Memories of Bonegilla: A Narrative of Migration and Modernity

Eugenia Arvanitis

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Eugenia Arvanitis, Greek Ministry of Education, Victoria, Australia

Abstract: This article presents the sociohistorical narrative told by Zacharias Vogiazopoulos in his book 'Memories of Bonegilla: Recollections of an Insider'. It also presents the core research methodology as well as it analyses the framing concept of this book, which is the personal reflection on migration and modernity and the sense of reciprocity (Singh, 2002) amongst migrants. Finally, the article explores the contribution of different sociocultural practices and discourses to the so-called community building.

Keywords: Australian Migrant Experience, Bonegilla, Oral History, Community Building, Reflective Writing, Migration and Modernity

Introduction

THE HISTORY AND development of ethnic communities has been a key feature of Australian society especially after World War II with the beginning of mass migration. However, globalisation has brought new ways of understanding, belongingness and personal transformation across *world-space* and through changing *world-time.* In this context commonly reflected cultural practices and collective memories and representations tend to strengthen the sense of community in an imaginative way (Hall, 1990). Reflecting on those past lived practices is important in forming new social relations across the globe and across different community spaces. Diaspora communities constitute paradigms of such a development engaging in a triadic relationship (Cohen, 1996 and Verttovec 1999). This relationship affects the way personal and collective representations provide an 'imaginary coherence' (Hall, 1990) amongst diaspora community members who have experienced migration.

The Greek diaspora communities have been developed on the basis of *face to face* relations amongst their first generation members. At the same time sustaining the sense of community as well as the language and culture in the future generation constitute an integral part of their formation. The latter has lead to the adoption of new practices, namely the formation of new global networks of communication and education. These community based strategies[1] have strengthened the 'moral voice' of the Greek community enabling its members to negotiate the challenges of globalization, such as the intensification of social relations and consumerism (Giddens, 1990 & 1998).

One of the key community strategies of the Greek community in Australia has been to record and publish migration life histories in order to express both collectivity and identity and thus, to facilitate community connectedness and sustainability. More specifically, sociohistorical narratives like the one presented in the book[2] of Zacharias Vogiazopoulos: *Memories of Bonegilla: Recollections of an Insider* play an important role in creating a sense of connection among Greek Australians across different locations. This book presents in a compelling and powerful way an insider's view about one of the most important Migrant Reception Centres established during Australia's mass migration period, the Bonegilla Migrant Reception Centre. It also helps us to understand the role of migration in social formation and the contribution of migrants to the Australian social fabric. Such reflective and interpretive representation is important in fostering a broader understanding of the positive role that immigrant communities have played in Australian history. To that end this book goes beyond the notion of multicultural community building based on the preservation of different cultures to offer an exchange of personal

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[1] The community based strategies have been seen as important to describe the new forms of social integration and structure abstract local-global relations. In this context sustainability of community becomes the prime concern. (James, 1996).

[2] *Zacharias* Vogiazopoulos was employed as an Assistant Escort by Intergovernmental Committee of European Migration (I.C.E.M.) in the first mission of Skaubryn from the region of Macedonia in Greece to Australia (the fifth from Greece) on 30th of October 1953. He later on became the official Interpreter of the Bonegilla Migrant reception Centre (1947-1971) as well as the Director of the Greek Block, number five (1953-1956). His role was to welcome and assist his fellow Greek migrants to settle in their new life in a new country, Australia, during the crucial times of the 1950s. During this period of mass migration, some 320.000 emigrants went through the Centre including 35.000 Greeks. Zacharias' narrative also captures the unpublished stories and tales of his Greek compatriots who lived at Bonegilla/Australia during the mass migration period.

narratives and experiences which form and rework inter-ethnic relations as they create a common understanding of Australian, diasporic and global citizenry (Arvanitis, 2006).

This article presents the core research methodology as well as it analyses the framing concept of this book, which is the personal reflection on migration and modernity, the sense of reciprocity (Singh, 2002) amongst migrants as well as community building and the contribution of different sociocultural practices and discourses to strengthen the Greek diaspora consciousness. Building on a collective memory, real life histories and strong communication patterns have been seen to lead to a sustainable community form (national and/or ethnic) which is based on informal and affective social bonds.

