Daughters of the Diaspora: An autoethnographic odyssey of identity

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Abstract

My thesis is a tightly focused autoethnographical study of my lived experiences as a cultural hybrid and daughter of a migrant proxy bride from Southern Italy. This thesis is contextualised in the wide-ranging issues that Italian proxy brides experienced during post war migration to Australia. I examine how migration impacted my mother's life, leaving her homeland to live in a new country. Her resistance to assimilation culminated in cultural and societal challenges for my mother and me. My gender was of key significance in the governance of my life as the daughter of a Southern Italian proxy bride. The trajectory of my adolescent life determined my negotiated identity. Contributing factors for the lack of agency from childhood to adolescence were cultural hybridity, gender, cultural transmission, and intersectionality.

Autoethnography as a research approach afforded me the opportunity to explore, frame and contextualise my narratives, in the process producing data that explored contributing themes of culture, religion, patriarchy, racism, and resistance. My autoethnographies became the conduit for my memories of conversations with my mother and the memories of my lived experiences.

I propose that the complexities of being a proxy bride and a daughter of a proxy bride are rarely addressed within scholarly literature, but they should be. Studies identified little to no research was undertaken for this aspect of a significant period and niche in Australian history. Further enquiry is recommended to examine the unique experiences and cultural influences of women such as my mother. Research is essential to examine how assimilation and racism were the characteristic attributes afforded to migrants – specifically those of Southern Italian ethnicity. The historical significance and contribution of proxy brides to contemporary culture should not be underestimated. Women like my mother should be acknowledged in

light of their unique experiences and cultural influences on the generations of women thereafter.

Thesis including published works declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at any university or equivalent institution and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

This thesis includes one original paper published in peer reviewed journals. The core theme of the thesis is cultural hybridity. The ideas, development and writing up of all the papers in the thesis were the principal responsibility of myself, the student, working within the School of Education, Culture and Society, Faculty of Education under the supervision of Professor Jane Southcott and Dr Maria Gindidis.

Thesis Chapter	Publication Title	Status *(published, in press, accepted or returned for revision, submitted)*	Nature and % of student contribution	Co-author name(s) Nature and % of Co-author's contribution*	Co-author(s), Monash student Y/N*
4	Unspoken Barriers: An Autoethnographic Study of Frustration, Resistance and Resilience.	Published *The Qualitative Report*	90%	Southcott, J. 5% (reflective critique, contribution to discussion) Gindidis, M. 5% (reflective critique, contribution to discussion)	N

I have renumbered pages of submitted or published papers in order to generate a consistent presentation within the thesis.

Student name: Rose Marie Wake

Date: 04/04/2023

I hereby certify that the above declaration correctly reflects the nature and extent of the student's and co-authors' contributions to this work. In instances where I am not the responsible author I have consulted with the responsible author to agree on the respective contributions of the authors.

Main Supervisor name: Professor Jane Southcott

Date: 04/04/2023

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I am deeply indebted to my mother who sacrificed so much, firstly as a woman, a mother and a daughter. I have drawn on my memories and lived experiences to give her life prominence, respect, and significance within this thesis. I thank my father for making the decision to migrate to Australia and for being the best father he could be.

I thank my husband Anthony for his love and unwavering support. I thank him for the times when my thesis took priority over everything, his belief in me kept my spirits and motivation high during this process. My gratitude and love for the unselfish times when you recognised that my space and solitude were the necessary conduit for the demands of writing this thesis.

I would like to acknowledge and thank both my sisters for their unwavering support. Many thanks to Teresa for authenticating our family history and to Lena who was my sounding board providing me with clarity and validation during times of uncertainty. I would also like to give a special mention to my colleague Dr Melanie Dare, who inspired me to take the first step of writing my thesis, thank you Mel.

Prefatory Comment

This thesis consists of published, accepted and unpublished manuscripts. While the author has made every effort to avoid any unnecessary repetition, there are instances where this was unavoidable such as providing clarification and contextualisation for the reviewers and various editors of international journals. The references for the published journal article directly follow the paper, with the thesis references placed at the end of the thesis document.

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List of Abbreviations

ICEM	Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration
WWI	World War One
WWII	World War Two

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Chapter 1 Introduction

We carry so many of our homelands

On the shoulders of a single earth

– *Zbigniew Herbert (1962)*

This autoethnographic thesis is about me, my mother and her mother before her. My Southern Italian mother was a proxy bride who brought to Australia all of her cultural understandings which were then imposed upon me, her Australian-born daughter. My mother's understandings were shaped by her mother, which in turn shaped me. This thesis is about generations of imposed and culturally embedded understandings of women as proxy brides, the culture they left, the culture they found, and the negotiations they made between themselves, their families and the wider society. This was about how proxy brides and the generations that came from them would form their understanding of their sense of self or cultural identity. My mother's decision to migrate as a proxy bride was not her decision, it was determined for her. Her decision created my past and my present. I am not the only woman in Australia to have had her life shaped and constrained by the life experiences of their parents, but I argue that daughters of proxy brides are a particular group that warrant our attention. There are many reasons for this, I offer two now. Many proxy brides such as my mother did not know their husbands before they migrated to Australia. My mother experienced many challenges assimilating to a new life as a new wife and migrant in a foreign country. As a daughter of a proxy bride, her challenges, became my challenges. Secondly, daughters of proxy brides are cultural hybrids who straddle between two worlds of culture and ethnicity seeking to create their own identity. I will unpack the term cultural hybrid in due course, but for now, I use the term to capture my experience of standing in two cultures and trying to create my hybrid self.

Issues

My autoethnographic research journey concerns me as the daughter of one of many proxy brides who married without the groom present with a substitute in their place for the ceremony, and they migrated to Australia. I was particularly interested in Southern Italian women as this is my linguistic and cultural heritage. Initially I wanted to know about women who experienced proxy marriage and how they encountered and understood their migration experiences. I wanted to know if they had a choice to marry in this manner and if they wanted to migrate as proxy brides. I wanted to know if they were understood by other Italian women who did not have the same marriage experience once they arrived in Australia. I wanted to know if their children had lives similar to mine as cultural hybrids. I was thwarted in my exploration by a lack of research on the subject, propelling me to investigate further across diverse forms of qualitative data that only focussed from social, psychological, and phenomenological standpoints relating to the migratory experiences of proxy brides. Eventually I decided to start with myself and my family, particularly focusing on my childhood and adolescence up until my marriage. My long-held rememberings of my mother's story gave me the valuable data to draw upon and start the research journey for proxy brides.

In this thesis, to contextualise my autoethnographical research, I address the broader range of issues that Italian proxy brides faced during post war migration to Australia to contextualise my stories. Such stories are shaped by migration experiences and capture how individuals negotiate both their own identities and their relationships with others, and how they negotiate their own sense of identity. These include my mother's resistance to assimilation which led to her limiting my developing sense of self as an inhabitant of more than one culture. My mother resisted my living and creating my own identity as a cultural

hybrid. It is evident to me that gender, cultural transmission, and intersectionality were in many ways responsible for the issues that impacted upon two lives, my mother's and mine.

We are not unique. I am well aware that many proxy brides came to Australia from very different cultures and that these women had children, particularly girls who became cultural hybrid daughters. These are second generation cultural hybrid daughters. Their lack of presence in Australian migrant history has lessened our shared understandings. Italy was not the only country that sent proxy brides to Australia however my focus is on my history which is Southern Italian.

Cultural Hybridity

Before I proceed, I need to explain what I understand by the term "cultural hybridity". My notion of cultural hybridity is the combination of different cultures. When I refer to cultural hybrid identities, I associate this with critical approaches for exploring constructions of relational identities (Masticelli, 2015). Cultural hybridity is an interpersonal subjectivity, there is an understanding of how one's self-identity impacts on all facets of life, in this instance, those carrying cultural assumptions and memories (Collins et al., 2009; Colpi, 1991; Marino, 2019b). In my thesis I impart knowledge about how second-generation daughters negotiate their cultural hybridity within and beyond their relationship as second-generation daughters with their mothers in Australia. Additionally, I explore identity co-construction within these interpersonal relationships and interrogate the complex intersection of race or ethnicity, gender, and national identities. Cultural hybridity emerges as a dominant point of discussion within my thesis as I describe the impact and significance of complex cultural negotiations during my lived experiences as a child and adolescent.

Liminality

Liminality, as, I understand through my understanding and experience, is being in a state of temporal in-betweenness and ambiguity. Liminality takes a position within this thesis

as being my experiential and connectedness in the structure of my life during childhood and adolescence. I offer explanations of how liminality was a functional and a habitual routine during moments of needed respite from opposing cultural situations (Jackson, 2009). Liminality became my method of coping when living as a peripheral. It provided me the respite by seeking temporal sanctuaries as a liminal being from what felt at times a chaotic existence. My narratives in my thesis share how during these moments I would withdraw from the time and place I was in, so I did not have to interact with anyone or anything. I talk about how I allowed myself to engage in my own ideals, sense of identity and preferred culture, where my thoughts, self-understanding, and behaviour were unfastened from the expectations of my family and culture. These narratives materialised my memories taking front row in my mind when it came to remembering events that triggered emotional responses.

Intersectionality

Gender

The concept of intersectionality has been used prolifically in feminist studies to explain intersections of gender and culture to name only two (Crenshaw, 1991). When referring to gender intersected by cultural hybridity, the connotations reveal that they intersect because of the cultural codes I was locked into. In my narratives I discuss how my gender was the meaning making of my cultural hybridity, which in turn became the intersecting approach that explained my lived experiences (Sondergaard, 2005).

Intergenerational

My thesis explores my heterogeneous culture in context to my life as a second generation daughter of migrants born in Australia. Further to this, I now understand the transmission of culture to me as a daughter of a proxy bride to be the negotiation of identity formation experienced as intergenerational ethnic identity. The importance of gathering data

in context to my cultural life as a second generation daughter became a difficult task to compare with others who experienced intergenerational mobility of cultural, societal and economic associated outcomes (Khoo et al., 2002).

Race

My family's experienced reality of racism began when they migrated to Australia, a country that at that time was governed with a White Australia and an Assimilation policy. This was the new environment that my parents and others experienced as new immigrants. Racist manifestations were encouraged by these policies which in turn created cultural enclaves of migrants to secure their cultural identity and traditions. The fact that, like many others, both my parents did not speak the English language and had a distinct Southern Italian appearance made them targets for racial abuse by fearful Anglo Australians who did not want to see multiculturism in their country. The birth of their children in Australia presented my parents with another level of racism from others and their own as I will discuss in my autoethnographies.

In this tightly focused autoethnographical study, I explore the private and enacted lives of women (my mother and me). I argue that such lives are rarely the subject of scholarly inquiry, but they should be. I address the issues of my gender focusing on the experience of my childhood through to adolescence. I consider my developmental milestones as they were impacted by my family structure, cultural influence, my identity formation, educational outcomes, paying particular attention to the role of gender in these fields.

Contention

My main contention is that there is minimal data about proxy brides who have left their homeland to make a new life in a host country, and how the generational understandings inherited through family lines about particular ways of thinking and being have been influenced. I also argue that there is little to no research conducted on how the following

generations of daughters of proxy brides from the post World War Two (WWII) era, impacting and affecting their behaviour and thinking as cultural hybrids. Additionally, there is no specific data on Southern Italian proxy brides that demonstrates the impact of migration and lack of assimilation being the catalyst for generational cultural transference onto their daughters. I contend that there are matters to be explored in these overlooked areas.

My underpinning contentions are:

1. There is an inherent impact in being a cultural hybrid daughter of migrant parents, in this case from Southern Italy.
2. Culture is transmitted to hybrid daughters by migrant parents, particularly mothers.
3. Being the daughter of a proxy bride impacted my identity preventing the natural development of psychosocial milestones during my childhood through to adolescence.

Limitations

I address the limitations within my thesis that impeded my research. I speak specifically of my mother who was a proxy bride, who is no longer alive, so I rely on my memory and confirmation of my rememberings in conversations with my sisters. I was also limited by the lack of research conducted on proxy brides in both Australia and world-wide. There are many scholarly articles that discuss the statistics relating to census calculations of migrants entering the country, the economic status of migration, the labour forces and opportunities for new migrants. There are little to no studies that provide significant inferences or insights into the cultural transmission for culturally hybrid daughters of proxy brides. More broadly, research was further impeded when seeking to acquire specific information such as the transference of generational trauma to the second generation offspring of proxy brides, like me. Based on this, I turned to my own experience to address

this lacuna regarding the children of proxy brides who experienced negotiating identity formations as part of their continual transaction process of daily reconstructing or reshaping of self.

Timeliness

This research is timely because most of the women who came to Australia post WWII have died, generally leaving no personal accounts of their experiences. Their daughters are aging. It is important that these stories are told as they have historical significance. This timely study affords the opportunity to explore one mother-daughter dyad from my understandings. Offering one tightly focused set of studies, the phenomena of post WWII proxy marriages has a place in Australian history, but importantly there is a need to acknowledge the women who were proxy brides, their lived experiences and their daughters' lived experiences. When you consider the associated social outcomes for both cohorts of women, further studies identifying physical and mental health being impacted due to cultural hybridity and/or familial conformity, should be implemented as a matter of historical importance. Additionally, education is an important trajectory that needs to be identified and documented for this cohort as many proxy brides like my mother had a rudimentary education. It is timely to determine and establish if education was not a valued competency for all females for this cohort and if so, was this way of thinking transferred on to their daughters. There are many questions to explore and examine. My primary research question and sub questions are guides that inform the research in my thesis.

Research Question

My over-arching research question which drove the data is:

> How did my experience as the daughter of a migrant Southern Italian proxy bride shape my childhood and adolescence?

The sub questions that sit beneath this over-arching question are:

How did my experiences as a cultural hybrid impact on my childhood and adolescence?

How did the intersections of gender and race impact my identity?

How did intergenerational cultural transmission impact my lived experiences?

How did my need of inhabiting liminal spaces provide me with a sense of security?

When I speak of cultural transmission, I include all aspects of a navigated and negotiated life, traversing educational institutions, social and community settings, and the private world of the family and home. Sub-questions were provoked by the data seeking answers to queries such as, was my life a proxy life due to cultural transmission? Also, are the narratives and memories embedded as understood memory and how do the daughters of proxy brides interpret their lives in light of their history and cultural transmission? These questions became the catalyst for the primary research question which I believe is pertinent to future research for other daughters of proxy brides who may have had similar backgrounds. To contextualise this research I offer a brief overview of the history of Italian migration to Australia with a particular focus on proxy brides.

Historical background

To contextualise my study, I offer a brief overview. The focus on post WWII and the migration of Italians to Australia was a significant time in Australian history. The discussion of assimilationism, multiculturalism, cultural hybridity is imperative to understanding how Italian immigrants had a momentous place in history and Australia's society at that time. The word migration conjures up many interpretations, for me it is the journey that both my parents undertook to forge a new life in a new country. Correspondingly, there is no definitive way to give a conclusive or exact definition to the word migration. Castles (2000) argues that this is problematic due to the complexities of political and the economical

positions of participating countries. In an effort to understand transmigration and the concepts of hegemonic constructions for ethnic groups, Basch et al. (2006) suggest that consideration must be given to the past when governments utilised their authority and dominion to influence and manipulate as a means to form hegemonic constructions for immigrants.

Historically it was important for me to explore migratory patterns between the two countries, Italy (in particular Southern Italy) and Australia. My research introduced me to noted academic scholars, historians and researchers in the field of Italian migration such as Loretta Baladassar, Susanna Iuliano, and Francesco Ricatti. These authors provided me with the data to draw upon this genre of migratory history including documentation citing challenges that many immigrants faced as new Australians. These resources provided me with additional records of Australia's political and economic history during post WWII. I advance the resonances of migration by detailing within my autoethnographic narratives on the life of my mother and father, mine, and how that impacted on familial relations. The history around the Italian diaspora is important and requires further clarification as context for this thesis.

The Italian Diaspora

Since the times of the ancient Romans, people who lived in what is now termed Italy have always been diasporic people. The trading posts of the Roman Empire were imperative for merchant Italians to voyage around the Mediterranean, Arabian Peninsula and Asia (Pirenne, 2014; Stoianovich, 1960). This voyaging continued across the centuries. The renowned journey by Genovese explorer Christopher Columbus began in August 1492 (Colombus & de las Casas, 1991) with many following his lead dispersing across the globe.

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries there was considerable political and social unrest in the states that eventually combined in the Risorgimento ('resurrection'), driving many to undertake voluntary or involuntary journeys across the globe (Beales & Biagini, 2014; Isabella, 2009; Luconi, 2011). It was not until the late nineteenth century that the modern Italian state was founded during the Risorgimento on March 17, 1861, although this exact date is contested (Beales & Biagini, 2003, 2014; Clark, 2013; Forlenzza & Thommassen, 2011). The unification of states and provinces to create Italy as a legitimate country did not sway fourteen million Italians from leaving between 1876 and 1914 with a further four million between 1916 and 1945, and an additional seven million leaving between 1945 and 1975 (Gabaccia & Ottanelli, 2000).

The historic-economic post WWII period in Italy is an important part of the migration narrative that enticed desperate people experiencing poverty, feelings of desolation and despair to change their destiny and future. The one illuminating prospect of having a chance for a better life was to migrate to another country that offered an opportunity for a prosperous life and a peaceful future. For many, this hope became a reality and they travelled to Australia with youthful exuberance and enthusiasm to work hard and accumulate wealth (Faggiano & Furlan, 2017). This includes people from the various regions of Italy.

It became an important imperative for me to examine the overarching reasons why Southern Italians, in particular, made the decision to leave their country and migrate to Australia. How was the host country Australia going to offer a new immigrant who spoke no English language, had no skills apart of the agrarian knowledge passed down through the generations, or given the opportunity to assimilate with their new Australian neighbours. I acknowledge the role of both Italian and Australian governments as catalysts in influencing Italians to migrate to Australia. The push by Italy and the pull of Australia generated the

strategic outcome which both countries envisaged to improve their economic positions (Baldassar, 2006; Dewhirst, 2014; Furlan & Faggion, 2016; O'Connor, 1996; Wake, 2018). Historian Paul Gilroy (1991) summed up in his statement "I want to begin by asking how resistance is itself to be understood" in context to the inescapable diversities of government domination, transmigration, diaspora, racism as a consequence of authority (p. 3). As will be discussed, resistance was held tightly by my mother against any form of government regime or assimilation policy. There would be no familial acknowledgement that I was a cultural hybrid, I was only Italian and only born in a country named Australia.

Proxy Brides

The subject of proxy brides within this thesis is dominant in the discourse pertaining to my mother and my life as her daughter. I offer in my thesis my understanding of historical proxy marriages and why this institution was introduced specifically in Australia post WWII. Historically, Australia and Italy during that era provided the means and opportunity for proxy marriages to be conducted to benefit both countries and their populations. My research for information relating to proxy brides led me to orthodox and non-orthodox studies due to the limited resources on this subject specifically in Australia. My mother's experience was easy to draw upon as we had many brief and extended conversations as a family about the good, the bad and the not so good experiences of being married by proxy. My rememberings of those conversations was that my mother would always reminisce about the other proxy brides who travelled with her by ship from Italy. The women she specifically talked about presented as either excited or fearful about what their future would be like. My mother was neither, her role as a proxy bride was to conform to her parent's direction in both life and marriage.

Researcher Positionality

This is an autoethnographical study therefore I must explain my positionality in this work. As a constructivist, I use my agentic voice which I frame in my own experiences and understandings. I am an andragogical educator with fifteen years' experience in both levels of tertiary education. I bring personal understanding in this thesis as an educator of cultural hybridity and generational understanding of a gender divide. I include my experiences of the safe haven of liminality as a paradigm for educators who may have also sought out during their challenging times as cultural hybrids. This cohort of educator would understand the sensitivity and impart empathy of the lived experiences required for the students we teach. Understanding the tensions in one life affords windows into the complexities into the lives of others particularly cultural hybrids like me. Australia is constructed in terms of the settler populations by migration and continues to do so. Future research as a vehicle for self-exploration for transnational families of the historical diaspora of post WWII to Australia, would bring about results relating to identity formation and generational transmission.

I claim a direct link to the experience of first-generation migration and diasporic experience as the daughter of a proxy bride who endured the six-week journey from Southern Italy to settle in their host country, Australia. I situate myself as a witness to my parent's rootlessness from their homeland, resettling in a new and unfamiliar country, and recalibrating of self that comes with finding their way as new migrants in a country that has not always been receptive to Southern Italians. My deeper dive into understanding the female aspect of cultural transmission affords me the opportunity of bringing forth the real complexities of intergenerational ethnic identity and life construction that in turn impacts social history (Marino, 2019c).

The narratives are accounts of my childhood and adolescent years that were fraught with frustration due to my thwarted identity as a cultural hybrid, perpetuated by cultural conventions from family, church and society. I document these experiences within four

autoethnographies. In one autoethnography, I include the accounts of another daughter of a proxy bride. This methodological approach allowed me to collect data epistemologically and constructively, which in turn provided me with intimate knowledge of myself on a conscious level. Taking a constructivist approach to epistemology I adopted a reflexive position to my research as I interpreted the data from my subjective world view. Writing a thesis in an academic institution and writing as an autoethnographic researcher has brought about tensions against competing research traditions. My position holds true as a reflective practitioner; autoethnography has earned its place in academia as a credible and quality methodology (Byrne-Armstrong, 2001). As an autoethnographer I valued the opportunity to research from a personal level which in turn allowed me to analyse my adolescent history in context to culture, family and societal conventions. My stories show how my lack of identity was the consequence of "long held silences on power, relationships, and cultural taboos" (Adams et al., 2015, p.103). The compelling epiphanies that revealed themselves during the research process also became transformative moments in which I was able to create and design figures and tables embedded within this thesis. This is further articulated by Lilyea (2022) "the potential for transformation through the shared story and through the entire research process extends to all the stakeholders (those who affect and are affected by the experience) of the research" (p. 316).

Thesis background

As the daughter of a proxy bride I reflected on my background from the past and understood that my memories and artifacts represented my life from childhood to adolescence. They were the data that would answer my questions and inform my research. I used the opportunity as an autoethnographer to detail the historicity relating to my parents' diaspora as Southern Italian migrants. I discuss the political landscape that motivated their

mobility to settle in Australia. My narratives detail my cultural hybrid life that are the scaffolding for evocative stories of culture, family and oppression by systems of government and societal power. I detail the consequences of migration and culture and assimilation in a new country. My thesis divulges how I thought about and described my place in my world as a child through to adolescence. Autoethnographically I wrote adhering to the persuasive words of Ellis (2013) "for most of us, autoethnography is not simply a way of knowing about the world: it has become a way of being in the world, one that requires living consciously, emotionally, and reflexively" (p. 10). As an autoethnographer I am afforded the luxury to share what I experienced beyond culture-level value dimensions of my personal experiences and the importance of acknowledging my personal attributes and situational landscapes of my world and my interpretations of the social and cultural world I inhabited.

A Peripheral Life

As a foretaste of the autoethnographical pieces to come, I offer the following short story which is a recollection of me as a girl of ten years of age walking home from school talking to myself, a common occurrence. In this I capture cultural hybridity, gender, race, liminality and oppression. I have identified that my oral culture, that is the stories that I share, are important reminders that my hybridity in fact cultivated my thoughts with the constant envisioning of a future where my identity was my own.

As I walked home from school, the same feeling of not fitting in this world would always creep over me without warning. These thoughts continued to linger on my mind as I strolled towards the shopping strip in my neighbourhood. A respite from my thoughts was to look in the shop windows for new and interesting things. The newsagency (a store where newspapers, magazines and books are sold) was one store that I was particularly drawn to as it had many books and magazines that attracted my attention. I could clearly see the glossy

magazines on the shelves displaying pictures of beautiful girls with blonde hair and blue eyes, I stared at them in awe. My eyes would dart desperately looking for the pictures of other girls, girls that looked like me or girls in my family, but there were only Anglo looking girls on the covers. I slowly glanced down at my arms and as if for the first time became aware that the colour of my skin was not like theirs. I had olive brown skin, brown eyes, dark brown hair, all of which made me consider myself as being dark. I was different and I did not like this about myself. Another reminder. I don't fit in, how could I, I didn't look like an Australian, I don't have blonde hair or blue eyes, and my nose is different. I walked slowly away from the shop, my pace becoming even slower as I walked towards the next street. I deliberately did this because I knew I had to go home and face my other world, another reminder. As I tentatively approached my street, I remembered the hurtful incident that happened at school earlier that day. I meticulously recalled every moment as if gathering evidence to report to the police about my teacher, the adult who decided to publicly chastise me. Feelings of anger bubbled up from the pit of my stomach leaving me with a sense of loathing because I didn't fit in. The truth was I didn't mind going to school but one thing I was sure of, I hated maths, but I loved music and my teacher knew this too. At the maths session she observed me struggling. I was struggling, the questions, the figures became another language that I did not understand and what was the use of writing for the sake of writing. My teacher announced to the world if I didn't finish my maths by the set time of 11.30am in the scheduled morning period, my punishment would be that I would not be allowed to go to music class scheduled in the afternoon. My body wanted to explode. My eyes welled up to cry with a wanting to scream at her aloud, but I wasn't going to let her see me cry and I certainly wasn't going to scream, I knew I would be in bigger trouble if I did that. 11.05am I support my slumped head up with my palms as I stare at the clock situated above the blackboard, scrutinising every inch of its wide glass face and listening to its rhythmic tick

tock, tick tock. 11.10am nothing. 11.20am I now feel anxious and cannot think about the next ten minutes. If she only knew the ecstatic feelings of freedom that I derived from singing, the way that I could lose myself in the songs. Singing was the only time I felt whole and knew that I was good at something, that I fitted in, I had a place in my world. 11.30am class dismissed and she tells me that I have detention in the afternoon to finish my maths exercise. As I continued to walk my mood changed, but my thoughts continued to prompt questions about the life I had and why it was so different. Why can't I be like the other girls, they go to each other's places out of school, why am I not allowed. Am I that different? Why can't Mum be like the other girl's mothers and come to school to help out in the canteen? I knew what the answer was, my Mum didn't want to come to the school because she didn't fit in, she did not speak the language and she resisted the Australian culture. She only knew her culture and that was enough for her. My slow walk finally ended when I reached my home, as I walked through the gate. I thought, I still don't fit in.

This story was not an unusual occurrence for me. I relived this scenario and others often on my way home from school. My primary school days were difficult ones and I would regularly enter the refuge of liminality. The moments spent there were to experience a liberating reprieve from a world I did not understand because I didn't fit in.

Structure of Thesis

This thesis is structured into nine chapters that follow the format of Thesis with Publications. This option is available to all doctoral and master's students enrolled at Monash University. According to university guidelines, "The thesis including published works is not a different degree; rather, it is a thesis format that includes papers that have been submitted, or accepted, for publication" (Monash Research Graduate Office, 2020, para. 2). Following these requirements, this thesis includes one journal article, one of which has been

successfully published in a peer-reviewed international academic journal. The findings were also presented at The Qualitative Report Tenth Annual Conference in Florida, USA. The opportunity to present to my peers provided me with the impetus to seek further connections within academic networks as a means to gain knowledge within my discipline. I include three narrative chapters which will be sent to scholarly refereed publishers once this thesis is completed. Table 1.1 below briefly describes each of the chapters included in this thesis with journal articles published and unpublished. Please note that as I have included four chapters published or written in the form of manuscripts for future submission. There may be some overlap as for example, I need to revisit context and methodology on each occasion.

Table 1.1

Summary of Chapters

Chapter	Description
1. Introduction	Chapter 1 provides an introduction and contextualisation of the study. The contents provide the impetus for the research, research context, the justification for the study, research questions, and the structure of the thesis.
2. Literature review	This chapter provides you with a contextual evaluation of the research data relevant to the study whilst identifying particular gaps in knowledge.
3. Methodology	The methodology chapter presents a detailed analysis and process utilised within my research approach.
4. Publication 1 Journal Article Chapter 4 *Unspoken Barriers: An Autoethnographic Study of Frustration, Resistance and Resilience*	This journal article presents themes of immigration, cultural capital, and cultural hybridity as the contributing players within my autoethnographic research. I share my lived experiences to highlight the challenges of being a cultural hybrid.

5. Narrative Chapter 5 *Crossing the Threshold: An Autoethnography of a Hybrid Daughter*	In this article I explore how the meaning of culture, migration and being female contributed to my constant search of finding agency in hybrid spaces. The narratives that I present construct understanding of the Southern Italian cultural boundaries that I was confined to.
6. Narrative Chapter 6 *I am and I am not my Mother: Through my Autoethnographical lens*	This article highlights implications for women of similar cultural and familial backgrounds to my own. I discuss how my life trajectory was impacted upon as a direct consequence of my mother's migration, her experience as a proxy bride and resistance to assimilation within an Australian culture.
7. Narrative Chapter 7 *Daughters of the Diaspora: Interrogating Impositions of Cultural Conformity*	In this paper I discuss my personal experience with cultural transmission as cultural conformity using a collaborative approach as an autoethnographical method.
8. Discussion	This chapter examines the four journal articles to provide a snapshot of the core themes, aims and findings.
9. Conclusion	This concluding chapter presents the contribution of this study. A succinct summary of major findings is offered. It also presents the limitations and the significance of the research. Finally, recommendation(s) for the future are provided with a view to further research.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter undertakes the challenge of investigating intersected and overlapping scholarly literature to contextualise the study and history of Italian migration to Australia and Italian proxy marriages post World War II (WWII). This literature review reports research that explores the historical and societal contexts, including the diasporic nature surrounding Italian migration to Australia. Firstly, I examine the literature written in relation to diaspora and the historicity around migration and presence of Southern Italian migrants in Australia. Secondly, I assess specific scholarship highlighting themes of societal and government racist manifestations towards Italian migrants engendered by the White Australia policy. Thirdly, the impact of chain migration and the intentionality of formed cultural enclaves is examined versus stipulated government assimilation. I present the broad themes of proxy brides their transnational experiences and proxy marriage. Finally, I discuss the notion of liminality and third space and the potential impact of intergenerational trauma.

Diaspora

Ancient Diaspora

Diaspora is an old concept that has undergone changes of context and interpretations throughout history. Within cultural and migrant studies, theorisations of diaspora support scholarly debate (Braziel & Mannur, 2003). Early discussions of diaspora referred to the long-held understanding relating to the dispersion of Jewish populations. With time, the term proliferated from its original meaning to incorporate all the diversified interpretations of migration (Brubaker, 2005; Faist et al., 2013; Kenny, 2013).

The term diaspora originally came from the ancient Greek words “dia speiro,” meaning literally “to re-sow.” This term and concept were initially employed in reference to the ancient Hellenic peoples and to the 6th century BCE Jews after the fall of Jerusalem (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2014). Faist (2010) explained that the meaning of diaspora was initially “the historic experience of particular groups, specifically Jews and Armenians. Later, it was extended to religious minorities in Europe” (p. 12). This ancient word is also found in significant religious medieval writings (Ages, 2012; Braziel & Mannur, 2003; Gilroy, 1994). Diasporist William Safran – has written widely over the years of the social and political aspects of migration and diasporic transnationalism. Safran acknowledges that the term diaspora had a specific meaning, with the exile of Jews, however over time diaspora has become a term relegated to immigrants who choose to migrate to another country (Brubaker, 2005; Safran, 1991, 2005, 2007, 2009; Safran et al., 2008).

Safran (1991) asserted that the historical meaning of a diasporic community be contextualised by the following six categories:

1. progenies of the homeland community who have migrated to two or more countries;

2. posterity of collective memory, vision, or myth about how original homeland contributes to a valued-added community;

3. belief of never being accepted by the host community which in turn perpetuates feelings of alienation and isolation;

4. belief and perception that their homeland is their epitome of a home where they should or would return if it were possible;

5. exemplary commitment by the collective community to support and maintain solidarity to the homeland for its safety and prosperity;

6. endurance and maintenance of relationship, personally or vicariously, to their homeland to regenerate feelings of solidarity and communal consciousness (pp. 83-84).

This perspective is also pointed out by Berthomiere (2005) espousing the works by Gabriel Sheffer who explores the concept and timeline of diasporic peoples back through history. The theorisation was characterised by three significant definitions:

1. To maintain and develop a collective identity as "diasporised people";
2. To create cultural networks distinct from those of the homeland; and
3. Maintain significant homeland contact and follow traditions from homeland (Sheffer, 1986).

Diaspora and Migration

The characterisation of the construct and term diaspora has led to a proliferation of terms such as migration, ethnographic movement, geographic dispersion, transnationalism, and other adjectives to describe the cross-cultural movement across the globe (Angelo, 1997; Butler, 2001). Tololian (1991) argued that "the term that once described the Jewish, Greek, and Armenian dispersion now shares meanings with a larger semantic domain that includes words like immigrant, expatriate, refugee, guest-worker, exile community, overseas community, ethnic community" (pp. 4-5). Castles (2000) added that, "migration is often a result of economic and social development … migration may contribute to further development and improved economic and social conditions, or alternatively may help to perpetuate stagnation and inequality" (p. 269).

Questioning the difference between migration and diaspora, Butler (2001) ultimately defines the latter as "the dispersal of a people from its original homeland" (p. 189). The reference to diaspora as a "scattering of a people" originating as human migration is a prolific description asserted by diasporic academics (Chander, 2001; Gabaccia, 2013; Gabaccia & Ottanelli 2000; Galperrin, 2014; Haque, 2013; Hoskins, 2015). The collective definition of diasporic peoples has been argued as a transnational community characterised by leaving their homeland for a new host nation, maintaining the same notion of culture whilst choosing to live within a supported cultural network where social relationships are nurtured (Brubaker, 2005; Clifford, 1994; Safran, 1991; Van Hear, 1998).

Migration can best be described as the transition of people leaving their homeland to live in a new nation because of direct political or economic influence, or a voluntary choice (Meseguer & Burgess, 2014). Notions of diaspora and migration are intersected by differing motivations for migrating. The reasons may be the lure of better employment options, the pursuit of a new career or to further political ambitions in the new host country (Cohen, 1997). There are different interpretations of migration. Interestingly, Horst (2006) perpetuates the view that there is a culture of migration which is experienced by refugees who have hopes and dreams to resettle to another country away from their oppressive environment. These two interpretations have served migration scholars throughout recent history as prominent research lenses to philosophise, analyse and forecast the aftermath of immigration populations and their new host country (Zapata-Barrero & Rezaei, 2020).

Diasporic Ethnicity

Cohen (2008) affirmed the notion of diaspora being primarily cultural, either mandatory or voluntary. This can be a complex notion to contemplate. Cohen (2008) discussed the significance of Wittgenstein's rope analogy "to compare systematically how

different diasporas conformed to the normal, but not invariable, features of most diasporas" (p. 158). The interlacing of the fibres of a rope could be understood as a symbolic reminder of the different ethnic groups, their complexities, and reasons why they were leaving their homeland. No ethnicity is straight forward. The emergence of the more contemporary expanded meaning for the term diaspora within postcolonial studies and beyond, suggests that many diasporists agree that the term and meaning of diaspora is complicated (Anthias,1998; Chariandy, 2006; Hall, 1990).

Alternatively, Butler (2001) questions the context of diaspora implicitly from an acculturation and ethnonationalism paradigm and advances the argument that minimal research has been afforded to diasporic studies as a distinctive cultural classification. The conversations around diaspora continue to gain prominence in discussions regarding the exodus of many people around the world from a violent and oppressive history. This diaspora is cultural. For example, Hang and Nguyen (1995) consider the dispersion and exile of their people from Vietnam as diasporic since 208 BCE. Van Hear (1998) considers the making and unmaking of nations and the plight of expelled migrants as a determinant of their disruptive history as "diasporization" (p. 195). Historical diasporic transnational formations are labels that are accorded to migrants who consider themselves as diasporic and oriented within their new host country by culture, religion, and tradition (Brubaker, 2005; Clifford, 1994; Cohen, 1997; Dufoix, 2005; Tölölyan, 1996).

Diasporic terminology

The continuing analysis around the term and meaning of diaspora draws attention to the conceptualisation of displacement, dislocation, exile, and mass movement in addition to providing epistemological resonance for academics, diasporists, anthropologists and other scholars (Israel, 2000; Jacobs, 2009). The discussion of voluntary or involuntary trans

mobility across borders is not new knowledge: human beings have always moved in response to their countries political, religious, or economic positions (Herzig & Hoerder, 2013; King, 2002; Kothari, 2002; Ma, 2003). Diasporic historians remind us that despite diasporic populations leaving their homelands of their free will, there is an argument to be had that this was not their decision. When you consider that people believed that economic circumstances were responsible, even though it may not have been immediately life threatening, but in terms of the betterment and promise of a good future, people had little choice but to leave in search of economic amelioration (Erdal & Oeppen, 2018; Gieling et al., 2011).

Relative Diaspora

Acknowledging that diaspora can be all the above descriptors including what Berns-McGown (2008) asserts as primarily "a space of the imagination" (p. 7), her argument provides an interesting perspective relating that diaspora does more than describe which generation has migrated, their gender, their race, their belief system and yet can be all those things (Berns-McGown, 2008). Interestingly, Shain and Barth (2003) argue that diaspora is most probably linked to political choice, civil disruption and war serving as conduits for conflict and intervention. Considering previous scholarly literature, Brubaker (2005) puts forward another point of view that theories of diaspora have their own teleologies. This theory has validity, however, as it is loaded with language that requires in depth analysis. Daswani et al. (2013) put forward the argument that several scholars engage in unnecessarily expanding on the meaning of diaspora detailing probable irrelevant and hypothetical connotations. Ultimately, scholarly, and diasporic literature continue to subscribe to a broad consensus that the word diaspora is polysemous with migration, geographic dispersion, scattering, and transnationalism. These are all connectors and contributors to the history of unintended consequences for the many legions of migrants who leave their homelands for other countries. In this thesis, I use the term diaspora in relation to culture. The Italian

diaspora informs my studies and research which is richly embedded in cultural history and traditions. Ultimately, the word diaspora did have its early interpretations aligned to the exile of the Jews and included other global communities as a consequence of warfare or political dogma. Of course, meanings change over time and origins are not current perceptions.

Diasporic Identity

Stuart Hall writes prolifically regarding race and diaspora (Hall, 2002, 2008, 2018, 2020) and defines diaspora as "the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of 'identity' which lives with and through, not despite, difference; by hybridity. Diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference" (Hall, 1990, p. 235). Considering Hall's discussion, identity as a concept can be extended to the formation of an immigrant identity because of a diasporic experience Relevant to this study, I specifically focus on the Italian immigrant identity. The identity of diasporic Italians living in Australia is about the choice to set foundations in a new country whilst maintaining their diverse culture, language, beliefs, and ethnic regimes (Baldassar, 2006; Smolicz et al., 1998). Ethnic identity is carried within the self, it is not left behind when crossing borders.

With the increase of diasporic literature post 1990, several diverse interpretations became popular as characterised by Kaur et al. (2005), extending "from queer theory where sexuality is the site of difference from which settled notions of belonging are challenged, to economic network theory, where diasporas are examples of effective entrepreneurial networks" (p. 8). By its increasing popularity the term diaspora has also acquired diverse interpretations in modern diasporic literature at the expense of the term becoming debased (Clifford, 1994; Dirlik, 2004). Challenging the historical interpretation of diaspora, Mulanney

(2010) refers to postcolonial literature citing “they name both a geographical phenomenon – the traversal of physical terrain by an individual or a group” (p. 7).

Culture

Culture as a concept is multifaceted. This makes it difficult to bring a clear and distinct definition of it as a whole. There are key differences of the word culture when speaking about a way of life, art, groups of people, geography, customs, gender, traditions, civilisation, institutions, sport, religion, and recreational pastimes to name a few (Eagleton, 2016; Wildavsky, 1996). In a statement defining the plurality of culture, Williams (1983) describes “the specific and variable cultures of different natures and periods, but also the specific and variable cultures of social and economic groups within a nation” (p. 89). An additional description was provided by Mitchell (1995) who stated that, culture can be described as “something which both differentiates the world and provides a concept for understanding that differentiation” (p. 103). Further to this, Jackson (1989) argued that cultures create their own diverse patterns of existence namely cultures representing meaning, this then makes sense of the world they inhabit. The polysemy that situates culture as a challenging task for definition in a finite manner is best described by Samovar and Porter (2003) who conclude “culture is ubiquitous, multidimensional, complex, and pervasive. Because culture is so broad, there is no single definition or central theory of what it is” (p. 8).

The discussion around culture leads invariably to cultural boundaries. One specific notion is espoused by Clifford (1988) who advocates that hegemonic cultures are defined and challenged by living within a space of inauthenticity. He argues this is as a result of being “caught between cultures” as a consequence of living in a world that is interrelated (p. 11). According to Mitchell (1995), who disputes that culture has no ontological existence, believing it is the idea of culture that has importance, it is about the meaning making of a culture that determines what culture is. To argue this point further, Cremaschi et. al. (2021)

approach the ontological position of culture as where and what it is, being that culture is constructed from meanings that occur as part of the course of existing in society.

Cultural Identity and Diaspora

Acknowledging diaspora as a way of looking at the world by encompassing homogeneous ideas of nationality, diaspora and migration should be seen consistent with the concepts of traditional cultural structures as significant semantic spaces (Tsagarousianou, 2017). The Italian cultural structure embodies the family, religion, community and what is termed the '*sistemazione*' to frame the very essence of their continued existence from their homeland (Baldassar, 2006). Another point of view espoused by Shweder et al. (2008) that culture can be perceived as the "custom complex" that respects the "symbolic and behavioural inheritances" (p. 867). As discussed, culture, however it is defined, is an authentic paradigm within communities across the globe. Historian Marino (2021) proposes that culture is inherent for many as they are guided through the challenging times of cultural identity, being migrants negotiating a new life in a new country (Marino, 2021). According to Daswani et al. (2013) "while 'cultures' and 'communities' are social constructs that spatially connect, and disconnect, people in real ways, its effects are never simply constructed but are also determined through relationships" (p. 31). In Gilroy's (1993a) estimation, culture is belonging. It is affiliated with the process of being part of a place of arriving in the host country and absolute to ethnicity. Figure 2.1 below is my interpretation of three key objectives encompassing the meaning of culture.

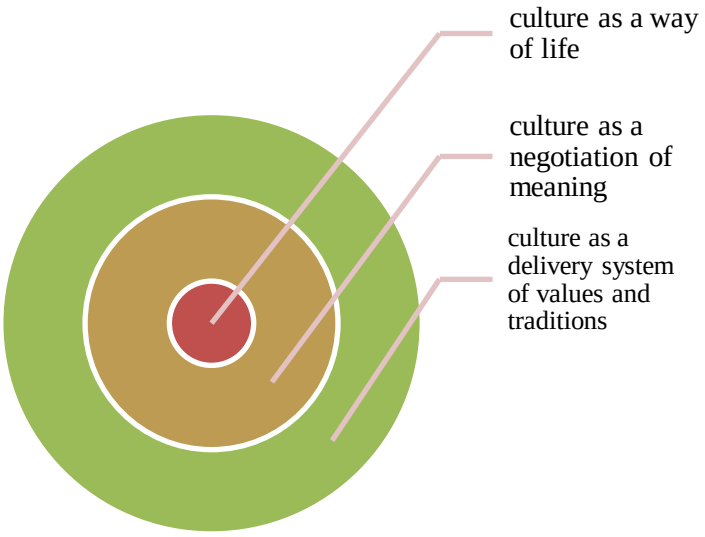

Figure 2.1

Wake's Interpretation of Culture

Culture has deeper implications for migrants who wish to continue living their lives epitomised by their native cultural traditions and community whilst maintaining their identity. Hall and Du Gay (1996) posit that cultural identity is a work in progress that develops from the inside out. In addition they espouse that no cultural identity is fixed as the experience of diaspora gives meaning to the lived experience. Figure 2.2 highlights what I believe constitutes the staples for a healthy cultural identity.

Figure 2.2

Encapsulating Cultural Identity

It allows the past to be part of the present whilst acknowledging new experiences within a new life to unfold. According to De Lepervanche (1980), culture is constructed through ethnicity, the exploration of oneself and not to be mislead by cultural symbols that are often representative as contributing to a definition of cultural identity. The argument for this view is disputed by Iuliano (2001) who purports that ethnicity encapsulates language, religion, endogamy, within the cultural boundaries of a homogenous community. Consideration must be given to how the diasporic experience shaped cultural identity for new migrants in the host country. While there is limited body of literature which examines the experiences of Italian female migrants, specifically proxy brides, further research would assist to compare studies with women in similar circumstances in other countries.

Italian Diaspora in Australia

The History, the Explorers, the Migration

The concepts of diaspora and migration are central to historical scholarly literature when discussing the migratory history to Australia by Italians. The first recording of Italians arriving in Australia predates the First Fleet. James Mario Matra (Matraville is an existing suburb in Sydney named after Matra) was a midshipman with Antonio Ponto, a Venetian passenger on the 'Endeavour' captained by James Cook on his voyage in 1770 (Jupp, 2001; Whitlam, 2002). The infamous Italian convict by the name of Giuseppe Tusa (or Tuzo) was a guest at his majesty's pleasure on the First Fleet, which docked in Sydney on its arrival in Australia (Cresciani, 2003; "Italy," n.d.; Jupp, 2001, Rando, 1998). In the 1850s, many Italians were drawn to Victoria by the discovery of gold, including Raffaello Carboni, who "witnessed and documented the Eureka Stockade in 1854" ("Italy," n.d.). When the gold rush ceased its productive phase, the Italians who stayed, established small, mainly agricultural communities in country Victoria. In contrast Cecilia (1987) denotes that the first significant wave of Italian migrants was a group of seventy stonemasons to arrive to Australia from the region of Lombard. Equally, Italian researchers recorded that within the late nineteenth century, the lure to Australia attracted Italian performers, fishermen and sculptors (Cavallaro, 2003; Mecca & Iozzi, 2000).

Enhancing the attraction to migrate to Australia, Italian cultural association – the Dante Alighieri Society (http://www.dantealighierimelbourne.com/) – founded the Melbourne branch in 1896, the only branch of this society outside of Italy. This Italian cultural organisation was instrumental in achieving a population growth to 1,500 in Victoria and providing employment for Italian migrants who possessed skills as labourers, artisans, artists, doctors, agriculturalists, retailers, manufacturers, and scientists. Highly skilled and renowned engineers Carlo Catani and Ettore Checchi were a significant force in transforming the Australian city of Melbourne's irrigation and water system schemes ("Italy," n.d.).

