

London School of economics and Political Science
European Institute
Hellenic Observatory
2nd LSE PhD Symposium on Modern Greece:
LSE, June 10, 2005

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Title: Within social and cultural practices of Greek society subjects negotiate a series of issues that are related to family and the complexities of it.

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Within social and cultural practices of Greek society subjects negotiate a series of issues that are related to family and the complexities of it.

Introduction

This presentation will focus on a variety of different photographs that subjects chose from their family albums; photographs that illustrate parades of national commemorations such as 25th of March and 28th of October, ritual ceremonies (particularly Easter), and other cultural and social practices such as marriages and funerals. It will closely examine how these practices obtain a meaning and constitute part of subject's identity within the family, and how families have actually been shaped and produced within these social and cultural practices. 'Families' have a great influence not only over how and why these practices are celebrated but also in the subjects' explorations and interpretations within their interviews of the kinds of themes-concepts and the 'ethical' values that they transfer to their children, and how these may become embedded as part of the self and national identity.

Moreover, what triggered my awareness and what further intensifies the social force that family has within Greek culture, is the emphasis that subjects place on lived and embodied experience when remembering their stories of national commemorations and other ritual and social events. These experiences find their reference either in particular figures like the grandparents and their role in relation to the preparation of, and the participation in, any sort of ritual and social event, or in the concept of death and mourning that emerged through and was prompted primarily by the ritual procession of Good Friday. The subjects expanded the idea of death by bringing me more

photographs of their own relatives who are not alive anymore and they talked in detail about the particular significance that death seems to hold in Greek social life. The concept of death acquires a complexity that, as subjects say, emerges from a rather 'confused' relationship between the position of their emotions in relation to the obligations and duties that this social practice requires. Within the process of mourning either on a collective or on a personal basis, subjects recognise that feelings of suffering and pain, when interwoven with emotions of guilt and obligation, affect the formation of their identities.

Taking this into account, it seems from another aspect of Greek culture that emerges especially within discussions of photographs of weddings and national parades the feeling of suffering is transformed or rather translated into a feeling of shame. Subjects expressed various emotions such as anger or regret in relation to certain expectations that family 'demands' in order to fulfil the above social practices. These emotions hide a sort of fear for the subjects in terms of failing at the social ideals that their parents and society expect them to fulfil in relation to these cultural practices. In this internal process, these kinds of emotions are covered by an overall feeling of shame. Shame appears as an emotion that has been created by the subjects in relation to others. "In shame, I expose to myself that I am a failure through the gaze of an ideal other" (Ahmed, 2004: 106). Like suffering, shame involves obligation and commitment; subjects adopted and adapted shame as part of their identity with and in relation to certain aspects and attitudes that have been constantly implanted from the family and become a very powerful embodied experience. " I am ashamed of myself as I appear to the other" (Sartre, 1996:2002). In order for the subjects to confirm their love

and devotion to the social ideals of their parents, they are willing to sacrifice many of their beliefs and prioritise the beliefs of their parents. This issue was expanded by the subjects in depth and it brought to the surface discourses of class and *social milieu* that the subjects seem to take very seriously. Therefore, I will ask to what extent the expression of subjects' emotions, which are based on particular social and cultural practices, can become a national shame or a national ideal. ^[s1]Based on the above accounts what I would like to emphasize is that apart from the social, political and even the psychological interpretations that these themes enable me to develop, they also leave me the space to question and re-evaluate the meaning of Greekness and what we refer to as Greek 'national identity'.

Grandparents as a fairytale symbol for cultural identity.

The religious or traditional meaning of the Easter ceremony or of a national commemoration in Greece seems to remain vivid because of the role of the grandparents, according to my subjects. For them, grandparents are the ones who make social and cultural practices happen; subjects participate and experience the historical, religious, or even social significance of these practices through the eyes of their grandparents. Subjects brought a series of photographs from Easter Sunday or from national parades and in most of them, the grandmother or the grandfather posed with her or his grandchild. However, ^[s2]even when grandparents were not in their photographs, in subjects' memories Easter and other social practices have a direct reference to them. Subjects acknowledge a sense of Greekness through the verbal and bodily language of their grandparents. For subjects it was not only the special nouns or adjectives that

grandparent put in their stories that absorbed their grandchildren but also the various gestures and facial expressions they made in their descriptions that made them appeal to the subjects. In this context, subjects' identification with these social and cultural practices has been imprinted in their minds as an unforgettable experience involving the presence of the grandparents. It is as if the grandparents constitute a vital part of the activation of all these social practices and traditions.

For example, Alexandros is showing me a series of family photographs from Easter. '**Pascha**' in Greek is the most sacred and celebrated of all Greek holidays. The word '**Pascha**' comes from Hebrew and it means 'pass over'. Easter for Alexandros means a family celebration. His photograph of Easter Sunday stands as a main prompt in order for him to explain why and how Easter has such a deep meaning and a direct link to the meaning of Greekness and family. The first thing that is observable in his photograph is a number of cooked lambs, one next to the other. Beside them, members of the family dance, eat, and enjoy this very traditional ceremony. Alexandros emphasizes that Easter Sunday has a very religious but especially traditional atmosphere that seems very Greek to him.

