



The Olive Harvest,
Theophilos

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Snapshots of Hellenism: Positioning the Self within the Diasporic Space that Informs the Frame¹

Prologue

In the European summer of 1989 I found myself in Greece in the village that my parents hailed from. I had been to Greece several times before with my family but this was the first time that I had travelled there on my own. Almiropotamos, as this small village on the island of Evia is actually called, is made up of two distinct parts: there is the main part of the village, literally perched on the side of a mountain, and housing the school, the church, the medical centre and most of the homes; and then there is the seaside section that houses the dwellings and taverns of the fishermen and their families. A steeply descending road leads from the ‘upper village’ to the ‘lower village’ as the two sections are called by the locals, and a thirty-minute brisk walk conjoins the two.

It was on one of these solitary walks that the revelation occurred. I had reached slightly beyond the half-way mark when I stopped at the low stone wall that closed off one of my father’s plots of land – a huge olive grove, extending literally as far as the eye could see, that had been handed down from one generation to the next for as many years as anyone could remember. It even had a name. Korpeseza. A word that encapsulated the bilingual nature of the village composed, as it was, of a fusion of Greek and Albanian words – a legacy of the Ottoman Empire.

And so there I was. To the right of me, notions of longevity through tradition and complexity of language. I turned around to see the centuries-

old houses on the mountain, their gaze enveloping me in the reassurance of their being throughout the proverbial mists of time. In front of me was the outstretched sea, forming an alliance with the sky in that intoxicating fusion of blue upon blue. And I knew, at that moment, that I was experiencing a point of profound connectedness that would forever haunt me.

Shortly after, I returned to my homeland, Australia. I was born in Melbourne and have an unstinting love for this city. I excitedly told my parents about these revelations and informed them that I was determined to return and build a house on this ancestral plot – a ‘home’ that we could, periodically at least, ‘return’ to. Their reactions surprised me. My father’s memories of this particular stretch of land were quite painful ones. He tended the sheep there throughout his childhood. Like many of the children, he had no shoes during the war years and wore old motorcycle tyres wrapped around his feet. The land there was riddled with thorns and no matter how tightly he strapped on his makeshift shoes, his feet would always be pricked. My mother nodded in agreement, pointing out that this area was arid and was also prone to bitter winds. Although they loved their homeland, they couldn’t conceive of this area as ‘home’ in the way that I did.

How bitter sweet was the realisation: that my parents, endowed with the wisdom that a life of hardship inevitably engenders, intuitively understood the notion of imaginary homelands long before their theoretically-inclined daughter did.

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First snapshot: physical terrains

I grew up in the 1960s and 1970s within that parallel diasporic space known, at that time, as the Greek Orthodox Community of Melbourne. It was a distinct enclave within a wider Australian postcolonial milieu, the defining features of the latter of which were an endemic mono-culturalism and mono-lingualism. For the wider – what we might term ‘mainstream’ – Australian society, the Southern Europeans of the post-1950s mass migratory wave were the ‘not quite whites’, while the Greek immigrants, sensing the host country’s condescension at best and racism at worst, set about building networks that entailed schools, community groups, churches and sporting groups. The situation reflected an amalgamation of Castles’ ‘other

definition’ and ‘self definition’, the Greek community’s minority status thus a firmly entrenched reality of the time.² Greece was the eternal homeland, while the possible return there was a constant topic of discussion and, at times, heated debate at family gatherings. Indeed, my parents were the most ‘settled’ of our large circle of family and friends, their migration to Australia having an air of permanency about it from the start.

In my parents’ household references to the homeland were heartfelt in their nostalgia, yet ever tempered by a biting realism with regard to the intricacies of its landscape. My father, for example, would often relate the anecdote about the days of Creation when God, not knowing what to do with a huge surplus of stones and craggy rocks, unceremoniously dumped them on Greece! The inherent beauty of the landscape was no doubt lost on a little boy of five who had to traverse these rocks daily on his trek up a mountain to tend to the family’s sheep and goats. This image of Greece as a beloved homeland but an inhospitable physical terrain was then replaced by the effusive patriotic verses we had to learn off by heart at the Friday afternoon Greek school – verses dripping with more adjectives and superlatives than I reasonably knew how to pronounce. Indeed, in keeping with Castle’s minority community appellation, a symbiotic relationship was actively cultivated in these afternoon Greek schools between the learning of the Greek language and an obsessive patriotism towards the Greek nation state. This was further reinforced by our attendance at the Greek Orthodox church every Sunday, our even more religious attendance at the Greek team’s soccer matches on a Sunday afternoon, Greek movies on a Sunday night, obligatory Greek dance, wedding or baptism on a Saturday and Greek dishes for every evening meal.³ And so, ‘home’ was irrevocably aligned with being *Greek*.

