

PEOPLE LIKE US...

Every week, "Kosmos" newspaper will be presenting stories of Greeks in Australia. If you would like to share your story with us, send us an email and your favourite photo at: kosmos@kosmos.com.au



Two words about me:

That I can never boil anything down to two words!

Where was I born:

Sydney, Australia

Date of birth:

17 December 1984

Family status:

Father (Greek-Australian), Mother (Portuguese), two brothers and a Maltese Shih-Tzu (even our dog is of mixed origins!)

My origins:

My father originates from Euboea, Greece, and my mother from Madeira, Portugal. My father was born here, but my mother was born in Portugal and migrated to Australia at seven years of age. My two younger brothers and I were born in Sydney, Australia, and have lived here all our lives as 'Portugreeks' – a term I created to describe our mixed heritage.

Two words about my family:

My parents struggled to be together. My father's parents were very strict about their Greek heritage and didn't approve of my mother's Portuguese background. Eventually, my parents eloped—risking their future with my father's family for their love and future together. Needless to say, my father's parents did not attend their (official) wedding—a memory that will always hurt my father. Eventually, they came to accept my mother, but the story of my parent's journey has always been an inspiration for me and my brothers. We have learned to accept people for who they are and not what they are; and know to follow our hearts and our heads.

About my work:

I recently graduated with my Masters

Vicky Spichopoulos freelance editor & writer

in Communications and currently work as a freelance editor and writer, and as an English tutor. Prior to this I worked for two years as a Publications Officer for 'The School Magazine' – a children's literary magazine – published by the Department of Education and Training. Playing a role in the education of Australian children was something I found endlessly rewarding—particularly when I received their heartwarming feedback on any of my work.

My interests:

I may be the living example of having too many interests! I enjoy so many things: from literary and academic interests to light and fun pop cultural interests. I strongly support Breast Cancer charities and have a great passion for animals and animal welfare. And I thrive on travel and exploration—obviously the ancient Portuguese sea-traveller side of me coming through!

About my life in Australia:

I have grown up and lived in the Inner West for most of my life—a cultural melting pot with a diverse range of peoples and personalities. Living in this area leaves room for personal growth and inspires individuality. You can't put people in a 'box' here, which is something I have thrived on. I love the idea of freedom of expression and creativity. In saying that, I have met some Australians who are very narrow-minded and 'backward' in thought—personality attributes I cannot tolerate.

My relationship with Greece:

My experience with Greece has been

through my grandparents and my Greek relatives. There is such a strong sense of history and togetherness in the Greek culture which I find alluring. It's very different to here in Australia as we have a young history built on multiculturalism. Unfortunately, I am yet to visit Greece—or Portugal for that matter. I cannot wait until I have the opportunity to explore the depths of my heritage.

What I like about living in Australia:

The multiculturalism, and the food! It's amazing to think how many different cultures we are faced with every day in our country. Many foreigners have also told me that they are very impressed with our selection of cuisines, and the quality of these foods. Our resources allow for an abundance of fresh produce, which I also appreciate as I'm very health-conscious and I enjoy cooking.

What I don't like about living in Australia:

Some Australians' ideas of what it is to be 'Australian'. I am of the belief that an Australian Citizen is an Australian; not a white Anglo-Saxon with convict heritage. If we are to say 'real Australians' were those who were 'here first', then real Australians are the Aboriginies. The modern Australian society has been built on multiculturalism, and without it we would not have the international identity and recognition we have today.

I also have a problem with the word 'wog'. It's offensive and outdated. Those who misuse it are ignorant of



the history of the word, and how it hurt many early migrants.

If I would like to live in Greece one day and why:

I will have to visit Greece first in order to answer this question! But many people tell me that when you go to Greece, you won't want to come back.

My personal big dream:

To keep writing—even if it is for my own personal enjoyment. Writing has been my outlet since a child; I find it very cathartic. The process of writing can be very revealing and insightful, even to one's self. One of my lecturer's once described the process of writing as presenting 'a slice of life'. Whether the slices of my life eventuate into a career in writing, I don't know. All I know is to follow my parents' advice to follow my passions. It's the only way to lead a happy life.

My life philosophy:

Never quit, know your self worth, and never accept second-best. They might be cliché phrases, but they are cliché for a reason!

'Pulling Readers In: news photos in Greek and Australian broadsheets'

Dorothy Economou investigates naturalistic photos that introduce long, front-page feature stories on asylum seekers in a Greek and Australian broadsheet. She compares the techniques that each broadsheet used in drawing readers in and argues that images are used to a "greater evaluative effect" than photos that accompany daily news stories, which possess a "predominantly ideational aim". Economou suggests that such images are used to pull readers in to a feature article, and, together with headlines, position the audience on the issue explored.

In her studies, Economou found a number of similarities and differences between the Australian and Greek texts. She found that each story made visual choices to emotionally engage readers in order to entice them into reading the story. She also noticed that all stories were similarly sympathetic towards the plight of asylum-seekers in their country, and critical of government policy

regarding asylum-seekers. However, she found differences in the way Greek and Australian newspapers evaluatively position readers on the issue of asylum-seekers, and towards asylum-seekers themselves. Economou argues that the selection and intensification of different dimensions of ideational meaning in the news photos provoke different attitude values with respect to asylum seekers. She suggests that Greek photos create "closer involvement, empathy, positive appreciation and judgment of the asylum-seekers." (p.277) While the Greek images suggested non-popular, non-fictional art or film context, reinforcing readers' involvement with asylum-seekers depicted as real people; Australian photos create empathy in a more detached way by intensifying the circumstances of asylum-seekers, rather than the asylum-seekers themselves, through the use of dramatisation and references to popular, fiction, art and

cinema forms.

Economou's writing demonstrates the idea that media images create, and add to, media discourses. They shape our perceptions of certain issues and may manipulate our thoughts. Photographs act as proof, and if these are manipulated in such a way so as to impact on our perceptions on a particular viewpoint, we are convinced to a greater extent. It is interesting that Economou noted that the three Australian visual texts did not reflect the position on the issue developed in the written stories, and this may raise problems of understanding for 'peripheral' viewers. Images create concrete pictures in our minds and it is crucial for editors to acknowledge that the way they put forward ideas on a certain issue through the manipulation of images may have a profound impact on readers' socially constructed systems of knowledge and beliefs.