Alexandros (23 years old, Athens): Here I am with my parents and my grandmother in the village where my father is coming from. As you can see we cook usually lots of lambs not only for the family but also for anybody else that wants to enjoy our celebration. In this photograph there are many activities that are taking place such as some people dance Greek traditional songs, some others eat the red eggs and lamb... I don't know, especially Easter is really linked to what we call Greekness and Greek tradition, and this is a feeling that I develop from my family and especially my grandmother. Especially my grandmother makes me feel and believe either within the process of the fast or with the whole

ritual in the holy week that this ceremony-tradition has something very religious and also very Greek.

Alexandros' experiences of Easter Sunday are embedded ^{[s3]embeddede}in his memory within the concept of family. His complete attachment to Greek Easter, which actually constitutes a part of Greekness for him, derives from the stories that his grandmother used to narrate to him. It seems that his Grandmother appears as an interpreter of the tradition of Greek Easter. The roasting of the Easter lamb and the hard-boiled red eggs, the traditional Greek dances, and even the process of fasting acquire a meaning for Alexandros through the presence of his grandmother. She is the one who creates and shapes a religious ceremony into an educational as well as a creative space that makes Alexandros participate and really enjoy it. His grandmother is the medium who is able to transmit to her grandson the celebration of Easter through various ways that seem to be very appealing to Alexandros' eyes; and these ways are the ones that make the difference in his memories and shape how he perceives and understands the Easter ceremony. For Alexandros, his grandmother represents the knowledge and meaning that Easter or even any other social ceremony involves; the knowledge or the transmission of knowledge is more 'convincing' because it is presented by his grandmother rather than any other educational institution.

Alexandros continues to express his feelings about his grandmother based on the same sorts of photographs from Easter ceremony.

Alexandros (23 years old, Athens): Here I am with my grandmother holding the red eggs and we are ready to chink them. I feel so thankful to my grandmother. She was really the one who initiated me in this Easter atmosphere; I love every

single ritual of it. In a way I feel like having a role where I am acting very well. What I mean by that is that I see and experience the whole ceremony of Easter not as a beholder but as a person who participates and follows all the religious processes of it. For me Easter is not a superfluous ceremony but a ceremony with lots of serious and important elements. I don't know whether this is a real or an imaginary image of Easter but what really counts to me is that I feel completely absorbed by Easter especially Good Friday, Saturday, and Easter Sunday. Once more I am grateful to my parents and especially to my grandmother who managed to transfer and to pass this tradition to me.

Alexandros feels contentment at being able to know all the traditions of the Easter ceremony and the meaning of them. Alexandros appreciates and respects not only the traditional character of Easter but also the religious one. He has learned, adopted, and deeply believes in the significance of Greek Easter in relation to its religious context. Alexandros approaches such a state of being because of his grandmother. His fidelity to the Easter ceremony emerges from beliefs that his grandmother transmitted to him. Whether these images are real or not, as he said, is not important for him, but what counts most is that he is completely integrated into this ritual ceremony.

As with Alexandros, Xaralambos also puts his emphasis on to the role that his grandmother and grandfather play in terms of transferring the customs and the traditions of the Easter ceremony. His photographs depict the village of his father where he used to go when he was very young to celebrate a series of ritual ceremonies with his parents and grandparents.

Xaralambos (24 years old, Athens): This portrait of my grandfather and my grandmother, I really love it. These are the people in my life that I owe them a lot. Because of them I learned how to appreciate the meaning of Easter celebration

and how to respect every single commemoration that is part of my tradition. Although they didn't go to school as I did, I remember very vividly that when I was six or seven years old they used to tell me stories and fairytales from the war, and all the stories and the adventures of how they grew up and what they passed through. This is actually how I learned history.

Once more grandparents appear in Xaralambos' mind as people with great wisdom and knowledge of what it means to be Greek and have a sense of Greekness. For Xaralambos, grandparents are people that we have to admire, respect and believe for all the things they know. In Xaralambos' ears whatever his grandparents have taught him, even about a dramatic event such a war, sounds like a fairytale. It seems that grandmothers have this capacity to transform even events such war and be able to transfer these to their grandchildren as mythical or a fantastical element of a family-tale. As Xaralambos emphasises, this is how he learned history. For him the definition of history either for the war or for the national commemorations emerges from the voices of his grandparents. The narratives of his grandparents stand as an accreditation [14] for Xaralambos' knowledge. It seems that grandparents have the capacity to transform narratives of their everyday experience into an imaginary story through any of the senses. Whether their stories have a mythical and a real element, what counts as valuable in Alexadros' and Xaralambos' minds is that the history of their nation is constructed through the mundane and the everyday.