Methodology

Reflecting and reconstructing migrant life histories has proven to be a challenging and complex issue. Empirical analysis (James, 1996) formed the basis of this project following a non-prescriptive approach aiming to interpret the meaning of migration and community formation as it was felt by the participants. Qualitative approaches supplemented by quantitative data used including official and unofficial discourses of community and individual biographies as well as life histories, census statistics, archival materials and official migration documents. Drawing on these sources was important to capture the deep reflection on and transformation of migrant experience over time and place it in its respective sociocultural and historical context. The life-histories presented in this book allowed for a more dynamic and contextualized interpretation and understanding of the Greek community and its transformation over time and through place via migration modes of practice. At the same time they offered a deeply textured understanding of the present ecology of the community which attempts to incorporate its migrant tradition into the second, third and fourth generation Greek-Australians as well as in the national psyche.

The multiple sources of data allowed for a more elaborated analysis. The methodology was comprised of four elements: a) detailed life history profiles (interviews), b) extensive archival records and books (passenger lists, ocean liner lists, films, and newspaper clippings), c) personal primary resources such as photographs, written documents, personal literary expression) and d) site and route observations.

A) Life History Interviews

The primary source of information constituted the author's personal testimony supplemented by life history interviews of the first Greek-migrant employees at the Centre of Bonegilla (community resource people and observers). An important research instrument in conducting the life history interviews was the author himself[3], whereas the book editor had the role of an *outside* researcher.

Interviewees were engaged into a *story-telling mood* where reflection and transformation were apparent. The interviewer, being the author himself, became a sensitive research instrument and an empathic listener allowing people to comfortably narrate their memories. At the same time both the interviewer and interviewees were engaged in their bicultural narratives. The sense of *face to face proximity* is evident and it constituted a powerful research tool in unfolding their migrant stories (James, 1996). At the same time this connectedness[4] and active engagement helped people to reflect on their personal stories and contexualise their role in a wider sociocultural environment. Tranformation became apparent when past and present lived practices were interwoven and disseminated to the broader public.

Overall 50 interviewees were approached. The vast majority of them were males reflecting on male migration patters of that era. An interview guide/checklist was deployed to elicit information. The life histories were centred around major themes such as migration and social movements, major community events (political, cultural, religious, social), community people (immigrants and their families) and places (e.g. Bonegilla and Greta Migrant Camps, community organizations in different Australian localities). More specifically, complex themes of identity, history, and the struggle of belonging were presented. As the narrative of immigrant settlement unfolds we learn about the various journeys of migration; life in the Bonegilla camp through the eyes of the people who worked there for many years; the contribution made to easing the challenges of settlement by the first "welfare" workers of the migration movement; as well as the profiles and experiences of older community resource people. Significant social and political issues such as the so-called 'Macedonian Issue' and the riots at Bonegilla in 1952 and 1961 were also presented. Finally, the narrative is completed with further personal stories that reveal how the contemporary fabric of Australia's "heteroglot history" (Clifford, 1997) has been influenced

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[3] The author, with the assistance of the outside researcher, has collated and interpreted primary sources to tell his own history as well as those of other Greek migrants who worked and contributed in Australia by serving as important vehicles of social transformation and transition. These narratives contributed to a shared community oral history project.

[4] The author's detailed account of his personal life is mixed with the stories and experiences of his compatriots and other migrants revealing a unique sense of connectedness and community belonging. Their life histories and reflections constitute a more open and dynamic illustration of the Greek community's development over the past 50 years.

by relations between peoples in space, time and memory.

The language chosen for the interviews was Greek. The author purposefully has chosen to write his life narrative in the Greek language even though he speaks and writes fluently in English. This in fact is another manifestation of his strong Greek identity and at the same time reveals a strong commitment to the multicultural character of the new "homeland". It was the author's multiple sense of identity that enabled him to become a full member of the Australian society and to proudly assume his dual citizenship.