Day to day school life, however, was irrevocably aligned with being *Australian*. My parents had bought a fish and chip shop in an area of Melbourne that, quite unbeknown to them when they initially bought it, was quite a comfortably middle-class one. I was the only Greek girl in the whole school. My fate was sealed. My two realities were utterly distinct, like two Venn diagrams with an indiscernible point of overlap. At school we raised the Australian flag every Monday and sang, with hand on heart, the then national anthem, ‘God Save the Queen’. I loved reading and writing in the English language. I selected an Australian football team and barracked for

it with all my might. I had sandwiches for lunch like all the other children. I played sport and took part in choirs and plays.

Imagine my surprise, then, when in Grade 6, I chanced upon the following in the books in my school's library:

Papa once went to Greece,
And there I understand
He saw no end of lovely spots
About that lovely land.
He talks about these spots of Greece
To both Mama and me
Yet spots of Greece upon my dress
They can't abear to see! ⁴

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The isles of Greece, the isles of Greece!
Where burning Sappho loved and sung,
Where grew the arts of war and peace,
Where Delos rose, and Phoebus sprung!
Eternal summer gilds them yet,
But all, except their sun, is set...⁵

Despite my teachers' warnings to my parents about all the linguistic influences at home impeding my successful acquisition of English, I actually became a voracious reader from a very young age; rather than go out to play, I would often sit in the library and read during lunchtimes.⁶ These poems destabilised the world as I knew it. They constituted a palpable a point of connection between my Greek and Australian environments. Moreover, in the case of the latter poem, it was almost as effusive as the Greek poems I recited at Greek school events. What I was too young to realise at the time, but which became abundantly clear upon recalling these two poems all these years later, is that they are not so much the flattering descriptions of actual physical attributes of an admired landscape, as much as they are characteristic responses of the times to a foreign landscape. This episode can now be perceived against the backdrop of a wider, more dominant, cultural context. As Saadi Nikro has noted, 'although at the time the Australian landscape was still entwined in a language of race and cultural imperialism, with the

teaching of history in schools largely reflecting and constituting the imperial project of white settlement, it was beginning to be questioned and explored in both intellectual and artistic forums'.⁷

Even the most cursory overview of the biographies of Edward Lear and Lord Byron, reveals that they appeared to have a genuine and positive appreciation of the countries around the Mediterranean. However both men were the products of the 'Grand Tour of the Continent' mindset⁸, the influence of which manifested itself in disparate ways. This could range from the relatively benign, 'travellers carry with them not only their trunks but also their emotional, social, cultural and educational baggage...their backgrounds and their particular interests inform both their expectations and what they actually observe'⁹ through to the more insidious context of Said's *Orientalism* which pervasively contends that 'without examining Orientalism as a discourse one cannot possibly understand the enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage – and even produce – the orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period'.¹⁰ Although Lear's poem is in the form of an amusing children's ditty, 'the spots of Greece/grease' echo a sort of derogatory underlying subtext, ably reinforced by the use of the homonym that aligns hard to remove grime with the Greek landscape. Meanwhile, Byron's impassioned ode primarily concerns itself with ideals of freedom emanating from ancient Greece – in the 1800s the country was under the yoke of the Ottoman Empire and very much part of the Orient, as opposed to the Occident - within the glow of bygone glories.

It would be many years before I would find descriptions of the Greek landscape that conveyed its idiosyncratic beauty in a way that captured my perception of it during my own travels there.¹¹ The Durrell brothers, Lawrence and Gerald, come immediately to mind.¹² As do a number of mainstream Australian writers – Charmian Clift, Beverly Farmer, Martin Johnston, Jena Woodhouse, Gillian Bouras and Robert Dessaix, to name a few - who have written about their experiences of Greece either as tourists, through their association with a Greek partner, or as expatriates, providing vivid descriptions of the physical landscape in the process.¹³

It is hardly surprising, then, to find that first-generation Greek-Australian women writers have written evocative descriptions of their homeland. The following poem by Dina Amanatides is a prime example:

Her beaches
are blue sheets
where boats of the mind
travel on the satin
of endless time.

Her islands
are exquisite brush strokes,
scattered diamonds
throughout the seas...

