Culture and identity in study abroad contexts

After Australia, French without France

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CULTURE AND IDENTITY IN STUDY ABROAD CONTEXTS:
After Australia, French without France

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Chapter Five
Cultural Identity Issues

This chapter focuses on cultural identity issues which have grown out of the data analysis of chapters three and four. The re-negotiation of cultural identity during intercultural transitions, from the perspective of the participants of this study is of paramount importance as the ramifications of identity remodelling may dramatically affect the future of these young sojourners. This is because their self-concept and self-esteem have been altered to varying degrees, irrevocably in some instances, and the way they perceive their new cultural identity during the difficult re-entry transition back into France may have lasting personal and social consequences.

An important issue has emerged. In France, as in many other nations, there is evidence of an innate fear of the hegemonic effects of English for its undesirable influence on the cultural identity of the young generation. Therefore, the link between language, culture and identity increases in significance during the transitional processes of adaptation and readjustment. Language, after all, has been considered a part of humans' unique cognitive endowment (Erard, 2005). It stands to reason that language is an intrinsic marker of one's cultural and national identity (eg. Hill, 2002; Liddicoat et al., 2003). Liddicoat (2002) argues culture is entrenched in even the simplest language and is perceived as inseparable from the way we live our lives and use our language. The complexity of culture becomes apparent when one considers it in its sociolinguistic context, that is, how it shapes the things we say, when we say them and how we say them, from the simplest utterances to the most eloquent speeches. He argues it is fundamental to the way we speak, write, listen and read.

This chapter will analyse how French sojourners represented their cultural identity and to what extent they remodelled it as a result of the various interactions between the multiple groups involved. Further, it will evaluate the impact this transformation has had on their re-entry processes. The foci of this chapter concern first and foremost the perception that the French sojourners had of their cultural identity initially, with special emphasis placed on the ensuing remodelling of their identity subsequent to their Australian sojourn. These perceptions centred on aspects of their national identity, which appears to have become for them the salient aspect of their identity as the result of their experiences living and studying in a new culture. Secondly, analysis of the identity experiences of this group of sojourners will focus on their interactions in the sociocultural settings of Australia and France. Both the acculturation and repatriation processes can be expected to impact significantly on the identity orientations of this French group. This is because identity transformations occur in response to temporal, cultural and situational contexts (Ward et al., 2001). Berry's (1991) modes of acculturation and Kim's (2001) communication theory of intercultural adaptation will be employed as templates for assessing the emergent identities of this group in the context of Australia. Sussman's (2002) conceptualisation of the cultural identity model will assist in determining the resultant identity orientation of the returnees in France and Switzerland based on the cyclical process of adaptation abroad and readjustment to their country of origin.

Whilst identity issues, which are closely tied to self-concept, are more salient during adolescence (Phinney, 1992), one cannot deny the implications of modifications of one's identity during intercultural

exchange situations. When sojourners, like their traveller counterparts, enter a new society with long-standing, distinctive cultural norms and values, identity changes may result from intercultural contact between the visitors and the host society members (Ward et al., 2001). As the cultural identity of the French respondents had rarely been challenged before their sojourn in Australia, the catalyst that precipitated modifications to their cultural identity emerged as a result of the lack of exposure to the Australian culture.

The Vicissitudes of Identity of French Academic Sojourners

The sense of being French was highlighted for the sojourners during the exchange experience and their perceptions of what this meant and how it was valued were effected by the events of the exchange. This section examines vicissitudes of identity (Garza-Guerrero, 1974) in relation to the intercultural exchange situation of these sojourners. The term 'vicissitudes of identity' signifies variations or changes in circumstance or fortune, where an individual's identity undergoes transformation as a result of intercultural contact. The concept also involves a potential threat to an individual's identity. The data revealed all respondents but one placed positive value on their French identity at the start of the sojourn in Australia. The pride these sojourners felt in their identity and in French culture was often mistaken for arrogance and many made no apologies for this view. Brigitte's statement is testimony to this: 'On est un peu arrogant quand on parle de la culture française. La fierté peut passer pour l'arrogance'.[1]

The significance of this avowal becomes apparent when one considers the transformation in Brigitte's cultural identity that has taken place after eighteen months of sojourning in Australia. Where, on the one hand, Brigitte makes no apologies for the feeling of arrogance when it relates to French culture, she modifies this sentiment by explaining that pride can be misconstrued as arrogance. One can extrapolate from her interviews that where initially she felt no need to qualify her statement about French culture with an apologetic explanation, cultural learning and cognizance of sensitive issues during intercultural interactions in Australia have taught her to moderate her expressions in regard to cultural distinctions. However, it is essentially the contrast with other groups that has reinforced her sense of belonging to French culture (see Tajfel, 1978, 1981). The following comment from Brigitte encapsulates the semantic connotations of cultural identity generally perceived by the French subjects not pertaining to the group characterised as multicultural identities:

> In Europe, now we have the Euro, not the same money as before. That's one piece of identity lost. I am a French girl. I am very patriotic, I like France, I like the culture and the history. I am very proud of my country, of being French and that's another thing when you go in Australia or another country, you feel this identity of French becomes over-important for you, it is […] highlighted. Before you didn't think about that, you didn't ask yourself questions or wonder about your identity, you didn't think about that […] Je pense que je suis encore française, peut-être plus qu'avant. Mais d'un autre côté je pense que j'ai cette dualité du fait d'avoir été à l'étranger (Brigitte).[2]

Brigitte shows perspicacity in her comments about the question of identity when she articulates the importance of the transformation that occurred as a result of her Australian sojourn. Brigitte reaffirms her Frenchness whilst reflecting on the duality of her identity following immersion in a multicultural context for eighteen months. This text further illustrates the philosophy of 'translation' and 'hybridity' expounded by Bhabha (1996) and the concept of 'the third place' posited by Liddicoat (2003), Kramsch (1993) and Byram (1999) because it shows that this person has successfully integrated language and

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[1]   One is a little arrogant when speaking about French culture. Pride can be misconstrued as arrogance (Brigitte).
[2]   I think that I am still French, maybe more than before. But on the other hand I think I have this duality for having been overseas (Brigitte).

culture learning through the sojourn experience. The terminology used by Brigitte to describe this feature of her sojourn experience is highly charged: 'I am […] more French than before' and 'I have this duality'. Her testimony of the importance of changes that have taken place during the sojourn are intensified in these words. A degree of cultural integrity is maintained without sacrificing one's origins within the context of the larger social network, as Brigitte has assumed aspects of Australian cultural identity whilst maintaining firm allegiance to her culture of origin (Berry, 1991). She found her niche in a place between the two cultures, establishing her own identity as a user of English without relinquishing the most important features of her culture, such as her native tongue, her accent, and other French cultural attributes. The excerpt shows successful second language acquisition because Brigitte developed her own style in this third place, where the focus is on intercultural communicative competence (Kramsch, 1993; Liddicoat et al., 2003).

In chapters two and three, Brigitte's views provided authentication of the pride she felt in her French cultural identity, and it became evident that she vigorously embraced her role of ambassador. In those chapters, language was an intrinsic marker of her cultural identity and in this instance she perceives the change of currency in France from the franc to the Euro as detracting from French identity. The fact that questions relating to one's identity are heightened as a consequence of the sojourn accentuates the need for a thorough examination of the concept. The following excerpt is of fundamental importance as it embodies the changes in cultural identity that became apparent to the majority of the French participants as a result of the dynamics of their relationships during these exchange situations:

> Je me sens pas encore […] ce serait encore arrogant de dire que je me sens australienne mais je me sens plus internationale, intégrée d'avoir vu tellement de différentes personnes. On a tenu un journal intime de voyage, et quand on regarde du début à la fin, c'est vrai que l'expérience interjoue un rôle et je pense que ça fait part de notre identité maintenant et c'est ce qui sera le plus difficile à partager à notre retour. C'est bien qu'on se sent plus français qu'avant […] on va être plus exigeants parce qu'on a renforcé notre côté français. On est plus sûrs de nous, on a appris tellement et quand on va essayer d'en parler, les gens vont peut-être pas comprendre. Je suis toujours française mais mon coeur restera en Australie parce qu'on a des amis très proches en Australie (Brigitte).[3]

Brigitte's enriched intercultural identity orientation, articulated in this substantial text, results from her international relations during her academic sojourn in Australia. She credited her overseas experience with having enhanced her identity, culminating in her feeling more French than before. This view exemplifies how the process of adjustment in Australia initially confirmed the French cultural identity of the respondents. However, a continual process of hybridity, culminating in a 'third place' occurred whilst abroad as a result of the sojourners' sociological, cultural and linguistic interactions. The ultimate but unconscious goal of the linguistic and cultural experience of this group of sojourners, was to reach a hybrid third place for themselves, achieved through a valuation of the evolving cultural identity as well as that of the target culture (Liddicoat et al., 1999). As Byram (1999 p.99) points out, where existing identities are firm, such as was the case with the French group, the development of new identities need not undermine the original. As the data revealed, this French group felt both French and European and, in some instances, a little bit Australian. As Byram argues, the two identities are in essence, not mutually exclusive as their status is represented at different societal levels.

Growing from the data in chapter three, Brigitte's feelings are mirrored by the rest of her cohort as they embrace the changes to their personalities because of the sojourn, through awareness of their own cultural identity thrown into relief with the Australian, again reminiscent of Tajfel's (1978; 1981) notions of social comparisons and Sussman's (2002) arguments on cultural identity awareness. This finally manifested in a transformation of their French identity into a dual or hybrid cultural identity. The significance of the notions of 'hybridity', 'third space' and 'third place' is reiterated throughout the data, specifically articulated by the respondents who have become aware of their modified identity. The

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[3]   I don't as yet feel […] it would be arrogant to say that I felt Australian but I feel more international, integrated for having seen so many different people. We kept an intimate diary of our trip, and when we look at it from the beginning to the end it's true to say that the experience interplays a role and I think that it is now a part of our identity and that is what will be the most difficult thing to share when we return. It's good that we feel more French than before […] we are going to be more demanding because we have reinforced this French characteristic. We shall be more self-confident, we have learned so much and when we are going to try to speak about it, people will perhaps not understand. I am still French but my heart will remain in Australia because we have very close friends in Australia (Brigitte).

process was not devoid of complications analogous to identity crises for some respondents as witnessed by Brigitte's testimony above. Clearly, there is a dichotomous relationship evident in the confusion expressed by Brigitte who worries firstly that her feeling a little bit Australian may be construed as arrogance. After having adopted many facets of Australian lifestyle and culture and having made significant friendships, she opts for the term 'international' instead of Franco-Australian perhaps. Secondly, keeping a diary for the duration of the sojourn assisted Brigitte in assessing the vicissitudes of her cultural identity, monitoring the variations in her circumstances. She interprets this as being instrumental in determining the person she has become and confesses to a fear that the new persona will not be easily assimilated into French society upon her return. She considers that her reinforced French identity will exacerbate the critical transitional phase upon re-entry because the new cosmopolitan individual she has become involves a more demanding side to her French character and people will not understand the changes. The statement that she is still French but her heart remains in Australia is manifestly problematic and may have contributed to the identity crisis Brigitte experienced upon re-entry. These sentiments are also representative of the majority of the French cohort. The complexity of this situation becomes evident upon analysis of Brigitte's motives for leaving France in the first place:

> I was thinking that I was not happy with my life in France. I was not happy about Paris because it was polluted and over-crowded, des grèves, (strikes) the striking people always complaining about something, the administratives, you have always when you want something, you have to wait. C'est la bureaucratie française! Et il est vrai qu'à ce moment-là j'avais envie de partir et de voir comment ça se passait dans un autre pays et de peut-être de trouver quelque chose d'autre, un peu le paradis, l'utopie […] et c'est vrai que j'ai trouvé ça [en Australie]. Je pense que je pourrais même vivre ici, mais il faut que je fasse le deuil complet de la France, de ma propre culture et pour ça je me donne quelques mois, j'angoisse beaucoup à ce moment là […] J'ai réussi mon challenge, je parle anglais, j'ai réussi mon LLM, mon Master, j'ai rencontré des gens formidables et je sais toujours pas si je peux rester ici en Australie […] pour moi c'est un grand pas. J'ai pas encore eu le courage (Brigitte).[4]

This text clearly encapsulates the distress that thoughts of emigration can involve for the French sojourners who contemplate leaving their homeland for Australia. However, the internal conflict between their French consciousness and their newly acquired intercultural identity is critical and worthy of consideration. Brigitte admits to a desire to leave France because of dissatisfaction with the social fabric of her society but a paradox emerged which complicated her life even further. In leaving France, she essentially re-confirmed her French identity rendering the re-entry process even more complex because of her wish to establish herself in Australia also. This further aggravated the difficulties she envisaged upon re-entry because the anticipated problems did not appear easy to reconcile. The dilemma becomes even more intricate as she contemplates settling in Australia because she feels torn between her French cultural heritage and adopting Australia as home. Her reasons for procrastinating are consequently complex. The excerpts illustrating Brigitte's adjustments to her cultural identity have highlighted potential problems that sojourners increasingly face in the context of intercultural exchanges in this age of globalization. The increased mobility of French youth, in this case facilitated by their Australian experience, has created a third culture where these returned academic sojourners are becoming international nomads (e.g. Pollock and Van Reken, 2001; Stultz, 2002). The following examples further substantiate the notions expressed by the above researchers.

