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MODERN GREEK STUDIES
(AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND)

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Το περιοδικό φιλοξενεί άρθρα στα Αγγλικά και τα Ελληνικά αναφερόμενα σε όλες τις απόψεις των Νεοελληνικών Σπουδών (στη γενικότητά τους). Υποψήφιοι συνεργάτες θα πρέπει να υποβάλλουν κατά προτίμηση τις μελέτες των σε δισκέτα και σε έντυπη μορφή. Όλες οι συνεργασίες από πανεπιστημιακούς έχουν υποβληθεί στην κριτική των εκδοτών και επιλέκτων πανεπιστημιακών συναδέλφων.

CONTENTS

SECTION ONE

Stuart Roseworne	The Shifting Power Relations in Australia's Economic Success Story: From Neo-Liberalism to Neo-Conservatism	7
Carole M. Cusack	Religion in Australian Society: A Place for Everything and Everything and Its Place	28
Evan Kanarakis	Where Be the Rock? Sex, Drugs and Rock & Roll: Influence, Empowerment and rebellion, or Commercial Constructs, Cheap Imitation and War Over?	46
Steve Georgakis–		
Richard Light	The Athens of the South: Sport in Australian Society	58
Andrea Bandhauer–		
Maria Veber	German Studies Today: Gender and Intercultural Studies	75
Panayiotis Diamadis	Aegean Eucalypts	86

SECTION TWO

S. M. Hawke	Dancing with the Ghost of Charmian Clift: A Ficto-Critical Requiem	106
Alexander Norman	Where the Church Bell Can Be Heard, There the Parish Lies: Issues of Schism and Continuity in the Greek Orthodox Church in Australia	122
Yiorgos Anagnostou	Through the Lenses of Rage: Refracting Success in Greek America	132
Angie Voela	The Construction of the Woman in Karkavitsas' <i>Η Ανγερή</i>	145
Vassilios Letsios	Back to Bable in the Time of Modern Greek. Language Varieties in the Novel <i>Αντιποίησης Αρχής</i>	167
Elena Koutrianou	Poetry as Recomposition: Odysseas Elytis Translating Sappho	192

Petro Alexiou	Diaspora and Colonialism in Australia in the 1920s: The Case of Alekos Doukas's Migrant 'Voyage South'	206
Anthony Stephens	Interrogating Myth: <i>Ariadne</i>	230

SECTION THREE

Joanne Finkelstein	The Demotic City – The Chattering Classes and Civility	263
Robert van Krieken	Occidental Self-Understanding and the Elias–Duerr Dispute: 'Thick' versus 'Thin' Conceptions of Human Subjectivity and Civilization	273
Craig Browne	Castoriadis on the Capitalist Imaginary	282

SECTION FOUR

	BOOK REVIEWS (Edited by Helen Nickas)	300
	LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS	327

Yiorgos Anagnostou
The Ohio State University

THROUGH THE LENSES OF RAGE:
REFRACTING SUCCESS IN GREEK AMERICA

Rage resides in the underbelly of Greek America. It percolates individual psychic sediments, simmering or suppressed, dormant, concealed or displaced. Yet it may be disguised, undetected in everyday words and gestures. I can think of no better metaphor than a geological one to gauge its shifting pressures. An imperceptible shift in the architecture of its plates and it emerges as diffused resentment. Apply a magnified pressure, and it erupts in 'magnificent wrath' (Stearns and Stearns 13).

Rage can be felt everywhere in Greek America for those willing to attend to its capillary forces. It slices its presence in autobiographies, ethnographic interviews, short stories, novels, or scholarly analysis. When its pressure is contained, it casts its shadow on individuals and may inspire creative action. When irreverently spills over it unleashes its destructive force and may damage social relations. Anger can be positive or negative. In either case, it marks social life with its unmistakable imprints.

Rage, perhaps predictably, does not command the center of attention in mainstream Greek America. Though disturbingly powerful when articulated, it lacks the visibility of popular Greek-American sentiments such as pride in achievement, joy in the dance, fulfillment in hard work, love for church and family, gratification in civic ethos, and philanthropy. In contrast to these positively valued emotions, rage can be dangerous, disruptive, anti-social, all in all a negative emotional force.

