

A Body Broken

A critical biography of Alekos Doukas (1900-1962)

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January 2008

Contents

Acknowledgments
Abstract

Prelude 1
Introduction 3

Chapter One: Childhood (1900-1915) 21

I Introduction
II Framing the Past 26
III Aivali – Kydonies 35
IV Moschonisia 47
V Constructing a Childhood 55

Chapter Two: Exile and War (1915-1922) 67

I Introduction
II Mytilini (Lesvos) – the first exile 68
III Thessaloniki – capital of the ‘new lands’ 73
IV The Return 79
V The War 90

Chapter Three: The Crisis Years (1922-1927) 111

I Introduction
II Historical Framework 112
III The Hospital 125
IV Lesvos – the home front 136
V Xanthi – a new start 141
VI ‘Dreaming of Steamers and Ships...’ 157

**Chapter Four: The Migrant ‘Voyage South’ (1927-1928):
Diaspora and Colonialism in Australia** 167

I Introduction
II The Voyage 177
III Melbourne – city of colonial wonders 184
IV Diaspora Discourse – the Greek guides 186
V On the Tracks of Diaspora – country Australia 196

Chapter Five: Years of Change (1928-1936)	213
<u>I</u> Introduction	
<u>II</u> On the Move	216
<u>III</u> Return to Greece	244
<u>IV</u> Second Voyage South	253
<u>V</u> 'The Duty and Right of the Young'	261
 Chapter Six: The 'Legend' of Alekos Doukas: A Deconstruction of Migrant Mythology	 269
<u>I</u> Introduction	
<u>II</u> Alekos Doukas (1936-1962)	272
<u>III</u> The Construction of a Legend	278
<u>IV</u> Reading the Past: a critical counter reading	285
<u>V</u> A Genre Mistake or Mistaken Genre?	302
 Chapter Seven: The Cultural Politics of Identity: Theoretical Debates and Conceptual Problems	 321
 Epilogue	 341
 Appendices (I – IX)	 345
Alekos Doukas: Select Bibliography	375
Archives	381
Interviews	381
Newspaper and Periodical Sources	382
Select Bibliography	383

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Thesis Abstract

This thesis is a critical biography as cultural history that tracks the life of an Asia Minor Greek, Alekos Doukas (1900-1962), through his childhood years, exile, wartime experience, refugee life in the 1920s and migration to Australia where he is gradually radicalised in the 1930s. In the 1940s and 1950s he becomes an activist and published author. Through a close study of a literary archive of letters and manuscripts, Doukas is located and analysed as an historical subject within the broader events and discourses of the first half of the twentieth century. The thesis works to open up the neglected field of migrant subjectivity in which cultural history has been flattened by assimilationist monocultural theoretical frameworks. The thesis critically examines contemporary Greek-Australian historiographical and literary accounts that construct Doukas in terms of a mythologised figure and that read his 1950s socialist realist novels as unproblematic autobiography and historical testimony. The study explores the cultural history of a minority group through a transnational perspective within broad Australian cultural debates about national history, ongoing colonialist discourses, ethnicity and race, memorialisation, and the competing claims of fiction and history. The thesis constructs a biographical narrative that focuses on the interplay between broad discursive systems and everyday practice, addressing in the process questions of agency, location and cultural specificity. It analyses Doukas within the broad cultural and political crisis that followed WWI and the Greek-Turkish war, as well as the transition of the Greek diaspora from traditional trading to industrial migrant patterns of overseas

settlement. The methodology is informed by critical discourse analysis and, in particular, Edward Said's *Orientalism* which provides a model for the movement from broad analysis to close textual readings. The study analyses original sources in Greek and Greek-Australian cultural history, connecting a wide range of theoretical and historical perspectives. The thesis is also informed by contemporary research that seeks to rewrite the separate national narratives of communities in the old Ottoman Empire as interconnected and entangled histories. Finally, the thesis also focuses on the corporeal aspects of memory and the materiality of culture in which intellectual and cultural phenomena operate through the location of a unique body.

PRELUDE

In the darkness, a soldier feeds a cartridge into the magazine of his rifle. The cartridge moves up in regular jerks as each shot ejects a spent case onto the barren ground. Its movement towards the firing chamber resembles in reverse order its passage of manufacture through the finely-honed machines of a factory in faraway Europe. The soldier keeps firing into the night. The cartridge finally slips into the chamber's throat.

