

Abstract

BOUKOURAKIS, ANGELA. *It's Greek to Me: The Politics and Shape of Greek-American Identity*. (Under the direction of Dr. Sheila Smith McKoy.)

The purpose of this thesis is to examine how native Greeks and first-generation Greek-Americans identify or disidentify with “Greek-ness,” “American-ness,” or both in their struggle to achieve an ultimate, successful balance of a third “space,” one that expresses their Greek-American identity. In order to come to certain conclusions regarding the formation of Greek-American identity, I examine Greek-American life from a historical overview that spans as early as the first Greek-American communities of the early 1900’s, to Greek-Americans of present-day society. I look at how Greek-Americans perform “Greek-ness,” “American-ness,” or “Greek-American-ness,” through language choice and the altering of traditional gender roles, in an attempt to achieve the third “space” of “Greek-American-ness.” I discuss their use of Greek and English languages in the first chapter of the thesis from a qualitative, sociolinguistics study I conducted in spring 2003. In addition I examine females’ and males’ altering of traditional gender roles, and their implications, in several Greek-American texts, including Helen Papanikolas’s novel, The Time of the Little Blackbird, and her story collection, The Apple Falls from the Apple Tree, Nia Vardalos’s film, My Big Fat Greek Wedding, Nick Gage’s memoir, A Place for Us, and Eleni N. Gage’s memoir, North of Ithaka: A Journey Home through a Family’s Extraordinary Past, for the purposes of this thesis. These texts most effectively illustrate the altering of traditional gender roles and the affects of interethnic marriage. I found that the definitions of Greeks and Greek-Americans have always been ambiguous. Furthermore, Greek-American identity continues to be so in contemporary America, as a result of white, American socio-

historical and socio-cultural constructs of race and ethnicity. Other findings include the fact that American-born and Greek-born Greek-Americans consider themselves different from other Americans, as well as from the Greeks who live in Greece. Both groups express their “Greek-American-ness” through language choice, altering of traditional gender roles, and lifestyle patterns characteristic of American life. Both males and females successfully achieve the third “space” of Greek-American identity in contemporary America. However, from a historical perspective, males assimilated more easily, and more often, than females. In addition, it took females much longer than the males to achieve this third “space,” because of Greek traditional gender roles, which automatically allowed males more freedom for self-definition than the females, as a result of Greek patriarchal society in which these original roles were constructed. Finally, contemporary Greek-Americans are assimilating more than ever before, since influx of Greek migration patterns has significantly slowed down, from the last working class group who came in the early 1980’s. This is probably the last group of first-generation Greek-Americans, so assimilation will become even more prevalent amidst later generations with the passing of time, unless Greek-Americans find ways to preserve their history and culture. This is why it is important to unearth Greek-American immigrant literature currently out of print, and to continue to write about the Greek-American experience, so future generations have a way to connect to their cultural origins and embrace the history that sets them apart as distinctively Greek-American.

It's Greek to Me: The Politics and Shape of Greek-American Identity

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Dedication

For Mom, Dad, and my sister. I hope that this project will contribute to the recognition of Greek-American identity in contemporary America. Last, but most certainly not least, I hope that it will foster greater sensitivity, understanding, and acceptance of all minorities in the U.S. because diversity has undeniably contributed to the greatness of American society. It is this which makes the U.S. distinctive from any other country in the world.

Biography

Angela Boukourakis, baptized Evangelia after her paternal grandmother, is a first-generation Greek-American who was born to Greek-born Greek-Americans, Paul and Anna Boukourakis, in Charlottesville, Virginia. She received her B.A. in English from Mary Washington College in Fredericksburg, Virginia in May 2003.

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First, I would like to thank God for bringing me to this point in my life and my academic career, and for carrying me through it all. In addition, I would like to thank my parents for instilling Greek heritage and culture in me alongside my American breeding, despite the fact that I took the “Greek-ness” for granted while growing up. It is truly a blessing to be part of two cultures that make up who I am. I would also like to thank Dr. Sheila Smith McKoy for her plethora of guidance, support, and time spent on me and this project. Likewise, I would like to thank Drs. Wolfram and Prioli for their encouragement, enthusiasm, and time, which they devoted to this thesis. Furthermore, I thank the rest of my friends, family, and professors who have also supported me on the journey that led me here.

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Introduction

A few days ago I was watching Greek television. I was surprised to see my grandmother in Kalymnos¹ on the screen...my parents explained that the Turks wanted to take an island near Kalymnos...I screamed out, 'You barbarians, you took it all from us and made it yours. And now you want more. I will fight you too if I have to...' My father smiled, kissed me and said, 'A true Greek.' I said with determination, 'Yes father. A true Greek and proud of it.'

From a compilation of Greek-American children's essays When I Realized I am a Greek Child
Eleven-year-old girl, Brooklyn, New York

What exactly is a Greek? And what is a Greek-American? One must first examine the history of the identity in order to begin to answer the question. The main factors that influenced Greek identity include Greece's topography, the Byzantine Empire, and the Turkish Conquest. Greece has always been divided into independent city-states as a result of the country's mountainous mainland and numerous islands, the latter of which span throughout two bodies of water: the Aegean and Mediterranean seas. Both the mountains and the ocean created self-enclosed communities with their own music, food, and customs, making the definition of what it means to be a Greek complex. Furthermore, thousands of Greeks lived in other countries outside of Greece as a result of the eastern Roman Empire called Byzantium (300 A.D.-1453), with its capital located in Constantinople (present-day Istanbul, Turkey). It included people of multiple ethnicities and countries; however, all of them were characterized as essentially Hellenic, as a result of Greek language and culture, which thrived among them. Generally speaking, in addition to language and culture, present-day Greeks are also largely characterized as

¹ A Greek island in the Aegean reached by a one-hour ferry crossing from the coast of Turkey but by an eighteen-hour crossing from mainland Greece.

Orthodox Christians, due to Emperor Constantine, who recognized Christianity as the official religion of the Byzantine Empire in 313 A.D. (Scourby 1). Furthermore, Greeks adopted various Turkish customs and cultural patterns as a result of the Turkish Conquest (1453-1821).

Several definitions of Greek identity existed in both eastern and western hemispheres of the world throughout history. According to Eleftherios Venizelos, the Greek prime minister who spoke at the Versailles Peace Conference, “A Greek is a person who wants to be Greek, feels he is a Greek and says he is a Greek” (Seaman 220); being Greek is based on choice and comprises a feeling and attitude of “Greek-ness” on the part of the individual. In the West, C.M. Woodhouse, an Englishman, echoes Venizelos’s sentiments in his work Modern Greece: A Short History, noting that “...The only practicable definition of a Greek is that he is somebody who thinks he is a Greek; and it is the Greek people as so defined, neither more nor less, that is the subject of history” (12). Because of the vast historical dispersion of Greeks around the world, including in America, the elusiveness of the definition of a Greek is felt in America and abroad, for Greek-Americans and Greeks alike. While it is true that Greeks cannot be distinguished by physical features and they do not share region-specific dialect and customs, they still have some commonalities, which include a shared history of Hellenism, Orthodox Christianity, and basic Greek language, as they did under Byzantine rule. These commonalities extend to Greeks who settled in the U.S., regardless of the region or country they left.

Despite some common characteristics among Greeks in America, Greek-American identity is just as abstract, if not more so, than the definition of Greek identity.

In addition to having the ever-changing definition of a “Greek” by which to define themselves, Greek-Americans have the added layer of “American-ness” to reconcile. Some characteristics of “American-ness” include exercising individualism in life choices apart from one’s family, opposite sex socialization in the form of dating, and an environment that provides Greek-American women several possibilities for a life outside of the home, in the form of education and career opportunities. At times, this American way of life and value system clashes with Greek cultural values. Furthermore, Greek-American identity is constantly being re-defined by other white Americans throughout history, who do not allow for the recognition of Greek-American identity in the U.S. In the early 1900’s-1920’s, strong anti-immigrant sentiment existed against the Greeks, which caused them to form self-enclosed communities apart from mainstream America, and brought great implications for the American-born children of immigrants, who grew up amidst such ethnic intolerance. Greeks experienced violence towards them in the 1900’s as a result of job competition across several states. Americans’ resentment towards these immigrants bred hatred and objectification of Greeks as “undesirables, the ignorant, depraved, and brutal foreigners” (Scourby 34). The Greeks would work for lower wages than other workers on railroads and in factories. For example, in 1909 in Omaha, workers of a meat-packing industry struck for higher wages; the packers brought in Greek strikebreakers who worked for lower wages. “Equally as threatening were the ambitious, hard-working Greeks who operated small businesses [in south Omaha]. The more prosperous Greeks had invested in an estimated thirty-four to fifty grocery stores whose value was placed at a quarter of a million dollars” (Scourby 34). Americans’ resentment of the Greeks culminated in an anti-Greek riot that took place in south Omaha

in February 1909, as a result of a Greek man who entered the house of an American woman of “questionable character” (Scourby 33). He was arrested “without any overt cause whatsoever” by a policeman who followed him, the Greek resisted, and the officer was shot. Then “one of the most shameful riots ever known took place because of prejudice against the foreigner” (Scourby 33). South Omaha’s Greek Town was burned down, driving 1,200 Greeks away. This explains why the “census of 1920 showed Nebraska to have a Greek population of only 1,504, less than half of what it had been in 1910” (Scourby 33). In Montana, mass meetings were held for the purpose of eliminating the Greek population from the city of Great Falls. Such meetings led to a committee that was formed in 1909 “for the explicit purpose of ridding Montana of its ethnic blight” (Scourby 34). Greeks from Idaho “remember when a hundred of them, who had cleared the land of sagebush near Mt. Home, and expected to be paid the following day, were, instead, taken from their tents by fifty masked men on horseback and herded, half-dressed, down the railroad tracks clutching their few belongings” (Scourby 34). The strong anti-Greek sentiment which existed throughout the country reinforced Greek identity for the immigrants’ children and taught them to fear American society outside of their enclosed communities.

Helen Papanikolas, a Greek-American historiographer and fiction writer, reports similar instances of anti-Greek violence that occurred in Utah in the 1900’s. Specifically, she notes how Greeks are racialized as “non-white” at this time in American history, in addition to being deemed ethnically inferior. According to an interview conducted by Ken Verdoia, Papanikolas states how the Greek immigrants who first arrived at the turn of the century were “mostly illiterate, considered uncouth, and mostly dark-skinned;” in

short, they were not considered white

(www.kued.org/joehill/early/papanikolas_interview.html). In addition, Papanikolas notes that they were segregated on labor gangs, they could not rent in certain areas of towns, and there were demonstrations against them. She adds that the white Americans feared three things: 1.) that they would be overrun by the Greeks, 2.) that they were anarchists; and 3.) that they would seduce their daughters. She discusses “two cases [in Utah] where two young Greeks were almost lynched over involvement with an American girl.” In one instance, she tells of a young Greek who “was interested” in an American girl, the sister of Jack Dempsey (a famous boxer of the era). She explains how racial violence arose out of a fight between the Greek man and Dempsey’s brother, who was killed in the incident. In another instance, she discusses an incident involving a young Greek man from her hometown in Carbon County, Utah. She states how he:

Gave a young woman a ride in his new yellow Buick and was promptly stopped on the outskirts of -- of Price, [Utah to take him] to the jail and a mob formed.

They wanted to take him to the hanging tree. There's a tree south of Price called the hanging tree. And only because the Greeks and the Italians banded together with their knives and guns were they able to disband the mob.

(www.kued.org/joehill/early/papanikolas_interview.html)

In this interview, Papanikolas explains that feelings were “so raw on this issue of immigrants coming in” that they were not even permitted to join “small existing labor unions” (www.kued.org/joehill/early/papanikolas_interview.html). Papanikolas attests that “the main reason [for this violence] was because they would work for lower wages. The immigrants had nothing to do with what their wages were. This was all decided by

management [usually a Greek who knew adequate English to make work arrangements with Americans]. And management was like a king. Each manager was like a king, had his own little country” (www.kued.org/joehill/early/papanikolas_interview.html).

Papanikolas illustrates how Greek-Americans are racialized in American society through these real-life examples.

Greeks were also targeted by the Ku Klux Klan in later years, which, ironically, derives its name from “kyklos,” the Greek word for “circle,” representing a fraternal organization. Papanikolas notes in her historiography, An Amulet of Greek Earth: Generations of Immigrant Folk Culture, that:

In the 1920’s, the Klan added immigrants to its hostile policies, and espoused such disparate principles as ‘protecting American womanhood.’ Newspapers gave sanction to the Klan in its hard-hitting campaign against aliens. ‘Scum of Europe a Menace to the U.S.’ and ‘Alien Influx is National Menace: Must be Stopped’ were typical headlines of the early 1920’s. (159-160)

Furthermore, she notes that at that time, “the Greeks were singled out for establishing Greek schools, sending large numbers of money orders to their families in Greece, and reading Greek-language newspapers in coffeehouses. They angered Americans by speaking Greek on the streets” (160-161). As mentioned earlier, all of this animosity caused Greeks to turn inward and foster strong Greek identity with their children, while forming protectionist groups that simultaneously pushed assimilation and focused on the connection between greater American society and the Greeks, based on shared Hellenistic values of humanity, democracy, and freedom (www.ahepa.org). It is important to examine Greek-American identity because of this “double bind” for Greek-Americans.

Early immigrants were caught in this contradiction between being the “undesirables” of Europe and the bearers of Hellenistic heritage upon which America was founded.

The “double bind” of Greek-American identity as racially and ethnically ambiguous also exists in later years of history for American-born Greek-Americans. Jeffrey Eugenides discusses this “double bind” in his work Middlesex. Eugenides focuses on the experiences of Milton Stephanides, a Greek-American whose restaurant is torched in the 1967 Detroit riots under the pretense that he is “white,” but who faces discrimination at the hands of a white American realtor, who does everything she can to discourage him from buying a home in a predominantly white, upper middle class neighborhood during a time when white flight began in the U.S. Eugenides explains how, at that time in Detroit, a point system was implemented by realtors to keep minorities out of certain neighborhoods. Although no one spoke of it openly, “realtors mentioned ‘community standards’ and selling to ‘the right sort of people’” (Eugenides 256). He states, “for all the disavowals of its existence, the point system is no secret. Harry Karras tried unsuccessfully to buy a house in Grosse Pointe the year before. Same thing happened to Pete Savidis” (257). Eugenides states that the realtor “examines Milton’s complexion, his hair, his shoes” (255), and then asks about the origins of his name, what line of business he is in, and what kind of church he attends. He explains how the realtor silently evaluates Milton: “*Let’s see. Southern Mediterranean. One point. Not in one of the professions. One point. Religion? Greek church. That’s some kind of Catholic, isn’t it? So there’s another point there. And he has his parents living with him! Two more points! Which makes—five! Oh, that won’t do. That won’t do at all*” (255). White society continues to perpetuate this racialized Greek-American identity

in contemporary America, which appears in the early 1900's with the first Greek immigrants.

Apathy towards Greeks and Greek-American identity is ever-present within contemporary American society, despite the fact that Greek-Americans have greater freedom of self-definition now than they have ever had in American history. This is evident through the ambivalence of Greek-American identity by white Americans throughout the texts I examine for this thesis, which range from a time period as early as 1913 and as late as 2003 in contemporary America. Greek-American identity is constantly being misrecognized and "lumped" into an ambivalent "other" category by white Americans in Helen Papanikolas's works and in Nia Vardalos's My Big Fat Greek Wedding. In addition, Greek-American identity is even ambiguous for Greek-Americans in Greece, as native Greeks mistake Greek-Americans for either foreigners or natives, in Eleni Gage's North of Ithaka: A Journey Home through a Family's Extraordinary Past in 2002.

Furthermore, as time passes, Greek-Americans have become more assimilated as a result of education for men and women, moving into white American neighborhoods, and a steady increase of Greek-Americans' intermarriage to non-Greeks. Other possibilities that influenced Greeks' assimilation in America, and moving away from traditional male and female gender roles during the last several years, includes the Civil Rights Movement, Women's Liberation Movement, and the more Americanized ideologies of post World War II immigrants who migrated to the U.S. with more egalitarian views of traditional gender roles, along with white America's changing views towards Greeks in contemporary America. All of these factors facilitated later

immigrants' and their children's assimilation to white America's ideologies and value system, allowing for minimal culture clash and stronger success rate for "blending" within mainstream society. Thus, it is important to examine the complexities of Greek-American identity, and its historical evolution, as it becomes buried under Greek-Americans' assimilation in contemporary America.

I will utilize Ngugi Wa'Thiong'o's identification and Jose Munoz's disidentification theories to examine how one chooses to "be Greek," "be American," or "be Greek-American." In his work Decolonizing the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature, Ngugi argues that language is culture (15-16). He explains how his culture is cut off from him once he enrolls in the colonial school system where English is the language of instruction and prestige. Ngugi identifies with his heritage by consciously writing most of his works in his native language of Gikuyu. Thus, in this project, I specifically focus on the hyphenated identity of native Greeks and first-generation Greek-Americans because, as George Kourvetaris argues in Studies of Greek Americans, the greatest loss of language and culture exists between these two generations. "The pressure from American society to conform makes Greeks of [this next] generation more vulnerable to losing their ethnic identity" (Kourvetaris 214). While the first chapter of my work proves that language is culture, through the use of Greek and English languages, it extends this theory to other non-linguistic ways in which one identifies with his or her Greek heritage, such as adhering to traditional gender roles, and intrafaith marriage.

In Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics, Munoz chooses to disidentify with his culture's expectations of male heterosexuality, and the

concept of machismo, by openly being a gay Hispanic. I extend Munoz's definition of disidentification as deliberately performing one's identity in opposition to expected societal norms to Greek-American identity through the utilization of Greek, the minority language, in a public domain where English is the majority language.² Although there are several ways for a native Greek or first-generation Greek-Americans to identify or disidentify with "Greek-ness," some of the most crucial ones include language choice, the altering of traditional gender roles, and "mixed" marriage.³ I examine Greek-Americans' and native Greeks' portraits in Helen Papanikolas's novel, The Time of the Little Blackbird, and her story collection, The Apple Falls from the Apple Tree, Nia Vardalos's film, My Big Fat Greek Wedding, Nick Gage's memoir, A Place for Us, and Eleni N. Gage's memoir, North of Ithaca: A Journey Home through a Family's Extraordinary Past. I chose these literary texts from the paucity of Greek-American literature still in print because, for the purposes of this thesis, they most effectively illustrate the altering of male and female traditional gender roles from a historical overview within American history.⁴ In addition, these texts allow the reader a more comprehensive understanding of the complexities of each gender role and how they operate in relation to the formation of Greek-American identity and successful achievement of it.

² "Disidentification is the third mode of dealing with dominant ideology; it neither opts to assimilate within such a structure nor strictly opposes it; rather, disidentification is the strategy that works on or against dominant ideology" (Munoz 11).

³ For the purposes of this paper, "mixed" marriage refers to a Greek who marries a non-Greek; the individuals share the same religion or have two separate ones.

⁴ See Alexander Karanikas's literary review on Greek-American literature in the bibliography.

Few linguistic studies exist on Greek-American bilingualism and biculturalism, and I found none that examined this topic from a sociolinguistic, qualitative approach, at the time that I conducted my study in 2003. Since there are few studies regarding biculturalism, bilingualism, and Greek-American identity, I review the findings of my study in chapter one of this thesis. I examine how all participants, both native Greeks and first-generation Greek-Americans, identify with their “Greek-ness,” “American-ness,” or both, through the use of Greek and English languages. In addition, I discuss how, when, and to whom, participants choose to speak one language over the other. Furthermore, I examine how all participants—both first-generation Greek-Americans and native Greeks alike—express Greek-American identity, and achieve a successful balance of it, through their use of a unitary, hybrid, language, which one participant, Demetri, described as “Grenghish.”

In chapter two I examine how Greek-American females identify and disidentify with their “Greek-ness,” “American-ness,” and how they struggle to achieve balance of Greek-American identity using a historical framework. Helen Papanikolas’s works focus on Greek-American identity in 1939 and 1960, while Vardalos’s film focuses on contemporary Greek-American identity in 2002. I study several different constraining aspects of the Greek traditional gender role that limit Papanikolas’s women from fully achieving Greek-American-ness. Vardalos’s Toula, the most contemporary Greek-American female I discuss, is the only one who finally achieves successful balance of Greek-American identity. She does this by breaking out of the Greek traditional female gender role, attaining educational and professional aspirations outside of the home and

family business, and finally, having a successful “mixed” marriage through familial and spousal support.

