

CHAPTER ONE: Childhood (1900-1915)

I

‘...men and women are not only themselves; they are also the region in which they were born, the city or apartment or farm in which they learnt to walk, the games they played as children, the old wives’ tales they overheard, the food they ate, the schools they attended, the sports they followed, the poets they read, and the Gods they believed in. It is all these things which have made them what they are and these are things that you can’t come to know by hearsay, you can only know them if you have lived them.’ W.Somerset Maugham *The Razor’s Edge*¹

If Maugham’s words intimate some of the challenges and limitations of biographical writing, they do so by bringing attention to the physicality of life, the materiality of culture and the specificity that time and place imprint on experience, the very ‘chronotopic’ nature of meaning that Bakhtin uses to relate life and literature (Bakhtin 1981). The epigraph asserts the sheer impossibility of knowing another life in any lived sense, a salutary antidote perhaps to a fashion in biography that often promises the reader privileged insight. Nevertheless, it can be asked how much can we know of a life, or even ‘how much should we try to know?’ (Donaldson 2004). What do more facts and details bring us in terms of knowing? What constitutes this knowing of another’s life? The biographer Victoria Glendenning has argued that there is an over-fondness in biographical writing for minutiae and that without their crafting into a compelling narrative they are of little profit (Field 1996: 12). These preliminary remarks raise important issues that confront a biographical study at every point of its construction. How they are dealt with is a measure of its critical engagement with the past. Historical narration is not a value-free and ideologically neutral interpretation of sources: rather, historical narration contains embedded views of reality that are always already ideologically inscribed. When the historian, or biographer, knows ‘how the story ends’ he or

¹ Introductory epigraph to Pallis (1954).

she assumes an understanding of life as having a beginning, middle and end. This assumption rests on the belief that the veracity of a representation, whether of a factual or fictional nature, is conditional on the account fulfilling the formal demands of a story that involves a sense of closure. The narrativising impulse in writing, as White (1987: 23-25) argues, is at heart a moralising impulse. Whatever narrative shape is constructed to convey a sense of a life can only ever be, in the final analysis, the writer's own 'moralising' stance toward the past and the present. With these reflexive thoughts on the limits of biographical discourse I approach the 'beginning' of Alekos Doukas' life.

In writing about Doukas' 'childhood' and 'adolescent' years in the first two decades of the twentieth century it is important to keep in mind that the discursive category of 'youth' had only just begun to emerge in Greek society, including the communities in the Ottoman Empire (Liakos 1988: 7-19). Affected by exile, war and downward social mobility, Doukas' 'youth' was particularly troubled, and, in some respects, cut short in terms of the expectations created by this emerging social identity. The sources that might shed light on his childhood and early adolescent years are limited: a biographical blurb on the cover of his 1953 novel *To Struggle*, *To Youth*, the fictional (auto-) biographical third-person account in the novel, his brother Stratis Doukas' biographical notes in the archive, a 1925 affidavit concerning family property, a number of interviews with family members, fleeting references in letters and literary texts. These constitute a small series of heterogeneous genres - personal and official, published and unpublished, fictional and non-fictional - that all look back, at varying distances through time. Each frames the past in different ways, at times slightly shifting the focus, or at other times recalling a completely different set of events or experiences. How do we assess the 'reliability' of such sources? Do some texts enjoy greater status or veracity than others? Does the subject himself possess a privileged access to the past? My answer to these questions is

not a simple yes or no, but an approach that examines the ‘genres of recollection’ as different framing devices through which the past is mediated through the discursive present (Papailias 2005). In this biographical exploration there is no privileged text that stands as *the* objective benchmark of reliability, free of ideological distortion. Memory is an investment in the present. The notion of a fixed and objective memory is untenable. The official document, the oral testimony, like the fictional narrative, are contingent historical productions that, closely examined, reveal a high degree of inter-textual leakage and crossover. The reliability, status and authority of texts are contingent matters that need to be examined in each specific case. In this study I use a multiplicity of texts, and some artefacts, as ways to ‘figure forth the thought-world’ of the biographical subject and ‘the world of emotional investment and praxis of [their] time and place of production’ (White 1987: 187).

As a part of my research into Alekos Doukas’ life I visited in 2002, 2003 and 2006 the island of his birth, Moschonisia (Cunda – pronounced Junda - in the local Turkish vernacular and Alibey Adası in official usage), which is on the northern Aegean coast of modern day Turkey. The island’s geographic location is important in the study for a number of cultural and historical reasons that will become apparent. Suffice to say that it is 80 kilometres south-east of the historic site of Troy, and 160 kilometres south of Gallipoli (the phonetic amalgam of the Greek *Kallipoli* and the Turkish Gelibolu), the site of the Australian foundational national myth of the Anzacs.² The Dardanelles is a point of historical crossings between the notional East and West, Xerxes’ invasion from the east, Alexander’s from the west. I begin with these historical connections to intimate the significance and contention around the naming of places, the use of geographic space for national myths, the geographic markers in Orientalist narratives, and the contemporary dimensions of my study of Doukas’ childhood. To ignore

² Australian and New Zealand Army Corps. Now celebrated as a national day on 25 April.

these would be to reproduce a hermetically-sealed national or ethnic biographical narrative of an Asia Minor Greek subject that silences the entangled histories of this specific geographic and cultural space that was once the community of Moschonisia.³

My arrival on the island in 2002 resulted in an unexpected twist in the research. A little nervous that my enquiries about the life of a Greek from 80 or more years ago might arouse hostility, or simply indifference, I was surprised to meet the 84-year old Ali Onay, recently-widowed and passionate local historian, an *istoriodifis*⁴ as a Greek academic friend described him. Onay, or Ali Bey (Mr Ali) as I came to call him, is a Muslim Cretan (a *Kritikos*) who arrived on the island in 1923 as a part of the population exchange.⁵ Through his father, who in the late 1890s had visited the island for business, and his own dealings with a number of Moschonisiot refugees from Mytilini, Onay has a personal connection to the old Greek community and its stories. He has taken on the task in his later years of carefully documenting the material remnants of the Greek Christian past.⁶ A warm and hospitable man, of democratic and humanist outlook, he is also the bearer of an older tradition of ethics based on inter-communal respect and friendship, and a type of religious syncretism between Christianity and Islam (Koufopoulou 2003: 215). Ali Bey took me all over the island, showing me the ruined churches, monasteries, old houses (most still in use), schools, roads, cemetery, fountains, wind-driven flour mills, olive presses and groves, bays and ancient sites, all the while pointing out the technical details of the material construction of these remnants

³ It is only in recent times that Australian writers have begun to contemplate the proximity of the Australian participation in the Dardanelles Campaign in 1915 and the Armenian Genocide. This historical gap or silence includes the history of the Greeks on the Asia Minor coast. See Manne (2007).

⁴ This term in Greek denotes the idea of the amateur historian or collector of historical sources in contradistinction to the trained academic historian. See discussion about the tensions between the two in Papailias (2005: 47, 89-90).

⁵ For a discussion of the complex cultural identities of these Greek-speaking Turks of Cunda see Koufopoulou (2003).

⁶ His moving and informative account of the inter-faith history of the famous church of *Panagia* (the Virgin Mary) on Moschonisia has been published in Greek (Onay 2000).

and the stories attached to them. All around me were the physical connections to a past that I was exploring through texts and multiple genres of memory. The ironies of my meeting with Ali Onay abound. I was being shown the physical spaces of Alekos Doukas' childhood by a Greek-speaking Muslim Turk who identified as a Cretan and who was expelled from his homeland to colonise the empty space left behind by the forced exodus of Turkey's national enemy, the Christian Greeks, now displaced and dispersed, a community of inter-generational memory.

The visit to the old Greek cemetery with Ali Bey illustrates well the 'archaeology' of the recent past that exists everywhere on the island. The once grand cemetery is now a cultivated field and the chapel and gravestones, dynamited around 1929-1930 by one of the refugee settlers, lie in a large mound.⁷ The stone walls and entrance survive, but in a state of ruin. Lying on the ground near the entrance, and half covered in mud, was an engraved headstone. It belonged to one of the island's nineteenth-century bishops, as the classical inscription on the stone revealed.⁸ Ali Bey remembered the cemetery before its destruction, with its family graves, charnel house, wrought-iron entrance and marble archway, and abundant eucalypt trees. As a melancholy irony of history, the Muslim cemetery serving the Cunda community lies only a few metres away in the adjacent field, where we visited the fresh grave of Ali Bey's wife.

⁷ The dates were given to me by Ali Onay. Video Recording 8 October 2002. Doukas* (1953: 352) writes that on his return to Moschonisia in 1919 he found the cemetery had been vandalised by the Turkish garrison stationed on the island during WWI. [*Where I use the name Doukas, without initial, in a reference I am referring to Alekos.]

⁸ Bishop Paisios, the Smyrnian, whose bishopric between 1872-1882 was considered to be benefactor for the island. See Drakos (1985b: 43-54).

II

Framing the Past

Alekos Doukas was born in 1900 in Moschonisia, Kydonies, Smyrna.

He attended the High School of Kydonies and Mytilini for two years.

As a young refugee of sixteen his studies were terminated and he threw himself into the struggle to earn a living.

He served in the Asia Minor Army from March 1920 until the Catastrophe.

He was wounded in Ankara and later at Afyon Karahisar.

He was awarded: 1) The Inter-Allied Victory Medal, 2) The War Cross 3rd Class 3) The Silver Cross for Valour with which he was decorated by King Constantine on the battlefield of Eskisehir.

He migrated to Australia in 1927.

These terse biographical statements appear on the back cover of Alekos Doukas' novel *To Struggle, To Youth* published in Melbourne in 1953. A black-and-white photo of a middle-aged man, neatly attired in a suit and tie, clean shaven and showing the early signs of a receding hairline, takes up a third of the allotted space. Along with a similar supplementary blurb on the cover of his novel *Under Foreign Skies* published posthumously in 1963, this 'authorised' biographical portrait will constitute the enduring public image of Alekos Doukas for the next forty-five years. I say 'authorised' because below the lines that describe the author's translations and literary contributions to Greek journals are the words 'Published by Alex. C. Doucas' and a Melbourne address. The biographical blurb as a genre is rarely a casual text. As a 'peritext' that signs the outermost layer of a book, its lexical economy, placement and format function to project a sanctioned public image of the author, often

suggesting ways a work is meant to be read.⁹ A careful examination of this brief biographical portrait will dispel any conception that it is a straightforward presentation of facts.

Alekos Doukas. We note the preference for the colloquial form ‘Alekos’ of the baptismal name Alexandros, an indicator of a language preference for the demotic Modern Greek and an informal literary style. *Moschonisia, Kydonies, Smyrna.* Moschonisia is the Greek name of the small island off the Asia Minor coast, the sister city of the better-known Aivali (Turkish Ayvalık), here given the Greek name of ‘Kydonies,’ thereby linking the text to the wider discourse around the Greek presence in Asia Minor, particularly as it applied in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The inclusion of *Smyrna*, a hundred or so kilometres to the south, presumably helps the reader place Moschonisia and Kydonies on the western coast of Asia Minor. Not coincidentally, Smyrna is the city whose burning buildings and fleeing refugees, photographed from the harbour in September 1922, provide the emblematic image of the exodus of the Greeks from Turkey in this period. *The High School of Kydonies.* For those familiar with Modern Greek history, the mention of this school, linked as it is to the famous Academy of Kydonies, will conjure a tradition of learning that goes back to the Modern Greek Enlightenment whose ideology inspired the national uprising of 1821. *As a young refugee of sixteen his studies were terminated and he threw himself into the struggle to earn a living.* The sentence brings attention to the effect refugee experience had on his life, the rupture it represented. That the writer ‘threw himself into the struggle’ at this young age stresses his active stance in dealing with difficult circumstances. By way of association, the word ‘struggle’ echoes the novel’s title *To Struggle, To Youth*, the overarching theme of the work and which can also be read as a dedication. *He served in the Asia Minor Army from*

⁹ The peritexts make up the outer zone of a book and are sub-category of paratexts defined as ‘those liminal devices and conventions, both within and outside the book, that form part of the complex mediation between book, author, publisher, and reader’ (Genette 1997).

March 1920 until the Catastrophe. The capitalised ‘Catastrophe’ refers to the traumatic national defeat of the Greek-Turkish War (1919-22) which terminated in September of 1922. In the novel’s preface, Doukas describes the Asia Minor Army as ‘barbaric,’ indicating a moral revulsion, or at the very least, a deep ambivalence about the war, which gives the detailed description of his war decorations in the blurb an ironic dimension. In 1992, his only surviving nephew informed me that his uncle had felt ashamed of his war medals, which suggests that he was persuaded to include them in the biographical blurb to emphasise his credentials as a loyal and decorated soldier whose criticism of the war would therefore be seen as more credible and weighty.¹⁰ The biographical note ends with a short sentence, divided by a space, like a line of demarcation between his life in Australia and the past. *He migrated to Australia in 1927.*

The most explicitly biographical texts in the archival sources are a series of letters by the writer Stratis Doukas, Alekos’ older brother and life-long confidante, to the former’s biographer, Tasos Korfis, in the late 1960s.¹¹ From an undated letter we read: ‘Dear Tasos, I’m replying to your letter of 30 October 1968, beginning with my biographical details. The birth of my siblings in chronological order are Doukas, Stratis, Dimitros, Eleni and Alekos.’¹² Stratis’ biographical notes contain details of the family’s history that go back to their paternal great-grandfather one of whose brothers established himself as a merchant in Aden. Their paternal grandfather Doukas Doukas [sic] joined his uncle in Aden but after a time left with two Arab servants in a boat laden with goods for his homeland Moschonisia. The family, as

¹⁰ Notes from a conversation with Emile Andronicos in Sydney, 2 December 1992.

¹¹ From the Envelope ‘Biographical Information for Mr Pistas Nos 1 and 2,’ Stratis Doukas Archive, Department of Medieval and Modern Greek Studies, Aristotle University, Thessaloniki.

¹² Their dates of birth are: Doukas [first name] November 1893, Stratis 6 May 1895, Dimitros June 1896, Eleni May 1898 and Alekos January 1900. From here on I have chosen to refer to Alekos Doukas as simply ‘Alekos,’ as the use of the surname would require a continual differentiation with his brother Stratis. In addition, and importantly, the first name is in accord with this work’s interest in the personal as a subject of study in cultural history.

was the case with Alekos' maternal side, made use of the titular prefix *hadji*, signifying that a member of the family had made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, thereby demonstrating the family's means and reinforcing its social standing in community affairs.¹³ Stratis writes that he remembers his father telling him how he accompanied his own father to Jerusalem along with an Arab servant who had been baptised as a Christian and remained on the island. The latter had carried his former master into the Jordan River and immersed his head in the water. An important family figure was Alekos' maternal grandfather Efstratios (Stratis) Hatziapostolis, who belonged to the class of notables and was 'mayor' of the community and a tax-collector for thirty years. He was also known by his Turkish nickname of 'Pehlivan Istrati' (Stratis the wrestler), owing to an episode in which, accosted by a bandit, he had tied the latter to a tree and continued on his way. His son-in-law, Konstantinos Doukas, Alekos' father, was also a person of means who had landholdings in the hinterland and enjoyed good relations with Turkish officials. He was known by the Turks in the area where he collected taxes as 'Kara-Kostandi' (dark Kostandi), a reference to his complexion. These examples testify to a degree of everyday contact between Greeks and Turks, and indicate the social and economic standing of the Doukas family in the provincial society of the Aivali area.

Apart from his own land-holdings, Alekos' father was also a partner, along with his wife's three brothers, in a merchant company which owned olive-pit factories, oil presses and olive groves. Details of the family holdings and properties are listed in an Affidavit of Witnesses, Mytilini 8 December 1925, in which three witnesses, a Muslim and two Christians, provide statements as to the holdings of the company in 1911 when it became bankrupt and was

¹³ Drakos (1891: 31-32) writes that certain islanders took the journey to Jerusalem as a means of joining the class of notables and taking up community positions of political and economic power.

forced to sell its assets, at below market value, to pay off its debts.¹⁴ The Affidavit was used to provide proof of former holdings in Turkey at the time that refugees in Greece were seeking compensation for properties lost following the Lausanne Population Exchange Agreement of 1923. The witnesses' statements lead to the conclusion that the sale of the family's company assets was in reality a surety for a temporary loan between relatives, as the company's debts were about 5,000 to 6,000 Turkish pounds whereas the assets were worth 15,000 pounds. The document confirms the fact that the family faced a serious financial setback in the period after 1911. This appears to have been related to the bankruptcy in 1910 of the Bank of Mytilini which had set up a branch in Aivali in 1907 and from which the company had taken out a large loan jointly with the Greek company Zavoyiannidis of Piraeus to repair their olive-pit factory (Sakkaris 1920: 176, Korfis 1988: 35, Digidikis 2001: 216).

In an undated statement belonging to the late 1960s, Stratis Doukas includes a section 'Biographies of Relatives,' which apart from his parents and grandparents includes Alekos Doukas, Dimitra Douka (Stratis' wife), both writers, and Papa-Ioannis Hatziefstratiou, a close relative and a teacher at the famous theological School of Halkis in the Marmara Sea near Istanbul.¹⁵ Here we note that Stratis' archive gives priority to the literary over the personal as a principle of relevance. The longest note is devoted to his brother Alekos, and is, interestingly, an amalgamation of the two biographical blurbs mentioned above, with an additional statement that exaggerates Alekos' involvement in Greek community politics in the early years of the latter's migration to Australia. The biographical note illustrates, perhaps not surprisingly, how information related to memory is often recycled over the years in a circular and reinforcing fashion. Papa-Ioannis Hatziefstratiou's biographical note is interesting

¹⁴ Envelope 'Identity Cards, Certifications.' Stratis Doukas Archive. Op. cit.

¹⁵ Four typed pages entitled 'Biography.' Stratis Doukas Archive. Op. cit.

because of the manner of his death and his connection to the Doukas archive. Stratis notes that he was ‘Massacred along with the Bishop of Moschonisia, Ambrosios, the Metropolitan of Kydonies, Grigorios, and the other clergy, during the evacuation and the destruction of the Asia Minor Greeks (1922).’¹⁶ This is one of the few direct references by Stratis of Turkish massacres of civilians, with the exception perhaps of his novel *A Prisoner of War’s Story* (1929) which, while giving a fictionalised first-person account of gruelling and horrific experience, is free of nationalist hatred and prejudice. The family connection to the theologian Hatziefstratiou explains the presence in Stratis Doukas’ literary archive of nineteen letters addressed to the former: two from his brother in Moschonisia (in 1899 and 1922) and seventeen from his niece Eleni Angelara between 1918 and 1922.¹⁷ The letter of 1899 provides a glimpse into the lives of the Hatziefstratiou family: Ioannis is studying in Constantinople where he has recently arrived by boat; his collar and cuffs are being mended by his sister on the island; his brother-in-law is in Pelit Köy, a village in the hinterland where Alekos’ father has olive groves and a press; one of his nieces is in Smyrna boarding with one of the Doukas families; the family will soon send to Ioannis, by steamboat, his clean underclothes along with a tin of quince paste. Life appears prosperous enough, and Aivali and Moschonisia are linked in the Ottoman Empire to a wider Greek world of educational institutions and business, primarily through slow but regular steamboat communications with Constantinople to the north and Smyrna to the south.

In an interview in Sydney in 1983, Alekos’ sister Eleni, then eighty-five years old, said she remembered her childhood years well, although her account lacks detail.¹⁸ She remembered that her father used to say that it was their mother who brought them up, as he was mostly

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 3.

¹⁷ Letter book ‘*O Ponos tou Mikrou Aderfou Mou*’ (My Young Brother’s Pain) Vol. 2, pp. 2-21. Stratis Doukas Archive.

¹⁸ Eleni Andronicos in interview with Mimis Sophocleous 1983.

away working ‘in Turkey.’ ‘He was a merchant of oil, soap and other things.’ She had studied French for two years at school and wanted to continue her studies in Smyrna but her mother wouldn’t agree to it.