There is a brief pause in the gunfire and the combatants have the momentary sensation that the battle is over. But the silence is broken by an even more ferocious burst. The soldier's finger presses on the trigger. Inside the chamber, the bullet is released in an explosion.

The bullet reaches the rifle's muzzle in an infinitesimal fraction of a second. To observe its journey we would need to slow time down, to suspend its unceasing action. The bullet is now travelling at 800 metres per second as it spins inside the dark hollow of the barrel.

As it emerges into the cool summer night air the bullet wobbles awkwardly at first, its gyrations gradually lessening as the speed of the thrust stabilises its flight over the slope of the mountain. The bullet is now set on its course. Only diminished energy or contact with a denser medium can stop it.

We are on the side of a mountain above a dry Anatolian plain. It is August 13, 1922. The Greek Front in the Greco-Turkish war has begun to collapse under the strong counter

offensive of Kemal Attaturk's forces. The young soldier about to be hit by the bullet is corporal Alexandros Doukas, a Greek from the Asia Minor coast...

I want the image of the spinning bullet to remain suspended above the discourse of the thesis as a metaphor for the biographical narrative of Alekos Doukas, and as metaphor for the physicality of culture and the problematics of subjectivity in history. As in Zeno's paradox, the bullet inches closer and closer on its journey, always spinning, yet never reaching the point of impact for as long as the narration continues. The bullet becomes a metaphor for biographical narrative movement through time that can be slowed or quickened, even stopped for digression and discussion, the narrative focus widened or narrowed, precisely as the narrative requires. As metaphor it points to the constructed nature of narrative, to the fact that there is no life that is 'capable of speaking itself and of displaying itself as a form of a story' (White 1987: 25). This very bullet literally sits on my desk as an 'artefact of memory,' testimony to a physical link to the subject of this study through his one surviving nephew who passed it on to me years ago just before his house was burned to the ground and his possessions turned to ashes (Hamilton 2003: 84). The bullet represents a pivotal moment in Alekos Doukas' life – that dark day on the thirteenth of August - that remains a black hole around which his memory repeatedly circles. The bullet, its flight, its impact on flesh and bones, its bent and deformed shape, constitute elements of micro-historical events that reverberate through time. These reverberations form a central part of the study of the psychic and material life of the subject of this thesis.

Introduction

This thesis is a critical biographical study of Alekos Doukas (1900-1962) who in 1927 migrated to Australia where he lived and worked for most of his adult life. In Australia, Doukas wrote two published novels and fictional and non-fictional prose. He translated literary works into Greek from English and co-founded an important Greek-language magazine and newspaper. He grew up on the Asia Minor coast of the Ottoman Empire and left for Greece in a period of exile during World War One (WWI), returning in 1919 to Turkey where he fought and was wounded in the Greek-Turkish War (1919-1922). He was evacuated to Greece and lived there again as a 'refugee' until 1927. These brief statements point to a life that crosses individual, national, imperial, as well as numerous community histories. Doukas' life story is a part of the transnational flow of people and ideas in the early twentieth century, sometimes exciting and hope engendering, more often than not traumatic and dislocating.¹ Through a close study of a literary archive, historical studies and sources, the thesis locates Doukas as an historical subject within the broader events and discourses that took place in the first six decades of the last century. It stages a critical investigation of Greek-Australian intellectual and cultural history, although it is not a general cultural history of that ethnic group.

In Greek-Australian studies and ethnic community cultural discourse, Doukas has an almost legendary status as a leftwing intellectual, although significantly, he is often seen as a problematic writer who belongs to an earlier pre-literate phase of migrant history. In the broader field of Australian cultural history he is virtually unknown, not so much as an

¹ In the sense that the thesis takes into account transnational dimensions of history it can be seen as part of a twentieth century trans-Indian interaction between Europe and Australia via the Suez Canal.