In chapter three I examine how native Greek and Greek-American males identify with their “Greek-ness,” “American-ness,” or both, by adhering to, or altering, the traditional male gender role. I use Helen Papanikolas’s novel, The Time of the Little Black Bird and Nick Gage’s memoir, A Place for Us, to examine Greek-American male identity. In addition, I discuss various aspects of the traditional gender role and how Greek-American males fulfill or relinquish it, based on certain responsibilities that define this role, in the face of identification with “American-ness” and assimilation into mainstream society. Finally, I note how successful achievement of Greek-American identity is more readily available for men than for women, due to freedoms traditionally allotted to males within a Greek patriarchal culture and society. Thus, Greek-American males achieve balance of Greek-American identity much sooner than females.

Chapter 1: In America We Are “the Greeks,” and In Greece, We Are “the Americans”

The fact that I
 am writing to you
 in English
 already falsifies what I
 wanted to tell you.
 My subject:
 how to explain to you that I
 don't belong to English
 though I belong nowhere else,
 if not here in English.

“Dedication”
 Gustavo Perez Firmat

Adapting to a given language and culture as an adult is simpler in terms of identity than being raised simultaneously as a bilingual/bicultural individual. The native Greek already has a defined sense of self that changes as the individual adapts to American society. However, the bilingual individual's sense of self is a conglomeration of “Greek-ness” and “American-ness” that exists from childhood and on. The individual often struggles to find a balance between the degrees of “Greek-ness” and “American-ness” that define him or her from the onset of life, unlike the natives who face this issue later on. Few studies exist on Greek-American cultural identity and even fewer exist on native Greek identity; none examine the ethnic/linguistic identity of either group from a sociolinguistic and qualitative approach. This finding is even more disturbing, given that natives and first-generation Greek-Americans are slowly becoming nonexistent. In this chapter, I examine how Greek and English languages shape the ethnolinguistic identity of first-generation Greek-Americans and native Greeks who live in the U.S.

My findings contradict a study conducted by Paul Lamy, who argues that language does not have a direct impact on one's ethnolinguistic identity, in his article “Language and Ethnolinguistic Identity: The Bilingualism Question.” In contrast, my

data proves that language and culture are significant, and both have a direct impact in the forming of one's identity (linguistic and ethnic/cultural). My findings also contrast sharply with John Myhill's article, "The Native Speaker, Identity, and the Authenticity Hierarchy," in which he argues that language is not central to the authenticity of one's ethnic identity. Furthermore, Myhill points to native Greeks and Greek Diasporans as examples of ethnic groups that downplay the importance of the Greek language as an indicator of identity, and prefer other aspects of culture to connect with their Greek heritage, such as religion. I submit, however, that both Greek-Americans and native Greeks attest that language is representative of a culture and this is seen in the role that Greek and English languages play for both groups. Other studies that support my findings include those of Wallace E. Lambert and Rebecca E. Eilers.¹

Many previous studies have been conducted on how bilingualism and biculturalism affect Latin Americans in the U.S. (such as in Eilers's work), French Americans, and French-Canadians (as in Lambert and Lamy's works), to name a few ethnic groups; however, not much research has been conducted regarding the effects of bilingualism on Greeks (both natives and first-generation speakers). In addition, the few studies that have been conducted on Greek-American identity are mostly quantitative, and take a psycholinguistic or anthropological approach, as opposed to a sociolinguistic approach. For example, Aristotle Michopoulos created a bilingual language dominance test in order to assess Greek-American students' knowledge of English and their second language (Greek), which he discusses in his article "A Language Dominance Test for Greek-American Children." He then conducted a quantitative study of children of varying age groups at the Greek Bilingual School and the Church School in

¹ See bibliography for the specific references to these studies conducted by Lambert and Eilers.

Tarpon Springs, Florida. Similarly, Terry Tchaconas conducted a quantitative study, based solely on second graders, to test cognitive style and reading process of Greek-English bilinguals, which he analyzes in “Cognitive Style and the Reading Process in Greek-English Bilinguals.” Tchaconas’s participants came from a public elementary school in New York City, whose Greek population was approximately 25 percent. Other studies conducted on Greek-Americans include anthropological writings, such as Georgios Anagnostou’s “Anthropological Constructions of Greek American Ethnicity,” which focus on social mobility and collective identity of Greek-Americans, while my study concentrates strictly on individual identity. My data is based upon qualitative sociolinguistic research, the approach which I feel best demonstrates the linguistic markers of Greek and Greek-American identity.

In this chapter, I analyze transcribed samples of data collected in spring 2003. I interviewed two native Greeks, as well as three first generation Greek-Americans individually, with questions designed for Greek Americans or natives (dependent on how the participant was categorized). All first generation Greek-American participants are college students who attend public institutions in the U.S, all were born and raised in the U.S., speak Greek fluently, and visit Greece regularly for summer vacation. There were two female participants and one male. Mary, age 19, attended the University of Virginia. She was interviewed in a private residence. Demetri, age 18, who also attended the University of Virginia, was interviewed on the same day and in the same University of Virginia dorm room as Emily, age 21, who attended the College of William and Mary. The native Greeks include one male, Paul, age 64, and one female, Anna, age 56, who were self-employed restaurateurs at that time. Paul has lived in the U.S. for thirty-five

years and Anna has lived here for twenty-five. In stark contrast to the educational level of the first-generation Greek-Americans, Paul has a grammar school education and Anna a middle school one; both participants were interviewed in a private residence. My data is qualitative in nature since I base my findings on five respondents. In addition, I utilize specific examples from the participants' interview responses to support my conclusions.

Some limitations with the data regarding native Greeks may include educational levels, how old they were when they started learning English, and how much of the time they speak English, as opposed to their native language; all of these factors influence their level of fluency with the non-native language (English) and hence, the results of the data.² Furthermore, their level of fluency may be drastically different from another native Greek's, based on a variation of these factors for other individuals. Another factor that contributed to the accurate representation of their responses is the fact that the interviews were conducted in their native language (Greek), so they had the same advantage as the Greek-Americans did, with a full range of vocabulary usage and articulation. Some limitations that may have affected my findings with the Greek American participants include the slight age differences that existed among them, although I believe age was a stronger constant in the study as opposed to some other factors. Another limitation that could have affected Greek-American participants' responses was my familiarity with the participants themselves.³ In addition, a

² I refer to English as the native Greeks' "non-native language," instead of a "second language," throughout the chapter because English is only Anna's second language but Paul's third language.

combination of age, lack of familiarity, and gender could have influenced how one participant in particular, Demetri, phrased his responses to the interview questions. Demetri was the youngest and I was a female interviewer whom he had met minutes before the interview. These factors could be reasons why Demetri's speech was more hesitant, and why his responses were filled with repetitive phrases such as "like," "you know," and "I mean" throughout the interview (see Appendix B), as opposed to the two females whose speech was more fluid.

One final factor that could have influenced the strong correlation between Demetri's and Emily's responses is the fact that they are brother and sister. However, overall, there were strong correlations among the responses of all three participants, regardless of gender and familial relations. In addition, the closeness of the participants' ages was a factor that favorably contributed to the study. Since the participants are rather close in age, age is one of the least probable limitations of the study.

The Greek language is crucial to Greek-American identity, and directly expresses Greek culture, for all of the individuals who were interviewed. According to Ngugi, "The choice of language and the use to which language is put is central to a people's definition of themselves in relation to their natural and social environment, indeed in relation to their universe" (4). All of the participants in my study give several examples that prove language significantly impacts the definition of self in relation to the performance of Greek-American identity. For example, the negotiation of Emily's

³ My familiarity with the native Greek participants was actually a stronger factor, because they are my parents. In addition, Mary is my sister, so familiarity is strongest with her, than with Demetri and Emily, whom I corresponded with via e-mail, and only met in person, the day of the interviews.

cultural identity over time, between her Greek and American cultures, is evident through the second half of her response (see Appendix B, question 2). When asked how she defines herself in terms of culture, she responds:

‘Culture I’d say Greek, well, I guess culture, I’d say more Greek-American ‘cause Greek-American is just like, a weird mix of the two. It’s kind of like, American, basic American values, like I dunno, the society we grew up in, and stuff that we’ve been listening to and hearing since we were little kids, but then, culturally, I’d say more Greek, definitely. Especially in terms of the music I listen to, the things I like, um, yeah, definitely.’

Emily states that her cultural identity is “more Greek-American ‘cause Greek-American is just like, a weird mix of the two.” She further defines Greek-American cultural identity as comprised of the values and rhetoric of the American society in which she grows up, but then she discusses the Greek aspect of her cultural identity, which she immediately relates to language, as she refers to the music she listens to. While American values are part of Greek-American cultural identity, Greek language is also inherent to the Greek component of that identity.

Note how Lamy claims that “There is not much of a relationship between bilingualism and identity once both intergroup contact and demographic context are held constant” (33); in short, he argues that there is no direct link between language and one’s cultural identity under these conditions. In contrast, my findings show that linguistic and cultural identities are not two separate entities. Rather, they are enmeshed and intertwined for the bilingual and bicultural individual, even for one who has intergroup contact. This is evident from Mary’s, Emily’s, and Demetri’s responses when I asked

how they felt about being raised bilingually. Mary's first statement to my question is, "Um, I'm very proud of it. I think I consider it as one of the many benefits of being, you know, multicultural, having two cultures influence me." In this statement, Mary considers her bilingualism as a benefit of her biculturalism, that is to say, she views her bilingualism as a result of "having two cultures influence [her]." Hence, her response supports Ngugi's idea that language is culture and that the two elements are inseparable and fluid in the formation of one's Greek-American identity.

When asked the same question about being raised bilingually, Emily says, "It just exposes you to a completely different way of life. You don't really even need to be exposed to the culture; the language in itself is representative." Even though the first part of her statement, "You don't even really have to be exposed to the culture," appears to make a distinction between culture and language with regard to one's identity, Emily finishes with, "...The language in itself is representative" (see Appendix B, question 2). Hence, she contradicts the first part of her statement and validates that the culture is part of the language. Like Mary's response, the second half of Emily's supports the idea that biculturalism is a result of bilingualism. From Emily's response, it is evident that even if an individual only has direct contact with a second language, he or she is still directly impacted by that language's culture.

Several factors support the claim that linguistic and cultural identities are intertwined, and that both affect the individual directly. Demetri's response to his bilingualism is worth noting:

'I mean, when I was little, Greek school was on Saturdays, three hours from ten to one, and we'd be like, why do we have to go, all my friends have sleepovers and

soccer games, and duh duh duh, y' know? I don't know if the Greek school helped as much as the Greek music and summers but uh, I'm definitely glad our parents forced us to go to school and put it [the language] on us. I mean even though it was hard, it was worth it.'

Although Demetri states that he hated Greek school while growing up, he immediately relates his bilingualism and learning the Greek language, not only with Greek school, but also with other influences. They include Greek music and the summers he spent in Greece. Again, this example indicates that linguistic and cultural identities are not independent of each other. Furthermore, this example proves Ngugi's statement; the Greek language is central to Demetri's sense of self, and also how he makes sense of the environment when he spends his summers in Greece. His fluency of the Greek language (Appendix B, question 5) allows him to comprehend and experience a completely different country than his permanent home of the U.S. more fully, than if he did not have this linguistic flexibility.

When I asked the participants to describe their fluency of the Greek language, all responded that they consider themselves sufficiently fluent (Appendix B, question 5). Hence, speaking Greek is an option for first-generations, unlike for Greek natives, who do not have full mastery of both languages, and choose their native one over English out of necessity, as will be discussed later. Speaking Greek by choice for the first-generations is evident through Mary's answer to question four when I asked her how she felt about being raised bilingually at the time of the interview, and how she felt about it while growing up, she states:

‘Growing up, I guess as a kid, you tend not to understand it as much. So, going out, I’d just kinda be like, ‘Speak English! Don’t speak Greek!’ or, ‘Shh! You’re speaking too loud, other people are starin’ at us!’ But, now, it’s kind of like the little childhood or adolescent, I mean, so many things in adolescence, that that’s what you do with, and it rubs off, you know, and it kind of fades away. And now, I don’t care; if anything, I always speak Greek when I go out with Mom and Dad, I speak it loudly, and even with my friends. And in fact, it’s a benefit, if you wanna talk about somebody and you’re out, you’re like, ‘Look at their shoes!’ or something that they’re doing, you can use another language.’

Mary’s response represents how the Greek-American individual’s linguistic identity is negotiated over time, as well as how each language, Greek and English, serves as symbolic capital in two different stages of the individual’s life.⁴ As a child, Mary is embarrassed about speaking Greek (the minority language) in public with her parents, for fear that others may hear her. Although Mary attributes her aversion to speaking Greek to adolescence, I argue that she reprimands her parents, and clearly prefers English, because even as a child, she is fully aware that English is the majority language and she does not want to be marked as “different” or the “other,” by the utilization of a minority language. What child wants to be nonverbally marked as the “other” in a public domain? Thus, as a child, Mary views English as the language of symbolic capital.

⁴ “A credit, it is the power granted to those who have obtained sufficient recognition to be in a position to impose recognition” (Bourdieu 138). Language carries value that can produce upward or downward mobility for the speaker, based on whether it is viewed as high prestige or low prestige, within a given society.

However, it is also clear that reversal of Greek as the language of symbolic capital, as opposed to English, is due to age. As Mary states, “But, now, it’s kind of like the little childhood or adolescent, I mean, so many things in adolescence, that that’s what you do with, and it rubs off, you know, and it kind of fades away.” This is also evident from her feelings about speaking Greek in public now, at the age of 19: “And now, I don’t care; if anything, I always speak Greek when I go out with Mom and Dad, I speak it loudly, and even with my friends.” The stares may still be there when she speaks the minority language in a public domain, but with age, and with the camaraderie of other young adults who speak Greek, or who positively accept it in her school environment, Mary does not care if speakers of the mainstream language “mark” her for speaking a minority language. There is also a reversal of the language she views as means of symbolic capital, which is now Greek, as opposed to her viewing English as such when she was a child. The same language that was once embarrassing to utter in public, is now a benefit within the same environment. She undergoes disidentification by altering her own perception of Greek as the language of symbolic capital, and uses it to her benefit, when communicating with other Greek speakers. The language now builds solidarity among people of the minority group as I jokingly respond that she can only talk about people’s shoes in Greek “with Greek friends, not Americans,” to which she responds in the affirmative.

Several examples from my data illustrate how the individuals’ Greek and American, linguistic and cultural identities mesh through their use of what one participant in my study, Demetri, has labeled as “Grenghish.” There are several reasons why the participants choose to speak solely one language or the other, but surprisingly, none

could give me a reason for why they utilize “Grenghlish,” a mixture of both Greek and English languages that comes out when the individual converses with other Greek-English speakers. Like all of my participants who ultimately perform a unified Greek-American identity through the lens of Grenghlish, it is instructive to note how this kind of language use works with other hyphenated, American identities. Perhaps one Puerto Rican writer, Ed Morales, puts it best when he addresses the mixing of Spanish and English:

Spanglish is the ultimate space where the in-betweenness of being neither Latin American nor North American is negotiated. When we speak in Spanglish, we are expressing not ambivalence, but a new region of discourse that has the possibility of redefining ourselves and the mainstream, as well as negating the conventional wisdom of assimilation and American-ness. (95)

This holds true for all of the participants in my study, with regard to their use of Grenghlish. Through the use of this discourse, the individuals express both their Greek and American identities and the “in-betweenness” of being neither fully Greek, nor fully American, which incorporates both the mainstream language (English), and the minority language (Greek). The production of Grenghlish is native Greeks’ and first-generation Greek Americans’ way of disidentification, whether the hybrid language is utilized consciously or subconsciously. They take both mainstream and minority languages and mold them to fit their needs, according to Munoz’s definition. When I ask Demetri when he speaks English, when Greek, and why, he confesses: “I speak a lot more English now but, I try putting some Greek in once in a while, just mix the two, and Grenghlish.” Here, Demetri does make a conscious effort to throw in Greek words at times; hence, the

formation of Grenglish appears in his speech. When asked what language he tended to address his parents in, he says “I’d say Greek. I mean like, if I see my mom and I haven’t seen her in a while, it’s like, ‘Mother mou, ti ginetai?’ [Mom, how’s it going?] or you know like, sometimes over the phone it’s just like, you know. She usually, sometimes, she usually addresses me in Greek (Appendix B, question 8); sometimes I respond half English, half Greek but it’s usually in Greek.” Demetri responds with, “I mean like, if I see my mom and I haven’t seen her in a while, it’s like, ‘Mother mou, ti ginetai [Mom, how’s it going]?’”. Although Demetri does not specifically state the reason why he does this, Mary and Emily attest that at times, one language is more expressive than the other for them, and that usually, they do not think about which parts of their speech come out in which language when they speak Grenglish. Demetri further validates the fact that the use of Grenglish is subconscious for speakers when he tells me that he addresses his mother in Greek, yet he provides me with a Grenglish response.

Ngugi’s concept that language is culture also extends to the fact that bilingualism is biculturalism. When I asked Mary if she feels Greek, American, or both (Appendix B, question 1), she immediately turned to the Grenglish aspect of her bilingual and bicultural identity:

‘Um, well, in the ways that, in every aspect of my life actually. In, how I carry out um, every, like, day to day things, how I interact with other people, the expressions that I say. Um, a lot of the times, it’s Greek/English you know; um, not just with my other Greek friends, but, with Americans as well. Or it’s kind of like, the little, you know. If I slip, I’m not like “Oh no,” I’m like “Ooh, ooh!” Or

like, if I see some car accident, I'm like "Po po!" It's just, um, the food that I eat, everything.'

Again, Mary illustrates how every aspect of her life is affected by her bilingualism and biculturalism, and both linguistic and cultural identities appear to function as one when she states, "Um, well, in the ways that, in every aspect of my life actually. In, how I carry out um, every, like, day to day things, how I interact with other people, the expressions that I say," but then she focuses specifically on the Grenglish and how she throws Greek expressions like "Ooh, ooh!" and "Po, po!" in with her mainstream English, without premeditation. In response to when Mary speaks English, Greek, and why, she focuses on when she speaks strictly English and when Greek (primarily to her parents; this was addressed in question 8). Again, she focuses on Grenglish which I don't even ask about in this question. She states:

'Obviously I speak English in class, um, and when I have to. Um, otherwise, if there's any Greek person there, even if it's, if I'm out with friends and there's just one Greek [or Greek-American] person, and the other ten are whatever you know, Asian, American, whatever they are, I'm just prone to speak Greek. Knowing that someone else in the room is Greek, I, it's [a] very subconscious thing: my mind just goes into 'whatever is easiest, say it first.' And if half of those words are Greek, then say it in Greek. Or some things you just cannot express as well; there are certain expressions that define a moment better than others, and obviously, there are some expressions that you have in English that you don't have in Greek, and the other way around. And I'll just throw those in. In fact, I'll even teach them to my friends.'

After initially discussing when she speaks solely English, which is a rather straightforward answer, Mary states how she is prone to speak Greek even if there is only one Greek-English bilingual speaker among her crowd of friends. Then, she describes how this act of switching languages, which is more a mix of both Greek and English languages than it is a shift to solely Greek, is very much a subconscious act. Mary states, “Knowing that someone else in the room is Greek, I, it’s [a] very subconscious thing: my mind just goes into whatever is easiest, say it first. And if half of those words are Greek, then say it in Greek.” Another reason she gives in utilizing Grenglish is the fact that some things are more easily expressed in Greek than in English and vice versa. She notes: “Or some things you just cannot express as well; there are certain expressions that define a moment better than others, and obviously, there are some expressions that you have in English that you don’t have in Greek and the other way around.” Thus, speakers also utilize Grenglish for convenience; it is the most effective and efficient way to express oneself when one language expresses a thought or feeling better than the other.

