

ECHOES ACROSS THE NATIONAL DIVIDE: COMMON *TOPOI* IN THE TURKISH LITERATURE OF THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE AND THE GREEK LITERATURE OF THE ASIA MINOR DISASTER¹

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Abstract

This paper draws attention to common features of the early literatures of the Turkish War of Independence and of the Greek Asia Minor Disaster. The salient feature is the emphasis on victimhood, with each literature presenting the sufferings of its own side. This explains the different choice of subjects, for the Turks the Muslim peasantry during the war, for the Greeks Christian captives and refugees at and after its end. To convey these sufferings as lived experience both literatures use first person narration and in both literatures the boundaries between fact and fiction are hard to determine. Works in both literatures are also strongly influenced by political and other circumstances at the time of composition rather than of the war itself. These points are illustrated by examples from the work of Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu, Halide Edip Adivar and Elias Venezis. Finally the treatment of the refugee experience both in literature and the recording of oral history is briefly surveyed and reasons are suggested for its prominence in Greece and its absence in Turkey.

Keywords: *Halide Edip Adivar, Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu, Elias Venezis, Stratis Myrivilis, national narrative.*

ULUSAL AYRIŞMADA YANKILAR: MİLLÎ MÜCADELE DÖNEMİ TÜRK EDEBİYATI VE KÜÇÜK ASYA FELAKETİ DÖNEMİ YUNAN EDEBİYATINDA ORTAK ÖZELLİKLER

Öz

Bu makalenin odağında Türk Kurtuluş Savaşı ve Küçük Asya Felaketi ile ilgili edebî eserlerin ilk örneklerinin ortak özellikleri vardır. Bu döneme ait her iki edebiyatta da göze

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çarpan özellik, tarafların kendi acılarını anlatarak vurguladıkları mağduriyetlerdir. Bu durum, iki taraf arasında farklılaşan konu seçimlerini açıklar: Türkler, Müslüman köylülerin savaş sırasında yaşadıklarını, Yunanlar ise Hristiyan esirlerin ve muhacirler ile mübadillerin savaş sırasında ve sonrasında yaşadıklarını anlatmayı tercih etmişlerdir. Bu acıların yaşanmış gerçekler olduklarını göstermek için her iki edebiyatta da birinci şahıs anlatıcı kullanılmıştır ve her iki edebiyatta da gerçek ile kurgu arasındaki sınırları belirlemek oldukça güçtür. Ayrıca, her iki edebiyatta da eserlerin üretimi, savaşın kendisinden ziyade zamanın siyasi ve diğer koşullarının etkisi altındadır. Bu tespitler, bu çalışmada Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu, Halide Edip Adivar ve Elias Venezis'in eserlerinden seçilen örneklerle açıklanmaktadır. Makalede son olarak, hem edebî kaynaklardaki hem de sözlü tarih kayıtlarındaki muhacirlere ve mübadillere yönelik tutum kısaca incelenmekte ve bu konunun Yunanistan'da teşkil ettiği öneme karşın Türkiye'deki yokluğunun nedenlerine dair bir değerlendirme yapılmaktadır.

Anahtar sözcükler: Halide Edip Adivar, Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu, Elias Venezis, Stratis Myrivilis, millî edebiyat.

1. Introduction

The character of the war of 1919-1922 between Greece and Turkey, encapsulated in the title of Arnold Toynbee's famous book, *The Western Question in Greece and Turkey*, replaced polyethnicity with monoethnicity, separated Greeks and Turks in Anatolia for ever and decisively defined the way each country evolved as an independent nation state. Journalism apart, this war – in Turkey the War of Independence (Kurtuluş Savaşı) and in Greece the Asia Minor Disaster (Μικρασιατική Καταστροφή) – with the ensuing flight subsequently codified as a compulsory exchange of populations -- left a deep imprint on the literatures of the two countries as well.³ Although the subject matter is based on the same historical events these two literatures developed quite independently, if contemporaneously, in each nation and until very recently remained unknown to each other.⁴ Yet they exhibit certain common characteristics which will be briefly outlined in this paper.

The number of works which draw their subject from the War of Independence in Turkey and from the Asia Minor Disaster in Greece is enormous and their production has continued unabated to this day, a century after the events which have inspired them.⁵ In terms of influence, however, and of the formation of public perceptions of history itself the earliest works, those produced during the war

³ Millas has a long list of works from both literatures in discussing the image of the "other" including the early works. Also see Demirözü.

⁴ For a succinct list of translated works see Hidiroglou (1977) and Çokona (2008). Early Greek works about this war have been recently translated into Turkish. Although a lot of Turkish literature has been translated into Greek the early works on the War of Independence remain still untranslated. See bibliography.

⁵ Turkish prose has been surveyed by Balabanlılar and Greek prose by Doulis.

or in the first two decades after it, are of cardinal importance. A measure of this influence is very simply their enduring presence in print up to the present day. It is from these works that I will select examples of common characteristics.

2. Victimhood

The most striking characteristic which the Turkish literature of the War of Independence and the Greek literature of the Asia Minor Disaster have in common is the salience of suffering and victimhood and more specifically for each side its own sufferings as victim. It is scarcely necessary to adduce on the Turkish side the content of *Yaban*⁶ by Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu (b. Cairo 1889 - d. Ankara 1974) or the very title of *Ateşten Gömlek* (Shirt of Flame)⁷ by Halide Edip Adıvar (b. Istanbul 1884-1964) both of which have a wartime setting or, on the Greek side *Number 31328* by Elias Venezis (pen name of Elias Melios, b. Ayvalı⁸ 1904 - d. Athens 1973) which recounts the young civilian narrator's sufferings in the Turkish labour battalions after the end of the war.

This prominence of victimhood may not seem so surprising in the case of the Greeks, since they lost the war; but it becomes more surprising once we observe that there is no triumphalist literature celebrating the period of Greek advances up to 1920. In the case of the Turks, who won the war, the relative prominence of suffering by comparison with triumph is at first sight more surprising; it becomes less surprising when we recall the classic conception of national sentiment in Ernest Renan's famous address of 1882, *Qu' est-ce qu' une nation?*⁹

On aime en proportion des sacrifices qu' on a consentis, des maux qu' on a soufferts.... Je disais tout à l' heure: «avoir souffert ensemble»; oui, la souffrance en commun unit plus que la joie. En fait de souvenirs nationaux, les deuils valent mieux que les triomphes, car il imposent des devoirs, ils commandent l' effort en commun.

One loves in proportion to the sacrifices to which one has agreed, to the wrongs which one has suffered....I was just saying , “having suffered together”; indeed, suffering in common unites more than joy. With regard to national memories, sorrows count for more than triumphs, for they impose duties, they demand a common effort.

With these words of 1882 Renan has exactly characterised an opinion expressed by Fevzi Lütfi in 1923 of a book entitled *İzmir'den Bursaya Hikâyeler Mektuplar ve Yunan Ordusunun Mesul'iyetine dair bir*

⁶In deference to Yakup Kadri I leave the title of *Yaban* untranslated. In his 1970 interview with Jacobson (Jacobson 76), responding to the translation of *Yaban* as Stranger Yakup Kadri said that such a translation “does not give the full connotation of the word”. He suggested that “in addition to the meaning of outsider or foreign it carries the meaning of the barbarian too. Later he recommended that the word should remain as it is without being translated followed by a note of explanation.

⁷ The literally translation is Shirt of Fire, but Halide Edip used the title *Shirt of Flame* for the English version of the book which she translated herself. In a footnote to her preface to the book (Adıvar 1924, xix) she explains that “‘The Shirt of Flame’ is an idiomatic expression among Turkish people meaning great suffering which one does not try to get rid of if one has the power.”

⁸ Present day Ayvalık.

⁹Available on line at : http://www.iheal.univ-paris3.fr/sites/www.iheal.univ-paris3.fr/files/Renan_-_Qu_est-ce_qu_une_Nation.pdf accessed 28th May 2021.

Tedkik (From Izmir to Bursa: Stories, Letters and Investigations Pertaining to the Greek Army's Responsibility), a selection of wartime journalism by Halide Edip, Yakup Kadri and others:

Şimdiye kadar Türk edebiyatında millilik hasreti vardı, lâkin bunun ne olduğunu kimse fark etmiyordu. Esasen o aramakla, mantıkla bulunamazdı. İzmir'den Bursa'ya kitabı bu hasretin müjdecisidir. Onu yazarları memleketin harap yollarında ıstırapların içinde buldular ve heder etmediler.