empirical deficit but more importantly as the absence of a discursive space for the theorisation of such a figure. Why is there an absence of bilingual or cross-cultural studies in the area of non-Anglo-Celtic cultural and intellectual history in Australia? If the object of enquiry - in this case a Greek intellectual and writer of the decades before and after the war - is crucially shaped by theory and methodology, then the answer to the above question lies perhaps in the reluctance of scholars to grapple with the theoretical demands of locating such subjects in 'the wider social and historical matrix' (Teo 2003b: 147).² To dismiss the absence as simply a question of language (in)accessibility is to undoubtedly diminish the significance of the historically powerful disciplinary regime of assimilationism that has rendered non-Anglo-Celtic and Indigenous cultural life illegitimate foreign currency in the dominant cultural economy. This study is about one particular migrant group's relationship to that economy and the process of contestation over national belonging that began well before the mass migration of the 1950s. This early period of Greek-Australia cultural history is approached through the critical examination of the life and texts of Alekos Doukas in the context of his generation's engagement with Australian cultural and political life. Situated within Greek-Australian studies, the thesis locates itself within the broader cultural history debates about national history, ongoing colonialist discourses, ethnicity and race, memorialisation in history and the competing claims of fiction and history.³

One of the premises of the thesis is that Greek-Australian history has been largely written within an Anglo nationalist and assimilationist framework in which the migrant subject is constructed in terms of his (rarely her) integration into the hegemonic cultural norms of the

² The quote is from Barry York (1996: 17).

³ For a cross section of such debates see Teo (2003).

country.⁴ Other aspects of the migrant subject have been considered extraneous to this process. In the dominant racialised discourses of society in the early twentieth century, the Southern European is a subjugated figure. In the discourse of the Greek communities, a split subjectivity can be discerned in which diaspora national loyalty and identity were retained but subordinated within a broader submission to white Australia and its colonialist foundational myths. This historical process, full of contradictions, fractures and conflicts, is usually treated to a smooth assimilationist reading. My study of a located historicised subject aims to explore these areas of contradiction and move beyond a homogenised view of migrants as objects of knowledge. I am interested in exploring the migrant subject as an historical agent interacting through everyday practice with diverse and intersecting discourses that shaped and defined subjectivity. I consider it crucial to study the processes of subject formation prior to the migrant's arrival in Australia. In other words, a part of the research equation is the unpacking of the migrant's cultural baggage, the discursive systems bearing on subjective states of the individual and the collective *before* as well as *after* migration. In this I am resisting the tendency to view Greek migrants as subjects primarily formed by oral rather than textual culture.⁵

In a field of history where migrant subjectivity has been neglected, a biographical approach based on the close reading of source material provides a productive area of research. The thesis draws on a unique literary archive, the Stratis Doukas Archive of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, which holds letters from Alekos to his older brother Stratis, a well-known writer, critic and cultural figure in Greece.⁶ The letters span the years 1921-1962 and comprise an archive of transnational significance. They form the textual source for much

⁴ This premise concurs with the theoretical conceptualisations regarding the U.S. in Laliotou (2004).

⁵ See Chapter Six.

⁶ Stratis Doukas Archive, Department of Medieval and Modern Greek Studies, Aristotle University, Thessaloniki.

of the biographical narrative of the thesis and the detailed mapping of the subject's location in relation to a range of literary, political and social discourses. They also constitute one side of a continuing dialogue between the two brothers that connects Alekos to many of the literary and philosophical currents of educated Greek discourse. One of the distinctive contributions of this thesis to Greek-Australian cultural history is to bring to light a rich resource of archival material that has not been previously translated into English.

The biographical approach allows a high degree of contextualisation and location in the discussion of the wider discourses that have impinged on the subjective states of historical actors such as Alekos Doukas.⁷ Dominant discourses and institutions have largely constructed the identities available to historical subjects but always in an ongoing process of interaction between historical agent and discursive system on the level of lived experience.⁸ It is this sense of lived experience that the biographical study aims to investigate and critically assess through close textual readings that can in turn inform and modify theory. It is on the 'micro-political' level of experience that the thesis focuses much of its attention in order to observe how broader discourses manifest at the personal level and how at certain points in time individual thinking undergoes shifts and transformations (Laliotou 2004: 13). This approach takes up Michel de Certeau's (1984) idea of the 'singularity' of the ordinary historical subject and the polemical interplay between discursive power and the 'trajectories' of everyday practice. The thesis is an application of such theorisation to the life of Alekos Doukas.

What sort of biographical study does this thesis stage? It is not the study of a 'genius' or 'great poet,' or an exceptional subject who somehow transcends history. Neither is it a literary

⁷ What Laliotou (2004: 3) has called 'the interaction between the psychic and the historical forces' in her investigation of the 'cultural archive' of transatlantic migration.