Post WWII Italian Diaspora to Australia

The chronic shortage of labour in Australia due to the second world war determined the government's initial decision to source migrants from Britain, the reason being because their assimilated heritage would not present problems (Randazzo & Cigler, 1987). What was not envisaged by the government that the number of migrants from the United Kingdom were minimal, leaving them with no option but to amend their immigration policy to allow migrants from non-English speaking countries (Furlan & Faggion, 2016). Consequently, Italy became the only country in Europe whose main export was that of a proletarian mass migration due to the country's extreme and overwhelming poverty (Baldassar, 2007; Ember et al., 2005). Australia was in dire need to increase the country's population however they needed to convince the Anglo Australian community to accept the large intake of immigrants from Europe. The slogan 'Populate or Perish' was an initiative by the government to foster a cordial reception by Anglo Australians towards new immigrants who were wanting to commence a new life in the lucky country (Babb, 2016; Curnow & Wettenhall, 2010). The other catchphrase, 'Push or Pull' was used liberally to encapsulate the economic situations in both countries. The Push was by the Italian government experiencing chronic economic recession that forced people to migrate under the extreme circumstances of poverty and chronic standards of unacceptable living conditions. The immigrants presented as a surfeit of people, while Australia urgently needed an abundance of human resources to develop its national potential (Masticelli, 2015). The Pull was from the Australian government as a strategy to populate a sparse country as an imperative for growth. The advertisement of excellent work conditions and assisted passage for migrants was a positive lure to the lucky country (Leuner, 2008; MacDonald & MacDonald 1969; Wake 2018). The discussion of this era is a thematic focus highlighting how Australians viewed Italian migrants post WWII in Italian migration literature according to Caroline Alcorso (1992).

White Australia Policy and Italian migrants

As post WWII migratory patterns increased from Italy to Australia during the 1950's and 1960's the knowledge that eluded many immigrants was that the White Australia Policy was deeply embedded into its political and social landscape (Dewhirst, 2014; O'Connor, 1996; Wake, 2018). The Italian proletarian migrants were ignorant of the racism that this policy enshrined as they embarked on their diasporic journey between 1947 and 1950 through their own chain migration networks (Baldassar, 2011; MacDonald & MacDonald, 1969). The mass migration out of Italy was described by Baldassar (2011) as "the haemorrhage of humanity that flowed out a reduced number of migrants from other countries such as Holland, Germany, Greece, Yugoslavia, Poland, and Hungary" (p. 1). This was not perceived as good news for the contemporary Australian population as it considered itself to be an outpost of England and was a staunchly assimilationist country.

Southern Italians, the Wrong Colour

The welcome for migrants to Australia did not extend immediately to Southern Italians, rather they were considered an amorphous indistinct mass. Australia's infamous White Australia Policy initially excluded Southern Italian migrants wishing to emigrate as they were deemed as 'non-white' and a 'peril' to the Australian way of life (Jupp, 2002). Southern Italian immigrants were considered unfit as they were not of British descent and did not fit the vision for a 'Anglo-Celtic' Australia (Armillei & Mascitelli, 2017; Masticelli, 2015). This discriminatory policy targeted Southern Italians on their general appearance, their olive skin and facial characteristics which in turn deemed them persons of colour (Andreoni, 2003; Dewhirst, 2014). It is important to mention that northern Italians were considered favourably as new migrants due to their fair complexions, physicality, and their higher level of education. The prejudice towards Southern Italians was not a new experience. This racialisation against Southern Italians was prevalent by the northern Italians since Italy's

unification. The political production of the Southern question aligned with the continuous northern characterisation of the problem in the south. This discrimination created additional racial intolerance for Southern Italians in the late nineteen century, as the influx of Southern Italian migrants relocated to the United States (Dewhirst, 2014; Slaughter, 1939). Historical research and debate relating to the obstinate northern Italian judgement of Southern Italians as being ethnically inferior and sexually ambiguous subalterns, is argued to date back to colonisation after the unification of Italy (Allen & Russo 1997; Guglielmo & Salerno, 2012; Ricatti, 2018; Verdicchio, 1997). Attempting to further demonstrate the existing structural racism Ricatti (2018) advocated "the persistent representation of Southern Italians as almost African and almost black was easily appropriated by Australians, within a broader obsession with whiteness as the founding character of the Australian nation and its democracy" (p. 55).

In her account of the Thomas Arthur Ferry's 1925 Royal Commission report, Dewhirst (2014) highlights his position as to the racial fitness of Southern Italians as being reflected primarily by their physical traits and how the royal commission was complicit in encouraging systemic racism in Australia (p. 317). This social phenomenon has been a controversial subject for historians, anthropologists, psychologists, and positivist scientists when ascribing how Southern Italians were viewed as "individualistic and asocial and thus less able to construct a civil society and ultimately as more primitive and less evolved in contrast to northerners who were placid, orderly and sociable" (Cimino & Foschi, 2014, p. 290). Commentary and discussion around racialisation are further purported by Ricatti (2018) declaring "the racialized position of Italian migrants, especially the southerners, between white and black, is central to any understanding not only of the discrimination they endured, but also of their strategic attempts to contrast and mitigate such discrimination" (p. 54).

The Rules, the Coercion

It was not until the United States refused the mass migration of Southern Italians entering their country post WWII (reason being that thousands had emigrated from Italy post WWI) that pressure was put on Australia to lift their restrictions and allow the numerous influxes of qualifying emigrants to migrate without prejudice (Agnew, 1997; Cresciani, 2003; Dandy et al., 2010; Kevin & Pesman, 2001; McDonald & McDonald, 1969). The Italian diaspora to Australia challenged many of the new immigrants to question their identity and connection to their new country as both immigrant and a cultural hybrid. They were cognisant that they were diasporic and still personified the same role within their familial structure, still had the same skin colour, still practised the same religion, still embodied their *Italianita,* yet these facts did not fully define them (Baldassar, 2006; Berns-McGown, 2008).

The challenges of required assimilation for new migrants as articulated within the Australian assimilation policy, was a manipulative way to coerce new arrivals to relinquish their cultural, national, and personal history and adhere to a model society based on Anglo-Celtic racial and cultural origins (Damousi, 2013; Haebich, 2008; Macintryre, 2014). This was a constant concern for the migrants who had carried complex experiences as a consequence of living through pre and post WWII, which ultimately became the decisive factor to migrate (Damousi, 2013). The assimilation policy was initiated and designed to allay the fears of the Anglo Australian public who believed that they were being invaded by interlopers and aliens (Ang & Stratton, 1998; Carruthers, 2013; Damousi, 2013; Macintyre, 2014; Tavan, 2005). Additionally, Ting-Toomey and Djoree (2019) affirm that:

> when the host culture is operating under economically affluent conditions, its members appear to be more tolerant and hospitable toward newcomers, when socioeconomic conditions are poor, strangers become the scapegoats for local economic problems. (p. 101)

As migration began to grow Australia's post war reconstruction, assimilation policy notwithstanding, the government's ambition for the country to develop as an industrialised and mechanised nation was being realised (Masticelli, 2015).

Chain Migration

An important migratory indicator to Australia by Italians was the gender imbalance during the period of 1876 and 1976, 75 per cent were men (Ricatti, 2018). Ricatti (2018) suggests that an explanation for this imbalance was due to many migrants planning to return to their homeland, however women's migration demonstrated a surge during the post war period linked to the phenomena of proxy marriages.

My study mainly focuses on the Southern Italian immigrants who arrived in Australia post WWII. This information is relevant and pertinent as I am a second-generation daughter of Southern Italian Calabrian migrants, who were part of the Australia Italy chain migration in the 1950's and an important agent of change. Economically the situation in Italy during the 1950's took a positive turn in the north of Italy however this was not the case for the south. Rural southern regions and villages could not sustain the overwhelming conditions of poverty and unemployment which were to become the catalyst for "Calabrians to [migrate to] Australia en masse" (Marino, 2019c, p. 233). Australia wanted migrants to work as labourers and many southerners had only agrarian, shepherding and mining skills with limited or no literacy skills (Baggio & Sanfilippo, 2011; Castles et al., 1992). The phenomenon of admitting migrants as labourers was classified by Iacovetta (1992) as being "associated with the movement of the landed peasantry" (p. 22). The fundamental and primary characteristic of why the term peasant was established, is that it was representative of the Southern Italian landscape. The land is one of rugged and mainly untillable land which is largely fit for pastoral means and at best only growing wheat (Lopreato, 1965).

The term chain migration is a human mechanism that was established as a form of sponsorship by ethnic communities for their relatives and friends who came from the same village or town (Hill, 2011; MacDonald & MacDonald, 1964). Chain migration was the main migratory pattern that guided the Italians to Australia post WWII. Many of the migrants travelled with family and kinfolk that belonged to their villages or regions in Italy. Chain migration provided the means to join family and established communities who in turn provided them with settlement, social connections and in maintaining optimism for the future (Choldin, 2016). As chain migration became prevalent, the high mobility of single male Italian migrants to Australia did not prepare them for the racist attitudes by Anglo Australians. Letters to the prime minister suggested that 'murdering Italians' were a danger to society and their daughters (Scaparo, 2009, p. 89). The public's mistrust and fear were born from negative perceptions due to the disproportionate number of foreign single men looking for wives (Bosworth et al., 1993). Fears about the sexual proclivities of Southern Italian single males became a continuous concern well into the 1960s. These fears were perpetuated by the clergy of the European Australian Christian Fellowship group citing the gender imbalance between this cultural group and the alleged voracious sexual lifestyles (Simic, 2014).

Assimilating

The assimilationist expectations and the judgemental generalisations from the Australian government towards migrants did not engender confidence, but instead instilled episodes of misery for many who were homesick for the old life. Under the strain of post war poverty, the prejudice and hostility particularly towards Southern Italian men, only perpetuated feelings of loneliness, grief and betrayal by their homeland and new nation (Collins et al., 2009; Cresciani, 2003; Simic, 2014). A sense of belonging to a community of Italian culture was integral to healing the wounds of misery.

Cultural and social geographers are among the increasing numbers of academics who have developed growing literature on the cultural characteristics of chain migration. The degree of importance was guided by a sense of place that Italian migrants and their communities created by living and enacting their cultural traditions (Collins et al., 2009). The Southern Italian migrants in one sense were fortunate to be part of the chain migratory pattern demonstrating how they became the recipients of ongoing support of established family and *paesani* systems living in Melbourne, South Australia, New South Wales, and Western Australia. Their communities provided the means for the migrants to move to their new country with the commitment of maintaining strong community networks (Colpi, 1991; Marino, 2019c).

A Sense of Belonging

Chain migration also encouraged the formation of Italian enclaves and demographic profile in areas such as Carlton in Melbourne. These enclaves signified as 'Little Italy' were essential for maintaining cultural connections and nostalgic traditions with their homeland as well as preserving their ethnic identity. This also created a sense of belonging in a foreign and at times racially intolerant country (Baubock & Faist, 2010; Gabaccia, 2004). The communities comprised working-class families living in the vicinity of churches and Italian grocery stores. Italian newspapers such as *Il Globo* (inaugural publication 1920), informed its readers of local and international news which served to ease the transition into their new lives and maintain connection with the homeland (Iacovetta, 1992; Southcott & de Bruin, 2021). The infusion of transnational reports from Italy combined with community and migration discourses were reported by influential Italian newspapers *Il Globo* and *La Fiama.* Their journalistic reports and stories reflected changes in Australia's social and political landscape playing a pivotal role in the settlement for many of the Italian migrants (Dewhirst & Scully, 2021; Johansson & Battison, 2014; Rando, 2000; Ricatti, 2018). The imperative of being

connected and established in a cultural community was enacted through social interaction, language and maintaining religious and cultural traditions (Collins et al., 2009). Cultural events such as religious *festes* (meaning feast day or festival) became "the glue joining the sacred and secular aspects of Italian immigrant life in Australia" (Southcott & de Bruin, 2021). In many cities throughout the world where little Italy's exist, the Italian community bonds are brought about through Catholic religious rituals and practices. These are predominantly observed during highly significant times such as the celebration of the religious feast days honouring patron saints. According to Scott-Maxwell (2007), in addition to having a *feste* (feast days or festivals) the inclusion of a *banda* (a traditional Italian name for orchestra or band) was an imperative when celebrating religious and provincial cultural events in villages and towns predominantly throughout Southern Italy.

Proxy Marriage and Brides

Understanding Proxy Marriage

Drawing on scholarship across the globe the term proxy marriage has been historically described as the act of a woman living in her homeland who has entered a marriage with a representative for her absent husband standing in as a substitute (Baldassar, 2006; Baldassar, 2011; Iulliano, 1999; O'Hagen, 2021; Ricatti, 2018). This description also applies to other terms when describing proxy brides such as promised brides, picture brides and correspondence brides (Quiroz, 2014; Vaggalis, 2021). Arranged marriage was also a term that was used in the same vein as proxy marriage as Vaggalis (2021) depicted in her account of the long-held tradition practiced in the United States.

Marriage is a timeworn social institution within the history of human civilisation. Understandings of the institution of marriage have changed over time, but it continues to maintain its social significance across cultures throughout the world. Broadly, the definition of marriage is a custom and system respected as a global practice imbedded within its cultural

interpretations (Fincham & Beach, 2010; Lehrer, 2004). To expand further, Coontz (2004) interprets marriage as uniquely personal, while Noller and Feeney (2002) agree with this statement, albeit they concede that sexual maturity has a definitive bearing on the decision to marry. The context of proxy marriage takes on a different trajectory of the conventional tradition of marriage. It is perpetuated by immigration movements making it a prominent feature of worldwide migration discourses. This form of spousal immigration focuses on proxy marriages as an initiative to meet the needs of the host country and an alternative for migrants to leave the homeland for a more abundant life.

There are conflicting dates in history and origin of proxy marriage, one which Carroll (2010) dates back to biblical times. Other historians invoke the notion that proxy marriage began in antiquity with the Romans according to epigraphical data and evidence obtained from inscriptions on monuments and graves (Scheidel, 2007; Shaw, 2002). The Roman system of proxy marriage was that of a union between a man and woman constituted by an agreement of both parties with no required ceremony or official in attendance, only a written or verbally shared consent was necessary to deem the marriage legal. Roman law allowed only a man the option to marry at will by utilising a messenger as proxy. A woman was not afforded the same rights as the husband, as he was deemed the dominant partner in the union according to common law (Carroll, 2011).

The validity and legitimacy of a proxy marriage was accepted and authorised across many societies throughout the world over many centuries with the only exception to the Roman law being that the ceremony had to be authorised by the government and under the perspicuous sanctity of the Catholic Church (Cahill, 2016; Carroll, 2011; Iuliano, 1999). The historical Canonical tradition since the Council of Trent was in accordance with the civil marriage codes of European, Latin American, and South American nations which was in fact proxy marriage (Iuliano, 1999). The practice of proxy marriage became more prevalent

during post WWI and WWII as a means to build a new life in countries such as the United States, Canada, and Australia. Generally, the phenomenon of proxy marriages globally has been under researched as a result of limited scholarly literature (Iuliano, 2001).

A Global Proxy Phenomena

Contributing to this discussion, historian Iuliano (2001) brings attention to the accounts and narratives relating to Japanese picture brides who had similar experiences as the Italian Canadian proxy brides. Researcher Vaggalis (2021) discusses the terminology assigned as picture brides, correspondence brides, proxy brides as part of the European immigration history signifying that the term '"picture bride" was prominently and popularly applied to Southern European and Japanese women alike as a "politically charged, racialized signifier that provides nuance to the complex yet fluid racial hierarchies of the early twentieth century" (p. 47).

There are few explicit research studies conducted on Greek immigrant women (particularly proxy brides or female 'unaccompanied') in Australia (Nazou, 2013). For two decades (1952-1972) and with the sanction of the ICEM (Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration), the migration of Greek women to Australia exceeded 8,763 to be employed either in industry as factory workers or as domestic workers (Palaktsoglou, 2013). In migration discourse, Greek women were considered the invisible immigrants, whose individual migration experience is included in the male-dominated migration discourse (Palaktsoglou, 2013). Women immigrants comprised nearly half of all Greek migration to Australia, yet despite this, their history remains subsidiary with peripheral reporting in relation to diasporic marriages (Gavaki, 2003). Greek female unaccompanied brides were predominantly from poor agricultural backgrounds, with little or no dowry and with fewer prospects of marrying and having their own family in Greece (Palaktsoglou, 2013). At this juncture it is prudent to expand on if or how the proxy bride's life improved as a consequence

of migrating to a new host nation. Historians such as Donna Gabaccia are committed to the view that migrant women were instrumental in advancing their status and making improvements to the social structure in migrant communities (Iuliano, 2001).

There is limited scholarly literature which focuses on the historical and sociological position of proxy brides in general, that being said the studies that are available are not conceptually explicit to use in comparison. In terms of contextual generated informative Italian Australian publications, two historians Susi Bella Wardrop and Francesco Ricatti, provide historical and autobiographical data to draw upon. Often the discourse of comparison in historical migration studies is not related to existing scholarly works leaving no potential to formulate an informed argument (Yans-McLaughlin, 1991). Regrettably, on a global scale I found little literature that reported research concerning the phenomena of proxy marriages and proxy brides other than in Australia post WWII.

Italian Proxy Brides

A Systemised Marriage Ritual

During the post war era of the 1950's and 1960's the migration of single Italian males to Australia took on the phenomenon of marrying a single woman from their homeland by proxy. The unprecedented popularity of these proxy marriages was due to leaving an impoverished country of birth for a new life in a host country, eventually with a new wife from the same culture (Iulianno, 1999). These contracted unions had the foundation of a provincial and parochial endogamy, two important factors embodying the phenomenon and systemisation of proxy marriages. The facilitation by church, family and community was concordant and instrumental in arranging proxy marriages for Italians to migrate to countries such as Australia, Canada, and the United States (Baldassar, 2006; Baldassar, 2011; Iulliano, 1999; O'Hagen, 2021; Ricatti, 2018). Regional Italy, specifically Southern Italy, adopted the

term *'campanilismo'* meaning to have strong feelings, sentimentality, and attachment to their village by all who lived within hearing distance from the *campanile* (bell tower). This iconic symbol was significant and instrumental within the community in orchestrating and commissioning proxy marriages for single young women as a community responsibility (Callipari-Marcuzzo, 2017; Iuliano, 1999, 2001; Marino, 2020; O'Hagen, 2021). It was not unusual that the bride and groom were not acquainted as many families employed the assistance of an advocate and the Catholic church from the same community to arrange the marriage by proxy (Ricatti, 2018). Proxy marriages were analogous with traditional marriages in the south of Italy, becoming a considered ritual of marriage for all concerned parties (Scarparo, 2009). Drawing on case studies elicited data from interviews with proxy brides, it was not unusual for the parochial custom of having the groom's mother choose an appropriate wife for her son who was explicitly from the same village or town (Wardrop, 1996).

The choice and decision to agree to a marriage by proxy for an Italian woman was based on the criteria of ensuring that she wanted to leave her homeland and secondly allowing the selection of a husband by her family and community (Baldassar, 2011; Iuliano, 1999; Ricatti, 2018; Vasta, 1994). Proxy marriage was also a facilitator for single women who wished to emigrate to Australia who otherwise had no familial or national connections living there and wishing to commence a new life (Iuliano, 2001; Scarparo, 2009). Iuliano's contribution to the historical data of proxy brides and marriages calculated that 300,000 Italians who settled permanently in Australia between 1945 and 1976, approximately eight per cent married by proxy (Iuliano, 1999). Italian women were enticed by the inspirational stories of building a new life and being valued for preserving and protecting the morality of Italian communities in Australia, an inducement taken up by many.

The Need to Marry by Proxy

The definitive reasons why Italian men and women agreed to undertake marriage by proxy are complex, including the post WWII motivations of the proxy bride and groom, the Catholic church, and the Australian government (Caroll, 2010; Iuliano,1999; Scarparo, 2009; Simic, 2014). To determine the position of the Catholic church on proxy brides and marriages, Iuliano (2001) examined records in both Australian and Canadian archdioceses' uncovering a selection of oral narratives and newspaper articles. Transnational ideologies were perpetuated by the Catholic church including influential politicians coalescing with the media, as an invisible coercion towards "migrant organisations and associations to acquire political, cultural and even financial capital in negotiation with hegemonic cultures, ideologies and structures of power in the host society" (Ricatti, 2018, pp. 99-100).

Conservative Australian Catholic and influential speaker on Italian migration and culture, Bob Santamaria was often quoted in local Italian newspapers, *Il Globo* and *La Fiamma* to reinforce the Catholic debate regarding gender imbalance between Italian immigrants (Jupp, 2009; Masticelli, 2015). Bob Santamaria was revered by most of the Italian populace because of his staunch anti-communist rhetoric, strict Catholic beliefs and advocacy for Italian migrant rights, making him one of the most well-known and influential Catholic laypersons in Australia post WWII (Cappello, 2009; Jupp, 2009; Masticelli, 2015; Whitlam, 2002). He was supported and lauded as being instrumental in highlighting the shortage of Italian women in Australia. This was a critical issue as the church understood that migrant women were the key in ensuring that the family was embedded in the religious faith, morals, and principles. It was supposed that immigrant women would steer their proxy husband to live with strong Catholic values, supporting the family to reflect successful bourgeois societal status. The women also knew that they had power over their proxy spouse by the virtue of their virginity and being sexually faithful, they were in some ways God's

police (Summers, 2016). The positionality of men within the home could be restricted as argued by Baladassar (1999) who described that "men are brought up within the home – a very female-oriented domain … women create the home world from which they determine and maintain the moral order" (p. 13).

Religion and Italian Proxy Marriage

The Catholic church played a central role in defining and promulgating teachings concerning woman's place in family life and society. The subordinate position of a woman was determined by the virtue of their gender, church, culture, family, and society, particularly weighing heavily on Italian unmarried women. Implications for Italian women governed by the concept of family honour with an emphasis on virginity and faithfulness was greatly influenced by the belief in the inferiority of women (Willson, 2009). Proxy brides were heavily scrutinized in this and Davis (1973) details how women were monitored under the watchful eye of the patriarchy of their family and community to ensure their superiority and their maintenance of the honour code by being chaste and faithful. Perry Willson (2009) gives prominence to the discussion of how single Italian women were instructed and threatened to uphold and maintain their virtue by only having sex within the bounds of marriage. If this unwritten cultural and societal law was disregarded, public punishment rituals for local girls or women who were deemed sexually active inside and outside of marriage, would be subjected to the humiliating charivari ritual (used by medieval and early modern Europeans to chastise) by the self-governed community members (Davis, 1973).

A compliant marital existence was achieved through acquiescence and adaption and understood as being the destiny for many proxy marriages up (Lehrer, 2004). The power of religion was undeniable for Catholic Italians migrating from Italy. The determinants for social dimension are encased within the association of religiosity and living a life of spiritual

wellbeing which in turn contributes strong familial and cultural networks (Furlan & Faggion, 2016; Lim & Putnam, 2010). Consequently, the support and comfort afforded by religious networks to migrants who were experiencing isolation from their homeland was provided by attending church services and participating in religious rituals (Furlan & Faggion, 2016).

The Doctrine for a Proxy Marriage

The Catholic religion and its strict doctrines regarding women impacted the relegation of migrant women to the sole role of homemakers (Iulianno, 1999). Proxy brides were deemed as devotees of men, not necessarily able to gain employment in their own right. This in turn abetted their invisibility within scholarly literature of proxy marriages and migration. Baldassar (1999) research gives underlines the significance of how religious doctrine and practice was inherent to the cultural programming of women to establish successful marriages and families. In marriage, a woman was required to acquire culturally and generationally transferable attributes such as caregiving, sense of belonging, reminiscing, and replicating traditions and rituals from the homeland to ensure strong and continuing cultural connections. Contesting the accuracy of these reflections on migrant women, Palriwala and Uberoi (2008) argue that scholars must make visible migrant women in migrant studies, demonstrating equity not inconsistency when discussing migrant women as economic providers.

This discussion addresses the importance of understanding the role of being a migrant woman and how that would impact on a woman's agency and cultural identity. As stated previously, scholarly inquiry relating to Italian proxy brides and proxy marriages has been scant. The majority of articles and books represent fictional and autobiographical representations thwarting the analysis of further investigation of the complex inspirations, rationale, and consequences of this phenomenon. An emphatic and salient point that Pedraza (1991) makes is to acknowledge that "bringing women into the humanities and the social

sciences takes place in stages: first, by filling in the gaps in knowledge resulting from their absence; second, by transforming the conceptual and theoretical frameworks of their disciplines" (p. 304). Discussions on the possible impact of furthering research between the relationship of women's social position and migration would contribute historical knowledge of women as immigrants and provide a greater understanding of the challenges faced as a consequence of migration (Burkner, 2012; Pedraza, 1991).

Italian Proxy Brides in Australia

Formalising Proxy Marriage in Australia

As discussed previously the post war migration to Australia from Italy created a new and important phenomenon to increase and flourish Australia's population. The Australian government and the Catholic church implemented a formalised agreement to undertake proxy marriages as a legal constitution of marriage (Australian Archives, 1958a). The Italian government first initiated proxy marriages as a legal form of marriage in 1929 with amendments made to their civil law in 1942 (Ricatti, 2018). This facilitated the migration of many brides to Australia from Italy (Scaparo, 2009) and allowed Italian single men (who were perceived as being of dubious character by Australians) to marry reputable Italian women in Italy from distant Australia (Baldassar, 2011; Iuliano, 1999; Ricatti, 2018; Vasta, 1994).

The Catholic church took an ambivalent position to Italian/Australian proxy marriages, however they sanctioned all proxy marriages to be conducted with an authorised person standing in as proxy (namely the groom) to enable the marriage to be ratified overseas and in Australia. This was common practice during the 1950's where many young women from Southern Italy placed their marital futures in the hands of family, village friends and acquaintances to provide a viable spouse by the process of proxy (Cronin, 1970; Iuliano, 1999; Kertzer & Seller, 1991; Ricatti, 2018; Simic, 2014; Vasta, 1994; Wardrop, 1996).

The ritual of being married by proxy became a popular choice of betrothal for many young people wishing to leave a life of poverty in their homeland and the opportunity to travel as new migrants to Australia and start new families. Chain migration became an instrumental facilitator for the process and conductor of proxy marriages (Simic, 2014). The custom of endogamy was an imperative for many to secure a union of parallel cultural connections. The enticement for many single male Italian immigrants to marry by proxy was that they could legally marry an Italian girl who was from their region or province whilst they lived in Australia. The desire for a provincial girl was a cultural fundamental as they spoke the same language, practised the same religion, adhered to the same cultural practices and traditions, and importantly that they were virgins (Simic, 2014). This cultural programming was cultivated from long-established matrimonial conventions in Southern Italy, which Hyndman-Rizk (2016) noted that "marriage systems are perceived to be immutable and inevitable" (p. 306). The Southern Italian regions championed and promoted parochial endogamy as a facilitator for the proxy marriages between the two countries (Iuliano, 1999). Marriage by proxy held an important moral code for the bride as she could travel as a married woman which in turn protected her honour (Scarparo, 2009).

Expecting the Unexpected

Iuliano (2001) found that, regarding the specific ages when proxy spouses married, in Western Australia that average age for brides was around 22.8 years and for grooms 27.8 years. Following the urgent request from male immigrants for spouses that were preferably from their country and province, Palakgtsoglou et al. (2016) reveal that many proxy brides migrated to Australia utilising methods to migrate including being classified as a dependent. In most cases, the Assisted Passage Migration Scheme subsidised their fare, enabling the proxy brides to make the journey (Palakgtsoglou et al., 2016). Iuliano (2001) informed from interviews with proxy brides, revealed that many of the women did not necessarily wish to

marry, the dominant and primary influence to marry was the lure of migrating to another country. The enthusiasm of travelling with the blessing of family and community, proxy brides boarded ships with the excitement for a new life, away from their patriarchal controlled lives and an opportunity for an adventurous life in Australia (Iuliano, 2000; Ricatti, 2018; Wardrop, 1996). The quest of marrying by proxy also held trepidation for many, whilst consciously anticipating a positive prelude for a happy marriage even though they had never met their spouse. The anticipation also clouded the ambiguity of a new destiny in a new country with the clarity of not wanting to experience living in poverty and a restricted life in Italy. The latter was not an option for many young women who took the opportunity of an arranged marriage to change their destiny. These proxy brides acknowledged the daunting prospect of landing in Australia to meet their spouse with fear of the possibility that personal details and photo images did not reflect a true image of physicality and age (Baldassar & Pyke, 2014; Iuliano, 1999; Scarparo, 2009). Other modes of deceptiveness included not disclosing personal information such as a previous marriage or children and inaccurate financial information (Ricatti, 2018). Accounts were plentiful of the misleading and deceitful narratives which became the feeding frenzy for gossip for both Italian and Australian media (Ricatti, 2018; Scarparo, 2009; Simic, 2014). Notwithstanding, many of these marriages embedded within their strict cultural and religious beliefs were compatible, with very few separations or dissolutions of proxy marriages petitioned to the Catholic Church (Wardrop, 1996).

Throughout this literature review I have emphasised the lack of relevant research studies relating to proxy brides and marriages. Interdisciplinary immigration research with an intrinsic focus on post WWII migration, power relations, proxy marriage and proxy brides are sporadic and variable, creating a void. This gap in scholarly literature requires the intersectionality of previous research with new methodological research studies to generate

further historical data. A starting point would be to consider gender. Migration studies would benefit from researching gender issues specifically – migrating women and their categorisation against that of the male experience (Burkner, 2012; Tyner, 2003).

Liminality and third space

The importance of liminality in this study is to highlight its temporal threshold that I often hovered over during my childhood and adolescence. I speak specifically as liminality being a temporal transition or passage from an earlier state of being to a later state of being. It is within my narratives that I share my temporal experiences of liminality and third space as a means to explain how I was able to reach momentary identity and agency. Additionally, liminality has strong links to the women who were proxy brides and endured the complexities of migration as part of the transition from one country to another. In this thesis, my mother, a proxy bride, was caught between worlds—one known and one she felt an outsider in. Liminal spaces in this thesis offer insight into what drives "proxy brides" from their homeland as well as what keeps them emotionally and psychically tethered to their country of immigration. Theories of liminality offer the researcher a tool with which to encapsulate and examine the notion of homeland as both fixed and unfixed, a constantly shifting idea or memory. Liminal spaces are an opportune way for these women to navigate and redefine ideas of migrant, immigrant, and citizen (Noussia & Lyons, 2009).

What is Liminality?

The term liminality was first introduced by Arnold van Gennep (1960) explaining his concept of liminal states. The additional definition by Ali (2020) determines the word liminal as being derived from the Latin word *limen*, "'threshold' – a place of transition, waiting and unknowing" (p. 4). The concept of liminality and third space also refers to periods and

passages of time where thoughts are not invasive, allowing the body to relax within an imaginative positive environment (Stenner, 2017). The difficulty in explaining the concept of liminality is because each experience is a subjective experience and one which Stenner (2017) emphasises that the bond between structure and agency is often the catalyst for liminality, not the stimulus for sense or meaning making when undertaking the experience.

Liminality is often described as "the experience of finding oneself at a boundary or in an in-between position, either spatially or temporally" (Thomassen, 2015, p. 40). The concept of liminality as discussed by Klapcsik (2012) advances diverse theorists including Turner, van Gennep, Derrida, Lacan, Foucault, Deleuze, Baudrillard, and Marx who zealously cogitated about liminality within their respective theories (Klapcsik, 2012). Turner believed that a liminal phase could be achieved when a person, event or situation interfered to disrupt or control another person's life (Wels et al., 2011). Influenced by Arnold van Gennep and Max Weber until his concept of liminality was validated by his research within Indigenous communities, van Gennep identified significant and distinct phases of liminality, presenting as "neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial" (Turner, 1969, p. 95). This concept is argued further by Thomassen (2009) in relation to the connection between liminal experiences and how structure and order can be factored into the experience of liminality.

Literature describing liminal experiences are commonly defined as a peripheral open-ended unspecified space. The establishment of Van Gennep's (1960) metaphors to define spaces as swamps, virgin forests, and deserts to mean to inhabit a space other than that which lies outside chaos or order (Heidegger, 1993d; Levinas, 1969). A further description is advocated by Jackson (2009) as habitual routines to acts of contingency to define a liminal space. Gavey (2011) and Lewis (2008) take the view that liminality manifests from cultural situations and settings which in turn is endorsed through the experience of seeing the world

through the eyes of a liminal being. My experiences related to Ibarra and Obodaru's (2016) condensed version of Victor Turner's classic concept aligned with Stenner's (2017) prescriptive model of Turner's concept of Temporal Dimensions which described that the liminal distinction was a division of "spontaneous liminal experiences (which are events that befall us or that happen to us)" (Stenner, 2017, p. 30). In terms of transition between social position and the significance of Turner's temporary stage, Ibarra and Obodaru (2016) further espouse "liminality is a temporary hiatus between well-defined social statuses that still pervades much of the organizational literature" (p. 51).

A Space is a Space

Bhabba's (1994) discussion questions the paradox of occupying a third space arguing that without cultivating, maintaining and supporting the needs of a cultural environment, "the moment of transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity" (p. 1). Both my parents could not achieve liminality within their limited capacity to actualise or develop a sense of an emerging third space due to their ordered, strict, cultural, and religious upbringing. Indelibly my parents thought, spoke and acted like Italians which encapsulated their sense of identity within a multicultural context (Glenn, 2013). According to Ikas and Wagner (2008), Bhabha's concept of third space puts forward the view that being able to negotiate is to bring a common identity "one that is new in its hybridity; it is thus neither the one nor the other" (p. 2).

Largely, Bhabba (1994) confirms my experiences of occupying a third space as a cultural hybrid when he imaginatively describes "the stairwell as liminal space, in-between the designations of identity, becomes the process of symbolic interaction, the connective tissue that constructs the difference between upper and lower, black and white" (p. 5). My personal experiences of liminality are described in my narratives as being in a safe space and

sanctuary. Franks and Meteyard (2007) describe a similar journey as being “in no man’s land, where the landscape appears completely different, there is no discernible road map, and where the journeyer is jolted out of normalcy” (p. 216). Well-known examples of challenging experiences within a liminal space have been recorded in theological, psychological, anthropological and art journals, according to Rohr (2001), describing them as painful and unsolicited antagonisms when experiencing to old ways of being and doing. In my case, Rohr (2001) validates why I inhabited my liminal space often as a means to find new and replaceable answers to what was no longer the truth in my world (Barron, 2013). Finally, liminal experiences are a rite of passage according to Szakolczaj (2009), who compares it to marriage as a rite of passage in terms of sharing a space, living in the same space advocating that it can be of benefit to the individual.

Generational impact

The significance of this study consists of its contribution to the literature on the experiences of two generations relating to the Italian Australian diasporic circumstance. Literature that is focused on Italians immigrating to Australian research from their inception have concentrated mainly on quantitative census and naturalisation data derived from published sources (Martin, 1978). Research around settlement and inclusion of Italian migrants in Australia have concentrated on the first-generation Italian migrants although minimal studies have researched their children, the second-generation cultural hybrids (Marino, 2019b).

The imagined future for Italian migrants in Australia became a reality with the introduction of multiculturalism in the 1970’s. The existence and legitimacy of Italian migrants and an Italian-Australian diaspora was acclaimed and commended by historians and academics as a major influence on the progress and advancement of Australia and its

multicultural identity (Vitale, 2013). The lack of historical data regarding the impact on the generations born in Australia from migrants (within this study I specifically focus on Southern Italian migrants) is an essential resource as a determinant informing the phenomena of this specialised cultural hybridity (Baldassar, 2011). Further research that is required would ask questions about how the offspring classified as second generation, experienced growing up in a diverse socio-historical context and addressing issues such as negotiating identity, education, and connecting socially and economically with other cultural generations of the same age group (Baldassar & Pesman, 2005; Portes & Zhou, 1993). There are considerations to reflect upon such as the heterogeneity of the second generation, the intergenerational mobility as a course of study relating to cultural, societal and economic outcomes in comparison to their parent's experiences (Khoo et al., 2002).

Another important imperative is the examination of generational cultural transference and its impact on identity development for children and adolescents. The benefit of further research would be in examining how children from early age to adolescence master and handle concepts in relation to the cultural information that is transmitted by their inherited cultural background, environment, and parents (Vollebergh et al., 2001). The theories and concepts of Bourdieu are well placed when discussing cultural transference through generations, arguing that power structures that are in place from childhood and even before birth as cultural predictors and determinants of the future (Horvat, 2003). The statement that power is the central element that organises social life on this globe is argued by Bourdieu in his multifaceted works around his theories of habitus, cultural field and capital (Swartz, 2013). When discussing the genetic power structures within a culture and community, Bourdieu's foreground to human practice is relevant in terms of how relations of privilege and domination are brought about by the exchange and connection to habitus which in turn

shapes how the individual converts their social world by their subjective disposition (Freire, 2011).

Research informing how generational transmission within the orientation of cognitive and social development for both male and female children (of migrant parents) until the age of adolescence would demonstrate in Australian history the determinants and representations of levels of education, formation of identity, position in society, and cultural identity (Glass et al., 1986). Further to this the examination and research into vicarious intergenerational trauma that is associated with the immigration and assimilation experiences of parents and/or grandparents, is also a phenomenon that requires attention as contributing significant and important historical data relating to the transference of migration trauma onto second generations (Bender, 2004; Frazier et al., 2009; Goodman & West-Olatunji, 2008; Krysinska, & Lester, 2006; Lev-Wiesel, 2007; Ornelas & Perreira, 2011).

Chapter 3 Research Approach

Introduction

In this chapter I introduce my methodological approaches, beginning with my understandings of methodology *per se.* The epistemological stance that I have selected and situate myself in is constructivist epistemology. Whilst employing this underpinning for my thesis, consideration was given to the element of fluidity as a process for data to evolve and guide me as an evocator for the possible.

My understanding of ontology gave me the freedom to write and come from my place in the world. Writing authentically from an ontological space is meaning making to any narrative but I speak for myself, my memory and all the artifacts that I used to generate powerful and thought provoking narratives. Epistemologically and constructively, I learned to know myself and my work on a conscious level. Taking a constructivist approach to epistemology engaged me to work in reflective practice whilst documenting my lived experiences and then to interpret it from my world view.

An ambiguous statement made by Denzin and Lincoln (2011) prompts contemplation on the merits of qualitative research. They stated that, "Qualitative research is difficult to define clearly. It has no theory or paradigm that is distinctively its own … Nor does qualitative research have a distinct set of methods or practices that are entirely its own" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 6). It is recognised and acknowledged that qualitative researchers utilise a wide range of approaches in their work, however the search for more transparent, reflexive, and creative ways to conduct research amongst many disciplines does provide diversity (Adams et al., 2014). Advocating for change, Holt (2003) argued that a greater emphasis was placed by researchers to personalise research that focused on culture.

Hence, rather than deny or separate the researcher from the research and the personal from the relational, cultural, and political, many qualitative researchers embrace methods that allow them to explore and understand personal experiences and their relationship with context (Jordan, 2008; Veletsianos et al., 2019).

Autoethnography is the qualitative research approach I have undertaken for this thesis. I have always been drawn to autoethnography, feeling that it gave me the permission to be the creator of my narrative, my story. The research process of autoethnography permitted me to examine my own beliefs, judgements and lived experiences authentically whilst giving me the opportunity to expand my knowledge of my social reality. Holding a strong methodological design, process and collecting an extensive compendium of scholarly literature, I began my learning trajectory by following the crucial steps of methodology and analysis until the final submission of my research paper and the creation of my narrative chapters for future submission. My data were interlinked culturally, historically, ontologically, and epistemologically, whilst employing the process and analytical methodology of thematic analysis, appropriate to the requirements for autoethnography. The methodological design, process and analysis of my research structured the process of my research, however I understood that I had to do more than draw conclusions from the data. I became relentless in pursuing how the knowing was knowable, how to understand it, and how to interpret it. I drilled down into the analysis by applying the methods of bridling and coding to allow themes to emerge and then and only then was the knowable known.

The use and analysis of artifacts and memory as part of my thematic analysis evoked context and prompted many forgotten moments living the past. I also spoke with my two sisters, one older the other younger, who assisted in validating memories that I recounted to them within our conversations. I did not record their data – this research is about me and my understandings of my experiences. The data analysis was integral, involved, repetitive,

reflexive, and industrious bringing about credibility and validity through the analytical process. It is by bringing and linking all the elements of this research methodology that it can be deemed as trustworthy, rigorous, valid, and credible. The following Figure 3.1 attempts a graphic representation of the research process. It offers a visualisation of my overall research approach and practices.

Figure 3.1

Theoretical framework of the research design

Ontology

According to various scholarly literature, ontology is best described as the study of being (Crotty, 1989; Hacking, 2002; Lawson, 2009; Mäki, 2001). My ontological position is implicit within my autoethnographical research. My views on how the world is constructed and what were the most important components of my social and cultural world inform my study and research. My gender, my status as the second daughter of immigrant parents, my adolescent life, all provided my autoethnographies an accompanying consciousness of living and being a cultural hybrid. Making meaning of my existence, I used my narratives to detail and reveal my childhood and early adulthood in a manner to voice the frustration, resistance, and resilience. Ontologically I have written from a culturally informed and sensitive lens to guide my research which has been, at times, a challenging task. The interpretation of my autobiographical data, the phenomena that continually sprang to my attention, the memories that stealthily entered my mind as I reflected on my childhood, all revealed themselves as the main characters in my autoethnographies. When reflecting on explicit ontological issues, Grix (2004) argues that "Issues can help clarify the precise character of theoretical positions … it allows intuitions to be more fully articulated and developed; it helps to reveal internal inconsistencies in arguments; enables researchers to identify more accurately the differences between competing approaches" (p. 60).

There is no escape from my perceived reality as the autoethnographic process affords "a way of defining our lives, narratives become even more important when a smaller or disenfranchised group or community is excluded from the history of the larger world to which they belong" (Johnson-Bailey, 2010, p. 78). My reality that required an ontological revelation by autoethnography was my parents' migration to Australia and their proxy marriage, which inevitably became the catalyst and context of my cultural hybridity warts

and all. Using a constructivist approach, ontological meanings were constructed from my personal situations/phenomena which enabled me to make sense of my culturally hybrid world and act in it through such interpretations.

The unpacking of ontology uncovers how people are considered, intended, and original in their actions, and reveals how meaning develops out of social situations, connections, and interactions, bringing about the interpretive processes for the researcher (Hoffman, 2020). A more definitive approach for the researcher is described by Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) who advocate ontological postulations lead to epistemological postulations, giving rise to methodological conventions, finalised by the process of data collection and analysis. It was important to me to understand and interpret the unique situations which were culture and context-bound, knowing that there are multiple realities, not single truths in interpreting a situation or an event (Yilmaz, 2013). Being open ontologically revealed how history and biography intersect, prompting questions such as, do we create our own futures but not necessarily in situations of our own choosing? Realities are multiple, constructed, and holistic, capable of sustaining multiple interpretations (Hodges, 2011; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). My ontological view of the world as a child and adolescent described in my autoethnographies unfolded the reality that the construction of my way to critically act in the world was not by my subjective agency, but programmed by family, culture, and religious practice (Holman Jones et al., 2013). Additionally, through the medium of autoethnography, I observed and interrogated myself on what I thought and believed as a measure of challenging myself (Holman Jones et al., 2013).

Epistemology

Epistemology is interconnected with ways of knowing and understanding about the world and links information, understanding how reality informs the basis of our knowledge. Key issues that relate to the way in which knowledge is learned is advocated by Ritchie et. al

(2013) who have several theories one being that “knowledge is based on induction, a ‘bottom-up’ process through which patterns are derived from observations of the world” (p. 6). It is this process of induction that I have applied to my research in the manner of gathering data, interpreting, and analysing.

In my research the induction process became ensconced within the research questions, these became the facilitators when writing and gathering my data. My approach to the theory of epistemology in research work was to understand that the theory of knowledge is embedded with my personal postulations, conjectures, and beliefs as indispensable knowledge that I have accrued. Adopting a constructivist epistemological stance, I actively engaged consciously and methodically in the research process to bring investigation and scrutiny whilst striving to theorise the social reality of my research. The researcher taking a constructivist approach to epistemology is considered as engaging in reflective practice of documenting their lived experiences and interpreting it from their world view (Raelin, 2007; Schön, 1983). The aim of constructionism is to construct meaning by engaging within unique world realities by applying inductive logic and interpretation of those lived realities (Magana, 2002; Pouliot, 2007).

Interpretive epistemology is one of subjectivism which is based on real world phenomena. This is based on the premise that the world does not exist independently of our knowledge of it (Grix 2004). It must be recognised that knowledge accrued by autoethnography recognises our subjective realties that are negotiated by our feelings, which in turn awakens our consciousness, otherwise the world is meaningless. Supporting the view that consciousness is a determinant Cohen et al. (2008) advocate that although individually constructed, reality emerges when consciousness engages with the context of the situation, this is rich with meaning. In my case, knowledge and meaningful reality are constructed as a consequence of the interaction between me as a human and the world

where these constructs are developed and transmitted in a social context. It is only then that the social world can only be understood from my standpoint and others who are participating in it. It is therefore important to state that the application of interpretivism was integral to my research bringing to light unconscious and conscious elements in context to writing about culture, cultural hybridity, societal and government structures. I am reminded by Creswell (2009) that "interpretive methodology is directed at understanding phenomenon from an individual's perspective, investigating interaction among individuals as well as the historical and cultural contexts which people inhabit" (p. 8).

This bring to light the importance of imparting knowledge by using the required epistemological language within the research process. As a researcher I am aware that the language and terms for the research process are referred to as methodologies, perspectives, approaches, and philosophies (Crotty, 2020; Stanley & Wise, 2013). The research process advocated by Crotty (1998) has four benchmarks: epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology, and methods. These principles provide a methodological structure based on how the researcher identifies and interprets their world and society.

Methodology

Methodology is defined by Saunders et al. (2009) as "how research should be undertaken, including theoretical and philosophical assumptions upon which research is based and the implications of these for the method or methods adopted" (p. 595). Methodology manifests in the form of ideas that coalesce to the stated phenomena leading the researcher on the path to gain knowledge about the world and why (Scott, 2014; Strauss & Corbin, 1994; Tuck & McKenzie, 2014). This in turn provides the researcher with motives and explanations for using definite approaches including methods as strategy to construct and build knowledge of cultural and educational phenomena.

Interpretivism as a research method of autoethnography has become a determinant in context to my autoethnographies and thesis, enabling me to write freely and to expand my knowledge of social reality. According to Sion (2003) who suggests that the interpretation of phenomenological understandings are embedded within a constructivist paradigm bringing to the research meanings, ideas, and reflection through the conscious function of memory which in turn leads to understanding. This qualitative method dates back to the writings of Kant who purported the philosophy that it is not necessarily through observation that one can know the world, it is by using the human senses that one interprets what the phenomena is (Ritchie et al., 2006). The method assists, shapes, tempers the research to materialise into a reflexive and intuitive process for the researcher. The structure of the autoethnographical study should extend its reach to the world by the researcher sharing self-referential experiences to allow the reader to understand the narrative and the world it portrays (Denzin, 2014, p. 82).