Diane's interview conveys aspects of confusion, infused with feelings of pride in regard to her cultural identity. The overseas experience clearly induced her to redefine this crucial part of her self-perception. She explains her notions on national identity and pride:

> Pour certaines choses je peux être fière d'être française, par exemple quand on parle du vin français, de l'art de la table ou la littérature française […] sinon, bon je suis française, je suis européenne quoi! Je me sens pas limitée à la France, à l'Europe […] [Après cette expérience en Australie] je suis plus internationale plus que française […] [Avant] j'étais satisfaite de ma vie en France […] l'Australie c'est particulier. On vient ici et on découvre le monde entier, l'Asie ou

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4   It's French bureaucracy! And it's true that at that moment I wanted to leave and see what things were like in another country and perhaps to find something else, perhaps paradise, utopia […] and it's true that I found that [in Australia]. I think that I could even live here, but I have to grieve completely for France, for my own culture and for this I give myself a few months, I would feel anguish at that moment […] I have succeeded in my challenge, I speak English, I have successfully completed my LLM, my Masters, I have met wonderful people and I still don't know if I can stay here in Australia […] for me it's a big step. I have not yet had the courage (Brigitte).

l'Amérique Latine, Canada, des gens d'extra-Europe quoi. Enfin ya pas beaucoup d'Européens quoi. Ici j'ai découvert autre chose que l'Europe (Diane).[5]

The transformation of Diane's cultural identity is easy to trace in this text as she acknowledges pride in features of French tradition and culture. However, presumably because of the previously mentioned dearth of knowledge and exposure to everything Australian, her cultural identity was challenged when confronted with a whole new world of cultures within the microcosm of one nation, unlike anything she had come across in Europe. Modifications to her cultural identity were thus accelerated (see Blackledge and Pavlenko). The pressures to change her existing cultural identity were constant during her 15 months in Australia, albeit they were not overtly expressed, but they were certainly enduring. She considered her sojourn as an unqualified success and was one of the many respondents who tried to prolong her stay and envisaged returning in the future. Various examples supporting these arguments were utilised in chapter four on reverse culture shock. The transition from French identity to European to international is testimony to the effects of intercultural exchange situations on sojourners but this is also reminiscent of Liddicoat et al.'s (1999) and Bhabha's (1990) argument that a 'third place' was negotiated during the interactions between the self and the other, without compromising all existing parts of one's original cultural identity. Diane's sentiments are tantamount to liberation from being limited to France and Europe. This realisation represents the catalytic moment of the conscious conversion of her French cultural identity to that of international status. Diane offers further evidence of the confusion that transformation of her cultural identity had engendered prior to unravelling its complexities, as implied in her description below:

En revenant en France, j'avais honte d'être française quand je voyais tout le bordel qu'il y avait ici. Je crois que les français ne se rendent pas compte de la chance qu'ils ont […] quand on est loin on regrette beaucoup de choses de [son pays], de son origine et puis quand on revient on se demande pourquoi ça nous a tant manqués quoi, parce qu'il y avait rien d'extraordinaire […] en fait, on revient et c'est chez moi et on voit pas ce côté magique que les autres voient à Paris […] Maintenant je me sens plus ouverte, je vais beaucoup plus facilement vers les autres, je parle plus facilement de moi, je pose plus de questions sur les autres […] [6] I want to go abroad again to work or to travel. I'm French but I don't feel French. I feel Australian, I'm a bit of both. I like some Australian ways and some French ways. I fit into Australia really well, I was happy with my integration into Australia. Now back in France I feel different. I don't feel I fit in here well any more, I feel out of place […] I had to adapt to every kind of situation [in Australia]. I think I can go anywhere in the world now and adapt. It's a good life overseas […] You feel it's a pity to stay here [in France] all your life […] I know that I'm not pure French now. I'm agreeing [with criticism about the French] because I don't feel the same way anymore (Diane).

It is evident that Diane's cultural identity has traversed various stages culminating in a definition of bicultural orientation (Szapocznik and Kurtines, 1980). Biculturation implies acculturation is two dimensional, involving accommodation to the host culture whilst retention of the original culture is maintained. Having a fervent desire to experience further adventures abroad, she believes herself equipped to cope in diverse cultural situations thanks to her Australian sojourn where she, like her cohort, discovered a new aspect of her personality, assumed greater self-confidence and learned to adapt and integrate fully into that society. These are essentially the by-products of successful international exchanges and the reason why they should be carefully orchestrated. Further, it is through this experience that she developed the ability to emerge from her shy demeanour into an outgoing personality. Her admission that she had constructed favourable images of home whilst abroad, which

[5]   For certain things I can be proud of being French, for example when one speaks of French wine, the art of entertaining or French literature […] otherwise, OK, I am French, I am European! I do not feel attached to France, to Europe […] [After this experience in Australia] I am more international rather than French […] [Before] I was satisfied with my life in France […] Australia is distinctive. One arrives here and discovers the entire world, Asia or South America, Canada, people outside of Europe. Well, there are not many Europeans. Here I discovered things other than Europe (Diane).

[6]   When I returned to France I was ashamed of being French when I saw the chaos here. I think that French people don't realise how lucky they are […] when you are far away you miss many things from your [country], from your origins and then when you return you wonder why you missed them so much because there was nothing extraordinary about it […] in fact you return and it's home and you don't have that magical perception that people have about Paris […] Now I feel I am more frank, I am more extroverted, I speak more easily about myself, I ask more questions about others […] (Diane).

resulted in disappointment upon re-entry is endorsement of Garza-Guerrero's (1974) arguments on the vicissitudes of identity, exemplified during the stages of mourning for lost cultural cues from home. Diane's new identity emerged after going through the various phases of cultural encounter, firstly through the mourning phase and the threats to her identity and the subsequent recovery. Diane, through the eyes of her international friends, reactivated in fantasy the wonderful aspects of her culture in Paris, which she began to miss considerably. Unable to return home at that stage, she eventually overcame the difficult moments of homesickness and subsequently began to organise her ego identity based on selective identifications with Australian culture. Once she had internalised these, she felt that she had become a little bit Australian, whilst retaining the inherent elements of her French cultural identity. This awareness of the hybrid nature of her identity in fact created the 'third place' that she negotiated for herself.

Paradoxically, it is essentially her remodelled identity that impeded a smooth readjustment process for her back in Paris after fifteen months and caused her to feel ashamed of being French when confronted with aspects of her home culture she found deplorable. This transformation, mirrored in many of the subjects, can be construed as the catalyst which is compelling the French returnees to leave their homeland once again when they find it difficult to reconcile their bi-cultural identities with that of their co-nationals. The changes in their value systems can be understood to obstruct their chances of re-acculturation and they become intolerant of their cultural mores. Even the promise Diane, like many others, made to herself, to re-discover her beloved culture, translated into something which was just too hard to achieve once home. This was identified through the longing for lost cultural cues which characterised the initial stages of the sojourners' acculturation process in Australia. In her interview, Diane attested to finding it too difficult to organise herself early in the morning to revisit memorable sites in Paris because of various constraints: the cold weather, lack of time and searching for work, to name but a few. Whereas the promise to re-discover her culture helped to minimise the effects of culture shock whilst in Australia, realistically, Diane like the rest of her cohort, was not prepared to realise these projects for personal reasons.

Jacqueline's interview represented perhaps one of the most fervent expressions of a bi-cultural identity at the end of her sojourn which impelled her to make long term projects to return to Australia:

> Je sais pas comment je m'identifie. Je suis française, je suis pas australienne. C'est comme ça, c'est un fait! Je me sens plutôt une personne interculturelle, peut-être un mixte entre les deux. Je suis française, ça je le sais, mon passeport me le dit, c'est mon seul passeport, voilà. Mais culturellement, j'ai aucun problème et je pense que c'est très facile de s'adapter en Australie, c'est pourquoi je me sens interculturelle. Je n'ai pas eu de difficultés pour m'intégrer du tout et d'ailleurs si je pouvais rester je resterais […] Je pense que je suis moi, c'est peut-être une culture plus espagnole que française parce que déjà j'habitais la frontière [française/espagnole], on parle tous espagnol et par exemple en été on mange à 3h ou 4h de l'après-midi […] si j'avais la possibilité d'être australienne et espagnole en même temps je serais très contente.[7] I think I have this role [of ambassador]. I represent France in the way I act, the way I speak […] For [the Australians] I am a French person and sometimes when I am with French guys, as an Australian person I am free to speak English but there is always one guy coming back to French and I am going back to English and I don't like it at all. It gives the image to the Australian that French people don't want to speak English, are disrespectful. The Australian experience has made me realise that I have become European. I think I was open-minded before but now more. It's made me understand that I am sure I can live abroad and that I don't want to be here [in France]. I feel that I have to how do you say: épanouir? […] blossom, and that is the way to do it (Jacqueline).

Jacqueline's quest to establish a cultural identity she can finally embody appears to have materialised. In this text, she systematically analyses the situation, categorising the different aspects of her cultural identity based on her existing intercultural personality arising from the fact that she resides on the border of Spain and France. Further, besides the fact that they observe many Spanish customs, she and her family speak Spanish although their origins are firmly rooted in France. This factor set the scene for

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[7]   I don't know how to identify myself. I am French, I am not Australian. That's the way it is, it's a fact! I feel I am more an intercultural person, maybe a mix between the two. I am French, this I know, my passport tells me so, it's my only passport, there you have it. But culturally, I have no problems and I think it is very easy to adapt to Australia, that's why I feel intercultural. I have no difficulty at all in integrating and besides if I could stay I would […] I think that I am me, it's perhaps more a Spanish culture than French because I already lived on the border [of France and Spain], we all speak Spanish and for example in summer we eat at 3.00pm or 4.00pm […] if there were a way that I could be Australian and Spanish at the same time I would be very happy (Jacqueline).

Jacqueline's conflict with her identity. She traversed each cultural border that had meaning for her to arrive at the conclusion that she has espoused the best of French, Spanish, European and Australian cultures to finally establish a niche for herself. Although one could surmise that Jacqueline is experiencing an identity crisis in this quotation, the end result of her observations indicates her transformation to a multicultural identity orientation. Yet again, this confirms the process of establishing a 'third place' for herself, in-between cultural identities, where she feels comfortable in negotiating appropriately in diverse cultural contexts.

Jacqueline's Australian experience can also be interpreted as a paradox for her. Where it enhanced her intercultural identity by adding yet another cultural dimension to the equation, the experience appeared to impact significantly on her. During the interview she stated how devastated she had been at being obliged to return to France. She vowed to find a way to return, a route via Canada proving by far the easiest solution. Jacqueline's analysis of her cultural identity is predicated on the concrete elements which largely identify a person as belonging to a particular culture: a French passport, her French language, her role as French ambassador, and her cultural demeanour. Jacqueline's reference to her passport as a form of identity represents a political reality, but her experience is similar to Seelye and Wasilewski's (1996) argument that the possession of a particular passport does not necessarily tackle challenging issues in regard to one's identity. They suggest this is 'a less than satisfying identity metaphor: I am who my passport says I am' (1996 p.26). Jacqueline makes the distinction with cultural affiliations because she perceives herself as capable of adapting with ease to new cultures. This was evident in her efforts to rectify, albeit on an individual level, the negative stereotypical images the Australians generally have of the French because of a perceived lack of respect for speakers of other languages when in mixed company. Social comparisons are once again relevant in this instance as stereotypes play an important role in determining one's place in intercultural societies (Tajfel, 1978, 1981). Jacqueline's comments indicate that she perceives further travels as synonymous with a blossoming of her personality. This is significant in light of the transformation they, the French sojourners in this project, have undergone, as they journey towards their evolved identities as intercultural nomads. It appears that French culture no longer suffices when there are possibilities for greater development of one's cultural competencies. Whilst the intercultural transformation during sojourn experiences is credited with more positive attributes, one cannot deny that at times the results of the changes can be construed in a negative light by the society of the culture of origin when the sojourners return home.

Robert explains how the experience in Australia re-affirmed his French national pride:

> Je suis français, je pense que ça a renforcé […] quand on est à l'étranger on essaye de défendre sa culture, sans la défendre, d'incarner sa culture et son pays parce qu'on l'a apportée à l'étranger. C'est inconscient. Je pense qu'on a envie parce qu'il y a des gens qui sont autour de nous qui sont de cultures différentes […] Pour mon identité française, je pense qu'elle soit accentuée […] j'ai l'impression de plus faire partie d'un global village, plus interculturel. En plus j'ai pas ce sentiment nationaliste, pas du tout. Je suis même maintenant plus critique par rapport à la France après l'avoir vue de l'extérieur. Je défends pas la France pour la défendre, seulement s'il y a une raison de défendre. Je suis fier d'être français (Robert).[8]

This comment encapsulates once again the journey of discovery of identity. Robert's French cultural identity has been thrown into relief as a consequence of the sojourn experience, accentuating the pride he feels in being French but without the arrogance emanating from an egocentric standpoint. He is happy to defend his culture, of which he has become incarnate, but not indiscriminately as the intercultural experience triggers comparative opportunities with other cultures in the global village. This text from Robert illustrates how his cultural identity became reinforced through the international sojourn. His comments exemplify the notions expressed by the group of French sojourners who

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[8]   I am French, I think this has reinforced […] when one is abroad one tries to defend one's culture, without defending it, to embody one's culture and one's country because one takes it abroad. It's an unconscious action. I think that you want to do this because there are people around you who are culturally different […] As far as my French identity is concerned, I think it has become accentuated […] I get the impression of belonging more to a global village, more intercultural. Furthermore, I don't have this nationalistic sentiment, not at all. I am even now more critical about France after having observed it from the outside looking in. I don't defend France for the sake of it, only if there is a need to do so. I am proud of being French (Robert).

discovered their identity whilst overseas, simply because they had never given it much thought previously. They were in fact observing their culture from an objective stance for the first time, on the outside looking in. Thrown into relief through intercultural contact, social comparison (see Tajfel, 1978; 1981), which serves as a mechanism for group identification is useful in this context to explain how cultural behaviour comes into play. Out-group derogations can serve to alienate cultural groups but what emerged from the analysis of the data in chapter three was significant in that all antagonistic sentiments were dispelled when sojourners moved through the phases of culture shock to emerge as intercultural individuals. With this feature came greater awareness and tolerance for other cultures with the advantage that one's positive cultural traits were reinforced in the process, with the less savoury aspects discarded.