⁸ For a discussion of migrant subjectivity and institutional discourses in Australia see Pugliese (1995a).

biography of the ‘life and works’ genre with the aim of illuminating the work through the life or vice versa. It is, to borrow David Carter’s (1989: 35) description of his study of the ‘migrant’ writer Judah Waten, ‘biography as cultural history’ and his definition succinctly expresses the theoretical approach of this thesis as biography:

A cultural history is a history of the institutions and discourses, the structures and techniques, of meaning making (in a given society/at a given time). Biography as cultural history is the story of an individual, the ‘biographised’ subject, known within and across these institutions and discourses. It thus might also be the story of social institutions, and of ethical, political, and aesthetic discourses, known within and across the biographised subject.

The term “‘biographised’ subject’ is particularly useful, conveying as it does the idea that a life represented in biographical terms can only ever be the life of that discourse, the ‘biographised’ life, and not *the* life. Carter’s refusal to extricate the individual subject as something separate to, or above and beyond, the discursive systems and institutions in which he or she is located, is a poststructuralist reading that this thesis deploys.⁹ The subject Alekos Doukas is framed, understood and analysed ‘within and across’ intersecting discourses in Turkey, Greece and Australia over a long time frame.

The thesis contains broad historical contours that include many of the major events of the first sixty years of the twentieth century which has been described as largely an ‘age of catastrophe’ (Hobsbawm 1996). These events are not the focus of study even though they do stand as narrative divisions, landmarks in the personal and social landscape, and sometimes impinge directly, even physically, on Doukas’ life. They are experienced individually and

⁹ For a brief survey of poststructural approaches to cultural history in Australia see Garton (2004).

collectively in many different ways. For example, to juxtapose Australian and Greek histories, the experiences of Doukas, his family and island community of Moschonisia and the Australian troops deployed in the Dardanelles in 1915 may have occurred in close geographical proximity but as narrated histories they belong to different discursive universes. It is in this sense of individual experience and discursive framing that the large events of history figure in this study, although the intersection of histories and discourses is also a matter of vital interest. The scope of the discourses analysed are correspondingly broad but salient to an understanding of the biographical subject. They include Greek irredentism, Hellenism in the Ottoman Empire, Orientalism, Greek literary and refugee cultural movements in the 1920s, colonialism, assimilationism and traditional Greek diaspora ideology in Australia, liberalism and fascism, communist political and cultural movements and Cold War ideological polarisation. The thesis moves backwards and forwards from the broader terrain of intersecting and overlapping discourses to Doukas' literary and epistolary texts in which correspondences, differentiations and conflicts are discerned. The thesis includes a discussion of contemporary Greek-Australian discourse around literary, cultural and historiographical issues as these relate to the reading of Doukas' postwar historical novels as historical testimony. This involves an exploration of the politics of collective memory and how genres of memory are read and framed.

A number of broad hypotheses underlie this thesis and are argued through the narrative of Doukas' life and his textual production. The first is that the interwar years in Australia, particularly the 1930s, signalled the beginning of a transition period from traditional Greek diaspora to new industrialised patterns of settlement that involved conflicting and challenging discourses within communities. Traditional views continued to dominate, but in a climate of increasing contestation by socialist class-based ideas that advocated participation in local

social and political movements. The long-term consequences of these changes have been the gradual ethnicisation and nationalisation of Greek migrants but also the transformation of diasporic identity and connection. The use of diaspora terminology often reveals a problematic blurring of these older and newer formations, and a sliding between essentialist and contingent notions of identity. The detailed study of Doukas' early years culminates in the 1930s liberal crisis and his move to political activism within the Greek left movement in Australia. This activism and his later historical novels established Doukas as a representative figure of this movement. The second hypothesis relates to a certain mythologisation of Doukas in Greek-Australian historiography and community perceptions from the 1960s onwards. A further hypothesis that I pose concerns the manner in which the leftwing cultural interventions of the 1940s and 1950s have been largely forgotten and erased within the discourse of multiculturalism of the 1970s and onwards. The reading of Doukas' socialist realist fiction of the 1950s as documentary history or unproblematic autobiography is a case that is contested in the thesis. Finally as a broad hypothesis, the thesis argues that homogenised or unitary representations of historical actors and discourses break down under close historical and archival analysis, exposing more differentiated, complex and even contradictory terrains that open up space for further historical work.