Rage poses a direct challenge to that venerated story that Greek America, along other ethnic groups, loves to tell to itself and others: the narrative of ethnic success. The *topoi* of this narrative, social distinction, economic triumph, pride, professional accomplishment, and distinguished heritage, cannot comfortably co-exist with the resentment, the discontent, and the threatening posture inherently residing in anger. No wonder Greek-

American rage could be seen as a social pariah, an anomaly best kept sealed in its underground crevices.

Pressed to further account for the marginal status of rage in Greek America, one can point to a cultural explanation. American society displays a general discomfort toward anger. Socially disruptive, it is 'usually aroused in situations judged as antagonistic' (Stearns and Stearns 7). It tests the tolerance of a society which exhibits 'a peculiar vulnerability to displays of anger on the part of others, a counterpart to the national desire for affectionate approval' (3-4). '[T]here is no emotion about which we fret, amid greater confusion, than anger' (2) write social historians of anger in America. Increasingly, Americans 'seek to regulate not only behavior [associated with anger] but the feeling itself' (2). Anger is seen as a danger to public health, a social menace, according to a *New York Times* editorial, a 'form of public littering' (qtd. in Stearns and Stearns 3). The sidelining of rage in Greek America then may be seen as an assimilation to 'the long and complicated war against anger that many Americans have waged for a full two centuries' (3).

To discipline anger then is to embody an ideal of cultural Americanness. It also means to regulate public safety. In its lurking destructiveness, anger carries the potential to demolish social order. It could instantaneously, and unpredictably, turn into a menacing, life threatening force. This often takes place when social and economic frustrations translate into indiscriminate violence in work places or domestic settings. Often fueled by unequal distributions, anger seems to thrive in its capacity to tip scales of balance at the edge.

In this essay I speak of a different kind of anger, one that translates into social critique. I have in mind the anger that fuels protest, animates non-evasive talk, drives the desire to speak out what otherwise is marginalized or even muted in contexts of power relations. I think of the kind of anger that validates direct talk about violations of fair procedures, balances and distributions. Anger can be productive, not merely destructive. To dismiss it as an undesirable emotional state is to fumble a great opportunity to examine its significance to illuminate rarely discussed aspects of Greek-America. Emotions such as rage, grief, and resentment, anthropologist Renaldo Rosaldo argues, should be recognized as alternative yet legitimate sources of knowledge that generate insights into social life otherwise missed by objectivist social analysis.

What do we gain once we reflect on Greek America through the prism of rage? What sustains Greek-American rage? What nurtures it? Who expresses anger, under what circumstances, and what does this anger antagonize? In this essay I suggest that rage in Greek America works as an emotive and social force that counters any attempt to define Greek America in a uniform manner. It reacts against any perspective that claims absolute validity for itself. Anger shatters, in its force, monolithic views of the social world. It inherently destabilizes any confident assertion about ethnic success, the cele-

bration of national or ethnic culture, the glorification of American modernity at the expense of Greek tradition. Anger reacts to excess, as it thrives in excess itself.

For some time now I have been documenting references to and manifestations of rage in Greek-American popular culture, literature, film, and documentaries. I have been also reflecting on the rare scholarly works that analyze Greek-American rage. In the first level of analysis, it was evident to observe that rage emerges in reaction to blatant exploitation and abuse. The appalling exploitation of immigrant laborers or the patriarchal oppression of women fuels in Greek America the 'magnificent wrath' that often leads to violent – physical or verbal – confrontation.

As forms of violence themselves, albeit institutionalized, class exploitation and gender oppression in Greek America have been furiously resisted. 'Toil and Rage in a New Land: The Greek Immigrants in Utah' (Papanikolas) and 'American Aphrodite: Becoming Female in Greek America' (Callinicos) are the two Greek-American canonical texts in this respect. 'Toil and Rage' dramatically underscored the intensity of immigrant rage in response to the devastating psychological, social and economic violence unleashed by American nativism and the abuses of industrial capitalism in early 20th century Utah. 'American Aphrodite' gave a collective voice, albeit in a one-sided manner, to those Greek-American women who were subjected – and in some settings continue to be subjected – to patriarchal oppressive structures. In both accounts, anger became a social weapon among vulnerable classes. It was expressed as a desire for social change, when alternative options of agency and persuasion were severely lacking.