Autoethnography

Autoethnography is now a significant and legitimate method within many disciplines of research (Holman Jones et al., 2013). Originally autoethnography was termed to define a method of ethnography but latterly there has been discussion about its fit for purpose within the world of academic research and a point of contention argued by many (Anderson, 2006; Ellis, 2004). Autoethnography is best described by Ellis et al. (2011) in the following manner. Auto is to share personal experience, Ethno is to understand the importance of the cultural experience, and Graphy is how we apply and seek to describe and systematically analyse our narratives. This approach brings identification, authenticity, and reflexivity as a comparison against theories and philosophies with the opportunity to resist, respond and create new knowledge for educators (Ellis et al., 2011, p. 201). Autoethnography as a research method encompasses a myriad of approaches illustrating how autoethnography is linked to one's personal experience that can be examined and declared as cultural experience (Adams et al.,

2014). Articulating about the method of autoethnography, McIlveen (2008) suggests that it is derived from the lived experiences and can contribute to improving social and cultural issues which in turn contributes to new knowledge.

As a qualitative method, autoethnography offers specific knowledge about particular lives, when written in the first person, this demonstrates and highlights the vulnerability of relational stories influenced by culture, history, and society (Adams et al., 2014; Ellis et al., 2011). I applied the tenets of interpretative autoethnography by positioning myself on the (2013) work of Lincoln and Denzin, however I also acknowledge and understand that these authors do not necessarily focus on cultural identity. As a way of ensuring explicit and qualified knowledge, I undertook research of scholarly literature that recognised interpretative autoethnography as a significant research method when discussing cultural identity (Adams et al., 2017; Chang, 2013; Cooper & Lilyea, 2022; Lewis & Quinnell, 2022; Manning & Adams, 2015).

Autoethnographical authors strive to provide the reader with a method which Ellis et al. (2011) purport as one "that acknowledges and accommodates subjectivity, emotionality, and the researcher's influence on research" (p. 274). The creation of a narrative or story by the autoethnographic author gives permission to acknowledge the writer in many autoethnographical roles, being the primary storyteller who also plays the main character (Ellis, 2004; Ellis & Bochner, 2000). This in turn acknowledges the writer's knowledge within a contextual cultural research paradigm (Hamilton et al., 2008). Stories are important due to the author sharing their experiences that were influenced by their personal history, culture, religious upbringing, and society (Ellis & Bochner, 2000).

Although I believe that my cultural hybridity has provided me a perfect opportunity to write evocative and informative narratives, I know I am not alone. Everyone has a story to tell, reflect upon and tell if they choose. Using autoethnography as my research method I

chose to write and examine each and every phenomenon that elicited my memory in a manner that had me wondering and asking internal questions of each particular experience, challenging my emotions every step of the way. My vulnerability is validated by Adams et al. (2021) as they remind me that "we share intimate and vulnerable experiences that sometimes bring forth shame or sorrow; experiences and situations that shaped us and these events; and moments that motivated joy, confusion, conflict, grief, passion, and possibly trauma" (p. 3). I now know that this is considered autoethnographic inquiry. It is when the expression of structured life situated within the method of autoethnography requires careful consideration to meet; (1) the existence of others; (2) the influence and importance of race, gender and class; (3) family beginnings; (4) turning points; (5) known and knowing authors and observers; (6) objective life markers; (7) real persons with real lives; (8) turning-point experiences; and (9) truthful statements distinguished from fictions (Denzin 2014, p. 7). Lilyea (2022) discusses how vulnerability brings forth an important human element when writing autoethnographically, it allows the individual to choose the level of vulnerability they wish to share within their stories.

As a methodology, autoethnography empowered me through my vulnerability to document my lived history/herstory. Through this creative medium I was engaged as the writer which enabled the process of easily bringing memories to life, allowing the narratives to emerge to take life as I knew it. Autoethnography for me was like the changing tide, stories played out as quickly as I wrote them, embedded with the awareness of passages where triumph, possibility, and personal challenges were as I saw them, as I told them, believed them, and ultimately created them (Blinne, 2010; Humberstone & Nicol, 2019).

The revelation I have drawn from my experience as an autoethnographer is that it is not just a research method, it brings about the educator, anthropologist, and the historian within us to share our journey and journaling of life experiences. Ellis (1997) emphasises that

our stories should not be what others write for us, but instead, they are those that we pen fearlessly for ourselves, whilst Trahar (2009) considers in detail that autoethnography brings unique events and experiences to educate and elucidate. As a doctoral student, the methodology of autoethnography as qualitative research is an essential tool for my thesis. It reveals that I become and am the subject of my research. My subjective and private memories evolve naturally with the freedom of writing as an autoethnographer, it legitimises my immersion into my memories that compellingly emerge, both sensorially and cognitively. As a subjective process, what autoethnography predominantly uncovers and elucidates is my ability to recount unique stories whilst employing the mind with the authenticity of memories and then enacting the will to write them down.

Autoethnography can profoundly change one's perspicacity of what was past, what is present, and what can be in the future (Custer, 2014). My experiences, my life stories are bound up in feelings and emotions that trigger a deeper dive into why these stories should not be negated. It must be said that there are many emotions that can be uncovered through the process of writing autoethnographically such as profound sadness, exhilarating joyfulness and sensing feelings of excitement and trepidation (Raab, 2013). That is why autoethnography is the perfect conduit to share our unique view of the world engaged by our words, giving prominence to the voice within our narratives. This ontological process became when autobiographical genre of writing and research that displays multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural" (p. 739). Further research into why autoethnography as research method had prominence amongst many qualitative researchers was revealed by Holman Jones (2013), who is a deeply committed advocate to the qualitative method of autoethnography. The merit of this method is further articulated by Holman Jones (2013) who notes that, autoethnography "has become a way of being in the world, one that requires living consciously, emotionally, reflexively. It asks that we not only examine our

lives but also consider how and why we think, act, and feel as we do" (p. 10). My ontological position is implicit within my autoethnographical research.

Collaborative Autoethnography

Collaborative autoethnography (CA) was the method I chose for one of my narrative chapters, Daughters of the Diaspora: Interrogating impositions of cultural conformity. Focusing on the memories of lived experiences as daughters of proxy brides. I was the primary author and a daughter of a proxy bride with Maria Gindidis being the second author and a daughter of a proxy bride. Jane Southcott was the third author positioning herself as an etic analyst responding to our emic narratives. The meaning of both Maria's and my hybrid identity construction or lack of, is apparent within the shared stories pivoting against a backdrop of a hegemonic culture and society. The personal accounts are experiences used to "illuminate, interrogate cultural beliefs, practices and identities" (Adams & Herman, 2020. p. 1). The combined narratives highlighted differences in nationality and culture whilst sharing similarities of subjugation due to our gender.

Collaborative autoethnography has a primary focus to represent the narratives within a group autoethnographical process (Chang et al., 2013). The creative process of collaborative autoethnography allowed both Maria and me to write our stories by recognising and embracing the risk of vulnerability and moments of emotional encounters (Adams et al. 2015, p. 103). We devised a process of writing in which we wrote our own narratives from an emic position, then analysed each other's narratives, and lastly Jane responded as etic analyst for both our stories. The interpretation of our narratives as collaborators was a productive process that gave meaning and sense-making (Denzel, 2009, p. 94). The coming together of emic and etic analyses validated the experience for the group and offered the opportunity for voices to be heard. The writing of my stories and the recollections of the past often evoke emotional triggers, even nostalgia whilst tapping into a space of truth.

Assumptions or Truth

According to Shim (2018), potential problems surrounding autoethnographic research stem from issues relating to the credibility of this research method. This argument is based on the researcher's bias and prejudices that originate from indoctrinated knowledge and belief that autoethnography may appear to not be a real study. Autoethnography as a research process is clearly not one that Bonilla-Silva (1997) approves as a valid method of research, putting forward an argument that when researching race and ethnic studies research analysts in the field of racism, this research method is a merely philosophical phenomenon. I would argue against Bonilla-Silva and defend that autoethnography is a valid method of research utilising the researcher's autobiographical data to examine and interpret their lived cultural experiences. It is without a doubt that autoethnography provided me with a freedom to write in an unconventional manner to map my thoughts, learnings, feelings which allowed me to immerse myself within the excitement of discovering emerging themes.

Method

The utilisation of autoethnography as a research method enables self-investigation by remembering important events, memorabilia, immersing with the past by looking at photographs, reading journals, listening to recordings and other memory evoking resources. These are considered meaning making aids that allow understanding for the revelations that they bring. It is only when life experiences move outward by the evocation of our memories that our voice, our story, our significance presents its real purpose and structure (Denzin, 2013). Autoethnographers seek data from multiple sources such as memory, journaling, and artifacts. These deep pools of data afforded me the opportunity to recall, reflect and review the narratives to share intimate expressions and build a connection between myself and the reader. Our past is important in that our childhood is linked to the stories that are handed from many generations and categorised as life story methodology (Clandinin et al., 2016;

Merrill & West 2009; Miller, 1999; Tosh, 2013; Witherell & Noddings, 1991). My stories are vital and have been integral to this study as I have situated myself among the memories and stories told to me by my mother, what I observed and experienced as a daughter both as a child and adolescent. Undertaking the writing of my stories, ensued the realisation that I now know the power of my voice, the unspoken barriers, resistance, and resilience (Atkinson, 2007; Cook-Sather, 2006; Johnson-Bailey, 2021).

To make meaning of my existence during my childhood was only to employ autoethnography as a research method, it was my memory, the sensory loading of artifacts, the emotive evocation of memorabilia, the elicitation of emotional senses when looking at photos, combined with journaling that afforded me the opportunity to recall, reflect and interpret my narratives. My stories are vital and have been essential to this study. I have situated myself among the reminiscences and stories told to me by my mother, what I observed and experienced as a daughter both as a child and adolescent. The writing of my stories unfolded the realisation that I now know the power of my voice, the unspoken barriers, resistance, and resilience (Atkinson, 2007; Cook-Sather, 2006; Johnson-Bailey, 2021). Oral historians and researchers who also utilise this method believe that our past is important in that our childhood is linked to the stories that are handed down from many generations and categorised as life story methodology (Clandinin et al., 2016; Merrill & West 2009; Miller, 1999; Tosh, 2013; Witherell & Noddings, 1991). The personal effects linked to my childhood such as documents handed down from my parents, photo's, newspaper articles, personal and family history, journaling, video, and audio recordings were the fundamental data in my autoethnographical methodological approach.

Artifacts

The artifacts that prompted the memories and stories came in the form of memorabilia, photo's, jewellery, clothing, diaries, audio tapes, video tapes, letters, and cards.

Memorabilia. An English teapot shaped as a rooster with a bright red comb on the top of its head which was the lid, sporting lime green feathers, was an important piece of memorabilia. I remember this teapot being used ritually every Sunday afternoon as part of our early evening dinner. This teapot evokes many memories of the lively conversations around the family table mainly by my parents reminiscing about their life in Italy and how life in Australia was vastly different. The teapot also served as something to stare at on the table when wanting to not participate in the family conversations. The photos of family members including scenes from important events became triggers recalling the past and questioning my place in that reminiscence. Photos of different members of our immediate family aroused feelings of pride, sadness, happiness, and thoughts and questions such as, what if I was born into a different family? What would my life be like? Other moments of reminiscing were looking at jewellery. My mother's jewellery is the most precious to me as she loved how her jewellery made her feel special. Bracelets, rings, and broches are all created from yellow gold with diamonds, diamonds gave her the feelings of affluence. Affluence was not a part of her young life and only came about when she married my father. My mother also possessed a full-length fur coat which she loved. The other material she was attracted to was animal print fabrics, lion or tiger, these symbolised an exotic look to design her clothes with. My father on the other hand loved to write, he handed down his diaries with entries of his short stories and poems all written in Italian. My father was also a good singer, which I possess precious memorable video and audio recordings with him singing. Videos of family gatherings recorded from significant birthdays and religious events bring back emotive feelings of travelling back in time. Precious letters and cards with personal messages from my parents are a constant reminder that they did make time to show their feelings even during the most challenging times of their lives.

Photos, Audio tapes and Video tapes. Family photos were a very powerful medium which conjured emotional and sensory memories (both good and bad). Hearing the audio from video recordings which included my parents (who have since passed away) also brought about mixed emotions and philosophical conversations shared with my sisters. The viewing of the video's transported me to those times of celebration and also reminded me of the conversations that were had between my parents and myself. One particular video brought bittersweet memories as I viewed my father and I discussing his life as a young man being called to serve in the army during the second world war. I still remember that moment vividly as it is imprinted into my cell memory.

Memory

Old Memories. The old memories that come flooding back are from my childhood are embedded as a cultural hybrid. Being born in a Southern Italian family in Melbourne, Australia should have been no different than other girls' lives except for differing ethnicity. The only standout exception was that I could not socialise with any friends except for siblings or cousins. There is much to share about fear, assimilation, or lack of, culture, family and attending a predominantly Irish Catholic primary school, and I do within my narratives. Old memories are not always laden with sad memories there are many that bring a sense of pride of the culture I was born into. I often wonder if I was given more freedom as a girl, would my life have taken off on a different trajectory? My memories are integral and crucial to the integrity of this study. Memory is a gift to "chart our lives by from the mundane moment to the majestic" (hooks, 2009, p. 5). According to Adams and Herrmann (2020) it is by infusing your personal experiences, journal work and artifacts with memory work that assembles and formulates an evocative and authentic autoethnography. My old memory is situated from the ages of three to seventeen years of age.

New Memories

My new memories are articulated from the pages of my narratives. I say this because my adult self is remembering what my younger self experienced through her eyes. These new memories excite the senses by recalling times in the past that can only be relived through reading through these passages of time. My new memories are what I write in my autoethnographies that bring together the old and the new.

Journaling

Writing reflectively. The opportunity to write in my journals came at specific and interesting times during the day and night. There were many moments when my lucid memories took over catapulting me to write pages of significant experiences and events. Personal responses as a reflective method of writing were crucial as it allowed my truth to unfold in the manner it was meant to. According to Munro (2011) "a diary or journal should capture the events that occur during the development of the design, as these events unfold. These events can be visual, inspirational, theoretical, cognitive, comparative, or simply anecdotal" (p. 162). My journaling became a structured opportunity to reflect and expose what I deemed important, the good, the bad and the ugly. My reflective moments captured thoughts of specific times when events occurred which in turn carried me to write prolifically of the phenomena without censoring or editing. Researchers Davis et al., (2014) espouse that reflective journal writing has multiple benefits such as learning whilst immersing in critical reflection. Further discussion by Brookfield (2016) explores how personal assumptions can foster a deep examination about personal beliefs and one's subjective world view.

Freedom and Agency. The autonomy to write freely without formality or convention was emancipating, a creative way to allow the flow and ebb of my story to take a hold of me. I became empowered to write in this manner and allowed my emotions to emerge as the

words flowed in written form on the page. This in turn became an important process as I became cognisant of the many complex layers that made up my life story. My stories were important and needed to be told in context to identity, and the impact of cultural hybridity for young girls. The freedom of writing in a free textual mode was advocated by Smith et al. (2012), suggesting the "participants process and use of descriptive, linguistic, and conceptual comments assist to explore, describe, and explain their intended way of writing" and understanding the subject matter and could only be achieved through this process (p. 84).

My dedicated journaling commenced when I began my journey as a doctoral student. The free flowing writing of many stories came thick and fast, as well as the documenting of relevant and meaningful moments during my childhood. Some days I could write pages of my experiences as a child and my unbridled feelings about certain situations that I found myself in. As a method of autoethnographic inquiry I found writing musings and sayings that evoked further memories then turning them into prose gave me a lot of pleasure. Holman Jones et al. (2013) espouse this practice as being central to autoethnographic fieldnote writing (p. 66). My thoughts became conscious artifacts bringing elicitation of my reality to the pages of my journal, highlighting my perspective and world view. Online research for records and confirmation of my family's migration to Australia became valuable resources to draw and reflect upon whilst writing my narratives about my mother, a proxy bride. According to Holman Jones et al., (2013), there are 'three types of 'data' that stand front and centre, field notes, personal documents, and interviews' (p. 65). I have not used interviews as part of my data as my autoethnographies are based on my life and important others that I write about are my parents who have passed away. Creswell (2002) points out that the corroboration of evidence from a variety of sources increases the chances of accuracy and consistency, which makes the study not only credible but also dependable.

Conversations with Sisters

Gender. My two sisters and I have shared many conversations of our life and the gender that we shared was not without its challenges. The mere fact that we were female prevented us from having the same opportunities as my two brothers enjoyed. That included not being allowed to go out at all except with family, not allowed to have friends not even school friends, no boyfriends of our choosing and to adhere to the Catholic way of life, including being a virgin until marriage. Autobiographical data was engendered through conversations where my data through narratives were confirmed with my two sisters relating to time frames, events and phenomena.

Language

The Italian language that we learned and spoke at home as children and young adults was the Calabrese dialect. This has often been a source of contention during conversation with my sisters as we all experienced embarrassing moments of being told by other Italians that we did not know how to speak the proper Italian language. What we agree upon is that we quite enjoy the luxury of knowing another language and are grateful that we learned it easily by only speaking this language until we went to school. Within my narratives I explain how my mother had a knack for mixing English and Italian words and used English phrases for analogies such as ‘change channel’ for changing conversations that she did not want to engage in.

Mother and Father

Conversations relating to my parents in particular my mother, always brings emotional responses to my two sisters and me. My mother had mental health issues early on in her life and cancer for the last twelve years of her life, which we all shared the caring for

her in many different ways. The experiences come with stories which we share often and how my mother and fathers' life was challenging to say the least. The stories of the lack of assimilation and racism that we all experienced are often retold with emotional responses. As sisters we often share stories of our father and how his work ethic was exceptional – providing for five children whilst caring for a wife with mental health issues. We often recount proudly of his achievements in the local soccer community and how that also impacted personally on my eldest sister and my life.

School Days

The most passionate conversation that my sisters and I share is always about school during our formative years. We all experienced being oppressed by the same Catholic nun during primary school and share stories of how others also suffered at the hands of this woman. What was consistent of our experiences of school was that education for girls was not valued by my mother who made it quite clear we were to leave school as soon as we could to acquire employment. We all left at the government mandated age of fifteen with gainful employment. We often discussed how this then became the motivation to study as adults in the field of education.

Life and stories

It was important to me to understand and explore hermeneutically the relation between my life and my stories. As Widdershoven (1993) states, when life is processed through the interpretation of the narrative it is then that stories are processed as being interpreted from life. At first, I was not sure if I was exposing myself and my life to the world, however when I applied the tenets of autoethnography I remembered I was a researcher primarily and then the storyteller. I struggled with the balance between the

personal and the academic voice at first, however as my stories unfolded, I was aware of my consciousness being alerted to cultural cues and the language that were shaping my narratives. I initially had concerns that I may be accused of using this method to promote myself or make myself the centre of my narratives, this was soon disproved by Coffey (1999) and Denzin and Lincoln (2002) claiming that to understand oneself as the researcher one must acknowledge the powerful position of the researcher who creates, interprets, and finally analyses the data.

Further assistance was provided by researching scholarly literature to guide me through this process by remembering that sharing personal episodes of my life, my world view, how I interpreted them, became the framework of my autoethnographies (Ellis, 2020; Rodriguez et al., 2017). This in turn, with the utilisation of interpretive autoethnography engendered transformative learning for me. I became comfortable and informed with this new understanding of the phenomena that impacted my life in either a positive or not so positive way (Custer, 2014; Ellis & Bochner, 2006; Raab, 2013).

The confluences between scholarly literary articles and the requirement to define intersectionality between my identity, my family, culture, religion, hybridity, and racism could only be achieved by continuing to use the approaches of bridling and interpretive phenomenology. Indisputably, both approaches offer an unadulterated connection to the story as the unique meaning and interpretation are fixed. This is further maintained by Ellis (2001) who states that the researcher has taken steps to view themselves inwardly in an effort to allow the story to unfold outwardly. The purpose of autoethnography should not be limited in its purpose only to write and reflect on personal stories, but to magnify the reality of social existences through the interpretation and personal landscape of a researcher's experiences (Chang, 2013). An obvious revelation became reality when I developed a table demonstrating

my thwarted psychosocial developmental stages as a child and adolescence as presented in my Chapter 4, published journal article Unspoken Barriers: An Autoethnographical study of Frustration, Resistance and Resilience.

Analysis

Thematic analysis is regarded as the foundational research method for all qualitative analysis (Boyatzis, 1998; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Holloway & Todres 2003). A brief description of this method is advocated by Braun and Clark (2006) as a "method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organizes and describes your data set in (rich) detail" (p. 79). Following the process of thematic analysis as a qualitative research method, an emerging theme often reveals itself within the data as a meaningful piece of information. Thematic analysis employs the tenets of identifying, chronicling, and scrutinising as a method for meaning making generated from data (Aronson, 1994; Boyatzis, 1998; Braun & Clark, 2006; Floersch et al., 2010; Patton, 2002; Riessman, 2008). According to Boyatzis (1998), there are five functions that he believes consistently provide clarity and significance to this method: (1) a way of seeing; (2) a way of making sense of seemingly unrelated material; (3) a way of analyzing qualitative information; (4) a way of systematically observing a person, an interaction, a group, a situation, an organization, or a culture; and, (5) a way of converting qualitative information into quantitative data (pp. 4-5). It is by following in essence the planning and systematic process of thematic analysis, I have designed Figure 3.2 to demonstrate the steps I took when analysing my data.

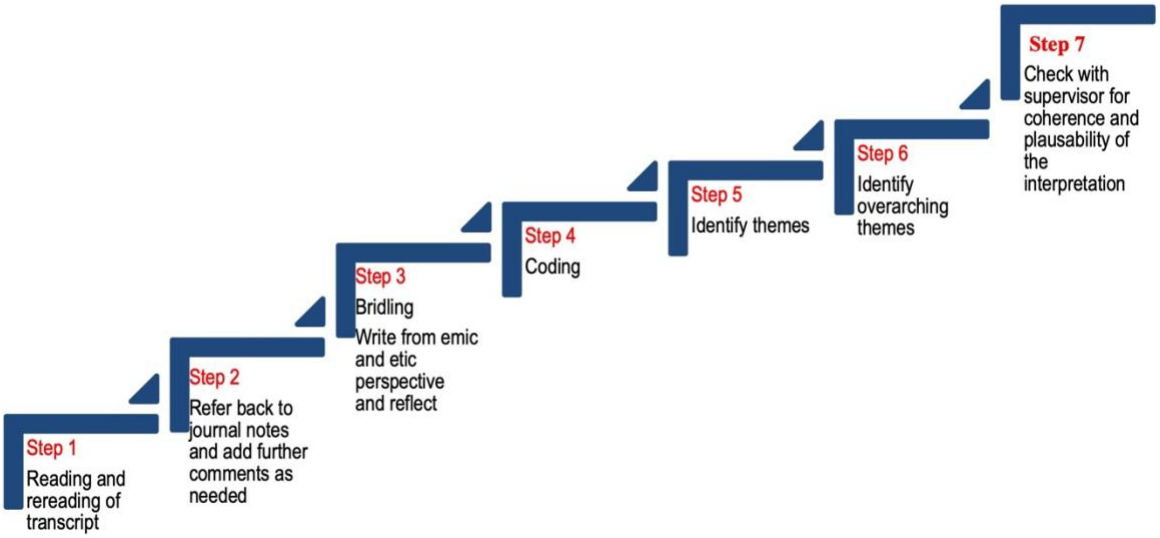

Figure 3.2

Thematic Analysis process

Bridling

According to Vagle et al. (2009), bridling is a process where the researcher devotes time to investigating and exploring what we know or believe we know when devising our blueprint for our research. I commenced my bridling process by reading and rereading the data which was both handwritten in my journal and a copy on my computer as a word document. The handwritten copy allowed me to write reflexively against other commentary that had been inserted into the margin of the page. The principles of bridling have always been used by me consciously and unconsciously right across my thesis journey commencing with the choice of topic. Bridling allows me to choose who I am, what I know, what I say, to bring meaning, understanding, honesty, and validity as a qualitative researcher (Vagle, 2009; Vagle et al., 2009). Dahlberg (2006) brings meaning to bridling through the description of the process as an essential reflexive function of meaning making when analysing data. "As researchers … we are not … objectivistic scientists that distantly register meanings … but immensely involved in the explication of meaning. Bridling then means to scrutinize the

involvement with this embodiment of, the investigated phenomenon and its meaning(s)" (p. 16).

I found that bridling became a useful convention providing me with a space to concentrate and identify my perspective of the world that I was a part of. I would take paragraphs that I had written and reread them, making additional notes in the margins. This practice helped to me to examine, identify, and interpret themes of identity, cultural hybridity, and gender (Johnson-Bailey, 2021).

Coding

As a process of thematic analysis, I employed coding as a means to highlight emerging themes that became obvious within the data during the first three steps of my analytical procedure (see Figure 3.2). I followed a process that sequenced the themes by manually colour coding every paragraph that referred to each particular theme allowing the patterns of the data to appear. This process began when researching literature that provided me with descriptions from authors such as Saldaña (2011) who emphasised that "Coding is a heuristic – a method of discovery … Patterns, categories, and their interrelationships become more evident the more you know the subtleties of the database" (p. 95).The manual coding process I undertook was an exhaustive process, however it also was a visual symbolic representation of how value laden the data was, that is the very essence of my evocative narratives were important to share and important to interpret and analyse systematically (Saldana (2009).

According to Cooper and Lilyea (2022) there are several forms of coding that can be applied to your research, those being Emotion Coding, Descriptive Coding, In Vivo coding, and Initial Coding which is also called Open Coding (p. 201). I incorporated Descriptive and Emotion coding which allowed me to use my own language as a process to capture the true meaning of the emerging themes.

Themes

In my process diagram (Figure 3.2) I refer to step five and six detailed as emerging themes and overarching themes. It is at this juncture that I explore and examine, define, and refine the themes to analyse, and to further analyse the data within them (Braun & Clarke, 2006). According to Braun and Clarke (2006) nuanced that "by 'define and refine', we mean identifying the 'essence' of what each theme is about (as well as the themes overall) and determining what aspect of the data each theme captures" (p. 92). At first, I began going down too many rabbit holes and found that I was making the analytic process of identifying and naming themes complicated just by over analysing. I conceded that I was missing a vital step in the process and decided to go back to the very beginning. I arranged the data from journal entries, narratives, bridling notes and reviewed each and every written piece of text. I then wrote observations of the text from the position of emic and etic with further reflections of being an insider and outsider. It was obvious through this process that I was over-extending with the coding process and now could identify outstanding themes as a result of that exercise.

Once I worked out the set of my overarching themes, the final analysis required that I submit it to my supervisors to examine and audit for coherence and plausibility. I concentrated on meeting the criteria of providing an account of the analytical journey by detailing the method in a coherent and concise manner. This was a crucial step as I wanted to publish my research and for it to be deemed as meeting the standards of validity, rigour and merit (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Dey, 1993).

Trustworthiness

When arguing for the value laden qualities of autoethnography as a research method, Patton (2002) makes clear that there are always "issues of credibility" (p. 147). The onus is on the researcher to demonstrate credibility and trustworthiness (Bassey, 1999; Merriam, 1998). Interpretative phenomenological approaches within autoethnography relate questions

of validity to the data. Understanding that the phenomena are drawn from the perspective of the researcher in turn gives credibility and validity by acknowledging the empathetic exemplification of the situation. My autoethnographical study, underpinned by interpretative and constructive epistemology draws on the interpretation of each phenomenon to ensure what Marshall and Rossman (1995) classify as "soundness" (p. 143). Other notable researchers, such as Cresswell (1998, p. 197) refer to "internal validity" as a manner to interpret and explain meanings and concepts that are the reality of the autoethnographical researcher.

According to Marshall and Rossman (1995), to meet the criteria for trustworthiness in all research it is imperative that you apply the tenets of seminal writer in this field. Guba (1981) presented his naturalistic inquiry paper attested to the four essential requirements of qualitative research as endorsement of trustworthiness, those being credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The work of Guba and Lincoln (1989) continued to establish further constructivist criteria for trustworthiness in qualitative research. I relate my research methods to Guba and Lincoln's four points.

1. Credibility – prolonged engagement with my life, peer checking with supervisors and sisters, triangulation;
2. Transferability – constructivist approach;
3. Dependability – reliability – analysis of the data;
4. Confirmability – I am not only the daughter of the diaspora. I have written with the co-author of my collaborative autoethnography 'Daughters of the Diaspora: Interrogating Impositions of Cultural Conformity' who is also a daughter of the diaspora. Emic and etic interactions by three authors (Wake et al., 2022).

Sandelowski (1993) argued that terms such as truth and value should be replaced by trustworthiness because the researcher can expose their research as "visible and, therefore, auditable" (p. 2). In contesting issues of validity and trustworthiness, qualitative research arguments frequently centre around differences between qualitative and quantitative research approaches. For example, Rolfe (2006) emphasises that "the very idea of qualitative research as an epistemologically or ontologically coherent paradigm is open to dispute" (p. 308).

Scholarly articles may reflect the argument that quantitative research is the only valid method due to its generalisability. This may be correct if you are researching ten thousand people and the findings can be extrapolated as generalisable to the whole population, but with limited numbers of participants, generalisation is impossible, and findings remain indicative. This should not denigrate the importance of autoethnographical research as an iterative process of analysis and interpretation. The rigidities espoused by the social science community relating to rigor and trustworthiness invigorated counter arguments by the autoethnographical research community to strongly advocate the importance of self-narratives by applying their criteria for evaluating autoethnographies to determine reliability, validity, reflexivity, and trustworthiness (Adams et al., 2015; Bochner, 2000; Bochner & Ellis, 2016; Clough, 2000; Denzin, 2014; Ellis, 2000; Richardson, 2000; Roberts, 2002).

Similarly, I addressed my concerns about autoethnography relating to its worth or value at the beginning of my doctoral trajectory. However, it was not long that my question relating to how autoethnography worked as a research method was answered, when I understood the meaning and interpretation to my narratives. I found the issue of robustness was key when discussing how trustworthy my work was to my supervisors. Researchers Adams et al. (2015) provided guiding principles to comprehensively authenticate that autoethnography is a legitimate research method:

- Formulating and adding supporting inputs to knowledge;

- Respecting the subjective experience;
- Exhibiting the effectiveness, technique, and accountability that evocative narratives and storytelling brings.

As a means of ensuring trustworthiness I incorporated triangulation which Cooper and Lilyea (2022) define as "quality control in your research design" (p. 203). In doing this, I examined the notes that I had gathered from my journal against newspaper articles and formal documents as well as checking in with my two sisters that my recollections were correct. The system of triangulation allows the element of trustworthiness as it provides a strategy to demonstrate evidence of the interpretation and the methodology process. Fundamentally, qualitative research requires such processes as triangulation to negate the potential for the data being assessed as unreliable. The benefits of employing the process of triangulation are that data is deemed as trustworthy when it is gathered from several sources when adhering to qualitative research analysis.

Ethical Behaviours

By choosing to do autoethnography I name myself. I deliberated and decided that there are ethical implications of writing autoethnographies; by naming myself I potentially identify others; so, I sought and received ethical approval to speak with my sisters (see Appendix A). I have written about both my mother and father within my autoethnographies and revealed details of their lives. Both parents have passed away. My sisters have provided me with the confirmation regarding fact checking for all data relating to my parents and my upbringing. I did not collect their data or include it in my research.

Implications regarding revealing my sisters and my connection is minimal as both sisters have different family names, that are not easily connected to my family name. Possible implications are that when my lived history is made public, my mother's mental health issues are also made public. Autoethnography for me has encompassed my experiences that I might

not ordinarily talk about publicly, however I believe that my narratives are evocative accounts of my life that are written in an ethical manner. My intention is to bring new knowledge and to inform the understanding of my story within the wider social and cultural history of Australia (Sparkes, 2000). In order to behave ethically as an autoethnographer, I sought permission from my sisters to write about our family and asked the question of was my writing going to upset them. They unequivocally responded with resounding reasons for making public what history had forsaken. That being that proxy brides who migrated to Australia is an under researched part of Australian history and our mother was one. There were also the stories of growing up as second-generation cultural hybrids that needed to be told. Autoethnography, according to Turner (2013), "is a relational pursuit. We study ourselves within our culture(s). Our self-narratives stray into and cross over the paths of others, and our autoethnographic stories become part of other's lives" (p. 216).

I position myself ethically by my memories and reflections, of my lived experiences. I argue that my autoethnography is situated within my constructed ontology which suggests that once words have been spoken or written I construct their meaning, they are my words that might include others, but ultimately, they are my words. As an ethical autoethnographer I make my own judgements, they reflect my ethical standing in relation to my writing and memory. Perhaps it is best said by Ellis (2007) we "honour our relational responsibilities yet present our lives in a complex and truthful way for readers" (p. 17). I have represented in this chapter coherency of the research process and analysis which underpins my thesis.

Chapter 4 Findings

The first article titled ‘Unspoken Barriers: An Autoethnographic Study of Frustration, Resistance and Resilience’ was published in *The Qualitative Report 23*(12), 2018. This autoethnographic study examines how the trajectory of my life was influenced primarily by culture. The research method of autoethnography provided me with the opportunity to reflectively account and analyse my lived experiences as a cultural hybrid from early childhood until adolescence (Denzin, 2013; Ellis et al., 2011).

This article introduces how my parents became part of the phenomena of post WWII immigration to Australia from Southern Italy. Marriage by proxy became their reality to create a new life in Australia, and my actuality to be born a cultural hybrid in Australia. Additionally, I discuss my biographical experiences that determined my thwarted developmental milestones and the inability to generate my own identity until my marriage at the age of seventeen.

The Qualitative Report

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Published Article 1 Unspoken Barriers: An Autoethnographic Study of Frustration, Resistance and Resilience

Abstract

Immigration, cultural capital, cultural hybridity are the contributing players within my autoethnographic research as a second-generation daughter of Southern Italian migrants from the post war era. This autobiography of my lived experience identifies contributing influences of arrested development within my educational and life trajectory and explores theoretical frameworks as key comparative indicators for my thwarted stages of psychosocial development. My identity and role as a female is further explored within the construct of a determined and culturally hybrid adolescence in an effort to answer research questions of identity and role confusion. My narratives situate my life as a daughter, student, and future wife living an existence of cultural hegemony acknowledging the non-existence of a bicultural relationship between my family and the Australian way.

Keywords Culture, Identity, Education, Autoethnography, Migration

Introduction

Post second world war migratory patterns from Italy began between the 1950's and 1960's. Australia began enticing immigrants to its shores with the White Australia Policy deeply embedded into its political landscape. The term *Push or Pull* refers to the experience that most Italian immigrants felt when they undertook the decision to migrate to Australia.

Pushing was by the Italian government which was in recession with its citizens experiencing extreme poverty due to post war depression, whilst on the other hand Australia was pulling migrants to its shores as the need to populate was imperative for economic growth. The immigrants were aware of the lucky country; however, as reported by Dewhirst (2014), rampant racism was targeted toward Italian immigrants, in particular those of Southern Italian extraction. These racist actions were levelled toward the new immigrants because of their physical attributes and dark olive skin which was not unlike that of Australian Indigenous people and another reminder to white Australia to discriminate.

Pushed out of Italy by post war depression and welcomed to Australia by the pull of good economic prospects, my parents learned to live along with multifarious and pervasive modes of racism. This knowledge is in context to my autoethnography presented in this paper and frames the beginning of my life as a second generational daughter of Southern Italian migrants. The narratives within are evocative forms of expression describing my lived experiences. They provide evidence highlighting the implication of living as a female cultural hybrid dominated by familial, patriarchal and religious conventions.

As a daughter of immigrant parents from Southern Italy born in Australia, I have been immersed within the symbiotic hybridity of two cultures and found myself cultivating my identity from a unique standpoint as an insider within a cultural patriarchal paradigm. The opportunity to explore and advance my life experiences through narratives has enabled me to reflect and make sense of my identity and culturally determined life recounted in my own creative style evoked by memorable visions of the past infused within all my senses. My research question, “How has cultural capital and hybridity shaped my educational/life trajectory as a second-generation Italian Australian woman?” necessitated writing the narratives as context to my lack of education in which Young (1971) rationalises the

inequalities within the different systems of social class, which in turn serves to identify motives of a society, culture and family towards the value of educational attainment specifically for daughters of Southern Italian migrants. My research may inform and assist educators and academics who seek to further understand culturally diverse complexities within specific hybrid cultures compared to that of a monoculture.

My narratives describe my hybrid cultural experiences along a continuum of time demonstrating significant events in my life as a child until marriage at the age of 17. The significance of identifying and narrating prominent moments within several stages of my life trajectory is to reveal that I occupied a third space whilst living psychologically and physiologically within two cultures. The third space enabled me to derive my own meaning and wisdom from hybrid cultural experiences uniquely associated to agency and position (Rutherford, 1990).

The immigration process for both my parents was an integral element and primarily the catalyst for my pre-determined life, especially when I consider the confusion around role and identity for my mother who travelled to Australia as a proxy bride to commence a new life with no English language and to live with a husband that she had never met before except for his image in a photo. A depiction of the predicament for Italian migrant women and their prophesied life by Vasta (1995) consisted of these edicts firstly to marry an Italian man, secondly, to meet the imperative of being a virgin before marriage and thirdly, to maintain Italian cultural and social practices. It is with these strict cultural and religious stipulations that my parents adhered to living their new life in Australia and in turn endured oppressive racism within both the Italian and Australian communities consequently influencing and shaping my hybrid cultural life.

The Researcher

I am a lecturer, academic course manager for a community service degree, associate manager for a disability company and a former singer and actress. All of the above roles have been developed and qualified in my adult years in what I exemplify as my "second life." My "first life" was from infancy through marriage at the age of 17 until separation from my husband and children in my late thirties. The confusion of hybrid cultures through my formative years until adulthood has led me to research first-hand my own history, bringing significance, timeliness and purpose through autoethnography. A constant struggle during my "first life" with my cultural identity, lack of agency and gender identity was finally rewarded with the opportunity for self-authenticity within my autoethnography. My writing became an indomitable force guiding my narratives to identify cultural and personal identity, arrested development and cultural hybridity.

The design and implementation of the comparative table of my arrested developmental milestones to Erik Erikson's psychosocial developmental stages has assisted my adult self to understand the complexities of my lived experiences. The reference to developmental milestones within my discussion of arrested development relates primarily to defined stages of life development where specific proficiencies in relation to age are met. There are many theorists who espouse the importance of meeting an accepted progression of developmental stages during childhood until adult maturation Erikson and Vygotsky are two who are most commonly referred to for guidance. Their principles and theories uphold the view that, for successful transition into adulthood, understanding psychosocial disorder is essential as it has a direct impact on the developmental processes (Remschmidt, 1994).

Literature Review Post-War Migration from Southern Italy to Australia

It was evident in 1945 for the Australian government that migration from European countries was needed to create post war economic growth by increasing the country's

population. Enticing slogans such as “populate or perish” were first advertised by the Australian Labour Party Immigration minister, Arthur Calwell. Australia was also called the “Lucky Country” where families were able to find work and achieve the Australian dream of owning their own home to raise their families. The most common migratory pattern to Australia from Southern Italy began during the 1950’s usually with the male of the family as the figurehead and surveyor seeking an appropriate livelihood and home for his family. What is known is that the post war migration in particular during the period of 1950’s and 1960’s by Southern Italians would demonstrate that they would continue to hold on to their cultural customs and traditions especially for their daughters. A minimal effort was afforded claimed Caruso (2001) to understand the plight of “second generation children and migrant ethnic identity within the broader context of education and cultural identity” (p. 107). The migration from Italy to Australia for both parents had correlations to other migrants worldwide; however, my mother’s experience as a woman dominated by patriarchy, culture, government and religious control is integral to this review. Racism is a dominant theme recorded by many authors towards migrants and, in my family, this fact cannot be omitted as a relevant element within my autobiography. As a second generational daughter of Southern Italian migrants, it is imperative to identify my arrested development due to confusion around identity as a cultural hybrid.

The momentous wave of post war Italian immigrants to Australia during the 1950’s and 1960’s was selected for this research. Racism and discrimination against my family due to their culture, appearance and lack of the English language was a constant for my father on a daily basis. It was acknowledged by Dewhirst (2014) that rampant racism targeted Italian immigrants, in particular Southern Italian immigrants, even though the Australian government of the time launched a significant campaign to attract immigrants to a new country with the lure of boundless opportunities of work and a new life in the lucky country.

On closer examination of the research literature relating to the governing laws of the day, Jupp (2007) reveals that the white Australia policy of the post war era and the notion of this cohort which stereotyped Italian migrants as being a threat to the Australian way of life perpetuated ongoing experiences of racism and discrimination. For example, this type of racism was instigated when immigration by Southern Italians to Queensland commenced in the 1920's and further validated within the Queensland Royal Commission. The Social and Economic Effect of Increase in Number of Aliens in North Queensland (1925) report, wherein the commissioner Thomas Arthur Ferry made reference to the Southern Italian migrants' colour, racial fitness and racial calibre as being social restrictions, recommended the implementation of "a better migrant selection process" based on "behavioural and moral characteristics"— highlighting the racialisation of Southern Italians (p. 317).

There are numerous accounts in scholarly and popular literature of Italian immigrants, in particular Southern Italians, being perceived as persons of colour or non-white, and therefore not meeting the criteria or attributes of a white Australian society. The history of racism is reported throughout Dewhirst (2014), confirming that racism and discrimination was experienced by many Italian individuals and families during the post second world war and beyond due to the very nature of their darker skin colour, their Southern Italian facial characteristics, and most importantly their lack of English language. The arduous passage of migration was discussed in depth by Baldassar and Pyke (2014), highlighting the influence and differing experience of the Italian diaspora, in particular, that of Southern Italian migrants. The experience of later Italian migrants in the 1970's was different, and culture is the strongest constant between the two generations.

Cultural Identity

When commenting on cultural identity, it is important to conceptualise culture and the experience of migration within the Australian society as situated. Culture can be perceived as the “custom complex” that respects the “symbolic and behavioural inheritances” (Shweder et al., 1998, p. 867). The importance of familial, cultural and behavioural practice was the cultural conduit for my parents to their Italian ancestry. Baldassar and Pyke (2014) espouse that this opinion directly relates also to the children born in Australia of migrant parents who consider themselves as Australians with a deep-seated and powerful bond to Italy. In addition to this, Caglar (1997) describes second generation Italian Australians as “hyphenated identities”: identifying with their country of birth interrelated with their ancestry.

One of the many findings across studies of gender identity consistent within immigrant families is the distinctive socialisation approaches that migrant parents impose and differentiate between their daughters and their sons. Research undertaken by psychologists, sociologists and social scientists within diverse immigrant populations in a range of countries demonstrate that immigrant parents implement and assert control over their daughter's social activities whilst allowing their sons to engage freely in activities of their choice. Daughters of immigrant parents are often not allowed to go out and socialise with friends and are relegated to spend time with immediate or extended family, whereas their sons are free to socialise as they wish (Olsen, 1997; Sung, 1987).

This lens in time is reflective of my personal experience relating to social control by my parents, whereas my two brothers had free reign to socialise on the weekends without question. The literature review revealed additional articles with extenuating similarities to my own cultural and familial experience pertaining to gender. It was a common occurrence and expectation for many second-generation daughters of immigrants to undertake the majority of

domestic duties within their household with little regard to educational achievement or attainment (Suárez-Oroco, 2006).

Suárez- Orozco (2006) further states that this stringent role of domesticity and servitude for daughters was held within many ethnic cultures and is not new knowledge second- generation Chinese women in San Francisco in the 1920s (Yung, 1995, as cited in Suárez- Orozco, 2006), Italian women in Harlem in the 1930s (Orsi, 1985, as cited in Suárez-Orozco, 2006), and Mexican girls in the Southwest during the interwar years (Ruiz, 1992, as cited in Suárez-Orozco, 2006). This fate of determined domestic servitude within the family structure also affected many more daughters of immigrants throughout the Caribbean (Waters, 1996, as cited in Suárez-Orozco, 2006), the Asias, Middle East, South America and all Hispanic speaking countries (Dasgupta, 1998, as cited in Suárez-Orozco, 2006; Olsen, 1997, as cited in Suárez-Orozco, 2006; Sung, 1987, as cited in Suárez-Orozco, 2006; Sarroub, 2001, as cited in Suárez-Orozco, 2006; Williams et al., 2002, as cited in Suárez-Orozco, 2006). Similar findings are also shown among south Asian immigrant groups in Canada (Naidoo, 1984, as cited in Suárez-Orozco, 2006, Talbani & Hasanali, 2000, as cited in Suárez-Orozco, 2006) and among Muslim immigrants in France (cf., Keaton, 1999, as cited in Suárez-Orozco, 2006).

Measuring ethnic identity presented a challenge, due to its complexity, and I was forced to gauge it as a cultural phenomenon continuum within many stages of my life. In order to understand and put into context the many cultural phenomena that shaped my life, in particular my attitudes during my formative years, Maestes (2000) suggests it is essential to acknowledge the attitudes of the individual which are borne by the synthesis of familial and cultural norms.

The definition of ethnic identity was further defined by Bernal, Knight, Ocampo, Garza, and Cota (1993) as “a construct or set of self-ideas about one’s own ethnic group membership” (p. 33). The literature provides some understanding of what constitutes the principles of ethnic identity and provides opportunities for self-reflection how one may willingly bond into a particular ethnic group, family, tribe or community or concede to a culturally destined life that is determined at birth. Gabaccia (1984) concurs that significant elements of family, ethnic identity and culture are the fusion which provides immigrants with a deep sense of kinship within their communities and the wider Italian society whilst honouring family values and traditions.

Cultural Capital

Bourdieu’s core hypothesis of cultural reproduction theory advances cultural capital as the basis that supports educational success within families over many generations (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990; Young, 1971). Bourdieu’s theories of cultural capital, habitus, social stratification and cultural reproduction provides significant insight into my lived experiences and agency as a second-generation daughter of migrant parents. The measurement of cultural capital within the context of my second research question, “How has cultural capital and hybridity shaped my educational/life trajectory as a second-generation Italian Australian woman?” necessitated my research by autoethnography into the significant impact and role that Australian society, Southern Italian culture, gender, and ethnic identity played in my forming my life and educational trajectory. The notion of cultural capital in the context of my education captures the inequalities within the different systems of social class, society, culture and family towards the value of educational attainment specifically for daughters of Southern Italian migrants.

My examination of the three states of cultural capital which Bourdieu (2010) adopts allows me to compare them against my own identity and cultural hybridity. The embodied state describes how the mind and body connection governs the individual's character and personality; therefore, an acceptance of one's situational position is acknowledged as one's agency. The second state relates to the *objectified* state in which materialism and resources that are available or inherent shape one's cultural capital. Thirdly the *institutionalized* state refers to the acquisition of educational qualifications and how the opportunities of having an education defines one's agency and determines their cultural capital.

McNay (2000) advances a similar concept to Bourdieu where she describes disembodiment and disembeddedness as one's life that has been shaped by their worldview and cultural upbringing. There is no right or wrong to these theories; however, in my own experience, I was not permitted to have a worldview, only a determined and predestined childhood and young adulthood within the confines of family and culture. Weigert and Gecas (2005) assert that "to remember, accept, present, reject, or lose an identity has bodily as well as psychological and social outcomes for self, a theoretical perspective that omits embodiment from interpretations of identity is, to that extent, inadequate" (p. 164). This assertion directly correlates to my arrested development as a consequence, relating to my lack of agency and the self-development of my identity.