There was up to now a nationalistic yearning in Turkish Literature but nobody could perceive what this was. Essentially this could not be found either by chance or with logic. The book 'From Bursa to İzmir' is the herald of this yearning. The authors found it in the ruined roads of the motherland and inside its anguish and they put it to use.

Explicitly emphasised is the birth of a nationalist literature in a literature of suffering.¹⁰ Remarkably these words were quoted by İnci Enginün in her preface to a reprint of the book fifty years later.¹¹

In this connexion even the backdrop of the Anatolian landscape becomes a land of sorrows. It is a war-torn, grey, infertile, scorched land, a step-motherland, to use Yakup Kadri's metaphor.¹² The reader who opens the first page of *Yaban* encounters this description:¹³

Sakarya muharebesinden sonra düşman orduları, Haymana, Mihalliçik, ve Sivrihisar havalisini, bize, yer yer taş yığınlarıyla örtülü, ıssız ve engin bir virane halinde bıraktı.

O afetlerden arta kalmış halkın, bu taş yığınları arasında, ilk insanlardan farkı yoktu.

Bunlar, yarı çıplak bir halde dolaşiyor; alevin kararttığı harmanyerlerinde toprağa, çamura karışmış yanık buğday ve mısır tanelerini iki taş arasında ezerek üğütmeğe çalışıyor; adı bilinmez otlardan, ağaç köklerinden kendilerine bir nevi yiyecek çıkarıyor ve bir yabancının ayak sesini duyunca her biri bir yana kaçıp bir kovuğa saklanıyor.

After the Battle of Sakarya, the enemy armies left us the regions of Haymana, Mihaliçik, and Sivrihisar as a vast desolate ruin, covered here and there with piles of stone. There was no difference between the people who remained after the catastrophe and the first cavemen. They were wandering about half-naked and trying to grind burned kernels of wheat and corn, often mixed with mud, by crushing them between two stones on flame-blackened threshing floors. Some were extracting a sort of nourishment from strange herbs, from roots of trees; and when they heard alien footsteps, they would all run away and hide in holes.

This impression of Anatolia may be compared with a passage from the original 1924 serialised version of Venezis' *Number 31328*:¹⁴

Παντοῦ, ὄθε περνοῦμε, στοὺς ἀτελείωτους κάμπους, ἀναμεσὸ στὰ πρωτόγονα βουνὰ τῆς τραγουδισμένης τούτης χώρας, ἡ φρέσκια καταστροφή ἔχει ἀφήσει τὰ χνάρια τῆς, ἓνα σωρὸ ρέπια, σὰ νὰ πέρασε ἀπὸ δῶ ὄχι ἀνθρώπινη ὀργὴ μὰ μιὰ ἀνιστόρητη θεϊκὴ κοσμογαλασά. Πολιτεῖες ὀλάκαιρες, σκόρπιες καλύβες ἐδῶ καὶ κεῖ, ἡμερα χωριουδάκια μέσα σὲ παρθένες χαράδρες – μιὰ λησιμονημένη ζωὴ ἀπὸ αἰῶνες, ποὺ δὲν ἤξαιρε τίποτα ὄζω ἀπ' τὰ σύνορα τῆς μικρούλας ρηματιάς καὶ τοῦ δάσου τῶν τσαμιῶν - ὄλα καμένα, ρημαγμένα, ἀπὸ πρόστυχα χέρια. Κάθε τόσο βρίσκουμε ἄθαφτα πρισμένα πτώματα, μελαψὰ, μισόγυμνα, μὲ μάτια ποὺ βασιτοῦνται ἀκόμα γουρλωμένα ἀπ' τὸν πόνο, λέσια ποὺ τᾶχουν μισοφάγει τὰ τσακάλια τῆ νύχτα καὶ φαίνονται τα κόκαλα μ' ἓνα λίγο κομάτι κρέας ἀπάνω, μάβρο ἀπ' τὸν ἥλιο.

¹⁰ Adıvar nd, 7.

¹¹ The book bears no date; bibliographical entries indicate its publication after Falih Rıfki's death in 1971 and before Yakup Kadri's death in 1974.

¹² Karaosmanoğlu 2006, 86, 149.

¹³ Karaosmanoğlu 2006, 15.

¹⁴ *Number 31328, Καμπάνα* 4 March 1924.

Everywhere we pass, in the endless plains, between the primal mountains of this much sung land fresh destruction has left its footprint, a pile of ruins as if there passed by here not human anger but an indescribable divine cataclysm. Whole towns, scattered cottages here and there, quiet little villages in virgin valleys – a life forgotten for centuries which knew nothing beyond the boundary of the little stream and the pine forest -everything burnt, torn down by vile hands. Every so often we find unburied swollen corpses, blackened, half-naked, with eyes still fixed wide from pain, carcasses which the jackals have half eaten in the night and you see a bit of flesh on them, black from the sun.

This Anatolia is very different from the pre-war “lost paradise” recalled in the later phases of the Greek literature of the Asia Minor Disaster.¹⁵

The prominence of victimhood helps to explain an obvious difference in the development of the two literatures, a continuity between wartime and post-war writing in the case of the Turks and the emergence of an Asia Minor literature only after the war’s end in the case of the Greeks. *From Izmir to Bursa*, for example, was first published during the war and its content originated in earlier journalism; its authors were to become prominent exponents of the literature of the War of Independence. *The Shirt of Flame* by one of them, Halide Edip, which is considered to be the first novel of the genre was published in instalments in *İkdam* (Perseverance) in 1922¹⁶ during the war, before Mustafa Kemal’s victorious army had entered Izmir. Venezis’ *Number 31328* on the other hand first appeared nearly two years after the end of the war when Venezis reached Lesbos from captivity.¹⁷

The reason for this difference in the emergence of this literature is relatively straightforward: captivity and exile constituted the sufferings of the Greeks while invasion and the war itself constituted the suffering of the Turks. This difference was also reflected in the very different emergence of the Greek and Turkish writers. The Turkish authors were already established writers¹⁸ who at the same time had involved themselves in journalism, war propaganda and politics; they also had first hand experience of the war and the events around it. The Greek authors, on the other hand, were not established literary figures and their reputations were made after the war by their creation of an Asia Minor literature. They were moreover themselves victims either as refugees or captives; the one exception was Stratis Myrivilis (pen name of Efstratios Stamatopoulos, b.Sykamia, Lesbos 1892 - d. Athens 1969) who, if not a direct victim, was a witness both as a native of Lesbos and as a soldier in the war.¹⁹

¹⁵ For succinct analysis of the development of the literature of the Asia Minor Disaster see Mackridge, 236-246

¹⁶ Kurdakul, vol. 2, 69, Balabanlılar, 2, footnote 6 refers to scholars who give 1923 as year of publication.

¹⁷ The first instalment of *Number 31328* appeared on 5th February 1924 in *Kampana* (issue 47). Publication began immediately after the completion of the instalments of Myrivilis’s anti-war novel *H Zōē en tāpō* (Life in the Tomb). The subtitle of *Number 31328* was “What the man with this number who was enslaved in the war went through”. Venezis who was one of many captives to arrive in Lesbos at that time had been specifically encouraged by Myrivilis to write his experience from captivity in the labour battalions.

¹⁸ Halide Edip and Yakup Kadri are both listed in Sevük’s *Türk Teceddüt Edebiyatı Tarihi* (History of Turkish New Literature) of 1925, pp. 628 and 631 respectively.

¹⁹ For a succinct analysis see Beaton, 133-144.

This emphasis on the suffering of the authors' own side is accompanied by an indifference to the sufferings of the other side. Recounting his recollections of the last days of İzmir Yakup Kadri writes:²⁰

Nitekim, bir çeyrek saat ya geçti ya geçmedi, yangın dumanının kokusu burnumuzda tütmeye ve alevinin sıcaklığı yüzümüzü kavurmaya başladı. Deminki karabulut şimdi akşamın alaca karanlığında kıpkızıl görünüyor ve yere şakülî hava fişeklerini andıran kıvılcımlar yağdırıyordu.

