such testimonies which ask questions about culture, grief and trauma, its transmission to the second generation, and one to the Australian context. Like other stories of trauma and dispossession in Australia, this is one that had not been integrated in ideas about national identity and definitions of Australianness.

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Beverley Raphael has written about a number of key issues relating to migration, ethnicity and emotional life. Amongst these are loss and grief and trauma, and remembered pasts. She argues that there is a need to appraise the differences, to incorporate valued, safe and personally significant elements of the past, while progressively taking in those components of the new that are acceptable to gradually become familiar and known to oneself or one's community. What is particularly difficult is when we hold onto beliefs and values in a way that leaves no room for anything new or different.

New migrants like Greeks, grieve their pasts communities, lives, relationships, but do integrate the new. When this does not happen, new and emerging communities may be isolated in the nostalgic context of an idealized, unreal and unchanging past. But when host communities are also locked into nostalgic longings of an idealized past – they way we were and the way things used to be – they can struggle to embrace new people to a community. The grieving process is important, but equally important is the hope and joy of the new, enthusiasm for life and hope for the future.⁴⁵

There are also themes of traumatic experiences of past waves of migration. If someone has suffered violence or experienced psychological injury, their opportunities for renewal are limited. People who have experienced trauma may find interpersonal experiences difficult, in terms of emphatic feeling for others. Trauma,

grief, and how we deal with adversity and how we manage change are central themes that are relevant for our health and wellbeing and especially for mental health. Those who have experienced warfare and conflict or dispossession may also be transmitted across the generations. The future can be built in relation to learning from the host community, but also facilities and infrastructure that value diversities. The notion of the alien must be diffused and challenged as well. Splitting the world into good and evil; is psychologically and socially unsound, and an 'immature' response and one which will not enhance cultural diversity.

What I have been arguing in this article is that Australian immigration history needs to take these issues further into account if a more complex and engaging story is to be written of how Greek immigrants and their families have experienced migration, especially since the Second World War. Only then will the enduring legacy of migration be understood in all of its complexity and diversity.

ENDNOTES

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- 3-4 David L. Eng, 'Melancholia in the Late Twentieth Century', *Signs*, vol.4, vol.25, 2000, p.1276.
- 5 Joy Damousi, History Matters: The Politics of Grief and Injury in Australian History, *Australian Historical Studies*, no.118, 2002, pp.100-112.
- 6 See Joy Damousi, *Freud in the Antipodes: A Cultural History of Psychoanalysis*, UNSW Press, 2005.
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- 8 Donald Horne, *The Lucky Country: Australia in the Sixties*, Penguin, p.15; p.37.
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- 15 See Michael Clyne, *Australia's Language Potential*, UNSW Press, 2005.
- 16 See for instance, V.G. Mavreas and P.E. Bebbington, 'Psychiatric morbidity in London's Greek-Cypriot Immigrant Community', *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology*: 22, 1987, pp.150-159; Eleftheria A. Sands and John W. Berry, 'Acculturation and Mental Health Among Greek-Canadians in Toronto', in *Canadian Journal of Community Mental Health*, vol.12, no.2, 1993, pp.117-124.
- 17 Litza A. Kiropoulous, Steven Klimidis, Harry Minas, 'Depression and Anxiety: A Comparison of Older-Aged Greek-born Immigrants and Anglo-Australians', *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, 2004, 38, pp.714-724.
- 18 *ibid.*, pp.720-723.
- 19 Pamela Dunk, 'Greek Women and the Broken Nerves in Montreal', *Medical Anthropology*, vol.II, pp.29-45.
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- 28 *ibid.*, pp.184-186.
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- 41 *ibid.*, p.55.
- 42 *ibid.*, p.60.
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