Women Writers in Australia and North America: Bearing Witness to the Hellenic Immigration Experience

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RÉSUMÉ

Des femmes poètes et auteurs, écrivaines de prose d'origine grecque et chypriote grecque récréent, à travers le langage, leurs propres expériences, ainsi que les expériences d'autres personnes relatives à leur déracinement et leur établissement en Australie, au Canada et aux États-Unis. A travers une variété de personnages elles présentent les rêves des immigrants, leurs premières impressions et leurs difficultés d'adaptation à un environnement culturel et linguistique différent, le racisme auquel elles font face, leur lutte pour la survie dans les sociétés capitalistes des pays d'accueil hautement compétitifs et hautement stratifiés aussi bien que de leurs impressions lors du retour à la mère patrie, après beaucoup d'années d'absence. La discussion de leurs textes montre leur importance littéraire, historique et socio-politique.

ABSTRACT

Through language women poets and fiction writers of Greek and Greek-Cypriot origin recreate their own and other people's experiences of expatriation and settlement in Australia, Canada and the USA. Using a variety of characters they present migrants' dreams, first impressions and difficulties in adjusting to a different cultural and linguistic environment. Also revealed are the racism enountered and the struggle for survival in the host country's highly competitive, class-structured capitalist society. The writers also relate their impression of the motherland when they return after many years of absence. The discussion of the texts highlights the literary, historical and socio-political importance of women writers of Greek and Greek-Cypriot origin and their experience.

Introduction

In their poetry and fiction, women writers of Hellenic descent living in Australia, Canada and the USA often describe the devastating effects of WWII, the German occupation, the Civil War and the 1974 Turkish invasion of Cyprus. They present the violence, the loss of beloved people and property, the disruption of family and communal life, the psychological

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traumas and the socio-economic and political problems brought about by wars as the major factors that caused the immigration of thousands of Greeks and Greek-Cypriots, the writers included, in the twentieth century. Standing at the intersection of two different cultures, they also tell stories about their own and other people's experiences of expatriation and settlement in foreign countries. Their texts focus on daily events in the migrants' lives, as well as on the thoughts, feelings and memories such events generate. They thus function as testimonies of immigration. There is a variety of characters, themes and techniques in the literary texts presented in this essay. There is also variety in the origins, educational background, and professional achievement, etc. of the writers. Three of them (Hermione Vassiliou, Avra Tsambi-Michaelidou, and Thalia Tassou) are of Greek-Cypriot origin, two (Haitho Massala and Voula Augerinou) were born in Australia, one (Penelope Karageorge) in the USA, and the rest were born in Greece. Most writers immigrated between the early 1950s and late 1970s.

Illusions about Wealth, First Images and Critique of the Host Country

The Antipodes, Canada and the USA represented places of safety from war and political conflict, as well as stable and wealthy countries promising a better life to immigrants and refugees. Particularly attractive were the legends about "gold in the streets" of North America and Australia, spread by labor and other agents in Greece in order to recruit poor young men.[1] Having first-hand experience of the living and working conditions in these countries, women writers reveal the exaggerated nature of such legends and the illusions they generated. For instance, Tsambi adopts an ironic attitude towards the immigrants' dreams in her short poem "Toronto 1975:"

> Dreams are on sale here,
> buyers
> the victims of circumstances
> Dream-books
> are out of print.[2]

In contrast to Tsambi who does not refer to the actual conditions of migrant life in Canada, Amanatidou and Massala illustrate how the dream of quick and easy wealth clashed with daily reality in Australia. Tassos,

Amanatidou's protagonist in her story "Without Roots," is one of the post-WWII migrants who believed the "many unlikely stories about that distant land which drew him like a magnet." One such story is that "in the Antipodes even a labourer lived like a king. As long as he had the indomitable soul of Odysseus, the will to survive..." The events of the story, however, prove that "the fight for survival was hard" and that money did not come easily.[3]

Massala also contrasts the immigrants' expectations of amassing wealth quickly and easily with their reality of "sweat and toil" (p.120, sect.3, l.48) for long hours every day, in her poem "Australia - New Mother" dedicated to her parents who immigrated there in the 1950s:

> When you reach Australia you will gather money
> from the streets
> by the sackful.
> "Why did you come?"
> "Why? Because Greece was poor.
> Poverty, hunger, earthquake — for many reasons."
> Australia — new mother.
>
> (sect.1, l.1-7)

> Australia.
> Australia.
> And they said the streets would be lined with money.
> No.
> No money in the streets.
> Hard work — nothing more.
>
> (sect.2, l.26-31)[4]

In addition to texts showing the migrants' illusions about the countries of reception, there are poems that convey their first impressions of these countries. The speakers in some poems tend to idealize Australia. For example, in Roumeliotaki's "Ode to Australia," Australia is presented as an "exotic Paradise." In Xenophou's "Destination" and Karathanasi's "Enchantress," on the other hand, Australia is personified. In the former, she is compared to a "gigantic[...] goddess" (st.4, l.1) surrounded by "fine-veiled

nereids who danced beautifully" (l.2). Like "Ulysses in Circe's island" (l.4), the newly arrived immigrant becomes "bewitched" and "spellbound"(l.3) by the nereids' "enhanted songs" (l.3) and begins to sing to Australia, her "new love" (st.5, l.7). In the latter, Australia is presented as a "desirable" woman whose beauty has enchanted poor people around the world:

> She is the noble daughter of the Earth.
> It was she who conquered us.
> Like a fresh, desirable woman,
> who quickly intoxicated us.
>
> She bathes in perfumes.
> Her clothes are glittering
> and we the poor children of the world
> hotly lust after her.[5]

In other poems and stories, however, the speakers' bad psychological condition, as they try to adjust to an unfamiliar environment, is expressed though negative images of Australia and its cities. For example, in Sevastopoulou's "Bonfires in Exile" the immigrants' feelings of inner "vacuum" (st.1, l.3) and "desolation" (st.2, l.4) make them see Australia as a place of exile: "Now we kindle bonfires in exile/but cannot feel their warmth." In Krili's poem "Departure" Australian cities are compared to "concrete jungles:"

> Herds of volunteer helots
> we arrive in concrete jungles.
> Without recommendations
> without welcome.[6]

By using the images of "herds" and "helots" Krili conveys the low status, vulnerable position and insecurity of the migrants in these "jungles." More ambivalent are the feelings expressed and the images used in a number of other texts. For instance, Vassiliou's speaker in *He Thealli* initially feels "an alien" in the "strange world" (p.13) of her new homeland. After becoming adjusted to her new environment, however, the city is "no longer foreign" to her. On the contrary, it enhances her self-awareness: "It was the city that introduced us to ourselves" (p.23).[7]

Ambivalent are also the views of the Bonegilla camp, where the immigrants had to stay upon arrival, in texts by Krili and Amanatidou. In her poem "Morias," Krili calls the camp "a place of patience and expectation" at which migrants "were waiting for the rainbow." In Amanatidou's story "To teleftaio idioktito," the Bonegilla camp where Gerasimos is taken initially appears to be a "naked, inhospitable camp. A stable where the herd could rest from the storm of immigration." His early conception of the camp gradually changes and he later parallels it to Noah's Ark that saved all the tribes of Israel from "the deluge of immigration."[8]

The new countries that attracted thousands of Greeks after WWII and the Civil War promised not only material wealth but also political freedom. The theme of freedom is important in two poetic texts by Pagoulatou in which the central image is the Statue of Liberty. In *Motherhood*, the immigrants arriving in the New York port of entry to the USA, admit: "Everything impressed our eyes/as though dressed in pure magic" (l.1-2). Leaving their fatherland they "began to dress a dream" (l.14). Yet, the comparison of the passage between the Statue of Liberty and the New York harbour to the deadly straits between the mythical Clashing Rocks, and the contrast between this image with the "magic" of the new place, suggest the immigrants' insecure position and their fear of losing their ethnic identities:

> We needed to find secret keys
> to pass chaste
> Liberty's Clashing Rocks
> with our ancestral Identification Card
> playing our anthem.
>
> (p.58, l. 3-7)

In the poem titled "The Lady Doorkeeper" (*Transplants*), the speaker cruising around the statue observes that the heart of "Lady Freedom" is "lifeless" (l.8), her head is "hollowed out" (l.9), her eyes gazing on "the Gate to the West" (l.14) are "sham"(l.12). Through these images the poet drops a hint that the contemporary USA may not be the land of freedom that the oppressed and persecuted people from other countries ("castaway humanity," l.18) have sought.[9]

Pagoulatou's and other writers' descriptions include not only the migrants' first impressions of ports of entry, migrant camps, unfamiliar landscapes and new workplaces, but they also include comments about the local society's dominant values, stereotypes, behaviour and their own relationship to it. In other words, there is a frequent comparison between the Hellenic and the Anglosaxon cultures that prevailed in the Antipodes, Canada and the USA. As we can see in the texts discussed below, the speakers usually criticize the latter. For instance, Alexia and Melina, the two central characters in Kefala's prose works *Alexia* and *The Island* respectively, whose families went as refugees to the Antipodes (New Zealand) in the 1950s, sound critical of the Anglos' preoccupation with the weather and with the cutting of grass in their daily conversation.[18] Melina, a university student, also points out that the Anglos become emotional only at sports and afterwards they become "mute as statues" (p.64). Their emotional restraint makes Melina label them "subdued" and "uninteresting" (p.92). Despite her growing command of the English language, her Anglo fellow students still see her as the "other." Consequently, Melina feels lonely and a misfit in all the groups she joins (pp.164, 166). She seems to move on the edge of two different cultures without belonging to either one.

More conscious of the complexities of her immigrant condition is the adult speaker in Kamboureli's journal in the second person, which combines poetry with prose. Although she has left Greece "not out of deprivation or disillusion" (iv, p.9), she originally feels excluded from mainstream Canadian society, because of her "difference," and criticizes its tendency to see her through stereotypes and to ignore her heterogeneity (Dec. 5, 1983):

> This is the first time I used the word immigrant with reference to myself. This word hits me in the face and in the heart. It ejects me from what I cannot leave (my past/my Greek language), and throws me into a place that constantly excludes me on the principle of difference. My ideas, my habits, my amorous moods, my temperament are, quite often, not seen as expressions of me, but as specimens of the Greek stereotype I am supposed to represent. How can I explain that, although I am a Macedonian like Aristotle, I am not a mimetic being, a signified brand. I am expected to be homogeneous at the expense of my personal heterogeneity. I've have said "No" to those who invited me

> to recite Homer by heart. I've given no response to those who described to me, very vividly, the dirty washrooms they visited in the small island towns of Greece.
>
> (ii, p.8)

The narrator expresses her feeling of dislocation as an immigrant by stating that she does not "feel at home with [herself]" (iii, p.8), but sees herself as "an allusion socially adrift" (p.14). She also expresses the split in her consciousness caused by the clash of her inherited Greek with her newly acquired Canadian culture/language/identity, by comparing herself to "a fractured bone. A fractured bone that heals itself "(p.21). Besides, she describes the English language in which she lives "bathed" (vii, p.10) after immigrating as "a second skin," another self "wrapped around" the original self (p.21). Living "on the edge of two languages, on the edge of two selves named and constructed by language," however, is not only a traumatic experience for her, as the image of the fractured bone suggests. It also "liberates the self from a monologic existence," because "the self becomes a being of multiple meanings and *jouissance* and many little deaths" (viii, p.11).[11]

Unlike Kamboureli's narrator, the speakers in Kotsovolou's and Panaretou's poems do not see any advantages in their otherness, but they are openly critical of Americans and their values. In "America: First Images," for example, Kotsovolou portrays Americans as superficial people lacking self-awareness and unable to express their emotions and to communicate. Coming from a different culture in which people move between extremes and express their emotions freely (images of "heaps of feelings," "burning flames," "cold icebergs," "storms" and "rainbows") her persona feels alienated and "unspeakably lonely" in her new homeland:

> Easygoing people
> how difficult you seem to me!
> With your ever-smiling faces,
> plain, unquestioning eyes,
> unsophisticated gestures,
> sparkling colors,
> practical minds.
> Have never seen you weeping.
> Can you?

Easygoing people
what is the secret of your culture?
what is the secret of your easygoingness?
Flat seem your structures to me
yet functional they are
and you survive happily
in an indifferent inertia.
Near you I feel unspeakably lonely
and unbelonging.
Brought with me from my distant country
heaps of feelings,
burning flames and cold icebergs,
storms and rainbows,
all the extremes and contradictions
of raw cultures
and their potential for synthesis too.
No place for my luggage here.
Leave them packed.

To help Americans discover themselves and learn to interact with different people like her she offers her own cultural wealth:

Easygoing people
I want to take you by the shoulders,
tenderly at first,
communicate my inwardness through meaningful touch
but also shake you strongly,
smoothly talk to you over a night's time
about other truths and values.
Then, deep look in your eyes
discover what's beyond that glacial look
and if there exists a world of nothingness
build together, stone by stone,
a city for human needs
and live there with you
in conscious peace
and awareness
of constructive interaction.
Shall we deal?[12]

The theme of loneliness is also central in Panaretou's poem "The Doctor." The female migrant in the USA who suffers from loneliness consults a specialist. By presenting the American doctor's viewpoint and showing his inability to diagnose and cure the woman's "illness" Panaretou condemns the "affluent" American society whose product the doctor is. In contrast to the speaker in Kotsovolou's poem, who wants to interact with people in the dominant culture, Panaretou's speaker feels rejected and in return rejects them. Her tone is sarcastic and through the words she puts in the doctor's mouth the poet portrays white American middle-class society as materialistic, morally and spiritually deficient, ignorant of and unable to understand people who are different, etc.:

> Your illness is very peculiar,
> Madame.
> You must undoubtedly be a foreigner...
> In this country, the symptoms
> are like an open book
> deciphered,
> simple, and
> not quite as crooked.
> I can deal with sex,
> insanity,
> or weight,
> but for your case, it's kind of late.
> Our education is not particularly concerned
> with soul, I am afraid,
> and I honestly, Madame, hate to see myself
> paid
> but it's an affluent society
> and although we can cure all diseases with
> pills of morality,
> we cannot prescribe salvation freely
> because of the taxes
> that limit our humanitarian process
> like iron axes.
> Doctors suffer a lot
> in this country, Madame...
> Oh, incidentally, did you say you

believe you suffer from
l-o-n-e-l-i-n-e-s-s?
Here is your bill – what a confusing illness!
You must undoubtedly be a foreigner.
How do you spell it, Madame?[13]

Panaretou sounds critical of white middle-class American values and lifestyle, in her long poem "Jogging" (*Traffic*, pp.29-31) as well. She presents jogging as a means of escape and uses it to point out Americans' inner emptiness and dull lives. These problems are further revealed through her reference to the "alarming blankness in their eyes" (st.1, l.4), their mechanical "unemotional steps" (st.1, l.8), their "unanimated discussions" (st.2, l.17), the "nonsensical" (st.2, l.15) TV shows they watch for hours, their light reading (*Play Boy*), their stereotypes of masculinity (a man is effeminate if he is interested in art), their dependence on psychiatrists (st.2), their obsession with routine and physical health, the exclusion of all "different" people from their neighborhoods in order to keep their property value high (st.3), their indifference towards older people (st.4), etc. As happens in "The Doctor," the persona in "Jogging" feels rejected by and a misfit in the dominant society, and reacts by rejecting it, too.