Like Mary, Emily also states that she usually does not have a preference in which language she chooses to express herself. She states, “When I’m at home, I speak a weird mix of the two. Whatever pops out first, really” (Appendix B, question 8). Emily is also a strong supporter of Grenglish. In addition, Emily also supports the use of a combination of Greek and English languages in order to convey something she has to say in the most effective way possible. When asked which language is easier for her, Emily responds with “English is easier for me, but like I said, Greek is much more expressive. Um, sometimes I find myself trying to explain something to an American friend, and I’ll just have this phrase on the tip of my tongue and I’m like, eh, this describes it perfectly

but, you don't understand." Like Mary, Emily also feels that there are certain things which are better expressed in Greek than in English at times, and her frustration stems from the fact that she cannot fully express herself at a time when a Greek phrase would best explain something, since her American friends do not speak Greek and her Greek-American friends do not speak it fluently. Unlike Mary, who chooses to speak Greek with "Greek [Greek-American] friends, but, with Americans as well," bilingualism serves as a constraining and isolating factor between Emily and her friends. This contrast of attitudes towards the Greek language is just one example of how one performs "Greek-ness" and negotiates Greek-American identity by speaking Greek. This identification with one's "Greek-ness" through language can have positive or negative effects, as demonstrated by Ngugi's linguistic cultural identification and Munoz's disidentification.

Unlike the Greek-Americans, the native Greeks of my study do not have enough flexibility with English (their non-native language) where it is possible for them to fully express themselves in both languages; this is evident in several examples from Paul and Anna respectively. Both interviews were entirely conducted in their native language of Greek, which I translated into English. Paul notes:

'Then, when I came here, I came at the age of 31, or 33 years of age, where I got into my own business again [restaurant business], and I had no desire to go to school at that point in my life due to age and due to the fact that I got into business again. So, this is my main complaint, that I wasn't able to learn the English language *well*, to speak it well, to be able to write it and read it. I speak it, I understand it, but a lot of times Americans don't understand me. But I'm very happy that, with what I do know, with the little education I do have, I was

able to establish myself [here, in the U.S., as opposed to somewhere else] so I could raise my children.’

Paul states that he does not read or write English (not much as evident from question 22, see Appendix B), and that he does not speak it as well as he would like, and at times, people do not understand him. Having grown up in this respondent’s household, I attest that he is sufficiently fluent in speaking English, but the problem most often lies in the listeners’ difficulty to comprehend his accent and word pronunciation. Hence, he cannot fully express himself to others through his English. Such constraints with the English language are a primary reason in which the native Greeks become isolated from the greater, mainstream American community in which they live. In addition, it causes them to have close-knit families, characteristic of Greek-American identity, in which they rely upon their children for linguistic assistance (Appendix B, question 26).

Paul discusses his language preference for watching television (Appendix B, question 26). He explains why he prefers to watch in Greek over English: “Uh, t.v., well, in Greek because I know my language well [he means by comparison to a non-native language, like English], and in English, but I understand Greek better.” Clearly, Paul states that he prefers listening to Greek because “he knows [his] language” and he understands it better than English. He prefers Greek to English because he has more fluency, and higher level of vocabulary comprehension in his native language of Greek, but he does like to watch television in both the Greek and English languages. While Paul does not have fluency over the English language, he exercises his “American-ness” when he watches television in English, and performs Greek-American identity by choosing to watch in both languages, in the same way one does by speaking Grenglish.

Anna discusses her difficulties with the English language; her interview is also conducted in her native language of Greek. When I ask what those are, she responds with “Because, because, I can’t put words in the right order. I speak it, but I don’t speak it correctly. I try, there are many words I know, and I try to put them in the right order, but I can’t pronounce them well so they [people in general] will understand me” (Appendix B, question 22). She concludes that both of these problems hinder people’s understanding of what she is trying to say. Hence, like Paul, she cannot fully express herself in English, as evident from her above response. Again, the native Greek’s English language abilities constrain and isolate her from the greater American community, even when she desires contact with it through verbal communication.

Unlike the first-generation Greek-Americans who have full linguistic capacity to identify or disidentify with their “Greek-ness” by choosing to speak Greek or English respectively, the native Greeks, who are only fluent in Greek, are forced to identify with their “Greek-ness,” because speaking their native language is necessary for their full comprehension. Although not directly stated in my interviews, Paul and Anna clarified in a phone conversation, that the reason they prefer to speak Greek to their children, is so they can fully express themselves through verbal communication. Therefore, they prefer speaking Greek over English, and consciously think about their actual utterances when speaking English, unlike the Greek-Americans, who switch back and forth between languages without thinking twice. The only time the native Greeks solely speak English is out of necessity, as seen in the following example, when I ask Paul what language he addresses his children in, he says, “To my children? I speak Greek with my children.” Then, when he is asked when he speaks English with them and when Greek, he explains:

“We speak Greek when we’re by ourselves and I speak English to them when there are Americans in my house.” In response to this question, Paul states that he addresses his children in Greek when they are by themselves. However, he speaks to them in English in order to accommodate his American guests, so that the guests are able to comprehend verbal exchanges between himself and his children. While the natives also have moments in which they choose to speak English over Greek like the first-generation Greek-Americans, they choose to speak Greek with Greek speakers out of necessity for language comprehension, unlike the first-generations who choose to speak Greek with other bilinguals more out of cultural solidarity. Despite linguistic limitations with the English language, both Paul and Anna identify themselves as Greek-Americans, and feel that they are distinctive from Greeks in Greece and other Americans of the U.S. as a result of having adopted an American lifestyle and certain American cultural patterns.

Surprisingly, although the native Greeks are not as fluent as the Greek-Americans to the point where they flexibly alternate between Greek and English words in one cohesive discourse, Grenglish subconsciously occurs for them as well, but to a lesser degree. Proof of this is present in Paul and Anna’s responses throughout their respective interviews. Although both participants stated that they are not fluent in English, and that they cannot express themselves well in their non-native language, both “pepper” their responses with English words without even realizing it. Paul utilizes “education” (question 19), “dorms” and “fraternity house” (question 21), and “well” (question 23). Likewise, Anna answers with a “yes” in question 20, utilizes “young people” in question 21, “especially” in question 24, and finally concludes the interview with “Thank you very much!” (question 24).

Both first-generation Greek-Americans and native Greeks utilize Grenglish in their everyday speech, even though the natives do not have full mastery of the English language. As Mary, a Greek-American participant, stated in her reasons for using Grenglish, “Some things you just cannot express as well; there are certain expressions that define a moment better than others, and obviously, there are some expressions that you have in English that you don’t have in Greek and the other way around.” All of Paul’s English utterances are not translatable into Greek, but this is not the case with his utterances of “education” and “dorms.” With Anna, all of her English lexical borrowings are translatable, so it is a matter of choice with her (and some for Paul), which proves that her non-native language of English does have a direct impact on her ethnolinguistic identity. Whether Greek-American and native Greek participants consciously or subconsciously speak Grenglish, it is evident that this mixture of Greek and English serves as an “expressive function” for all of the participants in my study (Appel 119). According to Appel, “Speakers emphasize a mixed identity through the use of two languages in the same discourse” (119). Like Spanglish, Grenglish is “the ultimate space where the in-betweenness of being neither Latin American nor North American is negotiated” (Morales 95). Native Greeks and first-generation Greek-Americans also position themselves in a third, new “space” that is neither Greek, nor American, but strictly Greek-American; this new “space” is a unified identity that consists of two languages, and hence, cultures that are inseparable to the individual.

Furthermore, the influence of both Greek and English languages on natives’ ethnolinguistic identity is evident in their t.v. preferences. For example, Paul states: “Uh, t.v., well, in Greek because I know my language well [he means by comparison

to a non-native language, like English], and in English, but I understand Greek better” (Appendix B, question 23). Even though Paul prefers Greek over English, he still enjoys watching television in both languages. When I asked Anna the same question, she also stated that she prefers watching television in Greek as opposed to English, but that she also enjoys watching it in English (see Appendix B, questions 23 and 24). Again, while the natives are not as fluent with English as the first-generations, they express their hybrid, Greek-American identity by choosing to watch television in English, and identify with their “American-ness,” through these television preferences, even if they do not have full comprehension of English.

Greek-American individuals (both natives and first-generations) choose to most strongly identify with either their “Greek-ness” or “American-ness,” by voluntarily immersing themselves in Greek or English respectively, in order to reach a certain comfort level, when their identity feels threatened in the environment opposite the language they choose for self-identification. Anna tells me that in Greece, she prefers to watch the American channel when she says, “And ’specially, ’specially I’ve noticed when I go to Greece, I like watching the American channel there [CNN].” Although she did not specifically give a reason for this preference during the interview, when asked to clarify in a phone conversation, Anna states that even though she did not fully understand CNN (since it was in her non-native language of English), she felt informed about news “back home” (the U.S., which is her permanent residence of 25 years), by watching CNN. In addition, listening to the news in English reminded her of her permanent home, which provided her with a sense of familiarity, during her visits in her native country of Greece. Thus, the natives consciously identify with their “American-ness” through

contact with the English language via their television preferences, even though they do not have full mastery of the non-native language.

First-generation Greek-Americans who are bilingual also choose to identify with their “American-ness” by speaking English while in Greece. Mary feels the need to assert the American part of her identity when she also visits Greece because the environment is extremely different from her natal country of the U.S. Mary spoke strictly English to Greek-English bilinguals during the summer of 2004 and refused to speak Greek in public, even though she is equally fluent in that country’s local language as she is with English. Like the natives, Mary also consciously identifies with her “American-ness” by choosing to speak strictly English outside of her permanent country of residence.

Greek-American identity, and the components that form it, is complex. As evident from these interviews, linguistic and ethnic/cultural identities are not separate, but intertwined, and act as one entity in forming the individual’s sense of self. In addition, the responses prove that not only are all of the individuals’ linguistic and ethnic/cultural identities being renegotiated, but that they consciously and subconsciously redefine their sense of self as neither fully Greek, nor fully American, but rather, a conglomeration of both. This is evident through their utilization of Grenglish, and their language preferences for watching television and listening to music. Through their identification with both Greek and English languages, the individuals demonstrate how their bilingual and bicultural identities simultaneously mesh into one linguistic discourse.

It is highly plausible that if this study was repeated, and these conditions were constant among participants, their responses would elicit the same conclusions as mine

did. Since there is not much literature on how Greek and English languages linguistically and culturally shape the individual from a sociolinguistic and qualitative approach, it is extremely beneficial if other studies similar to mine are conducted in the future, in order to see how valid my conclusions actually are from a general perspective, or whether they are only context-specific to the individuals I studied. This is especially crucial since it is only a matter of time that the first-generation Greek-American and the native Greek will be a scarcity in the U.S. George Kourvetaris argues that language in the form of reading, speaking, and writing, is the first to go when it comes to loss of culture between native Greeks and first-generation Greek-Americans (213). As Mary states with regard to assimilation for the first-generation Greek-American: “It’s a, [matter] of becoming accepted into this society, into the American society, and so, at some point, you do have to change some of them [your Greek traditions] (Appendix B, question 15),” which is valid in terms of language as well. Again, the negotiation between “Greek-ness” and “American-ness” in search of a balance of Greek-American identity also applies to other aspects of culture, such as through Greek-Americans’ identification or disidentification with traditional gender roles and “mixed” marriage, which will be examined in succeeding chapters.

Chapter 2: Womanhood in Greek America: Past, Present, and Future

Come my dearly loved girls
to inundate my life
Pythia, Sybil, Diotima
Corinna, Sappho, Telesilla
And you other anonymous
feminine layers of History.

I seek your fingerprints, O Silent Women
I seek the mystical wisdom of Mothers
In underground rivers.

“Underground Currents”
Ioanna Zervou

The negotiation of Greek-American identity in search for a balance between “Greek-ness” and “American-ness” is not limited to language. It also extends to the altering of traditional gender roles, as first-generation Greek-Americans struggle to find a balance between the two cultures. Greek traditional gender roles are particularly constraining for females, as they limit a woman’s freedom and self-definition in American society. In this chapter, I examine whether several of Helen Papanikolas’s female characters, Kallie and Dea in “County Hospital,” Athena in “The Apple Falls from the Apple Tree,” and Toula in Vardalos’s My Big Fat Greek Wedding, identify or disidentify with their “Greek-ness,” and the ways in which they perform “Greek-ness” or “American-ness.” It is important to keep the texts’ historical time frames in mind because they influence America’s racial constructs and consciousness which shape the performance of Greek-American identity. It is worth noting that Helen Papanikolas’s “County Hospital” is set in 1939 at a time when Hitler’s anti-semitic, racial purity activism terrorizes Europe and resonates in the U.S. Papanikolas documents these sentiments of anti-semitism, racism, and apathy towards ethnic groups of America at that time, through white Americans’ responses to Greek women in “County Hospital.” Likewise, Papanikolas sets Athena’s wedding in “The Apple Falls from the Apple Tree”

in 1962, at a time when the Civil Rights Movement brought attention to the injustices of racism in the U.S., and stressed equality for all people. These efforts helped end violence toward Greeks, such as the KKK's burning of a cross in front of a Greek's store in Magna, Utah, "because he had married an American woman," according to W. Paul Reeve and Jeffrey D. Nicols in their article "Klansmen at a Funeral and a Terrible Lynching" (www.utah.gov). In addition, these efforts helped end episodes such as the near lynchings of two Greek men who showed interest in American women, according to Helen Papanikolas in the Utah History Encyclopedia (<http://www.media.utah.edu/UHE/g/GREEKS.html>). Finally, Nia Vardalos's *My Big Fat Greek Wedding* is set in contemporary America, an America shaped by both the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Women's Liberation movement.¹ Vardalos thus has the ability to portray a Greek-American woman at a time in American history when it is possible to embrace cultural diversity, racial equality, and social mobility for Greek-Americans. Maria Kotsaftis focuses on the impact of American society on Greek women in "Between Scylla and Charybdis: Greek American Persephones in Helen Papanikolas's *The Time of the Little Blackbird*," stating that this negotiation "is even more poignant for women" than for men (127). Furthermore, "Not only does the Greek-American woman partake in the racism that surrounds her as expressed by American society against the "other," [but] she also finds herself in a double bind, namely that of "interior racism," as expressed by her male relatives who see her as inferior because of her being born female" (Kotsaftis 132). This chapter explores how Greek-American women utilize identification

¹ "The Women's Liberation movement of the 1960's has changed many gender roles in the second generation [what I call first in this paper]. Safilios-Rothschild, Constantakos, and Kardaras (1976) and Kardaras (1977) have found that both husbands and wives in upper-class families in the Detroit metropolitan area share somewhat similar views on marriage and the family." (Kourvetaris 111)

and disidentification with Greek and American cultural norms in order to create and embrace the possibility of a Greek-American identity.

According to the definition of women's roles per traditional, Greek immigrant society, a woman must "remain [a] virgin until she marries her husband for whom she must bear children and keep household. Since her virginity is her only asset in the male bartering process [of arranged marriages set up by male friends and family], it needs to be kept immaculate from suspicion, and should be dutifully guarded by her male relatives" (Kotsaftis 132). In "County Hospital," Kallie disidentifies with the traditional gender role of a Greek woman because Papanikolas portrays her as a college educated woman who works in a hospital laboratory. Even though she is a first-generation Greek-American who acknowledges her Greek identity, she exercises options previously not available to native Greek women whose only way out of poverty and spinsterhood was to be sold to husbands in the U.S. as picture brides, since men in Greece would not marry them without dowries.² In addition, Kallie's father also aids in her disidentification with this traditional female role because he is the one who ultimately allows Kallie to attend the university and pays for her schooling, as he does for his son, Vasili. Through this action, Kallie's father sets both his daughter and son on an equal level in terms of education.

Kallie also disidentifies with the traditional Greek female role when she does not follow in her sisters' footsteps to actively seek a husband, according to her mother's expectations. Papanikolas explains that Kallie's "mother had expected [her] to follow

² According to Greek tradition, it was necessary for a woman to have a dowry in the form of livestock, money, or property in order to marry. Lack of one, or a small one, created few, if any, marriage prospects for her. They were important in Greece where marrying for love was the exception rather than the rule, as late as the 1970's. A prospective spouse was found by a proxeniti/proxenitra (middleman/middlewoman) in the latter part of the century in Greece.

[her sisters'] example: be active in the Daughters of Penelope until one of the Sons of Pericles asked, with someone's prodding, to marry her" (49). In another example, Kallie disidentifies with this traditional female role when she "lightly," but firmly, asks her brother-in-law, Jim, not to find her a potential husband at the AHEPA³ convention he is about to attend. Jim responds with "You shouldn't be like that. Look at me and Nitsa. You could have a nice home and kids. You know I wouldn't fix you up with any fly-by-night or some goof" (61). Jim's "You shouldn't be like that" implies that there are certain prescribed roles for men and women, and that it is only natural for Kallie to marry and have a family. When Kallie declines a second time, he persists with his way of thinking by telling her that he is appreciative of his wife, even if it was "sort of fixed up" (61). Through this exchange, Papanikolas demonstrates the dominant pressure of and value placed on the Greek cultural norms of marriage, family, and the positive aspects of arranged marriage. In addition, she reinforces the prevalence of patriarchal superiority exercised through traditional gender roles, by having a male relative give Kallie this advice. Despite these pressures, Kallie identifies with the American ideal of individuality, and exercises αυτοδικαίωμα⁴—the Greek noun for "right to self," which I interpret as "in one's own right,"—through these choices of pro-education and anti-arranged marriage.

Nonetheless, Kallie identifies with her "Greek-ness" because she stays within the Greek community and abides by her parents' rules, even as they continue to subject and

³ AHEPA, the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association, was initially a protectionist group founded in 1922 in Atlanta, GA in response to KKK violence and its accusations that Greeks were un-American for continuing to speak the Greek language. Its members espoused the English language and used it in meetings with emphasis on Hellenism and its link to values upon which the U.S. was founded (humanity, democracy, freedom). It is the oldest and largest Greek-American organization. It also stresses community service and charity work. (Amulet 159-163 and www.ahepa.org).

⁴ I chose this word in an effort to define how the Greek-American strives for individuality and self-definition to define oneself as Greek-American both in American society and within Greek society, whereby the collective is favored over the individual in the latter community.

to confine her within certain constructs of the traditional Greek female role. Kotsaftis also notes this in her work with regard to the first-generations of Papanikolas's The Time of the Little Black Bird. For example, Kallie protests with her mother who orders her to drive some Greek friends home. She argues with her mother, even though she grudgingly complies, and caters to the patriarchal attitude towards women. When she returns from her mother's guest's home, Kallie asserts "You don't care that I've been working all day and then I have to drive your friends to their houses! Mrs. Kerasou's boys were listening to the radio and she couldn't get in the door fast enough to serve them their dinner! (7); both Kallie and Mrs. Kerasou are subjected to male superiority, regardless of their respective ages. Papanikolas illustrates Kallie's frustration with the fact that her mother puts her friends' needs before hers, but also with the traditional hypocritical treatment of females over males in Greek households. Kallie confronts her mother's hypocrisy when she tells her: "You never ask Vasilis [her brother] to take the women home! It's always me! He can do anything he wants! You think because he's a boy it's all right" (7). Here, Papanikolas depicts how Kallie confronts the hypocrisy of male superiority as a first-generation Greek-American woman, while the immigrant women like her mother and Mrs. Kerasou still adhere to it, and perpetuate it with their children.

Papanikolas describes females' subjugation to male superiority according to traditional gender roles within Greek society. In "County Hospital" for instance, she depicts this through Kallie's mother when she tells Kallie to take some stew over to her sister's family. She says she is tired and asks why her brother-in-law cannot come for it. Her mother answers her with "He works" and Kallie sharply responds with "So do I work" (35). Once again, Papanikolas illustrates the blatant female inferiority to which

Kallie's mother subjects her, forcing her to conform with Greek traditional constructs concerning prescribed male/female roles and expectations according to traditional, old-world culture. Old-world gender roles clash with American ones despite the fact that Kallie is equal to her brother-in-law in that they both work outside of the home. Thus, Papanikolas demonstrates the tensions caused when a Greek-American woman considers herself equal to a man.

Kallie also identifies with her "Greek-ness" with regard to the traditional female role, when she adheres to the customs of male protection and "Greek" means of female socialization with the opposite sex, which again, are forced upon her by her parents. For example, as her brother, it is Vasilis's responsibility to drive her; this is his brotherly duty. Of course, he has the privilege of driving the car, because he is male, regardless of the fact that he is a college student who lives within walking distance of the university, while Kallie works at the hospital, which is further away. However, he does not adhere to his duty of driving Kallie, but instead, uses the car for himself. In addition, Kallie is not allowed to go to the hospital dance unless Vasilis accompanies her. Papanikolas describes her annoyance at how ridiculous she feels about going with her brother as if he was a date. Furthermore, she is not allowed to date like her American classmates.