The methodology of the thesis has emerged from a number of critical theories that are deployed in general and specific ways. Foucault's (1977) theorisation of the writing of history as genealogy, with its rejection of the search for metaphysical essence, transcendent meaning, pristine origin and teleological continuity, has directed my study to a series of discrete and historically located discourses through which the biographical subject is made meaningful. My analysis of such discourses broadly reflects many of Foucault's insights into discursive formations and their characteristics, their institutional sites and connections. These

theorisations offer an incisive new way of approaching cultural history and subjectivity. A second and related theoretical source has been Edward Said's *Orientalism* which not only serves as a model for cultural analysis but also bears directly on one of the overarching discourses in the thesis, that of the western conception of the subjugated Other, both the Oriental and Native of the colonised 'New World.' Said's theorisation of a number of methodological problems has been instructional for my approach. These include his notion of the 'delimitation' of the archive to a manageable dimension and order, the description of partial discourses to suggest larger and more intricate formations, the notion of the exteriority of discourse through its representation rather than 'correctness' or 'truth,' and finally his skilled 'close textual readings' that illuminate both individual text and its larger discursive connections (Said 1978: 15-25, 1985). In many instances, Doukas' texts reveal a high correspondence with Orientalist discourses, attesting to the penetration and reach of European intellectual influence on educated Greeks in the Ottoman Empire. Said's (1994: 253) concept of the 'culture of empire' is utilised in understanding Doukas' intellectual captivity in his early years by notions of heroic western expansion and colonial enterprise. In the case of Greece and Greeks of the Near East, Orientalist discourse is further complicated by the fact that western Philhellenism is a form of Orientalism that has been internalised and redirected by Greeks against the Oriental other so that Modern Hellenism often becomes synonymous with European progress and expansion.¹⁰ In this way the ideologies of Hellenism and Greek irredentism, at least until 1922, are deeply implicated in European Orientalist discourses.

As a biographical study, the thesis uses both narrative and analytical modes to develop its argumentation, the one informing the other. The more overtly analytical sections work on both a macro and micro level, broad discursive examinations and close textual readings of the

¹⁰ See Skopetea (2003: 176), Papailias (2005: 28) and Chow (1993: 7).

archive. The biographical narrative is subjected to a reflexive commentary on its constructed nature and limits. The thesis also explores a level of the archival texts that relates to a certain evocative physicality that such documents exhibit. Just as objects function as ‘artefacts of memory,’ certain passages, phrases or words often evoke an intense physicality of time, place and the experience of these (Hamilton 2003: 84). Roland Barthes’ (1982: 30) term ‘biographeme’ to describe those indivisible elements in biography that, rather than propel the narrative, evoke a unique moment or image anchored in time and place, is a useful concept to employ in studying the production of biographical texts. The corporeal sense of the autobiographic text is theorised through Walter Benjamin’s (1999: 602) meditations on memory in which the past is invoked, not as a perfectly remembered world, but one recalled through the merging of indistinct memories that often coalesce into a concrete image or word. Just as Benjamin’s memories are inextricably linked to and encoded by objects and locations, so too physical objects and the sights and sounds of particular locations extend and encode memory in Doukas’ life. The physical space and medium of sense experience are an active dimension of subjectivity and identity (Richter 2000: 178-179). Of relevance to the theorising of biographical narrative is the connection in Bakhtin’s writing between the novel and the body, the latter connected to the world as the novel is to texts (Holquist 1990: 90). The ‘dialogical’ reading of the body is a fruitful way of approaching the study of a located subject in intellectual history. It opens biography to the investigation of the materiality of existence, culture, social life and thought - the body as a site of interaction with the wider world that permeates its membranes in a physical way, thus directly impinging on subjectivity.