Karageorge also appears critical of the affluent American society, in her poetry collection *Red Lipstick*. In contrast to Pagoulatou, Kotsovolou and Panaretou, however, she was born, raised and educated in New York and she is still living and working there. In other words, she is a member of the American middle class whose values and follies she satirizes. In her book she moves between the American and the Hellenic cultures, she observes them and contrasts the American urban landscape and the complex life of a money and pleasure oriented capitalist society with the rural landscape and the simple life on the island of Lemnos, where her grandmother was born. In the poem "Shepherd and Self," for example, she tries to imagine how an island shepherd, who works and sleeps outdoors, could live in America, and she shows how incompatible the shepherd's lifestyle (close to nature) would be in the New York highly technological and artificial environment ("of neon and stone," l.19). If he tried to live outdoors there, he could not possibly survive. For, he would be a social outcast like the poor and homeless city residents:

At night he sleeps in a lean-to near the animals,
fitting into a green, black, blue, and white world.
A city dweller, I observe him from my bus stop seat
as he crosses the road and imagine him
surviving in America. How he'd sleep over
a grate and dig cans out of trash barrels.[14]

The Migrants' Sunless Existence in Foreign Cities

Most immigrants who found themselves in the big cities of North America and the Antipodes came from villages and small towns and spoke no English. Consequently, their adjustment to their new environment was not easy. Karageorge, Vazra and Pagoulatou make general and often metaphorical comments in their poems about the difficulties the immigrants faced in the USA.[15] For example, in "Avenue 'B' Rembetiko" Karageorge remarks, comparing her own privileged position as a Greek American with that of her immigrant parents' generation:

Hardship traveled from Greece with
them. Tragic eyes set them apart,
guests in this Lana-Turnered landscape
of America. But I, fed on Rice Krispies and
speaking no other tongue than English, was
anointed to go forth smiling...

(Red Lipstick, p.14, st.2, l.1-6)

In "New York III, IV" Vazra suggests the dangers threatening the immigrants' health and lives in the urban environment:

We are children of pollution
living in streets
maimed by our footprints
and open death.[16]

In "Career" Pagoulatou compares the immigrant to a spider and conveys the vulnerability of his/her life and social position in the big city by metaphorically referring to his/her existence as "sunless" and "moth-eaten" and contrasting the fragile "weft" of his/her life with the hard "steel and concrete of skyscrapers:"

Like a spider
atop the steel and concrete of skyscrapers
I wove the immigrant's
sunless weft

Moth-eaten
and moldy
I spread it under my country's sun
It faded and vanished.[17]

Poets in Canada and Australia make more factual references to the immigrants' hard working and living conditions. For instance, Tassou reveals the harmful psychosomatic effects of such conditions on a female worker in Canada, a worker who is ironically one of the contemporary Aphrodites mentioned in the long poem "Aphrodite Montrealitissa" (sect. II). Another irony in the sick woman's case is that she still clings to the dream of wealth in the capitalist paradise of Canada, a dream shared by many other migrants from Greece and Cyprus. She longs to return "Home" in order to heal herself, but first she wants to buy a fur coat, symbol of her material success in Canada. The poet deflates the worker's illusions of wealth and creates further irony by contrasting the images of 1) the fur coat with 2) the cockroaches and rats that constitute the reality of the woman's life in poverty. As was the case in Pagoulatou's "Career," the sunlight of the motherland mentioned in Tassou's poem, has the power to heal the sick immigrant:

I want to go Home
she murmured trembling
I have a slipped disc
and arthritis
my child suffers
from asthma
I need sunlight

the doctor said
but before going
I must buy
the fur coat of which
I have been dreaming for years
How can I go Home
without it
take me with you
tonight
compatriot
I fear
the nightmares
at night
the cockroaches
and the rats.[18]

Another contemporary Aphrodite in Tassou's poem (sect. VI) is also a migrant worker in Canada. Through the device of repetition Tassou suggests the monotony of the woman's life and work. The poet shows both the worker's effort to break monotony, her coquetry and her social pretensions, by referring to her making new dresses every month in order to go to church:

The machine
the machine again
on the machine
the same movements
every day
every hour
every minute
every second
at night
she thinks
of the new
dress she will
make
with the new
pattern
she makes nearly ten

new
dresses
a month
how could she
present herself
at church
wearing the same dress
on Sunday?

(p.168)

More references to the monotonous and unhealthy work conditions of Greek industrial workers appear in Greek-Australian literary texts. Massala, for example, writes in "Australia — New Mother:"

Work work work work
24 hours
work work work work
overtime
work work work work
shifts
work work work work
seven days a week
work work work work
factories
machinery
noise
noise noise noise noise.[19]

Moreover, in "Departure," Krili stresses the newcomers' inability to communicate in a foreign language, as well as their enslavement ("put to the yoke"), exploitation and dehumanization ("parts of machinery," "factory fodder") by an alien industrial society:

Silenced by incoherent words
speechless we are put to the yoke
parts of machinery
under the subjection of heartless foremen.

The toil dries up the nerves
maims the body.
A dim cacophonous workplace.
We are the generation of the Diaspora
factory fodder.

(*Triptych*, p.124, st.4)

The Host Country as Melting Pot

In the previous sections I have presented literary texts that describe and comment upon the hardships of starting a new life in an alien place, and especially upon the immigrants' difficult working and living conditions. In the texts I am quoting in this section such conditions are placed within a wider context of social inequality and prejudice (ethnic, racial, sexual, class, etc.) existing in the capitalist societies of the host countries. In *The Angels*, for example, Pagoulatou points out "the ugliness" of New York "without make-up," an ugliness hidden behind the impressive "show case" of material success (st.3). She exposes the hypocrisy of those in power, as well as the lack of social care for and the exclusion of the contemporary Cinderellas (the poor, the hungry, the homeless, the drug addicted, the sick):

You surely do not suspect
what each narrow alley
washes downstream.
There, the hungry, the poor, and the sick
die in the sun, trembling from the polar cold
of the center of nuclear weapons
and the gleam of the peace prizes.
Tears drop from their eyes
in the shape of bread slices,
tears reflecting in their pearls
Cinderella's palace.
The snot runs down from their nostrils
like liquid antibiotic,
and sterilizes the needle
on their grubby sleeves.[20]

In "An Ode, a Prayer," Xenophou addresses Australia as "Mother dearest" and praises it for both its natural beauty and for having embraced people of many races (st.1). She wonders, however, why there is socio-economic inequality in such a democratic country:

> I look at your vastness, beauty and potential
> and wondering, disillusioned, I hear a cry:
> Why are some prosperous while others strive?
> Why the dole and not the dignity of work?
> Why imbalance in power and wealth?
> Why such greed, such fear, such deception?
> Why such indifference from some of your children?[21]

The pressure on the immigrants to become assimilated by giving up their language and culture and adopting those of the host country, their social exclusion or rejection because of their difference, the host society's feelings of superiority, hostility, contempt, etc. for the newcomers that often resulted in violence, are frequent themes in migrant women's literary texts.[22] I have already quoted Kamboureli's journal comment about her early feeling of exclusion from the mainstream Canadian society, because of her cultural difference and her immigrant status (*in the second person*, ii, p.8). Pagoulatou compares immigration to uprooting and borrows images from house construction to convey the displaced person's struggle to retain "uncorrodable" and "durable" elements ("stones") from her own cultural "legacy" in order to resist the assimilation forces ("crucible") in the USA and to create for herself a space of security ("home") there:

> Lord, I groaned while toiling
> to build a home in negation
> surrounding the foundations' depths
> with stones from the uprooted legacy
> uncorrodable by alienation's distress
> durable
> in the foreign country's crucible.
>
> (*Motherhood*, p.54)

In *Alexia* Kefala also shows how the members of a family that enjoyed a comfortable and refined middle-class life in the old country lost not only their home and property, because of war, but also their social status, when they became refugees. To survive in New Zealand, Alexia's parents work in factories while her older brother is sent to dig roads with a noisy pneumatic machine. The only "stones" from their "uprooted legacy" and previous social status are the musical instruments that they have brought with them. The father struggles to keep his identity by playing his violins, composing music and writing his memoirs after work (p.48). The son, however, becomes assimilated. He gives music up and becomes "a Maker of Noise" with his machine (p.58), because the island people consider music unimportant (p.70). Kefala uses Alexia and another girl to reveal the sexism, racism and other prejudices existing in New Zealand. Alexia discovers, for instance, that all the island myths degraded women: "Men belonged to a superior club — the Heavens, and Women belonged to an inferior club — the Earth" (p.62). The girl is also annoyed by the segregation of sexes in public transportation and elsewhere (p.84). Her friend Basia further points out that: "together with their Oath of Silence, the Island People had sworn an Oath to Hate: Foreigners, Intellects, Conversation, Artists, Emotions, Laughter, Volubility and so on..." (p.82)

Prejudices of various kinds did not exist only in New Zealand. As historian Tamis states, "racism and xenophobia pervaded Australian society from the first days of white settlement" too (*From Migrants*, p.77). In the pre-WWII period this society viewed itself as "Anglophone, white and culturally British" (p.331), and the definition of the "good" Australian was accordingly "white, Anglo-Saxon and Protestant" (p.160). Even after WWII, when Australia sought new settlers from all over Europe, Australian society maintained its "utopia of racial homogeneity" (p 40) and the government's long-term aim was still to "convert the country to a racial and political melting pot" (p.40). As an ethnic minority in Australia, according to Castan, Greeks belong to:

> a group that is not fully [i.e. north-western] "European"(!)-dark complexions and eastern influences have led to this categorisation—and therefore it has been the victim not only of Australian xenophobia but also of Australian racism.[23]

Racism against Greeks has been expressed in various ways. As Kalamara and Augerinou illustrate, in their poems "The Noble Ears" and "Greek Church" respectively, Anglo-Australians looked down upon the language and customs of the Greek immigrants. In "The Noble ears" Kalamara presents ironically the case of a lonely woman who is disturbed by the unfamiliar sounds of a song sung in a foreign language. The words "ugly," "discordantly," "barbaric" that the woman uses, when she refers to the old singers and their tunes, betray her prejudice. Kalamara also reveals the woman's ethnic and class arrogance by referring to her "noble ears" and the "top" European orchestras with which she was familiar:

> Outside some old fellows
> Sang discordantly
> in a foreign language.
> Ugly faces
> ugly tunes.
>
> In her home she was alone
> with the unknown song in an unknown language.
> Barbaric to her noble ears,
> nurtured by music
> From the top orchestras in Europe.[24]

In "Greek Church" the persona also remembers how strange the Greek religious customs first appeared to Anglo-Australians and how the latter often attached labels with negative connotations to Greeks in the 1960s and 1970s ("wogs," "greasy Greeks"). Trying to integrate in the mainstream society she adopted its standards, including those about feminine beauty (blue eyes, fair skin, blond hair), and as a result she rejected herself, because she looked different:

> Remember the Anglos lining the streets
> Wondering what strange cult these wogs were involved in?
> I suppose they didn't know much back then...

In the sixties and seventies you couldn't walk the street
Without hearing, "Hey Wog, Greasy Greek!"
I used to feel so ashamed that I wasn't blue-eyed and
blond-haired.
I can laugh about it now.

(*Re-telling*, p.281, st.2)

Some texts, like Toula Nicolaou's stories "Dagos" and "Mother's Canary," provide vivid examples of Australian children's racism against migrant children and adults. The extract I am quoting describes a scene at a school:

"Dirty Dagos!"
I ran, I was scared.
It was us they were talking about.
I ran up the second yard.
The words repeated over and over.
I could see children gathered near the taps.
I pushed through.
There he was, my brother with egg all over his hair and face.
He was not crying but every now and then a sharp rasping
sound came from his throat.
"Dirty Dagos, Dirty Dagos."
I pulled him towards me and tried to shield him.
Why were they saying these things?
I pulled him towards the tap and tried to wash the egg off.
It would not shift.
It was stuck hard and fast. The cold water made it worse.
I became frantic, children were hemming us in.
"Dagos, Dagos!"
I began to cry. I did not answer them but kept washing his
hair.

(*Re-telling*, p.273)

In the previous story, the father's protest to the school principal brings good results: "The events of that day were never repeated again" (p.274). In "Mother's Canary," however, the confrontation of a young mother and her children with a group of Australian schoolboys ends in her defeat. They take her canary, refuse to give it back and call her "dago," but they remain unpunished. The woman appears vulnerable and powerless because of her young age and her migrant status (*Re-telling*, p.278).[25]

In most of the texts quoted above, the verbally abused migrants sometimes internalize the dominant society's negative images, usually accept their inferior social position and, therefore, they remain passive. One of the few cases in which the migrant reacts is provided in Vassiliou's *He Thealli.* Her speaker reminds the Anglo-Australian of his probable descent from British convicts exiled in Australia: "We agreed on our own:/If you call me bloody wog I will call you bloody Australian convict" (sect. "Kravgi," p.52, l.6-7).[26]

Extreme cases of racist behavior resulting in violence are presented in two poems by Kalamara, "Victims" and "The Bullet."[27] Kalamara is aware that skin colour is a standard by which people with a racist mentality judge other people's racial/ethnic value. In "Victims" she creates irony by contrasting the Greek migrants, "all dark-faced like Arabs" (l.6), with the young Australian policeman whose "face is white/like sea foam" (l.15-16) and whose hair reminds one of God Apollo (*Genesis*, p.11). From his position of power the policeman victimizes the migrants who are already oppressed by an unfair socio-economic system:

> They all have fathers,
> in cement factories kneading mud.
> None though
> earned their bread with ease.
> Their bread.
> The bitter bread poisons their thoughts
> spits hatred
>
> (*Genesis*, p.11, l.7-13)

There are more images in "The Bullet" that show the miserable conditions under which the migrants lived: poverty, squalour, social oppression, exclusion, and discrimination. Their neighbourhood is compared to hell and they are compared to frightened sheep on their way to the slaughterhouse:

The bullet with tiny sweet sensation
pierced the boy's chest
and left behind a hole
a vivid blood colour!
Followed by the screams of the dark-faced wogs
in the neighbourhood of hell.
All dole bludgers.
All useless.
All depressed
and oppressed
with loneliness.
People surrounded by dirty walls,
Filthy cushions in narrow lounges
devoid of fashion.
The bullet flew far with a special whistle.
Such a noise
usually made only by kids in back yards,
by terrified mobs of sheep
before the slaughter.