When I met Stratis Doukas in Athens in October 1980, he stressed that his young brother Alekos was ‘gifted with a good memory’ which was, he said, apparent in his account of his childhood and war experiences.¹⁹ In his letters to Korfis, Stratis repeatedly refers him to his brother’s novel *To Struggle, To Youth* for further details of the family’s past and, in his biography, Korfis uses a number of long excerpts from the novel as factual and historical accounts (Korfis 1988: 23-24, 51-52, 71-76). Korfis has written elsewhere about Alekos Doukas using the biographical blurb of the 1963 novel almost word for word, and presenting his novel as an ‘historical’ and ‘personal’ account rather than a fictional work (Korfis 1992: 895, 906). This type of reading of Alekos Doukas’ fiction will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Six but it can be noted here that Korfis’ reading is not unrelated to his biography of Stratis Doukas whose letters he has rewritten almost verbatim into a third-person narrative, as though the past can simply ‘speak itself’ (White 1987: 25). This suggests a view of memory as a simple process of recall that remains constant, rather than a selective and historically contingent process that subtly changes through time. Nevertheless, it is true that a novel published in 1953 by the subject of this study may be the most comprehensive account we have of his past. That the novel has strong autobiographical elements can be ascertained by cross-checking information from other sources and a close reading of its own internal literary code. The author’s preface positions the novel in the postwar Greek discourse of the ‘lost homelands’ of Asia Minor, a discourse that foregrounds a particular set of memories, events, causes, betrayals and hopes, all issuing from the landmark event known as the

¹⁹ Personal notes from a conversation with Stratis Doukas on 9 October 1980.

‘Catastrophe.’²⁰ While the biographical information is inextricably woven into the novel’s fictional weave, it is also clear that it plays a subordinate role in the social and political reality the novel wishes to construct about the past. The novel, while describing a narrative of a life, constantly refers to a wider historical reality and thus simultaneously constitutes a political attack on power and injustice as well as an idealised view of a harmonious past as a didactic example for the future. *To Struggle, To Youth* is a source which needs to be read as a set of codes that simultaneously evoke a narrative of the past and an interpretation of that past consistent with a 1950s socialist realist mode of thinking (I discuss this in some detail in Chapter Six). Of course, this is to simply affirm that the past is seen, always, through the prism of the present.

Scattered sporadically throughout Alekos’ and Stratis’ letters and literary works, both published and unpublished, are fleeting references to the past, flashes of memory that arise at unexpected moments. In a letter in 1922, only weeks before the Front collapsed, Alekos remembers a long talk he had with Stratis in the family’s olive grove on the island in the autumn of 1914. The memory operates to emphasise the marked changes he has undergone in the intervening eight years.²¹ In 1923, he remembers how forlorn he felt after his father’s death in 1915. In another letter in 1926, he remembers the times he went swimming with Stratis around the islands of their birthplace. These descriptions are like brief snapshots of memory that arise years later in moments of longing and pain. Stratis, more controlled and reserved in his expression, occasionally crafts moments of memory into his literary work: ‘I hear the sound of birds outside, the children chirping in the house and I remember my

²⁰ See Nikolopoulou (2002) and Doulis (1977).

²¹ Letter* 31.7.1922. Stratis Doukas Archive. Op. cit. *All Alekos Doukas’ letters cited in the thesis are to Stratis unless otherwise indicated.

childhood years. I would look through the window to the yard outside, the white walls, the well in the middle. I want to remember them fresh, damp from the rain' (S. Doukas 1982: 20).

These brief biographical references to Alekos Doukas' childhood years, while providing small mosaic pieces that tell us something of a life in a specific time and place, remain disjointed and incomplete in the absence of the wider discourses of society. It is therefore time to look at these, after which we will be in a better position to see in what way memory may be shaped by the discontinuities or continuities of such discourses through time. My approach has been suggested by Foucault's study of scientific discourse in *Order of Things* in which he rejects the 'absolute priority' of the 'observing subject' as a 'transcendental consciousness' in favour of a 'theory of discursive practice' (Foucault, 1970: xiv). My aim is to analyse the dominant discourses of the provincial society of Aivali to identify the ingrained cultural thinking that constructs identity in terms of 'age-old distinctions between the Same and the Other' (Foucault, 1970: xv). This analysis will aim to identify a discursive framework which can illuminate the 'fundamental codes of culture' within society that govern 'its language, its schemas of perception, its exchanges, its techniques, its values, the hierarchy of its practices – [which] establish for every [wo]man, from the very first, the empirical orders with which [s]he will be dealing and within which [s]he will be at home' (Foucault 1970: xx).

III

Aivali - Kydonies

*The glass is smudged
But behind the smoke
God sees Aivali
And His breath is taken away. ('The Smyrna Songs')*²²

The verse of this popular 1990s song is part of a continuing Greek discourse about the 'lost homelands' of Asia Minor in which Aivali occupies, as memory, a special place as a pristine cultural space where the Greeks of the Ottoman period enjoyed a high level of prosperity and cultural wholeness that was lost. This view has been clearly articulated by the historian Kostis Moskof (1982: xvi) who draws on the writings and paintings of the Aivaliot refugee Fotis Kontoglou in which he detects a view of a society of religious and cultural harmony destroyed by a dependency on western 'imperialist penetration.'²³ The 'lost homelands' discourse contains a complex set of responses to the past that are not unrelated to broader problems of modernity and displacement.²⁴ It emerged as an ideological and emotionally-charged discourse in the 1960s and has continued in different forms until today (Liakos 1998). My interest here is primarily with the pre-1922 historiography of Aivali and its sister city Moschonisia. The latter has its own identity and history, but also shares much with the larger town within whose history it is usually subsumed. There is a sense of competing identity

²² 'Ta Smirneika Tragoudia' (The Smyrna Songs), lyrics Ilias Katsoulis, music Pantelis Thalassinos. CD *Astranammata* 1996, The Music Box International.

²³ A similar line of thinking underlines a Greek national television (ERT) documentary (1990) *T' Aivaliotika* (Talking Aivali) directed by Y. Tritsimbidis, that likens Aivali to the ancient Greek city-states in which an ideal balance between the private and civic spheres is believed to have existed.

²⁴ An interesting comparison could be made with recent historiographic nostalgia for the old industrial towns such as Volos. See Papailias (2005: 60-63).

between them although this is not a rigid antagonistic relationship. Rather the larger town's identity can represent both, particularly in relation to the wider world, while within the local context cultural differences remain.²⁵

Aivali, or 'Kydonies' as it appears more commonly in the histories of the town, possesses a significant historiographic record that is primarily related to its renown as a centre of neo-Hellenic Enlightenment in the late eighteenth century (Clogg 1972). The town is considered to have begun as a Greek settlement some time in the late sixteenth century, primarily colonised by Greeks from the large adjacent island of Lesbos to the west.²⁶ However, it is not until the early nineteenth century that we encounter any historical writings about Kydonies. In this early period, which coincides with the economic and cultural growth of the town, most accounts are those of European philhellenic travellers or Protestant missionaries involved in the task of bible dissemination.²⁷ In this period, as Petropoulou (1982: 235) notes, 'the Kydoniots live the present, leaving the foreigners to describe them.'²⁸ These early accounts stress the economic prosperity of Kydonies, its remarkable autonomy in administrative affairs, and the advanced state of learning in its Academy (Sakkaris 1920: 82-83). In the words of a learned 1820 Greek periodical in Vienna, Kydonies is described as 'the new Miletus, the metropolis of learning for the whole of Asia Minor' (Clogg 1972: 635,

²⁵ In a note written by Stratis Doukas in May 1970 commenting on a letter of complaint by his compatriot G. Iatridis to the Aivaliot refugee magazine *Kydoniatikos Asteras* in which descriptions of the 15 August festival of the Virgin Mary fail to mention Moschonisia where the festival was primarily celebrated, he playfully writes: '...once again we note the fanatical localistic mentality of the Aivaliots who take from others and appropriate them.' Letter book '*Grammata*' p. 883, Stratis Doukas Archive. Op. cit.

²⁶ The question of when it was founded, who the first settlers were and the exact site of the original settlement is common ground in all the histories of Kydonies which do not engage with Turkish historiographic or oral traditions.

²⁷ Petropoulou (1981: 232) writes about these travellers: 'Motivated by their philhellenic impulsions, the travellers were concerned to denounce oriental barbarity as well as validating the outlook that saw all the Modern Greeks' virtues, including their faults, as deriving from their ancestral heritage.'

²⁸ Clogg (1972: 647) notes that in 1818 when William W. Jowett, one of the early British missionaries to visit the Mediterranean, expressed surprise to the Principal Master at the Academy of Kydonies that there was no history of 'Haivali' the latter 'intimated that he was preparing a history of it.' This suggests the development of early historiographical awareness that was interrupted by the turbulent revolutionary years of the 1820s.

Karamblias 1949: 202).²⁹ The Greek historiography of Kydonies begins in the mid-nineteenth century and continues a traditional discourse until recent decades when more analytical and modern scholarship begins to critically engage with it.³⁰

A useful point of entry into the historiography of Kydonies is the 1914 book by the local doctor, Ioannis D. Apostolakis, *Kydonies Studies and Parallels* that includes material from the author's lecture at the Commercial Employees' Association in Aivali in January 1912 and the June 1913 end-of-year speech of the High School Principal, Ioannis Olympios. It also contains extensive references to earlier histories, as well as translations of various historical Turkish documents into Greek.³¹ The book is the first of an intended three-volume work that never eventuated, and its subtitle 'Before the Catastrophe' refers to the destruction of the city in 1821 during the Greek national uprising. The use of the term 'Catastrophe' eight years before *the* 1922 Catastrophe alerts us to the importance of the term within the discourse. The Catastrophe of Apostolakis' title is less biblical and final for the reason that, after 1821, when the Greeks of Kydonies and Moschonisia fled into exile, there was a return and rebuilding of the city. The theme of a cyclical pattern in the fortunes of the Greeks in Kydonies is deeply ingrained as an organising principle in the histories. The cyclical recurrence of destruction and return relates to deeper binary notions (catastrophe-rebirth, destruction-rebuilding, exile-return, stagnation-prosperity, inertia-progress, fall-revival, barbarity-civilisation, ignorance-learning) that surface at many levels. This binary mode of perceiving historical process has its roots in the European Renaissance and was further revived in the period of the Enlightenment when Greeks were constructing narratives of an emerging nation-state movement (Liakos

²⁹ Angelou (1956: 49) notes that in the late eighteenth century, the centre of Modern Greek learning had moved eastward from the Greek mainland to the Asia Minor coast (Smyrna, Chios, Kydonies, Constantinople).

³⁰ See Petropoulou's (1982) preliminary survey of the historiography in which she notes the need for the 'micro histories' of Kydonies to be placed within the conceptual framework of broader histories.

³¹ Apostolakis' basic material and themes are followed, and elaborated on, by the two major historical monographs of the city by Sakkaris (1920) and Karamblias (1949).

2002: 28-30). This outlook fuses a number of intellectual strands such that scientific learning and the legacy of the ancient Greek world coalesce to support the idea of a Modern Greek state as the rebirth and revival of an ancient and glorious past. For the Greeks, who rapidly absorbed European Enlightenment ideas in the late eighteenth century, the notion of renaissance had a particularly strong appeal. Exertsoglou (2000: 16) suggests that the idea of a movement between stagnation and prosperity, peaks and declines, has its textual source in the leading Greek Enlightenment intellectual Adamantios Korais, in particular his 1803 essay-lecture, 'Memoire sur l' état actuel de la civilisation dans la Grece.'³² Apostolakis organises his periodisation of the history on these binary criteria: 1821, destruction and exile; 1820s, return and rebuilding; 1842, a second destruction narrowly averted when the town's internal political conflicts provoke a blockade by Ottoman troops; 1880s to 1909, growth and prosperity; 1909, military curfew. Later authors continue the theme: 1914-1917, expulsions and exile; 1918, return; 1922, *the Catastrophe*; and post-1922, for some, the dream of return (Panayotarea 1993: 11, Karaiskaki 1973). A large part of Apostolakis' discussion of the past (with frequent references to his own time) centres around the best way to deal with internal communal conflict so as to ensure the city's survival and prosperity within a broader Ottoman context of political vulnerability and threat of destruction. The theme of exile and return is a constant in the histories up to 1922, with numerous references to the pathos and grief of fleeing refugees, as well as the mixed feelings of joy and bewilderment on their return to a city in ruins (Karamblias 1949: 231, Apostolakis 1914: 199).

Apostolakis' book can be studied in terms of how it embodies, and simultaneously silences, certain fundamental contradictions in the discourse of Hellenism, a discourse that constructs a

³² Korais, who lived most of his life in Paris, was originally from Smyrna and Chios, and was an enthusiastic supporter of the Academy of Kydonies. For a discussion of embedded senses of time in Greek letters in the Ottoman period see Liakos (2001, 2002).

national or sometimes pre-national identity through chronotopic co-ordinates of time and place. One of the main aims of his lecture, and that of I. Olympios, is to memorialise the figure of Ioannis Dimitrakelis 'Oikonomos' as the founding father of the economically and culturally rejuvenated Kydonies in the period between 1773 and 1821. Oikonomos, a religious title that remained as a name, succeeded in obtaining a number of imperial firmans that bestowed significant privileges on the city, making it virtually self-governing and relatively immune from the surrounding Turkish governors. He is acclaimed as the heroic figure who succeeded in driving out the small number of the town's Turkish inhabitants, thereby transforming it into an homogenous Greek Christian town. The evidence suggests that Oikonomos was a member of a rising merchant class that supported the Modern Greek Enlightenment that broke from scholasticism and embraced Western rationalism and the positive sciences, thus placing it in conflict with ecumenical Ottoman orthodoxy, fiercely guarded by the Patriarchate of Constantinople. This explains the repeated attacks on the prominent Enlightenment teacher in Kydonies, Benjamin Lesvios, whose vigorous defence of the Copernican view of the planetary motions was the cause of repeated but failed attempts to have him removed (Angelou 1956: 53).

In the histories of Kydonies, the figure of Oikonomos, surrounded by myth and legend, operates to conceal a number of contradictions related to the fact that the Greek Enlightenment in this period is invariably aligned with a growing national consciousness and the movement for an independent Greek nation-state. In his account of the past however, Apostolakis focuses on pre-nationalist consciousness. He stresses Oikonomos' loyalty to the Ottoman throne, referring to clerics and teachers at the Academy who use a narrow or local

sense of the term ‘country’ (Greek *patrida*),³³ and generally disavowing support for revolutionary activity on the part of the city (Apostolakis 1914: 71). When he argues that the reputation of Kydonies for internal conflict gave rise to a slanderous reputation of rebelliousness, which in turn led to Ottoman reprisals in 1821, he writes that ‘without it having taken part in the revolutionary movement, our innocent country became a wretched and superb corpse’ (Apostolakis 1914: 71). On the surface, the word ‘superb’ is incongruous but the subtextual suggestion is one of national pride. This sliding between pre-national or theocratic and nationalist identity is illustrated in Apostolakis’ comments on the sermons in the immediate pre-1821 Kydonies of two important clergymen, Konstantinos Oikonomos (of Constantinople) and Grigorios Sarafis, one of the masters of the Academy. The former’s sermon ‘Concerning the Love of Country,’ while hinting at proto-nationalist meanings, is a pre-nationalist Orthodox theocratic view: ‘Country is the copy of earthly paradise into which God placed man to work and guard’ (Apostolakis 1914: 2). Sarafis’ sermons lead Apostolakis to conclude that the city of Kydonies was at the time a ‘quasi Christian democracy,’ a term which captures in a non-antagonist manner the conflicting notions of religious theocracy and Enlightenment bourgeois order (Apostolakis 1914: 38).

The subsequent historians of Kydonies, Sakkaris (1920) and Karamblis (1949) adopt an unambiguously nationalist interpretation of the events before and after 1821, to the point where we can speak of the ‘logic of the nation-state’ being used to interpret a largely pre-nation-state reality (Kitromilides 2003: 28-29).³⁴ Writing in 1920 during the Asia Minor Campaign, Sakkaris is explicit in his nationalist interpretation, although revealingly he does

³³ The Modern Greek word *patrida* (the Ancient Greek *patris* going back to Homeric times) has, like the French word ‘patrie,’ the sense of birthplace, home town, region, mother country or father land, and in recent centuries, nation. Interestingly the term in Modern Greek for “lost homelands” is literally “lost countries” (*hamenes patrides*).

³⁴ See also Ernest Renan’s 1882 lecture ‘What is a nation?’ in Bhabha (1990).

note the existence of the two meanings of ‘country.’ Discussing the work of the Board of the Academy of Kydonies in 1815 he writes: ‘Those blessed men, being of the firm conviction that their truly magnificent work in those melancholy years had as its aim the salvation of the country, and of course not only their small particular country, because this could not be saved from slavery on its own, without the liberation of the totality’ (Sakkaris 1920: 59-60).

Karamblias reads the past similarly when he discusses the plural form of the city’s name, *Kydoniai*, in the classical tradition of *Athinai* (Athens) or *Thivai* (Thebes). He notes that its origins are to be found in the ‘learned class’ who wanted also ‘a higher historical future’ for their city: ‘And why not? From the very first years of its national course, the plans of its governors were, as we shall see, grand and aimed at a wider national goal’ (Karamblias 1949: 32). In all these examples we see the continuity of a discourse that is capable of subtle transformations concealing important shifts and contradictions. For obvious political reasons, Apostolakis in 1912 emphasises the loyalty of the city to Ottomanism. He is keen to point out that the Greek refugees of the revolutionary period did in fact return to their country, after suffering exile, and prospered under Ottoman government. A similar point, contradicting the broad sweep of nationalist rhetoric, is made by Panayotarea (1993) through her investigation of the oral memory of elderly Aivaliot refugees living in Greece in the 1980s. These refugees harked back to a collective memory that weighed up the losses of country, the ‘homeland’ in the narrow sense, against the sacrifices of refugee life in the larger country of the nation, with the saying: ‘Better, my children, slaves of the Turks than beggars in the allies of Greece’ (Panayotarea 1993: 45).

Perhaps no other issue in the history of Kydonies takes us to the heart of the discourse of Hellenism in the Ottoman space as that of the city’s name which in both the Greek and Turkish versions is usually taken to mean ‘the place where quince trees grow.’ The question

of the name is endlessly argued by Greek writers and commented on by foreign travellers.

The etymological explanations of the city's name cover a range of arguments: a) the area had abundant quince trees so was named by the Greeks and Turks, *Kydonies* and *Ayvalık* respectively b) the sea is famous for its tasty clams called *Kydonia* c) settlers came from a town on Crete called *Kydonias* d) settlers came from the village of *Kydonas* on neighbouring Lesbos and e) there was an ancient city called *Kydoniai* close by. For Apostolakis (1914: 118-121) the issue is clear, the Turkish *Ayvalık* is a translation of the ancient Greek name *Kydoniai* (or *Kydonies* in its demotic form). His argument appeals to the philhellene French publisher and traveller Firmin Didot who visited the town in 1816 and 1817 and who subscribed to the view that *Kydonies* ('*Cydonie*') was in ancient times one of the islands of Hecatonessoi (the Moschonisia archipelago), in other words, a site close to the present-day town.³⁵ The existence of the ancient city *Kydonies*, writes Apostolakis, is proved by 'geography, history and tradition' and in a long footnote he rebuts the argument that the Turkish name preceded the Greek by claiming that cohabitation was not the normal pattern for Greeks and Turks, and therefore the Greeks would not have moved to an established Turkish village or town (Apostolakis 1914: 118). Apostolakis' argument follows an 'either-or' logical *modus operandi* which ignores the many in-between possibilities in which cultural contact invariably occurred. The fact of cultural proximity and contact is only hinted at in the histories of *Kydonies*. In literary works about the Greek life in Asia Minor there are examples of contact, cohabitation and a certain fluidity in the cultural and social barriers between the confessional communities (Nikolopoulou 2002, Doulis 1977). Alekos Doukas (1953: 90-95) recounts the story of a young islander whose impossible love for a Turkish girl in Istanbul leads to madness and tragedy. Whether strictly true or not, the story reveals the existence of

³⁵ Apostolakis (1914: 115-116) argues that Didot's view must have had the imprimatur of the latter's Greek mentor, Adamantios Korais, the leading Greek Enlightenment intellectual.

narratives that deal with the phenomenon of cultural and social barriers and their transgression.