This view further supports the opening argument of this chapter that there is a strong cultural pride which emanates from this whole group but the bi- or even multicultural enhancement which the French underwent in Australia dramatically altered the way they ultimately perceived their original culture. That is to say, they became more discriminating in their judgement of when to support their culture. If it appeared warranted they defended France and their culture, if they found the criticism justified they generally concurred with the view. One can extrapolate from this situation that although cultural identity increases in value as a result of intercultural exchange situations, there is also a more analytic stance taken where the sojourners are more self-critical and accepting of both the good and bad aspects of their cultural traits. It is this acceptance that their culture is not the only one worth praising that contributes to personal growth, dismisses arrogant and parochial attitudes towards other cultures and fosters good international relations between cultures in the global village. Support from literature on intercultural relations can be found for this phenomenon of decentring (see Redmond and Bunyi, 1993). Social decentring, which plays a fundamental role in intercultural communication essentially signifies empathy for other cultures. This implies registering cultural differences and adapting one's communicative practices more suitably to the required cultural context. Diametrically opposed to this, one can find egocentric communication which espouses tendencies where messages, only intelligible to oneself, are conveyed to others without any effort made to adapt to cultural differences. In the above text, Robert exemplifies the notion of decentring by moderating his feelings of pride for his culture with an ability also to criticise it when warranted. Perhaps the most significant comment expressed by Robert follows:

> Ma vision par rapport à auparavant est plus franco-française mais plus européenne et mondiale, mais étrangement, il a fallu que j'aille à l'autre bout du monde pour me rendre compte de ça […] [9] I'm not only French. I think I have got part of something but I don't know what. I know that I'm still French but I'm more in a global village. I fit better in this global village and I'm looking for contacts with people from overseas because I think they are easier than here [in France] […] I think I am more intercultural now, not just French. This experience is making it harder to fit back in but I can't regret it. I think I can fit anywhere now, but you also need that adaptation time. I'm figuring out all this admin stuff in order to leave for Hong Kong. Leaving is one thing but you have all this logistic things so you have to recognise it, but I find it easier now because I'm prepared (Robert).

Robert sums up how his world vision changed as a result of his international exchange situation, re-affirming on the one hand his Frenchness and on the other reflecting his remodelled identity which encompasses the third place he construed for himself, that is, the merging of the European and global identity components. In chapter three, it was noted that thanks to his role as best man at an Australian friend's wedding he had concluded: 'C'est un témoignage de sympathie ce qui fait que vous vous sentez un petit pourcent australien'. (This is evidence of friendship which serves to make one feel a little bit Australian). Robert's comments do not denote an identity crisis per se, perhaps because at the end of his sojourn he was thirty years old. Rather, his remarks can be interpreted as a natural progression of the identity re-shaping which continually occurs in intercultural contexts. Robert's view is representative of a significant number of respondents who attested to the beneficial attributes of international exchanges for this and other reasons. One thing is for certain and that is the first intercultural exchange situation has prepared Robert for his next enterprising venture in Hong Kong. He is acutely aware that circumstances and the heterogeneously divergent French and Chinese cultures

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[9]   My vision compared to before is more Franco-French but more European and global, but strangely enough I had to go to the other side of the world to discover that (Robert).

will mean that his Australian experience will not be replicated. He confirms the advantages of cultural learning in the next comment. In his interview, Robert noted that upon his return to Paris, he had tried to initiate a 'French chapter' based on the alumni of his Australian university, in order to enact his role in bridging cultures: 'I want to try to give my experience to people who might want to go and live in Australia, or in any part of the world because this is a process that everyone can experience, the process of expatriation in every country'. Robert does not anticipate the process of acculturation to Hong Kong to be dramatically different from that in Australia. As a result of his successful adjustment in Australia, he perceives the task will be less daunting the second time around. One final observation on the subject of identity shows Robert has gained a pragmatic outlook about issues concerning his role as ambassador for French culture:

> I'm still proud of my identity. I think French people are always criticised but it's true. It depends on what people in front of you tell you. It's different if it's stupid or nonsense sentences about France and you will say something like: 'I'm sorry it's not true'. But it's not a question of being proud or not, it's more a question of 'it's true or it's false'. It's either right or wrong (Robert).

Decentring became an essential feature of the sojourn experience for Robert. His sentiments are mirrored by almost all respondents who took part in this study on questions of their national pride and their cultural identity and how they learned to moderate their position on divergent cultural traits through social comparisons. They appear to have retained a dichotomous nature to their identity orientation, where on the one hand, they largely retained their pride with respect to the essential attributes of their culture, while on the other hand they endorsed the view that many foreigners were correct in their judgement of French people on many occasions and it was futile to defy it. On the contrary, they concurred with the negative views where logic appeared to dictate that examples of bad cultural behaviour were difficult to justify.

It appears that vicissitudes of identity are a dynamic process beginning with the acculturation experience and continuing until such times as sojourners can attest that they have finally settled down once again into their culture of origin, if indeed this occurs. Two points of commonality are derived from the re-entry data concerning important features of French identity which highlight the significance of how testimonies of the respondents, growing from the previous two descriptive chapters, have influenced the cultural identity orientations of the sojourners. The first concerns the self-professed stereotypical image of stressed, highly strung French individuals in contrast with Australians who are perceived as laid-back and relaxed in general. The French respondents tended to adopt and value this feature of Australian culture. The second was the change from the franc to the Euro, as the currency of a country is arguably an important component of cultural and national identity. Firstly, Véronique was one respondent whose views on the subject of relaxed Australian attitudes were echoed unanimously:

> Je dirais pas que je me sentais australienne après un an là-bas mais j'avais réussi à m'adapter au style de vie en Australie, vraiment sans complication. Je trouvais la vie très simple. J'avais réussi à le prendre mais sans forcément penser à être australienne. Toujours rester moi-même dans le sens, avec quand même quelques changements […] j'avais toujours certaines valeurs qui restaient […] En arrivant j'avais vraiment cette sensation de pas se compliquer la vie. En rentrant, j'ai trouvé que les français en général se compliquaient trop la vie, pour des petites choses ils se posaient pleins de questions. Et moi avant j'étais comme ça hein et sûrement j'ai dû redevenir comme ça après six mois hein, je dis pas le contraire. Mais au début je faisais les choses simplement, sans me poser de questions (Véronique).[10]

One can observe through this text how positively valued elements of foreign cultures can easily become integrated into one's cultural register. Véronique, like the rest of her cohort, also managed to negotiate her special place in between cultures, adopting Australian traits, English language and other culture

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[10]   I can't say that I felt Australian after a year there but I had succeeded in adapting to the Australian life style, really with no complications. I found life very easy. I had succeeded in adopting it but without necessarily thinking of myself as Australian. I always managed to remain true to myself in one sense, even with a few changes […] I always retained certain values […] when I arrived I really had this sensation of not complicating my life. When I returned home I found that French people in general complicated their lives unnecessarily, they made an issue of little things. And I was like that before and I no doubt reverted to this way of being after six months, I can't deny that. But initially I used to do things easily, without complicating my life (Véronique).

learning without relinquishing essential French attributes that she personified. Not surprisingly, it took six months for these Australian characteristics to fade, and this happened largely because of the perceived intransigence of French members of society in regard to culturally diverse behaviour. Véronique explains that it is difficult not to adapt to the easy-going lifestyle of Australia and its people, especially when placed in stark contrast with French people, who have a tendency to needlessly complicate their lives. There was consensus on this issue from all participants and most attempted to integrate this Australian feature into their new cultural identity without dramatically altering their values, as Véronique emphasised. However, once more, the inability to translate their culture learning into French society saw them conform to French ways in time. According to this group, dealing with the infamous French bureaucracy is one reason why it became difficult to remain calm in the face of constant aggravation during interactions with public servants. This clearly contributed to reverse culture shock.

Identity Crises Correlating with Being in Transit in France

The data of chapter four indicates a strong correlation between those respondents who professed to being in transit after their return to France and those who attested to experiencing an identity crisis. Monique, one participant whose testimony confirms that she underwent a difficult readjustment experience in France also claimed to have had an identity crisis. Not unexpectedly, her confusion with her identity stems from an excellent acculturation to Australian lifestyle, like so many of her counterparts. Here she demonstrates how the vicissitudes of identity have altered her life and complicated her future:

> Now I got a lot of problems with my identity because for my family and friends, I have to settle in France and I have to have a classical life but after this experience I can't anymore have this kind of life. I mean I can't just stay in France, have a job and get married. I can't do it. I just want to travel and to go as far as possible and to discover other cultures (Monique).

Monique's acute identity crisis resonates with many other cases from her cohort who attested to being in transit until they could expatriate. The dilemma of these returnees originates from the fact that they experienced an excellent adjustment in Australia, a formerly unknown culture which broadened their minds and horizons and transformed them into culturally aware individuals, and culminated in a hybrid cultural identity. This is one of the possible objectives of intercultural exchanges. However, the downside to this process is that many of these sojourners found it untenable to remain in their country of origin when they returned. Faced with difficulties when attempting to implement their newly acquired cultural learning, this group largely chose to leave, seeking adventure in distant places.

It was argued in the last chapter that French people were perceived by the returnees to be intolerant of cultural ambiguity. This represents an undermining of the positive effects of international sojourns because of the many interpersonal relationship problems resulting from discord between returnees and their families and friends. This intolerance of the changes translated into cultural identity crises where both parties were at a loss to reconcile their differences. In Monique's case, as it was for others, the expectations from family, friends and society were insistently enforced upon their return. These draconian measures met in most instances with an intractable reaction from the returnees who professed to be adults who could make their own decisions. The close ties known to characterise French family relationships only compounded the problem for Monique, as for the others, because respect for their parents' wishes are instilled in French children from a young age. Monique explains her predicament in her search for work abroad:

> I would like to [go back to Australia] but it's very far and I am very family oriented and I need to see them and my friends and I don't want to miss them because I missed the birth of my nephew and it was awful. I am completely confused because I don't know what I want, where I want to live, where I can have a career but I know that I don't want

to be here [in France]. But I am still French and very proud of it […] I am not European. I am international. I could settle anywhere but not in Europe. I am not interested in Europe. It's not enough different for me. I want to know some other cultures but very different from European culture because when I was in Australia one thing shocked me was that I didn't know anything about the Asian pacific relationships (Monique).

Monique's enormous pride in her French cultural identity only intensifies the dilemma she is undergoing in her decision to fulfil her dreams whilst attempting to satisfy her need to maintain family ties. It is clear that she is affected by the difficult decisions she has to make but one thing is certain, she is determined to leave. Europe, it appears, does not figure in her plans. She is adamant that she is not European and that she must venture much farther than her continent in order to continue the uplifting experience she began in Australia's multicultural environment. Her new hybrid cultural status, French-International affords her the ability to achieve these goals.

Angélica is a respondent who found her niche in Australia because apart from all the factors that contributed to a successful adaptation to this country, hers was a voyage of self-discovery, which encompassed unquestioning acceptance by Australian culture of her sexual orientation, something she had not experienced freely in France. It stands to reason that she should undergo a difficult re-entry experience a year later when the cultural constraints of her upbringing re-surfaced. Angélica explains her feelings in regard to her cultural identity post-sojourn:

[My cultural identity] is a bit […] I will never say I'm French and I will never be anything else. I consider myself now more a citizen of the world 'cause I see things much more objective and optimistic now. I think by going that far I realised that I could go anywhere I wanted and I was so lucky that I was French and I didn't have any worries with visas and passports and I was free to go anywhere and do everything I wanted. That made me realise how lucky I was […] it's good to be French abroad. I defend French culture if they were wrong, but if [foreigners] said the French are rude, I agree with them. I am rude sometimes too […] When I was in Australia I did feel I was myself but I do feel myself here as well […] but I'm not very attached to France. I'm not forced to live here. It was my country but I didn't feel like I need to stay in France. When I need to decide where I want to go, I'll get the world map and choose where I want to go. I can live anywhere I want. It's freedom to do whatever I want to do, travelling around with people and I like meeting other cultures as well. I'm very open-minded. I don't think I've changed because I didn't realise this after but I didn't change totally as such, just precised [clarified] my personality (Angélica).

Angélica's interview confirmed that the exchange experience was indeed an enriching one, not only for her but also for all the others of her group. She traces the steps that the remodelling of her cultural identity passed through before reaching a comfortable place in the global village. Her case represents the epitome of the quintessential hybrid cultural identity, signifying that she has successfully negotiated her 'third place' between cultures. Although she does not attest to an identity crisis per se, her comments clearly show that a transformation of her cultural identity has occurred in spite of her claims to the contrary. The fact that she has become a citizen of the world, free to travel and appreciate the multitude of cultures available to her suggests that perhaps there is no crisis because she has resolved any issues which may have contributed to confusion of identity orientations. She has in fact incorporated aspects of her French cultural identity with additional cultural traits adopted in Australia. In the interview, for reasons she did not elaborate, Angélica claimed to have no familial restrictions placed on her which would prevent her from travelling in the future. In this text, she claims to act no differently from her behaviour during her sojourn in Australia, but in earlier extracts, Angélica offered concrete examples of the contrary, with respect to her behaviour in a lesbian relationship where she perceived alternative lifestyles were more accepted by the public in Australia. This was in direct contrast with the behaviour she professed she could not emulate in France.

Clément, one of two respondents who endured the most severe effects of reverse culture shock, which for him lasted fourteen months, is a good example of how a positive acculturation in Australia correlated with a difficult process of readjustment in France. Clément explains how he perceives his cultural identity:

Je me suis jamais posé la question [sur mon identité culturelle]. Mais j'étais français et j'étais fier de l'être. Il faut dire que, en réalité, c'était super d'être français, super utile. Les gens vous aiment bien, vous avez un petit accent et c'est vous qui êtes pour une fois, exotique, alors que d'habitude c'est souvent l'inverse […] Mais j'aurais très bien pu vivre en Australie, mais tout en restant français. Pour moi c'est pas un problème, sans oublier mes origines […] Je me disais

bien australien aussi. J'avais une vie australienne, c'est clair. J'avais des habitudes australiennes mais je restais toujours français aussi. Je faisais tout ce qu'ils faisaient (Clément).[11]

Yet again there is evidence of the awareness that dawned on the French respondents that their cultural identity was thrown into relief and challenged during the sojourn experience. Clément weighs up the positive and negative sides to the equation during the process of modification of his identity before determining where he in fact stands on that issue. It is apparent from Clément's comments that he has largely embraced an Australian cultural identity whilst maintaining his French origins and all that this represents. It is a clear case of additive or hybrid identity response as, once again, it becomes evident that, like his counterparts in this project, he appreciated the prestige that foreigners attribute to his nationality and clearly used it to his advantage. The contrast upon re-entry was, on the other hand, all the more dramatic when he tried unsuccessfully to re-immerse himself into the life he had left a year previously. As mentioned earlier, he, like his cohort, no longer felt special once they returned to France for a multitude of reasons. Further, the immense difficulties he experienced in his search for employment and in his relationships only augmented his problematic readjustment process. His happiness became largely contingent on two salient factors: a good job and a fulfilling relationship, without which he was prepared to leave France. He explains below:

I didn't know if I belonged here [in France] anymore. Even with my girlfriend you know I wasn't belonging in this place at all. I was feeling really rejected. I used to feel really good in Paris before Australia. I had really good internships in a good law firm, I was getting paid, I had a normal life, I could travel, so it was perfect. So when I went back I felt like closed feeling, like I wasn't belonging here. I know that if I couldn't find the right job I would have gone away. [My experience in Australia] was beginning to be a bad, painful experience, a bad choice (Clément).