The lack of autonomy over my subjective psychological and physiological development was further substantiated by McNay (2000) who argued that Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital, cultural identity or agency did not address the importance of the individual's subjective experience and metaphorically described "cultural norm gender is deeply inscribed upon our bodies" (pp. 98-99). Therefore, did this then mean that both

theorists believe that cultural capital and identity is passed on through familial lineages and only the more resilient can change their destiny?

It seems unrealistic to assert that as a female that I was in a position to be the co-creator of my life and destiny under the domination of family, culture and society. This point was eluded to by Collins (1998) who stated systems of domination are interconnected within gender and culture, which has broader implications for women who are seeking to identify their identity and role within society. Further to this, it could be also argued that economic capital and social capital also play a role in determining a more independent life, with the affability of status, knowledge and success (Bourdieu, 1979/1984; Bourdieu & Boltanksi, 1977; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). Economic capital and social capital were not a luxury that my family could afford. The theories of Bourdieu and McNay have served to illuminate variances in my autoethnographical research and assisted to bring further subjective clarification to my lived experiences.

Cultural Hybridity/Acculturation

The theories put forward relating to cultural hybridity and third space also fit in with related concepts of acculturation which Berry (2005) claims "is the intercultural contact and looks to generate change in either of both groups" (p. 701). My autoethnographical narratives demonstrate examples of unsuccessful acculturation including my hybrid cultural identity being challenged at many stages of my life due to the advancement of nationalism and ideologies by both cultures.

Milestones or Millstones

The reference to developmental milestones within my discussion of arrested development relates primarily to defined stages of life development when specific

proficiencies in relation to age are met. Theorists and researchers Erikson and Vygotsky provided me with the groundwork to examine my developmental milestones from early childhood until adulthood. Their principles which underpin their respective theories uphold the view that achievement for successful transition into adulthood benefits from the understanding that psychosocial disorder has a direct impact on developmental processes to adult maturation (Remschmidt, 1994).

Lev Vygotksy's theory of cultural history advances this view, claiming that one must understand that until you take account of a child's culture and biological influences which are related to their cultural foundations of beliefs and values, then the stages of development cannot progress to adult maturation (Agbenyega, 2009; Fleer, 2006). Concurring with this theory, Fleer (2006) affirms that "culture not only determines the principles for defining development but frames the contexts in which the development of child is supported" (p. 8).

A significant emergence from the literature and data was the realisation and implication that my psychosocial development was at odds with the Erik Erikson's fifth stage of human development theory, deeming my development to be chronologically disrupted and dysfunctional (Dunkel & Harbke, 2017). The knowing of self in terms of arrested development has significant implications in how mature aged students such as myself are making up time for developmental milestones not achieved at chronologically appropriate times. The fifth stage of Erikson's theory reasons it as imperative that the individual achieves this stage between the ages of 12 to 18 as it builds on identity formation and gives a sense of self continuity within their life (Dunkel & Harbke, 2017). Table 4.1 demonstrates my arrested development of life stages compared to Erikson's 5th stage of human development.

Self-authenticity within my autoethnography became an indomitable force guiding my narratives to identify cultural and personal identity, arrested development and cultural

hybridity. Vryan, Adler, and Adler (2003) advance that self-authenticity may not always be achievable highlighting that "to seek authenticity through situational identities" can only be achieved when dependent on "powerful others and culturally constructed" (p. 370). It was due to being totally dependent on powerful others and having a culturally constructed life that my autoethnography could be presented by my authentic self.

Methodology

I have chosen autoethnography to explain and describe my cultural hybridity, identity, traditions and lived experiences. My epistemological approach was through the qualitative method of autoethnography. This method best describes and defines my cultural hybridity, identity, traditions and lived experiences.

Autoethnography as a method provided me with the ability to demonstrate "reflexivity" through self-reflection of my lived experiences as a cultural hybrid without self-analytical judgement. Reflexivity is also referred to by Adams, Ellis, and Holman Jones (2015) as a process that enables the subject to acknowledge and investigate their connection as an individual within society. Reflexivity is also referred to by Adams et al. (2015) as a process that enables the subject to acknowledge and investigate their connection as an individual within society.

My own definition of autoethnography is a narrative of the self within a subjective context of culture and social status which reflects my lived experiences. A further definition of autoethnography by Creswell (2014) demands "a reflective self-examination by an individual set within his or her cultural context" (p. 468). The dynamics of autoethnography may be considered ground-breaking or progressive when one considers the concept of a meaningful epoch by drawing parallels with Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed (2002)

where he deliberates that “an epoch is characterized by a complex of ideas, concepts, hopes, doubts, values, and challenges in dialectical interaction with their opposites, striving towards plenitude” (p. 101). I found this epoch to be relevant to my life story and how culture played a pivotal role in shaping my identity, the concept of what my life was and what it was meant to be. Could I dream to have a different life outside the perimeters of the determined life I was experiencing? The narratives of my subjective experiences are loaded with emotionality and indeed justifiable and valid elements to my autoethnographical approach.

The plurality of autoethnographical literature has assisted me to situate meaning and validity to my subjective narrative and this is reflected progressively as academics have become cognisant of the possibilities for richer authentic personal experiences through narratives rather than solely relying on revolving theories which had equal merit as value driven literature (Bochner, 1994). Autoethnography as a research process is clearly not one that Bonilla-Silva (1997) approves as a valid method of research, putting forward that when researching race and ethnic studies research analysts in the field of racism argue this research method is a merely philosophical phenomenon. I would argue against Bonilla-Silva opining that autoethnography is a valid method of research utilising the researcher’s autobiographical data to examine and interpret their lived cultural assumptions. It is without a doubt that autoethnography has provided me with a freedom to write in an unconventional manner to map my thoughts, learnings, feelings which allowed me to immerse myself within the excitement of discovering emerging themes. The freedom of writing in a free textual mode was advocated by Smith, Flowers, & Larkin (2012), suggesting the participants process and use of descriptive, linguistic and conceptual comments assists to explore, describe and explain their intended way of writing and understanding the subject matter and could only be achieved through this process (p. 84).

Autobiographical data was collected through conversations where my data through narratives were confirmed with my two sisters relating to time frames, events and phenomena. Family photos were a very powerful medium which evoked emotional and sensory memories (both good and bad). Hearing audio from video recordings which included my parents (who have since passed away) also brought about mixed emotions and philosophical conversations shared with my sisters. The autobiographical data provided me with the information required to develop a chronological table which highlighted my psychosocial stages of development compared to Erik Erikson's Theory of Psychosocial development at the 5th Stage Identity vs Role Confusion between the years of twelve and eighteen (see Table 1).

Erikson's theory has often been discussed in relation to being specific to the male gender, however, I adopt a feminist standpoint which provides me with an explanatory construct to demonstrate a significant personal lived experience. This method of examination provides me the opportunity to highlight the gaps and disruption in significant stages of life. In Table 4.1I documented noteworthy events that I believed were pivotal links between my cultural hybridity and sense of identity. Further to this system of data collection were the collaborative analytical discussions with my sisters to validate the timeframes around events and dialogues.

Vignettes

I offer four vignettes about my life that highlight my personal journey and navigation around cultural hybridity. My experiences as a daughter of migrant parents who often dared to dream beyond her determined life is captured within the following stories.

Barriers and Borders

My narrative ***Barriers and Borders*** describes the personal experiences of migration for both parents but in particular for my mother. The push for her was twofold. Firstly, the push of a post war reality for her family to leave physical and psychological oppression to make a new life in a country where she would no longer be hungry and suffer poverty with the knowledge that her life path was directed towards a determined future commencing with her maiden voyage to Australia as a proxy bride. Secondly the push from her new husband and father promising her a governed life catapulting her into a life where identity, agency and culture was challenged constantly. Dewhirst (2014) and Baldassar and Pyke (2014) were explicit in their description of the Southern Italian diaspora to Australia reporting that the journey and experiences of migration were very different for immigrants in the 1950's and 1960's compared to later arrivals in the 1970's. The barriers and borders for my immigrant parents were defined by the challenges of employment and assimilating within the Australian culture and community whilst raising five children in a foreign country with the traditions and deep-seated bonds to Italian culture (Baldassar & Pyke, 2014). The raising of second-generation children by migrant parents was referred to by Caglar (1997) as parents having children with hyphenated identities who identified with their country of birth fused with strong ties to their ancestry. Consequently, when commenting on cultural identity it is important to conceptualise culture and the experience of migration within the Australian society as situated. This concept was advanced by Shweder et al. (1998) who perceived culture as the "custom complex" that respected "symbolic and behavioural inheritances" (p. 867).

Travelling to another part of the world to begin a new life was often a dominant discourse that was overheard in the piazza but was never considered a possibility within my mother's reality. During the post war era poverty was extreme in its abundance and my mother daydreamed of eating her favourite foods as she listened to the stories of the lucky

country. As fate would have it in 1953 this twenty-one-year-old became a proxy bride to a man whom she had never met by arrangement of her father and the groom's family. The marriage was conducted in a modest church within her village with government officials sanctioning the proxy wedding.

It was not long after that her voyage to Melbourne on the Oceania began its six-week trek with only a photo in hand of her new husband. The arrival into Port Melbourne was a welcome relief from the seasickness and surmounting anxiety of the life that was before her as she cast her eyes on her father and a young handsome man laden with an arrangement of flowers for his new bride. After one week of getting to know each other, the newlyweds began their married life in a shared house. This was the beginning of many new experiences for my mother and father, new relationship, new country, new friends and a new culture to assimilate with.

As a monolingual immigrant my father commenced his working life in a large bakery in the northern suburbs where he learned the trade successfully. Two years later he bought a small bakery attached to a house in Brunswick where my mother bore children and helped run the business. Mum and Dad worked very hard. I loved playing on the couch with the big red flowers in the lounge room, but we were never allowed to sit on it with our shoes on. I was very sad when Mum told me that we had to move again to a new place in Coburg.

Moving houses for my family on a regular basis became a normal occurrence. From the age of three we moved houses twelve times and sometimes within the same suburb. It seemed like a short time after the last move before my parents bought a brand-new home in Fawkner in a modern estate in the northern suburbs of Melbourne with predominantly Australian, English and Irish residents. The next transfer of residence eventuated five years later to a grand double storey house within the same suburb and only two streets away. This

mansion was situated on a busy main road which my mother loved as it represented for her a sense of prestige and class.

This two-storey house was so big with a cellar under the house. I remember being scared to walk upstairs at night every time Mum told me to go up and close the curtains in the two main bedrooms. The staircase seemed like I was climbing forever with each floral carpeted step approaching me enticing me to keep moving upward. I liked counting the little pink roses on the carpeted stairs, they helped distract me from my fear of having to face those big and dark rooms with high ceilings and wide windows; I hated that job. This continuing diaspora we were all experiencing seemed to only make sense to my mother; she travelled across the world to live with her new husband, which was not her choice, albeit assigned and accepting of this new life the gnawing yearn within her to search for the elusive utopian place of settlement continued to elude her.

No Man's Land

No Man's Land relates the initial impact of cultural identity directly linked to my childhood blended with my experiences at school as a girl who did not fit in because of her appearance and nationality whilst adhering to strict familial life as a daughter within a culture where female gender was governed to domesticity. I was not aware during this period of my life that cultural hybridity was embedded into my identity and this becomes evident when I describe walking out of the house closing the ornate gates behind me before I embark on the half hour walk towards the school cyclone gates. The walk between the house and the school was my "*No Man's Land*," a space where nothing had dominance over my thoughts or identity or gender. Gender for second generation daughters of immigrants was a predestined determinant of domesticity as expectations of servitude, disproportionate housework and

responsibilities placed pressure on many daughters of immigrants and impeded on their educational achievement (Suárez-Orozco, 2006).

The scenario within my story of taking Italian provincial fare for school lunch is not new knowledge, however, the anxiety of not fitting in or being culturally appropriate at school was an overwhelming stressor for me, and it was at this time that I unconsciously stepped into what Bhabha (1994) apportioned the “third space” on many occasions for a reprieve from discrimination. Consequently, the constant struggle to understand the complexities of my cultural hybridity and how it became a pivotal constituent in addressing the associated challenges to my identity was also fuelled by the authoritarianism within my family. The refusal to allow any social interaction with my peers inside or outside of school was further accredited by Suárez-Orozco (2006) who cited many researchers within various cultures that shared similar data relating to stringent control which was solely targeted to daughters by their parents. An equally significant finding by Maestes (2000) who asserted that it is essential to acknowledge the attitudes of the individual which are borne by the synthesis of culture that has been suppressed. Berry (2005), however, puts forward the view that related concepts of acculturation requires intercultural contact and looks to generate change in either or both groups. Acculturation was not successful during my school years and beyond due to the advancement of nationalism and ideologies by both cultures.

Our house had many impressive features especially the double front doors. They were situated strategically as the central focus of the house surrounded by a marble tiled veranda. The doors featured an ornate design of wrought iron peacocks amongst a myriad of swirls intended to make a statement of opulence to the outside world. The front gates and surrounding fence keeping within the same baroque theme extended the sweeping swirls across the perimeter of the front garden.

As I shut the gate behind me and start walking to school this was my time when I could think the thoughts that I wanted to think and what was it going to be like when I walked through the fence gates of my school. My mind always wondered if it was going to be another day that I would have to act like I fit in knowing how could I when I don't look like the others and don't eat the same type of lunch as they do. My lunches were always provincial Italian fare. Every morning my father would arrive from the bakery just in time with fresh bread and rolls that were still warm from the oven. Quite often my mother would fill them in with provolone cheese and salami that was home made. The salami sometimes had so much garlic and red chilli when combined with the cheese; this always gave off a strong smell, which did not make me popular with the white bread ham and tomato sandwich Australian girls. I made sure that I always ate my lunch quickly, so the smell would not linger. I prayed for the day that I could have butter and vegemite rolls and just be like the others.

Fawkner High School was a typical government state school with the same architecture and curriculum as other high schools in Melbourne. My experience attending this school was that I always struggled with my cultural identity and wanting to be an Australian girl that looked Anglo rather than Italian. When I entered the cyclone fence school gate, I found myself immediately assuming the character role of an Australian born and speaking student who initiated conversations with the popular girls about music or television, hoping that they would include me in their cliques.

At high school I was not allowed to go out with my friends outside of school hours, and I would have to make up lies if girls asked me to go to their place or, even worse, if they wanted to come over to our house. Mum and Dad would not let me go on excursions or bus trips as they said they would worry too much about something happening. I hated it when the

teachers were planning excursions, because I knew I would have to stay home and pretend I was sick. All I wanted was to fit in and be one of the girls in my class, but they did not want me either; I just did not look like them, think like them, eat like them, but I did sound like them.

As a thirteen-year-old in 1969 the day finally arrived when my alter ego could play the role of her life in her orange crimplene flares. This opportunity came at the end of term social, which was held in the school auditorium. This time was the one time I truly felt like I fitted in and part of the hip crowd wearing my orange crimplene flares to school. They were not always flares I stretched the bottoms out with a coat hanger for three days to get that wide fashionable flared look. I walked around the school with no shoes and felt as free as a bird. Dancing to the Beatles song "Hey Jude" as it was playing in the hall made me think and feel that I was on another planet. In that moment I was not worried about looking different or being Italian I just wanted to dance to my favourite song and lose myself in the music forever. Then the music stopped, and my heart sank; I knew that this magical time had come to an end and it was time to walk home. I put my shoes on, walked out the gate, and thought about the lyrics of the song as I sang them quietly to myself, knowing that Mum would never know about the mystical trance I felt through my mind and body that she could never take this great experience away from me: Nah nah nah nah nah nah nah nah nah, hey Jude!

It was between the cyclone school gates and ornate wrought iron gates of home that the realisation of this linear demarcation was my no man's land. This distance provided me a sanctuary from my struggles with cultural identity and having to live with physical characteristics of olive skin and a roman shaped nose as an Australian born teenager in modern day Melbourne. Arriving closer to home with the gate in my peripheral vision the psychological preparation of adapting to the role of the duty-bound Italian daughter became a

ritual as I crossed the cultural divide from the outside world into the doorway of a determined way of life.

All Grown Up

My narrative ***All Grown Up*** characterises my experience and inability to develop my personal identity within the space of cultural hybridity; however, cultural capital was linked only to my culture and future as a proficient and domestically skilled woman. Every narrative demonstrates insights of cultural hybridity and how cultural capital was dominant in determining the impact on my educational trajectory. The measurement of cultural capital within the context of my second research question, "How has cultural capital and hybridity shaped my educational/life trajectory as a second generation Italian Australian woman necessitated writing the narrative as context to my lack of education in which Young (1971) rationalises the inequalities within the different systems of social class which in turn serves to identify motives of a society, culture and family towards the value of educational attainment specifically for daughters of Southern Italian migrants.

The definite lack of cultural capital is evident towards the advancement and value of my education and is highlighted within all the narratives; however, ***Searching for Self*** demonstrates the use of acculturation as a means to an end by my mother to ensure that I fulfil the destiny she had mapped out for me. The suggestion that cultural capital in terms of cultural practice is passed on through ancestry is supported by (McNay, 2000) and is expanded by Collins (1998) claiming that systems of domination are interconnected within gender and culture which has broader implications for women who are seeking to identify their identity and role within society.

As a teenager I knew how to keep house as I was taught to cook and clean from the age of 8. I could cook different pasta dishes, roasts and other traditional Italian recipes that my mother had always cooked for the family. I was always told by my mother that I would marry an Italian man who came from "genti buoni" (good people/family). Often when people visited us my mother made sure I was either cooking or cleaning so she could demonstrate that I was mature enough to marry and it didn't matter if I was only thirteen years old when one potential husband was being considered! One particular Sunday a young man whom my father knew from his local soccer club came to visit and my mother promptly had me grilling red capsicums in full view to show off my skill at peeling the scorched blistering skins and preparing the capsicums in olive oil and garlic shards. I played the game, I was only a teenager, but I did not want this life for me and even though I told my mother that I was not going to marry just anyone, she made it quite clear I did not have a choice in the matter, and I was to do what she said.

The non-existence of a bicultural relationship between my family and the Australian way of life added to my continual frustration and shame. Frustration born out of the feeling a lack of identity which manifested as a constant resistance to acknowledging that I was either Australian born Italian or an Italian with Australian birth-rights with no rights or independence. This situation was exacerbated by the fact that my parents would never allow me to socialise with any Anglo friends or go to their homes because "they were not like us." In turn, when I attended school I was called a wog, dago and at times abo because of my non Australian appearance. I had it all reverse racism by my family, blatant racism by my school and the wider community just because I was a round peg trying to fit in a square hole.

Searching for Self

Searching for Self, reveals my desires and emotions as a teenager interspersed with confusion of what roles I have to assume on a daily basis. It is reasonable to assume that I missed many milestones by being catapulted into adulthood as a teenager. The narrative assisted the examination of life stages and it became apparent that when compared to Erikson's fifth stage of psychosocial development my arrested development was clarified. The achievement for successful transition into adulthood espoused by Remschmidt (1994) has a direct impact on developmental processes if psychosocial disorder is avoided. An equally significant aspect has Fleer (2006) claiming that "culture not only determines the principles for defining development but frames the contexts in which the development of child is supported" (p. 8).

It was imperative that I demonstrate my arrested development by comparison to Erikson's fifth stage of psychosocial development as a table in order to give emphasis to my life that was constructed within a dominant culture with no opportunity to experience self-authenticity as part of my identity (see Table 1). Poignantly self-authenticity is portrayed by Vryan et al. (2003) as not always achievable interpreting "to seek authenticity through situational identities" can only be achieved when dependent on "powerful others and culturally constructed" (p. 370). Ironically as a consequence of being totally dependent on powerful others and having a culturally constructed life, my autoethnography is written by my authentic self.

At the age of fourteen and a half I was encouraged to leave school by my mother to take on a short secretarial course at Bradshaw's Business College. I had no choice in the matter, as mother was convinced a career as a secretary would be an honourable means of employment before marriage. Due to my limited agency as a female and individual I decided that this new chapter in my life could also bring me some respite from the cultural identity

crisis that continually plagued me at school. It was not long before I was trained to write shorthand type at a proficient rate and demonstrate advanced skills in English literacy and comprehension. Six months later I landed a position with the Commercial Bank of Australia as a typist, interpreter and enquiries clerk at a branch in the northern suburbs.

I was fifteen years old and looked older than my age. The uniform that I wore to work made me look like a professional and that gave me a sense of pride. The day I received my first pay packet was bitter sweet, on the one hand I felt that I had finally found a place where I felt that I was being valued even if it was for my work, on the other hand my mother made it quite clear from the outset that I was not allowed to open my pay packet and was to hand it over to her unopened when I arrived home. It was not so much that I was not allowed to manage my money, but that I had no control over my own life.

Working in a predominantly male environment as a naïve fifteen-year-old, I was thrust into the Australian workforce culture which was alien to me. As this was my first real job, I was nervous being around the men who I worked with. They talked about going to the pub and getting roaring drunk, going to the footy and seeing bands on a Saturday night at their local. I was asked to go out by a few guys but I would always say that I was not allowed because I was too young, but I knew there was no way my parents would ever let me go out on my own and with an Australian guy. I wished that I could have gone out with them, especially on a Friday night when everyone went to the pub for drinks, but I had to go home always feeling that I was missing out and that I would never fit in.

Socialising with my peers was not negotiable after work due to my parent's belief that frequenting establishments such as a hotel was only for the morally depraved and the fact that Australian people did this for leisure made them unsuitable persons to socialise with. The cultural divide became wider even though, on the surface, life continued as usual, that being

during office hours complying within the boundaries of an Australian working convention and after hours obeying my determined Italian cultural practice of living.

As was the custom for my mother it was imperative that whilst I was working within a reputable occupation it was incumbent upon her to find a suitable husband for me. The family began attending Italian cinemas on Saturday nights, dinner dances that were culturally appropriate to meet potential life partners and the local soccer club which my father was the reigning president. The soccer club was where I met a tall handsome man that my parents approved of, especially as he spoke pure Italian with no dialect which made him more of a catch in their eyes.

Going to the soccer became the normal thing to do on the weekends and I did like seeing some of the soccer players on the field, especially when they would look my way and smile. I was attracted to a tall dark and handsome guy who my mother also thought was perfect for me. It wasn't long before she invited him to our house with the intention of making it clear that she wanted him for a son in law. I wanted to have a boyfriend even though I was only fifteen and a half and he ticked the boxes, and I knew if I married this guy, I would be free from living under my parents' control. He was easy to talk to and, before I knew it, I was engaged and then married just after turning 17 years old.

Arrested Development of Psychosocial and Maturation Milestones of Rose Wake

The design and implementation of the comparative table of my arrested developmental milestones to Erik Erikson's psychosocial developmental stages has helped my adult self to understand the complexities of my lived experiences (see Table 1). The reference to developmental milestones within my discussion of arrested development relates primarily to defined stages of life development where specific proficiencies in relation to age

are met. There are many theorists who espouse the importance of meeting an accepted progression of developmental stages during childhood until adult maturation. Erikson and Vygotsky are two who are most commonly referred to for guidance. Their principles and theories uphold the view that, for successful transition into adulthood, understanding psychosocial disorder is essential, as it has a direct impact on the developmental processes (Remschmidt, 1994).

Table 4.1

Arrested Development of Psychosocial and Maturation Milestones of Rose Wake

Erikson's 5th Stage Identity vs Role Confusion	Expected Achievement	Disruption *Attempted & Thwarted*	Actual Achievement *Reality*
Search/exploration for identity and sense of self as a 12-year-old	• self - love/self esteem • creativity – music	• not allowed to love or admire my outward or inward facing self, due to the strict moral and religious family • Wished to pursue a singing career – not an option for a young daughter of Italian parents	Achieved accepting sense of self at the age of 30 Pursued singing lessons and a music career at the age of 32
	• create and maintain friendships • belonging as Australian (hybrid identity) • Sexuality	• Unable to have friends from school l could socialise with due to parent's beliefs of racial differences • Unable to speak English at home whilst being racially discriminated at school impacted on my cultural identity	Ability to form friendships from the age of 25 Liberated to speak both languages without fear or feeling intimidated at the age of 35 Sexual experience commenced when married at 17 years of age

		• No sex education by parents or school – sex was forbidden to be spoken about in the home	
Contemplating future in terms of career, relationships and family	• Independence/ Adulthood, Career	• Female gender within the family had a determined future as wife and mother. Independence not achieved • Future is enforced not contemplated. Decisions related to career and relations is subject to permission (husband), not independent	Adulthood not realised, thrust into role as wife at 17 years of age
Contemplating belonging in society and social roles	Building social networks and place in society Exploration of identity Increasing independence Transition into adulthood	• No chance to achieve this as independent entity – a sense of belonging and social roles are based on identity as wife/mother • No opportunity to explore and identify identity due to new forced identity (wife) • Independence from parents not achieved – dependence transferred to new dominant adult (husband) • Adulthood assumed when a mother – realising responsibilities in this role being totally dependent on husband	Age 35 years the development of being socially interactive with community groups Age 35 onwards awareness of identity as a woman became a reality Independence truly achieved at the age of 40 when divorced Independence within all determined roles age 40

Discussion

As I have shown in my stories, I experienced within my cultural hybridity inherent tensions through linguistic and societal values, religious indoctrination and racism. It is important, therefore, to discuss the commencement of the diasporic experience for both my parents and the history that prefaced their new life as immigrants in Australia, which in turn determined my life as a cultural hybrid. I will thematically relate my narratives to cultural hybridity, cultural identity and cultural capital as a means to scaffold these distinctive and significant aspects of my autoethnography.

In my narrative ***Barriers and Borders***, I describe my father's experience as a monolingual immigrant who commenced his working life as a baker. The daily constant for my father was not working long hours but the constant barrage of racism due to his lack of the English language and ethnic appearance. The insults for my father were even more stinging as Italians from the northern parts of Italy, due to their fair complexion and lighter hair colour, hardly attracted any number of racist taunts.

The arduous passage of migration was relatively easy in comparison to what Southern Italians were to face in terms of societal acceptance and racism, and this was asserted in depth by Baldassar and Pyke (2014), who highlighted that the influence and differing diaspora experience for the Southern Italian migrants was evident for migrants who arrived between 1950 to well into the 1960’s. My mother's diasporic experience in my narrative ***Barriers and Borders*** demonstrates a life affected on so many levels which was measured by adversity commencing with her diasporic experience as a new migrant. A designated life as a proxy bride in a new country that she knew little of, stripped of agency and sense of self explains her need to move locations constantly during my young life.

Within my narrative titled ***No Man's Land*** my story describes my life as a young girl negotiating my lack of agency and identity as a cultural hybrid. I use the metaphor of my

third space as a time, as a means when freedom and time was sacred whilst walking between the gates of home and school. During these times, I could be the self that was not determined or dictated by culture, home or society. This third space became my default position when walking within my "no man's land." It was only once I arrived at the gates that I resumed the role of the acceptable self for both home and school. The theorist Homi Bhabha's concept of a "third space" relates to the awareness one must have when understanding cultural hybridity as the cultivation of a third space which emanates as a natural development creating its own position (Rutherford, 1990). Bhabha's theory was instrumental and transformational in identifying my own third space as my own natural phenomenon.

My own third space is revealed within my narrative ***No Man's Land*** as going to school and having to find excuses not to attend excursions due to my parents' mistrust of Australian values and society and secondly coerced by my insecure ethnic and gender identity I was not accepted by my peers. Measuring ethnic identity presented a challenge, due to its complexity, and I was forced to gauge it on a cultural phenomenon continuum within many stages of my life. In order to understand and put into context the many cultural phenomena that shaped my life, in particular my attitudes during my formative years, Maestes (2000) suggests it is essential to acknowledge the attitudes of the individual which are borne by the synthesis of familial and cultural norms. Linking the stories of my upbringing and the stages of my comparative table of arrested development of psychosocial and maturation milestones to Erikson's 5th Stage theory establishes the reality of thwarted agency to develop my own attitudes, as I did not possess my own subjective developed identity (see Table 4.1).

The afore mentioned literature provides some understanding of what constitutes the principles of ethnic identity and offers opportunities for self-reflection how one may willingly

bond into a particular ethnic group, family, tribe, or community, or concede to a culturally destined life that is determined at birth. Gabaccia (1984) concurs that significant elements of family, ethnic identity and culture are the fusion which provides immigrants with a deep sense of kinship within their communities and the wider Italian society whilst honouring family values and traditions. My parents had a profound connection to their Italian culture, values, religion and identity which I was expected to assume. My narrative ***All Grown Up*** is an example of how my identity was clearly linked to the expectation of my gender as a daughter of Southern Italian parents and to adhere to their cultural traditions and values. My ethnic identity would demonstrate that I was proficient in domestic duties from the age of 8 and would marry an Italian man when it was deemed appropriate by them.

My experience of what was cultural capital associated by the need of my family to uphold their culture, values and religious practices was demonstrated within my narrative ***Searching for Self***, revealing that I would leave school at the age of fourteen and a half be educationally proficient, be employed in a suitable job and present myself in a professional manner. Bourdieu's theory emphasised that cultural capital supports educational success within families over many generations (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990; Young, 1971). My family history on both my mother's and father's side indicates that education was not a commodity or a priority due to economic circumstances due to the first and second world wars.

The measurement of cultural capital within the context of my research question, “How has cultural capital and hybridity shaped my education/life trajectory as a second-generation Italian Australian woman?” necessitated that I undertake this research by method of autoethnography. I became aware of Bourdieu’s theory of three states of cultural capital when comparing these against my own identity and cultural hybridity. In particular, the

second state which relates to the objectified state, in which materialism and resources that are available or inherent shape one's cultural capital. A prime example highlighted in my narrative ***Searching for Self*** was the lack of autonomy afforded to me when my mother did not allow me to open my own pay packet and was to hand it over to her on my return home every week. Additionally, the third state, the institutionalized state, refers to the acquisition of educational qualifications and how the opportunities of achieving an education defines one's agency and determines one's cultural capital. This stage was obstructed in my educational trajectory due to cultural capital and lack of agency.

Conclusion

In conclusion, my autoethnography serves to inform and acknowledge firstly, the diaspora of my parents as Southern Italian migrants to Australia and the political landscape that enticed them during the post second world war era. Pushed out of Italy by post war depression and welcomed to Australia by the pull of good economic prospects, my parents learned to live along with multifarious and pervasive modes of racism. This knowledge is in context to my autoethnography presented in this paper and frames the beginning of my life as a second generational daughter of Southern Italian migrants. Findings within this autoethnographical research clearly demonstrate the implications of living as a female within a hybrid culture dominated by patriarchal and religious culture. The research literature assists to scaffold the narratives situating each story and related phenomenon as data in order to contribute new knowledge in relation to the implications that cultural capital, cultural hybridity and arrested development may have for future second generation daughters of immigrant parents.

The significant contribution of my autoethnography to existing knowledge is that the findings identified causative factors related to my parent's immigration, racism, strong

cultural and religious practices as catalysts for my chronologically disrupted development as an adolescent. My arrested development was compared to Erikson's fifth stage of psychosocial development highlighting vital milestones missed due to the lack of cultural capital that being little value was placed on allowing me to pursue further education or at best complete high school.

The three states of cultural capital which Bourdieu (2010) claimed as essential to determine my agency and situational position was classified as being embodied, objectified and institutionalized further affirmed that my arrested development was indeed thwarted and dysfunctional. The findings also provided insight how my identity was primarily compromised due to cultural hybridity and gender compelling me to seek out a familiar sanctuary in what Rutherford (1990) described as Bhabha's "third space." A further contribution to existing knowledge is that autoethnography was instrumental in perpetuating reflective self- examination into self-authenticity, thus becoming an obsessive attribute for my situated cultural and developmental knowledge and research.

Limitations to this research could be that due to the constantly changing world and the immigration process in the twenty first century the knowledge from my autoethnographical findings may be inconsequential for refugee and asylum seeker cohorts and could possibly benefit from further research relating to emancipatory theories which address power imbalances associated with cultures and race. The implication for my autoethnography is the suggestion that the dominance of both cultures at all stages during my childhood and adolescence were instrumental in regulating and ruling my situated position as a daughter who possessed a hybrid cultural identity with no opportunity to develop a true sense of agency or to explore and shape my identity at any stage of my adolescence. Additionally, my knowing of self in terms of arrested development has significant implications in how mature

aged students such as me are making up time for developmental milestones not achieved at chronologically appropriate times.

What this autoethnography does exhibit is that my stories are powerful in the sense that they demonstrate lives affected by diaspora, racism by both cultures, conscious and unconscious fears which guided the parenting practice within my family combined with the limited educational and social trajectory that was my adolescent history. The opportunity to present my narratives in an autoethnography and share my personal biography as a means to identify gaps and milestones throughout my adolescence as research and for the purpose of extending knowledge and sociological understanding (Sparkes, 2000) allowed me the subjectivity to represent myself as an emancipated woman who has liberated myself from the shackles of self-doubt regarding my cultural hybridity and identity. My research may inform and assist educators and academics who seek to further understand culturally diverse complexities within specific hybrid cultures compared to that of a monoculture.

Further qualitative research is recommended to be undertaken ethnographically across all states across Australia in an effort to identify if there are other cohorts of daughters of Southern Italian migrant parents who emigrated during the 1950's to 1960's and who have had similar experiences of arrested development during their adolescent years. The research questions would apply with the objective that the data may contribute new knowledge to the existing research for migrant women and their daughters

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Chapter 5 Findings

This second article ‘Crossing the Threshold: An Autoethnography of a Hybrid’ is presented as a narrative chapter for future submission to a refereed scholarly journal. Following on from my first published article I continue to delve deeper into the dynamic processes of my life through the methodology of autoethnography. My life as a female cultural hybrid from birth is examined and analysed against a background of conformity and lack of agency.

I further explore how cultural and societal boundaries imposed cultural weight during my adolescent years. I appraise the refuge of liminality and third space during distressing and disruptive moments which cultural weight imposed upon me. Ultimately, this narrative chapter describes my personal life as an adolescent cultural hybrid whose life was dictated by the decisions of culture, family, society and church power systems.

Narrative Chapter 2

Crossing the Threshold: An Autoethnography of a Hybrid Daughter

Abstract

Exploring the dynamic processes of my life through the methodology of autoethnography, I extract the personal and situational experiences of living as a female cultural hybrid. In this paper I scrutinise my life to make meaning of culture, migration and being female contributed to my constant search of finding agency in hybrid spaces. The discursive narratives that I present aim to construct understanding of the Southern Italian cultural boundaries and customs negotiated by my immigrant parents as an imperative to shape my identity that fitted their fixed mould.

Keywords Culture, Identity, Hybrid, Autoethnography, Migration

Introduction

> I want you to feel what I felt. I want you to know why story truth is truer sometimes than happening-truth …What stories can do, I guess, is make things present … (T)his is true: stories can save us.
>
> —*Tim O'Brien*, *The Things They Carried* (1991, pp. 172-173).

As I read Tim O'Brien's words a well of empathy engulfs me as I reflect on the untold stories that I have been suppressing until now. The stories give clarity for a life lived as an adolescent under the dominance of migrant parents, culture and society. The felt emotion of empathy comes from a place that has compassionate understanding of the past, but there is also a need to unleash the memories that have unconsciously wanted to be revealed in text. My need to recount these stories is to pay homage to a child and teenager

who did not own agency or had the opportunity to create or nurture her own identity. In this paper I have written narratives that span the years between fourteen years of age and seventeen and reveal my self-portrait through my words.

I was born in Melbourne, Australia and am a second-generation daughter of Southern Italian migrant parents. My parents were married by proxy in the 1950s. Scarparo (2009) explains that "a proxy marriage takes place when one party at the marriage ceremony is represented by a substitute known as a proxy" (p. 85). I am the second child and second daughter of five children. By being another daughter, I was a disappointment, as the family name could not continue without a male heir. On reflection, my gender felt like an infliction and remained with me for many years as a constant reminder of not being what my family wanted until my brother was born. In my early childhood I learned my parents' Southern Italian dialect very quickly and Australian English from watching television (some of it holding twangs of American English). In this autoethnography I share my narratives immersed in evocative images and sensorial meanings, stories that I need to tell from the position of a child, adolescent and adult. These narratives also highlight the impact of migration to Australia for my parents and their challenges and struggle to maintain their cultural identity at all costs.

Fourteen and Female

My life trajectory as a fourteen-year-old was determined by parents, primarily my mother, who at this young age informed me that it was time for her to plan my future. There was no asking me what I wanted to do, I had no say, only what she had planned for me. I had mixed feelings, I was not sure if I should be feeling pleased or scared, but mother knew best and I was forewarned. I asked her questions of how my future would play out as I wanted to know what she had planned for me. Her words boomed aloud as she yelled in her broken English "I told you, listen to me, I know what is good for you." I did not quite understand

why I was to have my life mapped out for me until marriage. I was only fourteen, I was only interested in music and reading. At school my friends and I would often fantasise about the weddings we would have, the white wedding dresses with layers of frills and we had to have a long trail. The tiara would be made of diamantes and finished off with a lace veil. We spoke of what the perfect boyfriend would look like and what job he would have to makes us want to marry him.

Having a good job was important as this would ensure that we would have the finer things in life. These conversations fuelled my fantasy of escapism from the reality of my existing life. I was cognisant that the Italian customs were different from the Australian ones, but in my family, I had no say over my life. My mother's plans were by design. I was her daughter, I was pubescent, it was time for her to commence informing the rumour mill around the Italian community of my status. It did not take long before it was made known within the Italian community that we belonged to, that I was available for marriage and any appropriate suitor could approach the elders of the family to make their intentions known. Effectively, my mother was declaring that I was available for marriage. My feelings of confusion were perplexing, there was ringing in my ears as I heard the words marriage, available, no choice. My mind screamed, what am I a chattel? I knew that my family did things differently but this was something that I did not understand as a fourteen year old cultural hybrid. Culturally this practice was not unusual for Southern Italian parents due to their subjective cognitive structure of maintaining ethnic identity in a new country (Baldassar, 1999). As an adolescent I did not comprehend that there was a bigger issue at play. I was unaware of the importance for my parents to continue with tradition as a measure to ward off the racism and denigration they were subjected to because of their Southern Italianess, living under the White Australia Policy (Andreoni, 2003, Baldassar & Pyke, 2014, Dewhirst 2014). The imperative for my parents as Italian immigrants was to maintain their

cultural practices, customs and rituals in accordance with their traditional laws and values. This in turn was the catalyst for the stringent upbringing of their daughters according to the conventions of church and culture (Pallotta-Charolli, 1989).

The symbology of my coming of age was distinguished as the cultural and religious rite of passage that deemed me ready for marriage. My mother took on her dutiful role as custodian of my life and commenced the process of attaining a husband that was fit for purpose (Baldassar, 1999). In turn, I only understood life to be that I attend school during the day, a simple way of being and acting and I knew what was expected of me. I had friends (even though I was not allowed to socialise with them out of school hours), friends who I could share thoughts and feelings with and who understood the mind of a fourteen-year-old. In the late afternoon arriving home from school, it was a different life. I would immediately feel the tensions of conformity as soon as I entered through the front door of our two storey brick veneer house. The smells of provincial cooking reinforced that I was an Italian daughter of an Italian mother who was proficient in the Southern Italian culture. The two cultural ways of life were always confusing and troubling. I wanted to please my parents, but I also wanted to be me. I would find myself muttering, is this my life or am I living the life that my mother wants for me? The realisation for this concern was cemented when I eventually comprehended my mother's plans for my future were in place. We engaged in an animated and agitated conversation, as she reinforced the significance of being married, by bellowing in no uncertain terms, that it was crucial for me to get a good husband. Adding to this momentous emotional disruption she stated that I had to realise that this came with responsibilities. I was only fourteen! What responsibilities does a fourteen-year-old have? One of those responsibilities for a cultural hybrid preparing for marriage was my duty as a daughter, that I become proficient in domestic chores and skills that would impress any future mother-in-law. Mother-in-law! My head was spinning, I felt dizzy. This conversation was not

happening, I am only fourteen! My mind resounded those words and it then hit me like a ton of bricks, the cold hard fact and overriding reason was, that being a very young woman also implied that I was still a virgin. This was traditional and cultural, being raised in the Roman Catholic church drove that historical belief system for many ethnic groups who adhered to the traditions of this way of life, in particular my family (Jesudasan, 2012).

My family's history of religious practice was Catholicism. It was also an integral part of my father's ancestral lineage with one paternal uncle who held a position as a priest in Rome. My father held him in high esteem and deemed his position in the church as a source of pride. This in turn made religious practice and rituals obligatory in our family and as a 'virtuous' child I was expected to attend mass on a weekly basis to maintain this title and image. I hated going to church and being the virtuous girl they wanted me to be: I had no choice but to comply. It was not the ritual and ceremony of the church so much that I hated but the expectation of having to attend every Sunday, this was the part of the conformity that I hated. At my age I wanted to listen to my music, play my games, wear what my friends were wearing, not go to church, this was not my world, I did not want it to be part of my growing up. The only thing that made sense was going into my inner world, my world where no one was allowed to intrude. This state has often been described as a "condition of liminality originated by living in two worlds (their immigrant parents and the Australian one)" (Marino, 2019a, pp.21).

The plan for my future took another leap forward at the age of fourteen years and seven months. The unexpected interruption to my life was all part of the grand design and precursor to a future marriage. Whilst attending school, assuming the role of a cultural hybrid and wearing a continuing uncomfortableness of confused identity, I was 'encouraged' by my mother to leave school and look for a meaningful job. I didn't love school as such, but I knew I did not want to leave it either, I had little choice in the matter. I knew I was too young to

leave school, I was not upset about missing out on an education and completing my high school years, it was more about that I had to leave the familiarity of seeing classmates every day of the week. It was about leaving my pseudo social network where I pretended to be only Australian during the day and didn't have to reveal any of my Italian heritage. All I wanted to be, like my friends from school, that would make me my version of myself, not what my parents or culture wanted me to be.

Leaving school was another matter that was settled by my mother and I knew that I was in no position to negotiate. I would have to adhere to the familial edict that had already been put in place by my parents. Getting a job, being employed I had no idea or prospect about doing what I wanted in life. Although singing was my one and only passion; I knew that I would never be allowed to pursue that career due to my parent's overt judgement of my gender and my place in the music industry. With that sorted in my mind I was also under no illusion that I also needed to upskill to gain meaningful employment in any field. My mother's recommendations for employment were a receptionist, typist or a secretary. They were her choices for a career not mine and with no say in the matter, I dutifully went along with her directive. I wondered what education I would need to achieve a position for any of these career options. The reality was that I would need to improve my typing and shorthand skills. I informed my mother that I lacked these skills and it would be identified when I went for a job interview. She did not hesitate to enrol me into a secretarial short course that met my criteria. It was not considered an issue for my parents but it was for me, being a nervous naive teenager who was not fifteen yet, getting on a train every morning to travel to a city business college. My mother's plan was in place, to learn a condensed receptionist skills course in six months. The plan included a certificate to demonstrate my proficiency in typing and shorthand and to find a respectable job. The plan worked. Two months after gaining my

certificate I was employed at the Commercial Bank of Australia as a typist and Italian interpreter.

Fifteen and Functional

Fifteen years of age, new uniform, new job, and scared witless. I walked into a workplace setting that consisted of staff who were predominantly Anglo-Australian. I was welcomed and accepted immediately as the youngest member on staff. My duties were made clear to me by the manager of the bank. I was required to undertake menial chores as well as reception work and interpret for the Italian customers. The chores consisted of vacuuming all the floors, making morning tea, collecting the rubbish and the mail, and anything else that I was instructed to do. Again, being a female and the expectation of doing domestic duties, different setting same gendered tasks. The dawning of a realisation for me came as a young woman, was that domestic chores were expected within most cultures by the very virtue of being born female.

The position as receptionist and interpreter called for my skills to interpret for any Italian-speaking customer who came to the counter and required translation from Italian to English. The problem was that everyone thought I was fluent in the Italian language, but really all I could speak was my parents' Southern Italian dialect. I was ridiculed by customers who did not understand me due to their understanding of the Italian language in accordance with their geographical location in Italy, particularly the north.

I became highly embarrassed by my inability to be understood by these customers. My feelings of inadequacy only bolstered my humiliation, leaving me unable to articulate and formulate the right words in the language I was supposed to know fluently. The only consolation for these embarrassing moments was that my Australian peers did not know the reason why the customers would become so animated when speaking to me. On one occasion

a male staff member asked me if I needed some support as he interpreted the vocal customer as complaining about the bank's service. My frustration fuelled my highly acute awareness of living a hybrid life, owning a hybrid identity, and feeling inauthentic. I can't even speak the language of my ancestry and it's not my fault! All I knew was that I needed to articulate this annoyance that kept playing on rotation like a record in my mind. I confronted my parents asking the question of why I had not been taught the Italian language in the way that all Italians understood and spoke it. I was not prepared for the feelings of empathy to well up inside of me as I heard the uncomfortableness in their voices. They revealed they were also limited in their ability to speak Italian fluently in its pure form because they were never taught the language or spoke it both as children and adults. This was the first time that I had witnessed my parents being vulnerable. My father felt shame that I was placed in this position, he was a proud Italian and wanted me to feel the same pride for my ancestry. My mother told me pragmatically that I would learn on the job to find and say the right words, the customers who would teach me. I felt some vindication for my dilemma, but my mother's response left me feeling confused.

Each day I found myself wondering how my workplace was an environment that left me feeling like a round peg that was never going to fit in a square hole. I went through the motions of doing my work and grew to like my work mates but continued to feel different by the obvious cultural distinction. My mane of black curly long hair, olive skin and an interesting Italian nose highlighted my physical ethnicity, I did not like looking different from everyone else. I always felt socially inept around my colleagues. My lack of education at that time also held me back especially when lively conversations about history and politics were being discussed by most of the staff, I would just listen in ignorance. The planning of work social events were also a constant source of conversation amongst the team, I did not contribute unless the events were scheduled during work hours. My reasons for this were

because it was made very clear by my mother that I was never to agree to socialise with either gender, which became the reasons for my inaccessible manner and creative excuses whenever invited outside the workplace. I now realise that this was a form of reverse racism by my parents, I was ignorant of this form of oppression at the age of fifteen. The repression of my agency was made perfectly clear by my parents who did not allow me to have any form of social interaction with people who were not in our family circle. As an adult and in retrospect, I now understand that these actions and mindset were driven by fear, fear of racism that my parents experienced and driven by having to conform to an alien way of life. Their concern was real. Langfield (1991) advocates that southern Europeans in particular were seen to be targeted because of their olive skin, a physical trait which did not fit the whiteness expected by a colonised and racist government. This instilled fear and promoted an invisibility for the many groups of migrants who confined themselves within close knit communities in trepidation of having to deny their culture and assimilate according to the White Australia Policy (Monsour, 2000). My mother resisted assimilation and this fear was culturally transferred to me as a consequence of her lived experiences.

Fifteen, Family and Fun?