Immigrant parents such as Kallie's see dating as a hazard, given the arranged marriage custom of their homeland and the value of a woman's virginity until marriage. Instead, she attends Greek dances held in the church basement, like the other Greek-American girls of her community, while the scrutinizing mothers "looked on, sharp eyed, to see how much space there was between [the young people's] bodies," when a young man asked a girl to dance during the American songs (29). Kallie longs to identify with her

“American-ness” in this respect, as she explains, “That’s when the world had turned bleak, in the church basement. American girls were going to junior proms and senior hops. They were going out on dates to movies and A&W drive-ins where they sat in cars and short-skirted waitresses brought hamburgers and root beers on trays that fitted into the rolled-down windows” (29). Nonetheless, this world of socialization is off limits to her as she and her Greek school friends are forced to attend the Greek dances. Although Kallie grows up in American society, she is forced to adhere to the traditional Greek customs of female restriction and “protection” that contrast drastically with American ones.

Yet Kallie constantly negotiates her identity, since the American culture in which she lives does not even consider Greek-American as an identifiable identity. She always has to reinforce her “Greek-ness” and her “American-ness” because of how America defines race in the anti-semitic World War II era in which she lives. Papanikolas depicts this cultural erasure when Kallie tells her friend, Madeline, how another co-worker, Krista Dauber, never speaks to her unless it is about lab tests. Madeline confesses to Dauber’s anti-semitism when she says, “You know when you applied for the job? Well, Dr. Roberts asked me if you were a Jew. I said you weren’t. You were Greek. He said, ‘You’re sure? Because Mrs. Dauber won’t work with a Jew’” and then ends with “I guess Krista Dauber thinks a Greek is as bad as a Jew” (46). Dr. Roberts himself mistakes Kallie for a Jew, presumably based on her physical features, because her last name—“Poulos”—certainly could not be mistaken for Jewish, even if it is a shortened version of her original family name.⁵ Papanikolas demonstrates the import of this exchange, noting that “Kallie’s tongue [is] paralyzed” (46). Not only is Kallie struck silent by the rampant

⁵ Papanikolas does not give Kallie an original Greek surname in this story.

anti-semitism that exists in her workplace, but also by the fact that she is “lumped” into a hated “other” category based on her Greek heritage. Madeline’s comment automatically places her into a “non-white,” un-American—and thus a foreign, undesirable category—even though she is American by birth.

Papanikolas notes that in this point in history, American society does not allow Kallie the space to exercise her Greek-American identity. Note how Dr. Harlow insists that a patient named Weber is Greek, even after Kallie tells him that Weber is not a Greek name. He states, “It says so right on his chart under nationality” that he is Greek, and concludes by telling her “Don’t be so paranoid, Miss Poulos” (71). Once the doctor leaves, Kallie realizes that the patient’s nationality was most likely abbreviated as “Gr” for German on his chart. Papanikolas notes that, in response, “Her brain [feels] cold with hatred for Dr. Harlow” (71). Kallie builds up hatred against the doctor’s ignorance because she wants her Greek identity to be recognized and distinguished from other nationalities. Instead, it just gets “lumped” again by yet another doctor as “other,” and “non-American,” based on Weber’s chart under the “nationality” category. Furthermore, Dr. Harlow misdefines “Greek-ness” and considers himself the expert; as an ethnically and racially identified woman, Kallie does not even have the space—the *αυτοδικαιωμα*—to recognize her own ethnic group. Thus, Papanikolas illustrates the ignorance and apathy towards individuality and the recognition of different ethnic groups by America’s educated, white elite at the time.

Papanikolas depicts other Greek-American female characters and their struggle with Greek-American identity through Kallie’s friend Dea. She also resists the Greek traditional gender roles prescribed to women, but she is unable to break away from the

traditional “mold.” She never has the opportunity to go to college. Instead, she works at her godfather’s candy store so she can put her brother, Tom, through law school. Dea’s family places her in an inferior status to her brother. The education of a male relative takes precedence over her own aspirations, since males are traditionally the breadwinners of Greek households. Thus, in 1939, it is more important for him to become a lawyer, than it is for her to strive for a college education and a career. A college education is not an option for her, as it was not for most first-generation Greek-American girls at that time.

Papanikolas shows how Dea disidentifies with her “Greek-ness” as a Greek-American woman, by criticizing native Greeks’ customs of childrearing. For example, Dea resents the fact that her mother sends her to school when she did not know enough English; as a result, she is held back two years in school. She vents to Kallie:

What were they thinking of? Sending us Greek kids to American school without knowing one word of English! Didn’t it occur to them we’d have a terrible time not knowing what was going on? All that baloney about keeping up the Greek language and our mothers never did learn enough English to communicate with the gas man. (33)

Dea is upset that her mother does not care to learn English in order to prepare her children for school, or for her own purposes of communication, yet she stresses the importance of their learning the Greek language. She bears the cost of her mother’s cultural isolation from the country in which she lives and raises her family through her apathy towards the English language.

Dea also disidentifies with her “Greek-ness,” and asserts control over her own body, and hence, claims αυτοδικαίωμα, as she criticizes the old village custom of checking a bride’s sheets for blood, which proves she is a virgin. Papanikolas explains how the immigrant mothers still practice this custom through the example of Mrs. Stratigos. Dea tells Kallie, “She looked at the sheets the day after her precious Stevie married Stella and said there wasn’t enough blood on them” (33). Not only does Kallie criticize this custom that goes along with the Greek tradition of valuing female virginity until marriage, but she also disidentifies with her “Greek-ness” on a second level. Papanikolas places Dea and Kallie in the position to disidentify themselves as distinct from the native Greek women. Papanikolas illustrates this most strongly when Dea asks “Why didn’t they just stay in their villages where they belong?” (33); again, she disidentifies with the native Greek women and her own “Greek-ness,” by referring to them as “they.” In addition, she implies that the village is the immigrant women’s rightful place, unlike the U.S., which is meant for Greek-Americans, like she and Kallie. Dea disidentifies with her “Greek-ness” and the native women and identifies with her “American-ness,” through her criticism of the village custom and through the “we” and “they” discourse.

Nonetheless, Papanikolas illustrates how Dea is still conscious of Greek cultural stigmas attached to old age and marriage. This is evident when she gives in to going out with Solly Stratigos, another first-generation Greek-American. His bad grammar angers her, because of the fact that he receives a college education—something Dea longs for but never obtains—and still says “he don’t” and “he come” (30-31). Solly is also the son of the tyrannical Mrs. Stratigos. Like Kallie, she is also not allowed to date, so Dea calls

her and pleads with her for a double date. She believes this is the only way her mother will even allow her to go out with Solly. Papanikolas emphasizes the cultural pressure of a woman's age in relation to her finding a husband, when Dea tells Kallie "I'm almost twenty-four and all I've got to look forward to is standing behind my godfather's cash register" (72). Kallie has so few options that she must accept Solly as a potential suitor because of her age. In addition, she confesses that she has nothing else to look forward to in life, except for her cash register job, which is the only option she is given by her male relatives. In the same light, Dea views marriage as an escape from life's emptiness because she does not have any other options presented to her, not because she loves Solly, or even wants to marry out of a desire for marriage itself. Papanikolas utilizes Dea to critique the stunted aspirations of first-generation Greek-American women who are forced to stay within the traditional "mold" where their sole purpose is to get married, have a family, and take care of their household.

Papanikolas demonstrates how Athena, another Greek-American female character, compromises her "Greek-ness" through language and religious affiliation in "The Apple falls from the Apple Tree." She is able to reconnect with her "Greek-ness" through the Greek Orthodox church, despite her disidentification from both the Greek language and the church, within her marriage to a Mormon, Rob Nielsen. She identifies with her "Greek-ness" by embracing the Orthodox church and learning the Greek language there. She also remembers being best friends with Effie Pappas in American school, and explains how they walked together to Greek school lessons (162-163). Papanikolas expresses their distance from identifying as American when she notes that, "Athena and her best friend Effie Pappas came out of the fifth grade class, each carrying

a Greek school book and tablet they kept hidden from taunting schoolmates in a loose leaf notebook” (162). Athena shares a Greek cultural and religious bond with this friend by attending Greek school together at the church. Athena also identifies with her “Greek-ness” by asserting her religious affiliation— that of the Christian Orthodox faith—by wearing a cross, like Effie.

Athena and Effie walked down Main Street of the small western town. Ahead of them Mary Ellen Martin swung hands with a girl who had just moved into town.

Mary Ellen turned to look at them, then whispered loudly to the new girl.

‘They’re Greeks. They wear crosses.’ ‘I hate her,’ Effie said, narrowing her eyes. ‘Thinks she’s better’n us.’ (163)

Both girls are marked by the American children as “others” because of their ethnicity and religious affiliation. Athena is simultaneously marked as “other,” and “un-American” along with Effie by wearing a cross, yet she identifies with her “Greek-ness” and bonds with her friend through the ostracization. This period of childhood is the time when Athena openly identifies with her “Greek-ness” through linguistic and religious identity, despite the fact that she is mocked and “marked” by American children as different and “un-American”; nonetheless, this resiliency and pride in her Greek heritage changes when she marries a non-Greek.

Papanikolas illustrates how Athena compromises her Greek-American identity, her αυτοδικαιωμα, and completely gives up her “Greek-ness” when she marries. This is evident as early as the wedding itself. Athena notes “If I were getting married in the Greek church with all that ritual and everything that goes with it, I wouldn’t mind Dad paying for a fancy wedding gown, but not for a two-minute ceremony” (184). Athena

does not feel that her wedding merits the same grandeur as one in the church does, as she declines the fancy dress for a simpler one; she recognizes that her wedding goes against the way a marriage is conducted in the Greek community. According to Demetrios Constantelos, “Mixed marriages [are] viewed as a threat not only to the preservation of ethnic identity but also to the unity and prosperity of the Greek Orthodox family” (131). While Athena does not completely forsake the Christian Orthodox Church, she puts her faith aside so that she can marry Rob; she does not convert to his religion, but neither does he to hers. Furthermore, not only does Athena realize that she is disidentifying with her “Greek-ness” by agreeing to a civil wedding with Rob, but that there is something wrong about this compromising of her Greek identity, from the onset of the wedding. Papanikolas describes how an “ominous dread pressed against the car window. Athena tried not to think of the wedding, of the judge, the quick ceremony, the barrenness of the room. Something, she thought, irrevocably wrong had taken place there...” (185). Papanikolas foreshadows the cultural and religious conflicts Athena has later on in her marriage with regard to identifying and disidentifying as Greek through the sense that something is terribly wrong in the initiation of this interfaith marriage.

Athena’s disidentification with two Greek-American men occurs early in Papanikolas’s development of her character. She notes “To Athena, [Greg and Mark] were just ordinary boys, spoiled by mothers and sisters, like so many young men in her church” (176). Nonetheless, their mothers seek her out at church functions and family name days yet she “Tried to avoid the mothers: they thought of her as a potential daughter-in-law and she could barely tolerate their sons” (176).⁶ Athena identifies with

⁶ Every Orthodox Christian is named after a biblical figure or saint; the church celebrates them on different days of the year, according to the church calendar. One celebrates his or her name day on the day the

her “American-ness” and feels a certain level of intimacy around Rob Nielsen, the Mormon whose father grazed his sheep on property parallel to her father’s, in contrast to the Greek-American men (177). Papanikolas illustrates this level of comfort that Athena develops toward Rob when she notes, “Athena’s stiffness vanished: *out to sheep*, sheepmen’s language; Eliza and Tula exchanging contraband magazines and his saying Tula’s name so naturally” (177). Athena identifies with Rob, and hence, her “American-ness,” because their respective families share a shepherding background, and their sisters a friendship, as their families grow up on parallel plots of land.

Nonetheless, like her portrayal of Kallie in “County Hospital,” Papanikolas illustrates that cultural, ethnic, and racial tension accompanies this dance between cultures. Athena’s “American-ness” is questioned by Rob’s family members, based on her physical features. When Rob first introduces Athena to his grandmother and announces that they are getting married, Papanikolas recounts how “The great-grandmother did not take her eyes off of Athena,” and she tells her great-granddaughter Wanda, “We’re gonna have a foreigner in the family” (182). Wanda responds with an embarrassed, “Shh. She’s not a foreigner. She was born in this country.” Again, Athena is marked as “other”—and “un-American”—just as Kallie is marked by the doctors and nurses who mistake her for a Jew, presumably based on her dark physical features. Papanikolas depicts the racial tension that exists between Rob and Athena through the portrayal of Rob’s great-grandmother as well. She eradicates Athena and her family’s Greek-American identity when she comments on her older sister’s physical features at the

church commemorates one’s patron saint. For example, if one is named Luke, he celebrates his name day on St. Luke’s day. Traditionally, they were celebrated instead of birthdays in Greece.

wedding. The narrator explains how “Great Granny would not take her eyes off Tula. “Who did you say she was, Clara?” and then, “If God had dipped her in once more, she’d a come out black” (185). Papanikolas demonstrates how Greek-American identity is read as “foreign” and “Black” by Americans who use physical features and skin tone to denigrate and disenfranchise people of other ethnic groups.

Many unresolved conflicts remain throughout the course of Athena and Rob’s marriage. Rob questions his own faith, but stays within the confines of his own community and keeps up those ties by attending the Mormon church; furthermore, he knows that even his business partners would denounce him and his financial security would be shattered if he spoke up against church doctrines he questions. While Athena identifies with her “Greek-ness” through the fact that she does not completely denounce her Christian Orthodox religion, and does not convert to the Mormon faith, she disidentifies with it, and strives to identify with “American-ness,” by attending the Mormon church. Note Papanikolas’s description of Athena’s attempts to look inconspicuous as she tries to “blend in”:

Athena slowly slumped in her chair and leaned to one side so that she was hidden from Sister Merrill by the large head of fluffy hair in front of her. She did not want to be called upon, to remind the women that she came from Greek immigrant people. The old feeling that she did not belong had returned recently, as sharply as it had in the early years of her marriage. (187)

It is evident that Athena is embarrassed by her Greek heritage and origins to the point that she literally attempts to “blend in” with the “American-ness” of the Mormon congregation. That is all it takes to remind her of the fact that her origins are different

from the people who surround her—the ones with generations of Mormon history and non-Greek blood. In addition, she points out that she recently feels a strong displacement in this church community—a feeling of not belonging—as she did in the first years of her marriage. Nonetheless, as much as she tries to suppress her “Greek-ness” and to disidentify with it in the Mormon church, she has a strong desire to belong to her own church community, a desire that reveals itself throughout the rest of this specific service.

Papanikolas demonstrates Athena’s unspoken desire for her original Greek Orthodox faith, one that has its roots in the ways in which Greek identity is almost inextricable from this religious tradition. She explains how “Athena absently lifted her hand to cross herself, then, opening her eyes wide, she remembered where she was and lowered it. She was afraid” (189). As much as she tries to suppress her “Greek-ness,” she forgets herself in this instance and falls back into the familiar, as she proceeds to form the sign of the cross by touching her forehead, stomach, and shoulders with her right hand.⁷ This form of prayer is so familiar and comforting to her, that it occurs subconsciously. She, herself, is surprised by the gesture which Papanikolas indicates through Athena’s wide eyes. In addition, she struggles to disidentify with this subconscious religious act, which is an inherent aspect of her “Greek-ness,” by remembering where she is and lowering her hand. There are several instances in which she flashes back to the services of the Christian Orthodox church as she sits through this Mormon one. Athena’s Greek cultural orientation is strongly linked to her religious identity, which resurfaces through her original religious “habits.” Papanikolas invites the

⁷ For the Orthodox Christian, this is a form of blessing oneself during and after prayer, as well as any time Father, Son, Holy Spirit, or the Virgin Mary are mentioned.

reader to consider the cultural implications of identification and disidentification between Greek and American cultures through Athena's fear after she crosses herself. She is afraid because it reveals her "Greek-ness" through her original church's manner of worship; hence, it gives her away as an "outsider" who does not belong in the Mormon church community (or the American community at large). Papanikolas also suggests that she feels guilty for forsaking her original faith and attempting to suppress who she is in the process. Nonetheless, Papanikolas illustrates how Athena's subconscious desire to connect to her "Greek-ness" through this gesture, indicates her original faith.

Athena's inner struggle between her "Greek-ness" and "American-ness" reaches a pivotal point in "The Apple Falls from the Apple Tree" when her eldest child, Paul, a missionary and clerical member of the Mormon church, writes her a letter asking why she and his father never married in the Mormon Temple. This event causes her to re-identify with her "Greek-ness," and regain true αυτοδικαιωμα, as she suddenly realizes that she spent so many years of her marriage suppressing it, and trying to identify with "American-ness," by immersing herself in the Mormon community. Even before she reads the letter, she realizes that:

She had let her children be steeped in Mormon family history and lore and had said little to them about her own parents and their life as despised immigrants. She had been ashamed not too many years back when [her oldest sister] Tula and [her brother-in-law] Gus had been around Rob's family. She had made them out to be funny "characters," because of Gus's heavy accent and blunt honesty, and of Tula's Greek words mixed in with her poor English and her dark looks. (215)

In this same passage, Athena realizes that in her attempts to disidentify with her Greekness, “she had hidden too much Greekness,” especially from her oldest son Paul (215). As she reaches this awareness of her attempts at Greek disidentification, her son’s letter ultimately causes her to re-identify with her “Greek-ness” through her refusal to continue attending the Mormon church. Although it is too late to pass down more Greek heritage to her own family, she reasserts her “Greek-ness” when she ultimately returns to her church; albeit, still “in limbo,” since her marriage with Rob was not sanctified within the Orthodox faith (240). Papanikolas describes how Athena “watched each [parishioner] with infinite envy” as they partake in Holy Communion. She longs to take communion, but knows that she cannot, as long as she is married to Rob. However, she is content that she is “there in the church of her people” and hopes that “someday perhaps the rules [made by men] would be changed and she then could approach the priest holding the chalice and place the red silk cloth under her chin” (240). She finds some peace within herself and reclaims her αυτοδικαιωμα by returning to the church, and by 1995, she does not care that Rob’s family “[thinks] her eccentric beyond their Mormon world” (241); she is content having everyone over for American Easter, and “knowing that her own Holy Week [is] coming” (241).⁸ Papanikolas resolves these cultural tensions by portraying the import of embracing a religious identity as integral to Greek-American identity.

Papanikolas suggests that it is only possible for a Greek-American woman to be both Greek and American simultaneously, and achieve αυτοδικαιωμα, in the twenty-first century. Toula in Nia Vardalos’s My Big Fat Greek Wedding (2002) is able to preserve

⁸ Orthodox Easter is based off on the Gregorian calendar, while American or “Western” Easter is based on the Julian calendar; sometimes the two coincide, and sometimes they do not, depending on the calendar year.

her Greek-American identity and achieve successful balance within it.⁹ The movie itself is based on Vardalos's own marriage to a ξενο, a non-Greek. This balance is evident in Vardalos's own life when she guest stars on the Greek reality series, *Fame Story*, in 2003, and explains how she asserted her Greek identity from the start of her career.¹⁰ Vardalos stated that she chose to identify as Greek-Canadian despite media pressure to claim a Spanish heritage, so her "ethnic" physical features would appear more appealing to an American audience. Through her refusal to hide her Greek heritage, Vardalos achieves her own αυτοδικαίωμα.

Vardalos illustrates the struggle to define Greek-American identity in the film against existing apathy towards the differentiation of various ethnic groups that still prevails in mainstream society. This is evident when Toula first meets her in-laws, Rodney and Harriet. Harriet remarks, "Toula, now that's not a name you hear every day. Does it mean anything in your language?" Here, Toula's future mother-in-law refers to Greek as "her language," as if Toula does not have ownership over the English language, although she was born and raised in the U.S., Vardalos emphasizes the objectification of Greek-American identity by Harriet when she asks "Rodney, didn't you have a Greek

⁹ The exaggerated stereotypes, which Vardalos chooses to make comical in this movie, are some of the most troubling for Greek Americans. Nonetheless, she successfully portrays these serious conflicts under the guise of humor and sarcasm. It is worth noting that Vardalos chooses to treat the most troubling aspects of Greek-American cultural disjunction with humor.