In addition, it was the author's deep belief that the Greek language will enable younger generations to appreciate the Greek migrant experience both in Australia and overseas. This also became important because the vast majority of interviewees had Greek as their first language. The symbolic and sentimental value of the language played an important role in unfolding the narrative and in engaging into a more dynamic dialogue between past and present lived practices. On the other hand the bilingual publication of this book showcases a deeply felt need to go beyond face to face interaction. Community participants desired the use of new means of communicating their stories breaking the limits of speech and thus, enabling the possibility of social interaction over larger spans of space and time. They have seen print as an opportunity of enabling social integration (Anderson, 1991) into its Australian national as well as Greek community and diasporic contexts.

B) Archival Resources and Personal Documents

Archival materials were drawn from the R.M.I.T. Australian Greek Resource and Learning Centre's comprehensive collection of Australian Greek archival materials and magazines, which is one of the most extensive Greek newspaper archives in Australia. In addition, materials were drawn from the extensive archive of Mr George Galanis, a freelance journalist and articles from the Greek magazine Ellinis and Paroikia, the Greek newspapers Neos Kosmos and Ta Nea. The analysis of the sources was based on ethnographic methods depicting the sociocultural context of that era.

In addition, personal and rare photographs were used, being important means of deep reflection in people stories. Photographs offered a tangible link between then and now and they can facilitate the development of ideas and critical thinking to the modern readers. At the same time photographs constitute a valuable artistic expression. Using *reflexive photography* as a tool utilizes the 'inside knowledge' of the Greek-Australian participants about their community. Community participants engage in deeper levels of reflective thinking and thus, construct reflexively meaningful narratives about their migrant journey and settlement as well as they communicate new ways of relating and belonging. This method allows them to contribute meaningful photographs, memoirs and artefacts from their personal collections (James, 1996).

Finally, *spatial social mappings* of the research site and the community (e.g. mapping cultural, commercial, residential and religious precincts/activities) added to this multifaceted methodology. For example, the outside researcher was taken by the author on a journey to the Bonegilla Migrant Reception Centre site following the initial migrant route from Melbourne to Bonegilla. This allowed the remapping of the old route whereas it unfolded the migrant narrative in geographical and spatial terms. At the same time a sense of how the research site has changed over time in terms of official and unofficial accounts of the place was developed. Reflexive photographs were taken whereas site and route maps were examined enabling the historical contextualization of the data as well as more abstract ways of analysis.

The analysis of various empirical data sources revealed the different ways in which migration experiences have impacted on personal and community development. The methodology made possible for various modes of social integration (e.g. modes of communication, organization and exchange) to be explored. According to James (1996), it is the very intersection of these modes illuminates community transformation, whereas the foundational categories (e.g. embodiment, culture, language, time and space) revealed by the life-histories added to the notion that migration can be seen as an ongoing constitutive process within modernity (Papastergiadis, 2000, p. 13).

Reflecting on Migrant Experiences: A Transformation in Time and Space

The flows of movement, the boundaries, the structures of belonging to a nation state and to a diasporic community as well as the significant role of migrants in establishing the new societies/homelands are all claims that migration is a central force in the constitution of modernity. As Papastergiadis suggests, "[T]he metaphor of the journey, the figure of the stranger and the experience of displacement has been at the centre of many cultural representations of modernity", even though "the precise nexus between migration and modernity is still unclear" (Papastergiadis, 2000, p.11). In this sense the book is a testimony of the modest contribution of individual migrants. It also gives a greater framework in describing the life time tension between movement and settle-

ment and unfolds a documentary and analytical representation of Greek immigrants in Melbourne.