One of the objects of study in this thesis is the narration of the past through different genres that represent personal and collective memory (letters, autobiographies, reminiscent texts, essays, interviews, fictional works), as well as through history writing both inside and outside

the academic institution. While the thesis primarily focuses on the biographical dimension of letters which are themselves a mix of genres that often slide imperceptibly from one to the other - conversational, confessional, essay, reporting, autobiographical, travelogue and so on – it also deals with a number of simultaneous and often competing genres of memory or ‘recollection.’¹¹ These include unpublished literary narratives written by Doukas in the 1920s and two post-World War Two (WWII) historical novels that re-narrate the past from another vantage point. Although the letters are read as documents of a particular time and place that provide important biographical information, they constitute a dissonant relationship within the corpus of Doukas’ writing. To the extent that Doukas’ novels belong to a postwar testimonial literature – the Asia Minor ‘Catastrophe,’ war, migration experience – this dissonance generates a number of problematics around the reading of testimonial genres as unmediated ‘truth.’ It brings to the fore the issue of mediation in both constructed fiction and oral and first-hand witness reports.

In both Doukas’ letters and literary work, there are traces of wartime trauma connected to the subject’s life experience. The trauma aspect of the biographical narrative is theorised in at least two ways - as a crisis of witnessing and forgetting (Caruth 1995), and as a disturbance that over time destabilises larger totalising systems of thought (de Certeau 1984: 199-203). Doukas’ experiences as a soldier and veteran of the Greek-Turkish war are understood theoretically through Eric Leed’s (1979) hypothesis of WWI as a profound experience of industrialisation in both the mechanisation and proletarianisation of the men involved. Doukas’ sense of discontinuity between the ‘before’ and ‘after’ of the war is analysed as a ‘disjunction’ between the polarised worlds of war and peacetime, the front and home. His war

¹¹ Papailias (2005: 4) uses the term ‘recollections’ to stress the active use of documents and archival material in the narration of the past and to make visible the ‘historicity of historical production.’

experience left a deep mark on his emotional and intellectual outlook and in the biographical narrative the trauma of war constantly intrudes. The title of the thesis, ‘A Body Broken,’ taken from Doukas’ own words, refers both to the permanence of trauma but also the struggle to continue living and healing in spite of physical and psychological damage.

As the research methodology of the thesis is largely based on an exploration and citation of archival sources, the following points need to be made. Although the Stratis Doukas Archive is situated as a public literary archive it can also be regarded as a family-cum-personal archive, a section of its holdings relating to the wandering diasporic figure of Alekos Doukas. In this sense it crosses lines often drawn up and regulated by archives between national and non-national, public and personal, literary and non-literary (Papailias 2005: 3). The archive is little known or published. It bears the authorial hand of its donor Stratis Doukas who collected and copied into bound letter books Alekos’ interwar material (1921-1936), which includes approximately 330 letters and around 30 literary manuscripts. The 125 postwar letters (1945-1962) are originals on loose-leaf paper and aerograms. The archival material has invariably undergone a process of copying and transcribing, a process not uninfluenced by Stratis Doukas’ own literary practice of using ephemeral forms of writing as a basis for literary reworking. The demarcation between letters and manuscripts is not always clear in the letter books, and this necessitated a good deal of transcribing, cross-checking and analysis to arrive at a working understanding of their internal logic and order. This material is again re-contextualised in the thesis in the form of translated quotation and citation, a process that involves an additional series of linguistic and socio-historical interpretations. I have included as appendices nine key texts in the original Greek with their translation in order to allow scholarly access to the texts.

The thesis has given greater attention to the early life of Alekos Doukas, and in particular the interwar years, as these were not only formative for the subject they are the least known or understood in Greek-Australian studies. The letters too are significantly different in the two periods mentioned above, moving from personal to more public domains in the post-WWII period. It is in the second period that Doukas became publicly known as an activist, intellectual and author. A more detailed study of the postwar period, using Doukas' letters and the published replies of his brother Stratis as a valuable source, remains to be done.¹²

In addition to archival research, the thesis is informed by the experience of a number of research visits to Turkey and Greece, which exposed the writer to important contemporary dimensions of the sundering of entangled Greek and Turkish histories by the 1919-1922 war and the compulsory population exchange that followed.¹³ In recent years a movement in academic research, local history, journalism, arts and cultural contacts has begun on both sides of the Aegean to rebuild connections and rewrite histories that move beyond national histories to intercrossing and located narratives.¹⁴ In this sense, the thesis is situated in a contemporary transnational intersection of entangled history writing between Australia, Greece and Turkey which not only works to reverse the twentieth-century realpolitik of 'unmixing peoples'¹⁵ but also to mix in migrant history with Anglo Australian history.