¹⁰ *Fame Story* is a cross between *American Idol* and a reality television show. It is sponsored by the Greek television station ANT1. A group of people are selected to compete against each other in singing. They all live in a house together, are trained by voice specialists and choreographers, and are given a song to prepare each week, which they perform on stage that Sunday evening. The public calls in and votes for the best singer; those who get the least votes must leave the show. The show continues in this way until there are two finalists; the one with the most votes wins several thousand Euros. Vardalos guest starred on the show in 2003 in honor of the first Greek-American contestant on this show—Kalomira Sarantis—a nineteen-year-old, American-born Long Islander of immigrant parents, who surpassed Greek linguistic and cultural barriers, and competed with Greek-born contestants in Greece until the end of the show when she won the grand prize. (www.famestory.gr, www.kalomirasarantis.com/Frame.htm).

receptionist once?” While her husband struggles to remember the receptionist’s ethnicity, Harriet guesses Armenian and asks Toula if Armenia is near Greece, to which she curtly responds: “Not exactly.” After much thought, Rodney declares his secretary as Guatemalan and Harriet responds with “Oh, that’s right dear,” which again, shows how Greek, Armenian, and Guatemalan all get “lumped” together by mainstream America. Toula solves the problems of the other Greek-American women—Kallie, Dea, and Athena—with regard to breaking out of Greek traditional gender roles and retaining her “Greek-ness,” despite prevailing ambivalence towards Greek-American identity.

Vardalos shows how Toula disidentifies with the Greek traditional role by going to college. She defines herself as an American woman through this choice. Vardalos illustrates Toula’s choosing to assimilate to “American-ness” through education by the two contrasting camera shots of her in the school cafeteria. In the first one, when she is in grade school, she sits by herself and is made fun of for her Greek lunch of moussaka. In college, she joins the Wonder bread, sandwich-eating blondes at the lunch table, and pulls out her own sandwich. In addition, she leaves her father’s restaurant business and puts the skills of her college courses to use in her aunt’s travel agency, unlike Dea, who cannot get out of the already prescribed vocation of cashier at her uncle’s candy store. Vardalos also reverses traditional gender roles regarding education, in that Toula paves the way for her brother, Niko, who attends college after her, which is undoubtedly a demarcation of the ways in which the contemporary moment allows for a construction of Greek-American identity that was not available to Papanikolas.

Vardalos demonstrates how the hypocrisy of traditional gender roles regarding marriage still exists for Greek-American women in contemporary America. Nonetheless,

she shows how it is overcome through Toula's character. From the opening scenes of the movie, Vardalos tells the audience that good Greek girls are supposed to "marry Greek boys, make Greek babies, and feed everyone until the day they die." She juxtaposes Toula's position as a female, regarding traditional gender role constraints, by telling the viewer that Niko "has two jobs: 1.) to cook in the restaurant and 2.) to marry a Greek virgin," when she introduces him in the film. She also illustrates the significance placed upon a female's age in relation to when she gets married through the first thing Toula's father tells her in the film: "Toula, you better get married; you starting to look old." In addition, Toula notes that she is "thirty and well past [her] expiration date" by Greek standards. The pressure for a woman to marry while young is emphasized in the diner scene when her uncle tells her father "don't tell anyone her age" concerning marriage prospects. Vardalos further demonstrates the double standard for males and females regarding age and marriage, through the verbal exchange between Toula's brother and father. When the family discusses Toula's "problem," Niko says "And I'll get married Pops, I promise," to which his father responds: "You have plenty of time, Niko." In her portrait of Toula, Vardalos breaks away from these gender role constraints, and asserts that as an American woman, Toula has the right to date, albeit in secret.

This egalitarian attitude, and alternate approach, towards dating in a Greek community where it is traditionally taboo to do so, is evident in the kitchen scene when Mrs. Portokalos (Toula's mother), asks both her daughter and son how their evenings went the previous night. Vardalos presents the equality of gender roles with regard to dating in contemporary Greek-American culture, when Toula and Niko lie about it in this scene of parallel comparison. Her mother asks "How was the class?" and she answers

with “The pottery class? Great,” when the viewer knows she was on a date. In addition, it is implied that Niko was on one as well, when he answers his mother’s “Where did you go?, What did you do?, Who did you see?” with “nowhere, nothing, and no one,” as he rushes out of the room. Vardalos effectively illustrates equality of the genders by paralleling Toula and her brother in this scene in which both lie to break away from the traditional Greek taboo against dating.

Vardalos illustrates how Toula breaks with the traditional female role by refusing to marry pre-arranged, Greek “prospects” and has a successful “mixed” marriage. She marries a non-Greek like Athena in “The Apple falls from the Apple Tree.” However, Vardalos allows Toula to stay true to her culture and religion. Both Toula and her American husband, Ian Miller, transcend cultural and religious constraints to be together and to make the marriage work. The non-Greek husband makes compromises which allow Toula to embrace both her “Greek-ness” and “American-ness”: he converts to Christian Orthodoxy and accepts her family’s ways and values along with her. He literally becomes a part of Toula’s Greek culture and heritage by accepting her faith. After the baptism scene, he tells her “Now I’m Greek.” In the scene with the Easter celebration, the viewer sees Ian learning the traditional Χριστος Ανεστη/Αληθος Ανεστη greeting.¹¹ In addition, he also actively participates in the dissemination of the Greek language and culture with their daughter. He tells her: “Greek school. Pame” and then tests her with “What does that mean?” Vardalos demonstrates that by 2002, American

¹¹ Literally means “Christ is risen/Truly He is risen” in Greek. Christian Orthodox greet each other this way on Easter in acknowledgment of Christ’s death and resurrection for humankind. It is an acknowledgment of Christ’s immortality and the fact that humans can achieve salvation because of Him.

society allows her the “space” to embrace both her “American-ness” and her “Greek-ness,” so that she fully embodies the definition of her Greek-American identity, and hence, αυτοδικαίωμα, through the way in which she chooses to live her life. This new “space,” or flexibility, of American society is exemplified through the attitudes and compromises of Toula’s husband, who ultimately accepts her along with her “Greek-ness,” and encourages her to continue identification with it.

Vardalos depicts how Toula successfully achieves Greek-American identity in contemporary America. She finds the ultimate balance between her “American-ness” and her “Greekness” where she simultaneously has the ability to disidentify with the Greek traditional female role and feel pride in her Greek heritage, family, and religion through the help of her family. Vardalos gives the first-generation Greek-American woman a new shape of matriarchal empowerment through Toula. She even does this through her name: Toula comes from “Fotoula,” meaning “light of God.” In addition, her last name, Portokalos, means “orange”; a fruit of the earth symbolic of fertility in pre-Christian ceremonies (www.uga.edu/fruit/citrus.htm). It is important to note that Toula’s brother acknowledges that she sets a path for him concerning education. He tells her: “You started it. You wanted to do something else Toula and you did it.” In addition, he encourages her to embrace her past, meaning her Greek culture and heritage, and incorporate it into her future, when he says “Don’t let your past dictate who you are, but let it be part of who you will become.” The strong, matriarchal empowerment that exists throughout the film, is apparent in the scene where Toula’s mother and grandmother express their support for her “mixed” marriage. Her mother states that no one has the right to tell her how to live. In addition, she tells her “I came here for you” and

concludes with “I gave you life so that you could live it.” Directly after this speech, Toula’s grandmother shares old photographs with her and places her own wedding crowns on Toula’s head.¹² Through this gesture, she also gives Toula her blessing over the wedding and provides a link between past and present Greek family history that will continue through Toula’s descendants, by literally placing her own crowns on Toula’s head. Vardalos depicts the link between past, present, and future and the continuation of Greek family history through the matriarchal lineage with the shot of Toula, her mother, and grandmother staring in the mirror. This unified stare into the mirror is then reflected straight into the camera, and thus, to the audience. Despite its inclusion of stereotypes, My Big Fat Greek Wedding is an important text because it presents Greek-American identity as a viable possibility amidst the “multiethnic, multicultural and multisectarian societies that have emerged in the last 50 years [of the 20th century]” (Constantelos 133).

What then are the factors which brought changes in traditional gender roles for first-generation Greek-American women between Dea and Toula’s time, concerning education, work outside of the home, interfaith marriage, and successful achievement of Greek-American identity? Several factors include changing attitudes towards Greeks in America as well as changing traditional gender roles in Greece. Greeks in the U.S. no longer live in the homogenous communities in which racism and xenophobia forced them to retreat during the 1900’s to 1920’s when “Anglo-Saxon megalomania was at its height” (Scourby 35). When the Ku Klux Klan saw them as a threat to “the moral fiber of American society,” and the Immigration Commission declared them as “inherently

¹² Wreaths that the bride and groom wear on their heads during the wedding ceremony; they symbolize crowns and indicate that now the couple becomes king and queen of their own household.

inferior” (Scourby 35), Greeks formed protectionist groups such as the AHEPA, and GAPA,¹³ which stressed that Greeks and Americans were linked by the same values of Hellenism. Meanwhile, “illiteracy among women [in Greece] showed a dramatic decline from 80 percent in 1907 to 27 percent in 1961” (Scourby 13). Furthermore, women ironically began to leave their villages and seek jobs in the city in order to secure a marriage dowry. These changing gender roles reinforce the differences from Evangelica Tastsoglou and George Stubos’s comparative study that examined the Greek immigrant family of the U.S. and Canada. They found that:

Prior to the 1940’s, immigrant Greeks assumed a more traditional institutional form characterized by more conservative values of kinship and extended family characteristic of rural Greece. Subsequent waves of Greek immigrants after World War II became more Americanized and were characterized by increased distancing from the kinship group, greater emphasis on interfamily and interpersonal relations, egalitarian marital relationships, greater marital autonomy for children and decreasing interfamily financial obligations. (Kourvetaris 105-106)

In addition, these late immigrant families were not affronted by the intense racism which the earlier immigrants faced, allowing them more space to outwardly embrace and assert both their “Greek-ness” and American-ness.” These changes in Greek immigrant family values and the attitudes towards multiculturalism in the U.S. explain how Vardalos’s Toula ultimately achieves αυτοδικαίωμα as a Greek-American woman who finds a

¹³ Greek American Progressive Association, another protectionist group, founded in 1923 in Pittsburgh, PA. It was interested mainly in preserving the Greek language and traditions. Its members were conservative and shunned flamboyance through modest attire and outdoor gatherings. (Amulet 162-163).

successful balance of Greek-American identity and still has the right to define her own possibilities.

Another reason for increased “mixed” marriage among Greek-American women is due to the lack of Greek-American males as early as 1948 (Constantelos 131); more “mixed” marriages have occurred since then. Despite the fact that the Greek Orthodox church has served as the locus of Greek ethnic and religious identity in the U.S. since the arrival of the first immigrants of the early 1900’s, it is no longer the case when “60 percent of the marriages solemnized by the Church between 1990 and 1995 were mixed” (Constantelos 132). With the drastic increase of “mixed” marriages in the Greek Orthodox church, services become more English-speaking with primary focus on the religion itself, and a shared Greek language and ethnic identity begins to disappear, even though Victor Roudometof and Anna Karpathakis in their article “Greek Americans and Transnationalism: Religion, Class, and Community,” argue that Greek Orthodox priests advocate Greek language and culture through the church. Hence, it is up to the Greek-American women to choose how they will successfully balance Greek-American identity within an ever-changing American society, by taking pride in their Greek heritage and their American individualism, and by rejecting traditional Greek gender role constraints.

Despite these various socio-historical and religious constraints for first-generation Greek-American women over the decades (1900’s to the present), both Papanikolas and Vardalos illustrate how first-generation Greek-American women can define the possibilities of αυτοδικαίωμα; in other words, how they identify as Greek, American, or both. Despite the homogeneous Greek community and the strong anti-immigrant sentiment in Papanikolas’s setting, she allows women to define themselves as Greek-

American by going to college, pursuing careers, and ultimately refusing an arranged marriage, despite cultural pressures of the traditional, tight-knit Greek community and family.

Nonetheless, Papanikolas also depicts women who attempt to break away from the traditional gender role restrictions but are unsuccessful. They are not allowed the opportunity of education and the choice of a career. Despite restrictions, they, too, identify as Greek-American in their own right, by refusing traditional Greek customs, such as checking a bride's bed sheets. However, they represent the stifled hopes and dreams of first-generation Greek-American women who succumb to the pressure of arranged marriage, due to lack of options.

Papanikolas also demonstrates the dire consequences that arise for Greek-American women who sever connections with Greek identity as a result of "mixed" marriage. She stresses the importance of achieving a holistic "self," and of finding successful balance between "Greek-ness" and "American-ness," even if one is in a "mixed" marriage. Papanikolas illustrates this through the emotional and psychological turmoil which her characters experience when they attempt to suppress their "Greek-ness," only to find their children completely alienated from their Greek heritage. In addition, she shows how Greek-American identity is negotiated over time, and how the formation of a holistic one, is positively or negatively influenced by the majority society of white America.

Finally, Vardalos presents Greek-American women who achieve the ultimate balance of "Greek-American-ness" by defying traditional gender roles concerning education, vocation, and marriage. In her film, they successfully transcend gender role

constraints through college education, picking a career outside of the family business, and marrying a ξεβο within the Greek Orthodox Church. Vardalos demonstrates how Greek-American women define themselves as American when they reject traditional gender role constraints, but also take pride in their Greek religious and ethnic identity through spousal acceptance of their “Greek-ness.” In addition, in this film, women now identify with their “Greek-ness” through the continuation of disseminating Greek heritage to newer generations of Greek-American females, such as by choosing to send their daughters to Greek school, while allowing them possibilities for their own self-definition in the future. Hence, Papanikolas and Vardalos demonstrate how the new Greek-American woman is a product of multiple histories and traditions, who ultimately transcends socio-historical and socio-cultural boundaries to achieve successful balance of “Greek-American-ness.”

Chapter 3: Greek Masculinity, Honor, and Americanization: Finding a Place
Between “Heracles” and “Harry”

wrap their babies in the American flag,
feed them mashed hot dogs and apple pie,
name them Bill and Daisy,
buy them blonde dolls that blink blue
eyes or a football and tiny cleats
before the baby can even walk,
speak to them in thick English,
hallo babee hallo,
whisper Spanish or Polish
when the babies sleep, whisper
in a dark parent bed, that dark
parent fear, “Will they like
our boy, our girl, our fine american
boy, our fine american girl?”

“Immigrants”
Pat Mora

Disidentification with “Greek-ness” is not an option for native Greek women with regard to altering traditional gender roles, because the immigrant females are forced to conform to those roles; hence, there is no room for them to perform “American-ness” through this medium. Thus, the disidentification of “Greek-ness” by altering traditional gender roles is a conflict that poses itself only for first-generation Greek-American women. The drastic gap that exists between native and first-generation females concerning the negotiation of Greek-American identity does not exist for males. Both native and first-generation Greek men have the flexibility to disidentify with their “Greek-ness” by altering traditional gender roles, as a result of traditional patriarchal Greek culture, which grants them greater possibilities for self-definition. In addition, all of these men have greater flexibility altering the Greek traditional gender roles prescribed to them, because they are male. As Constance Callinicos states in her compilation of Greek American women’s testimonies, American Aphrodite: Becoming Female in Greek America:

Papa passes on to his son the hope of “opportunity”—here [in the U.S.A.] a man can be captain of his own ship, Odysseus. Here life’s open sea is a man’s birthright. The Greek American female learns fear of the outside world; “out there” is rape. “Out there” is despoilment, where she will be “done in,” obliterated by the failed morals of the decadent society. (253)

Here, Callinicos describes the stark contrast in fathers’ attitudes concerning opportunities for their Greek-American sons and daughters. She likens Odysseus, a legendary character of Greek myth, to the sons. Callinicos also utilizes the open sea, a hopeful image of renewal and literal spaciousness, to describe the opportunities available to the sons, while she utilizes the powerful metaphor of rape in relation to American society, literally outside of their Greek homes and traditions, for the daughters. Instead of hopefulness, they learn fear of the world “out there.” This difference is most evident if one compares the degree of identification and disidentification of “Greek-ness” these men perform, to the time periods in which the negotiation of identity occurs. In this chapter, I examine how males perform “Greek-ness” or “American-ness” in four different texts: Heracles and Steve in Helen Papanikolas’s The Time of the Little Black Bird (1999), as well as Nick Gage in his book A Place for Us (1989), and in his daughter’s, Eleni Gage’s North of Ithaka: A Journey Home Through a Family’s Extraordinary Past (2004). While Papanikolas’s character Heracles, and Nick Gage, both the author and the subject of memoirs about Greek-American identity, are actually native Greeks who emigrate to the U.S. fairly early in their lives, each disidentifies with his “Greek-ness.” In contrast, Papanikolas portrays Steve, a first-generation Greek-American, as a character who identifies with his “Greek-ness” to a greater extent than the other two men. I submit

that there is greater pressure for native immigrants to assimilate to their adopted country and prove their loyalty, than there is for American-born Greek-Americans. It is important to note the historical events that influenced America's racial consciousness during the time frames in which these males' lives are presented. Strong anti-immigrant sentiment existed in the early 1900's, as I note previously, when Papanikolas presents Heracles, followed by anti-semitism and apathy towards ethnic minorities in the 1930's, as a result of World War II propaganda, when she presents Steve. These events influence the extent, and ways, in which Heracles and Steve assimilate to American society. In addition, America's attitude towards Greeks changes by the 1950's and 1960's due to the Civil Rights Movement, at the time when Nick becomes a full-fledged member of the American social scene by attending American parties and dating American women. It is also important to note that Nick also grew up in the Northeast, where there has historically been more acceptance of minorities. This chapter examines how Greek-American men perform identification or disidentification with their "Greek-ness," based on adhering to the traditional gender role characterized by financial responsibility to the family, finding husbands for female relatives, and following traditional marriage patterns. In addition, it is important to note how the concept of *filotimo*¹ shapes male Greek-American identity. All of these men—whether fictional or real—strive for a Greek-American identity; however, Nick Gage is the only one who achieves that perfect "dance" between cultures.

¹ It literally means "love of honor." In addition, "it implies that respect is given to one's honor by others, and includes self-esteem. Any insult, either direct or indirect, inflicted through family members constitutes a serious offense and calls for retaliation. In the traditional village, community honor depended upon certain sex-linked virtues, strength in number of relatives, a well-ordered household, and wealth in land to support one's family." Despite changing definitions of honor in contemporary Greek society, "it is still the status of the family as a collective unit that forms the core of *filotimo*, not the individual who, in actuality, has little importance [apart] from the group" (Scourby 10-11).

Papanikolas demonstrates that new immigrants benefit from the sacrifices of earlier immigrants, and this in turn, creates different possibilities of identification and disidentification with Greek and American cultures. She illustrates this through two brothers: Andreas and Heracles. Andreas is the older, more traditional one, whose name fittingly means “manly” in Greek. In addition, the fact that he is named after the martyred St. Andrew, reflects his constant suffering for the good of his brother. As the older one, he adheres to Greek custom and takes on financial responsibility for his extended family in Greece, and eventually, for his immediate family. Papanikolas deliberately uses these names to reflect the characters’ personalities. Heracles is named after the Greek god known for his incredible strength. However, it is worth noting that the mythological Heracles is driven mad by a woman; then he kills his children and those of his brother’s. His namesake’s fate reflects his own reckless behavior concerning the joint bank account he shares with his brother, which only worsens, once he marries. Andreas’s children financially suffer at the hands of Heracles, since their father must “pinch pennies” to compensate for their uncle’s excessive spending. In addition, Heracles metaphorically murders his future generations by erasing the Greek traditions of his heritage. Furthermore, the physical strength of his namesake contrasts so much with his own inner strength, that it emphasizes his weak personal character. Heracles is a native Greek, like the others of Greek Town, but he disidentifies with his “Greek-ness” because he does not share the laborer history and lifestyle of a Greek immigrant male. When Heracles puts on airs, his older brother, Andreas, angrily yells at him: “You found the table set! You came straight off the boat, got on a train, and came right here! I bought you a new suit that very first day. I sent you to the nuns to learn English. You

never knew hardship” (24). In contrast to his brother, Andreas worked in a slaughterhouse, laid rails, and dug coal when he was still a laborer in the U.S. In addition, he sent money to keep him fed and educated when Heracles was still a young boy in Greece. Papanikolas presents different definitions of Greek-American identity in this contrast between Andreas and Heracles.