The traditional history of Kydonies is not so much an exercise in the empirical scrutiny of evidence as it is a discourse about connection to country, identification with landscape and continuity. This is made clear in a passage in which Apostolakis concisely articulates the foundational myths of Kydonies, and in part, the Modern Greek Hellenic identity as it was constructed in the nineteenth century and up to 1922. Listing the successive waves of domination in the Aeolian area from ancient to recent times, he narrates a story of fall, servitude, and cultural decay from the original essence. It was the ‘inherited natural talents and impulses, the living tradition passed down from generation to generation.... [that] maintained the Greek nature.... The language suffered of course the inevitable influence of time and conquest... but still it remained Greek, reflecting a Greek heart!’ (Apostolakis 1914: 120). This clear statement of continuity of language and connection to the ancient homelands is based on the underlying assumption of a timeless and essentialist ‘national’ consciousness. Apostolakis (1914: 121-122) sums up his position on the city’s past through the view of the first settlers of Kydonies as:

...the true descendants of those wandering and nomadic autochthons of the Aeolian earth, who ended up, after years of wandering, as settlers close to ancient Kydonies, and who knows, perhaps opposite their own [original] country, the beloved name of which tradition had saved and inscribed in their consciousness and history had guarded, and in this way modern Kydonies [came to be].

The reference to history ‘guarding’ the truth reveals the text’s deep roots in the nineteenth-century historicism that Benjamin (1969: 256) has critiqued when he writes that ‘only for redeemed mankind has its past become citable in all its moments.’³⁶

The issue of place-names within the histories of Kydonies is premised on a deeper set of claims about the autochthonous status of the Greeks and nineteenth-century Hellenic identity that resulted from the combination of the classical heritage and Christian Orthodoxy into the contemporary ideology of a nation-state. In the construction of national history the task of unifying these strands was accomplished by Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos with his *History of the Greek Nation* first published in 1853. ‘The tri-partite scheme of the diachronic unity of Hellenism which he [Paparrigopoulos] proposes will gain total acceptance and from here on it will be the reference point into which all the subsidiary studies such as the histories of local places and cities will fit’ (Petropoulou 1982: 237).³⁷ Apostolakis’ account, despite its playing down, for tactical reasons, of the national consciousness and aspirations of the Greeks of Kydonies, and his arguments for loyalty to the Ottoman state, is inextricably bound up in this wider Greek nationalist discourse.³⁸ And even as he tries to present the city’s ‘founding father’ Oikonomos as someone who built schools and churches in the belief that they were ‘a complement of each other, a harmonising of Christianity and Hellenism,’ Apostolakis is closer to Paparrigopoulos than to the ecumenical orthodoxy of the conservative clergy of Oikonomos’ time (Apostolakis 1914: 165). This Hellenic discourse, not only proclaimed the inherent and essential link of Modern Greeks to the glorious past but also instilled in the

³⁶ Elsewhere Apostolakis (1914: 79-80) writes: ‘Whatever has happened belongs to history; and history judges objectively...for in life and in the tomb, one is watched by countless interrogatory eyes and remembering consciences.’

³⁷ Gallant (2001: 72) writes that ‘Archaeology, in Greece, both by Greeks and foreigners, was called on to produce the “symbolic capital” that demonstrated the linkage between the Greeks of “today” and those of the distant past.’

³⁸ Apostolakis quotes Paparrigopoulos in his account.

members of its 'race' a certain civilising mission. Apostolakis (1914: 165) expresses these ideas when he argues that Modern Greeks have a special role in promoting the learning of 'classical antiquity' not only as 'a necessary obligation.... to the Nation but also to civilised mankind.' This obligation is based on the identification of such a civilising mission with the enlightened role of the Academy of Kydonies, 'a special emblem of our city which its founder established from the city's beginning.'

Within the discourse of Hellenic continuity, the Greeks of Asia Minor figure as the bearers and instigators of progress, both economic and cultural. The plethora of Greek cultural and educational associations in the Ottoman Empire in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries have as their goal the promotion of learning as a natural value, the creation of a 'national' or 'homogenous' community out of the 'culturally, linguistically and socially fragmented space of Orthodox communities' (Exertsoglou 2000: 31). This Orientalist discourse of the educated class is based on the idea 'that the East is deprived of education in general, and that it awaits the activity of agencies like the associations to be re-connected to education and culture' (Exertsoglou 2000: 22). It is premised on a deep binary notion in which the East is constructed as a stagnant and empty space and the West a dynamic and progressive force filling it.³⁹ For example, when Sakkaris (1920: 168) contrasts the economically vibrant harbour of Kydonies, dredged by enterprising Greeks in 1880-1882, with the lack of transport infrastructure in the Turkish hinterland, he reproduces this binary characterisation: 'And so lands that were intended by the Creator to be a true earthly paradise for a blissful human life, remain, in the hands of the barbarians, a swamp of stagnation, misfortune and standstill.' This attitude, at the heart of the Orientalist discourse we are

³⁹ Said (1978: 149) observes that nineteenth-century Orientalism worked within a 'comparative framework' that inherently juxtaposed negative defective Eastern with positive superior Western features.

examining, points to a peculiarly dual aspect in the lives of the Greeks of Asia Minor. On the one hand they see themselves as autochthonous communities, who for reasons of ‘geography, history and tradition’ (Apostolakis 1914: 118) hold a continuous link to the land, and on the other, as innovators and instigators of progress that is peculiarly Western in orientation. As Scopetea (2003: 176) writes, the Greeks had ‘a particular mission of their own: that of civilising the East, or rather an East of their own inspiration (*i kath’ imas Anatoli* – Our East), consisting of the parts of the Ottoman Empire amenable to westernisation. In this context the Greek nation would function as a channel of Western influence, which, however, could very often be considered synonymous with *Greek* influence.’

The histories of Kydonies are directly connected to discourses of Hellenism that were generated by the educated classes of Asia Minor. Such discourses dominated the intellectual world in which Alekos Doukas grew to adulthood. He attended the High School of Kydonies in 1913, the very year that the Principal Ioannis Olympios, the noted Platonist scholar, recently inspired by his reading of the early histories of the city, urged his audience to regard Oikonomos as ‘a super-human figure, a hero... the founder of our city’ (Apostolakis 1914: 177). Teachers at the High School were also the future authors of the two major twentieth-century historical monographs of Kydonies, Georgios Sakkaris and Ioannis Karamblis. The contemporary discourses that dominated in the High School and cultural life of Aivali constructed in large part a sense of place and historical time in the Greek communities of the town, surrounding islands and coastline. They constituted an encompassing web of meaning in the lives of the Greeks on Moschonisi island, who awoke every day to the sight of the

harbour, bays, mountains and olive groves that surrounded them.⁴⁰ This was Alekos Doukas' childhood world across the waters of the harbour.

IV

Moschonisia

‘My home, my country! How my thoughts turn to you now.’ (Euripides *Medea* 329)

This epigraph appears below the title ‘Asia Minor Matters: A General Treatise Regarding Hecatonnesoi. Moschonisia today’ published in Athens in 1895 by the Moschonisiot Efstratios I. Drakos.⁴¹ The 48-page treatise, along with a number of other similar works by the same author, is one of only a few contemporary studies of Moschonisia history and life that we have, and the fact that it was written well before the nationalist troubles that began with the restoration of the Turkish constitution in 1908, makes it valuable as a text of educated discourse on the island at the turn of the century.⁴² While the treatise is undoubtedly about ‘country’ in the sense of birthplace or town, being a local history from ancient times to the present, there is in the epigraph already an echo, faint yet unmistakable, of the wider sense of motherland and nation. In the context of the nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire, the very reference to this line in Euripides is an appeal to a classical notion of ancestral home and country, encoding in the text a contemporary national resonance. That the writer’s thoughts turn to his home and country ‘now,’ at this point in time, speaks of a certain urgency, a force

⁴⁰ ‘Moschonisi’ (singular of Moschonisia) is also used to describe the main island.

⁴¹ Drakos, in contrast to other authors, spells ‘Hecatonnesoi’ with one ‘n.’

⁴² Alekos Doukas had read Drakos’ history as a boy in 1912-13. Letter 2.5.1961. Op. cit.

of attraction between the subject matter and the author. Why is the author drawn to describe his country now? The first part of the title 'Asia Minor Matters' (*Mikrasiana*) connects the study to a wider discipline, the study of the Greeks as folk, the *laos* of the nineteenth-century Greek national project of Folklore Studies (*Laografia*).⁴³ As Michael Herzfeld (1986: 13) has argued, *Laografia* was ideologically underpinned by an assumption of the nation, the *ethnos*, as an 'eternal verity.' The educated class, separate from the *laos*, studied it as a way of proving the latter's essential equivalence to the nation through time immemorial. Drakos' study needs to be seen within this wider discursive framework.

That Drakos is a writer of some authority on Moschonisia is acknowledged by Apostolakis (1914: 109-117) when the latter discusses ancient references to the Hecatonnesoi islands of the archipelago. There he quotes Drakos at length, variously characterising his study as the result of 'lengthy research and close scrutiny' and an 'excellent and profound.... treatise' (Apostolakis 1914: 110,117). Although Sakkaris (1920: 259-263) states that Moschonisia and Aivali shared a common history he includes a small section at the end on Moschonisia that is almost entirely based on Drakos' 1895 treatise.

Published in the exact year that Alekos' brother Stratis was born, Drakos' treatise offers a unique insight into the island's history and contemporary life. In an epilogue, in which Drakos writes a type of scholium of errors in the texts of those who have written about ancient Hecatonnesoi (Moschonisia), he produces a passage that presents the island's history and contemporary life in a tabular form, a list of the major contents of his treatise (Drakos 1895a: 42-43). Following Foucault's explorations into intellectual history, we can think of the objects of knowledge that this cataloguing constructs, the mental categories and orders that operate in

⁴³ See entry for 'Folklore' in Veremis and Dragoumis (1995: 72-73).

Drakos' description. We can ask as Foucault (1970: xix) does: 'On what "table", according to what grid of identities, similitudes, analogies, have we become accustomed to sort out so many different and similar things?' In the passage, Drakos enumerates the physical, social and historical entities of the islands. His list of subjects, places, landmarks, history, buildings, events, habits and practices, reveals a mental and cultural landscape, a type of inventory that is the world of Moschonisia as presented in discourse. Drakos' statement 'In my treatise one finds everything' suggests a conscious attempt to achieve a certain comprehensiveness, a systematic description of a community through time and space. His careful enumeration of the islands, the churches, the monasteries, the statistics of the general and school populations, taxes and commerce, point to the application of the principles of a positive science in a universe of things that can be counted and measured. Drakos describes his study as a 'topography' which as historical and cultural geography belongs to a Greek discourse of the time that aimed to promote awareness in Greeks of the Ottoman Empire of both a national identity and autochthonous link to place.⁴⁴ While the growing number of histories and geographies, often used in educational contexts, promoted Greek national consciousness through a 'unity of time' and 'space' (Anestidis 1989: 18) it is important to note the existence of a simultaneous and overlapping Greek Ottoman intellectual outlook that differentiated the Greek minority interests from those of the Greek state (Kechriotis 2005). Such was the case of A. Stavridis whose 1876 *Manual of Political, Natural and Commercial Geography of the Ottoman State*, published in 'Kydonies,' was one of the first text books used in Orthodox Christian schools with a focus on the Ottoman state as the home country (Exertsoglou 1996: xiii). Drakos' treatise however belongs primarily to local history which, while working within national Greek historiography, constructs his local community as a cultural space largely cocooned from the political implications of Greek irredentism and Ottomanism.

⁴⁴ Examples of such 'geographies' are I. Kalfoglous (1899/202) and A. Stavridis (1876/1996).

The opening paragraph sets the tone of the work: ‘In the channel between Lesvos and Asia in the southern entrance to the Gulf of Adramyttion lies the small archipelago of Moschonisia, the most alluring and important archipelago in the Aegean...’ (Drakos 1895a: 3). It echoes Strabo’s description of the islands in his *Geography*, which is the most detailed account of the islands in the ancient world (Strabo *Geography* 13. 2.5). Drakos begins with a bold statement of disagreement with Strabo over the number of the islands and with an assertion of Greek continuity in their naming through the enduring term *nesoi* or *nesia* (Greek for islands). He expresses a localistic pride in the beauty and importance of the archipelago. He rejects, as other writers do, Herodotus’ description of the islands as the Hundred Isles, being a false etymological inference from ‘*Hecato*,’ the adjective ‘far-darting’ used to describe Apollo.⁴⁵ In the epilogue, Drakos deals in great detail with the issue of the exact site of the two ancient cities of Poroselini and Nisos or Nasos, a preoccupation that is common throughout the historiography of Kydonies, and which reinforces the ancient Greek connection to place and habitation. Drakos believes that the Ottomans of old wrote the name of Moschonisia as ‘Gün Adası,’ the islands of the day or light, which he interprets as a translation of the ancient ‘*Hecatonesoi*,’ in other words, Apollo’s Islands. The name ‘Moschonisia’ is also variously interpreted etymologically as: a) ‘moschos’ meaning fragrance, and possibly named to avoid the embarrassing homophonic connotation of the name Pordoselini⁴⁶ b) the island settled in the early Ottoman period by a pirate named Moschos and c) calves, singular ‘moschos,’ depicted on ancient coins d) the joining of two cities Nisos and Maschakomi in the fifteenth century. While not adopting any one of these, Drakos does note the islanders’ belief that the name derives from the small adjacent uninhabited island of Pera Moschos (Yonder Moschos),

⁴⁵ For the ‘Hundred-Isle’ etymology see Herodotus *History* 1 *Cleio* 151 and Diodorus of Sicily, Book XIII, 4-77.

⁴⁶ Strabo (*Geography*: 13.2.6) explains that some writers avoid the form ‘Pordoselenê’ (Pordoselini), writing Poroselenê (Poroselini) instead, to avoid the stem ‘pord’ which is the Greek word for passing wind.

an important and abundant source of water in times of drought and, as tradition has it, the base of the pirate Moschos. By its very nature, the issue of naming is never amenable to simple clarification. The arguments revolve around arbitrary appeals to mythology, legend and etymological interpretation that invariably view the past through a national perspective.⁴⁷

While the twenty-seven islands are described topographically in relation to their location, size, terrain and flora, each one is also characterised by its history, communal memories and contemporary life. For example, the small island of Prodromos in front of the town of Moschonisia, with its monastery of the same name, provides ‘accommodation in the springtime owing to its proximity to sea bathing and its charming location’ (Drakos 1895a: 5). It is also the site where the Greek admirals held council in 1821 to discuss how to save the inhabitants of the two cities under threat. The tiny island of Nisopoula is the site where the corpse of the martyr Georgios of Chios was thrown in 1807, while the island of Agios Georgios, whose monastery was the only one spared from destruction in 1821, provided refuge for seventy-three islanders in the troubled revolutionary years of the 1820s. Each of the islands, the seven monasteries and the six churches are marked by an historical past related to communal memories that constitute the foundational myths of Moschonisia. These myths are connected to the landscape and often disappear into the mists of mythological time. The islands, according to Drakos (1895: 8-9), may have been settled by Penthilos, the son of Orestes, grandson of Agamemnon.

⁴⁷ Ali Onay, for example, believes that the Turkish name of Cunda may derive from a misreading of the Arabic script for Gün Adası or alternatively from Yunt Adası the Islands of the Wild Horses, which he believes is how the island was named by Piri Reis, the sixteenth-century Ottoman admiral and cartographer.

Like the histories of Kydonies, Drakos frames the history of the island in terms of the binary modes of exile and return. The 'return' after the 'catastrophe' of 1821, a key landmark event in both towns, is described by Drakos in the following emotive vein:

As soon as they [the refugees] came to the harbour a general wailing was heard in the air, because the two sister cities were lifeless. With their hair in disarray, they came in mourning to the ruins of their city in which only the cries of lone birds could be heard. The Abbot Païsios of the Agios Georgios monastery conducted a blessing in the city's deserted church of Agia Triada on the 13 September 1825, an historic day for the city of Moschonisia, and a day of inauguration. (Drakos 1895: 21)

In this way the town is given a modern founding date that marks a new phase in its existence. The rebuilding and progress of the town in the years that follow is emphasised through the report of a British lieutenant-colonel Charles Wilson, who, writing about the entrepreneurial activities of the Greeks in the East, compares the fast-developing centre of Moschonisia with Kydonies (Drakos, 1895: 21-22). In the treatise, the town's urban layout, on a slope that ends at the seafront, mirrors its social and commercial life – the divisions that operate are between parish neighbourhoods, commercial and residential, north and south. On the seafront, the commercial area has 220 shops constructed of stone (sixty-two general stores, a steam-driven flour mill and oil press, twelve traditional oil presses, eight soap works, fifteen shoe shops, six bakeries, fifteen coffee houses and many warehouses). 'The city is lit with seventy-six lamps' (Drakos 1895: 22). Drakos provides a vivid architectural image of the town with his description of the 1,192 houses 'built of stone, two and three-storey and.... painted variously in the colours white, rose, green and yellow, which makes the city charming with its large extensive streets, paved since 1873.' In this period the town was clearly becoming a minor industrial centre with bourgeois social features. Consistent with the town's social

organisation, the buildings that stand out are the ‘fine churches which look like palaces’ with their tall bell-towers, and on the waterfront, the grand private residence, ‘the palace’ of the Moschonisiot cleric Agathonikeias Grigorios.⁴⁸

Consistent with the general thrust of Greek cultural life in Turkey, Drakos (1895: 25-27) emphasises the educational achievements of the town, providing figures for 1893 at which time there were 314 boys (52 of whom were at the *scholarcheion*⁴⁹) and 305 girls at the boys’ and girls’ schools respectively. There were 200 pupils in the kindergarten that had been established five years earlier. The schools were funded by local taxes, monastery incomes and a levy on dowries. Many of the older generation complained that they had never had the chance to become literate, although Drakos estimates the literacy rate amongst the men at sixty percent and women at twenty. A library was set up in the town in 1872, with Drakos himself donating his personal library in 1879. The titles of the donated 158 books reflect a preponderance of ancient Greek texts, grammars, religious and ecclesiastical works, geographies both old and recent, Greek history books, local histories, and a number of mathematical, commercial and scientific works.⁵⁰ Drakos’ donation earned him the city’s declaration as ‘one of its great benefactors’ (Drakos 1895: 26-27). It is clear that the schools and their learning, the *sine qua non* of progress in the discourse of Asia Minor Hellenism, are a proud achievement of the town.

⁴⁸ A biographical account of this cleric (1809-1877), who accumulated considerable wealth in Rumania and was murdered on Moschonisia, is provided by Drakos (1895b: 67-71). In a peculiar case of coincidence, Alekos Doukas’ father may have purchased some of his furniture at an auction when the cleric’s estate was finally sorted out between contesting parties, being the Patriarchate, the Monastery of Saint Catherine of Mount Sinai, the Greek Embassy and the deceased cleric’s relatives. The ‘palace’ passed into the possession of the Turkish government and was used as an Administrative Office. Later, it was used as an orphanage during the Greek-Turkish War by the Greeks and after 1922 by the Turkish Republic. Today it stands as a prominent building but is in danger of collapse through neglect.

⁴⁹ Scholarcheion: a three-form school between the elementary and high school for students from the age of ten to thirteen.

⁵⁰ The titles of the donated books, along with a letter to the bishop and the School Board, are in Drakos (1891: 66-71).

