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Nostalgia for Being Otherwise*

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THE SHIP GOES BOTH WAYS: CROSS-CULTURAL
WRITING BY JOY DAMOUSI, ANTIGONE KEFALA,
ELENI NICKAS AND BEVERLEY FARMER

I wrote in the key of loss
Beverley Farmer

INTRODUCTION

The focus of this paper is writerly and academic women primarily from the Greek/Australian Diaspora, who relate experiences of love, loss, grief and ‘outside belonging’ in their academic and writerly work. The diasporic/transnational experiences of Greek migrant women, provides fertile writing ground for people making the ‘new world’ of Australia home. This Australia, is a land already disturbed and haunted by a hostile tale of settlement, where its indigenous culture remains insufficiently valued and understood, let alone the habits and practices, grief’s and longings of migrants and refugees. In contrast to Pierre Bourdieu’s fixed and stable notion of habitus, field and agency, Cultural theorist Elspeth Probyn talks about an ‘outside belonging’ felt by people who move between social, cultural, and geographic worlds. Australia is a land filled, it seems, with people located from, ‘outside belonging’, reconsidered here through writerly transnational exchange between Greece and Australia. With specific diegetic intention, this paper charts the journeys of these writers through the metaphor of a ship that goes both ways. Helen Nickas’ anthology *Mother’s from the Edge* (2006) narrates, through allegory, humour and grief, the experiences of Greek migrant women who have travelled to the ‘new world’ of Australia. Her more recent autobiography *Athina and her Daughters: a memoir of two worlds* (2009), unpacks this territory with intimate and historical detail. Beverley Farmer travels in the opposite direction to the new ‘old world’ of Greece. Her early writing as with Charmian Clift who precedes her, is doused in the harrowing, peppered with wit and metaphor, loss

and longing, as she culturally navigates a foreign land. Such writing produces a textual and cultural richness that I argue could be better represented and dispersed in contemporary Australian literary (and cultural) studies.

THE SHIP GOES SOUTH

In December 2006, at *The Minorities and Minority Discourses Conference of the Modern Greek Studies Association*, Professor Joy Damousi launched the anthology *Mothers from the Edge*, edited by Helen Nickas. In her launch speech Damousi said,

It is a cliché but it is true that Greek mothers carry the culture of a community: they continue the rituals of commemorations; they maintain contact with relatives and recognise and celebrate what it in fact means to be Greek. The thread of migration adds a unique layer to [such] narratives. (14 December 2006)

Old ways and new worlds coalesce in the shifting architecture of the migrant body and the memories and myths that inform its becoming. Greek women's lives have been changed by Australia, through those living here and those left behind. Nickas' collection of mother daughter diasporic experiences is haunted by the myth of Demeter and Persephone as it narrates the grief of many Greek mothers who have lost their daughters not to Hades but to the new world Australia. Bones are knitted into the words on the page, sentences are punctuated by the flesh of memory, pregnant pauses hang in the ellipses, that ever-present liminal space between words and cultures, mothers and daughters, old worlds and new ones. Such a collection is a priceless literary gem of diasporic women's writing, and the work that such writing can do and is a part of Nickas' larger project on *Writing the Greek Diaspora*, which contains several volumes. This paper is an appreciation of those contributions as well as the literature of Beverley Farmer who travelled in the opposite direction to the new 'old world' of Greece with husband Chris Talihmanidis in the late 1960s. The ship does indeed go both ways and the legacy of the writing that in current terms would be called transnational deserves, I think, a bigger chunk of the Australian literary pie.