RAGE AND THE AMERICAN DREAM

Rage may appear in situations least expected. For example, when George Veras, a producer and cultural entrepreneur-turned-documentary film-maker set to celebrate the American dream and capture in camera stories of Greek-American success he came across anger against, not praise of 'America.' At least this was the case when in her interview with Veras, actress and now author Olympia Dukakis felt inclined to document her depths of anger, not her breadth of gratitude, toward suburban America. For the viewers of the televised version of the documentary 'The Greek Americans' (1998) there will be no memories of an animatedly angry Dukakis. This particular interview segment was not included in the version broadcast on PBS. It was only featured in the commercially released videotape of the documentary, in separate, supplementing footage. A comparison between the narrator's view with Dukakis's position will help put this discrepancy into perspective:

'It wasn't easy but we [the Greeks] overcame [discrimination] with grace and humor' [Narrator, PBS televised version]

'And so I had a great deal of difficulty growing up with WASPS. We moved to a community in Arlington that had very few, at that time, ethnic people there. And it is there that I became angry, and I had a great deal of anger about this; [this anger] came out in sports. It was my way of showing, not only that we were as good, but that they couldn't come near me, they couldn't you know ... The thing I cherished the most was to have a weapon in my hand [laughs]. I laugh about this now, but I was a fencer...' [Olympia Dukakis, Videotape version, emphasis mine]

The excerpts above are incommensurable, in style, and content. Dukakis's confession highlights the personal, the corporeal, the subjective. Assertive, authoritative, it is attentive to deeply felt emotions. Discrimination for Dukakis has been productive. It has prompted her to act. In her agency, mind and body adopt an oppositional posture. Her emotional narrative communicates a deeply felt embodied knowledge, commonly conveyed by embittered, oppressed minorities.

In contrast, the narrator of the televised text assumes a position of impartial omniscience. His detachment follows the conventions of 'objective' journalism, which seeks to legitimize the production of generally applied truths. In his portrayal of Greek America's historical response to minoritization as a matter of dignified endurance, the narrator refuses to take into account Dukakis's oppositional anger; instead, he privileges a uniformly non-confrontational stance. The editorial decision to exclude Dukakis's comments on discrimination sanctions homogenization by suppressing those views, such as Dukakis's, that do not conform to the narrator's script.

The audience of the televised version then is denied the opportunity for exposure to perspectives that in popular imagination are not commonly associated with Greek America: The public articulation of profoundly ingrained anger directed toward the dominant society; the reminder that traces of discrimination and distaste did not entirely disappear with the migration of the immigrants or ethnics to the suburbs. Dukakis adopts a stance which mainstream America could interpret as threatening, isolationist, and disruptive. In a documentary such as 'The Greek Americans' which consistently endorses the view of Greek Americans as willing and eager conformists, the comments by Dukakis stand for a subversive rupture.

Dukakis's rage refuses to assimilate to the image of the eternally grateful ethnic who delivers celebratory paeans to the nation. It is possible, her anger seems to tell us, to be part of America and critique it. In destabilizing the deeply seated expectation of the

grateful ethnic, her rage subverts the idealized caricature of benevolent America advocated by those who make careers out of its praise. It is more realistic to think of America as a place where there is opportunity and constraint, acceptance and intolerance, fairness and exploitation. To recognize that there are many Americas not a singular one, means to be able to create the conditions for social change. Dukakis's rage deviates from a dominant ethnic propensity to ingratiate mainstream America. Expressed by a successful individual, the critique acquires particular poignancy. In the act of excising this critique from the nationally televised documentary, something, it feels, is terribly amiss.