Drakos mentions the building in 1880 of the Municipal office, the latter being paid for by the Bishop and the notables who are listed by name, Alekos Doukas' grandfather Efstratios Hatziapostolis amongst them. When Drakos discusses the community spirit of the islanders he ascribes natural leadership to the notables and bishops, who, when they are 'men of upright and heroic character, patriotic and hard-working' inspire an unselfish devotion to community affairs on the part of the Moschonisiot (Drakos 1895: 34). References in the text however suggest that this is an idealised view and that political conflicts were not unusual amongst the notables whose interests were not always aligned with the wider community.

Drakos devotes considerable space to the customs and superstitions of the islanders in the mode always of the educated folklorist (*laografos*) who uses the elevated classicist 'katharevousa' linguistic form to present a simple folk whose language is the demotic vernacular. In this manner, he discusses the religious festivals, the customs that have pagan roots, the boat and horse races, the courtship and marriage rituals, and the eighty-three superstitions, of which a dozen or so 'are still maintained' (Drakos 1895: 37). In demonstrating the continuity of ancient Greek culture through the folk he writes: 'On the eve of Christ's Ascension young women walk about the island's hills with incense, just as the ancients did in the mountains' (Drakos 1895: 35). In a similar vein, during the Carnival, the sight of people dressed as Alexander the Great's soldiers 'stirs the curiosity,' the suggestion being that there may well be an oral tradition of memory relating back to the passing of Alexander's armies (Drakos 1895: 35).⁵¹

⁵¹ That the 'oral' custom described above may be the product of a literary tradition of popular pamphlets in which the exploits of Alexander are told in narrative form, in other words, literate culture filtering into oral culture and then being reflected back as the literate culture's desired expectation (somewhat akin to the phenomenon of 'false memory syndrome') is a part of the wider focus of this study.

Drakos' treatise provides a discursive grid into which we can understand the physical topography of Alekos Doukas' childhood as well as a social and cultural order that such a discourse constructs. It is an order that, as we will see, ingrained itself in the thinking of the young boy of our study. It textually constructs a Moschonisia at a particular point in time against which we can attempt to relate Alekos Doukas' and others' memories.

V

Constructing a Childhood

I was born on Moschonisia, those small, hidden, unknown isles tucked away in a remote place inside the Gulf of Adramyttion and resembling rose petals strewn at the foot of Mount Ida by the love-struck hand of the forested Mount Pindasos. (S. Doukas 1983: 459)

Landscape and ancient history dominate in the memory of those who write about the 'lost homelands' of Moschonisia and Aivali. In *To Struggle, To Youth*, Alekos Doukas gives the title 'Hecatonnesoi' to Part One that deals with his childhood years on the island. The novel begins with three epigraphs from Strabo, Herodotus and Xenophon⁵² and three pages of 'Historical Notes' that discuss the sites of ancient Poroselini and Nasiotan (Nisos or Nasos), the etymology of the name Moschonisia and the linking of Kydonies with the ancient city of Kertonion or Kytonion mentioned in Xenophon. That Doukas disagrees on these matters with Drakos and others is less significant than the fact that, like his predecessors, he considers the interpretation of the ancient texts the foundational starting point. Doukas' contemporary perspective differs markedly from earlier writers in that he voices the hope for new

⁵² Strabo (*Geography* 13. 2.5), Herodotus (*Histories Book* 1: 151) and Xenophon (*Anabasis Book* 7 Chapter 8: 7-8).

archaeological research that will examine the ‘shared Asia Minor heritage’ of both Greeks and Turks (Doukas 1953: Historical Notes). However, in his preoccupations with the topographical features of his birthplace and their ancient associations he continues a discourse that dominated in his childhood.

While aiming to provide an account that breaks from a one-sided nationalist view, Doukas’ novel reproduces the older *Laografia* that set out to document the customs and lore of the folk as continuations of ancient Greek culture. In the preface ‘To the Reader,’ he writes: ‘I also wanted to rescue from total extinction, *ethographic*⁵³ material and age-old traditions of Moschonisia, as well as the life of Greeks on the coast of Asia Minor from the beginning of our century to the tragic day of its uprooting.’ The author’s ‘ethographic’ intent is felt throughout as he repeatedly focuses on the customs and beliefs he remembers from his childhood, presenting them in an idealised vein that necessarily precludes other forms of realism. When he describes the rituals and customs practiced by the children on Mayday he concludes that: ‘Great Pan has not died, nor has the source of the song between the boulders been extinguished. [They]... live on in the beautiful Greek Aegean islands’ (Doukas 1953: 89). With its incorporation of the literary genre of ‘ethography,’ the novel continues the traditional preoccupation with folk culture and the link with the ancient past.

In the biographical narrative that follows I draw on both *To Struggle*, *To Youth* and Stratis Doukas’ biographical notes, acknowledging that it is often difficult to disentangle their overlapping accounts and memories. As mentioned earlier, Stratis often referred his biographer Korfis to his brother’s novel, so we are unavoidably caught in a reinforcing cycle

⁵³ *Ethografia* is a Modern Greek term used to refer to the school of late nineteenth-century naturalistic literary prose that depicted the life and customs of traditional folk.

of fictional-factual accounts, not always able to differentiate absolutely between them. A simple opposition between fiction and fact is itself problematic as each mode is a discursive construction that appeals to different truth-making regimes. I read the texts as enmeshed between these modes, interpreting them contextually in an endeavour to make sense of an individual past.

Alekos was the youngest in the family and, on his novelistic account, doted on by his parents, who having ‘expended all their severity on their previous offspring.... decided that their precious darling, their youngest child, needed nothing but understanding, tolerance and sweet affection’ (Doukas 1953: 1). By implication, the older children had been raised more severely and, by inference, more traditionally. The father was typically away, weeks at a time, on the mainland in the ‘East’ where his estates and business were. Their mother, Emilia, was unusually withdrawn and melancholy, her only outward sign of affection to her children, a gentle pat on the head. At least this is how the two brothers construct her memory. Her strong presence in the domestic space of the family is without a doubt the expression of the gendered space of the island society. The father, in contrast, is remembered inhabiting a civic and commercial space. Stratis writes that their mother forbade them from playing in the street with other children, illustrating a certain severity (Korfis 1988: 23). I surmise that this may have also been due to the social status of her ‘notable’ family background. She had only one close friend in her life, a neighbour, Melanchrini, who remained unmarried and was like a grandmother to Emilia’s children.⁵⁴ In his biographical notes, Stratis states that this ‘matriarchal upbringing’ made them ‘extremely sensitive and timid in life’s struggles’ and that his mother’s influence created a contradictory mixture in him of religious superstition and

⁵⁴ Doukas (1953: 72-83) devotes a chapter to her and Stratis Doukas celebrates her gentle character in a poem ‘Saint: encomium’ published in *Efimerida Valkanion* 1924 (n.d.). Copies in Stratis Doukas Archive. Op. cit.

liberality, timidity and daring recklessness.⁵⁵ At an early age he discerned a certain affinity between himself and his younger brother. As a young boy, Alekos followed Stratis on swims across to the smaller islands, despite their shared terror of the depths: 'The truth is that Alekos always followed me but kept his own course. We were similar in other ways too, in our nightmares...' ⁵⁶ Stratis remembers the phrase 'In the olden times there was nothing, only God,' which he heard in kindergarten and which made the world seem dark and terrifying.⁵⁷

Alekos' father is remembered as having been a man at ease in the wider world of officials, farm work and the trading of rural produce. His ability to tell stories pleased the Turkish officials and his authority as a tax collector and merchant farmer was respected, or so the family mythology has it. Perhaps the most 'apocryphal' story of their father is the one in which he is attacked and beaten by thieves on the road to his estate in Pelit Köy, to the north east of Aivali, after which, surveying the wild thicket around him, he decided to turn it into an olive grove. In time it became the site of a large grove of over 10,000 trees.⁵⁸ The story suggests a certain mythologising of the economic entrepreneurship of Greeks in Asia Minor, an aspect of their civilising mission through the development of land. Such mythologising is seen here operating at the level of family memory and anecdote.

Both brothers remember details from the kindergarten they attended, the female teachers from Smyrna, learning to read and write, small mishaps or humiliations that loomed large in their childhood. Alekos recalls his first day at the kindergarten at age four when Miss Maria, the severe Smyrniot principal, sat him on her knees and kissed him. He recoiled because she had

⁵⁵ Stratis Doukas 'My First Steps' 17-page text in 'Biographical Details for Mr Pistas No 1,' pp. 5 & 6. Stratis Doukas Archive. Op. cit.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 7. See also letter 16.6.26. Op. cit.

⁵⁷ Stratis Doukas, 'My First Steps,' op. cit. p. 1.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 5 and Doukas (1953: 50-51).

bad breath, he writes in a third-person account fifty years later (Doukas 1953: 9). The kindergarten, founded and resourced from Smyrna, appears modern for its time, with a purpose-built structure, assistants and resources. Alekos remembers ‘building castles and houses with coloured wooden blocks on long special tables’ (Doukas 1953: 9). Stratis remembers the kindergarten as a one-room amphitheatrical structure from whose upper benches he fell and broke his teeth.⁵⁹ In October 2002, Ali Onay showed me a narrow vacant block on a slope where he remembered the kindergarten still standing and a plaque that read that it had been built with funds from Smyrna.⁶⁰

The six years at the island’s primary school and the *scholarcheion* receive little attention in their accounts. Stratis recounts an incident in which he stoically suffered the stabbing of a pen in his palm to test the efficacy of a miraculous remnant of the holy cross. He was, he writes, ‘stubborn from an early age.’⁶¹ Alekos too seems to have shared his brother’s stubbornness and pride, and when a classmate lets loose a cicada in the classroom and Alekos is wrongly punished, he refuses to eat for four days (Doukas 1953: 77-78). He also remembers that every year on the Sultan’s birthday they were marched by the teachers to the Turkish Administration in the ‘Bishop’s Palace’ to wish in singsong unison, long life to the Sultan, a self-conscious public performance of empire loyalty (Doukas 1953: 79-80). As for their achievement at school, Stratis ended the *scholarcheion* as the top student and Alekos gained the score of 9.25 out of 10 in his High School entrance exam, the highest of all his siblings, at least according to the father of Alekos Doukas’ fictional alter-ego ‘Young Brother’ (Doukas 1953: 1).

⁵⁹ Stratis Doukas, ‘My First Steps,’ op. cit. p. 1.

⁶⁰ Personal notes, 7 October 2002.

⁶¹ ‘Stratis Doukas, ‘My First Steps,’ op. cit. p. 3 and Korfis (1988: 26).

The years before Alekos leaves to study at the High School of Kydonies are described in his novel as carefree and happy. As children they roamed the island, visited the monasteries, took part in the summer harvest of fruit and grains and lived the daily routine of communal life. They heard the stories that circulated among the islanders: the exploits of the *kontrabatzides*, the island's tobacco smugglers who defied the monopoly of the French company *Regie*; the seafaring captain who secretly salvaged a fortune from a sunken Russian ship off the coast of Çesme, south of Moschonisia; and the saga of the 'Bishop's Palace' on the waterfront. In summer the family visited their father in the coastal town of Kemer to the north, where his business was based and its agricultural produce loaded onto sailing boats for export. In a short literary piece written by Alekos in 1928 he writes nostalgically of the three months of 'childhood paradise' spent every summer at Kemer: 'The calm Adramyttion sea, the renowned Mount Ida looming large before our house. The fishing in the morning, taking rowing boats for a joyride...' ⁶² Summer also included a few weeks in the mountain village of Pelit Köy where their father had his estate and Turkish villagers worked for him. In Alekos' novel, the friendship between the 'Young Brother' and Suleyman, a Turkish boy from this village, is the fictional vehicle for the author's vision of friendship and co-operation between the two confessional communities. The portrayal of this friendship is not always convincing and the inequality between the Greek landowner and his workers is largely ignored in favour of an idealised relationship. It would be mistaken however to assume that between the Greeks and Turks in these circumstances there were no cultural and social bonds. In a 1982 interview, Stratis, at the age of eighty-eight, recalls:

I can't tell you what the exact relationship between the Greeks and the Turks was. I'll tell you only about this one episode. I lived in Moschonisia where I was born, but my

⁶² Letter 7.10.28. Stratis Doukas Archive. Op. cit.

father lived in the East. There he had a *koumbaros*⁶³ Ismail. Of all my siblings he had chosen me to become *koumbaros*. The fathers were *koumbaros* and the sons were *koumbaros*. Ismail would take me shooting with him. Out of Christian fanaticism I would make him shoot wild pigeons, which was a sin for Turks. But he would do something to me. Once he took me up the minaret to see the village below. As we were climbing down he said. 'Hey, Istrati' – he spoke broken Greek – 'three times around the minaret, you've become a Turk.' I chased him with stones to the place where my father was working. I said to my father, 'Ismail took me up the minaret and made me into a Turk.' Then Ismail appeared, laughing. My father said to me, 'Don't be silly, you can't become a Turk that easily.' That's how close our relations were with the Turks. (Zervou 1982: 63)

Stratis' account of this incident illustrates how, in a common cultural space of economic and social interdependence, religious difference could be negotiated through playful and friendly contestation. Equally important however, his recall does not touch on other aspects of the mutual *koumbaros* obligations of protection, favour and loyalty between persons of unequal social standing, as the Doukas family and the Turkish farm workers clearly were. The exercise of memory is never divorced from the social relationships of the past.

On all accounts, Alekos grew up in a literate household in which there were books, magazines and newspapers. In *To Struggle, To Youth* when the young protagonist is sick in bed, his mother reads him *Robinson Crusoe* and the Greek version of the Eastern folktales of Nastradin Hodja. The father reads the Smyrna daily newspaper *Amaltheia*. 'Grandmother' Melanchrini is someone who is 'reasonably educated, liked reading and had a largish collection of old and new books' (Doukas 1953: 73). The greatest influence on his reading is his older brother Stratis, who at an early age becomes an avid reader. Stratis relates how, a little before he went to High School, he read an issue of an Athenian almanac which described

⁶³ A relationship based on being a best man at a wedding or through the baptism of children.

the tragic fate of the sculptor Yannoulis Halepas, who after fourteen years in an insane asylum was reduced to picking up cigarette butts on his native island of Tinos.⁶⁴ Such was the twelve-year-old Stratis' turmoil that he felt 'that the artistic future of Greece lay in ruins.'⁶⁵ Stratis' early concern over the fate of this artist is the beginning of a lifelong interest in writing and art.⁶⁶ His subsequent years at the High School of Kydonies (1907-1912) are characterised by an intense engagement with books. In Aivali, Stratis begins a close friendship with Fotis Kontoglou, a talented precocious boy, who converts him to a passionate love of demoticist literature and shares with him his exploration of religious iconography in the churches and chapels of their homeland (Korfis 1988: 108-109). Stratis, with his two other brothers, Doukas and Dimitros, board with an elderly lady in the town, and the house's large library, dominated by French literature, is devoured by Stratis in all-night reading sessions. He begins to order books from publishers' catalogues and the range of his reading encompasses prose, poetry, essays on philosophy and art, art journals and the growing output of the demoticists. As in other things, Stratis' passion for books and ideas is taken up by 'Young Brother' Alekos.

The security of Alekos' childhood world begins to falter after 1909 when, following an initial optimistic response by the Greeks to the promises of the 1908 Constitution, the political tide turns against them as a minority. In June 1909 Aivali and Moschonisia are blockaded by sea and land and martial law is declared (Sakkaris 1922: 202-206, Karamblis 1949: 212). Houses are searched for weapons, elders are arrested and soldiers of the Young Turk army order islanders to replace the blue on their houses with red (Doukas 1953: 41). The army posts notices warning against the 'enemies of the state who sow mischievous seeds of discord and

⁶⁴ Stratis Doukas 'My First Steps' op. cit. p. 8. See also S. Doukas (1976: 107). The *Imerologio* (Almanac) was published by K. Skokos. For more details on this journal see Kalogianis (1984: 41).

⁶⁵ Stratis Doukas 'My First Steps,' op. cit. p. 8.

⁶⁶ It is significant that Stratis spent many of his later years researching and writing about Halepas.

division' and calling on the people to remain 'faithful to the idea of the one, coherent and homogenous Ottoman homeland' (Sakkaris 1922: 205). In the next three years the clouds on the horizon grow darker and the events of the Balkan Wars and conscription dominate as issues of the day. Two important events in Alekos' life occur in 1912. His father's business with his brothers-in-law becomes bankrupt, while Stratis, who is offered a career with an uncle in Constantinople, insists on going to Athens, under straitened circumstances, to study law. On his first visit back to the island in the summer of 1913 Stratis' library has greatly expanded, particularly in demoticist literature and 'patriotic' nationalist texts (Doukas 1953: 137).

In 1913, following in the footsteps of his older brothers, Alekos is sent across to Aivali to attend the High School of Kydonies. Although his time at the school is interrupted by the outbreak of WWI, he absorbs something of its unique tradition of liberal education: 'He was very lucky in his teachers, both on the Island and in Aivali. They were nearly all educated men, aware of the psychology of children, and behaved more like older friends than hierarchical superiors' (Doukas 1953: 104-105).⁶⁷ In 1914, the Greek population of the area is systematically harassed: house searches, conscription taxes, seizure of goods and lands, forced service in the infamous Labour Battalions, beatings and even murders (Sakkaris 1922: 208-218). The High School struggles on under difficult circumstances but finally in May before the end of the school year of 1914-1915 it is forced to close.⁶⁸ Alekos leaves with a general grade of 8.75, which he attributes to his high marks in history, geography, religion and ancient Greek (Doukas 1953: 108).

⁶⁷ For an account of the moderate position of the High School teachers on the language issue see Karamblias (1949: 95-96).

⁶⁸ Alekos' report card of 1915-16 from the High School of Mytilini cites his report card from Kydonies with the date 17 May 1914. General Archives of the State, Archive of the Prefecture of Lesbos.

In the summer of 1914, Stratis returns to the island but instead of returning to his studies in Athens in September, he sets sail for Thessaloniki and from there to the monasteries of Mount Athos. He is gripped by a psychological crisis that will trouble him for many years. In this period, Alekos' eldest brother Doukas is in Thessaloniki working as a postal clerk to avoid conscription and the Labour Battalions, and Dimitros, who has just finished high school, is preparing for an entrance exam for a military school in Athens.

Some time in the summer of 1915, while the military blockade of Aivali and Moschonisia continues, Alekos' father dies from a uraemic condition. In these troubled times, his death comes as a severe blow to the family. Alekos describes his father's last days and funeral in an unpublished manuscript, possibly written in 1915 as a personal journal (it records five days from 3 to 7 July) and rewritten in a more self-conscious literary style in 1919 when he returned to the island after WWI.⁶⁹ The text captures the muted atmosphere of home in those final days and an adolescent boy's awkward emotional response to his father's approaching death. It describes the funeral procession from the house to the service in the metropolitan church of Taxiarchis and then to the island's cemetery and family tomb. The elaborate headstone in the tomb had been erected for Alekos' great-grandfather Efstratios Hatziapostolis by his sons who had made a small fortune exporting olive oil to Rumania and it had been sculptured by a well-known Tinian marble worker in Bucharest.⁷⁰ Alekos' description provides a sharp image of the final burial:

⁶⁹ 'How Father Died.' A five-page manuscript in Letter book, Vol. 2, op. cit. pp. 251-256. The text's introductory and concluding paragraphs suggest my hypothesis. Whatever the case, it is very likely the earliest literary text we have of the author. See also Doukas (1953: 127-135).

⁷⁰ Years later Stratis Doukas realised that this headstone had been made in the workshop of Yiannoulis Halepas' father in Bucharest. See S. Doukas (1976: 107-108).