The Chandris¹ shipping line began sailing between Athens and Sydney in the late 1950's, carrying wanderers one way and another, such as Talihmanidis. Other ocean liners were also moving people between worlds. Damousi's father arrived in

1956 on the Greek ship Kirinian, and her mother in 1957 on the Italian Orkiania. Damousi was born in Melbourne in 1961 and grew up as a second generation Greek Australian caught between two cultures. In pursuing academic life, Damousi has become an Australian historian. But what is interesting about her work is that much of it² is involved in mapping grief's and longings of post war Australian women. Did she inherit this concern about grief and loss from her migrant parents, unconsciously inscribed through what French Ethnographer Pierre Bourdieu calls the dispositions of the habitus, that is, those often-unconscious habits, practices and experiences of being that become second nature? Is a pre-occupation with grief and longing second nature for migrants, passed on through the generations? Damousi dedicates her book *Living with the Aftermath* (2001), to her father George, 'whose life experiences inspired [her] to explore the themes of family, identity, grief and courage' (viii). Preoccupation or not, Damousi suggests, 'Grief and loss have a history, defined by circumstances and time and place' (2001:196) and advocates a mapping of this territory. Damousi's work in this field also speaks to the nostalgia and losses of the women represented in *Mothers From the Edge* and the broader diasporic series produced by Nickas. New worlds are not always hospitable. As Damousi (14 December 2006) says in her launch speech, 'the Australia represented in these stories is not the sunny, warm laid back culture all the clichés talk about. The conditions are harsh and the people are hostile, as narrated by Chrisoula Simos who envied her Australian friends for not being 'dagos or wogs' (2006:195). Australian university students might have read the Iliad, or been introduced to Plato, and Aristotle but such philosophical inheritance was not readily realised by the white Australia of the Cold War that now had neighbours with olive skin who had learnt Homer by heart in primary school in the 'old country'. The stories in *Mothers From the Edge* are replete with loss and estrangement and cultural misunderstanding, as well as humour and astute intellectual analysis of second generation Greek Australian women trying to reconcile their modern Australian lives within a traditional Greek cultural framework.³ Some of the writers in the anthology witness the departure of older siblings and the effect the space of their beings has on those who remain; the haunting presence of absence. As Helen Nickas' narrative tells:

One night my mother got back on the last bus from Athens ... she went straight to her room. My father buried himself in the paper, or a book, as always. That's how he took refuge from difficult situations. After a few minutes, I could hear sobs. I

went in and saw her sitting on the bed, her body moving up and down, in desperation, hitting her forehead with the palm of her hand ... And after two years, I left, too. Just like that ... When did I really start to feel her pain ... When I too became a mother. (2006:249)

Most of the Greek migration to Australia occurred after WWII via ship. It was a very real possibility for mothers and grandmothers who remained, to believe they would never see their daughters again. Martha Mylona fictionally narrates the sight of a left behind grandmother,

There was Yiayia, standing pale, alone in front of the gate ... everything she had in life was on that bus, leaving her. Everything she had struggled for as a widow, all the hardship and pain, had come to this. (2006:191)

Who could know that rapid developments in airship technology a decade or so later would make it possible for some families to be reunited in the new world and for daughters to return home to Greece with Australian born progeny. Some writers speak of happy returns and others still, despite advances in travel technology, talk of arriving a day too late for embodied goodbyes with dying mothers, or not getting there at all.

The phone rang just after midnight. I ... [have] just given my paper at the conference about diaspora and memory ... In a few days I will be flying to Greece to spend two weeks with my sick mother. 'Eleni, is it you? ... I'm sorry it's your mother. She passed away earlier today' ... Now it was I who had an overwhelming desire to stroke my mother's forehead. It's my turn to do it, but I will not make it. (Nickas 2006:250-251)

LONGING AND THE 'ACTIVE PRESENCE OF THE PAST'

I'd like to return to Bourdieu for a moment, who speaks about a genetic structuralism; the less noticed incorporation of embodied and cognitive knowledge specific to a particular field, for instance Greek culture. Bourdieu applies the word habitus to such inherited attributes, knowledges, dispositions, and ways of being in the world. He relates the habitus of individual agents (people) to the 'fields' that

agents belong to, fields in which cultural and social capital are current and interpretable. He says, 'Habitus – embodied history, internalised as second nature and so forgotten as history, – is the active presence of the whole past of which it is the product' (1995:35). In the diasporic context, the 'active presence of the whole past' travels with the migrant and becomes more conscious or remembered in a foreign environment or field, where difference is accentuated. However, Bourdieu's terms while useful in a generic sense,⁴ inadequately address the experience of the migrant or refugee negotiating a new and foreign field where social and cultural capital is difficult to decipher.⁵ Cultural theorist Elspeth Probyn's concomitant discussion on 'belonging' and 'outside belonging' is perhaps more accessible. Probyn (1996) describes belonging as

... a tenacious and fragile desire [and] queries the possibility of ever truly feeling like we belong anywhere, ever affected by the fear that stability of belonging, belongs to the past (8).