¹² Stratis' replies to many of Alekos 125 letters between 1945-1962 can be found in S. Doukas (1975b).

¹³ 'Convention Concerning the Exchange of Greek and Turkish Populations, and Protocol, Signed at Lausanne, January 30, 1923.' The exchange involved about 1.5 million people which included those who had left Turkey during the war or immediately following the Greek defeat, while the rest, both Christians and Muslims on each side, departed in more regulated circumstances between 1923-1926. See Hirschon (2003).

¹⁴ Examples of such collaborative efforts are the edited volume Hirschon (2003) and 'The Compulsory Exchange of Populations between Greece and Turkey. 80th Anniversary Symposium, November 2003 Istanbul' in which Greek, Turkish and international scholars presented papers on a wide range of related subjects.

¹⁵ The term is attributed to Lord Curzon as a cynical description of the international solutions sought by the world powers in the conflicts of the first decades of the twentieth-century (Hirschon 2003: 4).

To fulfil the ambition to produce a (cross-)cultural history, this thesis has used a multiplicity of sources, theoretical approaches and writing strategies. It is not a general or literary history, traditional biography or anthropology; it borrows from these as it does from other disciplines. It is cultural history that aims to connect with contemporary debates that cross borders when examining questions of nation, diaspora and subjectivity. It is aimed at both Greek and non-Greek scholars, and for this reason aims to steer a middle course between them.

Chapter One confronts the task of how to narrate and understand Doukas' childhood years (1900-1915) when only fragments of biographical information are available. The biographical blurb on his 1953 novel *To Struggle, To Youth*, is closely analysed as a 'paratextual' device and initial entry point (Genette 1997). The histories of the twin towns of Aivali and Moschonisia on the Asia Minor coast are analysed in the context of the discourse of nineteenth and early twentieth-century Hellenism in the Ottoman Empire. It is a discourse of identity and place that, through local history and education, dominated the provincial society in which Alekos grew up. Using local history texts and other historical scholarship, the chapter establishes a link between Greek community discourse and Western influence in the area. In an approach suggested by Foucault's *Order of Things*, a local 1895 treatise is analysed to provide a portrait of the cultural and physical space of the island community and its foundational myths. This discursive space is painted in with the memories of Alekos, Stratis and other family members through reminiscing texts, interviews, references in letters and literary reconstruction. The chapter ends with the evacuation of the island during WWI.

Chapter Two covers the period 1915-1922, beginning with the Doukas' family exile in Mytilini (Lesvos) and Thessaloniki, and the return to Moschonisia in 1919. The significance of the intellectual and cultural life of Mytilini on Stratis and Alekos is examined, as well as

the WWI political situation that resulted in the Greek ‘national schism.’ The ‘Eastern Question’ and the Greek army’s occupation of the Smyrna zone in 1919 is analysed through the conjunction of the discourses of Orientalism and Greek irredentism in which the self-evident logic of Western intervention and minority nationalist claims are presented as the outcome of ‘age-old’ truths. Alekos’ decision to enlist in the Greek army in 1920 is theorised as a cultural tactic of ‘poiesis’ contextualised within a Greek education in which classical texts are sanctioned as authority. Alekos’ wartime experience is discussed through the concept of ‘the liminality of war’ and the particularly Greek experience in which ancient texts and narratives function to produce a disorientating ‘palimpsest’ effect on the soldiers’ relationship to the landscape and theatre of war. Alekos’ experience is explored both through *To Struggle, To Youth* and a number of short literary texts he wrote at the front, and which can be read as oblique responses to the stresses of war. His letters from the front introduce his thinking on social and philosophical issues, as well underlying anxiety, depression and ambiguity. The two events in which Alekos is wounded are examined through his letters and fictional texts within a theoretical analysis of the narration of trauma.

