

My cultural experiences and perception of home

[Life](#), [Home](#)



Pushing through the crowds of people, I catch sight of the swift New York streets as if I were still home. Like a captain frantically seeking a lighthouse in a storm, I heave myself across the ocean of human bodies, trying to stay afloat, and avoid being strayed - or trampled - in what is usually the most desolate city: Argostoli, capital of the island of my childhood, Kefalonia. This is my summer for as long as I can remember; the sun toasting my skin, tourists swarming the beaches, my yiayia's aromatic kounelli stultifying in flavor, and the village festivals where Greeks proudly wave the flag of their country. But soon I will be stripped away from Kefalonia. In a few short days, I will cross the globe to finish my final year of high school on Long Island and soon after face adulthood. But which do I call home? The place I am leaving or the place I am going? The United States or Greece?

Amidst two places that hold my youth and identity, I cannot decide where to call home. My thoughts are unsettling, already leaving me filled with nostalgia. I take the common iPhone from my bag and run my fingers over the slightly cracked front, searching through photos to recollect my holiday. It doesn't take me long to lose myself; I am immediately sucked in, broken down, and absorbed by this album of what seems like distant memories. I feel like I should be disturbed, but I am surprisingly satisfied. I stare openly at the last photograph then close my phone, looking out the window of my mother's car. I notice several clammy middle-aged men performing leisurely work in the scorching heat and then observe their wives carefully chasing their overactive children before peacefully closing my eyes. I feel as if I am a speck of dust out there, floating, happy, at ease.

I realize that I am at home between worlds. I am fluent in both English and Greek. I use Greek to communicate with the people most important in my life as well as meet others around the world. English, however, is my primary language for creativity, emotion, and description. America owns my childhood, filled with gelid winters, immense study, and fast-paced individuals; Greece holds my adolescent years, accompanied by shops trailing down stone-paved streets, flax-gold beaches, and relaxed social scenes. Kefalonia is the place where I learned to swim in bright blue waters, discovered true European culture, became acquainted with heartaches, and tasted independence. Once again, I look out the window and realize I am drawing into my short-lived summer days as I approach the almost archaic airport. At once, I step out of the vehicle, my feet hitting the ground one after another, and saunter toward the revolving doors. I turn around, take in the captivating scenery one last time, and smile. My yearly trips to Greece have made me look at the world differently.

Few have such cultural experiences as I do. But my musing is now at an end, and I have the answer to my question. Home is not a choice. Home is not the United States or Greece. Home is the in-between, the cusp of change, the time of tranquility, and that is where I feel most content.