As a trans-national child of Canadian/Welsh parentage she watched from the sidelines where children seem to know by intuition who belongs and who doesn't (40). She sums it up neatly when she says, 'The body experiences the feeling of being out of place 'You're not from here': the slip of the tongue, the flash of ignorance faced with an entirely new arrangement of the everyday' (2004:328), or in Bourdieu's terms, a lack of social and cultural capital to successfully negotiate a different field. Probyn relates not only her own experiences of outside belonging but theorises transnational movement through observations of more acute experiences of migration. She says, of hanging out in the intermediary spaces of airports and transport stations, 'I wonder about families with all their possessions ... heading off to make another life ... the ever increasing numbers of refugees and the apatriated – their tremendous courage is both humbling and terrifying' (1996:8)⁶

The themes of belonging and 'outside belonging' that Probyn takes up are reflected in Nickas' diasporic series that addresses new arrangements of the everyday, in which embodied and cognitive history and knowledge are confronted with new signs, languages and structures, in need of corporeal and textual translation. I argue that the accessibility of such work is crucial to an understanding and greater appreciation of diasporic minority discourses within the broader framework of Australian Literature, and Australian culture.

I asked Nickas what motivated her to begin Owl Publishing and produce the series, *Writing the Greek Diaspora* that narrates everyday living room stories of love, loss, belonging and acculturation of Greek migrant women that might otherwise have melted into the furniture, unuttered. She explained it was a cultural imperative to preserve diasporic Greek writing on the public record. That much of the writing and experience echoes the traumas of grief and loss and outside belonging, adds weight to Damousi's more historical academic imperative. Nickas came to Australia at the age of eighteen to live with her two older sisters. She gained her BA from Melbourne University, having commenced study in 1978 as a mature age student. As an editor, translator, literary critic and writer, she attributes her early success partially to 'Labour's abolition of tertiary fees, their multicultural policies, and feminism which made it okay for married women with children to study' (email correspondence 14 June 2007).⁷ Yet the *Writing the Greek Diaspora* series is as haunted by old worlds as it is receptive to new ones.

MULTIPLE MIGRATION AND INTER-LINGUAL CREATION

The writer I want to focus on from Nickas' publications is Antigone Kefala. Probyn's notion of 'outside belonging' is particularly resonant in the work of Kefala whose parents were Greeks living in Romania. Kefala arrived in Australia in 1960 as a young woman of twenty-five, to the swinging suburb of Surry Hills. She'd previously lived in New Zealand with her family as a Greek Romanian refugee of musical middle class intellectual parents. She gained her BA at Wellington University. Kefala, like Probyn, was 'born departing'. Probyn says of such dislocated belonging,

It seems to me that the processes of belonging are always tainted with deep insecurities about the possibility of truly fitting in, or [in the case of the refugee Kefala's] of even getting in. (1996:40).

Kefala says that coming to Australia, 'Gave me such a boost. I got a job in what is now the UTS library and found friends among other European intellectuals' (in conversation 14 June 2007). 'Most migrants have an optimistic approach, even when we are pessimistic' (in Nickas 1992:229). Her novel *Alexia*, for young adults, was written in the playful, mocking tone of a young girl narrating such weird experiences as squashing peas on to the back of a fork! This style of narrative voice makes it

extremely accessible. Not only does Kefala narrate the cross-cultural experience, she provides the reader with a humorous lesson in English grammar and semantics. Speaking in the voice of young Alexia, Kefala says:

And once she entered the classroom, Alexia went to her seat, which was on the last row, and waited there with Basia for Miss Prudence to come and teach them about the verb 'to be', which as everyone knows, is a difficult verb, full of philosophical resonances, metaphysical nuances, and has a long and exciting past, as well as the two verbs 'to come' and 'to go', which Alexia found very confusing. (Kefala, 1995:86)

Owl publishing is concerned with conveying the voices of unsettled and resettled, Greek women, less published in the mainstream, and promoting the variety of experiences such as those of Kefala, as relevant to an Australian multicultural literary history. Mainstream Australian publishers produce good, primarily Anglo Australian writing. However, there is a gap in the discourse. Nickas says,

I fill that gap by publishing writers like Kefala. But this is not a neat argument ... What I do is not commercial. It's an academic pursuit which is not interested in selling as much as it is in nurturing creativity in writing, in studying, in translating. Sometimes diasporic writers do not fit in anywhere. They are in a class of their own. And Kefala as a twice-migrated woman is in a sense doubly marginalised. (Email 20 June 2007)

Moving beyond the gap in the discourse, migrant writer and critic, Sneja Gunew,⁸ speaks to the necessary presence of migrant writing, asserting that, 'diasporic languages and culture serve to deconstruct a nationalism based on those exclusive imaginaries which are structured around heritage' (1994:21). Such disruptions make space for the diasporic voice and its own contingencies, originating in different languages, and informed by different cultural memory and history. Gunew says, 'Kefala's poetry constructs fragments of migrant subjects which draw the attention of some Australian readers to a 'foreignness', with which they should be more familiar' (1994:83).

Kefala, in her novella *Alexia*, encountered all the usual problems of re settlement. Language, culture, tastes and food, or the 'primary habitus' in Bourdieu's terms, were

displaced. Negotiation of the new field became a necessary acculturation. Her book *The Island* (translated into French and Greek in the same volume) continues the story of young Alexia into early adulthood with Melina as the displaced protagonist, as representative of the ‘in between people’. (Nickas, 1992:112). As Kefala says, ‘People cannot imagine how much energy a migrant has to spend on acculturation’ (in Nickas, 1992:229). While fluent in speaking four languages, Kefala’s writing is a different matter. She explains:

I was only twelve when I left Romania. When I went to Greece, I had to learn a new language. I never wrote in Greek because I was still learning it when we left. Then we came here [to New Zealand], so I began to write quite late, in my third year at university. The only language that I knew as an adult was English. (2002:15)

Translation from language to language and culture to culture is an ongoing challenge for any migrant or refugee and involves incorporating new information through temporal, spatial and textual means. ‘You are constantly trying to learn all you can about the new culture, gestures, mannerisms, constantly re-appraising. I will always be the same person I began as but with new things added to my experience all the time. It’s a continuum.’ (in conversation 14 June 2007) Kefala dovetails the lived experience with historical and cultural knowledge written into the in-between and interpretive spaces of fiction. Yet Kefala’s poetry and prose is not as well read in Australia as it might be, although it has been the subject of two theses that I know of.⁹ Kefala, says, ‘I felt I belonged to this landscape, but getting published was a different matter. Around 1964, ‘Henderson from Canberra produced a multicultural journal called *Hemisphere*, in which I was often published’ (in conversation 14 June 2007).¹⁰ In 1972 Kefala began working for the Australian Literature Board and says of that time, ‘A lot of multicultural writing came through the door but little was published although things did improve under Whitlam’ (in conversation 14 June 2007).¹¹ Currently Nickas’ Owl, and Ivor Indyk’s Giramondo Press¹² publish her, but despite their efforts, she maintains that, ‘Greek diasporic writing remains an overwhelming minority discourse. I don’t know what can be done about that’ (in conversation 14 June 2007).¹³

Partly in answer to Kefala’s comments, Nickas suggests that readers may want to identify with the writer of the book. From the 1970s onwards women’s voices were better heard, yet in Australia they were still primarily Anglo women’s voices. This is

not a complaint about the past. It is more about recognising the evolution of a multicultural society that through the 1970s and 1980s was still trying to define itself and produce its arts in the mainstream. Nickas acknowledges the literary contributions of Australian expat writers such as Charmian Clift, but more so those who migrated to Greece, having married Greek men. These include Beverley Farmer in Skala Katerinis and Thessaloniki, and Gillian Bouras in the Peloponnesus. Nickas agrees with my argument that such writers have opened up the Greek world to an ostensibly white Australian audience, and that the ship does indeed go both ways, but she points out that Anglo writers primarily attract Anglo audiences.