İzmir yanıyordu ve alevlerin parıltıyla, karşiki gemilerin projektör ışıkları başımız üstünde muttasıl çatıyordu. Önümüzdeki rıhtım ve gözlerimizin erişebileceği noktalarına kadar bütün Kordon boyu bir acayip, bir korkunç – hani neredeyse vahşi diyebileceğim - bir aydınlık içindeydi ve bu aydınlık içinde tüyler ürpertici bir fecaat sahnesi serilivermişti. Erkek kadın, çoluk çocuk, genç ihtiyar bir insan kalabalığı her yanı kaplamıştı. Bu insan nereden çıkmışlardı? Nereye gitmek, ne yapmak istiyorlardı? Kendileri de bilmiyor gibiydi. Sanki, bunlar ya bir sürü hayaletler, ya da kâbuslu bir rüya içinde yürüten somnambüller idi. Bu yağın bir selin sessiz suları halinde sokak köşelerinden fişkirip hâlâ kaldırımlar üstünde uyuyan Mehmetçiklerin üzerinden aşarak dalga dalga rıhtımın sertlerine doğru ilerliyordu ve orada bir kaynaşmadır başgösteriyordu. Rumca bir takım konuşmalar, yalvarmayı, ağlamayı andıran sesler. Sonra birkaç boğuk kadın, çocuk çığlığı.

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Kalabalık gittikçe artıyor. Kordonboyunda iğne atsan düşmez bir hal. Buna rağmen biraz evvel halkın içine karışıp giden subaylar bu mahşeri yararak dönüp geliyorlar. Onları ilk bakışta derin bir teessüre kapılmış görüyoruz. 'Ne oldu?' dememize kalmıyor, gördüklerini anlatmaya başlıyorlar.: Meğer, rıhtımın dibinde dizi dizi Rum kayıkçılar peşin para almaksızın kimseyi bindirmiyorlarmış. Adam başına on liradan aşağı olmaz diyorlarmış. Subaylarımızdan biri söyleniyor:

'—Bu ne denaet, azizim! Onlar da Rum bunlar da Rum. Bir insan ne kadar kalbsiz olmalı ki böyle bir felâket bir kâr ve kazanç fırsatı telâkki etsin!'

Öbürü ilâve ediyor:

'—Sanki kayıklara binip de nereye gidecekler? Karşiki gemilerden medet umuyorlar. Fakat, oraya kadar gidenler bile ters yüzü geriye dönüyorlar. Yahut da denizde avâre avâre dolaşıyorlar. Gemiler merdivenlerini kaldırmış, iskelelerini çekilmiş hiç kimseyi almıyor. Zavallılardan bazıları zincirlere tırmanıp zorla girmeye çalışıyorlarmış; fakat, tayfalar uzun sırkılarla ellerine vura vura hepsini denize düşürüyormuş. Asıl denaet, medeniliği ve insanıyeti kimseye vermeyen bu Avrupalılarda. Hem biçarelerin başını belâya soktular, hem de şimdi âkibetlerine karşıdan seyirci kalmak istiyorlar.'

Tam bu sırada, projektörlerin ışık hortumları, yüz binleri aştığı söylenen felâketzedeler yığının üstünde kayıtsız dolaşmağa başladı.

Yangın gecesi faciasının üstünden yirmi dört saat ya geçmiş, ya geçmemişti ki, bie askerî otomobili bizi Bornova'daki Garp Cephesi Kumandanlığı karargâhından alıp Gazi Paşanın Göztepe'de misafir olduğu Uşaklıgiller köşkünün götürürken iki akşam evvel bir mahşer halinde bıraktığımız Kordonboyunu baştan başa boş ve ıssız bulacaktık. Sıra sıra evler yine yerli yerindeydi, fakat, içinde kimseler yoktur. Denizde yine harp gemileri vardı, ama ışıkları sönmüştü. O kıyamet kalabalığından ise ortada hiçbir eser kalmamıştı. Gûya her şeyi yel üfürüp sel götürmüştü.

Pasaportan öte, Hükümet konağı semtine doğru yaklaştığımız vakit ve hele Kemeraltından geçerken yangın gecesi, bana, gerçekte hiç olmamış gibi geldi. Sanki o, sıtmalı uykularımda gördüğüm korkunç rüyalardan biriydi. Zira, İzmir, çocukluğum İzmir'i, okuduğum mektebi, bindiğim atlı tramvayları, Kışla Meydanın saat kulesi, Kemeraltı çarşısının dükkânları, kiraathaneleriyle yıllarca evvel bıraktığım gibi duruyordu. Ne vakit ki, Yalılar semtine geldim. Karataş'tan itibaren yakın geçmişe ait bütün hâtıralarım birer birer silinmeye başladı. İlk gençlik çağımı tekrar yaşıyor gibiydim. Sanki, -yalnız geçen geceki yangın değil – Mondros Mütarekesi, İstanbul'un işgal, İzmir'in zaptı, düşman ordularının tâ Ankara kapularına kadar dayanışı, sanki bu üç yılı dolduran bütün millî faciaların hiç biri olmamıştı. Sanki,

²⁰ Karaosmanoğlu 1958, 170-173.

Sakarya, Vadilerinden Gediz kıyılarına kadar uzanan memleket bölgesi yanmış, yıkılmış şehirleri, kasabaları, köyleriyle baştan başa uçsuz bucaksız bir harabe haline gelmemişti. İçimde bütün ıstıraplarımı alıp götürün öylesine taşkın, öylesine sevinç vardı.

Indeed, a quarter of an hour had hardly passed when the smell from the smoke of burning fire and the heat of the flames began to smoke our nose and to blast our face. Yet the black cloud appeared crimson red in the multicoloured darkness of the evening dusk and rained down sparkles like jet flares.

Izmir was burning and the lights from the ships' projectors opposite us were continuously clashing above our heads. On the waterfront in front of us up to the point our eyes could reach the entire length of the Cordon was in a strange, a frightening - almost brutal I could say- light and a tragic scene, which made your hair stand on end, was unfolding inside this light. A human crowd of men and women, children, young and old covered it all. Where have these people come from? Where did they want to go, what did they want? It was as if they themselves did not know. It was as if they were a flock of ghosts or sleepwalkers in a nightmarish dream. This mass of a silent torrent gushing out of the street corners was moving in waves towards the waterfront and passed over the Mehmetciks who were still sleeping on the pavements. They appeared to merge in the water front. There was some talking in Greek and voices which reminded you of begging or crying. Then a few hoarse screams of women and children.

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Gradually the crowd is increasing. There was no room even for a needle to drop on the Cordon. Despite this, the officers who, splitting this doomsday crowd into two a bit earlier, got through them and were coming back.

At first sight we see them in great sorrow. Before asking them "what happened" they start telling us what they saw: Essentially, the Rum boatmen lined up in the waterfront and would not take anyone aboard without first paying. They were saying that they would not take less than ten lira per head. This was said by one of our officers:

"- Dear me, what vileness! They are Rum and those ones are Rum too! How heartless this man must be that he is reluctant to help his compatriot at such a moment of calamity. He is not even content with not helping, he sees the opportunity to gain and make a profit from this calamity."

The other one adds:

"- Even if they boarded the boats, where would they go? They were hoping for help from the ship opposite them. But those who reached it were turned back. Or they are wandering around in the sea. The ships have drawn up their ladders and take no one. Some of the wretched ones climb on to the anchor chains and try to board by force but the crew strike their hands with long poles and throw everybody into the sea. There is true vileness in these Europeans, they are not civilised and they have no humanitarian feelings. They themselves put these miserable ones in trouble and now they want to be just onlookers of the consequences."

At this moment the light beams of the projectors started an unconcerned stroll on top of the mass of the victims of the disaster whose number exceeds the hundred thousand.

Twenty four hours had not passed after the night of the fire tragedy. As we were driven in a military car from the headquarters of the Western Front Command to the Uşaklıgil summer mansion in Göztepe where Gazi Paşa was staying as a guest, we found that the Cordon, which we had left in a state of doomsday two nights before, was altogether empty and deserted. The houses one after another were in their place but there was no one in them. There were still warships in the sea but their lights had been put out. There was no sign left of the doomsday crowd, as if everything had been blown by the wind and taken by a flood.

When we were approaching the Governor's Office at the other side of the Passport Office and especially when we passed Kemeraltı, truly it was as if the night of the fire had never happened. It was like one of the terrifying dreams I see in my feverish sleep. Because Izmir, Izmir of my childhood, the school where I went, the horse drawn trams, the clock tower in the Kışla Meydanı, the shops in Kemeraltı looked as I had left them so many years ago.

Time came and I arrived in the district of Yalılar; starting from Karataş all my memories from the recent past began to be wiped away. It was as if I was living again the period of my first youth. As if – it was not only last night's fire – the Armistice of Moudros, the occupation of Istanbul, the capture of Izmir, the enemy reaching almost at the gates of Ankara, as if none of all the national tragedies which filled these

three years never happened. As if the country which stretches from the valleys of Sakarya to the shores of Gediz had not become an endless ruin throughout with its scorched and razed cities, towns and villages. The overflowing exuberance and joy I felt took away all my sufferings.