Clément's feelings are acutely felt as he examines how the excellent exchange experience in Australia had almost turned out to be a poor career choice. Where a hybrid cultural identity is generally perceived as enriching and broadening, in this instance, a negative side emerged, especially as social comparisons again complicate the issue. The effect comparisons had on his decisions resulted in negation of the experience he had had in Australia. Clément compares his life prior to the sojourn with his foreign experience in Australia, which was equally satisfying but when contrasted once again with the reality of his current situation back in France, the burden of his choices appears to engulf him. Feelings of no longer belonging in Paris ultimately add to the confusion of his cultural identity. Due to his successful acquisition of characteristics pertaining to Australian culture, he felt he could no longer fit into French society. There is commonality in feelings of a lack of fit and not belonging among the majority of re-entry interviewees in this project. It is this lack of fit that has contributed to a large extent to a difficult readjustment process for so many. However, in spite of a protracted re-acculturation process for Clément, he succeeded in reaching the final stage of reverse culture shock, readjustment, thanks to a successful job and relationship. The serious consideration he gave to negating his experience in Australia was laid to rest as he was finally able to continue his life in Paris.

Clément's situation, (examined in chapter four), was complex but with reference to transformation of his cultural identity, his testimony provides yet another example of the degree of his pride in his French identity, which remained unchanged whilst he acquired many facets of Australian cultural identity. This essentially created a hybrid identity (Bhabha, 1996), paralleled by other cases depicted in this chapter as demonstrating a state of interculturality and 'a third place' (Liddicoat et al., 1999). It appears the French sojourners were reluctant to abandon their identity of origin totally whilst demonstrating through their comments, that they were equally quick to deprecate various negative aspects brought into question by foreigners during their sojourn. If the minority group members reject group membership as a result of discrepancies which emerge between their perception of certain elements of their culture as negative, this can be construed as a mobility strategy. The duality in

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[11]   I never questioned [my cultural identity]. But I was French and proud of it. I must say that in reality it was great to be French, very useful. People like you, you have a little accent and for once it is you who are exotic, whereas usually it's often the opposite […] but I could have easily lived in Australia, but all the while remaining French. For me it's not a problem, without forgetting my origins […] I used to call myself Australian also. I clearly had an Australian life style. I had Australian habits but I always remained French at the same time. I did everything they did (Clément).

perception of their cultural identity by these returnees indicates that they had an integrative identity response in Berry's (1990; 1980) terms.

An acute case of cultural identity crisis may be perceived from the data collected in Martine's interview. This respondent was also categorised in chapter four within the group registering difficulties in readjustment which precipitated a desire to leave France after her educational and familial commitments had been satisfied. Martine had not only felt a heavy emotional burden when leaving Australia but actually described her feelings as having had a part of herself excised as a result of having to leave. Her observations contribute to the discussion:

> Ce que j'ai vraiment adoré en Australie c'est ce côté facile, très décontracté des australiens. J'aime pas le point culturel et historique qu'il y a en France et en Europe de façon général. Enfin je l'apprécie mais c'est pas un truc qui me manque, auquel je tiens énormément […] Je suis fière d'être française mais je vais pas non plus le revendiquer. Non, j'ai pas envie qu'on me reconnaisse comme française. J'étais pas en Australie pour revendiquer mon identité. Si on critiquait les français j'essayais de comprendre pourquoi, de le défendre mais disons j'étais plus en fait dans une position d'aller vers la culture australienne que d'apporter ma culture française. J'étais vraiment prête à en faire abstraction, mis à part le fait que j'ai pas mal parlé français […] et puis parler anglais, ça m'a vachement manqué quand je suis rentrée en France, de pas pouvoir parler anglais (Martine).[12]

These views are reminiscent of Clément's situation in its rejection of the very same elements of French cultural identity that the remainder of the participants were adamant they could never relinquish, that is the cultural and historical aspects. Martine however displays a confused identity response as she claims firstly to be proud of being French but in no way wishes to proclaim this to everyone whilst abroad. Her tendencies of decentring are acute in this instance. Critical to my argument is her denial of her French identity in her statement that she does not wish to be recognised as French. As she was in transit in France after her sojourn, one can only assume she will return to Australia if possible or move far from home as soon as practicable. It is probable that she will adopt a portion of the cultural identity of the country she chooses to live in, just as she did in Australia.

The above vignettes have confirmed a strong correlation between the participants who professed to be in transit after their return to France and those who claimed to be experiencing an identity crisis. Clément's situation, along with that of the majority of the respondents in this project, appear to reflect Sussman's (2002) multidimensional scales of adaptation, the behavioural scale (CA/B) indicative of the degree to which the French sojourners interacted with individuals in the Australian context, the cognitive (CA/C), evidenced by this group's augmented knowledge about Australia and its culture, and the affective (CA/A), which documents the level of satisfaction, belonging and confidence acquired by the group in the Australian environment. Further, the strategies employed by the French sojourners in Australia appear to be similar to the various constructs of intercultural adaptation suggested by Kim (2001).

Re-Negotiation of Identity and *the Parallel Dimension*

The discussion in chapter four revealed only five participants in the re-entry component of this project registered a successful readjustment in France and Switzerland. Although there were firm correlates between those who registered a positive acculturation experience in Australia and who professed to be marking time until they could leave France, the perceived cultural identity of all subjects was ultimately

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[12] What I really loved in Australia was the easy life style, very relaxed manner of Australians. I don't like the cultural and historical side of France and Europe in general. Well, I appreciate it but it's not something I missed, something to which I am quite attached […] I am proud of being French but I don't want to proclaim it. No, I don't want to be recognised as French. I was not in Australia to proclaim my French identity. If people criticised the French I tried to understand why, to defend them, but let's say I found myself more in a position to go toward Australian culture than to bring my French culture to them. I was really ready to disregard it were it not for the fact that I spoke a lot of French […] and then speaking English , I really missed that when I returned to France, not being able to speak English (Martine).

remodelled. This was scaled in various degrees. Lise is one of the few academic sojourners who had prepared herself to some degree for the sojourn and was happy to come home to her boyfriend:

> I think I have a more open-minded way of seeing things than most French people. I mean I don't see things just in a French perspective. I feel very multicultural. Travelling opens your mind. You don't have all the stereotypes you had before, you try to challenge them more than before. I think I am more tolerant than before. I discovered a lot about myself being overseas. I am more open to change […] now I know that I have evolved. But I felt frustrated because I couldn't share this […] It was not a kind of arrogance but I felt different from the other people because I'd been learning so much. I could see [the French] were closed-minded because they don't travel that much. It was difficult to re-adapt yourself to the way French people are thinking because you feel different from them. I am French because it's my nationality, it's my country but I feel so much different from the mainstream French people (Lise).

This text demonstrates to what extent remodelling of one's cultural identity is pertinent to an individual's personal growth and the way they view the world as a result of their experience. Lise is not prepared to reject her nationality. On the contrary, her Frenchness has been reaffirmed. However, her comments isolate her from her nationality because she no longer fits in as she used to. She is unable to share her *année entre parenthèses* (year in parenthesis) with anyone else, like the rest of the participants, but appears to categorise that secret part of her life along with the cultural lessons learned overseas. This excerpt shows that an integrative identity response can function equally well upon re-entry as it did whilst abroad, but not without some compromise. However, few respondents appear to embrace this view. Their rejection of many aspects of French behaviour as a result of their sojourn in Australia resulted in a desire to leave France instead of reverting to their former way of life. Their hybrid cultural identity appeared to preclude re-settling back in France. The prospect of living overseas whilst retaining parts of their French identity was far more appealing to the majority of this group of sojourners. The vicissitudes of identity can be construed as paramount in determining the future cultural identity responses of young French people who sojourn in foreign countries for extended periods of time. How they negotiate and re-negotiate their cultural identities, based on the components of each country's uniqueness is an intrinsic part of the dynamic nature of culture and identity (Liddicoat, 2002).

Predicated on the testimonies of the participants growing out of chapters three and four, one can surmise that an 'emergent identity' (see Kim, 2001) epitomised the end result of the French sojourners' experience in Australia. It is through the effects of the intercultural contact situations on these students that a new interculturally enhanced personality was born. More significant however, from a global perspective, the findings appear to substantiate the view that 'groups and individuals in multilingual settings [such as French sojourners in the Australian context] (re)negotiate their identity in response to hegemonic language ideologies demanding homogeneity' (Blackledge and Pavlenko, 2001 p.248).

Blackledge and Pavlenko (2001) argue that these interactions are contingent on power relations comprising gender, class, race, ethnicity and sexuality and that negotiation and renegotiation of identities in multilingual contexts implies beliefs about, and practices of, language use. If the dominant culture in the society, such as Anglo-Saxon in Australia, considers that the ideal model of society is monolingual for example, despite Australia being recognised as espousing multiculturality, foreigners pose themselves questions about membership in in-groups and out-groups. Convergence to majority norms, where minority groups are expected to learn and use English over their native tongue, is favoured if they are to interact comfortably within the host society. They can thus bridge one gap, among interstices that preclude membership to the dominant group, such as colour and religious affiliations for instance. These authors argue that this is because in an unfamiliar environment, individuals experience identity vulnerability or insecurity because of a perceived threat or fear. They argue satisfactory outcomes as to identity negotiation in conversational interaction imply feelings of being understood, valued, supported and respected, in spite of intercultural distinctions emerging during this process.

Further, based on Bourdieu's (1991) arguments, Blackledge and Pavlenko (2001) suggest that the official language, English in this instance, becomes the language of hegemonic institutions because the dominant and minority group misrecognise it as a superior language. Bourdieu perceives this misrecognition of the legitimacy of the dominant language and culture as influential in reproducing existing power relations. Subordinated groups however, may not readily accept the symbolic power of the dominant group, resisting by adopting linguistic practices that oppose the dominant group. The means through which negotiation of identity takes place comprise verbal and nonverbal behaviours and

also a range of linguistic means frequently used with bilinguals, that is code-switching, code-mixing, code-alteration or language choice for example (Blackledge and Pavlenko, 2001). On a broader scale, if sojourners are able to transcend transitional conflicts to arrive at a 'third place' where their cultural identity has been negotiated in between cultures, without compromising their original cultural identity, authentic personal growth can take place along with personality development.

In line with these views, Berry's (1997) acculturation strategy, the 'assimilationist' alternative applies to non-dominant groups whose members generally espouse inter-group relations, or contact, with other than their co-national group. This is relevant because new comers tend to gravitate toward individuals of other cultures through convergence in their cultural values and behaviours with the host group, often at the expense of cultural maintenance. There is a greater tendency however, for migrants to accommodate to the dominant culture, as opposed to sojourners, because migrants are more likely to experience discrimination or exclusion, to assimilate in societies that are less tolerant of cultural differences. If negative comparisons are shared by the in-group, the minority culture, and the out-group, the dominant culture, assimilation takes place, but without hybridisation of cultures. In this way, the minority culture becomes absorbed into the mainstream. Assimilation may involve behavioural and linguistic accommodation to the majority culture and language. For example, in a study on inter-generational language maintenance and shift in the Franco-Mauritian migrant diasporas in Melbourne, Australia, Patron (2002; 2005) demonstrates this acculturation paradigm for children migrating during the 1960s. The study revealed a high degree of convergence to the host-society norms as a result of the hegemony of English and negative attitudes toward multiculturalism and multilingualism. Sojourners may also follow this trend if pressure to conform to host-society ways becomes too great, but this would appear less likely because of their temporary status.

Extrapolating from Bakhtinian (1981) philosophy on hybridity as well as the theories of Bhabha (1990; 1996) and Liddicoat et al. (1999) on the notions of hybridity, 'third space' and 'third place', and finally Hammer et al.'s (1978) conceptualisation of 'third culture perspective', I propose that an analogous concept has emerged from this study. This is the *année entre parenthèses* (the year in parenthesis) which is effectively a *parallel dimension* of experience. This is an experience which appears to be separated from the sojourners' lives in Europe, and which is neither understood nor appreciated in their home culture. This *parallel dimension* is complex but pivotal for intercultural exchanges, because the returnees claimed they were marking time until they could leave again as a result of their problematic re-entry experiences which did not allow them to integrate their new experiences into their original cultural frame. Evidently, they had not expected this reaction from their family and friends and society at large. The intransigence of their fellow nationals toward their changed cultural identity, compounded by their intolerance of cultural ambiguity and their devaluing of multilingualism, cast a shadow on an experience they vowed was the most enlightening and productive of their lives. This was bracketed as *une année entre parenthèses*, an interlude in their lives because they found few words to convey its significance. Further, they dismissed their co-nationals as incapable of comprehending what they had lived through during their absence largely because of the fact that the French knew little about Australia and its culture, to which they had become converted to varying degrees.

As a result of the incommunicability of the sojourn experience once home, the returnees elected to conceal a very important part of their lives from members of their society, including family and close friends in most instances. This facet of re-entry is by no means original in literature on returnees. Kidder's (1992) research on Japanese returnees, for instance, revealed some physical, behavioural and paralinguistic changes can be demonstrated or concealed by returnees, with some respondents adopting chameleonlike tendencies to merge with the required context. However, my finding, linked with other associated factors particular to French cultural mores, such as the embodiment of characteristics of a 'tight' society (see Triandis, 1990) renders the situation distinctive. For example, failure to observe courtesy formulae such as 'tu' and 'vous' in appropriate sociolinguistic contexts is not likely to be forgiven. The lack of respect is not tolerated either when incorrect speech patterns used orally or in written form are employed to convey meanings, as was noted in chapter four, nor the use of English or *franglais* (French and English combined). The French returnees were also criticised for obvious behavioural changes in social and business contexts. Brigitte, for instance, was warned to conform by

a law colleague who noted she was far too relaxed, happy and spontaneous in the work environment, evidence of having been influenced by Australian ways. Further, successful acculturation in Australia was recorded by all participants largely because of the prestigious status French language and culture enjoys in many countries. This resulted in initial negative stereotypical views between the two cultures being dissipated by the end of the sojourn. Research has shown this is not generally the case for Japanese and Asian sojourners for instance (see Liberman, 1994; Lin and Yi, 1997).