Therefore, one very strong aspect that makes the celebration of Easter important is the appearance of the grandparents. In my subjects' memories, grandparents are like figures that emerge from Greek mythology. They are able to create a social practice like a national commemoration or a ritual ceremony such as Easter in such a way that it attracts my subjects' interest and eventually they can extract

something valuable and meaningful from them. Through the presence of the grandparents, subjects experience and participate in the ceremony of Easter without seeing it as 'national duty' that they have to follow for the sake of their country. On the contrary, what remains alive in subjects' memories and gives 'life' to this cultural practice is all these small experiences such as the particular food of Easter and the whole atmosphere that comes into being through the presence of the grandparents. It seems that the actualisation and activation of this social and cultural practice happen through the mythical figures of the grandparents. I call them mythical because as my subjects say, whether their stories consist of something real or not, the outcome of it is what makes them attractive to them. Such an attitude makes grandparents symbols for Greek cultural identity. Taking this into account, another element that also becomes a symbol to bring the family together is the relationship between the participation and preparation of the Easter ceremony and the idea of food. Subjects' attitudes about sharing food allow us to understand the importance of Easter and other social events, which seem to construct a part of the national identity. As we will see below, food is a medium that signifies a sense of belonging as well as a metaphor [15] that helps us to understand why families in Greece have such strong bonds that keep them together.

When food becomes as a symbolic medium for uniting family

Food in Greece is one of the most important elements constituting part of national identity. Attention to food is in almost every single social event that is organised either by the family or in the broader sense of a more formal institution. People in Greece pay particular attention to the preparation as well as the presentation of food on the table. Food stands as marker of the status of a family. It is a medium of

appreciation and respect in a Greek family. The family will put in great effort and will go through a whole discussion about what type of food has to be cooked, how it will be cooked, and why. In a way this is like a whole ritual, which has to be 'perfectly' presented in order for the guests not to say anything negative about the family. Political, social and cultural conversations will come to the surface in the process of eating. Eating and discussing issues of the political and social life can last for hours and hours. Food is a 'shared' experience in a Greek family that provides the opportunity for people to perceive the present event, for example Easter ceremony or a national parade, from another perspective. Within food ceremonies especially, the subjects explore the meaning of Easter.

Subjects' experiences focus on the traditional food that we eat, especially on Easter Saturday and Sunday, and not on the religious and ritual processes of it. Athena shows me a photograph from Easter Saturday and remembers what they usually eat by giving me a detailed description. The '*Anastasi*' resurrection of Easter Saturday is one of the most important days of the Greek Easter calendar. On Easter Saturday at midnight all the lights are extinguished in the church and the priest comes from behind the doors of the altar carrying a candle. He walks to somebody in the front row and lights their candle, and the light passes from candle to candle until it fills the church. The light is a symbol of the resurrection. Everyone kisses one another and says '*Christos Anesti*' Christ has risen, '*Alithos Anesti*' – truly He has risen. The candle is carried back home, taking care that the flame is not extinguished. At the house three crosses are made with the flame above the entrance door, in order to bless the house and its inhabitants by the light of Christ's resurrection. After that all

the family sit on the table and enjoy the Easter Saturday dinner, which is always started after midnight.

Athena (55 years old, Athens): Here is a photograph from Easter Saturday, all the family again together on the table, eating a special soup and chant the red eggs after coming back from the church midnight. We usually cook this soup in the morning of Easter Saturday together with some other specialities and we even decorated with some red eggs and some sweet bread, everything has to be ready by midnight. I have to admit that we have to be very careful and everything has to be perfectly presented since we are expecting some relatives to arrive as well.

Athena's memories of Easter Saturday have a direct link to food. She remembers that night through the preparation of the food. The photograph with all the food in to the table and the way that Athena describes it leaves me with the craving to try them; I want to smell them and to see how they taste. Like Athena, I also understand what Easter Saturday means through the different dishes that have to be cooked. It seems that food has an extremely significant role in ways of remembering the celebration of such a ritual event. Moreover, food can also signify social aspects that characterise a Greek family. For example, when Athena says that everything has to be perfectly presented because her relatives are coming, she indicates the need that the family has to cook well in order to avoid criticism for the food not reaching the traditional standards. In this context, food becomes an important medium of Saturday Easter. It seems that cooking the special food of that day implies that you are following the tradition. Athena also describes Easter Sunday and how the lamb stands as a symbol bringing the family together and sharing their happiness and joy.

Athena (55 years old, Athens): Here is a photograph of the famous lamb that we cook Easter Sunday. That day usually my family go to church early in the morning, and then we participate in the preparation of the lamb. This is a day of happiness and joy that brings the family together as well as many other friends who come to share the lamb with us. The lamb is actually the medium that brings us all together. It has a very symbolic role. My father of course, the leader of my family is in charge, and goes and buy the lamb and Sunday very early starts the whole preparation. I helped him sometimes but usually it is the father who does the whole job. My mother on the other hand is in charge of doing the red eggs and preparing the table with different types of food that day.

Again, the food is a medium [16]that creates happiness and serenity in the family but also is the way that family experiences and understands even the religious context of it. Religiously speaking, the lamb represents Jesus and relates his death to that of the lamb sacrificed on the first Passover. In this sense, it seems that my subjects feel the 'necessity' to be there for the preparation of this day as a form of sacrifice for the sake of Jesus Christ; [17]It is a necessity in that each member of the family has to be there, to sacrifice any other sort of commitment in order to celebrate Easter Sunday with the rest of the family. In this case, it seems that the lamb stands as a collective and symbolic object. It is the medium that brings the family together around a collective activity. The whole family, as Athena describes, participates in the preparation of the lamb, and each of them is charged with doing different sorts of tasks. For example, the father is the one who goes to buy the lamb, lights the fire and makes the judgement about when it is ready. The father has the primary responsibility for the whole process of the lamb, and the rest of the members of the family prepare the red eggs and the additional food.