Papanikolas also demonstrates how pressures of Americanization are made possible by Andreas, who provides more of a first-generation experience for his brother. Heracles disidentifies with his “Greek-ness” and this immigrant history. He is not frugal with his money. He is a showy dresser who loves luxury. Papanikolas conveys this to the reader when Andreas sees him in a new suit and asks, “How many suits do you need?” (23), which implies that he has several already. In addition, Andreas continues: “You should have bought brown. Brown doesn’t show stains, like gray” (23). Heracles is extravagant in that he chooses gray, over a practical, brown suit. In addition, he further disidentifies himself from his brother and the Greek, male immigrant history, when he responds with “Brown’s for men like you. You don’t know how to live. Gray’s for me” (23). Here, Heracles directly expresses disidentification with Andreas when he elevates himself above his brother, even in his choices of attire. Furthermore, this disidentification with “Greek-ness,” linked to his air of superiority over the other natives of Greek Town, is evident when Papanikolas tells us that he does not go by his Greek name—Heracles—but that he calls himself “Harry” (23). This Americanization of his name is self-prescribed. Again, he identifies himself with his “American-ness” and disidentifies from his “Greek-ness” by giving himself a new, more American name, and, in effect, a new identity. Heracles’s migration history, extravagance with money, air of

superiority, and name change, all contribute to this disidentification of “Greek-ness” process.

While Heracles focuses on the rejection of his “Greek-ness,” his marriage is a significant factor that links him to Greek identity. Papanikolas illustrates how Heracles identifies with his “Greek-ness” by marrying a Greek through a similar way as the other men of Greek Town.² While the natives married picture brides³ through arranged marriages, Heracles arranges his marriage to Myrsini when he reads the advertisement she places in a Greek-language newspaper. Nonetheless, he disidentifies with his “Greek-ness,” and the Greek Town community made up of Greek village peasants, by marrying a woman who comes from Asia Minor.⁴ This disidentification from the community and their history is evident when Heracles boasts that *he* is not marrying a village woman and that *his* wife is educated (34). In addition, Heracles further extends this disidentification when he looks at his niece and then tells his sister-in-law “You’ll see the kind of children I’m going to have,” and continues with “My children are going to be refined, aristocratic” (35). Again, he distinguishes his future offspring and elevates them as better than those of his brother, and hence, those of the Greek Town community. Papanikolas illustrates how Heracles disidentifies with his “Greek-ness,” even though he marries a Greek spouse in a traditional way.

² Greek Towns initially formed in the early 1900’s because the anti-immigrant sentiment of American society would not allow Greeks to reside anywhere they wished, coupled with the fact that they could not afford residences in American neighborhoods. By the end of the 1920’s, almost all Greeks achieved enough affluence to move into middle class American neighborhoods. Moving created loss of Greek village culture for the children of immigrants. “Those who had lived on the outskirts of cities could no longer raise chickens and rabbits, husbands could no longer slaughter lambs in the back yard, or fill the neighborhood with fumes of fermenting grapes” (Amulet 275).

³ The bride and groom never actually met before the marriage, they only saw each other in pictures, and their male relatives arranged the marriage with the groom in America (Amulet 122-137).

⁴ A place rich in cultures, civilizations, and the grandeur of Hellenism, which flourished there since the time of the Byzantine Empire.

Papanikolas also depicts how Heracles disidentifies with his “Greek-ness” when he buys a house outside of Greek Town. His wife and child are literally outsiders to the rest of the Greek community as a result of the purchase. Myrsini is an outsider since she moves into the home practically upon her arrival in Utah, and their child, Constantine, is one, because he is born and raised in this house outside of Greek Town. When Heracles purchases the house, he tells his soon-to-be wife that it is “Brick. Six rooms and [has] a bathroom inside” (34). In addition, he continues telling her that it is not in Greek Town, but “in the good part of town” (34); again, here he disidentifies himself with his “Greek-ness” and aligns himself with “American-ness.” Meanwhile, Andreas’s house in Greek Town has a garden, a brick oven, rabbit hutches, and an outhouse in the backyard. In addition, even when Myrsini does invite Greeks from Greek Town to their home in celebration of Heracles’s name day, she tells her sister-in-law that the children cannot attend the dinner. Papanikolas notes that “The news raged through the [Greek] neighborhood. This woman, this refugee with her nose up in the air, did not welcome children into her house. All Greek Town children ran in and out of each other’s houses, but this woman would not allow children in her house” (360). Myrsini alters this “custom” observed by the Greek Town community, and literally cuts off contact of Greek Town children with her family. Heracles attempts to erase his heritage, as depicted in Papanikolas’s claims, in his deliberate construction of an assimilated, American lifestyle.

Even though Heracles identifies with his “Greek-ness” by continuing to be part of the Greek church community (i.e. he attends picnics with his family, his son goes to Greek school), he ironically disidentifies with it through his desire to attend an AHEPA

convention.⁵ Unlike his brother, Andreas is disgusted with the AHEPA members' "trying to act like Americans" and thinks it ridiculous that they include the speaking of English in the organization's constitution (41). Nonetheless, Heracles excitedly proclaims that he will go and that "[His] wife should mingle with the better class" (41). Once again, he places himself and his wife above the status of the other Greek Town families, and elevates the Americanized Ahepans as "the better class": the "doctors, lawyers, and peasants who've made big money" (41), who assimilated by speaking English, marrying American wives, and living in American neighborhoods. This disidentification from the Greek Town community is also evident when Heracles takes his wife out to eat. He does not take her to "Stellios's place," a Greek establishment, but rather, to the Hotel Utah, an American one (42). Papanikolas shows how Heracles disidentifies with his "Greek-ness," and aligns himself with his "American-ness," which he deems superior, both within and outside of the Greek community.

Papanikolas also illustrates how Heracles disidentifies with his "Greek-ness" by altering traditional gender roles for himself and his wife. One of the ways he does this is by allowing Myrsini to stop by the office. In so doing, he breaks with the Greek tradition that the work place is a completely male sphere the wife does not have a right to access. According to Papanikolas in her historiography, An Amulet of Greek Earth: Generations of Immigrant Folk Culture, "A wife who aspired to anything beyond the demands of home and children was an affront to her husband's masculinity. The Turkish Conquest affected other peoples besides the Greeks with their extreme views of women's

⁵American Hellenic Progressive Association; men dressed elaborately and carried canes to emulate American lodges. "Their national conventions were elaborate affairs in expensive hotels with formal balls and reigning queens" (Amulet 162-163).

subjugation, but the Greeks continued the cultural pattern of women having no participation in life outside the home” (147). The disruption of this traditional gender role is evident through Andreas’s dismay that Myrsini often drops by the office.

Papanikolas states in The Time of the Little Black Bird that “Women, to Andreas, had no reason to step into a man’s place of business” (41). When Heracles allows Myrsini to drop by the office, he becomes more egalitarian in terms of the authority he has as husband and breadwinner of his household, by giving his wife the right to penetrate this boundary of the work sphere. Hence, she exercises her power in their relationship through her mere presence at the office. Heracles identifies with his “American-ness” by altering this traditional gender role and allowing his wife freedom outside of the home, and particularly, his work space. Through Heracles’s character, Papanikolas shows how Greeks assimilate in America by shifting power in marital relationships.

While Steve is a first-generation Greek-American, Papanikolas depicts him as more “Greek” than his uncle Heracles, in his adherence to *filotimo*. However, upholding *filotimo* poses a conflict for him because gender role responsibilities prevent him from exercising his individualism within the social constructs of American society, which is the only society he knows. Traditionally, it is a man’s responsibility to find husbands for his female relatives (i.e. sisters, daughter, and nieces), provide a dowry, and arrange their marriages. The tradition of providing one’s female relative with a dowry changed with poverty-stricken families in Greece who had no financial capacity to provide one. Meanwhile, the demand of Greek women was high amidst the Greek immigrants around the early 1900’s, who came to the U.S. primarily as laborers. Hence, the same poverty-stricken families arranged, through male relatives and connections, to send their

daughters to grooms in the U.S. without a dowry. While a dowry is not a requirement for first-generation Greek-American women, first-generation men like Steve, are still expected to find husbands for their sisters. Steve desperately attempts to fulfill the standards of *filotimo* by adhering to Greek gender roles, even though it poses a cultural conflict for him. Nonetheless, he can never fully achieve *filotimo* and self-definition, because the former goes against the American ideal of individualism, which fosters the latter.

Papanikolas demonstrates how Steve struggles in the negotiation of his Greek-American identity concerning courtship and marriage. He is conflicted between his own desire to pursue dating and fulfilling traditional gender role responsibilities to his sisters. Steve identifies with his “Greek-ness” through his attraction to a Greek-American girl, yet disidentifies with it, through his frustration with existing cultural restrictions concerning opposite sex socialization. Papanikolas states that “He wanted to ask if her uncle would let her go out with him, but he did not dare: only engaged couples went to movies and drive-ins together. If he asked Sylvia, and her uncle by some miracle consented...But then he had those sisters with no prospects. ‘Damn Greek customs,’ he said out loud” (78). While Steve wants to identify with his “American-ness” by asking Sylvia out on a date, he knows that this American social practice is only allowed for engaged couples within his Greek community. Furthermore, he is well aware of his brotherly responsibility concerning his sisters’ marrying before him, and vocalizes his frustration at these constraints that, for him, are cultural obstacles, with “Damn Greek customs” (78). At the mention of Sylvia, his mother sternly reminds him: “Don’t forget you have sisters to marry off” (79). Again, Steve’s resistance to this Greek custom, and

his disidentification with his “Greek-ness” through his resistance to it, is evident when he answers her with “This is America. Let them find their own husbands” (79). He unsuccessfully attempts to break away from traditional gender socialization through his desire to date Sylvia and his affirmation that his sisters should find their own husbands.

Despite Steve’s resistance to the custom of finding husbands for his sisters, Papanikolas shows how he adheres to it, and hence, identifies with his “Greek-ness,” when he takes the girls to the AHEPA convention. To stress the importance of this custom, and actually marrying off Penny and Georgie, Papanikolas tells the reader that Andreas takes money out of his savings for the girls’ dresses. While Steve complies with the orders to take the girls, he disidentifies with his “Greek-ness,” and voices his resistance to this custom, by being angry with his sisters over the trip. Papanikolas notes that “On the train, he read magazines he had bought to keep from having to talk with Penny and Georgie any more than necessary” (79). On the train ride back, he explodes at his sisters:

“I bring you all the way across the country, spend all this money and all the good it did! Why in hell do you think I brought you to this convention?” He looked at Penny, wanting to choke her thin neck. “To find you a husband, you stupid moron! You make no effort! You don’t lift a finger! One of you is a dope and the other is so stuck-up, no one will come near her!” (82)

Steve grudgingly takes the girls to the convention and releases all of his anger on them by yelling over his wasted efforts on their way home, since they leave the convention without any prospects. He escorts them through Grand Central Station, to the hotel, and then the dance. In addition, Steve minds his responsibility and the “task” at hand, by not

dancing with any women when “Heavy-set men approached him to introduce their daughters or nieces who hovered close by” (81). Although he resists, Steve identifies with his “Greek-ness” by adhering to the actual custom of trying to find husbands for his sisters. Steve and his sisters are helplessly forced to adhere to traditional gender roles by their parents and by Greek cultural constraints regarding female marriage. Papanikolas demonstrates how despite his efforts, Steve fails to fulfill the traditional gender role responsibility to his sisters in the context of American society.

Papanikolas illustrates the tensions between adhering to *filotimo* and the formation of a Greek-American identity. Although Steve follows the custom of finding husbands for his sisters, he senses that there is something wrong with husband-hunting, when he makes cattle references to his sisters throughout the trip. Papanikolas writes: “In Grand Central Station, Steve felt he was herding Penny and Georgie out of the overwhelming frantic crowd; his heart beat with fear that they would never get outside” (79). Collecting the girls out of the crowd and pushing them out of the station evokes the image of cows being picked out of a herd, and steered in a particular direction, by the brother, just as the objectification of women inherent in *filotimo*—once removed from its Greek roots—requires. Papanikolas notes that “Steve showered and lay on the bed, but he was still tired when they took the elevator to the ballroom. Again he had the feeling he was herding his sisters” (80). Again, Steve feels that he treats his sisters like cattle by the fact that he is taking them to this ball on a specific mission to find husbands, not because any of them actually want to be there. Finally, this feeling of treating his sisters like meat actualizes into reality when he overhears another young man ask some others, “What do you think of the meat market this year?” and when he realize[s] that the “meat

market” meant the girls in the ballroom, he hurrie[s] to rescue Georgie” (81). This attempt to rescue his sister shows that he disagrees with this treatment of the girls and this custom of finding them husbands once again; hence, he disidentifies with this aspect of “Greek-ness.” Nonetheless, there is nothing he can accomplish beyond a momentary rescue of his sister. In his adherence to gender role responsibilities, he participates in the dehumanizing pressures his sisters experience. Steve feels just as helpless as his sisters in adhering to the custom of finding them husbands at the dance.

This conflict between identifying and disidentifying with “Greek-ness” also exists in the way in which Steve marries. He identifies with his “Greek-ness” by marrying a Greek-American girl, but he breaks away from the immigrant, picture bride tradition of the native Greek men based on different circumstances. By this point in the Greek community, there are many first-generation Greek-American women born to families such as Steve’s. There are plenty of single Greek women near his age; hence, there is no need for importing a bride from Greece. Unlike his parents, who never meet each other before they marry, Steve is introduced to Mary Tatsoglou in a group setting by other church friends his age. Furthermore, he grows up in the same Greek community with this young woman, unlike his parents. Steve also disidentifies with his “Greek-ness” when he rejects the traditional, arranged marriage system, and goes on several group dates with Mary and two other couples. He also identifies with his “American-ness” when he decides to marry her without consulting his family. In addition, he breaks with the Greek tradition of waiting to marry his sisters off before he marries. His mother warns him: “...But your sisters aren’t married. It’s not right for you to marry first...It’s your responsibility, like a good brother. Your *flotimo* [honor]” (91). She sees that her son is

not adhering to his culturally prescribed gender role when she tells him that his marrying first is not “right.” Nonetheless, he finalizes his break from this custom and disidentifies with his “Greek-ness” through it, by telling her “I’ve had enough of this *filotimo* business. You keep talking like this is Greece, Mama” (91). Steve makes it clear that the adherence to the rules regarding such Greek customs does not apply to him, because they are living in America. Nonetheless, Papanikolas emphasizes how it is difficult for Greek-American men to completely disidentify with their Greek traditional gender role, due to the complexities of *filotimo*, which confine them within it.

Just as important is Papanikolas’s focus on how Greek-American men break with the tradition of the dowry, while parents perpetuate it, through the character of Steve. He also disidentifies with his “Greek-ness” when he breaks away from the custom of having a woman’s personal wealth be a determining factor in choosing a wife. Traditionally, a woman was required to have a dowry. While dowries are no longer explicitly required of first-generation Greek-American women, Steve’s parents still want him to marry a spouse from a wealthy family, when this is never a concern for his sisters. His father points out that Mary’s family has nothing, and that “Her father lost his grocery store and works for the WPA” (91). When Steve responds with “Well, who the devil do you want me to marry?” his mother suggests another girl who is “nice” and “modest” (91). His father agrees and conveniently chimes in that the other girl’s father “made plenty of money bootlegging and still has it” (91). Although there is no official dowry required of first-generation Greek-American women, immigrant parents perpetuate the custom by influencing a son’s marital choice and favoring a financially secure spouse.

Steve disidentifies with his “Greek-ness” when he proposes to Mary without consulting his family (93). Nonetheless, he identifies with his “Greek-ness” and aligns himself with the traditional male gender role through the way in which he proposes to Mary. He identifies with his “American-ness” and further exercises his individualism, when he announces the news of the engagement to his and Mary’s parents after the fact. In addition, he disidentifies with his “Greek-ness” when he breaks with the tradition of sending his father to announce the news of the engagement to Steve’s future in-laws. “When he told his parents the next morning, Andreas [Steve’s father] said, ‘What kind of business is this? I should have gone to her father to speak for you. You’re acting like the Americans!’” (95). Nonetheless, Steve realigns with his “Greek-ness” by stating: “We’ll have the usual Greek wedding” (95); once again, Steve identifies with his “Greek-ness” and his religious identity by choosing to have a Greek wedding in the Orthodox Church, but identifies with his “American-ness,” through his sense of individualism. Papanikolas exemplifies Steve’s individualism by allowing him full authority over all decisions regarding his courtship and marriage to Mary, without heeding to his family’s input on choosing a spouse.

Papanikolas also shows how Steve succumbs to the Greek cultural pressure of marriage because it is expected of men and women. In Greek society, value is placed on the creation of family, and is deemed one of the most hallowed and significant steps in an individual’s life, whether one is male or female. Papanikolas describes this sentiment in her historiography, An Amulet of Greek Earth: Generations of Immigrant Folk Culture, when she explains how a dead miner “had fathered no children to live after him, had continued no line. In the Greeks’ eyes, he had died unfulfilled” (146). In this way, Steve

also identifies with his “Greek-ness” when he desires marriage out of this prevalent cultural pressure, and as a means of escape from his present situation. After the family’s fight over the fruitless attempt to find husbands for his sisters at the national AHEPA convention, Steve’s desperation is apparent to the reader. Papanikolas notes that “He had to get out of the house; his insides burned up at night. He could not live through evening after evening with his parents and sisters. His friends Perry and Lefty were engaged to girls who had sat on the chairs in the church basement, hoping someone would ask them to dance” (85). Steve explains how he cannot stand living in his parents’ house anymore and mentions that his friends are already engaged. His desire to marry for the sake of marriage itself is also apparent through his reaction to Mary when they first meet. He observes that “she was not really pretty...but not bad either” (89); this comment gives the reader a sense that Steve is “settling” for Mary out of lack of prospects. Finally, Papanikolas illustrates Steve’s sense of urgency to get married when he tells his mother “I’m almost twenty-six. You want me to wait until I’m forty [to get married] like these old Greeks who end up marrying young girls?” (91). Again, he reiterates: “I said I’m twenty-six years old” and then asks his mother, “Am I going to spend my old age in this house?” (91). Steve has nothing to look forward to by living under his parents’ roof. Through Steve, Papanikolas illustrates how Greek-American men are left helpless, once again, under the cultural pressure of marriage.

While Papanikolas demonstrates how Greek-American men like Steve have more freedom in choosing a spouse than the females of their generation, who do not ask young men for dates but must wait to be asked, Steve’s choices are also restricted in marriage prospects. Like the first-generation Greek-American women who are not allowed to date,

he is also forbidden to date. He clearly states that in his Greek community, only engaged couples are allowed to go on dates, so his possibilities of developing a relationship with Sylvia, the first girl in whom he takes serious interest, are eliminated. In addition, his possibilities are restricted by *filotimo*. Hence, he jumps at the first “opportunity” of a potential spouse offered him by the Greek friends who set him up with Mary. Although Steve succumbs to the Greek pressures of marriage, and doing so in a certain way, he also rejects Greek tradition in his constant striving for American identification, by expressing individualism regarding the traditional male gender role. Papanikolas illustrates how Greek-American males perform “Greek-American-ness,” by blending both Greek and American traits through marriage.

As a memoir writer and as a subject of his daughter’s memoir, Nick Gage offers a unique opportunity through which to view Greek-American male identity. He identifies and disidentifies with his “Greek-ness” and “American-ness,” in his effort to achieve a successful balance of Greek-American identity, which is illustrated in his book A Place for Us and in Eleni Gage’s North of Ithaka: A Journey Home Through a Family’s Extraordinary Past. Nick is also a native Greek, but he moves to the U.S. when he is ten-years-old. He joins his father when his mother is executed by political guerillas. He initially comes to the U.S. out of necessity but he assimilates by learning the English language, socializing with American schoolmates, and achieving higher education. There are several ways in which Nick disidentifies from his Greek identity. He disidentifies from the “Greek-ness” of his peasant heritage, as well as from the Greek, immigrant laborer history. He goes to school in the U.S. He furthers his education by going to college and becoming a journalist. In addition, Nick assimilates to such an extent, and

identifies with “American-ness” so strongly, that he marries an American, despite his efforts to find a Greek wife. As he reflects upon his journey to Greece, he notes that “Many Greek girls [he] met, while intelligent and well versed in Greek classical literature, had no knowledge of English literature, American theater, or the more relaxed American lifestyle [he] was used to” (A Place for Us 389). In addition, he discovers “to [his] dismay,” that he “had become too much of an American to be satisfied with a wife whose energies were completely devoted to what she wore and what she cooked” (389). Nick is not even aware of how assimilated he is to American society until he undertakes the task of searching for a potential wife. Nonetheless, there are several ways in which he also identifies with his “Greek-ness” throughout his life.