As the procession nears the cemetery my uncles take the place of the coffin-bearers and carry the load of their loved one through the tree-lined garden of death. They continue to the end, and then turn right, stopping at the family tomb, a square area enclosed with rails. In the middle of the tomb stands a high marble column, on top of which sits an angel, resting its pensive head on its left hand, as though weighed down by some eternal grief. Next to the column is a marble cross, lightly brushed by the branch of a eucalypt tree swaying in the warm afternoon breeze. Above, an azure blue sky.⁷¹

Standing on this same spot with Ali Onay in 2002, 87 years later, I felt a curious sense of history accumulating in the landscape. In the sub-soil of these adjacent fields, generations of Christians and Muslims, Greeks and Turks, were buried, their remains intermingling in ways that historical narratives of the living often deny.

This last farewell to his father is one of the last communal events on Moschonisia in Alekos' childhood. By September he has been sent to Mytilini (joined with Greece only three years earlier) where he is enrolled in the High School. Moschonisia and Aivali are under a double blockade, with Turkish troops on the streets and British naval ships blockading and bombing the coast. Stratis, returning from Mount Athos to Mytilini, finds his way back to Moschonisia by boat. His brother Dimitros, working as a teacher on the island, is questioned and beaten to reveal information about hidden weapons. In November, a band of Greek guerillas operating on the small Moschonisia islands and linked to the British forces in the Aegean, stages an attack on the Turkish garrison. Turkish reinforcements are summoned and Stratis, Dimitros, Eleni and their mother, along with other islanders, escape by boat to Mytilini. Those who remain are forced to evacuate the island and marched across to Aivali where they are billeted

⁷¹ 'How Father Died' p. 256, op. cit. For another description of this gravestone see S. Doukas (1976: 108).

by friends and relatives in a situation of military occupation. The first exile of the Moschonisiots has begun.

Within a few months, the fifteen-year-old Alekos has lost his father, his home, his school and the 'country' he has grown up in. On the night before his father's funeral, the narrator in Alekos manuscript has a dream:

I saw myself alone in a small rowing boat heading out to sea. I was so far from land I could see nothing but sea and sky. Pulling on the oars with robust strokes, I made the boat skim across the surface far out into the tranquil waters. When I awoke, an inexplicable fear gripped me over the reckless feat in my dream, my daring venture into the unknown...

In the archive, Alekos Doukas' letters and manuscripts periodically include dream sequences. These short narratives often illuminate psychological states and offer symbols that can be read in conjunction with his other biographical texts. In this case, the dream of the fifteen-year old can be read as a subconscious recognition of loss and a fear of an uncertain future, a signal that the young Alekos has abruptly entered adult life. For most of his life, he will remember this period as a rupture with the past, an end to his childhood and the beginning of a harsh struggle in the world.

CHAPTER TWO: Exile and War (1915-1922)

‘A body, once shot, is never the same again. It remembers what happened by storing its shock and outrage in unusual places: skin, muscle, connective tissues, nerves. Time passes, the body renews itself, but curiously, perversely, the visceral memory remains.’ (Bell 2003: 40)

I

If my study has something distinctive to offer it is precisely in the area of the transformations in thought and subjectivity it attempts to locate and understand. The broad hypothesis that I adopt is that Alekos Doukas’ experience of exile and war, including their aftermath, was transformative and persistent over time. In studying the nature of his war experience I draw on Leed (1979: ix), sharing in his endeavour ‘to anchor the stuff of intellectual history in the ineluctable reality of historical events.’ Leed’s hypothesis that World War One (WWI) was in essence a profound experience of industrialisation, both in the mechanisation of war and the proletarianisation of the men involved, can be productively applied, with some qualifications, to the Greek Asia Minor Campaign (1919-1922). Taken as a hypothesis over a longer time scale, it can also provide a key to Alekos Doukas’ life well after war’s end.

The biographical narrative in this chapter is interwoven with brief accounts of regional and military histories (Lesvos, Thessaloniki, Aivali, Asia Minor Campaign) and their relationship to broader national and transnational narratives. Doukas’ fictional writing from the front is used extensively as illustration of the psychic dimensions of his war experience, while *To Struggle*, *To Youth* offers a temporally later discourse of reconstruction and critique.

Finally, this chapter is part of a larger project being worked on simultaneously by writers from different sides of borders and communities to rewrite and deconstruct nationalist narratives of shared conflicts. Kasaba (2001) suggests that the Greek-Turkish conflict can be analysed not through totalising categories of conflicting nationalisms, but by trying to identify those factors that caused a breakdown in older peaceful civic and trading networks. By rejecting the circular logic that ascribes the causes of conflict to intrinsic ethnic hatred it is possible to begin to analyse events in a more complex way enabling dialogue between national histories. Pappe (2006) points to the need for ‘bridging narratives’ in inter-communal or national conflicts that use alternative sources and approaches to explore common grounds of experience and subvert the official narratives of elites. The present study also strives to question the adequacy of nationalist narratives by critically examining the meeting point between powerful discourses and institutions and the everyday experience and thinking of a historically located subject.

II

Mytilini (Lesvos) – the first exile

Alekos Doukas spent the school year 1915-1916 enrolled in the fourth year of the High School of Mytilini on the island of Lesvos.¹ The island had filled with approximately 15,000 refugees from the nearby coastal communities, forced to leave during the ‘persecutions’ or ‘expulsions’ (*diogmi*) as the refugees called these events in Turkey during WWI (Tzimis

¹ The capital and port, Mytilini, is also the name often used for the island of Lesvos (also Lesbos). My use of the term should be clear from the context.

2001: 246).² That Alekos' family were able to provide him with the means to continue his schooling while many refugees were forced to live in public buildings and survive on rations may have helped cushion the experience. The Mytilinian writer, Asimakis Panselinos (1982: 40) remembers, as a twelve-year old, the refugee children adapting quickly and merging with their Mytilinian peers: 'There was a great deal of idealism amongst us, and our common fate as Ottoman subjects was too recent to hinder our comradeship' (Panselinos 1982: 40). Many of the refugees had originally hailed from Lesbos and social and family ties were still strong. This helped in the support and hospitality they received. By the early twentieth century however Mytilini had also become a considerably stratified society so that exile was experienced according to the economic and social position of the refugees. Most believed that their return home was imminent and were reluctant to leave Lesbos for mainland Greece.

The cultural and social milieu of Lesbos had undergone a rapid transformation in the period 1880-1912. It had become one of the main trading gateways into the Ottoman Empire and the olive-oil industry had been expanded through the introduction of steam-driven factories and investment capital available to the island's merchant and diaspora class. The island's large landholders and merchants were now more closely in tune with the trading and investment activities of an expanding European capitalism in the Mediterranean. This was characterised by an 'opening' towards Europe and 'the reproduction of a lifestyle with distinct cosmopolitan features' (Sifnaiou 1996: 304). After the political ascendancy of the Young Turks in 1908, the Greek elite of Lesbos had increasingly seen its interests served by a union with Greece that was realised in 1912. At this time Lesbos had a developed banking system, social welfare, schools, cultural associations, a press, a large hospital and an extensive road

² Karamblis (1949 Vol. 2: 121) estimates the number of refugees in Greece at 200,000.

network.³ The educational movement in Lesvos enjoyed a popular base amongst Mytilinians who actively supported literary demoticism (Sifnaiou 1996: 325-326). At the time of liberation, a fertile climate for literary production existed and the newspapers, literary journals and cafes of Lesvos provided a space for lively social and political debates. Stratis Doukas, who had worked as a proof reader in the Mytilinian newspaper *Salpinga* in the winter of 1914-15, quickly became associated with the literary movement 'Lesvian Spring' that was to produce a significant number of Greek writers (S. Doukas 1976: 38-52).

Following the aborted attempt at liberation on Moschonisia in November 1915, Alekos' family joined him in exile. They rented the upstairs floor of a local house in the hillside neighbourhood of Halikas just outside Mytilini. Stratis worked for a period as a night receptionist at the large Kaloyiannis hotel, as well as supervising the hotel owner's olive oil press during the winter months (S. Doukas 1976: 38). Alekos' eldest brother Doukas remained in Thessaloniki working as a postal clerk.⁴ No mention is made anywhere of his brother Dimitros in this period suggesting that like most of the refugees he was unemployed. His sister Eleni remained at home, reflecting the social standing of a land-owning merchant family in Moschonisia whose daughter would not be expected to leave the household for paid work. The Doukas family shared certain class affinities with the elite of Mytilini but as refugees they were now cast adrift in uncertain times.

Alekos' enrolment is recorded in the High School register with consistently high grades.⁵

Religion. Greek. Latin. Mathematics. French. History. Physics. His deceased father's

³ There were approximately 2000 students in the city of Mytilini, with elementary schools, a High School, a Girls' School and two French-language schools (Sifnaiou 1996: 325, Tzimis 2001: 213).

⁴ I use 'Thessaloniki' as this has subsequently become the official name of the city, although during WWI and after, the common forms in English were 'Salonica' or 'Salonika.'

⁵ General Archives of the State, Archive of the Prefecture of Lesvos.

occupation is recorded as ‘merchant,’ which appears incongruous when in the same column Stratis is named as his guardian. The word ‘merchant’ in the school register very likely functions as a marker of social status.

Doukas (1953: 153-162) provides few details about this period in Mytilini, apart from a few scenes of the sixteen-year-old schoolboy protagonist accosted by a half-crazed alcoholic character ‘The Teacher’ who sets about demolishing the myths of Greek national education. This is clearly Doukas’ own 1950s Marxist position, while his sixteen-year-old self in this period can only be surmised indirectly. What *is* known is that political debate on the island was particularly lively in this period. In the ‘national schism,’⁶ the majority of Mytilinians were pro-Venizelist and the refugees especially saw him as a charismatic liberator who would continue the irredentist successes of 1912. Panselinos (1982: 40-44) remembers the ardent pro-Venizelist feelings of the youth, the satirical songs, the marches and hostility expressed towards monarchist symbols. He and his friends enthusiastically joined the scouts movement which was supported by the Venizelists and organised on quasi-military lines, reflecting an ideological mixture of German militarism and British Empire thinking (Panselinos 1982: 40-41, Liakos 1988: 55). The dominant ideological movements of the time were liberalism and nationalism, although in Lesvos socialist ideas had already begun to circulate. The slogans and terminology of groups like the United Workers (*Sinergatiki*) had entered the social and political discourse.⁷ Its internationalist anti-war song ‘Let the canon be turned into a plough, the gunpowder into seed...’ was prohibited as being ‘defeatist’ by the French military

⁶ The internal political conflict between the liberal Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos who was in favour of joining the Entente and King Constantine who favoured neutrality, a stance interpreted by the West as pro-German, culminated in a national schism by September 1916 when Venizelos declared a provisional government in Salonica.

⁷ E. Sifnaiou (1996: 327) notes that around 1910 terms like ‘capital,’ ‘labour,’ ‘class struggle,’ ‘exploitation’ and ‘socialism’ circulated in the newspaper *Laikos Agon* (Popular Struggle) and literary magazine *Haravgi* (Dawn), and that the first workers’ strikes occurred on the island in 1910.

stationed on the island in 1915 (Panselinos 1982: 18-19). This anti-war stance did not pose a significant threat however and was overshadowed, even amongst its own supporters, by the more powerful irredentist nationalism.

As an Asia Minor refugee, Alekos would have been aware of the cultural differences felt by the Mytilinians towards the 'old Greeks' (*palioelladites*), many of who now served in Lesvos as senior civil servants. These differences were many and subtle, including how they shopped, ate, spoke and even the fact that the Greeks from Athens didn't participate in the local Ottoman-influenced culture of the hammams where matchmaking was often conducted (Panselinos 1982: 33-35). They included the different attitudes the two groups had to demoticist literature, which in effect signalled differences on a broad range of cultural issues. At times the tension between them led some Lesvian intellectuals to speak of the 'intellectual poverty' of 'old' Greece (Panselinos 1982: 34). From his first period on the island in late 1914, Stratis had joined a group of young writers and intellectuals who had a passion for demoticist literature and the study of the island's folk traditions (S. Doukas 1976: 38-39). This literary activity also included a keen interest in European literature through translation and an openness to liberal and socialist views. Stratis had access to a large range of books through his friends. All these events and influences were certainly formative for Alekos, who as a young child had followed his brother's intellectual interests. When Doukas (1953: 159-162) sketches a scene in which the Mytilinian intellectuals, Stratis amongst them, engage in discussion in a café, the reader feels the young protagonist's presence observing his brother at a distance. In this sense, Alekos absorbed much of this intellectual environment indirectly through Stratis. The adoption of the demotic in his writing is immediately clear in the first extant letters of 1921-1922, and his reading is dominated by translated European literature.

His liberal pro-Venizelist views were also absorbed in this early period, although his attitude to socialist ideas, as we shall see, would remain ambivalent for many years.

Some time before July 1916, Stratis attempted unsuccessfully to migrate to France along with other Lesbians on a boat leaving from the coastal village of Thermi (S. Doukas 1976: 44).⁸ In this same period Alekos' family left Mytilini to join the eldest son Doukas in Thessaloniki. The reasons for the move are not clear. It is possible that conditions in Mytilini were deteriorating due to the continued influx of refugees.⁹ Perhaps employment and accommodation were better in Thessaloniki. According to *To Struggle, To Youth* (1953: 348-350) Alekos and Stratis followed the family later, sailing to Thessaloniki by boat in August 1916. Whatever the reasons, this move marked the end of Alekos' schooling and the beginning of another phase in his life.

III

Thessaloniki – capital of the ‘new lands’

Whether the voyage to Thessaloniki from Mytilini described in *To Struggle, To Youth* is fictional or not, it was probably not too different to the actual course of events that transpired. In that account the steamship was diverted from calling into the port of Kavala because of an Entente blockade. The WWI theatre of war in the Balkans was now situated in the eastern

⁸ Korfis (1988: 147) claims that Alekos joined his brother in this failed attempt but this seems unlikely, as Alekos makes no mention of it anywhere. Korfis refers to 1915 as the year that Stratis' made a 'second attempt' to migrate but this is contradicted by Stratis Doukas who dates the attempt at 1916.

⁹ By the beginning of 1917 the number of refugees on Lesbos had increased to 45,000 (Tzimis 2001: 253-255).

Macedonian region. Not long after their arrival in Thessaloniki, Stratis enlisted with Venizelos' republican National Defence force. The declaration of a revolutionary government in Northern Greece was an important development in Greece's political affairs, dividing the country and aligning it on the side of the Anglo-French Entente. The provisional government was part of a republican movement with a liberal reformist agenda that included a demoticist educational program. Furthermore its political leadership looked to further gains in the historical struggle of irredentism. In a speech in Thessaloniki in December 1916, one of Venizelos' close associates, Em. Repoulis expressed this clearly: 'The heart of this country is no longer in Athens. It is in Thessaloniki! In the place from which the greatest Greek military leader of all time set forth, the man who carried the light of Greek civilisation to those lands which again today are looking to Greece for deliverance' (Petridis 1997: 188-189). Of course, the reference is to Alexander the Great, and Repoulis' speech is a contemporary political statement of the 'Great Idea.'

Korfis (1988: 61) has interpreted Stratis' motivations for joining the National Defence in primarily psychological terms that has him seeking a physical regime of discipline, hardship and new experience as an antidote to his sensitive and withdrawn nature. It is also possible that by enlisting, Stratis may have felt less of a burden on his family. In hindsight however there were probably additional factors at play - his republican views and dislocation as a refugee. In the following two years, Stratis experienced combat as a muleteer, assistant quartermaster and reserve officer in Macedonia. An expression of the family's ambivalent attitude to his enlistment is expressed in an incident that occurred in the summer of 1917, when after unavoidably returning late from leave, Stratis was locked up in the Yedi Koule prison for desertion. When his brother Dimitros went to arrange his release, his first words to Stratis, blurted out in tears, were: 'Serves you right for volunteering to serve your country'

(Korfis 1988: 66). While stationed in Thessaloniki, Stratis became closely tied to a group of other volunteer writers and artists from Mytilini, Athens and other parts of Greece and Turkey.

When Alekos arrived in Thessaloniki in August 1916, the city had only been incorporated into the Greek state four years earlier, and while its governmental, social and cultural institutions were still in the process of being Hellenised, it retained much of its multi-ethnic Ottoman character.¹⁰ On the eve of Greek liberation, Thessaloniki was a modernising city that had undergone considerable urban renewal. The second largest centre in the Ottoman Empire, it was considered its 'most modern city' (Karadimou-Yerolymbou 1997: 91). After the Young Turk Revolution in 1908 the city experienced an upsurge in political and cultural activity, which included a flourishing multi-lingual press and the founding of a large number of cultural and political organisations. While most of the latter were based on ethnic-religious divisions with nationalist agendas, there was intercommunication and common interests between the ethnic groups of the middle classes and the large working class represented after 1910 by the Jewish-dominated Socialist Federation (*Federación de Trabajo*). In the period of nationalist struggle for territory in Greater Macedonia that included armed conflict and propaganda war to win the allegiance of heterogeneous populations, Balkan nationalist ideologies competed fiercely. With Thessaloniki's incorporation into Greece after the Balkan Wars (1912-1913), Greek state nationalism dominated.¹¹ The city that Alekos found in 1916 was a city in transition from an Ottoman past to a future as Greece's second capital in the New Lands, a city of multi-ethnic communities, modern urban features, new port facilities and customs house, a modern water system, gas lighting and a tram system newly electrified.

¹⁰ The 1913 Greek census listed the main groups in the city as Jews (38,9%), Turks (29%), Greeks (25%), Bulgarians (3.9%) and a large number of smaller groups, including European communities (Terzis 1997: 261).

¹¹ See Avdela (1998) where she argues that the ethnic and gender dimensions of the tobacco strike of 1914 were subsumed within the dominant Greek nationalist discourse.

Important in the city's life was the presence of a large number of British and French troops using the city as the main supply base for the Macedonian war front.¹²

As with Alekos' sojourn in Mytilini there is little information about his two and a half years in Thessaloniki. An extract from a letter to Stratis in 1923 provides us with a retrospective micro-narrative of these early years:

And from the day I abandoned my High School desk I had to work hard to make a living. Neither Doukas nor Dimitros gave me moral support. I remember in Thessaloniki at sixteen, there was an entrance examination for enrolment at the Agricultural School of Thessaloniki.¹³ I timidly said that I might try but everyone's answer was no. At eighteen I wanted to board the English ships. I secretly went and managed to get the required documents from the Merchant Marine office and I had almost done everything that was needed. But I didn't have the resolve to go through with it.¹⁴

That the subject frames his past in terms of setbacks - the cruel hand of fate and harsh treatment by his elder brothers – partly reflects his experience but also his depressed state of mind in the period following the Greek-Turkish War. The fact that his elder brothers, now in effect parental figures, opposed his studies suggests that the family's financial circumstances were indeed straitened. The passage also reveals a young man with secret desires - education, travel and adventure - but one who remains within his dreams, lacking the daring or strength to realise them or oppose family authority. Although he never went to sea, Alekos did begin

¹² By January 1916 almost one quarter of a million French and English soldiers had already disembarked in the city. See Petridis (1997: 186-188) and Mackridge (1997a: 10,13).

¹³ This reference is most likely to the American Farm School established in 1904 by the American missionary Dr J. H. House. Doukas' interest in attending the Agricultural College is indicative of his long-term interest in agriculture as a science and occupation.

¹⁴ Letter 11.1.1923. Stratis Doukas Archive, Department of Medieval and Modern Greek Studies, Aristotle University, Thessaloniki.

work in early 1917 as a clerk for an English stevedoring company. He was responsible for recording the loading and unloading of goods in the ships' holds. In his fictional account, this period was relatively happy, with opportunities for dips into the harbour and contact with young foreign, often English and Australian crews. In fact, this contact was significant in his life as it intimated the possibility of travel and friendship across national barriers. In later letters, Alekos talks about the search in his life for a certain elusive quality or experience that always seemed to be missing.¹⁵ In referring to his desire to leave behind his familial world, Alekos wrote: 'My change began exactly at the time of my meeting those dear friends from the north. Then raking about inside me, or perhaps because I was in a congenial mental environment, each day I discovered within me some hidden chord, that together composed for me a harmonious symphony.'¹⁶ For a number of years afterwards, Alekos corresponded with an Australian seaman called Charlie who kept him informed of merchant ships he might be able to board for Australia.¹⁷ Doukas (1953: 306-308) dates his protagonist Young Brother's desire to travel to Australia to 1917 when the latter worked on the ship *Yarborough* and met a young Australian called Harry who informed him about the tradition of 'mateship' that apparently characterised Harry's countrymen. Although this version of the past is patently retrospective and derivative of the Australian masculinist literary 'bush' tradition, it is true that Alekos did strike up friendships with Australians in this period after which his desire to travel steadily grew.