Our family belonged to a close-knit Italian community who socialised mainly around the local Italian based soccer club. Every weekend my family would have to endure my father's love and obsession of soccer. My father became heavily involved within this local soccer club achieving what the family considered the prestigious role of club president. Due to this position it was mandatory as a family to attend all weekend matches and events. I was not interested in this type of sport and only liked Australian rules football (which I kept a secret from my family). Australian rules football was seen as inferior by my father, because it wasn't an international sport, however I loved it and would find ways of following my favourite team, Collingwood, despite my parents' animosity for this code of football. This

was also my way of having agency over something that they did not approve of and I could control. I would watch matches on television when my parents were not near the lounge room and mute the sound whenever they hovered nearby. It was important for me to be informed of the football teams, the wins and losses, as this became the topic of conversation at work on a Monday morning. This was a way of fitting in as an Australian.

The obvious different code of football and the social accompaniment for a young fervent multicultural football club was to hold dinner dances, presentations and other events. Being the daughter of the club's president, I knew at all times I had to play the role of the dutiful and respectful daughter, in my mother's words, never bring shame to the family by acting common. Attending dinner dances I would always wear a new dress, bought and chosen by my mother. One particular dress was the colour of burnt orange bearing a laced bodice, to flatter my waist. My mother was shrewd in knowing what style of dress would attract the opposite sex and she chose wisely so I would gain maximum attention. Additionally, I was strategically seated on the main table next to my older sister who sat beside my mother, another strategy that my mother implemented to ensure that everyone would easily comprehend the hierarchy of the family unit.

My role within this social club necessitated that I had to undertake specific duties. According to my mother, I was given one of the important tasks to support the club and allocated the job of washing the dirty and nauseating soccer shirts, shorts and socks when we returned home from every soccer match. The painstaking extraction of reeking and malodorous sports clothes and placing them into the washing machine never ceased to induce my body to heave at least twice every time this ritual was executed. Once they were washed, I would hang the clean detergent smelling clothing up on the washing line in meticulous order under my mother's direction and watchful eye. I found a way to make this chore my own. My creativity kicked in as I ritualised the arranging of wet clothes on the clothesline

into an artform, shaping size, texture, pattern, and space as much as I could. I was creating art while my mother thought she was creating the perfect wife. Unknown to me this apprenticeship of domestic training was carefully planned in the manner of "sistemazione" (systemisation), a method that many Southern Italian migrants adhered to in their host country (Pulvirenti, 2000). The systemisation of the home also provided a sense of pride, fulfillment and gratification of owning one's own home (Faggion & Furlan, 2017). The notion of making a home became a reality when becoming aware of my mother's matrimonial plot for me.

The cultural tradition of registering interest in a matrimonial match for young men of Italian nationality was to approach the family first. This was the procedure in my case. My mother was convinced that my status as the soccer club's president's daughter was a compelling enticement for any young man. Even as a naive fifteen-year-old I was cognisant that my father's position in the community was an important factor for my potential marriage arrangement. The interesting fact for my future marriage was that I was never privy to who had had made their intentions known to my parents. I also was not permitted to speak directly to any of the interested suitors. The truth be told I was not interested or want to be part of the process, I did not ask for it so I was happy to be oblivious to any of the meetings between my parents and the prospective fiancé. I told myself this is never going to happen to me, I feel like a piece of meat and at the same time my curiosity prompted an interest in the interest. Often during these moments, I found myself daydreaming of a perfect getaway, to a place where life was simple and I was my own person. These liminal moments successfully managed to block the conversations that were in ear shot as I immersed myself in the execution of mundane domestic duties.

As tradition and protocol dictated, the successful suitor was chosen under the proviso that he met all the required scrutiny. It did not take much time for my mother to have her

informants make their discreet enquiries about this man and his family's standing in the community ensuring that they came from a 'good family'. Her loud and overpowering rules were clear, she was adamant that this person must have a steady job, only drank socially, was well-respected, and who could easily fit into our Italian family. A marriage was not always about the romantic union of the couple, it was foremost about family honour and respect and this was always up for scrutiny by the wider Italian community (Cosmini-Rose, 2005; Cullen, 2019). I finally met the chosen one. Initially, I liked the look and sound of him, not that I could have shared that conversation with anyone, especially my mother. That would have been interpreted by her as being unashamedly common. Knowing that he met all the requirements of a good husband and more importantly having no other choice, I admitted to myself that if I was going to get married and this was going to be my destiny I may as well be married to someone that was compatible.

The informal engagement became the catalyst for a series of visitations to our home by M who was always well received by my mother. I had grown to look forward to his visits as he was a pleasant distraction from my chores and life in general. The qualities that impressed my mother were that he was very tall, handsome, spoke pure Italian, had a good job, and was respectful. These were the traits that she would advance as being essential to be a suitable husband for any of her daughters. As M's visits became more frequent, I found I was getting used to him and feelings of fondness were emerging. In his absence I would allow myself to slip into daydreams of living with him as an adult, a married woman with grown-up responsibilities and freedoms. Often, my escapism into my own world would perpetuate a sensory experience of living an abundant life travelling around the globe, socialising with many like-minded friends and experiencing no restrictions, just free to be who I wanted to be. My idyllic escape became an essential and timely divergence whenever

my mother demanded strict conformity of domestic duties and for me to demonstrate traditional cultural behaviour.

Our relationship as a couple was a comfortable fit that we both acknowledged. Our families met and I was considered to be a good catch by his side of the family. This was deemed a suitable arrangement by the powers over me, I was to be married. I was only fifteen and a half, and I was formally engaged. I succumbed to my family's notion of the 'good daughter'. My small resistances were only in my head, I then knew it was a waiting game for my escape.

What I did not expect were my uneasy feelings and growing anxiety about my unknown future, these continued to increase exponentially. Providing fuel to my insecurities of going through with the wedding was my soon-to-be father-in-law. I became suspicious during our first few meetings until it was obvious that his nationality, Croatian, was a point of difference that he proudly promoted at every given moment. His migration to Australia as a refugee encouraged him to become overbearing about his nationalistic allegiance to his homeland. One example was when both families were having discussions about the wedding reception, he became insistent that the Croatian flag was to be hung behind the bridal table. It was evident that his motives were racial and political which immediately made me experience heightened emotions of disbelief and anger. In retrospect, the complexities of intercultural marriages were something that I did not understand as an adolescent let alone understand the undercurrents of culture competitiveness between being Italian and Croatian. The obvious distinctions between the two cultures and their values contributed to the differing cultural attitudes and practices which were perceived by me as disruptive and negative (Garcia, 2006; McFadden & Moore, 2001).

This disruption happened two weeks before the wedding day. It also became the excuse I was contemplating on whilst summoning up my courage to call the whole thing off.

I was confused, disillusioned and irresolute and wondered if I still wanted to go ahead with the wedding. I spoke to my fiancé in a rare moment of privacy and made it clear that I was feeling undecided about if the wedding should go ahead. I explained how I believed that his father's beliefs had no place on our wedding day and were insensitive to my family. My final position on the matter declared that if our wedding was to go ahead, it would not be sabotaged by his father's nationalistic racism and his interference was to cease. Again, M repeatedly reassured me that he would speak to both his parents. He followed through and for a time, the nationalistic rhetoric simmered.

I then made the crucial mistake of voicing my uncertain feelings of going through with the wedding to my mother, who in turn told me in a very direct manner that if I did anything to stop the wedding that the consequences would be severe. I looked at my father who sat in silence, I did not know what this meant but enough to know that I no longer wanted to remain in my parents' home. My family would lose face if I bailed out. I did not wish to bring shame to my family as Baldassar (1999) confirms that to leave a family home was only by the consecration of marriage. My only ray of hope if I got married, was firstly I could leave my family home, and secondly not ever having to endure my mother's overpowering need to control everything that I did. It would be the perfect opportunity to control my own destiny and navigate the life I wanted, even though I had to concede marrying into a family where their ideals, values and culture were indifferent to the one I was bought up in. The decision was made, I would get married. The escape.

My wedding day had me transfixed on my transient allusive thoughts when I should have been thinking about my wedding day. The thoughts swirled like tidal pools giving me no respite. I was distracted by the bridesmaids and before I knew it, I was dressed in a beautiful white wedding dress topped off with a floral tiara and long veil. The matron of honour completed my bridal look by applying my makeup and grooming my hair. I looked in

the mirror and saw myself in the costume that represented emancipation. I was ready. Outside the drivers in the bridal cars waited patiently in the driveway, I followed protocol and emerged out of our house with my father in tow. I knew my father was nervous as he chose not to converse with me on the way to the church, I also remained silent until we arrived in the church driveway. My nerves were probably the same as all brides, but maybe there was also the excitement of my long-awaited physical escape, the fear of the new, and the hope for something better (or at least different). As I alighted from the vehicle one of the handmade chiffon flowers on my gown got caught in the greased hinge of the car door, immediately staining the fabric. I was horrified and in disbelief, I immediately commenced to cry. My older sister noticed what was happening and came to my assistance. She reassured me all good dressmakers are armed with sewing kits in their handbags and she would fix the problem. She folded the stained chiffon flower into one of the many folds of the gown and hid the offending stain. There was no stain visible, I was able to remove the runny mascara from my face, blot my cheeks and proceeded to walk down the aisle. I took measured steps down the long aisle with the steady stream of tears coursing down my face This was not because I was emotional that I was marrying the man of my dreams, but because my dress was tarnished. I thought this stain might be the foreshadowing of things to come, prophesising that my marriage would be doomed from the outset.

The marriage ritual presided by a catholic service was rendered without incident. I did not feel any different from who I was before the ceremony, the difference was that I was now a married woman at the age of seventeen. I walked down the aisle once more with my husband by my side, confetti sprinkled over us including audible congratulatory wishes from the congregation. This was followed by the prolonged ordeal of photographs including immediate and extended family. The photographer darted about the garden placing bodies in a linear fashion, all of whom were placed on either the bride’s or groom’s side. The

photographer was well aware of placing members of the families according to protocol and long-standing patterns of affection and dislike. We smiled, we did not blink, we stood still and I quickly grew tired of the conformity, again. Three hours later the moment of truth, we arrived as husband and wife at our wedding reception, where most of the three hundred people invited were in attendance. I held my new husband's hand very tightly as we entered the reception room to the applause of the guests. This accolade for being a bride was perplexing and uncomfortable. I wanted to become invisible and not have to be the centre of attention. This was not by any means my default position, but I knew that I had to undergo this ritual to complete the ceremonial proceedings. The evening soon concluded fulfilling all the expected duties of a bride and groom, that met the expectations of my mother and both families, who happily waved us both off as we alighted the taxi. As the taxi departed my emotions were vacillating from euphoric highs to fearful lows. We were alone with each other, pretty much for the first time. My husband was also very nervous and tried to engage in conversation about the wedding ceremony and reception to provide a calming environment. My nerves were not just about the impending 'wedding night' but also about the magnitude of what had just occurred. For the first time, I was out from under my mother's domination, but I realised I might be now underneath someone else's. The beginning of a new chapter in my life had just begun.

Methodology

The use of autoethnography as my research method was imperative to explore how my hybrid identity was negotiated through my stories of how decisions, choices, resistances, edicts, judgements, and restrictions influenced the why and how of my life as a second-generation daughter of migrants. The choice to use this research approach and writing connected me with a history which was influenced by family history and trauma. Referring to the definition of autoethnography by Ellis et al. (2011) as "an approach to research and

writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyse (graphy) personal experience (auto) in order to understand cultural experience (ethno)" (p. 1), became my guiding compass during my research

As a second-generation daughter of migrant parents, my autoethnography provides a scope for my reminiscent stories to be told how I navigated my life as a cultural hybrid enculturated under the direction of a Southern Italian and Australian cultural and societal compass. My hybrid identity existed from the moment I was aware of my difference, that is living in both worlds of being born as an Italian daughter and being raised in Australia. I became aware of what Bhabba (1991) refers to a third space or "in-between" experience often as a child until adolescence. This liminal space became a refuge when I needed the quiet away from rules and culture.

It is important at this juncture that I emphasise the relevance of autoethnography as a research method as it identifies that I am the subject of my research (Bogiannidis et al, 2017). My subjective and private memories evolved naturally with the freedom of writing as an autoethnographer, legitimising my immersion into memories and emotions which compellingly emerged recalling my lived experiences (Gallardo & Gindidis, 2020; Chang, 2008; Morse, 1994; Van Manen, 2006). My research has not sought to criticise or judge the historical events relating to my family or cultural upbringing, only how it influenced my life trajectory. In fact, what it did do was peak my curiosity, I was able to view the data reflexively and posture myself as a researcher, not as the daughter of proxy wed migrant parents (Chenail, 2000). O'Brien (1990) asserts that telling stories is important and stories have a place that can liberate the truth. Autoethnography has been the catalyst for my stories to be expressed as embodied within the personal, cultural, and political self which in turn expresses my truth (Denzin, 2018).

As a researcher, I am aware that the personal history and experiential stories that I share within this study are in effect oral historical data of first-generation migrants, that is, my parents. This is important not only that it provides the reader with a unique understanding of the numerous and complex circumstances of how migration influenced their lives and mine. The failure to recount these stories would "leave an inestimable void in our understanding of the multiple and complex ways that transnational migration reconfigures an individual's sense of belonging, family networking, formation of social bonds and enactment of community cultural traditions" (Glenn, 2013, p. 151). My autoethnographical focus and intent is to inform and "pursue the ultimate goal of cultural understanding underlying autobiographical experiences" (Chang, 2008, p. 49). My connection to writing as autoethnography seeks to impact educational research as a voice that qualifies my place as a contributor to qualitative inquiry (Bhattacharya, 2020). The utilisation of this methodology to enable me to self-investigate my memories and then deciding which ones are evocative to transpose into stories often challenges me with questions of are these meeting scholarly conventions? It is then the meaning making of my memories which aids to clarify these questions (Bochner, 2020).

Discussion

I must apportion the cultural weight of my lived experience within my teenage years directly to my lived experiences as a cultural hybrid. The reconciliatory task of making sense of my fractured identity as a teenage cultural hybrid highlights many encounters of my internal struggle to understand the cultural practice, values, rituals and the complexities of my status in a multicultural society. I would consider that my acquiescence for a life without incident led my small resistances as a cultural hybrid, to recognise the embodiment of my internal experiences within my narratives. My imagined resistances fearlessly questioned the status quo and had me escaping in the most courageous exoduses. The discourse of voice and

narrative discussed by Saukko (2008) and Thomson et al. (2018) brings meaningful clarity to why women's voices, agency and tension fuelled resistances should not be silenced. Furthermore, they declare "the personal is political and the political is personal" to underscore the importance of agency in one's life (p. 99).

The writing of my autoethnographic narratives spurred me on to examine my life as a young cultural hybrid, shifting between habitual routines to acts of contingency as a means to define a liminal space (Jackson, 2009). As an adolescent I lived automated by emotion which drove my conscious and unconscious thinking into action. My narrative as a fourteen-year-old self who often sought an interim refuge whilst performing designated domestic duties for home and the soccer club, was blissfully suspended in a moment of time. The moment was empowering as I hung out the soccer socks and clothes under the watchful eye of attentive others who saw this through their own lens of domesticity, while I was happily designing artwork for the world to appreciate. My view of the world I lived in and how I articulated it was summed up by Gavey (2011) who stated that "that my interest is in the complete enmeshment of experience and culture and that I am interested in discourse only insofar as it is a way of understanding the cultural conditions of possibility for being in the world" (p.186).

It is important that I clarify the concept of liminality within my adolescent years. Liminality in short, was the secret hiding space where I could lose myself when the conformity of life according to my family and culture became too much. Liminality in my life gave me the opportunity to divorce myself of everything that was going on around me, including conversations by others who were in my proximity and where I was. The manner in which I can describe my liminality is by providing a template of examples relating to the times I formalised my liminal stages by incorporating Turner's classic concept of Temporal Dimensions. Victor Turner believed that a liminal phase could be achieved when a person,

event or situation interfered to disrupt or control another person's life (Wels et al., 2011). The research and data that determined his findings were conducted within indigenous communities where he witnessed distinct phases of liminality, presenting as "neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial" (Turner, 1969, p. 95). I can relate with the feeling of being not of this world when assuming my liminal space, time was inconsequential. A perfect out from at times a vexing world.

Incorporating Ibarra and Obodaru's (2016) condensed version of Victor Turner's classic concept aligned with Stenner's (2017) prescriptive model of Turner's concept of Temporal Dimensions and clarified that the liminal distinction was a division of "spontaneous liminal experiences (which are events that befall us or that happen to us)" (Stenner, 2017, p. 30). In terms of transition between social position and the significance of Turner's temporary stage, Ibarra and Obodaru (2016) further espouse the example between adolescence to adulthood as "liminality is a temporary hiatus between well-defined social statuses that still pervades much of the organizational literature" (p. 51). In Table 5.1 I have integrated my own liminal stages against the conceptual models to demonstrate my adolescent experience between the ages of fourteen and seventeen.

Table 5.1

My Liminal Stages compared to Turner, Ibarra, Obodaru & Stenner

Turner's Classic conceptualisation	Ibarra & Obodaru's Present day extensions	Stenner's Temporal Dimensions	Wake's Liminal stages	Wake's Liminal Mapping
Simultaneous role and Identity suspension	Uncoupled or sequential role and identity suspension	Moment: sudden event affecting one's life (death, divorce, Illness) or individualised ritual passage	Cultural hybrid inhabiting and hovering through multiple identities:	Identity suspension began as a fourteen-year-old, no opportunity to take on hobbies or

		(baptism, ritual passage to womanhood)	Teenager, daughter, fiancée and wife	belong to social club of choice – soccer club only available social experience Assuming the role of a fiancé at the age of fifteen Marriage at the age of seventeen
Highly institutionalised ritual guided by elders; a built in communitas of fellow liminars Socially legitimate narrative Obligatory nature: the liminar had no choice but to undergo liminality	Self-guided process, self-made communitas Incomplete and/or culturally problematic narrative: emergence of new scripts Voluntary nature: the liminar can choose to initiate liminality	Period: Critical Life Stages Puberty or Teenage - weeks, months or years	Conforming to multiple life roles in teenage years. Expectation of strict cultural and religious compliance for cultural rituals e.g. courtship, engagement and wedding. Choice to engage in liminality as a refuge	Adolescence was obstructed by cultural and family traditions with no opportunity for a self-guided life trajectory e.g. Obligation to marry at a young age, accept a choice that met the expectations of family and community, triadic hybridity Initiated liminality to avoid mother's dominance and cultural conventions from old and new relationships
Outcome is always certain. Only one outcome possible: Person assumes the next status in the "natural order"	Outcome can be uncertain. Multiple outcomes possible: Progressive change, regressive change, or unresolved stasis.	Epoch: prolonged intellectual confusion Incorporation and reproduction of liminality into social and political structures Modernity as 'permanent	Liminality emerged as a natural consequence and alliance during significant experience e.g. engagement and wedding	My "natural order" during the adolescence years was first to comprehend the experience of traversing over the threshold to enable and develop experiences of liminality. Value

		liminality’?		my own sense of identity

The tangible and intangible dimensions of liminality existed as an enigma which remained invisible to others, and at times even unrecognised by me. I believe it was an unconscious default position that I possessed. It is essential to divulge that liminality was not a concept or a notion that either parent were privy to. My ‘zoning out’ was not unusual for them to witness. They believed I was lost in my own world yet again, they were right. My parents were only concerned with the moral imperative as Southern Italian immigrants, to maintain their culture in *sistermazione* (systemisation), and to ensure that their good character was upheld within their community and family (Pulvirenti, 2000). The very thought of having a conversation with my parents, even as an adult, about my secret liminal escapes, would have made them both believe that I was cognitively impaired. I also knew that if it became public that either of my siblings or I were afflicted by mental health issues, this would bring shame to my parents and sully the family name, it was a cultural thing, it was a family thing. A measure of success and social position according to my family was the perception by the Italian community of their wealth, good health, good genes, intelligent children, and their home. I have never shared my private and personal moments of serenity with anyone, until now.

The tensions of cultural weight within my narratives could also be described in a manner of ways, mine were sensory. My experiences sensed the tangible, visceral and intuitive – the reek of filthy soccer outfits, and the shame of a stained bridal gown. The weight of conformity, tradition and familial expectations at times could not be balanced no matter how composed I wished to appear. This cultural weight imposed on me by the racial and familial political rivalry, contributed to my disillusionment of familial motives. On reflection this was a marriage of convenience for all the stakeholders, most importantly for

me, convenient to facilitate an escape from a life that was not mine to live. It is only now that I am aware of the conscious and unconscious resistances of my lived experiences. My voice in the narratives reverberated the tensions I felt as a woman and one who battled yet negotiated my embodied experiences and identity (McKenzie-Mohr et.al., 2014).

Bhabba's (1994) discussion questions the paradox of occupying a third space in which he maintains that without a nurturing and supportive cultural and societal environment how one occupies "the moment of transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity" (p. 1). Both my parents could never achieve liminality within their limited capacity to actualise or develop a sense of an emerging third space because of strict cultural and religious upbringing. Embedded within the narratives was the identification of cultural maintenance for tradition and values as an essential approach to life in our family. Indelibly my parents thought, spoke and acted like Southern Italians which encapsulated their sense of identity within a multicultural context (Glenn, 2013). The fact that both parents worked on the land before migrating to Australia supports their imperative to maintain strict cultural practice as a consequence of shifting from life as peasants to living in an industrial society (Vasta, 1995). Their Italianness was magnified against a backdrop of Australian culture, however it was also crystalized in time relating to their lifetime and cultural practices in Italy. Episodic memories are prominent in my mind of times when extended family gathered together on occasions where grapes were crushed, and pigs were slaughtered to uphold and maintain the ritualistic traditions from Southern Italy. I continue to retain and experience strong sensory reactions recalling those times.

Conclusion

Engaging in a review and account of significant portions of my adolescent life, the research methodology of autoethnography supports my voice, my past and my psychological growth. The application of autoethnography to my stories guided and informed my own

interpretation of disconnect as to understand that subjectively culture and my hybridity was the threshold I learned to cross over as an unconscious practice. This autonomous transformational shift provided me with the ability to contract or expand from any challenging situation as I wished. However, upon reflection it became increasingly apparent that I wished to disassociate from my Italian culture as a teenager due to the complexities of living as a cultural hybrid. This was particularly evident when working in my first job as a receptionist and Italian interpreter, I did not fit in with either culture. I fervently wanted to be considered Australian as I was born in Australia however my Italian face, olive skin and dark hair overtly promoted my ethnicity (Wake, 2018).

My individual stories within a cultural frame and resistance have led me to present my life in review as an adolescent during pivotal moments in time, this life review has profound meaning for me now as an adult. I am aware where resistance itself was not permitted in terms of action; my alternative was resistance in the mind. The learnings for me and others are that my identity suspension as a fourteen-year-old was a critical stage to note, wherein my identity was culturally marketed as a girl ready to embark on marrying the right man. My thwarted identity was further impacted by my cultural obligation and instrumental in creating a new identity as a triadic hybrid. The stories of my adolescence have a common theme of desire, the desire to escape and living a life on my terms.

The gift of autoethnography as research method has given me permission to time travel and write by exacting and illuminating the nuances and complexities of my cultural phenomena (Adams, 2012). Additionally, my stories reveal various moments of retreat as a cultural hybrid through the indulgence of reflection and contemplation. Consequentially, my episodic memories allowed me to clearly see the inevitability of my determined life mapped out by parents who also had their life mapped out for them. My cultural burden was an

imperative as a teenager, questioning that burden and unable to escape from under it became my obligation for writing my stories.

Additionally, the implications of cultural and religious expectations associated with traditional frameworks of culture and hybridity may provide further insight in understanding the life of a cultural hybrid. This may also assist further understanding of the challenges encountered by daughters of migrants thus providing meaning and understanding through a lens of lived experiences. It is also my intention to give voice from a feminist perspective for the underrepresented stories that are not included in the mainstream enterprise of knowledge production relating to daughters of migrants in Australia (Thompson et al., 2018).

This study also has the potential to open up possibilities of an ethnographical inquiry for these women who may have had similar experiences of resistance cultural hybridity and crossing their own threshold. The opportunity for discourses and narratives to advocate for the silenced voice can assist to unleash the binds of past cultural conformity and oppression. Additionally, my stories reveal various accessible liminal stages as I inhabited spacial moments of retreat, reflection and contemplation. Consequentially, the emergence of the concept of liminality only became apparent when writing my stories as an adult drawing on episodic memories, whereas my chosen place or space as an adolescent had only transformational meaning shifting from what was happening in one moment to engaging in another.

There is a changing tide for all daughters of migrants where stories are playing out as quickly as we write them, stories with passages that speak of possibility and uniqueness, we tell it, we believe it. My possibilities and uniqueness evolved by building resilience through initial resistance to oppression. My internal author fearlessly elevates my voice to share my stories, I do not compose my narratives as a victim but as an author who is creating a library from my history.

We are our cultural history it is an imperative on us as sentient beings to interrogate who it is we are and why we behave as we do.

Chapter 6 Findings

The third article is ‘I am and I am not my Mother: Through my Autoethnographical lens’ is also presented as a narrative chapter for future submission to a refereed scholarly journal. This autoethnography continues the examination of how my Southern Italian migrant parents constructed their lives and that of their children in Australia. The narratives highlight the important facets of my life by following cultural and religious traditions dominated by the patriarchy and matriarchy in my family.

The construction of my identity was further examined by establishing how generational trauma became a facilitator in how my upbringing was determined. My mother has a prominent place in this autoethnography and was a powerful force of authority during my formative years. The commencement of my mother’s life in Australia as a proxy bride was a catalyst for her disrupted future life as a mother and wife. My stories present evocative memories that defined and shaped my young life.

Narrative Chapter 3

I am and I am not my Mother: Through my Autoethnographical Lens

Abstract

This autoethnography focusses on how my mother's migration and my relationship with her as a second-generation hybrid embodied strength and fear. These poignant elements inform my study as it narrates the journey of Rosa, my mother, who migrated from Southern Italy in 1953 to Melbourne, Australia as a Calabrian proxy bride during the post war era. This study recognises migration, culture and being female as the catalyst for my determined life. My memories of her life weave their way within my narratives warping and wefting as they interlace a lived herstory. Theoretically, the construction of identity for both my mother and me highlights the constraints of being raised in a patrilineal culture and society. Exo-autoethnography as a research method facilitated my evocative memories as a catalyst attesting to the personal resilience and transformation which overcame turbulent lived experiences manifesting in trauma for both my mother and me. Behind all my stories is my mother's story, because her story is where mine begins and her story shaped my life. This article highlights implications for women of similar cultural and familial backgrounds to my own. I discuss how my life trajectory was impacted as a direct consequence of my parents' migration and resistance to assimilation within Australian culture. I am not alone in such experiences.

Keywords: Culture hybrid, Proxy bride, Migration, Autoethnography, Exo-autoethnography

Introduction

In this paper, I employ theoretical diasporic scholarship as I write from a positionality of a daughter whose mother was a Southern Italian migrant. I establish my account of a proletarian herstory highlighting the diasporic journey of Rosa (my mother). Rosa was not

alone in her transnational sea journey to Australia during the post war era of the 1950s and 1960s (Iuliano, 1999). The diasporic voyage to Australia was the destiny for many Southern Italian proxy brides and their future husbands, with the push of migration encouraged by Italy's government even though the White Australia policy was an integral part of the fabric of the Australian psyche (Baldassar, 2005). Getting married, even by proxy, for many women was the only way to leave a life of extreme poverty and a chance to live in a country where a bountiful and abundant family life was possible. Along with the stories provided within this paper I examine the phenomena of my mother and father's proxy marriage in the context of their experience as immigrants to Australia and how this in turn influenced my life as a cultural hybrid.

The use of autoethnography as my research method was imperative to explore how my hybrid identity was negotiated through my stories of how decisions, choices, resistances, edicts, judgements, and restrictions influenced the why and how of my life as a second-generation daughter of migrants. The choice to use this research and writing approach connected me with a history which was influenced by family history and trauma. Referring to the definition of autoethnography by Ellis et al. (2011) as "an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyse (graphy) personal experience (auto) in order to understand cultural experience (ethno)" (p. 1), became my guiding compass during my research.

Exo-autoethnography as a research method is described as "developed for the qualitative study into transgenerational transmission of trauma, moving beyond the personal experience of the researcher" (Denejkina, 2017, p. 1). Exo-autoethnography is a valid and reflexive research method allowing me to discuss the conversations had with my mother about her life (she is no longer alive), exposing pivoting snippets of clues of how my life trajectory would manifest. What became apparent was her embedded trauma from her

childhood through to adulthood combined with the ordeal of her immigration, and how this was then transferred on to me. The question that arises for me, is transgenerational transmission of a trauma genetic and or as a consequence from traumatic experiences? The science of epigenetics suggests this may be both and refers it to a set of potentially heritable changes in the genome that can be induced by environmental events and transmit genomic DNA information from one generation to the next (Yehuda & Lerner, 2018; Youssef et al., 2018). It is further argued by Desjarlais et al. (1995) and Perez-Foster (2001) that personal trauma occurs before, during and after one's personal experience of migration and well beyond.

The trauma my mother experienced as a child and adult, her proxy marriage and migrating to Australia has now been exposed through my recounting our conversations into narratives with pristine clarity as they are deeply embedded into my memory. My mother never discussed or even considered having her biography written. She thought that the exposure of how trauma impacted her life would bring shame on her family. My mother's and my experiences are inexorably linked. The process of transgenerational transmission of trauma, its reason and impact on many lives was observed in 1966 by Danieli (1998) as "offering a means of researching writing through the acquisition of oral histories and body language" (p. 2).

My position as a researcher is to narrate experience as discourse to publish. As a daughter I bring my mother's and my discourses to life through my narratives to inform and bring new knowledge for publication. Glenn (2004) claims that memories are evoked through experiential narratives, and history demonstrates that the process of enculturation evolves in the second and third generation of Southern Italian migrants. It is not difficult to research journal articles that refer and support the authenticity of migrants experiencing immigration

trauma (Beckerman & Corbett, 2008; Benish-Weisman, 2009), however I found it challenging in my research to find evidence or data relating to the longstanding psychological impact of immigration trauma on migrants and their children born in the country they migrated to (Slonim-Nevo et al., 2009).

As a second generation daughter of migrant parents, my autoethnography provides a scope for my reminiscent stories to be told how I navigated my life as a cultural hybrid enculturated under the direction of a Southern Italian and Australian cultural and societal compass. My hybrid identity existed from the moment I was aware of my difference, that is living in both worlds of being born as an Italian daughter and being raised in Australia. I became aware of what Bhabba (1991) refers to a third space or "in-between" experience often as a child until adolescence. This liminal space became a refuge when I needed the quiet away from rules and culture.

It is important at this juncture that I emphasise the relevance of autoethnography as a research method as it identifies that I am the subject of my research (Bogiannidis et al., 2017). My subjective and private memories evolved naturally with the freedom of writing as an autoethnographer, legitimising my immersion into memories and emotions which compellingly emerged, recalling my lived experiences and my mother's lived experiences (Gallardo & Gindidis, 2020; Heewon, 2008; Morse, 1994; Van Manen, 2006). My research has not sought to criticise or judge the historical events relating to my mother and father's marriage, only how it influenced my life trajectory. In fact, what it did do was peak my curiosity, I was able to view the data reflexively and posture myself as a researcher, not as the daughter of proxy wed migrant parents (Chenail, 2000). O'Brien (1990) asserts that telling stories is important and stories have a place that can liberate the truth. Autoethnography has

been the catalyst for my stories to be expressed as embodied within the personal, cultural, and political self which in turn expresses my truth (Denzin, 2018).

As a researcher, I am aware that the personal history and experiential stories that I share within this study are in effect oral historical data of first generation migrants, that is, my parents. This is important in that it provides the reader with a unique understanding of the numerous and complex circumstances of how migration influenced their lives and mine. The failure to recount these stories would "leave an inestimable void in our understanding of the multiple and complex ways that transnational migration reconfigures an individual's sense of belonging, family networking, formation of social bonds and enactment of community cultural traditions" (Glenn, 2013, p. 151). My autoethnographical focus and intent is to inform and "pursue the ultimate goal of cultural understanding underlying autobiographical experiences" (Chang, 2008, p. 49). My connection to writing as authoethnography seeks to impact educational research as a voice that qualifies my place as a contributor to qualitative inquiry (Bhattacharya, 2020).

My methodology of self-investigating my memories, then deciding which ones are evocative to transpose into stories, often challenges me with questions of, are these meeting scholarly conventions? It is then the meaning making of my memories aids to clarify these questions (Bochner, 2020). I am my mother's daughter thus by proxy I own a hybrid identity. My life experience, my life lessons have provided me with the ability to foster and live by my own ethical principles. The memories were free of any tainted personality, in fact I realised that they were the conduit for what was to be remember and written in narrative form. This was not an egoic exercise but an honest exercise to share as research. My truth is what drives my integrity, which in turn gives meaning to my sense of identity, autoethnography perpetuates this truth.

Who am I?

My hybrid identity begins as the second – daughter the second child of five children born to Giuseppe and Rosa in Melbourne, Australia. My life as a female in Australia was determined by my mother's lived experiences as a migrant and a Southern Italian woman. A consequence of her resistance for assimilation within an Australian culture that she was emphatic about, was that I would have no Australian societal or cultural influence upon my upbringing. This was due in part to the racism extolled to Southern Italian immigrants and the White Australia Policy which promoted divisiveness (Dewhirst, 2014). Growing up with my mother's xenophobia was difficult for me to reconcile when wanting to socialise with other children in the neighbourhood. The reasons she provided were that we were being protected and that 'they' did not live like we did. I responded in the Southern Italian dialect to my mother when asking questions such as "perché, why"! As a child I did not comprehend the logic of not being able to play with my friends. My mother loved us unconditionally and demonstrated this in her own way, however it was difficult to understand her reasoning of not wanting her children to associate with other children from different cultures. My mother's fear was influenced by what Rando (2009) claims as "the vision of the new world is filtered through the one left behind, leading to the development of an original/unique sensitivity and the construction of a new morphology of the present" (p. 112).

It was during this time I questioned am I my mother or am I my own person? I decided to dismiss what she said and demanded and made the most of being with my friends when attending school, and when at home immersed myself with other household distractions to ignore the constant thoughts of missing my friends. As I grew older, I learned to come to terms with my life as a daughter of strict Southern Italian parents seeking refuge in my third space whilst complying with their customs and rules.

Historical context

In this paper I provide historical context of marriages by proxy, only in reference to Southern Italians migrating to Australia. The post war era created dire economic conditions in Italy, primarily in the southern regional areas of the country during the 1940s and 1950s (Scarparo, 2009). Many Southern Italians suffered through poverty and working the land was the only employable skill that males possessed as a means to make a living. The Italian government promoted migration to other countries for its citizens as a solution. This was also precipitated by a timely call in 1945 from Australia's Minister of Immigration, Arthur Calwell to war torn Europe. The minister explicitly used the slogan "populate or perish" as a means to instil urgency into the psyche of the Australian citizens by proclaiming 'we must fill the country or lose it' (Collins, 1988, p. 21). Calwell expediently introduced a policy to induce migration to Australia on a vast scale "that created a watershed in Australia's history" (Zubrzycki, 1994, p. 1).

The apparent disconnection between difficult economic times and anti-immigrant sentiment within the Australian political landscape in both countries could be described as dire at best, whilst immigrants felt the immediacy of the *Push or Pull* by both Italy and Australia. The push by the Italian government for their citizens to leave due to the economic recession and the pull by Australia in order to populate therefore enabling economic growth (Ricatti, 2018, Wake, 2018). Politically this was a solution for both countries however migrants from Southern Italy were also considered and labelled as "less-desirable" due to their appearance and lack of education and skills. Southern Italians were only permitted to migrate to Australia after the 1951 Assisted Migration Agreement bilateral accord was initiated (Baldassar, 2005; Wake, 2018). This agreement then allowed many males from these regions to migrate to Australia and establish themselves in employment in communities with predominantly Italians who arrived on shore in previous years. The lure of living and

working in a country that was economically abundant became the motivator for many single Italian males to leave their homes for a better life (Faggion & Furlan, 2017).

Historically this was also when proxy marriages became the norm with many male Italian immigrants of single status wanting to marry an Italian girl from their regions. The Italian unattached male's preference for an Italian girl from their homeland instead of an Anglo-Australian girl were for the reasons of speaking the same language, practising the same religion, adhering to the same cultural practices and traditions and being a virgin (Simic, 2014). It was important that the continuation and extension of endogamic marriages in Australia were consistent with the cultural expectations and traditions in Southern Italy where 'marriage systems are perceived to me immutable and inevitable' (Hyndman-Rizk, 2016, p. 306).

Proxy marriage was a perfect solution with the marriage ceremony sanctioned during the post war era by the Italian and Australian Governments with the authorisation of the Catholic Church (Australian Archives, 1958a). The word proxy in this context meant that another person, usually a family member, stood in for either the bride or groom (most commonly the groom) as proxy, to confirm consent for the marriage by the missing party. In the case of my mother and father's proxy marriage, this ceremony was held in Italy. They had never met in person, which was not unusual for many who married in this manner. The process was similar for couples who undertook this ceremony, but the organisation of the proxy betrothal was different in each case. Marriages that were arranged by the families in Southern Italy was a serious affair where family, friends and often acquaintances were consulted to determine if either one of the spouses was a viable contender for a good marriage (Cronin, 1970; Kertzer & Seller, 1991). Customarily, many of the engagements were easily negotiated due to "strong ties of loyalty and attachment to place (Iuliano, 1999, p.

323). In my mother's case, the marriage was formalised by the ceremony which then initiated the timeframe for her journey to Australia. Plans to migrate to Australia could only commence from the signing of the proxy documents, this process usually took one year (Scarparo, 2009). My research in studies regarding migration to Australia from Italy mainly focused on the homeland, racialisation, and the diasporic journey during the post war era (Baldassar, 2001). It was of particular interest to me that in literature on marriage systems, female positioning in society were not as extensive for women from Southern Italy.

The Stories

The following stories I share are from what I remember as my mother's memories, from her time as a young girl, when she arrived on the docks at Port Melbourne, Melbourne, Australia as a proxy bride. I have also included within this account a condensed version of motherhood, her health issues, and her influence on my life up to adulthood. I have many fond and evocative memories of our conversations creating movies in my mind as she described her life and lived experiences. It is here where I feel that the reader may gain some insight into the life of my mother Rosa — the proxy bride — to understand many aspects of how her story was integral to how my life was going to be according to Rosa. I am my mother's daughter and I have been shaped by my mother. I write and see my mother through my eyes, my memories of memories. My autoethnography reveals my memories from the perspective of an empathetic daughter and woman. My 'truth' of my embedded memories is told with the hope that my narratives evoke an understanding of how my life unfolded up until adolescence, acquiescent to the conventions of culture and family (Ellis, 1993). I enhance the meaning of my truths by telling and retelling my mother's stories (Hutchinson, 2019) and allow vulnerability and transparency to flow through the narratives (Clandinin et al., 2015).

I now acknowledge the emotions and the precious vivid memories I have of my mother and the stories she would share with me and my siblings, even though she passed away sixteen years ago. I feel her presence and spirit most days. My mother had a knack of gently going back to the days when she was a small child to talk about the poverty that she and her family faced on a day-to-day basis, especially during the post war years. The mixed feelings I felt when listening to these stories had me wondering and unable at times to comprehend the level of hunger that she experienced. The intense facial expression was obvious as she recounted how the tiny morsels of bread that were distributed between nine children was like a mother bird feeding her hungry chicks. My mother described the sensation of tasting the bread was like an exquisite delicacy for her and she would then mimic for me the way she could make it last in her mouth to savour the taste. The movie in my mind of this scene is still clear and my feelings as her child to reconcile how food was so scarce for her family continues to bring up feelings of sadness. I now understand why my parents always provided for us an abundance of food so their children would never go wanting.

I am my mother

My mother Rosa Schipano nee Barba was born on the 7th of August 1932 in Calabria — a province positioned in the south of Italy. The geographic location of her home in the village Dasa nestled in the mountains of Vibo Valentia, in which my mother described the ruggedness of terrain in detail within many of our shared and poignant conversations. Born to parents Pasquale and Rosa Barba they all shared an unpretentious humble home made up of children, four daughters and five sons. My grandfather was the traditional breadwinner in the family and worked as the local Carabinieri (community police) in the village. My mother would beam when speaking about her father. She loved her father unconditionally placing him on a pedestal that no other man could ever dare to dismantle. An example of the unqualified love she held for her father was demonstrated when she was only ten years old

and my grandfather contracted an eye infection. It was with unwavering insistence that my mother placed the prescribed eye drops in her eyes first to ensure that her father's eyesight would not be further impaired. I remember her repeatedly stating, "I could not take the chance of him going blind, he had a family to feed, I was only a girl, it didn't matter, I loved my father and would do anything for him." It made me wonder if I would do the same for my father who I also loved unconditionally.

Scarcity of food was an everyday reality for the family during pre and post war Italy. On most days the rationed meals between nine children and two adults did not satisfy the excruciating hunger pangs, nonetheless my mother constantly hoped and wished that she would have more the next day. The story that she would often tell was:

> *I had a small, chipped bowl that had one red rose painted on it, but it was mine and it was the only thing that I owned in my family. At night I would often leave bits of food in it and hide it under my bed for breakfast until the next morning. When I had some meat to hide, it was not unusual for me not to sleep so as to protect it. I knew my brothers and sisters were hungry and would not hesitate to eat my portion. Usually my food consisted of only a little ration of bread which had to last me for the next day. I would dream of eating big plates of pasta drowning in meat sauce, topped up with parmesan cheese. Bread did not taste the same, and the stale bread would often get stuck in the back of my throat, but if I didn't it eat how could I do the work I was told to do. I needed my strength because I knew I would have to walk for hours to search and collect dry wood for the fire and stove. It was a hard life.*

As recounted by my Mother, the Barba household was unprivileged and simple with no modern utilities such as gas or electricity. In comparison to the home I lived in as child the

stories of the central heating consisting of only an open fireplace and the woodstove. The diurnal collection of firewood that was an essential resource during the freezing winters was another experience I could not understand as a child and often thought to myself how could I cope with those elements and being responsible for heating the home as a young child. The challenges consisted of my mother and her siblings having to cope with seasonal temperatures that regularly plummeted to below freezing. The daily task of collecting wood was by foraging and navigating through exhausting tracks crossing over ice-covered brooks through the bitter cold hinterland dominated by the Serre mountains. At times the insurmountable fatigue from these daily expeditions only became tolerable when my mother returned home with large bundles of wood. I remember the pride on her face when recounting how she was praised by her parents when she entered the home hauling a significant amount of wood, this gave her immense pleasure as she studied my face to see if I also was proud of her.

My mother's education was limited by her family's poverty and she only attended school sporadically until the age of 12. Her educational trajectory ceased when told that she was duty bound as a female to look after her maternal grandparents. The domestic duties she was to perform were to clean their house, cook their meals and assist with the seasonal harvest of the many olive trees they had in the orchard. This was something she was not proud of and often told me that she could have been anything she wanted if she was a male.

This decision was not questioned by her as she understood that her obligation as a daughter was to abide the life path charted by her parents. The ability to read and write in Italian, which was considered foundational literacy, was a skill that my mother mastered and something she was proud of as many of her friends in the village were illiterate. From a very young age it was clear to my mother that her life as a female was marked out by her parents

within the conventions of her culture, religion and community.

What my mother did not know as a twelve-year-old her that her limited education would also determine her impending future. The proof of her literacy skills in an imminent future was to become her legacy with the fast approaching change of her destiny. At the age of twenty my mother's declaration of age and education was forwarded to the Australian government as a handwritten statement penned out in the Italian language to validate her education and literacy skills. Rosa writes:

> *Io Rosa Schipano - Nata Barba a Dasa Prov. CZ dichiaro che ho dovuto lasciare la scuola 3 Elementare alieta di 12 ann per assistere I nonni materni in lavori vari chioe pulizie cucinare lavare. Ed anche a reccoglie olive, cioe assistenze complete per otto anni e sei mesi. Cioe fino a ordando sono emigrate per l'Australia. I miei nonni erano Vicennzo e Rosa Vavala.*
>
> I Rosa Schipano- Nee Barba in Dasa Prov. CZ, declare that I had to leave school at grade 3 Elementary at the age of 12 to assist my maternal grandparents in various jobs such as cooking and washing. And also, to collect olives, that is complete assistance for eight years and six months. That is, until ordering I emigrated to Australia. My grandparents were Vincenzo and Rosa Vavala.

Rosa the Teenager

The memories of my mother reliving her life as a teenager were a source of joy for her to recount, always commencing that she was young and beautiful and physically well endowed. The scenario of our conversations relating to her adolescence would always begin with the piazza in the village which was an integral gathering place for many in the community. It was commonplace for all the young women to gather at the washing wall. My mother described the events that came to life as beautiful young girls swishing wet clothes,

tablecloths, sheets and towels doused into the soapy water from handmade soap all in synchronisation with their singing. The scrubbing against filed down rocks assisted in the removal of stains and provided the percussion for the *signorini* (maidens) to sing their favourite *stornelli* (traditional Italian folk songs) in time. Mother and her friends loved this weekly catch up enabling them to experience the freedom to laugh and sing without community judgement. The young women also took this opportunity to lock eyes with the local boys and a potential mother in law who may want to observe their domestic proficiency. My mother blushed when she revealed to me that she had secretly liked the look of one particular young man, however she did not have the courage or the audacity to speak to him as this would be considered by onlookers as being flirtatious and bringing moral disrespect to herself and her family. She was also mindful that even though the piazza provided her with the opportunity of experiencing feelings of great joy being with her friends, it was also a place where everything and everyone was observed. The piazza was an environment where gossip spread like wildfire, reputations destroyed, marriages were arranged, religious expectations and conventions were endorsed, all extolled throughout the community and beyond.

Like my mother, I too was physically mature for my age. It was from the age of twelve she was often mistaken for a sixteen-year-old, well past her pubescent years. It was not uncommon for my grandmother to be approached by prospective suitors for her hand in marriage due to her adult physicality. Her illusory female form masked the secret of not physically experiencing her menses until the age of eighteen. Mum explained that there were reasons why she was not like the other girls, she believed one being that the freezing temperatures that she experienced when collecting wood for the family, whilst traversing barefoot through the rugged countryside and waterways, halted the natural flow of her

womanhood. The other reason that she believed contributed to this hormonal delay was that her diet lacked the essential nutrients required for the natural physical progression to occur in a timely manner. I suspect the latter was the reason.

She managed to successfully keep this secret of her menses from her friends as she was often racked with painful symptoms produced by her reproductive system whilst presenting a convincing pallid complexion. This appearance assured her *campagni* (girlfriends) she was suffering through another menstrual cycle. As time passed, she became more acutely aware of her body and expanding breasts which caused her extreme embarrassment. Strategies to minimise her abundant shape included binding her breasts tightly with a cotton sheath and wearing very loose clothing to create the illusion of androgyny. My mother story about this time in her life was repeated to me often.