Anglo Australian readers were interested in reading books by their fellow expat Australians.¹⁴ People are interested in such 'exotic' stories ... these writers also ... had a ready audience. If readers picked up a book by Clift, they would ... be reading something from their own sense of perspective. If, however, they picked up Antigone Kefala's book *The Island*, they wouldn't necessarily identify. (Email 15 June 2007)

My point is, I suppose, that these books representative of cultural difference are not in wide enough circulation or are insufficiently represented in readings of English departments at Universities or High School curriculum. Perhaps this is where Cultural Studies departments may shift the traditional departmental habitus' and create space for the stylistic 'outside belonging' in language and culture brought to bear in the instance of Kefala, of someone coming to English through three other languages and multicultural embodied experience.

THE SHIP GOES NORTH

While Nickas and Kefala made the trek to the new world enjoying the legacy of the Labour Whitlam government and the freedoms of feminism and tertiary education, Beverley Farmer travelled in the opposite direction to the old world of patriarchal Greece¹⁵, living for three years in the north, with husband Chris where she taught English to children and businessmen. Speaking autobiographically, Farmer says, 'My life was fractured by the events of 1959' (in Jacobs, 2001:221) and two difficult years followed.

In Melbourne 1962-1969 I retreated for safety – for survival – out of my own society into an ersatz Greek one and into the female working class self I had been so eager to rise above, and capped it off with a patriarchal marriage. (221)

Greece was a potent site for her emerging craft, from 1969 to 1972. While there she transformed earlier writing into a novel, yet didn't find publication in Australia until 1980, with *Alone*.¹⁶ Her following collections of short stories, *Milk* (1983), and *Home Time* (1985), narrate with astute simplicity, her own challenges as a 'resident alien' in northern Greece. She says of that time, 'Our positions were reversed. I was then the migrant trying to find my feet, and he was ... attempting a re-entry into the past which had suddenly spun by him and changed behind his back' (in Jacobs 2001:37).¹⁷ She re-tells her husband's emotional return to mother and homeland and her introduction thus:

We got in too late at night to ring his sisters and parents ... we went to a hotel he knew of in Vardari, near the ... red light district where he grew up. The corridors were rowdy and puddled with urine ... once in bed under the grey prison blanket I burst into tears. This was hardly the land of my dreams. Here I was, mired in foreignness, alone, a lost soul ... 'I thought it would be nice,' he said, stricken. It was nine years since he had embarked with empty pockets ... to Australia, the end of the world ... I would come to see this as this ideal introduction to his city. (*Heat* vol.13, 2007:209)

Some things remained stable, however, such as the hospitality of his mother to her foreign daughter-in-law, an only child who had landed in an extended family, not yet sufficiently versed in gendered and cultural protocol; lacking in cultural capital to revisit Bourdieu's concept, a woman not yet 'at home' in her new surroundings but one who would negotiate a familial place in the terrain of language, religious orthodoxy and culture.

In praise of Farmer's cross-cultural writing, her biographer Lyn Jacobs reports,

In the 1980s, Farmer's focus on Greek/Australian cross cultural relations was timely in an Australian society coming to terms with its increasingly multicultural identity ... The Australian life was being revised in culturally relative terms. (2001:2)

Yet while Farmer's writing has been reasonably well read in Australia compared to her Greek counterparts none of her novels have been translated into Greek or other languages. Partly because of the translation issue, Farmer's rich cross-cultural writing, that describes with acuity some of the experiences of Kefala and Nickas in reverse, is largely unknown in Greece.