In Alekos' accounts, fictional or otherwise, there are no specific memories of the city or events of the time, including the Great Fire of August 1917 which essentially destroyed old Thessaloniki, leaving 14,200 families homeless and affecting 4,900 shops of which seventy

¹⁵ Letter 5.4.1926. Op. cit.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ See letters 12.4.1924 and 29.10.1924. Op. cit.

percent belonged to the Jewish community (Hekimoglou 1997: 200). It seems strange that a catastrophic event that left over half the population unemployed, drove prices into a spiral of inflation and effectively left a large swathe of charred ruins in the centre is absent in *To Struggle, To Youth*. There is evidence that in this period of nationalist consolidation there was virulent anti-Semitism and nationalistic chauvinism directed against the Jewish community.¹⁸ It may be that Doukas' later internationalist beliefs did not sit comfortably with these dark undercurrents of nationalism, or conversely, that his life was relatively unaffected by the Great Fire and its aftermath. Of course the latter proposition describes precisely the type of ideological self-censorship that operates in situations of nationalist discrimination against minorities. Young Brother remembers the armistice of 11 November 1918, when, at midday, all the warships in the harbour began to fire their canons into the air in celebration (Doukas 1953: 350-351). The narrator comments bitterly that this was no 'real peace' only a temporary truce, a retrospective anti-war view that had very likely not crystallised in the nineteen-year-old Alekos. Such a view did however exist in the 1920s amongst young people and veterans of WWI and the Asia Minor Campaign (Liakos 1988: 36-38). For the refugees from Asia Minor, the surrender of Turkey to the Entente signalled a turn in fortune, a time of return.

¹⁸ Mackridge (1997: 175-176) quotes a newspaper column of the time welcoming the fire as a way of ridding the city of 'the filth of so many centuries.' Mackridge argues that this phrase alludes to the whole Ottoman past, including the non-Greek communities of whom the Spanish-speaking Jews made up half the city's population. Avdela (1997: 431-432) also refers to virulent attacks on the Jews during and after the Great Tobacco Strike of 1914 in which they are referred to as 'vipers' and as belonging to 'foreign races,' their socialism being of a type inimical to Greek national interests.

IV

The Return

In the spring of 1919, Alekos was sent back to Moschonisi earlier by his family to avoid military service in Greece.¹⁹ Doukas (1953: 352) adopts the familiar historiographical trope of exile-return to describe Young Brother's voyage home: 'The Island of his birth, with its uninhabited islets, was decked out in festive clothes to welcome its children returning from exile.'²⁰ In both towns the signs of destruction and neglect were stark and there are numerous accounts of the impression this made on the returnees (Karamblias 1949: 19, Valsamakis 1978: 181, Panayotarea 1993: 94-96). The theme of destruction is invariably linked to the idea of renewal and progress, the Orientalist theme of Western progress and change in contrast to Asiatic backwardness and stagnation: 'Everywhere the spirit of barbarity, sacrilege and destruction is manifest. The repugnance of ruins had placed underfoot its stinking mark of filth and exterminating evil on this sacred ground, which for so long has constituted the dwelling place of the spirit of progress and the promising boast and pride of Hellenism!' (Sakkaris 1920: 233).

The joy of returning to a familiar and reviving community is tempered in these accounts by feelings of violation and loss. Doukas (1953: 352) describes how Young Brother's first desire was to visit his father's gravestone which he could not find due to the vandalism that had occurred. The desire to connect to emotionally-charged artefacts of the past is illustrated in the unpublished manuscript 'How Father Died' where the third-person narrator describes

¹⁹ Letter to Stratis 28.10.24. Op. cit.

²⁰ The voyage and rough seas encountered are also described in the letter 27.9.1961. Op. cit.

Doukas' fictional alter-ego searching in his old room for his journal notes of July 1915. The context fits exactly that of Alekos' return in 1919, even to the detail of the cane armchair which appears in a surviving photograph of his eldest brother Doukas taken in the same year:²¹ 'Yes, here they are, he found them. Lying on the white cane armchair he opens the yellowed sheets of paper, and when he recognises his childhood handwriting faded by time, his face takes on an expression of pain and joy.'²² The creative impulse of the text clearly arises from a need to remember and memorialise a deeply-felt loss.

In another reference to this period Alekos writes to Stratis in April of 1923 describing it as one of the 'brightest periods' of his life.²³ Working in the office of the Municipal Elders as a clerk, he spent his free time roaming the island and exploring places he had never dared go as a young boy. Given the constraining circumstances of his earlier adolescent years and what was to follow it is not surprising that Doukas remembered the ten months on the island till February 1920 as the freest of his life. What we do not have in these biographical fragments however is a sense of the wider political events of the time that were tumultuous and fraught with anxiety. Almost simultaneous with the return of the exiles, in May 1919 the Greek army occupied the Smyrna zone which extended north as far as Aivali. The occupation was generally welcomed by the Ottoman Greeks as a liberation although many feared that it may not last and was ill-conceived. The arrival of Greek troops in Aivali was welcomed with patriotic celebrations. Eleni Angelara, a close relative of Alekos' family, writing to her uncle, the teacher Ioannis Hatziefstratiou at the Halkis Seminary, describes the tumultuous May events in Aivali:

²¹ Album (*Lefkoma*) No 3, p. 6b, Stratis Doukas Archive.

²² 'How Father Died,' op. cit.

²³ Letter 10.4.1923. Op. cit.

And thank the Lord, since Ascension Day, we too are finally free. Who would have thought a year ago when we were in exile that this might have happened? On the very Day of Ascension the barbarians were raised! Four hundred of our Evzones arrived two days ago. A large crowd, with Stellios the musician in the lead, accompanied them to the Garrison. It was beautiful and moving; they sang as they marched... Four days ago we were at war because the Turkish villages in the area refused to surrender. The last three days it has been peaceful. They are conducting negotiations with them which I hope are not successful so they'll get a taste of it.²⁴

The arrival of the Greek army signalled in effect a reversal of power in inter-communal relations. The Greeks, formerly a vulnerable minority subjected to harassment and internal deportations during WWI, now suddenly had the upper hand. Undoubtedly, among the complex range of emotions, revenge was not absent, whether expressed, as it often was, as an abstract religious sentiment or openly wished for as the above quotation reveals. Sakkaris (1920: 231) has the 'expiatory solution' at the end of WWI appearing as the Greek god of retribution, Nemesis, carrying out 'with severe justice its cleansing work.' The deeply embedded belief in the cycle of suffering and redemption is inextricably intertwined with the ideology of nationalist irredentism.²⁵ As another Aivaliot writes of the time: 'God knows well how many times our Race has been battered and tested. And none of us has ever denied that in the end it has been resurrected and achieved great things' (Valsamakis 1978: 185). It is significant that Sakkaris interprets the Allied victory as the triumph of Western values and ideas, of Christianity and the Greek spirit. Having fought 'under the flag of these ideas' and having for centuries suffered and struggled against 'despotism and barbarism,' the Greek nation now watches 'columns of its heroic fighters arriving on this prestigious land and conducting a victorious liberation struggle in the steady march towards fulfilling its historic

²⁴ Letter 22.5.1919. Letter book 'My Young Brother's Pain' Vol. 2, pp. 10-11. Stratis Doukas Archive. Op. cit.

²⁵ For similarities with Italian Risorgimento discourse see Patriarca (2005).

rights' (Sakkaris 1920: 233). This jingoistic nationalism was the dominant view and thousands of young men from Aivali and Moschonisia joined the Greek army.²⁶ There was however an undercurrent of disquiet about the possible turn of events, and many older people were sceptical about the lack of formal guarantees from the European Powers.²⁷

'The Eastern Question'

It is important to widen our frame of reference and consider the conjunction in 1919 of Greece's nationalist irredentist movement in relation to the Greeks of Turkey, the interests of the European Powers in the defeated Ottoman Empire and the dominant Orientalist discourse of the time. With the occupation of the Asia Minor coast, Greece was finally to put to the test a messianic dream of enlarging its territories to encompass those of the Byzantine Empire.²⁸ This move involved Greece in a serious engagement with the *realpolitik* of the Great Powers who were pursuing their own geo-political interests. Said (1978: 223) points to two aspects of Orientalism - 'latent' (essentialist and unchanging) and 'manifest' (specialist and empirical) – that reached a certain crisis in this period:

But at no time did the convergence between latent Orientalist doctrine and manifest Orientalist experience occur more dramatically than when, as a result of World War I, Asiatic Turkey was being surveyed by Britain and France for its dismemberment.

²⁶ Ralli (1995: 91), without giving a source for her figure, writes that over 4,000 young men joined up to the 'call of their sweet motherland.'

²⁷ Although Ralli's account follows an unquestioning nationalist narrative she does inadvertently allude to a certain scepticism by the islanders of the official Greek position that has been passed on through oral means (Ralli 1995: 89-95).

²⁸ As an example see a popular map of 1920 which shows Venizelos' 'Greater Greece' (M. L. Smith 1988: Front cover). See also Kechriotis (2005) who argues that the Great Idea was a shifting concept associated with 'overlapping national discourses' and that its final phase of empire ambition was based as much on Greek-Ottomanism as it was on the older 'nation-state irredentism.'

There, laid out on an operating table for surgery, was the Sick Man of Europe, revealed in all his weakness, characteristics, and topographical outline.

‘The Eastern Question’ – essentially a political discussion about Western interests in the East – was by definition an Orientalist discourse. In the pamphlets, journal articles and letters of philhellenes and the influential Greek diaspora of England, the support of Greece’s ambitions was invariably based on the enumeration of essentialist features of the Turks, stated as self-evident truths.²⁹ Incurable Asiatics, barbarous and despotic, the Turks are described as intruders and squatters, incapable of adopting liberal or democratic institutions. For this reason Turkey must be partitioned or dismembered according to ‘the principle of nationality’ with the creation of a Greek, Armenian and small interior Turkish state. Europe owed the Greeks a debt for their ancient heritage and a powerful Greece was in the interests of the West (London Committee of Unredeemed Greeks 1919b: 14-15).

The conjunction between Greek and European discourses is clearly illustrated in a talk given in Athens in April 1918 by Gustave Fougères, the Director of the French Institute and President of the Greek-French Association.³⁰ Pointedly titled ‘The Mission of Hellenism and the Greek Soldier’s Duty,’ the talk was delivered to a ‘distinguished audience of politicians, diplomats and learned persons’ (Fougères 1918: 1). The Greek translator hails the speaker as an ‘ardent philhellene’ and a ‘singular eulogist of the Greek ideology’ (Fougères 1918: 1). In demonstrating the ‘usefulness of history’ the speaker states his belief in ‘the educational power of history, especially in time of war’ (Fougères 1918: 6). For those who can ‘read history in a profound way’ the value of Greece’s glorious past is as a guide to duty in the

²⁹ For a sample of these see London Committee of Unredeemed Greeks (1919a & b), Polybus (1919), Reeves (1918), Burrows (1919). A classic statement of such ‘truths’ is in George Horton (1926: 27): ‘To comprehend this narrative thoroughly, one must remember that the East is unchangeable.’

³⁰ Fougères was a classical scholar with archaeological experience in Greece, professorship in France in History and Greek Philology, and a resident of Greece from 1913.

present (Fougères 1918: 9). Fougères' broad conception of history hinges on the idea of 'the age-old conflict of Europe and Asia,' evoked with the image of historical scenes on a bas-relief, depicting in processional manner, a three thousand year-old continuous struggle, 'with assaults and retreats, falls and victories, calm and turmoil, wounds and mutual wounding, with neither combatant ever being defeated to this day' (Fougères 1918: 9). In a statement of deep Orientalist logic, Fougères informs his audience that between these 'two contradictory worlds.... no reconciliation is possible' for they are 'destined to an eternal and unceasing antagonism: their lands, race, political and social organism, their intellect are at opposite poles' (Fougères 1918: 10).³¹ He then presents a view of Asia as seen from Greece, a perspective reminiscent of the Greek term *i kath' imas Anatoli* (Our East), which whilst constituting a moral order also provides an economic subtext of a vast space that offers 'under-exploited and inexhaustible treasures, the gold of its rivers, precious stones, grains, fruit, flocks, horses and the variety of cattle [that] make it the Promised Land' (Fougères 1918: 10).

Fougères continues in an effusion of Orientalist projection and Social Darwinian metaphor, in which the East represents the brutish underbelly or unconscious of humanity which the West controls through intellect and logic.³² This image of the East, which the speaker traces back to Homer and Aeschylus³³, is quickly conflated with Turkey in which 'three thousand years of convulsions have not progressed its strange soul which vacillates between pleasure and slaughter' (Fougères 1918: 13). Fougères returns repeatedly to the idea of an Asiatic society that lacks a sense of the individual, or even the ability for individual thought and freedom, the

³¹ See Said (1978: 149-166)

³² Fougères' descriptions of Asian societies, replete with images of cancerous growth and anonymous impersonal life, illustrate Said's (1978: 150-153) observation that the Orientalist is at heart describing a phenomenon that by definition is inferior to the West and that can only in the final analysis provoke disgust and pity. See also Pugliese (1994).

³³ See Said (1978: 55-57).

cornerstones of modern liberal democracy. The Asian Lords ‘never knew equality or solidarity and the duty of the citizen’ (Fougères 1918: 15). The speaker’s discourse is intent on forging the important link between history and moral duty, a sense of both being a unique and superior characteristic of Western, or interchangeably, Greek civilisation. And so in the ‘historical phases of the Greek-Asian conflict’ whose strange inception begins with the incorporation into Greece of Eastern mythical founding fathers such as Pelops, Kadmos and Minos – an explanation for the tragic impulse of the Greek mythical narratives - and which includes the Greek revenge in Troy, the epic struggles with the Persians, Alexander the Great’s conquests and the Fall of Byzantium, the last victory of the East by which the latter realised ‘the destructive dreams of Xerxes and Darius’ (Fougères 1918: 23). This binary Orientalist view of history enables Fougères to argue that Greece, the ideological core of the West, having retained its essential liberal character during the centuries of Ottoman rule and having taken the ‘light’ from the French Revolution back to its birthplace, is ready to do battle once more.

Fougères, the prestigious scholar, thus delivers an argument to his Greek audience that is a vigorous endorsement of the ‘Great Idea.’ ‘Greek heroism, helped by the active participation of faithful friends, faces the double monster [Bulgaria and Turkey] and slays it to finally wrest back the best lands detained for centuries. Asia, expelled from Ipiros and Macedonia, retreats to the lair where it was born’ (Fougères 1918: 25). This then is the ‘struggle today,’ the duty of the country and its soldiers, who having valiantly accounted for themselves as Allies in WWI, must soon proceed to liberate their countrymen ‘on the Asia Minor coast, in the depths of Thrace and in Macedonia’ (Fougères 1918: 26). For Fougères, and his audience both near and far, the ‘educational power of history’ is unambiguous. It exhorts the taking up of arms against a hereditary enemy of the West and Greece’s glorious heritage. The speaker ends by

describing how on Greek Independence Day the previous month, as he watched the Greek soldiers parade he had a premonition of victory and a voice within him spoke: 'Oh Greek soldiers, you are truly manly. I don't ask your names, for I know them already. Your names are surely Achilles, Ajax, Diomedes, Leonidas...' (Fougères 1918: 30). Just as the East's corruption and evil is known in advance by the Orientalist so too are the virtues and strengths of the West. Fougères' speech in April 1918 is a call for war and an argument for enlistment, 'the Greek Soldier's Duty' to defend 'the eternal Greek ideal with your life even' (Fougères 1918: 30).

Enlisting – the example of Socrates

Surprisingly, or perhaps not for a nationally-orientated Marxist, Doukas (1953: 143) passes over the question of his enlistment in one sentence: 'When the Greek army occupied the Island of Hecatos and Aivali, Young Brother went and enlisted in Mytilini, from where he was sent to the front, to Pergamos.' The protagonist's enlistment is self-explanatory in this account which exposes a contradiction in the novel's critique of imperialist intervention and the underlying nationalist motivation of the protagonist who up to this point is well-disposed towards the Turks.³⁴ The fact that Alekos worked at the Municipal Offices and tutored school students for ten months before his enlistment in February 1920 suggests that he did not come to his decision quickly. His family were presumably not in favour. After all, they had sent him back to the island to avoid conscription, and the family already had one son, Stratis, in the war. It is difficult to overestimate the heightened atmosphere in which the Moschonisiots and Aivaliots were experiencing the Greek occupation. The towns were rife with rumours and

³⁴ The literary critic Demosthenes Kourtovik (2003) has noted a similar contradiction in the protagonist of Dido Sotiriou's 1962 *Farewell Anatolia*.

speculation, the signs of the growing military conflict palpable. On Moschonisia, the ‘Bishop’s Palace’ was converted into an asylum for war orphans (Ralli 1995: 91). Alekos’ decision to enlist is illuminated by a brief account he wrote to Stratis in a letter in October 1924. This ‘micropolitical’ event is worth more detailed examination because it can be seen as one of those ‘moments of becoming [that] are not always recognizable parts of the main body of history’ (Laliotou 2004: 13). It is a way of seeing how a subject might reproduce or apply ‘interiorised master patterns’ of the *habitus*, as absorbed through educational institutions (Bourdieu 1971: 192-193). The letter refers to the period before Alekos’ enlistment and his crisis of conscience is significantly located in an educational context:

I remember that before I enlisted in the army.... I was tutoring on the island. Then, while teaching the children, the scene between Socrates and his disciple came up in the reader. The disciple went to Socrates at night to help him escape. The scene of the Laws. At that point I was severely tested. I heard the harsh words hanging over my head. ‘Why aren’t you enlisting?’ And I didn’t escape from their grip until I enlisted as a volunteer.³⁵

To what can we attribute the power of such a text to affect Alekos in this profound way? The ‘scene of the Laws’ from Plato’s *Crito* is an important text in Western political philosophy, dealing it as it does with moral and political issues of duty and obedience to the state. Considered by many as ‘one of the most severe documents in the history of legal thought,’ it has been frequently analysed (Kraut 1984: 6). Plato introduces the personified Laws in a dialogue within a dialogue in which they speak to Socrates regarding his obligation to respect the state’s decision to execute him. The Laws introduce a parallel argument of obligation based on a parent-state analogy, duty to one’s parents implying duty to the state. From birth to

³⁵ Letter 28.10.1924. Op. cit.

completion of education, both of which are realised through laws and institutions, one is beholden to the state (Plato1954: 90). In the original Greek text an added dimension to the analogy argument is the close etymological connection between the word for father (*pater*) and country or fatherland (*patrida*) (Kraut 1984: 54). The following extract in which the Laws speak to Socrates may well have been the key passage in Alekos' reading of the *Crito*:

Are you so wise to have forgotten that compared with your mother and father and all the rest of your ancestors your country is something far more precious, more venerable, more sacred, and held in greater honour both among gods and among reasonable men? Do you not realise that you are even more bound to respect and placate the anger of your country than your father's anger? that if you cannot persuade your country you must do whatever it orders, and patiently submit to any punishment that it imposes, whether it be flogging or imprisonment? *And that if it leads you out to war, to be wounded or killed, you must comply...* (Plato1954: 91) [My italics]

How might Alekos have read this text in the sense of reading as a creative meeting point between discursive systems and lived experience? In de Certeau's (1984: xii-xiii) theorisation of everyday experience it can be seen as an act of cultural consumption, an act of '*poiesis*,' and not as an over-determined event in which the subject passively reproduces a particular element of a totalising discursive system. It would be too easy to argue that Alekos simply read the text within a tradition of conservative political thinking in which the state reigns supreme in matters of individual duty and action, and, having read the text 'correctly,' drew the political conclusions lodged within it. Socratic philosophers have been interpreted in ambivalent and contradictory ways by both conservative and liberal thinkers. Rejecting the tradition that views such philosophers 'as eternal thinkers outside of the constraints of social context' we need to see the reading of such founding texts as 'fundamentally ideological' (Wood & Wood 1978: 9, ix). They can be read, in relation to other texts by Plato, as

arguments for ‘justified disobedience’ to the state (Kraut 1984: 11-12) or, as they have also been read, as objective testaments to the dangers of democracy (Wood & Wood 1978: 259). In Alekos’ reading of the text we need to keep in mind that Greek education of the time placed such texts on an ideological pedestal. These were texts of unquestioned wisdom and moral precept, all the more powerful when read in the ancient language, the ultimate in sanctioned ‘distinction’ in nineteenth century Greek education and thought (Bourdieu 1971: 200). Argiropoulou (1995: 44) comments that nineteenth-century Hegelian scholars like T. Karousos regarded ‘philosophical’ and ‘national’ education as one and the same thing, reflecting a widely-held view that ‘philosophy has as its aim not only to enlighten the mind of the Greeks but also to inspire them nationally by making them capable of assimilating the riches of an age-old heritage.’ In this sense, the example of Socrates does not exert its power over Alekos simply through the efficacy of its argument but as a sanctioned model and source of authority. Crucially important are not so much the actual arguments for duty and obedience but how Alekos in this moment of history interprets the model.³⁶ As Bourdieu (1971: 192) writes: ‘Culture is not merely a common code or even a common catalogue of answers to recurring problems; it is a common set of previously assimilated master patterns from which, by an “art of invention” similar to that involved in the writing of music, an infinite number of individual patterns directly applicable to specific situations are generated.’