> *I did not like my large breasts as they always attracted the attention of boys and envious comments from the girls who wished they had been more endowed. I did not have a bra to support me in those days which would have helped me not to feel so embarrassed. I remember thinking, why could I have not been given a normal pair of breasts instead of large ones, it seemed to have been a curse. I had to bind myself like a mummy and this was uncomfortable, but it was better than having those wandering eyes staring at me all the time. This also helped me when I was washing clothes at the waterwall, I did not feel out of place and was happy to look like many of the other girls who were there.*

I have also inherited my mother's physical attributes which my mother always seemed proud to point out to me.

Italy and Australia

As my mother approached her late teens my grandfather informed the family that he was travelling to a new country called Australia, to find a city where the family could emigrate to where life promised an abundance of food and where opportunities for a successful life were plentiful. My mother would reveal that was filled with mixed emotions which manifested in experiencing heightened feelings about the real possibility that she would be moving to a new country of which she had no knowledge, this compounded her with trepidation of an unknown future. The emotional wrenches in her heart were the feelings that she had developed for Luciano, a local boy from the same village. The emotion in her voice was heart rendering as she recounted the time when the two had found moments of secrecy to speak and share conversations of wanting a more intimate relationship. This was in kind an unspoken bond of love between them. This secret she could not share with her *campagni* or siblings in fear that she would be beaten by her mother for casting her family in dishonour. As tears rolled down her face, I asked my mother did she love this young man. I still recall her response.

> *No one or nothing could take away my feelings for Luciano, they were real for me, but no one could know. I knew I could not allow myself to dream like many other young women of my age. The dream of sharing a future with this man, having a family with this man, but this would never happen because my future was not up to me to plan, my parents planned everything for me. My life was not mine, I had to do everything that my parents said, it was the custom, and as a girl and I did not have a choice. I could not go against them; people would talk and that would bring shame on my family. That's my luck!*

I was devastated for her as I imagined many times since then, what would I have done in her place?

The Proxy Bride

The discussion of being married by proxy was one of interest and I needed to have my mother tell me of her experience. Initially she learned about the new concept called proxy marriage from her friends and the village philosophers in the piazza and was often lost in a state of confusion about how that type of marriage arrangement could ever be valid. The contractual marital arrangements which transpired between families in the village made sense to her as agreements were reached, dowries apportioned, whilst the chaperoned bride and groom became familiar with one another in a reasonable timeframe. The notion of being married by the state and not even knowing who your future husband was, what he looked like, what his voice sounded like with only a photo of a stranger who would be the potential father of your children, instilled chilling fear throughout her body. This also made her cry over many nights where she was able to hide her emotions in secrecy from everyone.

The marriage was decided upon when her father travelled to a neighbouring township and met her future father-in-law. The meeting eventuated with the negotiation of the terms of marriage between their two families as they both had eligible children who required suitable spouses. When asked by me, how did you feel about not knowing your new in—laws, let alone your soon—to—be husband? My mother shrugged her shoulders and said, it was not up to me I did what I was told. Subsequently, she was pledged to Guiseppe and Guiseppe's sister Elena was pledged to mother's brother Pepe. After the matrimonial agreements were confirmed, her father returned home with the news of the impending proxy marriage and an engagement present for her consisting of a black and white photo of her young fiancé Guiseppe, the stranger to whom she would marry.

Little time passed when her father and two brothers emigrated to Australia and the

wedding day became a reality. It was not official, and my mother recalls the declaration on the 7th day of March in 1953, Rosa Barba, a twenty-one-year old woman born and raised in the small village of Dasa, now promised to a man living in a 'lucky country' named Australia. The marriage between Rosa Barba and Guiseppe Schipano who was six years her senior, was by proxy in a wedding ceremony conducted in her village situated in the southern region of Calabria in Italy. Her feelings are always mixed when reminiscing about this particular time and this is conveyed by the expressions on her face as she continues with her story.

Marriage by proxy was a common traditional practice in Southern Italy and always regulated by the family patriarchy. Matrimony under this sanction was regimented by the Catholic church within the constructs of the local town hall and conducted as a civil ceremony. Mother's father— in—law Antonio represented his son in the role of the 'proxy' groom. My father was well aware when and where he would be wed. The wedding day and all the details of the couple's nuptials were communicated to my father along with the signed documents from the Italian Government. My father who emigrated two years earlier to Melbourne, Australia was eager to start his new life in the lucky country. The marriage bolstered the dream of creating a future with a wife and many children, this was now manifesting into reality.

The wedding was not what my mother expected or wished for but the existence of her day to day life surviving in poverty became her sobering actuality. Her account of the wedding experience brought tears to my eyes, as thoughts bombarded through my mind, my life would never be like hers, I would have a better experience or not at all. Mother knew she would never be a traditional bride or ever wear a full-length white lace bridal gown crowned in a white veil and tiara. The sadness and cynicism in her voice describing herself as a new

bride with a scarce bridal dowry consisting of a borrowed and ill-fitting brown jacket and skirt with black respectable pumps to define her final rite of passage as a single woman, to become the wife of someone she had never met and who lived halfway across the world, was like listening to a woman whose soul was stripped bare— possessing no identity nor agency. Being a new proxy bride was an experience my mother shared with many other young Italian women during this era, one woman in particular was her new sister in law, Elena.

The Voyage

The SS Oceania docked in Naples and my mother embarked on her journey to Australia. She always described the long six-week voyage to Australia as a traumatic experience mainly due to her being seasick for most of the journey. Her travelling companion and new sister— in— law Elena, fared much better enjoying the social activities on the ship and enjoying the luxury of eating three meals a day. This left my mother feeling envious as she did not possess a strong constitution and spent most of her time being sick and laying on her bed. As the ship trawled closer to the Port of Melbourne my mother told me "I could see many people on the docks waving handkerchiefs in the air in hoping to capture the attention of their loved ones.

> *It was not until the ship had moored that Elena and I could see our family clearly. I could see my father and my brother and other males standing beside him. I did not know who my husband was or what he looked like. I was nervous and excited at the same time.*

Lena Pasqua, my parents' third daughter wrote this excerpt in response to the newspaper article that was published in 1953:

The final morning of Rosa's voyage another romantic representation of immigration and proxy marriages went to press in Australia. The story featured in 'News of the Day': a tale of marriages between two Southern Italian families. It is an unauthorised story of Rosa's immigration to Australia. Her name, age and the details of her voyage are accurate; however, the romantic courtship and the agency she possessed in leaving her birthplace, marrying and choosing to embark on a voyage to Australia is fabricated. In this press story Rosa's uncertainties and fears do not exist. It is assumed that Rosa's story was compiled from shipping lists that detail a proxy bride's identity and details of the husband assigned to claim her upon arrival. Rosa's real story as a proxy bride was still unfolding as the SS Oceania approached Melbourne.

The following article was published in the Melbourne daily newspaper, *The Age* on September 3, 1953 and titled 'By Proxy' in the section of newspaper headed 'News of the Day'. Reports of proxy brides arriving on bride ships were not unusual, they were strategically written to introduce the concept of a new type of marriage in order to influence a favourable perception towards the new migrants by the 'old' Australians (Simic, 2014, p. 154).

Figure 6.1

Newspaper account of my Mother's arrival

By Proxy

DISTANCE is no barrier to romance, nor even to a wedding.

When Guiseppe Schipano, 26, and Guiseppe Barba, 23, last saw each other's younger sisters in sunny Italy four years ago, they were no more than casual friends.

But absence 7000 miles away in Australia made their hearts grow fonder, and last December the two couples became engaged—by correspondence.

Papers were signed in Melbourne, while in an Italian village church 21-year-old Rosa Barba became Mrs. Schipano, and 20-year-old Elena Schipano became Mrs. Barba.

Tonight there will be a happy reunion when the wives arrive at Port Melbourne in the liner Oceania.

The Age, 3rd September, 1953, p. 2.

As my mother disembarked the ship, she recalls how happy she was to be met by her father and her new husband. Her first thought on laying eyes for the first time was that he was tall and handsome and looked like the movie star, Victor Mature. I laughed when she explicitly pointed out that her loving embrace and kiss was for her father only. After a week of living with her father she joined her new husband in their rental home in Brunswick and began their life together as husband and wife.

Living in Australia

My mother was twenty-two years— of— age when her role as mother commenced one year later after she arrived in Australia. At the age of thirty she had five children, three daughters and two sons. I was the second child, the second daughter. The birth of her youngest child, a son, left her with irreversible reproductive health issues and as a consequence underwent a full hysterectomy. The year her world was upturned was 1962, this surgery had a drastic impact in her life and that of her family. The brunt of what was to unfold in a sequence of events within all our future lives was subliminal and could never be conceived as fair and just for a woman and her family.

Hormonal replacement therapy was not considered appropriate or available for a Catholic woman during this era. The post-operative side effects my mother endured were treated with anti-depression medication. This was the beginning of the end for my mother's mental and physical health. As a child my siblings and I had witnessed my mother's struggle with the highs and lows of depression with the constant change in her medication to stabilise her vacillating emotions. I remember her stories would often be repeated during times when she grieved for the moments of happiness she experienced in her village. It was during these

times I would think that her marriage to my father was never her choice, this arranged marriage was one she had to agree to and endure. This had a bearing on her unhappiness for a life that she was never to know under her own terms. I felt conflicted as I loved both my parents, however, I felt sorry for my father whose loyalty to my mother was unwavering. As the years went by my siblings and I learned how to care for my mother during her 'sick' times and hide her medications when we sensed she may take more that she needed to, an experience that every member of my family witnessed too often. This ritual began for me at the age of seven and continued until I married at the age of seventeen.

My mother's proxy marriage, her health issues, her culture, her religion were all complicit in how my life would turn out and regulated in a similar way to hers. My marriage at a very young age was a consequence of my mother's proxy marriage. That being her obsession with having her daughters wed before they became knowledgeable of the freedom that existed in the outside world. Reflecting on my profound and indelible experience as a teenage bride afforded me the opportunity to see that I was trapped between my family's obsession with saving face, meeting family, cultural and community expectations, and not having any semblance of understanding for my life as a young woman. As I embarked on my new life, I felt that I was not longer part of my parents' world and suspected that I was not really part of my new husband's world either.

Discussion

Thinking, contemplating and considering how my life up until adulthood existed as the daughter of migrant parents, my mind continuously ruminated on an illusionary formation of a spiral and circular labyrinth. The Cambridge Dictionary describes a labyrinth as "a confusing set of connecting passages or paths in which it is easy to get lost" (Cambridge Dictionary.com, 1995). The labyrinth gave me moments to contemplate questions such as, was my life perpetuated through the lived experiences of my parents, did culture and tradition

really have a hold over my destiny, if so, were these factors powerful enough to determine my life? The twists and turns within my mental labyrinth often voiced ‘from the past is the present and what now for the future’? I would wait for the answers and then ponder on a new repeating thought, how will this end? My logical mind takes over and I realise that my mother’s destiny and upbringing was to obey her parents and every decision they made for her. As a mother she wanted and needed to invoke the same authority over her children. Again, from the past is the present and what now for the future? This reality was difficult for me as a hybrid to reconcile as a young girl, I was born in Australia, spoke Australia English thought in Australian, went to school in Australia, but had to conform to a Southern Italian way of life. I had to obey, I was a controlled female, could not express my own opinions, or allowed to socialise with friends outside the home (unlike my brothers).

I consider how my mother commenced her life in Australia as a proxy bride and the hardship she endured trying to communicate with only the Southern Italian dialect as her language. The English language did not come easily to her and her command of the pure Italian language was limited due to her lack of education as a child. I compare her life to my life, realising that I can speak both languages through the experience of both cultures. However, the only similarity between my education and my mother’s, identified that mine was limited in terms of not completing high school which certainly inhibited my world view until I sought to educate myself as a mature aged student. My mother’s educational trajectory consisted of learning the very basic in literacy and numeracy skills over a very limited time frame. As long as she knew the alphabet, write her name and her date of birth, she was determined fit to leave school with her family filling in the gaps of providing her with further education in the home. I recall my mother telling me how she learned to read.

I enjoyed going to school, but I had to leave so I could help me grandparents who were elderly. I knew how to write my name but I could not read properly and I wanted to

learn. I told my grandmother that I wanted to read when my grandfather said, reading was not important for a girl, but then after a short while he would show me the books that he had on the bookshelf. He would choose his favourite one and start reading to me. It was funny because he would point out words on the page and say do you know what this means? Of course I didn't so he would sound out the word and tell me what it meant. This was how I learned to read; I loved my grandfather.

My mother demonstrated pride when telling this story, the pride was so much about that she learned to read, it was more about remembering the love and affection she felt for her grandfather. There were not many moments that my mother felt love and joy, reminiscing about pivotal moments in her childhood gave her these.

As I began my research into this autoethnographical study, the ruminations of my mental labyrinth continuously held me hostage down the path of exposed memories as I revisited my mother's chronic mental health issues. The memories drew attention to the many modes of reassurance and actions that I would undertake as a measure to convince her that her life underpinned by pain would get better. However, I knew there was no end to the recidivism of my mother's psychological turmoil brought about by multiple levels of trauma. I also now know that there was no jumping from one labyrinth path to another for me, it was a slow, motionless and distressful amble negotiating each episode of trauma. I could also equate many of the heart rendering experiences combined with feelings of hopelessness to Dante's Inferno and his concentric circles. It was at times as if I was constantly moving back and forward from hell to purgatory and then during the quiet times I would settle in limbo (Kirkpatrick, 2013). I have memories of sitting beside her bed after hiding medication and watching my mother's body breathing heavily after another suicide attempt from taking too many pills. The same feeling of fear would engulf me, that she would wake and want to take more to finally end her life. This was a common occurrence. My siblings and I took turns in

watching over her during these events, until times when she was successful taking excessive amounts and needing to be hospitalised. After every discharge from the psychiatric hospital she would come home as a happier mother until the next event. What I found out in later years was that the feelings that I interpreted as of happiness were the result of undergoing ECT (Electroconvulsive therapy). The apathetic demeanour that my mother demonstrated after returning home, conflicted with the agitated mother we knew before she went into hospital. Her slowness of gait and speech provided my siblings and me some respite from the unceasing crescendo of her cries for her world to end as she left our home. Unfortunately, we had become accustomed to those heart rendering cries every time she was tormented by her mental demons. My mother had many demons, and no one understood how they persecuted her, how could we, we did not experience her life as a child and adult. A life of cultural and familial conformity.

My mother's inferno I believe was fuelled by her fear of the overwhelming cultural disparagement she would face should her reputation be smeared due to her mental health issues. This was her understanding of a judgmental culture. The patrilineal enculturation of her family and community had firm structures of maintaining a solid family presence and maintaining practice as good families with no secrets (Glenn, 2013). My mother's reputation was very important to her and if any information was leaked that she suffered from mental health issues within the Italian community, she was convinced it would bring disdain on her character, this type of humiliation was one she could not endure. When asked by friends and acquaintances why she was ill, she maintained that her health issues were of a physical nature, in order to save face and continue to maintain a respectable standing in the community.

Life is a Lesson

My awareness of how the complexities that were the constructs and meanings of culture in my life, are now understood by me as an adult. I am my mother's daughter and that understanding came very early on in my life. Culture for me has always been defined and determined by my family, nationality, traditions, values, community and religion. Holman Jones et al. (2013) assert that our experiences and memories are interpreted by our subjective reality and understandings of culture which in turn are constantly in flux. Chang (2008) affirms that "culture consists of cognitive schemas or standards that shape and define people's social experiences and interactions with others" (p. 21). The cognitive schema for my mother was real and became a reality for my family. My mother's schemas and actions instilled fear in me as a young girl. I was expected to do the right thing, get married and give up on any life where I could think and act for myself. Education in my family was only seen from the perspective of learning from life lessons, lessons from the home, cultural lessons taught by family and community. Attending university was not deemed important or necessary for a woman. My parents held the view that attending university would also influence a young woman's mind to think differently, rebel against our culture, and lead me to go against the family's wishes of marrying at a young age. Moreover, it was an imperative for a girl to learn and possess good domestic skills in order to raise a family and lead a highly regarded family.

It is at this point that I maintain that my mother's experience of migrating to Australia as a proxy bride, a world that she was familiar and understood, had a major impact on her life as a woman, mother and wife. My writings may portray my mother as vulnerable as a consequence of the life and events she experienced as a proxy bride. I must preface here that this was not the only reason. Her vulnerability was linked to her destiny as a Southern Italian woman who emigrated to Australia and conditioned by her culture, family and society. I in turn, was the product of the life my mother had dictated for me. When you consider that a

similar scenario played out for me as an adolescent, leaving school at the age of fifteen years of age, commencing work immediately as a receptionist in a bank. I then became engaged at the age of sixteen to a man of my mother's choosing and married at seventeen. I am also aware that many of the psychosocial milestones that are considered normal for an adolescent, were not experienced by me.

I initially felt conflicted when writing the narratives for this autoethnography and divulging my mother's medical history. My feelings were of empathy and sadness for her and how she wanted her 'sickness' hidden from the community she lived in. The reality for me was that this part of her lived experience was prominent and very much a part of our family's day to day life. The moments of harrowing fear I felt living as a child and adolescent when trying to determine what mood I would be privy to was at times a daily constant. What my mother did not know was that her many enforced hospitalisations was common knowledge in the community. Ellis et al. (2013) argue that to write ethically one must trust her gut feeling, "going with her gut re trusting that this was the right thing to do" (p. 43). I went with my gut and wrote my mother's history and my history. My mother passed away seventeen years ago and this period of her life and mine were essential to write about to emphasise the vulnerable and turbulent, albeit conformed life we were both destined for.

At this juncture it is important that I discuss that concept of the visibility of the self (Holman Jones et al., 2013). My authentic focus within the reflexive narratives was essential to demonstrate my true visibility and vulnerability of self. Reliving the many challenging memories and experiences was, at times, painful and sad. My personal inferno was of reliving my mother's painful battle with depression, attempted suicides and my role as a child and adolescent as her protector. My duties as her guardian were essential to recount, as a daughter and as a researcher. These critical periods of disruption had a direct impact on my psychosocial milestones during my formative years. I relived the many moments of wanting

to be a ‘normal’ teenager who had many Australian friends, I was never allowed to experience that rite of passage. I relived a teenage relationship with a man seven years my senior. My visibility charts the life mapped out for me by the life that was mapped out for my mother, the proxy bride.

Conclusion

The key concepts raised in this article are about identity, the lack of agency as a consequence of immigration, proxy marriage and culture. The consequence of immigration was primarily that of acculturative traumatic stress which in turn had a significant effect on my life. The narratives within this study are a definitive example of how my mother’s life represented the parallels that she would invoke on my life until my marriage as an adolescent. The parallels of living a life as a female in a patrilineal family, culture and community, the restriction of owning and managing our lives due to our gender and role in the family. Unfortunately for my mother she did not have the resilience or the social support to overcome many of her tumultuous life challenges which I believe were made manifest from the beginning of her childhood. She had no way to look beyond who she found herself to be. She was trapped by cultural directives, and so was I. At the end of her life my mother was finally able to make the choice to transcend as an emancipated woman. She chose to reject my father’s plans to renew their marriage vows celebrating 50 years of marriage. She also chose not to die at their home and elected to spend her last days at a hospice with caring staff that did not remind her of her traumatic past. I recall her being transferred by ambulance from the hospital to the hospice, she smiled because for the first time in many years, she was genuinely happy to finally make her choices of life and death on her terms.

Signifying that these concepts have heavier weightings, I consider that positive implications for daughters of immigrants can be achieved with resilience and autonomous agency through education. Educators who learn about the diverse and complex lives of

female immigrants who were proxy brides, can gain a deeper understanding of how culture and patriarchy may constrain essential life opportunities for young women by the virtue of their womanhood. Welch (2020) supports this, asserting that “when you consider the education system and given that education is such an important and powerful site of cultural transmission” (p. 156). I am my mother’s daughter, but I have made the choice to lead my adult life that resonates with my truth. The truth of my mental labyrinth and its concentric memories are not what define me as an adult but what have given me evocative narratives to share in this study. Truth is further articulated by Bochner (2013) as “what we create ourselves, what we experience and do, that gives meaning to our lives” (p. 50). Autoethnography has gifted me with a sense of resilience as I recognise through my stories how I was able to construct my sense of identity in my adult years despite many barriers and conventions of cultural control. As an adult and an emancipated woman, I enjoy the fruits of my labour as an educator, feminist, and daughter of a proxy bride.

Chapter 7 Findings

My article ‘Daughters of the Diaspora: Interrogating Impositions of Cultural Conformity’ is the fourth narrative chapter for future submission to a refereed journal in this thesis. This autoethnographical study concludes the historical accounts of my life as a daughter of the diaspora. My choice to further highlight my experiences was through collaborative autoethnography. I convey the reminisced lived experiences of two daughters of proxy brides, myself and Maria. The use of a collaborative method included an etic collaborator coalesced by an emic approach from both daughters. This produced an analytical and interrogative triadic imprint of our lived experiences, both women who are cultural hybrids and the valued interpretation from our etic collaborator.

The process of collaborative autoethnography provided the medium to reveal our vulnerability within the vignettes and taking the risk of exposing our emotions whilst giving meaning to our stories (Adams et al. 2015; Denzel, 2009). As adults taking a review of our lives, this article seeks to inform by merging the past into the present and bringing to light the implications of cultural weight for cultural hybrids.

Narrative Chapter 4

Daughters of the Diaspora: Interrogating Impositions of Cultural Conformity

Abstract

In this paper I discuss my personal experience with cultural transmission as cultural conformity. As a cultural hybrid and a daughter of an Italian proxy bride I share my narratives with a daughter of a Greek proxy bride. We find confluences in our experiences and understandings that suggest we are Daughters of the Diaspora. We may not be unique. Using a shared autoethnographical approach between ourselves and a collaborators, we construct and critique vignettes that capture and interrogate our understandings. This study models potential for further inquiry by women who are daughters of migrant parents and who may have had similar experiences of the impositions of cultural conformity. It behoves us in terms of social planning and social inclusion to recognise who our people are, the different way which people came to this country and how that impacts the generations that follow them.

Keywords: Diaspora, Emic, Etic, Autoethnography

Introduction

As an avid reader of accounts of post World War Two (WWII) migration, I endeavour to make sense of my own cultural identity. Further, I read many narratives that consider past and present diasporic cultural lived experience, seeking to unpack the impact of migration on daughters of migrants born in Australia like me. I was born in Australia to Calabrian migrants. I use the autoethnographical approaches to explore and chronicle the cultural practices of religion, language, and patriarchal customs as dominant influencers in my life as a cultural hybrid. I focus on the Southern Italian diasporic experience as my mother was a

proxy bride, who experienced the trepidation of leaving her country, newly married to a man whom she had not met until her arrival in Melbourne, Australia.

It is with compelling interest that I research and write about proxy marriages to highlight the sanctioned role of the female gender and understanding what signified a woman's 'place' in traditional Italian and Greek families. I write with another daughter of a proxy bride, using autoethnography as methodology which allows the interconnected perspectives of both of us through narratives. The experiences highlight our dissimilar yet in some ways similar upbringings, capturing via memories of important events that inform both happy and traumatic times. This research provides me with the ability to discuss cultural hybridity inherent tensions of two young women from different backgrounds, which undergirds my thinking in relation to the concepts of culture, cultural practices and cultural identity (Lovitts, 2005).

Migration in post-World War II Australia

The conceptualisation of Australia becoming a multi-ethnic society became a vague possibility as post-WWII Australia recognised a need to 'populate or perish'. Between 1945 and 1949, the Australian Federal Government's Immigration Minister, Arthur Calwell was responsible for affecting change to increase the population by two per cent per year to achieve economic growth for the country (Appleyard, 1971; Jupp, 2007; Zubrzycki, 1994). Although British migrants were preferred, the Australian government recognised the imperative for their economy to grow meant attracting Europeans to populate the country (Collins, 1988) so that "by the 1950s and 1960s an increasing proportion of migrants came from southern Europe and countries such as Italy and Greece" (Grimshaw et al., 1994, p. 272).

The Italian Diaspora

After WWII a significant diasporic wave of Italian immigrants came from Southern Italy (Baldassar, 2004). Italy was a country experiencing extreme poverty and hardship. Australia provided a solution for Italians seeking to migrate to a country that promised a more abundant life. In the 1947 Australian census it was reported that "the Italian born population in Australia consisted of 22,506 males and 11,126 females. Between 1947 and 1950 a further 33,280 Italians arrived" (Wardrop, 1996, p. 5). The mobility of post war Southern Italian migrants between the 1950s and 60s was through chain migration (Baldassar & Pyke, 2014). Chain migration attracted and enticed people who lived in the same village or surrounding regions to immigrate. A sense of security of living in a close-knit Italian community in a new country was also another incentive that appealed to these new immigrants (Wardrop, 1996). My parents migrated from the region known as Calabria in the south of Italy, and lived in the villages of Dasa and Sant'Angelo, both located in the province of Vibo Valentia. This region was socially and economically depressed during and after WWII and became the catalyst for the highest number of Italian persons migrating to overseas countries (Cosmini-Rose, 2005). Cultural heterogeneity of the Southern Italian chain migration could be debated as the beginning of the establishment for further Italian diasporas to Australia (Gabaccia, 2000; Mascitelli, 2015). I now introduce the background for my colleague the daughter of a Greek proxy bride. The migration of Greek migrants to Australia followed a similar path to the Italian one.

The Greek Diaspora

The signing of a Migration Agreement between Greece, Australia, and the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration (ICEM) in 1952 prompted the subsequent mass and chain migration from Greece to Australia. The ICEM was established in Geneva in 1951 post WWII. This agreement assisted in the resettlement of migrants from European countries. Greek migration, in its early stages, was male dominated. The number of

Greek women remained low until 1952, in anticipation for the Migration Agreement to be signed with Greek government (Palaktsoglou, 2013). Greece, its affiliation and inclusion to the ICEM incorporating the consequential Migration Agreement, the partisanship with many countries appeared to be a resolution to its socio-political and economic problems of high unemployment, poverty, and political instability (Dimitreas, 1995). The escalation of unemployment and the economic crisis afflicted the country's population leaving them with the ultimatum to migrate to other countries. The ICEM Migration Agreement was instrumental in providing employment for the new migrants including the funding of their journey for many as a show of good will (Palaktsoglou, 2013).

Marriage by Proxy

As migration increased, the imbalance of the sexes became obvious. Concerning migration from Italy, the Australian government and the Catholic church implemented a formalised understanding to undertake proxy marriages as a legal constitution of marriage (Australian Archives, 1958a). This facilitated the migration of many brides to Australia from Italy (Scaparo, 2009). A proxy marriage constitutes that a marriage can be held with a person standing in as proxy (namely for the groom) to enable a marriage to be sanctioned overseas or in Australia. This was common practice during the 1950s where many young women from Southern Italy placed their marital futures in the hands of family, village friends and acquaintances to provide a viable spouse by the process of proxy (Cronin, 1970; Kertzer & Seller, 1991).

The ritual of being married by proxy was a popular choice of betrothal for many young couples wishing to embark on a diasporic journey as new migrants to Australia. What was not envisaged by some young women who had never met their spouse, was the daunting prospect of landing in Australia and meeting their spouse who did not necessarily reflect the image in the photo that was provided to her in Italy. Commonly, the man would migrate first

to the new country, usually accompanied by a male sibling whilst the rest of the family remained behind (Baldassar & Pyke, 2014; Iuliano, 1999, Scarparo, 2009). Of the 300,000 Italians who undertook the diasporic journey to Australia who were married by proxy, 12,000 were new brides (Iuliano, 1999).

Proxy marriages became the norm with many male Italian immigrants of single status wanting only to marry an Italian girl from their regions. The preference for an Italian girl from their homeland was because they spoke the same language, practised the same religion, adhered to the same cultural practices and traditions, and the women were virgins (Simic, 2014). This cultural programming was as a result of the long-established matrimonial cultural conventions in Southern Italy, which Hyndman-Rizk (2016) noted that "marriage systems are perceived to me immutable and inevitable" (p. 306). The allure of a new life and a new family in a new country became the motivation to marry someone from their place of birth, and many undertook the arduous journey by ship, for six weeks to Australia. It was not unusual for proxy brides from Europe to travel accompanied by a trunk filled with a dowry, photos and markers of identity which was classified as "movable cultural heritage" (Agutter et al., 2013, p. 307).

It is noted that there are few explicit research studies conducted on Greek immigrant women (particularly brides or female 'unaccompanied') in Australia that detail their lived experiences. (Nazou, 2013). The realisation of two decades (1952-1972) and with the sanction of the ICEM, the migration of Greek women to Australia exceeded 8,763 — to be employed either in industry as factory workers or as domestic workers (Palaktsoglou, 2013). In migration discourse Greek women were considered the invisible immigrants, whose individual migration experience is included in the male-dominated migration discourse (Palaktsoglou, 2013). Women immigrants comprised nearly half of all Greek migration to Australia, yet despite this, their history remains subsidiary with peripheral reporting in

relation to diasporic marriages (Gavaki, 2003, p. 56). Greek, female, unaccompanied brides were predominantly from poor agricultural backgrounds, with little or no dowry and with fewer prospects of marrying and having their own family in Greece (Palaktsoglou, 2013).

Positioning of Selves

The connection of culture, religion and kinship was essential for the success of a proxy marriage, a held cultural identity and a base for negotiation in a new country. Across generations of descendants of proxy brides, daughters inherit understandings that frame how they comprehend the complexities of enacted migrations and cultures throughout their life trajectory. Being in receipt of inheritances and yet another in a chain of descent (Hyndman-Rizk, 2016), I Rose, am the daughter of a proxy bride who was herself a witness. and I position myself in this space. I descend from a line of strong women who have had various experiences of marriage, they have observed the marriages of others, they have been in proxy marriages, and I am myself on receipt of this descent line.

Jane isn't a daughter of a proxy bride; she is an Anglo-Celtic Australian who does not judge or presume the experiences ascribed in the narratives. Jane has long written about cultural and linguistically diverse groups. She offers considered responses for each narrative and asks challenging questions from an etic stance. Maria is a daughter of a Greek proxy bride and her narratives assist to demonstrate the phenomena of proxy marriages within a different culture. Our lived experiences are not the same but I (Rose) acknowledge it is the constant yearning to transcend my parent's cultural dispositions and remove the ethnic identity marker that I was bound by (Marino, 2020).

Research questions

The research questions that drive this study are:

- How can daughters of migrant proxy brides navigate the cultural transmission of a proxy life?

- How can the generational memories of lived experiences for daughters of proxy brides be interpreted as an opportunity for emancipation?

Methodology

The collaboration of autoethnographical stories are focused on the memories of lived experiences as daughters of proxy brides. The meaning of both Maria's and my hybrid identities construction or lack of, is apparent within the shared stories pivoting against a backdrop of a hegemonic culture and society. The personal accounts are experiences used to "illuminate, interrogate cultural beliefs, practices and identities" (Adams & Herman, 2020. p. 1). The combined narratives highlighted differences in nationality and culture whilst sharing similarities of subjugation due to our gender. Collaborative autoethnography (CA) has a primary focus to represent the narratives within a group autoethnographical process (Chang et al., 2013).

The creative process of collaborative autoethnography allowed both Maria and me to write our stories by recognising and embracing the risk of vulnerability and moments of emotional encounters (Adams et al., 2015, p. 103). We devised a process of writing in which we wrote our own narratives from an emic position, then analysed each other's narratives, and lastly Jane responded as etic analyst for both our stories. The interpretation of our narratives as collaborators was a productive process that gave meaning and sense-making (Denzel, 2009). Our autoethnographical method commenced with my narrative *Changing Channels*. Maria responded in a reflection to how she felt after reading my narrative. This triggered her memory of an event that she felt compelled to write *The Gold Bracelet* in which she brings different cultural perspectives.

My narrative *Repressive Tolerance* and Maria's *Ice-cream castles in the air … Tears and Fears – the Accordion* continued the collaborative process of autoethnography. The coming together of emic and etic analyses validated the experience for the group and offered

the opportunity for voices to be heard. The writing of my narratives and the past often evokes emotional triggers and even nostalgia whilst tapping into a space of truth. My memories are integral and crucial to the integrity of this study. Memory is a gift to "chart our lives by from the mundane moment to the majestic" (hooks, 2009, p. 5).

As I delve deeper into my research, I reflect on the implications outlined in relevant literature about the diaspora, women, and questions of identity and language. In the case of both Italian and Greek women, "migration and feminist literature requires further research regarding gender dynamics or the lived experience of women of proxy brides embedded into their frameworks" (Gabaccia & Iacovetta, 1998, p. 162). The affirmation and representation of feminine discourse through the narratives seeks to function as an agent of emancipation for the cultural advancement of women who have lived through the oppression of a patriarchal culture and society.

Data (stories and responses)

The narratives will provide etic and emic viewpoints to position the data as a reflective representation of the different cultural experiences by two daughters of proxy brides. The etic responses will offer the reader a further understanding of significance by a daughter whose mother was not a proxy bride.

Changing Channels – Rose

The art of conversation in my home when I was a young girl transitioning into a teenager was always around my future as a wife and mother. This was an important facet of my life from my parent's perspective. It was from an early age that I enjoyed watching television and observing the dialogue that was exchanged between characters in a family scene and comparing it to my family. As a 10-year-old girl, I remember asking my mother why we did not live and speak to each other like the families on television. Her answer was clear and direct, we are not the same, we do not come from the same background and do you

know, I had to travel to Australia not even knowing what your father looked like, that is why we are not like them. Our life is not like their life, their lives are pretend. Before I could ask my next question, she said 'change channel'. What my mother meant by this phrase was that she no longer wanted to engage in this conversation. This proxy bride learned how to hide the past by learning an English phrase that allowed her to move on to a new moment in time without having to immerse herself into an uncomfortable conversation. My mother had a knack for using Italian and English phrases or words that were intrinsic to the situation or circumstance she aligned them to. 'Change channel' was a perfect metaphor for her, using a click of the dial or a press of the remote button to change channels on the television. An instant stop and move on. This phrase provided her respite from answering any questions that would require recollection of her past or justification for her present.

I soon learned this trait and found that it had its benefits when not wanting to deal with conversations that also brought about feelings of doubt or inadequacy. As a daughter of a proxy bride a common theme that was embedded around the history of my mother's migration, was that I had better get used to being 'second best'. The fact that she did not marry in a conventional manner had significant meaning for her, marrying this way made her feel second best. I was the second child in a family with four other siblings which ensured that I too felt second best. My marriage at the age of 17 was a conventional marriage with all the conventional requisites, all chosen by my mother. From that moment on I learned to deal with anyone imposing change or control over my life by changing channels.

Maria's emic analysis – Changing Channels

The most powerful message I had from Rose's story was a sense of repressed anger and grief. "We are not the same" reverberated in my mind not from a position of humility or pride on the part of her mother but from a place of logic and inevitability. Rose's mother 's ability to compartmentalise her life into accepting the differences of family life without

reflecting, discussing or expressing emotion brought forth an indescribable sadness. “Change channels” was the cry for a stubborn acceptance of a life that was “second best.” There was a futility borne from a sense that one had no power to change their life or what life gave them. Rose was destined, like her mother, to accept the inevitable consequences of a proxy wife’s future which was then passed on to her daughter(s). As a reader, I felt it hard to resign myself to the depth of repressed anger and grief expressed by Rose’s mother’s resolute inability to watch the “channel” and not want to build a different future for her children. As a reader and mother of daughters, I always dreamt of more opportunities and empowerment for my daughters beyond what I as a woman was able to achieve. I kept thinking I would want them to create their own “television show” as a metaphor for not changing channels, but creating a channel that was different, and as exciting as the one that did not represent the life and circumstances they were living in due to choices I as a mother may have made, or had made for me. I felt great empathy for what I perceived as the deep, hidden and repressed anger of a young woman, now an older mother, who had been “forced” to marry as a proxy bride, abandoning the dreams of her own youth. What I could not reconcile was the act of “sacrificing” your offspring to that same future. I was left with “why?” why ignore the innocent question of a ten-year-old young girl, without offering hope? Why did Rose’s mother envisage a life for her own daughter that was “second best”? I was left saddened with a sense of my own anger towards a mother who could not, or did not want to empower her own child and create a destiny that was more positive.

Jane’s etic analysis – Changing Channels

Rose’s story and Maria’s response to it speak of a life of proxy – living someone else’s dreams. Destiny looms large – there is no argument, no possibility of change, just an inevitability of what will happen. Questioning is not permitted and if attempted met with ‘Change channel’, reinforcing that there is nothing to discuss, all is ordained and deviation

impossible. The mother's life circumscribes the daughters – Rose's mother had no options, no possibility of personal preference, just marriage to a stranger, a world away. Rose had no options, just marriage to an almost stranger, within her social circle but largely unknown. Not only destiny/fate, but the notion of settling for the lesser, the second option, the 'second best'. Individuality is not accepted, but Rose must accord with her mother's plan, in some ways, having the wedding with pomp and ceremony that her mother was denied. Rose becomes a proxy herself, standing in for her mother's aspirations and performing a proxy life.

The Gold Bracelet – Maria

My mother, as a proxy bride, raised her two daughters in Australia with the metaphor of a gold bracelet. Growing up as teenagers, she never failed to remind us that our life was like a gold bracelet, worn as a piece of jewellery to be admired, or worn as a reminder of being manacled to a man, a hard life and a lack of opportunities. Leaving her village and poverty behind her at the age of 19 and travelling to a country so far away to marry a man she had never seen, was for her a chance of liberation. As younger girls, she told us stories of her life in the village, and these romanticised visions of the freedom of outdoors and her own mother who she clearly loved very much, who would often create questions of why? Why did she leave her mother? Why did she not fall in love and marry someone in her village like her sister and brother?

As we watched her favourite show "Bonanza" — a cheesy American western series — one Friday evening on our black and white television, during one particular scene she stood up visibly upset and left the room. Following her into our small kitchen I found her slumped against the sink crying. Mum …? She looked at me and dabbing at her tears with the apron she always wore, slowly she straightened up and with deliberation and in a pleading tone said: – "promise me you will wear a gold bracelet one day" I was so confused – what did that have to do with what happened? What gold bracelet?

The scene that had caused her distress was one of a cowboy dragging a native American Indian behind him, tied by his hands to the horse. She explained that she remembered as a young girl her father doing exactly the same thing to her mother, parading her past the village square and "kafeneio" (small coffee house) where men congregated in the afternoon to share their day's stories and have a drink. My grandmother had upset her mother-in-law and to show his mother that his wife was a chattel, a woman who had to serve her husband and his parents, he decided that this humiliation would appease his own mother and send a message to his wife that he dominated every part of her life. Women came out to watch and some quickly turned away sharing the pain and humiliation. My mother, with tears explained that her mother instead of walking and stumbling with her head down, stood tall and straight-backed looking straight ahead. "Nothing would break her spirit" explained my mother with pride in her voice and a tear-stained face.

My mother was 10—years—old when she witnessed this. When her father had finished and untied her mother back at their small home, my grandmother went inside and continued to cook. Throwing herself at her mother in a show of love and support, my grandmother knelt, stared her in the eyes and said, "I am too poor to give you a gold bangle so I will help you make one, and then for all the women that will follow me, your daughters and their daughters. I want you to be brave and grow up remembering what you saw today and promise that this will never happen to you. Promise me!"

My mother said her "gold bracelet" was becoming a proxy bride. She came to a country where she worked and had power over her life, no man would humiliate her like her father had done to her mother "Your gold bracelet is to go to school, finish high school one day and become someone important, a teacher, a doctor, someone who did not have to work only in a factory as she did – you then must promise me you will help your sister do the same". As a young child I just wanted to see my young mother happy, so I promised and the

“gold bracelet” was passed to the next generation. It was at this point crafted from the uncertainty, courage and fears of a journey of a proxy bride – my mother. My job was to craft it differently.

Rose’s emic analysis – Gold Bracelet

It is apparent to me from the first paragraph that cultural customs around gender were a dominant and an influential factor in the life of Maria’s mother. The notion of conformity and adhering to her place within the hierarchy of her marriage was graphically expressed leaving me as a reader feeling a strong sense of sadness for this woman’s ordeal. The overwhelming and quintessential essence of this vignette is the awareness and unwavering motivation of a mother who promotes the meaningful value of the gold bracelet.

The metaphor of the gold bracelet that being made of gold, is lauded as having and owning wealth and prestige by many cultures. The bracelet also symbolises an infinite cycle and this was a clear message by Maria’s mother to always remember that the gold bracelet was a reminder of hope, choice and freedom. The symbolism and message offer a strong reminder for her daughters, granddaughters and future generations of daughters to always have a strong sense and resolve of what is important in their life and to live it with purpose.

Jane’s etic analysis – Gold Bracelet

Maria’s mother, another proxy bride, also carried memories of her own mother’s belittlement and felt ownership dragged in public view for all to see. Carrying generational memories and her own of being destined to exist in particular ways, Maria’s mother found resilience in holding on to her memory of her mother unbroken by public shaming. This resilience she gifted to her daughter, speaking of the imaged gold bracelet given from mother to daughter. This virtual manumission saw mother give daughter the right to defy, at least in thought and possibly in action. The large gold bracelet could also stand for the gold ring of marriage, in effect, a woman telling her daughter to form her own freedom in marriage and in

life. These stories toll destiny unquestioned by one generation may be questioned by the next. Within cultural confines there are possibilities of realised aspirations and other ways of being.

Repressive Tolerance – Rose

From a very early age I knew that I loved singing. Singing and music were a source of bliss that I tapped into at every given moment. No one paid too much attention to me as a five-year-old in the family backyard swinging as high as I could on the wooden swing set. I loved the momentum of the swing allowing me to reach exhilarating crescendos of height and notes. This ritual was my time and I enjoyed immersing myself in song and play until one particular day. As I sang a Beatles song with great gusto 'she loves you yeah, yeah, yeah' my maternal grandfather walked past me, then stopped and looked at me. He groaned 'go inside, go *luva* the plates and stop singing'. The word luva in dialect meant wash. What he really was saying you should not be singing of love, your place is in the kitchen washing the dishes. This admonishment of my singing whilst playing as a child was the first incident that I experienced as a female where I felt suppressed and controlled by the patriarchy in my family.

As I grew older my parents became aware of my mature singing voice and encouraged me to sing at family events and even at weddings. The flaunting of a daughter with talent was also a ploy to attract a future husband. At the age of 13, my parents agreed to send me to singing lessons to learn more Italian songs for upcoming family weddings. I soon met the Italian female singing teacher they chose for me who was impressed with my voice. I was asked to sing my favourite song, which I sang unaccompanied. Her response was not one that I expected, she stated to my parents that I would indeed have a career in the music industry and be successful. My parents demonstrated feelings of pride however they refused this notion for a career as they did not deem music and singing an honourable profession for a young woman. It was acceptable to sing for family at weddings but it was made quite clear

that no daughter of theirs would have a career in music. I was devastated as I knew that this was my calling.

I continued to sing at weddings and large events, with one particular wedding where I made a vow to my mother, after returning home, to never sing again. This was as a result of her chastising me for dancing and moving to the beat as I sang a popular song on stage. I was referred to as moving like a loose woman and I was to only stand still when singing. I kept my vow until my uncle asked me to sing at his wedding which was being held in a small and conservative hall. I sang for him and his new wife and then only sang in private for myself and nobody else. Like the gold bracelet from the previous vignette my experience of singing for my parents was an act of manumission. Shackled by cultural rules and emancipated when wishing to promote the singing prowess of their daughter.

Maria's emic analysis – Repressive Tolerance

I loved the title of this vignette: both words juxtaposed in meaning offering the tension that lay deep in the words and emotions of this memory. Contemporary Australian society has resulted in the presence of bicultural children from many nations, Rose is one of these children who brought with her multiple possibilities for musical engagement within both her home and Australian or western culture. This is evocatively described when she remembers herself singing a Beatles song. The young Rose in this vignette expresses real and experienced notions of issues of social integration, identity construction, and cultural maintenance being negotiated on a continual basis. She was made to feel guilty when she sang the Beatles song and duly sent by her grandfather to do more appropriately gender prescribed cultural activities such as washing dishes. I became emotional at the thought that a five-year-old was not encouraged to play and express herself freely, instead her young mind was burdened with confusing messages – it seemed she was perplexed at the thoughts had she had done something wrong in the eyes of her grandfather?

If only Rose's family understood the importance that her singing was for her at a deeply personal level – it allowed her to express herself and show the talent she had for what, even at a young age, was evident. The words: "I was devastated ... as I knew it was my calling" frame the enormity of this memory and vignette. Rose was not only bilingual and bicultural but now hid in a duality of identity – she created a liminal space referred to as a space occupying a position at, or on both sides of, a boundary. Rose sang without moving like a "loose woman" at family events yet "sang in private for myself and nobody else." Rose calls singing for her parents an "act of manumission." I had to look up the word – manumission and abolition are words both used to mean "freeing slaves" or "a release from slavery." More specifically though, manumission is the act of a slave owner setting slaves free, her parents freed her when they allowed her to sing. Rose says she was "shackled by cultural rules" the expression certainly for me brings forth the image of a slave. Rose states that her parents "emancipated" her when they promoted her singing talents at family events. Emancipation, unlike manumission, involves government action – her family was in essence the authority and powers to be in her life – the question that was left with me after reading this vignette was – was Rose emancipated? Was living in that liminal space created by Rose to understand the conflict of converging cultural worlds "emancipation"? I was left with that question as it weighed into my feelings of sadness and profound loss at the end of the vignette. I kept thinking emancipation and manumission would in many circumstances bring a relief and joy of freedom. Yet, for Rose it did not feel like this – I was left with the image of a beautiful singing bird caught up in a huge, complex, sticky spider's web unable to move or sing freely.

Jane's etic analysis – Repressive Tolerance

Rose loved to sing, holding it close within her when forced to stop by narrow cultural bounds. Singing was joy, obedience an absence of joy, a negation of self rather to be

subsumed in proscribed behaviours – do the dishes, do not move like a *puttana*. Not only was voice denied, but music outside culture not permitted. Taking her voice was devastation, years later to be reclaimed by Rose who permitted herself to sing songs beyond culture that offered other ways of being, a performance of emancipation from mother, family and cultural strictures.

Ice-cream castles in the air … Tears and Fears – the Accordion – Maria

The year was 1968 and I was 11— years—old. We lived at the back of a Milk Bar where every day after school from 6 pm – 7 pm I had to "serve" customers, allowing my mother a break to cook and prepare dinner. Our shop was open from 7 am in the morning till 8 pm seven days a week. When a customer entered the store a ringing sound was made from the attached silver bell on the hinges of the shop door. I came to hate that sound and still shudder when I hear the distinct sound of a tinkling bell. I stood behind the counter on a raised platform plank my father had made to assist my younger sister and me serve customers at eye level. As it was a quieter period for the store, I listened with abandon to a small transistor I had hidden behind the cigarette stand. I sang softly to my favourite song—so happy it was playing.

Rows and flows of angel hair

And ice cream castles in the air

And feather canyons everywhere

Looked at clouds that way…

The song was "Both Sides Now" by Jodi Mitchell, the long— haired blonde, folk singer that filled my heart with yearning and who, from the very first time I saw her on television, I dreamt of learning to play a guitar. I begged, cajoled and repeated my wish to play a guitar every day to my parents. "I will serve in the shop every day and weekends for three hours and promise to get all A's on my report card" I earnestly told my Mum. My father smiled and would always say that if my mother agreed we could buy a guitar and find a

teacher to teach me. Today however I was lost in my thoughts of singing holding a guitar like Joni Mitchell.