In a similar way it is hard to find examples of Turkish suffering in the Greek works, although it is true, for reasons that will be discussed below, that in the earliest period a vivid picture of a specific Greek atrocity is given. The passage previously quoted from the 1924 serialised version of *Number 31328* continues:²¹

Δίπλα μου, ἀπὸ τότες ποὺ ἔχασα τὸν Πέππα, ἔχω ἕναν καινούριο σύντροφο ποὺ ἔκανε στρατιώτης καὶ μοῦ λέει : Νὰ ἐδῶ εἶναι ποὺ ἀφλαντιάσαμε μέρα νύχτα, πέρσου τὸ χειμῶνα νὰ μᾶς μουντάρουν οἱ Τοῦρκοι καὶ τὰ ποδάρια μας ἦταν μούσκεμα ὅλον τὸν καιρὸ ἀπ' τὰ νερά, μέσα στὰ χαρακώματα.

Ἕστερα, σὰ δόθηκε ἡ διαταγὴ νὰ κάνουμε ἐπίθεση καὶ τοὺς τσακώσαμε ἀνύποπτους, ἐγὼ ἔπιασα ἕναν ποὺ τὸν βρῆκα πλαγιασμένον, ἄρρωστο, καὶ τοῦ ἔσκισα τὶς φλέβες του μιὰ-μιὰ, ὡς ποὺ ψόφισε.

Στὴν ὑποχώρηση, ξαίρεις, τὰ καίγαμε ὅλα. Πεινασμένοι, μὲ τὴ λύσσα ποὺ μᾶς ἔπνιγε, δὲν ἀφήναμε πετράδι στὸν τόπο του. Λίγο παρακάτω θὰ βροῦμε ἕνα χωριό. Ἐκεῖ, ὅταν φτάσαμε, ζώσαμε γύρω-γύρω καὶ βάλουμε φωτιά. Θυμοῦμαι πὼς μέσα σ' ἕνα στενὸ δρομάκι, ἀπὸ μιὰ πόρτα πετάχτηκε ξεφρενιασμένη ἀπ' τὸν τρόμο μιὰ χανούμισα, ἕνα δροσερὸ κορίτσι, ποὺ ὅμως δὲ σκέφτηκα νὰ τὸ πείραξω. Μονάχα, ὅπως βαστοῦσα τὸν τενεκὲ μὲ τὸ γκάτζι, τὸν ἄδειασα ἀπάνω της καὶ τράβηξα ἕνα σπύρτο. Ἔπεσε ἀνάσκελα τσιρίζοντας ἡ σάρκα ἄναψε μονομιὰς κι' ἔλιωνε σὰν σπαρματσέτο.

Beside me from when I lost Peppas I have a new comrade who did time in the army and he tells me : Over here is where we were cowering day and night last winter for the Turks to leap at us and our legs were sodden all the time from the water in the trenches.

Later when we got the order for an attack and we caught them unawares, I got one I found lying down, ill, and I tore his veins out one by one until he croaked.

In the retreat, you know, we were burning everything. Hungry, choked with fury, we didn't leave a stone in place. A bit further we'll find a village. When we got there, we surrounded it and set it on fire. I remember that in a narrow little street there flew out from a door a Turkish girl, out of her wits with terror, a real beauty but it didn't cross my mind to molest her. Only, as I was holding the can with the petrol, I poured it over her and lit a match. She fell backwards screaming; the flesh flamed up at once and was melting like a wax candle.

Notably, however, this episode does not appear in the very different book version of 1931. The book version does rise above narrow minded nationalism, depicts some villainous characters among the Greeks and acknowledges the occasional kindness from a Turk. But reference to Greek atrocities in the course of the war itself is extremely vague and muted and becomes progressively more so in the subsequent editions between 1945 and 1952.²²

Connected with this indifference, occasionally callous, to the sufferings of the other is an indifference even to his existence. The example of Istanbul/Constantinople as a *topos* in both senses of the word is quite indicative of this: Giorgos Theotokas' (b. Constantinople 1905 - d. Athens 1966) *Leonis* of 1940 is a *Bildungsroman* set in Istanbul between the beginning of the Great War and 1922.

²¹ *Number 31328*, *Καμπάνα* 4 March 1924.

²² Kastrinaki, 165-174, observes the way in which the references to the Greek reprisals in Bergama are toned down in successive editions of the book.

The wartime events are clearly delineated in the background and the hero's best friend and role model who volunteers for the Greek army is killed at the front. The end of the book finds the hero displaced in an almost alien Athens.

Yet, despite the Istanbul setting the only Turks in the novel are the Westernised orchestra conductor in the kiosk of Taksim Square, some policemen and soldiers whose role is of almost no significance in the plot. Leonis, the eponymous hero, witnesses the arrival in Istanbul of the Germans at the beginning of the Great War when the Ottomans entered the war on their side. Later Leonis witnesses the arrival in Istanbul of the Allied powers armies and with them the Greek navy and its sailors parading as victors of the war and thus fulfilling centuries old Greek national aspirations. At the same time Leonis seems to be completely unaware of the crowded demonstrations by the Turks who gather to protest against the Greek landing in Izmir described in great detail in Halide Edip's *Shirt of Flame*²³ and in her *Turkish Ordeal*;²⁴ or of the Muslim refugees who had been flooding the streets of Istanbul since before the Balkan wars and whose fate is lamented by Yakup Kadri in an open letter to Claude Farrère published in the newspaper *İkdam* in 1922.

As a parallel we can consider the parts of Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar's (Istanbul 1901- d. Istanbul 1962) long chapter on Istanbul in his book *Beş Şehir* (Five Cities) of 1946 which recall the days of the allied occupation and in which the existence of a single contemporary Greek is completely ignored. We have accordingly impressions of Greek and Turkish cultural lives in the same city which are conducted quite independently of each other. It would not be fair to suggest that images of the Greeks are entirely absent from works of this period but where they appear, as in some of the pieces originally written between 1920-1922 and selected by Yakup Kadri for publication in *Ergenekon* in 1929, they are presented as sleazy and treacherous interlopers who have no proper place in the city.

3. Authenticity and first person narration

The prominence of victimhood in both literatures helps also to explain the choice of similar narrative tropes. To project this experience of horror as a lived experience the authors in both literatures resort to first person narration.

Consistently with the use of first person narration both literatures select linguistic forms which are close to the vernacular, eschewing in the Turkish case more traditional Ottoman forms and in the Greek case the archaising *katharevousa*. The issue of linguistic register is a complex one and space does not permit its proper exploration here. It should be borne in mind that linguistic alterations are evident in successive editions of the same work. For example Venezis completely altered his demotic between

²³Adıvar 1924, 32-39, Adıvar 1943, 21-24.

²⁴Adıvar 1928, 30-34, Adıvar 2014, 40-48.

the serial version of *Number 31328* of 1924 and the book edition of 1931 to give it a smoother and more everyday texture. Readers of the Turkish literature of the War of Independence need to be aware that current editions have been updated with the use of neologisms and even changes of phrasing which in many cases are very different from the original choices of the authors.

First person narration is a feature common to Halide Edip's *Shirt of Flame*, Yakup Kadri's *Yaban*, Stratis Doukas' *Η Ιστορία ενός αιχμαλώτου* (Diary of a Captive) and Venezis' *Number 31328*. If we only had large fragments of these works and no knowledge of history or the biographies of the authors we would naturally conclude that they accurately reproduce the lived experiences of the narrator.

In these narratives the boundaries between facts and fiction are indeed very fluid and often hard to distinguish. For the Greek case this fluidity is epitomised by one of the earliest works, first published in 1923 and after a reprint in 1924 almost completely forgotten until it was unearthed for a new reprint in 2006. This work is *Από την Αιχμαλωσία κατά το Ημερολόγιο του Αιχμαλώτου Αεροπόρου Β. Κ* (From Captivity: According to the Diary of the Captured Airman V. K). The brief discussion of this book in 1977 by Thomas Doulis who published what is still the only book length treatment of the Literature of the Asia Minor Disaster²⁵ is based on a fundamental misconception. Doulis took the work at face value as a genuine diary. However, a perfectly convincing case, based on personal testimony, was made by the editor of the 2006 edition that it is in fact a work of fiction or quasi fiction by the reasonably well known author, Markos Avgeris.²⁶ Doulis was misled by the verisimilitude of the narrative form which truly reads like a diary.