Farmer defines cultural and gendered difference through her character driven narrative and accentuates the expectations and prohibitions of a woman married to the oldest Greek son. For example, in 'The Captain's House' (from *Milk*, 1983) Kyria Sophia (the mother-in-law of her Australian character Barbara) is secretly annoyed with Barbara for teaching her grandson Vassilaki, English (151). And in 'Place of Birth' (from *Home Time*, 1985), the unwell, pregnant character Bell is admonished by her Greek husband for not keeping the younger daughter-in-laws in their place. Listen to this dialogue:

'She [Kyria Sophia] had a fight with Chloe.'
 'And you?'
 'Me. No. I stayed out of it,'
 'You didn't try to stop her.'
 '... If Chloe wants a fight, I suppose that's her business, isn't it?'
 'If she fights with her own mother it's her business. If she fights with mine it's my business and yours and all the family's.'
 'So I should have stopped her.'
 'You were there ... And your place in the family gives you the right.'
 'Because I'm older than Chloe?'
 'No. Because I'm the older brother and you're my wife ... Mamma does everything.'
 'No she doesn't. Chloe pulls her weight. I'm here all day and I know.'
 'You know! You live in a world of your own! Chloe pulls her weight, does she? And what about you?'
 'Tell me, what do the men do here while the women are pulling their weight? Pull cards in the *kafeneion*? Stroll around Thessaloniki?' (pp. 17-18)

While Farmer's Greek counterparts had some sense of cultural community to fall back on for support in Australia, Farmer's experiences in Greece as narrated through various characters reflect the cultural isolation of an Australian woman more

accustomed to independence and her own cultural and familial informants than Greek culture allowed for. To echo Kefala's earlier comment about acculturation, Farmer's writing explores those experiences with poignancy and equal relevance painfully wed to other issues of loss and suffering.

In *The House in the Light* (1995) Farmer revisits the character Bell and her return to the Greek in-laws after divorce from her husband. She returns alone, and narrates the scorn Bell feels from her mother-in-law Kyria Sofia:

She will never forgive me for the divorce ... I never asked her to. She could have cast me out. I have one shred of legitimacy left, I suppose: I married Grigori in church, which is more than the new wife has done so far. And bore him a child – a son! (If it had been a daughter?) And never remarried. I am at a loose end, and so she accords me a place as her grandson's mother. To give her her due, this is more than kind. Merciful. She gives what I did ask for. (I could have kept a daughter.) (1995:98)

Bell is now doubly an outsider because of the failure of the marriage. To cite the marriage failure as a matter of cultural difference would be to over simplify. There is a strong undercurrent of gendered oppression and the sufferings of women at the hands of men asserting their conjugal rights as narrated in 'Great Friday' (165) that explains graphically Bell's life-saving need for escape. In 'Saturday' (179-181) Kyria Sofia's lack of choice is narrated with harrowing honesty, her inability to escape and her subsequent lifelong suffering, constitutive of gender and generation. The reader is made privy to a resonance of resilience born of suffering and by the end an apology from Kyria Sofia which brings the women to a common understanding in the following excerpt:

'Thank you for everything!'

'Nothing! You did well to come, Bella. Do you hear? ... And Bella ... I have a sharp tongue. If I said anything to upset you—'

'No!' She gasps ...

'—you know I am old now, forgive me.'

'No, no it's you— who—'

In her shame and sorrow the words stick in her throat...

'E, Bella? Sorry,' the bundle in her arms is murmuring, and the eyes gazing straight

up into hers now in their pouches of blood are the eyes of a hurt child. Everyone has stopped breathing. (234-235)

Farmer has managed to live between two cultures in similar ways to her Greek counterparts, crossing the hemispheres regularly, constantly negotiating two fields, haunted by primary cultural habitus and her migrant familial obligations. This experience disrupts Bourdieu's concept of habitus as '... a system of *dispositions*, that is of permanent manners of being, seeing, acting and thinking ...' (2002:28), and gives rise to a more dynamic concept that I refer to as 'secondary habitus' that 'incorporates the incorporation' of new habits and practices in new fields. Such adaptation is a necessary part of the acculturation and migrant process, if new fields are to be successfully negotiated and the sense of 'outside belonging' resolved. While embodying the 'active presence of the whole past', migrant women, Australian and Greek, demonstrate the necessary adaptations and flux of living in a new world informed by different culture and language, habits and practices.