Unable to re-negotiate and re-integrate their emergent intercultural identity back into their society, the returnees faced the prospect of accommodating to French cultural norms or leaving. Finally, confronted by a perceived intransigence of French society members to the changes in their cultural identity, the returnees negotiated a special place for their indescribable experience, establishing a *parallel dimension* to their lives, into which only like-minded individuals were permitted access. The *parallel dimension* came into being essentially because the returnees' evolved intercultural identity was not valued by the society. The data revealed that the French sojourners had successfully established a 'third place' for themselves in the Australian context, comfortable with their newly transformed identity which had integrated aspects of both the French and Australian cultures, and in some instances, other international traits derived from their multicultural encounters. However, this 'third place' was found to be incongruent in the French context. Therefore, there was an urgent need to create a comfortable space in which to exist back home. The transitory state triggered by this event signified not only a coping mechanism to mitigate the effects of reverse culture shock, but more importantly resulted in a desire among the French returnees to leave their homeland for reasons that could be construed as French cultural and linguistic hegemony, within the microcosm of the nation. The disappointment arising during the interviews in regard to French attitude was incontestable. Feelings of dejection and loneliness led to dramatic solutions, with most returnees adopting temporary convergence in order to remain inconspicuous until it was time to leave.

The vicissitudes of cultural identity among the French sojourners prior to, during and following their sojourn in Australia precipitated a cultural identity crisis in several members of the group. The results emerging from the data are consonant with Garza-Guerrero's (1974) constructs delineating the phases of culture shock. The French group followed closely the recognised manifestations of this phenomenon. The first phase was typified by mourning and threats to the newcomer's identity. This occurred where the French sojourners reactivated in fantasy all the positive aspects of their culture that they missed. They subsequently experienced a growing sensation of discontinuity, of consistency and confirmation of identity. During the second phase, the sojourners organised their ego identity on the basis of selective identifications predicated on the new Australian culture which they internalised and integrated. Through this process, their French identity was not only re-confirmed but re-incorporated into the new culture, essentially recovering what was lost and at the same time enriching the self with a new experimental environment. The third phase represented the final consolidation of newly acquired cultural traits, new object relations into the organisation of ego identity, which translated into a gradual feeling of 'belonging' to the new culture. The term ego identity encompasses a stable and integrated concept of total objects related with the self. What started as a threat to identity, mourning and low self-esteem culminated in a re-affirmation of both ego identity and self-esteem (see Garza-Guerrero, 1974).

Sojourners with Pre-Existing Multicultural Identities

The focus now turns to issues relating to individuals from both the longitudinal and cross-sectional groups, with pre-existing multicultural identities, that is, those of dual, or 'hyphenated' cultural identity, living in France and Switzerland. These students had already confronted issues of comparison between their various identities, and potentially had different perceptions and values of their various

cultural/national identities. I will investigate how this group has experienced remodelling of their cultural identity as a result of the intercultural exchange in Australia. The following text illustrates how even unconsciously, the experience of the multicultural French sojourners in Australia sets the scene for a quest to re-affirm their cultural identity whilst re-designing selected aspects. Some respondents in fact admitted to a voyage of discovery in this respect, for the first time truly understanding who they were. This is exemplified by Arlette who also came from Paris:

> It was like a discovery of my identity in Australia. At first, when I arrived, everybody was saying: 'Where are you from?' And that's something that you don't really ask in France. And 'Where do your parents come from?' And even people were saying: 'Oh your parents are Spanish so you must be Spanish'. I was trying to explain: 'No. I've always lived in France. I'm French even if my parents are Spanish'. They made me feel French and it was the first time! I had never realised that I was French. I never thought about it, so it was a big discovery. Even if I was not sure if I was French, because I was trying to discover who I was, I was defending French culture (Arlette).

Arlette has experienced deep soul-searching as did many others about the question of their identity. Here she examines the different cultural perspectives affecting her identity orientation, French and Spanish, arising from questions in regard to who she is and where she is from. Arlette's description of her sojourn experience as a journey of discovery of her identity emphasises the impact her travels had on such an important question in her life. It is precisely because her identity was thrown into relief through the sojourn experience that she was able to reconcile the different allegiances she had to each culture: 'They made me feel French and it was the first time! I had never realised that I was French'. That is, life in France had highlighted her Spanish origins and backgrounded her French identity, while in Australia her French identity became equally salient.

Kati, who constitutes part of the longitudinal section of this project, offers an interesting perspective on the issue of dual nationalities and their corresponding identity orientations. Her Franco-Vietnamese heritage had been cause for concern even whilst residing in Paris and later Strasbourg, but through her intercultural experience she witnessed a re-affirmation of who she was as a result of a conscious analysis of her identity. When asked in the interview whether she embraced the role of French ambassador during her sojourn she had very strong feelings on the subject:

> En général les français sont très fiers de leur pays. Et moi personnellement je m'en fiche! […] parce que moi quand il s'agit de défendre, je défends la France quand ça me parait justifié […] Je représente la France mais pas du point de vue politique […] c'est plus au niveau culturel […] [Les australiens] sont des gens très accueillants, très ouverts à la culture asiatique, beaucoup plus que les français. En fait je me sens plus à l'aise ici. Et les australiens adorent les français et le français. On se sent à plaisir avec le fait d'être français d'autant plus heureux d'avoir une double identité culturelle […] En France on nous demande de nous adapter, de nous intégrer, alors qu'en Australie le fait d'être biculturel c'est un avantage, donc c'est pour ça que j'apprécie bien […] J'étais déjà interculturelle mais ça [mon expérience] m'a rendu plus fière d'être française et en même temps vietnamienne. Au niveau d'identité, je suis devenue plus fière de la culture française, tout ce qui touche à la France, ce qui est attaché à la France […] surtout les gens qui me voient d'abord comme une asiatique et après comme une française. Donc ça me facilite les choses (Kati).[13]

This excerpt depicts the effects of Kati's 'double cultural identity' from the comparative perspectives of the French and the Australians. After consideration of both points of view with respect to how these individuals are regarded and treated, Kati claims through the sojourn experience she has discovered where her allegiances lie, re-confirming in the process the duality of her cultural identity. This protracted text highlights further the impact the sojourn experience had on the participants, even if more acutely for the multicultural French members as a result of identity crises. In France, Kati's intercultural status was met by indifference from the society at large but this was dramatically contrasted with the

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[13]   The French are generally very proud of their country. I personally don't give a damn! … because when I have to defend France I do so when it seems justified […] I represent France but not at all from a political standpoint […] it's more on a cultural level […] [Australians] are very friendly people, very open-minded toward Asian culture, much more than French people. In fact, I feel more comfortable here and Australians love the French and their language. You feel happy being French here and even happier because of the dual cultural identity […] In France you are expected to adapt, to integrate, whereas in Australia the bicultural status is an advantage so that's why I appreciate it here. I was already intercultural but [my experience] has made me more proud of being French and Vietnamese. Where identity is concerned, I have become more proud of French culture, of everything French, everything connected to France […] especially when people perceive me firstly as Asian and then French. Therefore, this made things easier for me (Kati).

positive reception she witnessed in Australia with its multicultural nature. Her intercultural experience in Australia, followed by her brief immersion in Hong Kong (discussed below) where she visited family, became the subject of serious reflection about who she was and where she fit in. Kati's identity underwent a period of remodelling until she was able to reconcile her Asian physical appearance with cultural affiliations to France:

> Actually, I think this cultural identity issue […] came to my mind more in Australia than in France because in Australia, the thing is, with so many Asian people around me, I was wondering if I felt more Asian than French […] [In Hong Kong I didn't feel at home] because I don't speak Chinese and I don't look like them. They are skinny compared to me, and small and white. I feel a little bit like a giant and it's not good because I feel a bit fat as well […] so except for Asian things no cultural identity shock. I still feel French […] I mean Australia is very Asian [you] could say that I feel a bit Australian as well but I'm still Asian-French (Kati).

The comparison between her physical appearance and that of the Asians in Australia and Chinese in Hong Kong resulted in Kati's closer identification with being Asian-French. The extensive analytical process Kati negotiated over a year before arriving at the conclusion that she was actually Asian-French supports the notion that the French sojourners' conscious or unconscious quest for a clear definition of their identity emerged as a result of this exchange experience. In chapter four, Kati's anguish at being referred to as overweight upon her return to France by well-meaning family and friends had its roots in her brief stopover in Hong Kong on her way home. Issues of self-acceptance are clearly linked to questions of personal identity and the erroneous comparison she made between the 'skinny' Chinese and herself [she is in fact quite slim] resulted in difficult moments for her during the early stages of her re-entry process. The psychological problems arising from this period were symptomatic of the possible traumatic effects of reverse culture shock which can manifest at these times. However, Kati finally reconciled the differences between her physical appearance and her inherent Frenchness to conclude that in spite of external attributes she was essentially Asian-French. On the other hand, the hyphenated identity was further complicated by feelings of being a little Australian as well because of her positive acculturation experience. In spite of difficulties during the initial stages of her re-entry, the end result of this process of self-discovery contributed significantly to Kati's ability to settle down in a relationship in France whilst the greater part of her cohort were marking time in transit before leaving their homeland once again. In this respect at least, the hybrid 'third place' Kati found in Australia was successfully re-established in the French context even if she chose to safeguard details of her *année entre parenthèses* from others.

The testimony of another respondent from Paris, Léah, sheds light on the problem of judgements made on the basis of stereotypically expected cultural behaviour. Her cultural identity is clearly problematic as she has grown up as Cambodian-French in Paris but she refers to herself as Chinese in spite of the whole family being born in Cambodia. In the following quotation she talks about her identity crisis in Australia and subsequent to her return:

> I didn't get along very well with Chinese people [in Australia]. It's something about their culture [...] I wasn't behaving like a Chinese girl. I have a Chinese face, and I behaved like French and it's a bit hard for Chinese to understand that. They don't consider me as Chinese and they don't consider me as French as well, so I'm not a friend to them. I didn't get along with them at all. I was very angry […] it's like I thought they were small-minded. There is something about Chinese culture, it's quite racist […] you're not totally Chinese, you have a western culture and they object to that. They are not totally wrong because I can't say I'm Chinese and I can't say I'm French. I'm so proud to be French, to be Chinese yeh, it's great, it's a good mixture but because I met these students at Monash and they said 'You're not Chinese, you're not French'. I was angry […] Now, I don't feel very happy in Paris, I just want to get out of here […] I can't say I have my own country. It's a mixed culture, I don't feel it's like some people who if they're born in France and if they're French. I can understand some French people who don't want to leave the country, they don't speak other languages and they don't want to move. But for my part I have an international background and if I leave it's not a big deal for me (Léah).

The confusion Léah's dual identity has engendered in her life is apparent here. She compares French and Australian perceptions of her nationality as did Kati before. This time however, Léah criticises the Chinese in Australia for their small-mindedness and racism. She analyses the effects their criticism had on her during her sojourn but concludes with a re-affirmation of both her French and Cambodian

cultural heritage, although this in no way constrains her to reside in France permanently. Léah's circumstances differ from the vignettes provided above in that the resultant reflection on the question of her identity led to a firm desire to leave France. She registered a difficult re-entry process and was yet another respondent who was biding her time to finish her degree in Paris before leaving once again. Conversely, although she had altercations with Chinese students in Australia, her adjustment to Australian society was an excellent one. She was not prepared to allow some international students to mar her experience but openly admits to reacting angrily at accusations that she was not Chinese. Clearly, her identity crisis emerged from this incident although during the interview she claimed not to have problems in integrating in Paris. She misses the life in Australia, a factor contributing to her fervent wish to return there. She is proud of her French heritage and claims to enjoy her dual nationality, except when challenged. This suggests confusion and anger arise when core beliefs about one's identity are challenged.

Matthieu is another respondent who classifies himself as part French and part German and living in Strasbourg affords him the opportunity to use German. He explains how he avoids the issue of his identity following the sojourn:

> Je ne me trompe pas trop de nationalité mais comme je parle l'allemand aussi c'est pourquoi je laisse un petit peu le côté de nationalité de côté mais c'est vrai que j'ai considéré que j'étais plus le même après mon retour, qu'avant mon départ […] Je suis moitié allemand culturellement, je suis trilingue […] [14] [After my return] I had the feeling that I did not belong totally to the environment here, and that I was different. All my thoughts were somewhere else, I did not have the same expectations, my daily life was different […] I know in my environment, my city, my job there are some constraints, some negative points but I learned to see the positive side. I think that it's something I learned in Australia […] I thought: 'I'm gonna be so alone and unhappy in France'. That's something I was expecting … but now you have to live in Paris, make the best out of it and that's why I really tried to focus on the positive aspects of my life here (Matthieu).

Matthieu evaluates the effects of the sojourn on his life, recounting the difficulties in reconciling his feelings of no longer belonging to his culture of origin because of his evolved cultural identity. He acknowledged the constraints involved in living in Paris and utilised positive thinking to resolve difficult issues. Matthieu's dual nationality does not appear as problematic to him as to others of his group because he has systematically analysed how to deal with the issues confronting him since his return. He has adopted Australian qualities which he added to his cultural inventory, a feature that essentially served as a coping mechanism during the most difficult stages of reverse culture shock for him. He avoids questioning his cultural identity but he cannot deny that his trilingual status affords him the possibility of residing in other countries apart from France. The significant personal growth evidenced by his articulate dialogue during the interview indicates that although he found culture learning difficult to implement in France, on a personal basis he attempted to put to good use every facet of learning derived from the Australian experience as he explains below:

> Even if I can't use what I learned in Australia at all, the method used, dealing with legal issues, I can use it now in my daily life. I've applied it to my methods. It's about methods we used not the content […] I really integrated into Australian life. I learned to adapt to other cultures but I learned to keep a distance with the things I do, the vision I have. I've learned to elevate myself to see from a different perspective, be more objective. There are many things I don't like [in France]. I don't defend the French anymore. I see things more their way [the foreigners'] […] When people ask me my nationality, I feel more European with French and German background […] It never happens that I go to another [French] city to see friends. I go to Brussels, Berlin, London to visit my friends (Matthieu).