RAGE AND ETHNIC SUCCESS

Rage cannot be treated as an exception in Greek America. Anger suffuses narratives told by Greek-American women. It regularly surfaces in ethnographic situations, an occurrence that will elicit a knowing nod among anthropologists, for whom ethnography serves as method to understand and disseminate people's points of view.

It should come as no surprise then that the only serious scholarly exploration of Greek-American anger we have to our disposal to-date comes from an anthropologist. Trained to identify muted or marginalized perspectives, sensitive to the views and feelings of others, anthropologists are methodologically situated to explore cultural phenomena that tend to slip through the cracks of mainstream representations. The writings of anthropologist Phyllis Chock offer an insightful analysis into Greek-American rage as a gendered process; a process, that is, specifically associated with the historical and social experience of a particular gender, women.

In her interviews with mainly 'middle-class Greek-American women who were the daughters of immigrant mothers' in the 1960s, Phyllis Chock (*The Self-Made Woman* 240) reports that the expression of feelings was a regular element in women's narratives about the histories of their families. In the interviews, women grappled to articulate views about the meaning of their own successes, ethnicity and nationality. Anger, resentment and bewilderment permeated their narratives. Rage, Chock found, is an indispensable factor in women's attempts to define what it means to be a successful Greek-American woman.

Women's rage comes out in relation to a narrow, yet pervasive male-centered model of ethnic success in America. This model equates male business activities, socioeconomic mobility, and success, and in doing so it implicitly introduces an element gender bias in understanding success. It is males who are exclusively thought as successful since in immigrant Greek America, it is males who have traditionally assumed the position of the breadwinner. The association between success and male socioeconomic mobility is so

widespread, that it is accepted as a natural fact. It is unreflectively incorporated in the narrating the women themselves tell about their families. The protagonist in women's narratives is 'a heroic male immigrant ... who transforms himself into an American and a success,' Chock observes (239). The narratives naturalize the relationship between maleness, national identity and success. It is immigrant males who can claim to embody the American Dream through their success. '[W]omen's virtual absence as protagonists, [implies] that women are less assuredly successes and American' (239).

This narrative of male ethnic success is incapable of recognizing the work immigrant women do at home, the school, their social networks, ethnic organizations and the civic sphere. Its pervasiveness suppresses alternative definition of a successful American ethnic. It marginalizes, even mutes, perspectives that might relate success with a range of activities disconnected from narrowly perceived economic terms. Immigrant activities are valued as American insofar as they bring about economic mobility.

Phyllis Chock reports that some women did move beyond the conceptual poverty of male-centered narrative and explored alternative definitions of success. They spoke about female relatives as successful individuals whose success should be judged as 'citizens' and 'human beings' (243). Yet, others did not easily overcome the limitations of this model. Its dominance seriously fettered their effort to come up with alternatives. Anger chokes women, and their feelings of exclusion are not translated into words to articulate the biases embedded in this model. Rage works to counter the notion that ethnic material success is the only way to claim belonging to America.

RAGE AND THE SUCCESSES AND FAILURES OF TRADITION

Rage can be made to oppose assimilation to a dominant ideology. In the case of Olympia Dukakis, it works against the ideology of the ethnic as the cheerleader of the nation. For the women interviewed by Phyllis Chock, rage has no patience with the translation of success as dictated by the American dream. Yet, in its oppositional posture, rage could turn into a force sanctioning a particular point of view. Rage could be seen as assimilation to the opposite it reacts against. This dialectic could be productive, as I have shown, in that it moves beyond monolithic perspectives on the meaning of American ethnicity. In the conceptual terrain associated with Greek America, it makes space, so to speak, for plurality and diversity of worldviews. Yet it can also commit to a rigid and narrow perspective.

Take for example the angry monologue of Effie, a fictional character in Helen Papanikolas's short story 'The First Meeting of the Group.' In the following excerpt, Effie, a daughter of early 20th century immigrants erupts to angrily repudiate ethnic custom.