Her mountains, her hills,
and all her plains,
adorned in the morning dew,
are praised and blessed.¹⁴

It is significant to note that such descriptions from first generation-Greek-Australian writers are not the creative offerings of the detached observer; the writers cited throughout this thesis primarily hail from rural communities thereby having an intimate relationship with the physical landscape, arising out of cultivating land that had been in their family for generations. Besides which, summarily dismissing these works as 'dominated by nostalgia'¹⁵, is to totally ignore two important considerations. Firstly, in reacting to the physical terrain of Greece through their creative writings, they can be actually be perceived as situated within the Australian literary tradition. As noted by Shé M. Hawke in her essay, 'The Ship Goes Both Ways', such 'transnational literary production (is) a crucial part of Australia's polyvocal literary history'.¹⁶ Secondly, to dismiss these writers as being preoccupied with an idealised past, is to disregard the enormous body of literary work that depicts, in painfully vivid detail, the events that drove them to leave their homeland in the first place. Besides which, in the case of Greek-Australian women's writings, 'recollection is not the passive imitation inspired by antiquarian zeal, it is active recreation...belonging to the activity of concurrent actual production'.¹⁷

Second snapshot: re-visiting homelands

For many Greek-Australian women writers, finally reuniting with their beloved mothers and extended family members back in Greece is as much about reassembling the fragmented bits of self as it is about reconnection with their motherland. Antigone Kefala has a wry take on this – focusing on the subtleties of this reconnection physically, bodily – when she notes that:

*...every time I come here, it is as if I enter, rediscover a physical ancestral line, the streets full of shorter people with warm skins, moving with Father's walk, waiting at windows like Mother, a nervousness in their gestures, a quick way of throwing their heads, nodding, opening their papers, something that feels infinitely familiar; it is as if one can see where one has come from and where one is going...'*¹⁸

For many first-generation immigrant women finally reuniting with their mother after thirty or forty years means re-acquainting themselves with a woman they barely know. In her epic poem 'Portrait of a Woman', Yota Krili paints a vivid picture of the convergence of gender, class and cultural threads, the entwining of which has served to constrict women throughout time:

She was 83 when I visited her.
Her eyes were bleary but still
she was agile and sturdy.
She was my mother but I did not know her till then.
She had no time to mother her girls.
She loaded the table with fruits of her garden
spread her woven blankets on the beds
opened her chest and offered me her heirlooms
some were meant to be my dowry.
She enchanted my daughter
with her spinning of songs and folktales
yet was perplexed by the state of my marriage.¹⁹

Ioanna Liakakos' novel, *In Pursuit of the Rose*, centres on the protagonist, Vasso, who migrates to Australia for a better life in the 1960s.²⁰ She settles, and eventually marries, in Melbourne, the result of a love match with a fine young, hard working fellow compatriot. However, their happiness and

progress are thwarted at every turn by the husband's acutely felt nostalgia for their homeland. Although Vasso misses Greece, she expresses an oft-cited desire to have been born in Australia, particularly after her four children were born here. Moreover, she intuitively understands the impossibility of return, the subtlety of which echoes William Safran's contention:

...diaspora consciousness and the exploitation of the homeland myth by the homeland itself are reflected not so much in instrumental as in expressive behaviour. It is a defense mechanism against slights committed by the host country against the minority, but it does not – and is not intended to – lead its members to prepare for the actual departure for the homeland. The 'return' of most diasporas (much like the Second Coming or the next world) can thus be seen as a largely eschatological concept: it is used to make life more tolerable by holding out a utopia - or eutopia – that stands in contrast to the perceived dystopia in which the actual life is lived.²¹

Unfortunately for Vasso and her children, her husband's yearning for home starts to manifest itself as clearly discernible depression and so they make the difficult decision to resettle in Greece.

The whole enterprise proves disastrous for them, both financially and emotionally. The years in Australia have changed them, turned them into hard-working citizens with a sense of responsibility and contribution. These changes are imperceptible in their adopted country in that they are surrounded by countless other immigrants whose transformation mirrors their own. In Greece, their reflection proves elusive. Indeed, they find their Greek counterparts to be lazy and somewhat amoral. After a year of incessant endeavour, they come to terms with the bitter truth that their departure is inevitable. With fifteen years of life-savings squandered chasing a dream, Vasso and her husband, with four young children in tow, return to Australia and set about rebuilding their lives. They buy a milk-bar reasoning, as so many other immigrants had done before them, that they would be able to work while still looking after their children. However, low profit margins necessitate her husband working in a local factory, leaving Vasso to run the shop single-handedly, as well as cleaning and cooking in the house at the back. They never make the money that they lost in Greece during their ill-conceived repatriation, but their children all become educated and marry well, the incisive point being made that:

Everyone on this earth sacrifices something. Some give their all to their homeland, some to a grand idea, others to a great love, while others give their all to their family. We sacrificed everything for our children. Perhaps because our parents sacrificed nothing for us. They sacrificed everything for their homeland.²²

This novel illuminates many issues, but two are fundamentally important within the context of the migration of Greeks to Australia. The protagonist articulates the point again and again, that very few migrants became wealthy through their exile. Most immigrants only managed to eke out a modest standard of living, any savings accumulated the result of endless hours of overtime, strict budgeting and never-ending deprivation.²³ This deprivation rarely manifested itself in terms of the needs of their children – rather it manifested itself in the parents denying themselves even the most scant 'luxury'.

The second point is one that is elucidated throughout. Namely, that migration resulted in a more ecumenical stance towards people of other nationalities. This was not just a stance of graciously embracing difference, but a mutually understood, fundamental strategy for survival.²⁴ The multiculturalism that we take for granted in Australia today arose out of the working classes in the 1950s and 1960s when immigrants from every corner of this earth worked side by side in industrial conglomerates, the necessity for communication leading to a mutual exchange of idiosyncrasies, of language and customs.²⁵ Whereas Vasso and her husband felt negligible affinity with their Greek counterparts in Greece who had entered a sort of quasi-middle class stratosphere, they felt completely comfortable with their fellow working-class immigrants – although of a different ethnic and religious background, their common bond emanated through a shared worldview:

That morning, before leaving for work, Yanni said to Vasso, "When I get home from work tonight have the children ready. You be dressed and ready too. We're going to visit Halill and Maro. We'll leave at about eight."

Halill and Maro were a young couple whom Yianni had recently met at work. He was Lebanese, she was a Greek-Cypriot hunted out of her country after the brutal Turkish invasion of Cyprus. They lived in a flat that was so tiny that it could pass for a doll's house. They were always smiling. Their youth seemed to fill them with joy.

*Halill opened the door. Halill, the Muslim, welcomed these Greek Christians into his home, happy and with open arms. Maro showed them to their seats. They started to talk in English, to drink tea, to munch on biscuits, to talk animatedly, expressing their thoughts, their worries, making their troubles lighter. Their children were playing happily too, enjoying the company, having fun. No one had built a wall between them yet; no one had managed to make them aware of their different background, different religion...*²⁶

Third snapshot: recurring palimpsests

Second-generation Greek-Australian women writers have also written insightful evocations of the Greek landscape. If the 1950s and 1960s were characterised by the ‘tyranny of distance’, this new millennium is plagued by what Nikos Papastergiadis has referred to as the ‘tyranny of proximity’.²⁷ One of the more fortuitous byproducts is that there is a greater facility for travel back to Greece, transnationalism facilitating the longevity of the diasporic connection through successive generations.²⁸ Such visits do not merely constitute a sort of detached sojourn to the parents’ homeland but entail an opportunity for the contextualisation of memory; enabling the superimposing of one’s own experiences of family mythologies over the neon-bright realities of present-day landscapes. Eugenia Tsoulis highlights this in the following passage:

*I had returned many times, to pick up the pieces drifting around my memory, walking through the streets of Psillalonia, trying to find my bearings, the lemon tree in the garden, the whitewashed cottage with the red tiled roof, the yoghurt man, the horse that left the droppings we would gather for the vineyard, the hill with the paper kites flying wild above blue fields of irises. And not showing any disappointment that nothing here had remained the same, I would drive down the hill towards the mountains of Missolongi looming like dark protective sentinels across the bay...I drove around the streets, searching space behind one apartment block after the other, blocking the view to the sea, no vineyard close by or in the distance, my past blocked out forever.*²⁹

In her prose piece, ‘Visiting the Island’, Anna Couani paints a vivid portrait of the ancestral island Castellorizo, in the process establishing that ‘discourses of marginality such as race, gender...geographical and social

distance, political exclusion, intersect in a view of reality which supersedes the geometric distinction of centre and margin’.³⁰ Situated in precarious isolation from the plethora of other islands in the Mediterranean and just a stone’s throw away from the mainland of Turkey, its strategic geographical position has ensured a turbulent and often violent history at the hands of a succession of invaders, culminating in its virtual annihilation when ‘the British burned down the island’ - for all the hotly contested and mythologically inspired reasons. However, the incessant array of marauders did not succeed in decimating its social fabric to the extent that mass migration and the advent of globalisation managed to do. Into this complex narrative depicting social desolation, physical beauty and cultural formations informed by entrenched patriarchal structures, Couani interweaves her own position, encapsulating the impossibility of any vague notions of an ‘objective’ stance; through her use of metafiction ‘she is artfully unsettling traditional distinctions between reality and fiction and expos[ing] the arbitrary notion of boundaries’³¹:

*...the narrator (who is the writer) is no less touched by the immediate situation and no more able to achieve a distance on it than any of the other players in it. This narrator is here on the island at the time of writing – making friends, doing the washing, taking out a calculator to convert drachmas to dollars and like many others, visiting the place where the family came from. Still, after generations, stung by the events which tore the place apart. At the more personal level, the female narrator, no longer young and dewy but young enough to be expected to conform, finds herself as a tourist sitting amongst groups of men all day while the local women remain virtually unseen, at home doing the housework perhaps or holding court in private with other women or in family groups. The narrator, deprived of female company and constantly negotiating the obstacles thrown up by the men on the passage through town. The men, like everywhere, posted like sentries at the public meeting place between cultures.*³²

A number of currently emerging third-generation Greek-Australian women writers are the offspring of bicultural relationships forged across transnational divides, Melissa Petrakis highlighting her Irish mother’s and Greek-Australian father’s serendipitous meeting precisely within the currents that globalism generates:

*My mother travelled halfway round the globe to meet my father on a beach, in the sunshine of a Melbourne summer. It is part of our family mythology that my parents had to each travel from one hemisphere to the other, had to travel halfway round the globe, to find one another. This is my blueprint for love.*³³

Second- and third-generation offspring tend to visit Greece often and, in some cases, even successfully resettle there.³⁴ In Jeana Vithoulkas' novel, *Love Begins with an A*, the mother is devastated when her three daughters eventually decide to resettle in Greece. In the case of the protagonist Fiore, what begins as the pursuit of the imaginary homeland, the seeking of the ancestral home 'from whence it all began', transforms into a fulfilling quest to create a space for herself within a milieu that she comes to perceive through a singularly realistic lens.³⁵ There seems to be an endemic pull, a primordial urge, to rediscover oneself within a space that signifies linguistic and cultural lineage. Within the gossamer of this nexus of past and present, ancestors exert their right to be, the cognizance of which can surprise you even in the most unlikely of circumstances:

I look down at the fish on my plate,
its lifeless eyes stare into the distance.
Our host nods encouragingly at me,
but I don't know the proper Greek to explain,
in Australia I only eat fish fillets.
How can I tell a Greek fisherman's wife
that I have never deboned a fish?
I look down at the fish, and raise my knife.
Somehow, I know to cut out the spine first.
All the bones are laid on a plate for the cats,
and although the fish is wrought with tiny bones
I don't swallow one.
I look to my mother as I finish,
she is coughing up her third bone.
And I think absent-mindedly,
that my ancestors may once have eaten
the same dish.³⁶

Fourth snapshot: atavism and diasporas

This phenomenon of going to the ancestral homeland has always been a feature of this country's Greek-Australian reality, particularly from the eighties onwards. The mass migration of the fifties and sixties, and the hard work that accompanied it, eventually resulted in a certain degree of monetary comfort that allowed for a trip back home. These trips then became a prominent feature of the lives of second-generation offspring who were inevitably mesmerised by the allure of the Greek landscape, the visual impact heightened by the fact that it was rarely mentioned at community gatherings, the focus of conversation being the painful memories of the war years. And so, after growing up listening to many unutterably sad stories of hunger and deprivation and general bleakness, the breathtaking effect of the first glimpse of the idiosyncratic blue of a Greek sea and sky was a feast for the senses.

In her short story, 'Every Daughter her Mother', Vicki Fifis portrays a complex amalgam of the beauty of the terrain with an ever-increasing awareness of her identification with it. She gives a heartbreaking account of the hardship she experienced as the daughter of a mother suffering from mental illness. Many years later, she visits Greece for the first time and starts to understand the feelings of dislocation that exacerbated her mother's anguish and heightened paranoia:

The road reaches toward your village, a village with stone houses, engulfed in green mountains and a lake. Another world, another time. Stepping back in time. The silence. The stillness. The peace. So isolated. The tears erupt like a raging river. A transformation – the past is released; the pain and the grief are the bridge that leads to the new, over the river of fear.