Matthieu describes the analytic process he used to employ his culture learning to the fullest, claiming it is the methodology used and not the content which ultimately matters. Clearly, he has determined where his cultural identity lies as a result of the sojourn. He has become more European than French and is not prepared to defend the French because he believes the critics are justified in their stance. His focus on method translates into an effective coping strategy which allows him to make full use of cultural

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[14] I don't really mistake my nationality but as I speak German also that's why I leave the question of nationality to one side but it's true that I considered that I was no longer the same when I returned compared to pre-departure […] I am half German culturally, I am trilingual […] (Matthieu).

lessons learned abroad without actually applying the Australian life style to the French. This in fact avoids negating his valued experience abroad. Matthieu has learned to extrapolate from an existing modus operandi so that his strategies comply with French mores which helps him to fit in.

To complete the picture of multicultural identities, Marc, of Franco-Swiss origin, is proud of his intercultural identity, being the product of a Swiss father and a Brazilian mother, but this pride is not nationalistic. His pride originates rather from his ability to share his French culture with foreigners. His definition of culture merits consideration :

> [Je suis] fier [d'être suisse] mais pas patriote au point que je vais aller chanter l'hymne national le premier août, l'anniversaire nationale, mais je suis fier dans le sens que les autres la découvre, la culture française […] La culture, c'est formateur d'identité et puis c'est un mélange de choses, de coutumes, la vie de tous les jours, la routine [...] la manière dont ça se passe […] et puis la culture culinaire, la célébration de Noël, la tradition, l'art, les formes d'art, la musique (Marc).[15]

Marc's pride in being Swiss is derived more from a desire to promulgate French culture than to espouse notions of patriotism. He elucidates the importance of culture as forming and playing a key role in one's identity (see for example Kim, 2001; Liddicoat, 2002). Marc's definition typifies the core values that the majority of the respondents professed contributed positively to their French identity. However, he also had problems in the multicultural nature of his identity. Since he acquired Portuguese only from his mother and not from Brazilian Portuguese formal education, his version of the language was old-fashioned. Marc explains his complicated search for his identity:

> J'avais l'habitude de parler plusieurs langues avec mes parents, le français avec mon père et ma mère mais elle est brésilienne alors on parle toujours en portugais. J'ai un problème avec le portugais. Je l'ai pas étudié donc mon portugais écrit n'est pas aussi bon que la langue parlée parce que je ne l'ai pas appris formellement. Le problème que j'ai quand je vais au Brésil, je connais pas toutes les expressions parce que ma mère parle un portugais d'il y a trente ans. Les gens me demandent toujours de quelle région je viens du Brésil (Marc).[16]

Marc's attempts to discover one side of his cultural and linguistic identity met with confusion when people questioned the source of his origins based on his language use. It obviously constituted a problem for him because people were not readily accepting of cultural differences in travellers who had assumed they would go unnoticed in the crowd. This initial foray into other cultures was replicated when Marc arrived in Australia, a culture he places in between the Swiss and Brazilian. His sojourn experience in Australia appeared to intensify the identity crisis he had acknowledged in Switzerland, at least in the earlier stages. He continues his soul searching for his identity in the next extensive text:

> Avant même de venir en Australie j'avais un problème d'identité avec la nationalité suisse et brésilienne. Et là vraiment j'arrivais pas à dire si j'étais plus brésilien ou plus suisse. En Suisse, j'étais pas tout à fait suisse. Au Brésil, j'étais pas tout à fait brésilien. Ce qui est drôle, c'est qu'en Suisse on me disait: 'T'as pas l'air vraiment suisse' et au Brésil: 'T'as pas l'air vraiment brésilien'. Donc finalement on se sent un peu de nulle part mais en même temps de partout donc c'est vraiment drôle. En Australie ça m'a permis de définir mieux mon identité je dirais. Je me suis rendu compte que j'étais quand même plus suisse parce que j'ai habité toute ma vie en Suisse. J'y ai fait toutes mes études, primaire, secondaire. Je parle et j'écris beaucoup mieux le français que le portugais […] J'ai pas renié ma culture brésilienne. Ça faisait partie de moi. D'ailleurs j'ai connu beaucoup de brésiliens ici à Bond [University] et j'avais beaucoup de plaisir à les connaître. D'ailleurs de ce côté là je pense que je suis devenu plus brésilien en étant ici qu'en Suisse. Mais en même temps quand quelqu'un me disait: 'Mais d'où est-ce que tu viens?' j'aurais jamais pensé à dire du Brésil. J'ai toujours dit la Suisse. J'avais une amie norvégienne et brésilienne et elle mentionnait toujours qu'elle était moitié brésilienne et moitié norvégienne. Ça m'énervait un peu qu'elle commence à expliquer tout ça […] parce que les gens, ils veulent une réponse

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[15]   [I am] proud [of being Swiss] but I am not patriotic to the point of singing the national anthem on the first of August, on the Swiss national day, but I am proud in the sense that others discover it, French culture […] Culture forms one's identity and it's also a mixture of things, of customs, of daily life, routine […] the way one does things […] and then the gastronomy, Christmas celebrations, tradition, art, different types of art, music (Marc).

[16]   I was used to speaking several languages with my parents, French with my father and mother but she is Brazilian so we always speak Portuguese. I have a problem with Portuguese. I have not studied it so my written Portuguese is not as good as the spoken because I have not studied it formally. The problem I have when I go to Brazil is I don't know all the expressions because my mother speaks Portuguese the way they spoke it thirty years ago. People always ask me from which region in Brazil I am from (Marc).

facile. Ils veulent pas l'histoire de votre vie. Mon expérience [en Australie] m'a permis de redéfinir mon identité parce que j'adore l'Australie et c'est un pays dans lequel j'aurais beaucoup aimé habiter. D'autre part, c'est pas 'home'. Ya pas un mot pour ça en français […] Ce ne serait pas que je me sens australien (Marc).[17]

Marc's continued search for his identity is heightened in this text. He recounts the episodes relating to questions about his identity from Swiss nationals to Brazilians and Australians explaining how they reinforced his identity crisis. That is until he was able to resolve this issue of who he was as a result of his Australian experience. The international contact situations in Australia assisted him in determining that he was finally more Swiss. His spontaneous responses to questions about his identity emphasised his Swiss affiliations and made him realise that he could not answer to being Brazilian, in spite of speaking Portuguese, although this side of his identity was also reinforced in Australia. This quotation from Marc represents a perfect example of how an identity crisis experienced by individuals of hyphenated identities can be clarified through intercultural encounters. Marc's situation is poignant because feelings of a lack of fit in both Switzerland and Brazil could be potentially soul destroying if individuals do not eventually come to terms with identity issues. His travels led him eventually to Australia where he at last discovered who he was. It is interesting to note that it was the multicultural makeup of Australia that assisted him in enriching his dual cultures, the Brazilian thanks to the large contingent of students from that country on his international campus, and the Swiss because the analytic process of discovering his identity led him to re-affirm his Swiss origins. His upbringing and education in French Switzerland, coupled with his family and friends of both nationalities residing there were instrumental in the breakthrough that Switzerland was indeed home to him.

Conversely, unlike the other French returnees who professed to have assumed, albeit in a small way, a small part of the Australian identity, Marc asserts that his experience did not mark his identity to the extent that he could call himself Australian. This is quite a contradiction in fact because in the previous chapter Marc's interview provided evidence of cultural acquisition after having assumed the relaxed attitude: 'just chill' he had adopted after two years in Australia:

> [My experience] made me more relaxed and look at life in a way, like 'just chill', not quite like the Australians but I'm much more relaxed. I was a very tense person before […] It was a heat wave and straight away I was in my boarder shorts at the lake in Geneva. It was good you know. My friends were saying: 'Great! Where did you get the shorts?' (Marc).

On that occasion he had attracted attention and was very proud to add his newly acquired traits of Australian culture to his mixed heritage. On another note, Marc's annoyance at his friend, who made a point of giving the history behind her origins at every turn, is worth mention because it highlights his previous experiences in regard to the constant challenging of his identity. Consequently, he found it difficult to tolerate the lengthy discussion which ensued every time someone asked: 'Where are you from?' Marc believed that in discussion with people who were really interested, they would eventually discover his origins. Although Marc cannot be described as a TCK (Third Culture Kid) or global nomad per se, as these terms characterise individuals who have spent a significant part of their formative years living abroad, research in this area (e.g. Seelye and Wasilewski, 1996; Smith, 1996; Stultz, 2002) suggests that individuals like Marc may experience pain from an inability to categorise their identity in national/cultural terms. Hiding the truth about their origins for whatever reason is not a pleasant

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[17]   Even before arriving in Australia I had a problem with my Swiss and Brazilian identity. And I really couldn't tell whether I was more Brazilian or more Swiss. In Switzerland I was not altogether Swiss. In Brazil, I was not altogether Brazilian. The strange thing is in Switzerland people would tell me: 'You don't really look Swiss' and in Brazil 'you don't really look Brazilian'. So in the end you feel like you are from nowhere but at the same time from everywhere, so it's really strange. In Australia I felt better able to define my identity I would say. I realised that I was really more Swiss because I had lived in Switzerland all my life. I had done all my studies there, primary, secondary. I speak and write in French better than in Portuguese. I have not renounced my Brazilian culture. It was a part of me. Besides, I met a lot of Brazilians here at Bond [University] and I enjoyed knowing them. Besides, as a result of that I think I became more Brazilian being here [in Australia] than in Switzerland. But by the same token, when someone asked me: 'But where are you from?' it would never have occurred to me to say Brazil. I always answered Switzerland. I had a Norwegian/Brazilian friend and she always mentioned that she was half Brazilian and half Norwegian. It annoyed me a little that she started to explain all of that […] because people want a quick answer. They don't want your life history. My experience [in Australia] allowed me to redefine my identity because I love Australia and it's a country where I would love to live. On the other hand it's not home. There is no word for this in French […] It's not that I feel Australian (Marc).

experience. Giving a long answer runs the risk of boring the listener, or of being perceived as a snob. Giving a short answer requires that the foreigner being questioned ignore a large part of his/her background. Marc's quest for affirmation of his identity offers further evidence for the argument presented in Chapter four that he had become an intercultural nomad:

> Je pense que mes études m'ont tant intéressé […] La raison pour laquelle j'ai fait Relations Internationales c'est parce que je me sentais moi-même très touché par cette question et c'est vrai que je me sens quelqu'un très interculturel, cosmopolite qui serait prêt à habiter autant à New York, Londres, Paris, Genève qu'à Sydney. Ça m'a ouvert la porte. En Suisse ils sont un peu fermés, bornés (Marc).[18]

The international academic sojourn in particular was instrumental in Marc's making plans for further sojourns in multiple countries and his mission in Kyrgyzstan for one year under the auspices of the United Nations confirms the value of his experience. This indeed saw the fulfilment of his dreams. His studies in Australia, the US and his visits to other countries essentially formed the backdrop of his future cultural adventures. It is clear that identity crises sometimes produce positive results but it is the international exchange situation that serves as the catalyst for this outcome. For the students described above, contact with Australian culture has led to a focus on their existing perceptions of belonging to a national culture, but in this case led to a re-evaluation of their pre-existing identities and their perceptions of belonging to a national culture of their home countries. The exchange highlighted attachment to the dominant culture as well as reinforcing affiliations to the minority culture. Various participants discussed in this section might equally have been included in the previous section which highlighted the correlation between cultural identity issues as a result of an excellent acculturation process in Australia with a difficult re-entry process upon returning home. The end result was found to translate into a transitory phenomenon, often exacerbated by unresolved questions about their cultural identity once home. Analysis of the interviews confirms issues that of identity conflict appear to be more acute for respondents of multicultural identity.

Cultural Identity Responses of the Acculturation Study Group

The preceding sections have examined in detail vicissitudes of identity culminating increasingly in identity crises for the French academic sojourners in the re-entry study. At this point, it is appropriate to include an analysis of French cultural identity paradigms which emerge from the first phase of the study, the first cross-sectional group, as a result of the acculturation process in Australia. These sections are distinguished by the fact that participants from the first group appear to have already re-negotiated their cultural identity, some before returning to France and others making the decision not to go home. It must be remembered that a large number of this group have chosen to immigrate to Australia, via different administrative paths. Alain, who immigrated to this country where his family finally joined him, was completing his university degree on the Gold Coast when interviewed for this project. He appears to have no confusion whatsoever in his identity response. He is clearly French and proud to be recognised as such. Although he left France because of dissatisfaction with many aspects of life already illustrated in the preceding chapters, Alain integrated very well into Australian society but had no intention of relinquishing his cultural traits:

> C'est frappant que je suis parti de la France parce que j'avais des choses que j'aimais pas là-bas, mais dès qu'on critique la France, je vais quand même la défendre parce que c'est ma culture pendant dix-huit ans. Evidemment si [les critiques] sont infondées, je volerais au secours de ma patrie et j'essaierais de rectifier, de montrer que c'est faux. Je suis aussi

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[18] I think that I was very interested in my studies […] The reason I studied International Relations was because I was really concerned by this issue and it's true that I feel I am a very intercultural, cosmopolitan person who could live as easily in New York, London, Paris, Geneva as in Sydney. It has opened the door. In Switzerland they are a little uncommunicative, narrow-minded (Marc).

chauvin que tout le monde je pense. J'aime pas qu'on critique, je suis fier. Voilà! Je suis français, en plus attention, plus basque moitié, moitié. Quand on attaque […] notre image je pense que c'est quelque chose que très peu de gens peuvent supporter sans rien faire (Alain).[19]

Alain's testimony encapsulates successful negotiating of a 'third place' for himself in the Australian context. He explains his firm stance on what it means to be French and although he has elected to leave France for various reasons to settle in Australia, he embodies everything French. Alain's strong national pride is not exceptional in the context of this study; his pride extends to his mixed Basque and French heritage also. However, the significance of this text is that in spite of Alain's dissatisfaction with his life in France and his subsequent decision to immigrate to Australia, he brought with him, firmly intact, his French cultural identity. His is a good example of a successful integration into Australian life which he prefers to the French but at no stage is he prepared to dismiss his French heritage. He explains how he plans to combine the best of both worlds:

Je dirais que comme l'Australie n'a pas vraiment d'ethnie de base, c'est un mélange de races, c'est très facile de devenir australien si on le veut parce que l'australien type c'est un mélange de cultures, donc c'est assez tolérant surtout dans les villes […] Je veux retourner en France une fois par an, pour voir la famille et pour apprécier la France […] en tant que touriste que en tant qu'habitant, que national qui vit sur le pays, parce que la France est un super pays mais j'en avais marre de vivre là-bas. Le mode de vie australien me plaît beaucoup (Alain).[20]

While Alain explains that it is easy to become Australian thanks to the multiculturally tolerant tendencies he has observed, at no stage is he prepared to relinquish his French cultural background. He concedes the attractions of living in France are strong but living in Australia ultimately offers him greater advantages. This text demonstrates how those who enjoy the luxury of residing in two countries can achieve stability in their lives and succeed in maintaining well-defined intercultural identities.