“...I never got to do anything I wanted to. All the time I was in junior high and in high school,” Effie breathed in so deeply that the muscles of her neck became two thin ropes on either side of a bony windpipe, “all the girls were having fun, but I had to go to Greek school, I couldn’t date; I had to bring the tray with baklava and coffee to all those visitors. Years and years of holding out the tray to those goddamn women giving me the once over to see if I was good enough for their shitty sons!” (175)

Punctuated with an intensity that is made visual through the physiology of rage, Effie’s anger is legitimate. It emerges in response to the power of custom to exclusively define women in terms of already prescribed social dictates. Tradition demands adherence to custom, and in doing so it denies women’s agency. Effie knows that the rituals of traditional hospitality reproduce gendered expectations of female passivity. Serving the tray means more than welcoming guests. It stands for the performative display of the domestic competence required by any prospective *nikokyra* (the lady of the house). The interested, scrutinizing female audience who evaluates Effie’s performance serves as a reminder that gender oppression may multiply in conditions of migrancy. In traditional Greek America, women are not only restricted within the domestic sphere they are subjected to the imperative of yet another ethnic sanction, intra-group marriage. Tradition stands for confinement, restriction, incarceration. It precludes the flight outside the immigrant household to the perceived freedom of American modernity.

Directed against Greek tradition, Effie’s indictment introduces a duality between a negatively valued ‘Greek’ tradition and positively valued ‘American’ modernity. Her rage is ethnicized. In her view, ‘Greek’ gender customs block women’s emancipation, which can only be consummated within ‘American’ modernity. In this formulation, ‘Greek’ ethnicity and ‘American’ nationality stand as two mutually incompatible categories. The ‘Greek’ fails the daughters of the immigrants who desire full participation in the dating rituals and leisure activities of ‘America.’ The immigrant past presents an impediment to the Americanization of the ethnic. It is only through daring acts of cultural defiance that immigrant traditional codes can be shattered. Effie assaults tradition and marries outside the group, a rebellious act at that time, often punished with community ostracism. In ‘choosing’ to do so she asserts her own individuality, in fact her own Americanness. American modernity makes agency possible, enabling Effie to overcome the perceived adversity of her immigrant background. She steps outside immigrant tradition and inside American modernity. In her narrative, the boundaries between the Greek past and the American present remain intact, the gap unbridgeable.

Effie angrily opposes immigrant tradition and assimilates to the idea of an emancipatory American modernity. Yet, this neat dichotomy is confronted by her cousin Mary's rage. In an acrimonious exchange between the cousins, whose relationship is scarred with cross-cutting layers of resentments, Mary challenges Effie's one-sided assault on ethnicity. She angrily offers an alternative explanation of Effie's failure to early on integrate in America:

'Mary slapped the coffee table. "Did anyone ever ask you for a date to the senior hop? No one ever did! You were fat and had b.o. So don't come around fifty-years later blaming everyone because you didn't get to go to the senior hop!"' (176)

The comments deflect blame from the immigrant culture to personal shortcomings. The individual is held responsible from failing to assimilate to modern forms of hygiene.¹ Deviation from body ideals signals exclusion. This 'bodily' deviance is culturally non-forgiven within the aesthetic economy of modern mating rituals. What is in trial here, is not so much Effie's appearance but the naturalization of American modernity with emancipation. It is possible that Mary's anger works as an emerging yet not fully articulated consciousness that questions the unreflective celebration of American modernity. Not unlike Greek tradition, America also operate with equally rigid, albeit different restrictive codes. The appearance of an individual may serve as grounds for exclusion from the rites of coming of age in America. Those who do not conform to mainstream ideals of beauty are rejected. Mary's anger defamiliarizes modernity. After all, American culture can be seen as a set of *customs*, potentially as rigid and stifling as immigrant codes of conduct.²

The short story then works to challenge simplistic binaries. It is thanks to the heteroglossic quality of literature, its capacity to juxtapose diverse perspectives, that the reader is prompted to think beyond dichotomies. Cultures are not coherent categories consisting of fixed rules. After all, Effie's family eventually welcomes her 'non-Greek' husband warmly. Immigrants may embody what can be seen as oppressive customs, but they also exhibit an extraordinary capacity for empathy, warmth, and reaching over, across ethnic differences. Through Mary's angry intervention, the dual opposition between a 'good' modernity and an 'undesirable' tradition cannot hold as valid any longer.