In Halide Edip's *The Shirt of Flame* published in 1922 in a serialised form in *İkdam*, as that of Yakup Kadri's *Yaban*, the main narrative purports to be the content of a notebook. In *The Shirt of Flame*, the notebook belongs to a man, now in hospital with a bullet in his head, in which he has recorded his experiences during the War of Independence. The story involves a complicated love triangle between a dashing hero, the ideal woman of Smyrna and the narrator who is besotted with her. At the end we are led out of the story in the notebook and are told by an apparently objective narrator that the owner of the notebook died on the operating table; and from a conversation between two doctors which the objective narrator reports we learn that the other people mentioned in the notebook, not least the hero and heroine, did not even exist. The doctors explain the story away as a hallucination of the writer. From various hints in the narrative it is fairly easy to see that Halide Edip intended the narrator's passion for the national cause to be understood as akin to an erotic passion which, in his hallucination, is transmuted into a passion for a woman, the ideal woman of Smyrna.²⁷ And yet the narrative itself is a

²⁵ Doulis, 49-54.

²⁶ Pen-name of Giorgos Papadopoulos (b.1884 - d.1973).

²⁷ The significance of the ending has been much discussed, eg: Parla 2007, 15 Seyhan 2008, 55, Binyazar, 55.

realistic account of the War of Independence with autobiographical elements from the life of Halide Edip herself to which she draws attention in her footnotes to her own English translation. So here we have realistic picture whose authenticity is emphasised by the first person voice but undercut by the framing device at the end of the novel.

In the cases of *Yaban* and *Number 31328*, the question of fact or fiction is posed even more acutely by the character of the prefaces which introduces the main narrative. Reading the preface alone one might think that the main part of *Yaban* really is a diary whereas it is actually a work of almost hallucinatory fiction.²⁸

İşte, Garp Cephesi Kumandanlığının gönderdiği 'Tetkiki mezalim heyeti' o viranelerde taşlar altında kömürleşmiş insan kemiklerini araştırırken, bu kitabı teşkil eden yazıları, ortasından yırtılmış ve kenarları yanmış bir defter halinde buldu. Köylülerden, bunun sahibinin ne olduğunu sordu. Kimse nereye gittiğini bilmiyordu. Bununla beraber, onun iki üç yıl mütemediyen bu köyde oturduğunu ve son felâket gününe kadar burada kaldığını söyleyen de kendileri idi.

And so it was, that when the members of the “War Crimes Commission” sent out by the commander of the western front were searching through the ruins and under the rubble for charred human bones, they found the writing which comprises this book. It was in a form of a notebook, torn through the middle and burnt around the edges. They asked the peasants what had happened to its owner. None knew where he had gone; and this, despite their revelation that he had lived in their village for two or three years and had stayed there until the very last day of the disaster.

The introductory instalment of the 1924 serialised version of *Number 31328* (omitted in the 1931 book version and subsequent editions) reads so surreally as to suggest fiction which we are assured it is not. Quotation of the opening and closing paragraphs alone is sufficient to convey its character:²⁹

Πολλές φορές τώρα τελεφαία μου ήρθε στο νοῦ ἡ ιδέα πὼς ἓνας πεθαμένος κοιμᾶται μέσα στις φλέβες μου, φέρνοντάς με σὲ πολὺ δύσκολη μιζέρια κάθε τόσο πὸν θὰ τοῦ κατέβει ν' ἀλλάξει τόπο. Ἀφτὸ δὲν μπορεῖ νᾶναι παράξενο, οὐδὲ πίστεψα ποτὲς πὼς ἔχει πάθει τὸ μιालό μου. Μ' ὄλον πὸν γιὰ τὴ θλιβερή μου τούτη κατάσταση δὲν ἔχω να παραπονεφτῶ ἐναντία σὲ κανέναν, ὄξου ἀπ' τὸν ἑαφτό μου. Γιατί μου κάπνισε - λίγο σὰν ἀστεῖο, λίγο σὰν παλαβάδα - νὰ φυλάζω ὡς τώρα μὲ γινάτι ἓνα μεγάλο βρώμικο δόντι, ἀπ' τὸ κάφκαλο ἐνοῦς πεθαμένου πὸν τῶβρα σ' ἓναν ἔρημο τόπο. Ἄς εἶναι. Ἀφτὸ εἶναι μία ἱστορία πὸν τὴ θυμοῦμαι ὅσο καὶ τὶς παγωμένες μέρες πὸν πέρασα ντυμένος μὲ τσουβάλια κι' ἀξυπόλυτος μιὰ χρονιὰ πὸν ἡ ὄργη ἔπεσε ἀπάνω μου.

.....

Ἔτσι εἶναι καὶ ὡς τώρα, πὸν δὲν μπορῶ νὰ ἡσυχάσω. Κάθε στιγμή φέρνω στοῦ νοῦ μου ὅλες τὶς μέρες καὶ ὅλες τὶς νύχτες. Ἀκόμα θυμοῦμαι καὶ πολλὰ προσώπατα, πὸν δὲν εἶναι πιά μὲς τοὺς ζωντανούς. Ἴσως μου ἔρθει ἡ γαλήνη. Συλλογιέμαι τὴν ἀνοιξη καὶ τὰ λουλούδια κ' ἓνας ἀπαλὸς τόνος χαδέβει τὴ ψυχὴ μου. Ἡ ζωὴ τραγουδᾷ μέσα μου ἓνα δικό της τραγοῦδι, πὸν δὲν τᾶκουσα ποτές μου. Μεσ' ἀπ' τοὺς πόρους ἀναδέβει σὲ ὄγρους κὸμπους κάτι σὰν αἰθέρας, πὸν χύνεται ἀπάνου στοῦ κορμί μου, κ' ἐγὼ κλαίγω ἀπὸ ἐβγνωμοσύνη. Πάντα ἐπίστεψα στὴν ἀξία τῆς δυστυχίας γιὰ ἐκεينوῦ πὸν συλλογίζονται. Ὅμως ποτές δὲν ἐσκέφτηκα γιὰ μιὰ τόση ἐφτυχία. Σιγὰ-σιγὰ θὰ τοὺς ξεχάσω τοὺς πεθαμένους. Ὁ οὐρανὸς εἶναι πάντα γαλάζιος κι' ἀπάνω στὴ θάλασσα τρέχει μὲ θερμὴ πνοὴ ἓνας ξανθὸς Θεὸς πὸν μὲ καλοσωρίζει. Τότες,

²⁸ Karaosmanoğlu 2006, 15.

²⁹ *Kampana*, 5 February 1924.

ὄταν πιά θά έχω ἡσυχάσει, θά γράψω ἕνα τραγοῦδι γιά ἕνα βρώμικο δόντι, ποῦ τὸ φυλάγω ἀπάνου στήν καρδιά μου, ἀπ' τὸ κάφαλο ἐνοῦς πεθαμένου συντρόφου μου.

Recently there came into my mind many times the idea that a dead man is sleeping in my veins, putting me in terrible misery every time he takes it into his head to change his place. This can't be strange and I never believed that something's happened to my brain. Yet for this pitiable condition of mine I can't complain to anyone except myself. Because it occurred to me -a bit like a joke, a bit like something daft – to hold stubbornly on to a big dirty tooth from the skull of a dead man I found in a waste land. So be it. That's a story that I'll remember just like the frozen days I passed dressed in sackcloths and without shoes in a year when wrath fell upon me.

That's how it is up to now, that I can't calm down. Every moment I bring up in my mind all the days and all the nights. I still remember many faces, that aren't any more among the living. Perhaps serenity will come to me. I think of spring and flowers and a gentle feeling strokes my soul. Life sings its own song inside me, one I I had never heard. From my pores there comes in moist beads something like a gentle wind that pours over my body and I cry with gratitude. I always believed in the value of unhappiness for those who think. But I never imagined such happiness. Gradually I will forget the dead. The sky is always blue and over the sea there runs with warm breath a blond God who welcomes me. Then, when I've become calm I will write a song about a dirty tooth which I keep over my heart from the skull of a dead comrade.

4. Fact or fiction?

Not only do these framing devices suggest the fluidity of the boundary between fact and fiction, but fact and fiction can be blended in the narratives themselves. A little noticed example in the oeuvre of Yakup Kadri is a fragment of his own possibly unfinished and certainly unpublished “Shirt of Fire” which was printed in *Dergâh* in 1922. The similarity of the narrative to a story that is presented as a real life case in Halide Edip's *Turkish Ordeal* and which coincides temporally in her narrative with Yakup Kadri's stay as her guest in Ankara in 1921 is striking. The connection between the two works can be explained by what we know about the relations between the two writers.