Chapter Three deals with the immediate aftermath of war and the years up to 1927. Alekos’ family situation is located within the historical framework of refugee life and the wider political and cultural climate of the ‘New Lands’ in Northern Greece. The broad terrain of literary and aesthetic discourse in the 1920s is analysed in relation to the Doukas brothers and their close friend and compatriot Fotis Kontoglou, a noted representative of the symbolist aesthetic. The narrative follows Alekos from the hospital in Athens to Mytilini and Xanthi, tracking his mental and physical recuperation and search for intellectual and spiritual meaning. In his deep crisis, Alekos turns away from rationalist and secular thinking to a personal and ecumenical Christian faith. His reading and discussions with Stratis are explored

in connection to wider aesthetic, philosophical and political debates within Greece. Alekos' manuscript of the novella 'Phrygia' is analysed for its biographical and discursive connections to wider currents and the literary movement represented by Stratis Doukas and Kontoglou. Alekos' political views in this period are an ambiguous mix of 'agriculturalism,' romantic notions of retreat and evolutionary ideas of progress. After repeated attempts to migrate to Australia he finally boards a ship in September 1927.

Chapter Four focuses in depth on a period of twelve months (1927-1928) in which Doukas sails to Australia and works as an itinerant labourer in the countryside. It locates him at the intersection of two tangential but related discourses of white colonial settlement myths and Greek diasporic tradition. After sketching in the historical situation of Greek diaspora in the 1920s, Doukas' voyage south is examined through his letters as an example of Orientalist writing and imagination. The discourse of Australia's diaspora communities is mapped in detail through a survey of three Greek immigrant guides published in the first decades of the century. The guides reveal the communities' own foundational settlement myths and their implication in white colonial dispossession. Doukas' travels and impressions of Australia are narrated and analysed in a parallel mapping that reveals many idiosyncrasies and paradoxes which undermine any assumption of Greek immigrants as unitary or stereotypical subjectivities. The biographical subject's differentiation from the stereotypical diaspora outlook provides an interesting example of an uprooted Greek Ottoman intellectual searching for a new society and identity within a conditioned education of 'culture of empire' (Said 1994: 253).

Chapter Five covers the period 1928-1936 which includes the early years of Doukas' wanderings in rural Australia, all the while producing fictional and non-fictional texts. These

texts continue many of his earlier neo-romantic philosophical preoccupations, as well as attempts to imaginatively enter the white colonialist appropriation of the land through a classicising domestication of the landscape. An extended analysis is made of the manuscript 'Under the Southern Cross,' an attempt to create a Hamsunesque romance-cum-migrant novella, which also reveals Doukas' effort to fictionally transcend social and racial barriers of the time. The Depression years and the crisis of liberalism are analysed in Australia and Greece where Doukas returned in the years 1932-1935 to work in his family's wholesale business. In Greece, Doukas is located in the broad intellectual and political movement of refugees towards the left in the 1930s. On his return to Australia in 1935, he began his contact with Greek leftwing activists whose history is sketched in this chapter. The beginning of Doukas' political activism is pinpointed to late 1936 when he began to send translations and articles to the bulletin of the Greek workers' club Democritus. The chapter concludes that, far from immediately embracing communism, his politics in this period are a form of militant liberal anti-monarchism and anti-fascism.

Chapter Six departs from the biographical narrative structure to examine a contemporary Greek-Australian discourse around issues of literary history and historiography as these relate to the figure of Alekos Doukas. Following a short summary of his life after the late 1930s, the legend that grew after his sudden death in 1962 is studied as a process of mythologisation. How his fiction has been read from the 1980s onwards is examined in detail to show how both leftwing mythologisation and multicultural discourse led to a particular reading of his fiction as unmediated autobiography and testimony with confusion over the periodisation of literary production and context. The literary context of Doukas' novels is explored as part of the socialist realist movement in 1950s Australia. The analysis aims to locate Greek migrant

literary production within a specific Australian cultural and historical context and the conditions of migration and engagement with society.

Chapter Seven takes up a number of theoretical debates that are touched on the previous chapter and involve the cultural politics of identity in the area of literary and cultural history. Competing conceptual frameworks in Greek-Australian literature are explored and found to be problematic in placing minority literature within the Australian context. I briefly examine conflicting positions on language as a criterion for literature with diasporic dimensions, as well as the issue of hyphenated terminology as a political marker of cultural identity. I survey the emergence of the term 'Greek-Australian' in the cultural life of Greek migrants in an effort to historically contextualise cultural movements in the prewar and postwar decades. The use of the term 'multiculturalism' in the narration of cultural history is examined and found to be historically problematic. These theoretical discussions are related to issues of analysis and interpretation in the writing of this biography as cultural history.