RAGE, ETHICAL OBLIGATIONS, AND IMMIGRANT HISTORIES OF SUCCESS

In 'The First Meeting of the Group,' rage among women impedes change. Resentments which trace their roots in the immigrant past interfere in the vision shared by some women in the story to expand the social activities of *Philoptochos* (Friends of the Poor), a

church philanthropic organization. The all-women's meeting in the story aims to establish a new tradition for this organization: Encourage critical discussion among women about the issues they face in their families, their social lives and the church. *Philoptochos* meetings are envisioned as forums to reflect on taken-for-granted issues such as the election procedures of its national officers. In inviting reflexivity on traditional practices, the new initiative encourages the juxtaposition between the past and the present. This initiative dissolves before it is even launched. Rage interferes to damage social relations among women, eliminating the possibility that a new tradition of critical reflexivity will take roots in the organization.

In the film 'Achilles' Love' (2001) rage is also connected with the past. In this case, however, it works to reaffirm connections between the immigrant past and the ethnic present. The protagonist of the film, American-born Achilles, 'Ike,' Mannis is an insurance agent in a respectable firm in Pittsburgh. The firm, a family business founded by Ike's immigrant father, among others, is in transition. An ambitious new boss is determined to sweep away traces of the company's immigrant past and revamp the image of the company as a leading corporate player. His policies include a steep raise in insurance premiums making coverage unaffordable for the original immigrant customers. Outraged by these developments, Ike takes it upon himself to act and protect the interests of the vulnerable immigrants.

In a first glance, Ike is just another 'symbolic' white ethnic.³ He expresses his ethnicity selectively, in specific contexts. The festival and the immigrant coffeehouse offer venues for performing his ethnicity. He enjoys and cooks Greek food. In contrast to his highly assimilated, and successful lawyer cousin Connan Charles, who shuns away from (and arguably suppresses) ethnicity, Ike's ethnic attachments and friendships mark him as 'ethnic.' Yet his ethnicity does not determine where he lives or whom he dates. By all accounts he is an assimilated, yet bicultural 'white ethnic.' He comfortably negotiates mainstream cultural situations as they arise at work and leisure while he also participates in the social networks of Greek immigrant men. One might say that his ethnicity works as a social asset. In the eyes of Lucy, whom he courts, Greek festival culture, and the food, dance, and hospitality that it offers, are seductively charming. The community she encounters appears accepting, warm, and cohesive. It is not unlike her trusting, mutually supporting close-knit group of confidantes, only in a larger scale. It is in her interaction with Ike's friends in the festival where Lucy learns of Ike's deep commitments to the immigrants. He acts as a cultural translator, who explains the intricacies of American culture to the immigrants and safeguards to the extent possible their economic interests.

Yet, Ike's ethnicity is not merely symbolic; he is not just 'choosing' to enact ethnic roles. It entails interdependent ethical agency and enduring emotional connections with

the immigrant past. Not visibly recognized as ethnic, these connections are illuminated when Ike acts to protect his immigrant clients from the new corporate ethos of the firm. Ike exhausts all alternatives to intervene on behalf of the elderly immigrants, but still fails to sway his boss that people matter over profits. When it becomes clear that the profit-centered corporate logic is bound to supplant the profit minding yet human-centered business ethos of the past, Ike physically confronts his boss. His rage emerges when nothing else works.

The sources of Ike's rage reach deep into immigrant histories. His anger is inseparable from the consciousness that the success of his family's insurance business is connected with immigrant networks of mutual support. The same immigrants who are denied coverage in the present were the loyal customers who made the business viable in the past. Ike's outrage is fueled out of memories of the history behind success. Memories of the past inform his ethical stance today. He is not willing to forget past loyalties and discard people in the name of a new corporate ethos that values profit above anything else. Rage embodies ethical memory in a last resort to instill an ethical sense of accountability to new business managers. Ike's deeply felt obligations, cannot be translated to business majors, such as his boss, who lack a sense of historical burden. Two incompatible worlds collide in rage and Ike is fired as a result. With the financial support of a former business partner of his father, Ike sets out to establish his own practice, presumably guided by his own (ethnic) business ethic.