Sotiris brought me a photograph with him and his son posing in front of the lamb.

Sotiris (44 years old, Athens): “For me Easter Sunday is a very important day, because it is one more opportunity for the family to be together and to share this particular atmosphere that Easter involves. Here I am with my son. My son has the ‘*philotimo*’ to stay with us every year and to celebrate Easter Sunday. We prepare the lamb and we are so happy. I love this photograph so much.”

Once more Sotiris identifies himself with the importance of Easter Sunday within the concept of family and to an extent with the Sunday lamb. He is very proud that his son devotes himself to this family tradition. He characterises his son as having ‘*philotimo*’ a Greek word that translates literally as ‘love of honour’, although ‘*philotimo*’ is not captured adequately by any English word or phrase. It is a concept that refers to several aspects of Greek character and social relations. First is a sense of responsibility and obligation particularly to the family, second, it refers to appropriate behaviour within the in-group, and third it is strongly related to personal honour and self esteem (Broome, 1996: 66-7). All of these three explanations can be adapted to what Sotiris is actually expecting from his son. Characteristics such as responsibility, obligation, appropriate behaviour and honour are extremely important for the family as a social unit. So in such a significant ritual ceremony as Easter Sotiris is extremely happy that his son fulfils his expectations. It seems that the actualisation of Easter Sunday comes through the ritual of eating but on the other hand food brings the family together and also in this case brings to the surface aspects of Greek cultural identity such as ‘*philotimo*’.

In this sense I am questioning whether it is the family [18]that initiates us not only to the historical and the social context of the above social practices but also becomes the means through which we conceptualise them. Is the family itself also formed by certain values within these social and cultural practices?

It seems to me that the cultural characteristics that emerge from these social practices such as this sense of obligation and responsibility to others on the one hand, and this sense of personal honour and self esteem on the other hand, are combined and constituted in Greek ways of belonging. This sort of attitude that emerges from the whole family behaviour and reaction to particular cultural practices constitutes one part of what we can call Greek national identity; therefore, in present situation subjects' identity is formed in and through relation to these (conscious and unconscious) cultural components, which seems to shape and compose part of what we refer to as national identity. I will explore this context further within the process of mourning, when the subjects express how psychological and social needs, which constitute part of their self-identity can be transformed into a social ideal that eventually is able to define what we call 'national identity'.

Taking this into account, another important aspect that came into surface within the photographs of Easter and especially of Good Friday is the concept of death and mourning in Greek society and the extent to which this shapes part of national identity. Subjects' photographs of Good Friday stand as a prompt but also explain certain cultural characteristics that demonstrate the importance of death. This became even more explicit when subjects brought photographs of persons they lost, and narrated a series of ritual processes that underline the 'need' to mourn for somebody in Greek society.

Mourning as a collective and personal cultural activity

When somebody dies in a Greek family the whole process of mourning involves a high degree of suffering and exhaustion. Each family member's mourning consists of a series of rituals like special food, special flowers, and particular songs that stand as an honour to the person she/he lost. This sort of attitude involves a series of mixed feelings; on the one hand all these gestures that I mention above are a means of expressing their love to that person and on the other hand they indicate a very important obligation and 'duty' that has to be done. Subjects describe this sort of reaction as being like a cathartic process for each family in order to be relieved of elements such as guilt and pain. By following all these rather typical though important procedure of how and why to honour the person they lost, they feel rather a superficial contentment I can call it; since I believe that the deep feeling of pain and suffering is somewhere there and is very hard and difficult to just cover it and express it with a series of ritual aspects that show this sort of respect and love to the person they lost. Taking this into account, it seems that there is something deep and complex in the whole idea of how and why Greek families mourn for somebody so much, which I think is worth looking at profoundly. Based on subjects' comments, the process of mourning either on a personal or collective level seems to have a great impact on the formation of Greek family and to an extent what sort of beliefs and values constitute part of our cultural identity. For example, Good Friday as a collective mourning activity not only brings the family together but also shapes a particular ground of how family itself is built within this ritual ceremony in relation to concept of death.