I have never seen a place of such beauty in all my life. Staring with a child's wonder and amazement, I study the view that surrounds me. A few houses, a church, and a coffee shop. I am consumed with 'agape'. The purest love.

*I light a candle for you in Ayio Nikola, filling the church with the warm light, which shines from your own heart. I wander off for a bit on my own and stand silently, feeling your presence and approval. The mystery that entangles you begins to dissolve.*³⁷

In ‘Peloponnese Sunset, Angela Costi has encapsulated the essential eroticism inherent in this landscape, relentlessly intoxicating the visitor until landscape and desire are one:

How can you be lonely, you make love to this
environment, the hills have slopes you can swoon on
they have views you can open your thighs to
they have Venetian structures ready for you to take
with one open gasp, they have seas
that melt your gaze, the colour of lilac
if it was blue and black crosses on white churches
reminders of sacred sensuousness
reminders of honey skinned almond eyes
the touch of madness and of chance.³⁸

Is it any wonder that countless second-generation Greek-Australian women, who went to Greece on a holiday, ended up in a relationship there. Moreover, many of these relationships resulted in these women relocating to Greece permanently.³⁹ Apart from the intoxicating landscape, there was another much more prosaic reason for this phenomenon. The girls growing up in the 60s and 70s in Australia’s Greek diasporic communities were repressed by the social mores that the parents held from pre-war, rural Greek life. The patriarchal system in place meant that going out was difficult, forming romantic relationships, impossible. Back in Greece, however, the people left behind, particularly those who had relocated to the large metropolises of Athens and Thessaloniki, had moved on. They were gratefully embracing more liberal ways of thinking and living. For second-generation Greek-Australian girls, going to Greece on their own was, literally and metaphorically, a breath of fresh air. They went out with a vengeance and formed romantic entanglements, unencumbered by the dreaded admonition they were used to in Australia. Predictably, these relationships were sometimes happy and long-lasting, and other times, disastrous and short-lived. In *Love begins with an A*, for example, Jeana Vithoulkas literally goes through the entire spectrum of possibilities. Fiore has a number of relationships during her sojourn in Greece, ranging from the truly horrible, through to a happy encounter with Mihalis who proves her equal in terms of intelligence and outlook and with whom she could actually contemplate a future.⁴⁰

Epilogue

Many years later, I experienced the untold joy of travelling to Greece with my daughter – just the two of us. We stayed in the upper village and on the second day there we couldn’t wait to walk to the seaside section, to take in the beautiful scenery at our leisure, followed by a swim. We stopped at the low stone wall and I told her about my feelings there many years ago. My daughter looked around her and said that although the association of this landscape with her grandparents moved her, she felt “those sorts of connected feelings at the beach near our home in Melbourne”. She then went on to say that one day, she might take this walk with her daughter or even her granddaughter. That they’ll stop, just as we did, at the low stone wall and talk about what the spot meant to all of these generations of people. We walked the rest of the way in silence, enveloped in a sort of mutually acknowledged need for quietude...

Notes

- 1 This article draws from my doctoral thesis focusing on Greek-Australian women’s writing entitled, *The Shadow and the Muse*, (English & Greek Departments, La Trobe University) particularly that of a small section of the second chapter on the notion of ‘motherlands’.
- 2 Stephen Castles & Mark J. Miller, *The Age of Migration*, Hampshire, 2009, pp. 34-35.
- 3 See Konstandina Dounis, ‘Greek School’, ‘The Greek Cinema’, and ‘Soccer at Middle Park, *Poems for my Mother*, Melbourne, 2009, pp. 31-33; p. 36. For a comprehensive overview of the Greek movies shown in the 1960s and 70s, see Peter M. Yiannoudes, *Greek Cinema Across Australia: Behind the Scenes*, Melbourne, 2010. For an entertaining account of Greek celebrations as carried out in Australia see Zeny Giles, *Wedding Dance*, Dangar, 2009.
- 4 Edward Lear, ‘Spots of Greece’, *The Nonsense Verse of Edward Lear*, (ed. John Vernon Lord), London, 1984, p. 222.
- 5 Lord Byron, ‘The Isles of Greece’, *The New Oxford Book of English Verse*, (ed. Helen Gardner), Oxford, 1972, pp. 575-576.
- 6 We spoke Greek and Albanian at home. It is easy now, in this new millennium, to be critical of the stance of these teachers, however it should be remembered that, in the 1960s, bilingualism was not the theorised phenomenon that it is today. In fact, over the last 20 years, Australia has produced world authorities in the field of bilingual education. The mass influx of Southern European immigrants after the 1950s caught teachers off-guard. Although one or two of my teachers might have been motivated by a post-Second World War xenophobia (my initial prep teacher, for example), I have such wonderful memories of my primary school teachers generally that I rather think they were motivated by a sincere desire to see me learn English and progress well with my studies. In other words, they did their best with the meagre resources they had at their disposal. Noted bilingual theorists have included Jo Lo. Bianco, the late Michael Clyne and one of the pioneers, the late Marta Rado. In relation to how under-prepared Australian teachers in the 1950s were for the massive influx of non-English speaking immigrants, see Joy Damousi, ‘Ethnicity and Emotions: Psychic Life in Greek Communities’, *Journal for Modern Greek Studies in Australia and New Zealand*, Vol. 14, 2010, p. 17.