The expression of rage in the film shows that there are many 'Americas' and different kinds of hyphenated Americans. The workplace ethos Ike embraces is incompatible with that espoused by his boss. Furthermore, Ike and his cousin, Connan, both 'Greek Americans,' represent fundamentally different worldviews. Ike's stance in life is at odds with the predatory and manipulative habits of Connan. Ike's rage underscores the fact that America and Greek America are heterogeneous social entities, peopled with individuals who stand for a variety of principles and hold differing visions of society.

CONCLUSION

Though rage is nurtured within individuals, it is fundamentally social. It cannot be thought independently from histories of oppression, socioeconomic systems of exploitation, patterns of exclusion and discrimination. Anger's depth seems proportional to the magnitude of injustices suffered. It dwells wherever life has been crippled, non-mainstream values dismissed, cultural difference derided, human labor abused.

As expressed in Greek-American arts and letters, rage exposes the narrowness of dominant perspectives. It acts as a psychic *and* social force, making its presence felt any

time a claim about Greek America's material prosperity, business success, conformist ethos, and triumphalist history seeks to assert itself as *the* defining truth of the Greek American experience. In its impatience with one-dimensional representations of Greek America, rage carries a subversive potential. For the individuals or fictional characters who sustain it, its presence points to new ways of feeling, thinking and acting upon the world, expanding the conceptual territory we associate with Greek America. Examining Greek America through the prism of rage brings to the fore the urgency to imagine and articulate alternative narratives of what it means to connect with Greek America in an increasingly complex, multicultural world. It also calls to raise questions and consider strategies to widely disseminate these narratives in Greek America and beyond.

What strategies of persuasion are needed to reach individuals, who like fictional Effie, tend to dismiss the immigrant past as a mere source of oppression? What kinds of knowledge are needed to illuminate relevant Greek pasts? Why does it matter to move beyond triumphalist accounts of the nation? What public forums and mechanisms of cultural dissemination are needed to make Ike's ethical agency an intrinsic aspect of the way Greek America imagines itself?

These are difficult questions. In seeking ways to translate anger into a wide public debate that will dare to imagine a multi-dimensional Greek America, I feel compelled to appropriate in the context of my discussion Ian Martin's comments on the political possibilities of rage via adult education. He writes:

'[I]t is important to recognize that anger can be positive or negative, creative or destructive. And I suggest that citizenship education needs to start by confronting the Janus-faced nature of people's anger, and making the most of it. ... [Franz Fanon wrote that] "Anger does not in itself produce a political programme for change, but it is perhaps the most basic political emotion. Without it, there is no hope." And, of course, making anger hopeful is an educational task.'

Anger opens possibilities for cultural change as well. It could erupt and dissipate, serve as sporadic evidence of discontent, but could also be translated as knowledge that seeks to erode the structures that sustain it.

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NOTES

- 1 Instilling habits of personal hygiene to the children of early 20th century immigrants was a high priority in the assimilationist policies of the American educational system (see Foner 208)
- 2 It is relevant to mention here that in the film 'My Big Fat Greek Wedding,' (2002) Toula's transformation and eventual integration in mainstream America is initiated with a change in her appearance. Her social acceptance is sanctioned, once she makes herself up as a modern woman, when she joins her college-mates in the symbolic space of the college cafeteria. Marked as foreign in her elementary school's cafeteria, her 'choice' to modernize in appearance delivers her to America in the space that excluded her in her earlier years.

- 3 Sociologists such as Herbert Gans, Mary Waters have been successful in promoting the notion of symbolic ethnicity in order to account for the persistence of ethnicity among assimilated descendants of European immigrants. According to Gans, symbolic ethnicity entails voluntary and temporary association with an ethnic group. This paradigm views identity as a behavioral role, or selective connection with cultural traits which wane with the passing of each generation; it has nothing to say about processes of identity formation through discourse (Chock, *Irony and Ethnography*) or psychosocial processes (see Fischer).