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

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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

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

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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 enables 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 is that post war migration to Australia 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-Orozco, 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 & Boltanski, 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 Vygotsky’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; Fler, 2006). Concurring with this theory, Fler (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 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. 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 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 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 1 below, I 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 brought 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 Fler (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 1 Arrested Development of Psychosocial and Maturation Milestones of Rose Wake

Erikson's 5 th Stage Identity vs Role Confusion	Expected Achievement	Disruption <i>Attempted & Thwarted</i>	Actual Achievement <i>Reality</i>
Search/exploration for identity and sense of self as a 12-year-old	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> self -love/self esteem creativity – music 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<p>Achieved accepting sense of self at the age of 30</p> <p>Pursued singing lessons and a music career at the age of 32</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create and maintain friendships • belonging as Australian (hybrid identity) • Sexuality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unable to have friends from school I 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 • No sex education by parents or school – sex was forbidden to be spoken about in the home 	<p>Ability to form friendships from the age of 25</p> <p>Liberated to speak both languages without fear or feeling intimidated at the age of 35</p> <p>Sexual experience commenced when married at 17 years of age</p>
Contemplating future in terms of carer, relationships and family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independence/ Adulthood, Career 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<p>Adulthood not realised, thrust into role as wife at 17 years of age</p>
Contemplating belonging in society and social roles	<p>Building social networks and place in society</p> <p>Exploration of identity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<p>Age 35 years the development of being socially interactive with community groups</p> <p>Age 35 onwards awareness of identity as a</p>

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 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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