The interrelationships between migration and modernity emerge from a variety of metaphors and symbolisms such as the journey of migration, the movement and settlement as well as estrangement as it is explored in the analysis it follows.

i) The Journey

The physical movement and the metaphor of the journey were important concepts that emerged from the life histories. The detailed accounts of the actual journey to Australia presented in Chapter Two is an emotional description disclosing the full story of spatial and psychological dislocation that many migrants felt after leaving their homeland. The sense of 'exile'[5], experienced by all participants, lies at the very centre of a national culture left behind. The vivid scenes of the farewell (family farewell at the villages, farewell at the train stations, and the port of Piraeus) dominated all stories revealing psychological pressures and feelings of duty towards family, fear of the unknown, a sense of failure in the homeland, pride, a desire for success, and the agony of young migrants facing an unknown future. All these were part of the migrants' experiences through this stage of their journey. Thus, "[T]he dream of a better life and the nightmares of loss are both expressed by the metaphor of the journey" (Papastergiadis, 2000, p. 11).

Furthermore, migrants' movement, as presented in the book, is not just a spatial shift, as the journey and the narratives of migration coincide to the journey of modernity. It is also linked to the ability of participants to imagine an alternative/ new way of life. According to Bauman (1991), the constant move forward is a driving force for both individuals and the postmodern society witnessing the transformations between the local and the global (Bauman, 1991). For instance, traveling with an ocean-liner (e.g. Skaubryn) poses a new transformative challenge (one in the lifetime) which is worthy of detailed description. The life on board as well as the various stops in different ports such as that of Port Said, Suez Canal, Aden, Colombo, and finally, Fremantle-Perth and Melbourne are all part of the new learning experience. The symbolic value attached to the trip and the ocean liner is a powerful and eternal point of reference.

In addition, entering into a new cultural and social context creates powerful connotations of imaging the new life in the 'lucky country'. Thus, the welcome given to people at Melbourne's Station Pier, the first adverse impressions of Melbourne, the necessary debarkation procedures, the trip to Bonegilla as well as the Australian natural environment, were all new images of transformation for the young migrants who were awed by the Australian outback. Making dreams about the new life was a vital connection with the new country and their personal desire to succeed. The Bonegilla Centre was considered to be a symbolic place; a temporary refuge, which enabled Greek migrants to establish themselves in Australia after hard work, even though their experiences could vary (most of them were positive ones).

Finally, the causes of movement were well illustrated on the book stories. The economic factors primarily dictated migration. A brief account (see Chapter One) of the socio-political and economic environment in Greece after the end of the Second World War (1945) and the Greek Civil War (1949) indicates that Greek migrants left their country in search of greater prosperity, stability, and security. The strong economic recession and inadequacies as well as social and political unrest that triggered migration, forced thousands of Greek males to dislocate themselves and migrate to countries such as America, Australia, Brazil and Germany.

However, the distinction between voluntary and involuntary movement was difficult to define. The author and the other participants accepted in the most absolute manner that migration was a personal choice made as a result of broader economic, social and political constraints taking full responsibility for their action to migrate. As it is presented in the book, the decision to leave was made out of both individual aspirations and collective needs. The personal choice derived from the feelings of responsibility that link the person to the past and the future. Greek migrants have felt compelled to leave their homeland in order to fulfill individual and collective needs, to offer assistance to parents and family, and for political reasons. The latter indicates that it was more a coercive displacement (Papastergiadis, 2000) rather than a free movement.

ii) The Settlement

Life histories in this book revealed the central role of economic and political structures in the regulation

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[5] The notion of belongingness in these narratives was attached to the crossing of national boundaries. The powerful connection to the country of birth determined the exilic status migrants felt during the early stages of their migration. This was based on the notion that citizenship and exile determined either inclusion of exclusion from the national state (Papastergiadis, 2000, p.54). However, borders are no longer permanent and natural geographic markers of the state. They are socially constructed lines to encourage greater flexibility and mobility (e.g. the formation of the European Union or the free trade agreements, etc.) and this poses new challenges in the definition of migration.

of migration[6] and the distorted levels of cultural exchange caused by the migrant's socio-economic inferiority within the new society. They also reveal the mainstream tendency to stratify and assimilate migrants. Migration during the 1950s and 1960s was seen as either necessary condition or an unwelcome burden to the Australian social order. Thus, the admission of the Greek migrants to the Australian society during the White Australian Policy was based on the necessary assumption of assimilation as well as the economic calculation of opportunity over exploitation. The Greek migrants were very conscious that they were seen by their Australian employers as cheap source of labour[7] and that the *hospitality* expressed by employers was based on the expectation of profit and adoption of the Australian values.