But now they only block the sun

They rain and snow on everyone

So many things I would have done

But clouds got in my way

My dreams had been shattered when a week ago, my mother brought an elderly Greek man to our home who was selling a piano accordion. My parents excitedly touched the instrument, sharing memories of how this musical instrument was played in their village. Our visitor played a number of Greek folksongs that both my parents sang to, my father at one point twirling my mother to the beat. They both looked at me and said – this is the instrument you will play ... not that Australian guitar! I looked at this portable hideous half piano with bellows that opened and closed and the ugly leather strap that was positioned over the shoulder. This was NOT what Jodi Mitchell would ever play! “What do you think? asked my mother as she requested our visitor place the strap over my shoulder. “No !” I called out in Greek as I took three steps back. “I don’t want to play that … it’s so ethnic ... it’s so uncool … it's a squeeze box not a guitar!”

My parents were angry, I had embarrassed them in front of their visitor. No sale was made, and they ensured that the visitor stayed for dinner and a formal apology was made by me, their “Australian” influenced, badly behaved offspring.

I've looked at clouds from both sides now

From up and down and still somehow

It's cloud's illusions I recall

I really don't know clouds at all

Jodi Mitchell's soulful words enveloped my heart … why did my life have two sides? Why did my Greek world, as a daughter of migrant parents, disagree with my Australian visions of life and dreams? My mother believed that any woman who sang with a guitar was "not honourable." An accordion for her was a more serious instrument. I could be hidden behind the squeeze box, not on show for an audience in the same way as the elegant Jodi Mitchell held her guitar as if she was caressing it – an extension of her body, face and voice. I had visions of trying to pump the bellows whilst finding the right keys on the piano accordion, lost to the needs of the instrument. I never learnt to play any musical instrument … as a daughter of a migrant proxy bride, I had been held hostage, an unwilling slave to the customs and values of her Greek heritage and the music and instruments that were valued in her world. My second world— my Australian world— was "second best" like the gold bracelet in my earlier vignette, my 'guitar' was not gold, it was not precious, it had no worth.

And if you care, don't let them know

Don't give yourself away

I've looked at love from both sides now

From give and take and still somehow

It's love's illusions that I recall…

Rose's emic analysis – Ice-cream castles in the air … Tears and Fears – the Accordion

Maria's use of Joni Mitchell's song was profound and evoked emotional triggers for me when reading her vignette. The first verse of the song allowed the melodic life of an eleven-year-old to flow during the course of her life in the milk bar and her adolescence. A dream of floating in life, accompanied by her guitar, being short lived by a parental decision and culture was indeed something I could relate to. The second verse of the song delivered the message of no agency and lack of identity for Maria. The Greek folksongs and instrument were important to Maria's parents and provided them with much happiness which they also

wanted to share with their daughter. However, Maria could only equate the piano accordion with being old and ethnic instead of the guitar which had the symbolism of freedom and unconventionality. It had no ethnicity, no culture just freedom.

Maria states in her story, why did my life have two sides? Her hybridity impacted on her dream of being the singer with her guitar which was an extension of herself. The music inside of Maria could not be unleashed whilst it was deemed as 'not being honourable' to be a woman who played a guitar. Maria was thwarted by her parents' choice of cultural music and traditions with no consideration for the musical choices that their hybrid daughter wished to follow. This only highlighted the lyrics in Joni Mitchell's last verse as uncomfortable, sad and a fluid numbness for Maria to experience.

Jane's etic analysis – Ice-cream castles in the air … Tears and Fears – the Accordion

Maria relished the broad, popular culture of wider Australia, hankering for music making that was evocative, sensual and, as expected, not to be tolerated in her family's notion of good Greek traditions. Maria strained against the 'ethnic' wanting freedom of choice – the guitar not the accordion. Like Rose, the child Maria was captured in culture and, although permitted refusal of the Greek, she was not allowed freedom to choose. For both, singing and playing popular songs was not to be tolerated, seen as behaviour unbecoming a young girl being readied for marriage. For hybrid children, a choice is made either by self or others; depending on the choice, something dies or at least sleeps until resilience becomes resistance and ultimately some degrees of freedom to choose. No one ever escapes their past completely – we carry it with us as a turtle carries a carapace. Even if we choose to ignore it, it is always there.

Discussion

Understanding the impact that cultural customs and practices had on the second-generation daughters of proxy brides must commence with literature that represents ancestral and social traditions. Drawing on Werner Sollors' theory of Consent over Descent, (Sollors, 1988), I am increasingly aware of the correlation of the relationship between heredity and agency. Hemingway (1987) supports Sollors theory stating that "consent relations describe relations of law or marriage, and consent language stresses the free agency of marital choice, personal destiny, and political fate" (p. 436). Descent was the inherited relationship to culture and family. The concept of being married by proxy can be attributed to arranged marriages which have been a long-standing tradition in the Italian culture, with Hyndman-Rizk (2016) espousing this as an "endogamous arranged marriage within the patrilineage, the village community and sect" (p. 303). Although descent gives me my heritage, my lived experiences, I am the daughter of a proxy bride and this has influenced my life, I have navigated through the Syclla and Charybdis metaphoric state of being in my life to become who I am now.

Descent is imbued within traditional ideologies of culture, whether it be Italian or Greek, and it plays an integral part within the cultural conflict that was transferred to second generation daughters of migrant parents. Cultural transmission and the stereotypical expectations of migrant parents for their daughters to be a 'good Italian girl' created issues of identity for many young women living in Australia as cultural hybrids (Pallotta-Chiarolli, 1989).

Both sets of narratives highlight the thwarted opportunities for Maria and me, to carve and create our own unique expressions of our lives as young cultural hybrid women. Parental, societal and cultural conservations and transmissions were dictated as we were of female gender and needed to fit the cultural criteria of being honourable and chaste (Baldassar, 1999; Pallotto-Chiarolli, 1989; Simic, 2014). The historical events that contributed to the diasporic experiences for my parents and many others, attributed to the fear of assimilation and racism

which perpetuated a stronghold on cultural, religious and family conventions and in turn did not, and could not, allow the welcoming of a hybrid cultural identity for any member of the family. It was not an unusual occurrence that diasporic movement impacted on relationships in families, individuals, group identity, everyday life, and home (McDowell,1998).

Conclusion

Merging past and present, the cultural traditions, practices, the good, the bad, the ugly, that the narratives expressed, now need to be deconstructed. The stories do not stop, there are many, and hearing the stories makes them impossible to forget. The importance of allowing one's identity is to manifest in tune with lived experiences and not be dictated by patriarchy, society or culture. The narratives demonstrate that the life trajectory of creating a unique identity was thwarted for the two daughters, based on the categorisation, stereotypification within cultural/traditional/societal cages that they were locked into. Identity constructs do not promote the architecting of a sense of self, worth or purpose, they serve as labels to identify with and in turn creates a carapace of burden.

My research serves my need to identify and name the signposts for a transformative life whilst acknowledging my past lived experiences as a hybrid daughter of a proxy bride. My research aims to inform the new daughters of migrants that cultural and societal values do not have to determine how the trajectory of their life is determined in terms of marriage and identity, a true sense and respect of self will be the catalyst for women to have greater agency in the negotiation of marriage and over their own lives (Hyndman-Rizk, 2016).

Matters of cultural identity for daughters of proxy brides is under researched and important for this cohort, given the number of generations of migrant populations and given the impact of the 1950's until the 1970's of Greek, Italian and other European migrants in Australia. The importance of shared narratives will assist to inform a wider demographic of

how generations of mothers and daughters were an integral part of the historical fabric in building this country.

Chapter 8 Discussion

Introduction

In this chapter I will present the key ideas from the four autoethnographic articles included in this thesis and articulate the connectedness between them. I interpret these key findings with reference to the relevant literature as discussed in Chapter 2. I offer an integrated discussion of the unified work highlighting the main points and the overall purpose of this doctorate. The framing of ideas and meanings generated from my ontological position as a researcher and writer, builds on the concepts of themes of how culture impacts on my identity, cultural hybridity, liminality, and circumstances from a conscious perspective. The research approach I have undertaken within this thesis is autoethnography, providing me with the ability to write in an evocative manner to share my authentic memories of my lived experiences. The exploration of familial, cultural and historical events that shaped my existence gives the reader an insight within the narratives documented in the journal articles. Additionally, the significant issues of intersectionality, cultural and generational impact are further discussed in accordance with the dominion over my life. Finally, I share how liminality and third space became the catalyst in creating cerebral havens to seek refuge in during triggered and challenging moments.

The Power of Autoethnography

In this section I first discuss my embodied memories, I then address the chronicle of my lived experiences, and finally I consider the role of self-introspection.

What autoethnography has afforded me as a researcher and as the subject of my own research, is the opportunity to share my narratives through the lens of culture. Adopting an autoethnographical approach has enabled me to interpret my lived experience, discuss

cultural and religious practices, traditions and share my relationships with important others (Adams et al., 2015). This powerful medium acknowledges my life as I narrate my encounters, actions, feelings, and draw upon evocative memories both as a child, adolescent and adult.

My cultural hybridity is a gift as it has allowed me to write prolifically and authentically within this thesis about the two worlds I straddled during my young and formative years. Using autoethnography as a research method I chose to write and examine the phenomenon that elicited my memory in a manner that had me wondering and questioning each experience, challenging my awakened emotions whilst constantly asking myself, why me? My vulnerability as a writer and researcher was validated by Adams et al. (2021) as they reminded me that "we share intimate and vulnerable experiences that sometimes bring forth shame or sorrow; experiences and situations that shaped us and these events; and moments that motivated joy, confusion, conflict, grief, passion, and possibly trauma" (p. 3). This is evident in Lilyea (2022) where he uses autoethnography as an appropriate research method to articulate the importance of using one's voice to inform the understood importance of one's life. My lived experience during my youthful years is an important story to tell when you consider the complexities of culture and family who determined my identity and agency.

Temporality

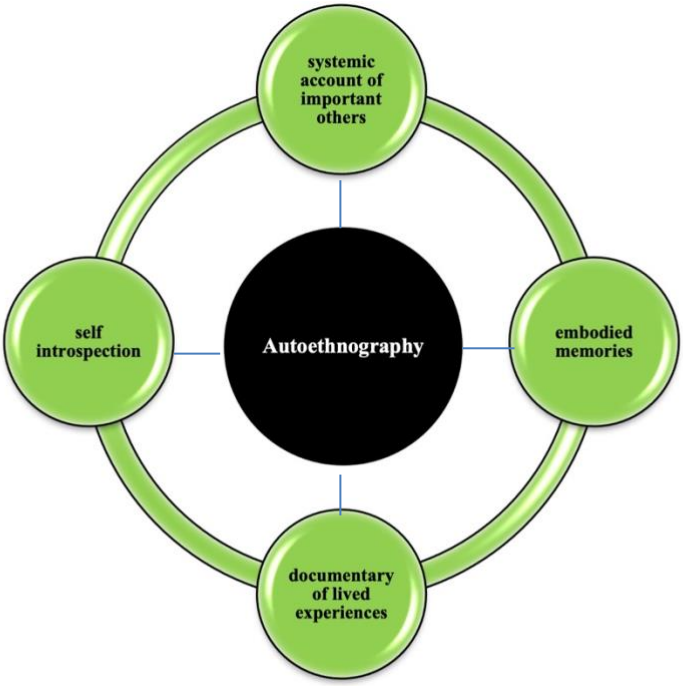
The clarification of temporality within my autoethnographical narratives is reflected within my stories, they are situated at the time when they occurred. I acknowledge that time changes, however what I am talking about was then as I remember and understand it. I found Lilyea's (2022) first line in his journal article "life is fragile and each of us likely lives far closer to disruption then we imagine" (p. 316), a powerful reminder of how my life evolved

from a time of disruption. Disrupted by culture, family traditions, religion, societal expectations, and racism. As I reflect on my narratives detailing my past, the temporal process gave me freedom to write as an autoethnographer through the process of remembering, owning and elaborating on the pivotal moments that were significant at that time. My rememberings provided me with substance, giving me the opportunity for reflective consciousness. Undertaking the process of autoethnography allowed me to bring to life the characters that directed my life and in turn created the many episodes of my evocative lived experiences, some of which became the material for autoethnographical writing. The ability to look at myself introspectively whilst writing as an autoethnographer, gave me insight into my life as an adolescent in the context of how I was perpetually unable to find equanimity as a cultural hybrid.

Figure 8.1 below encompasses how I understand the contribution of autoethnography as a reflexive and reiterative cycle for my embodied memories, authentic accounts of lived experiences and discovery of self within the phenomena of my life. I examine the systemic account of important others within my narratives as influential data, highlighting my designated role as a female cultural hybrid whose life was determined by family, church and community.

Figure 8.1

The cyclic nature of Autoethnography



The important other is me, the Australian-born daughter raised and educated as a cultural hybrid. My Australianness was the part of my hybridity that was important for me to cling on to, to authenticate my aspirational reality in a confusing cultural existence. I describe in my narratives, how I vacillated between being the obedient daughter of Southern Italian parents where culture and values were dominant in my upbringing. My important other emerged when I was at school speaking and being what I conceived to be Australian, times spent with my peers. These times allowed me to tap into who I aspired to be, the girl who was permitted to have Australian friends outside of the family, the girl who could dress how her friends at school dressed, the girl who could be the free and life loving Australian. I was able to recount systematically some of the disrupting events, the emotions, and the ambiguity of self within all of my autoethnographies.

Embodied Memories

The theoretical framework of Bourdieu's (2010) concept of *habitus* provided me with the resources to describe my life which enacted the themes of habitus. When I speak of gender and ethnicity within the social structure I lived in, I describe a life (mine) with no sense of individual agency. I embodied the behaviour that was determined by my culture and family who shaped my world accordingly, in the manner that would be acceptable to family and society. The notions of *habitus* that Bourdieu (1990) advances as "the conditionings associated with a particular class of conditions of existence produce *habitus*, systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is as principles which generate and organize practices and representations" (p. 53). *Habitus* manifested my embodied memories. Theorising further on this concept Bourdieu (1990) espouses "the body does not represent what it performs, it does not memorize the past, it *enacts* the past, bringing it back to life … 'learned by the body' is not something one has … but something that one is" (p. 73). My memories were cell memories, deeply embodied. Bourdieu's concept of fields is also another way of articulating how society is part of the embodiment of being, a multidimensional space consisting of sub spaces of fields. They encompass societal power and domination over family, church, school, workplace, community groups. My subjective *habitus* was embodied and constructed from the diverse and complex conditions within my social and private world that I experienced in my young life (Southcott & Joseph, 2019). In turn they became my embodied memories that resulted in the data for my narratives.

Chronicle of My Lived Experiences

Writing as part of my autoethnographical process from the very beginning of my doctoral journey was an experiential process of inquiry. At first the journaling and blogging

were irreverent, until they became the prompts that catapulted me into documenting my personal writings that had profound meanings with epiphanic moments. I was able to translate the lived intersections of my life, highlighting my reality, in my world. Autoethnography, being central to creating the space to write in this way, is depicted by Spry (2001) as revealing "the fractures, sutures, and seams of self-interacting with others in the context of researching lived experience" (p. 712).

Self-introspection

Self-introspection is at the heart of my autoethnographies. It may be interpreted as being work undertaken to practice the art of identity work or to make meaning in an endeavour to understand the world at large (Butz & Besio, 2009). Reflexivity factors as an essential element in my writing, being the cornerstone for resourceful writing and research. I used this element to explore and examine the phenomena that occurred in my life from a non-judgemental and heuristic lens. I also concur with Reed-Danahay (1997b) who takes the view that an advantage of reflexivity when writing autoethnographically is utilised by situating oneself through "forms of self-narrative that place the self within a social context" (p. 9). Within my autoethnographies emerging themes produced evocative meanings to the narratives, a reflexive medium that I adopted to examine my data comprehensively. Self-introspection assisted me with this examination by using memory recall of a particular event or pivotal moment. I would immediately tap into the emotion of the moment which often evoked deep sensory emotions attached to the memory such as the sense of smell. My memory recall involved seeing even the most minimal of details of each particular moment or event, which in turn allowed me to write authentically of these experiences (Ellis & Bochner, 2000).

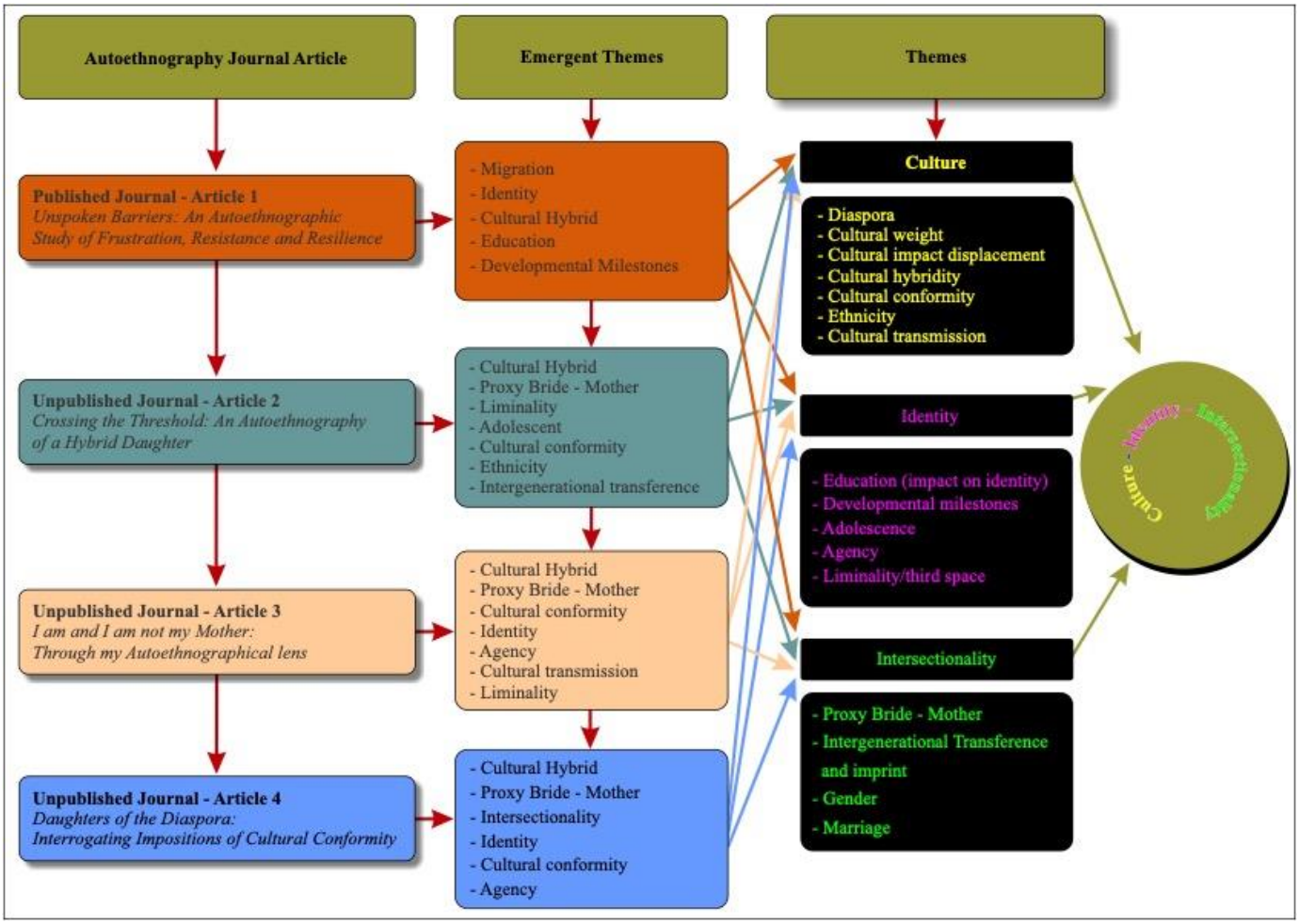
Materialising Themes

In reviewing my autoethnographies, I identified a number of themes that were a contributory acknowledgement and validation of the three significant key outcomes being Culture, Identity and Intersectionality.

The construction of Figure 8.2 was a means to capture the emerging themes that were embedded within my four journal articles.

Figure 8.2

Culture, Identity and Intersectionality



The themes emerged as links between the four articles and yet they all told different stories. My methodology in constructing Figure 8.2 was to draw out the significant themes that were consistent in the data. I did this by designing a colour coded thematic table relating to the four

articles. The results became obvious when the themes such as culture, cultural hybrid, and identity appeared across all four articles. It became an imperative for me to identify how all the themes could be condensed. Ultimately, the evidence became apparent and I created three key themes. Figure 8.2 featured three columns, firstly the journal article title, secondly the emergent themes from each journal article. I distinguished the major themes within each of the articles to produce column three—Themes. Once these were all identified I analysed through a mind mapping exercise the three principal themes— Culture, Identity and Intersectionality. I present this within a circle to the right of my three columns. Culture being the yellow, Identity is pink and Intersectionality is green. The circle demonstrates the three dominant themes to represent a continuous cyclical motion of my adolescent life. Additionally, Figure 8.2 highlights, examines and analyses these governing themes which were signified by the stories, the memories, the events and how I interpreted all these elements. I found that these themes were interconnected with each other and at other times took centre stage within the narrative. Culture, Identity and Intersectionality are central to this thesis, evidenced as powerful premises which surfaced within every journal article, these are discussed further in this chapter. Identity also takes a leading role against a backdrop of intersectionality.

Chapter 4 demonstrates generated themes of migration, identity, cultural hybrid, education and developmental milestones. The first theme, migration, framed the historical significance of diaspora and the migration of my parents to Australia by proxy marriage. The second theme, identity is discussed within the narratives and linked to other themes being cultural hybrid and developmental milestones. These relate to my lived experiences as the second daughter of a migrant family born in Australia. I explain how I struggled with my identity as a cultural hybrid with one example where I share my thwarted developmental milestones in a comparative table titled Table 4.1 (p. 111) Arrested Development of Psychosocial and Maturation Milestones of Rose Wake against Erikson's 5th Stage, Identity vs Role Confusion (Maree, 2021). Further to this, my analysis of the data demonstrated evidence that there were

only three central themes, Culture, Identity and Intersectionality. On reflection, the theme of education held a dominant position as it illustrated the obstruction and hindrance of culture and gender during my adolescence. One example I experienced as a thirteen-year-old cultural hybrid was written in my narrative *No Man's Land,* highlighting that education was an important influence in my life. It was taken away from me as soon as I was old enough to leave school. My dream was to be Australian, and my aspirational Australian identity would manifest by being educated as an Australian. Aspirations are simply defined by Coates (2008) "hopes for desired future states" (p. 14).

In Chapter 5, I developed themes of cultural hybridity, proxy bride – mother, liminality, adolescent, cultural conformity, ethnicity, intergenerational transference. All the themes were born out of the narratives *Fourteen and Female, Fifteen and Functional, Fifteen, and Family and Fun?* The narratives draw upon the weight and complexities of cultural and ethnic conformity as an integral part of my upbringing. I describe my life between the ages of fourteen and seventeen and share stories describing moments of liminality that assured me sanctuary from the world around me. I consider myself a liminal being which has often been described as a "condition of liminality originated by living in two worlds (their immigrant parents and the Australian one") (Marino, 2019a, p. 21). I describe the various forms of conformity, religious and societal authority in Chapter 4 revealing their dominance over my life as a cultural hybrid. My mother's strict and traditional Southern Italian parenting determined the trajectory of my childhood and adolescence up until my marriage at seventeen years of age. Her life was determined by intergenerational transmission which she passed on to me.

Chapter 6 brings to light similar themes from the above chapter. Cultural hybridity, proxy bride – mother, cultural conformity, identity, agency, cultural transmission, and liminality were prominent in my autoethnography. The key concepts raised in this article are about identity, the lack of agency as a consequence of immigration, proxy marriage and culture. The consequence of immigration was primarily that of acculturative traumatic stress on my mother which in turn

had a significant effect on my life. The narratives provide a definitive example of how my mother's life represented the parallels that she would invoke on my life until my marriage as an adolescent. The parallels were of living a life as a female in a patrilineal family, culture and community, the restriction of owning and managing our lives due to our gender and role in the family. She was trapped by culture, and so was I.

Chapter 7 brings out engendered themes of cultural hybridity, proxy bride – mother, intersectionality, cultural conformity and agency. Within this autoethnographical article the narratives are written from an emic and etic position, a collaborative initiative to demonstrate the lived experiences of two daughters of proxy brides. I became my own data and my own researcher dancing between the emic and the etic. The narratives were written with the intention to address the emergent themes born from the memories and cultural existences. In both cases as daughters of proxy brides, cultural transmission and the stereotypical expectations of migrant parents for their daughters to be a 'good Italian girl' created issues of identity for many young women living in Australia as cultural hybrids (Pallotta-Chiarolli, 1989). In the following section I display the notions of my identity and cultural constructs and the architecting of sense of self.

Connections

The first theme, Culture, accumulated and included every cultural aspect the shaped my life from birth to adolescence as articulated within each of my journal articles. As discussed by Whitten et al. (2011), culture generally is borne from persons learning from each other which in turn engenders traditions, cultural rituals that shape lives. In my case, my cultural learning was signified by my acquiring genetic and cultural inheritance evolving over generations. I question whether I would have felt a sense of thwarted social identity during my adolescence if I were not a cultural hybrid. When extracting key phenomena such as my mother's migration to Australia as a proxy bride, her cultural transmission on to me, from the equation of how my life would be, it could be assumed that I would embody the evolutionary culture of the geographical position I

was born in. The linkage between culture, language and geography provides the distinction for the assumption.

The identity theme describes it as fluid and constantly negotiating to reconstruct my identity during moments of liminality and transience of accepting my life as a cultural hybrid. My liminal moments gave emphasis to my long held aspiration to be further educated within an Anglo Australian education system as an adolescent, struggling with the constantly reconstructed image of oblivion. The image that reflected in the mirror of my childhood and adolescence revealed my dual identity, I saw who I was, and I also saw who I was not, and did not want to be. My mother wanted me to dress and act according to her tightly-held cultural conventions – this was not what I wanted; this was not what defined me. As an adolescent these were the tensions I lived with, so I learned to create the images of the accepted identities when with family and when in society (Morton et al., 2009).

Negotiating intersectionality echoes my life and the need to excise, through all the spheres of my existence, to own one identity. The cornerstone of intersectionality cut through every facet of my lived experience as a cultural hybrid and as a young woman. Negotiating the slippery slopes of culture, gender, identity, tradition and adolescent marriage resulted in feelings of ambiguity when engaging as a daughter and teenage bride. Dancing in the liminal in a pursuit to negotiate my vacillating identity, I became cognisant that education was the connection that was linked to the only identity I wished to own. This became the cultural weight that I carried around with me knowing that I had no agency to develop my own identity.

Cultural Weight and Impact

In my autoethnographical endeavours, an important and pervasive question to ponder on is, as a cultural hybrid how did tradition within the Italian culture impact my life? My first impulse in response is that tradition within any culture or family can certainly contribute to feelings of being connected, sharing and ownership of ancestral practices, passing down valued and rich cultural rituals down to generations. It is when I consider the role of the diaspora and the

impact it had on my family, and how culture and the traditions embedded within family, religion and community, I can now appreciate the complexity and the symbolic behavioural inheritances (Baldassar, 2006; Shweder et al., 1998). I am also conscious of the degree of importance that was placed on maintaining traditions, to protect, practice and preserve cultural identity whilst living and enacting cultural traditions (Collins et al., 2009; Marino, 2021). In Figure 2.1 *Wake's Interpretation of Culture* (p. 28) I demonstrate three subjective understandings of culture: culture as a way of life; culture as a negotiation of meaning and culture as a delivery system. Culture as a way of life is about cultural communities across generations who continue to participate in cultural practices from an interactional worldview (Rogoff, 2016). Culture as a negotiation of meaning necessitates the recognition and the interrelatedness for the many aspects of living within a family and community that precludes autonomy and independence (Rogoff et al., 2014). This in turn, perpetuates the clarification of how culture is a delivery system based on the implicit and explicit enculturation of traditions and belief systems I was born into (Hall, 1993).

Within all of my narratives I discuss how the enculturation of traditions was the ingrained cultural pledge that governed my parent's way of life. Intersectionality of my gender, within all categories of my life from a young child to adolescence, mainly describes systems of power, that is systems of discrimination and disadvantage. From an early age I was under no illusion that I was a female cultural hybrid and that limited my psychosocial development in terms of meeting developmental milestones, according to Table 4.1 Arrested Development of Psychosocial and Maturation Milestones of Rose Wake (p. 111) outlined in Chapter 4. The overarching gender related elements that continually collided within my life are reflective of how the intervening cultural, societal and religious cogs perpetuated the wheel of my destiny as a female. In Chapter 5, I seek to examine and unpack the load of cultural weight that I accrued in my life as the second daughter of immigrant parents born in Melbourne, Australia. In my stories I highlight the significance of my hybrid identity at different stages from young child to adolescent. Through

the lens of autoethnography I framed and formed my stories by stepping back through time. I share my lived experiences as a daughter of Southern Italian migrants to wife at the age of 17.

Chapter 6 details the issue of gender for both my mother and me. I compare my mother's life to mine as a cultural hybrid and consider how much more we both might have been able to do had we had the chance, and what we may have decided to do in our lives if we had the choice. The reality is, that theoretically, the construction of identity for both my mother and me highlights the constraints of being raised in a patrilineal culture and society. My evocative memories are the catalyst attesting to the personal resilience and transformation which overcame turbulent lived experiences, manifesting in trauma for both my mother and me. Chapter 7 discusses my personal experience with cultural transmission as cultural conformity. As a cultural hybrid and a daughter of an Italian proxy bride, I share my narratives with a daughter of a Greek proxy bride. I find convergences in our experiences and harmonious considerations that suggest we are Daughters of the Diaspora. The narratives highlight the sanctioned role of the female gender and understanding what signified a woman's 'place' in traditional Italian and Greek families and the cultural impact that was imposed upon daughters.

To understand how my mother was fixed and embedded within her gender according to the Southern Italian patriarchal covenants, is to understand the power of cultural conformity. The cultural obligations of being a woman were grounded and passed on through the generations as traditional practice. My mother tried to pass this generational burden to me. Identity or agency was not an option for a woman, observing cultural and religious customs were essential for a successful family life.

Adolescent Intersections

The transference of generational cultural customs revealed within my female gendered life are demonstrated by the following age trajectory, giving confirmation to how the transmission of enculturation impacted my agency and identity by family, society, culture and

religion. In Table 8.1 *Adolescent Intersections* I outline the intersections of my lived experiences revealing my determined life exacted from the ages of five years until seventeen years.

Table 8.1

Adolescent Intersections

Age	Lived experience	Intersections
5-11 years	Catholic School Taught by nun Anglo-Australian school curriculum	No recognition of non-Anglo culture
8 years	Learned domestic skills to cook and clean the family home	No choice or autonomy to be an eight-year-old child compelled to train learning as a domestic
13 years	As a cultural hybrid I did not fit in at school and did not fit in at home	Lost in two worlds. My liminality was my expression of escapism to fit in.
13-14 years	Introduced to Italian community as coming of age	Mother ensured that Italian community was informed that I was a candidate for marriage.
14.9 years	Obligated to leave school by mother to find employment	Gender and education were not a priority. Significant goal was attaining suitable employment, this was a prerequisite for marriage.
15 years	Employed as an Italian interpreter and receptionist in a bank	Vacillating between two cultures, the Australian born and Italian dialect speaking daughter conforming to enforced strict

		cultural norms including no socialising with my Australian peers
16 years	Engaged to marry	Accepted a marriage proposal under the endorsement of my parents
17 years	Married	Acquiesced to begin a new way of life and the hopeful emancipation from the old way of life

Gender and Marriage

I share experiences of the lead up to my marriage at the age of seventeen within Chapter 5 which outlines the conditions for my gender made by family, culture and religion. I discuss the impact of my parent's proxy marriage, and in particular my mother's experience as a proxy bride, within all my narratives. As the daughter of Southern Italian parents who enforced strict religious and moral codes as a way of life, the understanding of becoming a subordinate woman whose identity and agency were guided by possessing impeccable morality and virtue, obedience to church practice and traditions, following cultural traditions, knowing my place as a female in the family hierarchy, and accepting my place in society.

This well-worn tenet was handed down to Southern Italian women who were governed by the concept of family honour, with an emphasis on virginity and faithfulness, which was greatly influenced by the belief in the inferiority of women (Davis, 1973; Lehrer, 2004; Willson, 2009). The marriage system of proxy marriage for many women promoted parochial endogamy. This practice ensured aphorism of culture and language as determinants for a successful marriage, but more importantly, the significance of being a virgin confirmed her moral code of honour and by extension the moral code of the whole family (Hyndman-Rizk, 2016; Iuliano, 1999; Simic, 2014).

These moralistic and religious autocratic expectations were those that my mother enforced unconsciously, or consciously on to her daughters. In her eyes, we were to be virtuous, chaste daughters who were domestically skilled from a young age in order to be ready for marriage. In Chapter 4, I share my experiences as a young teenager who has my life mapped out for me up to my wedding day. This includes how the prospective groom was chosen, how the engagement and wedding arrangements were all organised by my mother, not by me, as I was a girl who she professed did not know about these things. As in all my narratives, my life is not my own, and it is evident that my mother's life circumscribes mine— leaving me with no possibility of developing my individual identity or agency. My mother wanted the opportunity to be part of the wedding that she never experienced, and, in that way, I became the proxy for her (the proxy bride), standing in for my mother's wish for the perfect Italian wedding (which she never had). The significance of cultural programming in relation to marriage and the prominence of a limiting gendered life, became the invisible veil between the old world and the new world (Baldassar, 1999; Iulianno, 1999). The invisible became visible, and then removed. Intersectionality became as obvious as crossroads in my life, daughter, wife and obedient cultural hybrid.

Intersectionality

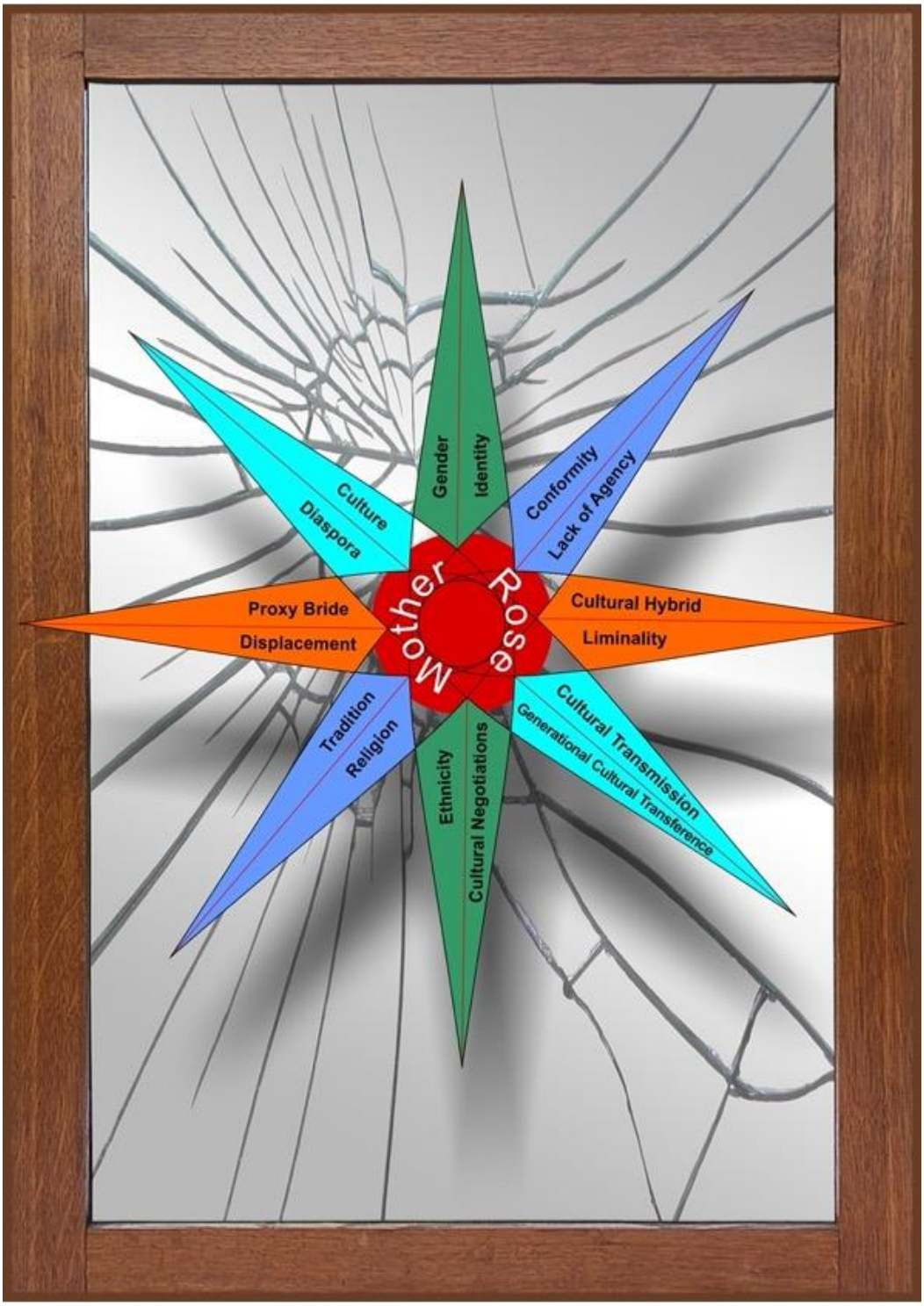
The term intersectionality has gained interest over the years as a key concept— mainly associated with feminist inquiry. The meaning of intersectionality is succinctly described in the influential *Washington Post,* by Crenshaw (2015) as being "an analytic sensibility, a way of thinking about identity and its relationship to power." Scholarly literature written on intersectionality suggests race, gender and social experiences produce various levels of identity, such as diverse identity realities and profiles (Chang, 2018; Crenshaw, 1991). Consideration must be given to the children of immigrants, like myself, who experienced intersectionality by negotiating identity formation as part of their continual transaction process of daily

reconstructing or reshaping of self. This is consistent with cultural hybridisation in terms of nationality, race, ethnicity, class, and linguistic diversity. Many immigrants, for instance, face this process as they attempt to accommodate new environments and experiences, while holding on to their indigenous, sociocultural principles or beliefs.

The intersections of what shaped my adolescence linked with my mother's cultural identity are demonstrated below in Figure 8.4 *Mirroring Intersectionality.*

Figure 8.4

Mirroring Intersectionality



Recognising the salience of my multifocal lens when designing the above diagram, I became cognisant of my inherited cultural status by virtue of my parents' diaspora and the

impact of post WWII migration to Australia. The emergence of the themes and how they intersected revealed a continuous coalescing of gender, culture, tradition and conformity. I designed the razor-like blades to demonstrate the various aspects of identity interdepending between my mother and myself (Crenshaw, 1991; Jones et al., 2012; McClellen, 2012). The prescriptive intersectionality of both lived experiences was inextricably linked by the generational transmission of culture. It was intentional to present an image that provoked, expressed and symbolised feelings of being cut off by culture, family and religion.

Identity

My metaphor for the sharp and pointed blades as an image within a reflective mirror, reveals how I was continuously reminded that my life was lived on a knife's edge as a cultural hybrid. Like Alice, I wanted to pass through the mirror, but I had to smash it to do so. I constantly looked in the metaphorical mirror for the reflections of an identity that symbolised a life on my own terms. The intersections shattered all illusions that were not in accordance with the identity that I constantly strived for. I elucidate further by describing each blade as a representation of the cutting symbols being the manifestation of deep-seated inequity, appearing as unique patterns of overlapping oppression systems experienced by my mother and myself (Crenshaw, 2017). My autoethnographies therefore became the scabbard holding the memories of a life that was dissected by two cultures.

The central intersecting blade (orange) acknowledges the significance of the social, racial, and culturally constructed lives that we both experienced as women in systems of oppression (Crenshaw, 1991). Liminality intersects with displacement giving prominence to the elevated ledge that I balanced upon whenever my immediate hybrid world became arduous. The proxy bride term was placed on this blade, converging with cultural hybrid as a reminder that my life was a proxy life and duty bound to family and culture. The light blue blade relates to the consequences of culture and diaspora, the convergence of cultural transference with limited

scope to develop my social identity or agency (Hernandez et al., 2015). The discourse around the green blade highlights how gender was a significant influencing factor on us as women. These cultural negotiations necessitated adhering to the patriarchal edicts and conforming to the way of life that was transmitted down the generations. Ethnicity and identity are juxtaposed in my case, as I was thwarted in developing my own identity as an adolescent. Ethnicity was what my mother and I were born into, my mother knew who she was and comfortable with her identity, I was not. The purple blade has tradition, religion, conformity and lack of agency as intersecting principals that were influential in my upbringing. These key elements did not skip generations for our gender, they became embedded in our everyday existence.

Generational impact

In this section I emphasise the impact of culture as a social and psychological determinant in the lives of my parents. As a result they in turn transmitted their cultural understandings, beliefs, traditions and viewpoints on to me.

My narratives detail how why migration and the lack of assimilation, racism (by the new host country and reverse racism by my parents), religious dogma, and the Italian community became the catalysts in engineering how my life until marriage was orchestrated. The influence and effect of generational cultural transference was articulated within my narratives, one example being education, being undervalued for females (Haddad, 1999; Sayers, 2012). My mother only received the basic level of education. Education for my mother was to learn life skills, so she encouraged me to leave school when I had reached the minimum mandated age at high school. This was a different scenario for my two brothers because of their gender, they were able to continue with their education as this was considered essential for their future; the future for their families, to carry on the family name with pride. My gender inequity was fraught with frustration, but this was never to be voiced in public or private conversations.

Objectified, Embodied and Institutionalised

The generational transmission of culture towards females in my family and the communities that they came from, was by preaching and practicing the continuing ethos of strict religious and moral teachings to ensure that all daughters represent their families as respectful, virginal and virtuous. These were essential foundations to a successful marriage.

My generational cultural transference determined how my marriage was to eventuate and in turn became a significant millstone and milestone in my life at the age of seventeen. Any notion of intermarriage with another culture was prohibited. It was made abundantly clear to me that at no stage was I to dream of entertaining the thought of marrying into another nationality, especially not with Anglo Australians. The spoken and unspoken messages I was dictated to, were the fervently held cultural expectations for my marriage. They were to be a good wife and mother with no aspirations for an outside career apart from being a proficient homemaker.

These concepts were described and deliberated in Chapter 4. I drew upon a variety of experiences that made comparisons with my lack of cultural capital. I examined Bourdieu's (2010) three states of embodiment, objectified, and institutionalized against my cultural upbringing which corresponded with McNay's (2000) concept of disembodiment and disembeddedness. In addition to Chapter 4, I also exhibited data which tabled my thwarted developmental stages linked to Erik Eriksons' eight psychosocial stages of development (Knight, 2017). The table detailed my Arrested Development of Psychosocial and Maturation Milestones (p. 111) attesting testimony that cultural transference facilitated my destiny (Wake, 2018). My narrative *Searching for Self* reveals McNay's (2000) elucidation that cultural capital in terms of cultural practice is passed on through ancestry (Wake, 2018, p. 2910). I identify with the significance that Bourdieu's theory of habitus and power structures address, giving prominence to the cultural trajectories experienced to both my life and my parents' lives that we were born into. Bourdieu alluded to the impact of generational transference by advancing the view that you were likely to become what you were, even before you were born, because your life was predicted and determined (Heffernan, 2022).

Trauma

In Chapter 6, I discussed how my mother was the most significant member of my family. She was a migrant and a proxy bride who found that her new country was culturally inaccessible, which in turn perpetuated the prolongation of generational trauma (Krysinska & Lester, 2006). I legitimise her transgenerational transmission of trauma by sharing accounts of her life by what Danieli (1998) refers to as "research writing, oral histories and body language" (p. 2).

My thesis has identified significant issues relating to the transference of generational trauma by second generation offspring whose parents migrated to Australia post WWII. Much has been written on post-traumatic stress associated to differing forms of traumas, however there is little to no research that has been explored into the specific Southern Italian immigration experiences giving opportunities to identify the possibility of the existence of transgenerational trauma as causation (Phipps & Degges-White, 2014). It is with this purpose that my life as described within all my narratives within the Findings chapters, can attest as being a recipient of generational trauma. Crucial to new and important migrant research, it is essential to explore and determine if other second-generation daughters of migrants and proxy brides experienced the same thwarted identities due to the overshadow of the parents' immigration experiences. My experiences did have moments of uninterrupted conscious space when retreating to my own unique third space as a liminal being. Taking my position as a liminal being, provided me the freedom to experience a unique feeling of independence in a conscious state without leaving the home.

Becoming a Liminal Being

In this section I discuss how third space and liminality became a form of protection for me during moments of vexation within my world.

This thesis presents my understandings of events described through my narratives as products of the post WWII migration of my parents to Australia from Southern Italy. As discussed previously, my parents and other migrants experienced displacement, oppression and

acceptance from others as a consequence of commencing their new life in Australia. It is at this junction that my voice representing cultural hybrids such as myself, born in Australia and brought up as an Italian has to be acknowledged. The conformity of my determined and regimented life led me to acquiescence, subversion and to internalise small resistances, which in turn created what I consider my third space as a liminal cultural hybrid. The cultural weight imposed on me by community and religious conformity as described in my stories, also contributed to my disillusionment of my familial motives, thus it was essential for me to seek refuge as a liminal. The conscious and unconscious resistances that I lived through are reflected within my narratives as a voice reverberating the tensions I felt as a female, and one who battled, yet negotiated my embodied experiences and identity (McKenzie-Mohr et al., 2014). From undertaking this thesis I came to realise there was a different way of being. Generally this was just looking through the window of my mind, looking for the other, wanting the other but being trapped, negotiating in the liminal. An example within my narrative *No Man's Land* in Chapter 4, highlights my desperate attempt to fit in with my peers at high school by repurposing my orange crimplene pants into flares, stretching the bottoms with a coat hanger for three days. My cultural hybridity was temporal. I vehemently pursued my Australian identity during school hours and conformed to my Italian identity after school hours. All of my journal articles discuss moments of feeling insentient and operating mechanically in this world, losing myself as a liminal being to escape the chaos and lack of agency and identity.

Betwixt and Between

My narratives all have segments that examine how liminality and third space factored in my life as a child and teenager. Chapter 2 explores how my experiences with liminality were paralleled to the research put forward by Victor Turner. I describe my experiences of liminality against Turner's definitive concept of Temporal Dimensions within a comparative table demonstrating the mapping of my liminal stages. The belief espoused by Turner was that a

liminal phase could be achieved when a person, event or situation interfered to disrupt or control another person's life (Turner, 2018; Wels et al., 2011). This concept articulated by Turner achieved significant success with his research focussing on the phases of liminality. In his findings with Indigenous communities he stated, "neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial" (Turner, 1969, p. 95). This concept was argued further by Thomassen (2009) who declared that the relationship between liminal experiences is linked to structure and order and can be factored into only one type of experience of liminality.