The whole ritual consists of a series of customs such as particular food, songs, clothes, that to a great degree not only affect but also shape the whole behaviour that family has in relation to death, on a personal and collective level. On Good Friday the way family members behave and interact with each other could easily be interpreted as that family mourning for a relative who passed away. There is something very melancholic and 'heavy' in the whole atmosphere in each family's house. Therefore, it seems that the process of mourning either in a collective or a personal basis can be characterized by the subjects by one word; 'suffering'. The feeling of suffering is quite complex as we will see below, so that it affects subjects' construction of identity on a conscious and unconscious level. This sort of attitude finds its origin and becomes part of two components that Freud called the 'id' and the 'superego', which in the present case play a vital role in subjects' identity formation. According to Freud the structural model of the mind consists of three parts: the *id or unconscious*, the *ego* and the *super ego*. In the id Freud located all the instincts and drives of which we cannot be aware. These drives and impulses were thought to be inborn and instinctive and to seek immediate satisfaction. Nevertheless these drives very often come into conflict with other, socially approved, learned behaviour and the general demands society makes upon us. At this stage ego and superego start to interfere and therein lies the friction between these two areas of the mind: the Unconscious pressing for satisfaction of its impulses, and a conscious, rational, socialised part of the mind that contains a critical agency which forbids the satisfaction of these wishes. We cannot observe unconscious wishes directly, but we can observe how they push the critical agency and manifest indirectly in our behaviour (Roth, 2001: 9). [39]

In this context, subjects' emotions of suffering and pain have already become embedded as a part of their identity construction, tied in with obligation. In this sense, the process of mourning and suffering has an idealised role in terms of how the subjects conceive and experience it. This idealised meaning is not a separate component of subjects' identity; it is part of it, which I think is always re-created according to the certain values, and ideals that are given to subjects^[J10]. Subjects' superegos already incorporate certain rules that their parents and society impose to them and eventually become a powerful force in the mind of the subjects. The power of the superego comes from its capacity to create guilt and the bad feelings connected with guilt, and it can dictate our behaviour and our thought. Thus, subjects' suffering cannot really be analysed in terms of the elements that comprise it; it does not seem to have a particular content. It is a feeling, which directs the subjects automatically to act in such a way. As Sara Ahmed underlines:

The 'ideal self' does not have certain characteristics; the 'content' is in some way empty. Idealisation, which creates the effect of an ideal, is contingent because it is dependent on the values that are 'given to' subjects through the encounters with others. It is the gift of the ideal rather than the content of the ideal that matters. (Ahmed, 2004:106)

This sort of attitude underpins the fact that this idealisation of suffering does not consist of a particular descriptive element that allow us to see clearly why subjects react to mourning in such a way; on the contrary, it has a rather abstract character which nevertheless is able to provide an overall image that constitutes part of our national

identity. It seems that subjects are not really interested in seeing the different content of a collective and personal ceremony of mourning, but they put all of their energy [p11] to an emotional state of being.

In this context, the feeling of suffering for Jesus Christ or for a relative becomes a collective-social activity, which brings subjects together, and shapes a particular ground in terms of beliefs and values that construct part of our national identity. Moreover, there is a strong sense of attachment-identification to a person they mourn. As subjects say “ On Good Friday I am always sad, and melancholic, it is like every year I mourn for somebody I lost”, so that there is a strong feeling of admiration, respect, and extreme pain on Good Friday in mourning of the death of Jesus Christ. Their reactions are like mourning for their own relatives and not for an icon [p12] like Jesus Christ. On Good Friday evening the coffin of Christ is decorated with gold cloth and fresh flowers, where the faithful bow and stoop to kiss the symbolic body of Christ. After this follows the procession of the '*Epitaphios*' which is carried out of the church and paraded through the streets in a lengthy funeral procession.

It is [p13] as if Jesus Christ signifies people that subjects once lost or even only imagine could have been there. This absence of a loved object, Jesus Christ at that moment, creates emotional bonds of suffering and pain that glue together thousands of people, as subjects say. Athena explains below while describing her photograph of the Good Friday procession that this sort of reaction is a very strong characteristic that seems to constitute part of our identity.

Athena (55 years old, Athens): Yes apart from the fanatically religious element, there is a very strong traditional one which is very vivid on Good Friday. In Good Friday, you and thousands of people hold their brown candles, mourn by singing the psalms and follow the shrine of Christ decorated with flowers in the church in

the morning of Good Friday. The procession of the shrine is a very collective religious ceremony and constitutes a very strong element of the sense of Greekness

Athena shows her strong admiration for the procession of Good Friday not only for the religious content of it but mostly for the traditional one. It seems to me a bit like a paradox; although Jesus Christ is a religious figure, Athena decides to give to him a more human dimension. She remembers the whole ritual process of Good Friday by focusing especially on small details like the brown candles or the psalms that create strong emotions of love and respect for that day. This sort of emotional and traditional atmosphere for Athena constitutes a very strong sense of Greekness.

Margarita also remembers this beautiful atmosphere of Good Friday by showing me a photograph with her family from Sunday Easter.

Margarita (39 years old, Athens): Here I am with my family at Sunday Easter. I really love Easter in Greece, all the holy week is so beautiful, not for its religious context but mostly for its sentimental and social one. At Good Friday, when we go to the church to share the pain of Jesus Christ, to sing, cry, and at the same time socializing with our family and our friends. Easter for me is a very family ceremony, where there is a strong sense in the whole atmosphere between death and beauty.