Furthermore, the participants and the author understood migration as a life-long process which dynamically affects the boundaries of society and the very essence of belonging in a triangular context. For these people migration has gone beyond their physical movement, social settlement and estrangement, even though it is directly connected to these concepts. Participants also revealed a modern sensibility of their self-identification in a multicultural society, where the very notions of being a foreigner, the migration, the dislocation, estrangement, etc. are discussed in a modern context[8].

The estrangement experienced by those migrants in that period is being reconceptualised in the context of globalization and modern migration movements. The binary logic of *us-them, modern traditional* and *insider-outsider* does not provide a more complex framework of addressing the shifting patterns of inclusion and exclusion in contemporary times, as the very notion of the *stranger* in modern societies is not linked to the migrant alone (Papastergiadis, 2000, p.14). Thus, the redefinition of their migrant and social status is an evolving and transformative process which involves the predicament and sensibility of being a *stranger* ('xenos')[9]. This feeling during the very first stages of settlement **is** well illustrated

in the life histories. Many migrants such as the author and the participants felt the isolation and the loneliness of being a foreigner in Australia. Many of them invited family members form Greece (chain migration) to joint them or created families to support their personal aspirations. They also created a complex network of community, religious and educational organizations and structures to counteract assimilation and estrangement (Arvanitis, 2006).

In this context, participants and the author himself were anxious to clarify the stereotypical connection between migrants and strangers[10]. The distinction, according to their views, creates another type of displacement such as ethnic tension and antagonism. By posing this challenge the Greek participants reveal a sense of commonality with other migrant groups and they challenge the exposure of migrant to a continuous scrutiny in terms of tenure, ambiguous social position and loyalty to political culture. And this becomes important in the context of globalization, which has brought new dynamics in determining modern migrants and especially the fact that people maintain an ongoing and subjective association with migration. The identification with migration continues long after the physical act of movement is over and this is well portrayed in the book. As such, migration cannot be seen as a temporary or negative process in modern society as it is an integral part of modern development. Thus migrants cannot be defined by a marginal status, because of the constant movement and the transformative force of space and time in the modern world. However modern anxiety over migration and difference continuous as it is part of the broader uncertainty over the form of society.

Moreover, these migrants being agents of modernity have seen themselves as bridging persons between their cultural surplus and the new sociocultural synthesis needed in a multicultural society. They also connect their identity to a broader social consciousness (Said, 1993), which could be built upon social practices of discussing cultural differences. Parti-

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[6] **T**he author being an I.C.E.M. recruitment officer discusses the role of the states in organizing this large scale migration. In 1952 Australia and Greece signed a bilateral agreement to attract 'New Australians' from Greece via the I.C.E.M. program. Thousands of People attended the interviews with I.C.E.M, even though, according to the participants, information about this new and unknown country (Australia) was limited and it was mainly based on newspaper articles, campaign documents and some informational cine-films. Detailed descriptions of the procedures and documents necessary for migration to Australia were essential features of the displacement process. Detailed medical and quarantine checks were performed as well as Police checks and Certificates of Social/Political Beliefs were needed for all young unskilled workers to migrate.

[7] Despite this the Greek workers at Bonegilla Centre were in fact pioneers in offering their welfare services to the Greek migrants in Australia during the mass migration period, well before the Australian Government funded various settlement services and programs.

[8] Migration takes on a different form and it is greatly diversified. The reasons and patterns of migration as well as the type and professional skills of modern migrants vary indicating that the act of settlement is no longer the core feature of the journey as it was back in the 1950s.

[9] Throughout the book it is apparent that the author and other participants felt that they were strangers (xenoi) in a country that required their assimilation after they were admitted. This is an acute sentiment that penetrates all the stories. Each story is an emotional reflection, which needs to be told for the sake of the next generations. It is an obligation that the first generation Greeks in this book feel they must fulfill. The author however tells these stories as if they were also the stories of millions of other migrants regardless of ethnic background.