The well-defined cultural identity of other respondents, Thierry and Eric for example, resonates with Alain's to the extent that after at least twenty years growing up in France, they find it hard to reject their culture and all it signifies. However, like Alain, this intense national pride does not prevent them from seeking work in Anglo-Saxon countries. Particularly in Thierry's case, as he believes the film and television industry is not as well developed in France, thus creating fewer opportunities for him to find work in his chosen field. When asked if he considered himself an ambassador for France he responded:

Un petit peu. On n'a pas trop le choix en fait […] quand on arrive les gens disent: 'Oh you're French, from Paris', et là on est tout de suite ambassadeur. C'est joli. On représente la France […] C'est une chouette expérience de partager sa culture. C'est un chouette pays la France […] [21] I'm going back to France on holidays after this semester but not yet to settle, definitely. Even at the end of my degree I don't know. In Australia you feel fine you know. I like to speak English. I'd like to be able to use all my languages to communicate with people. I would not be able to speak English that much in France. It depends on the job I get. But if I'm at home I will speak French. I would lose some of my English. I lost my Spanish because I don't use it. And now my writing skills are not as good because I write in English now […] [Going from law to film and television] might be the reason I don't want to go back to France […] I'll probably go to England or maybe stay here in Sydney. France is a great country, it's my country you know, but I have so many opportunities now, I open up myself to the whole world, to everything (Thierry).

Thierry recognises the role that is incumbent on him as a French national to represent his country and his culture abroad. It is also one that he clearly relishes because he is proud of his French identity.

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[19]   It's striking that I left France because there were things that I didn't like there but the moment people criticise France I will defend her because it has been my culture for eighteen years. Obviously, if [the criticism] is unfounded I would fly to the rescue of my country and I would try to rectify, to show that it was false. I am just as patriotic as everyone else I think. I don't like being criticised, I am proud. There you are, I am French, and careful, half Basque half French. When people attack […] our image, I think it's something very few people can tolerate without responding (Alain).

[20]   I would say that as the Australian national has really no ethnic root, it's a mixture of races, it's really easy to become Australian if one wants to because the typical Australian is a mixture of cultures, therefore quite tolerant especially in the cities […] I want to return to France once a year, to see relatives and to appreciate France […] as a tourist rather than as a resident French national who lives there because France is a great country but I had had enough of living there. I like the Australian lifestyle (Alain).

[21]   A little bit. You don't really have a choice in fact […] when you arrive people say: 'Oh, you're French, from Paris', and you are straight away an ambassador. It's nice. You represent France […] It's a nice experience when you share your culture. France is a nice country (Thierry).

However, after weighing up the pros and cons of settling back in France as opposed to living an intercultural experience in other countries after his sojourn, he has opted to return to France only on holidays. Recent information reveals he is living and working in Sydney. Of prime concern is the inability to continue speaking English in France. It appears that Thierry, like Alain, has no qualms about proclaiming his French cultural identity. He enjoys his role of ambassador whilst abroad, a feature that confirms an argument presented in this project, that the French academic sojourners preferred their French status whilst abroad as they were given the feeling that their culture was positively valued. This is also found in other studies of re-entry and is not an uncommon occurrence (e.g. NAFSA, 2002; Storti, 2001b; Weaver, 1994). The disillusion that sets in when sojourners return home and resume their original role of ordinary member of their society may augment the degree of reverse culture shock for returnees. The French were no different. More pertinent to readjustment problems for Thierry was the change in orientation of his academic degrees, from law which he did not complete in France, to Film and Television in Australia. He came to Australia because of the lack of courses in this area in France, which he believes will prevent him from returning because of the difficulties of finding employment in his chosen field. One can surmise from Thierry's case, that once again there is evidence that French sojourners may lean toward an integrative identity response when abroad, whether the sojourn is short-term or whether they choose to immigrate. This may be due to the positive side of the dichotomous world vision of French culture abroad, its prestige among foreigners on the one hand and commonly held negative stereotypical views of the French on the other. The degree of cultural similarity of the two western nations, observed during the Australian sojourn, also contributed to better integration for the French sojourners. Although the respondents were not immune to culture shock upon arrival in Australia, once difficult issues were resolved, the French sojourners experienced an excellent integrative process in this country.

Eric is determined that he will not go back to France and pronounces himself intercultural. During the interview he boasted about his lack of French accent when he speaks English [he in fact has a pronounced French-American accent]. Although he is quite clear on his allegiances to his cultural identity, his criticism of his fellow countrymen is marked and he has no qualms about marginalising them:

> I'm very proud of my country. I'm proud to be French. I will never forget France. I'm proud of the gastronomy, the history, the architecture […] but I'm not proud of things like the administration […] It's painful! It's so complicated! […] I'm well cultured I would say. I can catch anything. I am intercultural. I can have dinner with Indians, Japanese, I can work with Chinese. It doesn't really matter […] I'm cooking Asian food, who could believe it? [French people] are fucking narrow-minded […] But I can't forget my French culture. I think I took the good part of Australian culture and kept the good part of French culture […] I love the European Union. I'm really for it. I'm not worried about losing my French identity. I lived twenty years in France. I'll never lose it (Eric).

This statement encapsulates the pride Eric feels in being French but it is not devoid of warranted criticism. He describes his intellectual attributes and congratulates himself on his emergent intercultural identity thanks to his sojourn in Australia. He has no fear of losing his French identity even now living in Sydney, for twenty years of life in that culture will ensure this never eventuates. Eric's comment confirms his unequivocal stance on his cultural identity but, although he is keen to defend his country from criticism, he willingly admits that his co-nationals have a lot to learn to become as open-minded as he has become. In his interview he was adamant that he preferred Australian girls to the French but may yet settle with a French girl 'outside of France'. Once again, it can be observed that the French sojourners greatly appreciated being French away from their homeland, confirming that once they had established their 'third place' in the foreign society, they could enjoy the best of both worlds. Returning to France could diminish their chances of enacting their new intercultural role in society. It is through comparisons that social groups and individuals define and re-define their cultural identity and in the context of sojourns, the French students in particular discovered the best of both worlds by adopting only the better aspects of both the French and Australian cultures.

In contrast to the above two cases of clear cultural identity, one participant, Christiane, displays signs of confusion in her identity responses, resulting from her interactions with Australians and internationals during her sojourn. She has elected not to return to France, opting instead to settle

temporarily in New Caledonia with her boyfriend who has permanent residency status in Australia. This was subsequent to her failure to obtain a business visa for Australia. Together their goal is to obtain Australian citizenship after due process. Her case illustrates an identity crisis especially with reference to enacting the role of French ambassador:

> Je crois que je me suis si bien adaptée ici que je voudrais bien y rester […] Moi qui adore Paris. J'appelle toujours Paris ma ville. Eh bien Sydney pour moi c'est vraiment très très bien. Même pour avoir des enfants par exemple, je me vois plus les avoir à Sydney qu'à Paris [22] […] [An ambassador for France] no way ! I'm not so proud of being French because l learn so much about what people think about French people. They say that we are arrogant, we don't speak in English. Arrogance, I completely agree […] I don't wish to lose my French accent. I still think that French people are very nice people but not so friendly as here […] I don't know I'm maybe losing too much of my culture but […] I will always be French. I have integrated in Australian society but I'm getting some things from Australia, this kind of friendliness, happiness, lay-back attitude like you know, no worries […] because you don't really get stressed for so few things you know, tiny points in your life, it's not like a big drama […] I am more intercultural because I used to live with Germans […] Je suis française mais je ne vais pas me revendiquer que la France est le plus beau pays du monde […] Oui, le français est une très belle langue, je suis née en France et je parle français, je trouve que la France est un magnifique pays […] Quand on est avec des européens, je suis européenne, mais ici, avec les français, je me sens moins française qu'eux! (Christiane).[23]

Christiane displays chameleon-like tendencies, adapting to sociolinguistic situations as warranted, being French, European and intercultural when necessary (see Kidder, 1992; Stultz, 2002). Extrapolating from this idea, Stultz (2002) argues many (global) nomads describe themselves as chameleons, skilled in adaptive techniques in new cultures. They observe the cultural mores and values of different cultures and emulate the hosts in order to fit in. Christiane explains that Paris will always remain close to her heart but the thought of raising a family in Australia offers far greater advantages. She vehemently rejects the role of ambassador and defending the French from criticism because negative stereotypical comments such as: 'The French are arrogant' and 'They don't speak English' have left their mark on her. She confesses however to a desire to retain her French accent and acknowledges the better aspects of her culture but this does not deter her from embracing her emergent intercultural personality in this foreign milieu.

Evidently, negative stereotypical images that surfaced during the early stages of Christiane's sojourn have had a lasting effect on her perception of who she perceives herself to be. Although she has adapted successfully to Australia and has chosen to make this country her home, she is not prepared to indiscriminately accept all components that reinforce her French identity. She did not feel the need to act French on all occasions and during all interactions. It must be said that this respondent has perhaps one of the strongest French accents when speaking English, a feature she claims does not overly bother her. However, her cultural pride does not extend to the assumption of the role of French ambassador. Her physical appearance, blond and blue-eyed, affords her the ability to go largely unnoticed until she speaks. She at no stage wishes to proclaim her Frenchness although she still loves her city, Paris, adores her language as well as the many cultural attributes that being French brings. This in essence describes an acute identity crisis. Her cultural identity has irrevocably been transformed and is in the process of becoming hybrid. She feels European among other Europeans but definitely less French among French people in Australia. She wishes to adopt an Australian lifestyle and raise her children in Australia and her relationship with a New Caledonian ensures that selected features of her French cultural identity can remain intact in the process. Christiane's identity response is no less integrative than her counterparts', but at twenty-three, there are critical issues that have to be reconciled before she resolves the question of who she really is. It appears she is still seeking to negotiate her 'third place' in this intercultural milieu.

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[22] I think that I have adapted so well here that I would like to stay […] I who adore Paris. I still call Paris my city. Well for me, Sydney is really really great. Even for having children for instance, I can see myself having children in Sydney rather than in Paris […] (Christiane).

[23] I am French but I am not going to proclaim it, declare that France is the most beautiful country in the world […] Yes, French is a very beautiful language, I was born in France and I speak French, I think that France is a magnificent country […] When we are with Europeans, I am European, but here, with the French, I feel less French than them! (Christiane).

Christiane has chosen to partially reject group membership as a result of her perception of certain elements of French culture as negative. The changed cultural identity orientation was responsible for this action. The distinctiveness that became apparent during the sojourn experience of the French students can be construed as precipitating a mobility strategy, where hybridisation becomes possible. This mobility strategy contrasts with Tajfel's (1978; 1981) arguments that the identity of individuals is derived from the in-group and the choice to retain or reject membership within that group is conditional on existing distinctions between their perception of positive or negative elements. This outcome ultimately depends on reactions to changed cultural identity orientations such as occurred with the French subjects during their sojourn. In the Australian context the French students integrated elements of both French and Australian culture which co-existed harmoniously because the negative comparisons perceived by the French as the minority culture were not perceived as such by the dominant culture. This essentially constitutes a paradox. Tajfel assumes that negative comparisons are shared by in-group and out-group, however, in none of the cases in this study is this so. The negativity is perceived by in-group members but the identity still has positive values in the out-group, which facilitates mobility, but with hybridisation rather than assimilation. Clearly, the French group could only envisage being French without France because members of French society in France displayed xenophobic tendencies toward their culture learning and obduracy toward changes in their cultural identity. Outside France, they could enjoy being French in a non-French environment.

Along the same lines, Dominique's case is also interesting because her testimony reinforces the positive side of the French cultural identity of sojourners who enjoy being well-regarded whilst abroad because they are French but have no intention of re-settling back in France. She is also influenced by her dual Franco-Spanish nationality. When in France, Dominique's words echo majority sentiments:

> It's very good to be, like overseas, to meet people in other countries, like you are a French girl in another country, you have something to tell to the people […] and people can talk about them as well. That's something that you never had in France. You are just another French girl, just one in the middle of them. I really enjoy being French. I'm proud to be French but now I'm really an international student. I'm French but of the south but maybe a little bit Spanish as well, but I'm European definitely more than French […] I can settle in an Anglo-Saxon country easily I think […] Ma mère est née au Maroc, ma grand-mère est espagnole et alors donc j'ai voyagé depuis l'âge de trois ans. Mes parents m'ont emmenée en Thaïlande, au Maroc plusieurs fois, cinq fois. Je suis allée en Espagne tous les ans chez ma grand-mère (Dominique).[24]

Dominique describes the advantages of being French abroad and like so many of her cohort, does not wish to relinquish this image by re-immersing herself in French culture. Her links with Spain and her extensive travels have provided with her the intercultural means to settle anywhere in the world. She has clearly become intercultural, indicating she has successfully negotiated her 'third place' in a number of societies. She has not only been to Australia, but unlike most of her cohort, she is well-travelled and has mixed origins. In follow-up email contact in 2005, Dominique has confirmed a posting in a French company recently established in Malaga, Spain, where she has obtained a marketing position at ground level and is poised to take part in its developmental stages.

Adrienne's case is dissimilar from Dominique's in that she is less-travelled and is the only respondent who arrived in Australia with no prior preparation for the sojourn and who was completely monolingual. In spite of these disadvantages, she integrated well into Australian culture, fell in love with an American student and followed him to the US to marry him without completing her degree. She at least does not question her cultural identity:

> Je me sens complètement française. Je suis super fière de l'être. Je resterai toujours française mais si je peux ajouter une autre nationalité ça serait formidable. Mais il faudrait que je sois parfaitement bilingue, que je sois avec un australien enfin voilà. J'apprécie d'être française en fait parce que c'est super agréable parce que les français ont une bonne réputation en Australie. Enfin les gens sont très gentils envers nous[25] […] I like to be foreign in another country. I want

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[24]   My mother was born in Morocco, my grandmother is Spanish and therefore I have travelled since the age of three. My parents took me to Thailand, to Morocco several times, five times. I have been to Spain every year to my grandmother's (Dominique).