Margarita also describes Easter and especially Good Friday as a day that will bring her family together when her family and her friends will share a 'common' pain and suffering of that of Jesus Christ. She is fully absorbed in this ceremony mostly because of its particular atmosphere, which involves strong emotions but is not necessarily related to the religious content of it. She perceives that day as a social

space where family and friends express strong emotions for somebody who died. It seems that the whole ritual of mourning and generally the concept of death for her is almost embedded in her daily life; it is like a 'natural' process, a continuation of life. She is also able to see the whole concept of death without pessimism; on the contrary as she underlines that 'there is a strong sense in the whole atmosphere between beauty and death'. Based on that comment it looks as if Margarita does not see death as something 'bad' or 'macabre'; instead there is beauty waiting to be recognised.

Alexandra shares the same perspective as Athena and she tries to express it by showing me a personal photograph of the tomb of her father.

Alexandra (40 years old, Athens): Here is a very macabre photograph. It's the tomb of my father located in Mani (Southern Peloponnesian). The concept of death is very important in Mani. Around the tomb of my father there are many women dressing in black who mourn by singing special songs for the death of my father. In Mani the social events that are very important are the funerals and the Remembrance Day. Since I was a kid I remember my father bringing the newspaper in the house and the first thing that he used to read was the page of the funerals and the remembrance day in order to see whether there is a relative or a friend. A funeral in Mani is a social place of meeting and socializing with people. I also remember when my grandmother died women in the streets dressing in black to mourn with *moirologia*.

Alexandra seems very familiar with the whole idea of death. In the place that she was born funerals were one of the most important social events; she remembers also as a child that the idea of death and generally the whole process of mourning somebody was actually circulating and became part of her daily life within certain habitual

experiences of her father's, such as always reading the page where the funerals and remembrance days were listed in the newspaper. Another vivid experience of hers, which I think intensifies the importance of death, is when women dress in black and sing these particular songs: *moirologia*. *Moirologia* are^[J14] a form of lamentation that has various aspects including: being an honour to the dead person, a sort of cathartic process for people not to feel guilt, and another way of expressing the destiny of that person. Taking this into account it seems ^[J15]that mourning in Greek society is so much embedded in our daily life that it becomes a state of being and constitutes part of our identity. The process of mourning forms part of our ego and superego. The former indicates our deep feelings that sometimes come into conflict with the latter which are all these moral values and codes that not only family but also the society we live in, have implanted in us. Nevertheless, both structures of our mind and the ego and the superego are responsible for the position that the concept of death and mourning obtains in our formation of our identity. Our respect for social relations, and law and order, is not simply imposed on us by the society we live in, but comes from a need that begins in infancy and early childhood: a need to obey, honour and maintain the social order in which we live (Roth, 2001: 14). ^[J16]Therefore, there is no line of demarcation between where the pain and suffering starts and where the obligation begins. ^[J17]

Taking this into account, it seems that a ritual ceremony like the mourning of Jesus Christ or of a relative contain such strong emotions of pain and suffering tied with guilt, that eventually simultaneously become a national pain and suffering and constitute part of their identity. What is also interesting is that although subjects sometimes avoid placing their pain and suffering into a religious context which it

also connects with, I think it is the strength and the power that religion has in Greek society which creates the confusion between pain, suffering, and guilt.

A Pride of Suffering...

The same sort of behaviour was recognised when the subjects brought a series of photographs related to public ceremonies like weddings and national commemorations. They expressed the idea that although their beliefs about these social practices were different to the ones that society and family has imposed to them, they reached a stage where they 'had' to fulfil expectations and commitments for the sake of their parents. In a way it is another form of suffering which is as important as mourning, since subjects really suffer in the idea that they have to go against their views and fall back into social ideals that they do not really support. Suffering here creates feelings of shame or regret for the subjects since they feel that they are trapped into not making a confession to their parents about how they really feel about these social practices.

Marriage in Greek society is a very old and very traditional ceremony, which involves lots of characteristics that constitute part of our national identity. Family has a great involvement not only in the preparation of the wedding but also with whom you are getting married in terms of his/her class, occupation and origin. In this context the whole process of marriage becomes not an individual but a family decision. This sort of attitude raises a big concern as subjects explore what their own emotional or psychological world stands for. It seems that not only for the idea of marriage but also for other kinds of social practices such as national commemoration or even more daily experiences like being a good student at school, subjects express feelings of shame and sadness related to how they feel about them

[J18]but without be able to transmit these to their parents. It appears there is a line of demarcation between of what parents feel and believe and how their children act upon those feelings and beliefs, disregarding or leaving aside their individual psychological world.

Mariana expresses the following opinion while she is showing me a photograph from her wedding.

Mariana (35 years old, Athens): I don't believe in marriage as part of our tradition, something that has to be done. I believe more in the ritual context of it. Otherwise the concept of marriage doesn't say anything to me. Nevertheless I am willing to fulfil this imaginary commitment of my parents and of the parents of my boyfriend. What I mean is that I am ready to fulfil their wishes and their wanting, meaning to get married with a very traditional wedding as they want and to follow every single step of the whole process as part of our tradition. Although I believe that from all of our traditions we have to keep the ones that we feel completely identified with, I am ready to make this sacrifice for my parents and to go against my beliefs.