He identifies with his Greek heritage and his family’s history through several mediums in his life. He reconnects with his mother and his matrilineal grandparents when he returns to Greece in 1963 for the first time after his escape to America. He decides to take this trip with his extra fellowship money because he feels that his mother “brought [him] to this point” in his life (A Place for Us 330). During his stay in Greece, he feels a connection to his maternal grandfather for the first time in his life and partakes in a memorial ceremony for his mother. In addition, Nick also reconnects with his mother and honors her by writing about her story in the book Eleni. He discusses her torture and death, which takes place in her own home, at the hands of Communist guerilla fighters. Nick further identifies with his Greek heritage and family history as he aids survivors who seek refuge in the U.S. over the years. He also keeps a link between himself and his immediate family when he submerges himself in “the Greek life of [his] relatives, the feast, dances, visits, and church services” on weekends, which “[give] him

strength” to deal with “drug raids, corruption scandals, and a series of Mafia wars” that plague his career and the outside world of the 1970’s during the week (A Place for Us 404). Another way that Nick identifies with his “Greek-ness” includes keeping abreast of Greek news through the Greek satellite television he receives in his Massachusetts home. All of these elements allow Nick to continue ties with his Greek culture and family history.

There are also several ways he performs “Greek-American-ness” throughout his life, which he illustrates in A Place for Us. He does this when he literally serves as a middleman, bridging Greek and American cultures together for various Greeks. Nick fulfills this role when he initiates his Greek friend, Fred Malitas, into the American world of dating. Even though Fred does not know any English, Nick serves as Fred’s “voice” on their double date. He also writes letters to senators on behalf of Greek friends and relatives, and fills out papers for the newly arrived immigrants, who cannot read or write English. In each of these instances, Nick is the literal medium of “Greek-American-ness” who works between Greek and American worlds through the use of Greek and English languages, in order to help fellow Greeks.

Nick successfully fulfills the traditional Greek gender role regarding *filotimo*, which allows him to achieve successful balance of Greek-American identity. He fulfills his responsibilities to his family in various ways. Although he does not financially support his father and siblings, he supports himself through undergraduate and graduate school, and serves his Greek community as a go-between. In addition, he honors his mother by writing her story. He provides closure for her death and healing for his family through this written attestation with the details of her death. Furthermore, he buries his

mother's remains with his father's as he promises him, and he honors both parents when he adheres to the Greek custom of naming his son and daughter after his father and mother. Finally, one of the most important responsibilities he fulfills is educating his children about their Greek culture and heritage. He consciously or subconsciously inculcates his daughter Eleni with the desire to identify with her "Greek-ness," which she exemplifies in North of Ithaka: A Journey Home Through a Family's Extraordinary Past.

Eleni's identification with "Greek-ness" is so strong, that a father/daughter role reversal of ethnic identification occurs throughout her memoir. Interestingly, she demonstrates how Nick disidentifies with his "Greek-ness" when he forgets the mannerisms and cultural nuances of his people, which are the most fundamental aspects of identification with one's ethnos. In reference to Thanksgiving preparations, his daughter writes: "Nick Gage had turned into a conscientious objector, chiming in with phrases like 'Greeks don't eat boiled green beans!' as we rushed around the kitchen" (254). Gage insists that Greeks do not eat American food, even after his daughter tells him:

We could serve these people peanut-butter-and-jelly sandwiches and say, 'This is our tradition,' and they'd all tell us how delicious it was. You forget how friendly people are here. Whenever I traveled, strangers would stop me to say, 'Are you visiting? Come to our village next—just go to the main square and ask for Lambros; you can stay with us.' (251)

Gage's half-Greek, Manhattan-born daughter reminds him that his people are so friendly and hospitable to strangers, that they will positively receive any kind of food offered them. Eleni continues with "My father was born in Lia. I was born in Manhattan. But

when they got all prissy, whiny, and worried like this, I couldn't help but think of my parents as "the Americans" (252). There is incredible reversal of ethnic identification, as his daughter claims her "Greek-ness" by acknowledging the friendliness and kindness of the villagers, and labeling her parents the whiny "Americans." She ultimately defines the characteristics of "prissy, whiny, and worried," as acting "American." By doing so, she disidentifies her parents from "Greek-ness," and ultimately, from herself, as they fret that Thanksgiving will not be appreciated in a foreign land like Greece.

In another reversal of ethnic identification, the villagers linguistically disidentify with Nick, and identify with his half-Greek, Manhattan-born daughter, although he was born in the same village as they were. Theodoris Panagiotou asks him, "So why does Eleni speak Greek so much better than you? She speaks it like it was Farsi" (256). Once again, language implies culture; in this case, Eleni's mastery of the Greek language signals her "Greek-ness" to the villagers. Nick responds to his fellow villager by telling him that he left the village in the fourth grade but Eleni studied Greek in college. He admits that his daughter is "more Greek," based on the fact that she is more fluent in the Greek language than he is. However, his identification with his "Greek-ness" is so strong, that it ultimately leads Eleni to claim her own "Greek-ness." This is evident when she studies Greek folklore and language in college, and ultimately forms her own connection to her grandmother and namesake, when she rebuilds her grandmother's ancestral home in Greece.

Papanikolas, Nick Gage, and Eleni Gage show how males identify and disidentify with Greek-American identity by assimilating more often than women. In addition, they achieve balance in this in-between-ness more easily than the females do, because, in both

Greek and American culture, they are allotted more possibilities towards self-definition. Furthermore, the men's freedom for self-definition presents less inner struggle and more feelings of content regarding negotiation of identity and the performance of Greek-American-ness. Unlike the struggle to embrace a viable Greek-American identity that Vardalos's My Big Fat Greek Wedding presents, these portraiture historically show that Greek-American men choose both "Greek-ness" and "American-ness" sooner, and more effectively, than females. Despite the fact that Greek-American identity is easier for males to attain, these texts indicate that inner struggle is ever-present for Greek-American males as well. In addition, even though male decisions are respected more than those of females, the traditional Greek value system dictates that the collective rules over the individual for both genders. This relationship of respect for the collective starts with the individual's immediate family and branches outward. Thus, Greek-American males are also expected to respect and adhere to the opinions of parents, relatives, and friends, in that order, with regard to traditional gender roles and responsibilities. This clashes with American individualism, and poses conflict for all of the Greek-American males of these texts in different ways. Papanikolas demonstrates how they can never fulfill the Greek traditional gender role responsibilities because they exercise individualism, and hence, they identify with their "American-ness," by looking out for their own interests and ignoring collective opinion regarding financial, familial, or marital responsibilities. Finally, the Gages poignantly illustrate the cultural struggles which Greek-American males face, with regard to "mixed" marriage and Americanization.

Conclusion

AmeRican, defining myself my own way
any way many ways Am e Rican, with the
big R and the accent on the i!

“AmeRican”
Tato Laviera

As I have already noted, native Greek and Greek-American men assimilate to American society more often than do Greek-American women. In addition, they achieve successful balance of Greek-American identity earlier, and more frequently, within American history, than do the women. This is due to the fact that the male traditional gender role initially allowed Greek men more possibilities for self-definition. As long as they perform their responsibilities related to their Greek traditional gender role, their decisions and actions are not questioned by their families, since the man controls his own selfhood and household (if he is married). Traditionally, a Greek man had this right for self-definition, and as a male, his word was not questioned, or at least not as readily as a female's. Hence, this initial mobility and freedom of selfhood for Greek males aligned itself well with American ideals of rugged individualism and the self-made man.

A Greek female's gender role traditionally allotted her only the sphere of the domestic. Since Greek culture placed enormous value on marriage and family, both men and women were seen as equally incomplete if they did not marry and have a family of their own. Nonetheless, traditionally a woman's main station in life was to marry, to have children to carry on her husband's name, and to take care of her household. Even within the realm of the household, the woman's traditional role was that of caretaker, not decision maker, regarding childrearing, and representing the moral value of her family. Thus, this Greek traditional gender role forced women to be voiceless, subservient, and dependent on their husbands or male relatives. The rigidity of this traditional image of

Greek women starkly contrasts with the mobility and freedom available to women in the U.S. Hence, these two polar opposites of womanhood posed more conflicts for Greek-American women than men throughout history. This “culture clash” was problematic for women who tried to find a middle ground between their “American-ness” and “Greek-ness” by altering their traditional gender role, in search for a balance of Greek-American identity that allows them full self-definition.

Nonetheless, the continuation of Greek-American women’s assimilation to American society via education, career pursuits, “mixed” marriage, and the achievement of a Greek-American identity, continues after Vardalos’s My Big Fat Greek Wedding (2002). There are several reasons for this continuation. They include, but are not limited to, the changing attitudes of American white society towards ethnic groups and diversity. There is also the fact that the current generation of Greek-Americans is the offspring of the later Greek immigrants who migrated to the U.S. These newer immigrant families keep closer ties to Greece and visit more frequently than older Greek-American families (Kourvetaris 105). As a result of this close contact to Greece, changing gender roles in Greece influence these later immigrant families, who, in turn, foster more assimilation tendencies with their children here in the U.S. Kourvetaris notes that:

Gender roles are rapidly changing in Greece toward a more egalitarian or shared familial and occupational responsibility among men and women. The 1976-1982 family law bill, for example, reflects the gradual liberalization of the traditional gender roles which gave men greater power over women. According to the new law, both spouses have equal rights and equal responsibilities. No longer is a woman’s role restricted to the domestic domain and the man’s to the public

domain. Women can pursue their own interests. Schooling is also more co-educational. (105)

As a result of Greece's shift to a more egalitarian society with regard to gender roles, and the late immigrant family's close ties with Greece, changes there may have influenced these newer immigrants' assimilation to American society. And possibly, their support of both sons' and daughters' break with Greek traditional gender roles, as they raise their children in the U.S.

In addition, the Greek Orthodox Church in America is also steering Greek-Americans towards a Greek-American identity, by emphasizing identification with both "Greek-ness" and "American-ness." According to Roudometof and Karpathakis, the church currently attempts "to facilitate a bridgehead between Greek and American identities, [it] has appropriated American national heroes (such as Jefferson) into its pantheon, through a form of ecumenical particularism" (49). The authors of this study also explain how "immigrants and clergy alike emphasize 'American' cultural elements, creating a dual heritage in which they are now of America because of their acquisition of American virtues, but still possess Greek virtues distinguishing them from other Americans" (49). Both clergy and contemporary Greek immigrants identify themselves as having a unique Greek-American identity, which distinguishes them from Greeks in Greece and other Americans of the U.S. Furthermore, the Greek Orthodox Church currently facilitates assimilation because "[since] the 1990's English has replaced Greek in many Greek churches, especially in those which reflect second and third generations in their membership" (Kourvetaris 213). As Ngugi argues, language is culture, and, it is possibly, as Kourvetaris claims, "the single-most important factor of ethnic identity"

(212). Since widespread migration of Greeks to the U.S. has come to a virtual halt, and present generations succumb to assimilation through altering traditional gender roles and discontinuing the use of the Greek language, the unearthing of Greek-American literature and immigrant history is a much needed reclamation process. This reclamation of literature is crucial for future generations so that they may connect to their Greek identity. According to Stuart Hall, one's ethnic origins are crucial to the formation of a present identity. He explains:

You have to position yourself in order to say anything at all...the relation that peoples of the world now have to their own past is, of course, part of the discovery of their own ethnicity. They need to honor the hidden histories from which they come. They need to understand the languages which they've been taught not to speak. They need to understand and revalue the traditions and inheritances of cultural expression and creativity. And in that sense, the past is not only a position from which to speak, but it is also an absolutely necessary resource in what one has to say. (4)

Hall's argument does not only apply to validating what one has to say, but also, what one is. Even if future generations of Greek-Americans do not speak Greek, it is important that they learn about the richness of the language which carries cultural nuances distinctive to Greek culture and heritage. In addition, it is important for them to understand the significance of certain Greek cultural practices and traditions, and to perpetuate them. Furthermore, this reclamation process of Greek-American history and literature is also significant to American culture because of the little-known contributions Greek-Americans have made to the U.S., especially since Greek-Americans made these

contributions through the Hellenistic ideals they valued so dearly—the same ones upon which Western civilization was founded.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Brief Historical Overview of the Greek People

300 A.D.-1453 Byzantium = eastern part of Roman Empire; essentially Greek (i.e. language/culture).

313 A.D. Emperor Constantine officially recognizes Christianity as religion of empire.

1453 Turks capture Constantinople (capital of empire, which is present-day Istanbul); ruled all of Balkan Peninsula, Greece, Asia Minor (present-day Turkey).

Greeks deprived of rights; heavily taxed; not considered citizens.

Millet system- Greeks viewed as autonomous 'millet' (or nation); an autonomous religious community ruled by its own church leaders. System fused religion with nationalism and allowed survival of Greeks through four centuries of alien rule (Scourby 2).

Ottoman Rule devastating effect on Greek people and country; time stopped between 1453-1821.

Underwent no Renaissance, Reformation, or Age of Enlightenment (Scourby 3).

Struggle for independence 1821-1829.

Greece a sovereign nation 1832.

Constitutional monarchy 1862.

New nation population 750,000; 3 times that many lived under Ottoman imperial and British colonial rule [stats vary between Scourby and Burgess].

Greece divided into city-states even during pre-Ottoman Rule; different parts of Greece won independence many years apart.

Primary cause of emigration to U.S. was economic (Burgess 18).

Sources:

Burgess, Thomas. Greeks in America. New York: Arno, 1970.

Scourby, Alice. The Greek Americans. Boston: Twayne, 1984.

Appendix B

I. First generation Greek-Americans:

Mary

1. Do you feel Greek, American, or both? Both
 In what ways? (Now v. childhood)
 Um, well, in the ways that, in every aspect of my life actually. In, how I carry out um, every, like, day to day things, how I interact with other people, the expressions that I say. Um, a lot of the times, it's Greek/English you know; um, not just with my other Greek friends, but, with Americans as well. Or it's kind of like, the little, you know. If I slip, I'm not like "Oh no," I'm like "Ooh, ooh!" Or like, if I see some car accident, I'm like "Po po!" It's just, um, the food that I eat, everything.
 How does this differ from childhood?
 Um, from childhood, I guess, it was more of Mom and Dad kind of enforcing what they wanted you to do, or to say, or how to act. Um, going to Greek school, um, it was more imposed. Getting older, it's kind of like, you retain what you want and you incorporate it into your life.

2. How do you identify yourself in terms of nationality?
 I identify myself as a Greek-American.
 In terms of culture?
 As a Greek-American; both.

3. What Greek, cultural influences were you exposed to growing up? (Food, music, other holiday traditions?)
 Um, all our gatherings at holidays when we had lots of food and lots of people gathered together. When we used to go to, Mountain Lake for Easter. And, going up to Dad's village, where they had the panigiri and being in these massive circles of people, and I was like, five, you know. Just, the food.
 How did you feel about them then, and now?
 I still like them; I'm glad I was exposed to that as a child. I still enjoy going to you know, Greek weddings and Greek traditional dancing and all of that. I'm it was all there.

4. How do you feel about being raised bilingually?
 Um, I'm very proud of it; I think I consider it as one of the many benefits of being, you know, multicultural, having two cultures influence me. I think not only does it help me, um, with my education, but with day-to-day life. Especially having Greek with so many roots of words.
 How did you feel about this while growing up?
 Hmm (laughs). (Interviewer): It's ok, you can be honest.
 Growing up, I guess as a kid, you tend not to understand it as much. So, going out, I'd just kinda be like, "Speak English! Don't speak Greek!" or, "Shh! You're speaking too loud, other people are starin' at us!" But, now, it's kind of like the little childhood or adolescent, I mean, so many things in adolescence, that that's

what you do with, and it rubs off, you know, and it kind of fades away. And now, I don't care; if anything, I always speak Greek when I go out with Mom and Dad, I speak it loudly, and even with my friends. And in fact, it's a benefit, if you wanna talk about somebody and you're out, you're like, "Look at their shoes!" or something that they're doing, you can use another language.

(Interviewer): With the Greek friends (Mary: Yes) not Americans (jokingly).

Mary: Yes.

5. How would you describe your Greek? (Your competency of the language)

Oh, I'd say that I'm very fluent in it. Took so many years of it, um, I tutored other little kids in it. So, pretty much in terms of reading and understanding, I'm fine. Um, the summers we go back to Greece and talking with my Greek friends here, I'm up to date with the modern Greek and all the slang and stuff. And in terms of writing, I'm pretty good; I guess, I might have a few grammar mistakes, but.
6. When do you speak English, when Greek? Why?

Obviously I speak English in class, um, and when I have to. Um, otherwise, if there's any Greek person there, even if it's, if I'm out with friends and there's just one Greek person [person of Greek descent that is bilingual], and the other ten are whatever you know, Asian, American, whatever they are, I'm just prone to speak Greek. Knowing that someone else in the room is Greek, I, it's very subconscious thing: my mind just goes into whatever is easiest, say it first. And if half of those words are Greek, then say it in Greek. Or some things you just cannot express as well; there are certain expressions that define a moment better than others, and obviously, there are some expressions that you have in English that you don't have in Greek and the other way around. And I'll just throw those in. In fact, I'll even teach them to my friends.
8. What language do you address your parents in? Greek

Do you prefer one language over the other?

I don't know if it's a matter of preference really, I guess it's just whatever comes easiest to me. But, I don't know, to tell you the truth.

Why the preference in the language you choose to speak to them?

Oh, to Mom and Dad, or just to people in general?

(Interviewer): To Mom and Dad.

To Mom and Dad, definitely Greek is a preference. Um, just because I know Greek is easier for them and, why strain them? If I know both languages equally as well, why put a strain on them? And second of all, it helps me in knowing that I'm going to continue to speak Greek and to practice it.
10. Do you plan on teaching your children Greek? Definitely.
15. What do you think is the best and worst part of living in the U.S.?

Um, I think the best part is that you have so many opportunities; um, given to you. You are in a country where it is a big melting pot, and you get to learn about

other cultures through having different friends at school, and education wise; I mean that's why so many people from Europe and other countries come to the States for college, that's a big plus.

The worst part?

Oh, the worst part. Um, I think the worst part is that, especially growing up, you're not accepted as well, and you are considered to be different. And so, it is a matter of assimilation, and, you have to change your traditions and Americanize them in a sense. Um, obviously, some things that we do are different than some things that, are done back in Greece. Um, I guess it's just how you melt both cultures but it's, it's a, point of becoming accepted into this society, into the American society, and so, at some point, you do have to change some of them.

What's the best and worst part about living in Greece?

Um, the best part about living in Greece? The nightlife and the beaches; no, I'm kidding (laughter).

(Interviewer smiles): You can be honest, if that's what you think is the best part about living there. (laughter from Mary)

No um, I guess, having your family there and just have a very different way of life. American life and the society here is very workaholic, very stressed out, there's always so much pressure on you, always. Whether you're an adult, whether you're in college, whether you're a teen, it's always busy twenty-four-seven and it's spread to every state of America. It's just how it is; it's just a very Puritan, work ethic mentality. In Greece, people are very nice to you, kind of live every day as it goes, and, do what you need to do, but do it stress-free, relaxed. What's the worst part about living in Greece?

Um, well, I guess that, being around so many Greek people, you get the little, I mean, there's good and bad for every country. I guess, the fact that we were raised so far away from our family, um, and not, if we had been there, or, I don't know, maybe if we had just spent more months out of the year with them. But, going back and being with them for such a long time, everybody tends to get in each other's business. And you have all these people calling you, all times of the day, and knowing what you're doing exactly. So, I think that would be a downside; just having all of my aunts and uncles and cousins being all up in my business all the time. And um, it just, I guess, just little things that we're not used to. I don't really think of them as negatives, but people see just something I need to change, and change, as kind of a bad thing. It just needs time, the whole, you know, stores closing at noon and reopening again, the transportation. I mean, it's a huge city. Athens is a huge city, and if I move there, it would just be getting used to all the little bad things about huge cities.

Demetri

1. Do you feel Greek, American, or both? Um, now v. childhood?
 I mean, I've always felt, I've always definitely felt both, but now, definitely more Greek than before. Like, I remember when we were little, we would, like when it was July fourth, when it was Independence Day in Greece, we would remember, we would like, my sister would put a little American flag on her door. But know, we don't even think of like, I don't know. We've been in Greece every summer, for the last, as long as I can remember. Um, and like, even though, I guess, even though I've kinda, I haven't forgotten my Greek over time, it's gotten a little bit, I mean, I have a little bit of an accent over time, when I talk my friends notice. I feel like, as time went on, and as we like, we went to, we were always part of the Greek community when I was like, in high school, middle school, and GOYA, you know, like Greek Church. And so like, that kind of, I made more Greek friends and we'd go to Greece every summer so I just felt, I feel like I've gotten to connect more and more, and since I've started, I've been able to connect to the culture more and more as I get older. And I like it cause it's actually, I don't find anything, like, to connect to here, besides being a home. Like, if I would have had a choice, between being born here and in Greece, I would have been born in Greece, but when I was little, I wouldn't have thought that. I mean, even though the people are lazy and the government isn't that great either, I just find that it's such a more care-free and it's not so money driven, and like, capitalist. I don't know what it is, I don't know. But like, I don't feel as connected to the American side as much as I used to.