(*Genesis*, p.12)

In both poems Greeks are portrayed not only as victims of police violence but also as victims of their biology (dark skin means inferior ethnic group), their social class (workers), their immigrant status (wogs), and the technological-industrial environment to which they were transplanted, a highly competitive environment in which only the fittest could survive.[28]

Returning to Greece/Cyprus as Citizens of the Host Country

Many literary texts express strong nostalgia and the psychological need of migrants to return to their places of origin and reestablish connections with their past, after many years of absence. There is a variety of feelings and thoughts generated by the experience of return. For example, in Vassiliou's novel *Clelia* (Part 7) the narrator is warned that she may get frightened by the changes that have taken place in Cyprus during her twelve-year absence. In fact, most older relatives, including her own parents, have died and the younger ones have immigrated to different countries. Only her aunt

Alisavou has remained and the narrator needs the aunt's welcome kiss to reconnect herself with the land and her family's past (p.169). Her visit to the village, the cemetery and the little church of Panagia Karmiotissa, as well as the stories about the Virgin's miracles finally enable her to feel her ties with the Cypriot land, language and religion: "The umbilical cord of the language I was speaking, the religion I retained and the place I loved had never been severed; it was still joining me with my land" (p.171).

The setting in other texts with the theme of return is Greece. In some of them, like Kefala's "Summer Visit," the narrators or other characters pay short visits to their places of origin. In others by Karathanasi, Xenophou, Amanatidou and Liakakou, the immigrants return to settle in Greece permanently. Kefala's narrator has a reunion with her relatives. Acting as an observer she also sees connections between ancient and modern Greeks, "a continuity of line between the people in the street and the statues in the museums, the Byzantine paintings" (pp.46-47), she "rediscover[s] a physical ancestral line" and finds people's manners "infinitely familiar"(p.61). Yet, after some time, she is anxious to return to her own life in Australia, because in Greece she feels that she is "living suspended unable to think" (p.72) and she forgets who she is.[29]

More conflicting are the narrator's feelings in Karathanasi's autobiographical *Kravges apo to parelthon.* Her return to her village Moloha (near Kozani) is motivated by strong nostalgia. It brings, however, memories of a painful past connected with the violence against and the displacement of her family members and other relatives during the Asia Minor catastrophe, WWII and the Civil War, including her own immigration to Australia. The changes that time has brought about cause her additional pain: her grandparents, parents and other relatives and friends died, her parents' house was sold and renovated, her grandparents' house is ruined, the village has been deserted by most of its young residents, etc. What remains unchanged is the beauty of nature that temporarily frees her from pain and even makes her dream of starting a new life in Moloha. But, as she realizes at the end, the ghosts of the past and her old age will prevent her from doing so (p.158).[30] As a result, her quest for wholeness, happiness and a new life in the motherland remains unfulfilled.

In contrast to Karathanasi's *Kravges,* Xenophou's novel *Vemata* leaves open the possibility of a happy life in Greece for her young protagonist Demetres

whose bond to the motherland is reestablished through his marriage with his beloved Anthoula, during a short visit to his village. Although Demetres takes Anthoula to Australia, he plans to return to his village soon, settle there permanently and contribute to its development, utilizing the education and professional skills he acquired in Australia.

In certain texts the speakers present their migration as a kind of rejection by Greece, and their desire to return is mixed with the fear of a new rejection. Amanatidou sums up such feelings in "Scattered Thoughts:" "Our motherland is tight. So tight that we made the big decision to leave. So tight that when we return it can no longer contain us" (*Re-telling*, p.105). Amanatidou deals with the theme of rejection in some of her stories as well. In "Gyrismos," for example, the narrator Gregoris returns to his village after eighteen years of absence. The joy and excitement of his reunion with his mother, siblings and villagers are soon replaced by a feeling of alienation from them and from his old self. He realizes that he cannot recapture the remote past (p.38), because everything has changed and, after his mother's death for which he feels guilty, he finally returns to Australia where he belongs now (p.39).[31]

The feeling of rejection is combined with disappointment when the immigrants' high expectations, based on their ideal and rather static picture of the motherland, clash with reality. This also happens when they compare their new homeland, which is technologically and economically more advanced, with the old one. Some texts sound very critical of contemporary Greek society and culture. For instance, in her autobiographical story "Paralirima" Goga describes some of her experiences during her visit to Greece in 1985, after thirty five years of absence in Australia. She complains about relatives who care only for money, treat her with indifference and give her the impression that she is an undesirable "xeni" ("alien"). Similar experiences are described by Liakakou's narrators in her story "Kalimera" and her book *Yia ena rodo*. The narrator in "Kalimera," who returns to see her mother before she dies, concludes that only rich immigrants are welcome in Greece. She herself feels "xeni" in both countries (p.131). In *Yia ena rodo*, Vaso and Yiannis sell everything they accumulated in Australia for fifteen years and return, with their four children, to live in Greece. Liakakou describes in detail the treatment of the immigrants by their families, relatives and villagers, emphasizing the villagers' interest in money (p.86), the

changes that all the characters have undergone, as well as the discrimination against Vaso, Yiannis and their children who are seen as Australians even by their close relatives (p.87). The most painful rejection comes from their own mothers who blame Vaso and Yiannis for both immigrating and returning, and treat them and their children as "xenoi."

Moreover, Liakakou refers to the political and socio-economic problems during the military dictatorship (1967-74), and especially to the poverty of a large segment of the Athens population, in both her novel (pp.90-91) and her tale "Zitianoi tis Athinas." In the tale, the spectacle of an "army" of beggars and street vendors generates feelings of pity, disgust and shame for the degradation of Athens and its inhabitants from the glorious period of Pericles to the present. The narrator concludes that slaves in Pericles' Athens lived better than many of its free citizens today (p.74). She is also annoyed by the slogans and behavior of the junta as well as by the citizens' submissive attitude (pp.74-75).[32] In both texts Greece is portrayed as a third world country, when contrasted to Australia whose citizens the immigrants have become. Therefore, the readers are not surprised when, at the end, the protagonists decide to return to Melbourne and start from the beginning.

Similarly, in her poem "Motherland" (st.3), Krili expresses both the immigrants' view of themselves as Greece's "rejected children" (l.7) and their feelings of alienation and confusion when they return to it:

> Many return
> searching for the essence of our roots
> and your identity.
> Cut off from your nourishment
> we have lost our rhythm,
> we are like tourists.
> We pay you fleeting visits,
> enchanted, we feel your history,
> touch your beauties
> and become confused.[33]

Using strong language she also condemns what she considers the vices of modern Greece:

Your villages deserted
your shores sold off.
The multinationals blow cancer in your bowels.
(p.386, st.1, l.16-18)

On the proud mountains they have nested death
and above renowned Athens
a curled-up adder spits vitriol.
(p.386, st.2)

Motherland betrayed,
cushion of the rich,
lair of the C.I.A.
harlot of the superpowers
from the cradle,
you found yourself in bondage
at the crossroads of the world.
Your history distorted
the language of the people enslaved
your schools anaemic
your hospitals stables
your crops discarded.
(p.387, st.4)

She praises the Greeks who "defended" (st.5, l.6) their country but "were tortured or murdered" (l.7), and blames the present decline on the people who "did not rise" (l.1) but chose a self-centered, comfortable existence. She feels at home only when she is able to reconnect with those aspects of Greek life, culture and history that she values:

I recognize you
when the song moves on the lips of a shepherd
when the muses recreate your rhythms
when the brave fight for freedom
when the people flood the streets seeking the sun.
(p.387, st.7)

Karageorge also speaks about the decline of values. Like Liakakou and Krili, she chooses modern Athens as her target. Being American-born, however, she is free from the strong emotions of the poets who are first generation immigrants. "Socrates in Denim" is a good example of her critique:

> Greece, you light up the Acropolis
> and burn down your forests. Smog chips your ruins,
> Grey mist, and the drone of motorbikes
> on hot summer nights. In the Plaka, discover
> priapic monkeys, plaster Zeuses for sale
> next to worry beads in neon colors.
>
> You dilute Homer's wine-dark sea, color
> it pastel blue, create calendar art on sale
> to drugged-out dreamers. Spokes on a bike.
> Song of a lyre. Climb the Acropolis.
> See a crone shuffle *drachmas*, then cover
> her eyes with a black apron, face a rutted ruin.
>
> Voyagers to antiquity whirl in a glass ruin
> of mermaids, quiver to screaming motorbikes,
> cower by kiosks, pop icons. Theseus under cover
> rides a ferry third class to Heraklion, sails
> back to maze and memory, while Athena colors
> the air electric, street-walks the Acropolis,
>
> searching, Greece, for your soul, Acropolis
> of marble and working muses, all in ruins.
> Cicadas scream in your empty houses. Uncover
> gods turned to dust. Fragments blend with earth, color
> the landscape, haunt of lovers on motorbikes
> seeking answers to riddles, yearning to sail

beyond the three-day classic tour, assail
spirits hidden in caves. Weep amid ruins.
Map desire in Hermes Travel Bureau. Color
of ancient light floods the Acropolis
where travelers struggle to discover
the lost music of Alpha. Motorbikes

wind down through rock. Socrates on a bike
wends his way to a taverna to discover
a woman of gold, flowing hair the color
of sun, more beautiful than ruins,
graceful as magenta ships that sail.
Red-gold flame lights up the Acropolis.

Visit your dreams. Discover Acropolis.
Search through chrome ruins, find motorbikes
the color of Paros marble and myhs for sale.

(pp.23-24)

As we see in the poem, Greek society's ways of thinking and living appear destructive for both the natural environment and the cultural legacy left by ancient Greeks. For, it sacrifices everything for the sake of material profit.[34] Contemporary Athenians who bear the names (Athena, Socrates, Theseus) of ancient historical and mythological figures also appear lacking their ancestors' qualities, and ancient gods (Hermes and Zeus) are presented as objects used by the tourist business. In the eyes of the poet, all this proves the decline of moral and spiritual values in modern Athens. Moreover, Karageorge suggests the loss of ancestral beauty and harmony, by showing that the song of a lyre and the music of Alpha have been replaced by the irritating noise of motorcycles.

Conclusion

The extracts illustrate that the return to the motherland is a complex psychological and intellectual experience that usually involves a cultural

shock, because of the immigrants' long stay in a different cultural environment. Together with the other poems, stories and novels discussed in this essay, the texts about return constitute a small part of Hellenic immigration literature. They all deserve our attention not only for their literary value but also for the information they provide about the lives, thoughts, memories, feelings, relations, etc. of individual immigrants, against the background of historical events. By adding personal testimonies to the official histories of Hellenic immigration, which do not deal with individual experiences, the writers give validity to such experiences, and they complement and enrich the official histories. Moreover, their concern with socio-economic problems, their political commentary and their cultural critique of both homelands, make their texts significant documents from a sociological viewpoint, as well.

NOTES

1. See C. Evangelos Vlachos, *The Assimilation of Greeks in the United States* (Athens: EKKE, 1968), p.58, and Charles C. Moskos, *Greek Americans: Struggle and Success*. 2nd ed. (New Brunswick: Transaction Publs., 1989), p.12, about such legends concerning the USA and their effects on Greek men. As Vlachos points out, in their imagination America became "the land of dreams, and gold, and opportunities" (p.58).

2. Avra Tsambi-Michaelidou, "Toronto 1975," in the anthology *Allohthona topia: Ellinoglossi poiesi Australias-Canada ('Other' Landscapes: Greek-language Poetry from Australia and Canada)*, eds. Eleni Nickas & Stephanos Constantinides (Melbourne: Owl Publ., 1998), p.170. The title of this book as well as of the other books cited in my essay appear abbreviated in subsequent references. I have translated into English all the poems quoted from this anthology, as well as the titles and excerpts quoted from: a) literary texts written in Greek by Amanatidou, Gatsiou, Goga, Karathanasi, Liakakou and Vassiliou, in co-operation with the writers, and b) scholarly works written in Greek and cited in the essay. Also, from bilingual collections of poems or stories I cite abbreviated the English titles in my text and notes (after the first full bibliographical reference), because I quote from their English sections.

3. Dina Amanatidou, "Without Roots," *The Seed of Peace: Short Stories*, trans. into English by Nick Machalias (Melbourne: Argo Publ., 1993). The quotations come from p.28.

4. Haitho Massala, "Australia – New Mother," in the bilingual anthology *Re-telling the Tale: Poetry and Prose by Greek-Australian Women Writers/Me dika mas logia: Ellinides syggrafis tis Australias*, eds. Helen Nickas and Konstandina Dounis (Melbourne: Owl Publ., 1994), p.118. Massala also provides a list of the work places for migrants in the cities, such as factories, railroads, milk bars, fish and chips shops, etc. (p.119). See also Anna Gatsiou's poem "Apatila oneira" ("Deceptive Dreams") in bilingual *Apartia I: Anthology of Poetry and Prose* by the Association of Greek-Australian Writers (South Oakleigh: Nautilus Publ., 2000), p.55 and Ioanna Liakakou's prose piece "Prosfygas" ("Refugee") in her book *...ta idia shedon (...almost the same)* publ. in East Kew, Vic., by Tsonis (2002). In the latter, the young man is warned that he won't find dollars in Australian streets; instead, he will face various kinds of difficulties (p.41).

5. "Ode to Australia" by Helen Roumeliotaki" (*Re-telling*, p.98, st.1, l.1) – the poem was translated into English by Konstandina Dounis. Georgia Xenophou, "Destination," *Reflections: Poetry 1956-1999*, trans. Kalliopi Kafetzi (Melbourne: Nautilus, 2000), pp.2-3. I am quoting stanzas 1-2 from Noula Karathanasi's "Enchantress," trans. by C. Alexiadis and published in the Greek-Australian newspaper *Neos Kosmos* (25 Oct. 1989). The grandeur of Melbourne also impresses the arriving immigrant, as she sees it from the ship around midnight, in Karathanasi's "Melvourni" ("Melbourne"), *Kelaidismoi (Bird Songs)*, Athens: n.p., 1998, p.20.

6. From "Bonfires in Exile," by Sofia Sevastopoulou, I have quoted lines 3-4, st.3 (*Re-telling*, p.59). From Yota Krili's "Departure," in sect. III titled "Laya" of the bilingual *Triptycho: Poeimata/Triptych: Poems* (Melbourne: Owl Publ., 2003). I have quoted p.124, st.3, l.8-11. The laya (=black sheep) represent the poor Greeks who were forced to migrate by circumstances. The Greek proverb, "Everyone takes wood from a fallen tree," that "prefaces this section aptly illustrates how migrants were like the fallen tree of which others benefited" (Helen Nickas, "Introduction," *Triptych*, p.7).

7. *He Thealli: Poiesi (The Storm: Poetry)* by Hermione Vassiliou (Melbourne: Owl Publ., 1993). The excerpts are from Vassiliou's entry on 1 Feb. 1987 (p.13), included in Ch.1 which is part of the section titled "Plin tria sin exi," 1991 ("Minus Three Plus Six"). This section has the form of a journal. The excerpts from p.23 come from the entry on Oct. 1991, included in Ch.10, in the same section.

8. From "Morias" (*Triptych*, pp.134, 136, 138) I have quoted p.136, st.8, l.2-3. Dina Amanatidou, "To teleftaio idioktito" ("The Last Possession"), *Homatenioi anthropoi: Diegemata (Earthen People: Stories)*, Melbourne: n.p, 1989, p.18.