Although long separated from her husband Chris, Farmer's family ties remain firm in Thessaloniki. Their adult son Taki is very much a shared bi-cultural treasure for both his parents and his paternal grandmother whose frail hands Farmer holds in hers on a brief return in 2005. This return is narrated in an article aptly titled, 'The House on Rebirth Street' (*Heat*, 2007). Farmer says, 'Flesh, vein and bone seemed to have fused in her hands like a lava flow' (206). On this return Farmer is faced with old memories from the architecture not only of hands but of the changing landscape of Thessaloniki and the villages that surround it over twenty-five years, the places she used to live, the stories and histories written and told, and those less spoken. She says,

Unquiet graves, lost souls, ghosts, some of them my own; I felt like a ghost myself as I groped my way around my own old haunts, landmarks and memories, sinking back. (2007:213)

Farmer's sentiment of 'writing in the key of loss' reflects her own early writings, experiences, leavings and returns, as well as resonating with the themes narrated in Nickas' series. It is in this context, that I argue for a contemporary re-reading of Farmer's early work in the first instance. A reading of the texts of Farmer, Clift and Bouras in conjunction with the work of Nickas and Kefala (and in different ways

Damoussi) could provide unique openings that could be well utilised in literary and cultural studies and so disrupt more homogeneous representations of knowledge and the finite production of Bourdieu's habitus as the norm.

In embarking on a metaphoric journey on the ship that goes both ways, I've paid small homage to everyday stories of losses (and findings) that have been obscured by more mainstream writing. The women represented in this paper are writers, editors, critics, and cross-cultural intellectuals, interlinked by shared ethics around representation and an understanding of cross-cultural diversity and its incumbent challenges, and gifts. The preservation on the public record of such narratives, of displacement and 'outside belonging', conjoined by a shared hospitality of gender and meaningful transnational literary production, are a crucial part of Australia's polyvocal literary history that has perhaps been under-read.¹⁸

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ENDNOTES

- 1 The Chandris shipping line ran three ships between Piraeus and Sydney via Fremantle and Melbourne. The Patris (meaning fatherland, though the word is feminine); the Ellinis (meaning Greek woman/girl); and the Australis (meaning Australian woman/girl. (Email from Beverley Farmer to Shé Hawke 12 July 2007).
- 2 See Joy Damousi *Living with the Aftermath: trauma, nostalgia and grief in post war Australia*, 2001 and *The Labour of Loss: mourning, memory and war time bereavement in Australia*, 1997. See also her article in this volume.
- 3 Nickas' latest volume *Athina and her Daughters* (2009) recounts with aching personal and political detail the multigenerational traumas of migration, loss, nostalgia and heartache.
- 4 Bourdieu makes very vague reference to the notion of a 'second birth' in relation to gradual co-option and initiation of the agent from one to field to another in *The Logic of Practice* (1990:67-69). However, it is only in his work published posthumously that he considers the challenges to habitus of transnationalism brought about by migration and refugee movement. See Jean Hillier and Emma Rooksby (eds) 2002, *Habitus: A Sense of Place*, Ashgate: Aldershot, for a lengthy discussion on the politics of habitus and its currency as a methodological tool.
- 5 Interestingly in the book *The Brain that Changes Itself* (2007:298) by Norman Doidge, there is a discussion on the migrated brains (and body) ability to change via its plasticity, to new circumstances adding neurological clout to the critique of Bourdieu's constricted notion of habitus, via the notion of secondary habitus. Doidge's book alludes to both adaptation as Bourdieu would have it but also a complete refiguration of being.
- 6 Probyn (1996) theorises 'belonging' and 'outside belonging' partially through Michel Foucault's work on heterotopia. See Foucault (1986) 'Of Other Spaces' in *Diacritics*, pp. 22-27.
 More latterly, Probyn (2005) *Blush: faces of Shame*, draws on the work of Pierre Bourdieu's (1980) exploration of habitus and field in *The Logic of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice, Cambridge: Polity Press.
 See also Shé Hawke 'Infinity and Other Possibilities: following the footfall of expatriate Australian writers from Greece – Charmian Clift, Beverley Farmer and Sue Woolfe' in *Literature and Aesthetics: the Journal of the Sydney Society of Literature and Aesthetics*. Vol. 17, no. 1, June 2007. USYD, Sydney. This article theorises migrant displacement in terms of Bourdieu's concept of the field, cultural capital and habitus, and my argument for 'secondary habitus'.