We can view Alekos’ reading of Plato’s text as an ‘art of invention,’ a personal ‘trajectory’ on a unique line that traces the individual’s interaction with a powerful historical discourse (de Certeau 1984: 34-35). Having no arguments with which to counter such a discourse, Alekos was in the grip of a crisis of conscience in which the arguments of obligation to family and

³⁶ Given the dominating influence of Hegel on Greek philosophical discourse in the nineteenth century and the former’s belief that the state was the ‘highest of all social institutions’ the ideological slide between nation and state becomes an inevitable one (Aiken 1956: 79-81) See also Argiropoulou (1995: Introduction).

country, delivered by a powerful model of education, prevail: *if it leads you out to war, to be wounded or killed, you must comply...*

V

The War

What was the nature of the Greek war experience in the ‘Asia Minor Campaign’ of 1919-1922? That the war came to be known as a ‘campaign’ undoubtedly conjures military associations with the ancient world.³⁷ The undeclared war was in reality a military occupation in which Greece was a mandatory of the Entente Powers and a force increasingly pitted against a Turkish national liberation struggle (Smith 1998: 78-83). My approach is to search for the metaphors and myths mobilised by the soldier Alekos Doukas in the symbolic representation of his war experience. I apply Leed’s (1979: xi) focus on ‘the transformation of personality in war’ to Doukas’ letters, fiction writing at the front and the novel *To Struggle, To Youth*. In addition to Leed’s concept of ‘the liminality of war’ and the binary oppositions (war and peace, front and home, industrialisation and pastoralism) I also explore the role of ancient texts and narratives in Alekos’ representations of his experience.

³⁷ The Greek Army’s official history of the war bears the general title *Condensed History of the Campaign in Asia Minor*. See Greek General Army Staff (1957-1967).

War and trauma

In writing about the experience of war we are inescapably confronted with the inherent difficulty of narrativising trauma. In the case of Doukas who was shot twice, there are numerous signs that point to a site of trauma, a void around which his memory circles nervously, unable to consciously reconstruct the event as a coherent whole. His repeated attempt to locate the event in historical time and space suggests its evasive quality. The trauma is a black hole around which his existence precariously pivots. Theoretical investigations of trauma point to its paradoxical nature: that it is never experienced directly or consciously, that it represents a belatedly registered void, that its 'inherent forgetting' is its very experience, that the departure 'from the site of the trauma' and its survival through the impossibility of conscious witnessing constitutes the post-traumatic crisis (Caruth 1995: 3-12).³⁸ Trauma is not simply a pathological symptom but a 'symptom of history,' an event about which there is a problem of witness, a 'crisis of truth' (Caruth 1995: 5, 6).³⁹

In my narrative of Alekos Doukas' experience of the war I am aware of silences that surround wartime deaths, destruction and atrocities. These are invariably omitted in the national narrative or ascribed in a one-sided way to a stereotyped enemy, the nation's 'other' that in this war became the Turk.⁴⁰ Although Doukas (1953: 167, 246) is one of the first novelists after World War Two (WWII) to refer to Greek military atrocities against civilians, he does so in such a broad and ideological manner that it leaves open the issue of specific accountability. In his letters from the front there is a pronounced silence on such matters that, beyond the

³⁸ See also Bell (2003: 3, 40, 428) for a contemporary and personal exploration of the trauma of a random shooting.

³⁹ 'The traumatised, we might say, carry an impossible history within them, or they become themselves the symptom of history that they cannot entirely possess.' Caruth (1995: 5).

⁴⁰ Scopetea (1999: 14) notes that before WWI the Bulgarians were Greek nationalism's 'other' while the Turks were seen as prospective partners in a reconstituted Turkey.

workings of military censorship, has to do primarily with ‘the dialectics of unspeakability’ (Goodall 2006).⁴¹ The letter or postcard from the front is a public-private genre that is characterised by extreme restraint, often an exercise in cheerfulness and lexical avoidance.⁴² The Marxist discourse of the 1950s, attacking Western intervention in Greece and Turkey, allowed Doukas to say things that had been ‘unsayable’ during and immediately after the war.

The war in *To Struggle, To Youth*

Part Two ‘Blood and Broken Bones’ of *To Struggle, To Youth* is the primary source for a detailed mapping of Doukas’ war experience. It shares with other post-WWII novels a desire to reconstruct the lost space of Asia Minor communities and to stage a Marxist critique of the ‘Catastrophe’ through testimonial narrative modes that function as a rejection of official history.⁴³ While Doukas’ fictional account reconstructs the past through personal memory it is locked into larger didactic concerns. Often emotional, angry and bitter, it narrates Young Brother’s thirty months of duty, initially as a quartermaster then a combatant soldier. After initial skirmishes around Bergama (Pergamos), an area close to his birthplace, Alekos’ company marched eastward to Balıkesir and Bursa, bivouacking to the east of the latter for the winter of 1920-1921. The novel comments on wider political events such as Venizelos’ November 1920 election defeat and the purging of republican officers at the front, although the perspective, critical of both political factions, derives from the left critique of the 1950s

⁴¹ Goodall discusses Devleena Ghosh’s use of the term in reference to the historical absence of public discourse around the violence of Partition between India and Pakistan. ‘Private stories’ that contradict the official narrative are not aired in public. The ‘dialectics of unspeakability’ is constituted in official narratives by ‘silences.’

⁴² An example of this can be seen in the postcards sent home from the front by Private Magnis between 1919 and 1921 (Millis 1983).

⁴³ It compares with Dido Sotirou’s (1962) *Farewell Anatolia*. For a detailed analysis of the latter see Nikolopoulou (2002).

and not the minority anti-war communist opposition in the Greek army at the time.⁴⁴ In the novel, Young Brother visits his father's old Muslim friend during the early stages of the war and, feeling uneasy about the inter-communal shedding of blood, concludes that 'neither of us is to blame' (Doukas 1953: 172). Far from bringing the reader closer to the reality of the war, this account distances the fighting as an abstract event for which no-one on the ground bears responsibility.⁴⁵

In the spring of 1921 the battles that ensued around İnönü were particularly fierce with the WWI panoply of artillery, trenches and barbed wire in full use (Margaritis 1999: 180).

Doukas' account of combat experience is marked by stylistic changes: short staccato-like sentences, gaps in the narrative, heightened subjectivity. The explosions in the night sky appear to Young Brother like the traditional fireworks on Moschonisi at the Festival of the Virgin Mary, but now transformed into 'rockets of death' (Doukas 1953: 233). Doukas (1953: 229) tries to convey the peculiar working of memory around such traumatic experience: 'From here on whatever he remembers is like a broken cinematographic film. Vivid impressions with large white blanks.' Even the text is broken up at a point of heightened action with dotted lines and the words 'Memory void' (Doukas 1953: 230). The sounds, sights and smells of the battlefield under mortar attack are experienced in a medium in which soldiers learn a strange new language of movement and perception. For these battles Alekos was decorated with a war medal at 'Dorylaion' (the ancient Greek name for Eskişehir) on 8 August 1921.

⁴⁴ See statements issued on behalf of 'groups of Communist Soldiers at the Front' in the newspaper *Ergatikos Agonas* (Worker's Struggle) 20 September 1920 and 29 November 1920 in Anti-War Anti-Nationalistic Rally (1993: 68-75).

⁴⁵ For a more concrete analysis of responsibilities see Kasaba (2002).

The complexities of time and context are particularly pronounced in the surviving texts and artefacts of memory relating to Alekos' war medals. *To Struggle, To Youth* lists his decorations, while the protagonist is presented as a fiery anti-royalist who, along with his comrades, mocks the King's patriotic appeal to ancient Greek ideals (Doukas 1953: 227, 250). The copy of his military record states that 'His Majesty the king personally decorated him with the Silver Cross of Valour during celebrations at Dorylaion on 8 July 1921.'⁴⁶ This same Silver Cross sits on my desk as a surviving artefact, and on the inside of its case, written in faded ink are the words: 'Dorylaion 18.7.21 Alekos Doukas. I was decorated personally by the King.'⁴⁷ The formal language suggests a peculiar ambivalence, as though he was secretly communicating a certain pride of honour to his family. Even the spelling of the 'Σ' with its Byzantine form of 'C' adds to an imperial impression. The discrepancy of dates also raises questions about what was written when and where. The stories behind this medal illustrate the complex nature of the politics of memory.

Throughout Doukas' account of the theatres of war there are detailed descriptions of the geographical terrain and ancient place names. As he marched along, Young Brother 'remembered Xenophon the Athenian and recited in a murmur the ancient text which he still remembered clearly from school' (Doukas 1953: 165). Xenophon's *Anabasis* and narratives of Alexander the Great form a textual backdrop to the war.⁴⁸ Such texts are part of a wider referentiality to ancient Greek historiography and literature that was central to Doukas' relationship to the Asia Minor landscape and its monuments. His account is characterised by a double grid of chronotopic referentiality. Turkish place-names have their equivalent ancient

⁴⁶ Handwritten copy of Alekos Doukas' statutory declaration of details of his Military Record dated 7 November 1926. Letter book, Vol. 2, op. cit., p. 101.

⁴⁷ 'ΔΟΡΥΛΑΙΟΝ 18.7.21 ΑΛΕΚΟΣ ΔΟΥΚΑΣ. ΜΟΥ ΤΟ ΑΠΕΝΕΙΜΕΝ ΙΔΙΟΧΕΙΡΩΣ Ο ΒΑΣΙΛΙΑΣ.'

⁴⁸ Doukas shows familiarity with Alexander's campaign very likely from Plutarch's *Parallel Lives* or stories that had circulated as popular pamphlets from the middle ages to the nineteenth century. See Pallis (1971).

Greek names: Balıkesir-*Andrianothyres*, Bursa-*Prousa*, Eskişehir-*Dorylaion*, Ulu Dağı-*Mount Olympus*, Seyitgazi-*Nakoleia*. The regions are referred to by the ancient Greek names used in the Roman Empire. Nikolopoulou (2002: 25) notes that in Dido Sotiriou's *Farewell Anatolia* the use of Turkish place-names emphasises the local Greeks' Anatolian identity whereas the use of ancient Greek signals their national Greek identity acquired through schooling and literate sources: 'Thus space becomes a palimpsest of projections illustrated through the interaction of place-names.' Such a 'palimpsest' is at work in both Doukas' contemporary and retrospective accounts, indicating how culturally embedded it was.

A corollary to the palimpsest of place-names is the peculiar disorientation in the sense of historical time it produced in soldiers like Doukas who experienced the landscape as literally 'alive' with Greek monuments, mythological landmarks and military narratives, all of which constituted the symbolic capital of Modern Greek identity.⁴⁹ As the prospects for the Greek army deteriorated, this experience took on a nightmarish discordance between ancient glories and the unrealisable objectives of the war, bringing to mind Toynbee's harsh but sober conclusion at the time that for the Greeks in Asia Minor 'the past offers no foundations but treacherous ruins; and the Greeks make matters worse by digging down below the mediaeval stratum to memories of Ancient Hellenism' (Toynbee 1922: 128). Outspoken in his criticism of the Greek campaign and atrocities, Toynbee illustrates the Greek preoccupation with the past in the army's communiques: 'The offensive against Angora was going to "cut the Gordian Knot"; the first day's advance was inaugurated "a new Catabasis of Alexander"'

⁴⁹ The sense of time standing still is conveyed in a letter towards the end of the war. '...here there is neither forest nor trees; a vast land where the only green to be seen is in the crops. Now even they have dried and the land looks like the joyless country we passed over last year....' Letter 4.7.1922. Op. cit.

(Toynbee 1922: 128).⁵⁰ The deep projection of an ancient Greek literary reading on the wartime landscape in *To Struggle, To Youth* constitutes a fundamental contradiction between the narrator's anti-war statements and deeply nationalist identifications. Though the intention is to portray the slow but inevitable shedding of Young Brother's national bourgeois consciousness, this is undermined by the narrator's own discursive complicity with nationalist preoccupations.

Writing literature at the front

In the summer of 1921, Doukas wrote the first of a number of short prose pieces at the front that, along with eleven letters, allow our narrative to draw on a more dense collection of textual sources. Although these lyrical texts portray mythical or metaphysical, rather than realistic social worlds they can nevertheless be related, albeit tangentially, to real events and people.⁵¹

The first text, 'The Parting of Ida and Pindasos,' involves the reveries of a young man, 'the eccentric,' sitting on the side of a hill on Moschonisia.⁵² He engages in dialogue with a wild fig tree that argues that the domesticated tree has been perversely transformed into 'a subordinated production machine' by humans who have become estranged from Mother Nature. The fig tree advises the eccentric to 'allow his being to dematerialise and spread its spiritual fibres into mighty infinity.' The piece suggests a disturbance in the natural world, an

⁵⁰ While providing a first-hand and salutary critical appraisal of the war, Toynbee's view of the Greek as a 'spoilt-child' remains one of Western superiority (Toynbee 1922: 348).

⁵¹ Of the twelve fictional pieces written at the front only seven survived, four of which were later published in the Thessalonikean literary magazine *Makedonika Grammata* (Macedonian Letters) and newspaper *Efimerida ton Valkanion* (Newspaper of the Balkans). References to these are in the letters 31.7.1922, 12.11.1922 and 11.1.1923, op. cit. For literary magazines of Thessaloniki see Mackridge (1997) and Kehayia-Lipourli (1997).

⁵² The text is in the Letter book Vol. 2, op. cit. pp. 256-260 and dated 15.7.1921 with the note that it was written 'on the banks of the River Porsuk near Dorylaion.'

antithesis between nature and technology. The ‘machine’ appears as an unnatural means of enslavement, the latter idea dominant in the experience of WWI soldiers who felt harnessed to the overpowering machinery of war (Leed 1979: 29-30). The text also suggests the possibility of escape into an immaterial or metaphysical realm. The second reverie involves the ‘eccentric’ secretly watching the personified lovers Mount Ida and Mount Pindasos arriving in a rowing boat in a small bay on the Asia Minor coast.⁵³ They will soon be parted forever by the Gulf of Adramyttion created by Poseidon’s mighty storm. The story hovers between a contemporary description of lovers and a mythical tale of romantic tragedy, drawing on classical Greek mythology and a contemporary mythological narrativisation of the local landscape.⁵⁴ While representing a nostalgic return in memory to Alekos’ island of birth, the story also reveals the landscape subtextually as a point of contact between East and West. The lines ‘the blue tongue of the Aegean which advances like a knife in the breasts of Asia, parts the two giant lovers,’ with its phallic connotations of penetration and violence, can be read as a tangential echo of the Greek army’s penetration of the Asian landscape. Such a reading justifiably arises in the context of the ancient Greek textual and iconic tradition of a feminised barbarian East that was built on by European Orientalism (Hall 1993).

First wounding

The Greek army’s most ambitious offensive eastwards began in August 1921 from the north-south line Eskişehir-Kütühya-Afyon towards Ankara. This month saw some of the most intense battles of the war. It was also the month that Alekos wrote to Stratis, on leave in

⁵³ Mount Ida is known as Kaz Dağı in Turkish and Mount Pindasos as Madra Dağı although the latter is also referred to as Kozak Dağı although not by A. Doukas.

⁵⁴ The setting of two lovers in a boat reflects the social conventions of the time. Panselinos (1986: 22) writes about the role of the rowing boat in the love affairs of young people.

Moschonisia, asking him to acquire certification of his status as a volunteer because he feared that without it he might be classified as a conscript and forced to serve longer. Alekos was searching for a way out and the letter ends on a note of desperation: 'I've sacrificed eighteen of the best months of my life, and I'd gladly give another six, but more than that I cannot. I don't know what I'll do if this fails.'⁵⁵ In the battles that followed around Polatlı and the Sakarya River, Alekos witnessed bloody and macabre scenes (Doukas 1953: 243). By the end of August 1921, with great loss of life and materials, the Greek army was forced to withdraw to its earlier mid-July positions.⁵⁶ On 30 August, Doukas was wounded at the river Sakarya, a bullet grazing his head. The wound was not critical but required two months in a hospital in Bursa. The psychological trauma of the bullet wound is indicated by the fact that Alekos repeatedly returns to this event, as well as the second wounding, in his later letters. The event is described in a strangely oblique way by focusing on his thoughts at the moment of impact which he associates with a moment a year before when he had stood at a well filling canteens with water. What emerges is a sense of irrevocable rupture:

I was thinking of the world with such pure and beautiful thoughts when that crazy bullet found me and shattered my health. Because there can be no sound mental life when the body is broken. There may be flashes, but when you think on it, the mind will never be intact again.⁵⁷

In both the letters and *To Struggle, To Youth* there is a degree of confusion and non-linearity as regards Doukas' two woundings. The sign of the trauma is marked in both cases by an absence.

⁵⁵ Letter 4.8.1921. Op. cit.

⁵⁶ Margaritis (1999: 182) estimates that the battle to cross the Sakarya River decreased the Greek army's combative force by half.

⁵⁷ Undated letter (1924). Vol. 1, p. 664. Op. cit.

Seyitgazi – tombs of the past

Some time in early October 1921 Alekos was sent back to the front, to the town of Seyitgazi, south of Eskişehir where he penned at least three prose pieces. ‘The Nymph Myrto’ is a short story that deals with the wounding of a soldier in a battle charge against an entrenched enemy.⁵⁸ The soldier is struck and immediately plunges into a river where he is enchanted by a nymph. Evoking a state of mind associated with trauma, semi-consciousness and morphine-induced delirium, the piece suggests a metaphysical realm associated with dying that provides a longed-for escape from the reality of war and injury. The story’s realistic framework, told in melodramatic style, occurs in a hospital where a young female nurse hovers over the bed of the critically-wounded soldier. The autobiographical elements are not far removed from Doukas’ recent brush with death near the Sakarya River.