9. Regina Pagoulatou's bilingual texts: long poem *Mitrotita/Motherhood*, trans. Kali Loverdos-Streichler (New York: Pella, 1985), p.58, and "The Lady Doorkeeper" in the collection of poems *Metamoshefsis/Transplants*, trans. A. Athanassakis (New York: Pella, 1982), p.13.

10. By analyzing their otherness Alexia and Melina "participate in the discourse about migration, language and cultural interconnections," as Helen Nickas states in her "Introduction" to *The Island*. According to Nickas, Kefala places language "at the epicentre and succeeds in showing that any migration, whether voluntary or not, forces comparisons" (p.17). See Antigone Kefala's bilingual *Alexia: A Tale for Advanced Children/Alexia: ena paramythi gia megala paidia*, Greek trans. Helen Nickas (Melbourne: Owl Publ., 1995), p.84, and her trilingual novella The *Island/L'isle/To nisi*, trans. Marie Gaulis (French) and Helen Nickas (Greek) published in Melbourne (Owl Publ., 2002), pp.66, 68, 72.

11. All the quotations are from Smaro Kamboureli's *in the second person* (Edmonton: Longspoon P, 1985). In Miranda Panaretou-Cambani's poem "Letter to my Mother" the trauma of the double or divided self is conveyed through the image of "twisted" feet "so that neither fits here or there" (st.4, l.1-2). The speaker admits that she is "tired of trying to belong" (st.5, l.4). See *The Traffic of the Heart* (Chapel Hill: Carolina Wren, 1986), p.94.

12. The poem is included in the English section titled "Human Inscapes" (pp.94, 96) of the bilingual collection *Esoterikes diarythmisis: Poeimata se dio glosses/Interiors: Poems in Two Languages* by Youlika Kotsovolou-Masry (Athens: Nefeli, 1988), trans. into Greek by Toula Spanou-Kafetzaki.

13. Panaretou, "The Doctor," *Traffic*, p.21. As Anastasia Stefanidou remarks, social stereotypes of American otherness created by transmigrants, function as the main resistance mechanism against Americanization and cultural assimilation. See her "Ethnic and Diaspora Poets of Greek America," PhD diss., Aristotle U of Thessaloniki (Greece), 2001, p.169.

14. From "Shepherd and Self" I am quoting lines 9-14 (p.79). For Karageorge's critique of the USA and its middle-class citizens, herself included, see also the poems "Avenue 'B' Rembetiko" (p.14), "New York Love Letter: P.S. You're Crazy" (pp.27-29), "Bloomies" (p.30), "Big Bed" (p.43), "Office 3 p.m." (pp.55-56), "On an Elevator in a New York Office Building" (p.57) and "The Crazy Ladies of New York" (pp.60-61) in *Red Lipstick and the Wine-dark Sea* (New York: Pella, 1997). What mitigates her critique is her humor.

15. Historical information about the immigrants' difficult living and working conditions in the USA is provided by Moskos (pp.12-13) and Ioannis Touloumakos,

He Ellada exo apo ta synora: Ena mikro afieroma ston ellinismo tis diasporas (Greece outside the Borders: A Short Dedication to Diaspora Hellenism), publ. by Malliaris (Thessaloniki, 1996), pp.17-18. Tamis also refers to the difficulties, exploitation and frequent unemployment of Greek migrants in low paying manual jobs in Australia (pp.96-98, 103, 156) and to the high death rate amongst them in the pre-WWII period (p.21). See Anastasios Tamis & Efrosini Gavaki, *From Migrants to Citizens: Greek Migration in Australia and Canada* (Melbourne: LaTrobe U, National Centre for Hellenic Studies and Research, 2002).

16. Persa Vazra, "New York III, IV," in the bilingual *Mia epimoni anoixi/A Persistent Spring* (Thessaloniki: Nea Poreia, 1987), p.44, st.1.

17. "Career" in bilingual *Pyrrhichios*, trans. Apostolos Athanassakis (New York: Pella, 1979), p.34.

18. Thalia Tassou, "Aphrodite Montrealitissa" ("Montreal Aphrodite"), *Allohthona*, pp.164-65.

19. Massala, "Australia – New Mother," *Re-telling*, p.119, sect.3, l.1-13. For descriptions of the hard, unhealthy and unpleasant work conditions in Australia see also the poems: Krili's "Necessity's Children" (p.128), "The Machine" (p.130), "Black Horse" (p.132) and "Morias" (pp.136, 138) in *Triptych*; Demetra Koutouli's "Foreign Land" (p.106), Amanatidou's "Elegy" (p.114-15) and Xenophou's "For Factory Women" (p.318) included in *Re-telling*; Karathanasi's "Oi Synetairoi" ("The Partners," pp.40-41) and "Rizosame" ("We Have Put Down Our Roots," p.44) in *Kelaidismoi*. Also see the following prose pieces: Xenophou's novel *Vemata ton Xenitemenon (Paces of Strangers)*, publ. in Adelaide by Claxton P. (1997), pp.46, 51-53, 70, 82-83, 94, etc.; the story "He modistroula" ("The Young Dressmaker") by Litsa Nikolopoulou-Goga, *To spiti tou patera mou (My father's House)*, publ. in Melbourne by Tsonis (2000), pp.122-24); Kefala's Alexia (pp.48, 50, 52, 58), and Liakakou's *Yia ena rodo yia ena milo (For a Rose, for an Apple)*, Melbourne: Tsonis (1998), pp.21-24, 38-40, 52, 60-61, 64-68. References to the migrants' poverty and their hard struggle for survival are also found in Vassiliou's novel *Clelia* (Melbourne: EKEME, 2000), pp.15-16, 39-40; and in Amanatidou's stories "To diavatirio tis anthropias" ("The Passport of Humanity") in *Anthropini Characteres: Diegemata (Human Characters: Stories)*, Melbourne: Tsonis (1997), pp.40-41, and "To teleftaio idioktito" in *Homatenioi*, pp.17-25. In the latter, Amanatidou mentions the aging of the first generation immigrants, expressing the fear that the Greek race will disappear after their deaths (p.22). Moreover, some writers discuss the long-term effects of toil and other hardships on the migrants. For instance, Karathanasi starts "The Message" by referring to the "Withered faces/bodies bent/sunken eyes" of the older migrants (*Re-telling*, p.132) and ends "Enchantress" by comparing herself and the other migrants to "transplanted flowers,/who before they bloomed again/lost their Spring" (*Neos Kosmos*).

20. *Oi Angeloi/The Angels*, trans. A. Athanassakis (New York: Pella, 1988), No.12, p.43, st.4, 5. Also in "Snow Storm" (*The Nepenthes*, p.39) the "purity of the unexpected snow" (l.2) conceals "social corruption" (l.4). Pagoulatou calls the snow "Nature's costly mask of hypocrisy" (l.16) that covers the grim daily reality. Moreover, in "Investments" her speaker states: "As an emigrant child of hers/I made my money/laboring hard/on docks and other service posts" (l.8-11)-"hers" refers to Greece. Yet, the fruit of her labor does not help either Greece or herself; for, her savings end up "in the World Bank/of Social Injustice" (l.13-14). See *Ta Nipenthi/The Nepenthes*, trans. George Pilitsis (New York: Pella, 1995), p.29.