[10] In modern development the different cultural symbols and practices are no longer depended on the physical presence of strangers due to the new forms of media and travel communication create new forms of cultural displacement without people's movement (Papastergiadis, 2000, p. 15).

cipants are an integral part of the social transformation seeking a commitment to common social norms based on the respect and integration of cultural differences and the surplus of migration. These life stories express a weakness of people to connect their cultural practices with the broader social values of consumerism and individualism. The latter is an important realization for modern societies that face the 'breakdown to community' where people feel unmoored, isolated and anomic (Apple, 2001).

iii) Community Building and Self Determination

Empirical analysis suggested that the journey of migration affects people's *life world* throughout their entire life-span. This journey echoes the deeply felt sentiment of these particular community members to maintain their communities by utilizing informal social bonds and strengthening the 'moral voice' of their community. The migrant experience as it is described in its micro level indicates the need for a conscious interpretation of lived sociocultural practices and it contributes to the so-called community sustainability. Past lived practices described in the book contribute to a more expansive notion of sustaining an ethnic community in a modern world because they reveal how communities cohere through time and in different spatial contexts. It also reflects on how communities are negotiating the challenges of globalization.

At the same time participants voiced a need for community-based strategies of interethnic communication and intercultural connectedness in a multicultural society. This is a conscious attempt to argue for a new *brand-state* (van Ham, 2001) which recognizes multicultural development and the contribution of migrant communities to the national building. It seems that the life histories presented in the book offer a rich context of narratives which offer a model a self and national redefinition via more abstract cultural and linguistic symbols, icons of ethnicity, history and place attachments. Stable and fixed attachments to ethnicity, place and common institutional bonds seem to be rethought and redefined by those living actors of modern Australian history. Community building and sustainability is seen as a contemporary boarder crossing within the context of multicultural society itself and between generations in the same ethnic group. The life narratives enable people of a Greek background and especially the younger generations to position themselves in a

diasporic and multicultural context allowing for greater transcultural understanding. This becomes particularly important to a society which already has dealt with the entire spectrum of cultural and linguistic diversity; a society that bases its vibrancy in the development of new reflective and innovative ways of social multicultural action.

Furthermore, the continuous move of modernity is expressed through the transformations and representations of migrants' identity. The shift in subjectivity is linked to a destabilization of the cultural codes of the homeland but most importantly is connected to the sense of belonging and the perception of destiny within migrants' life-narrative. The self-defined attachment to specific localities (the place of birth, the place of initial settlement, the Bonegilla camp) extends beyond specific time frames to follow the journey of migration and settlement. Ethnicity, language, bicultural attachments, the sense of belonging to a larger diasporic community as well as collective memory are powerful markers of identity and self-definition for those Greek migrants.

The Greek identity maintains a central role in the self-definition of these Greek-Australians. It has a unique essence reflecting nostalgia about traditional cultural values and the importance of the language. At the same time participants felt that identity is an ongoing process of negotiating differences in a multicultural context, as the strong affiliation with the place of origin and the culture does not mean that there is a single path of determining all the possibilities of shaping identity in present time. Participants felt that their identity has been formed through spatial dislocation and social interactions, whereas imagining new representations of cultural identity become possible due to the communality and bonds amongst participants even 50 years after their migration.

Thus, the boundaries of this commonality exceed the limits of ethnic identity to a more elaborated notion of belonging to a wider multicultural society. The life's passage to another place (being more or less a traumatic or disruptive experience) also revealed the desire and dream for transformation and move.