2. How do you identify yourself in terms of nationality?
 Nationality, uh, if people ask me like, where I'm from, I usually say Greece, plus like my name kinda. But then, officially, I have an American citizenship and like, that's my official nationality you know? So, I usually call myself Greek-American; in Greece, I'm the American and here, I'm the Greek. I guess it's the same with like a lot of Greek people. Interviewer: Sounds like us. Demetri: Yeah. In terms of culture?
 I don't really know what American culture is, I don't think there is one; I don't know if that sounds offensive but, there really isn't. I think that's one of the, maybe that's part of it's success in the world, because like, the fact that everyone has their own opportunity to have their culture, there's so many, you know, the diversity that exists in America doesn't exist anywhere in the world. But, I think that's part of the reason, I'm mean I've Greek danced for the past, like, eleven years and like all these traditions and customs at Easter, I don't know what my life would have been like without them, growing up. So that's the culture my life is based around, you know.

3. What Greek, cultural influences were you exposed to growing up? (Food, music, other holiday traditions?)
 Uh, well. Uhh, traditions, well Easter's the first thing that comes to mind. I mean, like, uh, you know the souvla and the Greek. I mean, well first of all, my dad's all about like, Theodorakis and like, Kazatzithis, you know, the Greek music that he

would, we always had Greek music playing when I was little. Well, I went to Greek school one year in California, and then 'til eighth grade here. And After Greek school here, we would dance for an hour. And then, after eighth grade, if you wanted to continue Greek dancing, you had to go to the teacher's house individually, after school for an hour, and like, a lot of people stopped because of that, but I continued so that became like, that continued to be a part of my life; Greek dancing. And I still do it; like the past three weekends I've gone home, I've gone to a Greek dance festival because, she, she's out of guys and she wants guys to dance. Whenever we go to Greece, my mom's village has a panigiri and my mom has a list of names for the name days. And like, we went to Crete this summer and there was another festival. Things here and there.

How did you feel about them then, and now?

I guess, when I was little, I kind of, took them for granted and was just like, you know. I did whatever my parents told me, kinda like naïve, just go with the flow. And now it's kind of like, I, think of it on my own and I'm like, you know, what happened to this, and I wanna, you know make sure, I dunno, like, yeah.

4. How do you feel about being raised bilingually? How did you feel about this while growing up, and now?

I'm, now that I look back, it's, I wouldn't change a thing; I'm so glad that I know both languages now. Like I think, I mean, my English isn't that good. I mean, the verbal part of the SAT II was the bane of my existence, but I think it definitely has helped. I mean, first of all, I find learning other languages easier. I mean, when I was little, Greek school was on Saturdays, three hours from ten to one, and we'd be like, why do we have to go, all my friends have sleepovers and soccer games, and duh duh duh, y' know? I don't know if the Greek school helped as much as the Greek music and summers but uh, I'm definitely glad our parents forced us to go to school and put it on us. I mean even though it was hard, it was worth it.

5. How would you describe your Greek? (Your competency of the language)

Fluent, like, sufficiently fluent. I mean, I could live there easily, like I mean, I think the only, the main, the main limiting factor would be advanced vocabulary like business and science things. Like, if I ever wanted to go work at a hospital there, I'd have to learn like, lots of new words upper level. But like, as far as understanding and reading, like, I know very well. Talking I have, I guess a little bit of an accent but, you know, living here let alone will do that. And writing, orthographia, I mean uh, spelling stuff has always bothered me but, it's good as well.

6. When do you speak English, when Greek? Why?

At home we speak as much Greek as possible; basically parents and sister. Well, when I'm with my sister, when we're by ourselves, we don't usually speak as much Greek if we're here. When we were in Paris let's say, and went to Montreal, we spoke Greek together a lot, I don't know why that is, it's weird. But, at home, church, Greek-American friends, I write letters to my Greek friends

and talk to them on the phone in Greek. And English, I mean, that's just like, with my English friends [he means American friends], and like, in school and stuff. I speak a lot more English now but, I try putting some Greek in once in a while, just mix the two, and Grenglish.

8. What language do you address your parents in?

Like over, I mean, any time I see them, or like over the phone versus?

Interviewer: Anything, what language do you tend to address them in? Primarily I guess?

I'd say Greek. I mean like, if I see my mom and I haven't seen her in a while, it's like, "Mother mou, ti ginetai?" or you know like, sometimes over the phone it's just like, you know. She usually, sometimes she usually addresses me in Greek; sometimes I respond half English, half Greek but it's usually in Greek.

Do you prefer one language over the other? Um, in addressing your parents? And, why the preference in the language you choose to speak to them?

Yeah, I prefer to speak Greek when I can, just cause like that's one more opportunity I have to practice it.

10. Do you plan on teaching your children Greek? Yeah.

15. What do you think is the best and worst part of living in the U.S.?

These are cool questions, no one's ever asked me these questions before. The best part of the U.S.; uh, I guess the freedom, like, I guess the freedom to express your opinion and I guess the freedom to move around. I feel like there's a lot of, like, not open space, but like, it's easier to get around like, even though like, I find like the thing I said about it's money driven and everything is superficial and material, that, like, I guess has it's benefits in some ways. Like if you have a car and a computer, everything is so much more accessible. They're things that I can live without, but like, they are nice advantages though, you know? I think that's something like people here take for granted too. Like, if you don't have a computer, people here are like, "What, you don't have a computer?" and in Greece it's like, "You have a computer, whoa!" Um, and I'd say also, the, all the different people; the diversity here is like nowhere else, you know. In some cases I feel like, you get a little piece of some countries and cultures. Like when you have, like you can have opportunities, there's like mini communities within America of different cultures, so, I dunno. I've gone to some like, Chinese and Indian festivals and I think it's really interesting. I'm interested in that kind of stuff. One of my least favorite things would be, I feel like a lot of people of this generation are brainwashed. And like, it's become kind of like an assembly line of, for the future, of like college students sort of. You know what I mean like? Everything seems commercially driven and very, set in stone.

Do you feel like that's specific to the U.S.?

Yeah. There's more pressure to do, I know what you're doing, and do this.

What's the best and worst part about living in Greece?

Uh, the best part, I'd say, having friends and family first of all. And, beautiful land; like I always am amazed at like, whatever, the beaches and the land fascinate me; and the food. And, the worst, a lot of Greeks are jack asses. Like, I dunno, when it comes to, people can be very stubborn and selfish. I mean, even though I love all my friends and family, like, it's true. Like, when it comes to driving, when it comes to like, I dunno, anything. You know what I mean?

Interviewer: Mhmm, yeah, I do (chuckles).

Is that enough?

Interviewer: Yeah, that's good.

Emily

1. Do you feel Greek, American, or both? In what ways? (Now v. childhood)
 I'd say I feel both, but there were definitely times, like there were definitely phases in my life where I felt very much more Greek or very much more American. Like when I was younger, I pretended not to be Greek, at all. At all. And then once I got probably to middle school, like seventh or eighth grade, um, I was just like, I'm not American, at all. I just completely ignored that part of me. Now, I guess the past year or two, um, I've started feeling a little more, American, again, but, it's definitely the same, if not more Greek. Like, I feel that's more of a part of me than my American side.

2. How do you identify yourself in terms of nationality? And in terms of culture?
 Emily: Like, you mean if someone asks me where are you from, er?
 Interviewer: Um, just, how do you, how do you identify yourself in terms of nationality? I ask you and I say, what's your nationality?
 Emily: I'm Greek.
 Interviewer: Ok.
 Emily: I always say that (chuckles).
 Interviewer: Alright.
 Emily: Yeah.
 In terms of culture?
 Culture I'd say Greek, well, I guess culture, I'd say more Greek-American 'cause Greek-American is just like, a weird mix of the two. It's kind of like, American, basic American values, like I dunno, the society we grew up in, and stuff that we've been listening to and hearing since we were little kids, but then, culturally, I'd say more Greek, definitely. Especially in terms of the music I listen to, the things I like, um, yeah, definitely.

3. What Greek, cultural influences were you exposed to growing up? (Food, music, other holiday traditions?)
 All of it, all of it. I guess, when I was younger, my parents didn't really speak English, I was the first born, and my mom didn't speak a word of English. I was basically raised speaking Greek until I went to kindergarten I guess. And, my dad picked up on the language a lot faster than my mom did. But languagewise, from the get go, it was Greek and then my mom didn't really know how to cook anything other than Greek food (chuckle from interviewer), so that's been a part of my life. And, going to Greek school was never questioned, I've been going to Greek school since I was little up until ninth grade.

How did you feel about them then, and now?

I never really knew that, or how different I was being raised until about probably well into elementary school, I didn't really catch on. Like I knew there was something different about me and my lunchbox, (interviewer: chuckles) but I didn't really understand what was going on until well into elementary school. Um, I hated Greek school. I hated it. Just because like I wanted to play sports, I wanted to go to girl scouts like all the other girls at school were doing. And I just,

was never really able to because all my Saturdays were taken. Um, I didn't like Greek dancing either but all that changed once Greek school stopped. I continued Greek dancing and I love it. And now that I'm in college, I really, really miss it a lot.

Interviewer: You guys don't have anything like that at William and Mary? We don't have a big Greek community at William and Mary, there's like, a handful of us. There's a handful of us and then the Greek church is about twenty minutes away. I just don't, I don't have the time, I don't have the car, I just, I can't do it. Interviewer: It's like me and Fredericksburg with church, it's pretty far out there. It's the same way, I don't really get to it frequently.

4. How do you feel about being raised bilingually? How did you feel about this while growing up, and now?
Right now, I would say, I could not be more grateful for being raised bilingually. I think it's unbelievable and I think, even if, being a parent, you are not bilingual, you should raise your children, you should send them to classes and have them start learning another language from a very young age because it's, it's unbelievable how it helps you with school. Second, it just exposes you to a completely different way of life. You don't really even need to be exposed to the culture, the language in itself is representative. When I was younger, like I said, I hated Greek school, but that only lasted until I guess freshmen year in high school. After that I appreciated it. Going back to Greece and being able to communicate with my friends and keep in touch with them when I'm back here is just awesome.
5. How would you describe your Greek? (Your competency of the language)
Fluent; definitely.
6. When do you speak English, when Greek? Why?
When I'm at home, I speak a weird mix of the two. Whatever pops out first, really. With my parents, it's never been like, only Greek or only English. Generally, we speak English I'd say. When I was younger, we spoke more Greek but now I speak more English. My brother and I usually speak English unless we're talking about someone or, (Interviewer: Sounds like me and my sister) but usually, when I first meet someone who's Greek [meaning someone of Greek descent, not necessarily a native Greek], that speaks the language, we start talking right away because I miss speaking it. And obviously, in the summer, I speak Greek.
8. What language do you address your parents in? Um, and do you prefer one language over the other?
I prefer Greek over English; um, I find I can express myself better in English than in Greek because the vocabulary is a lot richer and, I dunno, I love speaking Greek. Speaking to my parents, it really depends on the situation but generally, I speak both, pretty much equally to them.
Why the preference in the language you choose to speak to your parents?

Um, like I said, it really just depends on the situation. Usually when we're arguing, it's in English for some reason. Sometimes, (chuckles) actually, it's kind of, twisted. Sometimes when we're arguing, I'm yelling in English and they're yelling in Greek.

(Interviewer): (chuckles) O.k., that sounds more familiar!

And um, just because I guess that's the first, the initial reaction because, I don't know, I guess I can yell better in English (both laugh). The question was, why the preference?

(Interviewer): Uh, yeah, why the preference in the language you choose to speak to your parents?

I don't know, I guess it's just a matter of practice too 'cause they're really the only ones. My family's the only source that I really have to speak Greek to that fluently. Like, my Greek friends [meaning Greek-American] that I have, don't speak Greek that well.

9. Is one language easier for you than the other?

English is easier for me, but like I said, Greek is much more expressive. Um, sometimes I find myself trying to explain something to an American friend, and I'll just have this phrase on the tip of my tongue and I'm like, eh, this describes it perfectly but, you don't understand.

10. Do you plan on teaching your children Greek? Yes

15. What do you think is the best and worst part of living in the U.S.?

The best part of living in the U.S. is definitely the amount of opportunity, the social mobility, and privacy. I'd say privacy about anything is unique to the U.S. whereas in Greece, everyone's always in your business. You never have a spare moment alone. Just, like I said before, Greece is much more of a life, much more of a calm life. There's not as much emphasis on success and being number one. People like to have as much as they need to get by, and in general, from there on, they're just happy with their Frappe and their tsigaro. (Interviewer chuckles)

What's the best and worst part about living in Greece?

I think the best part is that, people there seem to be very expressive. Um, they don't really tone down their emotions at all which sometimes can be negative, but I don't find it to be because I feel like people in the United States are very suppressed individuals. Like in any, in every shape. But in Greece, people tend to tell it like it is, and sometimes that's considered harsh by other cultures, but, I personally like it. And I think it makes for a better, more natural, society. Negative, I'd definitely say their organizational skills are terrible. They can't, they just can't do anything on time. (chuckles) They can't get their act together, ever! (chuckles) I mean, you go into the bank, and there's like six tellers and you wait behind one teller because the rest of them are out having like a thirty minute coffee break together.

II. Native Greeks (Translated from interviews conducted in Modern Greek; words in bold indicate actual English words uttered by participants during their interviews.):

Paul

19. How do you characterize your fluency of the English language?

My fluency with the English language, uh, I characterize it as a second, language for me, as a third language, second was German for me, which I know, but if it's not your native language, you forget it, here, I have some difficulty with it [English], even though I live here so many years, because I can't speak it the way I speak Greek, because Greek is my native language, it's not my native language, like Greek, and I don't have **education** here or in Greece. I started out from a poor family, my father had his own grocery shops, but after the war, they were bombed by the Germans, so he lost everything and we were poor again. For this reason, uh, it was difficult for me to go to school. To begin with, we didn't have any schools, or money, but we didn't have schools during the war [World War II]. There were no schools or churches or anything during the war because they used to bomb them, and I remember because I was born in '37 and the war in Greece started in '41 or '42, and even though I was so young, I remember we didn't have schools. They'd enclose us in a school there and my parents, everyone's parents from the village would teach us a little bit because we had guerilla fighters who would go around murdering, so the children couldn't learn. Then, after I grew up, served in the military and then went to Germany, I didn't have the opportunity to go to school. I worked to make money and further, I didn't even know if I'd stay permanently in Germany when it'd be beneficial for me to go to school and learn to read and write German well. Then, when I came here, I came at the age of 31, or 33 years of age, where I got into my own business again [restaurant business], and I had no desire to go to school at that point in my life due to age and due to the fact that I got into business again. So, this is my main complaint, that I wasn't able to learn the English language *well*, to speak it well, to be able to write it and read it. I speak it, I understand it, but a lot of times Americans don't understand me. But I'm very happy that, with what I do know, with the little education I do have, I was able to establish myself so I could raise my children.

20. Did you go to school at all to learn English?

Here in the U.S., no, no, or in Germany [for German], just by practicing, from the people [around him].

21. What was your biggest challenge/difficulty when you were learning English?

When I was learning English, yes, I didn't go to school, but I went to, when you ask me if I went to school, it was a school exactly during the time after the Vietnam War, a lot of Vietnamese refugees came here and, particularly here in Charlottesville, they had converted a building, the government gave up a building here at UVA like those big **dorms**, uh, no, those aren't called **dorms**, what do you call those groups that have those buildings, um, **dorms**, no, they're not called **dorms, fraternity, fraternity?**

Interviewer: fraternities?

fraternity house, the government set one of those up, and they had an American teacher and they would teach us to *speak*, she would stress that “Here, we will teach you to *speak*, not to *write*.” And we would try to learn to write on our own, and I had difficulties.

Interviewer: What was your biggest challenge when you were learning?

When I was learning, because, I didn’t know, I didn’t have much education from Greece and Germany and it was difficult, I couldn’t spell them [the English words].

22. What difficulties did you/do you have with the English languages- what’s difficult about the English you do know?

My difficulty is that I can’t read well; I can read English, but only a few words in capital letters, things like that, or words that I know, like bread, or water, house, those I can read. But I don’t know words that I’ve never encountered before, or I don’t understand a letter if it’s about school [his children’s], or if it’s written by a lawyer, or a doctor. That’s what I don’t understand. That I can’t read and I can’t write English. This is my difficulty.

23. In which language do you prefer to watch t.v. in?

Uh, t.v., **well**, in Greek because I know my language well [he means by comparison to a non-native language, like English], and in English, but I understand Greek better.

24. In which language do you like listening to music?

Paul: What music do I like?

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Any kind of music. Here in America, I love **country music**.

Interviewer: In which language do you like it better?

In English.

25. In which language do you speak to your children?

To my children? I speak Greek with my children.

Interviewer: When do you speak English with them and when do you speak Greek?

We speak Greek when we’re by ourselves and I speak English to them when there are Americans in my house.

26. What assistance does your children’s English contribute to the family?

Uh, their English provides assistance in many different ways. It [the children’s English] helps us learn English too.

Interviewer: Um, in what ways does it [the children’s English] help?

It helps, something they [the children] will say in English, and I, it’s something I don’t know, or if it’s a word I know how to pronounce halfway, and I learn it from my daughter and then I know how to say it well too.

Interviewer: **Thank you**, thank you very much for the interview.

Paul: You’re welcome, you’re welcome.

Anna

19. How do you characterize your fluency of the English language?
 How do I, uh, what my fluency? I don't understand.
 Interviewer: Uh, your strengths, how do you view your strengths with the English
 Let me say, I would have accomplished it [fluency] just fine. I would
 have learned the language, and how to write, and everything. Again, I can
 accomplish this with the computer [through internet] but I also want, perhaps my
 health problems have been a hindrance to my learning [she has hypertension-her
 blood pressure tremendously increases when stressed]. If it wasn't for that, I like
 it [learning the language] and I have the patience to sit for an hour, or two hours,
 while I complete an assignment Mary [her daughter who lives in the area] would
 give me, so I can continue learning, I'd like that.
20. Did you go to school at all to learn English?
Yes; four years.
21. What was your biggest challenge/difficulty when you were learning English?
 Because, because, the others would pick up on it [the language] faster, and I
 needed the teacher to repeat things to me two and three times to pick up on it.
 The teacher didn't have time to repeat things though. The teacher would give you
 the exercise and ask you to fill in the responses. And I would feel bad sometimes.
 I had to and ask her and say I didn't understand this, I didn't understand that, and
 she would move on because along with me, there were also **young people**. There
 were high schoolers, there were lots of Chinese that had come over, and she [the
 teacher] wanted to move them on so they could leave the class.
22. What difficulties did you/do you have with the English language-
 Because, because, I can't put words in the right order. I speak it, but I don't speak
 it correctly. I try, there are many words I know, and I try to put them in the right
 order, but I can't pronounce them well so they [people in general] will understand
 me.
 What's difficult about the English you do know?
 I have difficulty because I speak Greek more times than I speak English, hence
 this is crucial. When you speak one language all the time, that language comes to
 you more easily than the other.
23. In which language do you prefer to watch t.v. in?
 In Greek.
24. In which language do you like listening to music?
 Oh, I like listening in English too, and [likes watching] lots of Westerns I watch
 with Dad [Interviewer's dad and Anna's husband].
 Interviewer: Do you like, uh one language more than the other, or both, what do
 you think?
 No, I like both. And '**specially**, '**specially** I've noticed when I go to Greece, I like
 watching the American channel there [CNN].

25. In which language do you speak to your children?

Greek.

Interviewer: When do you speak English with them and when do you speak Greek?

Greek most of the time.

26. What assistance does your children's English contribute to the family?

Our children read letters to us, our children will write out anything we don't understand, our children speak for us on the telephone most of the time when they have to so they can understand well [better than Anna and her husband would in a given situation].

Interviewer: **O.k**, thank you very much, those were the questions.

Anna: **Thank you very much!**