The second piece ‘Nakoleia,’ the Byzantine name for the city of Seyitgazi, is a mythological narrative about the age-old enmity between the Greeks and Trojans, in which Sangarios, the god of the river Sakarya and father of the Trojan queen Hecabe, seeks revenge for the sacking of Troy, Alexander’s conquests and the Greek army’s current occupation.⁵⁹ Here the Turks figure as the descendants of the Trojans, a belief popularised in Europe from the Middle Ages and related to an older foundational myth of Rome (Runciman 1972, Kafadar 1995: 9, Spencer 1952: 330 and Kritovoulos 1954: 181-182). The mythological imagination of

⁵⁸ Letter book Vol. 2, op. cit. pp. 247-2648. It is dated 28.10.1921 and located at Sidi Gazi (Seyitgazi). An extract, edited by Stratis, was published in *Makedonika Grammata* in September-December 1922, Issue No 5, p. 68, under the pseudonym ‘Aleck Chimu.’ In a later manuscript, Doukas writes about a character who is the ‘Helmsman of Chimu,’ the word ‘Chimu’ referring to a South American civilisation that flourished on the coast of Peru from about the 13th to the 15th centuries.

⁵⁹ Letter book Vol. 2, op. cit. pp. 64-65. It is dated November 1921. Published in *Efimerida ton Valkanion*, under the name Alex (English spelling), most likely in 1924 when Stratis was a regular contributor to the paper. It is also a two-page chapter in Doukas (1953: 256-257).

‘Nakoleia’ draws on this identification within a narrative of perennial conflict between Europe and Asia. Sangarios now desires revenge on the contemporary Greeks: ‘He hears the clamour of the two mighty races as they slaughter each other and his spirit is gladdened by the blood spilled from youthful bodies’ (Doukas 1953: 257) The final lines carry an unmistakable reference to the battles of August: ‘The human carnage has ended. The frightened Nymphs have returned to Sangarios’ reedy banks. Vultures tear at youthful breasts and the wild beasts have come to eat their fill’ (Doukas 1953: 257). It is clear that ‘Nakoleia’ provides a vehicle for Alekos to express a certain revulsion and anger about the disturbing aspects of the war through a safe mythological narrative, at heart an interpretation of the political reality of the war using traditional Orientalist tropes.

Alekos sent ‘Nakoleia’ to Stratis in November 1921 with a letter describing the fortress that houses the tomb of Seyitgazi, the Muslim martyr-warrior, and where Alekos’ company was lodged. The letter is included in *To Struggle, To Youth* where it has been edited and expanded from the original in the archive letter book.⁶⁰ The fictional ‘tampering’ with the original ‘document’ is done to further the ‘realism’ of the novel, illustrating how the process of memory construction changes over time and context. The letter also provides evidence of the way in which Alekos purposefully explored and viewed the landscape through a palimpsest-like grid. Aided by a ‘map of ancient place-names sent to him from Thessaloniki’ Alekos describes the march to Seyitgazi, its tombstones with Greek inscriptions, Alexandrine temple, Roman *castellum* and Byzantine nunnery (Doukas 1953: 253). Thirty years later the memory of this preoccupation with the past is still strong as Doukas embellishes the original letter: ‘All around me I can feel the shadows of Alexander's phalanxes, Roman legions and Byzantine Armies’ (Doukas 1953: 255). The letter in the novel, unlike that of the archive,

⁶⁰ Letter book Vol. 2, op. cit. pp. 63-64. Also in Doukas (1953: 253-255).

reports how the Dervish caretaker of the holy site complains of looting by Greek officers (Doukas 1953: 254-255). In the archive letter Alekos also writes that 'In the monastery's catacombs there are many Byzantine tombs all mixed up with Turkish ones.' My own memory returns to the adjacent cemeteries in Moschonisia, another site of entangled histories, this time the tombs of Alekos' own family and ancestors.

A third fictional piece 'The Fall of the Two Giants' was also very likely written in Seyitgazi from where Doukas' company marched south towards Afyon in the winter.⁶¹ It tells the story of a soldier who fells an old oak tree for firewood but days later a dead soldier (possibly the same soldier) is left by stretcher-bearers in the snow next to the felled tree. The story's preoccupation with forest Nymphs and Satyrs and human transgression against nature invokes parallels between the dead soldier and the tree, thus implying a further transgression involving war: 'The snow keeps falling more heavily as though it wants to quickly cover up the shameful deeds of men.'⁶² As suggested, this fiction is one of oblique reference, with phrases like 'the axe had inadvertently fallen from his murderous hands' or 'the limbless trunk of the tree lies under a shroud of snow' expressing muted anti-war sentiments. Its literary discourse is of a vastly different order to the socialist realist 'anti-war' prose of three decades later.

Summer of 1922

From October 1921 to August 1922 the Greek strategy was to hold on to the triangular territory of Eskişehir-Kütühya-Afyon, while it sought a diplomatic solution to the impasse of the war (Margaritis 1999: 182-183). Highly vulnerable to incursions on a wide front, the

⁶¹ Letter book Vol. 2, op. cit. pp. 234-238. It is dated 27.12.1921. An extract was published in *Makedonika Grammata* in September-December 1922, Issue No 5, pp. 67-68, under the title 'The Old Oak Tree and the Axe.'

⁶² Ibid.

Greek army's military readiness and morale declined. By April, Doukas' division was based in İhsaniye some forty kilometres north of Afyon. From a surviving fragment of a letter it is clear that Alekos was mentally agitated and still seeking an exit from the war: 'I need isolation and calm to regain my health and morale. Try to resolve the matter as soon as possible, it's worrying me sick.'⁶³ Eight days later, he replied to his brother Dimitros who it appears had raised matters of political change, revolution and peace in an earlier letter.⁶⁴ Alekos rejects the view that revolutionary change in one country (presumably Soviet Russia) will bring about peace, arguing instead for worldwide change:

How can you better the lot of the individual if you don't make them a member of a world society based on brotherhood? How can there be perpetual peace⁶⁵ on this unfortunate planet, which one should call the planet of lament, if the foggy walls of nationalism don't fall?⁶⁶

For the first time in the letters from the front we read a political discussion among the Doukas brothers that touches on broad revolutionary and philosophical ideas. For Alekos, the 'wretched natural law of inequality,' the root cause of the world's problems, can only be dealt with by a fundamental spiritual change and the 'authority of a world society' that would 'regulate social problems' and enforce a peaceful state of affairs.⁶⁷ He implicitly rejects a political revolution in the communist sense, suggesting a duality in his thinking between intellectual or spiritual matters and the material aspects of political power. By way of answer, he ends his letter by pointing to the superior social model of the bee kingdom, which 'in some

⁶³ Letter (most likely to Stratis) 22.5.1922. Op. cit.

⁶⁴ This earlier letter was dated 25.5.1922, which suggests a rapid postal service within the army.

⁶⁵ The use of the phrase 'perpetual peace' connects the discussion to a European discourse on supranational European bodies proposed to enforce a 'perpetual peace' in the period after WWI. The phrase's lineage can be traced to the Abbe de Saint-Pierre's 1792 classic text *A Project of Perpetual Peace*. See Perkins (1959).

⁶⁶ Letter 30.5.1922. Op. cit.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

aspects is harsh and Draconian; but the result is a divine harmony and equality which is preserved forever by the grave laws governing its society.’⁶⁸ This view points to a conservative outlook in which authority and obedience are valued as political ideals, a not uncommon phenomenon among soldiers at the European front in WWI and after (Leed 1979: 198-200). Alekos’ anti-nationalist sentiments can be contrasted to the anti-war literature distributed by communist soldiers at the front in which soldiers were encouraged to desert and repudiate nationalist patriotism in favour of internationalist revolution (Anti-War Anti-Nationalistic Rally 1993: 68-75 and Carabott 1992). It is also worth noting that in the middle of the campaign desertion at the front and at home had reached an estimated 90,000 men (Margaritis 1999: 183, Doukas 1953: 252). Yet in this same period Alekos wrote to Stratis: ‘Let’s hope we’ll soon be discharged from our khaki with an easy conscience, like a worker who has diligently completed his task...’⁶⁹ A sense of national duty was obviously dominant and Alekos was in reality still well inside ‘the foggy walls of nationalism.’

Alekos’ discontent at the front was minor in a political sense, manifesting primarily as ‘intolerable boredom’ during this period of relative inactivity. His letters contain frequent requests for books: Hamsun’s *Mysteries*, *Victoria*, *Pan*, cosmographies, Lucian, Greek mythologies, J. P. Jacobsen and Geijerstam’s *The Book of the Little Brother*.⁷⁰ His reading includes Herbert Spencer, Anatole France, Tolstoy’s *Resurrection* and H.G. Wells’ *The Time Machine*, the latter making a deep impression on him and exciting an interest in metaphysical possibilities.⁷¹ The latter appears to have influenced Alekos’ view that communism would eventually lead to degeneration or weakening of the human will to survive as a species.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Letter 6.6.1922. Op. cit.

⁷⁰ Letters 12.6.1922 and 7.8.1922. Op. cit.

⁷¹ Undated letter (1924). Op. cit.

Alekos wrote a further three fictional texts in the last months of the war. 'The Happy Summer House,' set in an idyllic pastoral setting, recounts the story of a seafarer who eats of the lotus fruit and forgets to return to his loved one.⁷² An awkward mix of romantic fiction, fairytale, mythology and seafaring adventure, it reflects Alekos' fantasising about a life at sea. The 'Ship in Danger' is a more complex story about a soldier at the front who wanders away from his company's base and finds himself 'in a field filled with blooming poppies.'⁷³ Lying down in the field he falls into an opium-induced dream which is influenced by the words 'Ship in Danger,' the heading of a newspaper covering his face. The soldier finds himself on a sinking ship where he meets the son of Morpheus, an ideal and perfect companion from beyond the physical world. On being rudely awoken by a comrade, the soldier's desire to cling to his reverie is manifest. The piece is an example of a type of literature in which the zones of the war divide into the mechanised front line and the pastoral rear where the soldier finds imaginative relief and a freer 'mobility' (Leed 1979: 122). This division does not constitute a simple antithesis; rather it provides different mythical settings in which literature can reintegrate 'the phenomenal realities of war within a new and imaginative topography' (Leed 1979: 121). Although the Greek-Turkish war did not reproduce the trench warfare conditions of Europe which resulted in extreme problems of 'potency, mobility, visibility' soldiers *were* living under restrictions that involved these to varying degrees, as well as experiencing the mechanised nature of combat (Leed 1979: 123). In this sense, Alekos' imaginative construction of the pastoral setting is a pretext for a metaphysical solution to his agitated state of mind. In the opening lines of 'Ship in Danger,' the soldier searches for the location of his pain and finds only a 'vast void' in his being: 'His brain was so exhausted that it didn't allow

⁷² Letter book Vol. 2, op. cit. pp. 238-242. Dated 14.3.1922. Unpublished.

⁷³ Letter book Vol. 2, op. cit. pp. 243-247. Dated 8.6.1922. Unpublished

him to realise that this very void was the cause of his sorrow.⁷⁴ Revealingly, the reference in the story to the soldier's life as one of 'boredom and without meaning' echoes the words of the letter written two days earlier to Stratis.

'The Destruction of the Land of Happiness,' the third text, is a short fable about an ideal Land of Happiness through which a River of Joy runs.⁷⁵ Bordering this land, like a reverse mirror image, is the Land of Pain through which the River of Misery runs. One day the River of Misery suggests to its neighbouring river that they join their waters. Like the biblical loss of Eden, the world becomes a murky place in which nothing pure remains. As a fable in which the once crystal clear waters have become 'malignant mires,' it is another way of speaking about mental crisis, and the blurring of those everyday categories that allow a person to see the world as meaningful and worthwhile.

It is clear that Alekos underwent a mental crisis during early summer of 1922 which some of the fictional texts hint at and the letters make more explicit. In letters to both Dimitros and Stratis he explains that he longer finds comfort in gazing at the stars as he used to. The stars 'no longer talk' to him, his 'mental tranquillity' is gone.⁷⁶ His next letter to Stratis is unambiguous. 'Lately I suffered a terrible crisis. There were moments when I thought I'd passed the borders of reason and was lost in a world of madness. Thankfully, it has passed into the distance, though its traces have remained.'⁷⁷ Alekos' mental crisis, undoubtedly a consequence of the strains of war, can be seen within a broader framework of the transformation of personality in war. As Leed (1979: 2) notes, this phenomenon typically

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Letter book Vol. 2, op. cit. pp. 233-234. Dated 26.6.1922 at Egret. Published in *Makedonika Grammata* in September-December 1922, Issue No 5, pp. 67.

⁷⁶ Letters 12.6.1922 and 3.7.1922. Op. cit.

⁷⁷ Letter 31.7.1922. Op. cit. See undated letter (1924). Op. cit. p. 662.

manifests itself as a fundamental disjunction between the soldier's sense of self as a civilian and soldier, a 'before' and 'after' the war. Alekos' observation about the stars no longer talking to him suggests such a disjunction. He explicitly refers to this change:

My hopes about the future! I don't understand you, Stratis. Perhaps because I've changed so much since we last talked on that autumn night in the family olive grove. I remember myself then and I laugh out loud. The Army, the battles, the weariness, have all rid me of a good many worthless ideas.⁷⁸

Many soldiers in WWI had entered the war with the expectation that it offered a way out of the constrictions and contradictions of an increasingly regimented capitalist society (Leed 1979: 68). A similar expectation appears to have operated in Alekos' case. After the war he understood his military experience primarily as an antidote to a soul-destroying commercial spirit:

It's true that Mammon mercilessly devours the strongest of intellects. And it would have happened to me if I hadn't passed through the *purgatorium* of the Army. There the emotions that shake your existence, as you struggle every minute of the day with life and death, often bring you closer to God.⁷⁹

Alekos' framing of his experience in this way confirms Leed's concept of 'the liminality of war' by which the soldier, like an initiate in traditional ritual passages, returns transformed by an experience that is separate and incommunicable to his former world (Leed 1979: 2-3). Typically, such experience is separated 'within brackets' in the narrative self-understanding of the soldier (Leed 1979: 2). Eighteen months after the war, Alekos wrote to Stratis about the

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Letter 22.11.1923. Op. cit.

'intermedium' between his military and civilian life.⁸⁰ Now he understood it as 'an unspeakable tragedy' which reflects the deep ambivalence that the experience of war and trauma had come to represent for him.

If war has two contradictory aspects for soldiers, one being the negative experience of loss and horror (with liberal political implications), the 'positive' side had to do with community and comradeship (with authoritarian implications) (Leed 1979: 24-25). This contradiction is pronounced in Alekos who repeatedly refers to a sense of family and community in the army, even seeing his different Captains as father figures.⁸¹ For middle-class volunteers, acceptance into the community of the soldiers often meant the shedding of class distinctions and habits (Leed 1979: 24-27, 75-76, 80-96). This was the case with Alekos who rejected the privileges of the non-combatant officer and deliberately sought combat duty. This was further reinforced by his belief that as an Asia Minor Greek he was duty-bound to be at the front line.⁸² A sense of community of soldiers persisted after the war when, often feeling estranged from his own close-knit family, Alekos dreamed of finding such a community again through travel and migration:

Anyway, the family circle is the most suffocating of all. I have felt reciprocal love and compassion for people whom chance brought into my life. We became closely knit in the cruelty of life. When I was wounded up there, my Comrades grabbed me like a beloved brother and, with great danger to their lives, brought me down to the dressing station. I was saved by an endless chain of goodwill from people I had never done anything for, except for a friendly word or comradely smile that connected them to

⁸⁰ Letter 30.4.1924. Op. cit.

⁸¹ Letter 31.7.1922. Op. cit.

⁸² In a letter to Stratis in 12.4.1924 he writes: 'I remember when the battles were occurring in our blood-soaked country, that I could have avoided them as a clerk without anyone condemning me. But a higher voice called to me. "Your place is among the first. You're an Anatolian."' See also Doukas (1953: 226, 228)

me. And my estrangement from my family has deep roots, almost from the time my father died.⁸³

That Alekos contrasts these two notions of family two years after the war had ended illustrates the depth of the disjunction and estrangement the war had produced in him.

A bullet seeks its toll...

The final Turkish offensive came swiftly and decisively on 13 August 1922 in the area around Afyon. It began with heavy artillery bombardment and cavalry incursions into the Greek rear positions. After an all-night march from Eğret, Alekos' company was sent to defend the hill of Balmahmut, sixteen kilometres north-west of Afyon. The accounts of this battle in later letters and *To Struggle, To Youth* essentially agree on the sequence of events. Alekos was ordered to bring supplies by mule from the supply depot on the plain. On his return he insisted on joining his company under fire on the heights. This is how he describes the events in a letter to Stratis in 1924:

At five in the afternoon the Colonel was seriously wounded. My beloved comrades were falling in droves. At seven, my friend was struck on the right side of his chest by a hail of shrapnel. He was taken away unconscious. It was dark now. The enemy had surrounded us and a bullet came for me seeking its toll in blood...⁸⁴

Alekos' life was now irrevocably tied to the path of a bullet whistling through the cool Anatolian summer night. This event, with its own micro-history, can be seen as the focal point of a transformative process that will uncoil slowly through time, like ripples that spread in

⁸³ Letter 12.9.1924. Op. cit.

⁸⁴ Undated letter (1924) to Stratis. Vol. 1, pp. 662-664, op. cit.

ever-widening circles. An inherent disturbance, the effect of ‘casual time,’ the event comprises the ‘accidents’ that underlie the vulnerability of totalising systems (de Certeau 1984: 199-203).⁸⁵ Set in motion through wider histories (armaments manufacturing, European expansion, world war), such an ‘accident’ appears as the trajectory of a bullet in the chronotope of Alekos’ life. It can be seen as a micropolitical event that will act as transformative force in his life.

At the core of this event is human trauma, a void with no conscious memory, only corporeal ‘visceral memory’ (Bell 2004: 40). The bullet, a 7 mm Mauser, passes through his right cheek, smashing his teeth before exiting from his neck just below the ear and lodging in his shoulder. His survival in the pandemonium that followed the collapse of the front is remarkable and very likely due to his speedy removal to the makeshift theatres at the front. His memory of his transportation to Smyrna, where he was eventually evacuated on the hospital ship *Amphitriti*, is summed up in the novel with the phrase: ‘Fever, delirium and a crystal-clear brain interrupted by pitch-black voids’ (Doukas 1953: 273).

In 2003 I drove through the locations of the 1919-1922 war in Turkey where Alekos Doukas had served, a journey of familiarisation with contemporary Turkey and the eighty-one years of change. Standing on the wind-swept Fort of Afyon and looking to the north-west towards Balmahmut there was nothing but plains and barren hills. The trauma of war cannot be visited as a tourist site or monument. In the texts of Alekos’ recollection it is only hinted at as a dark horror, a blank space at the core of his experience. Only the physical reminders of the event, the bullet, the scars and the fragments of memory, remain as testimony. The narrative

⁸⁵ A similar idea of ‘friction’ exists in Clausewitz’s (1973) classic treatise *On War*.

exploration of his life constitutes an exercise in receptivity to an event of trauma and the struggles the subject engaged in to continue a life still in its 'youth.'

The 'Asia Minor Catastrophe,' as the disastrous end to the campaign came to be known, constitutes an historic landmark. It signalled the end of the irredentist movement and messianic dream of the Great Idea. It meant the virtual end of Greek and Turkish co-inhabitancy in Asia Minor. The civilian exodus and subsequent population exchange under the 1923 Lausanne Agreement saw the movement of approximately 1.2 million 'Christians' into Greece and 0.3 million 'Muslims' into Turkey (Hirschon 2003: 14-15). For the soldiers of the Greek army the cost was high: 23,000 dead, 50,000 injured, 18,000 missing (Margaritis 1999: 186).⁸⁶ The shock to Greek society of this traumatic event was similar in proportion to the shock of WWI in European societies. For veterans like Doukas, now also a 'refugee,' the experience of the war would not end with his return to civilian society.

⁸⁶ Such military figures need to be placed within the larger context of overall loss of life in the turbulent period 1912-1922. McCarthy (2001: 146) estimates that more than 1.2 million Muslims of Western Anatolia died, while Kitromilides and Alexandridis (1984-85: 34) estimate the deaths of Asia Minor Greeks in the same period at about 700,000.