21. I have quoted from "An Ode, A Prayer," *Reflections*, p.94, st.2. In the third (last) stanza Xenophou turns to God for help to right the social wrongs. The indifference of the Australian rich for the poor and of employers for their workers whom they exploit are also criticized in her novel *Vemata* (pp.96-98). Besides, in her poem "Necessity's Children" Krili affirms the contribution of immigrants and Australian working class people to the economy of the country (st.2) while presenting them as "maimed/victims of toil and progress" (*Triptych*, p.128, st.3, l.1-2). In the last stanza, she invites her "adopted Mother" to recognize their contribution and help them "to build the tower of justice," thus becoming a real "motherland" for all its inhabitants (p.128, st.4, l.5-6).

22. Moskos mentions the Anglicizing of Greek names in the USA as an example of the trend toward Americanization in the first decades of the 20th century (pp.40-41). Gavaki discusses a similar tendency in Canada, especially during the pre-1950s period, "when the preference in Canadian immigration was for white Anglosaxon Protestants, while immigrants with strange names and customs were not given many opportunities" (*From Migrants*, p.257). Greeks, the other Balkans, Italians and Eastern Europeans "were seen as *'unsuitable'* for Canadian society" (p.374). The change of Greek names to gain acceptance in pre-WWII Australian society is discussed by Tamis (*From Migrants*, p.86). As Moskos, Gavaki and Tamis illustrate, the trend toward assimilation was motivated by the Greek migrants' need to survive and progress in societies hostile to non-Anglo-Saxon immigrants. Vassiliou makes an ironic comment about the host society's limited and rather confused perception of the migrants and its tendency to level and homogenize their cultural differences often indicated by their names. Since this society finds all migrants similar, it is not surprising that an Asian man with the distinctive name Vang Pang makes some people wonder whether "he was a Greek, [named] Vangelis Pangratides" (*He Thealli*, sect. "Kravgi," p.54, l.3).

23. Con Castan, "Introduction," *Reflections: Selected Works from Greek Australian Literature*, eds. Thanasis Spilias and Stavros Messinis (Box Hill, Vic.: Elikia Books, 1988), p.9.

24. Vasso Kalamara, "The Noble Ears," *Genesis: Thirty-three Australian Poems* (Beaumaris, Vic.: Athina Publs, n.d.,), p.7, l.1-5 and 18-22.

25. In her book *To spiti*, Goga provides several examples of racist treatment of Greek migrants. "Isorropies" ("Balances"), p.53, and "Paralirima" ("Delirium"), p.93, refer to the verbal abuse of Greeks by Australians during the period 1956-70. Moreover, in "Ta paidia ton metanaston" ("The Migrants' Children"), p.86, and "Stin Pinakothiki" ("At the Art Gallery"), pp.127-28, Goga describes the mistreatment of Greek children by Australian children at school. Amanatidou deals with a similar theme in the stories "Ditti tautotita" ("Double Identity"), p.17, and "Aihmiro Proskinima" ("Painful Pilgrimage"), pp.29-30, in her collection *Anthropinoi*, as well as in the story "Without Roots" (*The Seed*, pp.31-32). In this story she additionally gives proof of discrimination among Greeks. Tassos who immigrated in 1952 married Meg, a girl born and raised in Australia. Because she "belonged to one of the first Greek families to arrive in Melbourne"(p.29), she treated him with an air of superiority: "You migrants who've just arrived, seem like hicks compared with us who've been here longer..." (p.30). All these examples refer mainly to the postwar period and most writers point out the gradual changes in the attitude and behavior of Australians after the 1970s. Xenophou, however, expresses her anger at being discriminated against by being called "a New Australian,/after thirty years of hardship and toil" (p.7) in contemporary multicultural Australia. See her poem "Pursuit of Agricultural Studies" (*Reflections*, pp.7-9) for more details.

26. According to Tamis, European settlement in Australia began in 1788: "The new settlers comprised 1000 British, 750 of whom were convicts... From 1788 to 1868 over 180,000 British and Irish convicts arrived in Australia" (*From Migrants*, pp.31-32).

27. See Anastasios Tamis, *Istoria ton Ellinon tis Australias (History of Australian Greeks)*, vol.1 (1830-1958), Thessaloniki: Vanias, 1997. Tamis mentions that people threw stones at, set fire to or looted Greek homes and shops in Australian cities in 1916 and 1934 (pp.613, 616). There were also cases of racist violence against migrants in the big cities before WWII (p.37). He provides similar information about Anglo-Australian attacks against Greek individuals and property during the first half of the 20th century in *From Migrants* (pp.323-24, 335). He also mentions the derogatory term "bastard dagos" applied to Greeks, the job restrictions, the segregation during the socials, etc. (p.335). Similarly Moskos mentions the following early 20th century events: 1) the characterizations of Greeks as "the scum of Europe, "a "vicious element unfit for citizenship," and "ignorant, depraved and brutal foreigners" printed in Utah newspapers, 2) the killings of Greeks in Nevada, 3) the breaking up of Greek stores and Ku Klux Klan attacks against Greeks in Utah, and 4) the anti-Greek assault in South Omaha, Nebraska (pp.16-17).

28. Zisis Papadimitriou considers social darwinism "one of the most aggressive forms of contemporary European racism, since it turns the 'survival of the fittest' [...] into a basic principle of social organization" (p.157). See his book *O Europaikos ratsismos: Eisagogi sto fyletiko misos (European Racism: Introduction to Racial Hatred)*, Athens: Ellinika Grammata, 2000). Tamis states that "the attitudes of social Darwinism reached the point of genocide" of the Australian Aboriginals (*From Migrants*, p.77).

29. All quotations are from Kefala's "Summer Visit" (pp.43-92), in *Summer Visit: Three Novellas* (Artarmon: Giramondo Publ., 2002). In her most recent "Travel Journal," publ. in *Heat* magazine (Nov. 2004), Kefala also describes a short trip to Athens, including visits to various museums that enable her to establish similar connections (pp.154-56).

30. Noula Karathanasi, *Kravges apo to parelthon (Cries from the Past)*. Thessaloniki: n.p., 1996. In contrast to *Kravges*, Goga's story "To spiti tou patera mou" ("My Father's House") presents a happier return to her late father's village in 1995. Although his house was sold and was later damaged by an earthquake and deserted, it brings her happy memories that enable her to reconnect with her family's past. This fact and the warm welcome by some villagers make her want to revisit the village (*To spiti*, pp.15-18). Also in "Yia ti Thessaloniki, yia mena, yia sena..." ("For Thessaloniki, for me, for you") Goga describes her recent visit to Thessaloniki with her husband and two other couples from Melbourne. Although she becomes aware of contemporary socio-economic problems, she has the satisfaction that her hard work in Australia has been rewarded and now she is able to fulfill an old dream, to visit Thessaloniki and enjoy the good things that the city offers (*To spiti*, p.38).

31. Amanatidou, "Gyrismos" ("Return") in *Petrina Somata: Diegemata (Bodies of Stone: Stories)*, 3rd ed. (Melbourne: n.p., 1990).

32. "Paralirima," *To spiti*, pp.95-96. Goga also complains about her estrangement, about the "scorn" and "disdain" (st.4, l.3-4) with which she is treated, in her poem "Homeland, you are wounding me" (*Re-telling*, p.100), and concludes that her best mother is her "Adopted Land" (st.5, l.4). Liakakou's, "Kalimera" ("Good Morning") and "Zitianoi tis Athinas" ("Athens Beggars") are included in *...ta idia*. See also *Yia ena Rodo*, pp.98-99, 105-106, 113-14, for events that illustrate the two mothers' hostile behavior.

33. Yota Krili, "Motherland," in *Greek Voices in Australia: A Tradition of Prose, Poetry and Drama*, ed. George Kanarakis (Sydney: Australian National UP, 1987), p.386, st. 1, l.6-15.

34. Similar themes are developed in Panaretou's poem "Blue Guide-An Extra Page," *Traffic*, pp.32-34.