My liminal experiences described in my narratives were linked to the designated structure and order of my life, by family, culture and patriarchy. I often took sanctuary and respite from the world by inhabiting a liminal space which Jackson (2009) refers to as habitual routines and acts of contingency, acknowledging that liminality was a complete experience. Gavey (2011) and Lewis (2008) advanced the view that the interlocking of culture and cultural conditions became the catalysts for a liminal experience. Liminality in short, was being in a state of in-between and ambiguity. It a gave me the opportunity to lose myself at any given time and within any space that I wished to inhabit. I achieved the ability to switch off and divorce myself of everything that was going on around me, what was being said, who was in my proximity, and my environment. The only way to sustain the moments when I could not disassociate from the pressures of cultural conformity, was by mastering my behaviour to fit in with the expectations of my cultural conventions. I repeated the same routinised interactions for what the situation required. As a liminal being, inhabiting my third space was an essential psychological lifeline to block out the world around me and dwell in my space that was safe.

Third Space

When discussing third space I refer to Homi Bhabba's (1994) theory that describes occupying a third space as, "the moment of transit where space and time cross to produce

complex figures of difference and identity" (p. 1). The term third space and liminality are fraught with ambiguities however they occupy the same unconscious liminal plane (Beech, 2011). This concept is addressed further by Bhabha (1993) as "that the unconscious speaks of the form of otherness, the tethered shadow of deferral and displacement" (p. 117). Affirming the connection between the two concepts, Moosavinia and Hosseini (2017) advocate "'Third Space' is inhabited by the liminal figure of the hybrid" (p. 336). This statement strikes a chord with me as I occupied my third space as a liminal hybrid after triggering events in what Van Gennep (1960) suggests as the liminal being engaging in a ritualistic process. On consideration, the description of a third space as the subjective cave where the occupant can create ideas and discover intuitive reserves within momentary stillness, aptly describes the correlation and conjunction of the third space and occupying a space as a liminal being (Ikas & Wagner, 2008). Third space advanced by Young (2008) does not mean that it is a solid space or a place you physically can go to, he suggests that it is "a place where people come unobserved and where they go without trace, the place which determines their lives … it is a non-place" (pp. 81-82). My non-place was real, it was in essence, an embodied bubble of tranquillity and empowerment.

The discussion of cultural hybridity and third space within Chapter 4 was in context to the concept of acculturation. This statement is in context to the experiences of my cultural hybrid identity and the challenges that I faced during many stages of my adolescence as a result of trying unsuccessfully to fit into both cultures. My third space enabled me to own my subjective experiences associated to agency and position and let go of the expectations of others (Berry, 2005; Rutherford, 1990). It is evident throughout my narratives that my parents were not able to occupy a third space or consider the notion of becoming a liminal being due to their strict cultural and religious upbringing. They were Southern Italians first and foremost and their identity within a multicultural society was always aligned to their culture and religious practice (Glenn, 2013), anything out of the norm would be considered going against their religious doctrine. Interestingly, Ikas and Wagner (2008) argue that Bhabha's concept of third space was

negotiated to bring a common identity "one that is new in its hybridity; it is thus neither the one nor the other" (p. 2). I am intrigued with Bhabba's (1994) view which is relevant to me and comes across strongly within all my narratives. He aptly uses the analogy to describe my experiences as "the stairwell as liminal space, in-between the designations of identity, becomes the process of symbolic interaction, the connective tissue that constructs the difference between upper and lower, black and white" (p. 5). My liminal stairwell used the open riser spaces between the steps to exist as the person I wished to be, buoyant with my approval of self.

The narratives in Chapter 7 provide substantiation to the moments of when cultural strictures were placed upon me. It was during that time that accessing my third space was the only way of emancipating myself from the imposed negation of self. The narrative *Changing Channels* describes the moments when my mother did not want to engage or hear conversations that made her uncomfortable. Her reaction was to immediately shut down any verbal utterance around her and went about her business. I ask myself, is this where I first learned to access my third space by watching my mother achieving this status but just refusing to connect? I in turn, was able to change the channel of my situation, consciously retreating to my third space under the illusion of liminality.

This strategic tactic was intentional until I reached the time which Van Gennep (1960) theorised as a rite of passage. He advanced the view that states liminality is experienced when the individual has undergone encounters of changing identities, experiencing before and after states, it is only when the after state has been reached that the rite of passage is completed. My experiences continued as a liminal being until the age of seventeen. I completed my rite of passage when I married at the age of seventeen.

Displaced

This section divulges the diasporic history of my parents to Australia. It also discusses why feelings of displacement were experienced by both them and me.

In each of the narratives presented in Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7, I understand myself to be the child that doesn't fit, or the young woman that doesn't fit. With hindsight, I carry a sense of alienation from what was imagined for me by others. The feelings of never enough, second best, no agency over my life became the swan songs of feeling displaced and deposed. I consider the historical events documented within this thesis and understand that they are the precursors that describe how my determined life was a causality of my parents' diaspora. The displacement of my sense of self, my identity and lack of agency are articulated within all of my articles and are attributed to cultural tradition, migration, hybridity, family, religious rituals and doctrine. The loss of autonomy over my life was a consequence of the loss of self-government that my parents experienced having to migrate to a foreign country. In Chapter 4, I spoke about how my inherited cultural hybridity was born from the carapace of culture carried by my parents on their diasporic journey to secure a better life in Australia. My narrative *Barriers and Borders* discusses the arduous beginning of embarking on a new life in a new country where government policies encouraged racism against Southern Italian migrants whilst promoting that life in the lucky country was abound with new opportunities. Historical literature reported that Southern Italian migrants were not welcomed into Australia as new migrants due to their inappropriate racial fitness and physical traits, being they were similar to that of indigenous tribes and were not seen as aesthetically pleasing as the fair skinned northern Italians (Baldassar & Pyke, 2014; Dewhirst, 2014; Cimino & Foschi, 2014; Jupp, 2002; Ricatti, 2018). As mentioned in Chapter 2, the intervention of the United States for Southern Italian migrants to enter Australia allowed my parents to enter the country with dampened prejudice (Agnew, 1997; Cresciani, 2003; Dandy et al., 2010; Kevin & Penman, 2001; McDonald & McDonald, 1969). Although nominally my parents entered the country with the declaration of no governmental prejudice, what they did encounter was pervasive local prejudice that was fervently embedded in the Anglo Australian culture of the time. My parents' diasporic journey had a myriad of complex challenges that impacted on themselves and their family.

Diasporic Impact

When considering the economic conditions for migrants that post WWII imposed specifically on Southern Italy, the push from the Italian government for their citizens to leave their homeland intersected with the lure of the pull from Australia to migrate and build a new life. What was unknown, was the realisation of how the White Australia Policy and the Australian assimilation policy were laying out the conditional rules for migrants, whilst actively putting in all measures to allay the fears for the Anglo Australian public who were fearful of this new invasion of peasant migrants (Damousi, 2013; Haebich, 2008; Macintyre, 2014; Tavan, 2005). I contemplate on how the cycle of rejection and feelings of displacement continued for my parents and other migrants encountering the same experiences. I speak specifically for the Southern Italian migrants who were induced to leave their country due to extreme poverty, and experiencing increasing prejudice from the northern compatriots. The obvious link made for Indigenous peoples and Southern Italians by the Australian government and Anglo Australian community, became the white flag to racially discriminate against these two cultures, which only drove the wedge of racism deeper (Dewhirst, 2014, Jupp, 2002; Ricatti, 2018).

Sense of dislocation

The reality that this racism held for Southern Italians was that the Australian government needed them but did not want them. Both parents often stated, that at various times in their lives, they felt that they were round pegs trying to fit into a square hole. An apt description of how my parents and many others learned to live as diasporic migrants is presented by Rozen (2008) "human memory and the way it evolves and constantly changes is but another example of the resourcefulness of the human spirit that enables people to survive coercion, humiliation, depression, war, loss and displacement" (p. 81). When describing the lived experiences by my migrant parents, Grillo (2003) argues that assumptions of cultural essentialism is relative and canvasses the notion about cultural anxiety as promoting opinions and judgements by migrants. I also refute these assumptions as being fixed or static or outdated ideas around ethnicity and race,

as I myself witnessed racism against my parents and experienced racism as a child and teenager, due to my physicality and colouring. It was no surprise to me why my parents balked at the idea of their children creating friendships with Anglo Australian children.

The apprehensive feelings for both parents regarding the rules and laws of assimilation commenced when they arrived in Australia by chain migration. The rhetoric that was exchanged by the many of the migrants only perpetuated fear and animosity for my parents. The experience for my father was visceral, commencing work as a monolingual immigrant exposing him to xenophobia and bigoted discrimination. Although chain migration was primarily to ease the transition into a foreign country with the companionship and connection to the old country, the disconnect and detachment continued for my parents. I describe in my narrative in Chapter 4, *Barriers and Border*s, the racist taunts which occurred both in the workplace and in the community. My mother, who arrived in Australia as his proxy bride, was not as resilient as my father. It was evident that the establishment and creation of family and *paesani* systems were critical factors for Italian migrants to begin their new lives among their familiar cultural and linguistically diverse community without fear or favour (Collins et al., 2009; Colpi, 1991; Marino, 2019c). Another means of keeping new migrants connected was through a significant community resource, the Italian newspaper *Il Globo*, this became a constant in our home and assisted to inform my family about the wider Italian Australian community, the political news from abroad and Australia, including religious events (Dewhirst & Scully, 2021; Iacovetta, 1992; Johansson & Battison, 2014; Rando, 2000; Ricatti 2018; Southcott & de Bruin, 2021). On reflection, the imperative for my parents was networking and speaking the same language within their community, being able to communicate with the old country where family remained, meeting traditional and religious customs, these were the essential attributes to building and maintaining a successful and happy Italian family life.

Historically post WWII, it was presumed that migrants who emigrated to Australia should forsake the country from where they were born and fit in to the Anglo Australian culture

and society (Welch, 2006). Assimilation policies that were in place post WWII, were initially designed and implemented to foster respect for all cultures. The government, by their own hand, created a policy that created a great divide between Anglo Australians and many European migrants. The fear of assimilation, on both sides of the fence, coalesced with their inability to acknowledge that societies were made up of multilingual and ethnic communities who contributed to a rich and diverse multicultural society (Welch, 2006). Damousi (2013) argues the consideration of trauma that migrants endured due to their experience of war and the economic aftermath was inconsequential to their fear of assimilation. The continuous negotiation of their cultural identity became a part of daily life for the new immigrants.

Many Italians coped with the intolerance of their nationality through the formation of Italian enclaves signified with the title of 'Little Italy', this provided the maintenance of cultural connections, gave value to ethnic identity and created a sense of belonging in a foreign, and at times racially intolerant country (Baubock & Faist, 2010; Gabaccia, 2004). It was not all doom and gloom with the spirit of new beginnings giving emergence to new and innovative resources that produced positive outlooks for the migrants. This new way of life that was created by these migrant pioneers seemed to be imperceptible by the government of the day. They were the powerful transmission of new ideas, inventions, and a familial way of life (Rozen, 2008). Even though the Italian culture would bring new language, epicureanism and other innovative gifts to society, this was not to be acknowledged by the xenophobic Anglo Australian community at large until many decades later. One barrier to a harmonious community that was irrefutable was one of language. Another language was not what Australia wanted; the English language was what was required for new migrants to be proficient in, and to use in public spaces. This was an impossible ask, especially when they had only achieved the basic or limited education in their own country, how were they to possess the language of another country until they arrived on their shores.

Culture and Language

Language being part of culture. It is a constant marker which I describe in all my narratives as the contributing factor for me to build liminal walls, oscillate between the ornamental gates and cyclone fences of my childhood and as the determinant for the future husband. Language was very important for my parents; it was the contributing factor why my parents picked my future husband. This was due to his excellent command of the Italian language even though he was not Italian. Language was another reason for my feeling of displacement which is described in my narratives of speaking the Italian language that I learned from my family, only to realise that I could only speak the Southern Italian dialect of Calabrese. This became an issue when employed as an Italian interpreter at the age of fifteen—and— a—half and was reprimanded by Italian customers who were mainly from the north of Italy, that they could not understand my language. Another reason for feeling like I didn't fit in. I felt that I did not fit into the culture I was born into due to the many cultural dimensions and hurdles that I continually had to cross.

A Virtuous Daughter

As the second daughter, I share my narratives (particularly in Chapter 5) to highlight my temporal experiences of that time. I was indoctrinated as an Italian Catholic daughter practising the conventions of the Roman Catholic church and Southern Italian culture and traditions (Pallotta-Charolli, 1989). Religion and following Italian tradition were very important to my parents because it gave meaning and value to their culture and practices, a pride of being Southern Italians (Andreoni, 2003; Baldassar & Pyke, 2014; Dewhirst, 2014). I voice freely within my narratives the power that culture and church had over my identity, virtue and agency as a young woman. I learned to take the subordinate position as a female under the hierarchical realm of family and church (Davis, 1973; Willson, 2009). As a virtuous daughter of a proxy bride I was under no illusion that my life would be determined and planned predominantly by my mother. My mother wanted her daughters to follow the same path of being compliant towards their arranged marriages, being chaste and following religious practice, as well as

possessing the attributes of maintaining successful marriages and being skilful homemakers (Baladassar, 1999; Davis, 1973; Furlan & Faggion, 2016; Iulianno, 1999; Lim & Putnam, 2010; Willson, 2009). This was all in aid to put me on show as the perfect Italian girl bride. My mother, my culture were all instrumental in designing my future life.

A Governed Life

It must be stated that my mother's migration to Australia became the catalyst for her challenging hybrid life including mine. The six-week ordeal of travelling by ship to Australia as a proxy bride during the post WWII era was significant in terms of her world view, or lack of world view, as she was a Southern Italian young, proxy bride following the matrimonial conventions of the culture, country and church (Simic, 2014). My narratives describe my upbringing as a cultural hybrid and how I coped living and witnessing the cultural imposition of patriarchal dominance over my mother's life, which in turn, she transferred on to me. Feelings of displacement, for both myself and my mother, is a continual theme that unfolds within the narratives. I was in receipt of inheritance and a link in the chain of descent (see particularly Chapter 7). When I consider my mother's life and the trauma of living as a young woman during WWII, having to marry a man that she did not know by proxy and travelling halfway round the world to start a new life in a new country, this was not her chosen destiny, it was patriarchal and cultural dominance that she adhered to and paid the price.

The Complexity of Intersectionality

This section reviews the characterisation of intersectionality and its piercing examples of conformity around the periphery of my life.

Intersectionality can be difficult to define as it encompasses many meanings in relation to social and cultural contexts (Knudsen, 2006). The multiple feminine subjectivities of intersectionality were advanced by Crenshaw (1991) as a central tenet of feminist thinking and a way to inform the oppression within intersections of race, gender, and class. When you consider

the relationships between gender, ethnicity, and culture which I have discussed within this chapter, my interpretation of the word intersection takes on an additional meaning. As demonstrated in the daggered star of Figure 8.3 *Mirroring Intersectionality* (p. 217) one-line slices through another line reflecting the complexity of intersectionality that points towards the diverse and dominated background of my life.

My design of Figure 8.3 *Mirroring Intersectionality* was to encapsulate a concept of power that can be linked to Foucault's (1980) notion of power and power relations in context to gender, societal and political structures and how this would impact on the individual's life and identity. The metaphor of intersecting blades of discrimination and oppression as reflections are the cracks in my mirrored life. These are as a result of inherited and generational transference of culture between my mother and me, we both lacked power as young women over our own lives.

Managing Complexity

It is without a doubt that my gender produced the first crack compelling the intersecting blades to identify that I was powerless to be what I wanted to become, the other, the Anglo Australian, the other side of my hybridity. The intersecting blades also symbolised piercing boundaries of a past history. I could argue that my gender was the reason for the visible and invisible oppression, however I view myself firstly as a person who experienced no agency and a lack of identity during my formative years. I also must mention at this juncture, that my thesis is not based on feminist theory, although intersectionality is embedded within much of the literature around feminist theory. My thesis is about my experiences as a cultural hybrid and I use intersectionality to describe my understandings, encounters and feelings. The complexity of intersectionality when designing Figure 8.3 *Mirroring Intersectionality* was by approaching each point of the intersections as the fundamental pivots that my lived experiences were hinged upon. The measure of complexity for me, was that all intersections pointed towards, and enacted multiple modes of power over my life all at the one time.

Chapter 9 Conclusion

> Subordinate people do not have the privilege of explicitness, the luxury of transparency, the presumptive norm of clear and direct communication, free and open debate on a level playing field that the privileged take for granted. (Conquergood, 2013, p. 34)

This thesis discusses the events of the past, but it is relevant to the present and future. As a cultural hybrid and daughter of Southern Italian migrants, I was compelled to undertake this thesis to commence the research journey of proxy brides and Italian migrants during post WWII. The historical accounts of transnational migration are insufficient in relation to proxy brides, what is needed are the authentic and significant narratives of the lived experiences from the proxy brides who took chances to marry as compliant women within a diverse marital convention. One example is my mother, a proxy bride who did not know my father until she docked in Australia, she only possessed a sepia photo of him and letters introducing himself. I have offered my narratives within Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7 to demonstrate how history dictated a complex destiny for both my family and me.

Two key concepts have informed my research, migration during post WWII and the complex social determinants of culture. I also argue that for me, and presumably for many others like me, the experience of Southern Italian proxy brides migrating to Australia permeated the lives of their second generation daughters of that diaspora. I explored and identified historical and current gaps in the field of post WWII migration to Australia by Southern Italian immigrants and specifically the migration of proxy brides. What comes to the fore within the data is the impact that cultural transference had on me as a cultural hybrid and a second-generation daughter of a proxy bride. Undertaking this study, I have identified a lack of research relating to the impact of cultural transference on the lives of such cultural hybrids. What I concede and fervently acknowledge, is the impact on women, of migration to Australia as proxy brides, that

was carried forward to succeeding generations of women. One example is that Southern Italian women were not included in the historical records that explored and examined how their lives were lived, what their roles were, and how these have impacted on their families and communities.

Background and Context

The challenge of undertaking my doctoral research was to explore and examine my lived experiences in context to my cultural hybridity. What I found was more than I imagined at the inception of my research. Employing the research methodology of autoethnography it became apparent that my gender and identity as a cultural hybrid underscored the tensions of polarisation within my life. I choose to be neither victim nor heroine, but seek to understand how I, the daughter of a Southern Italian proxy bride, transitioned into adulthood as a cultural hybrid. The narratives offered exposed my life as being circumscribed and constrained by unspoken cultural barriers, that were perpetuated by family, community, church, and society. I was the second daughter of migrant parents, education was not regarded as essential or a priority for my gender or station in my family. My parents expected only a basic level of formal education for their daughters, as they deemed it more relevant for me to learn how to be a successful mother and wife. My future life was determined – I was to be a respectable member of the Italian community—married with my sexuality contained within the bounds of marriage. Further, I was expected to procreate and obey my husband. My parents brought with them to Australia, cultural, religious, and generational mores from Southern Italy which they held to in their new land. My narratives detail the traditions, rituals, and customs and how they influenced conscious constraints to my autonomy. Additionally, my autoethnographies demonstrate the complexities and ambiguities of how my lived experiences, from childhood to adolescence as a cultural hybrid, were governed by dominant power relations in which I had no agency or autonomy over self.

Italian Diaspora to Australia

This thesis challenged me to research conventional ideas about post WWII Australian and Italian governments. As I researched further, I found that migrating to Australia was not that easy during this era with both Italian and Australian Governments entering into an agreement to accept Italians to migrate to Australia as a measure to ameliorate the economic struggles that both countries were experiencing. The degree of poverty in Italy was untenable because of WWII. The lack of population in Australia at that time deemed it necessary for it to summon nationalities from Europe to immigrate as a drastic measure to increase its population and pool of labour. As a consequence, the invitation to migrate opened the doors for many single Italian men to leave their country and work in Australia. This was not as romantic as might be perceived. Many new migrants were unprepared by the challenges of being unable to converse in the English language combined with a lack of understanding of the Australian culture. These became barriers for many new migrants like my parents.

Another challenge was the Australian Government's assimilation policy that shaped the lives of all post WWII migrants. The assimilation policy was introduced to alleviate the prejudicial judgements of the Anglo Australian community who alleged that their country was being invaded by impostors and aliens (Ang & Stratton, 1998; Carruthers, 2013; Damousi, 2013; Macintryre, 2014; Tavan, 2005). The new immigrants were ignorant of the underlying motive to coerce them into relinquishing their own private, cultural and countries' history and to accord with an archetypal society based on Anglo-Celtic racial and cultural origins (Damousi, 2013; Haebich, 2008; Macintryre, 2014). What was not contemplated was that little consideration was given to the added trauma that these migrants endured due to the complex experiences of living through pre and post WWII (Damousi, 2013). The prejudicial White Australia and assimilation policies did not simmer the racist behaviour towards migrants, the irony was that it only fuelled the escalation of new immigrants assisting to build Australia's post war reformation. This

became the catalyst for the construction of a progressive industrialised and mechanised nation (Masticelli, 2015). This in turn encouraged more marriages by proxy as an accepted and homogenous same religious union in Australia (Ricatti, 2018).

Proxy Marriage

Proxy marriage is discussed at length within this thesis with a particular emphasis on my parents' experience. My contextualising research identified that proxy marriage was developed and fostered by the growth in migration post WWII particularly among single Italian men. The official acceptance and sanction by state and church, was in accordance with governments and church in Australia and Italy as a measure to enterprise the migration of Italian women. This was an intervention to stabilise the assumed behaviour of Italian men and was intended to create moral, honourable, and decent communities (Baldassar, 2011; Iuliano, 1999; Ricatti, 2018; Vasta, 1994). There was also a larger issue of ethnic specific, gender stereotyping that was held by both a large proportion of the Australian public, and by Italian men, concerning Australian women. The longing for the traditional way of life in Italy and marrying someone from the same village or town who spoke the same dialect, perpetuated cultural customs and was the catalyst for many endogamous marriages (Iuliano, 1999; Scarparo, 2009; Simic, 2014). This was important, as marriage and motherhood for Italian women were considered an imperative that would lead to the creation of a successful family life (Iuliano, 1999).

Identified in the research was that most of the villages in Southern Italy welcomed and promoted parochial endogamy as a mediator for proxy marriages between Italy and Australia (Iuliano, 1999). The most notable aspect of marriage by proxy by Southern Italians was that it upheld the imperative of protecting the publicly perceived morality and virtue of the bride. This would mean that the bride could travel as a married, which would safeguard her honour (Scarparo, 2009). As discussed previously, my mother was a proxy bride, she was not motivated by the desire to emigrate to Australia or marry a man that she did not know. The generational

directives and customs of following the life her parents had determined for her were never up for discussion. My narratives discuss my perceptions of the impact on my mother of living a new life in Australia, rearing five children and how this, in turn, impacted on my life. Researching the history of migration post WWII, to Australia from Italy, and how my parents married by proxy to make a new life in Australia, revealed the complexities of living according to cultural traditions and assimilation in a new country. The impact of endogamous marriages for Italian proxy brides and other immigrant women encouraged a lack of assimilation in the host country, which in turn created cordons and enclaves of Italian urbanity. The resistance to assimilate, in particular by my mother, was due to the complexities and perplexity of autonomy that she felt by the power relations toward her culture, coalesced by a prejudicial Australian society and government (Baldassar, 2011; Iuliano, 1999; Ricatti, 2018; Vasta, 1994). The result of the resisted assimilation with the Anglo Australian culture is discussed at length within this thesis as predominantly contributing to the cultural and generational transference within the exclusive Italian ethnic boundaries of my family.

Generational Impact

The generational transference of culture was a common denominator in my life from childhood until adolescence. As an adult, I now understand the complex and multi-faceted structure of my Southern Italian family. Working through the underlying meanings within my narratives, that emphasis on the expectations to culturally conform and function in my role as the second daughter, identified my gender was always the common denominator. The fact that I was female impacted on me on a social and personal level which in turn thwarted my identity and agency from childhood. Gender was irrelevant for my mother as she saw herself only in the roles of a mother, wife, and daughter. Those roles were important to her in order to pass on the traditions, culture and religious rituals that she had received from her mother. What history and my research reveal, are that the generational impact on my life, was as a direct consequence of

how my mother believed was the right way for me to live my life even though I was a cultural hybrid traversing across two cultures. This research was driven by the fact that my mother was a proxy bride, and the process of migrating to Australia as a dependent of my father had extenuating and residual circumstances for both me and my mother.

Underestimated Consequences of Migration

What is underestimated is the significance of the Australian White Australia policy and Assimilation policy and the impact it had on migrants, particularly my family. The assimilation policy was created with the sole purpose of ensuring that all citizens left their culture, traditions, and ways of life in the past and assume a new life living the Australian way (Iuliano, 2010). The assimilation policy was incongruent to the reality that the majority of migrants did not speak the English language. This caused barriers of communication in the workplace and in society which in turn only propagated racism (Baldassar & Pyke, 2014; Ricatti, 2018). The fear and lack of trust that migrants such as my family experienced, with the Australian public, only perpetuated and facilitated them to socialise with their families and friends from the towns where they came from in Italy. As a consequence, this became a way of living and bringing up children, that was why my life was determined within the strict parameters of the Southern Italian culture and traditions of family and church.

The Limitations

The limitations that I have experienced writing this thesis were predominantly that I could not speak to my parents about their lives as migrants who chose to settle in Australia. They both passed away many years ago and I have my memory and artifacts that have brought my lived experiences, and their stories to life. My thesis brings to the fore my life from childhood to adolescence and how that was determined and presided over predominantly by my mother. Culture, traditions, religion, and community were the contributors that instructed and regulated how my mother would write and direct the script of my life. The impacts on my social and

psychological milestones were principally due to my gender and my inherited culture. The development of my own identity was not acknowledged by my family as a rite of passage, it was obstructed from developing due to a manifold of reasons. The identified impediments to accessing my own identity on my terms, agency on my terms and the freedom to explore and live a life that included my Australianness, were expressively detailed within my narratives, and historicised chronologically up until the age of seventeen.

Systems of Discrimination and Disadvantage

When I reflect and remember the systems of discrimination and disadvantage in my childhood, it confirms how I did not have the opportunities to be educated in my later teenage years, prohibiting me from what I wanted to be. My sense of agency did not exist and could not exist as I feared retribution from family and community. When I speak about systems, these are my immediate family, the Catholic church and school that I attended, and the extended Italian family and community. The personal disadvantages were that I experienced shame for who I was, what I looked like and that I was restricted from developing any friendships outside the home. I experienced stigma from my teacher at primary school due to my nationality (even though I was born in Australia) which in turn manifested in developing my low self-esteem and anxiety. What I was not aware of during my adolescence was that there were greater forces at play. I speak specifically about my parents, who did not wish to assimilate with Australians, and did not wish for their children to assimilate either. Their embedded fear of losing their cultural identity as a consequence of the White Australia and Assimilation policy dominated their views and actions of bringing up their children according to the Italian culture and the Catholic church. My parents' conviction was also based on the fear that their daughters would be influenced to think and act like Anglo Australian girls which did not align to their blinkered and biased reasoning (Gabaccia, 1984, 2000, 2004, 2013).

Gender

My gender was an issue as soon as I was old enough to understand that family and society dictated that boys could do most things and girls could only do some things. I experienced the rejection of not being allowed to play football at school because it was a boy's game, to add insult to injury my parents did not want me playing any sport as they perceived it as not being feminine. My life as a young girl was prohibited to unfold and experience the psychosocial milestones due to my Southern Italian culture and gender. Maturation depended on cultural rituals and traditions which were embedded in the tenets of my life plan, one important rule was I would marry in my adolescence to ensure that my virtue was intact. To marry, I would have to follow specific family practices from a very young age. In the following short story, I narrate how as a young woman I experienced the dichotomy of constantly wearing a metaphorical mask.

My appearance and how I presented myself was of upmost importance for my mother. My mother always wished for herself and her daughters to look like northern Italians, a fairer look, a more polished look than that of a Southern Italian. I was introduced to wearing makeup from the age of thirteen and from that time on I was to apply and wear makeup at all times in public. This was in order to make me appear more mature, more fashionable, more husband worthy. As a young girl I enjoyed the ritual of applying makeup. I would first smear the creamy foundation base on my clean skin. It was always two shades lighter than my own skin colour which I loved, it appeared as a mask and it gave me anonymity. My mother on the other hand had other reasons, she deliberately chose the lighter foundation to ensure that I looked fairer. The second step of the routine was to draw a dark line under each eye as a way to enhance the darkness of my pupils and ensure that my eyes looked larger. Blush was then applied on the cheeks by rubbing lipstick on my fingers and then onto my cheeks. Sometimes I would put too much on with the mirror reflecting a girl that looked more like a made up clown. This look pleased my mother as she interpreted it as looking healthy. Lastly, I would apply the lipstick, the same one that was used as a blusher. Pale face check, eyeliner check, blush check and lipstick check. I was ready to

be seen in public. My mother would always quality control my finished look and without fail demand that I return to the bathroom and put more blush on. Not enough, you need more colour! Returning with a similar look of a character in Gilbert and Sullivan's Mikado, I received her approval and was free to be unleashed in public. My mother's mantra for her insistence of being made up was 'you are nothing without your beauty'. This was in complete contradiction to her beauty regime that I had to endure at home away from public scrutiny. Every morning and evening my mother would submerge a course face cloth in the bathroom sink with handmade soap. The soap was made in our backyard in a forty four gallon drum. My mother and grandmother would mix three ingredients, animal fat, caustic potash and water to make enough soap to last a year. The smell of the soap was like meat that was rancid, making me feel nauseated with occasional bouts of vomiting. I hated this cleansing ritual; my mother would state that it was necessary for girls and deemed it essential for maintaining good skin. Her purification ritual consisted of scrubbing my face like she was handwashing a garment that had a stubborn stain on it. The only moments of respite from this torturous routine were the intermittent seconds of rinsing off the face cloth. My face felt as if it was stung by a million bees whilst she continued to rub it furiously in all directions. I would yell out in pain for her to stop but her standard response was, look you have red cheeks now, your face looks healthy. This was the standard look for the home. My metaphysical mask was literally and figuratively the personas who I had to become when in public and at home.

This narrative highlights the dichotomy of the two persons I was expected to embody from the age of thirteen years old. In public I wore the mask of a girl who was made up, looked older and performed to always demonstrate a confident attitude. This was the expectation from my parents, in particular my mother. The symbolism for them was that they could show off their beautiful daughters in public as an advertisement for a prospective husband. At home my life was to be subservient to my family, culture, and religion. My body cowered and became submissive to my parent's expectations and demands. This way of life was how my mother's

cultural and societal world view was centred. The female gender, her daughters, had limited prospects in their life in her estimation, she felt responsible for giving them what she thought the best life possible. My mother's life as a thirteen-year-old and teenager was completely the opposite of how I experienced life at that age. I believe the new life she was thrust in as a proxy bride in Australia, community, culture, and religion was responsible for the manner she chose to bring up her daughters. I was her proxy. This was my parents' new life in Australia and their culture would be passed on at all costs.

Generational Trauma

The concept of transgenerational cultural transmission was a linear progression of expectations for me to continue cultural practices and traditions the same way as my parents did. My cultural, ethnic, and religious identity was a continuous contest defying the perspectives and interpretive lenses of the power systems in my life. Their ways of thinking and behaving directly heightened my experience of turmoil through transgenerational cultural transmission. The promotion of attaining a good education was not a priority for my gender and this too was the transmission of a cultural standpoint. Education was one cultural transmission that did not factor into my life.

Education for females in Southern Italy was restricted to only equip girls with the basic numeracy and literacy skills. My mother attended primary school, completing the basic requirements of reading and writing, with no prospect of being educated further. Educating daughters from a peasant family was not a priority in Southern Italy, learning skills that women traditionally were responsible for in the home was an expectation for every young woman to be proficient in. Additionally, the agricultural villages relied on the women to assist in the fields, this was an essential duty that daughters and wives were expected to carry out. There was no significance in educating females, what was significant in the Southern Italian tradition and culture was young women were to be regarded as competent and respectable members of their

community, with a clear expectation to marry and produce children. Morality, virtue, and obedience were all attributes that a woman was expected to maintain before and after marriage. This cultural expectation was also carried to Australia by my mother, who in turn invoked these principles on to her daughters.

The issue that I have with the transgenerational cultural transmission that was passed on to me, was that my family and the larger Italian community including church and society, were the ones selecting and implementing cultural ideology, dogma, and societal beliefs for transmission. It is not an assumption to state that my parents considered that their own perceptions of how culture was the only orientation in their course of parenting, they also dictated how their children would conform to the coordinates they had aligned for them. Further to this statement and what I consider more importunately, is that my parents experienced trauma pre-WWII, during WWII, and post WWII. Both my parents spoke about their life during war time and how their families believed it was the end of the world as they knew it. The hardships they experienced as young adolescents often came up in conversations at the dinner table. My mother would reminisce about the times of extreme cold she felt when she would have to go out during heavy snow laden winter days to fetch tree branches and other wood for heating, as coal was too expensive to purchase. Food was also scarce during the post war period, and it was not uncommon for my mother and her siblings to go without food for days, until their parents could find charitable people in their village who would exchange food for domestic services such as washing and cleaning. They carried this trauma from their homeland to Australia as new settlers in a foreign country. This added to the trauma and issues of trying to assimilate into a new country that had a White Australia policy and considered Southern Italian migrants the same as indigenous people of Australia. My mother, being a proxy bride, carried trauma all her life, and my narratives demonstrate how she tried to overcome it by creating and designing my life to fit what she considered culturally appropriate, I now realise I was her proxy.

My Philosophical Take on the Adolescent Me

To challenge and understand why my life during adolescence needed a voice by undertaking this thesis, I dared myself to read and comprehend the basic ideas of life that Martin Heidegger (1962) advocated in his written work *Being and Time*. I became familiar with the word he constantly used, *Dasein* meaning a human being, a term that has many interpretations, however I believe for Heidegger the interpretation was, 'being there' (Heidegger, 1962). My understanding of his text (although it was difficult at times to comprehend fully) was that as human beings we are not unique; we belong to the world around us. My interpretation of this ideology is that the world is where you take your position as a human being and make choices for the betterment of your life during your time before you die. I certainly knew the basic idea of the temporal existence of humans on this earth, that is we are born and at some stage during our lifetime we die. It is this concept of Heidegger's being and time that I feel resonates with me, and that is to live a life as an authentic being. As a teenager I would not have been able to understand that concept, what I believed, I am in this world, but not of this world. This was a simple deduction during the many times of experiencing no agency over my life and struggling with a thwarted identity. When I say that I am not of this world, I speak specifically of times when I inhabited my world as a liminal being, occupying a third space as a consequence of the familial and cultural disruptions over my life. As an adolescent this was where I could be my authentic self. I now bring this authenticity to my life as an adult by declaring that even though my life was a determined one, I can now affect change by conducting further research in this field for others who have had similar lived experiences and may wish to be included in Australian history.

The Implications

This study distinguishes how my Southern Italian culture and how my hybrid experiences were unique in terms of the family I was born in. It is without a doubt that the migration of my parents to Australia post WWII had a major bearing on my life from childhood to adolescence.

The implications for others are that firstly this work is pioneering as there are so few studies in the field. There are implications for gender, in particular gender and intersections relating to hybridity, culture, and ethnicity. To pursue this further would require the undertaking of another thesis, it is beyond the scope of this current inquiry. The implications to influence research and hopefully policy and practice from this thesis are as follows:

- The recognition for a cultural hybrid in relation to their identity negotiation during childhood and adolescence, due to the restrictions of culture, church, and society.
- Understanding how migration and cultural diaspora is not a fixed concept, it is a continuous cultural process that is transmitted onto future generations.
- How the lives of second-generation Southern Italian cultural hybrids need to be considered in light of how identities are constructed as both Italians and Australians.
- Why the daughters of proxy brides need a voice in history, their stories will inform Australian history of their life and cultural and educational trajectory as hybrids.

Recommendations for future research

My thesis has presented my contributions to new knowledge, the limitations that I believe have prevented me from further research in this field of study, and the implications for others who have had similar experiences. I believe that there is much work to be done as a researcher to update the history of post WWII migration of proxy brides from Southern Italy and other parts of Italy. Research is also recommended for the many women who have migrated to Australia and continue to do so, whether it is by choice or by chance. It is by looking forward that I recommend these suggestions for my future research in:

- The education trajectory for second generation daughters of Southern Italian migrants who emigrated post WWII
- Impact of post WWII migration of Southern Italian proxy brides to Australia
- Further research is required for all proxy brides who are just one long line of women being dragged to this country under the notion of getting married and populating the country.
- Impact of generational trauma on second generation daughters of Southern Italian migrants who are cultural hybrids
- Longitudinal studies (both qualitative and quantitative) of women who are daughters of migrants, refugees or asylum seekers and their educational trajectory based on their gender in Australia.
- Longitudinal studies (both qualitative and quantitative) of generational trauma for women who are daughter of migrants, refugees or asylum seekers

Historians of migratory phenomena have an important role to play in the historical reality of transnational migration post WWII from Italy to Australia. My parents' history is important, my mother's experience as a proxy bride is important, now touched upon by me, but it is not sufficient. There is more to historicise, there are many migrants who crossed the world to make a new life in Australia, their narratives and lived experiences of living in Australia are important. The good, the bad and the ugly, it all needs to be told. History can be subjective, however the past has a place in a country's collective memory. What I mean by this, is that stories and the experiences of migrants, how they adapted and built their communities, need to be recorded within histories repository of memories (Ricatti, 2018).

My Stories, My Oral Culture

It is with pride that I tell my stories as an adult who wants to inform history of how my life was constructed and deconstructed from childhood to adolescence. The accounts of events

were important to share to impart context, however my individual culture is uniquely mine. I concede that it consists of two cultural identities, Italian and the other being Australian. It is a culture that has embedded cultural programming from both ethnicities as a consequence of ancestry and birthplace. What I am saying, is that I, as an individual, developed my own culture through my narratives, having the courage to share what oppressed me and what gave me joy. My culture endowed my identity as a liminal being, and now gifts me with bringing this research to the fore for other women who wish to tell their stories through their own oral culture.

I was empowered to reveal my oral culture through the research method of autoethnography. Autoethnography made me cognisant of how my research was experiential, I lived it, I researched it, I wrote it. As an autoethnographer, I recounted my experiences as the main subject and in turn, allowed self-reflection, I negotiated the stories that history illustrated. The negotiation was to leave many narratives out and include data that were deemed significant for this thesis. This thesis also questions what it might mean to examine firsthand, the research findings for a cohort of women whose voices and narratives are an opportunity to offer contemporary history significant knowledge that has never seen the light of day.

A Formulaic Identity

My research included distinguished theorists who guided me to understand the complexities of cultures, and that in order to communicate adeptly my lived experiences, I was reminded we must remember the importance of our own unique identity and its contribution to society. What is integral to my thesis is that I addressed identity-based issues —whether it is "within culture or across cultures" (Ting-Toomey & Dorjee, 2019, p. 1). I focus on the migration experience that my parents undertook to live in Australia, which transpired as an intercultural journey that challenged their identities, their ethnicity, and their children's cultural hybridity. What served as a critical factor was the initial lack of knowledge and language fluency of their new host country, which in turn hindered the assimilation process, aiding elevated acculturative

stress (Fassaert et al., 2009). As I contemplate the fact that my parents' culture was established from antiquity, I feel compassion for their struggles to assimilate in a foreign country that had no cultural connection or resemblance to Italy. Their cultural identity became their safety net which they held on to tightly. They enveloped their children within their cultural way of life to ensure that they never forget their cultural ancestry.

As their daughter, I have learned to make course corrections required in the journey of my life identifying as a cultural hybrid. My research provides insights into my identity negotiation, both personal and social, knowing that resistance or attempting to change my circumstances would be impossible. Given the ubiquitous nature of my upbringing, largely drawn from the composition of my gender, I offer explanatory findings in Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7. Identity negotiation is argued by Ting-Toomey and Dorjee (2019) who espouse that individuals are "socialized day in and day out in proximal space from birth to adolescence or adulthood within a value-laden cultural community" (p. 33). They also champion the belief that during the time of intense cultural engagement (meaning the daily life of the family), the immersive pull by all the cultural and social practices becomes a way of life that is entrenched into the psyche of the family members (Ting-Toomey & Dorjee, 2019). As discussed previously, the case of my mother commencing her married life as a proxy bride was a direct consequence of the value-laden cultural and religious family she belonged to. Her identity was culturally bound to her church and her family and the wider Southern Italian community. Gender for my mother was the link connecting her to being a skilful traditional homemaker and a proficient mother. This was reinforced and supported by the cultural structures that scaffolded her family unit. My gender identity from early childhood to adolescence was defined by the existing cultural systems. I learned to behave according to these systems and perform to the expectations of my family and community. I adhered to the rules and doctrines imposed by my family and did not express my thoughts or opinions because I was a female, I stayed within the boundaries of my gender.

Stages and Intersections

My life told through my narratives reflected upon my self-perception according to the restrictions aligned to my gender. The stories reveal my chartered life, an example being the comparison of my psychosocial milestones against Erik Erikson's 5th Stage, Identity versus Role Confusion (Dunkel & Harbke, 2017) in Table 4.1 Arrested Development of Psychosocial and Maturation Milestones of Rose Wake. My self-representation of childhood through to adolescence took into consideration Erikson's emphasis on the importance of social and cultural influences in a child's life. I used this theory as a yardstick to provide me with a contrast to my psychosocial developmental milestones during that passage of time.

My interest in Erikson's proclamations was due to his continuing influence in this field and answering my burning questions in relation to adolescent development (Haggbloom et al., 2002). This was crucial to my understanding of how I coped with not having a normative childhood in comparison to my peers of that age. One example being, as a twelve-year-old I wanted to explore and achieve my own identity through experiencing social happenings, however any attempts to do so was thwarted by familial, cultural and religious systems of belief reminding me how I was limited by gender codes. Another reminder by Erikson that social experiences shape and develop one's identity commencing from childhood until adulthood (Catalano, 2022).

The lack of psychosocial identity and identity negotiation with my mother was prominent when creating Figure 8.4 *Mirroring Intersectionality.* It was not until after my design phase of slicing the memories of my lived experiences according to my cultural hybridity that I realised it befitted a symbol of severance. A severance of what could have been, but never actualised for both me and my mother. The metaphor of blades within a cracked mirror was an authentic way to demonstrate the feelings of fragility and frustration at a life that was lived with deep-seated inequity due to my gender. The inequity was not just for me but also for my mother and all the women in my family. I acknowledge that my mother and I were not the only women who were denied a life of equality. Inequality that preceded the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries

was prevalent in denying women of every racial, ethnic, and social class any opportunity to be educated or to live a life according to her terms (Lorber, 2010). Overall, it seems that many women did not, and still do not enjoy the basic human right of equality as their male counterparts in many societies and in many families.

In conclusion my thesis argues that the daughters such as those of Southern Italian proxy brides are in receipt of research due the impact of their lived experiences as female cultural hybrids. There is little to no research on this cohort of women who were directly impacted by the migration and cultural practices of their proxy wed parents to Australia. I base this claim because of my stories, my lived experiences as the daughter of a proxy bride who shaped my childhood and adolescence according to Southern Italian cultural codes, the Catholic church's doctrines, and societal determinants that seem unreflected in research and only just present in popular media and conversation. My research question asks, *How did my experience as the daughter of a migrant Southern Italian proxy bride shape my childhood and adolescence?* My narratives depict many instances of how my mother's, and my life, were impacted by the expectations of associated power systems and fear. Gender was identified as the antecedent for the transmission of generational culture and practices. My mother experienced inequity due to her gender and she passed this on to me. In a sense her proxy life became my proxy life. This thesis has argued that my ethnic identity was shaped by my Southern Italian heritage which was built around my family's attitudes towards marriage, culture, religion, and community.

Figure 8.2 demonstrates how I developed a framework to identify thematic outcomes from my four autoethnographies in chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7. The three key themes were culture, identity, and intersectionality. Identifying these significant themes highlighted by the narratives, it became obvious to me how my life was metaphorically like an uphill railroad track. I was structurally supported by the steel rails on the crest of a mountain, my family. The wooden railway sleepers conveyed my conformity and toleration for a life which carried a train of continuous confusion and disruption, it reverberated in my head like the friction between the

steel wheel and the steel rail. Culture, identity, and intersectionality were the multiple tracks that crossed over my track. They forged out through the centre of my track enabling me to switch to whatever rail track I was to intersect and journey during my determined life.

I have argued the need for further research for the daughters of Southern Italian proxy brides who are now in their elder years. It is an imperative for Australian history to research their stories, to understand the impact of assimilation or lack of assimilation, the targeted racism towards their Southern Italian mothers and them. Consideration must be given to the generational trauma that may have been experienced as a consequence of migration to Australia. These stories need to be told, voices need to be heard, this and only this will happen when the history of Southern Italian proxy brides and their daughters can take their lawful place as contributors of the post WWII cultural and migration history.

Appendices

Appendix A

Ethics Approval

Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee

Approval Certificate

This is to certify that the project below was considered by the Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee. The Committee was satisfied that the proposal meets the requirements of the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* and has granted approval.

Project ID:	14146
Project Title:	Generations in an Australian Italian family
Chief Investigator:	Assoc Professor Jane Southcott
Approval Date:	16/07/2018
Expiry Date:	16/07/2023

Terms of approval - failure to comply with the terms below is in breach of your approval and the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*.

1. The Chief Investigator is responsible for ensuring that permission letters are obtained, if relevant, before any data collection can occur at the specified organisation.
2. Approval is only valid whilst you hold a position at Monash University.
3. It is responsibility of the Chief Investigator to ensure that all investigators are aware of the terms of approval and to ensure the project is conducted as approved by MUHREC.
4. You should notify MUHREC immediately of any serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants or unforeseen events affecting the ethical acceptability of the project.
5. The Explanatory Statement must be on Monash letterhead and the Monash University complaints clause must include your project number.
6. Amendments to approved projects including changes to personnel must not commence without written approval from MHUREC.
7. Annual Report - continued approval of this project is dependent on the submission of an Annual Report.
8. Final Report - should be provided at the conclusion of the project. MUHREC should be notified if the project is discontinued before the expected completion date.
9. Monitoring - project may be subject to an audit or any other form of monitoring by MUHREC at any time.
10. Retention and storage of data - The Chief Investigator is responsible for the storage and retention of the original data pertaining to the project for a minimum period of five years.

Kind Regards,

Professor Nip Thomson

Chair, MUHREC

CC: Mrs Rose Wake

List of approved documents:

Document Type	File Name	Date	Version
Explanatory Statement	RW Explan	17/06/2018	1
Consent Form	LENA PASQUA CONSENT FORM	17/06/2018	1
Consent Form	TERESA SCHIPANO CONSENT FORM	17/06/2018	1

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