As noted above, Halide Edip's own *Shirt of Flame* is regarded as the first novel to be inspired by the War of Independence and is one of the most celebrated. It first appeared in serial form with publication commencing in *İkdam* 14 June 1922. It came out in book form later in the year and the first of a succession of film versions, a silent, was first shown on 23 April 1923.³⁰ An English translation appeared as early as 1924 under the title, *The Shirt of Flame*. That the translator was Halide Edip herself can be inferred from the fact that there is no mention of a translator in the English edition and the language is characteristic of the language used by Halide Edip in her English language originals such as *The Turkish Ordeal*.

Both in a preface to the novel and in the *The Turkish Ordeal* Halide Edip describes the origins of the work. She was inspired by Yakup Kadri who was writing an ‘Anatolian novel’, while he was staying as her guest in Ankara, where he arrived on 1 May 1921. She recounts the story as follows: “It

³⁰ Kurdakul, vol. 2, 75.

was in those days that I asked him what he was writing. An Anatolian novel called ‘The Shirt of Flame’, he said. And I, who was dimly supposing that I also would write an Anatolian novel someday, teased him. ‘Oh, I will write that novel before you have finished yours.’”³¹

Yakup Kadri never published a novel with that title. Yet, there exists a single published excerpt from Yakup Kadri’s “Shirt of Flame” which was reprinted in Latin script in the posthumous collection, *Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu Hikâyeler* (Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu Short Stories) edited by Niyazi Akı in 1985.³² In this publication it is easy to overlook its origins in “The Shirt of Flame” because the excerpt is presented as a short story with the title ‘Kadın ve Ukubet’ (Woman and Punishment). The excerpt bore the same title in its original publication in *Dergâh*. There it was preceded by an editorial note by the editors of *Dergâh* which was headed by the words “Shirt of Flame”.³³

In this excerpt Cennet, an adulterous young woman in an Anatolian village whose polygamous husband was away in the army is being pursued by an enraged crowd of villagers and running for her life she reaches a nationalist army camp. With torn clothes and blood all over her face she implores the commanding officer to protect her from the villagers who want to kill her. As they approach the officer tells her to hide inside the tent and assuming a manner which he finds unnatural assures the villagers that he will see to Cennet’s punishment and turns them away. He then tells her that, if only half of what he heard about her was true, she should be grateful that nothing worse had happened to her. He could hide her in the tent until dusk but then she would have to go. He even agrees to have two of his soldiers escort her to a safe distance. However, Cennet jumps up and leaves the tent, going off to an uncertain destination. The officer is left to ruminate on the burdens and unfair treatment of womanhood and his thoughts are expressed in extremely emotional terms.

A very similar episode is presented as a true story by Halide Edip in her *Turkish Ordeal*:³⁴ a beautiful woman, regarded with some reason as a “slut” by the other wives of her husband and by the other villagers seeks refuge in the house in which Halide Edip, the educated outsider, was staying. The woman’s husband was away in the army and could not protect her from the enraged crowd. Like Yakup Kadri’s nationalist officer, Halide Edip manages by putting on an unnatural performance to manipulate the crowd and turn them away. As soon as it feels safe Halide Edip sees the woman off to the village where her brother lived, presumably to safety.

³¹ Adivar 1928, 256.

³² Akı, 131-135.

³³ I am grateful to Sevgül Sönmez for making the Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu archives available to me in which a small number of pages with the heading ‘Belonging to the novel the Shirt of Flame’ exist. They are transcribed, translated and extensively discussed in Lemos, 161-191.

³⁴ Adivar 1928, 257-260.

The similarities are too close to be credible as coincidence: a polygamous husband who is away in the army, the educated outsider who consciously puts on a performance to calm down the village crowd and the underlying theme of a woman's place in traditional society which in both stories compel her to leave her home.

From a comparison between Halide Edip's third party reportage and Yakup Kadri's first person narration the reader is left with the question, "What was the true story?"

A similar question, fact or fiction, arises out of an episode in *Number 31328* which is narrated inconsistently in the 1924 serialisation and the 1931 book form. The 1931 book version tells the story as follows: the captives have arrived in Bergama to the horror of one of them, a watchmaker, because he fears vengeance for reprisals carried out by the Greeks and in which he had a part. After they are thrown into a tobacco warehouse, a Turkish officer comes in, greets the watchmaker by name and offers him tobacco and brings food. It then turns out that they had lived together before the war, that their wives had been like sisters and the Turk's wife had been killed during the war (it is not clear exactly by whom or how deliberately). The watchmaker begs for mercy but to no avail. The officer leaves, and later in the night the watchmaker is led away without being allowed to see his family again. Earlier in the story the watchmaker's wife had been the victim of violent multiple rape by Turkish soldiers before the eyes of her child in the gutted church.³⁵

The only element which this narrative has in common with the 1924 version is the rape scene in the church. But in the 1924 version this is not just mindless violence but part of a threat to induce the watchmaker to reveal the whereabouts of buried treasure. When he reappears at the end of the night, he tells his companions that he was taken to a Commandant (*Διοικητής*) who forced him to dig for it at random. After an interval the other captives including the narrator are led to the next stage of their journey, but the watchmaker, his wife and child are kept behind, and the narrator learns no more of them.³⁶

For any consideration of *Number 31328* as the testimony of a lived experience this episode is one of the most puzzling: other narrative divergences between the 1924 version and the book can be explained away as omissions or differences of emphasis, but here we have two stories associated with an identified individual which are materially inconsistent. Was the watchmaker led away or did the others leave him and his family behind? Had the watchmaker been friends with the Turkish officer? Both versions cannot be true.

³⁵ Venezis 2008, 79-81.

³⁶ *Kampana*, 1 April 1924.

5. The effect of hindsight

Another important characteristic common to both literatures is the fact that their productions are not simple reflections on the war and its aftermath but refractions through the prism of later concerns. Political evolution leaves its mark very clearly on the evolution of Literature of the War of Independence. This may be partly due to the fact that unlike their Greek counterparts the relevant Turkish writers were not only established writers in the war period but were and remained politically prominent persons with close personal ties to Mustafa Kemal himself. Halide Edip for example had the distinction of being sentenced to death in absentia by the Sultan's government in 1920 and, after a prominent role in the resistance, of exiling herself from Kemalist Turkey in 1926. She returned to Turkey in 1939 after Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's death in 1938 and among many other occupations she became deputy for Izmir in the Grand National Assembly between 1950 and 1954. Yakup Kadri was not just a writer but also a prominent member of a self-appointed modernising movement, the Kadro group, tolerated for a while by Mustafa Kemal. Like Halide Edip Yakup Kadri too was as a member of the Grand National Assembly.

Works after 1927 which ostensibly deal with the war years clearly show Halide Edip's and Yakup Kadri's different response to the turn taken by the Kemalist regime in the mid 1920s. Halide Edip's *Turkish Ordeal* of 1928 which was first appeared in English and was only translated into Turkish much later, it is not strictly a work of fiction and it can clearly be read as an alternative history to the official line propounded by Mustafa Kemal in the *Nutuk* in 1927³⁷. Apart from anything else she has a number of unflattering vignettes of Mustafa Kemal which she tones down in the much later Turkish translation.³⁸

He was by turns cynical, suspicious, unscrupulous and satanically shrewd. He bullied, he indulged in cheap street-corner heroics... Of course, one knew all the time that there were men around him who were greatly his superior in intellect and moral backbone, and far above him in culture and education... Take any man from the street who is shrewd, selfish, and utterly unscrupulous, give him the insistence and histrionics of a hysterical woman who is willing to employ any wile to satisfy her inexhaustible desires, then view him through the largest magnifying glass you can find – and you 'll see Mustafa Kemal Pasha.

The relevant passage in the later Turkish version is transfigured thus:³⁹

Mustafa Kemal Paşa, fikrini yürütmek için her nevi sistemi kullanıyor, zaman zaman, bir George Washington tavrı alıyor, bazan Napoléon havası yaratıyordu. Fakat ilim sahasında çok yüksek olanlar bile onun kudretine yaklaşamazlardı. İnsanın tabiatının en yüksek zeki bir mümessili olan Mustafa Kemal Paşa daima mevkiini muhafaza edebildi.