- 7 Nickas was inspired by the early success of Greek Australian Dimitris Tsaloumas, who in 1983 won the National Book Council Award for his poetry *The Observatory*. She began to wonder how it was for writers to create in both languages. Her primary focus has been the writing of Greek Australian women, Antigone Kefala being one of the more successful she has published and translated.
- 8 Sneja Gunew is also responsible for the 'Australian multicultural writers subset' through Austlit, that arose from her *Bibliography of Australian Multicultural Writers*. The latest newsletter from Austlit is encouraging in what it reports about representation of multicultural writing.
<http://www.austlit.edu.au/news/newsJuneJuly2007>, downloaded 28 June 2007.
- 9 Marie Gaulis was Kefala's French translator for *The Island*. Her PhD on Greek Australian Literature focused on Antigone Kefala and Vasso Kalamaras. Helen Nickas Masters was on four Greek Australian writers, including Antigone Kefala.
- 10 Her first Australian publication was in *Australian Letters*, published by Max Harris and Dutton (1962).
- 11 In 1973 UQP published *Alien*.
- 12 Kefala, Antigone (2009) *Max: The Confessions of a Cat*, Owl Publishing: Melbourne.
- 13 The experience of Kefala's brother is not so positive. As a talented musician his delicate fingers were set to work in hard physical labour in New Zealand, in ignorance of his unique skill. There was no regard for his previous life as a musician. He died a broken spirited man unable to adapt to the harshness of an unhospitable new world.
- 14 See also Patrick White *Flaws in the Glass* and Gillian Bouras *The Foreign Wife*.
- 15 Farmer travelled by air ship to Greece with husband Chris who had travelled to Australia on the Patris as an assisted migrant in 1960. On this first return to Greece, Chris worked in hotels in Volos and Litothoro.
- 16 Beverley Farmer has an uncanny gift for representing the displacement of the Other and those located as 'outside belonging', be they migrants or lovers. In her coming-of-age novel *Alone*, while detailing a lesbian love affair, she narrates the displacement of forsaken first love with aching potency.
- 17 For more information see Lyn Jacobs very detailed book about Beverley Farmer's writing, called *Against the Grain* (2001). See also Gillian Whitlock (1989), (ed.) *Eight Voices of the Eighties: Stories, Journalism and Criticism by Australian Women Writers*, UQP, St Lucia.
- 18 My thanks to Antigone Kefala, Beverley Farmer, and Helen Nickas for their time and patience with my questioning and for their comments and corrections to this paper.

Beverley Farmer is a full time writer. She writes mostly from her seaside home in Pt Lonsdale. In 1984 *Milk* (1983) won the NSW Premier's Prize for Fiction. None of her books have been translated into other languages. Her mother-in-law passed away in 2007. In 2009 she was awarded the Patrick White Award.

Professor Joy Damousi is the head of The School of Historical Studies at Melbourne University. Apart from research interests in Australian history and psychoanalysis, she has contributed to the Oxford Dictionary of Australian History, and The Oxford Dictionary of Feminism.

Helen Nickas continues to produce and translate Greek Australian diasporic writing through Owl Publishing. She and I have discussed the possibility of a book called *The Ship Goes Both Ways*

that would include both Greek and Australian writers in the one volume. She holds a Masters degree and has recently retired from teaching in the Department of Greek and European Studies at La Trobe University.

Antigone Kefala lives in Sydney and is still writing and published by Owl and Giramondo. Her work often appears in two languages. Her latest volume is *Max: Confessions of a cat* (2009), Owl Publishing: Melbourne.