- 7 Saadi Nikro, 'Antigone Kefala: Translating the migratory Self', (eds Vrasidas Karalis & Helen Nickas), *Antigone Kefala: a writer's journey*, Melbourne, 2013, p. 164.
- 8 For Edward Lear, see Michael Pratt, *Britain's Greek Empire: Reflections on the History of the Ionian Islands from the fall of Byzantium*, London, 1978, pp. 169-171; for Lord Byron, see David Stanford Burr (ed.), *The Love Poems of Lord Byron*, New York, 1993, pp. vii-xv.
- 9 Lucy Pollard, *The Quest for Classical Greece: Early Modern Travel to the Greek World*, London, 2015, p. 2 & pp. 151-187.
- 10 Edward W. Said, *Orientalism, Western Conceptions of the Orient*, London, 1978, p. 3.
- 11 My first experience of the beauty of the landscape in Greece was in 1970 when my family and I spent a year there. Correspondence lessons from Australia were arranged for me and so I did not miss a year of school. We lived in an old stone cottage with my paternal grandparents in the village my parents hailed from. We visited Greece a number of times after that for short stays, the diasporic connections thereby kept very much intact.
- 12 Gerald Durrell, *My Family and Other Animals*, London, 1959. Lawrence Durrell, *The Greek Islands*, London, 1978.
- 13 See Charmian Clift, *Travels in Greece: Mermaid Singing & Peel me a Lotus*, Sydney, 1995; Beverley Farmer, *Milk*, Melbourne, 1983; Martin Johnston, *The sea-cucumber*, St. Lucia, 1978; Jena Woodhouse, *Eros in Landscape*, Milton, 1989; Gillian Bouras, *A Foreign Wife*, Melbourne, 1987; Rober Dessaix, *Corfu*, Sydney, 2001.
- 14 Dina Amanatides, 'Hymn for Greece', *Dreams of Clay, Drops of Dew*, (Transl. by K. Dounis), Melbourne, 2011, p. 181.
- 15 Con Castan, *Conflicts of Love*, Indooroopilly, 1986, p. 77.
- 16 Shé M. Hawke, 'The Ship Goes Both ways: Cross-Cultural Writing by Joy Damoussi, Antigone Kefala, Eleni Nickas and Beverly Farmer', *Journal of Modern Greek Studies Association of Australian and New Zealand*, Sydney, No. 14, 2010, p. 88.
- 17 Paul Carter, *The Road to Botany Bay*, London, 1987, p. 349. In this book, Paul Carter is examining, amongst other things, the relationship between Australia's indigenous peoples and their landscape, however many of his observations can be readily applied to immigrant writers.
- 18 Antigone Kefala, *Summer Visit*, Artarmon, 2002, p. 61.
- 19 Yota Krili, *Triptych*, Melbourne, 2003, p. 154.
- 20 Ioanna Liakakos, I., *In Pursuit of the Rose*, (Transl. By K. Dounis), Melbourne, 1998, (Greek: Για ένα Ρόδο, για ένα Μίγλο).
- 21 William Safran, 'Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return', *Migration, Diasporas and Transnationalism*, (eds, Steven Vertovec & Robin Cohen), Cheltenham, 1999, p. 375.
- 22 Ioanna Liakakos, op. cit., p. 186.
- 23 See Gillian Bottomley, 'The Export of People: emigration from and return migration to Greece', Centre for Multicultural Studies Occasional Papers, 1984, p. 14, for an interesting analysis of the ramifications of the centrality of factory work in the mass migratory wave of the 1950s and 1960s.
- 24 For a thought-provoking discussion about this struggle for survival, see James Clifford, 'Diasporas', *Migration, Diasporas and Transnationalism*, op. cit., pp. 224-225.
- 25 My late father, Theodoros Dounis, provided invaluable insight into this cross-cultural communication on the factory floor. Apparently, in the 1950s and 1960s the conditions under which workers carried out their duties were generally appalling. Many factory owners did not ensure the safety of their workers, were only concerned about profit margins, and knew well that the immigrants themselves would not complain as they desperately needed the work. And, as my father pointed out, with little or no English and no interpreters in sight, who were they going to complain to? This led to a fundamental camaraderie, manifested in the exchange of food, customs, ideas and the learning of basic words in each others' languages. This linguistic exchange was actually instrumental in keeping new workers safe in terms of the proper working of the machinery, taking a lunch break, finding out that overtime was paid and not a mandatory part of their work allotment etc. For a comprehensive overview of this, see George Zangalis, 'In the Factories and Unions', *Migrant Workers and Ethnic Communities*, Melbourne, 2009, pp. 429-476.