In order to push forward his ideas Mustafa Kemal Pasha used every kind of system; sometimes he assumed the pose of George Washington, sometimes he created a Napoleonic air. But even those

³⁷Adak, 2003, 510.

³⁸ Adivar 1928, 185-186.

³⁹ Adivar 2014, 171.

extremely advanced in knowledge could not get close to him in force. Mustafa Kemal who possessed the highest intelligence available to human nature always knew how to protect his own position.

By contrast, Yakup Kadri, initially at least, followed the official line. In 1928 he published *Sodom ve Gomore* (Sodom and Gomorrah) whose setting is the Istanbul of the Allied occupation. The title is plainly intended to symbolise the moral depravity of those who consorted and collaborated with the occupiers chiefly the English which was contrasted with the courage and high morality of patriotic Turks even though the latter were subjected to all sorts of humiliations and restrictions. The novel's hate filled accents show no pity at all for anyone deemed a collaborator. The general tone is entirely consistent with the official line from 1926 on that anyone who was not with Mustafa Kemal from 1919 was simply beyond the pale. One can truly doubt whether life in occupied Istanbul was quite as depraved as it appears in the novel. Yakup Kadri himself operated fairly freely despite the occasional interventions of the Allied censors as a journalist and columnist with strongly nationalist views in Istanbul and that there was a Turkish press in the city which openly lauded Turkish victories. The pages of Tanpınar's (Tanpınar 2010, 172-3) *Five Cities*⁴⁰ recall agreeable literary seances which brought together both nationalist and anti-nationalist litterateurs. Tanpınar himself consorted in a friendly manner with the signatory of the Treaty of Sèvres and Yakup Kadri's bête noire, Rıza Tevfik, whom he even witnessed dancing the zeybek. The picture in other words of Istanbul in *Sodom ve Gomore* is a fictionalised one and the fiction is motivated by the politics of its time, which followed the purge of 1926, not the time of the occupation itself.

In 1929 Yakup Kadri selected fifty nine out of a much larger number of the articles he had written for *İkdam* during the war years for republication in a book to which he gave the title *Ergenekon*. This was significant for a number of reasons. The first is the choice of title. Ergenekon itself is a place from the mythic past of the Turks which in 1912 had become an nationalist emblem with the well known poem of that title by Ziya Gökalp, the apostle of Turkism. Moreover the selection was published just after the alphabet reform thus ensuring the survival in the new script of what Yakup Kadri chose to project. Curiously of the fifty nine pieces selected none had appeared earlier than 1920, two in the first half of that year and four in the second, the rest dating from 1921 to the end of the war. Is the fact that the Kemalists had started to look like winners only after the end of 1920 a mere coincidence? Or was Yakup Kadri's support for the nationalists relatively belated? Research into Yakup Kadri's political journalism before 1921 remains to be done.

No less curious is the distribution of subjects in the articles selected. Apart from the exorbitant praise for Mustafa Kemal and to a lesser extent for İsmet Pasha a disproportionate number of articles

⁴⁰ Tanpınar, 172.

are directed not against the enemy but against doubters, pessimists and appeasers. The choice of scenes from the war largely disregards events on the Eastern front where generals other than Mustafa Kemal or İsmet Pasha were prominent and focuses on the war against the Greeks. The only victories emphasised are the two at İnönü and at Sakarya. The selection of themes fairly precisely agrees with the official line as drawn after 1926. Yakup Kadri's selection of articles seems intended to present him as a true believer from as early as 1920, a point emphasised in the preface to the book in which the author declares that the national struggle finally gave a meaning to his life.⁴¹

A striking feature of *Ergenekon* is the similarity of certain themes and imagery with Yakup Kadri's next novel *Yaban* published in 1932. *Yaban* quite apart from its merits as a work of art may be regarded as an imaginative response to the questions raised in *Ergenekon* about the path Turkey should follow and the often inconsistent positions taken in those articles. To answer those questions Yakup Kadri resorted once again to fiction using subject matter ostensibly from the War of Independence. *Yaban* embodies and projects the paradox of an educated class incapable of understanding the very people whose interests it claims to defend and advance. It is no coincidence that it was published when Yakup Kadri was active in the Kadro movement which particularly concerned itself with the proper path of Turkey's journey to modernity and the role of the educated class in guiding the process.

The stamp of later history and the divisions which predated the Greco-Turkish war between Venizelists and royalists on the Literature of the Asia Minor Disaster is in some respects more direct and in others more subtle than in the Turkish case.

The direct effect can be exemplified by outright bans such as affected Myrivilis's strongly anti-war novel *The Teacher with the Golden Eyes* which was first published in 1933. This was banned in the company of many other "anti-national" books by the Metaxas dictatorship in 1936, and the ban subsisted during the German occupation which ended in 1944. Another example, this time explained by reasons of state, is furnished by the fate of a memoir, *Prisoners of the Turks* by Christos Spanomanolis. This was written in 1923 but it began to appear in newspaper instalments in 1932; publication seems to have been motivated partly as a gesture of protest against the Greco-Turkish rapprochement promoted by Venizelos. After protests by the Turkish Embassy the authorities induced the newspaper to stop publication. Publication resumed after the Istanbul pogrom of 6 September 1955.⁴²

The more subtle effects are exemplified by successive changes and indeed non-changes to Venezis' *Number 31328*. This work first appeared, as has been noted earlier in this paper, in serial form

⁴¹ For completeness one should record that in his preface to a reprint of 1964 Yakup Kadri makes clear that his early hopes had by then been disappointed and he bitterly laments the praise he had showered on İsmet Pasha.

⁴² Spanomanolis, 18.

in 1924. This version has not been reprinted and it remains unknown to the general public. Surviving copies of the short-lived Mytilene newspaper, *Kampana*, of which the editor was Stratis Myrivilis and in which *Number 31328* was serialised after the original version of Myrivilis' own *Life in the Tomb* are scattered between three separate holdings which even together do not seem to constitute a complete set.⁴³ A substantially reworked and expanded version of *Number 31328* was published in book form first in 1931 and thereafter in a succession of editions until a final state in 1952, which has remained in print ever since. The serial and book versions differ markedly both in linguistic form and in literary manner. But apart from this, as already set out above, the serial version permits itself a description of a specific atrocity by a Greek soldier during the retreat. It also contains an extremely sarcastic depiction of some Greek priests in captivity. The former was completely expunged from the book version and the latter significantly toned down.⁴⁴ Elements such as these were consistent with the political stance of a provincial newspaper like *Kampana* in the turmoil that followed the Asia Minor disaster. *Kampana* was strongly Venizelist and generally supported the anti-monarchist regime which seized power at the end of the war. This political outlook could accommodate both biting satire of the priesthood and the recognition of Greek army atrocities in the retreat which took place under a monarchist army command.

Venezis set out to produce a new edition of the book during the German occupation and, as he writes in the preface, he reworked it three times "without touching its rough character": "I saw then in the terrible spring and summer of 1944 how much *Number 31328*, written after a great war, had a kinship of blood, a kinship of 'manner' twenty years later with the days of the new great war."⁴⁵ A comparison of this edition with its predecessor will show that the changes are very slight. The recurrence of extreme suffering, unparalleled in the history of Turkey after its War of Independence, allowed in the opinion of the author the older text to speak unchanged to new times.

6. Refugees

In pointing to the salience of victimhood both in the Turkish Literature of the War of Independence and the Greek Literature of the Asia Minor Disaster this paper also points to a paradox. A very large class of victims were refugees, whether Muslims who fled eastwards or Christians who fled westwards. Yet in the works considered so far in this paper the refugee experience of uprooting as such is absent.

⁴³ Matthaïou, 213. One of the three holdings, that of the Myrivilis archive, has since been deposited in the Archives of the Gennadius Library in Athens. I am grateful to Natalia Vogeikoff-Brogan, Leda Costakis and Eleutheria Daleziou of the Archives of the Gennadius Library of the American School of Classical Studies in Athens both for the reference to Matthaïou's article and for permission to consult the copies of *Kampana* in their care. The holding of the Municipal Library of Mytilini has been recently digitised: <https://ejournals.epublishing.ekt.gr/index.php/mnimon/article/viewFile/8029/7883> (Accessed 28th May 2021).

⁴⁴ Kastrinaki, 165-174.

⁴⁵ Venezis 2008, 22.