Mariana's reaction to what the whole ceremony of getting married means underlines a big compromise. On the one hand, she excludes marriage in terms of not seeing it as a vital ceremony that constitutes part of her tradition and on the other hand she acts in a completely opposite way; she is prepared to fulfil every single expectation of what her parents believe marriage is all about. It seems that her personal opinion comes second since she is ready to go against her 'real' ideas about marriage and to make, as she calls it, this 'sacrifice' for her parents. Sacrifice is a word with a very heavy meaning; Sacrifice has already constructed part of Mariana's identity which comes out in the form of experiences like the whole process of getting married and what means to her. Sacrifice stands [J19]as a conscious priority for Mariana

concerning her choices or rather her preferences particularly in relation to the concept of marriage and how she compromises herself for the sake of her parents. At this stage I am wondering what her identity consists of? If there is such a thing as self-identity, how, and in relation to what, has it been shaped? It seems that a big part of Mariana's identity is related to what beliefs and ideals her parents transfer to her, which in the end constitute and transform part of her identity. Therefore, to what extent do Mariana's experiences and emotions construct part of her identity, and where do these same experiences start taking the form of 'national duty', which eventually gives a more complex and coherent shape to what constitutes our national identity?

Athena shares the same opinion as Mariana but had a different experience, when she was about to get married:

Athena (55 years old, Athens): Here is a photograph of my wedding. Now I am divorced but that time I was really very much in love and I loved him very much. But I remember that my father forced me to get married before leaving to UK with my husband, because he didn't want to leave stay with him without being married...I felt that I was very young to get married but I didn't have an alternative; I had to get married and I did it... I was so upset and sad...but I had to follow the request of my father. My father was so afraid of the social milieu, what people will say if they heard that my daughter is going to live with somebody without being married that yes I had to do it no matter what.

What is very interesting is that although Athena is quite happy showing me her photograph of her wedding, her memories have some bitter taste of how and why she got married. Her emotions at that time involve some sadness because she was not ready or simply didn't want to get married. Nevertheless, the decision of her father came first and

Athena followed it by actually repressing her own emotions. One of the reasons that she did it was not only to satisfy her father but mostly all the relatives of the family who were aware and knew her story. Therefore, although weddings as a ritual and social practice primarily involve the interaction of two individuals, in Greek society they tend to be a social event which automatically contain multi-dimensional meanings, where as Athena says words like 'request' or 'social milieu' prevail over the feelings. In this case, even if the whole process of marriage has a significance and is something that creates feelings of happiness, it seems that the way that it happened in Athena's situation automatically gave another shape to the whole ritual. That means that the wedding comes to be an obligatory action from which certain cultural characteristics emerge that show how the family comes together and at the same time how it is formed within such a social event.

In this context, I understand together with my subjects that although the materialisation of experiences, of suffering of shame, regret, and sadness have great validity, nevertheless when it comes to acting upon certain ritual and cultural practices which family as an institution dictates they become something else, something that takes the form of something big and national, a national identity which is very strong and powerful. This sort of reaction is due to different levels of identification that subjects explore at a very early stage of their lives with their parents. They learn from their parents specific codes of behaviour and how to act upon them on the level of social and cultural practices. Freud says that at the very early stage small children take inside themselves and identify with their parents' prohibitions. Their superego is like the voice of their parents inside themselves, sometimes praising them for 'good' behaviour, but sometimes

punishing them for what the superego feels is bad behaviour. This voice of authority that once belonged to the parents becomes part of the self, confronting the rest of the self (the ego) and making demands upon it (Laplanche&Pontalis, 1988: 145).

Although their *ego* consists of a series of psychological and social needs, when it comes to particular cultural practices their *superego* becomes a *social ideal*; this social ideal is like an extension of their superego, which is created in relation to the society we live in, so that is inter-related^[120]. Therefore, it seems that the feelings of pain, suffering of shame or upset can be integrated into the norms and values that society has already established and that eventually create what we refer to as national identity.

Taking this into account, as Aphrodite express, it seems that school as an institution underlines certain sorts of behaviour that the parents-family expects. It is very hard as Aphrodite says to express a psychic turmoil, which might happen in your daily life, which actually is opposed to what parents believe.

Aphrodite (42 years old, Athens): I remember during the years of the dictatorship, I really hated the school. I used to have a teacher very politicised not against but for the dictatorship. This teacher was the witch of my adulthood years and she really made me hate the school. I never said anything to my parents how sad I was in my school, because my parents they have already built an image about me, what a good student I am, how disciplined, always getting very good grades, so I was very afraid and ashamed of telling them... I thought that I would ruin all this strong foundation that they have already had about me.

Aphrodite's experiences of school show a sort of ambivalence in terms of how she really reacted to it. On the one hand she was extremely sad and on the other hand she was presenting herself in front of her

parents as if nothing was happening in her psychic world. It seems that there is an inner struggle in Aphrodite's psyche; there is a conflict, as Freud would suggest 'between her psychic world and that of the ideal- that of social power, which eventually reflect the contrast what is external and what is internal, what is 'real' and what is psychical', and at the end fabricate part of her identity (Freud, 1923: 36). Therefore her psychic life is generated by all these constructed or rather social ideals and beliefs that seem to be so powerful as to conceal Aphrodite's feelings and emotions. In this context, Aphrodite's feelings of being ashamed and afraid of telling to her parents her inner worries related to an 'ideal' image that had already built her identity.