[25]   I feel completely French. I am very proud of it. I shall always remain French but if I can add another nationality to that it would be fantastic. But I would have to be completely bilingual, be with an Australian. I appreciate being French in

to be French in another country […] I want my children to be bilingual, it's the best education you can offer a child but it's difficult if your partner is the same nationality. It's impossible (Adrienne).

French pride in one's cultural identity is reiterated in this text. Adrienne lists the advantages of being French abroad as being more desirable, like her other counterparts in this project, and completes her statement with plans to live as a French person abroad and raise her children bilingually. Adrienne's interview revealed that in spite of placing more importance on her career and the need to repay loans which enabled her to study in Australia, the best laid plans can sometimes be discarded when relationships come into play. The fact that she has married an American and moved to San Diego is a manifestation of the vicissitudes of life and how paths may be altered as a result of intercultural contact. Given her desire for additive cultural identity, she will seemingly never doubt who and what she is during her foreign experiences. She has secured her 'third place' in the Anglo-Saxon societies of Australia and the US where she can be foreign in another country. However, inability to find work in the US has turned Adrienne into a global nomad. She moved back to Paris alone where she worked for six months and subsequently returned to the US to be with her husband who had by then found a stable job. Still unable to find work, Adrienne returned to Australia to finish her Masters degree on the Gold Coast before returning to the US. Only time will tell where Adrienne will eventually settle.

To conclude this section, Gilbert's case contrasts dramatically with the others because of his rejection of his French identity and the vehemence of his emotions toward everything that France and the French represent. However, although he has no intention of settling back home, his allegiances to his mother ensure regular visits. Recent information has revealed he now lives in Scotland. Gilbert's father passed away during his first sojourn which exacerbated existing problems on his first re-entry, fraught with difficulties not uncommon during the early phases of reverse culture shock. Not unexpectedly, he left France once again. For one so determined to forsake his French cultural identity, it must be said that Gilbert's oral proficiency in English would rate as the least competent within the group, and was a contributing factor to his culture shock in Australia. I felt the need to revert back to French during the interview because Gilbert experienced difficulties in expressing himself fluently in English at that stage, utilising stilted language with a very strong accent in spite of professing to be proficient. His identity crisis is the result of not only his sojourn in Australia but his childhood experiences where his mother had to deal with racism in the south of France because of her Spanish origins. However, his blond, blue-eyed appearance suggests that he probably did not experience this racism as a child:

> Moi en tous cas, je me suis jamais senti français. J'ai pas du tout une culture française très très forte. C'est pour ça que j'ai quitté la France. Je n'aime pas la France quoi. D'ailleurs, mes parents, mon père a vécu son enfance à l'étranger. Ma mère s'est sentie étrangère au début parce qu'il y avait le problème de racisme contre les espagnols au début. Je suis né dans un système […] enfin j'ai été élevé avec cette idée […] pas le rejet de la France mais surtout le rejet de la culture française […] Je suis pas à l'aise avec les français d'ailleurs. C'est pas du tout ma mentalité. Les français sont très individualistes, mais un individualisme comment dirais-je […] égoïste. C'est-à-dire, dans leur propre intérêt […] [Mon identité?] Européenne, ça c'est sur. Française, je peux pas la rejeter parce que forcément, j'ai été élevé en France mais je la rejette consciemment oui, culturellement. J'essaye surtout de me détacher de la mentalité française. En classe par exemple, au collège, au lycée, j'ai toujours été à part, j'ai jamais été habillé comme eux. J'ai jamais écouté la musique française. [J'ai gardé] la langue française sans doute par facilité, c'est ma langue. Mais je suis surtout allé vers l'anglais assez vite parce que c'est la langue que j'écoutais le plus […] I am not a good ambassador for France. I don't like France […] Je défends la France si on l'attaque mais je défends aussi l'Amérique si les français l'attaque. Je pense que je suis très américanisé (Gilbert).[26]

fact because it's really great because French people have a good reputation in Australia. Well, people are really nice to us (Adrienne).

[26] In any case I have never felt French. I don't have a strong French culture at all. That's why I left France. I don't like France in fact. Besides, my parents, my father lived abroad during his childhood. My mother felt like a foreigner initially because there was a problem with racism against Spanish people initially. I was born in a system […] well, I was raised with this idea of […] not rejection of France but rather of French culture […] besides I am not comfortable with French people. It's not at all my mentality. French people are very individualistic, but individualism how shall I say … of a selfish kind. That is everything for themselves […] [My identity?] European, that's for sure. French, I can't reject because evidently I was raised there, but I reject France consciously, culturally. I try in particular to detach myself from the French mentality. In class for example, in primary school, in secondary school, I was always marginalised, I was

This excerpt represents a very strong cognitive denial of one's cultural identity, at least on a conscious level. Gilbert explains he is incapable of completely denying his origins because of his French language and accent, but on an intellectual level, he firmly dissociates himself from everything French, through his fashion sense, his choice of music, his previous demeanour in school and so forth. He ends his interview with a re-affirmation that he dislikes his country. This is an exceptional case of almost total rejection of an individual's cultural identity. Gilbert's academic sojourn in Australia highlighted his identity crisis as he confesses that he had gravitated toward English language and culture from an early age. He believes that he has succeeded in detaching himself from French people and their mentality because he has made the conscious decision to do so. Gilbert contradicts himself however when he professes to be a bad ambassador for France as he still defends his country, just as he does America when this nation is criticised. Confusion over his cultural identity is therefore acute as he directs all his energies toward Anglo-Saxon countries and everything these nations represent but he must maintain contact with France at least because of his mother and brother.

As the members of the above group included those characterised as French nationals and those who could be classified as multicultural identities, the findings were predictably similar to those from the re-entry study except for the issue that the group in this section had already re-negotiated their identity before returning home or had decided not to return. The subjects in this group completed their Australian sojourn experience with an emergent integrative intercultural identity response (Berry, 1997; Kim, 2001). Further, like their counterparts from the re-entry study, they negotiated their 'third place' in the foreign milieu, electing to maintain select parts of their French cultural identity whilst rejecting the aspects of their culture that attracted criticism from foreigners. They also acquired elements of Australian cultural identity whilst rejecting other characteristics.

This section has revealed that successful negotiation of a 'third place' in the foreign milieu did not preclude cases of identity crisis. This outcome can be seen to be beneficial if sojourners are able to immerse themselves in foreign cultures and enhance their cultural repertoires with positive additive elements. However, the negative side to this scenario which emerges from this study is a growing resentment toward their French compatriots whom they report to be closed-minded and xenophobic in their attitudes. The fact remains that, apart from Charles, all other respondents from this cross-sectional component of the study have not, or do not intend to return home permanently. With a new intercultural status, they have elected to reject their homeland in favour of more accepting and tolerant societies that embrace multiculturalism and multilingualism. Where efforts to remain in Australia have met with disappointment, some respondents are now in the process of complying with immigration protocols seeking permanent residency status. In support of the view that a lack of adherence to principles of multiculturalism and multilingualism prevails in France, Seelye and Wasilewski (1996 p.14) argue that the social order of a country can deprive individuals of their dignity or personhood, if they do not conform to 'existing socially acceptable verbally labelled categories'. They cite France as an example where all persons, irrespective of religion or national origin, must select a first name for their French-born children from an approved government list of names, primarily those of saints or classical names. This list imposes a particular identity and a particular conception of what it means to be French.

Paradoxically, in light of French concerns for the hegemonic influence of English on French youth, at least with this group that has largely chosen to remain overseas, members of French society can be assured that embracing Anglo-Saxon culture and all that this entails, need not eradicate the French cultural values of these sojourners or indeed immigrants. On the contrary, it seems they embrace the better aspects of their French cultural identity when it is placed in relief against other cultures. Those who return to France on the other hand, appear to reject more readily the measures imposed on them to induce reconvergence with French ways. These only re-affirm their resolve to embrace everything English with more fervour. It seems that those who have returned home have espoused the concept of

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never dressed like they were. I have never listened to French music. [I have maintained] French language no doubt because it's easy, it's my language. But I went especially toward English quite quickly because that was the language I listened to the most […] I am not a good ambassador for France. I don't like France […] I defend France if she is attacked but I also defend America if French people attack her. I think I am very Americanised (Gilbert).

the *parallel dimension* as an escape mechanism whilst those who have remained abroad personify the 'third place'.

Conclusions

National cultural identity was a significant issue in the ways the sojourners in this study understood themselves and their intercultural experiences. Firstly, the identity conflicts experienced by the French students were brought into sharp focus as a result of the intercultural experience as they professed to having never before posed themselves questions on their cultural identity. The background information on this point is significant if one recalls that very few students had any prior knowledge about Australia and its culture. Their sojourn experience was found to be tantamount to a voyage of self-discovery, personal growth and cultural awareness as much as a geographical adventure. The fact that the re-entry study produced heightened experiences of reverse culture shock is testimony to the identity crises many traversed during their studies in a land they came to embrace to a significant degree. The negative reaction to their Australian sojourn by French society members precipitated soul-searching on the question of their identity precisely because of the intolerance of cultural ambiguity and devaluing of multilingualism evident upon re-entry. This in turn made the returnees reassess what being French meant to them, many choosing to reject various facets of French behaviour and cultural mores in the process. Thus, they began to focus on questions such as: 'Who am I?' and 'Where do I belong?'

The common denominator linking the resultant identity responses of the group in general can be construed as follows: intercultural personality, (Kim, 2001; Kim et al., 1998), integrative identity response (Berry, 1980; 1997), or additive identity orientation, (Sussman, 2000; 2002). How the results of this study matched the above paradigms will be explained presently. In brief, the French returnees have essentially retained their French cultural identity but have assumed the additive component of European distinctiveness mixed with selected characteristics of Australian identity. No respondent appeared to have a separatist or marginalist orientation. There were however, several participants who displayed an assimilative tendency while on sojourn, evidenced in their partial rejection of their own culture whilst adapting to Australian ways. Their efforts to remain in Australia can also be seen as a contributing factor. However, as long as they enjoy various facets of French culture, such as the literature, history, fashion and culinary traditions, and maintain their native French language, they are not likely to assimilate to such an extent that they will lose these key components of their French cultural identity. This is presumably because of the pride they demonstrated with regard to French culture throughout the interviews. Juxtaposed with this is their acknowledgement during the sojourn of the prestige French language and culture appear to enjoy worldwide. Enhanced appreciation for their cultural status was observed during the interactions with host nationals as well as international students on their campuses in Australia.

Similarly to Kim's (1995; Kim et al., 1998) theory of intercultural adaptation, this project focused on the communicative interaction between the minority individuals (the French academic sojourners) and their dominant environment (the make up of host nationals and international students on the Australian campuses) which engendered intercultural adaptation in the former group. It is through these interactions with both networks in Australia, as well as the general community, that these sojourners underwent what Kim calls a 'gradual internal transformation in their functional fitness and psychological health, vis-à-vis the dominant milieu, as well as their identity experience' (Kim et al., 1998 p.4). Through this process, the cultural identity of the French students was remodelled. The French sojourners were forced to review their perception of themselves in relation to French and Australian identities and deal with potential identity conflicts as they crossed identity barriers not apparent whilst they lived at home. Given the heterogeneous makeup of the population of Australian educational institutions, the cultural identity responses of the sojourners were impacted not only by Australian identities but by many cultures represented by the international body on their campuses.

Using the four types of post-adjustment identity identified by Sussman (2002): affirmative, subtractive, additive and global, each with a distinct repatriation outcome, the French sojourners have adopted an additive identity orientation, related to Australia as well as to the international cultures existing within the microcosm of the Australian campuses. By the end of the sojourn, the participants possessed elements of the Australian cultural identity in conjunction with components of their original identity, and this culminated in high repatriation distress synonymous with a negative repatriation. Similarly to Sussman's (2002) arguments, this additive shift is not to be conceived as identity loss, as the result of acquisition of many aspects of the foreign culture including its values, customs, mentality and emotion and so forth is better construed as an identity gain, as cultural identities have been heightened. However, this remodelling engendered a negative outcome upon re-entry because of the attitudes of members of French society toward dramatic changes in the sojourners. The returnees found their transformed cultural identity was out of place in their home culture. Clearly, the examination of the whole transition cycle in this project, as suggested by Sussman (2002), instead of discrete sections, supports a more holistic approach to intercultural studies, thus far not widely carried out.

Finally, based on Berry' s (1980; 1997) paradigms for determining the identity responses of sojourners: assimilation, integration, separation and marginalization, derived from the core value placed on cultural maintenance and the degree of contact with the diverse groups in the foreign society, on the whole, the French sojourners succeeded in integrating into the Australian context, registering what Berry (1997) termed an integrationist approach. This was achieved as a result of the permeable group boundaries found in a multicultural context which facilitated this process that supported this acculturation strategy. A system of cooperation was established in the foreign context where mutual acceptance engendered empathy for the visitors as well as interest in the foreign culture, and the sojourners were able to maintain their cultural identity, their behavioural norms and values whilst adopting many aspects of the host culture. This group of students were allowed to continue to evolve and positive relations existed between French visitors and Australian hosts after resolution of initial conflicts generated by stereotypical bias. This situation was possible because, as Berry (1997) argues, integration can only be 'freely' chosen and successfully desired by non-dominant groups when the host-society is open to cultural diversity. The positive relations and the interest Australians showed in French language and culture created the appropriate ambience for the French students to maintain their cultural identity, their behavioural norms and values whilst adopting many aspects of Australian culture. They essentially established their 'third place' in the process (see Liddicoat et al., 1999).

In Chapter six, I shall examine the implications of the impact of culture shock, reverse culture shock and identity issues on this group of academic sojourners. In addition, I shall suggest measures that can be employed in order to minimise the effects of these phenomena on, not only this group of French students, but on future contingents of university students from France who undertake intercultural studies to unfamiliar destinations. Parallels can thus be drawn from this study so that academic sojourners from all cultures can benefit from the findings on this discrete French group.

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