In the representation of the refugee experience Greece and Turkey significantly diverge. Direct non-literary recording of individual refugee testimony began relatively early in Greece, with the initiative of the founder of the Centre for Asia Minor Studies Melpo Logotheti-Merlier who embarked on this task in 1930. However selective publication began only in 1980 with the latest volume appearing in 2016. The whole publication consists so far of five volumes with the title *Eξόδοσ* (Exodus). The bulk of the testimonies which were recorded is impressively large and certainly counterbalances and perhaps excuses the comparative belatedness of their appearance in book form.⁴⁶

The literary representation of the refugee experience appears in *The Teacher with the Golden Eyes* by Stratis Myrivilis of 1933 and *Serenity* of 1939 by Venezis in both of which the tribulations of uprooting and resettlement are graphically depicted. A slightly later phase unveiled in Venezis' *Aeolian Land* of 1943 introduces the representation of prewar life in Anatolia and the nostalgia for the lost homeland.

In Turkey the value of the oral history narrative was stressed by Leyla Neyzi⁴⁷ much later than in Greece. As recently as 2001 and 2003 Leyla Neyzi recorded the testimony of a native Smyrniote, Gülfem Kaatçılar İren, born in 1915, of the burning of Smyrna and of Manisa.⁴⁸ In 2001 the Lozan Mübadilleri Vakfı (The Lausanne Refugee Foundation) was officially registered with the aim not only to record accounts of the Muslim exchangees but also to bring them in touch with their Christian counterparts in Greece. At around the same time extracts from the *Exodus* have been translated into Turkish by Umar in 2001 and 2002 respectively.⁴⁹ In 1998 Kemal Yalçın had published a book with the title *Emanet Çeyiz. Mübadele İnsanları* (Entrusted Trousseau. Exchanged People) in which he records recollections of fifteen Muslim and fifteen Christian Orthodox exchanged refugees settled in Turkey and in Greece respectively. Because of the strong nationalistic sentiment prevalent in Turkey the author thought it best to publish it as a work of fiction.⁵⁰ As for the appearance of refugees in the early works of the Literature of the War of Independence, it is only sporadic and with no explicit relevance to the plot, as for example in Reşat Nuri Güntekin's *Çalılıkıuşu* (The Wren) in which the adopted daughter of the novel's heroine at one point appears to be playing with muhacir children.⁵¹

Two solitary references to Muslim refugees from the Balkans in articles which Yakup Kadri reprinted in *Ergenekon* may suggest a reason why the theme was not developed further. The first is in

⁴⁶ Tenekidis, κη', footnote 2: at least 5,100 informants, 145,000 pages of recorded information related to 1,356 Christian settlements in Asia Minor. For a discussion of the selection of excerpts and methodology of *The Exodus*, see Kitromilides 1982, κγ'- μ' and Balta 2003, 47-55. Translation into Turkish of some of the refugee accounts were published by Umar Bilge.

⁴⁷ For a detailed analysis on oral history and its development in Turkey see: Neyzi, 2010.

⁴⁸ Neyzi 2008, 106-127.

⁴⁹ See bibliography.

⁵⁰ See Bedlek, 68-93.

⁵¹ Güntekin 1993, 25.

a piece originally printed in *İkdam* on 28 August 1922 with the title “En büyük Düşmanımız Cehalettir” (Our Worst Enemy is Ignorance).⁵² Yakup Kadri praises a short novel by Basri Bey which had just been published and whose subject is the refugees from Rumeli. The point that Yakup Kadri chooses to emphasise is that the enemies of these Muslim villagers were not just the Christian Komitadjis but their own hodjas who persisted in keeping them in ignorance. This is a clear echo of the theme in the works with an Anatolian background such as Yakup Kadri’s *Yaban* and Halide Edip’s *Vurun Kahpeye* (Strike the Whore) of 1926 which associates ignorance, superstition, indifference to the national cause and even treason with the old order which the enlightened nationalist movement must overcome.

The second reference is in another article in *İkdam* which was published on 6 June 1922 with the title “M. Claude Farrère Açık bir Mektup” (An Open Letter to M. Claude Farrère)⁵³ in which Yakup Kadri gives the picture of Istanbul at that time.

Bakınız, bakınız Süleymaniye Camiini (Sansür edilmiştir...)⁵⁴ önünde beyaz güvercinler nasıl ürkerek kaçıyorlar! Bunlar bizim dağılan hülyalarımızdır. Bakınız, şu mezarlıklarda dolaşan perişan saçlı, yalınayak çocuklara! Bunlar (Sansür edilmiştir...) nasıl ellerini uzatıyorlar, bizim ayaklar altına alınan gururumuzdur. Bakınız şu peçelerini açmış dolaşan çıplak yüzlü, uzun ökçeli (Azyade) lere, bunlar bizim esrari faş olmuş kalblerimiz, hiyanete ve ihanetle lekelenmiş aşklarımızdır. (...) Bakın şu muhacir kadınlara, bakın şu yetim çocuklara. Bunlar onların ayaleti, bunlar onların cisimlenmiş ruhlarıdır. Aramızda dolaştıklarına, bizim gibi yaşadıklarına inanmayınız. Onlar taş üstünde yatıyorlar ve toprak yiyorlar ve (bu gurbet yolunun sonu neresidir?) diye soruyorlar. Zira hâlâ bizim sandığımız bu şehri onlar artık benimsemiyorlar, yadırgıyorlar. Korkarım ki siz de kendinizi burada iki kat garip hissetmiyesiniz ve siz de o muhacir kadınları, o şehit çocukları gibi, (bu gurbet yolunun sonu neresidir? Hani size ey sevdiğim Türkler, siz neredesiniz?) diye sormiyasınız. Biz ordayız, oradayız; Üsküdar’ın arka tarafından görülen tepelerin ötesindeyiz.

Look, look how the frightened white doves run away in front of the Süleymaniye mosque (Censored...) They are our scattered dreams. Look at these shabby haired, wretched children walking barefoot in the cemeteries. How they (censored) extend their hands, they are our trampled pride. Look at these high heeled Azyades, who walk around with their veils removed, they are our hearts whose secret has been exposed, they are our loves who have been stained with betrayal and treachery. Look at these refugee women, look at these orphan children. They are those martyrs’ ghosts, they are the incarnation of their souls. Do not believe that they wander among us, that they live like us. They sleep on stone and eat earth and ask (where is the end of this road to exile?). Because they have not appropriated this city which we still think is ours, they find it strange. I fear that you too cannot feel twice a stranger and you cannot ask like those refugee women and like those martyrs’ children (where is the end of this road to exile? Hey dear Turks, where are you?). We are here, we are here; we are on the other side of the hills behind Üsküdar.

Here the misery of the refugees, who are still strangers, is one element among others: general poverty, westernised, treacherous Turkish women and the orphans of war. The refugees cry for the end of their exile; and the same fate may befall the other inhabitants of the city. But no! From the east salvation is at hand in the shape of the national resistance.

⁵² Karaosmanoğlu, 1973, 212-214.

⁵³ Ibid, 178-181.

⁵⁴ There was press censorship during the Allied occupation of Istanbul. Where for publication in *Ergenekon* Yakup Kadri relied on printed copy rather than his own drafts the censored passages are struck out.

These references suggest that the past of the refugees was not to be celebrated and that our own side was partly responsible for their plight. By contrast, their future is in a national homeland under an enlightened government. Unlike the Greek refugees, who were uprooted from their homes by an external enemy and whose resettlement could not be represented as part of a national renewal but was plainly the greatest calamity in the nation's history, the Turkish refugees did not and could not be prominent in a narrative of national victimhood. Furthermore, in presenting Anatolia, the scene of the war and the control of which was its whole purpose, as the core of the motherland it was important to give prominence to the sufferings of natives rather than of recent arrivals.

7. Concluding remarks

The first impressions of the Turkish and Greek literatures inspired by the War of Independence and of the Asia Minor Disaster respectively is that they embody quite different narratives of what in history was a single series of events. Closer inspection reveals underlying similarities. Each body of works emphasises the suffering of its authors' own side as victim and this emphasis determines the selection of different aspects of the war for projection in literature: for the Turks the suffering of the innocent natives of Anatolia during the war at the hands of the Greeks; for the Greeks the suffering of the innocent natives of Anatolia at the end of the war at the hands of the Turks. Consistent with this emphasis is a disregard more pronounced in the case of the Turks than in the case of the Greeks for the sufferings of the other side. For the projection of this suffering as a lived experience both literatures resort to first person narration and blend reality and fiction. Common to both literatures, finally, is the characteristic that the works are not straightforward narrations of past events but are composed and revised subsequently with contemporary concerns in mind.

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