What is coming out here is that even under the context of mourning of Jesus Christ or in the social practices of weddings or commemorations there is a 'pride of suffering' that has been recognised by the subjects. Subjects express their common suffering through mourning for the death of Jesus Christ or of a close relative as well as when they try to fulfil the expectations and commitments of their parents for the sake of a social ideal. Moreover, I can say that on the one hand these ritual and social practices bring the family together, on the other hand I have also shown how several cultural characteristics have been shaped by and with the family. [J21] This pride of suffering is made feelings of shame, regret, sadness and guilt. It is with these particular emotions that subjects raised an ambivalent kind of reaction in terms of where or how their feelings are positioned or where they stand in relation to these rituals and practices, at the moment when subjects start seeing them as obligation. This sort of attitude seems to affect subjects' identity formation; they are in a constant struggle to integrate the social ideals that have been inflicted by their families or by religious

norms and values as part of their ideal-ego (superego). It seems that there is an inter-related [J22]relationship between subjects' identity and social ideals. Therefore, there is a very strong and dynamic relationship between the psychic life of the subjects and the social ideals, which comes through in this chapter in relation to the family as an institution. In this context, I am wondering, together with my subjects, whether words like 'sacrifice', shared 'pain' and 'suffering', and 'guilt' that were mentioned especially under the sections of mourning, weddings and other social practices compose, sustain, and preserve in some way what we refer to as national identity. Therefore the self is both individual and national at the same time.

Taking this into account what then is the actual role of these social and cultural practices in relation to the formation of families and to an extent to the identity of a nation? It seems that these practices have a dual role:

On the one hand subjects experience the ritual of Easter by trying to find a connection or a link with their history and tradition, through not simply the family itself but how they imagine the concept of family; this imaginary commitment came through the eyes of their grandparents. Grandparents represent for them a social, historical and a mythical symbol where Easter or a national parade becomes an unforgettable experience. Whether grandparents' stories and experiences are 'real' or not, what counts for the subjects is that this is what constitutes part of their belonging and of what they call their sense of Greekness. This sort of behaviour also emerges from the subjects when food becomes a means-medium with a sensory dimension that signifies a sense of belonging and shows several characteristics of the Greek nation that connect the past with the present. It is within food that subjects interpret and contextualise the

'beauty' and the 'imagined' atmosphere that Easter or the day of a national parade has. Even if subjects imagined a particular picture of Easter or a national commemoration in their mind, it is within these events that a series of cultural characteristics emerge, which confirm myth as a mode of belonging and remembering that eventually constitutes part of our cultural identity.

On the other hand these social and cultural practices acquire a particular power, which seems to have a great impact on the formation of families and how subjects' identity has been shaped by it. It appears there is a continuous struggle or juxtaposition between how subjects imagine and feel about these social and cultural practices and how these practices appear when they take the form of 'obligation' or 'duty'. [J23]I do not really see these as two separate positions; on the contrary they constitute part of subjects' identity construction which always has the capacity to be re-shaped because of this ambivalent conflict that exists in their (conscious and unconscious) world between their psychological and social needs. Somewhere in between these two positions is concealed what we call 'national identity' or a 'national ideal', based on subject's perceptions of how family, Greekness, belonging, and suffering have been understood and experienced within certain types of social and cultural practices[J24].

[s1]Paragraphs should always be at least three sentences long- you can't make a new paragraph which is only one sentence.

[s2]Avoid starting sentences with 'And' or 'But'.

[s3]This may slightly change what you mean, but it's unusual to say they are 'recorded within the concept'... but they could be 'embedded' within it.

Page: 8

[J4]How do they accredit his knowledge? Do they not form the basis of it (rather than confirming what he already knows?)

Page: 9

[J5]In what sense is food a metaphor?

Page: 12

[J6]It is a medium, or a symbol? I don't think it can be both.

Page: 12

[J7]I'm very unclear about what you mean here.

Page: 14

[J8]What do you mean by this?

Page: 16

[J9]?

Page: 17

[J10]Who is 'them' in this context? The subject, or the values/ideals?

Page: 18

[J11]What do you mean by this?

Page: 18

[J12]Icon?

Page: 18

[J13]'like' is too informal in this context

Page: 21

[J14]are (is it plural?)

Page: 21

[J15]How do they indicate this?

Page: 21

[J16]? You will need to explain where this need comes from.

Page: 21

[J17]?

Page: 23

[J18]In regards to what?

Page: 23

[J19]What does this whole sentence mean? It's very unclear.

Page: 26

[J20]Explain further how its creation within society makes it intersubjective. I think you are presupposing a particular view of society here...

Page: 27

[J21]By using 'although' you imply that the latter part of this statement is contradictory, but I don't think it is.

Page: 28

[J22]Inter-subjective has to do with the relationship between subjects; so the relation between subjects and social ideals isn't really 'intersubjective' in my interpretation. They may be interrelated, but not intersubjective...?

Page: 29

[J23]This is very repetitive of the line before.

Page: 29

[J24]Something to lead into the next chapter would be nice here!