Finally, the life stories presented in this book formed an imagined community amongst these Greek migrants[11] defined by features of commonality and immediacy (James, 1996). The numerous migrant life histories reveal a strong feeling of connection and deep reflection of their migrant experience in a collective way. The author as much as the other participants maintain a special bonding based on

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[11] The progression and transformation of social relations are core elements of this book mainly referring to the face to face relations experienced by community participants during the journey of their migration, settlement and establishment into the new country. These relations extend beyond the face to face interaction to include a coherent context of communication of people who share cultural, linguistic and ethnic bonds as well as embeddedness within particular places. Bonegilla maintains a symbolic value for the participants strengthening their sense of identity as well as their bonds to the Greek and Australian community.

memories, lived practices, common interests, and strong interpersonal relations almost six decades after their migration to Australia. The people who have experienced migration felt the need to relate to their broader Greek and Australian community as self-defined individuals having the desired to be recognized as such.

On the other hand the sense of embodied presence and intimacy of interpersonal relations experienced by those Greek migrants are redefined in a more national, global and abstract way. The *face to face* integration experienced during migration and settlement are interwoven with more imagined bonds and common interests of future cultural and community preservation. There is a conscious attempt not to loose traditional forms of expressing identity, but at the same time to inculcate modern ways of communication in order to connect with new generations. Participants make new meanings of their ethnic identity via the redefinition of collective memories and belonging using new communication forms and abstraction. Their collective imagination of identity provides a useful context of rethinking their diasporic status and in strengthening their diasporic consciousness (Cohen, 1997).

Conclusion

This book without offering a historical research framework constitutes a valuable educational and community resource as it comes from people who lived and actively participated in the whole migration project. Young generations can be benefited by engaging themselves in active research of their own family's stories and by critically reflecting on Australia's migrant history. The book is a valuable contribution to the so-called *community building* by increasing the awareness and comprehension of community social history and unveiling some of its unknown aspects. It also promotes a positive ethnic

identification through the learning of Australia's community history and it recognises the community's contribution to the Australian socio-political development and multiculturalism. More specifically this book cultivates a wider understanding of the history, social contribution and development of the Greek community, one of the largest ethnic communities in Australia. This narrative is a testimony of a community of people that have gone through Bonegilla and started their new lives in Australia. After half a century these people feel that they are still connected to one another and identify themselves with their very passage from this Centre. This very fact suggests that the psychological identification with migration is confirmed long after the physical movement. Community participants shared a common interest to participate in the re-making of their own life histories and re-imagine their own community ties and feelings offering a critical connection between past and future community building. In that sense they reflected on the informal and formal social bonds of the Greek community and at the same time they revealed the "voices" of the ethnic communities to be recognized for contributing to the creation of today's Australia.

Finally, this book is a memoir of a migrant from the very beginning of his journey and dislocation to the relocation in a new spatial arrangement which is a transformative experience and leads to the rebuilding of a new identity. Greek as much as the other migrants dealt with this special, transformative migrant experience, as well as with the new social and linguistic interactions they encountered. Migration had proven to be a decisive moment of constant border crossing experience, a new beginning and a rebirth in time (Papastergiadis 2000). In the era of globalisation these personal and collective recollections illuminate the connection between history and the future, between global and local relationships.

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About the Author

Dr Eugenia Arvanitis
Eugenia Arvanitis was born on the Ionian island of Lefkada in Greece. She graduated from the Department of Elementary School Education at the University of Ioannina, Greece in 1992. In 2001 Eugenia became the first international doctoral exchange student to complete a Doctoral Thesis in Education at RMIT (Faculty of Education, Language and Community Services) from the University of Ioannina, Greece. As part of her studies she has been involved in research on Greek ethnic schools in Australia. Her research interests include multicultural educational policy and practice; ethnic community development and identity; community building education, and teachers' training. She has attended and presented papers at several conferences in Australia and overseas. Between 2001 and 2004 Eugenia co-ordinated and taught the Greek Language and Cultural Studies Program at the School of International and Community Studies, and was employed as the Manager of the Australian-Greek Resource and Learning Center at RMIT University, Melbourne. In November 2004 Eugenia was offered the position of Research Associate at the Globalism Institute at RMIT University, Melbourne. As part of her role Eugenia works with Professor Mary Kalantzis in developing a Learning Competency/Accreditation & Quality Assurance Frameworks for the Greek Ministry of Education (Secretariat of Adult Education). She finally engages in professional training for the Greek Adult Educational System, academic and publication activities.

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