- 26 Ioanna Liakakos, op.cit., p. 201.
- 27 Nikos Papastergiadis, 'Cultural Identity and its Boredom', *Complex Entanglement: Art, Globalisation and Cultural Difference*, London, 2003, p. 169.
- 28 Nina Glick Schiller, Linda Basch & Cristina Blanc-Szanton, 'Transnationalism: A New Analytic Framework for Understanding Migration', Steven Vertovec, & Robin Cohen (eds), *Migration, Diasporas and Transnationalism*, op. cit., p. 34.
- 29 Eugenia Tsoulis, 'A Place Called Melitsa', *Mothers from the Edge*, (ed. Helen Nickas), Melbourne, 2006, p. 179.
- 30 Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G., & Tiffin, H., *The Empire Writes Back*, London, 2002, p. 103.
- 31 Gayle Green, 'Feminist Fiction and the Uses of Memory', Greene, G., 'Feminist Fiction and the Uses of Memory', *Signs*, Vol.16, No.2, 1991, p. 293.
- 32 Anna Couani, 'Visiting the Island', *Retelling the Tale*, op. cit., pp. 354-355.
- 33 Melissa Petrakis, 'A Family Mythology', *Mothers from the Edge*, op. cit., p. 201.
- 34 Once again, there is a dearth of research about this topic of second/third-generation Greek-Australians re-settling in Greece. Although this is a relatively common feature of transnational diasporic connection, the only substantial documentaion pertaining to it is to be found in Greek-Australian literature. The ever-reliable Gillian Bottomley has made passing comment on this phenomenon, herself acknowledging how little this has been explored. See Gillian Bottomley, *From Another Place: Migration and the Politics of Culture*, Cambridge, 1992, p. 100. I suspect that the Greek Crisis of the last eight years or so, and the mass exodus of repatriated Greek-Australians back to Australia, will eventually lead to renewed interest and research in such transnational movements within the prism of diaspora.
- 35 Jeana Vithoulkas, *Mothers from the Edge*, op.cit., pp. 120-121.
- 36 Sophie Avramoudas, 'My Ancestor's Village', in Write4fun, *Empowered*, Bundall, 2008, p. 609.
- 37 Vicky Fifis, 'Every Daughter her Mother', *Mothers from the Edge*, op. cit., pp. 114-115.
- 38 Angela Costi, 'Peloponese Sunset', *honey and salt*, Melbourne, 2007, p. 15.
- 39 For an overview of this phenomenon of girls from the Greek global diaspora visiting Greece, many on a regular basis – some even moving there permanently, despite being born elsewhere – see Georgina Tsolidis, 'Living Diaspora Back Home – Daughters of Greek Emigrants in Greece', *Women, Gender and Diasporic Lives: Labor, Community and Identity in Greek Migrations*, (ed, E. Tastsoglou), Plymouth, 2009, pp. 181-196. As Tsolidis notes, 'these women have identities that are not constrained by national boundaries and move within and between communities, as these exist transnationally', *ibid.*, p. 196. For a detailed analysis of this phenomenon as it pertains to the Greek-American experience, see Anastasia N. Panagakos, *Romancing the Homeland*, op. cit., a doctoral thesis that marries the exceedingly personal with sociological research. Panagakos cites her body as the locus of her connection with Greece: 'nowhere else in the world could I be recognized as my father's daughter by my looks alone', *ibid.*, p. 198.
- 40 Jeana Vithoulkas, *Love Begins with an A*, Melbourne, 2003, pp. 318-319.

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